



An on-farm experiment to assess new phenotypes: how to involve farmers?

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Why a French lamb vigor project?

▶ In France current selection deals with 2 main difficulties:

- ▶ Lack of mortality data and poor quality
- ▶ Low heritability of mortality

➔ **Need to find others traits and to motivate people to collect**

▶ Vigor genetic selection starts developing in Scotland

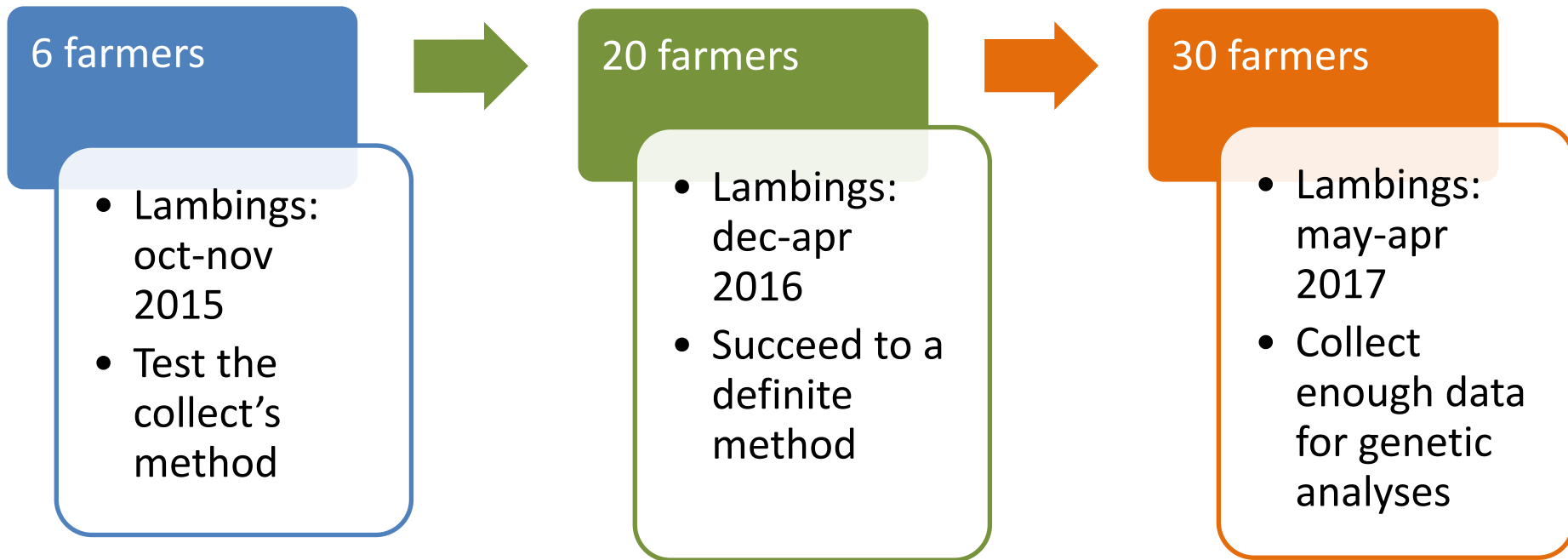
- ▶ Scoring system to evaluate lamb vigor exists
- ▶ Genetic selection possible



**Introduction of vigor in selection
depends on feasibility and
farmers' willingness
to register such data**

What about the project?

- ▶ Based on a farmers' group
- ▶ 3 successive tests to record lamb vigor on commercial farms



- ▶ The aim: to result in a data recording protocol

- ▶ Bottom-Up approach

based on the involvement of farmers and technicians

An on-farm experiment to assess new phenotypes: how to involve farmers?

- ▶ **A. Different data registered**
- ▶ **B. Conditions that lead to success**



An evolutionary protocol

- ▶ An initial method of registration recommended
- ▶ Test of data recording on farms
- ▶ After each test, changes on protocol and on scoring system motivated by farmers' experience discussed



- ➔ Meetings and surveys
- ➔ Discussion and experience sharing used to find the right way to register data

- ▶ Without to forget keeping the course : collect data for a genetic use!



The initial recording protocol

Lamb birth weight (kg)

Precision on mortality (date, reason)

Birth assistance

Lamb activity for 5 min after birth



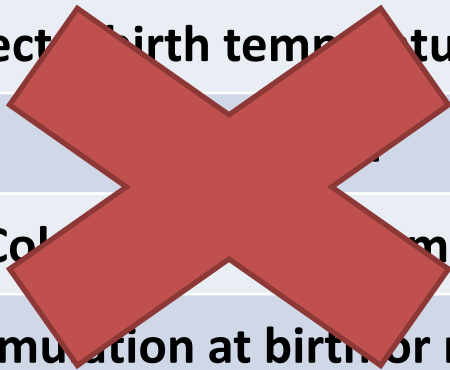
on wet lambs

Suckling ability

Rectal birth temperature

Color lamb

Stimulation at birth or not



Changes on the criteria level of birth assistance

0 Lambing not seen

1 Lambing seen, no help

2 Minor birth assistance, position correction, few efforts

3 Essential birth assistance, jammed lambs, major effort

4 Major consequences for the ewe



Lambing not seen, or no help



Minor help, without position correction



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- ▶ A. Data registered
- ▶ B. Conditions that lead to success



1. A strong network

- ▣ A limited region
- ▣ Farmers and technicians familiar with data collection
- ▣ Well motivated to progress on lamb mortality
- ▣ A gradual involvement

1st data collection

6 farmers

2nd data collection

20 farmers

3rd data collection

30 farmers



2. Integrate recording in farmers' habits

Study
breeders
habits
by visiting farms

Adapt the record
means : find the
most convenient and
the closest to usual
farmers' practices

Use an
evolutionary
protocol :
to take account
of constraints



3. Be receptive and to keep motivation

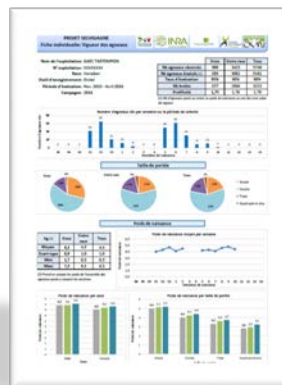


Keep in touch with farmers: the best person is the usual technician

Enquire to highlight the needs

Lean on breeders testify that ever collect the data to convince new farmers to join the group

Produce feedbacks



Participative approach suitable to involve farmers

