Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives in Europe

Proceedings of the Final Conference on 8 May in Brussels

Compiled by Heidrun Moschitz
INTRODUCTION

The final conference of the EU Project “Encouraging Collective Farmers’ Marketing Initiatives” was held on May 8 at the University Foundation in Brussels. The aim of the conference was to present key results of the COFAMI research, which has been carried out since September 2005. The conference represents the culminating point of a process of stakeholder involvement and dissemination, which has been carried out in the throughout the project in the form of two rounds of national stakeholder and European expert consultation. Altogether, 62 persons from 14 countries and the EU participated in the conference, representing farmers, LEADER groups, farmers’ initiatives, politics, and research.

Selected case studies from the 10 participating countries provided insights into the different strategies employed by the initiatives and the factors that limit and enable their establishment and development. Furthermore, the impact and contribution of these initiatives to sustainable rural development, as well as possible support strategies have been presented. The conference provided a platform for stimulating discussion between researchers, policy makers and stakeholders on the potential of collective farmers’ actions in addressing the challenges facing European agriculture and rural areas as well as possible strategies and measures to support them.

These proceedings are a collection of papers presented in the plenary sessions. A list of participants is provided in the Annex.
THE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The conference started with a brief Welcome by the responsible scientific officer of the project, Danièle Tissot and an introductory speech from a representative from the European Parliament, Hannes Lorenzen. The project coordinator Henk Renting then gave an overview of the COFAMI project. To show the participants the wide range of COFAMIs that had been studied during the project, eleven cases were presented on posters¹, and during an extended coffee break the participants were given the opportunity to inform themselves of cases they were interested in. The richness of collective farmers’ marketing initiatives was also shown with products from COFAMIs provided for tasting in the lunch break.

Another goal of the conference was to encourage focused discussions on three groups of strategies that COFAMIs follow – based on the analysis of the COFAMI cases: a) professionalizing short supply chains, b) developing markets for rural services, c) region branding. To this end, parallel workshops were organized at the end of the morning. Each of them included a presentation of two or more specific cases by representatives of the initiatives, and stimulated discussion among practitioners, policy makers, and researchers on the strategies these initiatives are following.

Lunchtime was used by many participants to carry on the discussions started in the workshops, and to exchange the outcomes between the groups.

The afternoon started with a presentation of limiting and enabling factors of COFAMIs based on the project’s results, and the discussion with the audience was enriched by a contribution from The EU project “Entrepreneurial skills of farmers (ESOF)”. Finally, possible support strategies for COFAMIs were presented from three different perspectives: based on project results, from a politics view, and from the point of view of young farmers. These input speeches were then used to start the round table discussion with representatives from the Commission, agriculture, and research.

¹ The posters, as well as the presentations of the conference are available on the project’s website www.cofami.org
The conference programme in detail

9.00  Welcome and opening
      Bill Slee, Conference Chair, Macaulay Institute, Scotland
      Danièle Tissot, DG RTD

9.15  The role of COFAMIs within the European Model of Agriculture
      Hannes Lorenzen, European Parliament

9.45  The diversity of COFAMIs across Europe and challenges they face
      Henk Renting, COFAMI project
      Open Discussion

10.30 Coffee break & Poster presentations of COFAMI cases

11.15 Parallel Workshops: COFAMI strategies and their contribution to sustainable rural development
      A) Professionalizing short supply chains
      B) Developing markets for rural services
      C) Region branding: valorizing territorial networks

12.30 Lunch Buffet
      Tasting of typical products from COFAMIs

13.30 Factors that limit and enable the development of COFAMIs
      Markus Schermer, COFAMI project
      Discussant: Christine Rudmann, EU project Entrepreneurial Skills of Farmers

14.30 Policies and strategies to support COFAMIs
      Karlheinz Knickel, COFAMI project
      Jean Michel Courades, DG AGRI, LEADER+
      Pieter Van Oost, CEJA

15.15 Coffee Break

15.45 Round table discussion on Support strategies for COFAMIs
      Isabelle Peutz, DG AGRI, Mark Cropper, DG AGRI; Jean Michel Courades, LEADER+;
      Timothy Hall, DG RTD; Gilles Maréchal, CIVAM; Pieter Van Oost, CEJA; Karlheinz Knickel, COFAMI

16.45 Concluding remarks
      Henk Renting, COFAMI project
INTRODUCTION:
THE DIVERSITY OF COFAMIS ACROSS EUROPE
Henk Renting, Project Co-ordinator, Wageningen University
Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives
Final Conference, 8 May 2008, Brussels

Collective Farmers’ Marketing Initiatives across Europe – Driving Forces, Diversity & Challenges

Henk Renting, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Outline

- Past and present of collective action in European agriculture
- Main lines and objectives of COFAMI project
- Wider market & policy trends and driving forces of COFAMIs
- Different COFAMI strategies and examples across Europe
- Conclusions
Past and present of collective action

- Important role of collective action by farmers in history of European agriculture
  - Marketing and buying co-operatives → improved market access, farm incomes, regional employment
  - Farmer study groups → technological innovation, spread of sustainable production methods
- Traditional co-operative strategies run counter to changing market contexts, societal demands and internal management challenges

Past and present of collective action

- New collective farmers’ marketing initiatives (COFAMIs) are emerging throughout Europe, including:
  - Producer groups of organic and regional / local foods
  - Supply chain co-operation to guarantee product quality
  - Direct producer-consumer associations
  - Groups providing public goods & services (tourism, landscape, care etc.)
- What can we learn from new COFAMIs? Do they provide answers to challenges of EU agriculture? If so, how can they be best supported?
Objectives of COFAMI project


- To identify (social, economic, cultural & political) factors that limit / enable farmers to pool ideas, experiences and capital in the development of co-operative producer organisations and marketing initiatives
  - To obtain overview of diversity of COFAMIs across Europe and identify different strategies
  - To identify different limiting / enabling factors and their importance according to regions, COFAMI strategies and development stages
  - To formulate support strategies and policy measures for the development, performance and dissemination of COFAMIs

