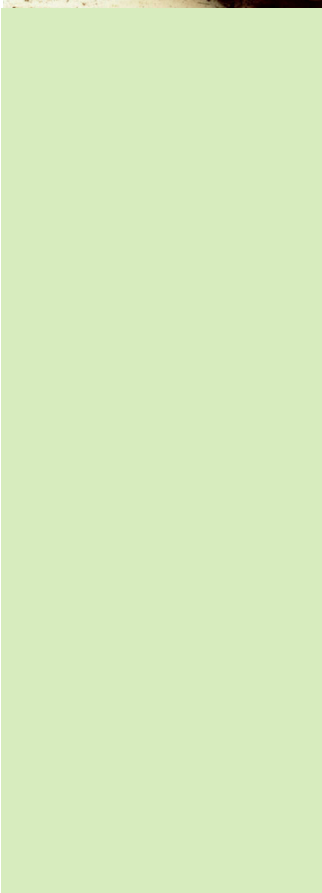




ESA 2010 ANNUAL MEETING



INVITATION

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Dear colleagues,

From October 10th to 12th, ESA European Seed Association will hold its 2010 Annual Meeting and the European Seed Trade Meeting in Brussels where the seed sector will discuss the latest political, scientific and market developments in plant breeding, seed production and seed marketing. With more than 500 registered participants from Europe, America, Asia and Africa in 2009, we are convinced that also this year our Annual Meeting will once again provide an excellent opportunity for discussion and networking of the seed sector in Europe and worldwide.



Next to representatives of ISF, the European Commission, the EU's Community Plant Variety Office CPVO, UPOV, FAO and OECD, the International Seed Testing Association ISTA and other organizations will -as always- contribute to our discussions in crops sections as well as our General Assembly.

This General Assembly 2010 will focus specifically on the European seed industry's position on intellectual property protection.

Appropriate intellectual property protection is key for supporting research and innovation in plant breeding. Assuring a fair return of plant breeders' long-term investment fuels its continuous development of ever better varieties for a competitive and sustainable European agri-food chain.

While the 'classical' variety protection by the Community plant variety rights legislation is a critical instrument for the breeding community, this instrument has shown some weaknesses, e.g. in the area of fair royalty payments for farm saved seed use.

With the start of the evaluation of the European legal framework for plant variety protection and in view of the increasing role of patents for biotechnological inventions, ESA feels that it is time for an overall view on the role and available instruments for intellectual property protection in the seed sector. Clearly, the interface of the legal systems for plant breeders' rights and for patents for biotechnological inventions will be one core aspect of this debate.

Following up on a specific seminar on intellectual property protection for seed and plants and based on the further work of ESA's Committee for Intellectual Property and Breeders' Rights, it is our intention to present our conclusions and positions on this important legal area and policy to the ESA membership and our guests during our General Assembly.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I look forward to welcome you for this debate, for trade and for meeting friends and new colleagues in Brussels this October, yours

Garlich v. Essen
Secretary General