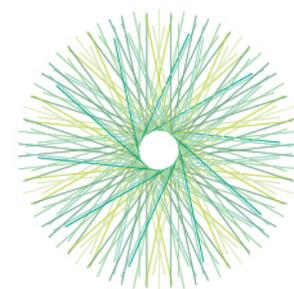


Press article

Sustainable beef production systems

NOVEMBER 2020



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AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

Press article long

Beef innovation network

Connecting European beef farmers and driving sustainability of the sector

Beef farmers in Europe are facing urgent sustainability challenges. The Beef Innovation Network Europe (BovINE) was established across 10 member states to provide practical solutions. This network focusses on the needs of the 1.8 million EU beef farms.

Maeve Henchion coordinates the project on behalf of Teagasc, the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority. She was inspired to set up the BovINE network by her cousin who is a farmer. Maeve: "My cousin was always eager to learn more from other farmers, and on his days off he often went to open days run by Teagasc and other organisations to learn about the research being done in the beef sector. BovINE does the work for him and other farmers now. We provide them with access to knowledge from farmers and research, and not just in Ireland, but also farmers, institutes and universities across Europe."

Understanding the farmers' needs and how their production systems work is central to the BovINE network. A significant amount of research has already been carried out, but it has not yet been translated into practice. That is one of the goals of the network. Maeve: "We see all the farmers in our network as a source of innovation and as important actors. We also collaborate with, for instance, animal nutrition companies, advisers, farmers and breed associations, and SMEs. Together we can work on innovations that drive the sustainability of the beef sector."

"Farmers may be interested in joining our network so that their voices can be heard and so that we can provide them with access to solutions based on their needs. They may also be interested in sharing their knowledge or showcasing their personal experiences with other European beef farmers. The BovINE network also disseminates results from other European projects that are working on themes related to beef. For example, we disseminate knowledge from the [LIFE Beef Carbon](#) project, and also from EIP-AGRI Operational Groups that are linked to our network."

Trevor Boland, a suckler beef farmer from the west coast of Ireland has joined the network. Trevor: "I got involved in the BovINE network through the IFA (Irish Farmers Association), to learn some new ideas and innovations from our EU farming counterparts. I hope that my participation in this network will help to secure the future of family farming in Ireland in terms of improving financial viability and environmental sustainability." Trevor also hopes to learn how fellow European beef farmers are tackling challenges across key areas like animal health, environmental sustainability, financial viability and technical efficiency.

Trevor: "We should be able to apply some of the solutions we can identify at EU level to challenges on our own farms. In the Irish network event, which I attended virtually, there was an excellent presentation on innovations and good practices from other EU countries. One innovation, provided by one of the BovINE partners from Portugal, highlighted a very unique method of reviving a weak calf at birth, which I had never seen before. With more information, which I hope to get on the BovINE knowledge hub, I would like to try this out on my farm."

Press article short

Beef innovation network connects European beef farmers and drives sustainability of the sector

Beef farmers in Europe are facing urgent sustainability challenges. The Beef Innovation Network Europe (BovINE) was established across 10 member states to provide practical solutions.

Maeve Henchion coordinates the project on behalf of Teagasc, the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority. Maeve: "Central in the BovINE network are understanding the farmers' needs and how their production systems work. Lots of research has already been done, but it hasn't been translated yet into practice. That is one of the goals of the network. We see all the farmers in our network as a source of innovation and as important actors. Other actors we collaborate with are for instance animal nutrition companies, advisers, farmers and breed associations and SMEs. Together we can work on innovations that drive the sustainability of the beef sector."

Trevor Boland, a suckler beef farmer from the west coast of Ireland has joined the network. Trevor: "We should be able to apply some of the solutions we can identify at EU level to challenges on our own farms. In the Irish network event, which I attended virtually, there was an excellent presentation on innovations and good practices from other EU countries. One innovation, provided by one of the BovINE partners from Portugal, highlighted a very unique method of reviving a weak calf at birth, which I had never seen before. With more information, which I hope to get on the BovINE knowledge hub, I would like to try this out on my farm."