COFAMI research activities

- Literature research, incl. ‘quick-scan’ of results from 8 previous research projects
- Status-quo review of collective marketing in 10 countries, resulting in typology of COFAMI strategies
- 18 in-depth case studies of representative set of COFAMIs, covering: strategy, relevant networks, sustainability impacts & support strategies
- Comparative analysis of case studies to identify (general and specific) limiting / enabling factors
- Stakeholder & expert consultation by European Expert Group and National Stakeholder Forums in all countries
COFAMI study countries & research teams

Denmark
Aarhus University

Latvia
Baltic Studies Centre

Czech Republic
Czech University of Agriculture in Prague

Hungary
Institute for Political Sciences

Austria
Innsbruck University

France
QAP Decision

Research Institute for Organic Agriculture

Italy
Research Centre on Animal Production

The Netherlands
Wageningen University
(Co-ordinator)

Germany
Institute for Rural Development Research

18 COFAMI case studies
Relevant market & policy trends

- Concentration in retail & processing
  - Transnational retailers have obtained central position as ‘gatekeepers’ between farmers and consumers
  - ‘Global sourcing’ of retailing & processing ⇒ competition and substitution amongst primary producers world-wide
  - Dominance of large retail surface ⇒ general lack of small and medium-sized retail / processing infrastructures

Consumers: 160,000,000
Customers: 89,000,000
Outlets: 170,000
Supermarket formats: 600
Buying desks: 110
Manufacturers: 8,600
Semi-manufacturers: 80,000
Suppliers: 160,000
Farmers/producers: 3,200,000
### Relevant market & policy trends

- **Growing importance of quality standards**
  - Shift from ‘bulk’ markets to differentiated product qualities and brands
  - Increase of public requirements for environment, safety, hygiene, animal welfare etc.
  - Multiplicity of private quality standards on top of public ones

- **Changing consumer habits & preferences**
  - Changing consumer habits (convenience, grazing & snacking, outdoor consumption)
  - At same time appreciation for food quality, authenticity and mode of production (environment, animal welfare)
  - More active involvement of consumer NGOs in food and rural issues

### Relevant market & policy trends

- **Emergence of new actors in rural areas**
  - Rural areas no longer strongholds of farming, but meeting place of variety of rural actors
  - From production space to ‘consumption countryside’
  - Growing role of partnerships in rural development policy

- **New markets for public goods & services**
  - Recognition of contribution agriculture in preservation biodiversity, landscape, culture etc. (multifunctionality)
  - Emergence of new non-food markets in rural areas, e.g. energy production, tourism, care etc.
  - Importance of synergies between different functions / activities in successful regional development
Different COFAMI strategies

Consumers

Extra-local policy actors

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

Local social & policy actors

COFAMI

Other economic actors

Product specificity

Location Factors
Ecology
Culture / Identity

Territorial resource base
Different COFAMI strategies

Market environment

Consumers

Extra-local policy actors

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

Other economic actors

Local social & policy actors

COFAMI

Product specificity

Location Factors
Ecology
Culture / identity

Other economic actors

Local social & policy actors

COFAMI

Policy environment

Consumers

Extra-local policy actors

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

Other economic actors

Local social & policy actors

COFAMI

Product specificity

Location Factors
Ecology
Culture / identity
Different COFAMI strategies

Differences in:
- Relevant social networks
- Role of policy & state agencies

Consumers

Extra-local policy actors

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

Other economic actors

Local social & policy actors

Differences in:
- Market strategy
- Alliances with other market parties

Differences in:
- Specific product quality
- Use of local resources

COFAMI

Product specificity

Location Factors

Ecology

Culture / identity

1. Countervailing power

Undermined by:
- Concentration in retail
- Market saturation, competition
- Food quality standards

Consumers

Building market power by:
- Pooling volume
- Risk management
- Investment in processing
- Shared market knowledge

Extra-local policy actors

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

Other economic actors

Local social & policy actors

Important in CEE countries and non-food markets (e.g. energy crops)

COFAMI

Product specificity

Location Factors

Ecology

Culture / identity

Generic, ‘bulk’ quality
Examples

NAWARO - Germany

LATRAPS - Latvia

2. Producer-consumer co-operation

Local & regional governments can play facilitating role

Extra-local policy actors

Local social & policy actors

Enabling role NGOs and social movements

Consumers

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

Producers & consumers jointly put pressure on / circumvent intermediaries

Key role of engaged consumer

Market knowledge

COFAMI

Product specificity

Location Factors

Ecology

Culture / Identity

Other economic actors

Local food, fair trade, authenticity, freshness
Examples

- AMAP - France
- Organic webshops in Netherlands, Italy and Switzerland

3. Quality differentiation

External quality guarantee

- Extra-local policy actors
- Local social & policy actors
- Promotion

Consumers

COFAMI

Building ‘niche’ markets by:
- Creating specific product quality
- Quality agreements along chain
- Collective processing
- Reputation, premium prices

Other economic actors

Quality differentiation by:
- Strong links with territory (e.g. PDO/PGI)
- Adhering to quality standard (e.g. organic)

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

Product specificity

Location Factors

Ecology

Culture / Identity
4. Region marketing / branding

Territorial policy schemes (e.g. LEADER+, Biosphere)

Extra-local policy actors

Local social & policy actors

Consumers

Chain Intermediaries (processors / retail)

COFAMI

Creation of synergies within rural economy

Local shops / restaurants

Tourism enterprises

Services & public goods (e.g. landscape)

Product specificity

Basket of products & services → Region as a whole becomes product / brand

Location
Factors

Ecology

Culture / Identity
Examples

Fuchsia Brand - Ireland

Region branding in Netherland, Czech republic and Germany

Conclusions

- New forms of collective farmers’ marketing that go beyond traditional co-operative mechanisms (‘countervailing power’) can be observed across Europe

- These can be understood as responses to changing market, policy and societal contexts:
  - Loss of control over supply chains due to concentration in retailing & processing
  - Growing differentiation of rural areas, evolving urban-rural relations, and changes in EU rural policy frameworks
  - New markets for distinctive food qualities, services & public goods

- COFAMIs apply a diversity of strategies - sometimes in combination - that are crucial to understand their functioning and (potential) impacts
Conclusions

- COFAMIs are mainly driven by the collective entrepreneurship of farmers, but have in common that build and capitalize on new networks beyond the agricultural sector.

