



copa
european farmers

2016

**Innovation award
for women farmers**

**Women farmers'
as drivers of
innovation and
green growth in
the EU**

Best projects selected



Innovation Award for Women Farmers 2016

The Women Committee of Copa and Cogeca organises the fourth edition of the European Innovation Award for Women Farmers. The 2016 edition is entitled "Women farmers as drivers of innovation and green growth in the European Union".

The award aims to highlight the innovative activities and projects carried out by women involved in farming throughout the EU. The projects presented by these women demonstrate their capacity to contribute towards finding new solutions to the challenges faced by the rural world and showcase their role as key players in the future of rural areas.

The winner project is chosen on the basis of criteria such as the use of innovative know-how, methods or new forms of technology in a sector or on the land, innovation transfer, the sustainability of the innovation, namely on an economic and environmental level, and/or new communication methods.

33 applications were received from all over EU and the Organising Committee recommended the 5 best applications to the Jury.

The award giving ceremony will take place in the 12th of October in an event hosted by Ms. Elisabeth Köstinger, Member of the European Parliament.

Olga Kujani Laszloné Cser

Monitoring and forecasting agricultural production

Member of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (NAK), Hungary



SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

In 2003, Olga founded Kujani Ltd and the Kujani farm. The farm is a family business and all four family members are well versed in agriculture, with several agricultural degrees between them. Olga herself is an assistant at the university. The Kujani farm is somewhat of an oasis in the middle of the Hungarian wasteland and has 14 hectares of vines and 16 hectares of stone fruit trees, which are essential for the production of apricot jam, cinnamon flavoured apricot jam, apple and apricot jam, strawberry and apricot jam, and sour cherry jam.

Whilst founding the farm, Olga was also granted SAPARD pre-accession funds for Hungarian agriculture and invested in a system of real-time monitoring and forecasting for farmers. The system that Olga created makes it possible to produce high-quality products that meet EU food security requirements. It is also

coupled with specialist advisory services. The system can be used anywhere in the world after a few tweaks to adapt it to the specific characteristics of each country.

The system recently became the basis of the system used by the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture and is employed by some 1,000 Hungarian farmers. It has also piqued the interest of foreign partners, and several state officials from Serbia, Kosovo, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and the United States have visited the farm to see the programme themselves.

INNOVATION

Olga selected and purchased the equipment herself and developed the integrated and complex plant production system, known as the Hungarian tailored system, which is perfectly aligned to Hungarian weather conditions and the needs of Hungarian farmers.

The system supports farmers' agri-environmental projects using smart tools (text messages and e-mails) to provide real-time professional advice for farmers on when to spray their plants, when to use chemicals and which dosages to apply. The aim is to forecast pest control trends, work on plans for soil management and fertilisation, and establish a rotation system and farming schedule based on best practices. The services also includes farm advice with practical demonstrations, group advice sessions (reviewing expectations) and organising training sessions for the National Qualification Register (OKJ).

The technological system was first used by the Kujani farm. At present, some 1,000 Hungarian farmers use this system to produce high-quality goods and meet EU food security requirements.

Margaret Farrelly

Free-range laying hens

Member of the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA), Ireland



SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

In 1983, Margaret married her husband, Leo, and they moved to a 16-hectare dairy farm with 10 cows in Mullagh, on the border of Cavan and Meath, Ireland. Having worked in a bank, it did not take long for Margaret to realise that the income from the dairy farm would not make ends meet, so she looked around to see what could be done. Margaret realised that farming families kept few hens and so, since then, Margaret has been investing in this sector.

INNOVATION

In 1987, Margaret began a pioneer investment in Ireland, buying 150 free-range laying hens and supplying a local packer. Nowadays, Margaret has 150

hectares of land, 168,000 free-range hens and her turnover stands at €6.2 million.

The product is presented on Irish supermarket shelves in coloured packaging, which sets the O'Eggs apart - the 'O' stands for outdoor. 5 cents from each pack of O'Eggs goes to a cancer charity.

Margaret also bet on Megga eggs, free-range eggs that are naturally enriched with omega 3, selenium and vitamin E via the hen's diet.

In 2009, Margaret identified another niche market, i.e. white eggs, and so invested in white hens. Three years later, in 2012, Margaret solved the problem of unsaleable very small and very large eggs by introducing pasteurised egg products and she now supplies bottled eggs to most of Ireland's main supermarket chains.

The company employs 33 full and part-time staff and Margaret works with 22 farmers who complete a poultry educational programme, including a programme with the University of Scotland. Margaret has also set up a research and development department for innovative products. This year, Margaret has already invested €8 million in production facilities.

Because sustainability is key for Margaret, she developed the Origin Green Programme within the Irish food board and encourages people to visit her farm to see how transparent the procedures are for themselves.

All of Margaret's products and ideas are promoted via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and she recounts her inspiring tale of entrepreneurship and innovation on television programmes too. Margaret also participates in a national TV programme, "The Secret Millionaire".

