



ISEKI-FOOD
ASSOCIATION

ISEKI e-news Issue 56
DECEMBER 2025

*Season's
Greetings*



Contents

NEWS FROM THE ISEKI-FOOD ASSOCIATION	1
Join us at ISEKIFOOD26 - Registration and Abstract submission open!.....	1
ISEKI-Food offers support to Members in Erasmus+ proposals.....	2
ISEKI-Food Association's Secretary General at 21 st UNIDO General Conference.....	2
NEWS ABOUT ISEKI-FOOD ASSOCIATION MEMBERS/PARTNERS	3
Dem@PICAR: Industrial Demonstration of Pine Bark–Based Natural Preservation in Traditional Cured Meat Products.....	3
Protein Transition in Action: LIKE-A-PRO shows the way forward.....	4
USAMV Cluj-Napoca joined the EU-GIFT European University Alliance.....	5
National Technological Centre for the Food and Canning Industry Spain: Nutrialitec Innovation Ecosystem.....	6
INTERIOR +: Rural Mountain areas revitalization.....	7
SafeSeed project: New biorational methods for stored seed pest control and protection: To serve and prevent.....	8
InnoMeatEdu project completion: innovative e-platform on Meat Science and Technology ready to be used.....	9
PTEP 2026 - XXXVIII Scientific and Professional Conference - Processing and Energy in Agriculture.....	10
NEWS ABOUT PROJECTS WITH ISEKI-FOOD ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATION	11
We truly enjoyed the Friday coffees with you! - The WASTELESS Monthly Café Talks concluded with great success.....	11
EU4Advice: Are You the Policymaker We're Looking For?.....	12
Observatory of the Agri-food (OAF) Pact for Skills: Summary of First-Year Achievements.....	13
ECO-Merce Project Launched to Turn Sustainability into a Competitive Advantage in the Agri-Food Marketing.....	14
FOODPathS final Meeting in The Hague: "Completing the partnership puzzle".....	15
WATSON final Activities and Main Project Outcomes.....	16
NEWS ABOUT OTHER PROJECTS	17
Final Conference of the Closer to Farm Project Successfully Held in Dublin.....	17
NEWS ABOUT EDUCATION AND TRAINING	18
Update on our Free online training available at the ISEKI-Food platform.....	18
Shaping skills for the future: join the 2026 Agrifood Pact for Skills Annual Event.....	19
UPCOMING FOOD-RELATED EVENTS / WEBINARS	20

NEWS FROM THE ISEKI-FOOD ASSOCIATION

Join us at ISEKIFOOD26 - Registration and Abstract submission open!



We are delighted to invite you to ISEKIFOOD26 – the 8th International ISEKI-Food Conference, which will take place in June 2026. The conference will be hosted by the University of Algarve in Faro, the heart of the sunny and enchanting Algarve coast in Portugal.

We welcome contributions for oral and poster presentations across these **3 main conference TOPICS**:

1. Education and training for sustainable and innovative food systems
2. Research for sustainable and innovative food systems
3. Responsible food production and consumption

Key dates to remember:

- **Deadline for abstract submission: 08 February 2026**
- Notification of abstract acceptance: 20 March
- Early Bird registration closing: 13 April (and payment completed before 22 April)
- Online registration closing: 01 May

Please carefully review the Abstract submission procedure described below the topics on our website. Then follow these simple steps:

1. [Register](#)
2. [Submit your Abstracts](#)
3. Seize the opportunity of the Early Bird fee before April 13th!

For more details, visit the [conference website](#)

We look forward to meeting you in Faro!

Warm regards,

The ISEKIFOOD26 Organising Committee



ISEKI-Food offers support to Members in Erasmus+ proposals

We are pleased to inform you that the 2026 Erasmus+ funding call is now open. Detailed information about the call is available [here](#).

If you have an idea that could be developed into an Erasmus+ project proposal, **ISEKI-Food Association** is pleased to offer support to our **Members** throughout the application process.



Our team can assist with:

- Identifying and connecting with suitable project partners
- Structuring and organising your proposal
- Providing input and constructive feedback on project content
- Carrying out a final review and quality check of the application

If you are an **ISEKI-Food Member** and interested in receiving support, please contact us at office@iseki-food.net. We will be happy to schedule a meeting with one of our project managers.

Best regards,
The ISEKI Team

ISEKI-Food Association's Secretary General at 21st UNIDO General Conference

Rui Costa, Secretary-General of the ISEKI-Food Association, was present in Riyadh from 23 to 27 November at the 21st Session of the UNIDO General Conference (**United Nations Industrial Development Organisation**) – the Global Industry Summit, one of the leading global events dedicated to the future of sustainable industrialisation, innovation, and inclusive development.

The event brought together governments, international organisations, universities, and industry leaders to discuss policies, investments, and technologies capable of accelerating the transition towards more sustainable production systems.



Rui Costa's participation reinforced ISEKI's commitment to international cooperation. During this visit, he also visited King Saud University in Riyadh to strengthen the cooperation and present the **EQAS-Food Award**.



NEWS ABOUT ISEKI-FOOD ASSOCIATION MEMBERS/PARTNERS

Dem@PICAR: Industrial Demonstration of Pine Bark–Based Natural Preservation in Traditional Cured Meat Products

by **Manuela Vaz-Velho¹, Ricardo Pereira-Pinto¹ & Lillian Barros²**, ¹Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo; ²Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, Portugal

Dem@PICAR is a co-promotion industrial demonstrator project scheduled to begin in 2026, following the successful completion of the PICAR research project (2021–2023). Its main objective is to validate, under real industrial conditions, the use of polyphenol-rich extracts obtained from Minho maritime pine bark (*Pinus pinaster* subsp. *atlantica*) as natural preservatives and functionalizing agents in traditional cured meat products.