- The nature of new (supply chain, territorial, community, private-public) networks and relevant actors for these is different for COFAMI strategies.
FACTORS THAT LIMIT AND ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COFAMIS

Markus Schermer, Innsbruck University
Christine Rudmann, Project Co-ordinator EU-ESOF, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Switzerland
Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives

Final Conference, 8 May 2008, Brussels

Limiting and Enabling Factors for the Development and Success of COFAMIs

Markus Schermer, Innsbruck University, Austria

The Dynamics of COFAMIs

Contextual factors
Market, political, institutional, social, cultural

Opportunities / challenges

COFAMI Goal, strategy

Organisation, networks, capacities

Changes in Contextual factors
Market, political, institutional, social, cultural

Impacts
Market, social, educational, cultural, environmental, political

Improved Capital assets
Financial, physical, natural, human, social

Initial Capital assets
Financial, physical, natural, human, social
Contextual factors and opportunities / challenges

Place specific contextual factors

- **Urban proximity / remoteness:**
  - Proximity to cities may encourage P2C initiatives, dedicated markets and / or supply of services
  - Remoteness may foster territorial networks between rural / supply chain actors and serve as basis for quality differentiation
  - ICT initiatives make ‘short chains at a distance’ possible

- **Rural attractiveness:**
  - Starting point for regional quality differentiation, marketing of public goods & services and region branding initiatives

- **Socio-cultural factors:**
  - Regional differences in tradition of farmers’ cooperation
  - Common political / ideological motivation
  - Strong regional cultural identity (or lack of this)

Contextual factors and opportunities / challenges

Non-place specific contextual factors

- **Market context:**
  - Globalization and ‘price squeeze’ stimulate search for added value and establishment of new chain relations / dedicated markets
  - Societal demands result in new markets (non-food, green care, agro-tourism, rural landscapes and biodiversity, etc.)
  - Wider societal trends offer new network opportunities (consumer lifestyle, environmental awareness, slow food, etc.)

- **Policy context:**
  - Regional policies may serve as enabling factor (Biosphere reserves, LEADER+, RDP measures)
  - National and EU policy frameworks both enabling and limiting (hygiene regulation, PDO/PGI, CMO Fruit & vegetables)

- **Institutional context:**
  - Existence of innovative milieus and institutional arrangements
  - Support for infrastructure and investments
Strategic orientation and relevant networks

Limiting and enabling factors depend on COFAMI strategy

- Quality differentiation in chain networks
  - Focus on product quality (e.g. regional speciality, quality standards, labelling)
  - Farmer initiated, key role for new supply chain networks

- Quality differentiation in territorial networks / dedicated markets
  - Often build on process quality (e.g. organic, face-to-face)
  - Mostly farmer initiated, key role for new networks with consumers (direct marketing) and other rural actors

- Developing markets for new rural goods & services
  - Also initiating role of non-farmer partners and policy actors
  - Networks integrate diversity of actors (e.g. region branding)

- Developing markets for non-food / energy products
  - Role of policy actors, use of pre-existing networks
  - “Traditional” co-operative mechanisms important (pooling volume)
Internal organization, capacities and life-cycle stages

Limiting and enabling factors depend on life-cycle stage

- **Founding phase**
  - Role of key initiators & leadership
  - Different types of (bonding, bridging and linking) social capital
  - Initial financial support requires formalisation of organisation
  - Internal coherent view on strategy needed (common ideology, diversity of actors)
  - Role of pre-existing networks for resource mobilisation (positive) and path dependence (negative)

- **Flexibility and capacity to adapt to changing contexts**
  - Reaction to changing trends (reactive and proactive)
  - Learning from shocks to build up resilience
  - Creating a learning milieu (continuous professionalization)
  - Internal communication / democracy vs. efficiency
COFAMIs result in improved impacts in terms of social, economic, and environmental rural development aims. Positive impacts are observed in all fields, but positive social performances appear a prerequisite for delivering other (market, environmental) impacts. COFAMIs develop activities and deliver impacts over longer periods of time. Relevance of and scores on different impacts depend on: regional context, strategic orientation, size and life cycle stage.
Translation into impacts and performances

- **Social performance**
  - Internal: sense of belonging *(size, strategy)*
  - External: trust in food, urban rural relations *(size, strategy)*

- **Market performance**
  - Premium prices, market shares, contribution to rural economy *(size, life-cycle stage)*

- **Environmental performance**
  - Reduced negative impacts (e.g. pollution, food miles) *(strategy)*
  - Positive effects through production practices *(strategy)*

- **Educational performance**
  - Innovation and learning capacity *(size, strategy)*

- **Cultural performance**
  - Traditional farming practices, gastronomic traditions, regional identity *(strategy)*

- **Political performance**
  - Lobbying capacity *(size, life cycle stage, strategy)*

Conclusions

- Limiting and enabling factors for development and success of COFAMIs depend on regional context, strategic orientation and life-cycle stage
- COFAMIs result in improved rural development aims, but deliverance of impacts requires time
- Successful COFAMIs manage to:
  - Tune their strategic orientation well to region-specific opportunities & challenges
  - Mobilize relevant actors and build strong and coherent networks that fit with their strategy
  - Adjust their internal organization to available capital assets and stay adaptive to changing conditions
  - Succeed in building social capital and translate this over time into other (market, environmental, etc) impacts
Entrepreneurial skills as strong stimuli for COFAMIs?

