

Innovation prize for women farmers

2011



Women Farmers' projects

Prize-giving

17 November 2011



Women play an increasingly important role in many areas of life. They are the backbone of rural society. Women farmers represent over 35% of the agricultural workforce in Europe and it is important to recognise the benefits they bring to the sector. More and more, they take an active part in farming families decision-making. They play a key role in a vibrant and successful EU agriculture sector, providing food and services for 500 million consumers.

In the wake of growing food demand, we are pushing for a dynamic, innovative and profitable Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the upcoming reform which ensures food security, enabling farmers to produce profitably and competitively to feed a growing population. Women farmers will play a major part in achieving this.

The innovation award introduced by the Copa Women's Committee aims to highlight areas where women have shown their expertise in being innovative and underline the activities and benefits that women can bring to agriculture. It also aims to stimulate adoption of further innovative, competitive practices. The prize, which is presented every two years, is awarded on the basis of criteria such as the use of new know-how, new methods or technologies in a given sector. The Women's Committee was established in 1968, ten years after Copa was created, and holds a special place within the organisation.

Pekka Pesonen
Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General



Dacian Cioloș
EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

It is not by mistake that the ancient Greeks put agriculture under the patronage of a female deity. Demeter was the goddess of agriculture, horticulture, grain and harvest. She was the keeper of the horn of plenty. It is not by mistake that there was another goddess, her daughter, Persephone, associated with the spring, with the seeds and the fruits of the fields, with the cycles of vegetation, which shoots forth in the spring and withdraws into the earth after the harvest. And there is not by mistake that another goddess, Athena was the deity for wisdom and reason!

The vitality of our rural communities and their future, the alchemy of our farming households and their balance, the heart of rural economies and their dynamism, they all rely on the contribution that women bring. The Ancient Greeks knew it already in their time!

Women in agriculture, women farmers, women entrepreneurs, women and innovation, have a key role to play for the future of our farming in Europe. We will continue to invest in motivating women to stay/become farmers, to promote the principle of non-discrimination, to boost innovation.

Already, in the reformed CAP we have put forward, there are several tools to stimulate innovation for women, in the context of LEADER, business development, cooperation, training and knowledge transfer. Prioritising women's participation in these measures means projects that target women and female entrepreneurs, but also projects developed by women. There are further opportunities for innovative projects in the frame of the agricultural European Innovation Partnership. This will allow women farmers to take leadership, to learn and capture all the practical advantages of these agriculture research initiatives.

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this few lines to introduce the Innovation Prize for Women Farmers. It is an initiative that deserves all the promotion and the awareness possible and I want to thank COPA for the role it plays in it.



Adriana Bucco
President of the Women's Committee

The second Prize for Innovation has seen a very large number of farms run by women from all over the European Union take part. Awarding a prize does not only enable us to increase the recognition of the value of women in agriculture, but also to get to know the kind of work carried out on these farms. Many very interesting farms participated, varying from farms where production is reconciled with family life, demanding reinvention on the farm, to multifunctionality. Many of the farms were excellent practical examples of short supply chains. Some were specialised in non-food products, such as flowers and others placed production alongside social activities, varying from activities with schools to providing a home to the elderly.

All the farms which participated in the Prize for Innovation are examples of farming in a modern way, moving with the times, with the specific goal of making a profit. What we have seen is enormous creativity and the clear capacity to run a business; to earn an income whilst continuing to live in rural areas, protecting and safeguarding the areas that we live in.

There are ever more women deciding to run farms and this is because they are secure in the knowledge that they can bring change, that they can breathe life into an agricultural sector which is reinventing itself. Understanding the market's needs and producing in accordance with these needs is vital, as is directing consumers towards informed choices for healthy living. Women are ready to do their bit!

Innovation Prize for Women Farmers

ONCE-A-DAY MILKING FARM

Ann MOORE,

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National Farm Family & Social Affairs Committee

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The innovation price for Women Farmers has been awarded this year to Anne Moore from the Irish Farmers Organisation (IFA) for her innovative Once-A-Day Milking Farm which is grass-based with 190 cows and focuses on low cost production of high quality milk

Description of the farms' structure and activities

The farm, which is a Grass Based Low Cost System, is a substantial holding totalling some 127 hectares, with grass pastures on free draining rich soil. Currently, 190 cows are milked on the farm, built up from just 28 cows in 1998. The Fresian herd has been crossed with Jersey bulls in recent years to optimise hybrid vigour and with Kiwi cross bulls in 2010/2011. Cows eat grass during the grazing season from February to November and silage during the winter period.

