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

Press release 13 (June 2025)

TechCare final conference

TechCare is a European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation project (grant no. 802050), involving nine countries – from Scandinavia to the Middle East –aiming to revolutionise the use of precision technologies in sheep and goat farming. Led by Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), TechCare is the biggest study of its kind for small ruminants and is focusing on improving management of welfare using digital technologies.

After 5 years of work, the project team organised a final conference in Brussels on the 17-18th June 2025, to reflect and present the outcomes of the project. Over 86 people attended the 2 days, both online and in person from over 16 different countries. The event was a great opportunity to take stock after 5 years of exciting research across Europe on the use of innovative technologies for small ruminants welfare management, with proofs of concept, prototypes, pilot trials and large-scale studies to leverage technologies and data to identify useful early indicators for farmers in their management of the welfare of their animals both indoors & outdoors, and also during transportation.

The first day was dedicated to the project with an overview from the project coordinator, followed by presentations from 4 other EU funded projects (DECIDE, ClearFarm, Digi4Live, aWISH) to give their experience from their project's perspective. This was followed by presentations on the work done on welfare assessments and priorities in small ruminant systems, the technologies tested in the pilot trials and large-scale studies, results of the transportation trials by road and by boat, and some of the platforms developed during the project. Participatory work carried out with the stakeholders in all partners' countries during the project was also showcased. The day concluded with a panel discussion, looking at issues around welfare data and alerts, and how thresholds can be identified or not. Farmers' engagement and motivation for PLF tools and welfare was also debated, and finally, how each panel member envisaged the future of PLF tools in small ruminant systems in 10 years' time.

The second day was dedicated to the future, with feedback from the large-scale studies farmers who tested some of the technologies identified by the project to monitor welfare. Five promising innovations, investigated and developed during the project, were then presented. Welfare intervention and technologies, and potential business models, concluded the discussions. The day finished with another panel discussion, on how to go from prototypes/innovations towards a market application, as well as how to encourage tech companies to invest in technologies designed for small ruminant systems. Challenges to explain the long-term worth of solutions were raised, as well as the difficulty to transition from university/research state to product state. The need for a multidimensional approach when marketing these technologies was viewed an interesting approach by the panel.

The two-days were rich in results and discussions and provided an excellent way to conclude the project's work. Thanks to all who participated and made this event a success! Stay tuned: Replay is online here.

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Participants to the Brussels conference