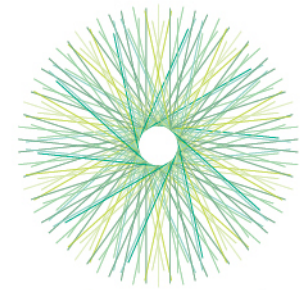


Press article

Protein crops

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Press article 500words

Smart solutions for on-farm protein crop production

Growing protein crops to optimise livestock farms' profits

Most livestock farmers need raw materials that are rich in protein for their animal feed mixes. Many specialised farms currently purchase these materials rather than producing them on-farm. The most commonly used feed protein component is the soybean, processed as oilseed cake. Its market price is unstable and forms an uncertain factor in the farmers' profits. What can European livestock farmers do on-farm to increase the protein in their animal feed, while remaining profitable at the same time?

Joining the Operational Group SOS Protein-TERUnic, farmers in the west of France are beginning to find the answers. Farmer Gérard Ménard, who is breeding Limousin cows, is hopeful: "This year, I am purchasing only 6 percent of the protein needed to feed my cattle, compared to 50 percent in previous years."

Together with advisers and researchers in SOS Protein-TERUnic, Ménard does protein crop field tests and uses the tool Devautop. The tool, designed by advisers at the Chambers of Agriculture of Loire-Atlantique and Brittany, measures a farm's protein dependency. It showed that Ménard purchased 50 percent of the protein needed to feed his cattle. The tool also shows the percentage of imported feed – in Ménard's case this was zero. Ménard already knew this: "Because I am working with the Limousin label, I need to be sure that I don't use genetically modified feedstuff. I only buy French rapeseed cake, as this is guaranteed to be GMO-free."

Emmanuel Bechet, adviser at the Chamber of Agriculture of Pays de la Loire, surveys and monitors around a hundred livestock farms in the region, of which Ménard's is one. Bechet explains: "Protein self-sufficiency on-farm is complicated to achieve. It implies that you need to dedicate land surface to the production of protein crops, while reducing the surface for other crops that you are growing. You then have to work with the quality of the protein that you have cultivated. Most importantly: you have to calculate what is economically sustainable."

Ménard and Bechet used the Devautop tool to calculate which modifications were needed to become more self-sufficient in protein production, and how this would affect the workload and the general business model of the farm. As a result, Ménard has increased the protein crop production on his farm. "I grow pure leguminous crops, clover and alfalfa on the plots that are far from the farm. We choose to wrap these crops with plastic after harvesting, so we can store these crops in round plastic-covered bales. This technique allows us to harvest and store the highest percentage of leaves, making the feedstuff rich in protein."

Last, but not least, the Devautop tool allows farmers to benchmark their results against the average result of all participating farms. Ménard has reached a level of 94 percent of protein self-sufficiency. This is very high compared to other farmers' levels of between 70 and 90 percent. Aiming to increase farmers' interest in developing a protein self-sufficient culture, the Operational Group SOS Protein-TERUnic facilitates group discussions where Ménard shares his insights: "I am pleased to see that I excel. More importantly I see the conditions of my cattle improve, followed by an increase in income."

Press article 250words

Smart solutions for on-farm protein crop production

Growing protein crops to optimise livestock farms' profits

Most livestock farmers need raw materials that are rich in protein for their animal feed mixes. The market price for oilseed cake is unstable and forms an uncertain factor in the farmers' profits. What can European livestock farmers do on-farm to increase the protein in their animal feed, while stabilising their profits?

Joining the Operational Group SOS Protein-TERUnic, farmers in the west of France are beginning to find the answers. Farmer Gérard Ménard, a Limousin cow breeder, is hopeful: "This year, I am purchasing only 6 percent of the protein needed to feed my cattle, compared to 50 percent in previous years."

Together with advisers and researchers in SOS Protein-TERUnic, Ménard does protein crop field tests and uses the tool Devautop. Devautop, designed by the Chambers of Agriculture of Loire-Atlantique and Brittany, measures a farm's protein dependency.

Emmanuel Bechet, adviser at the Chamber surveys and monitors around a hundred local livestock farms, of which Menard's is one. Bechet explains: "Protein self-sufficiency on-farm is complicated to achieve. You need to dedicate land surface to the production of protein crops, and you have to work with the quality of the protein you have cultivated. Most importantly: you have to calculate what is economically sustainable."

