MATCHMAKING EVENT IN AGROFOOD, IN LLEIDA

Development of Topics

Resource management

A major objective will be to strike a proper balance between productivity and environmental goals in agriculture and forestry by ways of efficient resource use. This requires a thorough insight into the dynamic interactions between agro- and forest ecosystems, resource use and climate. Advances in technologies such as ICT are expected to open new avenues for site-specific and precise resource use. In addition, closely interlinked rural and urban resource flows will allow gaining value from residues and byproducts in line with the principles of the circular economy. At the same time, a transition to resource-smart land use will enhance the potential in farming and forestry for mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to increasing climate variability.

Healthier plants and animals

Resilient agriculture and forestry systems require robust plants and animals with increased resistance to pests and diseases. Tackling numerous and highly dynamic biotic threats will require integrated approaches and the development of a wide range of tools for prevention, monitoring, control and management of pests and diseases along with risk management strategies. This includes seeking alternatives to contentious plant protection products and antimicrobials. The establishment of links between health and other disciplines and aspects of production will be sought. In the area of animal production, one-health approaches will receive particular attention.

Integrated ecological approaches from farm to landscape levels

This priority provides the ground for better understanding and use the potential of ecosystem services for primary production. It will allow exploring the functional role of biodiversity in the delivery of ecosystem services to increase resilience at farm and landscape levels vis-à-vis biotic and abiotic threats. It thereby links the first two priorities and provides the knowledge base to develop, test and demonstrate specific farming systems such as organic and mixed farming systems or different forms of agroforestry. It also allows tackling the ecologically important interfaces between agriculture and forestry along with the related needs for management of multifunctional forests.

Towards healthier and sustainable food

Increasingly, consumers are paying attention to healthier food diets, "healthy" food attributes (such as "freshness", "naturalness" and "nutritional value") and overall sustainability of processing methods. To meet these demands, food processing need to further evolve in terms of better preservation of the raw material and natural food properties while ensuring healthy, safety, tasty and sustainable food. In parallel it is necessary to improve the understanding of the influence of consumers' practices in maintaining the healthy food attributes from purchasing to consumption. Other important trends include a growing demand for regional and locally produced/supplied and less processed food. This has resulted in the emergence of new SME-led business

models and an increasing number of farmers engaging in food processing (either on farm or by sharing processing facilities) and local food value chains.