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Promoting sustainable food production by developing eco-efficient and tailor made packaging for fresh foods: The EcoBioCAP EU project

Nathalie GONTARD

National Institute for Agronomical Research (INRA), France

The paper aims at explaining at which levels packaging could be a key player for sustainable food consumption by improving food quality and safety preservation, and reducing food wastes management issues. An example of a current European research project, EcoBioCAP, illustrates how it is possible to improve the overall sustainability of food packaging. EcoBioCAP project aims to provide the food industry with customizable, eco-efficient, biodegradable packaging solutions with direct benefits both for the environment and consumers in terms of food quality and safety. This next-generation packaging is developed using advanced composite structures based on constituents (biopolyesters, fibres, proteins, polyphenolic compounds, bioadhesives and high-performance bio-additives) derived from food industry (oil, dairy, cereal and beer) by-products only and by applying innovative processing strategies (blends and multilayers at different scales) to enable customisation of the packaging's properties to fit the functional, cost, safety and environmental impact requirements of the targeted fresh perishable food (fruit and vegetables, cheese and ready-to-eat meals). The development of a decision support system for use by the whole packaging chain makes the EcoBioCAP technology accessible to all stakeholders.

Biography

Nathalie GONTARD is Research Director at INRA (National Institute for Agronomical Research), formerly Professor at the University of Montpellier II. She is co-author of more than 100 papers in peer-reviewed journals and leader of the "structure/mass transfert" research group working on integrated approach of the "packaging/food/processing" system with a focus on bio-materials, eco-design, safety and nanotechnologies. She has a strong international experience on research and was invited Professor at the Kyoto University in 1999 and 2010. As expert on multi-disciplinary and integrated approach, she participated in several national and European research policy development and evaluation missions. She has been leader or participant of more than 50 international (EU and developing countries), national projects, and industries. Currently, she is the coordinator of the EcoBioCAP EU FP7 (www.ecobiocap.eu) and NextGenPack (www.nextgenpack.eu) projects, expert at the EFSA, member of the European Technology Platform "Food for Life" board. Recently, she was the Conference chair of the EFFoST annual congress « A lunch box for tomorrow ».

Nathalie.Gontard@univ-montp2.fr