

eip-agri  
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

# Thematic Networks under Horizon 2020

## Compiling knowledge ready for practice



funded by



European  
Commission

# Horizon 2020 thematic networks

Horizon 2020 thematic networks work on a specific theme. They bring people from both science and practice together to create useful, practical outputs. Thematic networks are funded through Horizon 2020 which is the European Commission's main 2014-2020 funding programme for research and innovation.

Thematic networks have two main aims:

- collecting existing scientific knowledge and best practices which are close to being put into practice, but not yet sufficiently ready for farmers and foresters to implement.
- translating this knowledge into easily understandable end-user material such as short, informative recommendations and solutions ("practice abstracts"), leaflets, guidelines and audio-visual material (photos, video clips, etc.). This material should be made available beyond the lifespan of the project through the main existing dissemination channels which farmers often use, as well as through the EIP-AGRI website: [www.eip-agri.eu](http://www.eip-agri.eu).

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## Key features of a thematic network

### ► Choosing the right theme to get started

The specific themes for the networks are chosen by the project partners, focusing on needs identified by farmers, foresters or agribusinesses and working with the supply chain if necessary. Themes can be related to products or sectors, e.g. arable crops, fruits, vegetables, poultry, etc. or to subjects which are more cross-cutting, e.g. crop rotation, energy, implementation of certain EU directives, certain farming practices, short supply chains, etc.

The thematic network **FERTINNOWA**  is dealing with innovative water management in fertigated crops (nutrients added to irrigation water). The project aims to improve water quality, improve water use efficiency and reduce environmental impact. Els Berckmoes (Proefstation voor de Groenteteelt, Belgium) says that these objectives clearly mirror the core aims of growers.

*"FERTINNOWA started at the level of the farmers. Since 2011, the Flemish government has been running a programme involving farmers, helping them to improve their water and fertiliser management. A subsequent benchmarking study found that vegetable, fruit and ornamental sectors in different European Member States are facing the same problems. The study also revealed that there is a great amount of useful knowledge across Europe which was scattered and underused."* - Els Berckmoes

 **Winetwork**, another thematic network, is focusing on Grapevine Trunk Diseases (GTD) and Flavescence Dorée (FD), diseases that are jeopardising the future of wine production in the EU. "We wanted the project to tackle very precise topics and not general wine issues", says Eric Serrano, Institut Français de la Vigne et du Vin, France.

*"Winetwork is a response to the strong concerns of winegrowers in France and in Europe about vine diseases which are extremely destructive. In November 2013 we decided to apply, thinking that the thematic network approach was exactly right for finding answers to this to this type of problem."* - Eric Serrano





### ► Finding complementary partners

Thematic networks are a particular type of H2020 'multi-actor projects'. Multi-actor projects require partners with complementary types of knowledge – scientific, practical and other – to work together throughout the whole project period. Thematic network partnerships should be well balanced and tailored to the project objectives.

*"The WINETWORK partners were chosen by a predefined approach. We included 11 partners (2 maximum per country) to get a good mix of experiences, methods and problems, and partners with specific know-how on particular scientific expertise, communication tools, etc. Also, our work plan was inspired by a previous INTERREG project and it enabled all partners to work together properly in view of cross-fertilising knowledge and managing the different languages used."*

- Eric Serrano

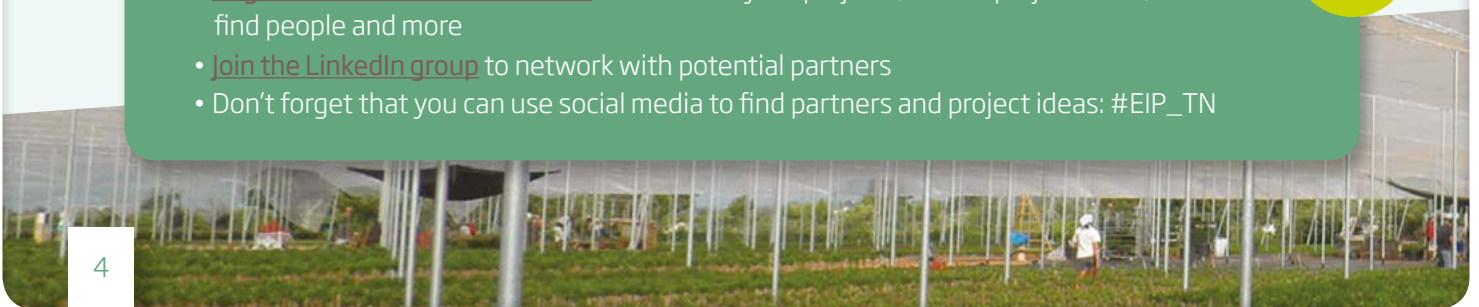
### ► The benefits of thematic networks

Thematic networks produce practical information which is easy to understand and to apply. The projects bring together insufficiently used existing knowledge and translate it into ready-to-use recommendations. Because farmers and other producers are partners from the start, the Practice Abstracts and other practical material produced will be more useful to them, leading to better dissemination and increased uptake. By promoting this information through the most common dissemination channels, the information will stay available beyond the project period.

