



# 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting EAAP 2012 August 27<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012



## Identification of on-farm innovations in sheep and beef systems



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# CONTEXT / BACKGROUND

## **3-year project**

**Innovation in beef cattle and sheep systems  
Involving both Development and Research**

## **Innovation**

**Not only technological, but also organisational  
Not only scientists, but also farmers  
Emergence of something new in the 'real life'  
→ farms = real life**

## **Two sources of data**

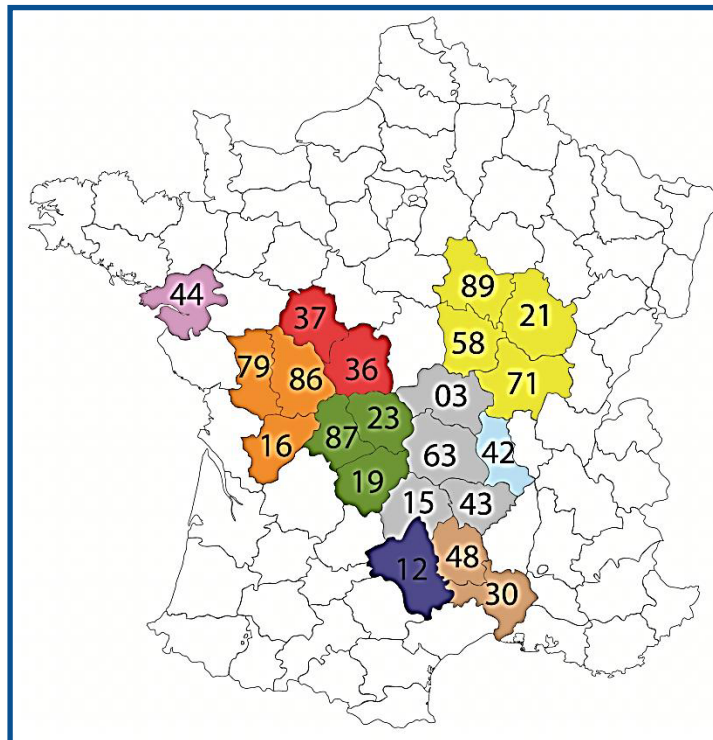
**A questionnaire to experts  
Some on-farm surveys**

**To better know and understand farmer's needs and wishes**



## Experts: 226 questionnaires sent in 2011

→ 50 answers (59 experts)



### 4 questions about on-farm innovation:

1: which kind of innovations?

2: what about the reasons to innovate?

3: interesting innovations, in your opinion?

4: what about innovations in the future?



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## Experts: different trends for the same 'domain'

### Breeding

Main trend: to modify periods, but...

Sheep: to release the pressure, more natural breeding season, give-up with several lambing/year,

Cattle: calving season sooner, 2-year calving, several periods

### Buildings / equipment

Main trend: new and bigger buildings, allowing tractors and new equipments, fitting standards but...

also: less buildings, out-wintering, low costs



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## Experts: different trends for the same 'domain'

### Sellings

Two opposite trends:

1- to simplify, to standardise, to sell younger

2- to diversify, to valorize, to get on-farm added-value

### Genetics

Main trend: to simplify by changing breeds

Sheep: high prolificity and hardy breed

Cattle: calving condition, easy to manage



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## **Experts : 4 reasons for farmers to innovate**

