

Projects presented during the EU CAP Network seminar ‘On-farm demonstrations for peer-to-peer learning and innovation’

17 – 18 June 2025 | **Mestre, Italy**



Funded by
the European Union

Name	Surname	Country	Poster
John	Greaney	Ireland	Signpost Programme
Daniel	Acs	Slovakia	Bridging Gaps in Demo Farms through Bottom-Up Initiative
Juan Carlos	Gázquez Garrido	Spain	Greenhouse Digital Innovation Training – AGROTECH DIH, Cajamar Group Foundation
Els	Lapage	Belgium	Demonstration projects
Giorgio	Trentin	Italy	Promoting demonstration activities as part of the AKIS strategy: Veneto experience
Ana Christos	Paz Vasilikiotis	EU	LILAS4SOILS
Pierre Siw Maria	Andong Fasting Pereira de Silva	EU	Climate Farm Demo
Andrea	Hrabalová	Czech Republic	MoA demonstration farms in the Czech Republic
Nicolas	Munier-Jolain	France	DEPHY-Ferme
Justyna	Fila	Poland	Support for demonstration projects and information activities – DEMONSTRATIONS IN ORGANIC FARMING



Signpost Programme

John Greaney



<https://www.teagasc.ie/environment/climate-change--air-quality/signpost-programme/>

The Signpost Programme
Campaign for Change



DESCRIPTION

The signpost programme is a multi annual campaign to lead climate action by all Irish farmers. The programme sets out to achieve early progress in reducing gaseous emissions from Irish agriculture, improving water quality and biodiversity, reducing costs and creating more profitable and sustainable farming enterprises.



INITIATOR

Teagasc initiated the project and sourced funding from industry partners



FUNDING

Sourced from the industry e.g. milk and beef processors



2021-2025. Phase II will begin in 2026

DURATION



Each demo farm is supported by a specialised advisor for the duration of the programme

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

- 120 Signpost farms
- showcase the science based technologies which can reduce emissions
- act as 'hubs' for the Signpost Advisory Campaign
- create a national framework of farms where carbon sequestration in grassland and hedgerows can be examined



ROLE of the demonstration farmer

Demonstration events are a big part of the programme taking place across all the Signpost farms. The events focus on the adaptation and mitigation measures implemented on the farm.

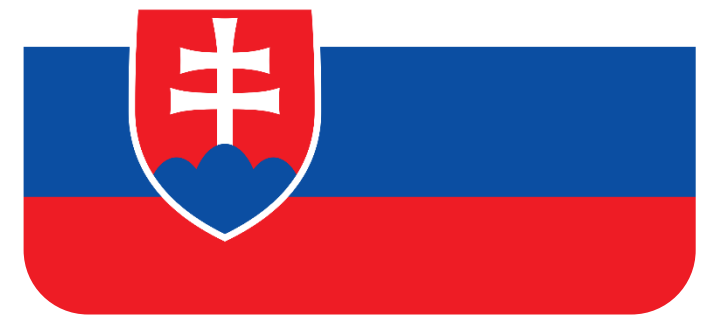
Strengths



- increase awareness of climate smart solutions
- improved motivation for climate change
- enhanced farmer knowledge
- greater farmer ability for planning and action
- boosted farmer ability for evaluation

Bridging Gaps in Demo Farms through Bottom-Up Initiative

Daniel Acs



www.bioeconomy.sk



DESCRIPTION

The goal is to promote innovation, knowledge exchange, sustainable practices, and policy development in agriculture and forestry, with the development of a support scheme for demo farms.

The initiative includes:

- establishing a national network of demo farms in Slovakia (via the CFD project) – 25 farms
- creating a Focus Group on demo farms
- cooperation and promotion on climate-focused demo farm events, and
- development of a support system for demonstration farms in Slovakia
- defining four demo farm types: farm-to-farm, policy-based, research-based, and educational

INITIATOR

BIOECONOMY CLUSTER (BEC)
with strong support of Climate Farm Demo
and Climate Smart Advisors projects



11/2023 – 2029 (CAP Strategic Plan ?)
12/2023 – 1st. Focus Group meeting
10/2024 – “Development of a support system for
demonstration farms in Slovakia” – document for MA



DURATION

FUNDING

Climate Farm Demo and Climate Smart Advisors
(Horizon Europe projects)
in-kind of BEC and Focus Group members
in synergy with other relevant projects (e.g. HUSK)

Slovakia – national level
>25 members of the FG from all over Slovakia

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

- farm-based – run by farmers or foresters for peer learning
- research-based – in cooperation with research institutions, testing innovations on farm
- policy-based – for piloting agricultural, climate and environmental policy measures
- educational – focused on awareness, youth education, and rural tourism (make farming attractive)



ROLE of the demonstration farmer

- farmer as a knowledge holder
 - test new practices
 - adapt digital solutions
- advise young and small farmers
- host and organize field days
- farm open every Wednesday



Strengths

- strong multi-stakeholder collaboration and bottom-up governance model
- strategic linkage with EU-funded projects
- vision for differentiated demonstration farm types with tailored support mechanisms
- cross-border learning with CZ, HU, NL, PL partners

Weaknesses

- no dedicated funding stream currently in place
- fragmented institutional support for long-term sustainability
- external risks such as foot and mouth disease on farms

CAJAMAR INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM



DESCRIPTION

Cajamar has created its own **innovation ecosystem** to foster innovation in the **agri-food sector** and to promote **profitability at farmer and industry levels** and **sustainability throughout the agri-food value chain**. Since **1975**, its research centre in **Las Palmerillas, Almería**, has developed and transferred knowledge and technology in **crop management, greenhouse technologies, water use** and **digitalisation** through an applied, collaborative approach. This work is complemented by a second centre in **Valencia** offering **research services, in-person and online training, market analysis**, and **Plataforma Tierra**, a key tool for driving **digital transformation** in the sector. Cajamar also promotes **Cajamar Innova**, a **business accelerator** specialising in **water, agritech and foodtech**.

A **hands-on training course** was delivered in **Almería** under the **AGROTECH DIH project**, focusing on technologies to improve **greenhouse production: climate control, fertigation, digital tools**, and **mechanization**. The training combined **real-life demonstrations, peer dialogue**, and **mutual learning**, with the goal of **transferring innovation directly to the field**.

INITIATOR

Cajamar Group Foundation is part of **Cajamar Caja Rural, Spain's leading rural cooperative bank**. The initiative was developed by the foundation's **research and innovation team** at the **Las Palmerillas Research Centre** in Almería. **Cajamar Caja Rural** plays a key role in the **transformation of Spain's rural areas**, supporting **sustainable development** through **financial and social initiatives**, especially in the **agri-food sector**.



FUNDING

The course was funded by the **AGROTECH DIH project (WP3)**, with a **public contribution of €4,200**. **50% was already received through EU co-financing**, and **50% is pending from Spanish national funds**. The course is **offered free of charge to all participants**.



The course was held in **2024** and consisted of **five in-person sessions**, each lasting **four hours (total: 20 hours)**.

Fundación Grupo Cajamar organizes **over 100 training and knowledge transfer activities** each year, with **more than 8,000 participants**.



DURATION

Almería province, Spain – particularly focused on farmers using **Plataforma Tierra**, **Fundación Cajamar's digital platform for knowledge transfer and agri-food innovation**, and growers from **COEXPHAL**, the main **association of fruit and vegetable producer organisations** in the region.



GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

- digital climate control systems
- irrigation and fertigation technologies
- pest/disease monitoring tools
- farm data management software
- mechanisation and robotics in greenhouses
- target audience: 40 innovative farmers, mainly from Almería



ROLE of the demonstration farmer

Farmers used and evaluated the tools directly in real conditions, interacted with technicians, and shared their opinions in field discussions and group sessions. Their feedback helped validate and adapt technologies



Strengths

- fully funded, practical and participative model, co-financed by the AGROTECH DIH project
- highly practical training format, encouraging strong interaction among peers
- solid ecosystem of researchers, companies, startups, cooperatives, and farmers
- focus on digital innovation and sustainability, combining theory and real-life field demonstrations
- hands-on training approach tailored to real farm needs and conditions

Weaknesses

- limited geographical scope, currently focused on the local scale (Almería province)
- trainers are not financially compensated, although travel and accommodation expenses are covered
- dependence on co-funding makes continuity and long-term planning challenging
- needs structural reinforcement to become more efficient over time and to enable the creation of a permanent network of innovative farmers



Demonstratieprojecten | Landbouw en Zeevisserij



DESCRIPTION

Demonstration **projects** deal with a proven sustainable technique or method, not yet commonly applied on farms. The goal is to raise awareness among farmers. The projects have to use on-farm demonstrations for peer-to-peer learning. **The demo farms involved vary each year, thus keep on attracting interest from farmers.**

Competitive calls: experts, researchers and advisors must collaborate for the organisation of on-farm demonstrations and other knowledge dissemination activities; they also provide additional background information from a broader perspective (e.g. how other farmers apply the technique or scientific results).

INITIATOR

Flemish Government
Agency for Agriculture and Fisheries



FUNDING

The funding per project is maximum 100.000 euro. The project promotor (often a practical research organization) is the beneficiary and pays the project partners, the demonstration farms and other experts involved.



A call for demonstration projects is launched every year. The project duration is 2 years. Demonstration farms are involved for the full duration of the project.

DURATION



Demonstration farms are selected according to the project topic. They are spread over Flanders. The project should reach the target audience across Flanders.



GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

- a demonstration project is defined as a **multi-actor project** and consists of a mix of different types of dissemination activities: on-farm demonstrations are key but they are at the same time **combined with training, press articles, brochures, leaflets,...**
- key topics: lowering agricultural inputs, smart farming, new business models,...
- **each demonstration project and demo event connects AKIS actors and is a key moment for knowledge flows for all involved**

ROLE DEMONSTRATION FARM

- performing field trials
- provide data
- dissemination of results
- benchmark with other farms
- ...

ROLE PROJECT PROMOTOR AND PARTNERS

- organisation of on-farm demonstrations and other dissemination activities
- gathering and processing data from the farms and using them in further dissemination activities



Strengths and weaknesses

- on-farm demonstration on « normal » farms, which appears to be extra attractive to farmers thanks to changing farms involved in the projects.
- the farms should be selected according to the project topic and have required equipment and experience.
- peer-to-peer learning combined with the exchange of views of researchers and advisors



DESCRIPTION

Demonstration activities carried out by farmers have a recognised high potential as tool for knowledge exchange to other farmers. These activities must be implemented ensuring scientific rigour, absence of conflicts of interest and attractiveness for farmers. The creation of an ecosystem, that facilitates the implementation of these activities, the involvement of farmers and their skills to do them, is essential to fully realise this potential. Some CAP interventions in the framework of the AKIS strategy can foster the spread of demonstration activities, the direct involvement of farmers and the creation of networks of demonstration farmers.

INITIATOR

Veneto Region

FUNDING

- OGs Projects = Intervention SRG01+ other Interventions (SRD Investment, SRH03 Training for farmers, SRH01Advice)
- Innovation Hubs = Intervention SRG09 Innovation Hub + other intervention (SRH05 demonstration activities, SRH01 Advice)
 - Demonstration activities = Intervention SRH05
 - Training (SRH03) and Advice (SRH01) for farmers
 - Training of advisors (SRH02)
- Networking demonstration farmers = SRH06 Back Office AKIS



2023 - 2028

DURATION

Regional

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

SRH05

- **21 demonstration farmers already involved:**
- 6 Private: Innovative farm models to reduce breeding and feeding costs and environmental impact
- 1 Agriculture Technical School (ATS) Innovations in annual and polyannual crop management in mountains area
- 6 Private: Innovative strategies for reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers in viticulture
- 7 Private+ 1 ATS: Product, technological and plant innovation

SRG09

- **7 demonstration farmers already involved in 3 Innovation Hub:**
- 5 Private: Innovative soil and water management and strategies for reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers in viticulture
- 1 University: Innovative farm models to reduce breeding and feeding costs and environmental impact

SRG01

- **133 farmers already involved in 44 OGs (different topics)**

ROLE demonstration farmer

testing innovations

performing field trials

hosting workshops/open day

hosting advisors/trainers

disseminating results

co-create knowledge
hosting visits/open day

Strengths

- close cooperation with the regional Agency VENETO AGRICOLTURA
- experience and motivation of the actors involved; adoption of SCOs
- project evaluation system; complementarity between interventions; involvement of advisors

Weaknesses

- sometimes not farmers driven project
- incremented costs for consultants; communication skills still lacking
- demonstration farmer not yet defined
- lack of advisors and trainers on the subject of demonstration activities
- linkage advise/training projects to demonstration activities still lacking; Networking between demonstration farmers still lacking





DESCRIPTION

LILAS4SOILS addresses the challenges affecting agricultural soils in the rapidly warming Mediterranean region. The project focuses on implementing carbon farming practices in Living Labs to promote climate adaptation and mitigation.

LILAS4SOILS will develop five Living Labs across six countries (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, and Israel), involving 24 expert partners, more than 80 farmers and 125 stakeholders. The project will test carbon framing practices in 100 demo-sites in diverse farming systems and pedoclimatic zones.

Through collaboration with farmers, researchers, industry and local authorities, LILAS4SOILS aims to accelerate the transition to healthy soils and contribute to standardized monitoring, reporting, and verification frameworks for future carbon markets.

INITIATOR

EIT Food South: a Knowledge Innovation Community of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)



5 years (2024-2029)

DURATION

FUNDING

HORIZON Europe (Research and Innovation to support the implementation of the mission A Soil Deal for Europe)



Mediterranean region: five Living Labs in Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, and Israel

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

Testing and demonstrating carbon framing practices focusing on:

- 1) peatland management,
- 2) agroforestry,
- 3) regenerative agriculture practices
- 4) maintaining and enhancing soil organic carbon,
- 5) livestock and manure management
- 6) nutrient, pesticides and fertilizers management.

ROLE

The project will engage 100 demonstration farmers, promote co-creation of knowledge and peer-to-peer demonstrations, engagement of different stakeholders within each Living Lab, perform field trials, provide data for research and developement of monitoring and verification methods, dissemination of the results, and organise trainings and workshops.

Strenghts

- A transnational network of Living Labs enables sharing experience in the implementation of carbon farming practices, while developing and testing the needed methods for monitoring the impact of those practices.

Weaknesses

- Long-term soil benefits may not be fully measurable within the project timeline and robust, standardized verification methods are still under development.





DESCRIPTION

A pan-European network driving climate-smart agriculture.

27 countries | **83** partners | **24** CAP Networks | **1,460** Pilot Demonstration Farmers | **4,500** farm demonstration events | **250,000+** actors engaged in peer-to-peer learning | **12** Adaptation & Mitigation Thematic Areas | **10** Living Labs co-creating practical solutions | **8** WPs | **45** Tasks | **27** Lighthouse Farms

INITIATOR

IDELE Pilot + ACTA support;
ILVO, CRPA, TEAGASC, WAGENINGEN, CLIMATE KIC,
CONSULAI, BIOSENSE INSTITUTE Coordinate



FUNDING

Funded by Horizon Europe (24.5 million euros = 21.49 million euros from the EU + 1.51 million euros from the UK + 1.47 million euros from Switzerland)

7 years - October 1st 2022 - September 30th 2029
2023 | set-up phase | establishing networks, platforms, guidelines, methodologies, best practices, Audits & AMPs
2024–2029 | 6 Annual Demonstration Campaigns
2029 | Scaling Up



