

EU PiG 2020 Grand Prix

Below are the details for the Top 10 Grand Prix entries under the theme of 'Meat Quality' and the two challenges, 'Being competitive in small-scale farming: developing a niche-market for pork' and 'How to promote pork to consumers'. These have been selected by the Thematic group.

Challenge: Being competitive in small-scale farming: developing a niche-market for pork

Title of Best Practice: Porco Celta: extensive production system

Country: Spain

Type of Farm: Piglet rearing Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

The challenge was to recover and preserve a native breed (from Galicia) which is currently endangered: Porco Celta. It is characterized by its high rusticity which allows the animals to be adapted to the changing weather conditions in Galicia. We also wanted to rear the animals under traditional and natural conditions. Farms dedicated to the breeding of Porco Celta are usually small and produce in extensive conditions. They do not use artificial insemination. Piglets are usually nursed for an average 6 weeks and fattened up to 12 months. The carcass weights are around 120-130 kg. The animals' diet is composed of a mixture of cereals, according to age and productive phase, which is supplemented with natural resources obtained from the land (pasture, scrub, fruits). Farms producing Porco Celta are distributed all around Galicia (Lugo has 50%). The two key points for a Porco Celta farm to be profitable are the establishment of good biosecurity measures and the provision of quality food.

Link to website: <http://asoporcel.es/>

Costs and benefits

Prolificity: 8-12 piglets/litter. Average daily finishing growth from 0.5 kg to 0.85 kg/day. Standard methods used to evaluate the % lean are not applicable to this breed. Alternatively, we classify carcasses according to the thickness of the dorsal fat, which ranges between 4 and 5 cm in the optimal carcasses. The fattening period is higher: 12 months of age with carcass weights of 120-130 kg. Mortality: Suckling piglets' mortality: 5-10% - Weaning mortality: 2-5% - Finishing pigs' mortality: 1-5%. The feeding cost for finishing pigs is around 155 euros/animal/fattening period. The handling is very simple and generally only one person is needed to take care of one farm. Regarding the facilities, the higher cost is always the perimeter closure of the plots which is essential to maintain a good biosecurity level. Cost associated with extra land. Prices: Piglet (<3 months): 90 €; Finishing pigs (9-12 months): 300-600 €; Sows 400 – 800 €; Boar: 450- 700 €.

Transnational impact

Obtaining differentiated pork products thanks to its quality and the way animals are bred: in a traditional and natural system. Moreover, the recovery of native breeds and traditional systems entails an important role in preserving the country's genetic heritage. Finally, for those consumers concerned about what they consume, this system offers products that respect both the environment and the animal welfare. The Porco Celta breed production system may be translated to other local breeds, with different environmental conditions, but with similar aims.



Title of Best Practice: Expression of the product: union of local breed, land and men

Country: France

Type of Farm: Finishing / Porking

General description

Breeders in the AOP (PDO protected designation of origin) Kintoa have chosen the specifications required to enable the production of a high value-added product, by protecting a living heritage (the Basque Pork breed), while preserving its territory (intermediate zone of mountains maintained, moors, forests, grasslands), and developing the activity on its territory: - Purebred animals - Extensive raising for more than 12 months - Non-GMO food from the geographical area of the PDO (70%) - Pastoral empties 2 to 4 months after each batch - Wooden shed integrated into the landscape - Valorization of natural resources - Slow growth of animals. Slaughtering at a minimum of 12 months, minimum carcass weight of 100 kg and minimum backfat thickness of 25 mm. KINTOA PDO meat is a deep red meat, very marbled (content of intramuscular lipids > 6% in the loin), a white fat, a silky touch. After cooking, the meat is tender and juicy.

Costs and benefits

The requirement of the specifications allows the production of a quality product and a good valuation of the carcass price paid to the farmers. In 2017, the average price was € 3.69 / kg carcass. The price scale can go up to 4.07 € / kg and an annual increase estimates a carcass price in 2020 of 4.35 € / kg.

Transnational impact

Creation of wealth for the rural territories through the protected designation of origin.

