

ITALY

Agri-food chain integration & quality

Location
Frontone

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P3 - Food chain & risk
management

Measure
M14 – Animal welfare

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 139 020
EAFRD 59 945
National/Regional 79 075

Project duration
2017 – 2022

Project promoter
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A family farm that breeds the protected Marchigiana cows received Measure 14 – *Animal welfare* support to improve the way their livestock are maintained.

Summary

The Filippini family farm is located some 70 km from the seaside of Pesaro, in Central Italy. The farm has been breeding Marchigiana cows for more than a century. The family realised that they could improve the traditional practice of ‘transhumance’, the practice of seasonally moving livestock for grazing, by applying new animal welfare standards.



After joining Measure 14, the Filippini family attended a mandatory training course on animal welfare. They set up specific spaces in the cowshed for quarantining and treating sick animals, which improved their chance of a full recovery. The family also introduced regular checks for common hygiene related diseases, to intervene more promptly and to reduce the overall use of medicines. This reduces the chance of drug resistance in the animals.

The farmer also started to check the quality of the water provided to the animals and the presence of mycotoxins in the feed in a systematic manner. Additionally, the animal diet is supervised by a veterinarian.

Results

Animal welfare has been improved as demonstrated by increase in fertility (+15% of calves born/year), the reduced birth mortality (-10%), and the reduced use of veterinary medicines.

The public image of the farm has improved, leading to more appreciation by its customers.

Cooperation has been established with nearby livestock breeders of Monte Catria area.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ A key limitation of Measure 14 is that usually Managing Authorities do not carry out detailed monitoring and ex-post evaluation beyond checking the typical compliance of beneficiaries with the commitments undertaken. This means that important data concerning critical results (e.g. changes in fertility and birth rates, changes in medicine use etc.) are not closely monitored and assessed.
- ❑ A critical and effective aspect of the Measure’s success is its requirement to provide training to breeders as a condition for receiving the grant.

Context

The Filippini family farm is located some 70 km from the seaside of Pesaro, in Central Italy. The farm has been breeding Marchigiana cows for more than a century. These huge animals are renowned for their tasty meat and are included among the five white cattle varieties in Central Italy that have been protected since the early seventies.

The farm used to move the herd to spend the summer months on pastures located about 30 km away from the farm at an altitude of 1 700 metres. The family realised that they could improve the practice of transhumance and improve the overall management of their livestock. For example, some hygiene problems needed to be addressed better.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Measure 14 in the Marche region are to:

- Raise awareness among breeders about potential improvements in aspects of health their herd;
- Improve the monitoring and treatment of common animal diseases;
- Foster knowledge exchanges among local breeders and farmers; and
- Offer a flexible menu of options for implementing the Measure according to specific needs.

Activities

Initially, the Filippini family attended a mandatory training course on animal welfare together with other breeders.

Then they extended the duration of the open range pasture at higher altitude from 3 to 6 months of the year. This enabled the animals to enjoy better conditions, increased their welfare and fertility, and reduced the risk of some hygiene diseases.

In addition, the farm set-up specific spaces in the cowshed for quarantining and for treating sick animals, improving their chances of a full.

The family also introduced regular checks for common hygiene diseases in order to intervene more promptly and to reduce the overuse of medicines, which can lead to drug resistance.

The farmer also started to check the quality of the water given to the animals, as well as the presence of mycotoxins in their feed more systematically.

Finally, the Measure stated that the animal diet should be supervised by a veterinary.

Main results

Animal welfare has improved as demonstrated by an increased fertility (+15% of calves born/year), the reduced birth mortality (-10%), and the reduced use of medicines.

The public image of the farm has improved, leading to more appreciation by its customers.

Cooperation has been established with nearby livestock breeders of the Monte Catria area. This is also aligned with the recent set up of an inter-sector partnership that involves breeders, butchers and restaurant owners under Measure 16 - *Cooperation*. This project aims at promoting the meat from herds that receive support under Measure 14.

Key lessons

Measure 14 has been structured well and this simplifies the requirements for beneficiaries.

However, its main limitation is that Managing Authorities do not carry out detailed monitoring and ex-post evaluation beyond checking the typical compliance of the beneficiary with the commitments undertaken. This means that important data concerning critical results (e.g. changes in fertility and birth rates, changes in medicine use etc.) are not closely monitored and assessed.

A critical and effective aspect of the Measure's success is its requirement to provide training to breeders as a condition for receiving the grant.



Additional sources of information

n/a