

What are good farming practices? Some stockbreeders' points of view

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Introduction

- Researches carried out into the way farms with herbivores adapt or could adapt to the challenges of sustainability
- Producing knowledge about what "change" means for these farms is focussed on aspects of livestock and work management
- What are the "underlying meanings" of practices?

2 examples of farmers' strategies leading to divergent combinations of practices (beef cattle systems)

- **Managing quality market chains**

Question: do farmers involved in quality market chains have specific rearing practices?

- **Decision making for herd management**

Question: what kinds of coherence between farmers' goals and the rearing practices?

A grid "to understand"

(From Magne, 2007)

"biotechnical system-oriented"

To control

To drive according to goals

To respect regulations

To make profitable

To maximise the income

To minimise costs

To secure

To minimise risks

To calibrate (space/time)

To adjust, to coordinate

"farmer-oriented"

To be recognised

To communicate

To feel positive

To develop skills

To understand

To memorise

To learn

To master work

To subcontract

To simplify

Managing quality market chain (1/4)

"100% quality market chains" Farmers maximising the number of animals sold in quality signs (males and females or only females)

Good practices = mainly an **external** issue

Consumer: quality sign (label rouge...)

Producers' group: schedule, regularity, whole production

Managing quality market chain (2/4)

"Opportunists" Farmers only proposing a few animals to quality market chains among the very best ones, when prices are high.

Good practices = mainly an **internal** issue

Farmer: skills to fatten 1 or 2 "extra" animals,
added value
selling = part of farmer's job

And also

Producers' group: to "bridge the gaps" in the schedule,
but no reliability

Managing quality market chain (3/4)

"100% quality market chains"

**"biotechnical system
oriented"**

To control
To make profitable
To secure
To calibrate

"farmer-oriented"

To be recognised
To develop skills
To master work

"Opportunists"

Managing quality market chain (4/4)

"100% quality market chains"

**"biotechnical system
oriented"**

To control
To make profitable
To secure
To calibrate

"farmer-oriented"

To be recognised
To develop skills
To master work

"Opportunists"

Decision making for herd management (1/6)

Categories of practices studied:

- Breeding
- Replacement / culling
- Feeding
- Selling
- Batching

To understand decision making process:

- **modalities** of the practices : what ?
- **time**: when?
- **indicators and rules**: how?
- **objectives**: why?

Decision making for herd management (2/6)

**Mastering breeding
processes**

**Few operations
during the grazing
period**



**Maximising grass
in the diet**

**Intensifying, high
stocking rates,
(fattening)**

Decision making for herd management (3/6)

Mastering breeding processes

Few operations during the grazing period

"biotechnical system oriented"

"farmer-oriented"

To control

To make profitable

To secure

To calibrate

To be recognised

To develop skills

To master work

Maximising grass in the diet

Intensifying, high stocking rates, fattening

Decision making for herd management (4/6)

Mastering breeding processes

Few operations during the grazing period

"biotechnical system oriented"

"farmer-oriented"

To control
To make profitable
To secure
To calibrate

To be recognised
To develop skills
To master work

Maximising grass in the diet

Intensifying, high stocking rates, fattening

Decision making for herd management (5/6)

Mastering breeding processes

Few operations during the grazing period

"biotechnical system oriented"

"farmer-oriented"

To control

To make profitable

To secure

To calibrate

To be recognised

To develop skills

To master work

Maximising grass in the diet

Intensifying, high stocking rates, fattening

Decision making for herd management (6/6)

Mastering breeding processes

Few operations during the grazing period

"biotechnical system oriented"

"farmer-oriented"

To control
To make profitable
To secure
To calibrate

To be recognised
To develop skills
To master work

Maximising grass in the diet

Intensifying, high stocking rates, fattening

Conclusion

- ➔ "Good" practices should be defined in several ways according to different stakeholders: consumers, ecologists, food chain agents, etc...

...but also among farmers, according to their own situations, constraints and goals

- ➔ Necessity to combine animal and social sciences in LFS analysis methodologies (left and right sides of the "grid")
 - see session 30
 - question: both by the same "LFS researcher"?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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