Title of Best Practice: Iberian production

Country: Spain

Type of Farm: Piglet rearing Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

The Iberian Pig breed is an Iberian native breed with a high fat deposition ability, high quality products and rusticity. We work with genetics of 75-100% pure Iberian. The production system used is: Sows are kept under natural conditions. Natural service is used (1 boar/7 sows) and after the service, sows are moved to the farrowing facilities provided with heating systems. When piglets are 28-30 days old, they are weaned and moved to weaning rooms for 30-40 days. Next, they are fattened in pens in the field fed with cereals until they are moved to the fields under extensive conditions (July). In autumn, the animals take advantage of the natural resources of the "Dehesa", such as acorns, for 3 months until they reach 170 kg. This final stage of the fattening period is called "Montanera". Advantages are: differentiated quality product with a high IM fat; conservation of a native breed; production system based on natural resources, animal welfare, and reduction of antibiotics

Costs and benefits

Production costs are higher: - A worse fattening conversion ratio: 50%. - Piglets weaned per sow: 6.5-7. - Litter per sow: 2 litters/year. The equipment and bedding costs are lower than the conventional ones.

The land (Dehesa) rental used for the fattening period costs around 4000 euros (for 60 fattening pigs for 3 months).



The price received is 3.04 euros/ Kg (35euros/@). Price is much higher and there is a System of labelling the product (there is a National Regulation on how to label the pig products obtained from Iberian pigs).

Transnational impact

Meat quality schemes can be implemented in other countries in which consumers appreciate differentiated products, using local breeds and local nutrition. The same system as Iberian pigs should be modified according to the environment and market of each country.

Title of Best Practice: Outdoor pig farm plus processing

Country: Italy

Type of Farm: Piglet rearing Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

The owner began to farm a few pigs outdoors 28 years ago as a hobby and then he gradually increased the number of breeding sows, the land availability for pasture and the pork production. At the moment he keeps 90 sows and 4 boars of different native and commercial breeds: Cinta Senese, Mora Romagnola, Nero Siciliano and Duroc. Finishing pigs are crossbred with the purpose of getting rustic pigs, adapted to outdoor conditions, and good quality of the pig carcass and meat for processing it into traditional cured cuts and products (i.e. ham, loin, belly, salami). Pigs are slaughtered at the live weight of 180 kg at an age of 15-18 months. Most slaughter pigs (70%) are sold to a contracted company for producing high quality processed pork products; the rest (30%) of the slaughter pigs are processed on farm in a small processing plant and sold on farm or in local markets.

Costs and benefits

Pig performance of Cinta Senese crossbred are much lower than those of commercial breed and hybrids. 90 sows in the Borghi farm produce around 1.200 pigs per year slaughtered at an age of 15 to 18 months at the live weight of 180 kg. Most pigs are sold at the contracted price of 4 €/kg of live weight, much higher than commercial pigs due to sow's lower productivity, slow growth and higher feed conversion rate. Feed for pigs is partly produced on farm (cereals) and partly bought on the market. Higher production costs are offset by the market price. Pigs are slaughtered in two small local slaughterhouses. The income from the sale of a live pig 180 kg heavy is 720 € although it can be doubled if the meat is processed on farm and sold on farm and/or in the local market (i.e. farmer markets, co-purchasing groups).

Transnational impact

This is an example for other European pig farmers/processors of crossbred pigs based of local native breeds, reared outdoor in order to obtain good pork carcass and meat to be processed into optimal cured pork cuts and salami.



Title of Best Practice: Romagnola pig free range farming and processing

Country: Italy

Type of Farm: Piglet rearing Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

The farm started in 2003 to produce free range pigs of the Romagnola native breed. Before that time the activity of the owner was pig processing to produce traditional cured pork cuts and salami. The introduction of a Romagnola free range farm was directed to obtain the possible highest quality of meat for high processed pork. To this end a first piece of land was fenced and equipped with a hut, manger and drinkers to keep a sow and its litter. The main lesson learnt concerns the high quality of the meat of Romagnola pig reared outdoors and fed with cereals corn, barley, wheat bran, soya bean, fava beans, chestnut and acorn. Unfortunately, the pig performance is much lower than those of commercial breeds. Fertility and prolificity are low (5-7 piglets/sow per birth) and piglet mortality also is very high due to the cold climate in several months a year.

