

In This Issue

- The International scientific conference on raw milk > p.1
- Cheese Farms Open Day - 2º edition > p.3
- The very positive balance of Teacheesy! > p.4
- FACE *in itinere*: the new programme of FACEnetwork > p.5
- A delegation of FACEnetwork went to the European Parliament > p.6
- Croatian's organisation SirCro joined FACEnetwork in 2020! > p.7
- More news in brief... > p.10
- News from our members > p.11

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INTERNATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
ON RAW MILK

In the framework of the XIº edition of the Annual meeting of FACEnetwork, the Spanish artisan cheesemakers association QueRed organised the "International Scientific Conference on raw milk". It took place **from 23th to 25th of October 2019, in Valencia in Spain.**

This year, our traditional tree-days event had a particularly great and prestigious dimension. Indeed, it gathered more than 250 participants, among them at least 50 researchers, from around 20 countries during the main events on the second and third day.

Several events took place:

- farm and dairy visits
- an internal meeting of the Teacheesy team
- the International Scientific Conference on Raw Milk
- the Awards presentation ceremony of the Video Contest 2019
- the meeting of creation of the network of scientists on raw milk
- the buffet of European Cheeses, with raw milk
- FACEnetwork's General Assembly



Source: Richard Alliey

Day I of the annual meeting 2019 in Valencia: Visit and lunch with traditional meal with goat meat at the **farmhouse dairy « Hoya de la Iglesia »**



During the second and third day, the International Scientific Conference on Raw Milk brought a lot of information. As reported by Remedios Carrasco, coordinator of QueRed, Vice-President of FACEnetwork and organizer of the Conference:



"This meeting was a wonderful opportunity for leading European experts in scientific research on raw milk to meet and to discuss the benefits and risks of this food. Lack of knowledge and misinformation are, in the opinion of these researchers, the main reason why health authorities restrict their use in many European countries. The main conclusions of the researchers gathered at the International Scientific Conference on Raw Milk held in Valencia leave no room for doubt: the consumption of raw milk and products made from it has health benefits, especially in avoiding diseases related to the immune system but not exclusively.

(...) They have concluded that more studies are needed to fully understand why raw milk and raw milk cheeses are so beneficial for human health but have highlighted also that it is the richness of the microbial diversity contained in these foods that seems to be behind it. A microbial richness that, at the same time, serves as protection against pathogens. For example, the inhibition of dangerous micro-organisms such as listeria in cheeses made from raw milk has been demonstrated.

(...) The researchers attending the Conference have decided to set up an international network of raw milk research experts."



Days II & III of the annual meeting
2019 in Valencia:
Conference on raw milk
European Cheese buffet



Source: Frédéric Blanchard

All the information about this event (presentations, scientific posters....) is on the website of the conference:
www.milkscienceconference.com.

Breaking news!

In 2020, the XII° FACEnetwork's annual meeting and Congress will take place in **Brussels from 14th to 16th of October!**

Newsletter
December 2019

www.face-network.eu

Cheese Farms Open Day - 2nd edition

The event "Cheese Open Day" was born in Italy in 2018, organized by FACE's member Casare Casari. The principle of the event is that cheese and dairy makers open their premises to visitors and organize tastings of their products during a specific weekend. This year, **it took place on 14-15 September.**



It was a success, as reports **Eros Scarafoni, President of Casare Casari and coordinator of the event:**

"87 farms in 19 regions participated. After this second edition of "Cheese Farms Open Day", a doubt starts arising: is it only an open day or is it a celebration of all the cheese farms?

Well, we can say it is both of them!

So, there are farms organizing games for children, visits to the stables, they tell about the animals' life to whom have never seen them, they let people touch animals and smell fresh milk.

And then the cheesemakers make cheese with visitors, so that for them that becomes "the best cheese in the world" because it is also made with their hands.

Each farm prepares platters of cheeses; of cheeses and meat; or of cheeses, meat and jams. All is matched with a bread to be told about, a glass of wine or beer to be tasted together, and togetherness is important, as eating is conviviality too.

