INSTITUT FÜR AGRARTECHNIK BORNIM e.V.
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ATB
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Potsdam, April 14, 2003

Press Release

Experts in precision agriculture and information management to meet in June at the European conferences on Precision Agriculture and Precision Livestock Farming in Berlin

Two European conferences highlighting emerging technologies in agriculture

The Fourth European Conference on Precision Agriculture (4thECPA) and the First European Conference on Precision Livestock Farming (1stECPLF) will be held in Berlin, Germany, June 16-18, 2003. Organizers are the Institute for Agricultural Engineering Bornim (ATB), Potsdam, Germany, and the Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape and Land Use Research (ZALF), Müncheberg, Germany. The international conference meets every two years in different European countries and draws 400-500 international experts who use modern technology tools such as miniaturized sensors or global positioning systems to improve agricultural production. The combination of the 4thECPA and the 1stECPLF will allow a comprehensive analysis of the state of precision agriculture in both, field crop and animal production. It will also, for the first time, give the chance of drawing up perspectives for a coordinated development and for creating visions for an integration of plant production and animal husbandry, in terms of sustainable and “transparent” production.

The two conferences on precision agriculture provide a perfect forum to exchange ideas and discuss new technologies not only for researchers of various disciplines, but also for farmers, consultants, software experts, public administration personnel and agribusiness representatives.

The conferences will offer more than 250 oral and 200 poster presentations. Topics include analyzing spatial variability in soil, site, and plants, decision support tools, remote sensing, sensors and their various applications, social and economic impacts of precision farming, data documentation for quality assurance, and others. Pre-conference courses on June 14-15 will offer young scientists an opportunity for getting in touch with latest methods in data analysis and GIS-applications (Geographic Information System) designed for agriculture, and with simulation models for soil, crops, and landscapes. Farmer workshops on key topics for producers and agribusiness companies will be held parallel to the scientific conference. On June 19, four excursions to farms, an experimental station and a research institute will give the chance to familiarize with practical experiences both in precision agriculture and precision livestock farming. In addition, a trade show will feature the latest commercially available hardware, software, services in data collection and information management, and field equipment.

Precision agriculture is the key technology for modern sustainable agriculture. It uses information technology and specialized knowledge of various agricultural disciplines to bring data from multiple sources to bear on decisions associated with agricultural production, logistics and also with marketing.

Precision agriculture is based on the development and use of new technologies including new computerized equipment and information management systems for more effective crop production and environmental protection. Unlike traditional crop management, which assumes uniform field conditions and recommends average input application rates, precision agriculture takes into account the heterogeneity of soil, site and canopy. It is an information intensive approach, requiring various data on field conditions such as soil or site characteristics, pest presence and microclimate. With precision technology it is possible to target inputs and management practices to variable conditions. Agricultural inputs are used in the most efficient and economic way turning out not only in financial savings for the producers but even more contributing to reduce environmental pollution.
In livestock farming, efficient and precise technologies will give way to a more animal friendly husbandry. Individual identification of farm animals, measuring and monitoring of feeding behaviour, animal welfare and reproductive parameters provide farmers with data that can be used for effective decision support tools.
Additionally, in times of BSE and other scandals associated with food production, the possibility of easy or even automated documentation of the data will add to improve food safety and quality assurance.

Registration details and more information on the conferences are available at http://www.ecpa-berlin.org.

What: **Experts in precision agriculture and information management to meet at the European conferences on Precision Agriculture and Precision Livestock Farming in Berlin to share the latest research findings and their application**

When: **June 16-18, 2003**

Where: **Haus am Köllnischen Park, Berlin, Germany**

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