DURATION

27 countries, >80 partners

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

Target audience: Farmers, advisors, policy actors, and agri-environmental stakeholders

Key topics:

- Climate-smart farming practices
- 12 Adaptation & Mitigation themes (e.g., crops, soil, water, biodiversity, energy)
- Rewarding mechanisms & sustainable transitions

Event Structure Tips:

- Include stand/station descriptions
- Allow time for Q&A at each stop
- Pre-plan route and participant interaction
- Focus on engagement, evaluation & real impact

ROLE demonstration farmer

Key Characteristics of a Great Host Farmer:

- **Public Speaker** – Comfortable sharing (introvert or extrovert)
- **Relatable** – Represents average conditions or is a pioneer farmer
- **Suitable** – Accessible, safe, and aligned with demo objectives
- **Good Farmer** – Trusted, respected, and open to innovation

Best Practices to Engage with the Host Farmer:

Interview led by a facilitator | Encourage participant questions | Create space for feedback and shared experiences |
Goal: Make the host central to the learning experience by showcasing real-world success, fostering dialogue, and encouraging peer learning.

Farmers & Advisors: A Key Relationship

Effective Advisors are:

- Knowledgeable on mitigation, adaptation & incentives
- In tune with farmers' realities
- Encouraging, curious, and critical thinkers

Key Activities:

- GHG audits & benchmarking
- Identifying climate-smart actions with farmers
- Demonstration & facilitation
- Building trust and supporting change

Needs & Requirements:

- Close knowledge gaps in climate strategies
- Streamline audits
- Develop advisory skills
- Mainstream climate into advisory services

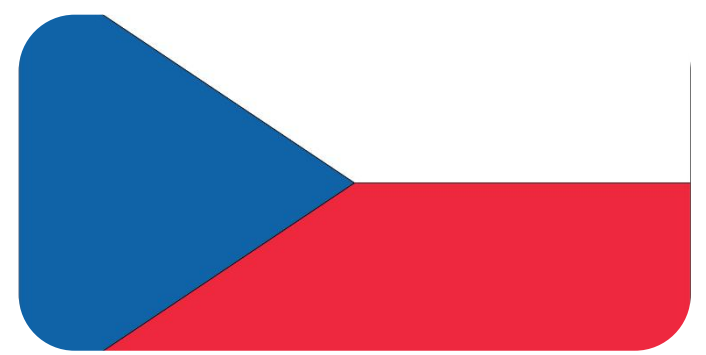
Strengths

- pan-European Reach: 27 countries | 83 partners | 24 CAP Networks
- massive On-Farm Engagement: 1,460 Pilot Demonstration Farmers | 4,500 Demonstration Events | 250,000+ Actors in Peer-to-Peer Learning
- robust Knowledge Framework: 12 Adaptation & Mitigation Thematic Areas. 10 Living Labs driving co-creation of solutions | Farming for Climate Web Platform
- strong Demonstration Backbone: 27 Lighthouse Farms inspiring best practices

Weaknesses

- adapting solutions across 27 diverse countries - What works locally may not easily scale without adjustments to fit different climates, policies, and farming systems