The herds' milk yield is recorded, with great attention being paid to animal husbandry and welfare. Management practices are excellent on the farm, with particular emphasis on the environment and to quality food production. The farm is also well-placed to optimise profit and to develop further once milk quotas have been phased out in 2015.

Along with purchases and sales, Anne Moore has had to manage her own administrative affairs, including stamp duty (property tax), capital gains tax, accountants' fees and solicitors' fees. She moved to a once-a-day milking model in 2010 to improve her quality of life.

The cows produce an average of 3,315 litres of milk per cow, at 4.4% fat and 3.7% protein content. Farmers from New Zealand have come over on numerous occasions to work on the farm, learning the system of grass budgeting. Her daughter and son have also adopted this technique



Innovative elements introduced on the farm and results

In 1999, Anne's husband David was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. It was a life changing event and she stepped in and began milking the cows. At that time, they had 28 cows on their newly purchased 65 hectare farm. They had sold their farm of 30 hectares and moved to this new location.

In a bid to expand and develop the farm, she purchased 18 hectares with milk quota in 1999. In 2005, she purchased another 15 hectares with milk quota. But milking twice a day and managing the farm proved very time consuming for Anne. She had been working with New Zealand farmers towards a grass based system and she decided to opt for a once-a-day milking farm in 2010 to improve her workload and balance in life.

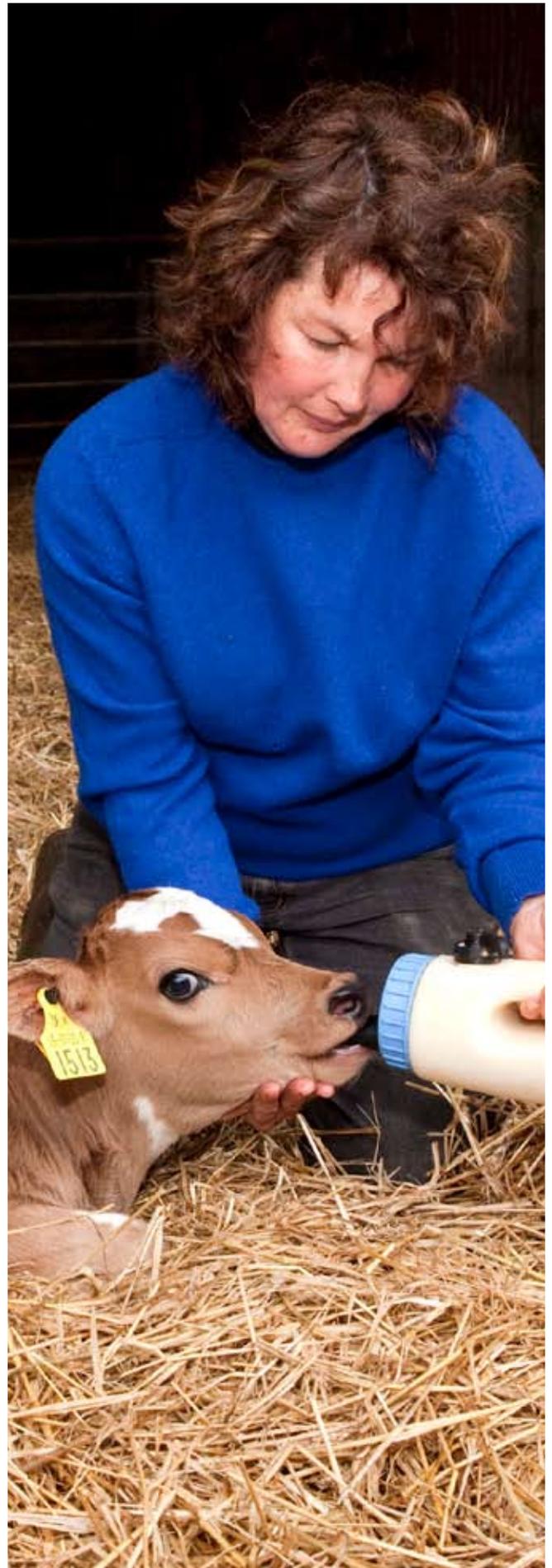
The farm has grown organically and sustainably over the years. The strategic management and careful planning have enabled Anne Moore to use to her advantage the opportunities that have presented themselves over time.

