

AGRA 2024 – focus on precision agriculture

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Date: 18.02.2024 *Issue:* 2/2024



The largest exhibition for agribusiness, food and wine will open its doors at the International Fair Plovdiv on Tuesday, 20 February. The international exhibitions AGRA, VINARIA and FOODTECH 2024 will present the innovations and trends in agriculture, the viticulture and wine-making industry and the food industry. A total of 580 exhibitors from 16 countries are participating, located on 40,700 square metres of exhibition area, including 7 halls. More than 50,000 visitors are expected to view the outdoor and indoor expositions.

International Agricultural Exhibition AGRA – a trade arena for agribusiness in Southeast Europe

The event covers all fields and sectors of agriculture – science, practice, technologies, machinery, products, innovations, services. It presents the best of the achievements of science and business and the most useful

solutions for farmers and specialists. The event is an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas among all those interested in providing high-quality products and services in the agricultural sector.

“Agra” has established itself as a prestigious forum for presenting innovations and this trend continues. The participants showcase latest-generation technologies and machinery for various types of farms, cost-effective equipment, improved varieties and breeds, new and traditional seed varieties and planting material, irrigation systems for open-field and protected agriculture in greenhouses, modern methods for organic production and environmentally friendly products, machines and technologies for wine production, chemical fertilizers and plant protection products with harmless ingredients, scientific developments, wines and spirits.

“Agra” is organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Innovation Competition

The Innovation Competition, featuring innovations presented at the AGRA, VINARIA and FOODTECH exhibitions, will once again distinguish the most avant-garde proposals. It is organized at the initiative of the International Fair Plovdiv with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Academy. The jury is composed of prominent scientists and experts from all branches. A total of 32 applications have been submitted for innovative products and technologies by 35 companies and 15 scientific institutes, competing in 8 categories. The awards will be presented at an official ceremony on Thursday, 22 February, at 17:30, in hall “Plovdiv”, Congress Center.

A large part of the exhibition is focused on innovations in agricultural machinery and equipment, but in 2024 the business programme dedicated to innovations in agricultural science also makes a strong impression.

BUSINESS PROGRAMME

A total of 32 applications have been submitted for innovative products and technologies by 35 companies and 13 scientific institutes, competing in 8 categories, some of which are new tomato varieties, winter barley and wheat varieties, sunflower, cotton, tobacco, alfalfa and hybrid forage maize. Several innovative technologies for seed production, production and cultivation of annual and perennial agricultural crops are presented.

Competition is strongest in the section for fertilizers and plant protection products. Bulgarian and foreign companies present organic products for pest control, soil enhancement and yield increase, and technologies

based on specific enzymes and microelements such as copper, zinc and others are represented.

In the section for machinery and equipment, interesting exhibits are competing, such as: an inter-row shredder, a GPS and laser levelling scraper, a self-propelled crop protection sprayer, a pick-up hay collector, a robotic mower with wireless installation, a digital assistant in agriculture, a handbook of technological instructions and others.

In the categories for wine, spirits and food there are both products and production technologies. Impressive items include a natural jujube liqueur, wine from extinct Bulgarian varieties, chardonnay with gold particles, bio-diabetic biscuits, chocolate halva with nuts and dried fruits without sugar, several types of cheese, enzymatic technologies for the production of food, wine and fruit beverages.



The Agricultural Academy in the AGRA 2024 innovation competition with 21 scientific developments

In Section V “Varietal seeds and planting material“ the Institute of Agriculture and Seed Science “Obraztsov Chiflik“ – Ruse is competing with the alfalfa variety “Cveta“. The Institute of Agriculture – Karnobat will compete for a prestigious award with the winter multi-row barley variety “Yuli Byan“.

In Section VII “Scientific developments“ the Institute of Mountain Stockbreeding and Agriculture – Troyan participates with Cow’s cheese from the Simmental breed in a clay jug and Cow’s cheese from the Simmental breed in a clay pot with a lid. The Tobacco and Tobacco Products Institute presents at AGRA 2024 the new large-leaf Virginia tobacco variety 0842. In the Innovation Competition the Institute of Forage Crops – Pleven participates with a Technology for cultivation of technical sorghum/broom; a Technology for seed production of perennial cereal grasses; a Technology for production of forage and seeds from spring forage pea and a Technology for establishment and use of meadows and pastures. The Field Crops Institute – Chirpan is a contender with the cotton variety “Snezhina“ and the cotton variety “Selena“, while the Maize Research Institute – Kneja participates with the maize hybrids “Kneja 653“ and “Kneja 652“. The Institute of Animal Science – Kostinbrod will surprise all guests at the International Fair – Plovdiv with a Raw-dried sausage from poultry meat type "Barsak".

In the same section the Dobrudzha Agricultural Institute – General Toshevo will compete with the sunflower hybrid “DALENA CLP“, which is a cross between a maternal line with cytoplasmic male sterility 1111A for resistance to Pulsar, created on the basis of Clearfield – CLPlus-technology, and a paternal restorer line of fertility N23R. The results from 2020 in the Executive Agency for Variety Testing, Field Inspection and Seed Control (IASAS) show that the hybrid exceeds the standard by 2.7% in terms of seed yield per decare. The yield varies from 320–420 kg/da depending on the climatic conditions of the production year. The hybrid is oilseed, linoleic type. The oil content in the seeds is from 45% to 47%. The hybrid belongs to the group of medium-early hybrids. The vegetation period is 120 days. It is resistant to lodging before harvesting (broken plants before harvesting – under 2%). The Dobrudzha Agricultural Institute also participates with the winter common wheat variety “Shibil“. Among the experts in the author’s team are the scientists Galina Mihova, Nikolay Tsenov, Tatyana Petrova and other colleagues. The systematic affiliation of the winter common wheat Shibil is *Triticum aestivum* ssp. *vulgare* L. var. *lutescens*. It was created through combinative breeding by implementing a simple hybrid combination Enola x Leda. The maternal form Enola is an awned, white-eared wheat. It is characterized by early heading and ripens 2–4 days earlier. It is characterized by a short stem and medium winter hardiness. The variety Leda is a Russian variety. The grain has excellent physical and very good baking qualities. The breeding line was obtained after multiple individual selections in the hybrid population.

The Maritsa Vegetable Crops Research Institute – Plovdiv is competing in the AGRA 2024 Innovation Competition with a Handbook of technological instructions „Handbook of technological instructions“. The Institute of Cryobiology and Food Technologies presents Bio-diabetic biscuits “Kaliya”, and the Institute of Food Preservation and Quality – Plovdiv showcases Fruit candies from prunes and grapefruit without added sugar and a Spread with sunflower protein and thyme extract. The Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnologies and Plant Protection "Nikolay Pushkarov" participates with a Device for passive sorting of fruits and vegetables.

International tastings and “Golden Rhyton“ competition

They are held in partnership with the University of Food Technologies and the Union of Enologists in Bulgaria. The competition is conducted in accordance with the criteria of the most prestigious world events in the sector. Therefore, the prize brings additional prestige to the awarded exhibitors, opening up new opportunities for establishing their brands and products on the markets. A total of 200 samples of wines and high-alcohol beverages participate in the competition. The results of the evaluation by the 12-member expert jury will be announced at an official ceremony on Wednesday, 21 February, at 17:00 in hall “Plovdiv“ at the Congress Center.

Source: Plovdiv Fair Plovdiv and Agricultural Academy