



"Just days after drought was declared in Britain, after one of the driest springs on record, the heavens opened, with some parts of the UK getting more than half an inch of rain in less than 24 hours. Unfortunately, it came just a day too early for farmers on Open Farm Sunday."

I borrowed the quote above from a press release from our affiliate member EISA/LEAF, European farmers working on sustainable farming. It has been a strange spring indeed, not just in Britain but hot and dry all over Europe, devastating storms in the Midwest, and long lasting snow in Canada. What is interesting is that not one journalist seems to associate this with climate-change, whereas less than three years ago this weather would have been regarded as "proof". How does mankind's mind work? Not logically, that's for certain. Is it just because the lingering financial crisis fully absorbs our thinking capacity? Who connects the dots?

The crucial importance of sustainable agriculture hasn't shrunk in the food and beverage industry as we welcome our 10th new member this year. SAI Platform has never grown so fast. It is a great beginning for our 10th anniversary which will be celebrated at the General Assembly on May 2, 3 and 4 in Evian in 2012!

Peter-Erik Ywema, General Manager of the SAI Platform

Nine new Members join the SAI Platform!



One of the largest beef companies in Europe, ABP, slaughters and processes 300,000 cattle per year in the UK, supplying retailers, manufacturers and caterers.



The role of Bord Bia, the Irish Food Board, is to act as a link between Irish Food, Drink & Horticulture suppliers and existing and potential customers throughout the world.



The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, provides a forum for the dairy industry to work pre-competitively to address barriers to and opportunities for innovation and sales growth.



Land O'Lakes is one of USA's premier member-owned cooperatives and a leading marketer of dairy-based food products for consumers, foodservice professionals and food manufacturers.



The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland, is responsible for providing services to the beef and sheep meat Industry, supplying information across the supply chain.



McKey is a 100% subsidiary of Keystone Foods. Specializing in supply and distribution of meat products, it processes more than 40,000 tons of meat per year.



The OSI Group, with more than 45 facilities in 18 countries, is a global leader in providing high quality



QMS is the public body responsible for helping the Scottish red meat industry to meet the highest standards

leader in supplying value added protein products to leading foodservice and retail brands.

sector improve its efficiency and profitability, and maximise its contribution to Scotland's economy.



VION Food Group, with its headquarters in Eindhoven (NL), is a global food company, active in the fields of high-quality foodstuffs and ingredients for people and animals.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Strategy reform discussion



The first phase of member's consultation ended in the first week of June. 24 members responded to survey, a great response and a sign of commitment from our members. Based on this consultation the secretariat has drafted a report and the Core Strategy Group will issue a document with the options for our future.

Apart from our Executive Committee, one further member has signed up for the core group. All members are encouraged to review the options document from mid July onwards. Keep an eye on your inbox.

SPA Phase II

The Second Phase of our Sustainability Performance Assessment (SPA) Project, which aims to benchmark existing tools to assess a farm's sustainability, has generated a lot of interest. More than twenty people have asked to be part of the steering committee, and to actively contribute to the project. Results will be presented and discussed at a seminar which will be held on September 29 in Brussels. Please put the date in your diary!

SAI Platform Chapter in Argentina

On May 30 in Buenos Aires a scoping meeting was hosted by Adolfo López Rouger, CEO of McCain Foods South America. The meeting was organized by the Secretariat and two of our board members with the support of the local Chapter-to-be-director, Miguel Hernandez. Six interested members were present at a high level. Our President, Ghislain J Pelletier, introduced the general concept of SAI Platform.



At this stage three members have confirmed their official commitment and another three have expressed an interest in joining. On August 23 the Argentinean Chapter will hold its opening event in Buenos Aires, inviting (potential) members and other stakeholders to share in its plans.

DON'T MISS:

SAI Platform Seminars and Webinars

This list of seminars and webinars is based on the inputs that participants at the last General Assembly gave us on topics they wanted to learn more about.



SEMINARS:

- 29 Sept., Brussels - Sustainability Performance Assessment (SPA)
- 15 Nov., Brussels - Soil Fertility



WEBINARS:

- 7 July, Sustainability Tools: the Field to Market Alliance's online Fieldprint Calculator
- 9 August, Sustainability Tools: the Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation (RISE)
- 27 September, Carbon Footprinting: scientific progress &

HIGHLIGHTS



General Assembly

The SAI Platform members met in the wonderful setting of the food valley of Parma, hosted by fellow member CIO Parma. Among the many participants were five observers, two of which have now applied for membership.

An important part of the meeting was the discussion on the "SAI Platform Vision", a document produced by the Executive Committee that could lead to a SAI Platform 2.0. The GA program included an "inspirational session", where selected members with ambitious programs and positive experiences in sourcing or producing sustainable agriculture raw materials presented to their colleagues what they do to "inspire" them. The GA ended with a field trip to a Parmigiano factory and a tomato field.

For more information or to view the GA documents or the presentations please check our website.