Establishing and maintaining contacts in New Zealand has offered a way of promoting knowledge transfer at international level. The knowledge transfer began with Con Hurley's writings on low cost dairy farming in the Irish Farmers Journal. She was also involved in the local Teagasc (Irish agricultural training agency) discussion group for a number of years.

Last year, her dairy co-operative Dairygold ran a workshop on her farm to help milk producers to tackle the problem of high somatic Cell Counts in milk. Many of the local farmers found it very helpful. She solved her own problems by putting in the back wash system called "Cluster Cleanse" to sanitize the clusters between each cow and so eliminate the spread of infection and ensure high quality milk production.

Adopting a once-a-day milking model, providing cost-effective production of high quality milk has improved her workload and balance in life. She is very active in the local community. She helps to run a soup kitchen for the homeless in the local town.

The family finances have improved significantly and they now have a stable farm business to pass on to the next generation. She is a vocal member of the farming community in her area, yet still finds time to pursue her own personal interests. She is a member of the local Irish Farmers Association and she likes to meet and share knowledge with her colleagues. She attends the Positive Farmers conference each year and the Women and Agriculture conference. She gave cookery demonstrations in her own home and in other homes to raise funds for charity. She uses these opportunities to promote the sourcing of good local food ingredients. She believes that new knowledge and up to date innovations and the sharing of this will result in a better farming life for everyone. This is her way of making the best of life's resources. She recognizes that her work gives her a sense of purpose in life.



First special achievement award

Diversification into organic farming and on-farm tourism and social activities

Stefania CORROCHER,

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Diversification into organic farming and on-farm tourism and social activities

Copa's First Special Achievement Award has been given this year to Stefania Corrocher from the Italian Farm Organisation Coldiretti for her multifunctional farm Baugiana which includes on-farm tourism.

Structure of the farm and activities

Baugiano is a multifunctional farm which was first established in 1999 and moved to organic farming in 2007. The farm has livestock (horses, donkeys, pigs, goats, sheep, poultry and cows for producing yogurt and cheese), grows organic vegetables and makes honey and organic extra virgin olive oil (PGI Montalbano). In 2006, the farm also became an agri-tourism business and an educational farm.

In order to raise awareness amongst tourists and local residents of the environmental heritage of the region, there is a picnic area in the woods, a spring water drinking fountain, a restaurant kiosk and a place for renting mountain bikes.

Stefania hosts guests and runs a restaurant on the farm, whilst entertaining and educating people (children and adults) on various topics linked to rural life, nutrition, the environment and traditions under the slogan 'growing future generations'. The farm offers summer centres and agri-holidays.

Stefania Corrocher has developed a new teaching method integrating play into educational dinners 'dine and play'. She has encouraged the creation of 'an educational Sunday with the family' which is a new way of considering free time.

The farm has also become a social farm through collaboration with cooperatives and ASLs (local health trusts) focusing on mental illnesses.

In addition, the "Young People's Dairy" project was created during a summer vacation on the farm and involves around 20 young people aged between 11 and 18 from various Italian regions, providing local schools with 2400 yoghurts per month.



Innovative elements introduced on the farm and results

Each year, Stefania makes a long-term investment in a project, such as ensuring that the stalls meet animal welfare requirements; creating a farm shop managed by young people; ensuring that all the educational equipment is safe; installing photovoltaic cells to contribute to energy independence and purchasing equipment for processing and preserving the milk and other products. Her most recent investments, in the dairy and the farm shop, were designed to significantly increase the income obtained from the market (livestock farming and foodstuff production). Parts of this project has benefited from support from the Rural Development Programme.

Her "dine and play" programme works together with local bodies to provide local organic produce to the Council's canteen. She has also started a small local supply chain to increase the value of a traditional grain Verna which she produces and grinds for her towns bakers to make into bread. Improvements were also made to animal enclosures for grazing and the rural bakery project (using farm products and traditional recipes).

