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## **Damage of birds on sunflowers: Terres Inovia at the heart of an international network of exchanges**



How to fight against the damage caused by birds on sunflower crops? Because the problem worried many producers, it was necessary to think of new solutions. For Terres Inovia, the construction of a network to exchange information and ideas among the many sunflower producing countries seemed to be obvious to move faster and better.

Moving into action: in the first issue of the ISA bulletin (September 2018), the institute launched a call for collaboration to build a network of experts on this subject relying on the [ISA](#) (International Sunflower Association) network, of which TI operates the permanent secretariat. The proposal has attracted the interest of several countries in America and Europe. It allowed for first exchanges with French (Terres Inovia, INRA), Argentinian (INTA), Italian (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna), Swiss (Agroscope) and

American (USDA, NWRC) researchers as well as with the Ministry of Agriculture of Uruguay.

### **Bird damage: disparities**

A first meeting was organized last March to establish an inventory of research issues and actions. It provided an overview of bird damage in the countries concerned. In Europe, for example, the experts insisted on bird damage at emergence, and less at maturity. In North and South America, damage is caused at both emergence and maturity. While the cases observed in Europe are quite similar, situations seem more diverse in South and North America, due to larger territories and probably better surveillance policies (especially in the United States).

The variation of damage over time and space remains poorly understood. The work done in Argentina shows a great variability of damage between fields, but no such data exists in Europe.

### **Control techniques: no miracle!**

What about control techniques? In France, as elsewhere, there is no miracle solution: they are only partially effective, including lethal control, and their effectiveness decreases in agricultural field conditions compared to small-scale experiments. Management remains rather empirical in trial / error mode without fundamental knowledge to identify a priori promising methods. The absence or removal of repellents in the European context is a major difference between Europe and the Americas. However, in Argentina, the application of repellents has not been very effective in mitigating the damage caused by colombidae.

### **Research: America as an example**

Research seems more advanced in America than in Europe. The USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services is responsible for managing conflicts between wildlife and agriculture and proposing solutions. This centralized organization does not exist elsewhere. In Europe, there is also a strong interaction between rural and urban areas (birds come and go), but no coordinated management. Pigeons have both defenders and opponents in urban areas.

### **What next?**

Participants in this workshop agreed to stay in touch by sharing information, including feedback from adaptive management (assessment and adaptation of preventive methods). Two themes of common interest have been identified so far: evidence of damage with a systematic framework and the creation of a coordinated field experimentation network, particularly in Europe. Some topics that could lead to collaborative projects. To be continued.

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