

# SmartFarmer

## Newsletter



### Needs Analysis and Target Groups

The focus of the Needs Analysis was to investigate the needs of the project target groups for Methodological Training Tools in Marketing (MTM) (VET/life-long education Programme, Training Manual, Workbook and Web Tool) of smart agri-products in the partner countries.

The Smartfarmer addresses several distinct target groups:

- Farmers (in particular organic farmers), agriculture entrepreneurs, managers and staff (in particular marketing managers and marketing/commercial staff) of agro-production SMEs, potential farmers, agriculture and marketing students;
- Public organisations and private institutional bodies with close links to the subjects tackled by the project (e.g. agricultural policy makers and decision-makers, farmers associations, bio-producers cooperatives, Superfoods cooperatives);
- Teachers, trainers, advisers, researchers and training organisations interested in integrating the curriculum and learning materials developed in their training processes;
- People living in rural areas, consumers (in particular consumers of bio-products) and general public, to raise overall awareness about SmartFarmer and its benefits.

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## Research Aim and Tools Used in the Analysis

The Research aim was to investigate the SmartFarmer project needs and specifically to:

- Ascertain whether the rural SMEs in partner regions/countries understand meaning/values of the Superfood.
- Compare different EU countries farmers and rural SMEs understanding of meaning/values of the Superfood.
- Identify main obstacles for the development of the Superfoods sector, obstacles in food chain, obstacles in marketing and marketing of Superfoods.
- Identify the best marketing and promotion tools of Superfoods and educational needs of farmers and rural SMEs in different partner regions.
- Compare different countries experiences and practices in Superfoods production, marketing and promotion.
- Identify producers, associations, schools, training centres and other stakeholders with an interest in participation in the project and pilot training.
- Determine how any potential training should be delivered.

Research tools for the Needs analysis included the procedures and criteria on how to select the analysis sample, the ways to reach the target groups, motivate its representatives to take part in the survey and the type of interaction. **A brief questionnaire** and **questions for interview** were created based on findings from a literature survey and the ProudFarmer project that is the basis for the SmartFarmer project. **A template** for generating the regional reports from all partners was also presented.

As a result of the survey, totally were collected 130 questionnaires/responses: 28 from Cyprus, 26 from Greece, 25 from Latvia, 26 from Portugal and 25 from Spain. Moreover, 57 persons were interviewed (11 from Cyprus, 13 from Greece, 10 from Latvia, 10 from Portugal and 13 from Spain) from a wide range of organisations connected and working in/within the sector, namely research institutes and universities, ministries and regional public institutions dealing with agriculture and rural development, farmers associations, export supporting institutions, agriculture funding bodies and selected farmers working in the superfoods sector.



## Main Results of the Research

In recent years, market demand has increased for healthy food, including fresh berries and berries' products. However, the concept of Superfoods is not much familiar to the farmers in all project countries or to the official public bodies related to the agriculture sector. It is also used more frequently for the promotion of these special products by sellers and dishes of the restaurants rather than by the producers themselves.

The main challenges for the production of Superfoods in the Project countries are:

- Higher production, packing costs and selling costs
- Agroclimatic conditions
- Customers not understanding that the nutritional value of Superfoods justifies higher selling prices;
- Difficulties in the selection of more appropriate sales channels;
- Administrative procedures



Furthermore and based on the provided answers of the respondents, **the most demanded areas of training** are:

How to calculate market price	14%
Exporting procedures	12%
What are the quality standards	10%
Packaging	10%
Cooperation methods	9%
Promotion activities	8%
Production methods/cultivation practices and cost of production	8%
Sales channels (retail food chains etc.)	8%
How to develop a brand	7%
How to implement registration for bioproduction, processing and sales	6%
What should be written on the label (labelling)	6%

Finally, the preferred ways to access to training or information are: **Direct contact training courses (periodical), specific study books, online training courses, field days and exchange of experience visits.**

## Second Meeting in Riga, Latvia

### 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 Riga Latvia

During the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the meeting, the participants discussed the following topics:

- the results of needs analysis - country reports and synthesis report
- the adaptation of the training programme
- the dissemination and exploitation plan – progress and next tasks
- the administrative and financial issues
- the detailed planning of the WPs till next meeting and the next tasks (June-October 2014).
- a presentation of the LdV MARLO Project was done by **CLUTUREX** - MARLO coordination team.

### 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2014

On the 2nd day of the meeting, the partners have visited a number of farmers and food producers in joint study/ dissemination visits with MARLO project:

- "Gundegas" farm that grows large cranberries and has interesting facilities for drying different berries and other fruit;
- Ramkalni Ltd - farm/ food producer that (in response to worldwide economic crisis) has successfully expanded their business by opening a shop and offering different tourism services;
- Piladzi farm that was an established fruit tree nursery business and has recently started wine production (including from superfood berries, e.g. cranberries, aronia);
- Safari Park More - deer organic breeding farm that has diversified their activities by adding tourism services.

During the visits, the farmers, who belong to the target groups and are potential participants of the pilot training, were informed about SmartFarmer and MARLO projects.



## SmartFarmer Project

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<http://www.smartfarmerproject.eu>

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