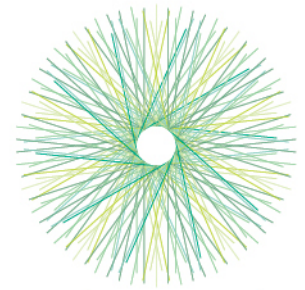


Press article

Knowledge systems

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eip-agri
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

Press article 500words

How farmers and researchers across Europe learn from each other

Thinking out of the box to co-create and share knowledge

The future agriculture will be an agriculture of knowledge. Not only research, but also advisory services, demonstration farms, farmers' organisations and networks are at the heart of these changes. Approaches to knowledge exchange, learning and innovation in agriculture are rapidly changing. In the past, it may have appeared sufficient to work out solutions in a research context and then pass them on to the farmer. Nowadays new and better ways to share knowledge and expertise are considered essential to keep agriculture and food production competitive and rural areas vibrant in the 21st century. Farmers, researchers, advisers, businesses should work together and share all useful information. Thinking out of the box is key.

New tools and approaches are already being used to enhance knowledge exchange, learning and innovation in the agricultural, forestry and rural development sectors. For instance the UK "Field Laboratories" where more than 750 farmers have tested and developed new tools and techniques in practical 'field labs', now extending into a wider network of farmer-led research called "Innovative Farmers". Or a Belgian goats' farm where an Advisory Board composed of a CEO of a biscuit factory, a manager of a hospital and a retired CEO of a cheese factory supported the future development of the business. They helped to channel new ideas and information into the business. Not to forget the Finnish agricultural press which has taken new directions, including the increasing use of the internet and social media. Or the online Twitter community #AgriChatUK which, every Thursday, creates evening conversations between 19 500 farmers and others around contemporary agricultural issues in the UK.

Although many countries and their farmers are already taking action, knowledge flows in European agriculture can be improved. The real knowledge needs of farmers can be addressed better. Farmers clearly stated this at an EIP-AGRI seminar on agricultural knowledge systems with comments such as "Researchers could learn more from farmers and provide practical solutions" and "Farmers do not need one size fits all advice – our needs are individual and farm-specific". Interactive innovation, where farmers, advisers, researchers and others work together, is key to tackle this, combining various types of knowledge and developing new ideas. Funding is available to do so: EIP-AGRI Operational Groups may be funded by Rural Development Programmes under the Common Agricultural Policy, while the EU's research policy Horizon 2020 supports multi-actor projects and thematic networks. The new solutions will not only be shared within the own community, but also through the EU-wide EIP-AGRI network. Making good use of scarce resources, it would be valuable if the answer to a question found by a Polish farmer and researcher can be shared with an Italian farmer with a similar problem.

Nowadays, agricultural professionals need all the brains they can get, to tackle the complex challenges they are facing: scientific, organisational and practical.

Press article 250words

How farmers and researchers across Europe learn from each other Thinking out of the box to co-create and share knowledge

The future agriculture will be one of knowledge. Not only research, but also advisory services, demonstration farms, farmers' organisations and networks are at the heart of these changes. Nowadays new and better ways to share knowledge and expertise are considered essential to keep agriculture and food production competitive and rural areas vibrant in the 21st century. Thinking out of the box is key.

New tools and approaches are already being used. For instance a Belgian goats' farm where an Advisory Board composed of a CEO of a biscuit factory, a manager of a hospital and a retired CEO of a cheese factory supported the future development of the business. They helped to channel new ideas and information into the business. Or the online Twitter community #AgriChatUK which, every Thursday, creates evening conversations between 19500 farmers and others around contemporary agricultural issues in the UK.

Interactive innovation, where farmers, advisers, researchers and others work together, is key to improve knowledge flows in European agriculture, combining various types of knowledge and developing new ideas. Funding is available to do so through Operational Groups, multi-actor projects and thematic networks. The new solutions will not only be shared within the own community, but also through the EU-wide European Innovation Partnership for agriculture (EIP-AGRI) network. Nowadays agricultural professionals need all the brains they can get: scientific, organisational and practical.

More information

[Download success stories on knowledge exchange discussed during the seminar:](#)

1. **Farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange**
 - Innov'Action (France)
 - Farmer Story (France)
2. **Social media for farmers**
 - #AgriChatUK (United Kingdom)
 - Agraari / Kaytannon Maamies (Finland)
3. **Farmer-led interactive innovation and learning**
 - Field Laboratories (United Kingdom) – [web newsitem](#)
 - Stable Schools (Germany)
4. **Innovative agricultural media**
 - VILT (Belgium)
 - Farmer Story (Germany)
5. **Better farm performance through benchmarking**
 - Benchmarking in Farmer Discussion Groups (Finland)
 - Farmer Story (Ireland)
6. **Knowledge networking**
 - WINETWORK (EU-wide) – [web newsitem](#)
 - Farm Carbon Cutting Toolkit (United Kingdom) – [inspirational idea](#) – [press article](#)
7. **Thinking out of the box**
 - Farmer Story (Belgium)
 - Farmer Story (Austria)
8. **Pooling resources and knowledge for future farming**
 - Farmer story (Germany)
 - Farmer story (The Netherlands)

[Download the success stories pdf](#) (including short introductory text and links to the powerpoints, speakers,...)

[EIP-AGRI Seminar: 'Promoting creativity and learning through agricultural knowledge systems and interactive innovation'](#)

An EIP-AGRI brochure on practical experiences of finding, co-creating and using new knowledge is scheduled for this year.

Background information

EIP-AGRI

The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) is one of five EIPs which have been launched by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation of the sectors concerned, by stepping up innovation efforts. The EIP-AGRI aims to foster innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors by bringing research and practice closer together – in research and innovation projects as well as via the EIP-AGRI network.

EIPs aim to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives and complement them with actions where necessary. Two specific funding sources are particularly important for the EIP-AGRI: the EU Research and Innovation framework, Horizon 2020, as well as the EU Rural Development Policy.

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