

Agra 2019: comprehensive solutions for agriculture

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From 20 to 24 February new integrated solutions for agriculture will be demonstrated at the International Agricultural Exhibition “AGRA 2019”, which is held at the International Fair Plovdiv. In recent years “AGRA” has been turning into an open platform for innovation and a meeting place for all stakeholders and participants in the sector. The forum is rightly considered unique in the Balkans and manages to combine in 4 days agricultural machinery, foods, equipment, wine and agricultural crops.

At this year's 28th edition of AGRA 2019 the focus again falls on precision agriculture, eco- and nanotechnologies, indoor agricultural farms, efficient and economical machinery and organic production. The exhibition also includes the International Exhibition of Viticulture and Enology “VINARIA”, “FOODTECH” and the

exhibition “Tastes of Italy”. The participants offer machinery from well-known Bulgarian and global brands, materials for agriculture and animal husbandry, fertilizers and plant protection products, services and software. The Agricultural Academy will present local and new plant varieties and animal breeds, technologies and equipment for their rearing.

Traditionally, the forum welcomes nearly 750 participants from over 30 countries and more than 40,000 visitors from Bulgaria and Europe.

Agricultural machinery and equipment and more

Companies from the agribusiness sector are increasingly focusing on the production of multifunctional machinery with high efficiency and an economical mode. One of the exhibits at the fair, deserving attention, is a spraying drone, which saves fuel and water costs, increases yields through more precise treatment and has high productivity, reaching up to 250 decares per day.

Systems for digital agriculture, online grain trading and a roadmap (bioscanner of the future), which tracks whether agricultural, food or pharmaceutical products have been produced in accordance with the requirements of organic production, in order to eliminate counterfeits, are only part of the innovations presented at the exhibition.

The technological zone of the International Exhibition “FOODTECH” provides opportunities for equipping and processing of raw materials, where farmers will find everything for the food industry – machines for processing, sorting, packaging and labelling. In addition to professional equipment, the FOODTECH exhibition will give visitors the opportunity to get acquainted with the full range of products from Siberian chaga – tea, liquid and dry extract. The “chaga” mushroom is approved in Russia as a preparation against many diseases, and scientific research supports the thesis of the healing properties of the mushroom, which in Japan is called “the diamond of the forest”.

At the exhibition for viticulture and horticulture “VINARIA” the latest generation of equipment in the sector will also be presented. A combined filling installation for wine and beer, single-use wine kegs, bottling of wine in aluminium can packaging are part of the specialized edition of the forum in Plovdiv.

The Agricultural Academy at AGRA 2019

Truffle cultivation is expected to attract the interest of more farmers from the country. Saplings of hazel, oak, hornbeam, linden, walnut and coniferous species are “infected” with spores from five types of Bulgarian truffles. On them are planted fruit, forest or ornamental trees in which seeds of the expensive underground mushrooms are implanted. Thus, their plantations can be combined with other valuable crops, bringing additional income.

The Institute of Plant Genetic Resources in Sadovo will present the newest wheat variety Nadita, registered in 2018, the well-known Sadovo peanuts, the first sesame varieties in the world suitable for mechanized harvesting, the only Bulgarian rye variety, the best winter pea varieties for green forage, overwintering varieties of naked and hulled oats and the rich diversity of plant genetic resources.

In recent years cotton production in Bulgaria has been revived, therefore Bulgarian scientists are offering varieties assessed as a new direction in breeding. They have naturally coloured brown fibre, longer and finer than the standard, with a high environmental and economic effect, the developers claim.

At the forum a technology for production of durum wheat, suitable for the manufacture of high-quality pasta products, will also be demonstrated. The variety provides better economic results for farmers.

An important segment of “AGRA 2019” are seeds, fertilizers and plant protection products. They will be presented by scientific institutes from Bulgaria and by world-renowned companies from the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and France.

The business programme also includes an **Organic Farming Day**, at which the guests of the forum will learn about technologies and equipment, clean fertilizers and preparations, products of agricultural and livestock farms.