The Devautop tool calculated which modifications Ménard needed to become more self-sufficient in protein production, and how this would affect the workload and the general business model of the farm. As a result, Ménard has increased his farm's protein self-sufficiency.

The Devautop tool also allows farmers to compare their results. Aiming to increase farmers' interest, this Operational Group facilitates group discussions, where Ménard shares his insights: "I see the conditions of my cattle improve, followed by an increase in income."

Background information

More information on Operational Group SOS Protein-TERUnic

- SOS Protein <https://www.pole-agro-ouest.eu/uk/sos-protein/>
- GEAC MENARD <http://www.menard-elevagelimousin.com/default.aspx>
- [Presentation SOS Protein](#) at EIP-AGRI workshop 'How to make protein crops profitable in the EU?'

Pictures

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Farmer Ménard (front right) sharing his insights on the tool: “I see the conditions of my cattle improve, followed by an increase in income.” – copyright European Commission

[Download the high resolution picture](#)



Farmer Ménard's Limousin cows eating more on-farm grown protein crops – copyright European Commission

[Download the high resolution picture](#)



Farmer Ménard (left) and adviser Bechet (middle) sharing his insights on the tool: “I see the conditions of my cattle improve, followed by an increase in income.” – copyright European Commission

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More information on protein crops

- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on competitive protein crops](#) (available in EN – PT - EE)
- [EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Protein crops](#)
- [EIP-AGRI workshop on Protein Crops](#)
- [2016, International Year of Pulses, nutritious seeds for a sustainable future](#)
- [Interview with FAO's Eleonara Dupouy on the International Year of Pulses](#)

EIP-AGRI Inspiration on protein crops from your country?

Here below you find a list of topics that have been covered in one of the EIP-AGRI events and/ or EIP-AGRI publications.

Inspirational idea	Innovative technology for animal feed rich in protein	Bulgaria
Inspirational idea	Feeding pigs and poultry: tips for a 100% organic diet	Denmark, Netherlands, UK, Sweden, Austria, Germany, Finland, Switzerland, France and Lithuania
Inspirational idea	Producing protein feed and fuel from biomass (p.10)	Denmark
Presentations at the EIP-AGRI workshop "How to make protein crops profitable in the EU?" – November 2014	LEGATO: LEGumes for the Agriculture of Tomorrow	EU
	Pôle Agronomique Ouest	France
	The yield gap to overcome: the French case	France
	Building a market: from farm to end-users	France/ EU
	Food Opportunities	
	How to make protein crops profitable in the EU? The EU Feed Industry perspective	Hungary/ EU
	Protein in Ireland	Ireland
	Soy in the Netherlands	Netherlands
	How to make protein crops profitable in the EU	Portugal/ EU
Presentation	EUROLEGUME Project contribution	
	Breeding priorities	Spain
	A view of the food sector	Spain
Presentation	Fava beans – UK farmers perspective	UK

More information on Operational Groups in your country

If you would like to cover a story on an Operational Group in your own country,

you can find following information on the EIP-AGRI website:

- [Check if your country will/ has set up Operational Groups](#)
- [Check if your country has set up a website where you can find information on the OGs which have been selected for funding](#)
- [Check the EIP-AGRI meeting point for Operational Groups in your country](#)
- [Contact the EIP-AGRI press officer to help you further: ina.vanhoye@eip-agri.eu](mailto:ina.vanhoye@eip-agri.eu)

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.

- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on the EIP-AGRI Network \(2015\)](#) (EN – FR – GR – HU – RO)
- [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Thematic Networks under Horizon 2020](#) (EN – FR – HU – SP)
- EIP-AGRI Brochure on Funding opportunities under Horizon 2020 - 2018 Calls: to be published mid November 2017

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups are groups of people who work together in an innovation project funded by Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). Operational Groups are the EIP-AGRI's main tool for turning innovative ideas into real solutions for the field.

An Operational Group consists of several partners with a common interest in a specific, practical innovation project. The people involved in the Operational Group should bring in different types of practical and, where necessary, scientific expertise. They may include farmers, scientists, agri-business representatives and many others. Every country or region has the possibility to define specific national demands or restrictions on how to put together an Operational Group.

- Visit the [Operational Groups page](#) on the [EIP-AGRI website](#) [EIP-AGRI Brochure on Operational Groups: Turning your idea into innovation \(update 2016\)](#) (EN – CZ – HU – RO- SP)

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