Costs and benefits

In 2017 the farm produced around 400 pigs. 335 piglets have been slaughtered at 8 kg of live weight and sold at the very high price of 200 €/piglet. Other 65 pigs have been slaughtered at a live weight of 180-200 kg and an age of 22-22 months and have been processed into traditional cured meat and salami. The ham is cured for 3 years and sold deboned at a price of 80-85 €/kg.

Transnational impact

This is an example for other European pig farmers and processors of pigs of a pure local breed, reared outdoors about what are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of activity.

Challenge: How to promote pork to consumers

Title of Best Practice: Pick Pork - Pork Midweek Meal Campaign

Country: United Kingdom

Type of Farm: Piglet rearing Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

Research showed consumers thought pork was unhealthy, tough and unversatile. GB fresh pork sales had been in decline - 1 million less British households bought fresh pork in 2017 versus 2013. The task was to slow the decline by rejuvenating pork's image. The Midweek Meals campaign brought together the supply chain to change perception (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-oXO3msquY&list=PLezjvDGHW5p7xd0hYCyMBhKpu1oJVqo2H&index=10>). The aim was to position lean pork cuts as an alternative to chicken. An integrated TV campaign (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yui0HX010I0&list=PLezjvDGHW5p7xd0hYCyMBhKpu1oJVqo2H&index=18>) was used to inspire consumers to try pork's new, healthy, quick and easy dishes, alongside retailer activity. The £4 million midweek meal campaign is a programme to rejuvenate the image of pork. First 2yrs: Attitudes that pork is suitable as a midweek meal increased by 10%. Household penetration of pork stabilised at 70% versus a target of 67%. The campaign needed the support of the entire supply chain to succeed. Farmers, processors and retailers all had to work together to achieve the common goal of slowing the decline.

Link to your website: <https://www.lovepork.co.uk/collections/pick-pork/>



Costs and benefits

Over the 2 years, the campaign has delivered an incremental £25m in retail sales from advertising alone. 65% of the uplift was driven by non, light or medium pork buyers. In year 2 of the campaign, loin medallion volume sales increased by 24% YOY. £4m of investment over 2 years.

Transnational impact

The Pick Pork Campaign sets out an infrastructure for delivering high impact consumer marketing that can be adapted to any market. This means that across the EU the campaign methodology can be applied to drive up sales of pork.

Title of Best Practice: Meat promotion through transparency

Country: The Netherlands

Type of Farm: Finishing / Porking

General description

We supply our customers with 100% honest meadow meat (guaranteed free of antibiotics) of very good quality. Grazing pigs in the meadow is quite special. Passers-by and visitors will find meadow pigs give a beautiful image in the Brabant landscape. Interested parties can see with their own eyes how the animals grow up healthy. This is a form of nature-inclusive production. Interested people can see with their own eyes how the animals grow up healthy. The business is unique because they are given experimental space to further develop their business with meadow pigs. This has been agreed in a Green Deal with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Province, ZLTO, HAS and the municipality of Hilvarenbeek. This results in a lot of spontaneous promotion.

Special attention to: - nature conservation and development, trees and flowery field edges. - recreation in nature, enthusiasts can make use of the picnic areas and hiking trails available. - Education and guided tours.

Costs and benefits

The production costs of a carcass are considerably lower compared to the sale of pre-packaged, ready-made parts or homemade meat products. It is not easy to provide insight into how these pig farms operate financially. There is a great variety between and within farms. The carcass yield varies between 'twice normal' and up to € 1,500 in sales in packaged parts. It is estimated that 50 to 75 pig farmers can earn a living in this way in the long term.

Transnational impact

Their grazing pigs are also used for effective nature management. Their obtained 'Green Deal' gives them the opportunity to demonstrate that their operations make a meaningful contribution to animal welfare, agricultural nature and landscape management and the protection and improvement of nature and the environment.



