

Fast Forward - meeting abstracts

Forty years of 'Gewasbescherming'

Where are we now and where are we heading for?

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The national journal 'Gewasbescherming', issued by the Royal Netherlands Society of Plant Pathology (KNPV), has its fortieth anniversary this year. The journal's and the Society's mission is to build bridges between crop protection research, extension, application and practice, education and policy making. The spring symposium is organized to celebrate the fortieth volume of the Society's newsletter. During the morning, a plenary session is planned that will briefly mention important developments that have taken place during the past four decades. Forty years ago, the discussion on the continuation of the central role of chemical compounds in crop protection had only just begun. Today the regulation of these compounds at national level and within the context of the EU is still creating a lively debate. Does it offer farmers and industry enough opportunities to survive and are environmental values and food safety sufficiently secured? Organic agriculture took off as an alternative. Still some persistent pests are causing major problems. Are sufficient alternatives available

for safeguarding the survival of some important crops in organic crop rotations? Integrated crop protection was developed as the 'polder'-variant and an attempt to combine the best of both worlds. But is there clear consensus on the role of chemistry in this approach? Should it be used for early pest suppression or only as a last resort when all other measures have failed. Resistance breeding has always been important, but clearly received a new impulse through the options offered through genetic modification. Large scale application of these modern technologies is still hindered by concerns raised by society. Are these justified? Or perhaps more importantly, can these worries be dismantled? These examples illustrate the need to build bridges between the various stakeholders in the crop protection arena and clearly justify the existence of Gewasbescherming for many more years to come. Today's symposium will not only inform on what was going on, but more importantly invites to discuss on: Where are we now and where are we heading for?

Keynotes

Bringing plant potential to life in a changing world

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The growing and increasing affluent world population, diets changing by increasing wealth, and the issue of food versus fuel argues for greater productivity to meet the needs. The resources

available for crop production continue to be under pressure. The amount of farmland will reduce and water is becoming scarce in many parts of the world.

Production will have to double to meet the future demands. We can only grow more food from less land by providing farmers with innovative technologies and the knowledge to use land and water more efficiently and to conserve biodiversity. Agri-technology investing in seed and crop protection can bring this plant potential to life. Regulation that is not science-based will stifle innovation and limit the ability of farmers to grow more food with limited natural resources. We believe that in partnership with farmers, government and other stakeholders we can unlock the boundless potential of plants.

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