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PLENARY TALKS

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Status of Clearfield Oilseed Rape and Prospects of Future Development in Europe

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With the introduction of the Clearfield Production System in Europe many advantages have been discussed, but also many concerns have been raised. After almost a decade of use of the Clearfield system in practical farming a balance can be drawn.

The market quickly realized the superiority in control of any kind of Brassicaceae weeds compared to existing solutions. The high crop selectivity in combination with better weed control can increase crop yield when Clearfield hybrids and Clearfield herbicides are used in a system. Farmer surveys have shown, that the wider application windows and the broad weed spectrum of the Clearfield herbicide solutions provide more flexibility in farm management and allow less passes across the field.

Besides that, the improved cross tolerance towards ALS Inhibitor residues in the soil from cereal applications, the possibility to use cruciferous crops as catch crop for reducing flea beetle damage, the possibility to improve the harvest product quality are valid points under practical farming conditions.

Concerns like potential outcrossing of the Clearfield character into other plants and weeds, the building up of volunteer seed banks and the potential development of herbicide resistance have been addressed before and during the introduction by running accompanying studies and have not been confirmed as a problem.

The future of the Clearfield Production System can be seen positive. There are further developments in oilseed rape production for which the Clearfield System can bring a valuable contribution. To be mentioned are the stricter rules for Erucid Acid content in harvest samples. Further, in oilseed rape crops in western France and Bulgaria the parasitic weed Orobanche ramose is attacking crops and impacts the yield negatively. Here Clearfield herbicides have proven to be highly effective in controlling the parasitic weed.

In the northern and baltic sea area increasing areas are infected with the soil borne parasite Plasmodiophora brassicacea. Besides variety resistance, so far no direct control possibilities exist. With its inherent high control of all cruciferous weed species, Clearfield herbicides in combination with Clubroot Tolerant hybrids can be a way to sustain oilseed rape production in the affected areas for the future.