

europa media[®] EUROPE & TECHNOLOGY Newsletter

The Food Republic

The state of food in the European Union is as mixed and diverse as anywhere else, if not more so than most places. Fruits and vegetables make their way across the globe to settle on our plates. The importance of having secure supplies of quality food cannot be overstated, nor does it have to be if you happen to be reading this around lunchtime. In this issue of Europa Media's newsletter, we take a glance at some of the key issues of food matters, including security, biotechnology and organic produce. Now, let's start chewing on the facts!

- The Europa Media Team -

Food Security

One of the most significant matters for all societies is the security of their food supplies. With the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU attempts to protect its citizens by ensuring reliable production levels and storing surpluses when possible. Additional produce is often distributed through aid programs to benefit the needy, including struggling EU citizens and outside countries.

Rates of agricultural output vary greatly across the Member States for a multitude of reasons; some natural, such as the soil conditions, and some artificial, like political interests. Controversy remains over the distribution of subsidies, especially between Old and New Member States, but the overall available funding from the EU to agriculture remains at a staggering, almost 50%. This is big business and clearly a significant chunk of the EU's policies focus on these matters.

Content

The Food Republic	1
Food Security	1
Biotechnology	2
Quality	2
Funding opportunities	3
Upcoming Events	4

As globalization enhances the fluidity of capital, it is becoming more and more common to hear stories of commercial and national interests investing in foreign land for food security. A great deal of problems or opportunities could erupt from such behavior, but the increased levels of direct intervention in foreign states' agriculture is a noteworthy trend that requires a keen analysis of its advantages and disadvantages. Political actors, lobbying groups and powerful international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, determine much about how the agricultural industry actually operates; it is along with the policies these actors define that agriculture continues to receive greater and greater investments from a variety of sources, including developers, speculators and people just searching for a nice plot of land to retire upon.

Further Information:

Activities of the EU: Agriculture

http://europa.eu/pol/agr/index_en.htm



3-4 December 2009, Budapest, Hungary

3RD FP7 UNTOLD STORIES

Biotechnology

The concerns about securing access to food have led to innovative new technologies being utilized. Biotechnology has significantly altered the way agricultural work is undertaken and introduced a serious rationality to the process of growing food supplies. A sensitive and controversial issue in Europe has particularly focused upon the introduction of Genetically-Modified (GM) foods into the markets and upon the soil.

GM foods are omnipresent in the farmland of several countries, notably in the United States of America, but reservations remain in many. The European Union has thus far restricted the widespread adoption of GM products and resisted calls to implement mass scale production by interested outsiders. The issue has become highly politicized and continues to face great resistance across Europe and will certainly garner more attention should food prices rise or shortages develop.

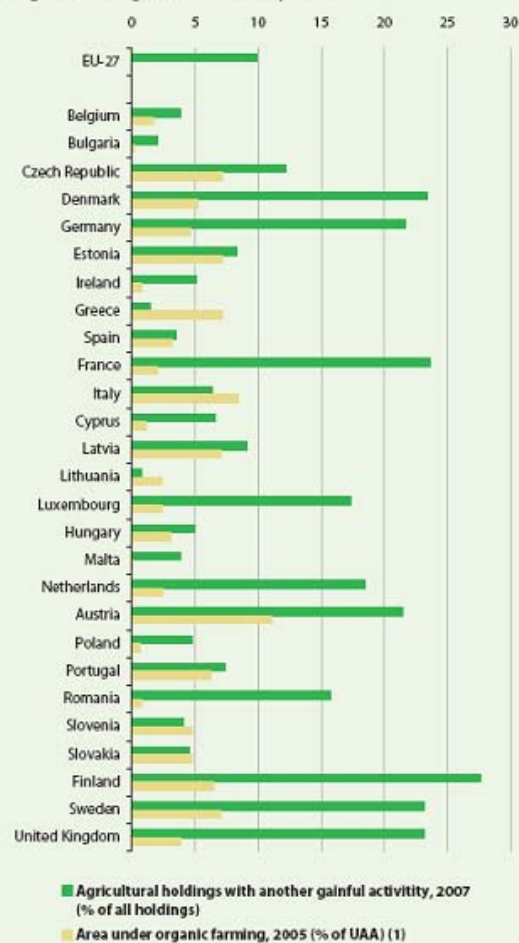


Further Information:

EU Biotechnology Stance

http://ec.europa.eu/biotechnology/index_en.htm

Organic farming and rural development



(1) Fully converted and under conversion; Bulgaria and Romania, 2006; EU-27, not available.

