



## Main Features

### Expert Words

The spitzberg plant survival kit

The European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry. Bio-based economy. (Technology

Platform of the Industrial Biotechnology).

Organic milk is high in omega-3 acids, antioxidants and vitamins  
Reform of the wine sector

### SPAS NEWS

### Projects and Events of Interest

### Links of Interest

International Food Fairs

Calendar of Events (Quarterly)

Welcome to the 4 SPAS newsletter which is regularly disseminated in order to keep you up to date in interesting achievements, news and events related to the agrofood sector.

**SPAS:** “*SMEs Virtual Platform on Agro-Food Sector to access the Sixth and Seventh Framework Programmes*”

Proposal Contract n° ETI-EC-023339-SPAS

SPAS is an initiative promoted by a consortium of 13 organisations coming from 9 different European countries, and supported by the European Commission within the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP6).

The SPAS Project will create a pool of enterprises of the agro-food sector in order to promote technological cooperation among companies, and support research and innovation activities.

The aim of SPAS is to encourage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to take part in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programmes through new instruments like Integrated Projects (IP) and Networks of Excellence (NoE). The participation will be focused on new and on-going projects, paying particular attention to calls for proposals and calls for tenders.

For more information please visit the “SPAS” website: [www.spas-project.eu](http://www.spas-project.eu)

### Expert Words

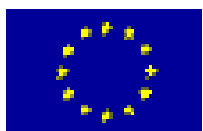
## THE SPITZBERG PLANT SURVIVAL KIT

Seeds representing 3 millions varieties of plants have just been deposited in a very special safe. They will be stored at a temperature of -20°C in a space hollowed out in a mountain on Spitzberg, a frozen island belonging to Norway.

The aim is to “*provide and ultimate safety net to conserve a capacity to feed the planet in the event of a disaster*” explain Cary Fowler of the Global Crop Diversity Trust. This safe deposit system has a refrigerating device to lower the temperature of the mountain that sometimes reaches -3°C.

The plant databank will include seed from developing countries as a priority, storing them under optimal conditions. Industrialised countries and private seed producers already have reserves of this kind-thanks to which it was possible to reintroduce local varieties of beans in África following the wars in Rwanda and Uganda.

*Source: RTD info. Magazine on European Research.*



## The European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry. Bio-based economy. (Technology Platform of the Industrial Biotechnology).

Chemistry and biotechnology have a clear role in providing technological solutions to the challenges facing society. Building on Europe's strengths, sustainable chemistry will be a major factor in stimulating the European economy by providing new opportunities that will benefit all citizens.

The European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem) seeks to foster and focus on European research in the areas of chemistry, chemical engineering and industrial biotechnology. After establishing a *Vision for 2025*, SusChem prepared a *Strategic Research Agenda* (SRA), which outlined the future priorities for European research efforts.

Industrial biotechnology is a key technology to realise the knowledge-based bioeconomy by transforming the knowledge of life sciences into new, sustainable, eco-efficient and competitive products. This includes an optimised combination of the biotechnology processes with classical and new biochemical processes – especially in the chemical, materials and biofuels sectors.

The following three topics have been identified as being of major importance to facilitate the harmonious development of industrial biotechnology in Europe:

- ☒ Biocatalysis – novel and improved enzymes and processes.
- ☒ Developing the next generation of high efficiency fermentation processes, including novel and improved production of microorganisms/hosts.
- ☒ Process eco-efficiency and integration: the biorefinery concept.

More information in <http://www.suschem.org/>

## Organic milk is high in omega-3 acids, antioxidants and vitamins

Until recently there has been little scientific knowledge about the effect of agricultural production systems on food. Research now shows that organically-produced food has a higher nutritional value than food produced by conventional methods. One study compared organic and conventional milk and found that levels of beneficial fatty acids like omega-3 were 60% higher in organic milk and it had 20% more antioxidants and vitamins..

## Reform of the wine sector

The EU has more than 1.5 million holdings producing wine, covering 3.4 million hectares, or 2 percent of EU agricultural area. The European Commission called for a root-and-branch reform of the Common Market Organisation for wine. The plan aims to increase the competitiveness of EU wine producers, strengthen the reputation of EU wines, win back market share, balance supply and demand and simplify the rules, while preserving the best traditions of EU wine production and reinforcing the social and environmental fabric of rural areas. The Commission considers four options for reform, and comes out clearly in favour of a radical reform model specific to the wine sector.

The objectives for a new EU wine policy:

- ☒ To increase the competitiveness of the EU's wine producers; strengthen the reputation of EU quality wine as the best in the world; recover old markets and win new ones;
- ☒ To create a wine regime that operates through clear, simple rules – effective rules that balance supply and demand;
- ☒ To create a wine regime that preserves the best traditions of EU wine production, reinforces the social fabric of many rural areas, and respects the environment.