The project is financed by COMPETE 2030, the Portuguese operational programme under the Portugal 2030 framework, supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The consortium includes Minhofumeiro – Enchidos e Fumados à Moda de Ponte de Lima, Lda. (industrial leader), the Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo (IPVC), and the Instituto Politécnico de Bragança (IPB). Dem@PICAR represents the crucial transition from pilot-scale scientific validation to full industrial-scale demonstration.

Traditional cured meats are a vital part of the Portuguese agri-food sector, with strong cultural and economic relevance, but face growing challenges related to food safety, shelf life, sustainability, and clean-label demands. Using sustainable extraction technologies, PICAR demonstrated that these natural extracts significantly enhanced the stability and safety of several cured meat products without compromising their sensory attributes. Building on these results, Dem@PICAR was designed as the essential industrial demonstration phase, enabling the transition from controlled pilot-scale experiments to continuous industrial production.

The project will implement the technology at full industrial scale at Minhofumeiro, integrating the natural extracts into continuous production lines and evaluating technical performance, economic feasibility, and regulatory compliance. The main objectives are industrial incorporation of pine bark extracts, large-scale validation of food safety and shelf life, confirmation of physicochemical and sensory stability, and assessment of production costs and market readiness.

Dem@PICAR supports sustainability and the circular bioeconomy by valorising a forest by-product and reducing the use of synthetic additives, in line with European priorities for clean-label and sustainable food innovation. The project is expected to deliver safer products, new industrial solutions, and stronger cooperation between academia and industry....



Protein Transition in Action: LIKE-A-PRO shows the way forward

by **Lisa Meidl MSc**, **Lebensmittelversuchsanstalt, Austria**

The **LIKE-A-PRO project** aims to accelerate the shift towards sustainable protein consumption across Europe by fostering collaboration among stakeholders and developing innovative strategies.

A key milestone in this journey is the **Protein Transition Arena**, where a selected food actor network from 22 countries in Europe co-created transition pathways to mainstream alternative proteins. The Transition Arena brought together experts from industry, research, and policy to identify barriers, opportunities, and actionable steps for mainstreaming alternative proteins. Among the contributors were **Lebensmittelversuchsanstalt** and the **Food Industries Association of Austria**, who actively participated in shaping the discussion and providing valuable insights from the Austrian food sector.

Main conclusions

The discussions made it clear: achieving a systematic change demands multiple, complementary approaches. The core statements are:

- We need to reduce meat and dairy consumption **AND** increase the consumption of alternative proteins.
- We need to diversify alternatives by developing novel protein sources **AND** value traditional, minimally processed plant-based protein sources.
- We need to mimic conventional animal-based products for easy substitution **AND** develop innovative products for building new consumption habits.

Why It Matters

Transitioning to more sustainable protein sources - such as legumes, algae, and novel plant-based products—reduces environmental impact, enhances food security, and supports healthier diets. This transformation is not only a technological challenge but also a societal one, requiring joint efforts from producers, retailers, policymakers, and consumers.

Take Action Today

Everyone can contribute to the protein transition. Here are some practical steps:

- **Food industry:** Invest in R&D, integrate alternative proteins in ready-made meals and hybrid products, use clear and transparent labelling.
- **Retailers:** Implement pricing strategies to achieve price parity, promote alternative proteins through dedicated shelf space and consumer education.
- **Consumers:** Experiment with plant-based meals, try new protein-rich ingredients like legumes or algae, and share experiences to normalise change.

Explore the full **Transition Arena Report** and join the movement towards a sustainable protein future:

[🔗 LIKE-A-PRO Transition Arena Report](#)



USAMV Cluj-Napoca joined the EU-GIFT European University Alliance

by Assoc. Prof. **Liana Salanță**, Assoc. Prof. **Anca Fărcaș**, Prof. **Iulia-Cristina Mureșan**, Prof. **Sonia Socaci**, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, Romania

We are honoured to be part of the EU-GIFT Alliance - European University for Geographical Identity & Sustainable Food Systems (<https://eu-gift.com>), alongside six prestigious European universities from Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Portugal, and Hungary. Together, we are building a shared vision: the development of sustainable food systems rooted in geographical identity, innovation, and excellence in education.

The partner universities in EU-GIFT Alliance are:

University of La Rioja – Spain,
Bordeaux Sciences Agro – France,
Eszterházy Károly Catholic University – Hungary,
Hochschule Geisenheim University – Germany,
University of Verona – Italy,
University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD) – Portugal,
University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca (USAMV Cluj-Napoca) – Romania.



The alliance aims to create a strong transnational academic space where students, researchers, and professionals collaborate to address some of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century: climate change, food security, environmental degradation, and the revitalization of rural areas. Through EU-GIFT, we contribute to shaping a European strategy for education and research in key domains essential for the future of the agri-food sector:

- 🌱 Sustainable agriculture,
- 🍷 Viticulture and oenology,
- 🍷 Food products distinguished by quality and origin,
- 🌍 Environmental protection and rural development.

As a member, USAMV Cluj-Napoca plays a significant role in shaping the alliance's direction. Through EU-GIFT, Romanian students and researchers gain access to international expertise, modern learning pathways, and collaborative projects that strengthen Romania's contribution to European science and innovation. Additionally, the initiative fosters partnerships with local agro-food industries, supports rural communities, and promotes authentic regional products and traditions. EU-GIFT thus contributes not only to academic excellence but also to regional development, environmental awareness, and the economic vitality of rural territories in Romania and across Europe.

