

NEW



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Innovation and Sustainability
of Agri-Food System
in the Mediterranean Area

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FOREWORD

More than before, the region is facing unprecedented and interdependent environmental, economic and social challenges that affect food security, economic growth, production system and sustainability, and thus the livelihoods of all Mediterranean people.

The global health and economic emergency caused by Covid-19, the scarcity and irrational use of natural resources, climate change, urbanization phenomena and market globalization are among the main factors that have influenced the evolutionary processes of Mediterranean countries. These phenomena, albeit in a different way between the different countries, have provoked strong solicitation and changes in the agri-food production / processing patterns, as well as in the food consumption patterns and lifestyles in the Mediterranean region.

To ensure that the agri-food system be capable to respond to the new needs with the widest possible benefits, it is necessary that the operators of the sector introduce new forms of technological, organizational and social innovation and collaboration in their production, transformation and distribution activities. Digital transformation is one of the tools that can make a significant contribution to the agro-food chain adaptation process.

The reference to a paradigm shifts in the production system emerges from the recent proposal of the EU Green Deal addressing to mobilize research and innovation to foster a just and sustainable societal transition aiming at new forms of agri-food entrepreneurship and value chain, 'leaving nobody behind'.

The aim of the special issue is to develop knowledge and common innovative solutions for Agri-food systems in the Mediterranean area, to make them sustainable, and by an integrated management more climate resilient, efficient, cost-effective and environmentally and socially sustainable, and to contribute to solving food security and health problems.

The final objectives of this Special Issue is to open a discussion for new ideas to improving health and livelihoods Mediterranean citizens, encouraging economic growth, inducing more sustainable Mediterranean societies and stability.

There is no single model for dealing with the ecological, digital and technological transition. It depends on local and regional conditions related to natural resources and human capital.

The new challenge is to ensure that technological and organizational innovations are inclusive, able to increasing competitiveness, productivity, improving public health, and better-protecting environmental resources.

Finally, we thank CIHEAM for supporting and encouraging this initiative. CIHEAM plays an even more crucial role in accelerating and facilitating the transition and strengthening the resilience of food systems using the large and qualified institutional and personal network within the Mediterranean area.

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