

EU CAP Network Focus Group ‘Alternative solutions for livestock product differentiation’

Flash report

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Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI



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This Focus Group included two in-person meetings (in Lisbon and Vienna) and gathered 20 experts from 11 Member States, including livestock farmers, researchers, advisors and innovation brokers.

It discussed innovative approaches for livestock product differentiation, identifying related research needs for practice and new ideas for EIP-AGRI Operational Groups.

Field visits

Field visits to 'Biohof Poyer', an organic, free-range laying hen farm, and pig farm 'Rauscher', both located in Austria, showed innovative business models for egg and pork production, processing and marketing. Different product differentiation strategies and instruments were presented, including mobile barns for laying hens, self-service vending machines, a farm shop, an innovative barn layout for pigs for upgraded animal welfare, and different quality label programmes (like Veal Rosé).

Highlighted outcomes

- Strategies for product differentiation should consider that the **top product attributes considered by consumers** are price, taste, health and nutritional value, and origin.
- The most **relevant marketing channels** for product differentiation are direct sale (farm shop, farmers market), online platforms, and HoReCa (hotels, restaurants and catering).
- Farmers face logistical challenges when developing new marketing channels, such as one-size-fits-all bureaucracy, excessive time dedication needs beyond normal farm operation, or difficulties to scale up when going beyond marketing small product quantities.
- Developing a communication strategy is a success factor: **"The way you talk about your products is very important"**.
- Certification schemes ensure that product attributes comply with certified standards and enable consumers to make informed choices.
- Packaging and labelling are important to effectively communicate quality attributes to consumers.

Four Mini Papers in progress

The Focus Group experts have been working on four Mini Papers, focused on: 1. quality and innovation to address evolving market demands; 2. labelling and certification in practice; 3. evidence-based environmental benefits for the differentiation of specific products; 4. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for product differentiation. Some of the 93 innovative practices collected are being explored in these four Mini Papers.

Key messages and takeaways:

Evidence-based information about livestock products can increase consumer confidence. Digital protocols and tools can collect and provide access to that information (e.g. QR codes). More research is needed to trace the origins (i.e. isotope analyses and omics-based methods) as well as show the higher nutritional value of livestock products from extensive/grazing farming systems (i.e. fatty acid composition).

Future Operational Groups could address innovation in achieving fairer pricing for differentiated products in relation to consumers, as well as attaining a fairer share of the value for farmers.



[Find out more on the event webpage](#)