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Assessing performance and management of European local pig breeds in project TREASURE

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Unlike in modern breeds, the knowledge on performance and management of local pig breeds is very limited. These are key aspects to be developed for their successful exploitation that requires strategies adapted to their specific productive and metabolic characteristics, quite different from those of modern pig breeds, to ensure their preservation and future expansion, particularly for those more endangered. These are some of the challenges addressed by the project TREASURE. For this purpose, a series of experiments involving 11 European local breeds -differing in the level of development- have been carried out covering various and complementary aspects like nutritional requirements in different productive phases (Cinta Senese, Iberian), feeding practices involving locally available resources (Krskopolje, Schwäbisch-Hällisches, Turropolje, Mangalitsa, Bisaro, Iberian, Gascon), and innovative management and housing practices to enhance product quality or improve animal welfare (Cinta Senese, Alentejano, Bisaro, Iberian, Mangalitsa, Moravka, Krskopolje, Schwäbisch-Hällisches, Black Slavonian). All these activities have been designed to obtain essential information to develop future productive strategies for each of the involved breeds, taking into account to obtain local high-quality products, and seeking for optimum pig performance and high animal welfare conditions in the production systems under consideration. The information provided constitutes a unique and valuable set of data for the management of these breeds and the further development of local pork chains. In some cases it is the first available data for the breeds concerned. A general overview of the developed activities will be presented highlighting some of the achievements obtained. Funded by European Union's H2020 RIA program (Grant agreement no. 634476).

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State of equine data available today at European level

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Knowledge of equine industries in Europe is deficient in the field of socio-economic data. The specificity of the horse is one of the main causes. Indeed, compared to other animal species, the equines are very specific. Their different values, the reasons for their breeding, their different life cycles, adapted to the heterogeneity of relationships that men have with them, makes them a species apart from the others. For this reason, they cannot be counted the same as cattle, sheep or poultry. Within the European institutions, two organizations manage data on the equine sector. Eurostat, and within the Health DG, the TRACES service. In both cases, the data are incomplete. For Eurostat, the data come from each Member States and from the FAO, which have only pure agricultural data (slaughter horses). In both cases, data are very incomplete and depend on the size of the sector in the country concerned, the collection or not of the equine data, the scope and method chosen. The TRACES service records the health movements of certain horses in Europe. Again, the data are very partial because not all horses are registered. The actors of the equine industry need urgently precise and comparable figures. Efforts must therefore be made at European level on the raw knowledge itself, on the definition of the scope and on the method of collection and classification. This work is likely to be even more difficult at European level as Eurostat plans to no longer integrate equine data into its agricultural statistics after 2020.