Organic Knowledge Network on Monogastric Animal Feed

OK-Net EcoFeed

EIP-AGRI articles 2nd project year

Deliverable number	*D.1.8*
Dissemination level	**Public**
Delivery date	*18/03/2020*
Status	*Final*
Lead beneficiary	*IFOAM EU*
Author(s)	*Ambra De Simone, Bram Moeskops*

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 773911. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Contents

Document Versions

Version	Date	Contributor	Summary of Changes
0.1	11/03/2020	Ambra De Simone	First draft
0.2	18/03/2020	Bram Moeskops	Revision
1.0	18/03/2020	Ambra De Simone	Final version

Executive summary

This deliverable is part of the Horizon 2020 project - OK-Net EcoFeed, Work Package 1 – Project management and promotion, led by IFOAM EU.

The overall aim of OK-Net EcoFeed (Organic Knowledge Network on Monogastric Animal Feed) is to help farmers, breeders and the organic feed processing industry in achieving the goal of 100% use of organic and regional feed for monogastrics, in particular pigs, broilers, laying hens and parents of broilers and laying hens.

This deliverable reports on the activities done to create visibility of the project in the EIP-AGRI (European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural productivity and Sustainability) network.

I. Introduction

The OK-Net EcoFeed project proposal description states to provide 2 articles per project year in order to ensure good visibility in the EIP-AGRI Network. These objectives were successfully achieved during the second year of the OK-Net EcoFeed project. Indeed, IFOAM EU has provided 2 articles for the EIP-AGRI newsletter and website. The first article, "100% organic and regional feed", was published in January 2019 in edition 65 of the EIP-AGRI Newsletter. The second article, "Inspirational idea: Foraging pigs" was published in edition 79 of the EIP-AGRI newsletter in March 2020. Both articles were also published on the project website of OK-Net EcoFeed and promoted by the project partners through relevant channels. Find below the details of the 2 articles mentioned.

II. 100% organic and regional feed

In January 2019 the EIP-AGRI published the article "100% organic and regional feed" about the farmer Marc Pousin in Saint-Pierre-des-Échaubrognes, France. The full item was also published on the OK-Net EcoFeed website under the title "On farm feeding for organic broilers" (and reported as such in D3.3). Marc Pousin provides 100% organic, local feed for its broilers and is the founder of the Volailles Bio de l'Ouest (VBO-West Organic Poultry Coop) cooperation. The article tells about the experience of OK-Net EcoFeed partners visiting the farm of Marc Pousin.

The article in the EIP-AGRI newsletter is available at: https://mailchi.mp/eip-agri/newsletter-on-agriculture-innovation-edition-65jan19?e=eff394224d

The article in the EIP-AGRI website is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/100-organic-and-regional-feed

II.1 Full article: 100% organic and regional feed

OK-Net EcoFeed aims to help farmers, breeders and the organic feed processing industry to reach the goal of 100% organic and regional feed for monogastrics, in particular pigs, broilers, laying hens.

Read the article on their visit to a farm in France and follow their progress on the project website.

III. Inspirational ideas: Foraging pigs

The "Inspirational ideas: Foraging pigs" was published in the EIP-AGRI Newsletter of March 2020. The article gives a portrait of the farmer Carl Shread who is experimenting a system of outdoor fattening pigs using various combinations of forage crops. Carl Shread began the trial in his farm in Pays de la Loire (France) in autumn 2019. He recently concluded the first phase of the trial and achieved promising results, which will be consolidated during the second trial phase in spring 2020. The practical testing was supervised by ITAB in collaboration with Chambres d'agriculture Pays de la Loire and Le Porc biologique Direct. Based on the first trial experience, ITAB, and the farmer Carl Shread also produced a video "Ok-net Ecofeed : foraging pigs in a crop of maïze, bean and courgettes". The article has been published on the OK-Net EcoFeed project website and promoted by partners through relevant media.

The article in the EIP-AGRI newsletter is available at:

https://mailchi.mp/eip-agri/newsletter-on-agriculture-innovation-edition-79-march?e=4219e8627a

The article in the EIP-AGRI newsletter is available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/inspirational-ideas-foraging-pigs

III.1 Full article: Foraging pigs

Carl Sheard is an organic pig farmer in France. He is experimenting a system of outdoor fattening using various combinations of forage crops. The overall aim is to reduce the amount of concentrate feed and improve the nutritional quality of the meat.

The market for organic food is showing a steady growth in most parts of Europe. A key objective of organic farming is the closing of nutrient cycles, but it is difficult to achieve. Horizon 2020 thematic network Ok-Net Ecofeed is working on increasing the use of local feedstuff for organic pigs and poultry. As part of this project, trials are being set up on farms across Europe to evaluate innovative practices.

In autumn 2019, one of these trials began at Carl Sheard's farm in Pays de la Loire in the west of France where he rears 45 sows. It is looking into how to provide a diverse range of mixed forage crops throughout the year and to evaluate the interest of pig foraging in fattening/finishing. Advisors and producers' organisations are involved with Carl in the trial. Phase one of the trial consisted of laying out appropriate fences, organising grazing paddocks, familiarising the pigs to the forage parcels and observing and analysing their behavior. Carl was initially worried about the distance between the plot and the buildings (300-400m). So, using permanent and electric fences, he built specific enclosed walkways to facilitate the movement of pigs. He also reduced the level of concentrate by a third to encourage forage consumption and he observed that the batch of 45 pigs easily found the grazing area. The forage crop which was already being used was a "three sisters' mix" of maize, haricot and courgettes. However, as Carl tells us "there were some issues this year. The variety of bean (Rongaï) grew too late, so the pods did not develop: this choice will be changed in 2020. The courgette did not develop due to competition with the maize and haricot, so the mix in 2020 will be composed of corn and haricot only. Finally, the maize suffered from drought and stayed relatively short, but it was homogeneous." The grazing area is made up of 2 plots of 0.5 ha, each one divided into 2 identical paddocks to optimise forage intake. Over a 6-week period, Carl observed that "The pigs proved to be extremely independent in establishing their own grazing routine without much prompting, finding their way to and from the buildings to the forage field. A small sub-group of 3 to 5 pigs adopted a different behavior, following their own routine, leaving the building later" Says Carl. The pigs consumed the bean and maize leaves and seeds, but tended to leave the cob interior. After six weeks of grazing, the soil had not been affected and the vegetation was well-consumed. "The batch of pigs was very heterogeneous and growth rate was much lower than usual," explains Florence Maupertuis, organic pig expert at the Chamber of agriculture of Pays de la Loire. "There are two main explanations for this: the restricted feeding was only partially compensated by forage, and a heat wave followed by a very wet autumn disrupted the growth of crops and pigs. However, the muscle content of carcass was higher than usual."

Antoine Roinsard, organic pig expert at ITAB concludes "We have found that phase one of the trial is very hopeful. It seems important to adapt the feeding restriction according to the forage quality (analyses can help to take decisions), the season, and the growth rate of pigs, in particular the smallest ones." The second phase of the trial, in spring 2020, will be centred around growth rates with regular weighing, and analysis of forage and meat quality. A continued exploration of optimal plant associations will be continued.

IV. Conclusions

Over the course of the second year of the OK-Net EcoFeed project, IFOAM EU has produced and published 2 articles in the EIP-AGRI newsletter strengthening the relations with the EIP-AGRI network and Service point. The work will continue in the third year of the project when at least other 2 articles will be published in EIP-

AGRI newsletter and project website further achieving the OK-Net EcoFeed objectives and disseminating the project results.