

Merinos del Sur, Cooperativa Remedios-Picasat, Corsevilla, CEIA3, COVAP, Ovipor and Dehesas Cordobesas took part in the event, organised by Cooperativas Agro-Alimentarias de Andalucía and Bioazul.

## Livestock farming is the focus of the second working session of the European CHOICE project in Spain

30/01/2025.- The office of Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias in Cordoba has hosted the second Participatory Lab of the European project CHOICE (GA 101081617) in Spain. This initiative, whose Spanish experience began just over a year ago, seeks to generalise the adoption of sustainable practices along the entire agri-food value chain, improving production processes and creating favourable environments for the reduction of negative environmental impact, thus paving the way to zero emissions by 2050.

Funded by the European Union within the framework of Horizon Europe, CHOICE brings together sixteen partners from five European countries, Colombia and South Africa. The pilot project in Spain, led by Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias de Andalucía, involves more than 200 Andalusian farmers and livestock farmers who have already started working on the implementation of measures aimed at increasing sustainability in their businesses.

Merinos del Sur, the Remedios-Picasat Cooperative, Corsevilla, CEIA3, COVAP, Ovipor and Dehesas Cordobesas took part in this second event, organised by Cooperativas Agro-Alimentarias de Andalucía and Bioazul, resulting in a productive session in which, in addition to dissecting the results obtained in the first Participatory Lab, a group work session was held to validate and prioritise the conversions identified and to define their associated variables.

### **Main topics discussed at the second 'Participatory Lab'.**

After a brief presentation of the CHOICE project and its application in Spain, the participants in this second Participatory Lab shared the results of the first meeting, in which olive groves and livestock farming were the protagonists. Through discussion and the exchange of ideas, the attendees were able to identify the main impact-generating elements, conversion mechanisms and sustainable practices, as well as possible barriers and levers for the adoption of sustainable management models.

After the review of the results and conclusions of the first Participatory Lab, the group work session began, in which many and varied issues were discussed, such as the importance of digitalisation and data integration or the adjustment of stocking rates.

Special attention was paid to the management of slurry and the regeneration of land abandoned by livestock, an issue of great importance, but very dependent on political regulation, and special emphasis was placed on the existing obstacles from

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this point of view. In the same vein, the issue of cover crops and composting and organic amendments was also discussed.

On the other hand, the debate on optimising animal diets was also very lively, highlighting the lack of research in this area and the need to better understand which products are more or less methanogenic and therefore which can reduce the carbon footprint more or less.

In the section on certifications, the focus was on those referring to animal welfare, something that is already required in certain markets for the commercialisation of products. Furthermore, mention was also made of other certifications linked to sustainability.

Regarding renewable energies, their increasing use was highlighted as a consequence of economic profitability rather than sustainable awareness, with solar panels being the preferred alternative. In addition, the use of sustainable machinery and automation was mentioned as a less prominent aspect.

Finally, the conservation of flora and fauna was discussed, concluding that this is an aspect that farmers do not take into account very much, except for those who benefit from the specific eco-scheme of the CAP.

After the conclusions, this second and profitable workshop was brought to a close, encouraging the agents involved to continue taking part in the working sessions that make up the project.