

ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michael Keller Elected Chair of the International Agri-Food Network

Rome, 15 June 2022: Michael Keller, Secretary General of the International Seed Federation, has been elected Chair of the International Agri-Food Network (IAFN). The IAFN works on a wide variety of issues relating to agriculture, food, and nutrition, with a particular focus on advancing the work on sustainable agriculture for food security and nutrition, the ongoing challenges of climate change and working with other partners on food systems approaches. Keller will lead the IAFN for the next two years in bringing together 19 international agriculture, farmer, and food associations that represent over 10,000 businesses worldwide in 135 countries.

The International Agri-Food Network is also the elected focal point for the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). “Right now, we are negotiating voluntary guidelines on gender and important policy recommendations on youth. Both these topics are vital to equity and inclusion and will shape the future of the food sector as we must recruit new generations to the business of farming and feeding people,” states Keller.

“In reality, this couldn’t come at a more important time,” says Keller. “As the UN Secretary General reported last week, we are facing several unprecedented crises with rising food costs, difficulties in accessing key inputs and resources, and supply chain disruptions affecting every aspect of the food system. In the face of these challenges, the private sector is working hard to increase efficiency, improve nutrition, and close the growing gaps in our ability to supply food.” The PSM is also part of the Global Crisis Response Group at the UN providing information from its networks to the UN’s early warning system.

“In the face of these multiple crises, it is more important than ever to innovate in the face to climate change and other shocks like the pandemic,” said Keller. “Coming from the seed sector, we know how important new innovations like drought-tolerant crops are. We are pleased to see FAO discussing a science and innovation policy this week, and the leadership of Director General Dongyu QU and Chief Scientist Dr. Ismahane Elouafi on using new technologies and analysis tools to help us respond to global challenges,” states Keller.

Keller added how innovation and creative responses are occurring throughout the agri-food value chain. “I want to thank Rick White of the Canadian Canola Growers Association as outgoing chair for bringing the voice of farmers to the FAO, CFS, and Food Systems Summit.” Past chairs of IAFN and PSM include: Donald Moore of the Global Dairy Platform, Jaine Chisholm-Caunt of the Grain and Feed Trade Association (GAFTA), the late Hakan Bahceci of the Global Pulse Confederation, and Charlotte Hebebrand then of the International Fertilizer Association. The collaboration of so many parts of the value chain has been invaluable.

Biography – Michael Keller



Michael Keller was appointed Secretary General of the International Seed Federation in June 2014.

Michael, a German national, lived and worked in Paris for 18 years before relocating to Switzerland to join the ISF in Nyon.

After graduating from the University of Mannheim and University of Bonn where he completed a Law State examination, Michael pursued post-graduate studies at the Paris-Sorbonne University.

In 1999 Michael joined the French Senate in Paris as a Parliamentary Advisor and moved to the Mayor's Association of France where, as Head of European and International Affairs, he represented his constituents' interests at European level.

Between 2008 and 2014 Michael held the post of Director of Regulatory and Public Affairs at DuPont Pioneer in France. During the same period Michael was a member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee at the Union Française des Semenciers (UFS) and Chairman of the UFS Regulation and Innovation Commission.

About the International Agri-Food Network (IAFN): Created in 1996, the International Agri-Food Network is an informal coalition of international trade associations involved in the agri-food sector at the global level. The network facilitates informal liaison among agri-food organizations at the global level.

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About the International Seed Federation: ISF is the voice of the global seed sector. Since 1924, it has represented the interests of its members who make up 96% of international seed trade today. Its global reach extends to seed associations and seed companies around the world and it has official observer status in key intergovernmental and international organizations.

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