

## NOTA BREVE

### PERSPECTIVES OF THE BEEF CATTLE PRODUCTION WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

### PERSPECTIVAS DE PRODUCCION DE VACUNO DE CARNE EN EL MARCO DE LA UNION EUROPEA

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#### Palabras clave adicionales

Política agrícola europea. Vacuno de carne. Régimen extensivo.

#### SUMMARY

The main conclusions of the workshop carried out in Córdoba (29th and 30th of November) about the perspectives of beef cattle production in Europe are presented in this paper.

Participating, were research workers from several European countries. The discussion showed that the representatives of the northern countries defended an improvement of extensive beef production systems, while people from the southern countries proposed to investigate carcass and meat quality of beef cattle extensively raised in order to build up a secure market for their beef products.

These two subjects were suggested to be considered in an international investigation project.

ba (el 29 y 30 de Noviembre) sobre las perspectivas de producción de vacuno de carne en Europa.

Investigadores de varios países europeos participaron en dicha reunión. La discusión indicó que los representantes de los países del norte defendían un mejoramiento de la producción extensiva mientras que los de los países del sur proponían que se investigara la calidad de la canal y de la carne del vacuno extensivo para encontrar un mercado seguro para estos productos cárnicos.

Estas dos materias se apuntaron como base para el desarrollo de un proyecto internacional de investigación en el que participarían los equipos reunidos.

#### RESUMEN

En este trabajo se presentan las conclusiones principales de la reunión realizada en Córdoba

The new common agricultural policy of the European Union has created the beginning of a *green revolution*. This has effected several sectors and subsectors.

One of these subsectors is beef cattle production. Because of the surplus beef, cattle farms will need to adjust to the new situation.

The adjustments will not be the same for all the European countries. The more developed, northern countries will have to think about reducing the intensity of their beef production while the southern countries will have to make their beef production more profitable.

In this way, using the great experience of the Department of Genetics of the University of Córdoba a first workshop was organized on the 29th and 30th of November 1993 focusing a beef cattle production within the bounds of the European Union, where the present status of the mentioned subsector was analyzed.

Participating in this meeting were several research centres from Spain and other European countries specializing in beef cattle production.

After the presentation of studies concerning the topics of the workshop which were carried out in each department a final discussion took place.

The aim of the discussion was to find the common interests which would allow a collaboration on future projects and talk about the possibilities of a proposal of the EU. The main common interests in the discussion were a reduction of the intensity of beef production and the determination of carcass and meat quality. With regard to the first point the proposal of the German researchers was first discussed. This

proposal dealt with the development of an individual identification and control system for suckler cow herds. By the introduction of such a technology the less intensive production systems can be improved by a better production control and the management of natural resources can be optimized.

That proposal was criticized by people from Portugal. From their point of view, there are big differences between the northern and the southern countries, according to the production system and the production conditions. Portugal and Spain, have great experience in extensive beef production (more than 50 years). Therefore, their main interest was not an improvement of the production system because they were mostly satisfied with their system. They were more interested in the determination of meat quality of the animals raised under those extensive conditions in order to develop a marketing strategy for beef products. For them, improved marketing of beef products was the best way to increase the farmers' income in the south of Europe.

The representatives of the northern countries, however, were more interested in improving the extensive production systems. They started introducing those systems in order to reduce beef production and to take into account the ecological problems. They proposed a project, which would keep in mind the following points:

- reduction of production costs
- reduction of housing and labour

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- introduction of technology
- ecological point of view
- social impact (keeping people in the field)

They thought of increasing the farmers' income firstly by improving the production conditions. For them the second point would be a classification of the products concerning the carcass and meat quality and the last point would be searching for a certain market with the possibility of finding a market niche. One of the most important points would be the optimization of beef production with the desires of the consumers.

One of the participants (USA) talked about his experiences of the collaboration between 12 different states of their country which had similar problems. They were forming work-shops once a year discussing those aspects and defining the work that should be carried out during the following year. By inviting farmers to those workshops they learned a lot about the possibilities of combining research and practical work.

Considering an EU project he proposed the following points to be considered in a possible collaboration.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Characterization of systems of cattle and range management to lower cost of production (economics) while maintaining or improving natural resources (environmental ecology)

2. Characterization of carcass muscling and meat quality (genetic resource and management system)

3. Transfer cattle production, management and economic results to producers (Extension) by

- a. Field days, seminars
- b. Bulletins

One proposal from Spanish researchers was to create a common project in which the different research groups have their own objectives, as f.e. nutrition, genetics, improving the production systems, meat quality etc..

### CONCLUSIONS

- A great interest in a collaboration was shown from all research departments

- The next meeting will be carried out in the second week of April 1994 in Portugal.

- Each research group will think about the possibilities of experiments, both associated with their interests and conducive to a possible collaboration in a project of the EU.

- The aim of the next meeting is to create a main building structure in which the interests of all research groups will fit in and to apply for a proposal which will include the most important requirements for developing and adjusting to the new European situation regarding beef cattle production.

The following research centres participated in the workshop:

Prof. Dr. Brinks, USA.

Institut für Tierzucht und Haus-

tiergenetik, Universität Göttingen, Germany.

Proefstation voor de Rundweehonderij, PK Lelystad, The Netherlands.

Estação Zootécnica Nacional, Santarém, Portugal.

Dpto. de Producción Animal, S.I.A. Badajoz, Spain.

Dpto. de Genética, Universidad de Córdoba, Spain.

There are also contacts between

the Department of Genetics of the University of Córdoba and the following research centres:

INRA Jous en Jousas, France.

I.N.I.A. Madrid, Spain.

Working on the same topics, these research centres show a great interest in a common project of the EU and they will participate in the next workshop in Portugal.

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