Some thoughts from the research project
Developing entrepreneurial skills of farmers (ESoF)

Dr. Christine Rudmann, project co-ordinator
Research Institute for Organic Agriculture, Switzerland

Content of the presentation

- Connecting entrepreneurship with entrepreneurial skills and COFAMIs
- Comparing results of the two projects
  - Influencing factors
  - Interrelation of the two projects
- Conclusions
Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, COFAMIs

Entrepreneurship in farming:

- Finding (new) ways of doing business in a changing environment

Individual

Farm / farmer

Groups / systems

- Clusters,
- Collective bodies,
- Regions,
- ...

Personality Traits
(entrepreneurial disposition)

Skills
(entrepreneurship as learnable activity)

Entrepreneurial skills

Opportunity skills

Strategy skills

Networking skills

Management skills

Professional skills

Complex, higher order skills: Establishing, steering + developing a profitable business (e.g. find a market for own products or develop a new product for existing markets)

Lower order skills: “doing” agriculture (e.g. milking a cow, financial management)

Basic skills

Source: Rudmann (forthcoming), adapted
Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, COFAMIs

- **Entrepreneurship in farming:**
  - Finding (new) ways of doing business in a changing environment

- **Entrepreneurial skills in farming:**
  - Know how to do tasks of establishing, steering and developing a profitable business in a changing environment

- **COFAMIs:**
  - Entrepreneurial strategies of marketing ("collective" entrepreneurship)

### Influencing factors for entrepreneurial skills

- **Factors internal to the farmer**
  - Personal features
  - Experience
  - Education / training
  - Age (+Gender)

- **Factors external to the farmer**
  - Features of the farm
  - Tradition / culture of farmers
  - Supply of education, services, projects
  - Politico-economic issues

- **Relational factors**
  - Social relations: NETWORKS!

Source: Vesala & Pyysäläinen (2008), adapted
Influencing factors in comparison

Contextual factors:
- Influencing factors more or less the same
- ESoF factors are experienced as enabling and limiting, depending on the (social, cultural) context

Internal factors
- Personal + organisational
  - Key initiators
  - Pre-existing networks
  - Reaction to changing environment
  - Learning / Creating learning environment
  - Internal communication

Entrepreneurial skills ↔ COFAMIs
Conclusions

- Entrepreneurial skills as stimuli for
  - Farmers’ generating ideas for initiating COFAMIs
  - Farmers’ recognition of a COFAMI as an entrepreneurial opportunity
  - Engaging in this opportunity
  - Adding to the success by bringing in personal
    - Communication skills, management skills, innovation skills, ...
    - Networks
    - Ideas

- COFAMIs as an opportunity for learning / experiencing of
  - Change of perspectives
  - Entrepreneurial skills (networking, communication skills, realising opportunities, ...
  - Social/cultural aspects (sense of belonging, trust, regional identity, ...

Further information on specific aspects of the presentation
Skill categories for farmers

Entrepreneurial skill categories:

- Recognising and realising business opportunities:
  - Recognising business opportunities
  - Market and customer orientation
  - Awareness of threats
  - Innovation skills
  - Risk management skills

- Developing and evaluating a business strategy:
  - Skills in receiving and making use of feedback
  - Reflection skills
  - Monitoring and evaluation skills
  - Conceptual skills
  - Strategic planning skills
  - Strategic decision-making skills
  - Goal setting skills

- Networking and utilising contacts:
  - Skills in cooperating with other farmers and companies
  - Networking skills
  - Team-working skills
  - Leadership skills

Source: de Wolf & Schoorlemmer (2007)

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Basic skill categories:

- Professional skills:
  - Plant or animal production skills
  - Technical skills

- Management skills:
  - Financial management and administration skills
  - Human resource management skills
  - Customer management skills
  - General planning skills

Source: de Wolf & Schoorlemmer (2007)
Support strategies for entrepreneurial skills

- Education/extension/research:
  - Experience exchange
  - Change of perspectives
  - Complex skill training (fictitious farms)
  - Research programmes which include farmers more as partners

- Politics/economics:
  - Foster rural development rather than “agriculture”
    - Regions rather than nations
    - Cross-sectoral strategies
    - Clusters (e.g. in the knowledge system)

References


POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COFAMIS
Karlheinz Knickel, Institute for Rural Development at the J.W. Goethe University, Germany
Jean-Michel Courades, DG AGRI, LEADER+
Pieter Van Oost, CEJA
Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives

Final Conference, 8 May 2008, Brussels

Policies & strategies to support COFAMIs

Karlheinz Knickel, IfLS Frankfurt

supporting collective action

- "… – a ten point summary" ⇒ conference folder
- analysis based on
  - insights derived from the 18 in-depth case studies
  - in 10 countries of the enlarged EU covering all relevant regions
  - interviews with key actors in initiatives & stakeholders
  - national level consultations (NSFs) / feedback rounds
- 29 pages report
why support initiatives?

- the possibilities for individual farmers to challenge powerful supply chain partners are limited!
- changing policy frameworks
  - territorial strategies, networking & cross sectoral collective action
  - rural amenities .. public goods .. 'new' rural services
- COFAMIs have the potential to ..
  - … strengthen the position of farmers
  - … increase rural incomes and employment
  - … collectively develop viable future strategies
  - … 'deliver' more cost-efficiently

