The Challenge of Global Leadership in enhancing farmer outcomes
Global Conversation with William Rolleston (South Pacific Sera)

On Monday the 7th of November we had the pleasure to have, as a guest in our class, William Rolleston who is a South Canterbury farmer and founding shareholder and director of South Pacific Sera. South Pacific Sera, located in the pristine central south island region of New Zealand, produces top quality donor animal blood, serum and protein products for use in therapeutic, cell culture, microbiology and immunology applications around the world. It has operated in the biological fields since 1988, building up an international reputation for quality and service. With an extensive base of established products and capabilities, it is constantly seeking new ways to be at the forefront of this progressive industry. William Rolleston is on the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment's Science Committee. He is the National President of Federated Farmers of New Zealand. As member of the World Farmers Organization he gave us a speech talking about developing policies which can favor and support farmers' causes in developed and developing countries around the world.

He discussed about the issue of agriculture starting from looking at the Global Context. Nowadays the amount of population is increasing but at the same time the available land for food production is decreasing; farms are getting bigger but the number of farms is dropping. Meanwhile the society is changing, for example people have less children and so the percentage of old people exceeds the one of young people. The habits of people related to food are changing too: the protein consumption is growing up, in particular as GDP goes up the amount of consumption of animal proteins goes up, and there is an increased demand for safer and healthier food. How can we achieve the needs requested by the population? Science, as influential people like Cameron, Obama and Gates stated, results as a powerful tool. There are many precision technologies and agriculture techniques that can be used: for example regarding technologies we have GPS technology in field mapping or biological technology in selection breeding and gene editing; while precision agriculture means measuring and tracking crops and lands, managing farm's productivity and environmental impacts, applying water and seeds in a precise way,

specific breeding and genetic design.

He then introduced the controversial topic of GMOs quoting the EU report on safety: “the main conclusion to be drawn from the efforts of more than 130 research projects, covering a period of more than 25 years of research, and involving more than 500 independent research groups, is that biotechnology, and in particular GMOs, are not per se more risky than e.g. conventional plant breeding technology”. Concerns such as allergies, farmers suicides in India, cattle dying in India/Germany, rats developing tumors, pigs with inflamed stomachs and poor yields have not stood up to scientific scrutiny. Considering the opinion of William Rolleston they are not a causation but a correlation.

One of the most important part in order to help farmers is joining International agreements that stimulate trade and exports. Taking his own country as an example, he explained that New Zealand is the first country to have a trade deal with China. Moreover 90% of what is grown represents exports and 25% of what is consumed comes from imports. New Zealand is known to be a big presence in international markets providing 32% of global production of kiwi fruits and 38% of sheep meat. To conclude, he summarized the many challenges World Farmers have to face: for instance the access to land, water, nutrients, technology, markets, capital, infrastructures, human resources. They should work together not only with each other in the global research alliance to share knowledge but also together with the environment, in order to adapt to the climate change.

Us students of the first year of Global Governance have not yet had the chance to discuss a lot about climate change and environmental issues, but we are well aware of how important these issues are. The course of Global Governance cares and work a lot on climate change and environmental issues in general, considering that are problems of great relevance in our contemporary world. In the month of January us students of Global Governance will be involved in a 4-days Climate change workshop that we hope will make us understand better the problems that are leading our planet to destruction.

Martina Forbicini and Elsa Elsa Maria Festa