



## PRESS RELEASE

### Global farmers ask: Why are European farmers not allowed to take advantage of agricultural innovations?

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Farmers around the globe have witnessed the benefits of using products derived from agricultural biotechnology, such as improved food security and better incomes. Their political leaders, they say, have shaped policies that allow them to reap these benefits to help their families and communities. Yet, they ask: why has Europe—long admired for its cutting-edge innovation—fallen so far behind in agriculture? Six farmers from around the globe – Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, the Philippines, and Uganda – are participating in a series of meetings and events in Brussels, London and Paris to show European leaders how technological advances have improved their food and economic security.

During today's event in Brussels, "Sustainable Solutions for Food Security," seven farmers and international experts—including Roberto Ridolfi, Head of Unit in EuropeAid at the European Commission, Mayra Moro-Coco, Policy Officer at Action Aid, and Justus Wesseler, Associate Professor at Wageningen University—discussed Europe's role in ensuring food security.

A farmer who spoke at the event, Ms. Rosalie Ellasus from the Philippines, noted,

"I'm surprised that European farmers can't take advantage of GM crops. The safety and benefits of this technology have been proven, and we need as many solutions as possible to help feed a growing

Did you know:

- ✓ 14 million farmers around the world grow GM crops and over 90% are small and resource-poor farmers.
- ✓ Since 1996/97, Brazilian farmers have accumulated nearly US \$4 billion as direct benefits from the adoption of biotech crops.
- ✓ Farming biotech cotton in Burkina Faso, which is up to 30% more productive per hectare, has allowed more land to be used for growing food.
- ✓ According to the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), this year alone, [925 million people will go hungry](#) or be malnourished.
- ✓ The UN estimates that by 2050 the world will need a further 70% of available food.
- ✓ By 2020 around a third of the world's population will be living in regions facing low levels of water.
- ✓ According to [Action Aid](#), food security is predicted to deteriorate further in Africa, to the point that nearly 50 percent of Africans could be going without enough food by 2020.
- ✓ In the EU, only two GM crops have been approved for cultivation, while an additional 20 have been submitted and are awaiting authorisation.

population and improve farmers' economic situations. Since I began farming GM maize in 2003, I've had higher yields, fewer pests and greater profits – I wonder when European farmers will experience these same benefits. As a widow raising three boys, I was able to leave behind my career as a medical technologist and pursue my dream – becoming a successful small farmer.”

Justus Wesseler, Associate Professor at Wageningen University, sees the benefits of GM crops for Europe:

"Farmers around the world are actively benefiting from GM crops thanks to their governments' policies. Let's make sure that EU policies will do the same for European farmers, and allow them to capitalise on cutting-edge environmentally-friendly agricultural technologies."

Nathalie Moll, Secretary-General of EuropaBio, stated:

"It is truly motivating and inspiring to meet farmers from around the world who are benefiting from biotechnology's scientific advances and products in tangible ways to help their economies and their sustainability, and I look forward to the day when Europe will have managed to catch up with the developing world in that respect!"

## **ENDS**

### **Additional Information Sources**

[Financial Times briefing: Food Security](#)

[Filling the Cupboard: U.N. Estimates the World's Hungry at Almost 1 Billion](#)

[Who's Really Fighting Hunger?](#)

[United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization \(FAO\): The Right to Food](#)

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### **About EuropaBio**

EuropaBio's mission is to promote an innovative and dynamic biotechnology based industry in Europe. EuropaBio, (the European Association for Bioindustries), has 66 corporate and 7 associate members operating worldwide, 4 Bioregions and 22 national biotechnology associations representing some 1800 small and medium sized enterprises. <http://www.europabio.org/>