Source: Eurostat (tsdpo140, tag00096)

QUALITY

Public awareness about the quality of the food we eat has been raised and the markets for bio, eco, and organic products have increased significantly. With approximately a quarter of the world's organic agricultural output, Europe plays a great role in producing much quality food through traditional practices. Due to a lack of standardization, the labeling of these products varies across Member states. Generally, the concept is that organic farming is a way of producing food in a standardized fashion. The sector is a seriously regulated field and not simply people growing vegetables in their backyards or on their balconies. The merits, proponents claim, are the lack of chemicals and the nutritional value of organically produced foods, though there is much debate about the true value still and this issue will only gain more attention with time.

The EU emphasizes the need to develop rural regions and support agriculture, though many argue this often is a more theoretical than applied distinction. Much money for subsidies continues to remain only in the largest producers, rather than reaching the single farmer plowing his land. Organic produce is just one direction the food industry may go, though it has a fair distance to travel before it becomes competitive with the industrial-oriented practices of larger-scale operations.

Much of these topics are covered by the Knowledge-Based Bio Economy (KBBE), which offers funding opportunities to address the quality of food and sustainability. The KBBE utilizes the advancements of biotechnologies and supports a variety of industries related to and with practical knowledge that can benefit the agricultural sector. >

Quality >

The quality of the foods we purchase, the impact on the soil and other farming issues are becoming highly politicized and receiving much coverage by the media lately. Concerns not only about the food itself but also about agricultural practices affect upon the environment have led to much debate about sustainability and even conflicts between various parties.

The future of farming across Europe will encounter many dilemmas as resources elsewhere become scarce due to climate change, population change and possibly political instability. Disputes about land use rights and zoning matters will continue to be a large challenge for many regions. Increasing urbanization does not diminish the need for food but only increases it whilst relying on a shrinking population of farmers to produce it.

Many questions abound and the research opportunities are vast. From securing water for irrigation to designing better technologies to supply it, to labeling products more clearly and developing agencies to monitor this, and so on and so forth, the challenges are astonishing but also present a fantastic opportunity for those interested.

Further Information:

Food Quality in the EU:

» <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/>

Knowledge-Based Bio-Economy (KBBE):

» http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/kbbe/about-kbbe_en.html



Funding Opportunities:

A variety of Calls for Proposals have been published under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) that relate to the agricultural sector. Though not comprehensive, we include below several opportunities for you to consider participating within or just to grasp a better notion of just what the EU is currently supporting in this field from the KBBE Call.

» <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7CallsPage&>

Call Identifier: FP7-KBBE-2010-4
Deadline for Proposal Submission: 14 January 2010
Indicative Budget: EUR 190.01 million

ACTIVITY 2.1: SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES FROM LAND, FOREST AND AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTS

- 2.1.2 KBBE.2010.1.2-02:** **Sustainable organic and low-input dairy production**
 Collaborative project (large scale integrating project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 6 000 000
- 2.1.2 KBBE.2010.1.2-05:** **Integrated pest management in farming systems of major importance for Europe**
 Collaborative Project (large scale integrating project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 9 000 000
- 2.1.3 KBBE.2010.1.3-02:** **Promoting coordination and cooperation at international level of research programmes in the area of animal health, in particular infectious diseases including zoonoses – Mandatory ICPC (Latin America and Asia)**
 Coordination and Support Action (coordinating action)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 1 000 000
- 2.1.4 KBBE.2010.1.4-01:** **Sharing best practice and enhancing European collaboration on research, knowledge transfer and innovation in farm animal sciences**
 Coordination and Support Action (coordinating action)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 1 000 000

