



SmartFarmer

"Improving skills for smartfarming as an innovative tool for rural development and economic growth"



Newsletter 8

Final Conference

Purpose and Scope

On 27 October 2015, the International Conference of the SmartFarmer project was successfully held at Curium Palace hotel in Limassol-Cyprus. The Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Institute (ARI-coordinator) was responsible for the organization of the international conference. The main goal of the conference was to provide to the partners another opportunity to meet and discuss the project results with the target group and other stakeholders, and to explore the issues of further cooperation.

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Newsletter Editor

CUT-Cyprus University of Technology

Newsletter Contributors

George Adamides
Petros Kosmas
Andreas Stylianou

Methodology

The conference was attended by over 60 participants representing the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, the Department of Agriculture, the National Rural Network, the IDEP Lifelong Learning, as well as agricultural associations, agricultural organizations, farmer groups, other relevant organizations and stakeholders and students. The main objective of the Conference was to present the results of SmartFarmer Project.



All participants received a folder, which contained material related to the needs of the conference, including a project leaflet, an evaluation questionnaire, a pen and some blank adhesives for taking notes. The total duration of the conference was five hours, including the coffee breaks. At the end of the conference a light lunch was offered to the participants. For the evaluation of the project training programme and the overall conference, the participants were asked to complete a short semi-structured questionnaire which consisted of twelve closed-ended and two open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were measured by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). For the analysis of the questionnaires, descriptive statistics have been used.



Results and Conclusions

The results of the closed-ended questions (a-l) analysis are shown in the table below, while the graph that follows shows the results of the 5-point Likert scale questions (a-k).

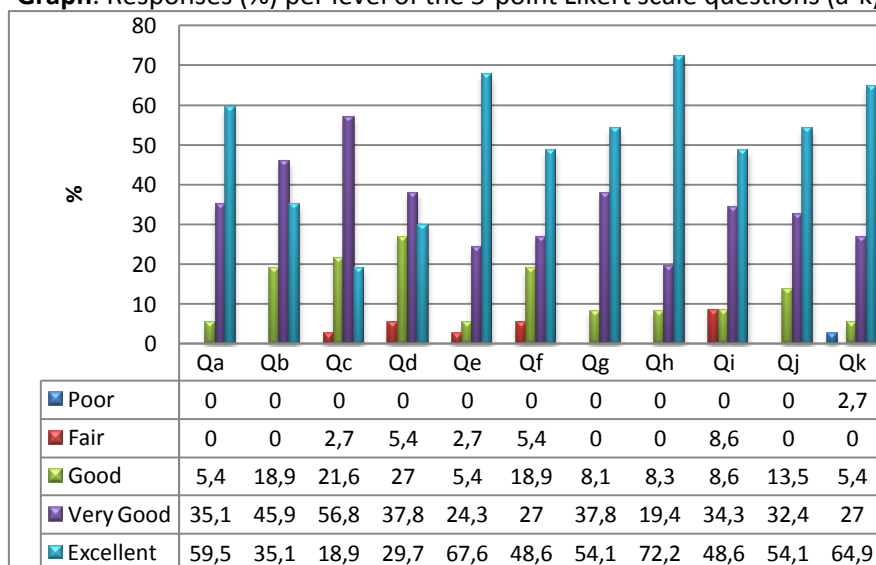
Table. Mean score of the closed-ended questions (a-l)

Question ¹	Mean
a) What is your overall satisfaction on the SmartFarmer conference?	4.5
b) How do you estimate your knowledge on marketing issues after finishing the SmartFarmer conference?	4.2
c) How well did the SmartFarmer conference meet your personal learning objectives / expectations?	3.9
d) What are the chances to apply the SmartFarmer tools that were presented today, in your everyday work (current or future)?	3.9
e) How well the different topics of the conference were developed by the speakers / presenters?	4.6
f) How useful did you find the SmartFarmer training material for your business activities?	4.2
g) What is your satisfaction on the overall organisation of the conference?	4.5
h) Are you satisfied with the time given for the presentations / speeches?	4.6
i) Are you satisfied with the time given for discussion?	4.2
j) Are you satisfied with the conference venue?	4.4
k) Are you satisfied with the equipment used (e.g. audiovisual material)?	4.5
l) Are there any subjects/ tools that you would like to be added to the SmartFarmer training programme ² ?	0.05

¹ Ordinal questions a-k (1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good, 5=Excellent)

² Dichotomous question; 1=Yes, 0=No; 5% said "Yes"

Graph. Responses (%) per level of the 5-point Likert scale questions (a-k)



Based on the information provided by the aforementioned table, the overall satisfaction on the International Conference in Cyprus was high ($M=4.5$). Moreover, the SmartFarmer conference met the participants' personal learning objectives at a high degree ($M=3.9$). The SmartFarmer training material was considered very useful for the trainers' business activities ($M=4.2$), while they felt that their knowledge on marketing issues after finishing the conference was more than "very good" ($M=4.2$). The different topics developed by the speakers satisfied respondents as the relevant question was scored high ($M=4.6$). Furthermore, it is likely that the participants will apply the SmartFarmer tools in their everyday work ($M=3.9$).

Regarding the conference organization (time given for presentations and discussion, venue, equipment, etc), was highly rated by the participants ($M \geq 4.2$). It is worth mentioning that 95% of the participants answered that no other subjects / tools need to be added to the training material. Only 5% gave a positive respond suggesting that the material should provide technical information for more crops/products (e.g. pomegranates, prickly pear). However, the main goal of the SmartFarmer project was not the development of a technical material (e.g. cultivation practices), but a marketing-oriented material.





The graph that follows the table, illustrates the responses (%) to the 5-point Likert scale questions (a-k). Specifically, it provides the relative frequencies of each question's level. By adding together the relative frequencies of the two maximum levels (4+5) of each question, it is concluded that the score of these levels in most of the cases is greater than 80%. Specifically, the score for questions a, e, g, h, and k is greater than 90%, for questions b, i, and j greater than 80% and for questions c, d and f is greater than 65%. This result indicates once more that the respondents were highly satisfied by the SmartFarmer conference.

In relation to the open-ended questions, there was only one suggestion. A participant suggested that during the conference the partners should provide to the audience samples of products for tasting. That was not possible as the project consortium decided to avoid the promotion of any specific brands.

In conclusion, the results -taken as a whole- point out that the SmartFarmer training programme and the final conference, highly satisfied the participants' expectations. Hence, one can say that the final conference of the SmartFarmer project is considered as successful.

Disclaimer

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<http://www.smartfarmerproject.eu>

SmartFarmer Project

Contact information

**Agricultural Research Institute
Coordinator:**

George Adamides

E-mail: gadamides@ari.gov.cy

Project Manager:

Andreas Stylianou

E-mail: a.stylianou@ari.gov.cy

**Cyprus University of
Technology:**

Petros Kosmas

E-mail: petros.kosmas@cut.ac.cy

Union "Farmers Parliament":

Inga Berzina

E-mail: inga@zemniekusaeima.lv

Harokopio University of Athens:

Despina Sdrali

E-mail: dsdrali@hua.gr

**M.A.G.I.-Greek Superfoods
Cooperation:**

Ioannis Galatoulas

E-mail: jgalatoulas@yahoo.gr

**Development and Innovation
Network:**

Alexandra Mendonça

E-mail:

alexandra.mendonca@rcdi.pt

Fundación Maimona:

Alejandro Hernández

E-mail: ahernandez@lossantos.org