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Report on meetings with EU institutions and bodies



E.1.2 Information and communication activities

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Authors

CNR

Matilde Schirru (IBE)
Elena Campus (IBE)
Enrico Vagnoni (IBE)
Pierpaolo Duce (IBE)
Pasquale Arca (IBE)
Antonello Franca (ISPAAM)

Agris Sardegna

Giovanni Molle
Mauro Decandia

Assessorato Difesa Ambiente – RAS

Federica Romano
Stefano Tronci
Gianluca Cocco

LAORE

Narciso Monni
Domenico Usai
Alberto Manca

UNISS

Alberto S. Atzori (Dip. Agraria)
Mondina Lunesu (Dip. Agraria)
Marco Vannini (DiSEA)
G.B. Concu (DiSEA)

Coordinated by:



CNR IBE

Institute of BioEconomy

Executive summary

This document contains reports and correlated materials of the meetings with the EU institutions and bodies, realized within the 'E.1.2 Communication and dissemination activities' sub-action.



Summary

Introduction	1
1. Promotion of the SheepToSHIP LIFE and exchange of experiences at the 3rd Annual meeting of the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership (LEAP). FAO -Rome (Italy), Rome, 21 September 2017.....	2
2. Meeting with meeting with EU institutions and stakeholders. “Environmental actions for the EU sheep sector”, Brussels, 23 January 2019	3
3. Participation to Carbon Farming Schemes in Europe – Roundtable, European Commission - Brussels, 9th October, 2019	13
4. Online meetings with representatives of European Commission's DG Agriculture and rural development (from mars 2020 to june 2021)	14



Introduction

Institutional meetings with EU institutions and bodies are key actions of the SheepToShip LIFE Communication strategy and will be devoted to the capitalization of project results in environmental and rural development policies.

The inclusion of policy makers from the environmental, climate and rural development sectors on regional, national, and European levels is essential for guaranteeing the sustainability of the project results far into the future. The end goal of the project is to transfer the knowledge generated into an Environmental Action Program for the sheep sector of Sardinia, which harmonizes the project's intervention strategy with regional policies to mitigate climate change. Therefore, methods and innovation generated from the project must be effectively translated into a simplified system of information to be transmitted to political decision-makers. The promotion of innovative means of production based on the Life Cycle Thinking proposed by SheepToShip LIFE in the social, economic and political spheres depends largely on the ability to communicate and cooperate effectively with the EU institutions.



**1. Promotion of the SheepToSHIP LIFE and exchange of experiences at the 3rd Annual meeting of the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership (LEAP).
FAO -Rome (Italy), Rome, 21 September 2017**

Pierpaolo Duce (CNR IBIMET) participated in the 3rd Annual meeting of the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership (LEAP) held at FAO headquarter in Rome, on 21st of September 2017. The main aims of the participation were the consolidation of the SheepToShip LIFE network and the exchange of experiences with the LEAP global partnership community.

The meeting was organized by the FAO's Animal Production and Health Division. More than 100 participants joined the LEAP Annual Meeting to discuss the role of livestock sector in global sustainable development. Participants included representatives of Governments, Private sector, NGOs, CSOs and other stakeholders as well as academia and research centres. The participation in the meeting consisted also in the presentation, during the afternoon session entitled "From tools to Action", of the main goals, activities and expected results of the SheepToShip project.

During the meeting, Pierpaolo Duce had the opportunity to discuss and have a fruitful exchange of opinions with a number of participants coming from relevant institutions and bodies in the livestock sector: from the University of California – Davis to AgResearch – New Zealand, from the Joint Research Center – European Commission to Agriculture and Agri-food Canada to the International Reference Centre for the Life Cycle of Products, Processes and Services – Canada to the Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria – Uruguay.

Most of the participants appreciated the SheepToShip effort as well as the methodologies proposed by the project, and showed to be interested to receive further information and to collaborate during the project and in future initiatives.

Our participation in the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership proved the interest generated by this project in the LEAP community. The project was considered a relevant experience for building credible, effective and robust accounting methods and metrics that serve as a foundation to address the sustainability challenges by the livestock sector, and, in particular, by the small ruminant sector. In the opinion of participant with whom Pierpaolo Duce spoke, SheepToShip was also viewed as an opportunity to support the transition towards more sustainable food and agriculture by improving the environmental performance of small ruminants supply chain while ensuring social and economic viability.

2. Meeting with meeting with EU institutions and stakeholders. “Environmental actions for the EU sheep sector”, Brussels, 23 January 2019

Report on the

1st meeting with EU institutions and stakeholders

Environmental actions for the EU sheep sector



Brussels, 23-01-2019

Introduction

The meeting *Environmental actions for the EU sheep sector* was held on 23 January at the premises of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia in Brussels, from 09.00 AM to 02.00 PM.

This meeting was meant to offer scientific input and practical support to policy makers and regulators (at local, national and European level) who have to define fundamentals and parameters for agriculture and livestock measures, taking into account the evidence base of knowledge and the good practices developed by the projects initiatives carried out for improving and innovating livestock systems. The main goal of the meeting was to promote the interplay between environmental and rural development strategies through a collaborative process for defining agro-environmental measures to mitigate GHG emissions from the sheep sector within the next Rural Development Programmes.

The Sardinia Region Minister for the Environment, representatives of two Directorate-Generals of the European Commission (CLIMA and AGRI), the European Network for Rural Development as well as the partnerships of selected EU projects were invited as speakers. The day's proceedings included a round table to stimulate an open debate amongst stakeholders, such as scientific and technical experts, public institutions and farmers representatives. The (small) cluster of projects involved was: SheepToShip LIFE, LIFE Forage4Climate, SheepNet (H2020), Inno4Grass (H2020) and DairyClim LIFE, that share a common vision driven by the integration between economic targets and social, environmental and climatic benefits.

The meeting was attended by 39 people in total, from the following organisations: 17 (44% of the total) from the above mentioned EU projects; 11 (28%) from several European Institutions (DG AGRI, DG CLIMA, ENRD, EASME/LIFE Programme, European Shepherds Network, ENVE Commission of the Committee of the Regions); 4 (10%) from the Italian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism; 3 (8%) from the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Agriculture and Relationships with EU departments); 2 (5%) from Unioncamere Lombardy (Italy); 1 (3%) from the EU's Permanent Delegation of Castilla y Leon Region (Spain); 1 (3%) from Occitanie Europe (France).



Contributions of invited speakers

A short summary of each speech presented according to the agenda of the meeting is provided below. Full presentations are attached to this report.

Opening Remarks (by Pierpaolo Duce – CNR IBIMET)

- SheepToShip LIFE, logical framework and its transferability and transnational relevance;
- Dimension and relevance of the Sardinian sheep sector;
- Presentation of the meeting: objectives, key highlights and invited speakers. The main questions are: (i) What are the most effective ways to optimize the efficiency of production systems providing both environmental and socio-economic benefits? (ii) How grass-based farms can valorise their environmental role within the transition towards a bioeconomy-based society? (iii) How EU AGRI/CLIMA policies can support climate change mitigation actions in the sheep/livestock sector improving, at the same time, farm competitiveness?

Integrating environmental considerations in the agricultural policy process: from local to European strategies (by Alessandro Portoghesi, on behalf of Donatella Spano –Minister of Sardinia Region for the Environment Protection)

- Main European policy framework for a bioeconomy-based society;
- The environmental sustainability of the agriculture sector envisaged/addressed by UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Italian Strategy on Sustainable Development;
- The role of the livestock sector in Global Climate Change;
- The Sardinia Region strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Specific actions for agriculture and livestock sector (promoting precision farming systems, Research&Development projects, cooperative approach and communication/networking).



Main results, sustainability and replicability of EU projects for innovating the livestock sector (by Giovanni Molle, Alberto Atzori, Antonello Carta, Françoise Lessire, Antonello Franca)

- The SheepToShip LIFE project was presented by Giovanni Molle (Agris Sardegna).
- The LIFE Forage4Climate project was presented by Alberto Atzori (University of Sassari).
- The SheepNet H2020 project was presented by Antonello Carta (Agris Sardegna).
- The DairyClimLIFE was presented by Françoise Lessire (University of Liege).
- The Innov4Grass H2020 project was presented by Antonello Franca (CNR ISPAAM).



These projects were selected considering the synergies between their areas of interest and strategy. Basically, three main themes run like a scarlet thread through the five projects: i) innovation of livestock farming systems; 2) sustainability of production systems in environmental, economic and social terms; 3) networking and knowledge transfer/share among farmers, researchers and policy makers. The projects/institutions involved in the meeting have well-established collaboration relations with the SheepToShip LIFE initiative, being part of the project's network. Of course, the invited projects do not represent an exhaustive picture of the overall European initiatives on these themes, while being a significant cluster focused on



sustainability of livestock production systems through different but converging points of view, aimed at improving their environmental, economic and social efficiency.

Environmental and climate targets to bolster bio-economy in Europe (by Christine Moeller – DG CLIMA)

- Relevance of the LIFE Programme as an instrument to demonstrate and deliver environmental benefits on the ground;
- Need for the DG CLIMA to understand the success factors of the presented projects, how the environmental impact is measured and to assess whether and how the proposed measures have been implemented by farmers;
- In developing appropriate strategies for the agricultural sector, it has to be taken into account that agriculture must respond efficiently to some crucial and practical questions, such as how to improve nutrition, soil quality, production efficiency, sustainability and resilience;
- Full engagement of farmers and the implementation of the proposed measure as paramount to the success of all the presented projects;
- EC's next steps: fostering land use efficiency; eco-scheme and farm C emission protocol.

