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Press Release

Global, fair and e-commerce will be significant challenges for the EU agri-food industry in the next decade.

Therefore, the EU Livestock and Meat Sector annual meeting emphasised Trade issues.

UECBV held its annual AGM in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, on Friday 23rd September 2016.

There are currently many challenges on the table regarding international trade such as the Russian embargo but also important free-trade agreement negotiations (FTAs) between the EU and some third countries such as the one with the USA (TTIP), Canada (CETA), etc. Therefore the EU Livestock and Meat Sector (UECBV) chose the topical theme of trade for its annual general meeting this year.

“With its well-known international port as well as its pro-active approaches to trade and innovation, Rotterdam is the perfect place to talk about trade”, said Philippe Borremans, UECBV President. The EU is the top exporter and importer at global level. Indeed, in 2015, EU exports and imports were worth respectively 129 billion and 114 billion euros. The livestock and meat sectors play a dynamic role among these imports and exports.

E-commerce in the EU is still in its infancy but it is developing also for international trade. E-commerce doesn't make you more distant to your customers, it is the opposite, you need to fully understand its demands to ensure the customer will click again next time, said David Bloch who started an e-business 5 years ago. The packaging industry, represented by Sealed Air Cryovac, is working to adapt to the challenges and Aalt Dijkhuizen, cofounder of webshop Hollandbuy, concluded that EU businesses should combine forces to access third countries' e-markets.

Nevertheless, the most anticipated topic was “Opportunity in trade” for which UECBV had the pleasure and the honour to welcome in particular Phil Hogan, Member of the EU Commission, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. His intervention focused on “EU trade policy and strategy”.

“We will be making a bigger emphasis on the beef and meat sectors in 2017-2018 and 2019 in order to highlight the role of the meat sector in the sustainability agenda”, said Phil Hogan.

He reminded attendees that he remains in favour of TTIP providing the deal is good for EU farmers and EU businesses.

He outlined all the work being done by the EU Commission to open doors for EU companies to access third countries' markets.

It is good to negotiate free trade with third countries but the EU must be strong in lifting SPS barriers so that trade goes both ways, pointed out Jos Goebbels, UECBV vice-President and Chairman of the Meat Industry Section.

Reinforcing EU exports to third countries is the future of our sector, underlined Philippe Borremans while a balance with imports remains necessary: international and fair trade.

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UECBV is the European Livestock and Meat Trades Union. **UECBV** is an EU association representing in total, some 20,000 firms of all sizes and over 230,000 jobs through its national member federations. The vast majority of these enterprises are small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

UECBV's core objective is to achieve an optimum business climate for the livestock and meat industry across the European Union and to strengthen the competitiveness of the industry as a whole. To achieve this goal, **UECBV represents and defends the meat** sector vis-à-vis the European Institutions, promotes **EU trade and international trade**, deepens the **internal market** and fights against **competition distortions**.
