

Using participatory research approaches to favour grazing practices of large herds of dairy cows

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Introduction

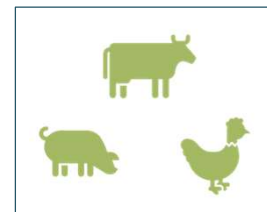
The “LIT OUESTEREL” association is an open innovation device that relies on **living lab** principles. Its ambition is to **reconcile livestock and society** by addressing societal issues linked to **animal welfare** and the **use of antimicrobials**, while guaranteeing animal health, and improving income, work and living conditions of actors (farmers, carriers, slaughterers).



Located in the west part of France



Covers three species: poultry, pigs and cattle



Methods

We develop in Normandy a specific project aimed at **maintaining grazing practices for large herds of dairy cattle**. This project relies on a six-year experiment called **TripI'XL** implemented at the INRAE experimental farm of Le Pin-au-Haras. The objective is to assess the **behaviour, the health and the welfare of dairy cows on pasture**, in particular by **developing animal welfare indicators of grazing cows** in order to **assess whether increasing pasture practices increases animal welfare**. In addition, the experiment is the concrete support of a **participatory approach involving all interested stakeholders** (direct and indirect users). So doing, we hope to better inform them on advantages and disadvantages of grazing, to **co-design complementary or alternative solutions** whose impact could be analysed and discussed thanks to the experiment, and to constitute a first circle of stakeholders, notably of farmers, in order to ensure the diffusion of good grazing practices. This will be achieved by **on-site meetings with professional and non-professional actors, creation participatory workshops**, the use of different diffusion supports (videos, social medias, etc.).

Results

It is too early to present first results of the experiment as only data for the first year (2021) of the experiment are available. However, we were able to start the participatory research. Notably, the experimental farm of Le Pin-au-Haras has opened its doors during four days in October 2021 in the framework of the Science Festival with visits and working workshops (farmers, scholars, citizens). One lesson that emerges is **co-constructing with all stakeholders on technical issues is difficult** because of knowledge gaps between professional and non-professional actors. This led us to adapt our **participatory methodology** on the basis of an “**Y**” approach. In parallel, we **have identified and characterized innovations** issued from research, development and innovation actors (top down innovations) and from farmers (bottom up innovations), that will contribute to codesign work.



Presentation of the TripI'XL experiment during the Science Festival (October 2021)

Conclusion

Despite we are still at an early stage of the project, a lesson that already emerges is that **the living lab approach offers opportunities to promote dialogue between livestock and society**. Even though this dialogue including all interested parties might be difficult, co-designing solution is a promising way will make possible to propose a shared future for livestock.

