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LIFE GREEN SHEEP FINAL SEMINAR · 17 & 18 NOVEMBER 2026

Lessons learnt from the project & feedback from participants



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TOOLS TO ASSESS ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY

Scaling carbon mitigation in the sheep sector is not just developing a **carbon calculator.** It requires **connecting** scientifically robust and harmonised **assessment methods** with existing farm **data systems**, trusted **advisory networks**, actionable mitigation **recommendations** and clear economic **benefits** for farmers.

1. **Harmonised methodologies**, not only softwares.
2. Focus on common emission h**otspot**s and key production **drivers**.
3. Incorporate carbon assessment within existing **AKIS and advisory networks**.
4. Turn carbon calculators into farm **decision-support tools**.
5. Connect climate **mitigation** with productivity and economic **benefits**.
6. Invest in i**nteroperability, benchmarking, training** and trusted **data governance**.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES FOR ADVISORS

Capacity building requires creating a **shared understanding of climate challenges**, carbon **assessment and mitigation opportunities**. Training becomes most effective when scientific concepts are simplified, linked to real farm evidence, integrated into the partnership-building process and connected to tangible economic and production benefits.

1. Build a **common climate language** across all partners
2. **Reuse and adapt proven training resources** instead of starting from scratch
3. Tailor capacity building to **stakeholders** with different backgrounds and climate knowledge.
4. **Explain mitigation measures** together with the mechanisms behind them.
5. Use **real** farm results and **practical** examples to turn knowledge into action.
6. **Link** climate mitigation to farm efficiency and economic benefits.

A survey across 5 partner countries

Sheep farmers and advisors surveyed in spring 2026

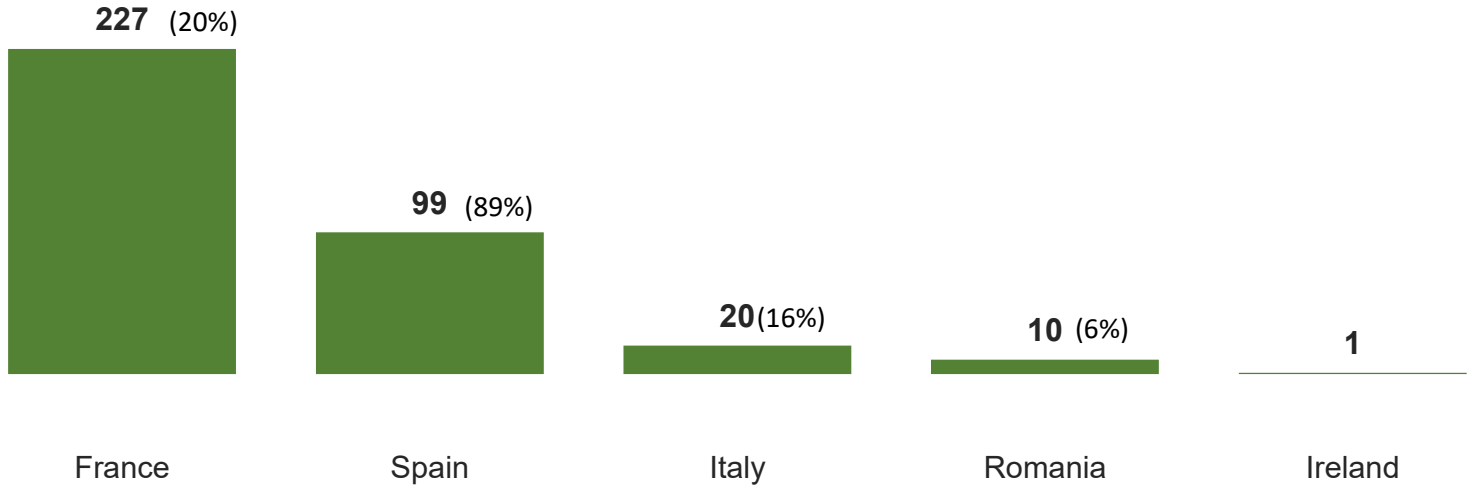
Objectives of the Survey : Gather feedback from farmers' and advisers'.
Online surveys (environmental issues, tools used, results achieved, action levers, dissemination material, etc.)

356
total respondents

5
partner countries

24%
of the farmer target reached

Respondents by country (% of the farmers objective reached)



Why a moderate response rate?

