**Conversion of sheep production to organic farming**

**Elvira Fina Planas - 29th June 2018**

**OBJECTIVES**

Go in depth into the sheep production organic farming, understand the conversion process and know the most important difficulties for producers.

**CONVERSION PERIOD**

- Time taken for a whole farm to comply with the **organic standards** and achieve the organic certification.
- Need of **investment** to adapt to the organic legislation, but lower production rates in crops and livestock.
- Sanitary management of the animals based on **prevention**, minimizing the chemically-synthesized allopathic drugs.
- No hormones allowed in **reproduction**. Management with male effect, flushing and photoperiod control.

**MOST USUAL PATHOLOGIES AND CONTROL RESOURCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathology</th>
<th>Control Measures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parasite infections</td>
<td>See Diagram 1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastitis</td>
<td>Phytotherapy and hygienic procedures in milking.</td>
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<td>Enterotoxaemia</td>
<td>Avoid sudden changes in feed. Limited access to frozen pastures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postnatal diarrhea</td>
<td>Day-long with the ewe, promoting regular lactation. Low density farmyard groups with similar age range. Regular disinfection and excrement removal of the pens.</td>
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**1. MAS LA CAPALLERA - CAMPRODON**

- Head: 440
- Land: 55 own ha
- Vending: Direct sale, abattoir agreement
- Motive of conversion: Subventions
- Difficulties: Mastitis and lamb diarrhea. They control it with individual supervision the first week of life.

**2. MAS L'EIXIDA – SANT FELIU DE PALLEROLS**

- Head: 300
- Land (total/own): 33/5 ha
- Vending: Direct sale
- Motive of conversion: Subventions
- Difficulties: Lack of own land

**3. CAN TERRADES – SANT CELONI**

- Head: 600
- Land (total/own): 1000/250 ha
- Vending: Direct sale
- Motive of conversion: Differentiation and subventions
- Difficulties: Foot-rot and parasites. Prevention with cooper sulfate footbath, pasture management and pen disinfection.

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Concerning commercialization**

- Producers must be able to have enough income. Generally, they make distribution and sales by their own to avoid intermediaries.

**Concerning legal bases and public administration controlling**

- Legal framework and inspections are demanding to assure the consumers’ confidence in eco-label. It implies more administrative work to farmers but offers a recognized differentiation in the market.

**Concerning production**

- The organic farming favor the rational and sustainable use of the land and resources, helping the rural development.
- Land property is a fundamental point because rent implies long-term insecurity.

**Concerning health**

- Prevention based practices in sanitary management improves the global health of the flocks.
- Reduction in allopathic drugs and chemicals benefit environment and the population, mostly in the case of antibiotic resistances.
- Veterinarians and farmers need new knowledge and changes in the conventional way of work.

**Concerning conversion**

- Motivation of the farmers in conversion sometimes is only economic, to have access to subventions. Others however, have more ideological concept of organic farming as a way to refuse conventional production and benefit the animals, the environment and the consumers.