*"FERTINNOWA will translate all end-user material into several languages. We plan to organise dissemination activities, workshops and showcase events, to send out a newsletter twice a year, to produce fact sheets and articles for growers and farmers' magazines."* - Els Berckmoes

## The EIP-AGRI Service Point can help you to find partners:

- [Register to the EIP-AGRI website](#) to advertise your projects, search project ideas, find people and more
- [Join the LinkedIn group](#) to network with potential partners
- Don't forget that you can use social media to find partners and project ideas: #EIP\_TN





### ► Disseminating results: Practice abstracts

Thematic networks, as well as all other Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects and EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects funded under rural development, are required to produce Practice Abstracts in a common template. Practice Abstracts are uploaded onto the EIP-AGRI website, which will become a unique EU repository for ready-to-use practical information for farming and forestry. This will also reward the researchers involved by making their work visible. Here are two examples:



#### **Trunk cleaning to fight Grapevine Trunk Diseases**

The “*curettage*” method is an effective way to clean the trunk of the vine and reduce impact of two GTDs: Esca and Botryosphearria dieback.

Trunk cleaning consists of digging into the trunk with a small chainsaw to remove the diseased parts. It should take place as soon as first symptoms of GTD appear. This usually happens between June and September and becomes visible as the leaves are drying out. The affected parts are often located close to dead wood zones and below big pruning wounds. They can be identified by their sponge-like texture producing toxins (white rot).

The method: first, open the trunk where dead wood has been detected; do not hesitate to open the trunk widely and take off the dead wood. The infected tissues need to be removed by scraping, using the side of the chainsaw and taking care to not cut sap flow. Do not hesitate to clean out the wood well enough to ensure that all diseased wood is removed.

If used in June, this method can save a whole harvest and reduce further spread of the disease. If the symptoms of the disease appear again, it is possible to carry out a second *curettage* even during the same year.





### **Application of zeolite to reduce nitrates concentration in growing media and soil**

Areas like the Albenga plain in Liguria Region (Italy) are classified as “areas vulnerable to nitrates” and are under specific legislation to limit nitrate contamination of superficial and deep water bodies.

The addition of a zeolite, clinoptilolite, to the source of nitrogen can improve the nitrogen use efficiency and reduce the environmental impact caused by nitrate leaching. The ammonium is held on the cation-exchange sites within the pores of the zeolite and is not likely to be leached out easily as water passes through. Through this slower release, zeolites improve nitrogen use efficiency. Secondly, the specific crystal structure with tiny pores keeps out nitrifying bacteria, so nitrification, and therefore nitrate leaching, are reduced.

Trials in the Albenga area have demonstrated that the addition of zeolite to the soil substrate both in open field (vegetables) and in greenhouse (ornamentals) led to a reduction of nitrates concentration in the substrate.

For the best result, add clinoptilolite at a rate of 3% weight/weight when preparing the substrate for crop cultivation:

- for potted plants: mixed in the peat based substrate (normally added with slow release fertiliser);
- for open field cultivation: mixed in the first 20-30 cm of soil through tillage.





## Information on calls for thematic networks



Calls for thematic networks are announced on the [H2020 website](#). The application form is online. For detailed information, please, also contact your H2020 [national contact points](#)

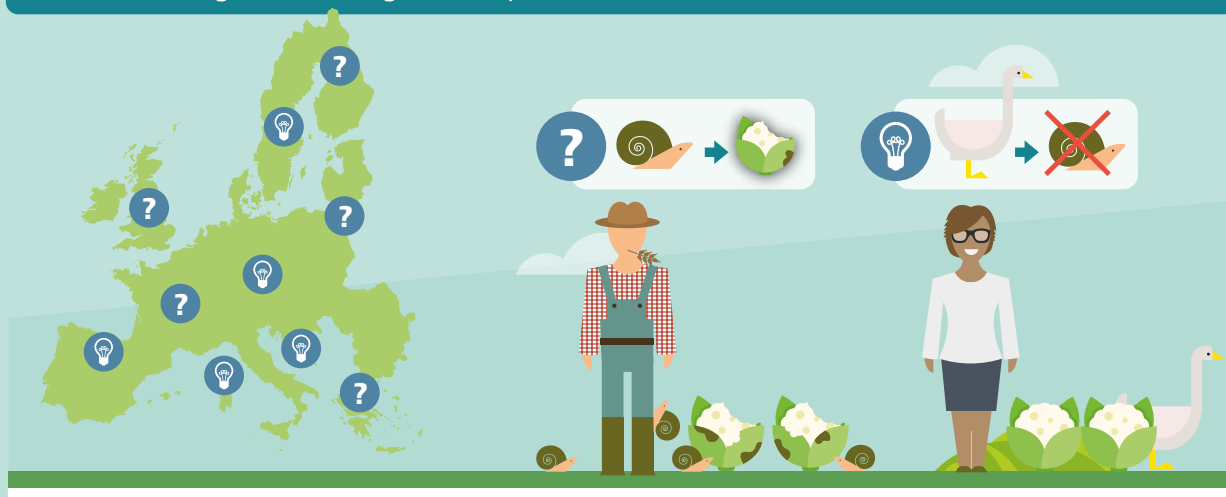
EIP-AGRI produces a brochure every year highlighting the upcoming H2020 calls. Sign up to the [EIP-AGRI newsletter](#) to stay informed.


## Thematic networks funded under Horizon 2020 calls 2014 and 2015

Thematic Network	Topic	Contact
4D4F	Data and sensor driven decision making on dairy farms	David Gardner <a href="mailto:davidg@innovationforagriculture.co.uk">davidg@innovationforagriculture.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.4d4f.eu">www.4d4f.eu</a>
AGRIFORVALOR 	Increase the value of biomass side-streams from agriculture and forest	<a href="http://www.agriforvalor.eu">www.agriforvalor.eu</a> Hartmut Welck <a href="mailto:welck@steinbeis-europa.de">welck@steinbeis-europa.de</a>
AgriSPIN 	Innovation brokering - identifying best practice for innovation and support	Heidi Hundrup Rasmussen <a href="mailto:hhr@seges.dk">hhr@seges.dk</a> <a href="http://www.agriscpin.eu">www.agriscpin.eu</a>
EUFRUIT	Fruit - cultivar development, minimise residues, storage and fruit quality, sustainability of production systems	Michelle Williams <a href="mailto:mw@food.au.dk">mw@food.au.dk</a> <a href="http://www.cordis.europa.eu">www.cordis.europa.eu</a>
EuroDairy 	Practice-based innovations in dairy farming - resource efficiency, biodiversity, animal care, and socio-economic resilience	Ray Keatinge <a href="mailto:Ray.Keatinge@ahdb.org.uk">Ray.Keatinge@ahdb.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.eurodairy.eu">www.eurodairy.eu</a>
FERTINNOWA 	Water management in fertigated crops - water quality, water use efficiency, environmental impact	Raf De Vis <a href="mailto:raf.de.vis@proefstation.be">raf.de.vis@proefstation.be</a> Els Berckmoes <a href="mailto:Els.berckmoes@proefstation.be">Els.berckmoes@proefstation.be</a> <a href="http://www.fertinnowa.com">www.fertinnowa.com</a>
Hennovation 	Laying hens - reducing injurious pecking and dealing with end-of-lay hens	Lisa van Dijk <a href="mailto:lisa.vandijk@bristol.ac.uk">lisa.vandijk@bristol.ac.uk</a> David Main <a href="mailto:d.c.j.main@bristol.ac.uk">d.c.j.main@bristol.ac.uk</a> <a href="http://www.hennovation.eu">www.hennovation.eu</a>
HNV-Link 	Support HNV farmlands through knowledge and innovation	<a href="http://www.hnvlink.eu">www.hnvlink.eu</a> <a href="mailto:info@hnvlink.eu">info@hnvlink.eu</a>
OK-Net Arable 	Organic arable cropping - increasing productivity and quality	Bram Moeskops, <a href="mailto:bram.moeskops@ifoam-eu.org">bram.moeskops@ifoam-eu.org</a> <a href="http://www.ok-net-arable.eu">www.ok-net-arable.eu</a>
Smart-AKIS 	Smart farming technology - Farm management information systems, precision agriculture and agriculture automation and robotics	Spyros Fountas <a href="mailto:sfountas@aau.gr">sfountas@aau.gr</a>
Winetwork 	Wine growing - controlling/fighting diseases	Eric Serrano <a href="mailto:eric.serrano@vignevin.com">eric.serrano@vignevin.com</a> <a href="http://www.winetwork.eu">www.winetwork.eu</a>

# Thematic Networks compiling knowledge ready for practice

Common challenges exist throughout Europe






A map of Europe where the question marks and lightbulbs from the previous image are now connected by lines, forming a network. A legend shows a lightbulb icon followed by an equals sign and a leaf with a snail icon.

**Thematic Networks**

- collect existing knowledge and best practices
- transform into practical information
- make available to all



An illustration of a meeting around a table. Five people are seated, with speech bubbles containing question marks, lightbulbs, and a swan. Arrows point from the meeting to icons representing a 'Practice abstract' document, a laptop, a tablet, and a megaphone.

Thematic Networks lead to a better uptake of existing solutions across Europe