creating a supportive environment

- different kinds of support
  - financial (investment / start-up finance; risk capital; ..)
  - information & public relations
  - advocacy … public legitimisation
  - brokering
  - training & consulting
  - technical & legal support for innovative & experimental approaches
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/ case study</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Life cycle stage</th>
<th>Type and importance of support received</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Financial (general)</td>
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<tr>
<td>North-western Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE / Eifel</td>
<td>Mix of food/non-food/services</td>
<td>New, but established</td>
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<td>DK / Thise</td>
<td>Biomass energy</td>
<td>Established</td>
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<tr>
<td>DK / Fagel</td>
<td>Food products (olive)</td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<tr>
<td>NL / Groene Woud</td>
<td>Mix of food and non-food public services (region branding)</td>
<td>Take-off</td>
<td>++</td>
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<tr>
<td>NL / VEE</td>
<td>Mix of food/non-food/services</td>
<td>New, but established</td>
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<td>Central &amp; Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>CZ / TBK</td>
<td>Mix of food/non-food/services (region branding)</td>
<td>New, but established</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUN / ASF Coop</td>
<td>Food products (wine)</td>
<td>Take-off</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<tr>
<td>LV / Latrava</td>
<td>Biomass energy</td>
<td>New, but established</td>
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<tr>
<td>LV / Priel</td>
<td>Food products</td>
<td>New, but established</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Europe &amp; Alpine Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT / UaB</td>
<td>Tourism services</td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT / Walser-Dog</td>
<td>Food products (cheese)</td>
<td>New, but established</td>
<td>+++</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH / Bio Weide-Beer</td>
<td>Food products (dairy)</td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH / bio-direct</td>
<td>Mix of food/non-food/services/public goods</td>
<td>Take-off</td>
<td>Bio-direct has not received any public or private support yet.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Food products (cheese)</td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>F / AMAP*</td>
<td>Food products</td>
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<td>IT / AsproCarna</td>
<td>Food products (dairy)</td>
<td>Mature</td>
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<td>IT / MangioCamillo</td>
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<td>Take-off</td>
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creating a supportive environment

- **different providers**
  - public sector / bodies ..... RDPs, LEADER+
  - social organizations: foundations, NGOs, …
  - communities
  - individuals
  - private (actual or potential) trading partners

- **increasing importance of public-private-partnerships**
## Sixth Framework Programme

**Scale types of support-providing bodies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/ case study</th>
<th>EU/international</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Local</th>
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### access to support & removal of constraints

- Support policies specifically **designed for groups** of farmers.
- Support for **alternative / 'new'** farm development models:
  - Value-added chains, distinctive food qualities, provision of public goods & services.
- Reduce bureaucracy: high TA costs can hinder realisation of new ideas!
- Create regulatory **flexibility**.
- Need for more room for manoeuvre & **experimentation** in both legal & procedural terms.
support related to knowledge & learning / advisory services

- strengthen the **social capital** of initiatives
  - skill-building and learning
  - .. beyond merely technical issues
  - training for leaders in professional management, ‘soft’ & entrepreneurial skills
  - **strategic coaching**

- advisory services
  - “... have to adopt new ways of thinking & development, ... develop a broader range of professional competences”

need to better target support

- policy is about making **choices**
  - who & what to support
  - how to provide this support in the most effective way
- relevance & importance varies with **life-cycle** stage
- **longer-term perspective** on initiatives’ development, commitment & strategy crucial
- profitability within a given time frame
- not all initiatives depend on public support!
two concrete proposals for European action

1. European support information system
   - existing information on support available for initiatives is fragmented

2. European exchange platform focused on the professionalisation of joint farmer initiatives
   - organisation of (inter)national exchange programmes for key actors
   - effectively support knowledge and experience transfer

COM, farmers unions, CEJA, advisory services, LEADER+, ...

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Thank you for your attention

For more information: www.cofami.org
E-Mail: knickel@em.uni-frankfurt.de
Collective Farmer‘s Marketing initiatives : support by the EU Rural Development Policy
Jean-Michel Courades (DG AGRI F3)

Four axes to implement the rural development objectives:

1. Improving the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sector
2. Improving the environment and the countryside
3. Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy
4. LEADER
Axis 1: Improving Competitiveness

- Measures aiming at promoting knowledge and improving human potential: vocational training/information; setting up of young farmers; early retirement; management, relief and advisory services, …
- Measures aiming at restructuring physical potential and promoting innovation: investments to improve production, processing and marketing structures (and infrastructures), …
- Measures aiming to improve the quality of agricultural production and products: adaptation to new EU standards; participation in food quality schemes; promotion for quality products.
Collective marketing

AXIS 1: relevant measures

- 114: use by farmers of farm advisory services
- 111: vocational training and information
- 121: farm modernisation
- 123: adding value to agricultural and forestry products
- 133: supporting producer groups for promotion for quality products

AXIS 3: relevant measures

- 311: diversification into non-agricultural activities
- 321: basic services for the economy
Collective marketing

AXIS 4: relevant measures

• 41: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
  • theme of the strategy: local products, territorial marketing

• 42: TERRITORIAL COOPERATION
  • Inter-regional
  • Transnational

Leader + project: Brugse Ommeland Farm products network

• Network of nine Farm shops
• Funded under the Strategy for farm-fresh products by LAG Brugse Ommeland
• Actions: Common label (image of the LAG region), joint advertising, marketing campaigns, mail order, map of the area with all information
• Link with other projects (‘stimulating a broader farm development’)
• In summer connection with cycle and hiking trails (issue: convince authorities to accept signposts)
• Project total cost: 362,536 euros
Leader + project:
Matön Gotland, the ‘food island’
- Support to the creation of a company to sell on behalf of seven island’s food producers by the LAG Gotland
- Supported actions: salary for a salesman, food fairs in Visby, joint summer farmer shop
- Products: farm meat, bread, fish, farm cheese.
- Markets: Stockholm market (30 shops) and Gotland’s tourists
- Total budget: 297,826 euros

Leader+ project:
Savours and flavours week
- Different events (on agriculture, heritage, industry, handicrafts, gastronomy, health)
- Products covered: aromatic plants, medicinal plant, cheese, olive
- LAG Luberon (Haute Provence)
- Target: professionals (producers, restaurant, sellers, distributors), general public (children, tourist, local people, connaisseurs)
- Additional projects: educational programme « I live in a region of savours and flavours », network of tourist offices
- Qualitative impact: mobilisation of partners
- Difficulties: mobilisation of all partners, to avoid to dilute the message by wanting to cover all sectors of the public
- Total budget: 130,000 euros (for the first event)
Leader+ project:
Portugal Rural

- Interterritorial cooperation project initiated under Leader II in 1998 and extended under Leader+ in an association called Proregios with more territories
- Commercial store in Lisbon for all Leader regions
- Products: food, hand-crafted goods
- Actions: action weeks in Lisbon, launching of new products, organisation of a fresh-food market
- Associated projects: pre-prepared baskets of fresh products ('Reciproco')
- Total budget: 519 000 euros
Encouraging Collective Farmers’ Marketing Initiatives
Final Conference, 8 May 2008, Brussels

Pieter van Oost
Young Farmers and collective marketing initiatives

Good afternoon to all of you,

I am Pieter van Oost, President of the Flemish young farmers’ organisation Groene Kring and vice-President of the European Council of Young Farmers. I am producing flowers together with my father. We are cultivating more than 700 species of azaleas and rhododendrons that we export across Europe or sell directly to the consumers.