Background information

Project information

BovINE, Beef Innovation Network Europe is an EU-funded thematic network project that was established in the summer of 2020. It is focused on knowledge exchange to help address the challenges and drive the sustainability of the European beef farming sector and community. The project will connect with farmers across Europe by providing an open platform – the BovINE Knowledge Hub – where beef farmers, advisers, member organisations and researchers can exchange knowledge and share experiences to drive awareness and adoption on farm of innovative and proven practices. The project focuses on four key thematic topics: Socioeconomic Resilience, Animal Health & Welfare, Production Efficiency & Meat Quality, and Environmental Sustainability.

www.bovine-eu.net

www.hub.bovine-eu.net

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Pictures

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Trevor Boland, a suckler beef farmer from the west coast of Ireland.



Trevor Boland: "I hope that my participation in the BovINE network will help to secure the future of family farming in Ireland in terms of improving financial viability and environmental sustainability."

More information on sustainable cattle production systems

The experts from the [EIP-AGRI Focus Group Sustainable beef production systems](#) cover the question 'How can grass-based beef production systems, based on agroecology principles, remain sustainable?' The Focus Group report - including a state of play, recommendations, ideas for Operational Groups and research needs on the topic - will be published in 2021.

- [EIP-AGRI Focus Group on dairy production systems: report – factsheet](#)
- [EIP-AGRI Focus Group on profitability of permanent grassland: report – factsheet](#)
- [EIP-AGRI Focus Group Grazing for carbon: report – factsheet](#)
- [EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Livestock Emissions: report – factsheet](#)
- [Brochure Sustainable livestock farming](#)
- [EIP-AGRI Focus Group on protein crops: report – factsheet – workshop – brochure](#)

Other Horizon 2020 projects working on sustainable cattle production systems

- EuroDairy - A Europe-wide thematic network supporting a sustainable future for EU dairy farmers: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic network – 02/2016-01/2019)
- 4D4F - Data Driven Dairy Decisions 4 Farmers: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic network- 03/2016-02/2019)
- Inno4Grass - Shared Innovation Space for Sustainable Productivity of Grasslands in Europe: [website](#) - [CORDIS](#) (Thematic network – 01/2017-12/2019)

Multi-actor projects are projects in which end users and multipliers of research results such as farmers and farmers' groups, advisers, enterprises and others, are closely cooperating throughout the whole research project period.

Thematic networks are multi-actor projects which collect existing knowledge and best practices on a given theme to make it available in easily understandable formats for end-users such as farmers, foresters, advisers etc.

EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects working on sustainable beef production systems

At least 29 Operational Groups working on sustainable beef production systems are available in the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups database (update 16 November 2020)

- **Austria:** 1
- **France:** 1
- **Germany:** 2
- **Italy:** 2
- **Latvia:** 1
- **Lithuania:** 1
- **The Netherlands:** 3
- **Poland:** 2
- **Portugal:** 4
- **Slovenia:** 1
- **Spain:** 8
- **Sweden:** 3

EIP-AGRI inspirational ideas on sustainable cattle production systems

<u>Producing protein feed and fuel from biomass</u> Agrinnovation n°3	Denmark
<u>Changing the menu in the cow barn</u>	Denmark
<u>Improving welfare for cows...and farmers</u>	Denmark
<u>Innovative technology for animal feed rich in protein</u>	France
<u>Growing protein crops to optimise livestock farms' profits</u>	France
<u>Exploring protein crop production for quality feed</u> - Agrinnovation n°5	France
<u>German farmer creates sustainable on-farm dairy solutions</u>	Germany
<u>Sports apps for dairy cows!</u>	the Netherlands
<u>Amazing Grazing- going back to the roots</u>	the Netherlands
<u>Concrete solutions for sustainability and animal welfare</u>	the Netherlands
<u>A passion for permanent pasture</u>	Portugal
<u>Decision support tool for dairy farm management</u>	Slovakia
<u>Improving feed intake in cows, sheep and goats</u>	UK
<u>Increasing farm profitability while cutting carbon emissions</u>	UK

EIP-AGRI

The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) has been launched by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation of the sectors concerned, by stepping up innovation efforts. The EIP-AGRI aims to foster innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors by bringing research and practice closer together – in research and innovation projects as well as via the EIP-AGRI network. Also grassroots ideas from farmers get developed into innovations through the so-called Operational Group innovation projects.