Climate Change mitigation and adaptation within the new CAP (Nicola Di Virgilio – DG AGRI)

- Climate Change, the double role of agricultural systems;
- Climate related expenditures in the CAP 2014-2020;
- Support of the current CAP to climate change and sustainable management, approaches and measures. Focus on sheep and goat sector;
- The CAP post-2020, a new approach. Policy context for implementing climate measures and practices;
- EIP-Agri, relevant Focus Groups on Animal-related issues;
- #EU2050, towards climate neutral Europe.

Sharing good practices and Pilots' results to support the design of the post-2020 CAP Strategic Plans (by Flavio Conti - European Network for Rural Development)

- Presentation of the ENRD: mission, structure, objectives, activities.
- ENRD project database for dissemination of good practices.
- Key messages resulting from ENRD activities: new approaches from R&D EU projects.
- Opportunities by RD/CAP 2014-2020 and perspectives from post-2020 CAP.

- The Sardinia Region strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Specific actions for agricultural and livestock sector (promoting precision farming systems, Research&Development projects, cooperative approach and communication/networking).

Open Debate (moderated by Antonio Raschi – CNR IBIMET)

The debate mainly focused on the following invited contributions.

Verdiana Morandi (member of European Shepherds Network and president of Rete APPIA - Italian Network of Pastoralism Onlus)

- Technology and knowledge derived from EU project and research activities are key tools for shepherds.
- Shepherds are ready to deal with the challenge of innovation and greening of their production systems but there is still a gap/distance between farmers' needs, researchers/technicians approaches and policy-makers mind-sets. An additional effort is needed in order to involve shepherds in decision-making and in knowledge transfer processes more effectively (considering, for example, that the hard work on field doesn't allow them to participate often in training events organized away from home or during the production season);
- The environmental role of grass-based and/or multifunctional sheep farms should be recognized also in economic terms by public incentives that should be designed and implemented in a clear and easy form, also for small farms. Sometimes, there is some contradictions between rural and environmental policies (i.e. valorisation of extensive livestock systems vs protection schemes of wildlife predators).

Maria Poddie (Regional Ministry for Agriculture of Sardinia)

- Climate change and adaptation strategy and actions in the actual Sardinian RDP;
- Main concerns related to the implementation of greening (RDP) measures for the sheep sector;
- The engagement of the Sardinian Ministry for Agriculture to boost the environmental quality of sheep farming systems.



Silvia Baralla and Antonio Caira (Italian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism – MIPAAFT)

- The effort of MIPAAFT for promoting climate change and adaptation actions for the livestock sector;
- The Quality of livestock products as main driver of the sector's development strategy.

Manuel Del Pozo Ramos (DG AGRI Unit G.3 Animal Products)

- The situation of the EU sheep meat market sector.

Additional contributions addressed the themes related to i) a distorted picture of farmers' role from the general public, ii) the needs for smart indicators for implementing effective agri-environmental measures, iii) the rural development strategy for the greening of the sheep sector should define specific measures for dairy and meat supply chains, in order to consider the relevant difference among their sheep farm management systems, iv) the environmental role of legume based mixture.



Main results and closing remarks

The meeting was attended by a quite representative group of the main EU stakeholders targeted by SheepToShip LIFE. Participants contributed actively to develop the main themes of the agenda in a satisfactory way.

The main outcomes of the meeting are summarized below:

- All participants agreed with the idea that the improvement of the environmental performances of livestock systems represents a clear priority for the new CAP agenda, taking also into account the socio-economic benefits that this will bring.
- The representatives of the invited projects highlighted that their own experiences point towards definite progress in improving the overall efficiency of production systems, and this could provide a basis of knowledge and data to inform the design of the future Rural Development Programmes.
- A comment from a sheep sector expert stressed that the dairy and meat sheep supply chains have to be considered as different sectors that need specific policy measures.
- The active participation of DG AGRI and CLIMA, as well as of national and regional institutions, confirmed that policy-makers representatives and regulators are open to listen and carefully consider bottom-up proposals.
- The debate initiated by this meeting contributed to promote and increase the institutional relationships among all the organizations that participated, boosting effective cooperation and networking.
- One point that was mentioned during the meeting and briefly discussed concerns the interest/opportunity to involve in future events stakeholders that consider (i) climate actions unnecessary or (ii) livestock as a serious threat for environmental sustainability. A range of views expressed in opposition can lead to a more effective debate and a stronger message.
- In general, the discussion during the meeting focused much more on general aspects of livestock farming than on specific aspects of the sheep sector. One of the desired result of the meeting was to design a preliminary roadmap for defining agro-environmental measures within the next Rural Development Plan, aimed at reducing GHG emissions from the sheep milk sector. This is a significant point that needs to be assessed immediately after the meeting, since it represents a key element of future actions.

