



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA



Relationships between dairy farming and Mountain Agro-Ecosystems: a focus group approach

Faccioni G.¹, Bogner D.³ Da Re R.², Gallo L.¹, Gatto P.², Ramanzin M.¹,
Sturaro E.¹

- ¹ DAFNAE – University of Padova, Italy
- ² TESAF – University of Padova, Italy
- ³ Umweltbüro GmbH, Klagenfurt, Austria

Added value of mountain livestock farming systems

Traditional mountain livestock systems are largely based on the use of meadows and pastures, providing several private and public goods and services:

- Dairy products (and meat)
- Conservation of local breeds
- Biodiversity and landscape maintenance
- Risk prevention
- Recreation and ecotourism
- Cultural heritage



Aims



- TOP VALUE project aims to support mountain food chains using the policy instruments provided by the optional quality term “mountain product” (EU Reg. 1151/12 and 665/14).

- Innovative approach: empowering the “mountain product” by identifying and quantifying ecosystem services (ESs) linked to the natural and cultural assets of the Alpine area
- this study aims at understanding stakeholders’ perceptions on the ESs provided by livestock systems in mountain areas as a prerequisite to implement the optional quality term

Study area



Methods

Socio-cultural approach in three steps:

1. Identification of relevant stakeholders with snowball sampling:
 - stakeholders of the sector (producers, cooperatives, sellers, etc.)
 - policymaker
 - local community (local action groups, associations, etc.)
 - workers in the tourism sector
2. Administration of on line questionnaire on the perception of ESs and how they are influenced by livestock systems in mountain ecosystems (9 questions: checkbox, Likart scale or open answers)
3. Two focus groups (one in Austria and one in Italy)



Methods

Step	Austria	Italy
Stakeholders identified through snowball sampling	25	75
N of complete on line questionnaires	13	17
Focus group: n of participants	8	11



Focus group

Focus group:

planned discussion among stakeholders
facilitated by a skilled moderator



Four sessions:

1) introduction;

2) brainstorming on the added value of the mountain ecosystem on the local chain production system and the impacts of mountain farming on ESs;

3) focus on the impacts on ESs;

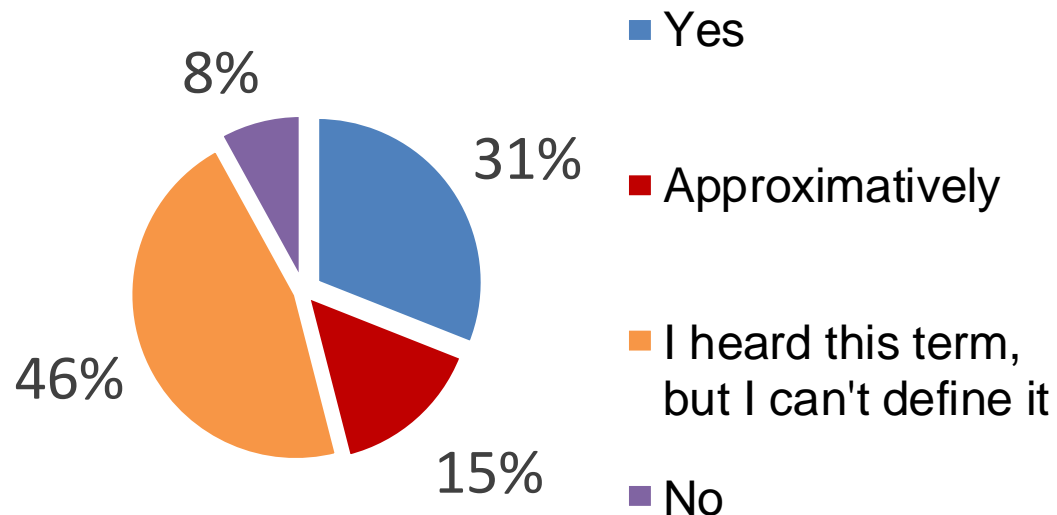
4) discussion on the strength and weaknesses of the present communication of all the topics



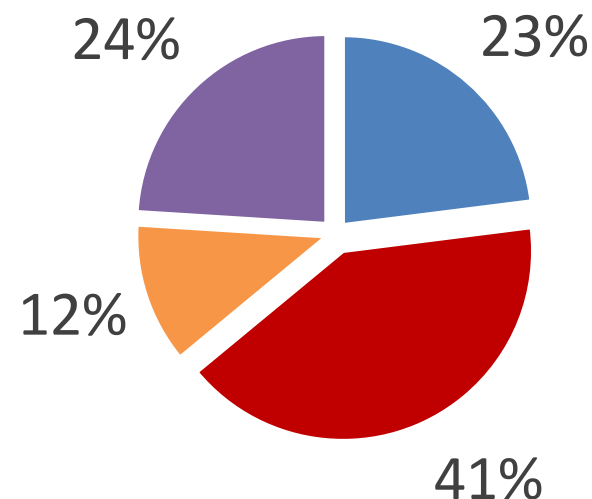
Results from on-line questionnaires

Could you give a definition of «Ecosystem Services» ?

