

NDA Belgium - Wallonia

AKIS Organisation – Belgium (Wallonia)

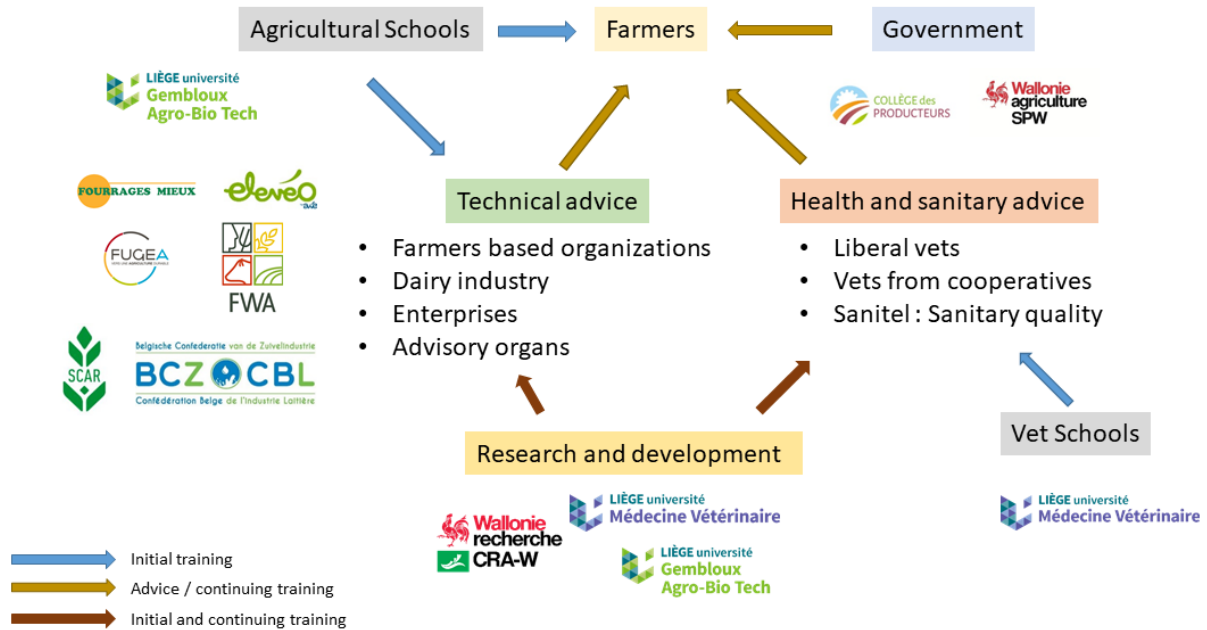


Figure 4. Dairy Agricultural Knowledge & Information System (AKIS) in Wallonia

Wallonia (Belgium) has a regional dairy AKIS that consists of 15 members (Figure 5):

- 4 pilot farms
- 2 advisor institutions: ELEVEO, Fourrages Mieux
- 1 enterprise: SCAR
- 1 Dairy industry: CBL
- 3 research institutions: CRA-W, Gbx AgroBioTech, Faculty of veterinary medicine
- 2 farmer-based organisation: FWA, FUGEA
- 2 government institutions: SPW, Collège des producteurs