In conclusion, coming-back to the explorative/preliminary goal of this initiative, we received largely positive feedback from participants and we can consider the main expected results reached.

Next steps

Moving from the results of the Meeting, the next steps will be the organization of: i) a meeting in Rome, during springtime 2019 and aimed at promoting environmental and rural development joint actions at national level; ii) a dissemination event, that will take place in Cagliari (Sardinia) in summertime 2019, in order to capitalize and share the preliminary results of the cooperation between the SheepToShip LIFE partnership and the Ministry for Agriculture of the Sardinia Region. Then, a second European meeting will be organized in Brussels as final step of this process.





Please find attached on the left of this document:

- Agenda of the meeting *Environmental actions for the EU sheep sector*
- Attendance sheet of the meeting *Environmental actions for the EU sheep sector*

3. PARTICIPATION TO CARBON FARMING SCHEMES IN EUROPE – ROUNDTABLE, EUROPEAN COMMISSION - BRUSSELS, 9TH OCTOBER, 2019

Pierpaolo Duce (CNR IBE) was invited and participated in the roundtable on result-based carbon farming in Europe held at the Barleymont, in Brussels, on 9th of October 2019. The main aims of the roundtable was exchanging experiences and discussing the lessons learned from existing carbon farming schemes.

The meeting was organized by the European Commission, DG CLIMA, in cooperation with DG AGRI. Contributions from 75 stakeholders and more than 350 online views via web-streaming made it possible to have a large and useful discussion about possible approaches, coverage, and practical workability of result-based carbon farming.

The 75 stakeholder participants in person came from across Europe and represented NGOs, farming associations, the local, national, and European government, science, and industry. In addition, live web streaming enabled a further 364 external viewers to follow discussions and contribute questions.



The presentations and discussions explored existing examples of relevant European schemes and projects and discussed how these could be scaled up across Europe. The Roundtable offered a chance for stakeholders to discuss the most promising options for result-based carbon farming schemes in Europe, with the aim of informing the further exploration of carbon farming scheme options in Europe.

One of the invited rapporteurs, who introduced schemes that have been developing components of result-based carbon farming schemes for European livestock and arable farms, mentioned the SheepToShip LIFE project as one the European activities that is substantially contributing to developing and consolidating carbon farming programs for the livestock sector.

Our participation in the Roundtable on Carbon Farming Schemes in Europe proved the interest generated by SheepToShip LIFE at European level. The participation in the roundtable gave Pierpaolo Duce also the opportunity to discuss and have a fruitful exchange of opinions with a number of participants coming from relevant institutions and bodies, interested in developing new initiatives on carbon-farming schemes in the livestock sector.

4. ONLINE MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S DG AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (FROM MARS 2020 TO JUNE 2021)

Periodic meetings with representatives of the European Commission's DG Agriculture and rural development were held during the period June 2020 - June 2021 within the information and communication activities developed by the SheepToShip LIFE project. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, all the meetings took place online (on 22/06 and 29/09 in 2020, and on 14-19-31/05 and 03-07/06 in 2021), with the participation of Mr. Pierpaolo Duce (CNR IBE) and Mr. Nicola di Virgilio (policy analyst at DG Agri, Unit D.4 Environment, climate change, forestry and bio-economy).

The general objectives of this continuous dialogue were:

- update DG AGRI about the activities and the main outcomes of the SheepToShip LIFE project;
- exchange views about the main aspects touched by the projects and the possible policy implications;
- have comments and practical and strategic suggestions from DG AGRI to ensure consistency and foster a synergic integration of the project outcomes with/into the environmental, climate, and rural development policies at Regional, National and European level;

The discussion between SheepToShip LIFE and DG AGRI has been going on for one year, covering two main points:

- Result-based carbon farming mechanisms that offer a promising way to incentivise farmers to take effective and efficient climate actions on their farms, because the farmer gets paid in accordance with the amount of GHG emissions reductions they achieve;
- EU methane strategy, including methods for measuring emissions in the livestock sector and simulation models to be used for estimating methane emissions and individuate possible actions to reduce them.

The results of this continuous dialogue were successful and beneficial for both the project and DG AGRI, which has being had the opportunity to touch experiences, successes and shortcomings of a demonstrative project on climate change mitigation in the livestock sector.

At the end of this exchange of ideas and views, both sides firmly agree to continue this successful dialogue beyond the end of the SheepToShip LIFE project.

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