Low carbon dairy and beef farms

Key messages

- A voluntary initiative supported by farmers from France, Ireland, Italy and Spain to reduce milk and beef carbon footprint by 20% for the next 10 years
- A multi-stakeholder partnership and a European initiative to decrease GHG emissions and increase carbon sequestration from livestock
- 6,000 dairy and beef farmers involved in an ambitious program

Livestock-based solutions

- The initiative aims to reduce carbon footprint in farms, by reducing methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide emissions while increasing carbon sequestration in soils;
- To achieve this goal, the initiative is improving farming practices efficiency of
  - Herd management and animal health
  - Forage production
  - Soil practices and manure management
  - Energy consumption
- The improvement of farm carbon action plans addresses also other environmental issues and ecosystem services
- The application of both low carbon strategies and best practices at the farm contribute to a better economic efficiency, improved farm performance and livestock sustainability

Results and evidence

- Inventory of existing methodologies, tools, practices to build a common dairy-beef carbon framework composed of innovative practices aiming at reducing carbon footprint
- 6,000 farms involved in the initiative which represent the largest sample of farms assessed on their contribution to climate change
- 300 advisers trained to develop carbon calculation in dairy and beef farms
- A EU network of dairy and beef carbon farmers, allowing exchanges in 4 countries, and a feedback from farmers on the acceptability/feasibility of the carbon action plan

Multiplier effects

- The initiative is a good example of a multi-stakeholder partnership joining different beef and dairy actors from regional to national and European level
- The multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential to bring together complementary skills in environmental, technical and economical analysis of production systems which represents an opportunity to reduce carbon footprint and to increase livestock sustainability
- The huge partnership guarantees the success in disseminating a low carbon strategy and involving all beef and dairy actors.
- Due to the dynamic, new stakeholders (cooperatives, farmers organizations, milk and beef enterprise,...) are now joining the low carbon program to involve their farmers

Partners

Institut de l’Elevage (FRA), CNIEL (FRA), INTERBEV (FRA), TEAGASC (IRL), CREA (ITA), ASOPROVAC (ESP) are leading the initiative in the four countries.

Advisers organizations are responsible for applying the initiative in farms.

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Achieving multiple benefits through livestock-based solutions, Addis Ababa, 8-12 May 2017