



DualAFS - **Dual** Curricula -
Study and Work Practice
in **Agriculture and Food Safety**

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| Programme: | Erasmus + |
| Key Action: | Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices |
| Action: | Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) |
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E-Newsletter Issue 7, Januar 2024

Final Conference in Tirana, Albania, 15 November 2023
"Dual university education - a promising model for improving practical training and employment success of students in agricultural and food sciences".

Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) in cooperation with University of Applied Science Nürtingen – Geißlingen (NGU), Germany, University of Applied Science of Savonia (Savonia UAS), Finland, University of Korca (UNIKO), Albania, University of Prishtina (UP) and University of Mitrovica (UMIB), Kosovo, as well as same Work Life Partners of the sector of livestock and food safety, organized the Final conference of DualAFS, titled:

"Dual university education - a promising model for improving practical training and employment success of students in agricultural and food sciences".

The aim of this conference is to discuss, also on the basis of the results of this Erasmus project, the possibility of applying the model of dual university studies in the field of agriculture and food, the importance of the cooperation of the university with the actors of practice as cooperation partners in higher education, especially in the practical training of students, as well as the development of university capacities in the field of lifelong learning, knowledge and technology transfer in the field of agriculture and food.

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Dual Curricula – Study and Work Practice in Agriculture and Food Safety

FINAL CONFERENCE:

*"Dual university education - a promising model for improving
practical training and employment success of students in
agricultural and food sciences".*

Agricultural University Tirana (AUT), November 15, 2023
Conference Room "Luce Agraja", Building of Faculty of Agribusiness



The program of the conference includes three sessions:

- The adaptation of study programs to the needs of the labor market and the development of the agri-food sector in Albania and Kosovo - one of the biggest challenges for universities and faculties in the field of agri-food sciences.
- DualAFS project as a contribution to the implementation of dual studies in agri-food sciences in Albania and Kosovo.
- Cooperation between the university and the practice partner as the most important prerequisite for the implementation of dual studies.



Conference participants (more as 100 participants) include representatives, academic staff and students from the project's partner universities and WLPs, representatives of the EU Delegation to Albania and the Albanian government and public institutions, farmers, representatives of farmers and business



organisations from the agri-food sector, heads of vocational schools, representatives of international projects, NGOs and experts working in the fields of agriculture, livestock and food safety.



The opening of the conference, chaired by **Prof. Dr. Erinda Lika, Vice Rector of AUT**, took place with opening speeches and welcoming addresses.

In his welcoming speech, **Prof. Dr. Heinrich Schuele**, Project Leader, Dean of



Nürtingen Geislingen University of Agricultural Sciences (NGU), Germany, welcomed the participants and gave a brief overview of the initiative to bring together the DualAFS consortium to address the issue of dual higher education in agriculture, where NGU, as one of the pioneers in introducing dual higher education in agricultural sciences, has a very rich experience, the very good experience of cooperation between all partners of the consortium in the implementation of this project, the interesting results and their relevance for the improvement of study programs in Albania and Kosovo in

the field of agricultural and food sciences. He also emphasized that this very positive experience gained in this project can be effectively used for the further development of cooperation between the consortium partners in the academic and research field.

The Rector of AUT, Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku, welcomed the participants as the



host of the conference. In his speech, Rector Sallaku pointed out that the adaptation of the study programs to the needs of the labor market and the development of the agricultural and food sector in Albania is one of the biggest challenges for AUT. He emphasized that the results of this project can be a help not only for us as project partners, but also for other higher education institutions in Albania and Kosovo in overcoming these challenges when it comes to aligning tertiary study programs with the needs of the socio-economic development of our countries and the labor market.

Finally, he thanked the EU's Erasmus program and all the partners in this project. He concluded his speech with full confidence that this very good experience of cooperation within the consortium of this project will be used as a good basis for further projects both in the academic field and in research and development.

Mr. Andrea Ferrero - Head of the Department for Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the EU Delegation to Albania - focused in



his speech on the great opportunities that the EU and especially the Erasmus and Horizon programs offer for the development of Albanian universities, and in this case specifically on the important sectors of agriculture and food. He emphasized the great opportunities that these programs offer for students and young lecturers and researchers of Albanian universities.