1

An online survey

Low adoption of digital tools and low appeal of administrative tasks, reporting, or expressing opinions.

In Spain and in France, face-to-face interviews achieved a much higher completion rate.

2

A busy calendar

Data collected in spring: the period chosen for the project's 2nd assessment, but also the time of heaviest workload in sheep farming (lambing, suckling lambs, milking, forage harvest).

3

Limited data access (Ireland)

Teagasc holds National Farm Survey data (economic, environmental, social sustainability) but not farm contact details — so the survey could not be administered to them

Risks widely recognised, more mixed interest in carbon credits

Perception of climate issues — France, Italy, Romania, Spain **3,84 / 5** By country: FR 3,91 · ES 3,70 · IT 3,54 · RO 4,26

1	**Climate risks recognised**	The rise in extreme weather events and biodiversity loss are seen as concerning in all four surveyed countries. The risk for farm productivity is highly considered.
2	**Cutting emissions seen as essential**	Farming is seen as directly concerned by this issue, with strong agreement on the need to act even if fossil fuel combustion is recognized as the main contributor to climate change.
3	**Sustainable grazing, a beneficial practice**	A large majority of respondents see sustainable grazing management as good for both the climate and environmental externalities.
4	**Carbon credits: more uncertain buy-in**	Perceived interest in carbon credits varies more by country, with notably mixed views in Spain.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

> *Climate change is a fact. We must turn this threat into an opportunity for the future of the local livestock sector.*
> **— Advisor, Spain**

> *The visible changes in the climate. How the animals behave during periods of excessive heat.*
> **— Advisor, Romania**

> *I thought sheep were a low-carbon production and that we could get carbon credits. But I realised we also had a lot to improve.*
> **— Farmer, France**

Useful tools, provided they are reliable and cost-effective

Expectations regarding indicators and support for the transition **3,53 / 5** By country: FR 3,38 · ES 3,70 · IT 3,91 · RO 4,78

1	**Sustainability indicators seen as useful**	Sustainability indicators are ranked at 3,36/5 as concrete support for managing the farm. The most skeptics argues about methodological uncertainty (e.g. carbon sequestration), tools not fully adapted to local contexts and the important effect of productivity
2	**Data reliability, a key point**	Access to reliable, accurate data is rated very important by the majority of respondents.
3	**Public support expected**	Support from public authorities is seen as necessary to support the transition
4	**Profitability, a condition for buy-in**	Whether tools are compatible with farm profitability remains the deciding factor in their adoption.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

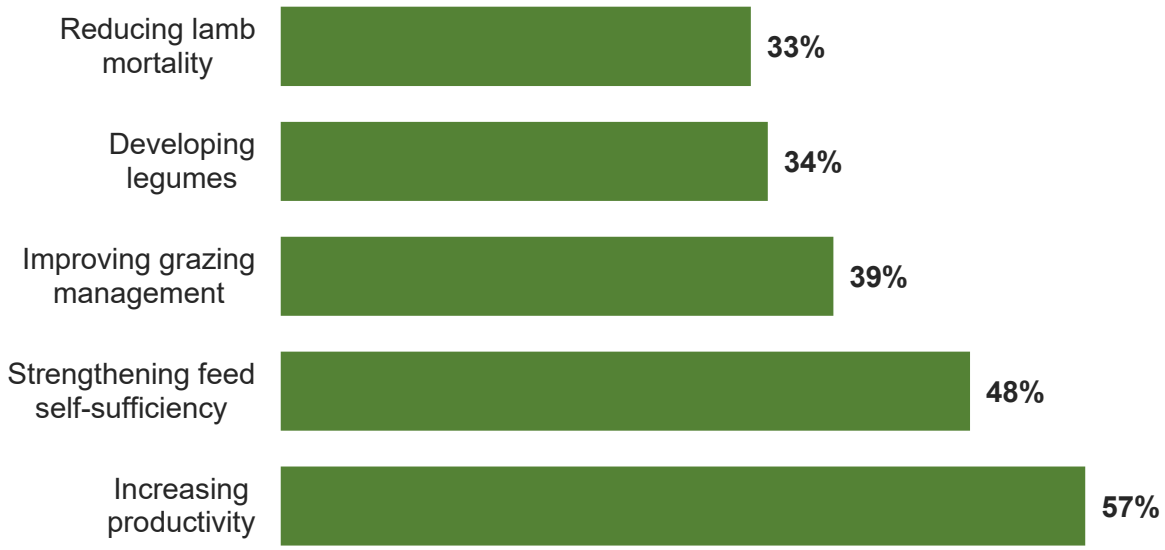
> *The diagnostic results really let us know our impact precisely. Without them, we are talking in a vacuum.*
> — **Farmer, France**