Firstly I would like to thank you for inviting CEJA to this conference.
We, at CEJA, have a strong desire to work closer with researchers. We believe that collaboration between the 2 sectors should be intensified to make EU agriculture more attractive and competitive, and this conference is a good opportunity to give you the feedback you need from the farming sector.

To be honest, I did not know the existence of the COFAMI project, while I am operating within several COFAMIs and benefiting from their strengths in my everyday life!
Actually young farmers are among the most relevant persons who can talk about collective initiatives, as most of them experience it through their collective activities with their father, uncle or a third person. They rarely start their business alone …
Although you talk about different forms of COFAMIs in your research, this form of collaboration can probably also be taken as a sort of COFAMI.
COFAMIs, an answer to new agricultural challenges

Before speaking more precisely about my own experience of COFAMIs, let me start with a more general approach on how COFAMIs enter into our model of agriculture and can help farmers to face the new challenges of agriculture.

In times of globalisation where international competition becomes fiercer than ever before, the pressure on all economic actors is constantly growing. Easier means for transportation and communication, reduced trade barriers and the spread of technology have combined to sharpen international competition. Farmers are among the first to face this competition and the great challenges of these days are putting more and more pressure on them. Climate change is one of these challenges, as well as ever higher expectations from society. While food demand is currently on top of the agenda at international level, European citizens additionally ask for ever safer and healthier food of high quality, as well as an attractive countryside. Farmers are asked to produce more quality food in a sustainable way and to provide environmental and social services in rural areas.

It even becomes more and more difficult for farmers to justify the fair price of their products and therefore the right value of their work.

It sounds quite tricky, but young farmers are ready to tackle these challenges, and COFAMIS could be part of the solution, if recognized as such and supported!

COFAMIs, a tool for our model of agriculture

CEJA represents more than 1 million young farmers across Europe that all agreed on a sustainable model of agriculture as an answer to current and future issues. Competitiveness, multifunctionality and innovation are the cornerstones of our model, all based on sustainability and usually directly linked to the territory where our products are coming from. I will give you a few ideas on our approach that supports and can be supported by COFAMIs.

Transparency

At CEJA, we regularly ask for more transparency in the market to better inform the consumers. One possibility of such information could be the mandatory indication of
origin on the products. The diversity and quality of European products are the assets of European agriculture and have to be promoted. A real marketing and promotion policy for European agricultural products has to be put into place, at European level but also at regional and local levels. Linking the product to the territory it was produced on is also a way of recognizing the right added value of the product deriving from European farming in terms of food safety, quality, protection of the environment, traditions and culture.

In that context, COFAMIs can play an important role in developing a marketing strategy on a specific product or group of products, linked to a specific territory. COFAMIs will reinforce the communication visibility of the strategy, but also its economic efficiency, by financing a common advertisement for example.

**Cooperation**
If we wish to keep this European farming structure which is linked to its territory and keeps rural areas alive, we need to assure collaboration between farmers in order to create a more efficient way of cooperation, as well as greater contractual power that increases the share of the added value for the farmer.

Cooperatives and other forms of COFAMIs between the actors of the food chain are a good way of improving their situation by allowing them to control the processing and sale of their products. Transnational entities could provide one way of adapting to market globalisation and producer organisations could assist small farms to gain a better position on the market.

Even more than that: producer organisations, if they are well managed, can be real partners for the food industry.

**Innovation**
To remain competitive, young farmers also believe in the necessity to continuously invest in innovation. A stronger link to the research sector and a harmonisation of the acceptance and implementation of the results could facilitate a better access to innovation. This would then help the farmer to faster adapt to the market as well as to new challenges connected to environmental protection and climate change.

The organisation of farmers in COFAMIs can serve as a good tool to work closer and more efficiently with research.
I will give you my personal experience on that particular point: a small part of my professional activity is to create new species of Azaleas. To facilitate the continuous research that is needed for this innovative approach, my father and I belong to a cooperation group gathering 21 members across Belgium who finance a researcher all over the year.

Agro-energies
At CEJA, we also promote production and consumption of agro-energies at local level, to support economic growth, social and territorial cohesion. Production of agro-energies also helps reducing Europe’s energy dependency as well as its greenhouse gas emissions, thanks to less imports and therefore less long-distance transports.

CEJA’s vision aims at an integrated approach of all available sources of renewable energy at farm level, such as water, wind or solar energy, or the use of micro-generators using local biomass etc …

To facilitate such optimized use of different sources, small COFAMIs can be implemented. I know for example farmers recuperating energy from a neighbour industry to heat their greenhouses.

Farmers can also gather in COFAMIs for an optimal use of biogas production: biogas enables, for example, electricity production for an engine, which is then used for heating greenhouses while CO2 emissions can be disseminated for some specific inside production such as salads, for example.

Lifelong Learning
Access to innovation and best practices goes also through an easier accessibility of training and counselling for farmers, all along their life. To prepare themselves to the new challenges and be updated on technology innovations, farmers should work closer together to share their experiences and exchange with advisory services.

At CEJA, we try to achieve this objective at European level, but training-oriented COFAMIs can also be a useful tool at national, regional or local level and should be supported by the corresponding authorities.

COFAMIs, what I can bring from my own experience
Because COFAMIs are part of the solution to face new challenges and because COFAMIs are a possible instrument for the implementation of our model of agriculture, I would like to see more collective initiatives around me!

