

# **Innovative marketing of high-quality dairy products from transhumant sheep and goat farms in Greece**

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Transhumant sheep and goat systems are still common in Greece accounting for about 7.5% of the national flock. Recent scientific evidence demonstrated that the milk produced by such flocks is of premium quality which is directly related to the biodiversity of mountainous grasslands where the flocks graze from April/May to September/October. Nonetheless, the milk produced during this period is not rewarded in markets up to its true potential. The absence of local infrastructure for milk processing is a major obstacle that forces farmers to sell their milk to dairies based in lowlands, which mixed the milk of transhumant farms with that produced in other farms (i.e. intensive). Dairy products made exclusively from milk of transhumant flocks are very limited and are produced either on-farm or in small local dairies. This paper presents initial results of an ongoing survey of the economic, management and marketing implications of three different approaches in summer milk marketing in transhumant farms. The first approach involves farmers selling their milk to the same industry throughout the year (winter and summer); the second is based on producing cheese solely from milk of transhumant flocks in a dairy situated in the highlands; and the third concerns on-farm cheese production and direct sales to consumers. Here a comparative technical and economic analysis of three case study farms - one from each approach - is presented in order to detect differences in the economic performance, the organization of labor etc. The findings of this survey will shed light towards the institutional and organizational requirements for more systematic production of dairy products exclusively of transhumant origin. Acknowledgements: This paper is part of ongoing research within the iSAGE Project (<http://www.isage.eu/>), with financial support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 679302.