

Why farmers are offended by buzzwords like ‘sustainable agriculture’

The Risk-Monger spent the day on a large Belgian farm having the opportunity to see the challenges and opportunities farmers are presently facing. I was able to tour the fields and barns, hear how they are trying to address sustainability questions. I was impressed but I could not help thinking how the idealists (those cosmopolitan zealots who run activist campaigns to try to handcuff these farmers) should take the opportunity of going out and getting a dose of reality rather than pontificating on issues they know nothing about. Pity that on this day they chose not to attend.

Sustainable agriculture is a buzzword that made me cringe almost as much as the phrase: “integrated pest management (IPM)”. Both of these terms imply that farmers have not been sustainable or care about their land and need educating. This is offensive. These are terms coined by activists and readily adopted by EU officials who don’t even have window-boxes to cultivate.

From my childhood, I can assure you that no farmer wants to use pesticides. They are expensive, hazardous to use and are short-term solutions. So using as little pesticide as possible has always been a farmer’s objective. Sustainable agriculture and IPM are not concepts developed by some clever Brussels civil servant – they are realities lived on the farm from the time children start to help their parents.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: Down on the farm, reality always trumps naïve idealism