



iSAGE Training Course and Workshop

INNOVATIONS TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY
IN THE SHEEP AND GOAT SECTOR
(Zaragoza, Spain, from 10 to 13 December 2019)

iSAGE Task 4.2: Testing selected innovative strategies on case study farms

Innovation: implementation of a P G S as an innovative strategy for the sustainability and viability of the Brogna Sheep

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Participatory
Guarantee System for
**BROGNA
SHEEP**
Association in Lessinia
(VR)



BACKGROUND

Many farms in the sheep and goat industry in EU are **small and working in marginal lands and disadvantaged territories**, often working in an extensive way performing very well on **environmental issues**, while being **important actors to maintain an economic and social presidium of the territory**. But this message of environmental and social sustainability is not easy to communicate to the consumers.

Organic farming and biodiversity support schemes, maybe important options, but not always applicable by the farms. Especially organic farming certification can be difficult to access, both for the small size of the farm, since the system is far to be proportional as costs and bureaucratic burden, and for the rigidities of the rules to be applied: e.g. legal contract of the land, organic origin of feedstuff.



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Lessinia is a geographical area of the Venetian Prealps located for the most part in the province of Verona and, only partially, in those of Vicenza and Trento. A part of the Lessinian territory constitutes the Regional Natural Park of Lessinia. Its peaks reach an altitude between 1500 and 1800 m s.l.m.



THE BROGNA SHEEP ASSOCIATION

The Brogna Sheep Association is a supply-chain local association including farmers, butchers, restaurants, processor, consumer and experts, cantered into the recovery of an old breed multipurpose (meat, milk and wool) and its strong territorial approach in the Lessinia mountain.



25

FARMERS

10

PROCESSORS

TECHNICIANS

3

SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES OF THE STANDARD

Food and non-food
identification with brand

Respect of Organic Agriculture
principles (IFOAM):

HEALTH

ECOLOGY

FAIRNESS

CARE

WHAT IS P.G.S.

"Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange."



Art. 1

**MEAT, FAT AND OFFAL
MILK AND ITS DERIVATES
WOOL AND LEATHER**

Standard for Products derived
from Brogna sheep:

Art. 2

PRODUCTION AREA

LESSINIA mountain: only the
mountain area of 19
municipalities in Verona and
Vicenza provinces.

Non- localized farms with
similar characteristics



Art. 4

LOCAL SLAUGHTER

Art. 3

BREEDING SYSTEM

- **pasture** (10 sheep/ hectare)
- **outside breeding** with night and
winter **shelter**
- respect for **animal welfare** and
species ethology
- prohibited mutilation, allowed
castration with limitation
- **prohibited**: herbicide, **pesticide** and
synthetic fertilizers
- grass and **hay from Lessinia** with
grains and feed (preferably) from
local / organic origin - NON GMO
- Lambs – max one month inside
before slaughter
- milk lamb (16-22 kg): only milk, grass
and hay (Lessinia)
- light lamb (22-30 kg): only milk, grass
and hay (Lessinia), possibility:
organic grains and feed or non GMO
- castrated lamb (30-45 kg): only milk,
grass and hay (Lessinia), possibility:
organic grains and feed or non GMO
- phytotherapic and homeomatic
treatments are preferred

Art. 5

BRAND CONCESSION

meat

all cuts

preserved meats

no nitrites and nitrates,
max 49% pig fat

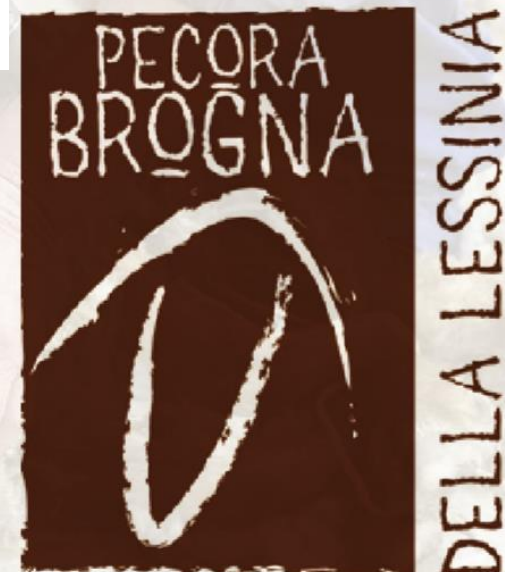
wool and leather

% in label, no from other
breeds of sheep



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Art. 6



BUTCHERS

have always to identify and separate from other breed of lambs or sheep cuts, give information to the customer, purchase register, copy of the specification

