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TALK IN BRUSSELS
I introduce myself.

The efficient management of fertirrigation is a key aspect of our vegetable production, due to the environmental implications as well as for its impact in the profitability of our crops.

In many occasion, us farmers notice that what the scientific community is working on does not match the problems that worry us. (e.g. to get access and manage alternative water sources at reasonable prices since the water quality of the aquifer is worsening with time; to have access to new varieties proven to use water more efficiently while keeping commercial yield; etc.).

Moreover producers may not be aware of the problems generated by our agricultural activity. We believe there is a gap between research and the real problems and needs of farmers.

It's good to work together, so this is why we are in this project.

Moreover politicians when they develop regulations, it seems, in many cases, they do it without taking in to consideration the farmers and their requirements to make a success of the crops and farm profitability (e.g.

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limitations on the amount of fertilizers used in nitrate vulnerable zones).

This is another key aspect: However, any technological solution should be locally adapted and should be evaluated in terms of profitability for both, large and small farmers.

Some examples of our needs are related to topics such as:

- Water Management, our future depends on the optimization of its use.

- Renewable energies in water management on issues such as pumping, transport and water reuse when it refers to crops without soil, with leach recirculation.

- The Use of water from unconventional sources like regenerated wastewater and desalination

- Improve efficiency in the use of fertilizers, both, to reduce costs and to avoid unwanted negative environmental impacts.

There is a great deal to investigate and we think there is a lot of research running. However the results of this

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research, in most cases, fails to reach the farmers or cannot be implemented at both, small and large farms.

Another key issue, that the EU should work on is the survival of family farms, these suffer most from regulatory pressure than any other type of farming.

Family farms keep the population in the territory and are the support of the social and economic fabric in agriculture, this being essential in the equitable distribution of wealth.

This network is to be useful for defining how to unify interests of both, R&D and Growers, to raise awareness of impacts of our agricultural activity, to ensure that the R&D results guaranty that the proposed technologies are environmentally efficient, producing also a benefit on product quality.

This network must help to get the support from researches to farmers at the time to take decisions to invest in a new technology, proposing and provoking too the necessary changes in the legal framework to allow it.

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For all these reasons, we think that there must be much more synergy, empathy and agreement between the different players involved in our agricultural production.

It is the best way to imagine the future of agriculture in the European Union.

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