

Practice Abstract #4

The challenges of obtaining knowledge in the agricultural sector

Knowledge can be obtained from a wide variety of sources and in a wide range of formats. Effective knowledge exchange is critical for the advancement of the agricultural sector and the strengthening of knowledge exchange within the so-called Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) of EU Member States has become an increasingly important objective of EU agricultural policy. The EUREKA project (www.h2020eureka.eu) aims to help strengthen knowledge exchange through the development of an online, open-source EU agricultural knowledge reservoir.

But what are the key challenges experienced by users in obtaining agricultural knowledge?

1. **Finding trustworthy information** – users don't always trust information that is delivered alongside advertisements as it appears to be more of a sales article. Sources without references can also be problematic.
2. **A lack of critical insight** – users often want to compare knowledge to enable them to make decisions based on a range of quality sources, where these sources don't exist to compare, a barrier exists.
3. **Language** – is a barrier to users from two perspectives, firstly obtaining knowledge in the native language and secondly, obtaining information that is written for them as an audience without too much technical, policy or academic jargon.
4. **Not everyone wants to share information** – despite vast quantities of knowledge existing in the agricultural sector, not everyone in the community is willing to share with others. This is commonly due to market competition. Information that exists behind a pay wall is also a challenge.
5. **Building a network with the right people** – finding the right people to share knowledge with can be a challenge, especially in specialist agricultural sectors.