Corine Fleuren

Mini apple trees

Member of the Agricultural and Horticultural Organization (LTO), The Netherlands



SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Corine worked in the Fleuren tree nursery, which is a family company that produces 1 million fruit trees per year in the Netherlands. Their apple, pear and cherry trees are delivered to customers both within and outside of Europe.

In 2010, the concept of producing your own food was gaining ground and Corine realised that it was not easy to have fruit trees in small spaces, such as back gardens. Corine therefore developed mini apple trees that do not need much space or care. The concept is now spreading across the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.

INNOVATION

Corine developed mini apple trees that do not demand much space and do not exceed 50 cm. This is an innovative product for fruit growers and consumers alike.

Moreover, these trees do not need to be pruned or sprayed, because they do not suffer from the common diseases that plague apple trees. Corine uses Facebook, Twitter, phone calls and e-mails to remain in contact with her consumers. This exchange is very positive as it allows the customer to express his doubts and also helps Corine better understand what people want.

The mini apple trees are sold directly from the producer to the consumer via her online shop. The concept to promote healthy food grown in small spaces began with a plan to plant 500 trees in the first year, but actually 5,000 trees were sold. Currently, 10,000 mini apple trees are sold annually and the business is also growing outside of the Netherlands.

Corine is also working with another company to develop a MiniMest (fertiliser) that is sent to the costumers in the right dosages and at the right time.

Corine shares her concept by giving talks on entrepreneurship in universities and clubs, and also gave a TEDx talk entitled "Find your inner farmer". She also works with market research students from different universities.

Lisa Paganelli

Symbiotic agriculture with mycorrhiza

Member of Coldiretti, Italy



SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Lisa runs Seggio, an organic family farm situated in the unspoiled hills of the Tosco-Togmagnolo Appennines, in the province of Forli-Cesena, Italy. After having graduated as a veterinary surgeon, she started becoming interested in local zootechnical problems and decided to better her work with other farmers, and improve the quality of their finished products.

In order to do just that, Lisa created the Bio Valbidente consortium, which is a sales point for organic farmers, and began using mycorrhiza for symbiotic agricultural production. Lisa's farm produces cereals, feed and livestock, and everything is minutely controlled. Lisa has also written a product specification, contributing to improving the local economy with good, clean, fair and innovative products.

INNOVATION

In 2014, after several experiments, Lisa developed an innovative symbiotic agriculture project using mycorrhiza at sowing. Mycorrhiza is a fungus that colonises the roots of the cereals, feed crops, trees and vegetables, and helps the crops capture more nutrients. This process maintains and develops the microbiological sustainability of the soil and plants, and also gives the final product better organoleptic and nutritional characteristics. For instance, they contain natural biota, which is a good bacteria that betters human health. These results were confirmed by national research institutes and have been published in specialist magazines.

At the same time, Lisa wanted to control the quality of the meat produced by the farm and so created a fully controlled system. The meat now contains more elements, such as lycopene, carotene, phenols and antioxidants. What's more, the higher percentage of polyphenols and enzymes in the meat facilitates human digestion. Lisa also found that this approach reduced nitrate residues in fruits and vegetables.

Lisa's aim was to improve the health of the population when she began the Bio Valbidente consortium. With her symbiotic method, she hopes to reduce the incidence of certain diseases, such as gastro-intestinal disorders, obesity, hepatic steatosis and diabetes. Lisa brought other farms, local schools, oncological institutes, public administrators and associations in Romagna on board too, and the local economy is more dynamic, food production is cheaper and the methods used are more sustainable.

Anna Wilén

Gourmet potatoes

Member of the Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF), Sweden



SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Anna comes from the eighth generation of family members who live and work on Dår Söre. This Swedish farm has been in the family since 1765 and produces potatoes, strawberries and vegetables that are sold to companies and directly to consumers. During the summer, there is also a farm café and a small shop that sells locally grown and locally made products from other farms and small enterprises. Tourists and local families seize this opportunity to have a picnic and stroll around too.

The farm is certified by the Swedish IP – standard certifying contributions to sustainable development in crop and animal production. Anna's approach focuses on reducing waste, and changing the standards and packaging of potatoes.

The farm and company employ about 50 people, most of whom are temporary workers during the summer season.

INNOVATION

In 2000, Anna Willén realised that producing potatoes and selling to companies and directly to consumers was not very profitable and generated a lot of waste, because any potatoes that were too small ended up being fed to pigs.

By selecting small potatoes and packing them in 1 kg bags, Anna created an innovative concept for the Swedish market, which was not used to seeing small bags of potatoes sold straight to the consumer. She called them "Gourmetpotatis" (gourmet potatoes). Anna also reduced waste by printing the product information and recipes straight onto the bag. Her gourmet potatoes became a premium product, which have increased incomes for all farmers who have adopted these new communication and packing methods. Potatoes have once again regained their rightful place in Swedish food culture.