

# At the start of the new agricultural year: The portfolio of Corteva™ Agriscience brings great momentum for the success of Bulgarian agriculture

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*On the capabilities of the domestic agrarian industry to meet the challenges of climate change with workable solutions, on Corteva™'s portfolio for the 2026 season and on the 100th anniversary of Pioneer® – Emil Ivanov talks with Ivan Drazhev, Product Manager Seeds, Marketing Manager of Corteva™ Bulgaria*

**After the dramatic drought in 2025, a situation of uncertainty emerged within the Bulgarian agricultural community. What is your comment on this alarming situation?**

Climate change, most of it unfavourable for agricultural production, is already becoming an unavoidable factor. In this turbulent environment, transformation and adaptation to the new conditions are becoming mandatory! In other words: reliable solutions in an uncertain environment will guarantee production sustainability, resource savings and good results.

**Corteva™ Agriscience is a multinational company that was launched on 1 June 2019 following the merger of Du Pont, Pioneer and Dow AgroSciences. Within a few years its representation in Bulgaria has become a sought-after partner for our farmers. Its commercial portfolio – seeds, pesticides and biological products – is recognisable and preferred. What innovations is Corteva™ offering in 2026 in the key seeds segment?**

The year 2026 is a jubilee one for the Pioneer® brand, part of Corteva™. One hundred years ago, a remarkable man – Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture (1933-1940) and Vice President of the USA (1941-1945) in the administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, founded the seed company Pioneer®. For 100 years now it has been a global leader and driving force in maize breeding. Pioneer® is the company that created the first maize hybrid. And this was a real revolution 100 years ago!

The R&D department of Pioneer® continues at high speed to create innovations, prospects and ever higher standards. The distinct individuality and unique identity of its maize hybrids provide the company with leading positions on world markets. It is no coincidence that the latest world record for maize grain yield per decare was set by a Pioneer® hybrid in 2023 in the USA. It is no surprise that in Bulgaria as well, Pioneer® maize hybrids were once again No. 1 in 2025!

For 2026, Corteva™ is introducing in Bulgaria 8 new maize hybrids in the 160-600 FAO range. Six of them are from the Optimum® AQUAmax® product line. Their strong agronomic characteristics carry the message: Created for more yield from every drop of water!

**Sunflower is the second most important field crop in Bulgaria. What practical advantages do Pioneer® hybrids have?**

In 2026 it will be 30 years since the introduction in Bulgaria of the first 3 Pioneer® sunflower hybrids. With what arguments can the statement be supported that Corteva™ (in this case Pioneer®) achieved a large-scale market breakthrough in Bulgarian sunflower production, which holds leading positions in Europe?

First of all, I would note that Corteva™ was the first to introduce the ExpressSun® technology, which is a basic resource against problematic weed species and the parasite broomrape. Currently Corteva™ is also offering Clearfield® hybrids, as well as hybrids from the conventional technology.

A large part of Corteva™ sunflowers have genetic resistance to all broomrape races identified so far in our country. And something else extremely important. P64LE280 is the first sunflower hybrid with a new gene for resistance to downy mildew, which Corteva™ introduced in Bulgaria in 2025. In 2026 we are offering 5 new hybrids, 4 of which have genetic resistance to downy mildew!

On the other hand, crop protection in sunflower under the Corteva™ brand provides maximum reliable protection against pests.

The fungicide for control of downy mildew (caused by the fungal pathogen *Plasmopara halstedii*, class Oomycetes) Lumisena™ 200 FS (a.i. oxathiapiprolin) is the only solution to date for the treatment of sunflower seed for sowing. Corteva is also working on the registration of a second fungicide for the treatment of sunflower seed against downy mildew. It is expected that in 2027 this second fungicide, together with Lumisena™ 200 FS, will also be introduced in Bulgaria. Thus the company will offer double chemical protection plus genetic resistance through a new gene against this now extremely harmful disease in sunflower.

Artemide™ FS (lambda-cyhalothrin) is the only insecticide authorised in the EU for the treatment of sunflower seeds against chewing soil pests (wireworms) with contact and stomach action. It protects young plants, helps the development of their root system and also has a repellent (detering) effect on pests.

Helianthex™ and Viballa™ are the two newest post-emergence herbicides for the control of problematic broadleaf weeds (ragweed, Canada fleabane, common lambsquarters – including in advanced stages, velvetleaf, pigweed, wild mustard, etc.) in all sunflower growing technologies.

**In 2025, rapeseed once again became a focus of attention for agricultural producers. How will Corteva™ encourage this interest?**

In this segment as well, I mean rapeseed, Corteva™ is marking an anniversary – 20 years since the appearance of the first Pioneer® rapeseed hybrid in Bulgaria. One impressive fact. Pioneer® started breeding winter oilseed rape in 1989. The first sale of hybrid rapeseed was carried out in Canada in 2001, in Western Europe in 2004, and in Eastern Europe in 2006. Two Pioneer® rapeseed hybrids ranked among the Top 10 most widely grown rapeseed hybrids in Europe in 2024-2025. For the 2024-2025 season, Corteva™ is the market leader in Europe in the segment of rapeseed hybrids genetically resistant to sclerotinia with the hybrid PT303.

