FEFAC 60th ANNIVERSARY "Resource Efficiency Champions of the Food Chain for 60 Years"	6 June 2019, 3 pm, Brussels, Royal Museum of Art&History

Scene Setter

You will give a keynote speech (25 minutes) at the 60th Anniversary of FEFAC, on the "EU protein challenge: key outcomes of the EU Conference on vegetable proteins and the DG AGRI Market study". In your speech, you may cover the following topics:

- [Out of Scope]
- DG AGRI focus & priority area on innovation in feed & livestock sector (e.g. precision feeding; digitization & sensors technology & new plant breeding techniques etc.);
- [Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

[Art 4.1 (b) - privacy]

First key messages

[Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]

Research and Innovation

- [Out of Scope]

- On legumes and plant breeding for protein plants:

- The Report on the development of plant proteins identified limited breeding resources and knowledge gaps as bottlenecks for further improvement of the protein crop production. We fully acknowledge the importance of plant breeding for protein crops and their potential.

- [Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

Second key messages (defensive points)

[Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

What is Commissioner's Hogan view with regard to SAM's view on the ECJ ruling and gene editing?

- This is a policy area for which Commissioner Andriukaitis is better placed than me to answer. However, it is clear the ruling of the ECJ needs to be taken into account in the implementation of current provisions.

- For the time being, I am aware that the European Reference Laboratory for Genetically Modified Food and Feed and the European Network of GMO laboratories published a report on the current and future possibilities and limitations regarding the detection of food or feed obtained by new mutagenesis techniques. Due to the limitations of detection, identification and quantification of genome-edited products, which cannot be solved at present, this will require further consideration.

- All technological developments may offer opportunities for increasing the competitiveness edge and doing better. However, all these need to be considered in a holistic way and in the long term, including societal expectations on the future of the CAP. Breeding is an important tool but needs to be seen in the overall context of production, farming systems, consumer demand or the access to breeding innovations (IP rights).

- Therefore, a market-oriented agriculture focuses on a production in line with market expectations.

- Is it important to underline that Commission proposal on "Modernising and simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy'' provides a very open ended and comprehensive path for development: enhanced agricultural knowledge and innovation system (AKIS), precision farming, training, digitalisation, more flexibility for MS for tailoring appropriate measures at local level, answering societal demands.

Plant breeding, role of new breeding techniques for protein plants?

- European farming is highly productive. At the same time, it is also facing manifold challenges and has to move towards more sustainable ways of production. To meet the challenges the agricultural sector needs to continue being dynamic, expand its knowledge base and innovate constantly.

- This is why for agricultural research in Horizon 2020 we follow a challenge-based approach, which does not prescribe the approaches to be used. This means that research priorities are framed in challenges, which can be addressed by modern and traditional plant breeding techniques. The choice of approach depends on the specific needs and scope of the challenge. This widens the chances to meet the manifold demands from society.

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New breading techniques

On 25 July 2018, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) clarified the status of products obtained by new mutagenesis techniques. The ECJ concluded that, contrary to those from classical mutagenesis techniques (which are exempted from the obligations of the GMO legislation), the new mutagenesis techniques are not exempted from the GMO legislation. Therefore, GMO authorisation, traceability and labelling requirements apply to such products.

The French 'Conseil d'Éta't brought this question to the ECJ following an action initiated by the French agricultural union 'Confédération Paysanne' together with eight other associations. This action contested the French legislation according to which organisms obtained by mutagenesis are not, in principle, considered as being the result of genetic modification, and asked for a ban on the cultivation and marketing of a particular rapeseed variety obtained by new mutagenesis technique.

The ECJ decision triggered widespread controversy in scientific world and among economic actors active in agricultural trade.

The impossibility of distinguishing between spontaneously occurring mutations (naturally occurring in the environment) and different types of human interventions is a major issue from a regulatory point of view. Implementing GMOs traceability and labelling rules for this kind of products will be quite challenging.

To support Member States and their official control laboratories on the analytical challenges to test products developed by new mutagenesis techniques, the Commission requested the European Reference Laboratory for Genetically Modified Food and Feed and the European Network of GMO laboratories to elaborate a report on the current and future possibilities and limitations regarding the detection of food or feed obtained by new mutagenesis techniques. The report should be finalised by March 2019.

The ruling can be expected to have important consequences for the EU consumers and farmers. It may also have impacts on international trade and on the EU research and innovation sector. One of the consequence of this decision could be a reduced incentive to develop new plant varieties.

High Level Group of Scientific Advisors to the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation working in the context of Scientific Advice Mechanism[2] provided on 13 November 2018 some further analysis of the issue and contributed to the ongoing debate with scientific arguments. This recent paper is largely based on the Advisors' Explanatory Note on New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology published in April 2017. The Advisors conclude that factors other than scientific evidence are and should be considered in policy-making as well as in jurisdiction. However, when criteria other than scientific evidence are taken into account, such as: ethical, legal, social and economic considerations, these should be clearly identified and communicated in a transparent manner. At the same time, relevant and robust scientific evidence should be provided to inform decision-making and good regulation.

[2] The Scientific Advice Mechanism was established in October 2015 to support the Commission with high quality, timely and independent scientific advice for its policy-making activities. Its Group of Chief Scientific Advisors comprises seven independent, eminent scientists, appointed in their personal capacities.
They also provided in June 2018 a scientific opinion on the authorisation processes of Plant Protection Products in the EU.

The Advisors recommended revising the GMO legislation to reflect current knowledge and scientific evidence, and as part of a broad dialogue with relevant stakeholders and the public at large.

In view of the strongly held and diverse views in this area, based on citizen's values, beliefs and concerns, the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies is currently working on the ethical issues raised by modern technologies.

Currently the Commission is also discussing the consequences of the Court ruling with Member States to ensure it is unify implemented by all actors at all levels.

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