

A look back with Sylvie Dutartre, CEO of GEVES 2009-2013

The beginning of the 2009-2013 period was marked by the relocation to the Anjou region, moving the Head Office from Paris and creating a new experimental station.

Staff reclassifications were necessary and for those who had agreed to move, a period of working in a temporary space next to the SNES made it possible to wait for the buildings to be constructed.

Visits to the two sites sometimes held surprises, such as the unexpected discovery that an opening had not been left in the concrete for the only window of the CEO's office, thus condemning the person to a dark, windowless room...!

At the Anjouère station, the agronomic challenge was taken up brilliantly and very quickly, given the poor quality of the farm's soils, which had long been neglected. In the end, the destruction of the plots was mainly the work of anti-GMOs, who came at night to destroy the trials of herbicide-resistant varieties.

Between 2009 and 2013, GEVES proposed to extend VAT to VATE, and to develop, test and implement new protocols, which were often more complex than those for more traditional trials to evaluate the agronomic and technological value of varieties.

It was therefore necessary to be creative and accept to leave a certain form of routine, even to question certain previous protocols.

For the DUS, the experience acquired with maize was extended to other species, making it possible to plant only a much smaller number of species in the field and thus reduce costs considerably.

The period was also used to position experts from the SNES, SEV and BioGEVES departments within the European bodies of ISTA and UPOV.

INOV joined GEVES, and GEVES positioned itself to obtain national leadership on genetic resources and to take charge of the national coordination for the conservation of these resources.

In agreement with the President, the structure of the management team was reorganised with the arrival of BioGEVES, no longer positioned as working solely for the SNES but in support of the two GEVES departments i.e. seeds and varieties.

The strongest and most ambitious commitment of GEVES during this period was its involvement in the PIA research projects: AKER, of course, but also PEAMUST, BREEDWHEAT, SUNFLOW, GENIUS, etc., for the greater benefit and enrichment of the teams concerned and in order to position GEVES more in applied research, in connection with and in support of fundamental research.

Indeed, GEVES must absolutely retain and develop a research component in its core activities.