

Food Innovation Summit 2015

Brussels, February 3, 2015

Keynote Speech

by

EU Agriculture & Rural Development Commissioner

Phil Hogan

- Ladies and gentlemen.
- I am honoured to address the Food Innovation Summit. I want to thank Premier Cercle for inviting me here today.
- **Innovation is a key priority in my mandate as Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development**, something which I made clear in my Parliamentary hearing.
- Agriculture and Rural Development are part of the Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness priority at the heart of the Juncker Commission and we are committed with Vice-President Katainen to progress quickly on this priority.
- Agriculture has always been an innovative sector. Most of the farms of today have little in common with the farms of the 1950s. And the farms of 2050 will probably differ significantly from the farms of today.
- And the same goes for food systems, which are much more diverse, complex and technology-intensive than in the past.
- Thanks to innovation, farmers and our food industry have been able to deliver on the different challenges that have appeared in the past 50 years – quantity; quality; food safety and traceability; animal welfare; more environmentally-friendly farming. We have addressed these societal goals and become more efficient.

- However, the challenges linked to our natural resources, including the need to adapt to climate change, continue to grow. But this also means that the opportunities will continue to grow.
- **Food security is a bigger challenge than ever, with a global population expected to reach 9.6 billion people by 2050.**
- World food systems will have to increase in efficiency and productivity to ensure that people have access to the food they need, in quantity and quality. We will have to do more with less: less water, less inputs, less energy.
- We still have unused potential. But will also have to conquer new productions areas, like urban roofs or for example, with new techniques and organisation.
- Above all, we will have to waste less. According to the World Resource Institute, we are still wasting 22% of our food calories in Europe, slightly less than the global average. Half of this is wasted at consumer level, one quarter at production level, one quarter at storage, processing and retail level.
- What will still be wasted will have to be turned into raw material, feed or ingredients. We will have to recycle and up-cycle more, finding new ways to enrich our soils with nutrients coming from food waste, or turning agricultural waste into food packaging for example. Using less from farm to fork also means rethinking ways to organise our supplies and closing nutrient cycles.

- **The EU agriculture and food sectors should be at the forefront of this efficiency drive.**
- Part of this will be to encourage young innovators to see farming as an attractive, high tech and rewarding career. I am glad that the new Common Agricultural Policy goes a long way to increasing the appeal of farming as a career. There cannot be food security without farmers.
- Innovative agriculture should also ensure the protection of natural resources, biodiversity, landscape, soil and water, and increase the environmental and climate benefits that farming provides.
- The rollout of fast broadband everywhere, supported in particular by Rural development programmes, will see greater use of data collection and data analytics in crop and livestock management. To use two concepts that you will hear more often in the future: this is Big Data for Precision Farming, a subject on your agenda for today. Biomass, bio-energy and bio-based products will develop further.
- Innovation is the key to sustainable food security: through innovation, we can improve resource-efficiency, adapt to climate change, improve food safety, diversity and quality while maintaining the competitiveness of the agri-food sector and creating more and better jobs in rural areas.
- Innovation is happening everywhere, today. In Europe, scientists, industry and farmers, collectively and individually are currently

working on new ways to produce, store, process and market food products. And it is happening all along the value chain, from upstream science to downstream investments, via social innovation.

- For example, smart farming systems using cameras, sensors and other forms of technology are being tested to improve irrigation efficiency or reduce use of pesticides by improving detection of diseases.
- Precision livestock farming is rapidly evolving. The 'AUTOGRASSMILK' project for example has developed techniques which enable to combine the use of milking robots with automated grassland and pasture management.
- EU seed banks contain a wealth of genetic material that can be exploited to develop new varieties that will be more resilient and help us adapt to climate change. Projects will start soon on how we can better valorise genetic resources in regional food systems.
- Innovating is also about re-inventing farming systems in synergy with their environment. The FP7 project LIBERATION for example is actively working on farm management practices that enable ecological intensification.
- An EU-financed consortia called BIOCOPAC has developed lining for metal cans made from tomato skins, which is safer for consumers, cheaper for industries and makes good use of waste.

