

International Confederation of European Beet Growers

CONFEDERATION INTERNATIONALE
DES BETTERAVIERS EUROPEENS

CONFEDERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE
DEI BIETICOLTORI EUROPEI



111/9 Boulevard Anspachlaan – B-1000 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 504 60 90 – Fax: +32 2 504 60 99
cibeoffice@cibe-europe.eu – www.cibe-europe.eu

INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG
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MIĘDZYNARODOWA KONFEDERACJA
EUROPEJSKICH PLANTATORÓW BURAKA

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Contact: E. LACOSTE

elisabeth.lacoste@cibe-europe.eu

Tel.: + 32 2 504 60 90

European sugar beet growers elect Franck Sander as CIBE President at a very challenging time

European Beet Growers elected Franck Sander as President of CIBE, succeeding Eric Lainé, during their Board of Directors video meeting on 17 December 2020 and discussed the extremely challenging situation for European sugar beet growers.

“This sugar beet season 2020 has been particularly painful for many growers across Europe. On the top of a market crisis with an EU sugar market price below the sugar reference threshold for 35 consecutive months, many sugar beet growers had to face a sanitary crisis. Not only Covid-19 has revealed the fragility of our life and economy, but other viruses and pests the fragility of farming and of our beet economy. The result is devastating in these regions, including my own country. At European level, the 2020/21 season in terms of average productivity will be the worst since a decade; in France and the UK it is a two-decade setback in productivity for sugar beet growers. Hundreds of millions of Euros are being lost this year by the beet sugar sector”, stated Franck Sander.

European Beet growers noted that the European Commission did not react so far to the multiple difficulties and challenges faced by the sugar beet sector. On market volatility, fall in growers' income, fall in competitiveness, unfair trading measures by third countries, non-level-playing field on global markets, lack of economic and environmental impact assessments in EU policy regarding plant protection, weakness in promoting innovative techniques of which New Breeding Techniques, inconsistencies between policies and in promoting bioeconomy based on sugar beet; on all these issues, the European Commission has failed to provide support and solutions.

“As President of CIBE, my role will be to remind the Commission of the strategic importance of our beet, sugar and ethanol sector, around joint contributions and projects developed with my colleagues from 18 beet-producing countries. In addition to a new CAP, the Green Deal challenges us, it can also be an opportunity if it is not only applied to farmers but to other EU policies. We need to redefine our import rules, so as not to import agriculture that we do not want, but also to strongly support farmers towards innovation and the promotion of good practices. I expect the Commission to speak truthfully about the consequences to be expected for farmers and how it intends to support them in meeting these challenges. In particular, I expect substantial support towards innovation, to enable us to define the technical route that can meet the expectations of the Green Deal. I am also expecting from the EU Institutions strong signals of support towards the promotion of our good practices and our products such as bioethanol, biogas, or biobased products for the green chemistry which allow the EU to decarbonize. Finally, the European Commission, after years of “laissez-faire”, must regain ambition in the management of market crisis and risks. The EU food, health and even energy security are at stake. I intend to make further efforts in this direction”, concluded Franck Sander.

Franck Sander, aged 41, farms 150 hectares in Ohlungen, Alsace (north-east of France): his crops are 70 ha maize, 35 ha wheat, 10 ha hops and 20 ha sugar beet. He delivers his beet to the Erstein sugar factory (Cristal Union) in Alsace. Alongside his crops, he has developed the production of energy on his farm, electricity and methanization. He is associated with 15 other farmers in a methanization unit. He has a long experience of commitments in the representation and defence of farmers. In 2012, he was elected Member of the Bureau of the French sugar beet growers' organisation “Confédération Générale des Planteurs de Betteraves” (CGB) and in 2013 President of the sugar beet growers' association in Alsace. He has been a Member of the Board of the sugar cooperative Cristal Union since 2011, President of the French regional farmers' association “FDSEA Bas-Rhin” since 2015 and President of CGB since January 2019.