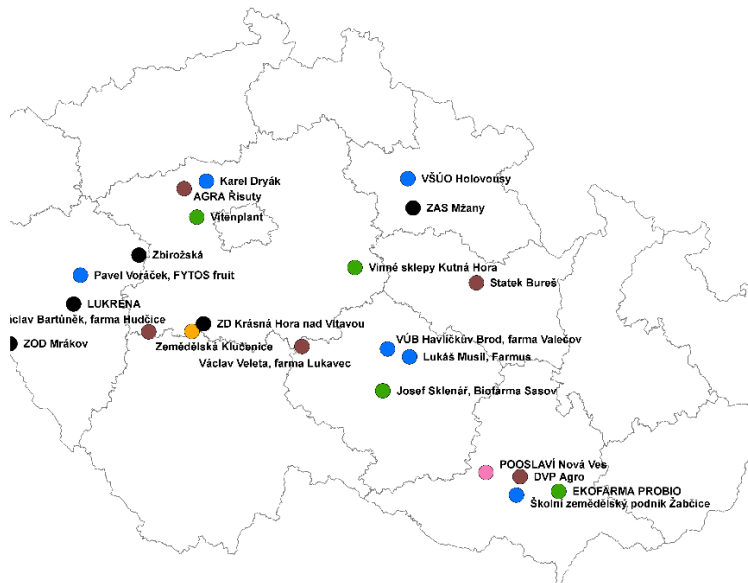


<https://agronavigator.cz/demo-objekty/demonstracni->

DESCRIPTION

The idea to build a group of demonstration farms showing good practice on arable land originated at the Ministry of Agriculture. A subsidy programme was designed, piloted on 3 farms, then launched in 2017 and running to this day.

Between 2017 and 2025, the number of demonstration farms increased from 7 to 22. In 2024, the 20 approved demonstration farms held around 550 events attended by more than 3 300 people, including nearly 2 000 farmers.



INITIATOR

Ministry of Agriculture initiated the creation of the group of demonstration farms. The aim was to introduce farmers to complex sustainable farming practices through practical demonstrations.

FUNDING

The activities of approved demonstration farms are supported by national subsidies from MoA under Agricultural Advisory Support Programme 9.F.m - Demonstration Farms (based on EU notification). For 9.F.m programme, EUR 200,000 was allocated in 2017, EUR 400,000 in 2018, EUR 600,000 in 2019-2024 and increased EUR 760,000 from 2025.



The demonstration farm applies through a three-year project and, after approval, annually submits a specific plan of demonstration activities for the given year.

There are currently 22 farms involved in the programme, but their distribution is uneven across the country, see map.

There are small family farms as well as large farms, farms with field production, mixed farms and farms specialising in orchards or vineyards.

DURATION

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

Demonstration farms can receive a subsidy of up to EUR 40,000 depending on the activities carried out, divided into six types:

Preparation of demo fields, Open day, Individual consultation, Group consultation, Cooperation with research and Promotional activities.

TARGETING

Six priority themes are currently supported: Soil conservation and water retention in the landscape, Low-protection crop cultivation technologies, Soil organic matter and its impact on erosion, Integrated plant protection, Organic farming and Precision farming in livestock production.

Strengths

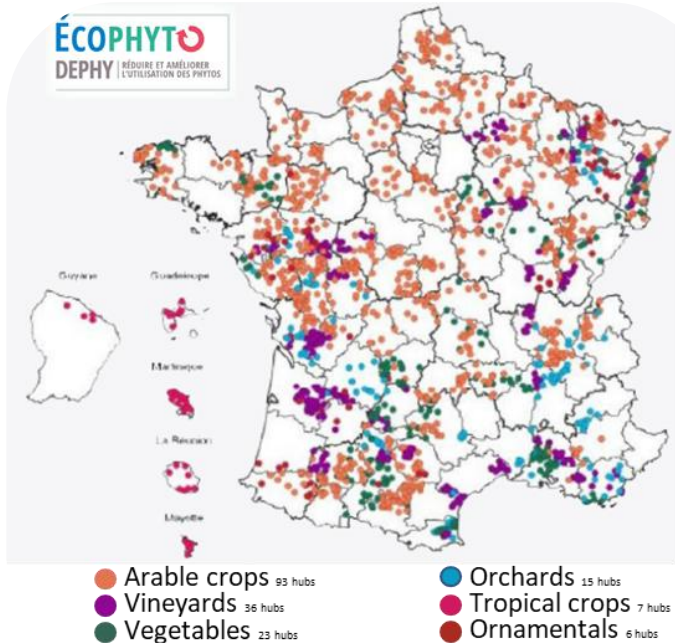
- the direct active involvement of the farms in the programme is a strong point (they set the project targeting and activities themselves). The programme flexibility is also an advantage (the subsidy consists of several optional parts)