Austria



Italy



Results: Focus groups – added value

Added value	Austria	Italy
ESS to mountain farming	<p>Production of high quality food</p> <p>Diversity of the environment</p> <p>Resource water</p> <p>Basis for traditional farming</p>	<p>Quality and taste of final products</p> <p>Healthiness of environment</p> <p>Social aspects related to the tradition and culture</p> <p>Consumer's perception</p>
Mountain farming to ESS	<p>Biodiversity conservation</p> <p>Protection of resources</p> <p>Cultural landscape</p> <p>Maintenance of rural areas for mankind</p> <p>Tourism attraction</p>	<p>Territory conservation</p> <p>Landscape maintenance</p> <p>Economic push</p>

Results: rank of positive and negative impacts

Austria	Italy
Production of high quality foods	Maintenance of tourism attractiveness
Maintenance of tourism attractiveness	Control of encroachment of shrubs and forest on pastures and meadows
Control of encroachment of shrubs and forest on pastures and meadows	Maintenance of traditional cultural landscapes
Maintenance of traditional cultural landscapes	Maintenance of beautiful natural landscapes
	Production of high quality foods
	Maintenance of air quality (smell)
GHGs emission	Avoid soil compaction
	GHGs emission
	Maintenance of soil fertility
	Maintenance of water quality (nitrate emission)

High positive relevance

High positive relevance

Not relevant /neutral

Not relevant /neutral

Negative relevance



Discussion

2) Brainstorming: many shared views between Italy and Austria

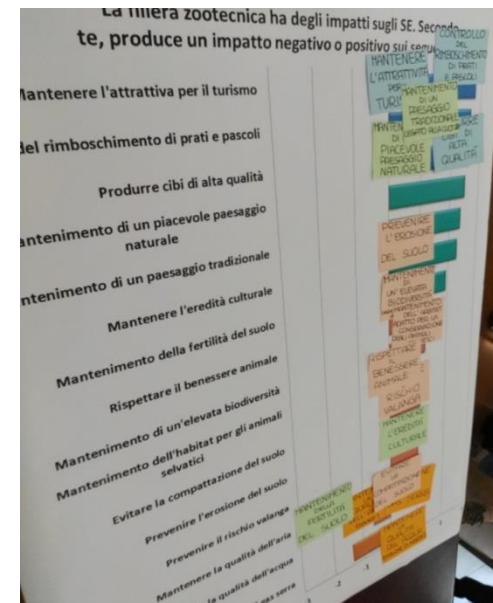
3) Qualitative evaluation of impacts of livestock farming on mountain ecosystems

- Austria → confirmed the evaluation of online questionnaire

- Italy → discussion and (some) changes in the evaluation

4) Discussion:

- EU «Mountain product» optional quality term seen as an opportunity
- Need to reinforce cooperation
- Need for efficient marketing and communication strategies



Conclusions

- Positive vision of the relationships between livestock farming and mountain (Alps) agro-ecosystems
- Relevance of participation and collaboration of different stakeholders to build a common vision of the perspectives of the sector
- Synergies among livestock sustainability dimensions: social versus environmental
- Multifunctionality of livestock mountain farming: results can be used to implement strategies aiming at generate «added value» for mountain livestock products, maintaining the equilibrium between production and alpine agro-ecosystems.



Online Survey to discover stakeholder's background knowledge

Questions	Answers
Section: Ecosystem Services	
Could you give a definition of “Ecosystem Services”?	Yes, I could I know roughly the meaning I heard about this concept, but I don't know the meaning I never heard about this concept
If you had chosen the first or the second answer, please try to define the term “Ecosystem Services”.	Open answer
Section: Mountain food chain and Ecosystem Services	
The livestock sector has impacts on ESs. According to your opinion, it produces a negative or a positive impact on the following ESs? (the complete list of the ESs is in Results, Table 6)	Likert scale from -3 to +3. -3 = very negative impact; 0=no impact; +3= very positive impact Option “I don't know” included.
Section: Additional value	
According to your opinion, the livestock food production chain helps the maintenance of a mountain economy?	Open answer
According to your opinion, having a farm located in a mountain area is an added value for the food production chain?	Open answer
Communication	
Is the relationship between the food production chain and the added value coming from the location of the production in a mountain area adequately communicated?	Open answer
If yes, in which way?	Open answer
If no, why?	Open answer
What would you suggest?	Open answer