

VIRTUAL MOBILITY (VM) GRANT REPORT

This report is submitted by the VM grantee to VNS Manager, who will coordinate the approval on behalf of the Action MC.

Action number: COST Action CA17110

VM grant title: Control Programs to support dairy calves health across EU Member States

VM grant start and end date: 20/07/2021 to 11/10/2021

Grantee name: Elena IRIMIA

Description of the outcomes and achieved outputs (including any specific Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the Virtual Mobility).

(max. 500 words)

First a brainstorming session with the support team (WG1 leading group and chair of the Action) was held to discuss the topics to be included. We decided for 25 questions and the questionnaire was divided into two sections related to 1) background information on dairy calves from the respective country and 2) specific information on CPs. The initial testing and validation of the questionnaire was performed through several email exchanges and in a meeting with all team members for a good clarity and conciseness of the questions addressed.

A request was sent out among the consortium members whether they would be interested to participate and dedicate time and data to this initiative. People that replied positively were contacted and online interviews were planned. In total 6 interviews were conducted and data on CPs for calves were obtained from 7 different countries.

At this point the first results are available, although we are still trying to involve more countries in this work. The results show that the definition of a calf differs between countries. In many countries calves are cattle up to 12 months of life (Romania, Northern Ireland, Hungary, Netherlands etc.) others classify them as a calf up to 6 months of age (Belgium, Hungary and Denmark). The replacement rate of the dairy cow per year varies per country from 25% (Netherlands) to 41% (Hungary).

Following the interviews, we were able to obtain information that shows the existence of CPs for dairy calves. The most common diseases with a CP put in place are Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) and Salmonellosis. Main risk factors that are associated to reintroduction of controlled diseases are related to animal trade and cattle movements. Recommendations to develop CPs for calves included diseases such as Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD), Neonatal Calf Diarrhoea, Cryptosporidiosis and Coccidiosis.

The work is ongoing and that the plan is to develop a publication which will include the mapping of the disease control programmes put in place in Europe, with focus or at least involve dairy calves and will include as authorship all the members from COST Action CA17110 who delivered information for their country status. Currently the study is the process of collecting additional data and conduct additional analysis which will be the starting point of writing the article.



Description of the benefits to the COST Action Strategy (what and how).

(max. 500 words)

The foreseen paper will describe the role of calves in the dairy industry throughout Europe. It will describe disease control efforts specifically focused or involving this group of cattle that are conducted in Europe and mention the needs for further disease control in dairy calves. The benefits are that with this work we will provide information that can be disseminated on the current status of CPs involving calves and the necessity for development of CPs in dairy calves.

Promoting the best control programs adopted for calves and the exchange of knowledge between researchers involved in WG1 or the whole COST Action group.

Our work has tried to identify as many countries that are part of the COST action and have implemented control and eradication programs for calves, providing an overview of their effectiveness. We have identified the main diseases that affect the health of calves and that develop major economic deficiencies on farms.

Description of the virtual collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned).

(max. 500 words)

Keeping in mind that this work is ongoing, collaboration with COST members to collect more data about CPs in calves from all over the EU countries will be still possible.

By conducting online interviews with EU COST members, we work together on this topic, experience the level of expertise on this topic that is currently available and the needs for future knowledge. This may result in opportunities for future collaborations with the group, especially for this comparative study between EU countries that have CPs in place for calves and the countries who need one.

Identifying bottlenecks of the CPs and share the found knowledge with the whole group after the evaluation of data obtained.

Lessons learned after this VM has the focus on improving my speaking skills, organizing online interviews, acquiring of knowledge regarding calf diseases and how the industry from each country get adapted to the highest standards for preventing or eradication calf health issues.

