Education, training and communication: keys to increase the necessary empowerment of agro-professional women

The II National Forum Agribusiness - Agro-Professional Women has been held this morning in Toledo under the motto 'equality is a task of all', with a huge success of affluence, and an undeniable social awareness in favor of equal opportunities and diversity in the agri-food sector.

A session where the main agents involved in this context have participated, an initiative of the communication agency Siete Agromarketing, which has had the collaboration of: Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias de España, Fepex, Asociación 5 Al Día, D.O. Valdepeñas, and the main professional associations: UPA, COAG and ASAJA, together with their respective associations, FADEMUR, CERES and AMFAR. And with the sponsorship of: ANSEMAT, Syngenta, Liberbank, Covap, Adama, Caser Seguros, Onuba Fruit, John Deere, IM Integral Media (Digital Partner) and Castilla-La Mancha, Toledo City Council and Women's Institute of Castilla-La Mancha (Institutional

Collaborators). The event has been followed in social networks with the hashtag: #mujerAGRO.

> A dynamic session of information, awareness and networking under the motto 'equality is a task for everyone', initiative of Seven Agromarketing

The official opening of the day was given by: Gissele Falcón, general director of Siete Agromarketing, communication agency that promotes the initiative; Charo Navas, director of the Institute of Women in Toledo; Carolina Gutiérrez Ansótegui, deputy general director of Innovation and Modernization of the Rural Environment, D.G. of Rural Development and Forest Policy MAPA; and Juana Velasco Mateos-Aparicio, general secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development MAPA.

During his speech, Gissele Falcón stressed that: "With the collaboration of all, this Forum has already positioned itself as an indisputable space for networking in all those aspects that revolve around equal opportunities in the agri-food chain. We have combined different values ??that have to do with entrepreneurship, innovation and the latest trends, to cover the interest of all those who have a well-defined role in this context, from managers to professionals and businessmen, without forgetting in any case the entrepreneurs".

Charo Navas explained that: "It makes perfect sense to develop this forum in our land, in Castilla-La Mancha, an eminently rural region and a region where the regional government's priority is rural care and equality policies" .

For Carolina Gutiérrez: "Thanks to Siete Agromarketing for inviting the Ministry and for making us participants of being here all together talking about the agroprofessional woman. It is more than evident that the Ministry of Agriculture should continue to lend its support to the agro-professional woman. The justification is given to me by the data we have today. Some are not very flattering and it is true that some have improved, but it is the data that shows that we must continue working. With regard to women in rural areas, we are very well and the representation is almost equal. The

woman, today, represents 49% of the population that lives in the rural environment, with which, the representation would be equalized ".

In the opinion of Juana Velasco: "This forum seems fundamental for me to remove stones from the roads we are on and that, in addition, are already talking about the agrarian world, the seeds that have to bear fruit that we all hope for and that is desirable, which is, in my view, the visualization of women and the empowerment of women. Because women, at present and in reality, have a determining role in all farms, whether they are more or less visible, which is what we are in: making visible that work that determines the viability of a farm. Because her work, her approach, her silent contribution have to be finished and the important role that women have must be given, because that is the way it is in reality. "

Four discussion tables of maximum interest and relevance

Agri-food journalist Álvaro Bárez, collaborator of different media, and executive secretary of the Association of Agri-Food Journalists of Spain (APAE), has moderated the four round tables that have been held, and highlighted during the presentation that: "Toledo is a community where the agri-food sector has an important weight From the point of view of the administration, we are betting on equality, and proof of this is the upcoming implementation of the Statute for Rural Women ". And it is that, also at a national level, the country is in a historic moment that is characterized by the determined path toward parity with the first Spanish Government with more women than men, in addition to the recovery of the Ministry of Equality.

The first of the dialogue tables, under the title "Road to entrepreneurship, Boosting talent", has focused on raising awareness and value that are being developed to promote entrepreneurship among women in the agri-food sector. I have counted on the interventions of: María Lucendo Díaz, Technical Services ASAJA Toledo; Carmen María García, President of the Woman's Week Foundation; Marta Gálvez-Cañero, Academic Director of Aliter, International Business School; and Lola Martín Morcillo, coordinator of FADEMUR Castilla-La Mancha.

In the opinion of María Lucendo Díaz: "In addition to advice and processing, we are providing ASAJA, in our offices, training courses for young people, and among these young people, there is a growing majority of women. that encourage the motorization of technology, for example, now has to hold the Fifth National Contest of the Young Farmer, a contest in which is going to reward a business project presented by boys and girls, especially they are young people under 40, whose project has a technological innovation and which is economically and socially sustainable ".

