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PICLÉG': A 'RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND STAKEHOLDERS' ALL-TOGETHER INITIATIVE FOR INTEGRATED PRODUCTION OF FIELD VEGETABLES IN FRANCE

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Although representing an important activity in Europe with a share of 8.9% of the overall output value of the European agricultural industry, field vegetables are often considered as minor crops and concerned by minor uses, as far as availability of registered pesticides is concerned. Vegetables are recognized for their nutritional value and for their impact on human health. Consumers are encouraged to eat at least 5 portions of fruits or vegetables a day. To meet the expectations of consumers and the society, the production of vegetables has to meet high standards with respect to sustainability and safety. To face those challenges, French field vegetables growers called for an ambitious research program on sustainable cropping systems.

Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Agriculture, INRA decided, in 2007, to launch a Scientific Interest Group gathering the growers Union (Légumes de France), advisory services (CTIFL, Chambres d'Agriculture, experimental stations), and stakeholders from marketing (FELCOOP, INTERFEL) to processing (UNILET), called "Groupement d'Intérêt Scientifique pour la Production Intégrée des Cultures légumières" (GIS PICLég™). The purpose of the Group is to identify gaps in knowledge for implementing integrated production strategies, deduct research and development questions to be addressed, build-up common collaborative research and development projects, organize the follow-up of the projects and the promotion of the results towards end-users.

So far, 23 projects have been funded, including systemic approach for integrated production and economic analysis in production basins, integrated crop protection against soil-borne pests and diseases at the crop succession scale including biofumigation, insects control through landscape management and chemical ecology, analyzing of trade-offs between fertilization, crop vulnerability and product quality.