

International Confederation of European Beet Growers

CONFEDERATION INTERNATIONALE
DES BETTERAUVIERS EUROPEENS
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CONFEDERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE
DEI BIETICOLTORI EUROPEI



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PRESS RELEASE

9th November 2017

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European sugar beet growers warn that their productivity and sustainable practices are under threat

At their annual Technical and Reception Control Committee today in Chantilly, France, European beet growers discussed various issues related to growing, harvesting and delivering beet to the sugar factory. Fundamental changes are at work with the end of quotas and with the possibilities of using of plant protection products that deeply impact the way farmers grow and deliver their beet.

Longer campaign, flat rate crown system, reception of whole beet have been debated between beet growers from the EU and Switzerland. Jean Pierre Dubray, Chair of this Committee, stressed that *“beet growers have always been in favour of modernization and simplification of beet delivery, but under the condition that the risks and benefits be equitably shared between growers and processors and we note that this balance is not there in many regions. Furthermore, the profound changes that are taking place put more pressure on growers and necessitate more than ever an increased technical competence and close monitoring throughout the long beet season, from seedbed preparation via sowing and growing to the storage and delivery of beet.”*

The extremely challenging context with regards to plant protection products was also extensively discussed. European growers cannot but note that sustainable practices are today challenged or banned, and innovation restricted. Over the past two decades, many plant protection products have been withdrawn, and good farming practices have already developed considerably in beet growing in the EU. However, today ideological positions prevail. *“This is all the more incomprehensible for our sector, whose strength comes from its high sustainability”* added Jean-Pierre Dubray.

“We sound the alarm to the EU Institutions and to the Member States because hasty and unjustified decisions with regards to plant protection products, in particular on glyphosate and neonicotinoids used in pelleted beet seed, would set us back 20 years with unsustainable practices and would jeopardize the sustainability of our sector to the benefit of imported sugar from third countries”. *“European beet growers remain committed to further improve their productivity and to work with the Institutions to further develop their good practices, under the condition that they are given the means to do so”*, concluded Jean-Pierre Dubray.