



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 42

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Adoption of smart farming technologies

Smart farming technologies (SFTs) such as variable-rate precision farming, milking robots, smart sensors (e.g. the “Internet of Underground Things” - Vuran et al. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adhoc.2018.07.017>) are revolutionising agriculture. This theme is also the subject of discussions on the OECD Forum (<https://tinyurl.com/uwrt4t7>). They are supposed to lead to better productivity, yields and cost savings as well as support more environmentally sustainable farming practices. Despite these advantages and the growing prevalence of SFTs, patterns of adoption vary within regions and across European countries. This is in part due to characteristics of specific farms such as farm size and type, as well as changing advisory landscapes with services becoming more fragmented, and challenges for advisors and policy makers in keeping up to speed with technological developments and the changing structures of farms. In the AgriLink project's case studies (in the UK, Czech Republic, France, Norway, Portugal and Poland) factors affecting the adoption of SFTs have been identified. These include the existing advisory landscape in the region; relationships and trust between farmers and advisors, and among farmers; the ongoing skills development of the actors in question and their capacity to stay abreast of technological developments. Therefore the challenge for traditional advisory services is to keep updated on new technology development, to recruit technologically skilled employees and to collaborate with other actors in order to provide the best advice at all key stages of implementation of SFTs.

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COUNTRY/REGION:

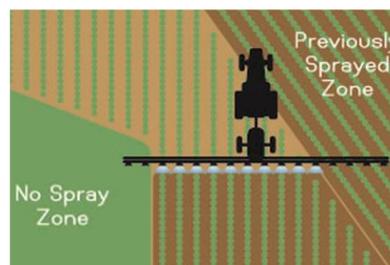
Czech Republic,
UK, France,
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Poland

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AKIS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The extent that traditional advisory organisations are supporting uptake of SFTs varies between countries. New entrants to the advisory landscape are taking a more prominent role. In the UK private companies (in the form of machinery and input suppliers) are favoured by farmers looking to implement SFTs. In Czech Republic, it is typically private companies that introduce farmers to these innovations. In France, traditional advisors and cooperatives play a more prominent role at the awareness stage, but are ill equipped to provide ongoing support. Likewise, in Norway, all types of advisors play a role in assessing the potential of SFTs, but some actors are more critical during the implementation stage because they have become specialised in specific technologies. In Norway, milk cooperatives have become skilled in technology, so it is not only the technology providers who are able to provide all of the necessary advice on adoption and implementation, as is the case in some other countries. The Portuguese case proves that there is a role for traditional advisors, but only if they can foster effective collaboration with hi-tech companies in implementation and ongoing support to farmers.



ABOUT AGRILINK

Agrilink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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