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PRESS RELEASE

DIGITALISATION OF THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR SOLUTION TO THE EFFECTS OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC

RO AgriFood Hacking – HAR 2020, the hackathon dedicated to the agri-food field is an initiative of the Asociația pentru Promovarea Alimentului Românesc – APAR, designed to bring together talented people to fight the world's biggest challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic, using the digitisation of the agri-food sector.

Between November 13-15, 2020 enthusiasts from various fields, from students, freelancers, engineers, software designers, programmers, to specialists in agriculture, marketing and sales responded to APAR's challenge to participate in this event. The actual performance of the hackathon was exclusively online, with 14 teams enrolled in the competition totalling 44 people. And because it is not easy to resist a 25-hour marathon competition, the finish line was crossed by 10 teams that presented 12 complete solutions to the jury, based on the [5 themes](#) proposed by APAR.

The process of developing solutions was supported with much enthusiasm and professionalism by [8 mentors](#), with extensive experience in the specific areas of the proposed themes. Mentors were with the teams, living with the participants the emotions of the presentation of the projects, as well as in the selection of the winners by the jury. The selection of the [9 members](#) of the jury was based on the criterion of diversity of the fields of activity: academics, public authorities and civil society.

The first 3 winning teams were AngusTerra (e.g. AgriTerra) consisting of Olimpia Copăceanaru, Adrian Stoica, Dan Birtaş and Ioan-Teodor Gociman, **Transilvania 2020** — Claudiu Frânc, Ioan Radu Moldovan, Daniel Ifrim, Chirilă Ioan and the **Agro Control** team composed of Cezar Dragos Geambașu and Ciprian Abramov.

The big winner, AngusTerra, proposed an intelligent solution to manage in extensive way grassland and bulls, based on IoT technologies and the use of satellite imagery. Smart pasture management platform helps farmers who need feasible solutions for the efficiency and solidity of businesses, given their difficulty to manage large grasslands efficiently, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second winning solution was proposed by the **Transilvania 2020** team and refers to the use of Artificial Intelligence (IA) to reduce the amount of substances to combat diseases and pests, the consumption of fossil fuels and the transparency of the use of treatments and fertilisers used on the farm. The proposed solution helps to reduce pollution, water consumption and increase the quality of agri-food products.

The 3rd place in the ranking was the **Agro Control** team, which presented 2 solutions: A smart agriculture module that will allow the farmer to automate through sensors the flow of information from agriculture (temperature, humidity, electrical conductivity, water content, oxygen level, volume of water in the soil). The second proposal presented by the team is an automatic pest detection system that provides real-time information on the occurrence of pests on different crops.

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All the proposed solutions will have a positive impact on the environment and sustainability in **the** context proposed by the EU Green Deal and the European strategy **Farm to Fork**. Solutions are also a response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by limiting human interaction in agri-food production processes. At the same time, the proposals introduce digitalisation elements for economic efficiency in agriculture, by optimising production costs, reducing expenditures and monitoring procedures.

The top 3 teams will be rewarded with prizes in products worth EUR 1000 each, designed to implement the winning solutions, as well as mentored over the next 6 months to develop and implement the 3 winning projects.

Although it was not present on the podium, the **Click Click Hack** team received a special award from mentors — *Mentors Award HAR2020*. Maricica Stoica, Liliana Mihalcea, Dimitrie Stoica and Olga Grecu proposed a solution (HARWa) to intelligently capitalise on by-products and fish waste resulting from the industrialisation of fish, which reduces the environmental footprint by eliminating the pollutants formed during the classical waste combustion. Given that this team was honorary awarded by mentors, APAR decided to offer 5 tablets, which, through the generosity of the **Click Click Hack** team, will reach the students from Cahul (Rep. of Moldova) who are studying at the Cross-Border Faculty of the "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galați, in order to support the learning process.

Beyond the solutions created, the hackathon has provided a positive working environment for participants, being a huge source of inspiration for stakeholders in agriculture, hope and optimism during this difficult time.

They aim, after the restrictions imposed by the pandemic will cease, to organise similar events that this time bring specialists, dedicated people to collaborate and generate innovative solutions for the agri-food sector.

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