

Added Value of Networking



“Goed Geboerd. Een portie landbouw op je bord!”

“Well farmed. A portion of agriculture on your plate!”

Basic information	
NRN:	Flemish Rural Network
Theme:	Success story
Coordinator:	Flemish Rural Network
Partners:	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Beneficiaries:	The general public was the target audience, with a focus on children.
Resources:	200,000 euros
Period:	08/07/2012 – 08/09/2012
Main element of networking:	Effective stakeholder engagement
Other elements of networking:	Building common understanding of common policies

Background

'Well farmed. A portion of agriculture on your plate!' was developed with the aim of informing the public about the Common Agricultural Policy. All participants also received a brochure on 50 years of the CAP with some nice Flemish recipes. They all learned about the evolution of agriculture and the role 50 years of the CAP has played in this.

Main activities

'Well farmed. A portion of agriculture on your plate!' visited the five Flemish provinces on several weekends between July and September of 2012 with an interactive stand on the importance of agriculture and horticulture in the past, present and future. Promotion of this tour was communicated on our website, in the magazines of agricultural organisations, by tourist services etc. Children had the time of their life experimenting in a child's laboratory and seeing how science and agriculture are



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combined – if they survived the labyrinth of the food chain and were able to create a landscape! There was also a game in which children had to catch the 'risks' farmers encounter on their farm. Adults accompanied the children and could read all the information signs. All the participants also received a brochure on 50 years of the CAP.

When developing this project we defined five key messages we wanted the public to remember:

- 'From seed to plate'
- 'Honest prices for honest and delicious dishes'
- 'Delicious and healthy products from our own land'
- 'The right farmer in the right place'
- 'The farmer as an entrepreneur'

These messages were communicated in two ways - through interactive games for children and information signs for their parents and grandparents. By giving children the opportunity to play on our stand, the parents were free to read the signs and so understand the messages we wanted to tell them.

The programme looked like this:

- 8 July: Alden Biesen, province of Limbourg
- 28-29 July: Mariakerke – Ostend, province of West Flanders
- 4-5 August: Diest, province of Vlaams-Brabant
- 18-19 August: Ghent, province of East Flanders

8 September: Heist-op-den-Berg, province of Antwerp

Main results/benefits

The project costs were quite high, but we reached around 5,500 people directly with most understanding the message we wanted to communicate. Many of the elements of the stand can be used at other events such as agricultural fairs. The communication objectives were:

- 1) to introduce agriculture to children and
- 2) by doing so also reaching their parents and grandparents, and inform them about the history of agriculture and modern farming: the risks, the role of science, setting prices etc.

The aim was to develop more respect and understanding for farmers. During the 8 days around 5,500 people visited the stand averaging almost 700 per day - more than we expected. The children were very enthusiastic and the adults were very positive, many of them encouraged such a good initiative. Most of them did learn a lot about agriculture and now have a better understand of what it's like to be a farmer. Farmers were also very positive as they were pleased that their job was presented realistically, with the



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advantages and disadvantages communicated in a positive way. We also did a survey among the participants, with the vast majority (more than 90%) of visitors very positive about the stand, saying it was attractive, clear and informative. The majority of participant's impression of Flemish agriculture and the Flemish countryside also changed after visiting. The visitors were most surprised by the low proportion of consumer spend which goes to farmers. This proves that the project had a big impact.

Success factors

The games on our stand were very creative. There was for example a labyrinth of corn, a professor who showed innovative techniques in his laboratory and a supermarket where children could scan cardboard food and find out what part of the amount we pay in the shop goes to the farmer. There was also a game in which children had to catch the 'risks' farmers encounter on their farm. The children loved these games because they were interactive and their parents were happy to see them amuse themselves without television or a computer whilst they also learned about agriculture.

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"Well farmed. A portion of agriculture on your plate!" was a huge success; all groups of participants - children, adults and farmers, were very excited about the stand! The combination of games for children and information for adults worked very well. Many teachers asked us to come to their school with the stand because it was so informative whilst still being fun. Farmers were very happy to see that their job and the difficulties they're facing were shown, without being negative. All these positive reactions inspired us to keep all the material and games which will be used for different events, like agricultural fairs and seminars for example.

Contribution of the NSU

The Flemish Rural Network and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries worked together to arrange everything. In partnership we wanted to show the public how the world of farming has changed over the years and what the job of a farmer looks like today. The Flemish Rural Network coordinated the whole activity.

Contribution of the partners

The Centre for Agricultural History (CAG – Centrum Agrarische Geschiedenis in Dutch) and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries worked together to make a brochure on 50 years of the CAP.

A communication agency called "The Oval Office" took care of the production of the stand.



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Additional information

Kris Peeters, Minister-President of the Flemish Government and Flemish Minister for Economy, Foreign Policy, Agriculture and Rural Policy, opened the stand on 8 July in Alden Biesen. We also welcomed some high-level visitors at the other locations including the president of a Flemish farmer's organisation, the mayor of Ghent, an EP-member, the mayor of Bilzen and a representative of the Province of Limburg. This success story was also published in the ENRD Magazine (Autumn 2012).

Pictures



Source: Flemish Rural Network



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