



**PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR.125**

**AUTHOR(S):**

Melanie Van Raaij

Innovatiesteunpunt

**How to support the farmer in his role as energy producer for others?**

Support to farmers can be given in many ways. In June 2021 a workshop in Belgium explored the challenges of the current advisory system and the role and skills advisors need to support farmers to develop a more sustainable agriculture. In Belgium it is not yet possible to sell energy to others due to a slowly evolving regulation. However, there is significant potential for farmers to play a key role in energy production. They have roofs, space, biomass, machinery, entrepreneurial spirit and they are experts on landscape and seasonal changes. Halnet is the first farmer-neighbour energy cooperative in Flanders and so far it is the only example. Thus, our knowledge on the farmer as energy producer for others comes from supporting this cooperative in their journey and supporting other farmers based on this experience. Producing energy for others has specific challenges. New competences are needed: develop support and engagement, provide financial means for the farmer to be able to persuade other farmers and neighbours, and negotiate with others, e.g. solar panel constructors and investors. Farmers also require detailed knowledge on what to invest in (wind, sun) and when, as innovations continuously develop further. Other challenges include: how to collect relevant energy data from the system and how to learn from it to become more energy efficient? How to match production and consumption and avoid an expensive battery? Those who can store energy, the mainstream, established energy suppliers, stand strong and show resistance to collaborate with small scale energy cooperatives, e.g. in the provision of thicker cables. Varied advice is needed: from roof structure – is it solid enough – and who is accountable, to financial agreements on cooperatives.

**CONTACTS:**

melanie.van.raaij@innovatiesteunpunt.be  
[www.innovatiesteunpunt.be](http://www.innovatiesteunpunt.be)

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Practice abstracts, from 101 to 141 can be found here:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers-0>



## 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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[www.agrilink2020.eu](http://www.agrilink2020.eu)

[twitter.com/agrilink2020](https://twitter.com/agrilink2020)

[pierre.labarthe@inrae.fr](mailto:pierre.labarthe@inrae.fr)

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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>