I have the feeling that farmers are afraid to work together, while it is beyond any doubt a wonderful way to go forward on a global point of view, but also on an individual point of view!

Another concrete example: in my region we practice “co-working”, which means that we are a group of farmers that are financing and sharing replacement staff that helps farmers in difficulties, on holidays etc … this is a way of expressing solidarity between us!

I also see some good emerging initiatives that would deserve more attention:

- For example the idea to create small intermediate enterprises gathering different complementary producers to facilitate a more transparent and direct selling should be encouraged! It would answer to quality and safety demands and ensure transparent prices for consumers, as well as avoid long distance transports.
- Furthermore, we regularly buy, together with other farmers, products such as fertilizers, materials … etc. This is a kind of non-official collaboration that could be formalized through the creation of a COFAMI, which will help us all to become better organized and work more efficiently!
- In terms of logistics, some farmers in Holland, for example, are organizing themselves in geographic zones according to their production. The idea is to avoid transports and to maximise efficiency for providers, retailers … etc

These are few examples that could be more supported and encouraged!

Let me conclude now with a few personal remarks, about what should, in my mind, be the frame of a good COFAMI.

I gathered 12 principles that should ensure the success and the durability of a COFAMI:

1. a first essential principle of equality
2. a principle of progressive collaboration: the common work has to go step by step!
3. a win-win principle for all collaborators
4. a principle of complementing each other
5. a principle of a common vision and common objectives
6. a principle of a clear legal agreement between the collaborators (I know a lot of informal collaboration that fails)
7. a principle of open and clear communication between partners
8. very important: a principle of confidence between them
9. a principle of availability
10. a principle of flexibility
11. a principle of open-mindedness on what is happening elsewhere (not only look at your own business)
12. a principle of reliable business

These principles of common work are not very hard to implement and should be supported and supervised by legal authorities to give more weight and maybe more insurance to farmers that hesitate to take part in the adventure!
I think we should, in the first place, encourage farmers to work together, communicate on the different possibilities they have and show them the benefits they could profit from.

