

Innovative solutions for water management in the agri-food sector to the benefit of farmers and agri-cooperatives

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Why research and innovation ?

**Bridging the gap between practice and science for a:
Sustainable, productive & profitable agri-food sector**

We ask for:

- Solution-oriented research focusing on needs identified in practice
- Encourage more applied research and involvement of scientists from the development of ideas to their implementation
- Reduction of the time span between promising research outcomes and their availability on the market
- Easier access for farmers and cooperatives to required knowledge and skills (e.g. via projects, advisory services, on-farm demonstration, financial support under RD)

Solutions needed to keep agri-food sector competitive while improving water use efficiency

Water related challenges affecting food production:

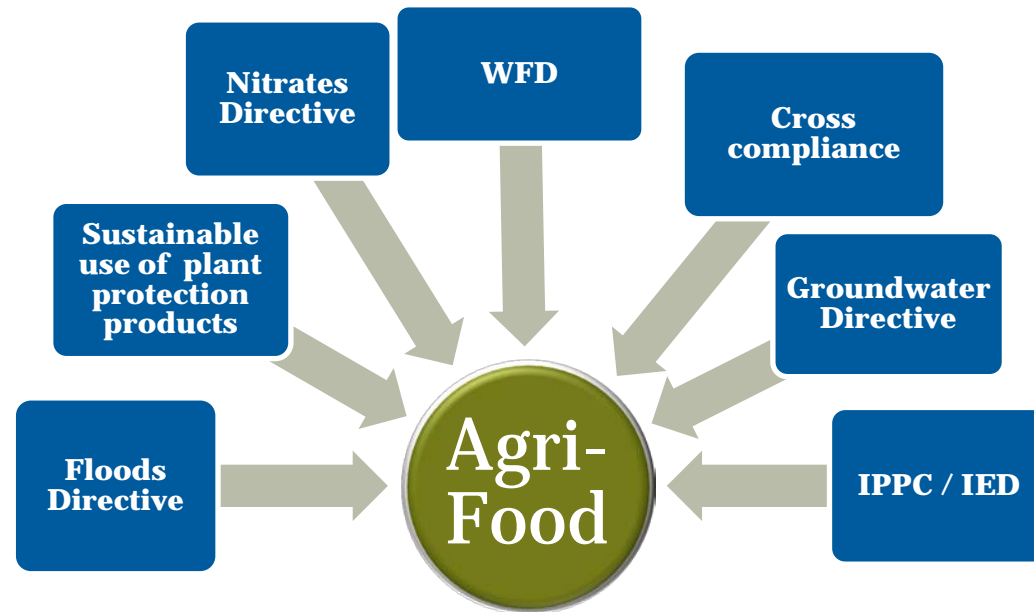
- Climate change, increasing rate of extreme events
- Limitations to the availability of water in the required quantity and quality at the right time for production and processing
- Increasing need to address environmental aspects including avoidance of water pollution and provision of ecosystem services

Need for:

- Water resilient farming systems allowing high productivity and the provision of products in the quality required by the market
- Economic valuation of water saving efforts by the market/consumers
- Advanced technologies, precision, mechanisation, automation
- Harmonised standards for water reuse in the agri-food industry



EU water policy and innovation in water management in the agri-food sector



- Farmers and cooperatives are facing an increasing number of requirements – not only water related.
- While legislation can foster innovation, it can also hamper its uptake in particular with the increasing complexity and trade-offs between different obligations.
- Preference should be given to multipurpose solutions and green growth measures.
 - > **need to have enough flexibility to encourage innovation**

Innovative solutions for efficient irrigation need to take into account the local farming conditions

Higher water productivity through development of solutions for:

- improved performance of irrigation techniques
- adapting the scheduling of plant watering
- modernisation of the irrigation infrastructure and its good maintenance
- water storage either technically or as soil moisture
- breeding and use of less water demanding crop varieties
- safe reuse of water

=> **Good collaboration of the water and agriculture sectors and scientists needed**

-> Action Group under EIP water:

WIRE – Water & Irrigated Agriculture Resilient Europe



Innovation is fundamental to produce more whilst using less water and avoiding pollution

- Agricultural productivity and sustainability EIP
- It is essential to promote the uptake of new technology and the adoption of improved practices in the agri-food sector.
- Investing in applied research is vital for identifying cost-effective solutions based on improved knowledge on the interactions between agricultural production, nutrient and water cycles .
- The pace of uptake of innovation is closely linked to economic and social success and acceptability to farmers, cooperatives and agri-food industry.
- Support for green growth measures addressing efficient and productive nutrient and water use is a ‘must’.

