smart 4 food

innovative microlearning for farmers

ISSUE 5

24.09.26

smart4food MAGAZINE



EMPOWERING AGRI-FOOD COMMUNITIES

FACING THE ELEMENTS

ON THE GROUND PILOTING

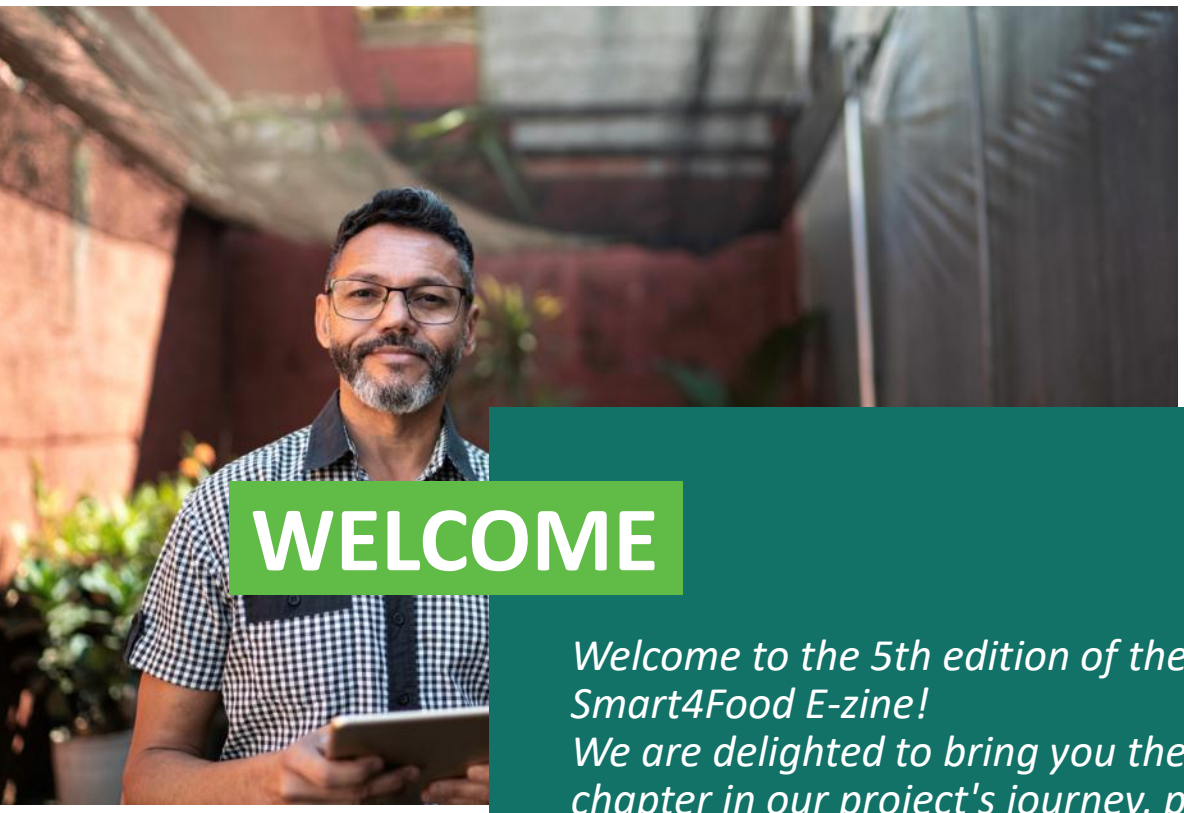
PLATFORM TESTING

NETWORKING & COMMUNITY

www.smartforfood.eu

Co-funded by the European Union

Financed with the funds of the European Union. The expressed opinions and positions reflect solely the position of the author and do not necessarily coincide with the positions of the European Union or the Agency for Mobility and Programs of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting body can be held responsible for them.



