

Interview with Mr Patrick Grootaert, Head of the Department of Entomology of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences

14 February 2013 / By Silvia Curbelo Betancort

Are insects a potential and sustainable source of proteins for feeding animals? Why?

Insects are indeed a very good and sustainable source of proteins for feeding animals because they contain all the essential and required amino-acids, as well as fatty acids, vitamins and minerals.

Are insects a potential and sustainable source of proteins for human beings in the future? Why?

The same answer as for animals. For humans they are not only suitable because of their complete nutrients' content, but also because of the presence of unsaturated fatty acids.

What would be the advantage of insect food in comparison with other innovative solutions such as in-vitro meat?

Insects can be considered as a complete natural product while in vitro meat is artificial, what is not negative per se, of course.

How could entomophagy contribute to enhance food security in the future?

Food security is a very important issue and quality control (safety) is a must. At first only reared insects will be allowed for consumption and high standards will guarantee food security. Collecting and merchandising insects from the wild is not yet possible since no quality and security standards are available for the security inspectors.

If edible insect species are healthy and nutritive, why is its consumption not regularized by law yet in most of the European countries?

Because in Europe there is no tradition of consuming insects and it is only recently that international organizations such as FAO started to promote insects as food and feed.

Do you think food companies will offer insect-based products, now that eating insects is legal in Belgium?

Of course food companies will start to commercialize insects as food and as feed!

Thank you!