

Official signs of quality in livestock production systems: Multi-performance from farm to society

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Consumer demand is increasing for products with strong warranties regarding animal welfare, environmental respect or organoleptic quality. These warranties are generally given through official labels, transcribed into official specifications regarding farming practices. We studied one monogastric production (Label Rouge chicken) and one ruminant production (organic lamb) and evaluated the different ecosystemic services they provide. Similar elements of the specifications can be found in both productions, in particular a lower intensification (animal density, limited use of some inputs). These elements lead in particular to lower feeding efficiency and productivity which can increase some environmental impacts (e.g. GHG emission) when expressed per kg of product. Yet, other properties of these systems can counterbalance this, such as the reduction of inputs (e.g. no chemical fertilisers in organic farming) and soil carbon sequestration in outdoor areas. Besides, results of the assessment of environmental impact (as GHG emissions) depend on the functional unit, and are, in these productions, lower when expressed by € of product. Products from both productions have indeed a higher added value compared to conventional ones: consumers are willing to pay for them as they return a positive image regarding animal welfare, organoleptic quality or the link to the “terroir”. In order to maximise environmental and socio-economic services while improving “provisioning” one, several solutions, at different scales, can be proposed. At animal scale, the main issues are the improvement of feed efficiency, adaptation to local conditions, and ewe productivity. The use of agroecology and territorial metabolism principles should help, at farm scale, to (re-)connect crop and livestock productions and, at regional scale, to imagine new synergies between farms. Collective organisation would indeed be a mean to improve the sustainability of livestock systems by 1) closing nutrient cycles by feed-manure exchanges, 2) organising selection of adapted genotypes (rustic breeds with low populations), 3) (re)building landscape with connected infrastructures and reinforced ecological regulations, 4) organising the sale of products, which can be strongly season-based for ruminants.