

Bayer opened the first multifunctional agri-innovation center in Bulgaria

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Дата: 14.07.2016 Брой: 7/2016



The permanent 50-hectare platform is located near the village of Gorna Mitropoliya in the Pleven region. The large-scale model provides a runway for the transfer of scientific achievements towards business and production. The system offers an innovation resource for formulating accurate and reliable managerial and technological solutions to achieve a high health status of the five strategic crops in our country – wheat, barley, maize, sunflower and oilseed rape.

The event was attended by responsible officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA), prominent scientists from the Agricultural University in Plovdiv and the Agricultural Academy, representatives of branch unions, specialists, businesspeople, farmers, and journalists from agricultural print and electronic media.

In his address at the opening of the centre, Gabor Raviczki, Manager of Bayer Bulgaria, CropScience Division, noted that Bayer's position, as a global leader in the agrochemical and seed industry, is that sustainable agriculture is the key to ensuring sufficient and high-quality food for the growing world population. The Centre for Agri-Innovation, which is being launched in Bulgaria, is part of Bayer's global corporate project for investments in the Future. Together with farmers and our other strategic partners, Mr. Raviczki emphasized, we wish to improve knowledge in the field of agriculture and to provide access to the global network for the exchange of good practices. In his assessment, the Centre for Agri-Innovation is successfully aligned with the specifics of Bayer's corporate policy: More global, more flexible, more committed. He personally thanked Ms. Svetla Stoyanova, who supported the idea and helped establish this innovative Bayer location.

The Bayer Centre for Agri-Innovation (BCA) project was presented by Ivelin Tonchev, Manager Technical Development of Bayer Bulgaria, CropScience Division. The profile of the BCA includes mainly two key characteristics. The first is the trialling and testing of Bayer plant protection products.

The sustainable development of agriculture is the second focus of the BCA programme. The world-renowned company ProPlant, already part of Bayer, is also involved here. Its software product, based on continuous monitoring of fields via satellite links from a system of special stations, will provide a new, higher level of the key plant protection practices – forecasting and warning. The product has been technologically validated for the conditions in Bulgaria. From a purely agronomic perspective, ProPlant will provide a service for diagnosing the condition of plants in order to issue warnings when conditions and opportunities for infection and pest attacks arise.

Agriculture is part of the global ecosystem. Agriculture is responsible for protecting the world's nature. As is well known, good plant protection practices necessarily include washing sprayers after the use of plant protection products, and this is a serious pollutant of groundwater. At the BCA, Bayer is positioning its innovative Phytobac system for optimal management of wastewater accompanying the processes of filling, cleaning and rinsing of sprayers.

The Bayer Centre for Agri-Innovation offers another option, which is aimed in a different, yet key, direction. It concerns a real contribution to the conservation of biodiversity – honey bees and other beneficial species. The structuring of buffer zones with strips of flowering species, predominantly melliferous plants, is only the beginning of this creative idea. The rich "forage" will attract not only honey bees, but also other wild bee species, which are excellent pollinators.