He concluded by calling on the universities involved in this project to continue their cooperation and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the EU programs.

In the plenary session entitled "DualAFS - Project as a contribution to the



presentation of dual studies in Agricultural and Food Sciences in Albania and Kosovo - A successful and promising cooperation", moderated by Prof. Dr. Heinrich Schüle, Project Leader, Dean of Studies at NGU, and MSc Petri Kainulainen - Dean of Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Iisalmi Campus, gave the following short presentations:

In his speech, MSc. Petri Kainulainen focused on the experience of Savonia University of Applied Sciences in adapting curricula and study programs in agriculture and environment to the requirements of the labor market

and the role of WLP in this process.

Prof. Dr. Merita Shala - Rector of the University of Mitrovica (UMIB) acknowledged



the great role of the DualAFS project in supporting the reform process of the study programs at UMIB and the willingness to continue this successful cooperation achieved in this consortium for other projects.

Dr. Festim Shytaj, Head of the Department of Animal Production at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MBZHR), underlined in his speech the great need of the livestock sector for well-trained professionals in the field of animal production, especially when our country has to adapt and implement the EU standards in this sector, as Albania has already started negotiations with the EU. At the end of the plenary session, the participants discussed the topic of the meeting.



In the first session on "Implementation of the dual study program in the agricultural and food industry - challenges and future", moderated by the **Vice Rector of AUT, Prof. Dr. Ilir Kapaj, and Prof. Dr. Anila Hoda**, the most important objectives and results of the DualAFS project at the partner universities were presented.

Prof. Dr. Jürgen BRAUN (NGU) spoke about NGU's efforts to integrate practice into



the curriculum of Master's programs, using an example of a Master's program in the field of economics and environment. This example could be a good reference for the further development of our AUT Master's program in Agriculture, Environment and Food Economics.



Prof. Dr. Myqerem Tafaj (AUT) presented the main objectives and the results achieved in the implementation of the Bachelor's degree program "Livestock and Safety of Animal Products" reorganized according to the dual model at AUT, as well as some ideas on the possibility of applying the dual study model in our country, especially in agricultural, environmental and food sectors. In this context, the need for improvements in the legal framework to support this model was also discussed, especially in relation to the implementation of dual professional practices in entrepreneurship, with the cooperation and recognition of the contribution of WLP partners, as well as

the aspects that regulate the relationship between theory and practice in the standards of higher education programs.

Dr. Dorian Marku (UNIKO) presented in his lecture "The implementation of the Dual Bachelor in Agricultural Management (AM) at UNIKO-Challenges and the



future" the results of the implementation of the Dual Bachelor in AM, focusing mainly on the implementation of the students' dual internship and the related model of the university's cooperation agreement with companies as WPL.



Prof. Dr. Muhamet Kamberi (UP) presented in his report titled "Improvement of practical training in animal science curricula of UP - challenges and the future" the improvements that have been made in the existing animal science program of UP and the challenges for its future in Kosovo.



The presentation by **Prof. Dr. Valdet Gjinovci (UMIB)** "Improvement of practical training in food science programs at UMIB - challenges and future", which also underlined the requirements of the labor market in Kosovo for study programs in this field.





MSc Florian Plaku (AUT) presented the experiences of a new teacher with innovative teaching methods at the Savonia UAS-Finland and his thoughts on transferring them to teaching at his home university.

A final discussion took place at the end of this session.

In the **2nd session** entitled "**Cooperation between the university and the practice partner as the most important prerequisite for the implementation of dual education**", moderated by **Prof. Dr. Ilir Kristo - Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture - AUT**, and **Prof. Dr. Myqerem Tafaj - AUT**, representatives of the private sector were addressed as partners in the implementation of the dual study model in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry and food safety.



