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QUICKSCAN - A TOOL HELPING TO IMPROVE THESUSTAINABILITY AND WELFARE ON YOUR PIG OR BROILER FARM

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Sustainability and animal welfare are two concerns that have raised european population concern. Pig and poultry production, in particular—due to their high demand and central role in the diet of many regions around the world—are under increasing scrutiny from consumers, policymakers, and international organizations. This pressure has led to a transformation in how these farming systems are conceived and managed, prioritizing not only production efficiency but also environmental protection, animal health, and living conditions.

Today’s consumers increasingly value transparency in production chains, and factors such as product origin, farming practices, and environmental impact directly influence their purchasing decisions. In this context, products that come from sustainable systems and ensure high animal welfare standards tend to be preferred, even when priced higher.

Therefore, promoting sustainable and ethically responsible livestock practices is not only an environmental and moral necessity, but also a strategic opportunity to strengthen consumer trust and ensure the competitiveness of the livestock sector in an evolving market. One of the objectives of the H2020 mEATquality project is to support the development of techniques to assess the sustainability of monogastric production; aiming to improve it by implementing the best practices while assessing its environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Thus, quick sustainability scan calculators were developed with those aims. In tohose quick calculators, intensive and extensive production were differentiated for each one of the species evaluated (pigs and broilers). The calculators are based on the evaluation of 10 aspects related to production management: 1) certifications; 2) water management; 3) feed; 4) waste and residues management; 5) energy efficiency; 6) socio-economic contribution to the territory; 7) farm associated businesses; 8) animal handling; 9) management of pastures, soil and biodiversity; 10) stocking rate.

The last two aspects evaluated only in extensive farms. Each of these aspects receives a score according to its importance and contributes in a different proportion to a final score (with a maximum of 100 points), which is organized into 3 categories: environmental, social, and economic impact. These calculators are designed for easy use (answers are just yes or no), with more than 60 questions for each one of the models.

These calculators were used to evaluate 60 broilers farms from Poland and Germany and 80 pig farms in Denmark, Italy, Spain and Poland. Intensive broiler farms achieved average scores of 81.6, 70.8, and 79.6 points in the environmental, social, and economic impact categories, respectively; while extensive broilers farms achieved average scores of 79.3, 72.0, and 78.0 points in the same categories. In pigs farms, intensive farms obtained 39.71, 41.94 and 39.96 points in the environmental, social, and economic impact categories, respectively; while extensive pig farms achieved average scores of 54.69, 53.57, and 51.35 points in the same categories.

These calculators are useful as a self-assessment tool for farmers, allow comparisons between farms (benchmarking), identify the weak points of each farm, enable participatory certification, and help to provide confidence to consumers.

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