Furthermore, we can also talk about those who went further, who didn't use only cheeses, those who prepared dishes with all the ingredients that a farm offers, because who makes cheese often also produces meat, and maybe they also have a vegetable garden. So, people celebrate all together tasting health and natural foods.

And it is party, with the animals, in the seasoning caves, on the meadows, with special dishes and wines or beers of the territory.

So, let it be more than a simple Open Day, let it be a day to get special feelings, to know never-seen things, to smell the food, the countryside, the animals, the cheeses!



If all this is not enough, these days are also dedicated to tasting, to educate people about matching cheeses with other products and about an aware consumption. Thanks to the Open Day, people can understand why a cheese produced in a farm is better than the industrial cheese, how the life of the animal influences the quality of

Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

the milk (and of the cheese then).

And then, maybe this celebration will get enriched with music, artists, poets, visits to unknown places, who knows? In this way, **cheese will be the centre of a wider world, would be the main character of two days dedicated to food, artisanal production, territory and culture, local community, animal, sustainable production, and so on.**

To make all this become reality, it is necessary that every farm creates its own celebration, its laboratories and activities, its guided visits, its special dishes, its communication under the brand of "Cheese Farms Open Day!".



This brand would promote a common cultural heritage, the cheese that has unique features according to the peculiarities of the territory where it is made: its land, its flora, its weather, and so on. So, we have a common but unique product that reflects and encompasses the territory, the community, and all their features.

We have noticed that the number of farms understanding these concepts has increased compared to the first edition,

this is very important as it means that they have understood the main aim and mission of these special days.

So, we have to work on this aspect: ensure that every farm creates its own party valorising their activity, their territory and their products!

Consult and share information about the Cheese Open Days at:
<https://www.caseificiagricoli.it/>

(source text and pictures : Eros Scarafoni)

The very positive balance of Teacheesy!

Teacheesy is a European project led by FACEnetwork and funded by Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. It aimed at facilitating the use of the Guide to Good Hygiene Practices [GGHP] in all EU countries. It took place from September 2017 to August 2019, and its balance is rather positive!

Through Teacheesy, FACEnetwork's goal was to create and provide the necessary **training tools and methodologies** required by qualified technicians and trainers who will instruct farmhouse and artisan cheesemakers across the whole of Europe on a common policy for good hygiene in cheesemaking.

During the first year of Teacheesy, training tools and methodologies were made. The team coordinated its work in the framework of 4 transnational meetings that took place in 4 different countries: Germany (October 2017), Spain (January 2018), Bulgaria

Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

(April 2018) and Finland (July 2018). Between each of these key events, the team continued exchanging through skype meetings.

In autumn 2018, 5 training sessions addressed to technicians from the Teacheesy partners' organisations were organised in 5 different countries: Spain, Italy, Poland, Germany and France. These sessions allowed the training toolkits and methods newly drafted to be used and assessed. Although these sessions took place in 5 countries only, the technicians from the 9 partner countries had the opportunity to participate as trainees. A total of **75 people participated** as trainees in these sessions, among which around 70 were technicians/trainers.

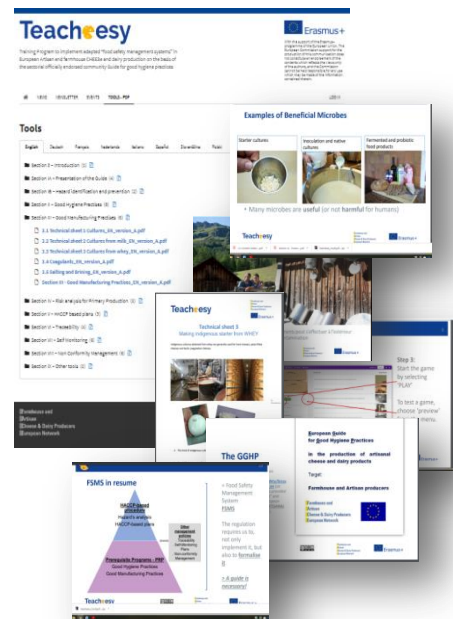
Early 2019, the training tools and methods were finalized by the Teacheesy team according to the balance of the "trial" training sessions of the Autumn 2018. 2 transnational meetings took place in the Netherlands in January and May 2019 to coordinate this work.

Between April and August 2019, each partner country organized an information event in its country, in order to present and explain the outcomes of Teacheesy. These events launched a larger scale and long term training programme in each country, on the basis of the work made through Teacheesy. A total of **277 people participated** to these meetings, mostly producers and technicians, but also representatives of authorities.

Thus, the Teacheesy programme achieved its aim: now, a huge pedagogic set of more than 50 training media in 13 languages will be available to all at the specific website, that will stay operative beyond the programme at the following address:

www.face-network.eu/teacheesy

Moreover, the sector of small scale European dairies benefits from now of a network of technicians across Europe, qualified on food safety management systems and who will stay in the link in the future and continue a sort of self-training process through their networking!



Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

FACE *in itinere*: the new programme of FACEnetwork

As already explained in our previous newsletter (August 2019) FACE *in itinere* is the new programme of FACEnetwork granted by Erasmus+. Its main objective is to provide to current and prospective cheese and dairy makers and retailers a **better access to trainings adapted to their needs**. This project will put a specific attention to open opportunities for **experiences in real working situation**

(internships, visits...) as essential complements to “classical” education.

The project will take place over 16 months with the following main actions:

1- **a web-based platform** will be built to **exchange offers/requests for internships and visits**

2- **an online inventory of training courses** will be achieved

3- as a consequence of the two previous workstreams, an **analysis of the specific strengths and weaknesses of the existing training system** will be made. Where gaps are identified, the information will be used to formulate relevant working plans and future projects for the development of suitable courses

The working team already made a first transnational meeting, on 23th and 24th of September 2019, in Cuneo (Italy) where they fixed their working plan for the next months, and where they started preparing the common tools that they will use (common questionnaires...).



The team in September 2019, in Cuneo, hosted by AgenForm, supporting member of FACEnetwork and one of the main partners of FACE *in itinere*

The programme FACE *in itinere* is funded by:



Erasmus+

A delegation of FACEnetwork went to the European Parliament

On Wednesday 20th of November 2019, FACEnetwork had meetings with 5 Members of Parliament (MEP) or their assistants. The main topics spoken were:

1. FACE's request for the creation of a European Committee about the GGHP's implementation and about flexibility
2. The importance of training the local inspectors specifically about small scale dairies and about the GGHP
3. The possible revision of the Hygiene Package
4. Possible financial support for the building of the raw milk scientific network (created in Valencia)

Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

5. The "front of pack" nutritional labelling (eg: Nutriscore...)
6. The regulation about vegetable carbon in organic cheese

We met:

Felix Tuchais and Jean-Marc Desfilhes, assistants of French MEP Benoit Biteau (Group of the Greens)

Clara Aguilera, Spanish MEP (Group Progressive alliance of Socialists and Democrats)

Anna Emmanuelsen, assistant of Swedish MEP Jytte Gutelan (Sweden's Social Democratic Workers' Party)

Taru Jokinen, assistant of Finnish MEP Elsi Katainen (Group Renew Europe)

Jacques Loyau, assistant of French MEP Eric Andrieu (Group Progressive alliance of Socialists and Democrats)

All the MEPs and assistants met payed a real attention to our issues and they were positives. We agreed to keep in touch. Some concrete actions may follow in 2020.



FACE's delegation in Brussels on 20/11/2019:
Sophie Espinosa, Yolande Moulem, Kerstin Jürss, Remedios Carrasco, Frédéric Blanchard

Croatian's organisation SirCro joined FACENetwork in 2019!

Who is our new full member SirCro? Here the answer, by the organization itself!

„SirCro“ stands for CROATIAN ALLIANCE OF SMALL-SCALE CHEESE MAKERS



Development of „SirCro“

With the assistance of the Agricultural Advisory Service, ten county associations of cheese producers were established throughout Croatia during 2006. All of them joined together to a national association, the Croatian Alliance of the Small Cheese Makers „SirCro“ on January 22th, 2007.

The main goals and reasons for founding our national association were promoting, improving, developping and protecting the production and consumption of raw milk cheeses and dairy products made on farmsite

Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

or artisanal throughout the Republic of Croatia.

To achieve these goals we implemented the following activities:

- Holding lectures and courses on milk production and processing
- Creating traceability control plans and guidelines to good hygiene practices
- Organizing practical presentations, workshops, demonstrations, exhibitions, competitions
- Promotional activities



Achievements and activities

From 2009 until today, „SirCro“ organized nine national conferences for small-scale cheesemakers (members as well as other cheese producers in Croatia) with complementary markets on the main square in our capital Zagreb. Main topics of these conferences have been for example:

- Shelf life studies on raw milk fresh cheese and cream
- Nutritional value and utilization of whey
- Legislation on milk processing and facility approval
- Labelling of dairy products and nutritional labelling
- Good hygiene practices
- Milk quality for processing
- Udder diseases and many more

Furthermore, „SirCro“ held regional and national cheese competitions in the last four years. Regional competition were organized in six different cities across Croatia.

In collaboration with different scientific institutions (Agricultural and Veterinary Faculty as well as the Faculty of Food Technology), we conducted a study on compliances with the criteria on *Listeria monocytogenes* for three types of the Croatian cheeses, running from 2015 to 2017.

One of the most significant activities for our members was the implementation of the Guideline on Good Hygiene Practices in small-scale dairies in 2012, which had been positively evaluated by the Veterinary directorate in the same year.

Other important activities are:

- Permanent cooperation and meetings with the competent authorities
- Organization of expert excursions (so far we visited cheesemakers in Slovenia, Bosnia, Switzerland and Austria)
- Participation in the Internationale Käsiade in Hopfgarten (Tirol, Austria) in 2014 (Käsiade is organized every other year)
- Setting up two cheese roads (Chesse road Karlovac county and Chesse road Zagreb county), and finalizing the plan of a Croatian cheese road

Croatian
chessemakers
at the Käsiade
in South Tirol
2014 with
medals and
certificates



Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

Benefits for members

All members are allowed to participate with three cheeses in the regional and national cheese competition for free. They can also participate free of charge in the annual conference.

Any member who needs a guide on good hygiene practices for their facility, will get it free from our technical experts in the Alliance. They also receive help with any other problem, especially such with inspectors. All these problems, the Alliance tries to resolve by discussions and meetings with the competent authorities.

Members of the alliance

Originally, members of SirCro were only the county associations, that had their own membership for cheese and other dairy producers. Since 2015 we amended by statutes and permitted membership of individual producers, for County associations did not all survive. Today, the Alliance counts three county associations with together 40 members (all farmhouse cheesemakers) and three individual cheesemakers (two of them farmhouse and one artisan cheesemaker). The county associations pay an annual membership fee for their members. Individual members pay for themselves. Technical experts and scientists are also welcome members. Their work supports the promotion, improvement, development and protection of the production and consumption of (raw milk) cheeses and dairy products. We are planning by different means to increase the number of individual cheesemaker in the next few years.

Every year „SirCro“ holds a general assembly. Each county association has three representatives in that general assembly. Additionally, in all other counties where there are no county associations, the cheesemakers elect one representative among themselves for every ten individual members. The Alliance is chaired by a president and two secretaries (technical and economic), who are elected by all members of the assembly every four years.



Current President of SirCro and other members promoting the traditional cheese ZG Sirek

The current President of the Alliance is Romina Zadavec who has a small, family-run dairy farm with 16 cows and milk processing facility. She produces different types of semi-hard cheese, cheese with spices and smoked cheese, yogurt, fresh cheese and cream. She also produces our brand „Zagrebački friški kravljji sir ZG Sirek“ („Zagreb fresh cow cheese ZG Sirek“). ZG Sirek is a typical farmhouse

cheese in the central region of Croatia (wider area of the capital city of Zagreb), produced only by a natural acidification and coagulation of raw milk, i.e. without the addition of starter culture and rennet. This fresh cheese is salted and then dried in a warm place (in summer outside in sheltered nets, in winter indoors above a fireplace).

Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

SirCro in resume

- **Number of cheesemakers members of SirCro: 42**, therefrom: 36 with cow milk (85,7 %) ; 5 with goat milk (11,9 %) and 1 with sheep milk (2,4 %).

- **Quantity of transformed milk:** ca. 1,8 Mill. kg per year

- **Typical products:**

Fresh cheese and cream, Dried fresh cheese, Soft creaking cheese, Semi hard cheese, Hard cheese, Semi hard cheese from boiled milk without or with herbs, spices or smoked



Traditional Croatian cheese ZG Sirek

(source text and pictures : SirCro and VHM)

More news in brief...

Winners of the Video Contest 2019

This year, the Awards of the video contest were presented by the winner of last year (!) during a nice ceremony within the Congress of Valencia.

The first prize went to **Sweden, with the video "Svedjan Ost" of Pär Hellström**. The second place was for the video **"Linda Elvingsson Angsholmen" also from Sweden**. Two videos won the third prize: **"Da Zero a Zore" of Alessia Berra from Italy and "Quesos de campo Puerto Carrillo" Domingo Puerto Dominguez from Spain**.

See the videos at:

<https://www.face-network.eu/news/details/7915>

(source: Katharina Heigl)

On October 4, Karl Fraissler and Mirek Sienkiewicz participated in the Small Scale Farm Dairies Conference organised by the Estonian Chamber of Agriculture in Rekvere, on behalf of FACEnetwork

Karl and Mirek presented the situation of small milk processors in Austria and Poland and the ways of reaching the market for their products. Moreover, Mirek as the Vice-president of FACEnetwork presented our organisation, its structure, goals and main achievements. Participants were interested in the presentation and asked about a way to join FACEnetwork.

The participants were 39 farmers representing small farmhouse and artisan dairies.

(source text and pictures : Mirek Sienkiewicz & Karl Fraissler)



- **FACE network published the position paper “Wood and Traditional Materials in Dairy Processing”**

This paper reviews the safety of wood in relation to other food contact materials. It was prepared for FACEnetwork by Paul Thomas, with the help of Angel Nepomuceno and with contributions from producer associations of several countries members of FACEnetwork.

- **FACE network published the position paper “vegetable carbon (charcoal) on organic cheese”**

For organic cheeses, the current regulation allows the use of vegetable carbon only in:

- Ashy goat cheese
- Morbier cheese

Other cheeses made with vegetable carbon cannot currently be marketed as organic. This discriminates against producers of cow, sheep and buffalo cheese.

The EU legislation on organic farming is currently under revision. That is why FACEnetwork did publish a position paper, in order to claim for the possibility to use vegetable carbon on all organic cheeses. The position paper was prepared for FACEnetwork by Marc Albrecht Seidel.

See all the position papers of FACEnetwork at:
<https://www.face-network.eu/lobbying>

News from our members

Some information not directly related to FACEnetwork’s activity can be interesting to share. This is the purpose of this section...

Don’t hesitate to send us your news or links interesting for the network, and we will publish them!

- **Dairy products from special breeds in Bulgaria**

(article „*Adding value to Bulgarian Dairy farm*“ published in Dairy Global (online paper) on 20/08/2019- source: Stoilko Apostolov, Bioselena)

„Low milk prices and increasing production costs make running a dairy farm in rural Bulgaria challenging. This has caused many farmers to venture into various businesses on their farms to ensure sustainability...” **Read more on the following webpage:**

<https://www.dairyglobal.net/Farm-trends/Articles/2019/8/Adding-value-to-Bulgarian-dairy-farm-463211E/?fbclid=IwAR1LhCDMdM1Jbznqg8zDcuTrz8PIVAkv0rfXxsdE6goGCKFNq82YphiJDKq>

Newsletter

December 2019

www.face-network.eu

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