

Innovation Conference

Concluding remarks - Thierry de l'Escaille

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need innovation. By this we mean not just the high-tech miracles of the internet age. To find the solutions, or even the right balance, between production and protection we will need to find new and old ways of doing business.

Sometimes, this will mean re-learning skills that we are in danger of losing. When our farm edges were protected by stone field walls and hedgerows, we provided space for biodiversity, birds and pollinators. But over the last few decades, we have replaced many of these landscape elements. Now we can see that this was not always a good thing.

At other times, we will need the best and most high-tech of solutions. Precision farming tools such as drones, tractors and mobile phone applications can help us be super-efficient in terms of use of resources. This means not only that farmers can use less crop protection and less fertilizer, but that we can target solutions really specifically.

Key words and actions in this context are:

- Creating all kinds of new and strong networks, whether digital or personal
- Allowing flow and access to information
- Adapted working tools: adapt the amount of inputs to the needs of the soil
- Education of farmers and the next generation of farmers: adapt the schooling programmes to continuously changing machines, tools, informatics programmes etc.

We have not been able to address all questions, but we believe that the most important ones have been asked.

Thanks to the speakers, for coming all over Europe to address our European Audience; thank you to our sponsors for supporting the event.

And once more, thank you all for your participations and for a lively discussion this afternoon.