The agricultural activity can and should be erected as a solution to climate change

By Milagros Jurado

The agricultural activity is the origin of 11% of greenhouse gas emissions ... compared to 70% that represents energy activity ... Some figures that show that agriculture is not the main catalyst for climate change; In fact, it is one of the sectors most interested in reversing this process, since it is among the most affected by it. The Agricultural Forum "Agriculture and Climate Change"**, held on January 19th in Seville by** the Cajasol Foundation **has served as a debate framework for these and other issues, such as the importance that agricultural activity has traditionally had as a barrier against desertification of areas , with environmental crops such as the olive grove, or ecosystems such as the Dehesa, in which the hand of man has been determining for its conservation.**

In this Forum, sponsored by Agrobank and which has had the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment of the Government of Spain, the European Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (CAPDER) of the Andalusian Government, *its speakers have agreed that, regardless of the responsibility it may have as one of*

the many causes -although not the most important- of Climate Change, the agrarian sector is emerging more as a solution than as a problem, although for this, *it requires the commitment and participation of all its agents.*

In this line, on the opening day, the president of the Cajasol Foundation, Antonio Pulido has considered vital the awareness-raising role of the whole society so that the fight against Climate Change is effective. The territorial director of CaixaBank in Western Andalusia, Rafael Herrador Martínez; the General Secretary of Agriculture and Food of the MAPAMA, Carlos Cabana Pulido, and the Minister of Environment and Territory Planning of the Andalusian Government, José Fiscal López also participated in the opening ceremony of this event

On the other hand, Rafael Herrador has indicated the commitment that his organization has been showing with the Fight against the Climatic Change, "independently of any global strategy and from a complete conviction". In that sense, he referred to the three-year CaixaBank plan for 2018 focused on that goal.

For Carlos Cabanas, *the agricultural sector should not be oblivious to climate change or its possible solutions, as it is a problem that directly concerns it*.

In his speech, the Andalusian Regional Minister for the Environment, José Fiscal, highlighted among the initiatives that his Government has been developing against climate change, the Draft Law on Measures against Climate Change, *which, among other actions, includes the promotion of energy renewable in the agricultural sector and facing its final stretch in the* Andalusian Parliament.

> José Fiscal: "Climate Change is a matter for everyone and we must all involve ourselves in restraining it. Andalusia is one of the first Autonomous Communities to take measures in this regard"

For Fiscal, faced with the threat of climate change, *"we must be able to promote an agrarian sector that feels its foundations on a socially responsible and economically sustainable activity"*.

The technical presentations have begun with the intervention of Cristina Lobillo, Chief of Staff of the European Commissioner of Action for Climate and Energy, who has offered a global vision and perspective of Climate Change in the European Union. In her speech, she stressed that *"the* Paris Agreement *is the first international commitment that has been made to reduce emissions of Carbon Dioxide"*. Lobillo has called attention to the fact that it is the first time that the EU wants agriculture to contribute to the fight against Climate Change, a proposal that will come into force in Spain in 2021, coinciding with the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Precisely on this issue, *the speaker stressed that Commissioner Hogan has as a priority that the CAP is linked to more current issues such as digitalization or Climate Change, reinforcing the commitment to research*.

In this line, Carlos Cabanas has indicated during his speech the need to adopt fertilizer measures that allow a more moderate and productive use that would reduce pollution.

> The General Secretary of Agriculture and Food MAPAMA has raised, as a future perspective, "the need to work with the CAP as an effective method to curb climate change"

He also announced that *the* Government *will start meetings with the sector to continue advancing in a strategy against Climate Change that, in his opinion, stands as an opportunity to find and develop more sustainable and efficient models and profitable*.

In the conference Climate Change and the Andalusian rural environment, moderated by the president of the Commission for the Study of Climate Change of the Congress of Deputies, José Juan Díaz Trillo, and with the participation of the Deputy Minister of Environment and Planning of the Territory of the Junta de Andalucía, Jose Luis Hernandez Garijo, and the Secretary General of Agriculture and Food of the CAPDER, Rafael Peral Sorroche, *it has been pointed out that agriculture, although with its share of responsibility, is more a sufferer of the consequences of Climate Change*, that a polluter and that said problem, given its complexity, must be addressed from multiple approaches. *In the case of Andalusia, it is a region especially vulnerable to Climate Change, a problem that will affect the pockets of farmers* and on which they are encouraged to continue acting "because it is on top of us". A problem that affects especially the agrarian activity of this autonomous community "is not exclusively Andalusian", so the need to convince Europe not to leave Andalusia alone in this task has been highlighted.

After finalizing conferences, two round tables have been developed in which experts and representatives of private organizations have dealt with the influence of agricultural activity on Climate Change and how it affects the sector itself.

Among its main reflections, it should be noted that although there is still much to be done and there is great uncertainty in this scenario, *research, without neglecting the transfer and training aimed at the sector, can play an essential role in the fight against climate change*. The need to create shared value chains has also been addressed, *favoring that producers who bet on sustainable systems receive a fair price*, and that the Government's commitment to renewable energies be more determined, which would also contribute to reducing costs in the agricultural sector. *A strategic sector for the provision of food that, in the words of the Adviser to the* National Climate Council*, Valeriano Ruiz Hernández, "should be the example and responsibility that we humans must put on to face Climate Change"*.

The closure of this conference has been borne by the director of AgroBank, Carmen Sabrí, and the vice president of the Cajasol Institute of Studies, Guillermo Sierra Molina.