

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS PESTICIDES MRLS WORKSHOP**

- I would like to start by thanking all speakers, panelists and the organizers of this event for a highly stimulating discussion.
- I will not try to summarize all that has been said today because I don't think I will be doing justice to the richness of the discussion but I will aim nevertheless to leave you with a few key messages derived from what we've heard today.
- My name is Marta Zuluaga Zilbermann, I work for Cargill and we are members of FEDIOL, COCERAL, FEFAC who were your hosts today.
- Food and agriculture is a global businesses. The commodity grain system is designed to efficiently move food around the globe.
- The ability to trade with each other in different geographies and allow food to move to where it is needed, when it is needed is of the essence in order to continue feeding a growing global population and providing economic opportunities in both rural and urban communities while taking care of our environment.
- While our sectors continue maximizing origination potential from EU agriculture, we are deficit in a series of agriculture commodities that we need to continue to import. Namely we import today, 26 MT of corn, vs a production of 61M; and about 30mt of soybean meal equivalent in order to fulfil our demand for protein rich feed. We also heard today that while the EU is important in terms of world trade it is not a leading market for most imported products...
- To accomplish this function of meeting supply & demand we need access to an open and predictable trading system that connects all members of the world community.
- Societal expectations regarding public health, environmental protection and policy making are rapidly changing and our sectors, also recognize the

legitimate public demand for different environmental, safety and quality parameters. We are here to also support the EU in responding to those challenges.

- However, referring to the topic of today's discussion, in doing so, one must remember that:
  - Divergent use of pesticides and the setting of different maximum residue levels, affects global food trade and are **becoming a major Non-Tariff Barrier** which affects producers, exporters, importer, processors and consumers. It has an overall impact on food access and food security.
  - In this respect, EU authorities and trading partners should engage in working towards **harmonized standards** for MRLs
  - When this proves difficult or not possible, EU legislation needs to provide **predictability** and **sufficient lead-in time** for the supply chain partners, from farmers to processors, to adapt to the changed environment.
  
- As sectors we are taking extreme care in ensuring that the products entering the supply chain are respecting EU legislation on Plant Protection Products and continuously discussing and sharing information with our counterparts in exporting geographies but this is becoming more and more complex to manage hence the need to **encourage pragmatic solutions** that would be conducive to trade to continue without disruptions and avoid shortage of access to raw materials and unintended crisis.
  
- As the global trade of commodities increases, the importance of standard setting bodies also increases. We believe that SPS/WTO principles should be at all times respected and for instance MRLs based on existing Import Tolerances/Codex **should not be automatically withdrawn** following the non-renewal of cut off active substances.
  
- In any case **suitable transitional periods** should be granted in order to allow operators to adapt.

*SPEECH – Concluding Remarks*

*Marta Zuluaga Zilbermann*

*Pesticide Residues Seminar, Brussels, November 12, 2019*

- We also call for efforts to be stepped up in order to ensure that the European farmers have the **tools at their disposal** in order to mitigate the impact of reduced number of active substances to fight pests.
  
- Just to conclude, international dialogue and cooperation both between the private sector and public authorities are exceptionally valuable as they allow us to both highlight problems, get to better understand best practices as well as to identify the challenges and opportunities ahead.
  
- We are again very grateful to all our panelists today for the insight and great engagement in this important discussion.
  
- I think the broad representation here today from DG SANTE, CREA, ECPA USSEC, Argentinean Mission, BfR, FAVV and of course our member companies and representatives of our associations proves that this is a topic which needs the voices of all to be heard.
  
- And now, for those of you who can stay, I would like to welcome you for a networking coffee and please do not forget to hand out your badges as you leave the room. Thank you.