PROCESSORS

in label % meat or dairy production and no from other sheep breeds, max 49% animal products of other species (Lessinia organic or pasture farms), purchase register

RESTAURANTS

have always meat from Lamb/sheep Broгна in menu, give information to the customer, purchase register, copy of the specification

Art. 7

USE OF THE BRAND

Stakeholders who request it: verified by P.G.S., commitment to contribute to costs

Art. 8

P.G.S.

- control system implemented locally : trust, social networks and knowledge exchange (Ifoam 2008)
- guarantee committee nominated by the association: a breeder, a restaurateur, a technician, a processor, a consumer (Slow Food local chapter)
- prepares the regulation for the controls and organizes and its implementation



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DATA COLLECTION

An online survey was administered in September 2019 to a sample of **21 stakeholders** involved in the “Pecora Brogna” supply chain: 13 farmers, 2 processors, 3 restaurateurs and 3 agricultural consultants.

RESULTS

Stakeholders have a **positive feeling** associated with all the constructs adoption of the PGS in the “Brogna Sheep Supply Chain”, and particularly for the “perceived ease of use” and the “intention to adopt”.



4.61

PERCEIVED EASE
OF USE



4.88

PERCEIVED
USUFULNESS



4.00

SUBJECTIVE NORM



4.63

INTENTION TO
ADOPT



4.71

Some public events organized to explain and promote the innovation:

- in connection with the iSAGE AGM in Verona , on May 29th in Velo Veronese (Lessinia mountains), a public event was organized with the association of the Brogna sheep. Local sheep products (cheese, meat and wool) was tasted and showed to participants. The event ended at a local restaurant where in the menu Brogna sheep meat and cheese were central. The event was reported with relevance by the local media (Verona newspaper, local TVs news).
- Local events with farmers and citizens have been organized during last summer and the information about the PGS development was spread.
- Meetings with local authorities (mayors, GAL, Park and Region) took place and the project was presented receiving strong interest.





PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Local and Regional authorities are showing strong interest in the initiative confirming public support through a Rural Development Regional Plan measure for animal biodiversity direct support to farmers that are breeding the Brogna Sheep (55 euro per animal per year for 5 years period) and other support measures in the short term, possibly **including the Brogna PGS.**



Potential of the innovation to enhance farm sustainability

- The model development of the Brogna Sheep Association, being a multi-stakeholder and locally based organization, helped defining and implementing an innovation that reinforce and promote outside the reliability of the association in the promise of delivering a clear direction toward farm sustainability enhancements.
- In the side of the **environment**, through:
 - **Maintaining and increasing Biodiversity:**
 - a) ancient and endangered sheep breed
 - b) marginal lands meadows in hill and mountain territories (mostly in protected park)
 - a) traditional geographical and cultural landscapes.



Potential of the innovation to enhance farm sustainability

In the side of **economics**, and the **social** one:

- **Increasing farm welfare, both in the economical-financial dimension and in the social one.** With adding value at farm level, (more processing and direct sales) improving short supply chain and integrated supply chain opportunities. With offering more opportunity of connection to the farmers to the local communities and the city as well.

More opportunities offered to the whole territory for increased visibility and attraction of tourism and contrasting abandon of rural areas.

Another value that the innovation is helping demonstrate is **Animal welfare**, guaranteeing the respect of the rules that requires most of their feeding based on grazing and grass/hay, most of the year in meadows moving from lower lands to mountain ones.



Limitations

- Economical means of the association are limited, not allowing for an adequate communication campaign; possibly the expected success of the implementation of the innovation and its diffusion, would allow the system to better finance itself.

Drivers and constraints for a successful implementation of the Innovation

- The innovation will be successful if it is well communicated to consumers, adopted by more restaurants and processors.
- Possible involvement and support by local public administration (from Region to Park and Municipalities) will be a relevant factor.
- A critical point is the full adoption of the standard by the farmers, especially on the lamb weight, since currently not all farmers are doing so.
- Another critical point is the limited size of the association, it the project will be successful, especially on the adequate availability of meat it would need to increase the numbers of animals.

