

THE EMPOWERED CONSUMER

AN ENGAGED AND HEALTHY CONSUMER

FOOD 2030: NUTRITION, INNOVATION



Engagement extends the role of consumers beyond passive purchasers of what supply chains provide, into active and self-organising players who shape the food system and develop solutions based on their values and preferences.

SPECIFIC R&I BREAKTHROUGH TOPICS

Informed consumers and food labelling: The basis for all consumer engagement is information. Mere prices do not reveal information on supply chains, food processing, transport, or ethical issues concerning food. Food labelling can be a crucial vehicle to make visible the social and environmental costs of consumers' daily food choices. Without coherent food labelling it is impossible for consumers to decide if, for example, a tomato grown locally in a Western European country, but in a glass house with heating and/or cooling, is more environmentally friendly than one transported from a southern country further away.

Active citizenship and education: Food-related education should, on the one hand, start at an early age to be able to impact habits and act as a driver of healthy eating. On the other hand, life-long education and engagement are equally crucial. Food contexts change over people's lifetimes, and novel scientific insights and debates must have a way to reach consumers in order to have an impact on their food choices. However, the form food-related education should take is under scrutiny. At the moment, food-related education is shaped by the senders/tutors, and information gets lost in translation when recipients' requirements and needs are not met. Moreover, schools increasingly take an active role - as exemplified by the City Lab Athens hosted at the Ellinogermaniki Agogi which is pursuing a model of an open school where food project-based learning unites students, parents and the local community - and there are other spaces, agents and roles whose educational potential is still underexplored. Furthermore, there is a chasm between knowing and doing; a richer understanding of the factors influencing people's food choices can complement educational initiatives and help

them facilitate more sustainable and healthier diets. FIT4FOOD2030 has experimented with developing training based on what recipient communities' own needs are for the transformation of their local food system.

Co-creation and Living Labs: The concept of Living Labs refers both to an organisation and a space where open and collaborative innovation can happen in a real-life context, and through a process of co-creation that includes a diversity of actors. The experience of FIT4FOOD2030's labs at the local and national level has shown that such intermediary structures can be, if designed with care, an appropriate tool for engaging consumers, public authorities, industry and NGOs in value co-creation. Through Living Labs and other forms of participation, citizens can contribute to shape their food system jointly with system stakeholders.

EXPECTED IMPACT

From the perspective of a supply-driven food system, engaged consumers are just one form of input for R&I activities. However, from a societal perspective, empowerment plus consumer engagement should contribute to a food system that is shaped according to the values and preferences of society. A [consumer] value-based food system focusses both on economic and non-economic long-term shared values, like equality and social fairness across the food system, environmental sustainability, clear standards, and animal rights etc.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES / CHALLENGES

- Market access for novel solutions plays an important role in driving demand. If active consumption means that every consumer has to stand up and dedicate extra time in making (at first) special food choices, then such consumers will remain in the minority. The empowerment of consumers and market access for novel products, often goes hand in hand with disempowerment of established other factors.
- Consumer choices are characterised by trade-offs and tensions between price and other aspects of food production, such as impact on health and sustainability.
- Transparency from farm to fork is important and information should be easily accessible by consumers.

EXAMPLE REFERENCES

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ASSOCIATED TRENDS IN FIT4FOOD2030 (URL)

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ○ Big data analysis | ○ Changing households and food |
| ○ Economic globalisation | ○ Consumer engagement |
| ○ Health and food consciousness | ○ Social media and food |
| ○ Responsible consumers | ○ New shopping behaviour |
| ○ Destabilised consumer trust | ○ Physical internet |
| ○ Fast and convenient food | ○ Responsible research and innovation |

ASSOCIATED CASES IN FIT4FOOD2030 (URL)

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| ○ Followfish | ○ Animals' rights |
| ○ Foodintegrity | ○ Bee urban |
| ○ Mimica Touch | |