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Fribourg, 17 January 2022

Press release

The canton of Fribourg launches the first projects of its agri-food strategy

One year ago, on January 12, 2021, the Fribourg State Council approved the economic development strategy for the agri-food sector. At the same time, three flagship programs with the objective of making the canton of Fribourg the leader in this field were adopted. In September 2021, academic and private representatives developed concrete projects. Of these projects, aligned with the three innovative and sustainable flagship programs of the agri-food strategy, three were selected. These projects and two sub-projects will be launched in 2022.

The canton of Fribourg has a solid ecosystem in the agri-food sector. Both agricultural and industrial, with a dense network of agri-food SMEs and leading national and international companies, the canton processes nearly a quarter of Swiss agricultural products. Currently, Fribourg is one of the best positioned cantons to position itself as a key player in the development of concrete solutions in the agri-food sector.

The agri-food strategy of the canton of Fribourg has primarily cantonal and regional objectives, but by its very nature it is part of a much broader context, addressing societal, health, and environmental challenges. The need for a new way of thinking and a coordinated and systemic approach, involving profound changes on the part of all actors in the “food system” is the key to its evolution towards sustainability and a circular economy.

The 3 flagship programs in brief

The canton of Fribourg has planned the following three flagship programs:

- > Flagship program 1: “Food & Farm Living Lab”
- > Flagship program 2: “Biomass Valorization”
- > Flagship program 3: “Agriculture & Industry 4.0”

Solutions must be systemic, it must integrate the needs of all stakeholders, including citizens. The “**Food & Farm Living Lab**”, one of the three flagship programs of the new agri-food strategy, will make this approach possible and allow the development of these solutions. The second flagship program, “**Biomass Valorization**”, promotes the reuse of biomass from the canton’s agricultural and agri-food production. The third flagship program, “**Agriculture & Industry 4.0**” promotes the optimization of current agricultural and agri-food processes using data science as well as the creation of virtual platforms offering better operability and transparency to the people involved.

The selected projects

To bring these programs to life and develop them, academic and private representatives presented ten projects last September as part of a participatory co-creation process, organized by the Food & Nutrition Cluster. The project committee (Copro), with representatives from the Food & Nutrition Cluster (CFN), Grangeneuve, the HES-SO Fribourg and the Fribourg Development Agency (FDA), has chosen three projects and two sub-projects. It opted for one project per flagship program and two sub-projects for the Food & Farm Living Lab.

Food & Farm Living Lab

I. Setting up the Food & Farm Living Lab

Objective: to accompany the innovations of the actors of the agricultural, food and nutritional economy of the canton of Fribourg;

Sub-project 1: realization of a pilot project on the link between information and consumer behavior in terms of food choices. This project is intended to be global and will also address aspects related to health and nutrition, innovation and the potential of local production;

Sub-project 2: creation of an innovation voucher mechanism for agricultural and food actors with a call for projects.

Biomass Valorization

II. Functionalized proteins from biomass and agri-food co-products

Objective: to make existing value chains anchored in the canton more attractive and sustainable through innovative intermediate and finished food products, adapted to the needs and demand of consumers for healthy and sustainable products.

Agriculture & Industry 4.0

III. Optimized nitrogen fertilization

Objective: use of agricultural data and imagery to optimize fertilizer quantities to increase crop yields while reducing nitrogen emissions into the environment.

Copro also defined the structure, governance, and specific rules for each of these projects. In addition, a project manager was appointed for each project. Projects' kick-off will take place in the coming days. The objective for the year 2022 is to move forward in parallel with these projects.

For more information on the agri-food strategy of the canton of Fribourg (in French):

<https://www.clusterfoodnutrition.ch/fr/nos-services/strategie-agroalimentaire-fribourg-2>

Information

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