- The NOSHAN consortium works on how to turn food waste into feed for animals.
- And I could go on for ever...
- But our agricultural innovation system also needs to be strengthened and further developed if we really are to achieve food security in a context of limited resources.
- There is a massive potential and also a pressing need to do more.
- There is evidence that the links between research, farmers and the industry are still too weak. Too many innovations are still left unexploited and too many research questions from the sector remain unanswered.
- Agricultural knowledge and innovation systems need to be made more efficient and interactive. And the same goes for food innovation.
- The new tools we have put on the table for 2014-2020 are there to ensure we really succeed.
- Today, I would like to highlight two dedicated instruments:
  - Firstly, the **European Innovation Partnership**, or EIP, on "Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability".
  - Secondly, the **European research and innovation programme Horizon 2020**, through which we have doubled our efforts on

**food, agriculture**, forestry and marine research to reach nearly 4 billion euros for 2014-2020.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen, what is the EIP?**

- "Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability" is a European initiative setup to boost innovation through networking and collective work, though European level activities as well as in ground-level projects throughout the EU.
- The strategy of the agriculture EIP is to bring partners from research, farming, industry, NGOs and the advisory sector together in '**operational groups**' to work on common innovative projects funded under the rural development programmes.
- People participating in these groups will not only be linked to their project partners, but also to other European counterparts through an EU-wide network.
- Through this approach, a solution found to a specific problem in one place can be easily transferred to other, comparable situations.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen, agricultural and food research in Horizon 2020**

- In parallel to our efforts in rural development policy, we are delivering a considerable boost to agriculture and food research through Horizon 2020. The budget has been doubled compared to the previous programming period.

- Support to research and innovation is coupled together to develop cross-thematic activities and avoid traditional research in "silos". The goal is to ensure that Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation, delivers research from universities and institutes to the farm gate and the rural economy, and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in making innovation happen.
- **Sustainable food security was one of the major cross-cutting focus areas** identified in Horizon 2020 work programme 2014-2015. I am happy to tell you today that **this will remain in 2016-2017.**
  - We are currently preparing an ambitious call for **Sustainable food security** that aims to build **more resilient and resource-efficient value chains.**
  - Activities will deepen the knowledge base in fields such as **optimum resource use, climate adaptation and mitigation, ecological approaches, plant and animal health.** We will aim at building a competitive, **resilient and sustainable food industry** that can thrive in the global economy. **Healthier diets** will finally be a strong focus under this new call.
- In parallel, we are also developing a **new specific call on 'Rural renaissance'**.

- Through activities financed under this new call, we will enhance capacity to **exploit the many new openings for rural growth** related to agriculture, related industries and also other sectors. We will look for new business models, innovative governance approaches which can deliver growth and jobs in our territories.
- We will also seek to **strengthen the human and social capital** in rural areas, ensuring that farmers and rural businesses are well equipped to face the challenges ahead of them, with adequate knowledge and skills, efficient innovation networks and excellent cooperation along supply chains and across sectors at territorial level.
- Throughout these activities we want to achieve a **strong interaction between science and practice**. Under Horizon 2020, new project formats have been created which match the EIP concept. "Multi-actor projects", in the jargon, are research projects where farmers and other end-users will be involved "all along the project": here farmers or SMEs should not just be the object of study but encouraged to be centrally involved in creating solutions.
- Moreover, the fact that agricultural research and innovation under Horizon 2020 are now closely coordinated with the CAP (via innovation support under Rural Development) is a golden opportunity to bolster innovation actions at local level and to contribute to more integrated policy making.

- Last but not least, I want to say to all of you who have come from other continents today that international cooperation is already and will remain a strong component of our research and innovation programme.
- This Food Innovation Summit is, I believe, a great occasion to debate innovation policy all along the food chain. I look forward to rich debates and will study the summit's outcomes very carefully.
- Thank you.