1- abilities and tastes

2- financial aspects

3- to work less / in better conditions

4- to adapt the system to the context

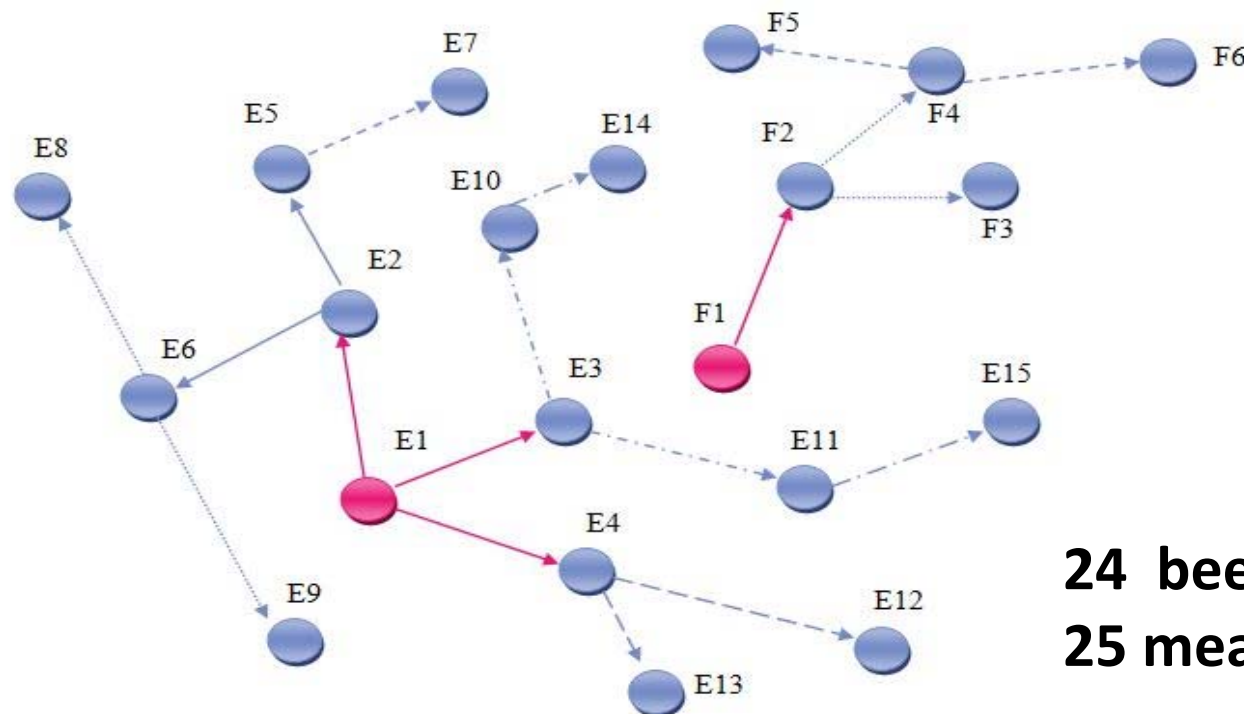


## Farmers: 49 on-farms surveys in 2011

→ Sampling = 'Snowball' method (*Thiétart, 2003*)

→ A "seed" (●) giving addresses of some other farmers (●) according to one specific criterion:

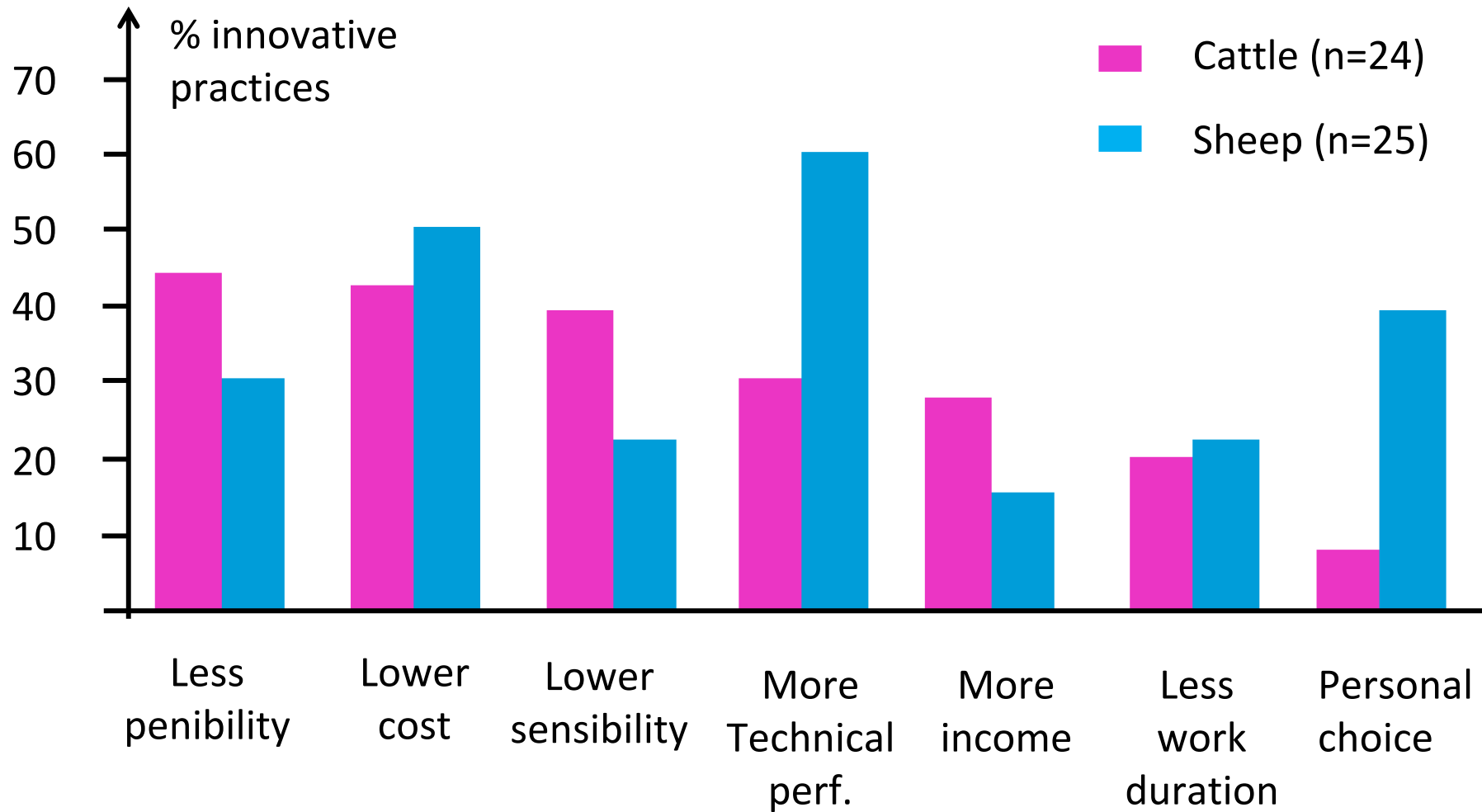
⇒ In our study: 'a farmer with new or unusual practices'