ACTIVITY 2.2: FORK TO FARM: FOOD (INCLUDING SEAFOOD), HEALTH AND WELL BEING

- 2.2.1 KBBE.2010.2.1-02:** **Media training for food and nutrition scientists**
 Coordination and Support Action (supporting action)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 1 000 000
- 2.2.3 KBBE.2010.2.3-01:** **Development of biodegradable food packaging**
 Collaborative Project (small or medium-scale focused research project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 3 000 000
- 2.2.4 KBBE.2010.2.4-01:** **Improving integration in food safety research**
 Collaborative project (small or medium scale focused research project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 3 000 000
- 2.2.4 KBBE.2010.2.4-03:** **Quality and safety aspects of feed**
 Collaborative Project (small or medium-scale focused research project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 3 000 000
- 2.2.5 KBBE.2010.2.5-01:** **Transparency of food pricing**
 Collaborative Project (small or medium-scale focused research project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 1 000 000
- 2.2.6 KBBE.2010.2.6-01:** **Strengthening cooperation in food safety research in the enlarged European Union**
 Coordination and support action (coordinating action)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 1 000 000

ACTIVITY 2.3: LIFE SCIENCES, BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOCHEMISTRY FOR SUSTAINABLE NON-FOOD PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES

- 2.3.2 KBBE.2010.3.2-02:** **Learning from research projects: specific dissemination action to potential users in marine genomics**
 Coordination and Support Action (coordinating action)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 1 000 000
- 2.3.3 KBBE.2010.3.3-02:** **Biotechnology for 'greening' the chemical industry - Industrial bioprocesses for fine and speciality chemicals and intermediates**
 Collaborative Project (large scale integrating project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 9 000 000
- 2.3.5 KBBE.2010.3.5-01:** **Biotechnology for the environment - Soil and water treatment and bioremediation**
 Collaborative Project (small or medium-scale focused research project)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 3 000 000

ACTIVITY 2.4: OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 2.4.1 KBBE.2010.4-03:** **Towards a Latin America & Caribbean Knowledge Based Bio-Economy in partnership with Europe**
 Coordination and Support Action (supporting action)
 Max. EC contribution/proposal: EUR 500 000

Upcoming Events

(For further details, please visit the appropriate website for each event.)

Biotechnologies Conference and Exhibition BioForum

Two-day event about a variety of biotechnology topics, including DNA issues, GMO, biobanks, etc.
30 September - 1 October 2009
Milan, Italy

» <http://www.bioforum.it/>

Information and Brokerage Day on Call FP7-KBBE 2010

International Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology
7 October 2009
Brussels, Belgium

» ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/kbbe/docs/programme-draft-august17_en.pdf

Workshop on Food Safety Management Systems

Introduces and discusses new tools for the agricultural-food chain
13 October 2009
Ghent, Belgium

» <http://www.pathogencombat.com/workshop/Gent.aspx>

European Forum for Industrial Biotechnology

Presentations about the future prospects of the European biotech industry
20-22 October 2009
Lisbon, Portugal

» <http://www.efibforum.com/>

Acquacultura Med Conference on Sustainable Aquaculture and Seafood

Conference about sustainable aquaculture and seafood production in the Mediterranean
22-23 October 2009
Verona, Italy

» http://fair.veronafiere.it/acquacultura/home_en.asp

EU- India S&T Cooperation Days

Focuses on EU-India collaborations in the following themes: Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology and Health
4-6 November 2009
New Delhi, India

» <http://www.euinec.org/euinecinfo/EUIndEvent.jsp>



Budapest, Hungary, 15-16 October 2009

FP7 – FINANCIAL & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

2-day intensive management training

PRACTICAL PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL

"Getting funded is only the beginning..."

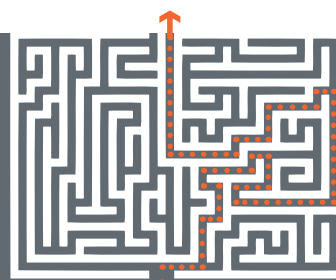
Budapest, Hungary, 13 November 2009

FINANCIAL REPORTING & AUDITS OF EC PROJECTS

1-day intensive financial training

FACTUAL TRUTHWORTHY PROVEN

"Understand the financial side to EC Projects..."



New EU Publications:

SME Success Stories: Food Quality and Safety

2008 Directorate-General for Research
Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology

» ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/kbbe/docs/bat-lowres-204-smes-20-8dec08_en.pdf

European Technology Platforms

2008 Directorate-General for Research
Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology

» ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/kbbe/docs/tps_factsheet.pdf



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We always like to hear from our readership!