



EU BEET SUGAR
SUSTAINABILITY
PARTNERSHIP

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN BEET SUGAR SECTOR LAUNCHES SUSTAINABILITY COLLABORATION

Brussels, 16 September 2015

The EU Beet Sugar Sustainability Partnership (EU BSSP) has announced the launch of its first joint initiative on sustainability throughout the sector.

At an event hosted by DG AGRI at the EU Pavilion of EXPO Milan 2015 on 9 September, the partnership announced the release of the Good Practices – a tool designed to illustrate the sustainability progress of the European beet sugar sector and to help spread the uptake of environmental and social management from field to factory. The Good Practices reflect the achievements of beet growers and sugar manufacturers together with their workers, and serve as a basis of dialogue with stakeholders' sustainability progress for European beet sugar, already renowned as one of the world's most sustainable crops.

CIBE President Jørn Dalby highlighted: "the Good Practices show the very high level of sustainability of sugar beet in the EU and the way growers and the sector have invested to work smartly and efficiently". "EU growers can be proud of their constant improvement which will now take place in an ever changing and challenging context", he added.

Johann Marihart, President of CEFS, described the BSSP initiative as "an initiative that proves that we have a positive grounding in sustainability and that we know where our remaining challenges lie." He also added: "We promote an approach that is commensurate with the risks of each supply chain. In the case of beet sugar, we believe the EU's evidence-based and precautionary regulatory regime, coupled with our long-standing, strong and local partnerships between beet growers, sugar producers and labour unions, ensures the sustainability risks are lower here than anywhere else in the sugar world."

Harald Wiedenhofer, Secretary General of EFFAT, described the involvement of trade unions in delivering sustainability and said: "We are in favour of joint multilateral initiatives amongst stakeholders involving workers and their trade unions. It represents a very good example not only for the employers but also for social partners. Well-functioning social dialogue helps to cope with sustainability challenges. This is the best lesson we can get from the recent economic crisis."

Some 85 participants from companies, trade associations, investors and others stakeholders took part in the event and welcomed positively the launch of the Good Practices. Delegates took active part in the discussions and contributed to deepening the



understanding of the Good Practices, the way they will be used practically, as well as their role in the trade of sustainable sugar.

Members of the partnership expressed their commitment to continuing working in collaboration with each other and to following up on their joint initiative, in response to stakeholders' feedback. A summary of the key themes discussed at the EXPO Milan event appears below.

KEY LEARNING POINTS FROM THE EU BSSP STAKEHOLDERS' ROUNDTABLE

Below are some of the key ideas discussed by participants at the EU BSSP stakeholder roundtable, which the partnership will be working to address in coming months:

- The Good Practices are both formative and informative: The purpose of the Good Practices is to be disseminated and taken up throughout the sector, all around Europe. They provide ongoing inspiration for continuous improvement, as well as a handy and practical benchmark for practitioners.
- European beet sugar is widely recognized as a sustainable crop and product: Customers, manufacturers, investors and other stakeholders already acknowledge the sustainability credentials of beet sugar grown and produced in the EU. They further encourage its development as a bio-based feedstock to produce materials currently requiring petroleum or other non-renewable materials. This diversification would have a positive economic benefit for the region, as well as an environmental one.
- Customers, consumers and governments need reassurance on the sustainability of products: It is vital for the work of disseminating Good Practices to translate into a clearer, more reliable picture of actual sustainability performance in practice. Sustainability certification is not necessarily the answer for EU-produced beet sugar, but more needs to be done to ensure the widespread uptake of good practices.
- The future for sustainable beet sugar is bright, but not easy: While sustainability can help differentiate sugar producers in an increasingly competitive market, it may not affect the prices that producers can hope to achieve. The changes ahead for the EU and global sugar markets, in light of forthcoming changes to the Common Agricultural Policy, paint an uncertain picture, but sustainability is likely to become more and more a part of the expected criteria for sugar demanded by customers. From that point of view, producing sustainable sugar will be a competitive advantage. Sustainability indicators, if relevant and communicated transparently are also seen by investors as useful proxies for the quality of a company's management and its value as a potential investment.



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- The Good Practices represent the sector's commitment to sustainability, and can drive continuous improvements in performance: The Good Practices are a welcome initiative by a sector with a long-standing partnership between labour, growers and manufacturers, and summarize some of the best approaches to environmental and social management in operation. The sector is challenged by its stakeholders to work to spread knowledge and implementation still further, and to raise understanding and awareness of their value in practice, both within and outside the sector.

ABOUT THE EU BSSP

Formed as a collaboration between beet growers (CIBE), sugar manufacturers (CEFS) and trade unions (EFFAT), the partnership focuses on enabling good social and environmental performance from field to factory, and working to meet the expectations of sugar customers, regulators, thought leaders, local communities and society at large.



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