

## Everything you need to know about sheep on one digital platform

**An Operational Group in Bulgaria is developing a national web-based platform to pool resources and knowledge and create a place for different stakeholders from the sheep breeding sector to exchange experiences. Simeon Karakolev from the project "The 'All for the sheep' platform features everything you would need to know about sheep breeding and processing of sheep products. This ranges from individual testimonies from farmers on overcoming challenges, to scientific research on sheep breeds to funding opportunities and legislation information." This activity ties into AKIS (Agricultural knowledge and information systems), ensuring knowledge is evenly spread amongst sheep breeders as well as students, researchers, consumers and investors across Bulgaria.**

The project identified two major problems in the sheep breeding sector in Bulgaria. There is a lack of information available to farmers, who are very busy working on everyday problems. The second is related to long supply chains, which increase intermediary costs and reduce farm income. This can be rather demotivating for farmers who are seeking to increase their standard of living. The project partners believed that user-friendly digital technologies can be an effective way to spread information to those who need it or are seeking it. The aim of the 'All for the sheep' platform therefore is to increase access to knowledge and resources in order to improve the productivity and competitiveness of farms, and provide solutions to common problems combining a scientific and practical approach.

The project is coordinated by the National Sheep and Goat Breeding Association (NOKA), and brings in other specialists from the sector. An IT company is developing the web platform and training the project team on how to publish data in the system. The team is collecting and organising information in an accessible and logical way so that it can easily be found by users.

The main part of the platform consists of information about sheep breeds, population and distribution of sheep breeding in Bulgaria. This includes the quality of different breeds, the quality of raw materials and their use in industry, news and recommendations on animal nutrition, milking, innovation, prevention of diseases.

Simeon Karakolev continues "We are applying an interdisciplinary approach, collating information in the field of sheep breeding but also legislation, science and business. The platform will provide complete information about the specific possibilities of using sheep products." The platform contains listings of resources, businesses and institutions relevant to sheep farming and related production processes. These include scientific, policy-related, legal and industrial content. It will serve as a unique electronic register of the sheep farming sector in Bulgaria. It also hosts an interactive map showing the distribution of breeds per region, prices of live goods and raw materials, climate information etc. A forum will allow users to collaborate and talk with one another. The platform will be regularly updated with news and events.

Simeon Karakolev explains "By using this platform, sheep farmers and other users can learn from best practices, find out about the latest research, understand legal issues. They will have better awareness of funding and support opportunities in the sector. We want to generally improve sheep farming, the resilience and competitiveness of farms, increasing access to innovation, raising the quality of products and allow farmers to reduce their costs."

Simeon Karakolev continues “The platform will also be a place of information for consumers, they will be able to find reliable information on sheep milk and meat products.”

The development of the platform is now finalised and it is currently being tested. Once it is released, it will be widely promoted across the country, including publications in the most relevant regional and national newspapers and radio stations. Project members are also distributing leaflets to farmers directly.

### More information

- **Contact:** Simeon Karakolev, Co-chairman of NOKA and legal representative [office@noka.bg](mailto:office@noka.bg)
- **Operational Group webpage on EIP-AGRI Database**
- The platform will be part of the website: [vsichkozaovcete.eu](http://vsichkozaovcete.eu)