The other innovative project is the Young People's Dairy which involves around 20 young people and provides local schools with 2400 yogurts per month. From April 2011, it has been managing the White Bar.

In the future, young entrepreneurs will be trained on the farm so that they can experience for themselves the risks and rewards of running a farm. There are various activities dedicated to developing the entrepreneurial aspects and self-sufficiency of the farm, as well as giving farmers self-confidence, helping them keep on top of the market, understanding the main players in a new market and gaining an insight into the economy (not through the free market, and pursuing individual interests but through understanding the situation and putting humanity, in its collective, more intimate sense, at the centre of attention).

Second special achievement award

“HORTULUS” ORNAMENTAL GARDENS

Iwona BIGONSKA,

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A Second Special Achievement Award was given to Iwona Bigonska from the Polish Farm Organisation KRIR for her 75 hectare nursery holding for ornamental plants called Hortulus whose biggest attraction is the 5 hectare thematic gardens.

Structure of the farm and activities

The 75 hectare nursery holding for ornamental plants is located in the district of Koszalin, Western Pomerania. A wide range of around 2300 species of trees, shrubs, climbing plants, creepers, perennials and herbs are produced on the holding and sold all year round thanks to a gardening centre which acts as an intermediary. .

The biggest attraction of Hortulus is the 5ha thematic gardens which were created in 1992 on the land of an old, abandoned farm. The public are able to come and visit them. They are an example of how the natural environment can be transformed, following the damage of progressive urbanisation.

Iwona was inspired to use the gardens as a basis for learning and as part of environmental education programmes for schools. The gardens also offer practical training for students from agricultural colleges and universities wishing to become professional gardeners or landscape architects. With respect to lifelong learning, particular focus is given to women from rural areas. Training sessions and shows are organised, linking theory to practical ways of refining gardening skills.

As a woman farmer, Iwona is interested in particular in helping women benefit from educational programmes, via gardening schools or through the help of their employers, in this way specialising in a profession and becoming competitive on the labour market. The innovation behind the thematic gardens is that they have also become a central part of tourist circuits. Export opportunities have also been created.



Innovative elements introduced on the farm and results

Creating the gardens on her farm allowed Iwona Bigońska to make her vision a reality, developing not just a comprehensive training facility but also a beautiful, unrivalled attraction. Her goal was to carry out an activity in the interest of education in the broadest sense, with a predominantly natural, environmental and social focus.

Long-term effort to this end achieved great results. Over the last 10 years, hundreds of thousands of people have visited the gardens at Dobrzyca, including groups for the elderly, women and young people. Visiting the gardens not only provides visitors with an individual, aesthetic experience but also the opportunity to learn about nature in the natural environment. It offers the possibility to observe natural species from the far corners of the globe, living in symbiosis in the animal and plant kingdom. The Dobrzyca gardens promote a healthy lifestyle. Visitors learn to appreciate spending time as a family, feeling at one with nature and seeing the advantages of living in rural areas.

The thematic gardens at Dobrzyca are one of the greatest attractions in the region and are testament to the innovation, creativity and achievements of their founder, Ms Iwona Bigońska.

She was awarded the national Polish Tourism Prize in 2007.



Anita COOLEN – JANSSEN

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De Port care farm for the elderly

The runners up include Anita Coolen from the Dutch Farm Organisation LTO with her entrepreneurial care farm for the elderly. At the same time, she runs a dairy farm with her husband.

Structure of the farm and activities

Anita runs the De Port care farm in order to help elderly people suffering from dementia. At the same time, she runs with her husband a dairy farm. They own 25 ha of arable land and pastures. An additional 8 ha for growing maize will be bought this year.

She offers day care to elderly people needing help to take care of themselves. Guests are able to enjoy the countryside and the outdoors, help prepare meals, care for the farm animals, help look after the kitchen garden as well as other activities. Every activity offers the guests a way of training or maintaining a skill of service to the farm. Guests are offered enjoyment and stimulation, whilst making a real contribution to the farm. At the same time, guests who have difficulties getting by in their personal lives are able to regain self respect through their achievements on the farm. Anita's future goal is to transform the farm into a 24-hour farm care centre. Her idea is to construct two houses offering supervised accommodation for eight guests, as well as apartments for couples where one of the partners is ill, to go on holiday. Such accommodation would offer the perfect holiday package for elderly people with an affinity with agriculture.