> *The CAP'2ER system used for the estimate does not fully fit the reality of Sardinian farms.*
> — **Advisor, Italy**

> *Communication must be incentive-based: anything that may be seen as punitive will be rejected by most farmers.*
> — **Advisor, France**

The levers farmers quote most often

Share of respondents quoting the action among their 5 most effective practices — all countries pooled (n=345: FR 221, ES 97, IT 18, RO 9)



Priorities that vary by country

- France (n=221): productivity (52%), feed self-sufficiency (49%), legumes (46%)
- Spain (n=97): productivity (69%), feed self-sufficiency (51%), grazing management (39%)
- Italy (n=18): flock health and grazing management (50%), feed self-sufficiency and fewer synthetic fertilisers (44%)
- Romania (n=9): productivity and grazing management (67%), legumes (56%)

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

> *A more efficient flock: culling unproductive ewes, more prolific animals, and feeding more efficiently with home-grown forage.*
> **— Farmer, Spain**

> *Improve grasslands: more legumes and more productivity, so better forage quality and a more productive flock.*
> **— Farmer, France**

> *Apply measures that need no major investment: selective culling, balanced nutrition, manure management.*
> **— Advisor, Romania**

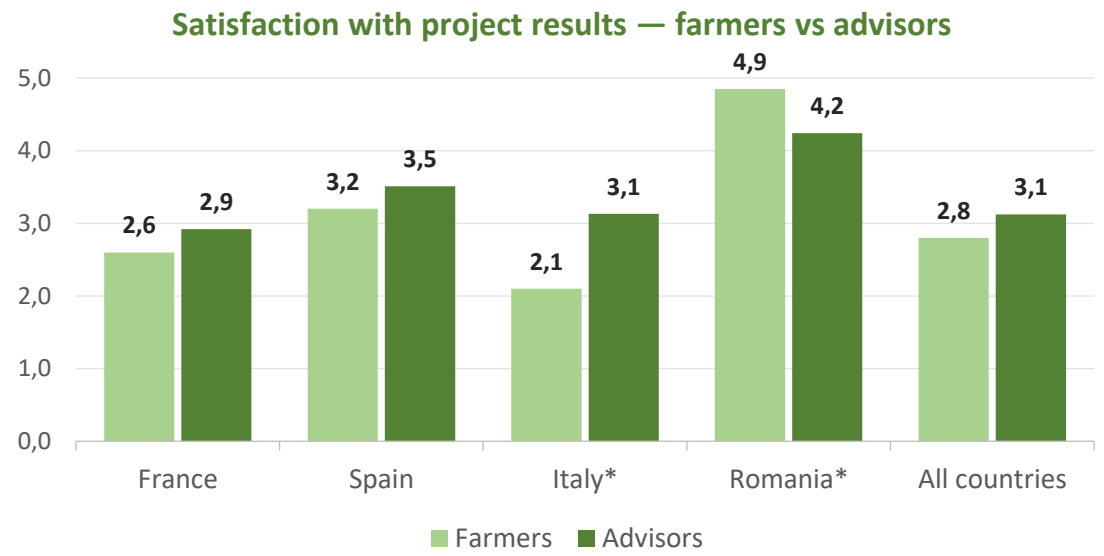
Moderate satisfaction with results, stronger among advisors

Results achieved by the project

2,90 / 5

- Moderate satisfaction with the environmental results obtained although most extensive farmer are deceived by the high impact of productivity on results
- Some farmers also thought that they would receive a financial grant or carbon credit for their low carbon practices
- Advisors are generally more positive than farmers on relevance, influence on decisions, and perceived impact on profitability

By country: FR 2,71 · ES 3,27 · IT 2,53 · RO 4,51



*Average score out of 5. *Small samples in Italy and Romania (fewer than 15 respondents per country).*