WELCOME

Welcome to the 5th edition of the Smart4Food E-zine!
We are delighted to bring you the next chapter in our project's journey, packed with fresh insights and key achievements. Our partner consortium continues to work hard behind the scenes, making meaningful strides to support, connect, and strengthen our vibrant agrifood community.

In this issue, you'll find:

1. **Empowering Agrifood Communities:** How our mobile-first Digital Learning Hub is bridging the gap between traditional farm expertise and modern green innovation.
2. **Facing the Elements:** An analysis of Europe's summer fodder crisis and why building climate resilience through smart skills is more urgent than ever.
3. **On the Ground Piloting:** Insights from our recent hands-on workshops in Ireland and Croatia, where farmers, students, and educators tested our e-learning platform.
4. **Online Platform Testing:** How you can access and evaluate our learning modules directly online, even if you couldn't attend a workshop in person.
5. **Networking & Community:** Highlights from the All-Island Food Networks Gathering and an introduction to connecting with us across our active Facebook and LinkedIn social media channels.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition, and we encourage you to share it with your colleagues, friends, and partners.

The Smart 4 Food Team

1. Technology-Driven Learning for Rural Development



*Empowering Agrifood Communities Through **Innovation***

Across Europe, smallholders and family farms face profound challenges. These range from shifting climate patterns and economic pressures to rapid technological changes and digital divides. Yet, immense opportunities lie ahead. With the right tools, skills, and support, our rural regions can lead the way as thriving hubs of sustainable enterprise, smart farming, and green innovation.

Traditional, rigid training models often fail to fit into the demanding daily schedules of farm life. This is why **SMART4Food** is changing the game. Through our open-access Digital Learning Hub and flexible, mobile-first microlearning modules, we are making digital and green education practical, accessible, and directly applicable to life on the ground.

Whether you are a family farmer, an agricultural educator, a regional agency worker, or a local food hub manager, discover how **SMART4Food** is bridging the gap between traditional agricultural expertise and modern, sustainable innovation.

Click to start learning

Learning | Smart4Food | Sustainable Agriculture & Digital Farming Education



2. Facing the Elements: Summer Heatwaves and Europe's Fodder Crisis

This summer has dealt an unprecedented blow to agricultural communities across Europe, with successive intense heatwaves and weeks of severe, continent-wide drought plunging the farming sector into crisis. Persistent high temperatures, frequently exceeding 35°C, coupled with almost no rainfall have severely stunted plant development and scorched fields in western and central Europe.

For livestock farmers, the dry conditions have snowballed into a major winter fodder crisis. Pasture availability and biomass accumulation have plummeted, with hay production for winter cattle feed running roughly 30% below historical averages in key regions. At the same time, critical summer feed crops like maize have suffered drastic yield reductions, and dairy cows suffering from heat stress have driven milk yields down by 10% to 20%. Source

This mounting pressure underscores why initiatives like SMART4Food are more vital than ever. Equipping family farmers, food sector workers, and regional agri-food networks with practical green skills, digital tools, and sustainable business strategies is a critical step in building long-term resilience against economic and environmental volatility.

3. On the Ground Piloting:

Testing the SMART4Food Innovation Training Programme in Ireland

Putting Microlearning to the Test

*As part of Work Package 3, earlier this month, Irish project partner **Momentum** hosted a pilot-testing workshop at The Food Hub in Drumshanbo, Leitrim, bringing together 17 representatives, including smallholder farmers, rural producers, and local farming cooperative members*

The workshop provided attendees with an early look at the SMART4Food Digital Learning Platform and its microlearning curriculum. Designed to fit around the daily demands of farm life, the platform features 6 Macro Modules delivered through bite-sized units, videos, podcasts, interactive quizzes, and reflection exercises.













Core Modules & Group Discussions…

During the session, participants explored two key modules:

- **Module 4: Local Food Systems and Short Supply Chains**
- **Module 6: Policy Innovation and Project Development in the Agrisector**

Through facilitated group discussions, attendees contextualised these topics for the local agricultural landscape, exchanging insights on building shorter supply chains and leveraging policy opportunities to support rural community enterprises

The constructive feedback gathered in Drumshanbo will directly inform the final refinements to the SMART4Food platform and curriculum. Thank you to all the farmers and cooperative members who shared their time and expertise to help us build a smarter, more accessible learning tool for the agricultural community!

