

Experience exchange trip to Poland

From September 22nd to 24th, SIA "Linus Agro" Cereals and Rapeseed Sales Manager Dace Kazlauska together with Agronomist/Sales Manager Sarmite Naburga visited "Corn days in Poznan" and the exhibition "Agro Show Bednary" in Poland. The experience exchange trip was organized by Syngenta for seed sales representatives from all 3 Baltic countries from various companies that are working in agriculture field.

The main goal of the trip was to visit corn demo fields, with different corn varieties that are already used in Poland and to learn about Syngenta upcoming developments in the corn seed market. For the rest of the trip participants were introduced to winter rape seed and barley seed processing/production processes, visited Agro Show and shared each country's agricultural experience this and last season up till now.

"Corn days"

Various varieties of corn were examined in the demo fields - both newly created hybrids and those already on the Polish market. An insight was provided into the corn sector and its importance in the Polish agricultural sector. In Poland, corn sowings reach 1.7 million ha and occupies about 16% of the total sown area in the country, it is the third most grown crop in the country, immediately after cereals and oilseed rape. Various experiments on corn sowings are carried out on a large scale, testing different varieties, sowing techniques and the most suitable varieties for the climatic and environmental conditions in Poland. Experts are convinced that there are big differences between fodder/silage corn, corn that are used for biogas and food quality corn. As an example, experts mention that a good food quality corn variety must have several characteristics that are less important for silage varieties. The most important features are: strong root system, stem stability, water release from the grain at the end of the vegetation phase and healthy cobs. A strong root system guarantees stability at the beginning and end of vegetation, the stability of the stems, in turn, gives a better chance of harvesting a standing variety even after a strong autumn winds. It should be noted that in Poland mainly grows fodder corn.

According to the recommendations of Polish experts, the best soil that is suitable for growing corn is a warm, soft soil with not too much nitrogen. The advantage of growing corn is that it tolerates many years of monoculture, but it also has its own needs for field treatment and preparation for sowing. Corn is a plant that is sensitive to excessive soil compaction, so if it is decided to reduce the number of cultivation procedures on a maize farm, it must always be remembered that the soil must be properly prepared during sowing, including keeping in mind the pre-crop and the planned post-crop. Experts recommend that the field intended for the next sowing of corn should be deeply cultivated. As the experts emphasized during the visit, there are a lot of diseases and pests in maize in Poland, and no such significant problems can be found in Latvia yet. In terms of height, the corn on the visited fields is shorter, and farmers in Poland, the same as in Latvia, are trying to grow 1 quality cob on 1 plant stalk.

Worth keeping in mind – when evaluating the suitability of the corn variety for your farm, pay attention to the type of grain and the shape of the cob. Grain types are mostly divided into Flint and Dent types. The shape of the cob can be flex (cob that adjusts its length and number to the growing conditions) and fix (constant length, filled with grain to top).

NEWS! Next season, Syngenta will offer a new product, MaxiMaize, a new, innovative approach to seed production for the corn silage market. After extensive research and experiments in Poland, MaxiMaize is specially selected and tested maize seed mix with various Syngenta maize varieties. This seed mixture guarantees high quality and yield stability. The results of research and experiments confirm that MaxiMaize gives an increase in both quantitative and qualitative yield increase, because the varieties included in MaxiMaize "motivate each other" to achieve better results. As the experts mentioned in the field visit - the varieties in the mixture highlight the best and eliminate the shortcomings of other included varieties in the same mixture, that's why the best of each added variety stands out. This will help maintain the highest yield potential and quality under different growing conditions.

At the end of the Corn Day, all participants also participated in a seminar about winter oilseed rape and Hyvido (hybrid) barley. A representative of Syngenta Poland presented the seed production cycle, experiments and assortment. Large part of the varieties offered by Syngenta are also sold by Linas Agro (SY Ilona, Aganos, SY Alix, SY Bracooda, Toreroo).

Exhibition "Agro Show"

As part of the experience trip, the specialists also visited the exhibition "Agro Show", in which agricultural machinery companies, producers and distributors of products, as well as companies related to the processing agricultural products, took part. "Agro show" was held on 14 ha big area outdoors. Like the exhibitions taking place in Latvia and other countries, companies presented their products and offered services.

Conclusions after the trip

Dace Kazlauskā: "Getting acquainted with the experience of Polish farmers, I realized that it would be valuable for farmers in Latvia to learn the practice - to use land resources to the maximum. Farms in Poland are engaged in the cultivation of several crops at the same time - it is perfectly common for one farm to grow fruit, rapeseed and potatoes - to cover losses, if any, due to weather or other factors. It is also interesting that farmers in Poland also actively watered their fields (potato plantations, etc.) during periods of drought, so as not to lose the harvest, the issue of watering was also relevant for many farmers in Latvia this summer. And we are definitely waiting for a novelty entering the Latvian market - a mixture of corn seeds."

Sarmite Naburga: "After the trip, I got information about the latest trends in corn variety development and selection, as well as about Syngenta corn seed mix, where there will be 3 varieties of seeds in one package to share the risk of harvest. It is important to note that in Poland 16% of sowings are occupied by maize, as a result it has contributed to the spread of diseases and pests, it is not a problem in Latvia (yet). In Poland, much more attention is being paid to the development of cereal varieties that are resistant to viral diseases and the destruction of aphids in sowings, as viral diseases are becoming an increasing problem. For example, the yellow dwarfism virus, which was already observed in Latvia this spring. In general, it was interesting to communicate with colleagues from other countries about agricultural trends now."

Linas Agro teams says big thank you to the Syngenta team for the opportunity to take part in this trip, from which we brought home a lot of useful information and knowledge. As well as thanks to industry colleagues for sharing their views and ideas and experiences.