

EIT Food Fight Podcast - S2 E12B - Connect Food V3.mp3

Lukxmi Balathasan [00:00:06] Welcome to this bonus episode of The Food Fight podcast from EIT Food.

Matt Eastland [00:00:11] In these episodes, we want to shine a light on new projects and agrifood startups and hear about their efforts to fight for a better future. This week, we're handing over to Maxine Roper to tell us about her startup Connecting Food, who are helping brands regain customer trust by providing total food chain transparency.

Maxine Roper [00:00:36] Hi, I'm Maxine Roper, Co-Founder of Connecting Food, we're part of the EIT Food Rising Food Stars, and we're fighting for the future of food because we're making retailers and food producers more profitable by increasing traceability in supply chains and providing transparency to the consumer about where their food comes from.

[00:01:00] Yeah, we're actually tracing food so that consumers can see all this information and people that are actually selling the food, so brands and retailers, they can be absolutely sure that all the food is really in line with what is written on the pack. So if it says, for example, it's organic, then we know that the ingredients in that pack really are organic and it's absolutely certain. You're a consumer, you go in a store, you want to buy some ham, you can see this QR code, you flash it with the camera on your smartphone and you will automatically see the whole history of where that food comes from. So you can go back to the farm. You can see which farmers actually raised the pigs, how they were fed. You can find out a whole load of stuff about what is actually with the animal feed made from, is it organic? If you're actually buying organic eggs, you know, the farm is in France, it's in Germany, it's in Belgium. It really connects consumers back to the farm. And it's very engaging for the consumer to actually be able to find out where the food comes from.

[00:02:10] We were actually saying that there is a whole load of stuff that's happening in the food supply chain, which is great, you know, we were working in branded food manufacturers and then we're actually working in the companies that have all the farms, have all the producers and all the agricultural side of things that are producing that. And the story behind that is really interesting when you're consumer to go behind a brand and see the reality of where the product comes from and how it was actually produced. You know, where we were working in these different companies and where we were seeing all of that, we thought, well, you know, the digital side of things can help us show that story through the pack because food packaging now is full of a lot of legal labels. There's not much space left to say, you know, where does this product come from? And you can actually put it, a QR code on the pack, which will extend the pack into your smartphone and you can see that story. That's great for brands and it's great for retailers to be able to show that to different consumers.

[00:03:15] Consumers want more transparency, but brands and retailers, they're not able to do that today because the supply chains are very complex and because the systems behind all of that to actually manage the supply chains, they're fairly obsolete. They're a few decades old, whereas today the technology exists to be able to show that in real time, to be able to show the product journey so that the different producers can share their information. And all of that can be put together to be shown to the consumer. But to be able to do that, you also need the behind the scenes traceability and quality auditing systems to be in real time. And that's what we bring to the market. We will actually update

all of those systems so that behind the scenes, the brand or the retailer, they are really confident in the quality of what they've done because they're following it in real time so they can really show it to the consumer. And it's in that order that we're actually changing the food industry.

[00:04:27] Between 2016 and 2020, the world has changed. I mean, even covid has made the food industry aware that they need to change in 2016. We already had this vision, but nobody was really in a hurry to say, ok we need to start changing stuff. But over the years, some food scandals and all that, suddenly made all these different food companies and the retailers realise it's no longer an option not to be transparent. So I'm pretty proud of having contributed to that because we could have given up three years ago, but we didn't. We thought, you know, we really believe in that and we really believe that the consumer is going to demand that it's going to have to happen.

[00:05:18] We've been working with EIT Food for over a year, and we're very pleased to be able to participate in different events and work with the ecosystem of start-ups to add extra features to the value proposition and to improve food. So working together, we can each bring a break and do an amazing new building and change the world of food. So we're really pleased to be part of that.

[00:05:45] I think that in the future, basically, you know, I really want to know who produced this product, I know where it came from, not generally, I really want to know where that batch of product comes from, because I want to be sure before I give it to my children, before I eat it myself. Who's actually handled that food? Which country does it come from? Which region? And how is it actually produced? And all that transparency is absolutely necessary and consumers are now demanding it and in the future it won't be an option. Everybody is going to have to show that kind of information on the pack. And since food packaging is too small, I think that the digitally enabled side of things is going to allow that because QR codes are a big thing on packs which enable to be able to tell a story behind the product, the real story, where it comes from, who made it and connects us back to the people that are actually behind that particular food product.

[00:06:46] So my message, it would be that tomorrow is all about transparency and food and the marketing of proof and actually showing where the food really came from, who made that food, the whole of the journey of that food from the farm right down to the store. That's really the future. And the technology is there to be able to do it. And Connecting Food platform is there to help you go on that journey.

Lukxmi Balathanan [00:07:15] Thanks for listening to this bonus episode of The Food Fight podcast.

Matt Eastland [00:07:19] To find out more and to learn how you can get involved in the fight for a better future, head over to eitfood.eu/podcast.

[00:07:31] For more information on Connecting Food, head over to connecting-food.com.