



World Association of
Beet and Cane Growers



NEWS FROM WABCG

EDITORIAL

We have had some quite challenging steps over the past years, haven't we?

Covid, war in Ukraine, the crisis in energy and fertilizers... I could make a long list! The newspapers are full



of bad news, and one may even hesitate to wish people a 'Happy New Year'!

But this period of the year is a blessing: it allows us to hope that things will improve and wish for happiness around us.

In our sector, we have reason to be optimistic! The year has begun quite well for us in terms of sugar value; we are entering 2023 at a level that is twice as high as that of three years ago.

So let us wish each other a 'Happy New Year' with conviction! Because we growers know that in everyday life, we need hope and confidence to go on. We have learned to be broad-minded enough not to hear just the bad news, and the good news around us must encourage us to invest for the coming seasons. Because whatever the situation, we plant, we tend, and we harvest!

So, my wishes for the coming year are for the world to hope, over and again, that the future will be better!

I wish you all, dear colleagues, a very happy 2023... and I look forward to seeing you in Colombia!

**David Thompson, President
WABCG**

JANUARY 2023

Happy new year!



See you in 2023

*Cali (Colombia): 13-16 June
London (United Kingdom): 20 November*



NEWS FROM FRANCE

Our sugar beet campaign is now coming to its end. Slightly less than 400,000 hectares have been harvested, at an average yield around 80 tonnes per hectare (11.7 t of sugar per hectare), which is below our 5 year-average yield due to the historical drought we experienced last summer.

The rise in sugar prices within Europe (+36% within a year), due to the reduction in sugar beet area together with the rise in world sugar and energy prices, allowed sugar beet to be paid around 40 €/t this year: an increase of 30% compared to the previous campaign.

Thus, despite the disappointing yield, the latest campaign was the first one able to give growers a margin since the end of quota regime in Europe, in October 2017. This was challenging: the consequences of the war in Ukraine are enormous in our sector. Fuel prices have doubled, gas prices have increased by 6 and fertilizer costs by 3. We estimate that our sugar beet production costs will have increased by 35% between 2020 and the campaign that will be begin with next Spring's sowing.

Better prices allow growers to be more optimistic about sugar beet but we nevertheless still estimate that our acreage in France will decrease next year. This can be explained by several factors.

Let's begin with the new CAP in Europe, implemented since the beginning of this new year. To keep the same level of support, French farmers will have to increase their crop diversification. In areas where growers have an important acreage of sugar beet on their farm, this point is fundamental. Indeed, the derogation to use neonicotinoid seed treatments that France has had since 2021, implies that we are not allowed to sow flowering crops (leguminous or rape-seed for instance) the following years. With the new CAP, growers who were impacted by the dramatic yellows virus in 2020 can't afford to take the risk of growing sugar beet without neonicotinoids but, at the same time, must keep their field able to receive flowering crops in the future! This point is very puzzling to growers, who are working hard to be able to establish a proper crop rotation on their farm!

Because the impact of yellows virus in 2020, when France lost 30% of its sugar beet production, is still in everyone's mind. We are fighting to obtain a new derogation in 2023, without stricter conditions than last year.

After the crisis in 2020, on our demand, our government launched a 3-year National Plan for Research and Innovation (PNRI) that brings together all the stakeholders of the sector, through twenty-three projects to prepare us for 2024, when derogation is not yet envisaged in the law. We have one year to follow up the results and measure whether they are sufficiently efficient to avoid us having to ask for a prolongation in derogation.

We know perfectly well that this environmental challenge is one of the first we will have to fight in the coming years, with the implementation of the Green Deal in Europe. The new CAP already fulfils part of the Green Deal ambition, and the coming months will emphasize this movement, with regulations on the use of plant protection products that are especially challenging for sugar beet growing.

In our view, these issues can only be tackled with innovation, renewed risk management tools, and a consistent trade policy.

Regarding innovation, we are working hard with our Ministry to encourage investment and access to new techniques that can optimize inputs on the farm. Regarding risk management tools, we have worked hard over the past years and in 2023 French farmers will have access to a renewed climate insurance scheme, together with a mutual fund for sugar beet that we will experiment in some French regions.

And regarding the European trade policy, we are lobbying to implement mirror clauses: they are the only way to achieve the Green Deal!



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