

**Current use of contentious inputs in European organic animal production**

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Contentious inputs are used by organic farmers to maintain production sustainability and high standards in animal health and welfare. Their implementation has detrimental impact on the environment and present a risk for the development of the organic sector. Information regarding the application of contentious inputs is not available at the European scale and it is a prerequisite to devise and implement roadmaps to phase them out. This work aimed to determine the extent to which antibiotics, anthelmintics and synthetic vitamins are currently used in organic livestock and to highlight differences in their controlled use. A multi-dimensional approach, incorporating: (1) literature reviews; (2) Europe-wide surveys or interviews of organic experts; (3) analysis of publicly available research data; and (4) national and international authorities (veterinary and agricultural organisations) was followed to quantify the current use and need of contentious inputs in European organic animal production. Overall, there was considerable variation in the use of anthelmintics and antibiotics reflecting country-specific differences in the level of pathogen threat and control. Estimates suggest that overall anthelmintic treatments do not exceed one treatment per animal per year in organic farms, although exceptions were noted. Extrapolated calculations indicate that on average 0.7 antibiotic treatments per animal per year are input in organic livestock systems. Dosages of synthetic vitamins are highly standardized, and decisions are made in the premix producing industry rather than on the farms. With few exceptions there are no differences between conventional and organic practice regarding dosage. Research-based background for organic-specific recommendations is therefore needed. The results provide the first benchmark on patterns of contentious input uses in organic livestock farming across Europe. Funded by EU H2020 No 773431 – RELACS.

**Perception of organic livestock farmers about the organic farming situation in Europe**

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An online survey to gather information about organic livestock production was conducted (Nov 2018- Feb 2019) among organic livestock farmers in 13 European countries. A total of 426 responses were analysed, of which 59% were French and Spanish farmers. Characteristics of the participants and farms were representatives of the European organic livestock sector. Farmers express their difficulty to obtain information on alternatives to antiparasitics (4.4/7) and antibiotics (4.3/7) compared to bedding (3.1/7). Feeding/nutrition (6.6/7), animal health (6.5/7) and welfare (6.5/7) were the most relevant issues in their farms. Yet, for farmers transitioning to organic farming systems, production costs (5.5/7), access to organic market (5.1/7) and animal health (5.1/7) were important factors. Although farmers report that the use of alternative therapies depends on the health issue and the usage of conventional treatments when necessary, in the last year, 64% of the organic farmers did not treat  $\geq 90\%$  of their animals. The three main source of information on alternative treatments were veterinarians (51%), other farmers (46%) and the internet (38%). In conclusion, organic farmers indicated more difficulty in retrieving information on alternative treatments than on bedding. Although production costs were decisive to become an organic farmer, animal health and welfare were the most relevant issues for those already farming organically. Despite rising popularity of phytotherapy, conventional treatment is still the predominant form of therapy. Funded by EU H2020 No 774340 – Organic-PLUS.