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PRESSEMITTEILUNG

Launch of the ReMIX project: Redesigning European cropping systems based on species MIXtures

EU agriculture needs to develop transition pathways towards agroecology-based, resilient and sustainable farming systems, combining the goals of ensuring productivity with achieving environmentally, economically and socially sustainable development. Exploiting diversity in cropping systems through the use of species mixtures can support achieving the ambitious goal of feeding a raising global population while reducing the environmental impact of the current agricultural practices.

Species mixtures, also known as intercrops, crop associations or 'plant teams', are well known for their ability to enhance resource use efficiency, improve the control of pests, diseases and weeds and increase crop productivity and resilience in variable climatic conditions. However, a number of practical challenges, such as the absence of specific adapted varieties for mixes and the lack of locally adapted management practices hinder their widespread adoption in Europe.

The ReMIX project, funded with 5 million € by the EU in the frame of the Horizon 2020 programme, will allow to overcome these barriers, through a 4-year collaborative research programme that will produce scientifically credible, but also socially valuable new knowledge, both for conventional and organic agricultural systems.

ReMIX will tackle the main aspects related to the introduction of species mixtures in EU agricultural systems, by addressing the agricultural value chain as a whole. Basic and applied research will be conducted, spanning from the mechanisms underlying the benefits of species mixtures and their adaptability to different pedo-climatic conditions, the production of new genetic resources and identification of varieties suited for use in species mixtures and the simulation of the effects of species choice, management practices and pedo-climatic conditions on species mixtures performance. The project will also develop optimised technical settings for existing agricultural machinery in order to facilitate species mixtures harvest and grain separation.

ReMIX will adopt the so-called "EIP-Agri multi-actor approach", through actively involving in the project local stakeholders. Actors across the agricultural innovation chain in 10 EU countries will be gathered in Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs), where innovation activities will be deployed, spanning from the specification of end-user needs and the co-design of in-field and on-farm experiments to demonstrations with evaluation of new varieties and practices, in order to better

grasp stakeholders' needs and ideas. The project will provide farmers across the different EU agroclimatic zones with readily accessible and practical information on species mixtures for immediate use. The project will also provide advice to overcome regulatory obstacles to the widespread adoption of species mixtures in the EU.

ReMIX partnership encompasses public research and higher education organisations, private research institutions, advisory services, farmers' cooperatives, agricultural equipment industries and SMEs. The partnership features 23 partners in 11 EU countries, Switzerland and China and is coordinated by INRA – Toulouse (France). The project started in May 2017 and will end in April 2021.

For more information, visit our website: www.remix-intercrops.eu and follow us on Twitter and Facebook (@RemixIntercrops).

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