

EUROPEAN AGRI-FOOD SUSTAINABILITY & INNOVATION

PRAGUE CONGRESS CENTRE, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 28-29, 2022



Session Topics

SESSION 1: STRATEGIES OF SECURITY EUROPEAN AGRI-FOOD PRODUCTION

Discuss how we will ensure sustainability of European Agri-Food sector and reach the EGD objectives without compromising food security. Within the session we will also discuss strengthening competitiveness of European agriculture, food production and communication related to new breeding techniques.

SESSION 2: SAFETY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

Discuss aspects of safety of new genomic techniques and their potential role in European food security. Agri-Food sector needs innovative tools for sustainable production.

SESSION 3: CHALLENGES FOR MODERN AGRICULTURE

Discuss the benefits and challenges of innovation in agriculture. The potential of modern agriculture to achieve the EU's objectives e.g. decreasing use of pesticides.

SESSION 4: PANEL DISCUSSION

Exchange views on envisioning the future of European Food and Feed system. The panel assesses where we stand and what obstacles must be overcome to reach the safe and sustainable production.

SESSION 5: CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE

Discuss how to adapt farming to climate change, drought, new pests or viruses etc. What ways or tools we have. Does EU have to choose between agriculture or climate change mitigation?

SESSION 6: PANEL DISCUSSION

Exchange views on impact of climate change on European agriculture and production, drought, sustainability of Agri-Food system, new genomic techniques and innovation.

Monday, November 28, 2022

Time	Programme	Speaker
8.30 – 9.30 Morning	Registration	
9.30 – 9.45 Morning	Welcome and introductory comments	Naděžda Hávová Moderator
	Opening remarks and message from the Czech Presidency of Council of the European Union	Zdeněk Nekula Minister of Agriculture

Session I	Strategies of Security European Agri-Food production	
Time	Programme	Speaker
9.45 – 11.30 Morning	Keynote speeches	Stella Kyriakides Commissioner DG SANTE European Commission Bernhard Url Executive Director European Food Safety Authority EFSA Martin Hlaváček Member of EP European Parliament Maciej Golubiewski Head of cabinet DG AGRI European Commission Michaela Šojdřová Member of EP European Parliament
	Including Q&A	
11.30 – 12.00	Coffee Break	

Session 2	Safety and Sustainable Agri-Food sector	
Time	Programme	Speaker
12.00 – 13.00 Afternoon	<p>New Breeding Techniques: Breeding using Natural Tools</p> <p>EFSA opinions on New Genomic Techniques</p> <p>Unlocking the potential of innovation to strengthen sustainability and resilience of Europe's agri-food sector</p> <p>Including Q&A</p>	<p>Jaroslav Doležel Institute of Experimental Botany of the CAS</p> <p>Ana Afonso European Food Safety Authority</p> <p>Dirk Jacobs FoodDrinkEurope</p>
13.00 – 14.30	Meeting with media Lunch Break	

Session 3	Challenges for Modern Agriculture	
Time	Programme	Speaker
14.30 – 16.00 Afternoon	<p>New genomic techniques - Scientific discovery of the century</p> <p>Detection of products developed by targeted mutagenesis techniques</p> <p>Leading the transition towards a resilient and sustainable agriculture</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>Including Q&A</p>	<p>Aleš Pečinka Institute of Experimental Botany of the CAS</p> <p>Ursula Vincent Joint Research Center of European Commission</p> <p>Olivier de Matos CropLife Europe</p> <p>Sabina Neumann USDA Foreign Agricultural Service</p>
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee Break	

Session 4	Panel Discussion	
Time	Topic	Panelists
16.30 – 17.30 Afternoon	“ Envisioning the Future of European Food and Feed System”	<p>Jiří Lehejček IFOAM Organics Europe and Czech Technology Platform for Organic Agriculture</p> <p>Hagen Duenbostel CEO of KWS Saat</p> <p>Jaroslava Ovesná Crop Research Institute</p> <p>Marek Kumprecht FEFAC; Association for Commodities and Feeds Prague</p>
17.30 – 20.00	Networking dinner	

