Report on the outcomes of a Virtual Mobility[1]

Action number: CA17110

Grantee name: Nienke Paarlberg

Virtual Mobility Details

Title: SOUND control: participating in the top-down approach and taking a leading role in the bottom-up approach. In this VM we aimed to collect the stakeholder data in the Netherlands for the top-down approach. For the bottom-up approach in this VM a leading role was taken to coordinate the participation of countries, the timely translation of the survey in national languages and the timely collection of results. Subsequently the data was send to the VM candidate who conducted the analyses of the data collected for the bottom-up approach across countries with regard to the decision making concerning cattle trade. The results were presented at the final SOUND-control conference and are currently written down for scientific publication.

Start and end date: 16/05/2022 to 15/10/2022

Description of the work carried out during the VM

Description of the virtual collaboration and activities carried out during the VM, with focus on the work carried out by the grantee. Any deviations from the initial working plan shall also be described in this section.

(max. 500 words)

The objective of this virtual mobility grant (VM) was to get a better view on the process regarding cattle trade in Europe. Data were collected on the following topics:

- Characteristics of the study population (farm size, main production system, age of the farmer);
- Cattle trade across borders (has the farmer bought cattle from abroad before, does he intend to do so in the future and what was/is his motivation to buy cattle from abroad?);
- Effect of disease control programs on the decision making process of farmers;
- Farmer perception of disease risk;
- What would be desirable information sources for disease control programs in other countries?

A questionnaire focusing on the beforementioned topics was developed in Microsoft Forms and pre-tested. For this study, seven countries participating in SOUND-control were enrolled: Albania, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia. Data was collected between 25-07-2022 and 29-08-2022. During this VM, I translated and set out the questionnaire for both the bottom-up and Top-down approach for the Netherlands, coordinated the data collection for the bottom-up approach in the other

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countries and hosted online meetings to discuss the progress. Additionally, I collated and analysed the data collected across countries using descriptive statistics. I presented the first results during the final SOUND control conference in Greece on the 19th and 20th of September. At the moment we are in the process of finalising the analysis and write the results in the form of a scientific paper that will be submitted for publication.

Description of the VM main achievements and planned follow-up activities

Description and assessment of whether the VM achieved its planned goals and expected outcomes, including specific contribution to Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the VM. Agreed plans for future follow-up collaborations shall also be described in this section.

(max. 500 words)

The data analysis process is currently in its final stages. The analysis of descriptive statistics is finished and were presented at the final SOUND-control conference in Athens, Greece. The results provided an overview of the characteristics of the participating farmers and showed to differ between country, herd type and whether farmers participated in a CP or not. The most interesting resulted are summarized below:

- With respect to the location of trade partners, most countries traded with neighboring countries.
- When focusing on the motivation of farmers to purchase cattle, the main reason stated for buying cattle was to start or improve their herd. In the Netherlands there was also a small group of farmers who indicated good financial opportunities as the main driver. Further analysis should investigate whether farmers who reported a good financial opportunity as an important factor belong to a specific production system, and if they differ in their risk perception related to purchase from other countries compared to farmers that do not purchase or that purchase because of other reasons.
- Trust in the cattle trader was perceived as an important factor influencing the decision to buy cattle from abroad by 76.5 % of the respondents from all participating countries.
- Price was not reported as being an important factor to decide whether to import cattle for 47.0% of the respondents from all participating countries. Further investigation into the differences in farmer characteristics between farmers do or don't regard price as relevant would increase the understanding of the farmer decision making processes.
- 13.9% of all the responding farmers indicated that they are not aware of the disease control programs in place in their own country. In addition, there is an even larger proportion of farmers, 42.3%, which replied that they are not aware which disease control programs are in place in other countries. For the countries who traded in the past and intend to do so in the future (Albania, Slovenia, the Netherlands) it is important to promote awareness about control programs in place abroad.
- When looking at whether an individual animal is part of a disease control program, there is a small proportion of farmers, 5.2%, who reported that they do not find this information important, and a slightly larger proportion, 9.2%, who reported that the status within a control program was not important information to them. It may be relevant to explore whether this could be due to a differences in farming system, and what the rationale behind this farmer perception is.

From these results several new questions arose regarding the relations between answers given to different questions. This is mainly focused on the relation between the farmers perception on disease risk when importing, their contributing in disease control programs, their motivation for importing cattle and the production system present at the farm. The work is still continued as we are now working on a multiple correspondence analysis and logistic regression to answer some of these questions. This work

is expected to result in a draft publication that is principally written by the VM candidate and supported by the WG4 leader group and the people involved in the collection of the farmerdata across Europe.