Beyond its academic mission, the EU-GIFT Alliance functions as a living laboratory where ideas, technologies, and traditions converge to shape tomorrow's food systems. By connecting universities with regional authorities, producers, start-ups, and cultural stakeholders, the alliance creates an environment where innovation responds to real territorial needs. This approach encourages scientific progress while supporting the preservation of Europe's landscapes, biodiversity, and rural identities. One of the alliance's key strengths is its focus on interdisciplinary learning. Students develop both solid scientific knowledge and an understanding of the socio-economic and cultural dimensions that influence food production. Through cross-country mobility, field practice, and innovation challenges, they gain the skills needed to navigate complex food systems and contribute to sustainable change. These experiences also promote intercultural dialogue and a deeper European identity. EU-GIFT also embraces digital transformation, integrating precision agriculture, remote sensing, and data-driven tools into teaching and research. Digital platforms encourage collaboration across Europe, accelerate innovation, and expand educational access for future professionals. The alliance places equal emphasis on social impact and community engagement. Through training programs, workshops, and partnerships, rural communities benefit from increased entrepreneurial capacity, product diversification, and sustainable land management practices. By encouraging short supply chains, eco-tourism, and the valorization of regional products, EU-GIFT helps build stronger, more resilient local economies. Through its vision, partnerships, and long-term commitment, EU-GIFT is shaping a model where tradition and innovation work together to create a healthier and more sustainable future for Europe.

EU-GIFT: Inspiration. Innovation. Impact.

👉 We invite you to follow the official EU-GIFT pages, like, and share the alliance's initiatives to support innovative education and the transition to sustainable food systems across Europe!

#eugift #europeanalliance #usamvcn #internationalcooperation #jointdegrees #highereducation #agrifoodinnovation #sustainability #geographicalidentity #sustainablefoodsystems



National Technological Centre for the Food and Canning Industry Spain: Nutrialitec Innovation Ecosystem

by **Ana Belén Morales Moreno**, National Technological Centre for the Food and Canning Industry (CTNC), Spain

CTNC, with over 50 years of experience, works to boost the competitiveness of companies through R&D. Its lines of action have a clear focus on the demands of clients and consumers, which is why in recent years it has specialized in the implementation of new technologies for the development of natural ingredients and their validation in products brought to market.

Since 2024, we have coordinated **NUTRIALITEC**, the Innovation Ecosystem for promoting food innovation, in which CTAEX, GOe Tech Center, UCAM, oloBion, and artica+i participate. Our objective has been to valorise the large quantity of byproducts currently generated in agro-industrial activities, intending to obtain bioactive and healthy ingredients within the framework of a sustainable food model. All of this is part of a shift towards a dietary pattern that increases the consumption of plant-based foods, which would provide environmental and health benefits. Visit the website nutrialitec.es and feel free to contact us.

The Nutrialitec Ecosystem's activities have been aimed at companies and business associations in the agri-food sector, analysis and characterisation companies related to this sector, companies in the pharmaceutical, medical, and cosmetic sectors interested in the use of bio-ingredients, research centres, technology centres, and universities developing technology in these areas, and all relevant government agencies.

We can highlight the promotion of technologies applicable to food and health, both in the industrial and gastronomic sectors, focused on different segments of the population and always enhancing the functionality of new ingredients and their effects on health. Furthermore, we have consolidated synergies in R&D&I among the different agents of the ecosystem, maximizing access to different services and technologies through the formation of multidisciplinary teams. Through the execution of the project activities, we have achieved significant developments in the value chain of functional bio-ingredients, such as in extraction protocols, chemical and functional characterization using omics techniques, the incorporation of bio-ingredients into food matrices and nutritional supplements, optimization of their release in the digestive tract, control of their toxicity, and analysis of their efficacy at both the nutritional and therapeutic levels.

Having completed the 21-month implementation period, we now have a Strategic Agenda, driven by the six working groups, which will serve as the foundation for promoting innovation activities aimed at achieving a safe, healthy, and sustainable food chain.

NUTRIALITEC (ECO-20241004) has received over €975,000 in funding from CDTI Innovation, with the support of the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities.



INTERIOR +: Rural Mountain areas revitalization

by Nuno Vieira e Brito & Marta Vilas Boas, Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Portugal

Inland Portuguese regions are experiencing structural challenges characterised by depopulation, an ageing population, and declining access to essential services, leading to weakened territorial cohesion and constrained economic development. The INTERIOR+ Project addresses these challenges by focusing on Rural Mountain Regions (Zonas Rurais de Montanha, ZRM), and pursuing the reinforcement of social capital while promoting the valorisation of traditional agri-food products.

The project pursues a dual objective. The first is the development of a platform designed to promote territorial innovation, gastronomic tourism, and business attractiveness. The second is to deploy this platform as a mechanism for attracting new residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors to the ZRM, thereby strengthening the market penetration of endogenous, value-added products rooted in rurality and its cultural assets.

More specifically, the project seeks to: develop an interface that stimulates territorial dynamism; create an accessible and replicable intervention model for regional revitalization, identifying opportunities and constrains relevant to the establishment of new companies and businesses activities; expand opportunities for qualified young people and small family farms; and enhance the capacity of economic agents within the ZRM to innovate, aiming to increase business profitability and generate skilled employment in the agri-food sector. The initiative was implemented in three mountainous regions of Portugal: The regions of Alto Minho, Beiras e Serra da Estrela and Beira Interior.

In the Alto Minho region, particularly in Melgaço, smoked meat production was identified as the agri-food product with the greatest potential to stimulate economic revitalisation while integrating innovation with local identity. In response, the Alto Minho research team structured its operational programme around the region's primary needs. Capacity-building and knowledge transfer emerged as central levers for strengthening the smoked meat value chain, through the active involvement of local companies, producers and public entities, targeted training was delivered via workshops and technical visits. In addition, a partnership was established with a vocational education Institution to deliver targeted short courses designed to address the specific needs of small-scale producers seeking to improve their business performance. This collaborative approach strengthened local human capital, supported the professionalisation of the smoked meat value chains, and contributes to the broader strategic objective of fostering Innovation-driven rural development in the Alto Minho region.

Learn more about **Interior+**



The INTERIOR+ consortium comprises 15 partners, including three academic institutions, one research centre, one agri-food technology support centre, three associations, and six small-to-medium-sized enterprises. The project was granted financial support from the PRR programme for a period of 36 months. For more information on the Interior + website: www.interiormais.pt

The INTERIOR+ Consortium: Instituto Politécnico da Guarda; Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco; Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo; Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária; In.Cubo, AAPIM; Meltagus; CCAB; Monte Silveira Bio; CER Fundão; O&C- Olive Company Lda, TeraMovigo; Gabriela Alves Unip.; Soproveira; QDB-Quinta da Biaia Lda.