Dipl. Ing. agr. Bianca Duro, Managing Director of Austria Praemix Albania and the Austrian Institute of Excellence, gave the presentation entitled: The food



industry needs well-trained graduates - how can the private sector contribute to this in cooperation with the university? Based on her 20 years of experience as an entrepreneur in the industry and her company that she represents in Albania, she mainly presented the expectations of the livestock sector in terms of competences and skills that new graduates should have in the study

programs in the field of animal production and quality and safety of animal products.

Dipl. Ing. Alban Zusi, Chairman of the Albanian Exporters and Entrepreneurs



Association, pointed out the great need of the food industry for well-trained graduates and the possibility of cooperation between university and companies not only for the professional practice of students, but also for applied research, innovation and services, based on his many years of experience as an entrepreneur, expert and at times also political decision-maker in the agricultural and food sector.

The chairman of the Albanian Agribusiness Council, Mr. Agim Rrapaj, who has many years of experience in representing the farmers of Albania, pointed out in his report the need of the entire agricultural sector for well-trained university graduates



and emphasized the great interest of this association in a stronger cooperation with the AUT. All three speakers from the private sector as well as the other participants of this session discussed and considered in the final discussion of this session the contribution of the private sector of agriculture, animal husbandry and food industry for the practical training of the agricultural students almost as a minimum obligation of the private sector, as this would enable the increase of the level of education of young professionals who will work in these important sectors

of the Albanian economy such as agriculture, animal production and food safety.

An important task of this project for AUT is also **the institutionalization of cooperation between AUT and private companies (farms/companies) in the**



livestock sector, not only for the implementation of the Dual Professional Practice of the students of the Dual Bachelor Program in LAPS (WP4), but also in the other component (WP6.2.) of LLL in different



forms, such as the provision of training, consultancy and services by AUT to partners in the private sector, i.e. farms and

companies in the livestock sector. The group of AUT members of the project SC has



been successful in concluding such cooperation agreements with 18 livestock farms and companies in the feed industry. The representatives of these farms and companies signed the final agreements at the end of the second conference session with the Rector of AUT, Prof. Sallaku. Once signed, these agreements will come into operation and their

implementation will begin. As this academic year (2023/24) the first group of students of the dual Bachelor program in LAPS will develop Practice 1, they will have the opportunity to complete their practice in farms, businesses and companies that have already signed agreements with AUT.



The conference concluded with an outlook on future cooperation between the DualAFS partners.

Prof. Dr. Heinrich Schüle (NGU) and Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku, Rector of AUT, briefly summarized the results of this final conference of the DualAFS project and thanked all participants for their active participation in the

discussion of the various conference sessions. At the end, both speakers emphasized the very good experiences in the cooperation between the partners of the DualAFS consortium as an excellent basis for the continuation of the cooperation between the partners in new projects in the field of teaching and research.

Workshop "Developments in Livestock Feeding, Husbandry & Welfare ", AUT, Department of Animal Sciences, 14 November 2023

Besides the main objective of the DualAFS project, which is to establish a Dual Bachelor programme in Livestock Animal Product Safety (LAPS) at AUT and in Agricultural Management (AM) at UNIKO (WP4), another important component (WP6.2) of this project is to develop the capacity of the Department of Animal Sciences (DAS) and the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment (FAE) of AUT to provide advisory and



operational services to livestock farms and enterprises, which will act as co-implementers of the students' dual practice on the farms/ enterprises.

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In order to familiarise veterinarians, animal production consultants and farmers with some of the latest developments in animal feeding, husbandry and welfare, AUT, in the framework of the Erasmus project, organised the one-day workshop "Developments in Livestock Feeding, Husbandry and Welfare" in cooperation with the NGU and local partners, namely the GIZ project, the State Veterinary and Phytosanitary Office (AKVMB) and the Albanian Veterinary Order.



This workshop was targeted not only at students of animal science programmes, but also at veterinarians and animal husbandry professionals who advise/ supervise livestock farms or work in the public sector of veterinary services and animal husbandry advice. The workshop took place on 14 November 2023 at the DAS of AUT. Around 120 practitioners and students attended this workshop. The speakers at the seminar were mainly NGU professors and researchers who were on a study visit to AUT as part of the DualAFS project mobilities.



