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PRESS RELEASE

Biocontrol technologies as key part of farmers' toolbox

Solutions to tackle pest and diseases in the farming sector have been at the top of the policy agenda in the recent years. Biocontrol technologies offer and are becoming an increasingly more important addition to the farmers toolbox, helping them ensure the future sustainability of the crop sector. Copa and Cogeca (EU farmer and agri-cooperatives) and IBMA (International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association) have been acting together for a long time in order to support the availability of low-risk substances as well as other biocontrol technologies for farmers.

In this context, Copa-Cogeca and IBMA are hosting today in Brussels the workshop ***"Biocontrol technologies in the current and future farmers' toolbox"*** with the purpose of showcasing farmers success stories in using biocontrol solutions as well as allowing the researchers to present some of the latest technologies in the pipeline, which have the potential to fill the farmers' toolbox with biological alternatives to pesticides.

Furthermore, the workshop will provide an update of the current work of the European Commission in facilitating market access for biocontrol technologies, outlining the regulatory processes as well as the proposed adaptation to it.

For Pekka Pesonen, Copa-Cogeca Secretary General: "Innovation is essential for the European agricultural sector to remain competitive in a globalized market. EU farmers and their cooperatives are confronted today by multiple challenges (e.g. adverse weather events, new pests and diseases, emerging risks, etc.). Hence, we need to be equipped with the right toolbox that is developed hand in hand with the latest scientific progress. The reduction of farmers' toolbox endangers their ability to effectively fight against pests and diseases. We insist that availability of proper tools (mechanical, chemical or, in this particular case, biocontrol technologies is a key element to properly implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM)."

IBMA Executive Director Jennifer Lewis further underlines the importance of collaboration between the biocontrol manufacturers and farmers for delivering solutions: "For both Copa and Cogeca and IBMA, filling the farmers' toolbox with safe and effective crop protection technologies – in particular biocontrol ones – is vital to fully apply IPM as well as organic farming programs, ensuring a more sustainable agriculture for future generations."

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