

From: [REDACTED] (SANTE)
Sent: lundi 7 octobre 2019 13:55
To: CHAZE Nathalie (CAB-ANDRIUKAITIS); [REDACTED] (SANTE)
Cc: [REDACTED] (SANTE)
Subject: BTO Visit Commissioner Andriukaitis to INRA - 19 September 2019

Dear colleagues,

With my apologies for the delay, a suggested report of the visit to INRA

Subject: Report of the visit of Commissioner Andriukaitis to INRA (French National Institute for Agronomical Research)
Basis (CAB ANDRIUKAITIS/1383)

Date/Place: 19 September 2019, INRA Versailles + Paris Headquarters

Participants:

- Commissioner Andriukaitis, Nathalie Chaze, [REDACTED]
- DG SANTE: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
- Paris EC Representation : [REDACTED]
- National Institute for Agronomical Research (INRA): [REDACTED]

Report:

Main purpose was to present some concrete research activities of the French National Institute for Agronomical Research which could be of interest for DG SANTE, following a recent meeting with Anne Bucher and a contact with Commissioner Andriukaitis at the Paris' Agricultural Fair.

- **Introduction:** INRA implements a research programme covering agriculture, food and environment, employing 12,000 persons with a budget of 860 M€, under the aegis of Ministries of Research and Agriculture. In the top 3 of publishing Agronomic Research Institutions at global level.
- **Visits:**
 - The visit to the "Phenoscope" illustrated research in a model plant (*Arabidopsis thaliana*) to identify biodiversity and accelerate the screening of genetic performance to adapt to **mild water stress** (e.g. in the perspective of climate change).
 - The visited cytology and microscopy laboratory works on mechanisms and modelling of **leaf development** and growth with a view to understand the recombination for improved breeding.
 - The field visit illustrated the test conducted on hybrid maize varieties to test performances of commercial varieties under **low-input** conditions and drought conditions.
- **Discussion New Genomic Technique:**

- INRA explained that in their view research on and use of new genomic techniques should be part of a panel of solutions for a “systemic approach”. Solutions needed to decrease pesticide use or to decrease pressure on environmental resources need to be diverse : new genomics should be used when other solutions cannot achieve the goals. There is therefore a need to carry out (research) work on quantification and prediction of the need of new genomic techniques. Further to the questions on potential market uptake, INRA considers that the success of those techniques would depend on new/societal traits (increase adaptation to hydric stress, decrease use of Pesticides). INRA works closely with industry and farming sector within EPSO (European Plant Science Organisation), notably to study potential market uptakes of products with societal benefits.
 - Work with new genomic techniques is carried out by INRA in contained use and no request for field trials has been filed yet with French authorities.
- **Discussion Chemical Pesticide-Free Agriculture:**
 - Development of more sustainable crop protection products and practices is one of INRA’s priority programmes, in line with a mandate received in the context of the French “Eco-Phyto II Programme” aiming at reducing the dependency on (chemical) plant protection products (PPP).
 - Commissioner reminded that the level of ambition of the French programme is unrealistic: new pests (e.g. Xylella, Pinewood beetle,...) are emerging and PPP are still necessary but the “toolkit” shall evolve to safer chemical and non-chemical solutions and their use should be implemented in a more sustainable way by farmers.
 - INRA explained their multi-tools, multi-tasks research strategy towards a chemical pesticide-free agriculture: develop more sustainable crop protection products (microorganisms), crop breeding to favour plant defences and crop practices (landscape design).
 - First results are in the pipeline with new grapevine varieties with increased resistance to mildew.
- Commissioner expressed great appreciation of the strategically important research works engaged by INRA which match well the objectives of the new green deal announced for the new Commission.
- Commissioner plead for associating sustainability of agriculture with healthy food as requested by our society. He recommended to associate “hard science” with “social science” to increase trust in science among society, otherwise innovation will not been taken up. Involvement of all actors of the food chain from consumers to social scientists is crucial.

- Commissioner invited INRA to R&D days to take place the week after, so as to organise the network of research institutes and discuss new financial models.
- INRA participants thanked the Commissioner and accompanying delegation and announced the organisation of a conference in September 2020 to gather internationally representative Agronomic Research Institutions to discuss the new challenges as regards food safety, sustainable food production and food security.

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Policy Officer Pesticides



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Please note that this e-mail contains the personal opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official opinion or constitute a formal commitment of the European Commission.