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Nextfood - Educating the next generation of professionals in the agrifood system

Practice Abstract #9: Aquaponics Project Wins Sustainable Supply Chain International Student Competition Game

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The Sustainable Supply Chain International Student Competition Games are an opportunity for Master students from any food-related study programme to participate in an online competition to develop and design their unique solution to an actual challenge in the food industry. Students voluntarily join this competition which requires i) identifying and solving real problems ii) action-oriented learning to train job-related skills and iii) a speaking opportunity at a professional conference for the winner. The winning project from the 2019 competition in Sustainable Aquaculture was "Towards sustainable awareness: Implementation of an aquaponic code of practice" and will be presented at Aquaculture Europe 2019.

The value of this real-world participatory student activity, with opportunities for student exploitation in a professional arena, is both to improve student skills and to generate novel ideas to improve food sustainability. Educators can use similar activities in other fields, engaging students and training them in soft and technical skills for the job market. Students take an active part in a series of webinars, engage and exchange ideas with external experts and with the other student teams. Students present their solutions in a written report and at a final virtual conference and a team of experts from academia and business evaluate the solutions on the grounds of originality, innovativeness and potential exploitability (application to industry and social, economic and environmental impact). Since food producers and processors partner with educators or professional associations all can benefit from entrepreneurial student ideas, putting winning projects into practice.