



## **FFA 2009 urges world leaders to address the challenge of food and environmental security in the face of the financial crisis**

Brussels, 17 March 2009

The lack of food and environmental security represents one of the greatest threats to global political and economic stability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The key to unlocking this challenge lies in finding ways to sustainably increase the amount we produce from existing agricultural land. The European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta today opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA 2009). In the opening session renowned speakers such as Paul Krugman, Professor of Economics & International Affairs at Princeton University, Franz Fischler, Former EU Commissioner and Chair of the FFA 2009 and John Atkin, Chief Operating Officer Crop Protection at Syngenta, discussed the Forum's theme "The Global Financial and Economic Crisis: the challenge of financing and governing food and environmental security". The Forum urges EU and World leaders to reinforce their commitments to meeting the food and environmental security challenge in the face of the economic downturn. In particular, the Forum speakers warn that the underlying structural challenges of the food crisis remain.

With the number of people around the world suffering from hunger expected to reach nearly one billion by the end of this year, there is a continued urgency and moral imperative for tackling the problem. In the future, demand side pressures on agriculture will increase due to a rising population and an increased shift to protein and calorie rich diets. At the same time, the pressure on agriculture's ability to produce what we demand is also growing, due to limited farm land, water scarcity, soil erosion, and the challenge of preserving biodiversity. In addition, the threats posed by climate change, such as drought, could see the yields of major crops in Africa, Asia and Latin America fall by 20-40%.

The key to unlocking the food and environmental security challenge therefore lies in finding ways to sustainably increase the amount we produce from existing agricultural land. To do this, the right legislative framework for agriculture needs to be set that enables farmers to maximize the productive potential of the land they work, while at the same time optimizing the efficiency with which they use natural resources such as soil and water. It also means ensuring that the approach to the global governance of food supply is right; and that more funding is directed toward the research and development of technologies that can sustainably produce the required amounts of high quality, safe, affordable food.

Franz Fischler, Chair of the FFA 2009 said: "We face a future of food scarcity, with high, albeit volatile prices. This is aggravated by managed trade, lack of finance and environmental degradation. The market has lost its magic. Deregulation has backfired. Regulation has been

rehabilitated. Non-trade distorting farm subsidies will have to stay, not just in Europe, but world-wide, if food scarcity is not to worsen. Southern hemisphere countries will have to introduce land reforms allowing the poor to accede to the land and adopt more appropriate food pricing policies. But this may not suffice. If there is going to be enough food at affordable prices for everybody, we may also have to change our food habits, not to say our life-styles.”

John Atkin, Chief Operating Officer Crop Protection at Syngenta pointed out the importance of technology: “Achieving food and environmental security is as relevant for Europe as it is for Asia and Africa. Farmers must have access to a full range of innovative technologies and farming practices to maximize yield and quality of their crops and to optimize the use of natural resources. We need to increase productivity from existing land. There is little scope for expanding cultivated land without damaging natural habitat. Europe’s political decision makers need to recognize this quickly, or they risk undermining the continent’s ability to sustainably increase production at this critical time. ”

Thierry de l'Escaille, Secretary General of ELO added: “The dual challenges of increasing food production - to help feed the extra three billion people by 2050 - whilst protecting and enhancing the environment have been placed at the door of Europe’s farmers and landowners. Rich soil and sufficient water are the two critical elements that Europe’s farmers have, in the past, been blessed with but that are now in ever shorter supply. A positive response will require access to the rights tools, effective policy and intelligent management.”

Further in depth discussions with experts will take place during a number of panel sessions on 18 March 2009 at Bibliothèque Solvay.

### **About FFA**

The annual Forum is an initiative of the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO) and Syngenta. It brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to catalyze thinking on the way European agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges that it faces in delivering food and environmental security. The Forum has been created in 2008 in response to a belief that many EU policies impacting on agriculture are focused on solving yesterday’s problems, such as overproduction, and do not deal with the new challenges and market opportunities. Challenges include feeding a growing world population, demand for a higher quality diet, increased demand for renewable sources of energy and changing weather patterns. With limited arable land available, there is a need to sustainably maximize production from that already under cultivation.

### **About ELO**

The European Landowners’ Organization (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 27 EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit making, ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. ELO aims at promoting a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels. Information can be found on [www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org).



### **About Syngenta**

Syngenta is one of the world's leading companies with more than 24,000 employees in over 90 countries dedicated to our purpose: Bringing plant potential to life. Through world-class science, global reach and commitment to our customers we help to increase crop productivity, protect the environment and improve health and quality of life. For more information about us please go to [www.syngenta.com](http://www.syngenta.com).

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