



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 60

AUTHOR(S):

Gunn Turid Kvam

RURALIS – Institute for Rural and Regional Research

Implementing electronic bells in sheep farming – farmers in the leading role

In the AgriLink project implementation of electronic bells (e-bell) on sheep in the county of Sogn og Fjordane in Norway was studied. E-bells are placed around the neck of the sheep for use when they are grazing in the outfields. The bell uses GPS or the mobile phone network and makes it easier to locate and control animals, thus reducing stock losses.

The County Governor introduced subsidies for the purchase of e-bells in 2010 as part of a project to reduce the loss of sheep through predation. The condition was that groups of farmers sharing common outfield pastures needed to apply for support on behalf of their members. These groups have traditionally cooperated in gathering the sheep at the end of the season. Most sheep farmers became aware of the new technology and the County Governor's project in meetings arranged by the meat cooperative and the farmers' interest organisation for sheep and goats. In the assessment and implementation phase, sheep farmers with knowledge in the use of the bells supported other farmers and usually provided the contact between the suppliers and the pasture group. The responsibility of the pasture group for the application combined with the peer-to-peer advising lead to a widespread diffusion of the new technology. Implementation has further led to stronger cooperation, increased contact between members of some pasture groups, and enhanced knowledge about where the animals move during a season. Overall, it has led to a greater commitment to the use of common land in the outfields. The study also showed that the public and farmers can initiate and diffuse technology innovations effectively by working together.

Check [here](#).

CONTACTS:

gunn.turid.kvam@ruralis.no

<https://ruralis.no/>

COUNTRY/REGION:

Sogn og Fjordane in Norway

KEY WORDS:

#sheep farming, #electronic tracking, #advisory service, #technology diffusion, #common management

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The region of Sogn og Fjordane is in the West of Norway with many fjords and mountains. Sheep farming is one of the important productions in this region with about 1480 sheep farms. Sogn og Fjordane is the fourth largest county in Norway according to sheep meat production. Compared to other counties, it is steep, has rough terrain, smaller holdings and huge grazing areas. The geography is challenging for sheep farmers and the new e-bells technology may in particular be very useful for farmers in this region.

The innovation cluster 'Natural resources common management' (water, grazing, forest, etc.), abbreviated to COMM cluster, in AgriLink, refers to the management of natural resources and how that management affects the efficiency of use those resources. Examples are: utilization of common pasture to sheep; supporting activities for the preservation and restoration of ecological infrastructures in agricultural areas; crop production in order to mitigate farming abandonment.



ABOUT AGRILINK

AgriLink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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pierre.labarthe@inrae.fr

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All the Practice Abstracts prepared by the AgriLink project in the EIP-AGRI common format can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers>