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Press Release

Copa and Cogeca underline urgent need to develop new and better plant varieties using new breeding techniques to deal with increasing challenges like climate change

With European farmers facing increasing challenges like climate change, Copa and Cogeca underlined at a major conference today the need to develop new and better seed varieties that are better resistant to water and heat stress to cope with the effects of climate change.

Speaking at the EU Commission Conference on Modern Biotechnologies in Agriculture today, Copa & Cogeca Chairman of the Seed Working Party Thor Korfoed stressed “Farmers and breeders need to be increasingly innovative to deal with the challenge of feeding a growing world population with limited resources and increasingly variable weather events, ranging from floods to drought. We need to develop new plant varieties which are for example resistant to water and heat stress, as a way to adapt to climate change, as outlined in the IPCC report on climate change”.

“New Breeding Techniques (NBTs) are crucial tools to support innovation in the plant breeding sector and in livestock genetic enhancement as a whole. And European farmers and their cooperatives need access to these technological advancements in order to meet the upcoming challenges and to remain competitive. But for investments to be made and for NBTs to be developed further, breeders need legal certainty and a well-functioning EU single market. We believe that NBTs should be looked at and discussed by experts on a case-by-case basis and according to scientific criteria. The EU Commission keeps postponing its Communication on the legal status of NBTs. We urge them to accelerate the process and clarify the legal status of NBTs to ensure that we have an innovative agriculture sector in the future capable of meeting growing demand. New techniques, like mutagenesis techniques, are a prime example of why this process needs to be speeded up”, he concluded.

For further information, please contact:

Dominique Dejonckheere

Senior Policy Advisor

Tel.: +32 2 287 27 30

Dominique.Dejonckheere@copa-cogeca.eu

Amanda Cheesley

Press Officer

Mobile: + 32 474 840 836

amanda.cheesley@copa-cogeca.eu

CDP(17)7167:1