24 beef cattle farms  
25 meat-sheep farms



## Farmers: the reasons to innovate

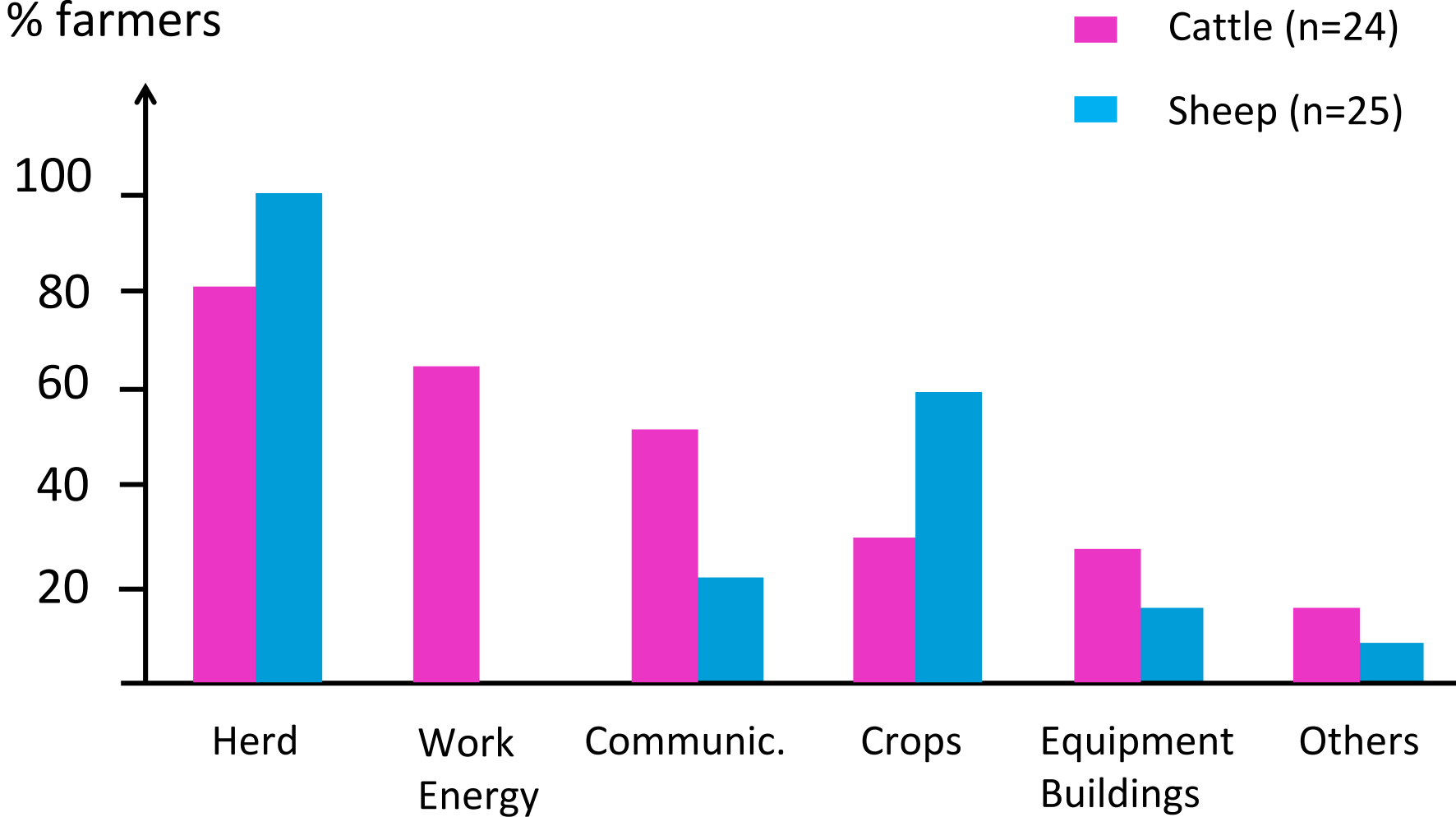






## Farmers: innovations expected in the future

% farmers





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# Conclusion

- A good match between the experts vision and what occurs in farms
- Innovation = firstly something new in one farm, within one region = not obviously 'never seen before'
- Several trends combined with several motivations
  - A large part due to farmers' mind
- The organisational dimension is missing → requires specific surveys with several visits
- Roles and methods for advising services?



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## Thank you for your attention!



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