Title of Best Practice: Organic farm guided tours

Country: Spain

Type of Farm: Piglet rearing Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

We want to show to consumers the origin of our products as well as share our philosophy based on the respect for both the animals and the environment. We open our farm to visitors because we believe that by seeing our activity, we simply enhance people's trust. Visits are offered to both families and schools and last about 1:15 mins. The visit includes a video session, showing our activities as well as an explanation of the farm's history, and a physical visit to the different stages of the productive chain (sows, piglets and fattening pigs). We also include a tasting session of our own branch of cured products in our shop. There is a picnic area just 5 minutes' walk from and people can stay to enjoy the beautiful scenery. We are announced in Trip Advisor. Our web page offers a calendar with available days for farm visits (3-4 days/month). Visitors have to book in advance. School groups can also visit the farm since we offer pedagogical programs according to the children's age.

Costs and benefits

Fee visit: 10 euros. Infants younger than 9 free entrance. School fees: - Primary school: 4 €/student - Secondary school: 8 €/Student. It is hard to exactly estimate the percentage of increase in sales, but we believe diversification helps family business. Labour costs of the contracted people needed to do the visits are covered by the fee visit.

Transnational impact

Opening the farms into small businesses like ours can be implemented in many other production systems in other countries. Opening the farm doors together with the tasting sessions helps to promote our own products. Moreover, it can help families to value organic farms' production systems and invest in products that respect both the environment and the welfare of the animals. Thanks to the school visits, children are able to learn the pig production chain. It is important to take biosecurity measures and reduce the number of people for visits to avoid disturbing the animals.

Title of Best Practice: Create awareness through company tours and the sale of unique Berkhout meat with a story

Country: The Netherlands

Type of Farm: Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

Our goal is that the end user buys a tasty and familiar piece of meat that meets and even exceeds his expectations, directly from the producer. We have built our own brand name. This is promoted by organising open days and farm tours, walking and cycling tours. This allows consumers to see and feel that we care for our animals with passion and experience in an honest, trusted way. To this end, we have invested in: developing a brand, creating points of sale, meeting rooms and skyboxes. The total costs for this are more than € 350,000 over the past 6 years. Making consumers curious about the sector and our Berkhout pig. The collaboration with Puur Brabant ensures that our meat has a unique story and is for sale in the local farm shop. There is a lot of ignorance about our sector, so many people form their own opinion about it. This offers an enormous opportunity to positively promote the sector with its own story. We are proud of what we do and are happy to show this to consumers!



Costs and benefits

To promote our sector and our unique Berkhout meat, we give people the opportunity to take part in one of our tours. Open days: free entrance Farm Tour € 15,= pp (adults) / € 7,50 pp (children up to 14 years) Walking tour € 7,50 pp (adults) / € 5,= (children up to 14 years) Cycling tour € 27,50 pp (adults) / € 15,= pp (children up to 14 years) Expected revenue increase: 15%

Transnational impact

Create your own unique story and do not let people make up their own story about the sector.

Title of Best Practice: YouTube channel and Facebook page

Country: Denmark

Type of Farm: Piglet rearing Sow Farm Finishing / Porking

General description

Rasmus is the founder of a YouTube channel called “Bondemaan og Co.” The channel shows every day working routines in a modern pig production. Rasmus wants to show the society how it is to work in Danish pig production. The videos should provide the consumer with a more varied understanding of the industry. Each video has around 1000 views. Besides his YouTube channel he is also founder of a Facebook-page “Bondem aan Rasmus” with 2500 “friends” He considers which topics are suitable for a video. He creates one or two videos each month and uses his spare time to do it. On his Facebook page he has a kind of Q&A live sessions once a week where it is possible to ask him all kind of questions. It is important to think about the content of each video and how it is presented. It should be understandable without having any knowledge of agricultural production. Furthermore, it is important to explain why different routines are performed to avoid misunderstandings.

Costs and benefits

This practice does not have a direct impact on production results. It is possible to implement this practice without any cost despite the time it takes to create videos. Even smaller videos made with mobile phones is a way to get going. This practice does not have a direct effect on the prices.

Transnational impact

This practice is very easy to implement. It is relevant to countries like Denmark where the society is no longer closely connected to agricultural production.

