Digital Agriculture Platform

Digital **A**griculture **P**latform
*To accelerate the **digitization of agricultural sectors**: to know and make known*

What – *Context & Overview*

The main challenges for the European agricultural sectors and the related public policies can be summarized as follow:

- Accompanying the transition of European agriculture and rural areas to meet the economic, environmental and climate challenges the European Union is facing, and

- responding to the imperatives of food safety & sovereignty.

In this context, **the environmental and economic performance of agricultural sectors are two sides of the same coin**. Greater environmental performance cannot be achieved if the competitiveness of Europe's agricultural sectors declines. Increasing sustainability requires more profitable economic sectors, able to invest in environmental actions, to bear the cost while earning a living in today's open world.

Therefore**, it is time to think of a** *"new agriculture"* **which considers the past, its mistakes and its achievements**. A considerable body of agronomic knowledge and innovations in digital can be mobilized to work for the economic and environmental performance of farms, and to the benefit of citizens, farmers and consumers.

At the same time, large scale adoption of smart farming is a catalyst for the convergence of all EU agricultures, allowing for farmers that lag behind in terms of competitiveness to catch up at a very rapid pace with their more advanced colleagues, thus allowing for a fair development of EU agriculture as a whole.

To ensure the full success of such **a digital evolution**, we should:

- **demonstrate** to both policy makers and economic actors the reality of this evolution, in other words **assessing and highlighting the concrete economic and environmental contributions it generates**;

- **convince** that encouraging this transition is more effective than reflecting on future actions by thinking only at the past;

- **provide** as many farmers as possible with access to these tools.

Encouraging agricultural value chains to make innovation on farms and to invest substantially in technical tools of dual performance, this requires not only convinced farmers, but also adequate political support and, at European level, **a complementary mobilization of the European policies, with the aim to**

encourage these types of investments and to provide a favorable economic environment in highly volatile markets.

In that context and as time is pressing to demonstrate the importance for decision makers and stakeholders to get fully involved in the transition of the EU agricultures to agricultures of dual performance, it seemed appropriate the set up within Farm Europe of **a Digital Agriculture Platform** bringing together players from the agricultural and digital sectors who share a common vision of a digitization of the agricultural sectors in Europe which is: **inclusive, centered around the needs of farmers, and in constant interaction with them**.

Why – *Aim, Vision*

This platform aims to **bring together agricultural sectors and operators sharing both the need to make the digital shift and lead this change to meet the needs of farmers**, and in full interaction with them.

The Digital Agriculture Platform is about **sharing experiences and highlighting the benefits of this change**. Today, experiments & pilot activities are being conducted in different sectors, without bringing together the relevant common elements, and therefore allowing to give form to the positive intentions of policy makers in favor of the uptake of innovative and digital models.

Such an approach may be of particular interest as the economic and political challenge of dual performance is already part of the EU policy environment.

At the core of the **Digital Agriculture Platform** there is the aim **to make the digitization of agriculture the political priority for the months and years to come.**

1) Digital Transformation of EU agriculture: a "new agriculture" needed to tackle the pressing economic, environmental & climatic challenges & allow for the convergence of all EU agricultures;

Smart farming is a farming management concept which exploits digital technology means to monitor farming resources and optimize the application of agricultural inputs and practices in the farming process.

> (***Key words***: *paradigm shift, new agriculture, double performance, convergence*)

2) Smart Farming: a valid solution for all farmers, all sectors & all types of farming across the EU as from today and not in a distant future;

Smart farming refers to a decision-making process that is not defined but can be optimized by the use of technology – namely by the combined use of data & knowledge coming from different devices & sources.

This process heavily involves the human factor: the farmer is placed at the center, being facilitated and accompanied all along the way by advisors who act as innovation brokers connecting him/her with an ecosystem of devices producing data and experts, generating, sharing and using knowledge.

(Key words: needs-based business models, low barriers to entry)

3) Promoting Smart Farming approaches that are holistic, inclusive & human-centered and allow for the development of a new culture of agricultural entrepreneurship based on informed decisions;

Smart Farming not only produces data, it equally generates a new culture of entrepreneurship: the farmer is not a passive consumer of expensive inputs that produces cheap products. He can make informed choices and business decisions based on the knowledge input: that is on data, scientific advice and market information.

*(**Key words**: decision making process, ecosystem of devices & experts, knowledge input, new culture of agricultural entrepreneurship)*

How – *Work Programme & Activities*

As a body of the think tank **Farm Europe**, the **Digital Agriculture Platform** offers the opportunity to reflect upon and to strengthen the means of action offered to its members on digitisation of EU farming sectors as well as on issues which go beyond or are interlinked. It provides a rich environment generated by members of varied backgrounds, all driven by a shared desire to better integrate competitiveness and environment as true principles of sustainable development.

The **Digital Agriculture Platform** is a **place to build recommendations and proposals** for policy-makers, with the objective of achieving a strong European vision for the agricultural sectors, of offering solutions, and indicating possible ways to build effective policies, able to unlock the vast potential of the European agri-food systems.

