

Welcome to the **FOODCOMM** Newsletter!

The consortium of the **FOODCOMM** project will provide you regularly with information regarding the project development and outputs. Furthermore, you will find news and links which are related to the research subject “Key factors influencing economic relationships and communication in European food chains”.

If you have any comments and suggestions concerning the newsletter, please contact us under the following email address: **foodcomm@ilr.uni-bonn.de**.

We hope you will enjoy the information of the newsletter!

Your **FOODCOMM** consortium
(<http://www.foodcomm-eu.net/consortium>)

Content of this Newsletter (Issue 03/07)

1. New FOODCOMM members
2. Second reporting period has ended
3. Web-based online survey launched
4. Dissemination activity
5. Begin of work package 4

1. New FOODCOMM members

The FOODCOMM consortium would like to welcome three additional researchers. Dr. Cesar L. Revoredo Giha has recently joined the Rural Economy Group of the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) to work as a researcher on the FOODCOMM project. Jaroslaw Wozniak, a new member of the IAFE team, has become a valuable colleague for the project. New to the project from the Finnish team Ruralia is Merja Lahdesmaki who will be supporting the project as a researcher.

2. Second reporting period has ended

The second year of the project was mostly filled with preparing and conducting the cross-country, multi-commodity survey of farmers, processors and retailers within the project's third work package (WP3). The report to WP3 was completed and summarises the questionnaire development and the surveying of the 13 agri-food chains in the six project member countries. In addition, activities for work package 4 (WP4), i.e., the analysis of survey data and identification of issues for country-specific research, and WP5, i.e., country-specific, in-depth research of selected issues, have begun.

3. Web-based online survey launched

A survey platform (www.foodcomm.eu/umfrage.html) was built by UNI BONN and launched on November 1, 2006. The survey helps to better understand B2B communication and relationships in European food chains with respect to types of

economic relationships and communication and factors influencing these. A benchmarking functionality supplemented the survey platform to offer an immediate incentive for farms and companies to take part in the survey, allowing them to benchmark their businesses with regard to their relationship and communication situation. In addition, by offering an online survey platform, it was possible to provide nation-wide access to the questionnaire and thus to potentially arrive at an overall representative sample. Further arguments to use an online survey are: reduced response time and error rate since data are directly saved to a database. Also, face-to-face interviews and postal questionnaires were conducted to increase further the number of responses. So far, more than 1,000 farmers, processors and retailers have filled in the online questionnaire or returned the printed version.

4. Dissemination activity

The following printed publications have appeared:

- Fischer, C., Gonzalez, M., Henschion, M. and Leat, P. (2006): Factors Influencing Trust-supporting Mechanisms in European Agri-food Chains. In: "Trust and Risk in Business Networks", M. Fritz, U. Rickert, G. Schiefer (eds). Universitaet Bonn – ILB Press, Bonn. Pages 75-86.
- Fischer, C., Gonzalez, M., Henschion, M. and Leat, P. (2007): Trust and Economic Relationships in Selected European Agri-Food Chains. *Food Economics*. Vol. 4, No. 1. Pages 40-49.

A second international scientific dissemination activity was initiated resulting in the acceptance of the presentation of a contributed paper at the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association's (IAMA) 17th Annual World Symposium in Parma, Italy, June 23-24 2007, entitled "Economic relationships and B2B communication in selected European agri-food chains – first empirical evidence".

5. Begin of work package 4

Already during the WP3 hypotheses and questionnaire development phase, agreement within the consortium was reached on the statistical methods to be used in order to analyse the WP3 survey data. In addition to descriptive techniques, it was agreed to try to explain the choice of relationship types by using a discrete choice model (a multinomial logistical regression in statistical terms) and to explain the goodness of relationships and the role of communication by using structural equation modelling (SEM). First SEM structural model templates have already been developed and a first analysis of the dataset as obtained by March 20 have already been undertaken. It is expected that the majority of the data analysis work can be accomplished within eight weeks after the completion of the WP3 data collection.

Editorial details

The Newsletter is emailed to all subscribers or can be downloaded under www.foodcomm-eu.net/newsletter.html. Normally, it is published every 8 weeks, or when sufficient news have accumulated.

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