

ITALY

Agri-food chain integration & quality

Location

Segariu

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P3 - Food chain & risk
Management

Measure

M14 – Animal welfare

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1 500
EAFRD 720
National/Regional 780

Project duration

2019 – 2020

Project promoter

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Website

n/a

A livestock farmer received training and undertook a consultation to find out how to improve animal welfare on his farm.

Summary

The region of Sardinia has a good track record of high quality cattle breeding and production. In this specific case, the beneficiary farm breeds cattle in stables, predominantly for meat production. In response to consumer concerns about animal welfare and also due to potential for generating added value, the farmer participated in a number of training courses and received specialised advice on how to improve the living conditions for his livestock.



Results

Improving living conditions for livestock created better quality meat which was then sold at the local market.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ When taking on such an important commitment it is important to register of all the requested information and maintain good communication with the authorities. This can prevent economic sanctions due to errors.
- ❑ Nowadays consumers are concerned about the origin of a product and that the animals have been treated well. For this reason, it is important to inform consumers that animal welfare is a key concern in the production process.

Context

A SWOT analysis carried out in Sardinia highlighted the prevalently extensive nature of the zootechnical farms in Sardinia (less than one livestock unit per hectare). Approximately 80% of the utilised agricultural area is used for feeding animals on permanent meadows and pastures, as well as cultivated grasslands and forage legumes. Livestock breeding is practiced by 34% of Sardinian farms. Most farms produce milk (sheep, goat and dairy cattle) and meat (beef cattle and pigs).

The production of calves or bullocks for fattening in specialised facilities in Sardinia, or in other regions (northern Italy), is managed in a closed cycle. Around 77% of farms and regional leaders fall within the provinces of Sassari, Olbia-Tempio and Nuoro. The most common breeds are the native Sardinian, Sardinian-brown, Sardinian-Modica and purified breeds (Limousin and the Charolais). Fixed stable breeding is also present and tends to be concentrated in the Oristano and lower Campidano areas (the project area).

Objectives

The project has two main objectives. Overall, it aims to protect the environment and help to tackle climate change by adopting an extensive farming system. It also aims to improve the competitiveness of the farm by improving the farmer's knowledge of animal welfare systems and responding to consumer demands.

Activities

The farmer participated in animal welfare courses. These included courses delivered both outside the farm and on site. In the first case, the owner participated in classes organised by the regional agency for the implementation of regional programs in agriculture and rural development. In the second case, a consultant from the same agency visited the farm. The total course hours was 16 (14 hours in class and 2 hours on the farm).

The farmer and the consultant discussed different issues on animal welfare management. These including methods of:

- cleaning and management of the animals living space;
- keeping records on changes of straw and its composition;
- on the presence of parasites by checking around the 20% of the new animals;
- on diseases and restraining them; the use of straw bedding by completely changing it every two weeks and adding a new layer every one and half day (generally wheat and/or straw).

Consultants advised that the floor must be cement and not cracked. Every two weeks the manure must be removed and stored in an external tank. The mature manure can be then spread on the fields.

Main results

Improving living conditions for livestock created better quality meat which was then sold at the local market.

Key lessons

The project is based on a series of activities and recommendations/commitments that each farmer should take on which go beyond the ordinary practice and obligations. These are very important in order for a farm to be sustainable, not only in environmental terms, but also in terms of economic and social results.

The registration of all the requested information on the online platform and good communication with the authorities can prevent the risk of economic sanctions due to errors.

Another important lesson is the importance of sending the right messages to the market. Nowadays consumers are very concerned about the origin of a product and how animals have been treated. For this reason, it is important to inform consumers that animal welfare is a key concern in the production process.

Additional sources of information

n/a