The participants were welcomed by the **Rector of AUT, Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku**, and representatives of the co-organising partners, namely **the Vice-Rector of UP, Prof. Dr. Pranvera Berzani**, the



Dr. Ardita Hoxha (Savonia UAS),

Project manager MSc Sara Pfaff (NGU),



the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture of UNIKO, Prof. Gjergj Mero, the General Director of the AKVMB, DMV Roland Mecaj,



and the President of the Albanian Veterinary Order DMV Ervin Resuli.



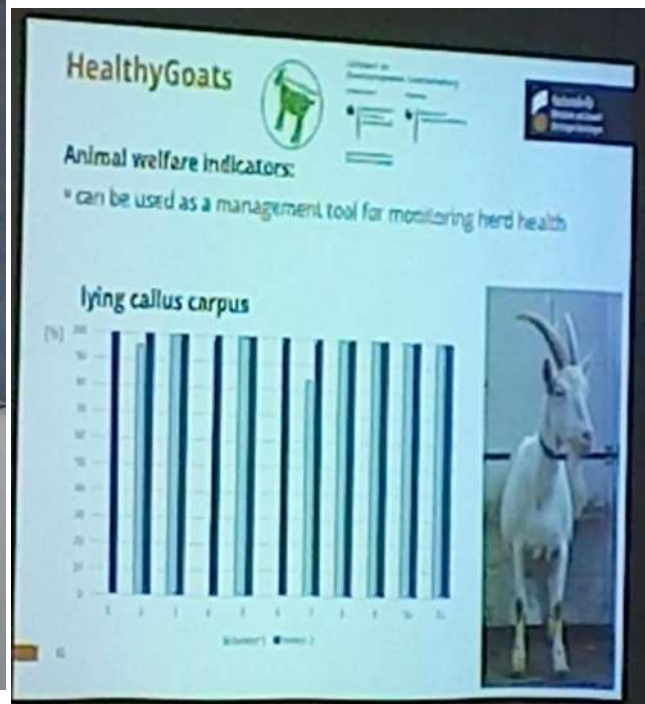
In the first session, **Prof. Dr. Dirk Winter (NGU)** gave a lecture on “**Practical feeding optimization for ruminants based on Wet- and NIRS analyses**”, prepared jointly with **Prof. Stephan Schneider (NGU)**. The second part of his presentation was entitled “**Horse Industry in Germany**”.



MSc Heiko Esslinger gave the jointly prepared presentation “**Current**



developments in goat husbandry and welfare” to **Prof. Dr. Maren Bernau**.



In the second session, **MSc Ines Maurmann** spoke about **“Using of Linear measurement in animal welfare studies: case of dairy goat”**,



MSc Sara Goth spoke about **“Using of Thermography in animal welfare studies: case in dairy goats”**.



Dr Xhafa (GIZ, Albania) also presented **“Activities of the SRD II project on the dairy value chain”**.



At the end of the workshop, the participants followed a demonstration in the DAS Feed



Quality and Safety Laboratory on feed assessment by NIRS method using a new Unity Scientific Spectrostar 2600 XT-R equipment, which was purchased as part of the DualAFS project. The laboratory demonstration was led by **Prof Dr Enkelejda Sallaku** and **Prof. Dr. Muhamet Kamberi**.

The workshop concluded with a final round of questions and discussion.



The participants considered the workshop and the content of the presentations to be



very relevant for professional training in the field of animal husbandry.

They recommended that such seminars should also be organised for other animal species such as pigs, poultry, cats and dogs.

Participants in this workshop received professional development credit points awarded by the Albanian Veterinary Order.



Upcoming Project End in Januar 2024

DualAFS will end on the 14th of January 2024. The project consortium will maintain the work developed in DualAFS and sustain the results achieved. Even though this is the last E-Newsletter, the website of DualAFS will be maintained.

Herewith the whole project consortium would like to thank you for your interest in the work, the developments and the results of DualAFS.

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