



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 59

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Farmers' innovation paths: (re)introducing new crops in France and Greece

The Agrilink project examined three innovation cases related with the introduction of new crops: chickpeas in France and stevia and avocado in Greece. Though all cases were market driven, different triggers of farmers' awareness, and the advisory landscape around them, reveal aspects of farmers' mentality and dependency paths.

Traders, following consumers' demand for healthy nutrition, were key-actors in chickpeas since they raised farmers' awareness by offering contracts and secure access to the market. They offered farmers advice and enabled them to assess and implement the innovation and evaluate its profitability. Thus, traders guided the growers at all stages of the production circle, realising their antagonistic economic models and marking growers' dependency from them. Non-adopters were farmers not reached by the traders. On the other hand, in Greece researchers and academics and, at a later stage, peers triggered farmers' awareness, who had already been seeking for alternative crops. These actors helped farmers assess the innovations as well; however, at the implementation stage growers were left alone amidst a fragmented advisory landscape to deal with agronomic and environmental challenges. Growers were standing on their own on marketing issues, while processing and marketability difficulties halted the cultivation of stevia. Non-adopters were farmers with no suitable land or farmers who wished for a more secure path throughout the innovation process. In both countries the engaged farmers valued professional advice but the advisory activity did not improve essentially the sustainability of farming systems, indicating that changes on the advisory regimes are needed (<https://www.agrilink2020.eu/>).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is worth mentioned that in the chick-pea case the contracts offered by the cooperatives minimize the economic risk for farmers and allow them to choose chickpeas as an alternative in their cropping system to lengthen rotations and break disease cycles. However, contrary to the cases from Greece, the French farmers do not identify chickpeas as an innovative crop especially since it does not require specific equipment.

More info at: <https://www.agrilink2020.eu/> .



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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All the Practice Abstracts prepared by the AgriLink project in the EIP-AGRI common format can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers>