

International cooperation data driven agriculture and food production starts in Brabant, the Netherlands

's-Hertogenbosch, October 28th – Regional, national and international organisations have taken the initiative to start a global alliance to promote a data driven food- and agriculture sector. This took place during an international conference 'Data Driven Agrifood Future' on the initiative of the province Noord-Brabant, AgriFood Capital, Eindhoven University of Technology & JADS, the city of 's-Hertogenbosch and FME.

Elies Lemkes-Straver, provincial minister for agriculture, food and nature: *"A sustainable agriculture and food production are of prime importance. It goes beyond the individual farmer and the farming community. The entire chain, from seeds, raw materials for food production, cattle, agriculture as a whole, from the food processing industry up to retail. Data are the key to this development. Exchange of data means a production more efficient and geared to demand, more control. This has a beneficial influence on the quality of food, a sustainable use of water and soil, animal welfare and reduces food waste."*

Cooperation in the food chain

The conference 'Data Driven Agrifood Future' was held in the seat of the provincial government in the capital of Brabant, 's-Hertogenbosch. Speakers from New Zealand, California, Denmark, Germany and Belgium and of course the Netherlands contributed to the discussions, live and online. Subject of the discussions centred on the road towards a more sustainable agrifood industry with the use and exchange of data. Currently data gathering and the use of these data are becoming more and more commonplace but the exchange is still the exception. Integration of data will give sustainability an important boost. Exchange of data between the partners within the food production chain- from farmer to factory- is a vital first step.

Agrifood and high tech

The main conclusion of the discussion during the conference is that data exchange will only come to fruition when all partners concerned benefit. Trust is key. The participants have the shared opinion that for a successful future of data exchange, the human factor is of prime importance. Partners have to know and trust each other. Brabant, as a province, provides inspiring examples. The agrifood industry has a strong presence in the broad range of the sector, coupled with an equally well-established high tech industry. This combination leads to impressive innovations in the agrifood chain.

Speeding up innovation

A letter of intent was signed in the closing session of the conference. The partners expressed their ambition to create a sustainable agrifood industry. The event marked the start of an international alliance of the industry, science, local and regional governments to facilitate and enable data driven innovations in the entire chain of the agri-food industry. This Data Driven AgriFood Future Alliance will address common problems in several parts of the world through research, experiments and the exchange of lessons learnt. The aim is to eliminate barriers, speed up innovations and to promote sustainable practices in the agrifood industry.