

Press release

## InVivo Group and Soufflet Group enter into exclusive negotiations with a view to a ground-breaking combination

- This combination would pave the way for the creation of a French champion in agriculture and agribusiness with an international footprint;
- The combination of their largely complementary activities would allow *InVivo Group* and *Soufflet Group* to maintain their organization by activities as well as their consistencies, positionings and respective identities in the long term;
- The new Group would be well-positioned to address the challenges of food sovereignty, competitiveness and sustainable development of French agriculture and the agribusiness sectors.

**Paris – Nogent-sur-Seine, 13 January 2021** – *InVivo Group*, a leading national French agricultural cooperative group operating in several key countries, and *Soufflet Group*, a French family group in food and agriculture of international scale, today announced that they have entered into exclusive negotiations regarding the acquisition of 100% of *Soufflet Group*'s capital by *InVivo Group*.

The agricultural and agribusiness sector is faced with multiple challenges: societal challenges driven by new consumer expectations (better food, proximity, transparency...), environmental challenges (fight against global warming, preservation of biodiversity, soil and water resources) and technological challenges (digitalization, biotechnologies...). At the same time, it must address the issue of food sovereignty, exacerbated by the sanitary crisis. Finally, at the economic and demographic levels, the sector must ensure the critical necessity of providing the planet with healthy and sustainable food, while promoting the farmers' work.

The combination of *InVivo Group* and *Soufflet Group* would lead to the creation of a French champion in agriculture and agribusiness with an international footprint, driven by the complementarity of their respective activities and the pooling of their resources. The new Group would be able to address the challenges and issues of societal, environmental and technological nature facing the agricultural and agribusiness sectors as well as the issue of food sovereignty while creating value for both farmers and all stakeholders of the French agri-business sector.

With combined revenues of nearly €10 billion, about half of which would be generated outside France, and more than 12,500 employees worldwide, this new Group would have a strong positioning both in France and internationally, operating more than 90 industrial sites, including 59 sites in France. Reaching such a critical size would offer a unique opportunity for an undisputed French champion to develop and provide, together with its agricultural and industrial partners, sustainable solutions to address these challenges and ensure their implementation at large scale, while strengthening its position vis-à-vis the European and international competition. Both would be based on significant investments in innovation, the ecological transition as well as the agronomic and digital transformations of the agricultural and agribusiness sectors.

**Philippe Mangin, Chairman of *InVivo Group*, comments:** *"Access to food has become a strategic issue reinforcing the need to preserve the food sovereignty of both France – the 'Made in France' label – and Europe. Bringing our two Groups together would enable us to address this challenge by providing a 100% French answer and would represent a key driving force for the agricultural transition and the interests of 'la Ferme France'."*

The combination of the strengths of these two major French players would significantly enhance excellence and sustainability in the key sectors of wheat, barley, vegetal protein and winery – from the field to the consumer. The joint know-how and expertise of the two Groups would thus meet the expectations of citizens who are concerned about the quality and security of the food chain, the preservation of the environment and the promotion of territories and agricultural production.

**Michel Soufflet, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the *Soufflet Group*, says:** *"Soufflet Group's heritage and family values remain the key assets of our identity and play a fundamental role in the relationship of trust that we have developed with farmers, our partners for more than 120 years. With this project, we would be able to continue serving and supporting our farmer customers to strive, as they have always done with us in the past."*



The preservation of the *Soufflet* brand and the retention of its talents would constitute the corner stone of this combination, which would enable the new Group to leverage the best of *InVivo Group's* and *Soufflet Group's* values, positioning and know-how, benefiting all stakeholders.

**Jean-Michel Soufflet, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Soufflet Group, adds:** *“The success of this combination would be based on the preservation of each Group’s identity, continuing to capitalize on their roots, reputations as well as local and international footprints, in order to enable them to pursue their respective development and serve their partners, whether they are industrials or farmers, following the dynamics of the cereals sectors built up over the years. By joining forces with InVivo, our family Group would find a Franco-French solution to preserve its identity, ensure the continuity of its activities and maintain both its ties in Nogent-sur-Seine and its regional presence.”*

Driven by a common commitment to social and environmental responsibility and supported by enhanced investments and innovation to promote and preserve agro-resources, the combination of the two Groups would accelerate access of all farmers to the latest and most environmentally friendly solutions, with a view to a large-scale implementation by “*la Ferme France*”.

**Thierry Blandinières, Chief Executive Office of InVivo, concludes:** *“Combining our common activities in the trading of cereals would strengthen the international positioning of the new Group. The complementarity of all our other activities as well as the consolidation of both our material and human resources, our legitimate expertise and unique agronomic knowledge, developed over decades, and our strong territorial presence would allow us to operate across the entire value chain. We would thus be ideally positioned to respond to the increasingly complex challenges arising from the agricultural and food transition that only major players are able to handle.”*

The employee representative bodies of both Groups have been informed of this project today and an information-consultation procedure would soon be launched. The combination of the two Groups would be subject to the prior authorization of the competent anti-trust authorities. The transaction could be finalized by the end of 2021.

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**About InVivo Group**

*InVivo Group* is a leading national French agricultural cooperative group, bringing together 192 cooperatives. Its purpose is to promote the agricultural and food transition towards a resilient agro-system. *InVivo* is organized around four key activities: *Bioline by InVivo* (agriculture), *InVivo Retail* (garden centres and food retail), *InVivo Wine* (wine) and *InVivo Grains* (grain trade) – and a transversal entity dedicated to innovation – *InVivo Digital Factory*. *InVivo* employs 5,873 collaborators across 19 countries. Its 2019-2020 revenues amounted to €5.1 billion. Find out more: [www.invivo-group.com](http://www.invivo-group.com).

**About Soufflet Group**

*Soufflet* is a family group in food and agriculture of international scale. It operates in the barley, wheat and rice and pulses sectors and provides support for vine growers. The largest family-owned grain buyer in Europe, it also operates on the international cereals markets through its trading subsidiary *Soufflet Négoce*. In barley, it is a major operator on the world malt market in Europe, Asia and South America. In wheat, it is one of Europe’s biggest millers and an expert in formulating tailor-made ingredients. It also designs and makes enzymes and sourdough; *Soufflet* is a significant manufacturer of bakery goods in France and Portugal, and it is active in the fast-food sector. The *Soufflet Group* invests in research and innovation to add value to agricultural resources, with a view to fostering sustainable development. The Group employs 6,851 staff in 19 countries. Its 2019-2020 revenues amounted to €4.9 billion. Find out more: [www.soufflet.com](http://www.soufflet.com).