

SPI: Strategic Platform for Insects in Belgium

Belgium's Strategic Platform for Insects (SPI), is a platform that brings together researchers, policy makers and sector representatives on the topic insect breeding. The platform is joining forces to stand out as a strong Insect Community in Belgium (with focus on Flanders) with opportunities for worldwide collaborations.

As many innovative and relatively new sectors, the insect sector encountered difficulties such as fragmented knowledge and incomplete or unfit legislation.

To meet the growing demand for a **solid framework** and a **joint platform**, the Flemish Minister of Environment, Nature and Agriculture installed this Strategic Platform for Insects in 2015. This platform is meeting on a regular basis to exchange knowledge on and expertise in insect rearing and processing for food, feed, and industrial applications, taking a **bottom up approach**. Research needs are identified and prioritized, and information on new project proposals and novel research is shared. New initiatives or trends in the sector are mentioned. Current and future (European) legislation with impact on the insect sector is discussed, paying special attention to (legal and practical) challenges and barriers. In that way, the SPI is supporting policy makers who can take into account the insights and aspirations of both, the research community and the sector.

Flanders' Strategic Platform for Insects consists of:

- a steering committee
- a research working group
- an annual stakeholders event

The SPI is coordinated by the Flanders' Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Departement Landbouw en Visserij) and Flanders' Research Institute for agriculture, fisheries and food (ILVO).

Members of the insect platform are:

- Researchers working on different aspects of insect farming and processing, including rearing, upscaling, processing, valorisation, food safety, allergens, etc.
- Representatives of government services that interface with insect research (food and feed safety, environment, agriculture, public waste company, manure processing centre, etc.)
- Representatives of waste treatment companies (to examine the use of waste streams as a substrate for insect rearing and build in circularity)
- Representatives of farmers' unions (Boerenbond, ABS)
- Representatives of BIFF as a sector organisation of the Belgian insect breeders
- Representative of the Food Industry (Flanders' Food)

For more information: www.vlaanderen.be/landbouw/insecten