

**Question for oral answer O-000104/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 128

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on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Subject: EU agricultural innovation systems

It is crucial that the EU agriculture sector embrace innovation in a proactive way if it is to maintain its economic competitiveness and to address sustainability challenges.

The emergence of connected agriculture, which uses hi-tech sensors among other things to monitor farm production and health disorders in animals, offers scope for savings across the entire food production value chain. This includes a move towards the automation of transport and logistics, which would bring farming products closer to the consumer and allow quicker and more precise stock management in warehouses and retail stores.

Smart farming systems that use cameras and other forms of technology could improve irrigation efficiency and save water. Precision farming, which involves data-based technologies, including satellite navigation tools and the internet, could help EU farmers manage crops and reduce the use of fertilisers and pesticides. EU seed banks contain a wealth of genetic material that could be used to develop new varieties.

Unfortunately, there is evidence that the links between research, farmers and the food industry are too weak. Too many innovation opportunities remain untapped and too many research questions from the sector remain unanswered.

Can the Commission explain how it intends to strengthen and promote agricultural innovation systems and make them more accessible to EU farmers?

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