Thank you for your attention.
ANNEX

Participants at the final conference of COFAMI on 8 May in Brussels
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agnieszka Wojda</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mcf1@poczta.onet.pl">mcf1@poczta.onet.pl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown of Northern Kraków Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Vuylstek</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Anne.Vuylstek@UGent.be">Anne.Vuylstek@UGent.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghent University (BE)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Department of Agricultural Economics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>+32 9 264 59 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Kawa</td>
<td><a href="mailto:basia@koronakrakowa.pl">basia@koronakrakowa.pl</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crown of Northern Kraków Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Slee</td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.slee@macaulay.ac.uk">b.slee@macaulay.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Macaulay Institute (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christiane Steil</td>
<td><a href="mailto:christiane-steil@web.de">christiane-steil@web.de</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regionalmarke Einfel (DE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Rudmann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:christine.rudmann@fbl.org">christine.rudmann@fbl.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Co-ordinator ESOF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudia Schrank</td>
<td><a href="mailto:SchrankClaudia@JohnDeere.com">SchrankClaudia@JohnDeere.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor Applications, John Deere Werke Mannheim</td>
<td></td>
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<td>John-Deere-Strasse 90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68163 Mannheim, Germany</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danièle Tissot</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Daniele.Tissot@ec.europa.eu">Daniele.Tissot@ec.europa.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG RTD</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Morris</td>
<td><a href="mailto:david.morris2@wales.gsi.gov.uk">david.morris2@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>Department for Rural Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel +44 29 2082 6969</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionisio Ortiz Miranda</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dortiz@esp.upv.es">dortiz@esp.upv.es</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (ES)</td>
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<td>Agri-environmental and Rural Economics Group Dpt.</td>
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<td>Economics and Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel +34 9638777000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elmar Fischer-Neuberger,</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elmar.fischer@adamah.at">elmar.fischer@adamah.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation und Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biohof ADAMAH, G. Zoubek Vertriebs- KEG</td>
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<tr>
<td>2282 Glinzendorf 7, Austria</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.adamah.at">www.adamah.at</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Els Hegger</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ehs.hegger@bureaubuiten.nl">ehs.hegger@bureaubuiten.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUISTEN, Bureau voor Economie &amp; Omgeving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achter Sint Pieter 160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3512 HT Utrecht, The Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +31 (0)30 - 2318945</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax +31 (0)30 - 2367840</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mob+31 (0)6 - 21213586</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bureaubuiten.nl">www.bureaubuiten.nl</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frans van Beerendonk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:f.beerendonk@home.nl">f.beerendonk@home.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groene Woud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geert van der Veer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gvdveer@bureaubraedium.nl">gvdveer@bureaubraedium.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groene Woud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postbus 69</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5460 AB Veghel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +31 413 385 820</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.bureaubraedium.nl">www.bureaubraedium.nl</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gilles Maréchal</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gilles.marechal@civam-bretagne.org">gilles.marechal@civam-bretagne.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVAM Bretagne (FR)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giovanni Stanzani</td>
<td><a href="mailto:g.stanzani@prober.it">g.stanzani@prober.it</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBER-Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulven Maréchal</td>
<td><a href="mailto:goulven.marechal@gabnor.org">goulven.marechal@gabnor.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GABNOR (Nord-Pas de Calais Organic Farmers Group) 20, rue Pasteur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59139 Wattignies, France</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +33 (0)320 322 535</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax +33 (0)320 323 555</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.gabnor.org">www.gabnor.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannes Lorenzen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hlorenzen@europarl.eu.int">hlorenzen@europarl.eu.int</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermann Hagspiel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hagspiel.faira@oesfo.at">hagspiel.faira@oesfo.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairea GmbH</td>
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<td>c/o Ökosoziales Forum Europa</td>
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<td>Franz-Josefs-Kai 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>1010 Wien</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +43/1/533 07 97-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Dempsey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ian@westcorkleader.ie">ian@westcorkleader.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cork LEADER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inga Klawitter</td>
<td><a href="mailto:i.klawitter@ceja.be">i.klawitter@ceja.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conseil Européen des Jeunes Agriculteurs CEJA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue Belliard 23/A Bte 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1040 Brussels Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +32 (0) 2 230 4210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris van der Graaf</td>
<td><a href="mailto:iris@kivaproducts.nl">iris@kivaproducts.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Eigen Erf (NL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle Peutz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:isabelle.peutz@ec.europa.eu">isabelle.peutz@ec.europa.eu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>DG AGRI</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan McCutcheon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ivan@westcorkleader.ie">ivan@westcorkleader.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cork LEADER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cork Technology Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonakilty, Co. Cork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.westcorkleader.ie">www.westcorkleader.ie</a> &amp; <a href="http://www.fuchsiabrands.com">www.fuchsiabrands.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +353 23 34035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan van Herk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@pergama.nl">info@pergama.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groene Woud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Van Winghem</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jan.vanwinghem@west-vlaanderen.be">jan.vanwinghem@west-vlaanderen.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province of West Flanders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Benoitstraat 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-8800 Roeselare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +32 51/ 27 55 55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mob +32 499/ 56 59 31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Michel Courades</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jean-Michel.Courades@ec.europa.eu">Jean-Michel.Courades@ec.europa.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG AGRI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and Affiliation</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joost Dessein</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joost.dessein@ilvo.vlaanderen.be">joost.dessein@ilvo.vlaanderen.be</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burg. Van Gansberghelaan 109, bus 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9820 Merelbeke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +32 9 272 23 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel + 32 9 272 23 41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Santry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kevin@westcorkleader.ie">kevin@westcorkleader.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cork LEADER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klaus Loukota</td>
<td><a href="mailto:uab@lk-tirol.at">uab@lk-tirol.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urlaub am Bauernhof (AT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brixnerstr.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6020 Innsbruck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +43-59292-1170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laust Spandet Jensen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feje Fruit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo Dvortsin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leo.dvortsin@wur.nl">leo.dvortsin@wur.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEI – Agricultural Economics Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 29703</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2502 LS the Hague, The Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Levidow</td>
<td><a href="mailto:L.Levidow@open.ac.uk">L.Levidow@open.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Policy and Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tel. +44-1908-654782/652103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://dpp.open.ac.uk">http://dpp.open.ac.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Bille</td>
<td><a href="mailto:linda.bille@llka.lv">linda.bille@llka.lv</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvian Agricultural Cooperatives Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republikas square 2-320, Riga, LV-1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +37129118615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcin Rybski</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.rybski@wielka-wies.pl">m.rybski@wielka-wies.pl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown of Northern Kraków Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Guittion</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marie.guitton@euromontana.org">marie.guitton@euromontana.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euromontana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, Place du Champ de Mars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-1050 Bruxelles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +32-(0)2-280-42-83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.euromontana.org">www.euromontana.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marien Sonneveld</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sonneveld@regiowaarde.nl">sonneveld@regiowaarde.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stichting Regiowaarde (Regional Value Society)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. box 90153, NL 5000 LE Tilburg, The Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Cropper</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mark.cropper@ec.europa.eu">mark.cropper@ec.europa.eu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG AGRI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro Brosei</td>
<td><a href="mailto:PedroBrosei@gmx.de">PedroBrosei@gmx.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue Jupiter 159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1190 Bruxelles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel +32.2.5342495</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name and Affiliation</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Pickel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:PickelPeter@JohnDeere.com">PickelPeter@JohnDeere.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieter Van Oost</td>
<td><a href="mailto:PickelPeter@JohnDeere.com">PickelPeter@JohnDeere.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piotr Adamczuk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:piotr@koronakrakowa.pl">piotr@koronakrakowa.pl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanislaw Kutáček</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiitu Ohvril</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timothy Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ralph Liebing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva Kucerova</td>
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<td>Heidrun Moschitz</td>
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<td>Henk Renting</td>
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<td>Hielke van der Meulen</td>
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<td>Imre Kováč</td>
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<td>Jüri Sanders</td>
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<td>Karlheinz Knickel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kees de Roest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Markus Schermer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otto Schmid</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandra Šūmane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tālis Tisenkopfs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Participants from the COFAMI project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita Kalniņa</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anita.soc@gmail.com">anita.soc@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudio Montanari</td>
<td><a href="mailto:c.montanari@crpa.it">c.montanari@crpa.it</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinna Zerger</td>
<td><a href="mailto:corinna.zerger@lr.uni-bonn.de">corinna.zerger@lr.uni-bonn.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egon Noe</td>
<td><a href="mailto:egon.noe@agrisci.dk">egon.noe@agrisci.dk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Kucerova</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kucerovae@pef.czu.cz">kucerovae@pef.czu.cz</a>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidrun Moschitz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:heidrun.moschitz@fibl.org">heidrun.moschitz@fibl.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henk Renting</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Henk.Renting@wur.nl">Henk.Renting@wur.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hielke van der Meulen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hielke.vandermeulen@wur.nl">hielke.vandermeulen@wur.nl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imre Kováč</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ikovach@mtapti.hu">ikovach@mtapti.hu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jüri Sanders</td>
<td><a href="mailto:juern.sanders@fibl.org">juern.sanders@fibl.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karlheinz Knickel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:knickel@em.uni-frankfurt.de">knickel@em.uni-frankfurt.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kees de Roest</td>
<td><a href="mailto:k.de.roest@crpa.it">k.de.roest@crpa.it</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markus Schermer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Markus.Schermer@uibk.ac.at">Markus.Schermer@uibk.ac.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otto Schmid</td>
<td><a href="mailto:otto.schmid@fibl.org">otto.schmid@fibl.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Šūmane</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sandra.sumane@lu.lv">sandra.sumane@lu.lv</a>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tālis Tisenkopfs</td>
<td><a href="mailto:talis.tisenkopfs@lu.lv">talis.tisenkopfs@lu.lv</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>