SafeSeed project: New biorational methods for stored seed pest control and protection: To serve and prevent

by **Sonja Gvozdenc**, Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops, National Institute of the Republic of Serbia (IFVCNS), Serbia

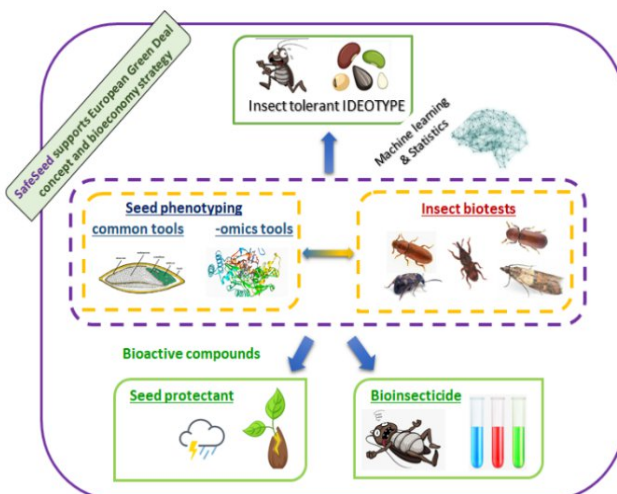
A sufficient amount of quality seeds is considered a backbone of food security, particularly in periods when plant production fails. However, post-harvest losses (PHLs) of durable agricultural commodities, especially pedigreed seeds (pre-basic and basic seed material), are evidently overlooked as compared with pre-harvest protection. Thus, developing new or improving existing storage technologies and pest management solutions will have a great impact on the preservation of seed quality. Reducing PHLs represents a sustainable solution to increase seed availability, reduce pressure on natural resources, eliminate hunger and improve farmers' livelihoods.

PHLs are associated with economic losses, deriving from both quantitative and qualitative causes, primarily by stored product insects (SPPs) or unsuitable storage technology. Roughly, losses caused by SPPs range from 10 to 40, but can reach 100%. Due to insecticide restrictions, the occurrence of insects resistant to insecticides, and higher market demands for pesticide-free food, is a big challenge to achieve satisfactory pest control with low chemical inputs.



The **SafeSeed project** (funded by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, call: Prisma) is a multidisciplinary project that aims to develop biorational methods for preserving seeds during storage and SPP management. The **SafeSeed** will define seed traits responsible for resistance to major SPPs (the rice and bean weevil, Indian meal moth and confused flour beetle) that can serve as the genetic pool for breeding

programs. The exploitation of inherently resistant plant genotypes to insect pests is among the most promising strategies of the IPM, attempting to reduce the input of synthetic insecticides. This strategy hasn't been used against SPPs so far. For the first time, within this project, we will perform a large-scale phenotypic study of seeds of ten different crops (cereals -wheat, barley, oat, rye, maize, spelt, legumes -bean, faba bean, grass pea and sunflower). A holistic approach within the project encompasses the use of state-of-the-art techniques combined with the novel omic techniques (metabolomics and proteomics). The **SafeSeed** will go beyond a sole identification of resistant traits and will assess the potential of specific protease inhibitors (PIs), as bioactive compounds with great usage potential but limited application in pest management. We will identify bioactive PIs from seeds of tolerant genotypes and assess their insecticidal and seed protectant potential. The idea is to develop post-harvest technologies able to cope with a changing climate and secure longer storage without losses in seed quality and quantity.



The **SafeSeed** concept relies on the sustainable protection and preservation of seeds with high added value for the future, which is one of the four important goals of the Smart Specialisation Strategy Draft in the Republic of Serbia (2020-2027). Moreover, **SafeSeed** will also follow the principles of the European Green Deal (GD) and the Farm to Fork Strategy, which promotes research focused on innovation within environmentally friendly technologies to promote healthier and sustainable food, as well as achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

Project consortium consists of IFVCNS, as the leader, the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Agronomy, Čačak, University of Kragujevac and Faculty of Science, Department of Mathematics and Informatics University of Novi Sad. Project members are experts in the fields of entomology, plant breeding, seed science, molecular biology and biotechnology, statistics and the IT sector.



InnoMeatEdu project completion: innovative e-platform on Meat Science and Technology ready to be used

by **Teresa-María López-Díaz***, University of León, Spain

After three years of work, the **InnoMeatEdu** project came to an end. The main objective of the project has been achieved: the development of an educational platform that focuses on use of innovative digital tools for education and training in the field of Meat Science and Technology (MST). The platform also serves as a bridge between industry and academia, offering materials aimed at students, educators, and professionals in the meat sector. The content topics were selected based on evaluations of current curricula at the participating universities and by considering feedback from the meat industry, particularly regarding gaps identified in the technical expertise of their workforce. The digital material developed covers areas such as:

- Meat production and processing
- Safety and quality
- Entrepreneurship and sustainability in the meat sector

The innovation of this output focuses on the methodological approach to developing up-to-date training material for MST, as well as on the fact that the material will be digitised to increase accessibility and provide open access. The high level of expertise and the combination of different specific meat science fields' backgrounds assured high-quality material for students, professors and meat science professionals. The didactic tools used in the e-platform are:

- manuals (learning, lab and making-process),
- topics in interactive pdf,
- case studies (prepared both by academic and industry partners),
- quizzes and take-home messages,
- multimedia resources (videos produced by InnoMeatEdu, infographics, interactive maps, other videos of interest, etc.),
- references and further reading.

The e-platform is in English, but most of the training material is available in Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish.

The platform is based on Massive Open Online Courses-MOOC (Moodle) and it is available at www.innomeatedu.unileon.es since September 2025. It will be freely accessible for 3 years.

Consortium: University of León -Spain- (coordinator), University of Parma -Italy-, University of Thessaly -Greece-, Instituto Politécnico de Bragança -Portugal-, Centro Tecnológico de la Carne -Spain-, and 4obs Accounting and Consulting -Greece-.