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Session 5	Climate-Smart Agriculture	
Time	Programme	Speaker
8.30 – 9.00 Morning	Registration	
9.00 – 11.00 Morning	Welcoming	Naděžda Hávová Moderator
	Keynote speech	Jan Doležal President Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic
	Lessons from the field: Which actions to transform agri-food systems towards green are being implementing and how to promote a further uptake of climate resilient practices?	Irene de Tovar Hernández COPA-COGECA
	The Community Plant Variety Rights system: fostering plant innovation and greater sustainability in the European Union	Francesco Mattina Community Plant Variety Office
	How plant breeding innovation can help sustainable food security	Petra Jorasch Euroseeds
	Biotech Tools for Sustainable Agriculture: a U.S. Farmer's Perspective	Mike Paustian Farmer of NGT crops Walcott, Iowa, USA
	Including Q&A	
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee Break	

Session 6	Panel Discussion	
Time	Topic	Panelists
11.30 – 12.30 Afternoon	“Impact of Climate change on European agriculture and production, drought, sustainability of Agri-Food system, new genomic techniques and innovations“	Zdeněk Opatrný Charles University Tiffanie Stephani Yara Europe Mute Schimpf Friends of the Earth International Neal Evans The Voluntary Initiative Emily Negrin, Inari
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch Break	

MODERATOR

Naděžda Hávová



She studied journalism at the University of Prague and regional studies at the University of Regional Development. She has been working as a presenter at Czech Radio for more than twenty years. She edited and read news at the analytical and journalistic station Czech Radio 6 from 2006 to February 2013. From 2008 to 2011, she hosted the news programme „You Say It!“ on the news television station Z1. and „Interwiev Z1“. She worked at Czech Television from 2015 to 2018 in the self promotion department. She has extensive experience in moderating professional events in the field of food and agriculture.

SPEAKERS & PANELISTS

Zdeněk Nekula



Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic

Zdeněk Nekula was born in Znojmo on 9 February 1970.

He studied at the Faculty of Operational Economics at the Agricultural University in Brno, field of operational economics. During work he also studied at the “Savings Academy” in Brno, among other the banking specialist and bank manager courses.

After finishing his university studies, he worked for 8 years at the Česká spořitelna, an insurance company, at its district branch office in Znojmo and Brno, in the senior positions in marketing, business policy and acquisition.

Another 15 years he focused mainly on agricultural finances in Erste Leasing in the positions as head of marketing, head of the South Moravian economic area and head of risk management.

Following this experience, he was Chairman of the Board of Support and guarantee farming and forestry fund, PGRLF for next 3 years. Here he implemented an organisational and personnel transformation of the fund into a financial and service organisation for Czech agriculture and the countryside, with a special focus on strengthening the multiplication effects of financial instruments. At that period, he also represented the Ministry of Agriculture in the supervisory board of the state-owned insurance company Export Guarantee and Insurance Corporation, EGAP.

As a long-time mayor of the Těšetice municipality and keen beekeeper, Zdeněk Nekula (Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party) was putting a lot of effort in cultivating and expanding of public green areas. His life approach towards nature is probably best described by the book *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Jean Giono.

Stella Kyriakides

As European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides has been leading the Commission's work on the public health response to COVID-19.

Commissioner Kyriakides is responsible for a number of initiatives in the area of health aiming to establish a strong European Health Union. These include Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, the implementation of the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy, the proposal for a European Health Data Space and the operationalisation of the EU4Health Programme. She is a strong advocate for mental health.

Commissioner Kyriakides is also responsible for the 'Farm to Fork' strategy for sustainable food, covering every step in the transformation of the food chain from production to consumption. Her responsibilities include animal welfare, food safety and animal health as well as leading the work to protect plant health and reducing dependency on pesticides.

Since February 2022, Commissioner Kyriakides has been at the forefront of EU efforts to support Ukraine and its people in the area of health, including by supporting the protection of the physical and mental health of Ukrainian refugees arriving in Member States.

