



Organisation of on-farm training and demonstration days: a roadmap

Summary

On-farm training and demonstration days are great opportunities to share experiences, increase knowledge and develop relationships among actors concerned by agriculture and food. This practice abstract introduces a generic and pragmatic route towards the organisation of such events, which can target various types of stakeholders.

Introduction

What better way to share knowledge about crops and farming systems than by visiting fields and farms? To complement classroom training, on-field and on-farm training provides great opportunities to demonstrate how particular practices are carried out; they let people interact and explore a range of subjects. However, organising such events requires careful preparation. Events can range from one-hour field meetings that gather, on short notice, participants from the local area; to large-scale all-day events for up to 500 participants involving many stakeholders.

Practical recommendations

As part of the DIVINFOOD project, a step-by-step procedure for the implementation of an on-field training or demonstration day has been developed based on the extensive experience of ICOEL in Denmark. This procedure can guide the organisation of successful events.

| Step | Issues | Tips for greater impact |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Brainstorming (before the event) | What is the aim of the on-field training/demonstration? What do we want to demonstrate, to whom? | Consider co-organisation with stakeholders and local actors. |
| 2. Fixing the timeline | Make a realistic plan for the event. Start in advance to be sure that crops can be demonstrated (e.g., soiling in due time). | Analyse the context to investigate whether there are any public holidays, other important events etc. |
| 3. Choosing the location | Choose the right location for the on-field training or demonstration day. | Consider transportation, parking and accommodation offers, if relevant. |
| 4. Costs and budget | Estimate costs and available budget. | Consider funding and resources from other projects and stakeholders sharing similar activities. |
| 5. Invitation | Send invitations to targeted actors via various communication channels. | Use digital tools to facilitate registrations and payments if necessary. |
| 6. Develop a program | Make a realistic and clear program about what will be demonstrated. | Incorporate timeslots for breaks, meals, and transportation. Share the final program with participants. |
| 7. Logistics of the event | Order food, organise facilities, recruit staff (and/or volunteers) if needed. | Value local food issued from farms that are visited, to be consistent! |
| 8. Communication on the day | Adapting presentations to participants. | Ensure that all contributing actors and organisations are credited and valued. Facilitate translation if needed. |

An example of a demonstration day about grain legumes being produced for food. Tasting event in the barn at the farm where the grain legumes are grown. Credits: Inger Bertelsen, ICOEL



Benefits (and limits) for practitioners or stakeholders



The proposed roadmap for organising on-field trainings and demonstration days has been formalised on the basis of examples from Denmark, covering a wide range of situations. It can be applied to other European countries, according to the relationship between farmers, advisory services and stakeholders.

Mutual understanding between farmers and other stakeholders, as well as the definition of new issues to be collectively explored, are fostered by organising meetings in the field. The real conditions and concrete problems of the field render this form of training more effective than holding a training in neutral premises. Time is always a limiting factor, which is why it is essential to plan the event

carefully, taking into account the work schedules of the various stakeholders.

Further information

Further readings

DIVINFOOD_D6.3-Roadmaps to organize on-field training-VF.pdf (inra.fr)

<https://zenodo.org/records/8379073>

Weblinks

<https://divinfood.eu/leg-nord-en/>

<https://divinfood.eu/faba-nord-en/>

About this practice abstract and DIVINFOOD

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Permalink: 10.5281/zenodo.13998460

This practice abstract was elaborated in the DIVINFOOD project, based on examples provided by the EIP AGRI.

DIVINFOOD - Co-constructing interactive short and mid-tier food chains to value agrobioDiversity IN healthy plant-based FOOD, is running from March 2022 to Feb 2027.

The overall goal of DIVINFOOD (a multi-actor, participatory project) is to facilitate the use and increase the value of Neglected and Underutilised Crops (NUCs) in food chains to foster healthier diets and more sustainable food systems.

Project website: www.divinfood.eu

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