

# News Release



## **Study shows how farmers and consumers differ in their understanding of sustainable agriculture**

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- **BASF Farm Perspectives Study interviews farmers and consumers in seven countries**
- **Topics include sustainable farming, food production methods and future trends in agriculture**

**Limburgerhof, Germany - September 16, 2014** – Across the globe, consumers (81%) and farmers (78%) say they care a lot about sustainability in agriculture. However, the two groups have a very different understanding of what sustainability means. While farmers see it as a detailed, multi-dimensional issue, consumers tend to define it mainly in the context of environmental aspects. This is one of the main findings revealed in the latest BASF Farm Perspectives Study. Carried out for the second time since 2011, the study analyzed answers from 2,100 farmers and 7,000 consumers in seven different countries regarding their perceptions on a range of topics related to food production. Compared to results from previous years, the study revealed how attitudes regarding agriculture differ greatly not only between farmers and consumers, but also from country to country.

The Farm Perspective Study was carried out in Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Spain and the United States between March and April 2014. For its realization, BASF commissioned the global market research institute Market Probe, based in Belgium.

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## **Understanding of sustainability in agriculture**

Consumers define sustainability in agriculture with a relatively narrow view, describing it as “environmentally friendly” (22%) or the “ability to produce sufficient food to feed the population” (18%). Globally, consumers listed one or two points when questioned about the meaning of sustainable agriculture. Farmers, on the other hand, presented a more specific, although complex, understanding of the topic. They highlighted environmental aspects like “soil protection” (40%), “land use” (27%), “water use” (27%) or “biodiversity protection” (25%), and also named economic aspects, such as “fair farm wages” (25%), as part of sustainable farming.

“These results help us to better understand the different perceptions regarding sustainable agriculture,” said Dr. Kristina Winzen, Vice President of Global Communications & Public Government Affairs for BASF’s Crop Protection division. “Growers and consumers do not understand sustainability in the same way and that makes it quite challenging for farmers to fulfill the requirements from society.”

The importance of sustainability in agriculture is clear to farmers and consumers. In all surveyed countries, the vast majority of consumers (81%) agree that they “care about sustainability in agriculture.” When asked about specific farming practices, the views of both groups differ. While 82% of all farmers agreed that crop protection is used responsibly, only 37% of all consumers shared this view.

## **The perception regarding regulations for agriculture**

Globally, 49% of farmers agree that there are currently “too many regulations applied to the agricultural sector”. Going in the opposite direction, 38% of consumers in the surveyed countries believe that “there are not enough regulations in the agricultural sector”. When looking into the results by country, the situation reveals itself as very diverse. In European countries – France (83%), Germany (72%) and Spain (77%) – farmers feel high pressure from increasing agricultural regulations. In Asia, the perception is the opposite:

Indian and Chinese farmers feel that there is a lack of laws in the sector. In their view (54% each), more regulations should be applied.

### **Higher satisfaction with agricultural production**

Although there is a common understanding that food production is becoming more challenging – due to increasing consumers' expectations, globalized markets and scarcity of resources – 76% of all farmers said they were satisfied with the current state of their profession (as compared to 62% in 2011). The most satisfied farmers live in the United States (89%); followed by China (85%) and India (75%).

When consumers evaluate the current methods for food production used in their countries, more than half (58%) are satisfied with the way farming is conducted. Consumers in Germany have the highest satisfaction level (68%), followed by India (65%) and the United States (63%).

### **Future outlook**

Regarding the future of their own profession, growers across the globe share very similar expectations. Farmers believe the following trends will change agriculture in the next five years: “small farmers will disappear” (45%), “tougher regulations” (23%), “improvements in technology” (22%), “water shortage” (21%) and “more sustainable agriculture” (19%).

“The results of the Farm Perspectives Study reinforce the importance of farming today. They enable us to better connect our initiatives and business development with growers' needs,” said Winzen. With consumers and farmers having different understandings regarding the fundamental aspects of agriculture, BASF also stresses the importance of promoting an open dialog between the two groups. “As a company that supports modern, sustainable agriculture, it is also our responsibility to promote and recognize the essential role farmers have in our lives and well-being,” concluded Winzen.

Further information about the study's set up, results and materials is available online: [www.farmperspectivesstudy.com](http://www.farmperspectivesstudy.com)

### **About BASF's Crop Protection division**

With sales of more than €5.2 billion in 2013, BASF's Crop Protection division provides innovative solutions in crop protection, seed treatment and biological control as well as solutions to manage water, nutrients and plant stress. Its portfolio also includes products for turf and ornamental plants, pest control and public health. BASF's Crop Protection division is a leading innovator that supports growers to optimize agricultural production, improve their business efficiency and enhance the quality of life for a growing world population. Further information can be found on the web at [www.agro.basf.com](http://www.agro.basf.com) or through our [social media channels](#).

### **About BASF**

At BASF, we create chemistry – and have been doing so for 150 years. Our portfolio ranges from chemicals, plastics, performance products and crop protection products to oil and gas. As the world's leading chemical company, we combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. Through science and innovation, we enable our customers in nearly every industry to meet the current and future needs of society. Our products and solutions contribute to conserving resources, ensuring nutrition and improving quality of life. We have summed up this contribution in our corporate purpose: We create chemistry for a sustainable future. BASF had sales of about €74 billion in 2013 and over 112,000 employees as of the end of the year. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchanges in Frankfurt (BAS), London (BFA) and Zurich (AN). Further information on BASF is available on the Internet at [www.basf.com](http://www.basf.com).