



Integrating innovative **TECH**nologies along the value Chain
to improve small ruminant **welfARE** management

Newsletter - Issue 2

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The first series of TechCare’s National Workshops are taking place in TechCare participating countries!



Dr Eva Sossidou (Principal Investigator from ELGO-DIMITRA) and Mr. Michael Kakanis (Greek National Facilitator) during the coordination of the Greek NW - © ELGO-DIMITRA

TechCare project aims to prioritize Small Ruminants (SR) welfare issues and to co-design, together with the stakeholders of SR value chain, innovative approaches based on PLF technologies to manage animal welfare. Therefore, TechCare has adopted a multi-actor approach, which takes into consideration the different interests and priorities of the complex matrix of SR stakeholders, and wishes to actively engage the relevant actors through a series of regularly planned National Workshops (NW) in all nine countries that are represented in the project. The first series of NWs, focused on the prioritization of welfare issues encountered in SR farming systems, were organized, and held in France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Romania, Spain and UK in April and May, with the participation of nearly 200 stakeholders in total from the SR value chain, namely: SR farmers, veterinarians, animal

transporters, slaughterhouse owners, national authorities, animal NGOs, etc. The NWs took place within the activities of Work Package 1 (WP1) and were organized by the TechCare partners with the assistance of their National Facilitators (NF), who are the main contact point for the NW in each country.

A common list of materials was prepared for the first series of NW comprising a workshop invitation together with a consent form for the participants, the workshop agenda, a survey concerning the perspectives of stakeholders on the PLF technology and welfare status in SR sector, a list with potential welfare issues (as compiled from relevant scientific literature in WP2), and a short presentation of the main key points, aims and objectives of TechCare project. To reach consensus between stakeholders, the O.P.E.R.A (Own, Pair, Explain, Rank and Arrange) method

was used, which offers a systematic way of merging different opinions and aspects into one view, to obtain a consensus decision based on the knowledge and experiences of all the stakeholders.



A screenshot of the participants of the Romanian NW - © BUAS

The first NW was organized in Romania in early April with the participation of 30 stakeholders who prioritized welfare issues encountered in dairy sheep. The Romanian NW was followed by the NWs in Greece (13th April) with the participation of 18 stakeholders from both the dairy sheep and dairy goats sector, in France (13th April) with the participation of 29 stakeholders from the dairy sheep sector and 30 from the meat sheep sector, in the UK, with two separate NWs (taking place on 14th April and 20th May, respectively) with a total of 29 stakeholders from the meat sheep sector, in Italy (15th April) with the participation of 26 stakeholders from the dairy sheep sector, in Norway (29th April and 4th May), with the participation of 26 participants from the meat sheep and dairy goats sectors, in Ireland (14th May) with 18 participants from the meat sheep sector, in Israel (19th May) with 17 stakeholders from both the meat sheep and dairy goat sector,

and finally in Spain (9th June) with 47 participants from the meat sheep, and dairy sheep and goat sectors. The welfare issues from all the NWs are gathered and will be merged into a common list of welfare issues for SR value chains, which will be the basis for the development of the PLF technologies to be considered in pilot and large-scale studies in the context of the TechCare project.

At the end of the NWs, the stakeholders were asked to share their opinions and comments, on the workshop and to propose suggestions for improvements. The majority of the comments were positive, despite the fact that all NWs took place virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions, denoting that the stakeholders found the workshops' scope and content interesting. Most of the stakeholders also expressed their interest in participating in future NWs and project's events, and that they looked forward to being informed on future developments and outcomes of this project.