Putting Microlearning to the Test in Croatia

Šibenik University of Applied Sciences, hosts a successful SMART4Food Piloting Workshop

Also getting stuck into the ongoing piloting activities for the SMART4Food project, Šibenik University of Applied Sciences welcomed vocational students and educators to test the newly developed e-platform. Under the guidance of Prof. Jelena Šišara and Prof. Nikolina Gaćina, the agrotourism technician students stepped into the role of end users:

- **Interactive Walkthrough:** Students were introduced to the platform's layout and guided through the navigation path.
- **Active Module Piloting:** Participants directly engaged with thematic learning units, experiencing firsthand how microlearning fits into sustainable agrotourism and agricultural education.
- **Direct Feedback Gathering:** Rather than a traditional presentation, the session empowered students to actively evaluate the content, usability, and digital learning experience.







Key Takeaways & Participant Impact…

- **User-Centric Refinement:** Student impressions, comments, and suggestions provided critical user feedback that will directly shape the final enhancements to the e-platform and its learning materials.
- **Bridging Education Levels:** The workshop successfully demonstrated the value of connecting secondary vocational training with higher education institutions to co-create innovative learning solutions.
- **Learners as Co-Creators:** By actively involving students in the piloting phase, SMART4Food ensures its educational tools are engaging, accessible, and responsive to the real-world expectations of the next generation of agrifood professionals.

As with that gathered in Ireland, the valuable insights gathered in Šibenik will be integrated into the final design of the SMART4Food e-platform, ensuring a smooth and impactful learning experience for users across Europe!

4. Can’t Attend a Workshop?

Test the SMART4Food E-Learning Hub Online!



Didn't have the chance to attend a regional pilot workshop? You can still participate and make your voice heard. The SMART4Food Digital Learning Platform gives you instant access to our learning resources that you can explore & TEST whenever and wherever it suits you. Join us in helping drive the future of smart agriculture

Who Can Participate?

We are seeking online testers from across the agrifood ecosystem:

- **Smallholders & Family Farmers:** Working in dairy, livestock, cereals, horticulture, viticulture, beekeeping, or olives.
- **Vocational Educators & Trainers:** From adult learning centres, agricultural universities, extension services, and community farming organisations.
- **Policy & Regional Stakeholders:** Agricultural co-ops, trade associations, and rural development agencies.

What You Get Early Access To?

No advanced technical background or prior smart-farming experience is required! As an online tester, you will get an exclusive first look at our **Smart4Food Micro-Learning System** and multimedia educational tools:

- **Bite-Sized Modules**
- **Multimedia Assets**

How Online Testing Works

1. **Explore at Your Convenience:**
   Log onto our open-access Smart Food Hub from your smartphone, tablet, or computer whenever it suits you best.
2. **Try out a Module:**
   Walk through our practical units and test out the multimedia learning features.
3. **Share Your Feedback:**
   Complete a short, structured survey to let us know about your user experience, the clarity of the content, and its practical value for your day-to-day farm operations or training activities.

Give us your FEEDBACK

Evaluation Form

5. Coming Together for the Future of Food

All-Island Food Networks Gathering - IRELAND



Our Irish partner, Momentum Educate + Innovate, recently joined over 200 producers, network leaders, and industry experts for a major national food gathering focused on building long-term resilience across agri-food systems through regional collaboration.