More information: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/capreform/wine/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/capreform/wine/index_en.htm)



## Focus

SPAS launch a Virtual Factory in agrofood industries

Celebrated the 4 SPAS project progress meeting in Budapest

SPAS launch a best practice guide, and training packages target in SMES

Spas promote SME participation in first FP 7 Call

Promote your project ideas in SPAS project

## SPAS News

### SPAS launch a Virtual Factory in agrofood industries

The 'Virtual Factory' a decision support tool for SMEs who wish to improve their food processing, will soon be available in the SPAS website [www.spas-project.eu](http://www.spas-project.eu). At this moment you can access it at <http://www.atoapps.nl/virtualfactory/spas/>

### Celebrated the 4 SPAS project progress meeting in Budapest

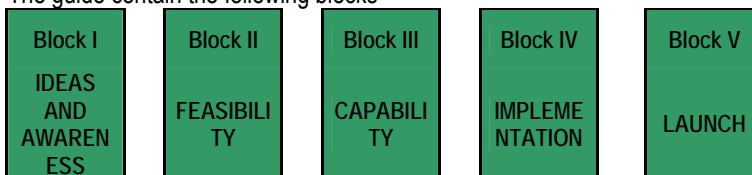
The 4<sup>th</sup> Spas Consortium Meeting was celebrated at the Mercure hotel Room Pest in Budapest (Hungary). Vaci usta 21.

The meeting was attended by all the members of the SPAS consortium, and the councillor of the Mantova Province.

### SPAS launch a best practice guide, and training packages target in SMES

SPAS partnership making a in order to lower barriers for SMEs to join research projects. The guide is a set of usefull information related to the RTD activities with the aim to help SME in his innovation process and also to mitigate the SME psychological barrier concerning a possible participation in European R&D

The guide contain the following blocks



Available in the SPAS website soon. ([www.spas-projects.eu](http://www.spas-projects.eu))

### Spas promote SME participation in first FP 7 Call

SPAS partnership promote the participation of SME in the first call for proposal Theme: [Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology]. SPAS partnership give direct support to the interested SMEs.

At this moment SPAS partnership promoting the participation of SMEs both in the second call for proposal (expected date for publication 15 of June) Than in the Research for the benefit of SMEs (Deadline 4 of September 2007). If you want to take part in this call. Please contact your SPAS country partner.

<http://www.spas-project.eu/consortium>

### Promote your project ideas in SPAS project

SPAS is providing assistance and support to those small and medium sized enterprises interested in finding or becoming a partner in a joint RTD project or Technology Platforms. As a specific support action SPAS offers to publish your search request via email to over 1,000 agro-food organisations. After publication, each idea will be listed on the SPAS website at [www.spas-project.eu](http://www.spas-project.eu), and directly promote between the SPAS network.



## Projects and Events of Interest

### 26-27 June 2007 Conference "Towards Future Challenges of Agricultural Research in Europe", Brussels

On 26-27 June 2007, the European Commission is holding a major Conference in Brussels on the future of European agriculture and its consequences for research. The Conference aims at debating research needs and developing a coherent European research agenda in order to enable agriculture to cope with a range of complex and interlinked challenges, such as rapidly increasing globalisation, energy shortages, climate change and unsustainable consumption of natural resources. The discussion will build on the results of a wide foresight process initiated by the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) aimed at identifying possible scenarios for European agriculture with a 20-year perspective. The Conference will bring together major European and worldwide actors/stakeholders from the fields of agriculture, food, forestry, aquaculture, rural development, consumer science/behaviour, economics, etc.

An individual request for registration is necessary.  
Registration will be possible (on line) from 14 May.

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/agriculture/scar/index\\_en.cfm?p=3\\_whatsnew](http://ec.europa.eu/research/agriculture/scar/index_en.cfm?p=3_whatsnew)

### Aquaculture Twin Event COST/EUREKA

The event is supported by COST, EUREKA and ESF-LESC. LESC is the ESF Standing Committee for Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences. Science Parck Patras Greece. 11 and 12 Jun 2007.

For more information: <http://www.aquaculture-event.eu>

More information in [www.spas-project.eu](http://www.spas-project.eu)

## Links of Interest

### SMEs for Food

[www.smesforfood.org](http://www.smesforfood.org)

### Food safety From the farm to the fork

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/index_en.htm)

### European Commission Agrinet Portal.

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/agriculture/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/agriculture/index_en.html)

### European Food Safety Authority

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en.html>

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/agriculture/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/agriculture/index_en.htm)

## Calendar of Events (Quarterly)

The 28th Plenary meeting of the AHAW (EFSA) Panel - 27-28 June 2007 - Parma

### Aquaculture Twin Event COST/EUREKA

## INTERNATIONAL FOOD FAIRS

Date of event: 4 - 7 March 2008  
Venue: Brno Exhibition Centre / Czech Republic  
Organizer  
Veletrhy Brno, a.s.  
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