



## EUFRUIT THEMATIC NETWORK KICK-OFF IN BRUSSELS

Michelle Williams from the Department of Food Science is coordinator of a new multi-layered project to unleash, stimulate and use European research potential for exploiting new opportunities in the fresh produce category.

2016.03.16 | [JANNE HANSEN OG NINA HERMANSEN](#)



Photo: Colourbox

On 3-4 March 2016, the kick off meeting of EUFRUIT took place in Brussels with the ambitious goal of fully exploiting the European research potential. EUFRUIT is a Horizon 2020 European funded project aiming at facilitating the access to knowledge and at disseminating existing research and innovation potential for the benefit of the fresh produce sector and consumers.

The project is coordinated by Michelle Williams, Head of the Department of Food Science, Aarhus University, and current chair of the Board of EUFRIN, an informal network of university departments and research institutes for temperate fruit crops.

EUFRUIT is setting up a unique thematic European Fruit Network where research institutes and the European representative organizations of the fresh fruit sector are joining forces. Altogether, EUFRUIT gathers a consortium of 21 partners from 12 different countries. The consortium will focus its activities on 4 crucial thematic areas for the competitiveness and innovation potential of the European Fruit sector. These areas include 1) new cultivar development, 2) minimise residues on fruit and in the environment, 3) optimise storage and fruit quality as well as 4) enhance sustainable production systems. As such, EUFRUIT will act as a knowledge platform

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successfully received the support of the European Commission. EUFRUIT will fill an important gap by enhancing research cooperation across Europe and will foster exchange of knowledge for the benefit of the fruit sector. In the project we are committed to build an efficient instrument to enhance the competitiveness of a very important segment of the agricultural economy of the European Union.

With a total budget of 1.8 million €, the network will establish in the upcoming three years a systematic approach for knowledge gathering and dissemination. This will be facilitated by harmonizing methodologies for the scanning and synthesis of knowledge, and foster exchange of best practises and technologies reviewed by international experts in the 4 priorities areas of the thematic network. It will importantly secure a direct path for new knowledge and reduce the likelihood of repetition of research at a national level.

Both Jacques Dasque (Secretary General of Areflh) and Philippe Binard (General Delegate of Freshfel Europe) welcomed the launch of the project:

- EUFRUIT is promising to be an important tool for the fruit sector with ready access to up-to-date information on research to stimulate competitiveness, sustainability, quality and safety of fruit for the benefit of the supply chain and ultimately the consumers.

Jointly with the other partners in the project AREFLH and Freshfel Europe will regularly update the sector on the progress of the work. The websites of [EUFRIN](#), [Areflh](#) and [Freshfel Europe](#) will provide regular update on the project developments.

The EUFRUIT project is a concrete result of the efforts of AREFLH and Freshfel Europe in collaboration with EUFRIN to bring together the fruit sector and their research institutes. Since January 2014, a Task Force with the three entities was set up, leading to the release in March 2015 of a Strategic Innovation and Research Agenda (SIRA) to better position fruit and vegetables in the European Union research and innovation priorities within the Horizon 2020. Priorities set by the SIRA were upheld by the European annual work plan of the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 and greatly facilitated the positioning of EUFRUIT as a priority project.

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### For more information, please contact:

Head of Department Michelle Williams

Email: [mw@food.au.dk](mailto:mw@food.au.dk)

Telephone: + 45 8715 7957+ 45 8715 7957/87158 335

Cell: + 45 2517 0049+ 45 2517 0049

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

DCA - Danish Centre For Food and Agriculture  
Aarhus University  
Blichers Allé 20  
8830 Tjele

Phone: +45 8715 6000+45 8715 6000

E-mail: [dca@au.dk](mailto:dca@au.dk)

CVR-no: 31119103

P-no: 1015079041

EAN-no: 5798000877412

"Stedkode" (Id number): 3622

## BACKGROUND AND MANAGEMENT

DCA - Danish Centre for Food and Agriculture was established July 1, 2011 as a result of a new organization structure at Aarhus University.

DCA is the specialist approach at Aarhus University for authorities, companies and organizations who want advice and cooperation within the fields of food and agriculture.

Centre director [Niels Halberg](#)

Phone: +45 2963 0093+45 2963 0093

E-mail: [niels.halberg@agrsci.dk](mailto:niels.halberg@agrsci.dk)

[Employees at DCA](#)

Aarhus University  
Nordre Ringgade 1  
DK-8000 Aarhus C

Email: [au@au.dk](mailto:au@au.dk)

Tel: +45 8715 0000+45 8715 0000

Fax: +45 8715 0201

CVR no: 31119103

AU on social media:

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