

Knowledge, innovation and skills for sustainable horizons

31 May-1 June 2023, The Square, Brussels

Foreword

Dear Participant,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 3rd edition of the EU AgriResearch Conference. Your active participation is key to shape the future research agenda that will provide farmers, foresters and rural communities with the right knowledge, innovation and skills for sustainable horizons.

The event takes place in a changing context for agriculture, forestry and rural communities. They must become more productive, competitive, resilient and sustainable than ever before. Research and innovation (R&I) are key to drive that change. That is why the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and all major European Green Deal strategies, like the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, the Forestry Strategy, the Soil Strategy and the Long-term Vision for Rural Areas all acknowledge the importance of R&I to achieve the ambitious EU policy targets and objectives.

The first edition of the EU AgriResearch Conference held in 2016 was instrumental to design our long-term strategic approach to EU agricultural research and innovation. Since then, the voices heard at the conference and its second edition have inspired and guided R&I programming in agriculture, forestry and rural areas at EU and Member States level. I am proud of what we have achieved together by mobilising the strengths of two flagship EU policies – the Horizon programmes and the Common Agriculture Policy. We have done this in particular by putting the end users right at the centre of R&I activities, co-creating solutions and exchanging knowledge with them, where they live and work, on farm, in forest and in rural villages. We have also pooled our forces in R&I partnerships with EU and associated countries, the private sector, foundations and other stakeholders to accelerate farming systems transformation. We focus on agroecology, on improvement of animal health and welfare, and on enhancing the potential of data and digital solutions in agriculture. We also have innovated the way we programme R&I by launching the Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' two years ago, with the ambition to establish 100 living labs with and lighthouses with more than thousand local experimentation and testing sites all over Europe to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.

We took comprehensive action on R&I over the last decade and now we see the results on the ground: there are already plenty of innovative solutions and new knowledge ready to use in practice. Yet, the changing context continues to be a challenge, but also offers many opportunities to our farmers, foresters and rural communities. The stakes are high and we need to keep on delivering.

Today, we are halfway when it comes to the implementation of Horizon Europe – the most ambitious R&I programme in the history of the EU with unprecedented funding dedicated to agriculture, forestry and rural areas. We are also about to start discussions on the next EU R&I programme and the future CAP after 2027. It is, therefore, timely to showcase promising R&I solutions and resume the dialogue with you on the R&I priorities for the remaining years of Horizon Europe and beyond.

During the first day of this conference, we will look at the key challenges and opportunities for farmers, foresters and rural communities. We will concentrate on what R&I actions are needed to achieve the ambitions of the EU policies and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and how to implement them to strengthen impact on the ground in the EU and globally. On that basis, we will discuss how we can pursue our goals in the next years, how we can further structure and organise our work to deliver more for society. This should be done in partnership with public authorities, international partners, primary producers and other businesses, local communities and all those active in the innovation ecosystems.

The second day will be dedicated to recap what we have achieved in the R&I policy for agriculture, forestry and rural areas so far. Building on that, we will reflect on concrete sectorial challenges with a systems perspective and co-create the priority R&I needs to address the environmental, social and economic sustainability challenges. We will certainly make the most of the opportunities that the innovation trends bring. Notably, we will co-design the paths to: sustainable management of natural resources, in particular through our Mission 'Soil Deal for Europe'; agrobiodiversity for healthy cropping systems; healthy and sustainable livestock systems; and multifunctional forests. Beyond this, we will look at the variety of skills, catalysers and tools that we can use to bridge the gap between science and practice and that can make a real difference on the ground. Attention will be given to digital and data technologies as well as social sciences. To ensure that no one is left behind, we will also delve into opportunities for rural communities to become stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous.

For the third day of the conference, we have organised field trips to visit six local innovation projects, so called EIP-AGRI operational groups, which we supported under the CAP. It will be a unique opportunity for you to experience how research and agricultural practice are working hand in hand for new innovative solutions and exchange directly with practitioners.

I am confident that these three stimulating days will be full of truly co-creative discussions and will generate new ideas on how EU R&I can accelerate the sustainability transitions in agriculture, forestry and rural areas. The conference is not the end, but rather a beginning for planning strategically the last years of Horizon Europe and paving way to the next EU R&I programme and CAP.

I am delighted that you have joined us. I look forward to welcoming you personally to the event and to your input to the discussions.



Janusz Wojciechowski
**European Commissioner for Agriculture
and Rural Development**

31 May

Innovating with impact, what's next for Research and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas?

