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## Press Release

### **COPA-COGECA EMPHASISE FARMERS' COMMITMENT TO REDUCING MYCOTOXINS IN CEREALS**

Copa and Cogeca participated at the European Forum on mycotoxins in cereals on 1st and 2nd February 2010, in order to emphasise farmers' commitment to reducing the presence of mycotoxins in feed through the use of best available techniques.

On behalf of Copa-Cogeca, Mr. Ian Backhouse stated "Farmers are able to control or even reduce the presence of Fusarium toxins but they certainly cannot eradicate them at ground level. To improve the contribution made by farmers in the medium term, it is essential to have new varieties and a diverse range of crop protection tools".

During the forum, participants confirmed that weather conditions during the critical phases of a plant's development are the key factor, closely followed by the presence of residues in crops. Visual monitoring of these toxins in fields is also impossible. Farmers need legislators to let them use flexible tools which allow them to make decisions on how they manage their crops. For example, the decision on whether to plough or use minimum tillage must be left up to the farmers who have all the necessary information and not up to law makers .

Mr. Ian BACKHOUSE emphasised that "Increasing demands via Community legislation will place further pressure on farmers who cannot control the uncontrollable, i.e. the weather conditions. A strategy needs to be developed along the entire food chain".

Mr. PESONEN, Copa-Cogeca Secretary General, concluded by saying "Farmers and their agricultural cooperatives are increasing their efforts to reduce the risk posed by the presence of mycotoxins in cereals. We would urge the European Commission to encourage and support joint sectoral action in order to better manage the risk. We do not want every single batch to be tested, and instead batches should be tested according to the risk of contamination involved".

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