Innovation and results

Anita has expanded her care farm so that it can offer 24-hour care. A sizeable investment has been made in the farm. Guests, partners and parents feel at home at the De Port care farm, because the agricultural enterprise has a solid operating programme, whilst also offering opportunities of seasonal work. Many people are happy to participate in the initiative. To the older guests, it provides a real sense of community, and helps to improve their self-esteem. This project also creates employment in rural areas. The provision of care is separated into two areas, housing and personal care. Clients rent the accommodation as well as pay for living expenses. Depending on the level of care required, people may be offered a Care Package, and pay a sum of money dependent upon the seriousness of the person's condition.



Clara van RAVENHORST-KIEFT

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Multifunctional farm and cooking with local products

The runners up include Clara Van Ravenhost-Kieft from the Dutch Farm Organisation LTO for her dairy farm which includes on-farm tourism and bed and breakfast facilities and luxury accommodation.

Structure of the farm and activities

The dairy farm, which has 70 cows, became multifunctional in 2002, with four large bed and breakfast rooms, accommodating families of up to 18 people.

In 2004, Clara undertook the initiative KOEkerellen, a catering scheme using products from the farm to prepare group meals. During the preparation, explanations of the origin of the products and how they were produced are given. In 2006, Hofstede Hooybroek was built offering luxury accommodation for up to 22 people. Holiday cabins were constructed in 2007, along with a conference facility. The De Uitrustung tea-rooms were built in 2007 where women can run their own business as a day-entrepreneur. In 2009, a book entitled Smaakmakers was published, offering recipes and stories from the Gelderse Valley, spreading knowledge of local products. The Meeting à la Carte scheme was started in 2011 which is an extraordinary way of offering meeting/conference facilities, which can be planned by individuals or organisations according to their specific needs, without having to accept set packages. All three locations combined have a turnover of 390,000 euros for 2010.

Innovative elements introduced on the farm and results

By learning to cook with local products people discover how easy it is, whilst being entertained with stories and learning about what goes on at farms.

Many women dream of starting their own tea-room where they can sell their own cakes. The De Uitrustung tea-rooms offer women who may not live in the countryside the opportunity to start their very own tea-room, starting out with a very small investment as a day entrepreneur. On a given day of the week, they take on the role of entrepreneur, running the tea-room, managing their own communication and customer relations. In this way, they are able to learn, step by step, how to run their own business. The conference facility is available for group clients who wish to arrange a meeting to be held on-site. Offering a great location, this is often an important aspect for clients. The Meeting à la carte scheme provides a tailor-made service.

Other entries



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Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti (COLDIRETTI)

IL BUON SEME (THE GOOD SEED)

On the farm *Il Buon Seme* (the good seed), innovative elements were introduced aligning the agri-tourism business with multifunctional activities. They re-evaluated how agricultural areas can provide other services and transferred part of the farmhouse to a social cooperative for use as housing for mothers and children. They also worked together with the social services to help integrate people who are in difficult situations. Bringing the community into the agricultural business and farmhouse also provided a certain amount of sustainability.



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Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti (COLDIRETTI)

Coldiretti Alessandria

TERRE SPARSE - SYNERGIES WITH ANIMALS AND PLANTS

The *Terre Sparse* complex has three different structures (agricultural business, educational and social farm and recreational educational association) which are managed together to create a wellness centre for both people and animals. It offers environmental education and psychophysical wellness programs thanks to the animals on the farm and particularly thanks to the alpacas which make it possible to have the wool course as well as the 'Alpaca Gym'. It helps develop creative imagination, self-confidence, decision-making abilities and improved manual skills.