The Agricultural Academy will present the following innovations at the International Exhibition AGRA 2019

1. Dobrudzha Agricultural Institute – General Toshevo. Sunflower hybrid “Deveda”. High-yielding, with over 50 percent oil content in the seeds, with no special requirements for growing the plants, resistant to a number of diseases.

2. Institute of Field Crops - Chirpan. Technology for production of durum wheat and Technology for seed production of durum wheat.

Institute of Field Crops - Chirpan - new durum wheat variety - variety "Helix".

3. Institute of Plant Genetic Resources - Sadovo.

Common winter wheat "Nadita". A high-yielding and economical variety. Its developers have successfully combined high yield potential with efficient use of nitrogen. This leads to a reduction in production costs and better economic results for farmers.

4. Institute of Agriculture - Karnobat

Winter barley "Zahir". The yield exceeds the average by 7%, and it is characterized by good grain quality and resistance to cold and diseases.

5. Maize Research Institute - Kneja: maize hybrid

"Kneja 317" - early, high-yielding, with an excellent phytosanitary profile with regard to economically important diseases and pests, maize hybrid.

"Kneja 461" – medium-early, high-yielding, stress-tolerant maize hybrid.

"Kneja 560" – high-yielding, from the medium-late maturity group, intended for grain production and also stress-tolerant.

6. Institute of Field Crops (IFC) – Chirpan

New cotton varieties - variety "Egeya" and variety "Nike". The two varieties are an achievement and a new direction in cotton breeding in Bulgaria. They belong to the new generation of varieties with naturally coloured

brown fibre, with a high environmental and economic effect. The most valuable quality of the two new varieties is the longer and finer fibre compared to the variety “Izabel”, established as the standard for coloured cotton.

7. Institute of Agriculture and Seed Science (IASS) “Obraztsov Chiflik”, Ruse

New wine grape variety “Kristalen”. Created by hybridization of the varieties Pamid Ruse 1 and Kaylashki Misket. It is early ripening, with strong growth and good productivity. The grapes have a pronounced fruity and muscat aroma, pleasant freshness and are suitable for the production of white high-quality wines, full-bodied and with good harmony between alcohol, sugars and titratable acids, as well as for the production of high-alcohol beverages.

8. Fruit Growing Institute - Plovdiv

Plum variety “Pagane”. It is characterized by large fruits, suitable for fresh consumption and drying, with a high content of dry matter and sugars and with excellent taste qualities.

9. Maritsa Vegetable Crops Research Institute - Plovdiv. Garden pea variety “Paldin”. Highly productive, suitable for freezing, retaining excellent organoleptic and colour characteristics during sterilization and during six-month refrigerated storage.

10. Institute of Agriculture - Kyustendil

Self-fertile sweet cherry variety “Alektion”. The variety has large fruits, firm flesh and excellent taste, good resistance to cracking, and participates in the innovation competition also as an exhibitor at AGRA 2019.

11. Institute of Animal Science - Kostinbrod

Veal sudzhuk “Viskar”. Prepared according to a classic technology from meat of Limousin breed calves. The animals are reared on pasture in the Viskyar Mountain. Their meat is fine and of exceptional taste quality.

12. Institute of Cryobiology and Food Technologies - Sofia

Diet chocolate - Functional chocolate LyoCrunch, containing natural cocoa, collagen peptides from beef bone broth, biologically active extracts, vitamins, freeze-dried fruits and a prebiotic, with no added sugar. Its development for the competition is a blue wine beverage, obtained from a standard vinified grape variety, enriched with a cryogenically obtained extract from fresh spirulina. This product has increased antioxidant and biologically active properties compared to standard wines.

13. Institute of Cryobiology and Food Technologies -

Linzer “Spirulina”. A gluten-free product, enriched with a natural bioactive spirulina extract, with reduced baking time and extended shelf life. Intended for dietary nutrition.

14. Blue wine “SPIRULINA” Institute of Cryobiology and Food Technologies – Sofia.

15. New coatings with high hardness, wear resistance and triboefficiency of the Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnologies and Plant Protection “N. Pushkarov” - Sofia.