

Abstract for the Virtual Conference

“University-Industry educational and training initiatives”

7-8 May 2015

Organised by ERASMUS+ Knowledge Alliance project EuFood-STA project 554312-EPP-1-2014-1-AT-EPPKA2-KA, a knowledge alliance between universities and food companies.

Title:

Best Practice in Austria: Knowledge Transfer by the Food Technology Network

Authors:

Grabler, Christine (CGR), Lebensmittelversuchsanstalt, christine.grabler@lva.at

Drausinger, Julian (JD), Lebensmittelversuchsanstalt, julian.drausinger@lva.at

Keywords:

Knowledge transfer, food, technology, network, SME, funding, professional training

Presentation preference:

Poster

Competitiveness of enterprises in the food sector is increasingly determined by the capability to innovate and constantly improve goods and procedures. The velocity of technical development as well as the evolution of standards for products and processes entailed a beginning decoupling of developers and operators. In response to the growing technological and managerial requirements emerging in the food sector the need for an efficient and competent knowledge transfer institution in Austria has already been detected in the late 1990's.

The physical realisation of this institution was eventually put into practice with strong engagement of the Food Industry Association Austria (FIAA). It was planned as a knowledge transfer platform, designed to establish contacts and facilitate exchange between research institutions and food production entities. The “Food Technology Network”, founded in 1999, is since then proactively working in the field of research and development for innovation in the food sector. Trained mediators are acting as interfaces between university research and industrial as well as artisanal production. It is their task to collect needs and ideas from national food producers, many of them SMEs, and act as contact point. Mediators are also involved in the exchange of research approaches and scientific solutions through intensive contacts with scientists on national and international level.

The “Food Technology Network” defines itself as a platform for facilitating interchange. On one hand it provides services for the translation of clients’ concerns and problems to research topics while on the other hand it takes care for the conversion of research results into practical applications and solutions. This approach makes it possible for food producing companies to benefit from research tailored to their needs; equally scientific institutes take advantage of the access to a pool of ideas for possible starting points for research.

The portfolio of the “Food Technology Network” encompasses the collaboration with agencies and ministries for funding within specifically developed programs and schemes.

Continuous support is provided moreover by an educational program that is offered for food companies throughout the year in the form of professional training. The schedule includes regularly organised events, which can be attended externally, as well as individually arranged in-house-trainings for company internals. Experts in the respective field of training are invited and share their knowledge and experience with the participants, who benefit from learning basic knowledge plus recent developments and best practices. The scope of trained issues ranges from hygiene and microbiology to sensory analysis and quality management as well as food law. With about thirty training events per year attended by nearly a thousand participants this program is leading the market in Austria.