How should this statistical reference be interpreted? The corporate engineering of Pioneer® has a large internal resource that is capable of accelerating the fulfilment of every idea! The profile of rapeseed genetics under the Pioneer® brand includes several characteristics, especially for the latest generation of hybrids. The hybrids have high yield potential, adaptability, a strong early vigour effect, rapid resumption of growth in early spring, high tolerance to TuYV virus, and an exceptional level of resistance to pod shattering, resulting from the introduction of a new gene providing this advantage. Corteva™ offers factory-treated seed with the insecticide Lumiposa™ 625 FS. It has systemic and contact action. It controls sucking and chewing insects in the early stages of crop development up to the 6th-8th leaf stage.

Belkar™ EC is Corteva™'s new solution for the control of highly problematic broadleaf weeds, including cruciferous weeds in rapeseed. Belkar™ EC can be used in both conventional and Clearfield® technologies. The selective post-emergence herbicide has a dual systemic and complementary mode of action thanks to the active bases – Arylex (halauxifen-methyl) and picloram. Arylex belongs to a new chemical group, with a new, different mode of action, and is not affected by unfavourable abiotic factors in the autumn. Belkar™ EC contains a built-in adjuvant. It is suitable for a technology without the use of pre-emergence soil herbicides.

Galera™ Super is Corteva™'s broad-spectrum super herbicide against annual and perennial broadleaf weeds in rapeseed. The three-component selective post-emergence product is absorbed simultaneously by leaves and roots and is translocated throughout the entire weed plant. The three basic molecules have different mechanisms of action and complement each other. The product has flexible application – in autumn and in spring. It also exhibits residual soil activity. Galera™ Super is the solution against highly problematic weeds such as corn poppy, black nightshade, chickweed, deadnettle and all ephemerals.

Corteva™ is also offering two further post-emergence broadleaf herbicides that have proven themselves in practice – Lontrel™ 72 WG and Korveto™.

**Cereal winter crops occupy the largest areas in Bulgaria. Ensuring their health status in an uncertain climatic and phytosanitary environment is a serious mission. What does Corteva™ offer on this key topic?**

Quelex® is Corteva™'s newest top herbicide for the control of all economically important annual and perennial broadleaf weeds in all cereal crops. Arylex and florasulam are the active bases of the product. The dual-systemic herbicide is absorbed by leaves and roots and is translocated via phloem and xylem to the meristematic tissues and growing points of the weeds. It provides reliable control at low temperatures and under unstable conditions. It has a wide application window – from first leaf to flag leaf. It provides rapid initial effect against common lambsquarters, ragweed, field bindweed, corn poppy, deadnettle, Canada fleabane.

Also of a new generation is the fungicide Univoc®, a formulation of fepicoxamid (Inatreq) and prothioconazole. Inatreq is an innovation of the highest rank – a new active substance, a new chemical group – picolinamides – a new mode of action. Origin – synthesis from actinomycetes, genus *Streptomyces* sp. Univoc® is the new standard for the control of septoria and rust species. It is applied in wheat, barley, triticale and rye.

**As mentioned at the beginning of our conversation, we are witnessing a panic attack among our farming community, provoked by obvious climatic and phytosanitary deficits and imbalances. My question is: Do the business partners of Bulgarian farmers – the multinational companies – share the concerns and fears of these people, and do they help them overcome stress, loss of security and motivation?**

All innovations in the Corteva™ portfolio, which I have informed your readers about in this interview as well, are multifunctional, broad-spectrum and highly effective products, bred and formulated to succeed in unstable biotic and abiotic conditions. Pioneer® hybrids – maize, sunflower and rapeseed – are among the leaders in sales in Bulgaria in 2025 as well. Corteva™ crop protection products rank in the top four. This is an indication that Bulgarian farmers place their trust in our company. A sign that we are obliged to uphold this high assessment.

To what has been said so far I would add that in recent years Corteva™ has activated a new line of business – it develops and sells biological products. This commercial range improves the level of environmental criteria, an essential part of the regulatory regime in the EU, increases many times over the uptake of atmospheric and soil nitrogen by plants (UTRISH® N), improves the resistance of crops to abiotic and herbicide stress (BIOFORGE®), and stimulates biological processes and photosynthesis under unfavourable climatic conditions (CELERATE™ and KINSIDRO™ GROW).

According to our corporate philosophy, the most valuable commodity in this world is information. Every farmer has the right to an informed choice. To have information means that you possess the power to know! Our field teams actively support agricultural producers with expertise, competencies and up-to-date information.

There is no doubt – today the Bulgarian farmer is at a crossroads! The changing climatic and phytosanitary environment, trending in an unfavourable direction, requires every farmer to assess their professional capacity, determination and courage to face the challenges. Some decisions will certainly come into conflict with traditional agronomic science and practice; some will be unconventional and illogical at first glance. All this by no means implies rebellious behaviour and uncalculated risk. The new realities impose a new way of thinking and a change in the previous behavioural model.

I dare say that a good example already exists in Bulgaria. Visionaries from large farming enterprises are boldly and convincingly transforming their practices, defining their own formula for sustainable production in the new dynamic environment. These innovators will certainly have followers. A good example is contagious!

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*Clearfield® is a registered trademark of BASF Germany*