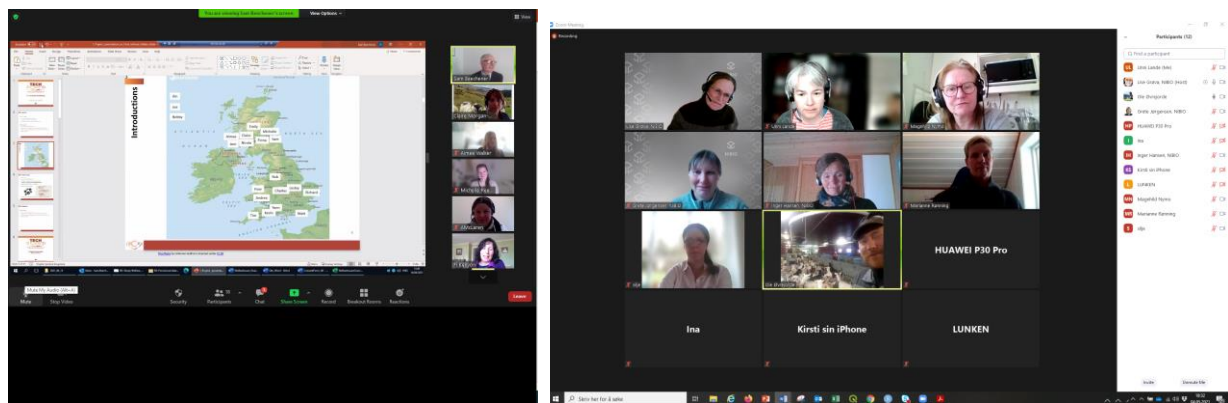


Fig. 1: A map with the location of the stakeholders participating in the NW in UK - © SRUC; Fig. 2: A screenshot from the Norwegian NW on dairy goat taking place virtually - © NIBIO

The TechCare project Team greatly appreciates the active participation of all the stakeholders and looks forward to meeting them again in the course of the project!



TechCare Partner Team: ELLINIKOS GEORGIKOS ORGANISMOS – DIMITRA (Leader WP1)



ELLINIKOS GEORGIKOS ORGANISMOS – DIMITRA (ELGO-DIMITRA) is a legal entity of the public sector, functioning under the auspices of the Hellenic Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food, focusing on agricultural research, vocational training for farmers and agricultural products quality certification. Three research units of ELGO-DIMITRA are participating in TechCare project as following:

1. The VETERINARY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (VRI), established in 1997, aims to improvement of livestock production (health and welfare, productivity, farm management), sustainable development, identification and conservation of local animal genetic resources, protection of public health, disease prevention in farm animals. It also has significant expertise on knowledge transfer and has a close working relationship with the farming industry. VRI is one of the consortium partners of the European Reference Center for the Welfare of Ruminants and Equine.



From left to right: Dr. E. Sossidou, Dr. K. Rekkas and Dr. F. Samartzi - © ELGO-DIMITRA

Dr Evangelia N. Sossidou is a veterinarian, research director at VRI. She is the scientific coordinator of TechCare for ELGO-DIMITRA and WP1 Leader. Dr Sossidou is Independent Expert of the European Platform for Animal Welfare, Management Team member of the European Reference Center for the Welfare of Ruminants and Equine, Specialist of the European College of Animal Welfare and Behavioural Medicine, member of the National Committee for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, Vice-Chair of of EAAP 'Animal Health and Welfare Committee' and Permanent Member of the Expert Group for technical advice on organic production (EGTOP). She coordinated and/or was partner in

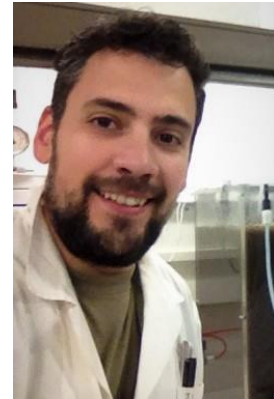
several projects funded by EU (Cost Actions, Leonardo da Vinci, FP6, FP7, INTERREG, ERANET, ERASMUS+, DG SANTE, etc.) and/or other international/national resources. Dr Christina Ligda (Animal Scientist), Dr Foteini Samartzi (Veterinarian), Dr Anna Dedousi (Veterinarian), and Dr Konstantinos Rekkas (Veterinarian) are Research Scientists, also based at VRI, with significant expertise on animal breeding and genetics, domestic animal reproduction, conservation and management of small populations and valorization of farm animal genetic resources.

2. The Agriculture Economics Research Institute (AGRERI) is the major Greek research institute that focuses on economic, managerial, and social issues in the agri-food sector. Dr Irene Tzouramani and Dr Alexandra Sintori are Agro-economists and Research Scientists at AGRERI with contributions in tasks related to market business models development (WG6).
3. The Research Institute of Animal Science (RIAS) is cited in a farm in Paralimni-Giannitsa and supports research in the area of livestock production science. Dr Maria Karatzia and Dr Dimitris Tsiokos are Animal Scientists and Young Researchers based at the RIAS with contributions in the definition of animal welfare priorities (WP2), in large-scale studies in Greece (WP5) and in dissemination activities (WP7). Dimitris also acts as substitute National Facilitator for TechCare Workshops.