The EIP-AGRI aims to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives, and complement them with actions where necessary. Two specific funding sources are particularly important for the EIP-AGRI: the EU Research and Innovation framework, Horizon 2020, as well as the EU Rural Development Policy.

[EIP-AGRI Brochure on the EIP-AGRI Network](#)

(EN – BG – DE – ES – FR – GR – HU – IT – PT – RO)

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups

- 98 Rural Development programmes provide support to EIP Operational Group innovative projects *
- Over 3200 Operational Groups are planned to be established under the approved RDPs (2014 – 2020)
- Over 1500 Operational Groups projects have been selected for funding and are currently ongoing (or already finished)*. Member States will still start more Operational Group projects which may run until 2023.

* Information officially submitted to the European Commission by RDP managing authorities (November 2020)

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups **are groups of people who work together in an innovation project funded by Rural Development Programmes** (RDPs). They bring together partners with complementary knowledge. The composition of the group will vary according to the theme and specific objectives of each project. Farmers, advisers, scientists, businesses or other relevant partners work together to find practical solutions for specific problems or opportunities for European farmers and foresters. Farmers and foresters need to be cooperating throughout the project to ensure that the innovative solutions are practical and likely to be quickly applied in the field. Read the [basic principles](#), [Innovation support services](#) (including advisers with a focus on innovation), and in particular innovation brokering, can therefore play a crucial role in getting worthwhile projects off the ground by facilitating contacts.

Find out more in the [EIP-AGRI brochure on Operational Groups](#). The brochure on Operational Groups is available in English, Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Spanish.

Operational Groups can benefit from networking and collaborating with organisations from outside their partnership and from other regions and countries, such as other Operational Groups, research projects, farmers' organisations or local authorities and European knowledge networks. Read the [EIP-AGRI Brochure 'Operational Groups – Collaborate to innovate'](#). It shows some examples of successful collaboration. It provides Operational Groups with inspiration and tools for further knowledge exchange within the EIP-AGRI network. This brochure is available in English, Latvian, Romanian and Slovenian.

Check out the '[Operational Groups](#)' dedicated section on the EIP-AGRI website, including:

- More than 1500 Operational Groups available in the database
- detailed information on how to set up Operational Groups, on supporting networks and relevant EIP-AGRI seminars and workshops
- links to results and contact details of ongoing Operational Groups in the [EIP-AGRI database](#)
- a [list of all RDP Managing Authorities](#)

EIP-AGRI videos



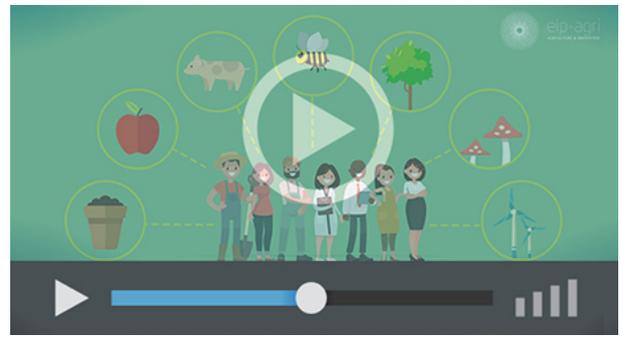
Operational Groups – first experiences



Operational Groups – collaborate to innovate



Innovation Support Services, supporting innovation in EU farming and forestry



EIP-AGRI Focus Groups, sharing knowledge to inspire innovation