In the project collaborated more than 40 industries/associations/companies of the meat sector (or related) (<https://innomeatedu.com/associated-partners/>).

*The project team is here: <https://innomeatedu.com/project-team/>.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

InnoMeatEdu project. Innovative digital tools applied to sustainable Meat Science and Technology Higher Education: a link between industry and academia. KA220-HED Cooperation Partnerships Erasmus +.
www.innomeatedu.com



PTEP 2026 - XXXVIII Scientific and Professional Conference - Processing and Energy in Agriculture

by **Milivoj Radojcin**, National Society of Processing and Energy in Agriculture, Serbia

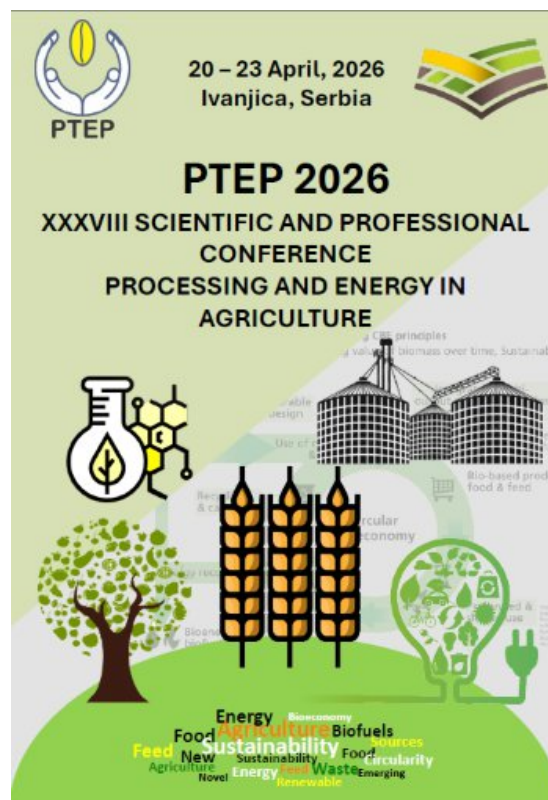
The XXXVIII Scientific and Professional Conference - Processing and Energy in Agriculture (**PTEP2026**) will take place from **20-23 April 2026**, at the Hotel Park in Ivanjica, Serbia.

PTEP 2026 is organised by National Society of Processing and Energy in Agriculture and Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Engineering, University of Novi Sad, and supported by the ISEKI-Food Association.

Preliminary Information package can be consulted [here](#).

CONFERENCE TOPICS:

- Advanced post-harvest technologies of agricultural materials
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in agriculture and food industry
- Biogas, biomethane, hydrogen, natural gas
- Biotechnology
- Advanced seed processing technologies
- Sustainability of food technologies (economy, quality, energy, social aspects, integral and organic production, etc.)
- Technical and technological aspects of food safety for humans and animals
- Innovations in food technologies and aspects of the food quality chain
- Physical properties of biomaterials and food
- Education in post-harvest and food technologies
- Trends in agricultural development
- Process control and
- Heating and air conditioning.



For more details, please go to the [PTEP 2026](#) homepage.

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PROCESSING AND ENERGY IN AGRICULTURE: www.ptep.org.rs; e-mail: ptep@ptep.org.rs

Faculty of agriculture, Department of agricultural engineering, University of Novi Sad

General Secretary of INOPTEP 2026: Dr Milivoj Radojčin

Technical Secretary of INOPTEP 2025: Dr Sonja Gvozdenac; e-mail: sonja.gvozdenac@ifvcns.ns.ac.rs



NEWS ABOUT PROJECTS WITH ISEKI-FOOD ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATION

We truly enjoyed the Friday coffees with you! - The **WASTELESS Monthly Café Talks** concluded with great success

by **Luminita Ciolacu** and **Sofia Reis**, ISEKI-Food Association, Austria



After two inspiring editions, the **WASTELESS Monthly Café Talks** have come to a successful close. Over the past months, our virtual café has become a vibrant space for meaningful conversations, knowledge exchange, and community building around one shared goal: **reducing food loss and waste across the entire food system.**

These talks offered an exceptional opportunity to dive into **fruitful discussions**, gain **insights from the latest research**, and connect directly with **leading experts** working at the forefront of food loss and waste.

In total, we hosted **18 engaging talks**, each shedding light on a unique dimension of the food loss and waste challenge. The café sessions covered a wide variety of topics, including unlocking the value of food loss and waste, exploring innovative tools and methodologies for measurement, best practices for prevention, policy developments, the skills needed and more.

We extend our warmest thanks to **all presenters and participants** for their enthusiasm, thoughtful contributions, and commitment. Your engagement turned each Friday session into a space filled not only with knowledge, but also with inspiration, making our “Monthly Café Talks” both informative and enjoyable.

Feel free to rewatch, rediscover, or share the sessions with your network, they're all accessible [here](#).

It was truly a pleasure to share a cup of coffee with you as we worked together towards a more sustainable food system across Europe through a better **WASTELESS** future.

For more information contact: luminita.ciolacu@iseki-food.net or sofia.reis@iseki-food.net



WASTELESS is funded by the European Union (Grant Agreement No. 101084222). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or Research Executive Agency.



EU4Advice: Are You the Policymaker We're Looking For?

by **Luminita Ciolacu and Sofia Reis**, ISEKI-Food Association, Austria



The EU4Advice project has officially begun its Europe-wide outreach to policymakers and we're inviting you to be part of it. Are you a policymaker interested in joining a dynamic European network? Or do you know someone who is? **Spread the word!**

Policymakers play a crucial role in shaping supportive frameworks, aligning regional priorities, and enabling innovative community-driven solutions to take root and flourish.

