Food Research in Support to Science-Based Regulations: Challenges for producers and consumers

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Jean Martin
President, Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU - CIAA
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Transform Challenges of the Food Industry into Opportunities

- Improve the competitiveness of the food industry
- Contribute to a healthier society
- Design ‘food–you-can-trust’ and ‘sustainable solutions’
- Attract the right personnel and sustain careers
Threats and Challenges to the Food Industry (2)

Actions needed

• Increase the speed and quality of innovation
• Increase R&D spending
• Focus, align and collaborate internationally between stakeholders
• Optimise knowledge capture and dissemination of knowledge between member states and towards SME’s
History and Achievements

• First ideas for an agri-food ETP: October 2004
• Official launch of the ETP Food for Life and basic Vision Paper prepared under auspices of CIAA: July 2005
• Board, Operational Committee and Working Groups: formed in December 2005, ensuring representation of all stakeholders
• Strategic Research Agenda: published in September 2007 after extensive national, regional and web-based consultations
• Implementation Action Plan: finalised in October 2008
ETP Food for Life (2)

History and Achievements

• 36 National Food Technology Platforms and NTP-network developed
• Workshops on Public/Private Partnerships established: January 2007
• Creation of SME Task Force: April 2007
• Creation of Member State Mirror Group: June 2008
ETP Food for Life (3)

History and achievements

- CIAA introduced the ETP Food for Life into its Road Map: 2009
- Linkage with the European Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (through CIAA)

- Recognition by the EU:
  - Financial support through FP6 Specific Support Action 2006
  - 90% of SRA-based priorities included in all calls of the FP7 Knowledge Based Bio Economy, theme 2: 2009
  - European Commission High Level Group recognized importance of the ETP: 2009
Core Challenges addressed in the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA)

Ensuring that the healthy choice is the easy choice for consumers

Delivering a healthier diet

Delivering quality food products

Assuring safe foods that consumers can trust

Achieving sustainable food production

Managing the food chain
From the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) to the Implementation Action Plan (IAP)

- The SRA outlined three key research thrusts to ensure that European resources are effectively targeted to boost competitiveness of the sector.

- The aim of the IAP is to turn the proposals made in the Strategic Research Agenda into focused, multi-disciplinary and collaborative activities.
Key Thrusts

- Improve health, well-being and longevity
- Build consumer trust in the food chain
- Sustainable and ethical production

New products, processes and tools that...
Key Thrust 1: Improve health, wellbeing & longevity

Source: Coen MR and van der Ouderaa F, Nature Pharmacogenomics, 2003
IAP - Key Thrust 1: Improving health, wellbeing and longevity

Scope
Describe research requirements in key areas of consumer, nutrition and food sciences, to improve health, wellbeing and longevity

Main Challenges:
• optimal development, wellness and ageing,
• intestinal health and immune functions, and
• weight management and obesity.

Key challenge: to deliver a healthier diet by developing new, high quality food products.
IAP - Key Thrust 1: Improving health, wellbeing and longevity

What needs to be done?

- Better understanding of how to assess consumption patterns across the food chain
- Improve communication with consumers
- Improve nutrition-related infrastructures
- Develop specific enabling technologies
- Develop new strategies to modify the intake of key dietary components (taking into account regional and national dietary habits)

Expected RESULT: Add years to Life!
Key Thrust 2: Build consumer trust in the food chain
IAP - Key Thrust 2: Build consumer trust in the food chain

Ensure that the healthy choice is the easy choice for consumers

- Measuring consumer behaviour in relation to food.
- Developing comprehensive models of consumer food choice processes.
- Promoting effective interaction with the consumer through communication and participation in public dialogue.
- Developing strategies to induce behavioural change to improve consumer health and social responsibility (through healthier food choices).
IAP - Key Thrust 2: Build consumer trust in the food chain

Food safety is a major public health and economic issue for Europe, both for foods consumed within the EU and those that are exported.

Objective: to develop an integrated and holistic approach to food Safety taking into account the total chain
Main challenges:

- Emergence of new and under-recognised biological hazards
- Research on low-level chemical contaminants in the food chain
- Immature tools for risk-benefit studies
- Consumers tend to be suspicious of new products and processes thus impeding introduction of novel quality, health and safety driven solutions
- Insufficiently-developed interfaces between natural science disciplines and economic and social sciences,
- Lack of transparency in prioritising research
IAP - Key Thrust 2: Build consumer trust in the food chain

Scope:
- To understand consumer food choice behaviour
- To stimulate the consumers’ selection of foods in order to arrive at a healthy diet (‘to make the healthy choice the easy choice’)
- To create trust and confidence in the food production chain
IAP - Key Thrust 2: Build consumer trust in the food chain

What needs to be done?

• Development of innovative measurement tools for data analyses and for predicting emerging hazards.
• Drafting international standards and commonly-agreed criteria for analytical methods.
• Development of technologies for the rational (cost-competitive) control of food risks via new solutions for process logistics and packaging
• Improved detection, monitoring, tracking and tracing.
• Increase public participation on food safety governance.

Expected RESULT:
Increased trust in the food and drink Industry
Key Thrust 3: Sustainable & ethical production
Main Challenges:

- Analysis of sustainability of food products (lack of science-based methodology)
- Food system efficiency and effectiveness: improvement potentials for technical and managerial solutions in each step of the food chain

Scope:

- To identify, promote and provide support for the implementation of sustainable food production systems.
- Develop synergetic solutions between environmental protection, social fairness and economic growth.
- Serve consumer needs for sustainable and affordable food.
IAP - Key Thrust 3: Sustainable & ethical production

What needs to be done?

• Develop better understanding of how to assess sustainability of the food chain and consumption patterns
• Improve technical and managerial solutions
• Enhance communication about sustainable options to consumers and stakeholders.

Expected RESULT:

Reduced use of resources, increased efficiency and better governance.
Next Steps

Development of the Implementation Plan:

• Stimulation of formation of ERA Nets on
  – Food, Health, Wellbeing & Longevity,
  – Sustainable Food Production/Food Chain Management,
  – Food-you-can-trust (extension of SAFEFoodERA).
• Development of a potential Lead Market (food and health)
• Stimulating the creation of public-private partnerships and specific Eureka themes
• Identifying “funding opportunities” (COST, European Institute of Technology, European Investment Bank, Venture Capital, etc...)
• Improving communication training and technology transfer
• Creating a favourable business environment (improved regulation, standards, IPR, etc.) to gain full commercial benefits of innovations
Conclusions

The « ETP Food for Life » will

- Drive the competitiveness of the European F&D industry
- Boost research performance
- Prevent research fragmentation
- Sustain career-development in food R&D in Europe
- Promote entrepreneurial activity
- Encourage greater involvement of SMEs

Increased R&D expenditure and substantial European funding is essential!
Thank you for your attention