

FFA2021 Regional event

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

09:30 - 12:00 (WEST)

10:30 - 13:00 (CET)

Santarém, Portugal and live online



Where agriculture
& environment meet
for an open dialogue

Press Release

The FFA2021 Regional Portugal brought together stakeholders to discuss Food System Renewal for a hybrid event that took place in Santarém, Portugal. The event was also broadcast online to hundreds of viewers who attended through the Forum's unique digital venue. The FFA2021 digital venue, which remains open for the week, features various rooms for digital attendees to explore including a kitchen with sustainable recipes, a lounge to network and a virtual exhibition area with stands to access exclusive content from.

The day was opened with a compelling speech from FFA2021 Chairman, Janez Potočnik, who calls for urgent action saying: *"It is high time that global and local communities live up to the promises they have made about sustainability. Whether it is about access to water, international trade agreements, or climate change."* The former Commissioner stressed that there is still time left to avoid the worst effects of climate changes, so long as we band together.

The first session highlighted the importance of sustainable water use, water saving technologies and how they can be placed in the hands of farmers and ensure that they have the right knowledge and practices to employ them. In that same session, Thierry de l'Escaille, Secretary General of the European Landowners' Organization, also spoke of the importance of equipping farmers with the right tools for farmland management practices and how farmers can be supported with the green transition.

Going beyond sustainability on the farm level, the second session examined how to increase sustainability standards in European and global trade deals, the responsibilities of the public and private sector when it comes to enforcement of any sustainability chapters, and how non-governmental actors such as businesses and NGOs play their part in delivering on trade sustainability.

The afternoon featured a Solutions Workshop exploring the role of New Genomic Techniques (NGT) in agriculture and plant breeding. The first hour focused on how NGTs can support farmers towards reaching the targets embedded in the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy. The second hour investigated the potential of NGT as a tool to tackle climate change on both an EU and global level.

There were some clear takeaways from the event: the only way to protect our precious natural capital is for all actors of the food value chain to work together. Water management will be a critical issue not only in Southern Europe, but around the world. We must provide farmers with the best tools to manage their lands, protect biodiversity and care for soil health. The future of international trade relations will need to embody not just the potential economic gains, but also take full account of the environmental, climate, and social externalities.

This week's events were organised under the auspices of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Council. To learn more about what was discussed during the day, visit www.forumforagriculture.com where the events will be available to watch, free of charge. The Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) has been contributing to the debate on agriculture and the environment in Brussels since 2008 and is now firmly established as the premier event of its type.

For further information contact:

Anne Marchadier

European Landowners' Organization

anne.marchadier@elo.org

+32 2 790 88 65

Pedro Arranz

Syngenta

pedro.arranz@syngenta.com

+34 683670069

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