In 2006-2019, she was elected to the Cyprus Parliament for the Democratic Rally party, of which she was the Vice-President for ten years.

In 2011, she was appointed Head of the Cyprus Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

In 2017, she was elected President of the PACE, the fourth woman to hold this position in the history of the Assembly.

She has been an active advocate on patients rights, and on the rights of cancer patients, founding the first Cypriot breast cancer organisation Europa Donna Cyprus, for which she served as President for over 15 years. She was elected President to the European Breast Cancer Coalition Europa Donna, and served on numerous European patient advocacy and scientific boards.

She is the recipient of numerous awards from her community service in Cyprus and globally.



Bernhard Url

Dr. Bernhard Url was appointed Executive Director of EFSA in June 2014, having served as Acting Executive Director for seven months. His mandate for a second term in office was extended in June 2019 for another 5 years. Dr. Url joined EFSA in June 2012 as Head of the Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance Department. A qualified veterinarian by training, he brings high level management experience from food-safety organisations to his role at EFSA. Prior to joining the Authority, Dr. Url was Managing Director of the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES), which represents Austria on EFSA's Advisory Forum. From 2008 to March 2012, he also served as a member of EFSA's Management Board. During his 10 years at AGES, he was in charge of technical and scientific affairs with a remit that included the timely delivery of risk assessment and risk management services across a wide range of areas. This included ensuring effective risk communications during urgent food safety-related events. Prior to AGES Dr. Url spent five years as an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Milk Hygiene and Milk Technology at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna before running a food quality control laboratory from 1993 to 2002. Dr. Url graduated from the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna in 1987 and became a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1990. He has published in the field of veterinary medicine with a particular focus on listeria and milk hygiene.



Martin Hlaváček



Martin Hlavacek was born on 14 January 1980 in Polička. He graduated at the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, as well as at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including also studies in Universidad de Seville in Spain in 2002. He passed several dedicated trainings and courses in Spain, Belgium, USA and Switzerland. As from 2015 He is member of PhD courses at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague with a focus on international trade. He speaks fluent English, Spanish and French. He is married with two kids.

Maciej Benedykt Golubiewski



Maciej Benedykt Golubiewski (born May 7, 1976) is a Polish political scientist and diplomat. He passed the International Baccalaureate exams at United World College of the Atlantic in Great Britain (1995). He graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude from Washington and Lee University (1999) with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. He later studied political science at Johns Hopkins University (Master of Arts, 2005).

For ten years Golubiewski lived in Washington DC, working in business consulting and cooperating with NGOs, think tanks, and universities, such as Center for Family and Human Rights.[4][5] He was an intern at US Senator Richard Lugar's office. From 2005–2008 he was a PhD student at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Mannheim.

In 2008, he joined the European Commission in Brussels, and in 2011 in the newly established European External Action Service.

EU official at the European External Action Service currently serving as the Head of Cabinet of Commissioner for Agriculture at the European Commission in Brussels. Experience in African and Middle East affairs, US affairs, public and cultural diplomacy, consular affairs. Previously, Consul General of Poland in New York, DCM at the EU Del in Beirut, and at the European Commission (ex-DG Development) in the area of international development promoting regional economic integration of the Horn and East Africa, and EU-Africa trade cooperation (negotiations of EU-Africa Economic Partnership Agreements). Other experience includes academic research and teaching (US and Germany), business/economic consulting and K street/think-tank research in Washington, DC.

Michaela Šojdrová



Michaela Šojdrová is a Czech conservative politician and a Member of the European Parliament (EPP). As a substitute member of the AGRI Committee, she actively participated in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, which will shape the future of the European agriculture until 2027. Her current point of interest lies also in new genomic techniques where she aims to speed up the legislative process and enable EU scientists and farmers to use these breeding methods.

Jaroslav Doležel

Jaroslav Doležel is a senior researcher at the Center for Plant Structural and Functional Genomics of the Institute of Experimental Botany in Olomouc and a professor of molecular biology and genetics at the Palacký University in Olomouc. His research focuses on the organization, function and evolution of plant genomes. Among other, he has developed chromosome genomics methods that facilitate genome sequencing and gene cloning in agricultural crops with complex genomes. J. Doležel published over 350 papers in scientific journals, which were often cited, and edited three books. He is a strong advocate for the transfer of molecular methods into breeding practice and coordinates one of the programs of the Strategy AV21 of the Czech Academy of Sciences "Foods for the Future".

He is a member of the Learned Society of the Czech Republic and received prestigious awards for his scientific achievements, including the National Prize of the Government of the Czech Republic "Czech Mind" - the highest scientific award in the Czech Republic awarded annually to one scientist.

Lecture title: New Breeding Techniques: Breeding using Natural Tools



Ana Afonso

Ana Afonso, is the team leader of the Emerging Risks team at the European Food Safety Authority. Objectives of the Emerging Risks team are to: (i) to carry out activities aiming at identifying, assessing and disseminating information on emerging issues; (ii) ensure coordination with EFSA units, Panels other relevant EU institutions, MS and international organizations (iii) promote the identification of data sources and data collection and /or data generation in prioritized emerging issues and (iv) evaluate the collected information to identify emerging risks in the area of food and feed, animal and plant health. The team is also contact point for the Rapid Alert system for Food and Feed providing scientific and technical assistance and coordinates EFSA urgent response procedures and crisis preparedness.

She is a veterinarian specialized in Aquatic Veterinary studies and joined EFSA in 2006 as a scientific officer for the Animal Health and Welfare Unit. Prior to that she worked as a Veterinary official responsible for approval and inspection of food establishments, as a Veterinary assistant for hygiene and animal health issues on fish farming and as a Research / Lecturer assistant at the Portuguese Veterinary Faculty of Lisbon and Vila Real.



Dirk Jacobs

Dirk Jacobs is Director General of FoodDrinkEurope, the organisation of the European food and drink industry, one of Europe's largest manufacturing sectors in terms of turnover, employment and value added.

Mr Jacobs is a member of various EU platforms and regularly engages in global multilateral bodies such as the United Nations, WTO, FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius, OECD and FAO. He is Chair of a multi-stakeholder Task Force which led the development of an EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices, the first deliverable of the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy.

Mr Jacobs has long-standing professional experience covering various roles in international and EU public/political affairs and strategic communications. Previously, he served as FoodDrinkEurope's Deputy Director General and headed its department for consumer information, nutrition and health.

Mr Jacobs, a Dutch national, holds a Master of Science (MSc) in International Business Administration at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, studied international economics in Milan, Italy, and has obtained a post-graduate MBA degree in European Business studies in Brussels, Belgium.



Aleš Pečinka



Plant geneticist focusing on the analysis of DNA and its regulation in the Centre of Plant Structural and Functional Genomics of the Institute of Experimental Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Olomouc (IEB).

A. Pecinka studied plant taxonomy and ecology at the Palacký University in Olomouc (1996–2001) with a focus on. Performed Ph.D. research at the Leibnitz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research, Gatersleben, Germany, where I studied chromosome organization in plant nuclei and received (2001–2005). Subsequently, worked as a post-doc on plant epigenetic responses to abiotic stress at the Gregor Mendel Institute of Molecular Plant Biology in Vienna, Austria (2006–2010), and as a group leader at the Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research in Cologne, Germany (2010–2017), where he established his independent research on the molecular functions of chromatin and DNA repair. Since 2017, he continues this research at IEB.

Throughout his scientific career, A. Pecinka published over 60 research articles in peer-reviewed journals. He popularizes plant science and new breeding techniques at schools, public debates, and in media.

Ursula Vincent



Dr Ursula VINCENT is an analytical chemist, biochemist and biologist by training. She is a senior scientist at the European Commission with more than 25 years of experience especially in analytical method development and validation. Dr Ursula VINCENT is currently the Head of Unit of the Food and Feed Compliance unit at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and the Director of the three hosted European Union Reference Laboratories (EURL) in particular the EURL for Genetically Modified Food and Feed.

