

## **What can the Future Internet provide to the consumers and the food chain members?**

**Reduced use of pesticides and fertilizers, more effective use of natural resources, showing to consumers clearly where their food came from, how it was produced and by whom, are some examples of the benefits what the society can get from the SmartAgriFood project funded by the EU FP7 program, which has started in April 2011 with the participation of 21 organisations from the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Finland, Greece, Hungary, the United Kingdom. The participants of the project represent both the ICT and the users' community from the agri-food chain.**

The SmartAgriFood project within Information and Communications Technology (ICT) theme of the FP7 is focusing on the application of existing and emerging internet technologies to agricultural and food production, food logistics and food awareness. SmartAgriFood aims to explore and identify actual and potential innovations in an attempt to achieve (1) more effective use of resources for production (2) minimising waste and energy to reduce the ecological footprint and (3) better handling and management of information to improve transparency and effective communication. The project is one of eight currently being funded users case studies together with a technology foundation, a capacity building and infrastructure and a programme facilitation and support project forming of the "Future Internet Public Private Partnership" programme.

The Future Internet PPP aims to advance Europe's competitiveness in Future Internet technologies and systems and to support the emergence of Future Internet-enhanced applications of public and social relevance. This will be achieved by (1) development of a smart, Europe-wide internet-powered infrastructure, (2) increasing the suitability for processing larger amount of data, (3) ensuring a more secure and reliable use of Internet, allowing a real-time data processing for real-time applications. Vice-President of the European Commission, Neelie Kroes, launched the Future Internet PPP in Brussels on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011.

Europe's current research efforts on the Future Internet account for about 90 projects, involving more than 500 European entities with total EU funding of around €400m over two year periods on average. The anticipated technological developments of the Future Internet and the trends towards smart infrastructures (in energy, mobility, health, work, environment, etc.) provide

Europe with an opportunity to progress towards a sustainable economy, in line with the Commission recovery package adopted on 26 November 2008.

The overall coordinator of the project is Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR) from the Netherlands. The SmartAgriFood project focuses on three sub systems of the sector, as:

- **Smart Farming** on sensors and traceability – concerns first the use of sensors and monitoring, decision support systems and precise input application so as to make the use of resources more efficient in food production, and secondly concerns ways to improve traceability and the flow of data along the food supply chain.
- **Smart agri-logistics** focusing on real-time virtualization, connectivity and logistics intelligence – concerns the intelligent matching of supply and demand followed by smart transport and logistics of agri-food products by e.g. tracking of food products, conditioned transport using sensors and control systems, remotely controlled early warning systems, and better predictions of food transportation needs.
- **Smart food awareness** focusing on transparency of data and knowledge representation – concerns enabling the consumer with relevant information e.g. concerning safety, availability, health, environmental impact, and animal welfare to make informed decision and making the activities carried out in the entire food production chain transparent

What this project means for ordinary citizens is better food produced with less impact on the environment through better operations based on improved flow of information, and greater knowledge and awareness about where our food comes from. For the food chain members from agricultural production through food processing and retailing, the project promises to contribute to the design of enabling tools for decision making and controls for lowering of inputs, reducing costs, increasing access to market relevant data for all people and organisations involved, and the recognition that farming and food production while technically challenging is central to our collective future. It includes early deployment, testing and experimentation of the new internet based solutions.

Participating in the project and the awarded EU funding greatly assist the improvement of innovation opportunities and capacities not only for the countries involved (the Netherlands, Ger-

many, Spain, Finland, Greece, Hungary, UK), but for whole Europe, particularly in the ICT “solution providers’ and the agri-food sector and foster their collaboration.

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