



European Association representing the trade in cereals, rice, feedstuffs, oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply
Comité du commerce des céréales, aliments du bétail, oléagineux, huile d'olive, huiles et graisses et agrofournitures

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COCERAL STATEMENT

Plant Breeding Innovation *The trade perspectives*

The value of trade in the supply chain

Trade plays a crucial role on the market, connecting producers to consumers, through distribution of capacities and services, helping farmers to have access to regional and global markets. A stable grain trade, underpinned by fungibility¹ of supply, plays a major role in feeding the world's growing population, moving goods from areas of surplus into areas of deficit and providing global food security.

Grains, oilseeds and agri-bulks have been traded in large volumes for centuries. Today, the international grain trade is well developed and highly globalized, using sophisticated infrastructure to provide safe, high volume, low cost, timely, predictable, responsive, resilient and fungible supply. The role of agri-bulks in global trade is expanding and increasingly complex, with interchangeability of transportation, handling and infrastructure. Governments must appreciate the grain trade is a key economic driver and a crucial component of world food security.

Trade and Plant Breeding Innovation (PBI)

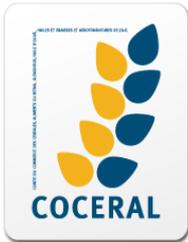
Thanks to scientific developments, plant breeding techniques are rapidly evolving. Plant Breeding Innovation techniques (PBIs) allow for faster and more precise results, in a continuum span. Plant breeding innovation could make an important positive contribution in overcoming societal challenges such as the need to produce more food, using less resources². Innovative tools must be accessible to farmers and producers at a level playing field;

The EU traders in agricultural commodities intend to contribute to the current debate on PBIs by sharing its preliminary reflections and views on the following leading principles:

1. Legal certainty and regulatory coherence
2. Support and promote access to innovation
3. Safety of products
4. Education and risk communication

¹ Fungibility: the supply of a given crop has a degree of substitutability and relatively comparable value, regardless of the geographic production area from which it originates.

² PBIs also allows creations of varieties more resistant to diseases or pests or requiring lower uses of plant protection products or other agricultural intrants.



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More in details:

1. Legal certainty and regulatory coherence

Legal certainty across Europe and regulatory coherence with the rest of the world are of paramount importance to enable trade to continue efficiently, without facing hurdles. The principle is valuable and does necessitate the highest attention both from an EU internal and international market perspective. National authorities across the globe are gradually taking their stance in relation to PBIs, including their scientific and regulatory classification. **A certain lack of compatibility among trading partners can already be preliminary observed, posing trade concerns due to the intrinsic characteristics of the bulk commodities way of operating.** Indeed, the trade in grains and oilseeds is tied inextricably to global sourcing to achieve a sustainable supply of these basic commodities. Any policy approach adopted in the EU should support least trade-distortive commercial and public measures for both imports into and exports from the European Union and provide for adequate fungibility throughout the supply chain, which is a critical component of agricultural commodities trading.

COCERAL supports a regulatory approach that not only fosters continued innovation, but is comparable, compatible, and recognized as acceptable by government authorities in key import and export markets to **minimize or avert the risk of costly market and trade disruptions that undermine the competitiveness of the European agriculture.**

2. Support and promote access to innovation

The adoption of safe cropping technologies and practices, such as plant breeding methods, enhance the production of safe, affordable and sustainable products. Innovative tools must be accessible to farmers and producers at a level playing field;

Innovation in agriculture must be supported and promoted as a mean for bolstering growth and development along the food and feed supply chain.

3. Safety of products

Any plant variety derived from the introduction and use of PBIs placed on the EU market must be safe and must not pose risks to human and animal health or to the environment. The safety of plants obtained through the application of PBIs must be ensured³.

Regulatory approval procedures should be limited to cases where **health concerns at stake are high enough to require prior scrutiny by a food safety agency.**

³ The level of safety consultation and risk-assessment that may be appropriate for a given enhanced trait should be based upon the characteristics of the resulting product, rather than on the technique used to develop the plant; and should be proportional to the degree of risk, if any, posed by the characteristics of the end-product.



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4. Education and risk communication:

Education and a sound **risk communication** are needed to inform the public of the benefits and risks, if any, of modern plant breeding techniques. This communication is **essential to gain consumer acceptance and trust**, which is a fundamental requirement to **ensure access to the market**.

The plant breeding sector is encouraged to lead industry efforts to establish public confidence.

COCERAL is the European association of trade in cereals, rice, feedstuffs oilseeds, olive oil, oils and fats and agrosupply. It represents the interest of the European collectors, traders, importers, exporters and port silo storekeepers of the above mentioned agricultural products. **COCERAL's** full members are 21 national associations in 15 countries and 1 European association [Unistock]. With about 3500 companies as part of **COCERAL** national members, the sector trades agricultural raw materials destined to the supply of the food and feed chains, as well as for technical and energy uses. **COCERAL** has 1 associated member in Switzerland and 2 European Associations (**EUROMALT** and **EUROMAISIER**s). Gafta is an extraordinary member of **COCERAL**.