Christa SCHWEIGER

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“Goggei” – developing marketing and production of free-range eggs in Tyrol

In the state of Tyrol – which is primarily characterised by dairy production – self-sufficiency in the supply of eggs was at 14%. It was impossible to buy free-range eggs produced in Tyrol from food retailers. Falling farm-gate milk prices prompted Christa Schweiger to develop the production of free-range eggs, offering a new source of income for the women farmer and the farm. As a qualified professional, she developed a brilliant concept as a way of filling the gap in the market for Tyrol free-range eggs. In 2008, she embarked on her pioneering work in this area. Successful marketing and cooperation made a success-story of the idea, with over 1,400 hens. Thanks to cooperation with *Agrarmarketing Tyrol*, the “Goggei” Tyrol free-range egg is on sale in many branches of SPAR, ensuring guaranteed sales of these quality-certified eggs developing a specific marketing concept.

Ann-Britt EDBERG

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Svenska Lantbruksproducenternas Centralförbund (SLC)

ORGANIC CEREAL PRODUCTION

This farm produces organic oats, wheat and barley for grains and clover. Ann-Britt helps farmers with grain drying and storing grain. She has built a new grain-drying house using advanced technology. She successfully combines office work, as a tax expert, and working in the fields with machines and also in forests cutting timber and fire wood for selling. It is very hard in Finland for a woman to be a farmer. She considers it an innovation that she takes care of the land and 150 clients each year and the old buildings which she paints in the summer.



Elämän VÄRIT

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Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK)

THE COLORS OF LIFE

Elämän Värät - The Colours of Life - is an handicraft cooperative society that was founded in Central Finland mainly by six women dairy farmers and a textile designer. The cooperative manufactures textiles. The designer brings pictorial motifs that are hand-printed into different patterns, and various sorts of textile for home decoration, and for everyday use. The goal of the cooperative has been to give a positive image of the countryside to city residents and to create an economic opportunity for those skilled in crafts. Many women in the countryside are often home alone, so it gives them the opportunity to be in contact with society outside their homes. All this also a developing and training impact on the cooperatives members and their skills.

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Valerie KINGSTON

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Irish Farmers' Association (IFA)

National Farm Family & Social Affairs Committee

GLENILEN FARM - AUTHENTIC FARM TASTE

25 products of "Authentic farmhouse taste" are produced from the farm's own milk and sold on the farm and local market. These are simple products using ingredients of the highest quality that yield a superlative taste. The packaging is also innovative and the logo has become a nationally recognized brand. Valerie uses glass jars for the yoghurts and glass ramekins. The farm has become a destination for school tours as they teach about the provenance of food and setting up businesses. In ten years, Glenilen Farm brand has grown to supply the local farmers market to a 2.2 million euros turnover business employing 28 local people.

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Vrouw en Bedrijf

VEGETABLE FARM

The farm is engaged in marketing courgettes using a flexible approach, drive and a high quality product. It brings new courgette products onto the market, working with the Anton Jurgen Institute which does surveys on consumer taste. They bring new products onto the market, including mini courgette sweet-sour sweetened with honey. This honey originates from bees pollinating the courgette flowers. Sales through locality -and farm shops. They have recipes on the website and a blog about courgettes.



Marleen & Agnita VAN ROOIJEN

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Vrouw en Bedrijf

BOERENSPELLEN

Loeigezellig consists of 2 companies situated under one roof. In one part, the dairy farm is fully automated and has a very high level of wellness for cows. The other company is called Boerenspellen and it has specialised in a short period of time in entertaining people in a modern, highly developed farm. Customers of all ages can entertain themselves at the farm by playing active and passive games, bicycles tours and activities related to living at the farm. The farm also offers an educational tour on the farm. It is also possible to arrange meetings in the business room, with all facilities and cooperation with the tourism industry.



Delia REVELLI

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Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti (COLDIRETTI)

Enterpreunarial Women

Coldiretti Cunio

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FISH FARM

On this fish farm (freshwater fish, particularly various species of trout) the fish are bred on the farm and sold live or processed on-farm. The farm also restocks in mountainous regions, working in fishing lakes and tourist fishing. The farm gained EU recognition as it only uses spring water which is subject to veterinary checks. The innovative aspect consists of having a non-intensive farm which works on a closed circuit. The products are all packaged ready for consumption. They are also an educational farm, recognised by the Piedmont region, teaching children of all ages and explaining to them how the reproduction, birth and growing process of the fish function. They are able with cooperative support to provide fresh produce for schools and hospital canteens as well. They have been able to raise awareness of their products by participating in initiatives, shows and *Campagna Amica* markets.