Sustainability Master Class

In May and June, SAI Platform and IMD ran their unique Sustainability Master Class in Europe and in the US. Procurement executives and managers from other functions, such as quality and finance, joined the classes. The first day looked at helping to build a business case for embedding sustainability in supply chains, with best practice case studies. The participants also enjoyed a presentation from Jason Clay, WWF and a new case study on Unilever's move to 100% sustainable tea in its Lipton supply chain. The second day included an insightful game simulation on empowering managers to instigate change in-house. See <http://www.saiplatform.org/activities/training/executives-training>. We are now exploring ways to bring the Master Class to Australia, as well as to make it available in-house.



News from ExCo

SAI Platform's Executive Committee had a very busy quarter.

- ExCo verified 11 membership applications determining that nine were eligible: five food companies and four affiliate members all from the dairy or meat sector.
- ExCO has agreed to revise the strategy. All members are invited to participate in the revision process. The revised strategy is due to be completed by the end of the year.
- To adapt to the growth of the organization over the last years, ExCo supported the secretariat's recommendation to hire a consultancy, Geneva-based Dryden Associates SA, to assist the Platform in accounting, financial and legal matters.
- Having noted the interest of some member companies ExCo supported the establishment of a local SAI Platform chapter in Argentina. The President, Ghislain J Pelletier, was also present at the scoping meeting in Buenos Aires.
- ExCo will meet with Swiss authorities on September 26-27 in Lausanne to discuss the "Internet and video supported global farmers exchange" project.
- Unilever's David Pendlington resigned from ExCo and will be replaced by his colleague Sikke Meerman.
- Next meeting 22-23 August, Buenos Aires.

Short news from the Working Groups

Arable and Vegetable Crops

The WG held a workshop on "Financial Aspects of Sustainable Farming" at PepsiCo in Cambridge on June 16. The meeting was facilitated by a farm-economics expert, who shared his 30 years of experience in with farm accountancy. A major conclusion from this was that farmers prefer farming over number crunching and computers but that there is, in fact, enormous room for improvement in practices based on better data. In general, financial farm optimization goes hand-in-hand with sustainable optimization, provided that the financial time horizon is not too short. The WG will re assess the economic principles with some of the new learnings. The next conference call is scheduled for Friday 19 August 10 am (GMT+1). The next meeting is to be held on 27 October, Brussels.

Beef

12 members assembled for the meeting in Oxford, England at FAI Farms. Also present for the day was Bryan Weech, Global Livestock Director for WWF. At the meeting the WG appraised the LCA Comparative Study they had commissioned which reviews some 17 different LCA methodologies (many of which are being utilised by the group members) currently being utilised in (predominantly) Europe. The Group identified the main areas of difference between the methodologies and are in the process of establishing a working group with practitioners and academia in order to debate these differences with the aim of reaching consensus on these issues.

Coffee

The WG Coffee launched the first phase of its project towards Green Coffee Product Category Rules. By the end of the Summer, the project, lead by Brian Lindsay, will have achieved the following: Established a steering committee, liaised with key stakeholders (SAI Platform members, and others as agreed by the Steering Group), and identified the key steps, tasks, deliveries and associated timing for the overall project

Dairy

The WG was joined by Bryan Weech (Global Livestock Director – WWF) and Richard Perkins (EU Dairy Lead – WWF) to hear the rationale behind the Dairy Round Table concept that WWF is trying to establish in the global dairy sector. WWF sees one of the key outcomes of the Round Table process as a set of global standards for dairy production (possibly with regional variations) and associated verification. The WG has agreed a potential route forward that will assist us in establishing whether the WWF approach will add value to the work in which we have already invested and not slow down our current rate of progress.

The next Dairy Working Group meeting will take place at the World Dairy Summit in Parma in October, date and location to be finalised.

Fruit

The WG is investigating the possibility to engage with UK's Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) on a research project focusing on sustainable pest management. The WG will hold a webinar on the subject on 26 July at 14:00 GMT with NERC's Knowledge & Innovation Manager, Dr Murray Gardner, who will explain engagement rules and funding opportunities for SAI Platform projects.

Water and Agriculture

The WG Water and Agriculture held a fruitful strategy meeting on May 1. Members and external experts examined the current situation around water management at farm level, the roles played by key stakeholder groups, and which one(s) should be played by the food industry. Work priorities were identified, which will be further discussed at the group's next meeting on September 28 in Brussels. A prompt outcome of that meeting was the establishment of a formal partnership with World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) on its "Food Fiber linkages with Water and Energy."

Partnership with WBCSD

The WBCSD, in a project kicked-off in June, is looking at the links between food, fiber and feed with energy and water. The expected outcome of the work will be a set of technology options to tackle the challenges identified, as well as policy recommendations which will feed into advocacy events like the Bonn 2011 Conference (November) and the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille (March 2012).

The SAI Platform will collaborate closely on this work through its membership, bringing its expertise in sustainable agriculture to the table, to help document

the linkages and shape our future scenarios. The joint project's outcomes shall help food and drink companies make strategic decisions linked to the water and energy needs of agricultural raw materials.

Questions or comments? E-mail us at info@saiplatform.org or call +32-2-5008757
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