That's why the EU4Advice and COREnet projects have launched the **Policymaker Short Food Supply Chain (SFSC) Network**, a dedicated European space for policymakers committed to building fairer, shorter, and more sustainable food chains. By joining, you will help strengthen territorial policies and accelerate the transition toward more resilient and sustainable regions. Watch this [video](#) where Stephanie Jongma from Provincie Flevoland, explains better what they are looking for.

What's in it for you? Members of the network will gain access to:

- A series of thematic workshops on key policy topics
- Shared knowledge, best practices and lessons learned
- Connections with a broad network of national and local SFSC advisors
- A vibrant EU-wide community working to transform regional food systems

If you want to know more contact eu4advice@innogestiona.es for more information.

Join us today!



This project has received funding from the European Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101059911



Observatory of the Agri-food (OAF) Pact for Skills: Summary of First-Year Achievements

by **Konstantina Ntrallou**, University of Torino, Italy, and **Luis Mayor**, ISEKI-Food Association, Austria

OAF Pact for Skills has successfully completed its first year of activities supported by the **AGRIFOODSKILLS** project, laying the groundwork for a dynamic and collaborative platform that anticipates skills needs and supports workforce development across the European agri-food sector. Through its eight thematic Working Groups (IFA leads Skills Intelligence), the observatory has delivered key outputs such as the first annual monitoring survey, a comprehensive mapping of 240 occupational profiles, and the design of a 12-year strategic roadmap to ensure long-term sustainability. These achievements reflect a strong commitment to evidence-based planning, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with EU priorities on digitalisation, sustainability, and skills innovation.



A major milestone this year was the development and refinement of sectoral scenarios by the Scenarios and Policy Forum 2050 Working Group. These scenarios—Sustainable Path, High-Tech Path, and Established Path—provide strategic foresight for the agri-food sector, helping stakeholders anticipate future trends in sustainability, technology, and business models. By integrating scenario analysis with skills intelligence and policy recommendations, the observatory ensures that its outputs remain relevant and forward-looking, supporting both immediate and long-term transformation across the ecosystem.

Looking ahead, the observatory will build on these foundations by consolidating operational practices and intensifying collaboration among partners. Upcoming actions include the launch of skill needs identification sessions, expansion of the training content repository, and further work on the development of micro-credential frameworks to foster lifelong learning. With its participatory governance model and forward-looking approach, the observatory is positioned as a key driver of transformation in the agri-food ecosystem, ensuring that skills intelligence, quality standards, and innovative learning pathways remain at the heart of Europe's green and digital transitions.

How can you benefit?



The most direct way to benefit from the Observatory's activities is by joining the **Agri-food Pact for Skills**. Members gain access to tailored insights, training, tools, and networking opportunities. They also benefit from shared resources, guidance on funding opportunities, and continuous learning support across the agri-food ecosystem—ensuring they stay at the forefront of sector developments and skills innovation.



ECO-Merce Project Launched to Turn Sustainability into a Competitive Advantage in the Agri-Food Marketing

by **Luminita Ciolacu** and **Luis Mayor**, Project Managers at ISEKI-Food Association

The ECO-Merce project, an ERASMUS+ cooperation partnership in vocational education and training (VET), held its kick-off meeting at the facilities of the **Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre**, at FH Münster University of Applied Sciences, on 18-19 November 2025.



The main objective of the project is to empower agri-food actors to leverage sustainability as a market advantage in e-commerce by aligning consumer values, digital skills, and sustainable business practices. By integrating sustainable marketing into VET and industry training, it bridges the gap between consumer expectations and agri-food actors' capabilities. Through a value-driven skills framework, digital training, and strategic roadmaps, the project will foster transparent, engaging and value-driven e-commerce practices.

With a duration of three years, ECO-Merce will conduct skill needs analysis and consumer persona mapping to identify sustainable marketing gaps. Based on this, it will develop competency-based training modules and launch the ECO-Merce Academy, an interactive online learning programme hosted by the **ISEKI e-learning platform**. A Train-the-Trainer program will equip educators with tools and strategies to deliver the programme in face-to-face contexts, whereas co-creation workshops will enable agri-food actors to develop personalized marketing roadmaps.

The project is coordinated by **University of Münster** (Germany), and has as partners the **Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities** (Germany), the **Irish Co-operative Organization Society** (Ireland), the **French Network of Food Technology Institutes** (France) and **ISEKI-Food Association** (Austria).

Stay informed about the project's activities and results through the ISEKI newsletter and social media channels.

FOODPathS final Meeting in The Hague: “Completing the partnership puzzle”

by **Andreia Pinheiro-Torres** and **Sofia Reis** (alphabetically), ISEKI-Food Association

After three and a half years of intensive groundwork, in which ISEKI-Food proudly took part, FOODPathS has now concluded!

The final meeting was held in October 2025 and brought together project partners and key stakeholders, including representatives from SCAR, FutureFoods, the European Commission for a high-level discussion on the future of EU Partnerships in R&I.

FOODPathS leaves behind a strategic legacy designed to accelerate the transformation of Europe’s food systems.



Blueprint for change

The **final recommendations** are a blueprint for future action and outline critical areas including:

- Governance:** creating inclusive, accountable, and balanced decision-making processes built on shared visions.
- Collaboration:** strengthening dialogues through accessible language and trusted spaces for diverse actors to work together.
- Funding:** promoting systems-based approaches, aligned calls, and strong incentives for interdisciplinarity and multi-actor cooperation in projects.
- Evidence to Policy:** establishing an independent food systems observatory to improve the translation of evidence into action.
- Knowledge integration:** building a practical knowledge hub to connect food system labs and foster cross learning between a diversity of actors

Flying as a “Partnership” towards a sustainable future

The **Handbook for Pragmatic Changemakers** is the practical, essential guide for building or strengthening partnerships for Sustainable Food Systems.

Provides guidelines on how to build an inclusive partnership based on a successful systems approach, and lessons learned from 3 years of real-life cases where food system actors joined forces around shared sustainability goals.



ISEKI-Food has played an important role in this legacy and remains committed to supporting the **transformation of Europe’s Food Systems** beyond FOODPathS.