New additions to TechCare: Sotiris Patsios, Michael Kakanis, Heather McDougall, Gaëlle Chéry Pottiau, Thomas Gomez

Sotiris I. Patsios (Communication and Project Management - ELGO-DIMITRA)

Sotiris holds a Dipl. Ing. in Chemical Engineering, with highest honors, and a PhD in Chemical Engineering from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He has been involved as a Research Associate in numerous R&D projects funded by the European Commission, national funding agencies, and private entities on advanced waste treatment technologies, valorisation of agro-industrial wastes, assessment of environmental impacts, and development of sustainable circular economy value chains. He has also significant experience on R&D administration activities, and on organizing dissemination and training events (Workshops, Multiplier Events, etc.) in various fields, including animal welfare. In TechCare project, he acts as the communication and administration manager for ELGO-DIMITRA.



Michael Kakanis (National Workshop Facilitator - ELGO-DIMITRA)



Michael is an official veterinarian working at the Department of Veterinary Services in Pieria Regional Unit of the Region of Central Macedonia in northern Greece. He has a MSc degree in Environmental Policies and Management and currently he is a PhD candidate at the School of Veterinary Medicine of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His main research interests are on health and welfare issues of farm animals and the use of precision livestock farming technologies. In TechCare project, he serves as the National Workshop Facilitator acting as the main contact point for the Greek stakeholders and ensuring the harmonization of the whole diversity of stakeholders' opinions.

Heather McDougall (Post-doctoral research Scientist - MRI)

Heather completed a BSc in Zoology at Edinburgh University and developed a keen interest in parasites. She was lucky enough to work as a summer student at Moredun after graduating, where she assisted on some of the early TST trials before going on to a Research assistant post maintaining cultures of parasitic worms that infect cattle as well as assisting in a number of large-scale vaccine trials in cattle and sheep. She completed her PhD in 2011, which focused on identifying hidden antigens in the Liver fluke *Fasciola hepatica*. Heather grew up on a hill farm in rural Perthshire where her family farm 1200 Blackface ewes and 90 cows. At home, she is married to Stuart, a sheep farmer, and has two daughters Ailsa (8) and Iona (6) who love helping out with their 350 sheep. To relax she loves to bake or get outside and walk. Heather is very interested in how implementing novel technologies could assist farmers and help identify disease before it becomes a problem. In TechCare, Heather will conduct the pilot trials as part of WP1 and 5.



Gaëlle Chérury Pottiau (Chief Service Officer - Agdatahub)

Gaëlle is an agricultural engineer with a degree in management of agricultural and agri-food cooperatives. She used to manage complex projects in the field of professional electronic exchanges and the standardization of agricultural data. She has to her credit the standardization of a dozen agricultural EDI messages at UNCEFACT (United Nations) and the development of harmonized code repositories used in parcel exchanges in France. Gaëlle will help TechCare’s members to understand how the API platform will facilitate their data exchange.



Thomas Gomez (Project manager in digital agriculture - Agdatahub)








Thomas is an AgroTIC engineer with a dual expertise in agronomy and digital technologies. His experience in the field and in IT project management in several organizations has enabled him to tackle a wide range of concrete problems related to the collection and use of data in the agricultural sector. He works for Agdatahub under the direction of Gaëlle Chérury Pottiau.

In the TechCare project, Thomas is the main contact to connect the group members to the platform API-Agro and guide them through the different functionalities.

TechCare in the news

List of past and upcoming events with TechCare partners attendance.

Event 	Date 	Location 	Partner 
			
The challenge of change the new normal? BSAS 2021 - Presentation: "Precision sheep management in the uplands"	12-15.04.2021	On-line	SRUC
Interview "Precision solutions to animal health & welfare" on FAS Podcast	19.04.2021	On-line	SRUC/MRI

Webinar "Future Livestock Technologies", organized by SAC Consulting (UK)- Presentation: " New Technologies Coming to Practice – sheep & cattle "	1.06.2021	On-line	SRUC
Webinar Sm@rt Elevage about connected ruminants	24.06.2021	On-line	Agdatahub
e-Forum by planet A Agriculture, guarantor of the One Health approach: challenges, innovations and best practices. Presentation: " Plateforme pour les données agricoles "	24.06.2021	On-line	Agdatahub
→			
72nd EAAP Annual Meeting – The Sm@RT and TechCare projects (session 14) 5 presentations dedicated to TechCare project	30.08-3.09.2021	Hybrid event (Davos, Switzerland)	SRUC, AGRIS, ELGO-DIMITRA



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