

Added Value of Networking

Success Story

Success Story title	<i>YouRural Net, a Social Network for young farmers</i>		
Theme	<i>1. Network communications; 2. Knowledge exchange;</i>		
NRN	<i>Italy</i>	Coordinator	<i>"Youth" Thematic Group</i>
Partners	<i>Environment Thematic Group, Support to RDP Group, Communication Task Force</i>		
Period	<i>From June 2011, still on line</i>	Resources	<i>32,000 Euro</i>
Geo-location	<i>Technical support and editorial staff are in Italy, Rome and Milan</i>		
Beneficiaries	<i>"YouRural Net" is a web community open to all, not only to young farmers but also to experts in the field (agronomists), university students (enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture but also to students of other disciplines) and those with an interest and curiosity to know the agricultural sector and the rural world.</i>		

Background

The decision to focus on this type of tool comes from deep observations in the field. Research, surveys and focus groups have confirmed that as for younger people, beyond the information available on most institutional channels (such as newspapers, magazines, websites), it is now decisive to share the experiences with other colleagues (also concerning best practices and innovations experienced in other Countries). YouRural Net, like almost all web communities, relies on spontaneous participation; the plurality of points of view is ensured and the community is animated by all its members. It represents a virtual place for sharing resources and knowledge using a common language. The goal is to identify the real needs of farmers, with particular attention to young people, attempting to translate them into priorities and strategic objectives in the next Community planning and also to try to guide rural development policies still being implemented.

Main activities

There are five thematic working groups animated by promoters of the group that are selected in the starting phase of the Community of Practice by the WG "Youth" of the NRN. The themes are identified taking into account the selection criteria as the most important aspects of starting a farm ("Opportunity - Business, Investments, funds"), continuing to two groups to improve the activities related to farm management ("Tradition, innovation and territory - Quality, technology, environment and activities related to agriculture") and for the improvement of professional competence ("Training - Workshops, Stage"). Two new groups have been included to begin to debate the future planning: on the one hand related to rural development policies ("CAP 2020 - Young comparing opinions") and on the other to potential generational change ("Rural4youth - Rural is participation"). Also, if one member wants to start a virtual debate on topics of interest to her/him but different from those proposed in the CoP and already "active", s/he can suggest it to the staff and become an animator of this new group. Through a system of preferences on her/his post ("I like"), a member of the community can become an "expert member".

Main results/benefits

The creation of this "NETWORK" offered the possibility for members to have a place to ask specific questions and where the answers are always focused and decisive thanks to the participation of the community, the Managing Authority (MA) and experts in the local programming. YouRural Net improved the dissemination of existing know-how in Italy, fostering better communication among stakeholders and a more dynamic exchange of experiences and innovations. Future actions which are already being carried out include activities aimed at enhancing farms managed by young people by geo-location.



Contribution of the NSU

The website is managed by Italian NRN experts. The “Youth” thematic group was involved through the participation of all experts that are working on different topics: generational renewal; communication, agri-tourism, educational farm, innovation, etc.

Contribution of the partners

YouRural net offers to members the opportunity to ask questions and to receive answers from dedicated and professionals in the field. Partners, such as the Managing Authority (MA) and specific experts provide this sort of expertise.

Success factors

The success factor is a faster channel of information through which young people can find all the necessary information on the opportunities available in terms of policy and funding.

Additional information

www.youruralnet.it

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