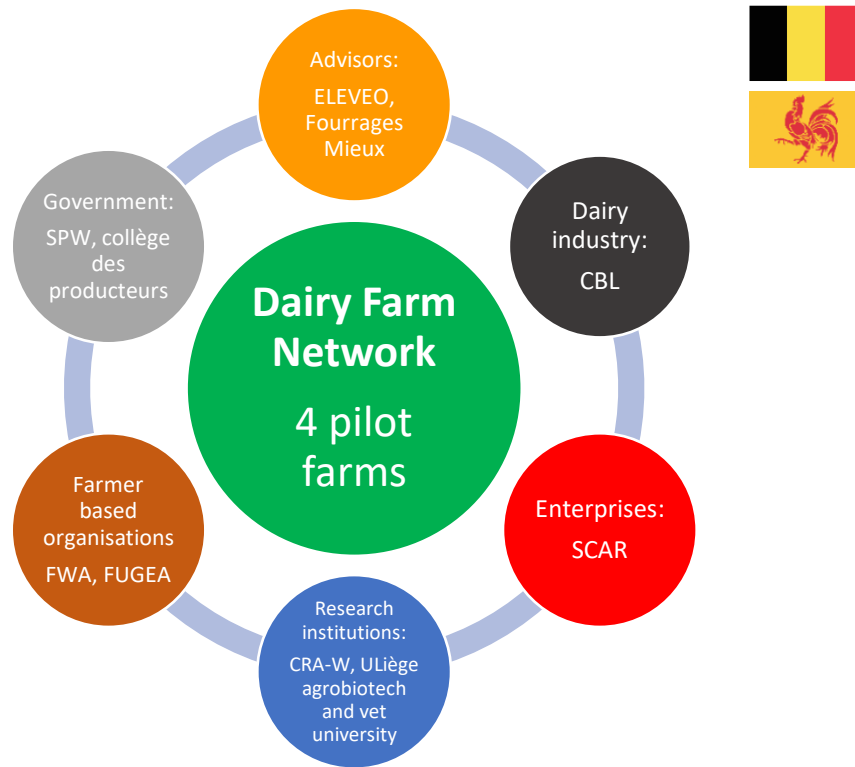


Figure 5. The regional dairy AKIS of Wallonia (Belgium) consists of 4 pilot farms and 11 non-farmer institutions each with their own expertise.

Below, each member will be described into more detail.

Pilot farms

The four pilot farms are spread over Wallonia and are depicted in Figure 6.

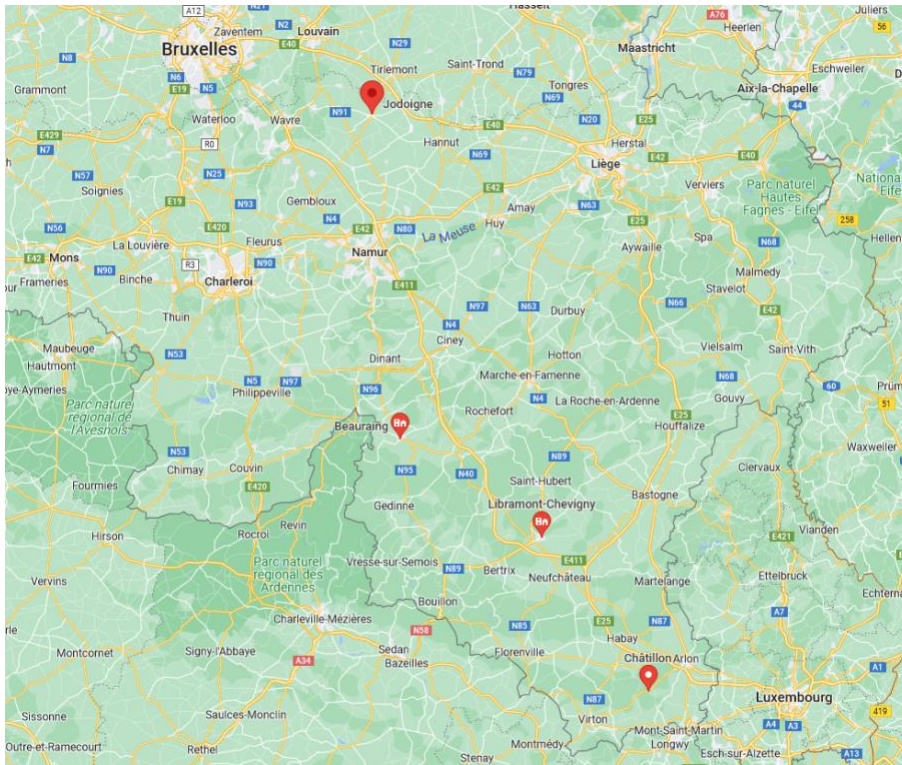


Figure 6. Location of the 4 pilot farms in Wallonia (Belgium).

1. Didier Thiry (Chatillon)
 - Volume of milk production:
615.000 kg per year
 - Dairy cows:
90
 - Reason to include this farm:
This farm just agrees in organic farming. The farmer aims to valorise own production and more especially grass. The farmer is open minded and interested in agroforestry (Nuts production)
2. Marie-Ghislaine Decoster-Paris (Jodoigne)
 - Volume of milk production:
1.560.000 kg per year
 - Dairy cows:
200
 - Reason to include this farm:
This is large mix farm, crops and dairy, for the region. The farmer is interested in calves' management and farm transition.
3. Marc-André Henin (Beauraing)
 - Volume of milk production:
380.000 kg per year
 - Dairy cows:
60

- Reason to include this farm:
This family farm is very innovative and testing things. They tried to fatten the calves under mother (cross breeding), seasonal calving, once-a-day milking and transformation (butter).
4. Fabien Divoy (Libramont)
- Volume of milk production:
220.000 kg per year
 - Dairy cows:
55
 - Reason to include this farm:
The dairy herd is Normand breed, with high level on fat and protein content in milk. Two herds are present on the farm: dairy and suckling cows. The crossbreeding is used to increase/renew the suckling herd and all the calves are fattened in the farm.