Maria Cristina GASCO

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Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti (COLDIRETTI)

Enterpreunarial Women

FARM USING NATURAL METHODS FOR PIG MEAT PRODUCTION

Around 1 year ago, 2 sisters took over the farm from their father. Until then, the farm had only focused on agricultural activity. Now, they also have direct sales which is bringing very positive results and gives them a great deal of personal satisfaction. The farm produces pigs and cows as well as cultivates arable land. They have a shop on-site where they sell pigmeat from their Italian pigs, which are born and raised on their farm and fed using natural methods on GMO-free feed made up of maize, barley, beans and soya alone. The farm has a shop area within the farm where customers can buy all sorts of cold cuts, sausages, lard, bacon, traditional pigmeat products.



Samanta ROVERA

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Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti (COLDIRETTI)

Enterpreunarial Women

Coldiretti Cunio

FARM USING BIO-DYNAMIC METHODS

Il Germoglio cultivates its seasonal vegetables, small fruit and aromatic and ornamental potted plants using biodynamic agriculture and only natural 'ingredients' in order to grow its crops as well as possible. For example, the farm uses organic matter to fertilise the land. This is the most modern, practical and effective system for producing organic-mineral fertiliser and nothing is wasted on the farm. Biodynamic agriculture is a way of living, observing and working the land. Its aim is not to leave the work up to nature, but to go beyond nature and help it to keep the land constantly fertile in order to benefit future generations. The products are sold at the markets or directly on the farm.



Dolores DIAZ GOMEZ

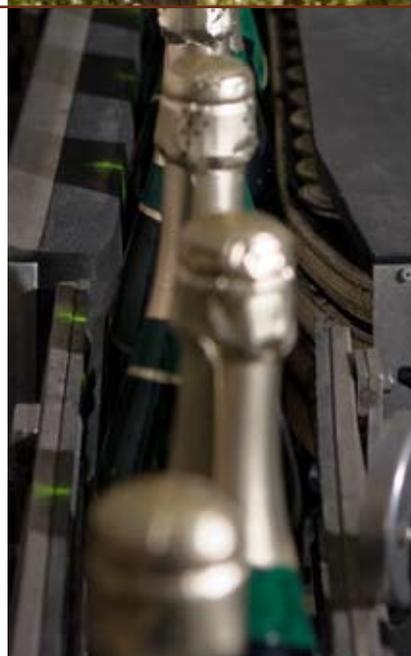
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ORGANIC PRODUCTION OF ALMONDS AND GRAPES FOR WINEMAKING

The innovation was to carry out organic production of almonds and grapes for wine making, which was not common in this region at the time, in addition to using machinery representing the latest in new technology. In this way, the agricultural operations, means of support and self-supply are more sustainable, profitable and lasting. The innovative machinery used aims to reduce the level of physical exertion of workers and reduce diseases. All these innovations have been carried out in view of improving product quality, making products healthier, using environmentally-friendly techniques as well as reducing economic costs, increasing economic yields and environmental benefits. The outcome is a commitment between all partners, ensuring a future for rural inhabitants and avoiding the depopulation of rural areas.





Amelia FERAGNOLI

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Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti (COLDIRETTI) - Enterpreunarial Women
INTEGRATION OF PEST MANAGEMENT APPLIED TO READY TO EAT VEGETABLES

The Feragnoli farm produces and processes ready-to-eat (fourth range) lettuces and other vegetables. The farm uses integrated pest management procedures. After harvesting, the vegetables are stored in a modern, technologically advanced establishment and then the selection, cutting, washing and packaging stages begin. The Feragnoli farm is also responsible for its own sales and transport. The farm is an example of a short supply chain applied to a multifunctional farm and is certified. Production and processing are overseen by suitably trained, result-oriented personnel. The farm chooses to employ female members of staff for the most part as women have a better feel of the kind of work they do The innovation is processing the vegetables and providing them to the end consumer as a ready-to-eat product which has all the freshness and taste of a product that has only been harvested a few hours ago. The farm is considering opening an agri-crèche for staff members' children.



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Confederazione Nazionale Coldiretti (COLDIRETTI)

Coldiretti-Pavia

SNAIL FARMING

The farm cultivates cereals as well as farms snails. Innovative elements introduced includes a mixed, complete, organic cycle rearing method. Through controlling the births and all subsequent growth, drying, purging and selection stages of 100% of the molluscs, the farm can guarantee a product all year round that is convenient, practical and suitable for modern and healthy recipes. After 18 years of experience , they have noticed that consumers not only want healthy products that are easy to cook , but also appreciate the attention and respect that they give to the animals and environment .



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Confederazione Generale dell' Agricoltura Italiana (CONFAGRICOLTURA)

Unione Provinciale Agricoltura di Bressola

INNOVATIVE FARM PRODUCING HEALTHIER WINE

The Agriturismo Cascina Le Preseglie is a farmstead of the 19th century which has been recently restored, preserving in particular the original rural architecture. After long tests and trials the company decided to introduce into the wine-making process an unusual step: a machine consisting of a 8 metre steel self-washing line for wine grapes before crushing. Though the "Grape Cleaning Unit" machine, the hand-harvested grapes are sanitized before being crushed. This process guarantees a much healthier work environment and reduces dramatically the use of sulfur dioxide. In this way, the grapes keep their inner characteristics connected to their territory and the microflora which is responsible for the fermentation.

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Coldiretti Como -Lecco

AEROPONIC FARM

Aeroponic cultivation is a way of growing plants by fully or partially suspending their roots in the air. The plants are grown using various different types and sizes of supports so as to leave the roots exposed to the air. There are no other examples of farms carrying out this type of agriculture in Lecco and especially not in Valsessina. This is a way to reduce costs for agriculture in mountainous regions. The farm also uses the short supply chain concept as all the products are sold in one shop in Lecco which is managed by the husband of the owner.

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FARM PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND CARE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

The farm and agri-tourism site Artemide is near a beautiful lake in the hills. They are open all year round apart from during our main harvest time. There is also a direct point of sale, which is part of the *Campagna Amica* project. In addition to carrying out conventional agri-tourism activities, the farm is also an educational site working together with schools and providing social activities for disabled people. These activities carried out on farm are having very positive results for the farm. At the same time, the farm has become a point of reference for disabled people living in the region who find a new way to express themselves and to socialise through their interaction with the animals and through practical on-farm workshops.



For more information :

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Innovation prize for women farmers 2011

The Copa Women's Committee is organising the second European prize for innovation, entitled the "Innovation Prize for Women Farmers". The Innovation Prize was introduced in a bid to make the central role played by women farmers in rural areas more visible and to better acknowledge the many innovative approaches they take towards agriculture and diversification.

The prize was awarded for the first time on 15th October 2009.

The Prize is awarded on the basis of criteria such as the use of new know-how, new methods or new forms of technology in a particular sector or region, the transfer of innovation and its sustaining innovation. In line with the Organising Committee's recommendations, a Jury formed by personalities with high responsibilities award a first prize as well as two special awards.

The Women's Committee of Copa (representing European farmers) was established in 1968, ten years after Copa was created, and holds a special place within the organisation.

Composition

The Women's Committee is made up of women farmers and delegates of the 60 Copa member organisations from the 27 EU Member States and of their 36 partner organisations.

Every two years, the Women's Committee elects from its members a Bureau made up of a chairwoman, two vice-chairwomen and two members. The majority of Bureau members are women farmers.

The Bureau prepares the Women's Committee's working programme and activities. It meets as a group two to three times a year. It also organises seminars on important topics such as increasing the competitiveness of farming in the European Union in the wake of the reform of the CAP and the visibility of women's work in rural areas.

The Copa president – or his or her representative – is authorised to take part in all of the Women's Committee's activities. For her part, the

chairwoman of the Women's Committee – or her representative – attends meetings of the Copa Praesidium and takes part in any decisions relating to the objectives pursued by the Women's Committee.

The Copa Women's Committee has the following objectives:

- To represent women in agriculture within the European Institutions, be they professional farmers, spouses or daughters of farmers or unpaid family workers
- To analyse the problems faced by women in agriculture, to ensure that Copa takes them into consideration, and to propose appropriate solutions

It is essentially involved in addressing all dossiers of concern to women in general and women farmers in particular.

The Women's Committee maintains regular contact with the European Commission, the European Parliament, and other European and international institutions.



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