

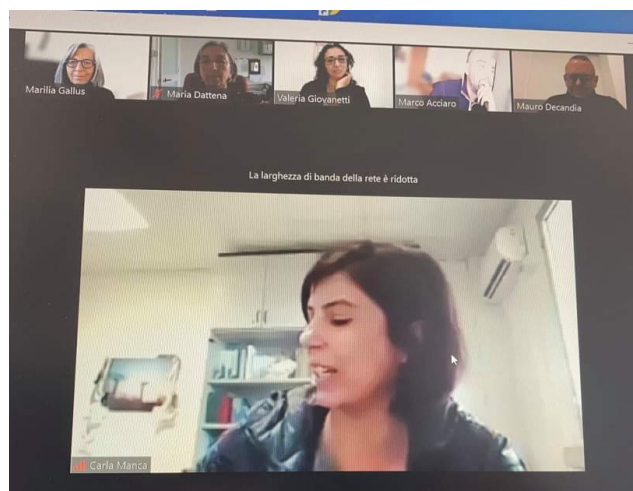


Integrating innovative TECHnologies along the value Chain
to improve small ruminant welfARE management



Italian stakeholders' views on sheep welfare priorities and PLF tools

During the first year of the TECHCARE project's activities, two National Workshops were held, in virtual mode, involving all the actors of the sheep and goat value chain, the so-called stakeholders, such as breeders, nutritionists, slaughterers, veterinarians of the national health service and freelancers, representatives of trade associations (e.g. National Confederation of Farmers) as well as researchers.



During the first workshop, the TECHCARE project was presented and the stakeholders' decision-making role during the project activities was explained. Thanks to their help, the main welfare priorities on dairy sheep farms were decided, which in Italy are mainly related to nutritional problems (malnutrition and unbalanced diets) and health issues (parasitosis, mastitis and lameness) as well as adverse weather conditions, inadequate barn conditions or predators.

The second workshop was dedicated to gathering stakeholders' opinions on potential technologies and digital tools that, applied in livestock farming, could be used to produce early warning systems to improve the

management of welfare problems identified as priorities.

In this regard, the milking machine with flow meters for individual measurement of milk production was the most popular technology followed by the automatic weighing with auto-drafter, low frequency electronic identification, weather stations and the portable somatic cell counter. All these technologies aroused much interest among stakeholders although their cost is the major limitation for on farm adoption.



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