

MANAGEMENT OF FARMING, FOOD AND FORESTRY SYSTEMS & VALORIZATION OF THE TERRITORY

Agriculture products and food processing

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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CHALLENGES

- Increase the engagement and involvement of consumers;
- Create a more personalized and customized food supply;
- Develop a more flexible, dynamic and sustainable food system.

PRESENTATION

Food Drink Europe promotes the European Technology Platform – Food for Life, an initiative that aims to set a pre-competitive research agenda in many areas of research related to the competitiveness and sustainability of the food system. The current iteration, initiated in 2015 (etp.fooddrinkeurope.eu), is presented under the sub-title *step-changing the innovation power and impact of the European food industry to the benefit of a sustainable society*. This is undeniably a food industry initiative, with many of the research areas proposed related to production technologies and the consumer. However, even a casual reading of the ETP-F4L Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), available on the site given above, shows that the food industry recognizes the need to contemplate the competitiveness of all parts of the food system if a real step change is to occur.

In the SRIA, three major research targets are presented; (i) to increase the engagement and involvement of consumers; (ii) to create a more personalized and customized food supply and (iii) develop a more flexible, dynamic and sustainable food system. Each of

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these is developed with a number of specific actions proposed. Just reading the titles, it is obvious that there is a key role for the farmer in each of these targets.

A brief and highly selective presentation of the SRIA was used as the opening to the work session, in an attempt to show how new challenges related to food processing can have relevance to the smaller producer.



MAIN OUTCOMES FROM THE DISCUSSIONS

In the working session itself, a number of quite varied initiatives were presented and discussed and at first sight it was difficult to identify any common themes. However, in the discussion sessions there was a recurrence of certain themes when the subject of innovation was discussed. In the first place, cooperation between different actors (farmer, researcher, IT provider, technology transfer specialists, etc) is seen itself to be a driver of innovation. The central position of the farmer was underlined not as the end-of-the line beneficiary, but as an active agent helping to design the innovation. Another point that was strongly made was that completing the full cycle of an innovation project at a local level can be a solution in itself but also the basis of a wider application of the innovation. Also worthy of note was the recognition that local and specific knowledge of the context in which a product is produced is very important to the success of any innovation developed around that product.

When debating digitization, much discussion was had on the positive, enabling role this can have on traceability and transparency. These are obviously key enablers of food safety, but also critical to support value-added claims along the chain to end consumers. Claims based on territory, variety, method of production, etc. can add considerable value to products, but the message must be supportable at the risk of trust being lost with the consumer. Likewise, the possibilities digital technologies offer to gain market and business insights can be seen as a form of democratization of access. Finally, it was recognized that, as in many other fields of activity, data gathered and stored can hold much more power than is first recognized. The more that digital technology is applied in the farm and for the farmer, the more data will be gathered for a specific purpose. However, a measurement taken for a specific purpose, when combined with other measurements that in some way relate to this data, for example data taken from the same sites or over the same time period of time, brings a new level of information. When multiple sources of apparently unlinked data can be analyzed together – big data – unforeseen uses might, and often are found.

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INNOVATION PROJECTS

At this thematic session, each participant assisted to the presentation of 3 of the following posters:

- **CompetitiveSouthBerries** – Innovative, competitive and sustainable off season small fruits production systems
- **Control of Monilinia spp. in stone fruit** - Use of prediction models and cultural practices
- **GREENTASTE** - A New base for dressings and sauces with high nutritional value;
- **iCheese** - Cynara innovation for best cheese
- **LACTIES** - Innovation, Eco-efficiency and safety in micro, small and medium sized dairy industries;
- **LegValue** - Fostering sustainable legume-based farming systems and agri-feed and food chains in the EU
- **MeMoGen** - Development of methods for early detection of metabolic disorders and improvement of animal health in dairy cows
- **Nature Bioactive Food** - Optimization of natural bioactive ingredients production from Portuguese traditional fruits and aromatic plants
- **Optimization of Idiazabal PDO milk collection**
- **VINSACLIMA** - Evaluations of innovative strategies for adaptation in vineyard and cellar to the climate change

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