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# GAIN Report

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## France

**Post:** Paris

### **Senator Didier Guillaume named as the new Minister of Agriculture**

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

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**Report Highlights:**

On October 16, 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron named Senator Didier Guillaume as the new French Minister for Agriculture and Food. He replaces the previous Minister of Agriculture, Stephane Travert, who had been in the cabinet about 16 months. Minister Guillaume has strong connections to organic agriculture, as his region of Drome is one of the leading producers of organics in France.

## General Information:



Didier Guillaume's nomination is a part of a wider French government reshuffle following the resignation of the Minister of Environment in August and the Minister of Interior earlier in October. Some French environmentalists and political commentators blamed former Minister of Agriculture Travert for the resignation of the popular former Minister of Environment Hulot. Hulot and Travert publically debated the use of glyphosate and non-organic, commercial farming. French farmers and the French Farm Union criticized Travert as not being a strong enough advocate for them within President Macron's Administration.

Most farms groups including the largest farm union (FNSEA) welcomed Didier Guillaume's nomination, recognizing his strong links to the French farm sector and urging him to be pragmatic in dealing with the challenges faced by French farmers. Some journalists have noted he has less experience in the EU-wide context.

Agriculture Minister Guillaume (59) has never held a high-level cabinet position before this appointment. Didier Guillaume was elected to the French Senate in 2008 and re-elected in 2014. He was previously the mayor of Bourg de Peage (1995 – 2004) and president of the Department Council of Drome from 2004 until 2015. During his tenure as president, Drome became the second largest organic region of France with sixteen percent of its cultivated area in organic production and one third of farmers.

Minister Guillaume has had previous experience in agriculture. In 1998-2002, he was political adviser to Agricultural Minister Jean Glavany. He was in charge of leading the passage of the 2013 French Farm Modernization Act in the Senate until recently was a member of the Senate's study group on farm and food economy. In 2009-2010 he was on the High Council on Biotechnology. He also co-chaired the parliamentary club on organic agriculture in 2013. In his department, he set up a platform ([www.agrilocal.fr](http://www.agrilocal.fr)) that aimed at supply local schools with organic and/or locally grown food products and that program has now expanded to over half of the regions in France. More recently, during the recent Senate vote on the French Farm and Food Law in July 2018, he opposed the ban on glyphosate. Following his nomination as Minister of Agriculture, environmental NGOs criticized this vote on social networks.

