

News Release – 28 April 2016

## Study shows consumers underestimate the severity of the global food challenge

Only 4% correctly estimate that world food production must increase 60% by 2050

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Research findings to be released today show significant levels of misunderstanding about the realities of food production, namely that only 4% of adults surveyed in Europe correctly estimate that world food production must increase by 60% by 2050.<sup>1</sup>

Results of the survey conducted by YouGov Plc suggest that European adults (UK, Germany, Spain, Poland) underestimate the potential severity of the world's food supply problem and the link between productivity and prices. They also underestimate the role that pesticides can play in supplying affordable food to the consumers. In fact only 31% of adults surveyed think that farmers' inability to protect their crops against diseases and crop infestation is a factor directly linked to increasing the cost of the world's food supply.

"If farmers cannot protect their crops, cost will inevitably increase," Graeme Taylor, spokesperson for the pesticides industry said at an event held in Brussels on the future of European farming where the survey results were released.

Taylor said, "Consumers expect - and deserve - to have access to safe and affordable food of good quality. To continue to be able to produce sufficient quantities of quality crops requires sustainable use of pesticides. This research shows however that consumers do not appreciate the magnitude of what is at stake if farmers don't have access to innovative solutions like pesticides to protect their crops."

Many country-level results also revealed misperceptions. In Poland nearly one-third (30%) of adults misunderstand the purpose of pesticides, disagreeing with the fact that they are designed to protect plants from damaging influences including harmful bugs, invasive weeds, parasites and fungi. When asked what percentage of global crop yields they think are currently lost to plant pests

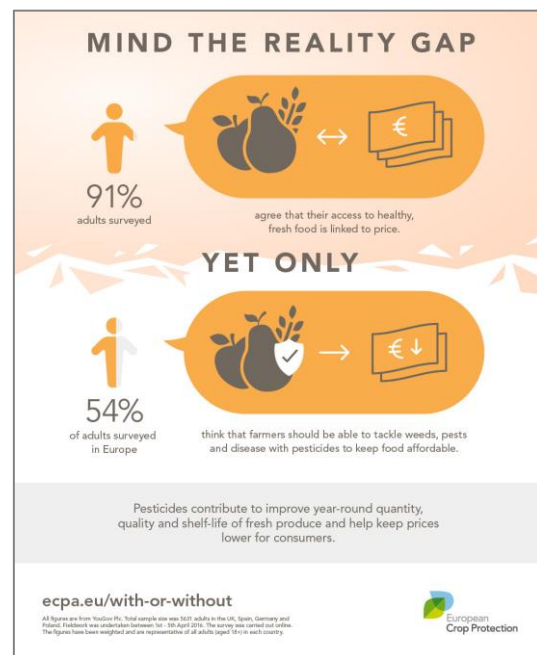
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<sup>1</sup> According to Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) figures, world food production must increase by 60% by 2050

and diseases each year, only 12% of respondents in the United Kingdom correctly identify the correct figure, which is 40%.<sup>2</sup>

ECPA is therefore launching an initiative aimed at engaging society in a conversation about the role pesticides play in food production and addressing the negative preconceptions that exist.

Join the debate at [www.ecpa.eu/with-or-without](http://www.ecpa.eu/with-or-without) On Twitter: #WithOrWithout



<sup>2</sup> European Union, European Parliament. (2015), Draft Report on Technological solutions to sustainable agriculture in the EU (2015/2225(INI)).

*Editor's Notes:*

Download the Key Findings Report “Consumer Understanding of the Global Food Challenge” and infographics [here](#)

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 5631 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 1st - 5th April 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults (aged 18+) in each country (UK, Germany, Spain, Poland).

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**The European Crop Protection Association (ECPA) represents the crop protection industry interests at European level. Its members include all major companies and national associations across Europe**

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