This platform will organize its activities on the basis of the following principles:

1. **Share** of experiences & best practices with a *"multi-actor"* approach (farmers, researchers, agronomists, industry), with the guarantee of **full confidentiality of specific results and data** that the Digital Agriculture Platform will be provided with by its members and other organisms;

2. Promoting **active collaboration** among participants (IT/Research-to-farmer networks);

3. **Identification** of factors/elements influencing the actual implementation according to sectorial and/or local specificities and addressing them;

4. **Developing own thematic analyses and studies,** by its own and in association with members, feeding the work of the whole platform;

5. Monthly **exchanges** to **assess** results and technical developments, considering both the economic, social and environmental aspects;

6. **Promotion** of the approach of *"digitizing European agriculture as an adequate vector to allow agricultural sectors to converge and to achieve a double performance – economic & environmental";*

7. **Development** of proposals and actions in both the legislative and communication fields, notably in the context of the CAP post 2020 proposal.

Target audience:

➢ **EU & NATIONAL DECISION MAKERS**

Communicating:

- Raising awareness among decision-makers by organizing meetings/events/publishing reports;

- Monitoring developments in both agriculture and digital policy and analyzing them from the point of view of users.

➢ **EU PRODUCERS**

Disseminating:

- Networking & raising awareness among farming sectors/organizations across the EU by organizing meetings/events/publishing reports.

Coordinating pilot projects on the ground:

- Encouraging, coordinating and overseeing the development of sectorial pilot projects that both enable the dissemination of smart farming practices and showcase its benefits with concrete results.

*An initial project has marked the launch of the Digital Agriculture Platform as a first concrete example: the New Viticulture Project. Launched in 2018 by Farm Europe and its **Wine institute**, this project already involves farmers, cooperatives and IT actors from three different countries. The step-by-step implementation of this project will demonstrate concretely the benefits of digitization of the wine sector, the multi-dimensional consequences of innovations and it will allow for proposing an efficient and balanced way of digitizing EU farming sectors.*

The Digital Agriculture Platform aims at gathering experiences and pilot projects in each agricultural sector, and at working on indicators and milestones and at collecting all relevant results and data (under confidentiality clause as necessary) to evaluate the outcomes and benefits of the digitisation of agricultural sectors in each case and finally to promote digitisation with very concrete reasoning.

The Digital Agriculture Platform does not promote a specific model of digitisation of EU farming sectors. It promotes the transition of EU agricultures to digital/smart farming practices, each sector, each farmer having the responsibility to define and choose the best way according to their specificities, while being fully aware of the benefits and implications of digitizing their systems.

Who – *People*

- **Members of the platform** are organizations and companies sharing the same ambition of sustainable growth, and willing to prepare the ground proactively for the transition of their members to economically and environmentally more performant agricultural systems. Members of the Digital Agriculture Platform are multisectorial, from several Member States, representing farming sectors, collecting and processing companies, companies providing solutions to the agri-food systems, extension services providers, research institutes. The platform is chaired by one of the members of Farm Europe for whom digitalization is of specific importance;

- **Coordinators** of the members of the Digital Agriculture in charge of the relation with the Platform and ensuring a deep involvement of each members;

- **A multi-cultural staff** under the responsibility of Yves Madre and Luc Vernet, mobilizing experts in digital, in agriculture and European policies.

Digital Agriculture Platform

The Digital Agriculture Platform dedicates its work to the transition of EU agricultural sectors to dual economic and environmental performance.

It is an independent, engaged, and creative place, which contributes with its ideas to the debate through the work of its team, its publications, its events, and the work of its members.

As a body of the think tank Farm Europe, the Digital Agriculture Platform does not have a political orientation. It aims to catalyse the thinking of all of its members. It has a multicultural team of recognised experts. It is open to a wide variety of members who wish to participate in the discussions, to brainstorm ideas, and to find a platform to give visibility to their views.

The actions of the Digital Agriculture Platform:

- **Reports**, nourished by members of the think tank and the team;

- Small **working groups** to allow the free exchange of ideas;

- **Public events** focusing on the issues in the agri-food sectors at national, EU and global level;

- **Access** to the work and main events of the think tank.

For more information, contact us at: digagriplatform@farm-europe.eu

Digital Agriculture Platform 1st Meeting
26 & 27 November, Hérault (France)

PROGRAMME

Monday, 26 November	
09:00 – 11:00	Wine Institute Meeting: Work program, Members
From 11:30	Arrival of the participants
12h30 – 14h00	*Lunch on the site of Pomérols - Vignerons de Beauvignac*

14h30 – 17h00	Meeting & Launching of the **Digital Agriculture Platform** - Wine Institute
	   - *Values, objectives and structure*
	   - *Communication activities*
	   - *Round-table*

17h00 – 17h30	*Coffee Break*

17h30 – 18h30	Discussion on the **digital viticulture project**
	
	   - *Objectives & Milestones*
	   - *Presentation by each participant*
	   - *Action plan*

19h30	*Dinner*
Tuesday, 27 November	
09:00 – 11:00	**On the spot visit of Mas Digital**
09:00 - 12:30	**Bilateral meetings** between participants
12h30	*Lunch on the site of Pomérols - Vignerons de Beauvignac*
From 13h00	Departure - Airports

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