Olivier de Matos



Olivier de Matos is the Director General of CropLife Europe. Prior to CropLife Europe he was the Secretary General at ECETOC, the European Centre for Ecotoxicology and Toxicology of Chemicals, where he spent 4 years leading the association and promoting its scientific programme activities and initiatives. Before that he held various leadership positions at Burson-Marsteller (now BCW) where he worked for more than 15 years.

Sabina Neumann

Sabina Neumann is the Senior Trade Advisor in the Plant Division of the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). She leads FAS efforts to address immediate and long term trade concerns affecting U.S. crop and agri-food exports to the European Union in the context of food safety and sustainability. Ms. Neumann has over twenty-five years' experience working in both the private and public sector on trade policy, trade remedies, and advocacy. She has extensive experience leading multinational teams involved in trade matters before regulatory authorities worldwide. Prior to joining USDA, she served as the Advisor to the Chairman at the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC). While at the USITC, she focused on specialty crop issues and developed a two volume report on the Global Economic Impact of Missing and Low Pesticide Maximum Residue Levels. While working as a Senior Economist at Crowell & Moring LLP, an international law firm, she led trade work in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America.



Jiří Lehejček

Jiří Lehejček, Ph.D. has been involved in the organic agriculture movement since 2014. Since 2016 he is involved in the IFOAM Organics Europe Board (2018–2020) serving also as vice president). He was also Board member of TP Organics– European technology platform and president of Czech technology platform for organic agriculture. Jiří is also university academic–teaching and publishing in the field of sustainability and climate change adaptation.



Hagen Duenbostel

Since 2015, Dr Hagen Duenbostel (born in 1970) has been CEO of the Executive Board and responsible for the following departments: Maize, Corporate Business Development and Communications, and Compliance.KGaA in Einbeck. He set the course for this early in his career: After getting his MBA at the universities of Regensburg and Passau (1995), he obtained his Dr. rer. pol. degree at the University of Göttingen as well as at the Harvard Business School.



Jaroslava Ovesná



Graduated at Charles University in Prague in Biochemistry, PhD in specialized plant production dealing with potato and brassica transformation habilitated in Genetics and molecular biology at Charles University working in Crop Research Institute. Experience from stays at CNRS, Strasbourg Fr., NRC Risoe, Denmark. Author of 155 WoS indexed publications, several books and contributions with EU and national relevance. Coordinator of national and international scientific projects. Expertise in GMO development, detection and safety assessment. Dealing during the career with genomic studies, marker assisted selection of major crops and vegetables. National expert in GMO area, member of ENGL Steering Committee at EU RL JRC EC Ispra, experience from EFSA panel and WGs, Chair of Scientific Committee for GM food and feed established by the Czech Ministry of Agriculture.

Marek Kumprecht



Marek Kumprecht, Master of Animal Science & Animal Nutrition. Active in feed industry since 1992 with main focus on poultry feeding & nutrition. Since 2008 in high management positions – Trouw Nutrition, Agrofert, De Heus. Current position commercial director De Heus (since 2012), Czech business unit responsible for CZ,SK,HU markets with responsibility for sales, marketing and product development.

Since 2001 ambassador SKK (Czech feed and commodity association) at FEFAC (European feed industry association) on different positions, currently the FEFAC Board member.

Jan Doležal



Jan Doležal (36) has been the President of the Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic, the most important domestic agricultural professional organisation, since June 2020. Before that, as Secretary (2017-2020), he represented the organisation at meetings in Brussels, where he was able to draw on his practical experience. He grew up on a family farm and is still involved in its activities today, before obtaining an Ing. degree from the Czech University of Agriculture (Agricultural and Rural Development) and a B.Sc. degree from Masaryk University in Brno (International Relations-European Studies). In his opinion, farmers must build bridges between each other instead of digging ditches. This is even more true of farmers' relations with the general (consumer) public, who need to be listened to while patiently explaining the difference between 'good, gentle and sustainable' and 'ambitious and impossible'. „I believe that farmers' interests need to be protected and cannot simply be excluded from the conversation, especially when the scales of sustainability are tipped to one side. While agriculture has its undeniable environmental scope, it must first and foremost be able to feed society and the farmer himself.“

