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Rural responses to the COVID-19 crisis

The outbreak of COVID-19 has significantly affected all aspects of life across Europe. In addition to threatening our health, the pandemic is also posing serious challenges to our socio-economic systems. In rural areas, farmers, businesses and communities are particularly affected.

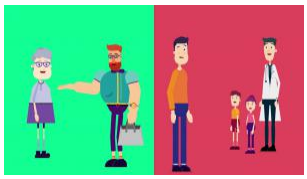
This page provides examples of projects and initiatives primarily launched by rural communities in coping with the COVID-19 emergency, supporting rural businesses and fostering solidarity with those more vulnerable in this exceptional situation. It also provides information about European Commission initiatives and actions aimed at alleviating the current difficulties faced by rural Europe.

We invite you to share your experience and projects! Please send your contribution to publications@enrd.eu [1]

How farmers and rural business are coping with the emergency

• Lend your arms to the French agricultural sector! Read more here [2].
• Agricultural training in Flanders goes digital. Read more here [3].
• COVID-19 and food security logistics - online consultation. Read more here [4].
• Supporting mountain agriculture during the COVID-19 crisis. Read more here [5].
• RuralGustos - the taste of rural Romania. Read more here [6].
• An online tour of a Flemish community farm. Read more here [7].
• Flemish flower growers: from competitors to partners. Read more here [8].
• Help the harvest - a Flemish initiative. Read more here [9].
• A recovery plan for agriculture and horticulture in West Flanders. Read more here [10].
• Modifying machinery to protect agricultural workers. Read more here [11].
• European ‘food heroes'. Read more here [12].
• Promoting local food through online platforms: experiences across the EU. Read more here [13].
• A drive-in to buy local food in Belgium. Read more here [14].
• COVID-19 response: the role of platforms, commons and fablabs. Read more here [15].
• The European Food Forum's views on the COVID-19 crisis. Read more here [16].
• 'Local heroes' wanted to promote Dutch local food. Read more here [17].
• Italian families help each other and support local food producers. Read more here [18].
• A rural Hackaton against the COVID-19 crisis. Read more here [19].
• An online platform dedicated to small producers in Romania. Read more here [20].
• Rural Portugal: initiatives against COVID-19. Read more here [21].
• Farnet is collecting actions to support the fisheries and aquaculture sector in EU during the crisis. Read more here [22].
• COVID-19 Information Hub in Scotland. Read more here [23].

Solidarity examples – supporting the community and responding to practical needs



• A Swedish LAG's action during the COVID-19 crisis. Read more here [24].
• Building from the community up. Read more here [25].
• Italian LAG initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more here [26].
• A 'talent bank' in rural Belgium. Read more here [27].
• Swedish High Coast local communities' responses to COVID-19. Read more here [28].
• COVID-19: Community Foundations in action. Read more here [29].
• The role of LEADER in the COVID-19 crisis in rural Italy. Read more here [30].
• Solidarity initiatives in rural France – a collection. Read more here [31].
• LEADER Projects responding to COVID-19. Read more here [32].
• Survey on food behaviour and COVID-19. Read more here [33].
• Veneto (IT): Demo farms ease COVID-19 lockdown. Read more here [34].
• ROBUST – Rural-urban relations in times of COVID-19. Read more here [35].
• A network of Community Champions against COVID-19. Read more here [36].
• Building rural resilience in a post-coronavirus economy – interview with Thomas Norrby. Read more here [37].
• LEADER initiatives responding to COVID-19 in rural Spain. Read more here [38].
• Italian farmers delivering food at home. Read more here [39].
• Local responses to the COVID-19 crisis in Slovenia. Read more here [40].
• Rural responses to COVID-19 crisis - RURITAGE calls. Read more here [41].
• A Spanish rural community takes action against COVID-19. Read more here. [42]
• Highlighting youth solidarity in rural Spain. Read more here [43].
• Spain: fostering solidarity in rural areas in the COVID-19 crisis. Read more here [44].
• Connecting people who can help and people in need in Slovenia. Read more here [45].
• Galway County Council (IE) co-ordinating local organisations in COVID-19 crisis. Read more here [46].
• Repository of responses to the COVID-19 crisis in France. Read more here [47].
• French rural mayors in action against COVID-19. Read more here [48].
• R.E.D. relays rural territories & solidarity initiatives. Read more here [49].
• ESPON is collecting experiences and evidence on local and regional responses to COVID-19. Read more here [50].
• The European Committee of the Regions has launched an online exchange platform about COVID-19. Read more here [51].

EU response

The European Commission is coordinating a common European response to the COVID-19 crisis, not only to support the healthcare systems of the EU Member States, but also to mobilise resources to support businesses hit by the crisis, including farm holdings, agri-food companies, and rural businesses.

Find out more about the coordinated EU response to COVID-19 here [52].

The European Commission has **published the latest package of exceptional measures [53]** to

further support the agricultural and food sectors most affected by the coronavirus crisis.

New Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) webpage [54] on EU response to COVID-19, supporting farmers and rural areas.

New factsheet [55] 'CORONAVIRUS: Emergency response to support the agriculture and food sectors'.

State aid [56]: Commission approves €100 million Italian guarantee scheme.

Specific measures to support farmers, agri-food companies and rural businesses

CRII+

As part of the 'Coronavirus response investment initiative plus' (CRII+), the European Commission announced a new set of measures specifically addressed to support farmers and rural areas, by allowing further flexibility in the use of structural Funds and the EAFRD, and extending the deadline for CAP payment applications until 15 June 2020. Read more here [57].

Increased state aid

With the adoption of the Temporary Framework for state aid rules, the European Commission is also allowing farmers and agri-food companies to benefit from increased state aid to face this unprecedented situation. Find out more about the Temporary Framework for state aid measures. Read more here [58].

Measures to support the food supply chain

The European Commission in close cooperation with EU countries is also committed to ensure the mobility across the Member States of seasonal workers critical to the agricultural sector and the non-stop functioning of the single market: special green lanes have been created to facilitate border crossing checks for all goods, including agri-food products. Read more here [59].

Source URL: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/rural-responses-covid-19-crisis_pl

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[4] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/covid-19-and-food-security-logistics-online-consultation_en
[5] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/supporting-mountain-agriculture-during-covid-19-crisis_en
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[13]
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/promoting-local-food-through-online-platforms-experiences-across-eu_en
[14] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/drive-buy-local-food-rural-belgium_en
[15] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/covid-19-response-role-platforms-commons-and-fablabs_en
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[19] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/rural-hackaton-against-covid-19-crisis_en
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[22] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/flags-response-covid-19-crisis_en
[23] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/covid-19-information-hub_en
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[26] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/italian-lag-initiatives-during-covid-19-pandemic_en
[27] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/talent-bank-rural-belgium_en
[28] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/swedish-high-coast-local-communities-responses-covid-19_en
[29] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/covid-19-community-foundations-action_en
[30] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/role-leader-covid-19-crisis-rural-italy-0_en
[31] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/solidarity-initiatives-rural-france-collection_en
[32] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/leader-projects-responding-covid-19_en
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[37]
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