For the full article on the event, click → HERE

Key Highlights & Discussions

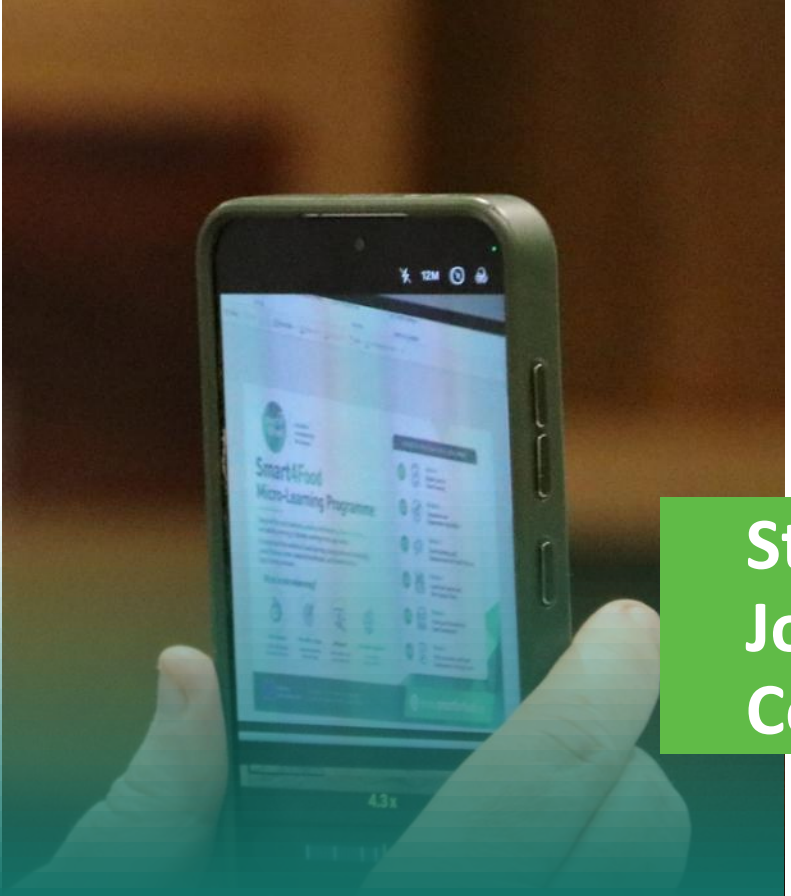
01 Education & Food Provenance:
Panelists stressed the urgent need to boost consumer awareness regarding food origin and supply chains, bridging a critical knowledge gap as food costs rise and reliance on local producers increases..

02 Producers as the Solution:
Discussions highlighted that primary producers are central to reconnecting consumers with their food, though targeted policy support and educational frameworks are needed to back them up.

03 Economic Fairness:
Speakers advocated strongly for primary producers, addressing the financial pressures they face and calling for a fairer distribution of market prices across the supply chain.

04 Unlocking Regional Ecosystems:
Representatives explored how building integrated, cross-regional food networks creates new economic opportunities through culinary tourism, short supply chains, and local food hubs.

These discussions align directly with our project's mission. By delivering practical microlearning and digital tools, **SMART4Food** helps family farmers and regional food networks adapt to modern challenges, strengthen their business models, and drive sustainable growth.



Stay Connected - Join the Smart 4 Food Community Online

Smart 4 Food is more than a learning platform…it is a growing community of farmers, food producers, educators, and rural innovators across Europe.

To keep everyone connected, informed, and inspired, we share regular updates through our ***Facebook and LinkedIn channels****.*

These spaces help learners stay up to date with new modules, pilot activities, events, workshops, and real stories from producers who are putting Smart4Food skills into practice.

Following our social media channels is the easiest way to stay involved. You'll find short tips, visuals, and examples that build on the ideas explored in Module 3: Smart Marketing and Communication for Small Producers, including storytelling, branding, and digital communication. We also highlight partner activities, rural development initiatives, and opportunities to participate in testing, training, and community events.

Our goal is to build a lively, supportive online network where rural learners can share experiences, ask questions, and celebrate progress. Whether you're a farmer improving your digital skills, a trainer supporting rural education, or a community organisation working on local food systems, these channels help you stay connected to the wider Smart4Food movement.

www.smartforfood.eu

Follow our journey