Long term, evidence-based governance for protein diversification

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“Web-based databases and Food Environments”

Prof. Piet van der Meer

Coordinator VUB Multidisciplinary Program on Sustainable Food and Biomass Systems
Office of the Vice Rector Research Policy, VUB, Belgium
Topics

- VUB Multidisciplinary Program on Sustainable Food and Biomass Systems
- Focus on protein diversification: web-based databases and food environments
VUB Multidisciplinary Program on Sustainable Food and Biomass Systems

• Sustainable food supply requires transformative change of food systems.

• Strategies are being developed worldwide, such as the EU F2F Strategy, that are:
  • multidisciplinary and evidence based,
  • developed in a transparent manner and include prior impact assessment.

➢ Universities are strengthening their research and education to provide the resources.

➢ The VUB Research Council decided in December 2019 to establish a program to support the preparation and execution of multi-disciplinary research and education projects on sustainable food and biomass systems.
Accomplishments in 2020:

- A consortium of over 100 research and education groups
- Collaboration with several international and EU organisations
- Working arrangements with VUB and ULB funding departments
- Collaboration with BrIAS
- First large size project on crop improvement submitted under a last call of Horizon 2020

Accomplishments in 2021:

- Large size project on protein diversification submitted in October 2021 under HEUR
- Third large size project under development under HEUR call “Building alternative protein-friendly sustainable and healthy food environments”
- Several other projects in preparation, e.g. PhD+, Sustainability Governance,
Protein diversification

Background:

• Environmental and health impacts of current protein production and consumption.

• Protein diversification can lead to more efficient use of land and water, a lower environmental footprint, and increased health.

• EU and national authorities are developing protein diversification strategies
Protein diversification

Farm to Fork strategy:

• “a key area of research will relate to increasing the availability and source of alternative proteins such as plant, microbial, marine and insect-based proteins and meat substitutes”.

• “European diets are not in line with national dietary recommendations, and the ‘Food Environments’ does not ensure that the healthy option is always the easiest one”.
Availability and source of alternative proteins

A Web based database to collect, curate, analyse and share information on:

- Alternative protein sources, e.g.: plant, microbial, marine and insect-based proteins
- Alternative production methods, e.g.: growing existing protein crops in new areas
- Alternative processing and delivery methods
- Environmental aspects
- Economic aspects
- Product quality aspects
- Product safety aspects
- Social – consumer acceptance

➢ Production and product readiness levels (PRLs)
➢ Proposals to increase the PRL
“The total scope of options within which consumers make decisions about which foods to acquire and consume”.
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Pieter.Jan.Van.Der.Meer@vub.ac.be