Non-farmer stakeholders

Advisors:

1. Eleveo – Groupe AWE
Represented by Benoit Wyzen and Edouard Reding
Eleveo has a social goal, which is to improve the bovine livestock and the economic management of farms, and to defend the interests of breeders and more broadly of Walloon breeding. Eleveo provides advice and support to the breeders and is involved in the field of research.
The AWE groupe (ELEVEO and INOVEO) is involved in several services to breeders: cattle registration, testing and monitoring of cattle performances (e.g., milk recording, type traits scoring, weight gain), technical and economic support (e.g., authorisations, accountancy) and advice on farm management (e.g., feeding, housing, manuring). Approximately 1000 dairy farms participate to the milk recording organised by AWE. In addition, lot of economic data are collected in more than 700 farms.
2. Fourrages Mieux
Represented by David Knoden
Fourrages Mieux is an ASBL active in advising and popularising on agricultural techniques related mainly to grassland but also to the cultivation of alfalfa, immature cereals, or fodder beet.
Grassland occupies an essential place in Walloon agriculture. Indeed, grasslands represent nearly 50% of the AA in Wallonia and in certain regions such as the Pays de Herve, this proportion can reach 95%. It is the basis for feeding ruminants, especially Dairy cattle in Wallonia. The pilot centre is a meeting place for farmers, the private sector (producers of forage seeds, fertilisers, plant protection products, etc.) and its various partners.

Enterprise:

1. SCAR
Represented by Eric Elias
Originally from the Pays de Herve, the SCAR cooperative, founded in 1898, today brings together more than 2,400 co-operator-breeders active in various animal species (dairy and beef cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry) and in different geographical areas (the historical cradle of the Plateau de Herve, but also Condroz, Eifel, Ardenne, Hesbaye, Basse-Meuse, German-speaking areas, Brabant, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, etc.).

Lits objectives are:

- To offer competitive and high-quality feed for your livestock in a transparent manner.
- To offer a friendly and professional service of nutritional and technical advice on the farm.
- To offer a service based on competence and proximity at our different levels of activity (commercial, ordering, manufacturing, delivery,).
- To offer a complete and diversified range of products and services at competitive prices.
- Maintain an efficient and effective decision-making structure that keeps the tool in the hands of the farmers.
- To maintain fair general sales conditions for all co-operator-customers.
- To set up and develop agricultural diversification structures offering added value and independence to the farmer.
- To defend and promote agriculture with the authorities, the various actors and links in the rural and agri-food world, as well as with the general public and the final consumer.

Researchers and education:

1. Walloon Agricultural research centre

Represented by Virginie Decruyenaere

The CRA-W is a scientific centre under the regional government of Wallonia. For this reason the CRA-W is competent to lead and manage scientific research covering four main topics in agricultural as (1) precision farming; (2) precision livestock farming; (3) risk management and (4) knowledge of products.

2. ULiège - Gbx agrobiotech

Represented by Yves Beckers

The Faculty of Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech is internationally recognized for the quality of its teaching and research.

Four bioscience engineering master's degrees are offered to students, enabling them to specialize in key areas of life sciences: environmental sciences and technologies, forest and natural space management, agronomic sciences and chemistry and bio-industries.

In collaboration with other faculties of the University of Liège and partner institutions, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech also organizes comprehensive training in landscape architecture and offers a master's degree in the following areas: agroecology innovation management and food design, and integrated production and preservation of natural resources in urban and peri-urban areas.

The research carried out within the unit of "Animal production and nutrition engineering" focuses on the breeding of livestock animals, their reproduction and their adaptation to specific needs.

The main objective of animal production is to raise livestock animals such as ruminants (cattle, sheep, goat) and monogastrics (pigs, chickens) for meat, milk and eggs for human consumption. Therefore, animal production entails day-to-day care, selective breeding and good animal husbandry practices. In addition, and especially in developing countries, livestock animals are raised for non-food production and energy sources. They also play an important role in a social, cultural and religious context and they contribute significantly in the fight against poverty.