12:00	Opening registration	
12:00 – 13:30	Welcome Coffee	
	The opening plenary will be hosted by Magda Kopczynska , Deputy Director General, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural development, European Commission	
13:30 – 14:45	High-level opening: Research and innovation enabling sustainable transition in agriculture, forestry and rural areas	
	High-level opening	Janusz Wojciechowski , European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development
	Short inspirational talk	Rogier Schulte , Chairholder, Farming Systems Ecology, Wageningen University and Research (WUR)
	Panel discussion <i>How can research and innovation effectively support the EU policy agenda?</i>	Peter Kullgren , Minister for Rural Affairs of Sweden and Chair of the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council Luis Planas Puchades , Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Spain Norbert Lins , Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, European Parliament Marion Jansen , Director of the Trade and Agriculture Directorate, OECD
14:45 – 16:00	Research and innovation and Sustainable Development Goals: Are we on track for 2030? What's next?	
	Keynote speech	Ismahane Elouafi , Chief Scientist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
	Panel discussion <i>Feeding the world and saving the planet: can Research and innovation meet both ambitions?</i> What are the key challenges and opportunities for farmers, foresters and rural communities to be more sustainable, resilient and climate-smart?	The Honourable Penny Wensley AC , National Soils Advocate of Australia Elisabeth Claverie de Saint Martin , CEO, French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) Alice Ruhweza , System Board Member, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Diana Lenzi , President, European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)
	Slido Q&A	Teresa Pinto Correia , Vice-Chair of the Mission Board "A Soil Deal for Europe" and Professor at MED-University of Évora, Portugal

16:00 – 16:30	Networking coffee and Poster session	
16:30 – 18:00	Research and innovation enabling farmers, foresters and rural communities to become more resilient, sustainable and climate smart	
	<p>Setting the scene</p>	<p>Sjoukje Heimovaara, President of the Executive Board, Wageningen University & Research (WUR)</p>
	<p>Panel discussion:</p> <p><i>What are we learning from the climate and geopolitical crises? How can R&I enable farming and rural communities to be more sustainable, resilient and climate smart?</i></p> <p>Slido Q&A</p>	<p>Gilles Saindon, Assistant Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Canada</p> <p>Frank O'Mara, Director, Agriculture and Food Development Authority (TEAGASC), Ireland</p> <p>Dóra Drexler, Coordinator, BIOEAST Thematic Working Group on Agroecology and Sustainable Yields</p> <p>Stefania Avanzini, Director, One Planet Business for Biodiversity (OP2B), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)</p> <p>Mateusz Ciasnocha, farmer, Ciasnocha Family Farms & CEO, European Carbon Farmers; member of the Board of the EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe"</p>
18:00 – 18:15	Setting the scene for the breakout sessions on Day 2	
18:15 – 19:30	Networking cocktail	End of day 1

1 June

Building on achievements to shape the future

08:30	Welcome coffee		
09:15 – 11:45	1st round of parallel sessions: Research and innovation delivering for sustainable, climate-smart agricultural and forestry systems		
1 Sustainably managed natural resources for agricultural production and the EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe"	2 Agrobiodiversity for healthy cropping systems	3 Challenges and opportunities for healthy and sustainable livestock systems	4 Sustainable management for multifunctional forests
12:00 – 13:00	Networking lunch		
13:00 – 15:30	2nd round of parallel sessions: Research and innovation enabling a people-centred green and digital transition		
5 Digital and data technologies in agriculture: R&I for sectoral transformation	6 Rural opportunities	7 Bridging the gap between R&I and practice: tools and skills for today's and future generations	8 Social Sciences and Humanities for resilient and sustainable agriculture and forestry
15:30 – 15:45	Transition from breakout rooms to plenary room (Gold hall)		
15:45 – 17:30	Concluding plenary		
	The concluding plenary will be moderated by Tamsin Rose , Director, Tamarack SPRL and Senior Fellow at the Think Tank 'Friends of Europe'		
	Reports from the parallel sessions	Tamsin Rose and Keynote Speakers from the parallel sessions	
	EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe" – International cooperation with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Neil Watkins , Deputy Director, Program Advocacy and Communications, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Magda Kopczynska , Deputy Director General, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural development, European Commission	
	Concluding remarks	Marc Lemaître , Director General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission Wolfgang Burtscher , Director General for Agriculture and Rural development at the European Commission	
	Inspiring take-home message	Sadhguru , Save Soil movement	
17:30	End of conference		

2 June

Field visits 'Innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas in practice'

The EIP-AGRI Support Facility will organise a series of field visits near Brussels, with the support of the Flemish Rural Network. Field visits are optional for the conference participants and will show how research and agriculture, forestry and rural challenges are bridged in EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects and other innovative projects.

The field visits will be closely linked to the discussion themes of the Conference.

[More information about the field visits](#)