



Typology of current European livestock systems



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Abstract:	Task 1.1 is aimed at characterising current European livestock systems at the farm or enterprise level. The work built on results from the H2020 Pathways project that provided an initial classification and characterization of the systems using four main data sources: i) the Eurostat database (e.g. livestock numbers and land use), ii) the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) for technical variables (e.g. yields, farm type specific land use), iii) the FADN for socio-economic data (e.g. labour, input/output ratios and subsidies) and iv) finally a livestock expert survey (including relevant literature). The three database cluster classes using FADN and Eurostat data were merged at NUTS2 level to identify regions with common and unique attributes. This was then manually cross-checked with the questionnaire data and typical systems were identified across all relevant regions, i.e. individual merge classes were grouped to a reduced number of final system types. This forms the basis of the defined final 38 systems developed by the Pathways project. The work in Step Up used 34 systems from Pathways that were distributed among the 9 main livestock categories as follows: 1. Dairy Cattle, 2. Suckler cows, 3. Beef/finishing cattle, 4. Meat sheep, 5. Dairy sheep, 6. Goats, 7. Pigs, 8. Laying hens and 9. Broilers The main characteristics (land use and herd management) and maps of geographical distribution of the 34 systems were circulated to Step-Up partners for initial discussion, especially with regards to tasks involved in modelling activities (WP5. Modelling options of transition paths for European livestock systems and estimation of aggregated effects). After several meetings the main feedback received was that for some tasks in Step-Up a more-simple classification would be needed together with the option to account for 'conventional / organic' in some systems. So, when a simple distinction between management systems within each main livestock category is needed, 3 main sub-systems will be considered. The idea behind this general distinction is to capture obvious differences among systems within each livestock category but without going into very complex and detailed classification. The three main systems are: 1. Intensive indoor systems (option for conventional/organic for pigs and poultry) 2. Intensive grazing (i.e., ruminants) or outdoor (i.e., pigs and granivores) systems 3. Semi-extensive (grazing or outdoor systems) with option for conventional/organic for ruminants, pigs, and poultry For other tasks in Step Up that need to use more detailed description, the original 34 systems (plus some sub-systems) initially derived from this task analysis can be classified as shown in the final table of systems that considers the following items: Livestock category, Main system, Sub-system, Conventional/Organic, Geographic Regions and Internal Project Code. This analysis highlighted the difficulties in achieving a livestock classification for the whole of Europe, due to the limitations of all data sources, whether that is fine detail missing from Europe-wide databases, or lack of coverage

when conducting interviews about regional or specific systems. Another identified limitation is to assign an approximate number (or proportion) of animals within each category by member states within the EU. This is going to be relevant for some of the modelling work in WP5 and will be addressed within the next months of the project.

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2.	SVERIGES LANTBRUKSUNIVERSITET	SLU	Sweden
3.	INSTITUT NATIONAL DE RECHERCHE POUR L'AGRICULTURE, L'ALIMENTATION ET L'ENVIRONNEMENT	INRAE	France
4.	STICHTING WAGENINGEN RESEARCH	WR	Netherlands
5.	IFIP-INSTITUT DU PORC ASSOCIATION	IFIP	France
6.	EUROPEAN FORUM OF FARM ANIMAL BREEDERS	EFFAB	Netherlands
7.	AGENCIA ESTATAL CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTIFICAS	CSIC	Spain
8.	UDRUZENJE ZA PREDUZETNISTVO I INOVACIJE FOODSCALE HUB	FSH	Serbia
9.	INSTITUT DE L'ELEVAGE	IDELE	France
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Mapping and analysis of European Livestock Production Systems (ELPS)

1. Objective

Task 1.1. aims to classify and describe the main types of European Livestock Production Systems. This classification is based on a comprehensive overview and analysis of diverse terrestrial livestock production systems and animal product value chains in different social, economic, geographic, and environmental contexts across Europe. Our goal is to create a system that reflects the diversity of European livestock production and that can be used in different tasks in Step-Up aiming to analyse positive and negative impacts and externalities of livestock production.

2. Methodology

2.1. Maps and clusters based on Eurostat, FADN and questionnaire to experts (previous work in Pathways)

The main data was obtained from a previous activity developed in the H2020 project PATHWAYS (<https://pathways-project.com>). FIBL and Aberystwyth University led this task, with contributions from CSIC and many other partners. Data was obtained from multiple sources, including the Eurostat and FADN public databases and a comprehensive questionnaire-based expert survey. This thorough multi-source evidence methodology provided specific quantitative and qualitative data and followed the steps shown in Figure 1.

Firstly, to have an overview across Europe, Eurostat and FADN aggregated data were statistically analyzed to create regional maps at the NUTS2 level with a general classification of the systems for each species. In parallel, a questionnaire was sent to collaborators and other experts to provide an inventory of their country's current European livestock production systems and within their expertise. In the final step, different analysis results were combined to synthesize the main livestock systems in Europe, revealing significant insights that will contribute to our understanding of European livestock production.

