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Press Release

The World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) and European Farmers and Agri-Cooperative Organisations (Copa and Cogeca) hold joint workshop to enhance use of digital technology in agriculture #DynamicAgri

Together with the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO), the European Farmers and Agri-Cooperative Organisations (Copa and Cogeca) organised a workshop on "Connecting World Farmers to the Value Chain" in Brussels today, to discuss policies that can help farmers to be part of the value chain and to develop new technologies that respond to citizens' demands.

The high-level workshop focuses on ways to encourage farmers and their cooperatives across the world to use digital technologies and smart farming in order to meet their needs and to produce more efficiently

Speaking in Brussels, Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said "The technological and digital transformation of agriculture is no longer a discussion for the future. It's a reality for many farms and cooperatives around the world. For example, in Europe there has been many policy developments recently that will strongly impact on the way technological and digital developments may transform agriculture, like the digital agenda, drones, data ownership. The workshop provides a platform to exchange views on how policies can help farmers to integrate into the value chain in order to get a better return from the market and to develop practices which society wants".

Dr William Rolleston, President of the WFO, said "An effective access to the value chain is vital for farmers to make their business successful. This is true in all countries of the world, for farmers of all scales and at all levels. From this important debate today we do expect ideas and proposals to be shared at international level which aim at fostering farmers' enhanced access to the value chain. Farmers face several challenges that affect their position, like climate change or price volatility of agricultural products, but still they are the first player in the agricultural sector, who are at the frontline in the achievement of global food security. Ensuring farmers are equal players in the value chain is not only fair, but is important to ensure sustainability and to create a healthy rural community all around the world. This workshop represents the right opportunity to relaunch the debate on this important issue. All stakeholders should take actions to ensure that markets in the agri-food sector function in an open, transparent, responsible, fair and competitive manner.

Ulrich Adam, Secretary-General of the European Agricultural Machinery Association (CEMA) said "Strengthening primary production and agricultural development in general can make a vital contribution to tackling food security and help to improve farm incomes and living conditions in rural areas around the world. To advance on this path in a meaningful and consistent manner, policies should in particular support farmers in making the best use of available technologies, ranging from more fundamental advances in sustainable farm mechanization to the increased use of smart digital tools".

Leonard Mizzi, Head of Unit at the European Commission Directorate-General Devco said "Boosting inclusive and sustainable growth in agri-value chains is at the heart of EU policy for agricultural development and food security. Producers' organisations are key stakeholders. They

combine the economic initiatives of their members with political actions to the benefit of smallholders. Producers' Organizations articulate farmers' interests to governments, private service providers and business partners”.

The event, jointly organised by Copa and Cogeca and the WFO, is supported by the European Commission and CEMA and the organisers would like to thank them for their support.

Note to the Editor:

The European Farmers and cooperatives Organisations (Copa and Cogeca) are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, they ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe. Copa represents over 23 million farmers and their families whilst Cogeca represents the interests of 22,000 agricultural cooperatives. They have 66 member organisations from the EU member states. Together, they are one of the biggest and most active lobbying organisations in Brussels. www.copa-cogeca.eu

The World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) The World Farmers' Organisation is an International Organization which brings together national farmers' organizations from all over the world. The mission of WFO is to represent and advocate on behalf of farmers in global policy fora, creating the conditions for the adoption of policies aimed at improving the economic environment and livelihood of about 1.5 billion producers and a rural community of 3.2 billion people. WFO performs such a role by drafting and proposing policies related to agricultural issues, engaging in dialogue with International and Government institutions (UN, WTO, World Bank, OECD) and participating in relevant international policy fora, in which WFO distinguished itself for its reliability and credibility. Of particular importance are the activities conducted by WFO in the field of the value chain, food security, climate change, innovation and access to credit. <http://www.wfo-oma.com>

The European Agricultural Machinery Association (CEMA) represents in total 4,500 manufacturers of agricultural equipment consisting of large multinational as well as numerous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The sector has a total annual turnover of €26 billion and provides employment for 135,000 people directly in the sector and another 125,000 persons indirectly in the distribution and service network. www.cema-agri.org

DG DEVCO The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) is responsible for designing European international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world. https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/general_en

¹ Value chain : all operators in the food chain from farmers to processors to retailers

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