Irene de Tovar Hernández

Ms. Irene de Tovar is Copa-Cogeca's policy advisor on environment, climate change, and sustainability. She holds an LLM on International and European Trade and Investment, and has complemented her studies with knowledge on environmental and agricultural affairs through à la carte courses in several well-renown institutions. Ms. De Tovar has closely followed the developments of the Commission's agenda since the announcement of the European Green Deal. In particular, initiatives such as the revision of the ESR, LULUCF, IED and the launching of carbon farming. She currently represents the interest of farmers and cooperatives in climate-related dossiers, advising the sector and advocating for their interest in front of the EU institutions.



Francesco Mattina

Francesco Mattina is President of the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) since February 2022. Educated as a lawyer with a degree in law from the University of Parma, Italy, he holds specialisations in European Union Law, from the European College of Parma, Italy, and in Intellectual Property Law, from the University of Alicante, Spain.

Francesco Mattina joined the CPVO in 2013 after a first experience in the EU public sector as a senior legal advisor in industrial property at the European Union Intellectual Property Agency (EUIPO). Since 2013, Francesco Mattina held various management positions at the CPVO.

From 2013 to 2017, he was the Head of the Legal Unit. From 2017 until his current appointment, he was Vice-President of the CPVO. Before joining the EU public sector, he managed contentious disputes in all major areas of intellectual property as an attorney-at-law admitted to practice before Italian national courts and the Court of Justice of the European Union. He served as partner in several national and international law firms based in Italy.



Petra Jorasch

Petra Jorasch holds a PhD in plant molecular biology from the University of Hamburg in 1999.

She is an internationally recognized science and industry advocacy expert with more than 20 years of experience in and a deep knowledge of the relevant policy frameworks for seeds, plant science and breeding, access and use of plant genetic resources as well as relevant intellectual property protection systems.

Petra worked for 13 years in the German seed sector at the interface of science and industry, managing intellectual property rights, public-private partnerships and technology transfer. From 2014–2017 she was Vice Secretary General of the German Plant Breeders' Association (BDP) and its research branch GFPI (German Federation for Plant innovation).

Petra joined Euroseeds in February 2017 as the spokesperson of the EU plant breeding sector on modern plant breeding methods and innovative technologies.



Mike Paustian



Mike Paustian is the sixth generation on his family's farm near Walcott, east-central Iowa. They currently grow corn and soybeans and run a 1,200 sow farrow-to-finish operation, raising pigs from birth to harvest. All of the corn they raise is processed through an on-farm feed mill to feed to pigs. Growing up on the farm, he always had an interest in agriculture, but his path back to joining the farming business included earning advanced degrees and working in microbiology research. He majored in microbiology at Iowa State, then earned a PhD at the University of Minnesota. He returned to Ames, Iowa, for a postdoc project at the USDA National Animal Disease Center and then was hired as a permanent scientist. While leaving his scientific career was a difficult decision, the benefits of working with family and seeing children develop an understanding of agriculture has been the right fit for their farm and family. Innovations in nearly all aspects of raising pigs are allowing him to be more precise, efficient and ensure that pigs are healthy and comfortable. He is excited about a number of technologies under development. Innovations are not only driving improvements for pigs, but also for sustainability of the environment and farms themselves. As past president and active member of Iowa Pork Producers Association, Mike Paustian recognizes the important role that organizations like Iowa Pork and ISU Extension play in the development of new products and technologies and sharing information with farmers.

Zdeněk Opatrný



Professor Zdeněk Opatrný (1941) is one of the founders of the field of biotechnology that can be used in the plant propagation and breeding. He graduated as plant physiologist from the Faculty of Sciences, Charles University, Prague (1963). After it, in the Institute of Experimental Botany, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, he started his that time pioneer studies on the application of *in vitro* techniques for understanding mechanisms of plant morphogenesis. His basic research stepwise focused to various applications in the fields of plant mutagenesis, organogenesis, pollen and somatic embryogenesis and plant somatic hybridization. His laboratory stepwise gained the profile of important methodological center with good international reputation. Thanks to it, he among other participated in the establishment of the first world organization on "plant *in vitro* biotechnologies", denominated as International Association for Plant Tissue Culture (1972).

