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Pic: Alfred Eässler

GCAN is go

OUR recently-launched network has been busy promoting the advantages of Conservation Agriculture at home and abroad and inside this newsletter you'll find updates on all of it.

GCAN hosted a conference on the advantages of Conservation Agriculture in the Green Zone of COP22 in Marrakesh and also participated in the launch of the 4 per 1000 forum and consortium. Read more about this, and our network inside.

World experts meet to discuss solution



FARMERS and experts from GCAN highlighted the benefits of conservation agriculture in mitigating the impact of climate change and ensuring greater food security.



GCAN members attended the 4 for 1000 Initiative event at COP22, which focused on ways to increase carbon content in our soil.



WHAT WE DO

1 GCAN aims to increase the understanding and adoption of conservation agriculture around the world to promote a climate-smart and environmentally-friendly agriculture.

2 GCAN helps member organisations to share best practice and helps policymakers and the public to understand the climate, environment and economic advantages of conservation agriculture.

CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE



Conservation agriculture is an agro-ecology system which aims to achieve sustainable and profitable agriculture though:

- No soil disturbance
- Use of cover crops
- Crop rotation

It is a way to combine profitable agriculture with environmental concerns and sustainability.

BENEFITS OF CA

Conservation agriculture:

- Reduces carbon emissions
- Improves soil quality and organic matter
- Enhances biodiversity
- Reduction in energy consumption of between 15-50%
- Increase in yields from less erosion between 9%-34%
- Reduction in cost of sowing of between €40-€60 per hectare



G CAN hosted a conference on the advantages of Conservation Agriculture in the Green Zone of the 22nd Conference of Parties (COP22) in Marrakesh, and also participated in the launch of the 4 per 1000 forum and consortium.

GCAN @ COP22

COP22, the international conference on climate change, took place from 7-18 November in Marrakesh where the signatories of the Paris Agreement discussed how to prevent global temperatures rising above 1.5°C.

It was the 'COP of action' according to European Commission Climate Commissioner, Miguel Arias Cañete.

And it was the 'COP of agriculture' according to the Moroccan government, the host and President of the conference.

Despite the fact that the official negotiations did not result in any concrete actions concerning agriculture, solutions did emerge in the Green Zone.



Pic: Sarah Singla



Pic: Sarah Singla



Pic: Thierry Fourmaux

CA is the talk of the town at the 'COP of action'

One of which was Conservation Agriculture.

GCAN Conference

During the GCAN conference: Conservation Agriculture and the Climate, members presented the principles of CA, the advantages of CA for the climate and environment, CA's advantages for society, the needs of farmers and farmers organisations, and public policies needed to encourage this change in our agricultural system.

See what they said on the following pages.

Conservation Agriculture for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation



Conservation Agriculture, based on no soil disturbance, permanent cover crops and crop rotation is a huge opportunity for climate mitigation and adaptation. First off, because it is a great opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to the reduced use of machinery resulting in reduction in fuel consumption. It involves a reduction of 6-10 times the amount of greenhouse gasses. But more importantly CA, which focusses on soil fertility, allows greater carbon storage in the soil: fertile soil, maintained by CA stores 56 per cent more carbon than conventional agriculture.



GCAN COP22

Here is what our members had to say...

A HIGHLIGHT at COP22 in Marrakesh was the GCAN conference on Conservation Agriculture and the Climate. GCAN members presented the principles of CA, the advantages of CA for the climate and environment, CA's advantages for society, the needs of farmers and farmers' organisations, and public policies needed to encourage this change in our agricultural system.



"Tilled soil emits up to 10 times more carbon than a CA field."

- Emilio González, General Secretary ECAF

"CA is also a tool to prevent hunger and poverty by increasing food security."

- Saidi Mkomwa, Executive Secretary African Conservation



"CA has given me greater yield stability and levels of organic matter twice as high as twenty years ago. But changing practices is not easy, people need to be assisted to avoid mistakes."

- Miguel Barnuevo, farmer in Spain



"It is only thanks to CA that I have managed to maintain my yields in my farm with the decreases in rain fall by better using water reserves."

- Aziz Zine El Abidine, farmer in Morocco



"Ambitious programmes to encourage CA have shown encouraging results on water quality in Brazil. This example could be adopted around the world."

- Marie Bartz, Universidade Positivo, FE (Brazil)



"CA is a way to rediscover the pleasure of farming. It's an agronomic practice where farmers are proud of their work and which has societal benefits. We must stop looking for excuses to not make the change. There are examples of CA success all over the world on every continent."