WATSON final Activities and Main Project Outcomes

by Sara Barbosa, Luis Mayor and Andreia Pinheiro Torres, ISEKI Food Association, Austria

After three years of collaboration, **Watson** project is coming to an end, having successfully achieved its main objective: **to tackle fraudulent practices in the food supply chain!**

The Watson consortium met in **Brussels** on **26–27 November** for its final **General Assembly**, bringing together **more than 40 partner organisations**.

In addition, the project organised its **Final Event**, [Beating fraud and building trust with The Food Detectives from the EU's Watson project](#), which was broadcast live on **Euronews**. The event featured live demonstrations of innovative food technologies addressing food fraud across **several use cases**, as well as insightful debates with representatives from the **European Commission** and **INTERPOL** on food fraud, transparency, and traceability.



The following initiatives, tools and solutions have been developed and/or implemented in Watson:

1. **Key Technological Innovations to tackle food fraud** (15 in total, detailed [here](#))
2. [The Food Fraud Incidents Application](#), which supports stakeholders (policy makers, industry, researchers and consumers) with evidence on food fraud incidents
3. **Training materials:**
 - a. [Webinars](#) (available on YouTube):
 - [Watson Cluster Webinar – Traceability & Verification in Food Supply Chains](#)
 - [Exploring Tech Solutions to Food Fraud: Olive Oil, Meat & Honey Sectors](#)
 - [Exploring Tech Solutions to Food Fraud: Spotlight on Dairy, Wine and White Fish](#)
 - b. Online course: [Food Authenticity from Farm to Fork](#) (soon available on the [ISEKI e-learning platform](#))
4. Contribution to **collaborative Platforms**:
 - a. Watson is one of the managing projects of the [Sustainable Food System Innovation Platform](#)—a collaborative initiative dedicated to driving innovation and sustainability within Europe's food systems. This platform serves as a hub for knowledge exchange and strategic collaboration among leading projects.
 - b. Watson is part of the [Food 2030 Online Platform](#), a common platform for projects, partnerships, networks and living labs working on transforming the food system for the benefit of the people and the planet.
5. **Dissemination Materials** to raise consumer awareness on food safety and value (Watson partners with Euronews on [YouTube](#)):
 - a. [Expert talks on food fraud playlist](#)
 - b. [Special series: "The Food Detectives"](#)

To know more about the WATSON Project, visit its [website](#) and follow its social media channels, [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



NEWS ABOUT OTHER PROJECTS

Final Conference of the Closer to Farm Project Successfully Held in Dublin

by [Kamila Wodka](#), Interdisciplinary Division for Energy Analyses (IDEA), Poland

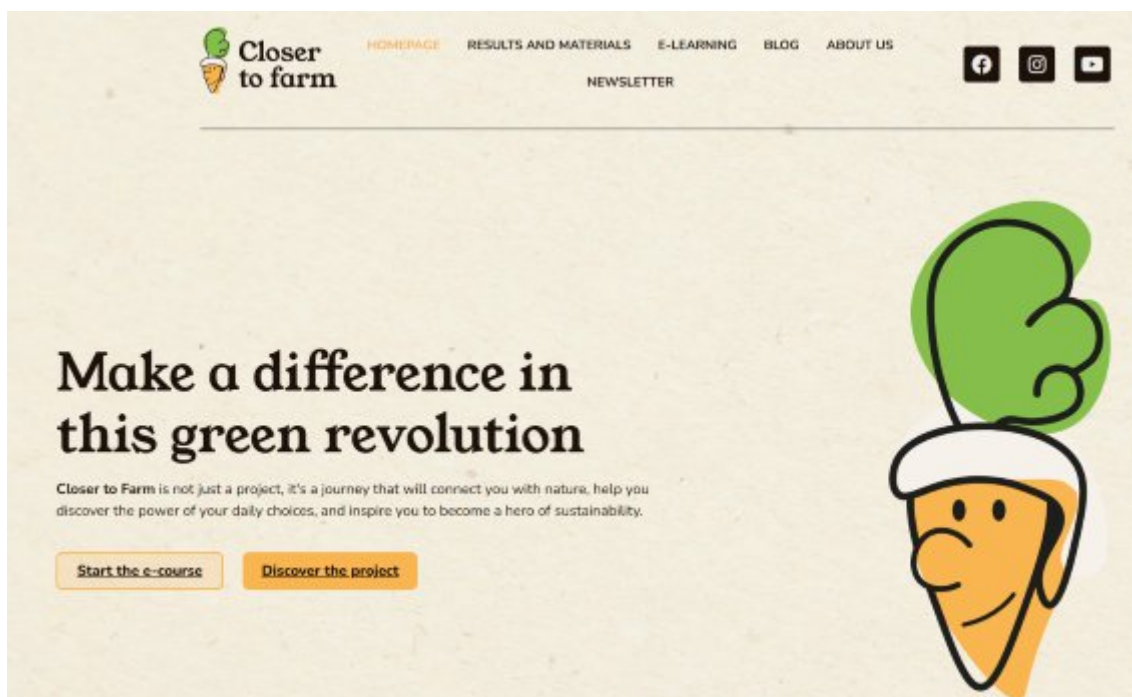
On **16 October 2025**, partners of the **Closer to Farm** project gathered in Dublin for the final conference of this **Erasmus+ initiative funded by the European Union**. The event brought together educators, youth workers, agri-food stakeholders and project partners to present and celebrate the project's results.

The conference highlighted the project's mission to strengthen young people's understanding of **short food supply chains** and reconnect communities with sustainable, locally produced food. Participants explored the key outputs developed during the project, including the innovative **educational escape rooms**, which teach sustainability and food system concepts through teamwork and problem-solving.

Another major result showcased was the set of **Short Food Supply Chain Games**, designed to introduce learners to local food networks, logistics, environmental aspects and farm-to-table processes. The project's **documentary video** was also screened, offering insights into the experiences of farmers, educators and young people involved in local food initiatives across Europe.

