

## Fitter Livestock Farming Joined the Discussion at ATF Seminar

*“What research and innovation can deliver to support climate mitigation and adaptation in livestock farming?”*

### Press Release

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Linking information about the **health and management of livestock to environmental data** is a key component in making livestock enterprises more sustainable in the battle with **climate change**, so said the delegates at the ATF workshop on 6 November 2019 in Brussels. The afternoon session of the 9<sup>th</sup> ATF seminar focused on “What R&I can deliver to support climate mitigation and adaptation in livestock farming”. The well-attended workshop was organized by the ATF and the Fitter Livestock Farming Common Dissemination Booster CDB Cluster.

The workshop began with the opening speeches of the ATF President Jean-Louis Peyraud, the coordinator of GenTORE Nic Friggens and Jean-Charles Cavitte from the European Commission - DG AGRI. Jean-Charles Cavitte said, “Research programs are important for European policy makers to identify progresses and gaps in knowledge for future policies”. GenTORE coordinator Nic Friggens added, “Livestock farming is serious about mitigating climate change and adapting to environmental challenges”.

### ***Insights into the outcomes of the Fitter Livestock Farming CDB projects***

The representatives of the EU-funded projects (Feed-a-Gene, SmartCow, GenTORE, IMAGE, SAPHIR and GplusE) presented products, tools, devices and systems developed by these projects.



Mike Lynch presented [GplusE](#) project and mentioned that access to high value phenotypic data will be key to getting an accurate measure of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from livestock. Marie-Hélène Pinard-van der Laan gave a presentation about the [SAPHIR](#) project which generated novel tools for healthier livestock, with its correlation with the direct and indirect effects of the climate change especially on health and welfare. She said, “There is more support needed for R&I on the development of methods linking **climate data with disease occurrence** and further implementation of these applications to prevent and manage climate associated diseases.”



Fitter Livestock Farming projects have received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreements: GenTORE - 727213; Feed-a-Gene- 633531; SAPHIR - 633184; IMAGE - 677353; GplusE - 613689; SmartCow – 730924. Its content reflects the views of the Fitter Livestock Farming Cluster, and not the European Commission (EC). The EC is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

**IMAGE** project was presented by Michèle Tixier-Boichard. One of the outcomes of the project is to use the gene banks to analyze adaptation to climatic variation by landscape genomics. It has been seen that there are significant associations between environmental variables and 44 candidate genes. She said, “National authorities should recognize national gene banks for conservation purposes, more **cooperation between European gene banks** should be supported, gene bank collections have to be better documented and initiatives for introducing specific traits from genetic collections into commercial breeding programs should be supported in particular for increasing the **adaptation to different environments** and changes in production systems.” Jaap van Milgen introduced **Feed-a-Gene** project and he mentioned that, the use of alternative feed ingredients compared to Brazilian soybean meal reduces the effects on climate change by 3-8% and increases the land use by 2-12%. As lessons learned from the project, he said “Multi-actor approach is necessary to include industry and **crostalk between projects** must be ensured.” Nic Friggens presented **GenTORE** project that aims to apply genomics in the context of precision agriculture. He told, “There is a need of incentives to spread use of genomics, to facilitate incorporation of data from on-farm technologies, to encourage practical use of decision support tools for reducing **farm environmental footprint**.” René Baumont presented **SmartCow** project with its outcomes such as developing proxies to predict nutrient efficiency and publishing a book of methods in cattle physiology and behavior. He pointed out, “**Better coordination of research infrastructures (RIs)** in the cattle sector is necessary to develop more efficient approaches to address the societal, environmental and economic challenges.”

## **Discussion**

The discussion was moderated by ATF Vice President Vivi H. Nielsen. In the beginning of this discussion, Bovine, **Methagene**, **HealthyLivestock**, **ROADMAP** and Smarter H2020 projects were shortly introduced by the representatives of these projects.

Using data is key to the holistic approach required to make livestock more sustainable. The delegates during the discussion were thus critical of the extremely competitive background in animal breeding. This prevents companies to share data, which in turn hampers farmers to identify and select their most efficient animals able to cope with a climate change. The importance of **communication of science with society** in a wider context for the future of European R&I programs, involving **industry and stakeholders** to the project from the start and the need for a trustworthy **regulatory framework** were among the common opinions of the representatives of Fitter Livestock Farming CDB projects.

*The **Animal Task Force** (ATF) is a European Public-Private Partnership and a leading body of expertise linking European industry and research providers for developing innovation in the livestock sector. We work together to identify actions that are needed to foster knowledge development and innovation for a sustainable and competitive livestock sector in Europe.*



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