Simultaneously with the studies on the "whole plant models" he focused his effort to the selection of original plant cell lines, which were later widely used in the investigation of plant hormone metabolism and function. They also proved their application in the studies on stress biology (effect of heavy metals, extreme temperature). He was significantly involved in the preparation and management of the national project called "Cell and gene manipulation of cultural plants for biotechnology in plant production (1986–1991)". In 1988 he accepted the offer of the central Crop Research Institute in Prague to participate in the creation of its Biotechnological Center and after 1990 he became its director. Since that he also accepted the function of National Representative in various European programs, especially European Cooperation in Science and Technology / COST (1992–2014) section for Agriculture Food Science and Biotechnology. During this activity he systematically supported the role of GM crops in modern agriculture.

However, his fondness for teaching and educating new experts eventually brought him back to the university grounds (1996) where he remains to this day as an emeritus professor. He is the author of nearly two hundred professional publications and several monographs. Throughout his life, he also loves the popularization of scientific knowledge for the general public through lectures, seminars, and mass media.

Tiffanie Stephani

Tiffanie Stephani is Vice-President, responsible for European Government Relations and External Communications at Yara Europe (cf. Yara European Footprint | Yara International), the market leader in plant nutrition in Europe. Truly inspired by Yara's vision of a world without hunger and a planet respected, Tiffanie works actively to promote climate-friendly crop nutrition and zero-emission energy solutions such as green ammonia. She joined Yara International - Region Europe in January 2021.

Prior to this, Tiffanie has been working as Senior Agriculture and Environment Manager at Fertilizers Europe, representing the interests of the majority of mineral fertilizer manufacturers in the European Union, between March 2016 and December 2020. She started her career in European Government Relations and in the agriculture sector about 15 years ago as policy officer in the European & environmental affairs department of the German Farmers' Association (Deutscher Bauernverband, DBV) in Brussels. Tiffanie (French native) holds a university degree in political science from "Sciences Po Lille" and a master degree in European public management.



Mute Schimpf

Mute Schimpf, Master of agronomy, work experience for various civil organisations on agricultural trade, biodiversity, food and GMO in Germany and at European level. Since 2010 food campaigner with Friends of the Earth Europe. Board of TP Organics.



Neal Evans

Dr Neal Evans, Operations Director, The Voluntary Initiative

Neal Evans was awarded a BSc in Applied Biology from Liverpool John Moore's University, UK and a PhD in Agriculture from the University of Glasgow, UK. He initially worked in research to understand plant disease epidemiology and to develop disease forecast models. Dr Evans began a postdoctoral position working on Pistachio diseases at UC Davis, USA before returning to the UK to work at Rothamsted Research. He initially spent a number of years developing decision support systems (DSS's) for diseases of oilseed rape (including the use of climate change models to predict future epidemics under climate change scenarios). Later, Neal coordinated the effort of many Rothamsted scientists as a project manager on the EU-funded Network of Excellence ENDURE which aimed to coordinate IPM-based research across Europe. After running his own consultancy for a number of years he joined the VI in 2018. Dr Evans has helped shape the work of the VI so that there is now a strong focus on best practice use of plant protection products (PPP's) and the implementation of integrated pest management (IPM), principally to help protect water and the wider environment.



Emily Negrin



Emily Negrin is Vice President of Corporate Affairs at Inari, the SEEDesign™ company leveraging A.I. and multiplex gene editing technology with plants to meet the food system needs of the future. Her broad food and agriculture experience helps Emily foster relationships with stakeholders across the value chain to bring forward sustainable solutions from Inari. Previous work includes leading global marketing and communications for Geosys and working for the agriculture division of Land O'Lakes. Emily earned her bachelor's degree and business minor from the University of Minnesota.

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