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New strategic research agenda: aquaculture breeding

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Prioritised subjects for future funding of research in breeding and reproduction.

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The Sustainable Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform (FABRE-TP) is an EU recognised Technology Platform, and was launched in 2006. It brings together industry, research and other stakeholders, with a view of strategic research needs to enhance business at the short, medium and long term, and proposes EU funding topics to the EC. In 2007 the exercise of developing an Strategic Research Agenda with involvement of over 500 breeding and reproduction experts has been undertaken. This was based on reports of 34 countries and 13 expert groups. Since several big innovations have changed the landscape in breeding and reproduction, new outlines for research needs in the future have been produced by a core group of high-level experts in consultation with a large base of experts in their field from all over Europe. In addition to this, the groups have produced White Papers, showing the most evident research gaps and opportunities to contribute to the global challenges of Climate Change and Food Security. These White Papers will be presented during this session, as well as the priorities in scientific research for the next twenty years.

New Strategic Research Agenda: aquaculture breeding

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Aquaculture is an important food sector in the EU providing healthy, nutritional products of high quality. It is strategically important for Europe, especially in view of our heavy reliance on imports of seafood. Two of the major global challenges for the future of food production are climate change and food security. Aquaculture production systems and technology will have to address and contribute to these challenges and can play a major role in offering sustainable solutions. Selective breeding and reproduction are important knowledge areas for further development of the industry in a sustainable and ethical manner. There has been little development and investment in aquaculture breeding compared to terrestrial animals, partly because of the practical difficulties in doing so, and partly because of the relative newness of the industry. Without research efforts in these areas the industry will not be able to develop and compete in order to meet market demands and need for fish products in Europe. The process to prioritise important research items for EU funding resulted in a list with 11 most important topics. These are the topics that will ensure sustainability in the European aquaculture breeding sector and develop it further into the future. The aquaculture breeding research and industry community was surveyed for their opinion and their prioritisation on topics grouped into four general areas, and the results will be presented: 1) reducing the environmental impact; 2) improving fish health and welfare; 3) produce a wide range of aquatic products of high quality; 4) generic topics.