

Involvement of the scientific *community in national and international networks*



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French Association of Agronomy

The French Association of Agronomy (AFA) was launched in October 2008 with the aim of forming a *bona fide* agronomy-based scientific and technical community to bridge the broad range of occupations and professional commitments of agronomists or anyone interested in agronomy. Individual members are extension agents, farmers, researchers, teachers, engineers in farm supply or processing companies, managers in administrations or associations, etc. Some members operate locally, while others are active nationally or internationally. Some legal entities (research organizations, development structures, educational establishments, private companies) have already become members to provide support for this recent association.

For AFA, the term ‘agronomy’ refers to a clearly delineated scientific and technological discipline, as illustrated by the current definition: “The scientific study of relationships between crops, the environment [considered in terms of its physical, chemical and biological features] and farming techniques.” Agronomy is thus one of the disciplines focused on studying issues concerning agriculture (which is broadly synonymous with agronomy).

Beyond simply being a learned society, AFA wants to primarily serve as a communications platform for agronomists involved in a range of fields, with two main goals:

- to promote the use of agronomic concepts, methods and techniques so as to gain insight into and solve problems related to food, the environment and sustainable development at different scales ranging from the field to the planet
- to facilitate agronomic change by taking new social issues and needs into account, while incorporating new scientific and technological knowledge, and adapting to changes in agronomic expertise.

AFA is involved in a range of projects:

- Five working groups are managed with the aim of promoting applicable production so that agronomy and agronomists will be more present in society. These working groups are as follows: Agronomic change and prospects; Exploitation and transfer of agronomic expertise; Agronomy and partner disciplines; Agronomy and the political and socioeconomic setting: what is the policymaking role of agronomists?; Young agronomists in AFA.
- Coordination of a biennial event (September of odd-numbered years), ‘*Les Entretiens du Pradel*’, held at the historic *Domaine d’Olivier de Serres* (Ardèche region, France), to discuss agronomic prospects between agronomists in research, development and training, in the presence of civil society stakeholders.
- The dissemination of information and knowledge to agronomists and non-agronomists via different media (website, projected online newsletter

Contacts

French Association of Agronomy (AFA)

250 members

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'Agronomy, Environment and Societies', different documents, etc.).

■ Participation in jointly organized events (conferences, symposia, seminars, etc.) with partners (research organizations, professional organizations and associations, etc.) and meetings on topics of mutual interest.

The French Association of Agronomy is a partner of the European Society for Agronomy (ESA).



European Society for Agronomy

The European Society for Agronomy (ESA) was launched in 1990, with four main objectives:

- to promote agronomic research in Europe
- to link stakeholders interested in agronomic research and development
- to promote information dissemination through tools such as the European Journal of Agronomy, a newsletter and the ESA website
- to cooperate with organizations with similar aims in Europe and worldwide.

ESA aims to bring together agronomists, researchers and teachers concerned about basic and

applied research, including those in the following fields: relationships between crops, soils, pests and diseases, climates and cropping practices, relationships between agriculture and the environment. It is a forum for scientists and users of research results wishing to share information and experience and develop collaboration projects.

ESA has three scientific divisions:

- D1. Plant systems biology: integrated functioning of crops
- D2. Field-scale agroecology: the crop field as an ecosystem
- D3. Cropping systems at farm, regional and global scales: a multiscale approach to cropping systems.

ESA has national representatives in around 20 European countries and collaborates with national societies of agronomy (Germany, Italy and France), and American and Australian societies of agronomy.

Every 2 years, ESA organizes a scientific conference (2010 in Montpellier, France; 2012 in Finland). Between conferences, it jointly organizes thematic symposia with several scientific societies, especially the Farming System Design Symposium (2011 in Brisbane, Australia).

The European Journal of Agronomy, which is published by Elsevier Science, was launched in 1992, and its scientific committee is made up of

ESA members. It is now the leading journal in the field of agronomy, and has a high impact factor (2.376 in 2008).

The ESA Newsletter is published twice yearly to convey information to ESA members and partners. ■