- Sarah Singla, farmer, Vice-President of APAD

"The three pillars of CA are: no disturbance of the soil, permanent crop cover and crop rotation. We need to think with a systematic approach if we want to achieve results."

- Rachid Mrabet, INRA Morocco and Member of the COP22 Scientific Committee



"The preservation of soil is a big challenge. Farmers have a fundamental role in bringing this practice from the few to the many to result in a true change in practices. They need to be assisted with national action plans involving all stakeholders, public and private, and of course farmers."

- Alexandre Meybeck, Senior Policy Advisor, FAO



"It's not easy to get farmers to completely change their system of farming. The steps needed have been identified by farmers, politicians now need to put it into action : incentive for farmers, insurance during the transition period, training on soil, working with researchers and farmers, payments for ecosystem services or carbon payments etc..."

- Benoît Lavier, farmer and President of APAD (France)



"There are examples of public policies in a number of countries which have positive results: creation of a CA committee, carbon programmes, ecosystem services payments, farmer exchanges, involvement of private sector, even the banning of tillage in China!"

- Tom Goddard, Senior Advisor, Government of Alberta (Canada)



"We need first of all to recognise farmers' know-how, involve them in the decisions and governance, from which they are all too often absent."

- Maria-Beatriz Giraudo, AAPRESID (Argentina)



Saving Our Soil



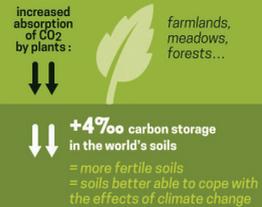
GCAN members attended the 4 per 1000 event during which conservation agriculture was positioned as a tool which can assist in increasing carbon content in soils by 0.4 per cent per year, and prevent increases in CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Philippe Maugin, President of INRA, identified conservation agriculture specifically as a practice which should be encouraged in order to increase carbon content in soils.



M. Le Foll, French minister of Agriculture, with GCAN members at COP22

If we increase by 4‰ (0.4%) a year the quantity of carbon contained in soils, we can halt the annual increase in CO₂ in the atmosphere, which is a major contributor to the greenhouse effect and climate change



During the 4 per 1000 event, the importance of involving farmers in the programmes and actions was emphasised a number of times.

This was noted as the only way in which those who practice conservation agriculture could bring about the change desired by 4 per 1000.

WHAT IS 4 PER 1000?

A 4% annual growth rate of the soil carbon stock would make it possible to stop the present increase in atmospheric CO₂. This growth rate is not a normative target for every country, but is intended to show that even a small increase in the soil carbon stock (agricultural soils, notably grasslands and pastures, and forest soils) is crucial to improve soils fertility and agricultural production and to contribute to achieving the long-term objective of limiting the temperature increase to +1,5/2°C, threshold beyond which the IPCC indicates that the effects of climate change are significant. This initiative is intended to complement the necessary efforts to comprehensively reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.



MEMBERS GCAN's members include farming organisations, researchers and policymakers

- European Conservation Agriculture Federation, ECAF
- Association pour la Promotion d'une Agriculture Durable, APAD (France)
- African Conservation Tillage Network, ACT
- South Asian Conservation Agriculture Network, SACAN
- Conservation Tillage Research Centre, CTRC (China)
- Conservation Agriculture Australia

- Western Australian No-Tillage Farmers Association, WANTFA
- Confederation of American Associations for the Production of Sustainable Agriculture, CAAPAS
- Fundação Agrisus (Brazil)
- Federação Brasileira de Plantio Direto e Irrigação, (Brazil)
- Asociación Uruguaya de Siembra Directa, AUSID (Uruguay)
- Federación Paraguaya de Siembra Directa

- para una Agricultura Sustentable, Fepasidias Association, WANTFA
- Asociación Argentina de Productores en Siembra Directa, AAPRESID (Argentina)
- Sequoia Farm Foundation (USA)
- Ohio No-till Council
- Carbon Management and Sequestration Center, C-MASC, (Ohio State Univ)
- Agronomy Dept of Universidade Estadual de Londrina, (UEL, Brazil)



What's next?

THE official negotiations may have kicked back any decisions or actions on adapting to and mitigating against climate change, but GCAN and our partners put forward a solution which steps up to the challenge and which ensures that agriculture is more resilient, while still ensuring greater

food security and sustainability in all climatic conditions. There is no doubt that COP22 has been an important step in increasing awareness of CA and ensuring adoption of public policy measures to support it. Now we must continue this important work.

WHO WE ARE



Global Conservation Agriculture Network

We are a network of conservation agriculture supporters from around the world

PARTNERS