

WORLD FOOD DAY 2019

SEED CHOICE TO SUPPORT FARMERS IN CLOSING THE FOOD GAP

Producing more food with less resources and in a sustainable manner is the foremost challenge on agriculture today. In order to boost farmer productivity to achieve the level of food production needed to feed 10 billion people by 2050, it is critical to provide farmers with informed seed choices and access to quality seeds.

The World Food Day, celebrated today internationally, brings into focus the need to produce 60% more food over this time period to accommodate our rising population, even as climate change continues to put pressure on production.

“We need to fill the shortfall between the amount of food we produce today and the amount needed to feed everyone within the next 30 years. Farmers face the extraordinary challenge of growing more food as even climate change makes it more difficult. We can help the world’s farmers to meet that challenge by providing access to varieties of their choice and allowing them to benefit from plant breeding innovation,” said Michael Keller, Secretary General of the International Seed Federation.

The World Food Day theme “Healthy Diets for a Zero Hunger World” acknowledges the role that farmers have in influencing the variety of food available by diversifying production and adopting sustainable agricultural methods to preserve natural resources, while also increasing productivity. Tomorrow (October 17), ISF joins the World Farmers Organisation (WFO) at the 46th session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS 46) to discuss farmer-centered innovation in boosting food systems worldwide.

The need for adaptation in agriculture

Last month, world leaders at the 14th Conference of Parties (CoP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) affirmed the urgent need to avert land degradation and improve agricultural productivity to meet the present and future demand for food. A [report by the Global Commission on Adaptation](#) said that climate change is already making food insecurity worse, and that without adaptation, it could diminish global agriculture yields up to 30 percent by 2050, which would affect 500 million smallholders and further widen the food gap.

With seed as the starting point of food production, the availability and quality of seeds – as well as farmers’ ability to make informed seed choices – can make a huge difference. The ISF paper [“Supporting seed choice for farmers”](#) posits that farmers should have the opportunity to make informed choices about which seeds they plant to best suit their personal circumstances. In addition to seed choice, the [ISF position on Sustainable Agriculture](#) further outlines the need to conserve and better manage soil and water resources, adopt integrated nutrient management approaches, and embrace integrated pest management in order to increase agricultural productivity per farmer and per unit of land and water.

The need for adaptation in agriculture highlights the role of plant breeding innovation in transforming farming systems to be more resilient and productive. The private seed sector supports farmers by investing in research and development (R&D), developing varieties that can withstand climate stresses like increasing heat, drought and plant diseases.

“We need more resource-efficient farming systems to feed our growing population, and plant breeding innovations can make food production more efficient. The seed sector is working constantly to provide farmers with solutions that will enable them to respond to climate challenges,” said Keller. “To continue doing so, the seed sector needs to operate in a regulatory environment that fosters innovation. This will allow us to sustain the delivery of improved seeds that will help farmers adapt to climate change. ISF is constantly engaging with industry, farmers, and government to ensure alignment of global policies.” #

Contact

FRANCINE SAYOC
Communications Manager, ISF

+41 22 365 44 20
+41 22 365 44 21
f.sayoc@worldseed.org

About ISF

ISF is the voice of the global seed industry. It has represented the interests of its members since 1924, and represents 96% of the international seed trade today. With a global reach extending to members around the world and official observer status in intergovernmental and international organizations, ISF is uniquely positioned to assist in the development of government policy and business strategy.

www.worldseed.org