For Carmen María García: "At the Woman's Week Foundation, we try to have a year that will serve to influence the problem of gender equality that still exists in our society, and to ensure that both the business world and the administrations, the world ofCulture and the social fabric in general, become aware of it and achieve once and for all the necessary change, tear down the glass ceiling and end the stereotypes of the image of women in culture, the media, the sport, etc. For this, we always have the best experts who discuss and make visible the problems that women face every day in their work and personal environment ".

Marta Galvez-Cañero pointed out that: "Without a doubt, the most important thing is to integrate man into reality, since we are going at two different speeds and what it is about is to unite, and not to divide. Prefer to talk about equal opportunities, rather than equality. In addition, it is very important for young women to think before about the 'career of life' rather than the professional career, for its part, it is a priority to eliminate the 25% wage band existing between men and women and, why not, to loby. In fact, in the case of the 'Me too' movement, it has been shown to work. "

For Lola Martín Morcillo: "From Fademur, what we are doing with talent, that in rural areas is not only agriculture and livestock, but there is a lot more talent, there are real initiatives of women that cover all business and commercial activities. What are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing? has been 'nothing, I am a housewife, I work on the farm, I attend my family's trade ...' Then what we fight is against that. "

During the second table, under the title "I am an agro woman, what about you? Experiences ", the objective has been to present experiences of women who are standing out in the agri-food sector, and those who play a representative role of women in the rural sphere before society. It has been composed by: María Fernanda Campa, director of the Quality Department of Greenyard Fresh; Lola Merino, president of AMFAR; Julia Pérez Correa, president of Mujeres Progresistas de Alcalá de Henares; and Noelia Serrano, president of CERES Castilla-La Mancha.

For María Fernanda Campa: "Women have contributed to agriculture and their business since the ancestors tenacity, resolution and effectiveness. Spain is a great matriarchy where the managers of small farms have always been women, collaborating with all the tasks and marketing the products since the origin of 'barter'. They have been and are also the great accountants and investors of these exploitations and those who had a long-term vision, since they managed the survival of their heirs. The man, on the other hand, fought, lived politics, hunted or, simply, worked without the burden of this management. I must add that women, at all times, raise their children and carry the logistics and needs of the home, in parallel with this work ".

For her part, Lola Merino pointed out that: "ANFAR is a national federation that has been defending the rights of Spanish rural women for almost 30 years. Currently we have implementation throughout the national territory, we have nearly 90,000 affiliates throughout Spain and we have representation in all areas, ie: from the national level, with a direct dialogue with both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Equality ; We are members of the State Council of NGOs, where there is a representation of each of the Spanish groups. "

Regarding Julia Pérez Correa, she has indicated that: "I believe that the equality agenda is open to different realities and priorities, depending on the countries and continents we are looking at. For example, in Spain rural women are subject to double days, lower incomes, less ability to contribute to their pensions, less capacity for conciliation and, until recently, they were denied co-ownership of land and family farms. In other countries of the world, women work the land, but they do not have access to property, nor when they become widows, they are expelled from their property by the relatives of their husband, they have no right to inherit. In addition, rural women have very little access to medical care, they have to travel many kilometers to have prenatal or pregnancy assistance, and deaths occur due to complications in childbirth. In all countries is the scourge of gender violence that affects, according to the United Nations, one out of every three women in the world. "

Finally, during his speech, Noelia Serrano has indicated that: "Over time, I have been strengthening in the agricultural field. In my family, unfortunately, we met the ruin for the agricultural sector, but after a while I, the smallest of the house, decided that for me that was not going to be a drag, that I really like the countryside and me That has never scared me and, therefore, I decided to bet again on agriculture. "

After the break for coffee and networking, the third of the tables has been developed under the

theme "Importance of communication as a means of change", with the purpose of making known what is being done and what can be done from the media to achieve gender equality in the agri-food world. He has counted with the interventions of: Soledad de Juan Arechederra, presenter of the Onda Agraria Program; Humberto del Horno, journalist delegate of Europa Press Castilla-La Mancha; Yolanda Monje, deputy director of Informativos of CMM Media; and Rubén Villanueva, responsible for Communication of COAG Nacional.

Soledad de Juan Arechederra: "For three or four years, we created a specific section in the program, called 'Rural Woman', with a lot of love and as a little window that we open to the entrepreneur woman. We collect testimonies from women, for example, in a small town in Zamora or Alicante, which they undertake. We also talk to the associations and organizations about the measures they take, the plans they initiate or the days they make but, above all, talk to the protagonist: with that woman who has decided to start making jams in a small town in the province of Ciudad Real, and we spoke with her to know her testimony, to tell us how it started and how it came about. "

In the opinion of Humberto del Horno: "It is always interesting to talk, not only about the role of the media, but also about the need for the representative entities of the tor to know their activities and 'know how

For her part, Yolanda Monje pointed out that: "I represent the regional television and radio of Castilla-La Mancha and I think that, without a doubt, this has much more journey, because the consumer, everything that happens to you and all your worries, affect them. There is a part, to open that information that is specialized and that has to remain so, we believe that it does. In this way, the consumer will know much more about that reality and will be more sensitive to it ".

