



## Farm inc. // Introducing marketing principles in the agricultural sector

Press release

August 2015

### **Pilot testing confirms success and relevance of Farm inc. online platform** Roundtable discussions and Infodays planned across Europe

Wide and enthusiastic acceptance of the free, online, interactive education and training platform, produced by the EU co-funded project Farm inc. with a focus on marketing, branding and exports of agricultural products, was expressed during a **pilot testing** in 3 European countries, **Greece, Italy and Latvia** with impressive turnout. More than **304 stakeholders** (farmers, representatives of farmer associations, agricultural entrepreneurs, VET trainers, policy makers etc.) participated in **21 pilot events** in the 3 target countries, endorsing the platform's relevance and usefulness, while **191** of them provided valuable recorded feedback on the improvement of its content and interactivity. The active involvement of participants, even during harvest and cultivation season and under difficult socioeconomic conditions, added to the value and potential of the course in the near future.

The platform is being finalised, according to the input received and it will be presented during a series of **roundtable discussions** and **infodays** across Europe, in Belgium, Greece, Italy and Latvia within the month of September. The first event will be held by project partner **Copa Cogeca**, the major European farmers and agri-cooperatives association, on **10 September 2015** in **Brussels**.

The Farm inc. project and platform will also be presented at the famous **Expo Milan 2015**, under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Education, with the support by partner countries' national representations and the participation of representatives of major European farmers' organisations, on **27 September 2015** to celebrate the end of the project.

#### *Some qualitative elements of the pilot trainings*

The majority (**51,3%**) of the participants were directly or indirectly involved in farm-related activities, **29,3%** were VET providers, VET trainers, PhD students and researchers, **10,5%** were marketing specialists, communication or rural development consultants while **8,9%** included agri-food consultants, local government representatives, private employees interested in farming, export managers and agro-journalists. The majority of the participants (**42,8%**) had more than **10 years** of farm-related experience while the participants' diverse background and activities enhanced the credibility of the pilot training results. All participants were enthusiastic about the material, with **46%** rating the material as "excellent", **47%** as "very good" and **100%** said that they would suggest this course to other people/farmers. They described the online tool (platform) as "user-friendly", "interesting", "easy to navigate" and "enjoyable", supported the interesting approach combining theory with practical examples, case studies and videos, thus, increasing engagement and enhancing understanding. Certainly, the importance of **branding**, as a modern concept, was not always easily grasped or accepted by traditional farmers, albeit **97,7%** said that they were willing to apply branding principles to their businesses. In parallel, although exports and selling abroad seemed to not be a priority for many participants, most of them expressed interest in learning more about internationalization, found the material a useful guide for future reference while **89,1%** said that they are willing to apply export strategies and tools to their businesses.

For further information, please visit the official project website: <http://www.farminc.eu>

#### *Few words on Farm Inc. project*

*The European project **Farm Inc.** aims to support small farmers and entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector to better market their products. There is a great potential for regional and local products in the market, but, as observed, there is a lack of marketing strategies to enable European agricultural entrepreneurs to compete*



with the international network and structures of multinational companies. Based on a Latvian best practice, a needs analysis, research and pilot testing, the Farm inc. consortium aims to design and produce a specialised education and training tool (online platform), tailor-made to the needs of farmers in four target countries: **Belgium, Greece, Italy and Latvia**. The training material consists of **6 Modules** (What is marketing?, A good marketing plan, Farmers markets, Quality, The strength of a Rural Brand, Selling Abroad) with a focus on marketing, branding and internationalisation of agricultural products, in **5 languages** (English, French, Greek, Italian, Latvian). More at <http://www.farminc.eu>

Farm inc. consortium members:

