



## Opening conference

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014, Corum (Pasteur meeting room), Montpellier, 19h30

# 'Family agriculture, a credible option given the challenges the planet faces?'

To open the 'Family farming and research' International Encounters and raise awareness among the general public, a conference and debate have been organised for the evening of June 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. The objective is to set out the agricultural issues and challenges that must be faced in the coming decades to improve the production and living conditions of farmers.

### Opening talk by Hans Rudolf Herren: 'What research for what agriculture?'

**Hans Herren is an entomologist and farmer, but also an internationally acclaimed specialist in agricultural and rural development issues.**

He is president of the Washington-based *Millennium Institute* and founder and president of the Swiss Biovision Foundation. He was the second Director General of ICIPE (International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology) and was co-chair of the International Assessment on Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD).

His thinking has strongly influenced awareness of the urgent need to break away from dominant agricultural models. His work is part of the recent reorientation towards innovations which are more respectful of people and their natural environments and provides essential input to research for sustainable agriculture.

Hans Herren has received two prestigious international awards, the World Food Prize<sup>1</sup> in 1995 and the Right Livelihood Award<sup>2</sup> in 2013.

In this introductory lecture, he will share his vision of possible future agricultural models and the role family farms could play. What are the limitations and risks of uncontrolled agricultural intensification? Which agricultural models should be defended? What societal projects are required? What research needs to be fostered for this future scenario?

1

The World Food Prize is the most prestigious international award given to individuals whose efforts have led to progress in human development through a considerable improvement in the quality, quantity and availability of food in the world. Several heads of state have also called it the 'Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture.'

2 Commonly known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize', it rewards people or associations who work on or search for practical and exemplary solutions to the most urgent challenges facing the world today. A jury awards the prize in fields such as environmental protection, human rights, sustainable development, health, education, and peace.

## 20h15. Round table: A credible option? For everyone? Everywhere? Different perspectives

The representations that we create of our world depend on the location in which they are derived. Six people, chosen for the diversity of their geographical origins and the 'communities' to which they belong, react to Hans Herren's vision and tell us what, for them, is at the heart of the debate on family farming. The round table will also display the diversity of approaches to family farming and expectations of research according to the field in which we are involved: campaigning, advocacy, knowledge production and political action.

**Fatma Ben Rejeb** is Tunisian. She is Director of the Union Maghrébine des Agriculteurs (UMAGRI, Maghreb farmers' union), an institution which brings together national farmers' organisations from Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia. She is very active in the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF), and will share the ambitions and demands of her organisation's members in the particular context of today's Maghreb, which is undergoing societal changes that also raise questions about its agriculture and future. More broadly, she will be a spokesperson for farmers and the work of the national IYFF committees in what they hope will be a pivotal year.

**Kees Blokland** is Dutch. He is Director of Agriterra, a non-governmental agricultural organisation based on a powerful platform created by four organisations of producers, rural women and cooperative firms in the Netherlands. Agriterra is a founding member of AgriCord, the alliance of agri-agencies whose Vice President is Kees Blokland. Agriterra works with nearly 80 rural organisations and cooperatives in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe, supporting agricultural development projects and promoting entreprising mind and investment projects within these organisations and its member organisations. Kees Blokland will give his views on family farming and the issues surrounding appropriate research to support it through his experience of decentralised cooperation from the North to the South. Economic development, rural employment and the importance of investment in small and medium-sized farms will be at the heart of his argument.

**Maryam Rahmanian** is Iranian. She works with farmers in her native country on the introduction of a national initiative for participatory plant breeding. Associated with the Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment, an Iranian NGO, since 2001, she was also Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Commission on Environmental Economics and Social Policy. Active in national, regional and global civil society networks focusing on issues relating to research, food sovereignty, food and agricultural governance, biodiversity and sustainable pastoralism, Maryam Rahmanian is the Vice-President of the first steering committee of the Committee on World Food Security's High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. She will respond to Hans Herren's talk based on her experiences in these organisations and her knowledge of the role of NGOs in international approaches. She will focus on the mechanisms for translating the campaigns of family farming activists into public policy.

**Patrick Caron** is French. He is Director General in charge of Research and Strategy at CIRAD. Patrick Caron holds doctorates in both veterinary science and geography. His overseas career took him to Brazil and Botswana. A specialist in family farming, farming and livestock systems and regional development, he coordinated numerous scientific projects. He was Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs at CIRAD's TERA department (Territories, Environment and Actors) and Scientific Director of the ES department (Environments and Societies).

He will share his knowledge on international research agendas for agricultural and rural development. What role does family farming have and what are the prospects and potential impact of the IYFF on these agendas? Who are the actors that drive the construction of these agendas and set the broad outlines? What are the main actors? How do we develop global strategic intelligence to identify research priorities and facilitate collaborations between converging research institutions to address these shared challenges?

**Ibrahim Alassane Mayaki** is Nigerien. He was Prime Minister of Niger from 1997 to 2000, and directed the Rural Hub from 2004 to 2009. He is now Chief Executive Officer of the planning and coordination agency New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), based in South Africa. Both organisations owe much to his commitment and not only his thinking on political action, but also on alternative strategies. This approach is characterised by the ambition to create links between research, development and public policy, making it possible to take an original approach to examining the future of African agriculture, particularly in its familial forms.

**Caio Galvão de França** is Brazilian, an expert in sociology. A specialist in international affairs at Brazil's Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) where he had previously served as Director of the NEAD research centre and as head of the minister's staff. A recognised specialist in family agriculture, land issues and public policies to foster it with the goal of regional development, he has written extensively on the 'zero hunger', characterisation of family farming and 'territories of citizenship' programmes which serve as benchmarks in the fight against hunger and poverty. He is currently Brazil's coordinator for the International Year of Family Farming and Mercosur coordinator for the Specialised Meeting on family farming. Caio Galvão França will share, from the point of view of the policy maker, the genesis of public action in favour of family farming in Brazil and surrounding area. He will also describe the specifics of this particular national situation, the successes but also the questions raised by the Brazilian experience, which serves not only as a reference but also generates debate.

#### **21h15. Discussions with the floor: And you? What do you think?**

The evening will be hosted and moderated by **Damien Conaré**, Secretary General of the UNESCO World Food Chair in Montpellier.

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