In addition, Rubén Villanueva explained that: "Rural women have a much more active behavior in social networks, use them more and are more participatory than men. Therefore, I believe that they

are the ones that are going to set trends since, in general terms, they have adapted more and better to technology. Initiatives such as 'Cattle Ranchers', reflect the dynamism of women in this sector. At the level of COAG and CERES, organization of rural women linked to this agrarian organization, social networks have served to make visible the presence of thousands of associates after our acronyms. They have always been, but have never been so visible thanks to new channels such as social media, a movement that has emerged throughout the agricultural sector to give light to the essential work of women in the field, which has been historically invisible.

To conclude, the fourth and last of the round tables has focused on making known what is the vision of gender equality and what can be done from the agri-food sector in order to achieve it, from the perspective of top management. Under the title: "Equality is the task of all: The role of women in the agrifood sector", have participated: Victoria Ruiz, responsible for Development of ANSEMAT; José Luis Rojas, director of Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias Castilla-La Mancha; Pilar Giménez, Director of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs at Syngenta; and María Soledad García Bermúdez, Director of the Agribusiness Business of Liberbank in Castilla-La Mancha Oeste.

For Victoria Ruiz: "The evolution experienced by women's access to the different ANSEMAT Work Commissions is proportional to the one that the Commissions themselves, and even the Association itself, have experienced in recent years. Throughout this time, our desire has been to position the Association, through the Work Commissions, within a current framework, not only in accordance with the demands of the market, but also looking for those who participate in them to be represented the interests of their companies and the work they carry out. Therefore, it would be impossible to claim that, in the current context in which women are an active part of the development of our sector, holding different positions of responsibility, they were not participants in the ANSEMAT Work Commissions, understood as a forum for meeting in the one that converge analysis, exchange and dialogue, as dynamic tools that build the future of our sector ".

In the opinion of José Luis Rojas: "The latest figures we use establish that we have associates in the 435 cooperatives of Castilla-La Mancha, of relevant social and economic interest, because then there is another type of more familiar associationism. The studies that we do separate them because they have a different consideration. These cooperatives have 162,000 members associated with them; the percentage of members is around 24%, that is, 39,000 members in Castilla-La Mancha, at the level of owners. It is a theoretical number, because then many members are associated as a mechanism for the exploitation to circulate in the name of the woman, when who really takes the reins of exploitation is the husband ".

Pilar Giménez has stated that: "My experience is from the company, a company that is dedicated to providing products and services to farmers and the rural world. What I can say is that, from my experience, and I have been working in the sector for more than 30 years, I have seen a tremendous evolution, both internally in the field of the company, and in the rural world, agricultural per se ".

Finally, María Soledad García Bermúdez has opined that: "Within our entity, what is the agri-food sector is the most important, because we are in the territories that are eminently agrarian. In Castilla-La Mancha the weight of agriculture is essential, the engine of Castilla-La Mancha is agriculture. Where I move, we always try to put all the weight, put specialists in the agrarian issue. At PAC levels, we are leaders in the sector, with a share of 25%, we have some 900 offices throughout Liberbank, among which 300 are in Castilla-La Mancha and the majority are in rural ar

eas. "

The number of initiatives that encourage women to empower themselves in rural areas grows

Although in recent years various entities related to the agri-food sector have been organizing specific days in which the role of women in the rural area has been highlighted, no means of communication had raised that flag, bringing together all those organizations and entities of diverse nature and orientation that have something to contribute to this debate. "That was precisely the reason for the success of the first edition of #mujeragro, and I think we have managed to repeat it in this second edition", explained Gissele Falcón.

For his part, Álvaro Bárez has identified five key conclusions: "Education, training and information, these three words are fundamental to achieving equal opportunities. You have to involve man in equality. We have to go from the protagonism of the speech to the protagonism of the Common Agrarian Policy. In communication many of you know, and I reiterate, that if you do not communicate you do not exist. Maybe we have to play two bands between empowerment and normalization, maybe now it's that moment. And, as has also been said during the morning, it is interesting to create links and networking, and not only among women, but also between women and men, precisely to reach that equality ".

(*) Media Partners: Fruit Today, Interempresas Media, Markets and CMM (Castilla La Mancha Media).

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