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

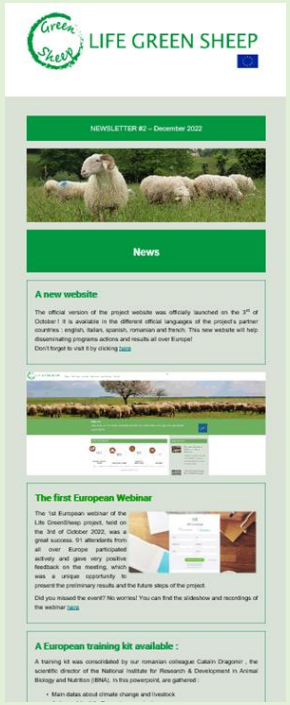
> *Disappointed that results are based on productivity, while my system is extensive, less-favoured, with lots of permanent grassland.*
>
> **— Farmer, France**

> *We expected something more theoretical, but in the end the results had a direct practical application on the farm.*
>
> **— Farmer, Spain**

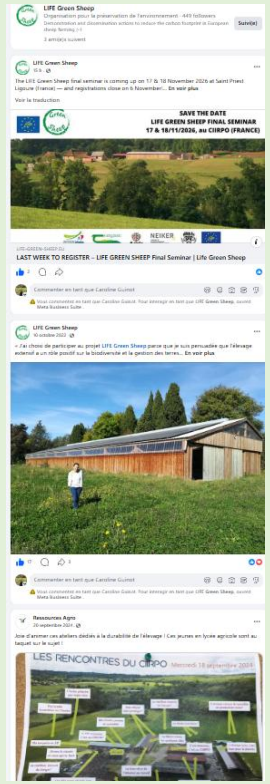
> *The main result is a lower environmental impact through greater efficiency: good nutrition, sound management and innovative crop techniques.*
>
> **— Farmer, Romania**

Overview of the “passive” material

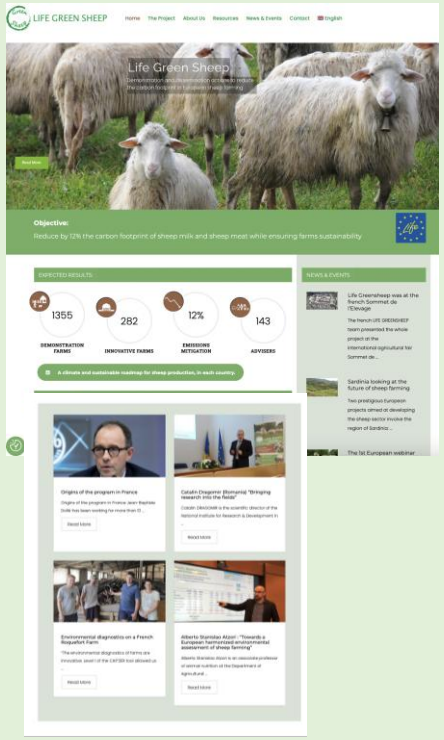
Newletter



Facebook



Website

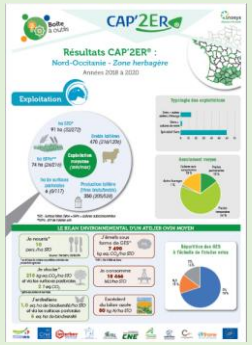


Testimony films





Leaflets with References And Results synthesis





Notice board



“Interactive & on farm communication”

~ 50 Professionnal, technical events, Farm Open Days













Scientific conferences

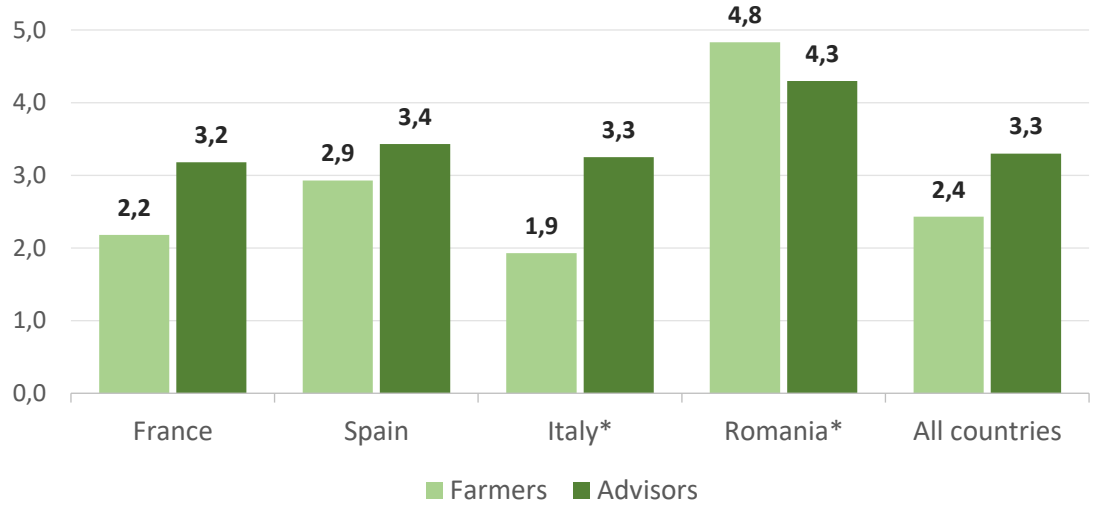
Dissemination materials little used, more trusted by advisors

Dissemination and training materials poorly used

2,71 / 5

- Moderate awareness of the “passive” materials produced by the project (site, newsletter, vidéos, leaflets)
- Regular use of the materials is limited among farmers who prefer face to face advises, farm or group visit. Reference sheets by system are among the most useful materials (60% in France, 45% across all countries)
- Trust placed in the materials is markedly higher among advisors than among farmers

By country: FR 2,50 · ES 3,05 · IT 2,38 · RO 4,50



*Average score out of 5. *Small samples in Italy and Romania (fewer than 15 respondents per country).*

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

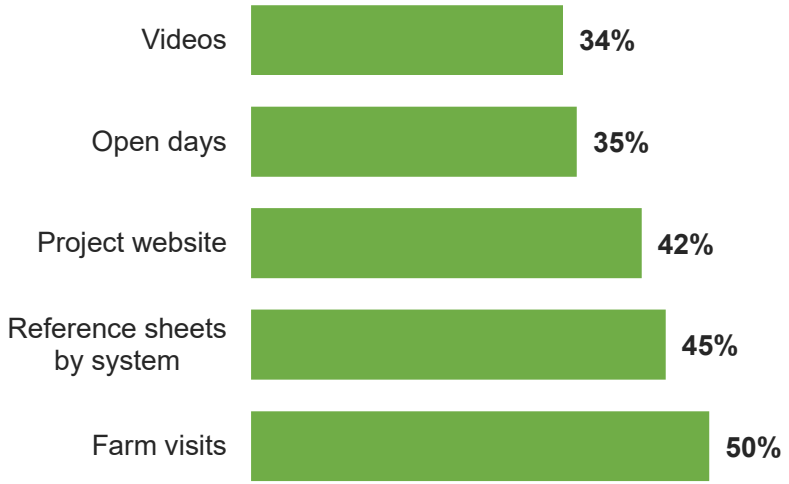
> *Communicate on the impact of the levers in a simple, educational way, with simple figures that show the difference.*
> **— Advisor, France**

> *Go and see similar systems to improve one's environmental* **— Farmer, France**

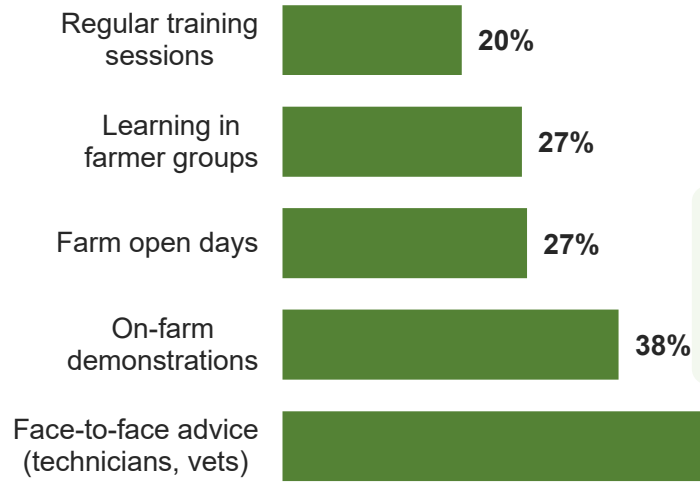
> *We did not receive enough documentation or news of the progress being made.* **— Farmer, Spain**
> *I would have liked to receive more information material.*
> **— Farmer, Italy**

How to better inform and support the sector?

