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Press Release

Copa and Cogeca underline need to step up investment in agriculture and make digitalization of EU agriculture sector a success #DynamicAgri

Copa and Cogeca underlined the need to step up investment in the EU agriculture sector and to improve infrastructures so that farmers have access to broadband and digital technology and can compete in dynamic markets at a Conference today organized by Picking Alpha.

Speaking in a panel debate at the Conference on “Farm Management: Innovations and Financing “ in Brussels, Copa and Cogeca Cereals and oilseeds Working Party Chairman Max Schulman stressed “Farming is an old profession but it is not an old fashioned one. Farmers need to be at the fore front of digitalization and need to be involved in the process right from the start, using a “bottoms-up approach”, so that innovative technology is tailor-made to their needs”.

Investment in rural areas is vital to improve the infrastructures and ensure that farmers have access to broadband so that they can use digital technology to develop their businesses and benefit from smart farming, he added.

Smart farming and precision agriculture helps farmers to produce more efficiently at the same time as impacting positively on the environment and biodiversity. Inputs like fertilizers and plant protection products can be applied in a more accurate manner and it enables savings on input costs

But Mr Schulman underlined the need to make the best use of all available funds, and not only agricultural funds, since it is not only farmers that benefit from digitalization in rural areas. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) including its rural development policy and the activities of rural networks are already delivering benefits to the rural community. But we also have to focus on the European Structural Funds and the European Fund for Strategic Investments that must contribute better to investments in rural areas to improve the infrastructures, he insisted.

Other speakers in the debate, which was moderated by Dutch MEP Jan Huitema, also underlined the need for a more modern EU agriculture sector which is capable of meeting today’s challenges.

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