Farming by Satellite Prize is won by Teagasc, from Ireland

The 4th Farming by Satellite Prize, promoting the use of satellite technologies in agriculture, was decided on Wednesday 5th December at EU Space Week in Marseille. The overall winner of €5,000 was team Teagasc from Dublin, Ireland with their idea for FODDERApp, a complete system and mobile app for grass and grazing management.

Second and third prizes were awarded to team TREASURE, a pan-European team and team Space Junk from University of Padova, Italy.

They beat stiff competition from 42 other young people across 17 European countries. Judges selected six teams to take forward to the final 'live' judging round. Finalists were from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK and, for the first time in the competition, Ireland and Finland.

Farming by Satellite Prize is an initiative of the European GNSS Agency (GSA) and the European Environment Agency (EEA). It is sponsored by CLAAS, a leading manufacturer of agricultural engineering equipment. Reviewing the winning entries this year, GSA judge Reinhard Blasi said: "The outcome of this year´s Farming by Satellite Prize once again showed there is no better way for innovation than investing in and rewarding the next generation of farmers. The amount and quality of the entries we received indicate that we have interesting times ahead in the area of smart farming."

Commenting on the environmental aspect of entries, Hans Dufourmont of EEA added: "At a time when we are facing critical environmental and climate challenges, it is of increasing importance that we continue to encourage this type of strong innovative thinking from the next generation. Copernicus offers all citizens a vast array of data, but we rely on exactly this kind of new thinking shown in the Farming by Satellite competition to challenge and improve on how we are currently using satellite technologies and the data it provides. It is critical, challenging, but also promising."

Said Marcel Foelsch, Head of Precision Farming Services at CLAAS E-Systems: "The past summer, with its unusually high temperatures and low rainfall, highlighted how challenging agriculture is. It is undisputable that using raw materials sustainably and acting responsibly is necessary when coping with unpredictable conditions and aiming to reduce negative impacts for the future. The participants of this competition are aware of this and submitted great ideas that tackle the challenges of today. I was impressed by the quality and level of innovation of the concepts that made it difficult to nominate the best one."

The last words go to the winners who said: "This was an amazing experience we really enjoyed brainstorming and developing the idea back in Ireland. And meeting all the other finalists and judges here in Marseille was fantastic! We hope to keep these connections in years to come."

Entrants must be under the age of 32 and can take part as individuals or as a team. They can submit case studies of trials, or new ideas and innovations, particularly those relying upon European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS), the forthcoming Galileo system and Copernicus (the European Earth Observation Programme).

For more information visit: www.farmingbysatellite.eu or contact organiser Alexandru Burlacu at Alexandru.burlacu@askhelios.com.

More information:

The judges said about the winning idea:

"This team presented an idea with a strong focus on practical issues and use by farmers. During their final presentation we liked being asked to put ourselves in the shoes of the farmer! The idea has high market potential, the team already have a working prototype, and good examples of how it could work. They also handled our questions very well indeed."

The winners are:

FIRST	Team name: Teagasc "Feed On DemanD - wEdge & gRazing App" (FODDERApp)"	The team from Ireland have the concept of FODDERApp, a cross-platform application (app) for desktop, Android and iOS devices to help farmers to manage feeding demand efficiently. It uses available Copernicus Programme spatial data along with other real-time meteorological information to estimate above-ground biomass on a per-field basis employing machine learning algorithms. It will incorporate EGNOS to ensure the GPS positioning accuracy and integrity at field-scale.

SECOND	Team name: TREASURE "Galileo for automated transplanting"	The team from France and the UK identified transplanting of vegetables, tobacco, tree, shrub, grass and flowers as a high potential area for the exploitation of precision equipment and the use of GNSS (Galileo).
THIRD	Team name: Space Junk "Copernicus satellites data fusion for Management Zones definition"	The Italian team proposes to bring together satellite systems of different types and characteristics (spectral and temporal resolution) for use in Precision Agriculture. They then describe how data fusion techniques can combine data from multiple sensors and related information from associated databases to improve accuracy and use.