

International Confederation of European Beet Growers

CONFEDERATION INTERNATIONALE
DES BETTERAVIERS EUROPEENS

CONFEDERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE
DEI BIETICOLTORI EUROPEI



INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG
EUROPÄISCHER RÜBENANBAUER

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

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The International Confederation of European Beet Growers (CIBE), representing 440 000 sugar beet growers from 18 Countries and 55% of world beet sugar production, is holding its 42nd Congress in Copenhagen (Denmark) from 16th to 19th June 2009. This event brings together officials, key agricultural and industrial leaders as well as economists, agronomists and scientists from all over Europe. It examines the situation of the world sugar economy and the main economic and political problems currently facing beet agriculture in Europe.

It starts today with an opening address by the President of CIBE and the President of the Danish Beet Growers' Association. The recent drastic reform of the EU sugar beet sector will be discussed in depth with a contribution from the Head of Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Agriculture. The impacts and implications of this reform will be analysed by the representatives of the European sugar beet sector as well by a representative from the ACP countries. New developments, challenges, opportunities and technical improvements in beet cultivation will be also debated. Furthermore the conditions for sustainable beet growing in Europe will be highlighted.

The Congress will end on 19th June with technical visits to the Gissfeld Monastery estate (built in 1575, it includes 3 850 ha of which app. 1 000 ha is arable land), a dairy farm and the Nordic Beet Research centre at Sofiehøj in the centre of the Danish sugar beet area.

The CIBE President, in his closing speech of the three-day conference, will present the resolutions adopted by the CIBE Board of Directors. The highlights of these resolutions with regards to the sugar market and the EU Sugar Reform are:

- The drastic evolution of the European Union position which switched from being the second largest exporter on the sugar world market to being the second largest importer.
- The danger for food security of further concentration of sugar world supply into the hands of Brazil, which accounts for more than 60% of raw sugar world exports.
- The risks of the irreversible character of the measures taken in the context of the process of the gradual liberalisation of world trade.
- The unacceptable proposals currently on the table at the WTO which will lead to unfair competition for growers in Europe and in ACP and LDCs and put the medium-term sustainability and viability of the sector at risk.
- The unacceptable repeated opening up of the European market to duty free imports which will undermine the sustainability of the sugar beet sector.
- The drastic and harmful impacts of the EU sugar reform of which the first step in terms of quota cut has been achieved.

- The severe impact of the drastic price cuts on beet income in the EU and Switzerland and the need for appropriate supporting measures in the form of direct support and rural development support.
- The iniquitous, discriminatory and unfair character of the production charge levied on the sector which must be urgently removed.
- The necessity to respect the terms and the objective of the EU sugar reform in the management of the market.
- The necessity to respect scrupulously the framework conditions for beet supply provided in the Sugar Regulation and in particular the need for balanced rules in the sharing of added value between growers and processors.
- The necessity to modernise the beet reception rules and the need to pay the beet crown for what it is worth.

Moreover CIBE highlights the following statements with regard to society's expectations and the sustainability of sugar beet:

- Beet growing and the sugar industry are key drivers for rural development.
- Sugar beet facilitates the maintenance of biodiversity, contributes to the diversity of the landscape and improves soil fertility.
- Beet growing has considerably reduced its impact on the environment and has improved its already significant positive energy balance and economic competitiveness.
- The development of non-food outlets for sugar beet is indispensable, particularly for the production of bioethanol, biogas, yeasts and chemicals.
- The recent adoption of the EU Climate Energy Package is a positive signal for the development of biofuels.
- Sugar beet contributes positively to the reduction in energy dependence on oil, to a reduction in net GHG emissions and meets the aims of the "EU Climate and Energy Package" objectives, as well as the Kyoto Convention on global warming.
- The limitation and control of ethanol imports are therefore a necessity for EU ethanol production and its sustainability requirements.

This event represents an opportunity for CIBE beet growers to make their voices heard and to assess the contribution of sugar beet cultivation in responding to the emerging challenges of the CAP: climate change mitigation, soil conservation, water management, biodiversity and green energy production.