3. Uliège – Vet university

Represented by Françoise Lessire

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Liège university is one of only two veterinary schools in Belgium (together with the University of Ghent, historically the two state universities)

authorised to deliver a complete veterinary medicine curriculum including masters, specialisation masters, doctorates and research. The other authorised universities must limit themselves to the bachelor's degree. It is also the only public veterinary faculty in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

The faculty welcomes 1 600 students and offers 14 bachelor, master, master of specialisation, university certificate and certificate of pedagogical aptitude for higher education courses, as well as doctorates, in French and in English. It also organises summer schools in veterinary sciences. It is a member of the European Association of Veterinary Education Institutions (EAEVE), the body of the European Commission accrediting veterinary schools in the European Union. In addition, it has 7 research departments, the faculty research unit FARA (Fundamental and Applied Research for Animals & Health) and three interfaculty units in science and medical science.

Farmer based organisation:

1. Walloon Federation of Agriculture - FWA

Represented by Marianne Streel

The Walloon Federation of Agriculture (FWA) is there to support its member farmers in the management of their farms. It defends the sector collectively, while supporting its members individually.

The FWA strongly defends the trade union line developed by its members in regional, federal and European political bodies. It supports its members in their individual cases.

2. FUGEA

Represented by Philippe Duvivier

The Fédération Unie de Groupements d'Éleveurs et d'Agriculteurs (FUGEA) is a farmers' union and a farmers' movement that develops and supports sustainable multifunctional agriculture. It accepts into its fold, without any exclusion, any farmer, whether from conventional or organic farming, and who generally follows the principles of the FUGEA charter, subdivided into three themes: Transmission/viability, Autonomy/sustainability and environment/human health.

Dairy industry:

1. CBL

Represented by Renaat Debergh

CBL is the professional association of the dairy industry in Belgium. The members of CBL, the dairy companies, collect about 98% of the milk from the farmer and process it into tasty and healthy dairy products. CBL represents the interests of the dairy companies. In addition, CBL participates constructively in the social debate on topics related to milk and dairy products, such as food safety, healthy nutrition and sustainability.

CBL and its members are committed to achieving a future-proof dairy farming that contributes to a sustainable future and can be part of the solution. Both aspects, both ecologically and economically, must be considered. CBL is therefore very interested in the ideas and conclusions that emerge within this project, both nationally and internationally. These can then be included in our own operations and to stimulate further sustainability in the entire dairy sector.

Government:

1. SPW - Les services extérieurs de la Direction de la Recherche et du Développement

Represented by Benoit Georges

This service of the SPW is the Development Department's privileged relays with farmers in terms of transmitting knowledge and information and in terms of popularisation. As such, they are the most likely to convey the expectations, needs and wishes of the farming community to the administration and to disseminate the administration's messages to farmers.

This relay role means that they are responsible for monitoring a considerable number of tasks, including the following:

- Monitoring the agricultural advisory system
- Extension of agricultural matters relating to the results of research and development, legislative matters
- Monitoring of regional reference and experimentation centres
- Monitoring of demonstration trials
- Technical monitoring of pilot centres
- Monitoring of provincial chambers of agriculture and agricultural committees
- Participation in land tenure commissions
- Participation in communal crop damage assessment commissions

2. Collège des producteurs

Represented by Catherine Beuraing.

The Producers' College is the link between the Producers, the public authorities and the actors in the sector. Within the College, the Producers can interact with public agencies, consumers, the agri-food sector and distribution.

In order to respond to the diversity of the sectors that make up Walloon Agriculture and to offer each sector the opportunity to make its voice heard, the College operates through Sectoral Assemblies.

This consultation tool, at the service of the Producers' College, enables farmers to make their interests known to the public authorities and to assert their position within the sectors. The voice of producers, as collected during the Sectoral Assemblies, is relayed by two representatives from each sector sitting on the Producers' College.

Facilitation methods

What have we done?

The workshop was organised during a meeting about the livestock system. The resilience of livestock systems was equated with their sustainability, emphasising the importance of the economic dimension. While economic sustainability is good, from the participants' point of view, the environmental and social dimensions tend to follow the same direction.

In terms of innovations, the discussions quickly turned to technological innovations, with a focus on the milking robot. These innovations were linked to the obstacles to their adoption. These are as much financial as lack of knowledge or loss of connection with agronomic practices such as the implementation of grazing.

To complete the data, a survey was done by email.

What was easy?

The combination with a global meeting facilitated the logistic and the communication about the project. The guideline proposed by the R4D teams permit to learn how to management the meeting. Discussions and interactions were very constructive.

What was difficult?

The lack of time to go deeper in the discussion. Not all NDA members were present.