The conference additionally presented the **Closer to Farm online platform**, which hosts interactive modules, learning materials and digital resources on sustainable agriculture and short supply chains. This platform ensures long-term access to project results for educators and communities.

The event concluded with reflections on the project's impact and the importance of EU-funded initiatives in promoting sustainable food education. The Dublin conference marked an important milestone, celebrating the collaboration and innovation that shaped the Closer to Farm project.



NEWS ABOUT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Update on our Free online training available at the ISEKI-Food platform

The ISEKI-Food Association has been offering online training courses since 2010 through our [e-learning platform](#).

Several training courses have been developed lately under the scope of three projects that ISEKI-Food is currently involved as partner: **FAIRCHAIN**, **E-SafeFood** and **WASTELESS**. The courses are available **ONLINE** and **FREE**.

🔊 The **FAIRCHAIN** project has developed the following online training courses:

1. **Introduction to Intermediate Food Value Chains (2h)** - Designed for entrepreneurs and stakeholders in all FVC-related fields (farmer, producer, regulator, marketer, distributor, financier, consumer organisation, etc.) at all levels (undergraduate student to professional with many years of experience) with interest in developing or valorising Intermediate Value Chains.
2. **From Short to Intermediate Food Value Chains (4h)** - designed for Short Food Supply Chain entrepreneurs interested in going from a local to a regional business
3. **Case-Studies by co-creation - learn from real life examples (6h)** - designed for Short Food Supply Chain entrepreneurs, primarily producers and processors, interested in using the co-creation process to incorporate innovations into their business and grow it to (part of) an Intermediate Food Supply Chain.



🔊 The **e-SafeFood** project has developed the **Food safety training programme**: an interactive online training programme about microbiological food risks, including learning modules on:

1. **Microbiological shelf life**
2. **Process validation**
3. **Control of microbial hazards**
4. **Risk analysis**



The trainings are structured with distinct levels, allowing any interested person to find their space to learn, for example: food industry operators and higher industry job profiles, students, educators, researchers, and many more. All trainings are available in English. Additionally, the “Microbial shelf life” and “Control of Microbial Hazards” training modules in their basic levels, are available in French and Spanish.

🔊 The **WASTELESS** project has developed a training programme featuring:

1. online course **Reducing Food Loss and Waste: CHANGE to the right path!** as a Teacher resource pack: Designed for secondary school students, teachers, and the general public to raise awareness and offer practical solutions to reduce food loss and waste. Lessons are now available in English, Italian, and Hungarian.
2. training materials for **Food Loss and Waste Researchers**: A series of training workshops showcasing the innovative tools and methods developed within the project, to measure, monitor, and manage food loss and waste across the entire food supply chain.



Registration:

To access the training programmes, you need to have an account on the ISEKI-Food e-learning platform.

Go [here](#) to create a new account.

Be aware that some of the trainings require an **enrolment key**: **esafe4all** (for E-Safe Food modules) or the keys available [on this page](#) (for FAIRCHAIN courses)

Certificate of completion:

After completing the training activities, the ISEKI-Food Association will issue a **Certificate of Completion**.



Shaping skills for the future: join the 2026 Agrifood Pact for Skills Annual Event

by **Lorenza Lirosi**, FoodDrinkEurope, Belgium, and **Luis Mayor**, ISEKI-Food Association, Austria

The 2026 edition of the Agrifood Pact for Skills Annual Event, titled “Shaping Skills for the Future”, will take place in Brussels and bring together leading actors from across Europe’s agri-food ecosystem. This year’s edition will place a strong focus on attracting and inspiring the next generation of talent, while showcasing impactful initiatives that respond to the sector’s rapidly evolving skills landscape.

Through a mix of high-level dialogues, project insights, youth-led moments, and networking opportunities, the event will:

- Highlight successful training actions and EU-funded projects that help make agri-food more attractive and future-proof
- Give voice to young professionals and students through dedicated panels and testimonial campaigns
- Foster connections between industry, education and training providers, public authorities, and youth organisations.

Whether you are a business leader, policymaker, educator, or student, this event is a unique opportunity to shape a shared vision for skills development in agri-food – and to co-create concrete solutions supporting Europe’s green and digital transitions.

[Register here](#) - More details to follow, stay tuned!



ANNUAL EVENT

AgriFood Pact for Skills

pre-registration now open



UPCOMING FOOD-RELATED EVENTS / WEBINARS

2026

March 2026

9 - 12 March 2026

17th International Conference “Science as Collaboration”

More information: <https://saafecs.co.za/17th-conference-2026/>

Mount Amanzi, South Africa

April 2026

New! 20 - 23 April 2026

PTEP 2026 - XXXVIII Scientific and Professional Conference Processing and Energy in Agriculture

More information: <http://www.ptep.org.rs/Sajt%20engleski/skupovien.html>

Ivanjica, Serbia

New! 28 - 29 April 2026

19th European PhD Workshop on Food Engineering and Technology

More information: <https://european-phd-workshop.com/>

Stockholm, Sweden

June 2026

1 – 3 June 2026

ISEKIFOOD26 - 8th International ISEKI-Food Conference

More information: <https://isekiconferences.com/faro2026/>

Faro, Portugal

July 2026

12 – 15 July 2026

IFT FIRST 2026

More information: <https://www.iftevent.org/>

Chicago, IL, USA



August 2026

25 -28 August 2026

IDS'26 - International Drying Symposium

More information <https://ids2026.org/>

Paris, France

September 2026

7 – 10 September 2026

FOODMicro2026 - 31st International ICFMH Conference

More information: <https://foodmicro2026.icfmh.org/>

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Editorial Board

Paola Pittia

Rui Costa

Margarida Vieira

Yu Fu

Andreia Pinheiro-Torres



ISEKI-Food Association

c/o Impacthub Vienna

Lindengasse 56/18-19, 1070 Vienna, Austria

email: office@iseki-food.net

<https://www.iseki-food.net/>

registered under Austrian law ZVR: 541528038