Weaknesses

- the weakness is the isolation of the farms (each one works mostly independently). There is no platform for linking farms yet. The low use of demonstration results for further sharing is also perceived as a weakness
- the threat is "farm burnout" - loss of motivation to implement demonstrations



<https://ecophytopic.fr/dephy/le-dispositif-dephy-ferme>



DESCRIPTION

The DEPHY-farm network was created in 2010. It is based on groups of 10-15 farmers, facilitated by a hub-coach (adviser), who both coordinates knowledge exchange on IPM among farmers, help them find site-specific solutions to reduce pesticide use, and organise demo events to convince other farmers of the region that it is possible to reduce the reliance on pesticide thanks to a holistic approach to IPM.

INITIATOR

The network was initiated by the French Government, following a multi-actor approach with many institutions. *It was inspired by previous networks managed by Chambers of Agriculture and INRAE*



FUNDING

The network is funded by public money, financed by a tax on pesticides paid by farmers. *Subsidies cover mostly the hub coach salary (half-time)*



DEPHY-ferme was launched in 2010, and is still operating. The funding is renewed each year



DURATION



The network covers all the French agricultural territory, and 6 agricultural sectors. It is affiliated to the IPMWORKS network which covers 16 European countries

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

- on-farm demonstration of a holistic approach to pest management
- on-farm demonstration of a specific non-chemical method mechanical weeding, biocontrol, cultivar, ...
- booklets describing individual IPM strategies
- testimonies in agricultural events
- videos, podcasts
- scientific articles based on the dataset of farm practices



ROLE of demonstration farmer

- share knowledge with peer farmers of the group co-innovation workshops, field discussions
- organise on-farm demo events
- testimony
- on-farm test of innovations
- provide detailed data, allowing to compute indicators of pesticide use, pesticide impact, economic performances

Strengths

- a very large network covering all types of production situations
- motivated, pioneer farmers
- Convincing results of decrease in PPP inputs
- Collaboration with research to demonstrate cost-efficiency of IPM at the national scale, based on a unique dataset
- source of inspiration for the EU-wide IPMWORKS network

Weaknesses

- weak adoption of holistic IPM by farmers outside the network in spite of convincing results



Support for demonstration projects and information activities - DEMONSTRATIONS IN ORGANIC FARMING



Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów
Leader of the Consortium

www.cdr.gov.pl



DESCRIPTION

Disseminating good practices and innovative solutions used in the organic food production system among farmers.

INITIATOR

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Contract with the Agency for Restructuring and
Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA)



FUNDING

Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020.
M 1.2.
12 652 069,26 EUR

20.06.2022 - 31.12.2024

DURATION



Poland

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

ON FARM DEMONSTRATIONS

DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES AND THE ROLE OF FARMERS

1. **265** demonstration facilities were set-up on farms/operations in the organic farming system
2. **66** scientific supervisors developed instructions based on scientific research
3. **349** agricultural advisors organized **1432** demo events at the demonstration sites for **8773** farmers on **152** farms
4. 46 seminars organised for **2240** farmers
5. Two-day conference organised to summarise the project (**200** participants)

6. Dissemination of innovations and best practices through:
 - a. **25** educational movies published on YouTube
 - b. Monthly publications with information on social media, newspapers and websites of consortium members

7. Role of farmers (demonstration farm): performing field trials, providing data, hosting demo events, testing innovations



Strengths and Weaknesses

- + Cooperation between the scientific supervisors, agricultural advisors and farmers
- + Updated and upgraded knowledge of the advisors and farmers
- + Strengthening the network of demonstration farms
- + Thanks to farm visits, researchers learned about the main problems and expectations of farmers, which will allow for better targeting of scientific research



All information on the seminar is available
on the event webpage:

<https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-seminar-farm-demonstrations-peer-peer-learning-innovation>



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