Most used materials



Preferred update channels



> *Personalised advice: what should I do to do better?*
> — **Farmer, France**

Share of respondents choosing each item among their top 3 — all countries pooled (n=315). Face-to-face advice leads in France, Spain and Italy; reference sheets are mostly valued in France (60%), videos in Spain (55%), the website in Italy (80%).

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

> *I thought it would be more theoretical, but it was quite practical — and a way to exchange experiences with other farmers.*
> — **Farmer, Spain**

> *We need the final results and attractive, easy-to-understand materials to help farmers put the measures into practice.*
> — **Advisor, Spain**

> *Testimonials from farmers about the levers they used.*
> — **Advisor, France**
> *I met a lot of people with different ideas.*
> — **Farmer, Romania**

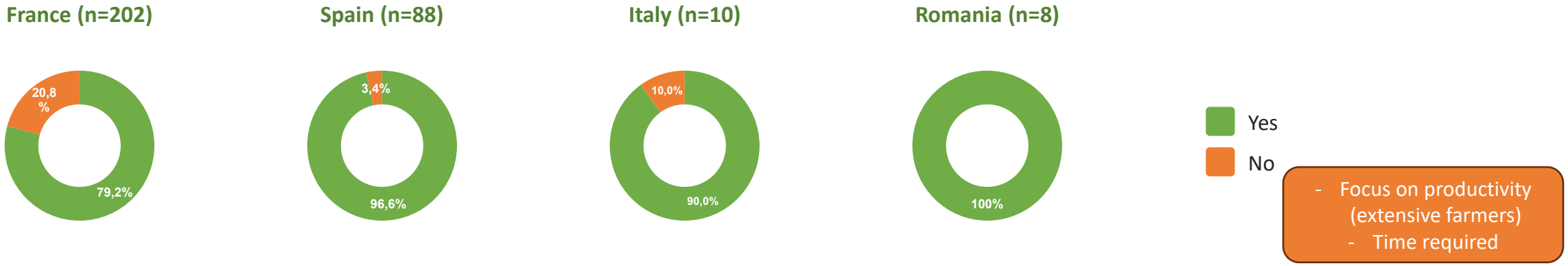
COMMUNICATION LEARNINGS

Effective communication is not about providing more information, but about **turning existing knowledge** into **trusted, practical and economically relevant** farm-level action. National Action Plans should therefore move from conventional dissemination towards a **continuous engagement** model based on **demonstration, trusted advisors, peer learning**, farmer co-design and clear evidence of both environmental and economic benefits.

1. **Show** rather than tell: use demonstration farms and **real farm results**.
2. Put **trusted advisors** and **farmer-to-farmer** learning at the centre.
3. **Link** carbon mitigation to **profitability**, efficiency and resilience.
4. Keep messages **simple, practical and action-oriented**.
5. **Combine digital** communication with face-to-face advisory support.
6. Make farmers co-designers and **engage** the whole value-chain ecosystem.

Farmers overwhelmingly recommend the project

Share of all respondents who would recommend it to another farmer or advisor — 85% across the four countries



Among ~175 substantive answers across the four countries, four arguments recur:

