



EUFRUIT – The European Fruit Network

HORIZON 2020 THEMATIC NETWORK

The EUFRUIT thematic network was launched in March 2016. Through a multi-actor approach, it aims to improve the implementation of research outcomes into practical and applicable knowledge that will directly benefit the European fruit sector.

The EUFRUIT consortium consists of 21 partners, including research institutes, universities, and industrial partners who represent key parts of the fruit supply chain, from 12 European countries; these partners can be found on the project website: <http://eufriin.org>.

“Each of the partners are leaders from a national perspective. Working together, we have developed a framework for identifying and exchanging knowledge via the EUFRUIT project and its Knowledge Platform, this approach will ensure the rapid dissemination of the latest findings across the EU” says the coordinator of EUFRUIT, Michelle Williams of Aarhus University, Denmark.

Gathering and analysing existing knowledge

EUFRUIT does not seek to create fundamental new knowledge or technologies but rather to gather and analyse state-of-the-art knowledge, to synthesise the national and regional best-practices within the four thematic areas and to share this knowledge through the EUFRUIT network. A first analysis of current trends has been carried out:

- [Performance of new fruit varieties](#)
- [Reduction in pesticide residues](#)
- [Fruit quality - Improvement of fruit handling/storage](#)
- [Secure sustainable fruit production](#)

Within each of the above-mentioned thematic areas, EUFRUIT has established an ‘international expert group’ (IEG) comprised of fruit research experts, SMEs and representatives from existing national fruit-oriented networks and clusters. These four IEGs meet annually to review and report on the state-of-the-art knowledge, existing practices and novel technologies and then synthesise this material to identify key areas of learning, new knowledge and possible best practice approaches at a European level. 86 experts were involved in the 2016 IEG meetings, representing 15 countries.



Farmers will be involved via national/regional network groups (NGs). Through these groups, the knowledge will be shared and shown via demonstrations days, technical bulletins and articles in journals/newsletters. The NGs will also serve as the contact point for wider dialogue with the farmers and the other stakeholders to ensure that the project continually takes into account the full range of challenges facing the European fruit supply chain.

Making the material available online

All the knowledge arising from EUFRUIT will be held in English on an open access Knowledge Platform <http://kp.eufrin.org> which is also accessible via the project website <http://eufrin.org>. This will ensure that existing knowledge is brought from the national / regional levels to become available at a European level (and vice versa) for all stakeholders in the fruit chain to access and implement.

Michelle Williams, emphasises that "The International Expert Group members are generating an extensive number of dissemination activities with the various national fruit industry stakeholders. Relevant material is then shared via the openly available online Knowledge Platform, allowing rapid access of information for further implementation at a local level. This open exchange of the latest information across the EU is critical for the success of the fruit industry and to ensure the supply of quality fruit which is important for all consumers - given that fruit is a key part of our everyday diet."

Further information for each on the 4 thematic areas:

A first analysis of current trends from the 4 thematic areas has been carried out by the project:

Performance of new fruit varieties

Production, fruit size, appearance, storability and shelf life are key criteria in the evaluation of new apple and pear varieties. It is also important that new apple or pear variety can be distinguished from existing varieties. Another important demand for a new apple or pear variety is that it is less susceptible to pests and diseases.



[Link to synthesis report](#)

Reduction in pesticide residues

Retailers demand fruit without residues and consumers are concerned about the health risks of eating treated fruit. This limits the use of pesticides to manage pests and diseases, which in turn may cause production problems for fruit growers. More and more guidelines impose rules to the growers and only limited information is given to the consumers to reassure them. Furthermore, pesticides may damage farmers' health as well as the soil, water, air, biodiversity, thus affecting the sustainability of the agro-system. Research has been done to find alternative solutions to the use of "chemical" products.

This IEG developed a synthesis report which provides the state-of-the-art on different European initiatives to reduce the use of pesticides. The report describes the alternative approaches and technologies that can already be used by the growers and what consumers should know about innovative approaches in plant protection.

[Link to synthesis report](#)

Fruit quality - Improvement of fruit handling and storage

This theme is about both technical and chemical methods for the optimisation of fruit quality after harvest. Research institutes are testing different destructive and non-destructive technologies for measuring fruit quality. Some are also working on different storage technologies to maintain fruit quality and on how to optimally store new apple varieties and other fruit species.

[Link to synthesis report](#)

Secure sustainable fruit production

This theme has three focus areas:

- Fruit thinning: decision support models as a tool that can help growers to make decisions about thinning, through measuring the development of the trees
- Water/nutrients: 1) modelling combined with sensors, soil and plant based and; 2) a portal or service to combine and/or integrate models for several factors
- Organic/Integrated Pest Management: side netting against insects, biodiversity and the use of big data.

[Link to synthesis report](#)

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More information: <http://eufrin.org>

Photos: EUFRUIT