

New trends for innovation in the Mediterranean animal production



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New trends for innovation in the Mediterranean animal production

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We would like to take a moment to mention that this book could not have been made without the work of our esteemed colleague Rémi Bouche who, we are sad to say, passed away in November 2009.

As researchers we grieve the passing of our colleague who was respected for his contributions to our scientific area.

This book was a project in which he, as an editor, invested a significant amount of time and effort.

We therefore also dedicate this publication
to the memory of
Rémi Bouche.

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Traditions in Mediterranean livestock activities: obstacle or source of innovations?

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Preface

R. Bouche, A. Derkimba and F. Casabianca

INRA, Research Laboratory on Livestock Development, Corte, France-

The Mediterranean Group

The Mediterranean Contact Group is an EAAP Work Group devoted to specific scientific and development issues related to animal production in the Mediterranean area. Its aim is to encourage collaboration between scientific communities and technical sectors from Mediterranean countries, and among other activities, the organization of a Mediterranean Symposium every two years. These symposiums are always excellent tools to link Mediterranean researchers on specific subjects about livestock development in the Mediterranean area.

Topic of the symposium

The Mediterranean area shows a great diversity of livestock systems, depending mainly on local resources and traditions, but also on the space of networking where informational resources are available for producers. During the last decades, a lot of innovations have been conceived and/or introduced in Mediterranean area, conditions for livestock systems to remain competitive but also, at the same time, the way to eliminate those unable to change.

Innovation is approached as a process creating a new way of producing, organizing or selling, and inducing some appropriation of users. It must be distinguished from invention that proceeds from an inventor, even if some invention may become innovation when adapted and adopted by users. Innovate is the ability to perform on a new way what is still functioning. It must be considered as a process by which local producers or groups, researchers and advisors, administrations and policy makers are reacting when facing to these new trends and by which they are learning during these processes.

As a first level of understanding, we can identify

- Technical innovation (new technical objects within the production unit) vs. Organizational innovation (new relationships among operators).
- Process innovation (a new way to obtain the same product) vs. Product innovation (a new product).
- Incremental innovation (some change into the system) vs. Radical innovation (change the system itself).

Innovations involve, classically, production techniques, work organization, equipment and infrastructures, collective features for selection, reproduction, feeding or sanitary devices. They have concerned also (and more and more) local organizations such as product labelling, new dynamics around local breed, collective rules for supply basin or new products approaches for new markets.

More recently, some innovations have focused on environmental impacts and/or ethical issues of livestock production, due to an increasing awareness of these kinds of problems.

All these innovations are now questioned by sustainable development in economic, social and environmental perspective.

The purpose of this symposium

- Making an updated review on the main innovations that changed significantly the activities of livestock production in the Mediterranean area during the last period (since 1980). How to characterize the innovation trends through the main observed evolutions?
- Examining to what extent these innovations, when adapting or adopting, improve the efficiency, insure the socio-cultural basis or reduce the environmental impact of livestock systems. How to evaluate the positive and negative impacts of innovations?
- Reflecting about the global balance between (1) development of local systems able to adopt such innovations and (2) elimination of producers unable to adopt them. Who is supported and who is eliminated by the innovation trend?
- Inducing some new vision of innovating systems based on participatory processes between researchers and producers. How to manage the building up of innovations in a participative way?

The structure of the proceedings

In the present symposium proceedings, presentations are organised within 4 sessions and a round table preceding the conclusion.

The first session provides some conceptual input of what is innovation today and gives an overview of what is occurring in the Mediterranean areas. Then the second one focuses on innovation in production systems based on new techniques. It deals with genetics, feeding systems, products and animal identification.

The third session deals with innovation in organisation systems, valorising know how, products, taking place in collective action. The fourth one concerns environmental innovation, giving insights on natural resources management, natural treatments, as emerging changes.

Then, the report of the round table allows an access to the main discussion during this symposium, around a question addressed to all participants: Are traditions in Mediterranean livestock activities an obstacle or a source of innovations?

The last words of the proceedings are from the President of the Mediterranean Group of the EAAP in a large conclusion emphasizing the main issues for the future of livestock activities in the Mediterranean area.