1 Learning from others and benchmarking

≈45 responses — the most frequent argument

2 Economic and environmental sustainability go together

≈39 responses

3 Knowing their own carbon footprint

≈33 responses

4 Supporting and defending the sheep sector

≈33 responses, mostly in Spain

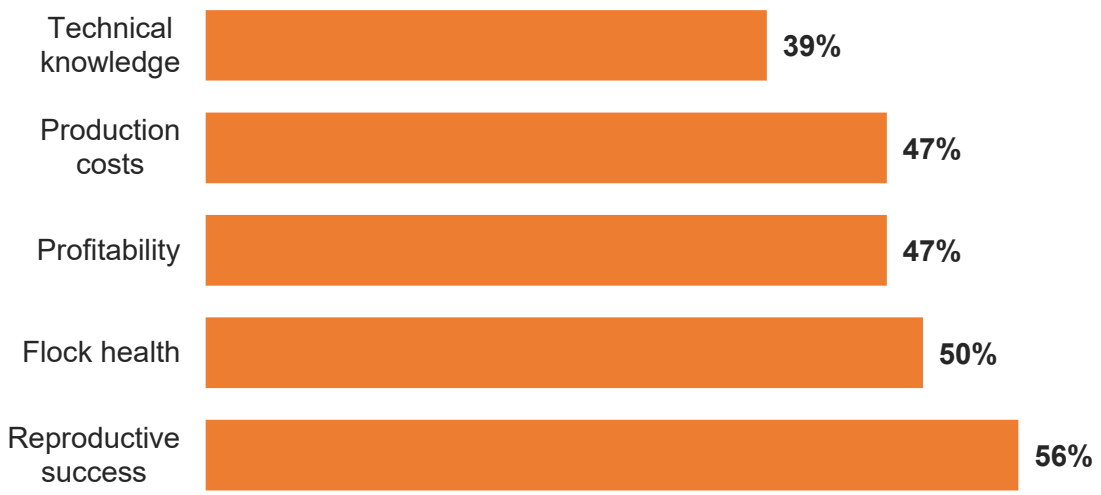
VOICES FROM THE FIELD

> *What is good for profitability is good for the planet.*
> — **Advisor, Spain**

> *I had no idea what my farm could emit and store, and it was good to be able to compare myself.*
> — **Farmer, France**

> *Simple measures to cut greenhouse gases can also bring higher or better-quality production. It is a win both ways.*
> — **Advisor, Romania**

What drives the most engaged farmers



Share of innovative farms citing each theme among the 5 with the most positive impact — FR (n=81), ES (n=35) and RO (n=5) pooled; no innovative farms surveyed in Italy.

Differences by country

- France: lamb mortality (43%) and working conditions (37%) stand out
- Spain: technical knowledge and profitability (57%) come first
- Romania: flock health and soil health (4 of 5 farms)

Would continue practices

61%

after the project ends — Spain 89%, France 48%, Romania 4 of 5

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

> *Keep the reproductive gains obtained by culling unproductive animals and controlling mastitis. Greater feed autonomy.*
>
> **— Farmer, Spain**

> *Sending ewe lambs on transhumance to maintain even more biodiversity and produce less manure.*
>
> **— Farmer, France**

> *Rotational, adaptive grazing to improve soil carbon storage, pasture resilience and animal health.*
>
> **— Advisor, Romania**

QUALITATIVE SUMMARY

Motivations and barriers, farmers and advisors

Cross-analysis of the qualitative interviews

	FARMERS	ADVISORS
INTERESTS	1. Actions combining **economic and environmental benefits** 2. **Self-sufficiency** and reduced input use 3. Improved **productivity** 4. **Practical** management improvements (grazing, manure, energy) 5. **Concrete** farm-level **solutions** rather than abstract climate concepts	1. Developing **advisory capacity** on climate mitigation and adaptation 2. **Knowledge transfer** through farmer groups and advisory networks 3. Training **tools** and technical **resources** 4. Data use, **benchmarking** 5. Systemic **sustainability approaches** (grazing, legumes, whole-farm systems)
BARRIERS	1. Limited **time and investment** capacity 2. Administrative burden and data-collection **effort** 3. Difficulty translating **results into concrete actions** 4. Perception of **limited mitigation options** in some systems (mainly extensive)	1. Difficulty engaging and **motivating farmers** 2. **Complexity** of explaining indicators and carbon metrics 3. Variable farmer engagement, linked to **economic pressures** 4. **Methodological uncertainty** (e.g. carbon sequestration) 5. Tools not fully adapted to **local contexts**

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

> *What sometimes surprises farmers is that agri-environmental progress = economic progress.*
>
> — **Advisor, France**

> *The main need now is to keep receiving technical advice to consolidate the improvements we have made.*
>
> — **Farmer, Spain**

> *Practical guidance and clear priorities on which actions to take to reduce the carbon footprint.*
>
> — **Farmer, Italy**

Lessons learnt

What the survey and the open answers tell us to do differently next time.

1 Engage farmers, not just enrol them

Farmers enrolled at their adviser's request rate the results lowest.

2 Follow up every diagnosis in person

A score without a debrief leaves farmers with nothing to act on. Need face to face advices and follow up

3 Show extensive systems what they contribute

A footprint per kg penalizes low-productivity farms. Add per ewe, per hectare, carbon storage and ecosystem services.

4 Materials for advisers, people for farmers

Farmers learn through a person or a farm, not through documents read alone.

5 Lighten data collection

Time and data gathering are the first difficulty in every country, in the busiest season.

6 Make the economic case

Farmers will move when mitigation pays. Link each lever to its effect on costs and income.



Questions & answers

What would you like to discuss?