The synthesis aimed to combine the different classifications of systems from the different sources (Eurostat, FADN, and the questionnaire) in a simple way, with a limited number of systems defined to grasp as much as possible the diversity of European livestock systems (Figure 1).

According to these descriptions, data from different sources were gathered, and regions with similar descriptions were grouped, with each group described as a system. Sometimes, to allocate some regions more precisely, further data checks were made for these regions using FADN and Eurostat databases and additional literature. At the end of the process, a European map was created with the regions coloured according to the system defined, and they are presented as synthesis maps in the following results section

2.2. Consultation and discussion with Step-Up partners and synthesis of systems

The work in Step Up used 34 systems from Pathways that were distributed among the 9 main livestock categories as follows:

Typology of current European livestock systems

1. Dairy Cattle, 2. Suckler cows, 3. Beef/finishing cattle, 4. Meat sheep, 5. Dairy sheep, 6. Goats, 7. Pigs, 8. Laying hens and 9. Broilers

The main characteristics (land use and herd management) and maps of geographical distribution of the 34 systems (**Table 1**) were circulated to Step-Up partners for initial discussion, especially with regards to tasks involved in modelling activities (WP5. Modelling options of transition paths for European livestock systems and estimation of aggregated effects). After several meetings the main feedback received was that for some tasks in Step-Up a more-simple classification would be needed together with the option to account for 'conventional / organic' in some systems. So, when a simple distinction between management systems within each main livestock category is needed, 3 main sub-systems will be considered. The idea behind this general distinction is to capture obvious differences among systems within each livestock category but without going into very complex and detailed classification. The three main systems are:

1. Intensive indoor systems (option for conventional/organic for pigs and poultry)
2. Intensive grazing (i.e., ruminants) or outdoor (i.e., pigs and granivores) systems
3. Semi-extensive (grazing or outdoor systems) with option for conventional/organic for ruminants, pigs, and poultry

For other tasks in Step Up that need to use more detailed description, the original 34 systems (plus some sub-systems) initially derived from this task analysis can be classified as shown in **Table 2** of systems that considers the following items: Livestock category, Main system, Sub-system, Conventional/Organic, Geographic Regions and Internal Project Code.

This analysis highlighted the difficulties in achieving a livestock classification for the whole of Europe, due to the limitations of all data sources, whether that is fine detail missing from Europe-wide databases, or lack of coverage when conducting interviews about regional or specific systems. Another identified limitation is to assign an approximate number (or proportion) of animals within each category by member states within the EU. This is going to be relevant for some of the modelling work in WP5 and will be addressed within the next months of the project.

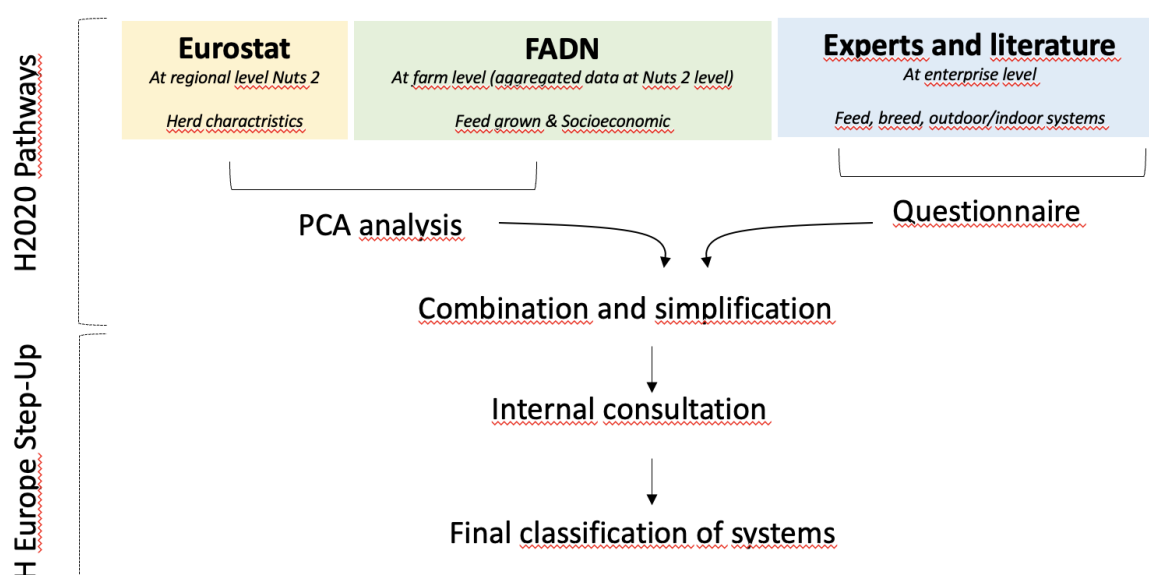


Figure 1: Scheme of the methodology developed for characterising the current European livestock production systems (Pathways + Step-Up projects)

3. Results: initial classification and synthesis of ELPS

3.1. Dairy cattle

The synthesis of all the data sources identified 5 main dairy system clusters (Figure 2). Due to the high availability of variables relevant to dairy cow production, several sub-systems within these main types, which are identified below, are also possible to further characterize.

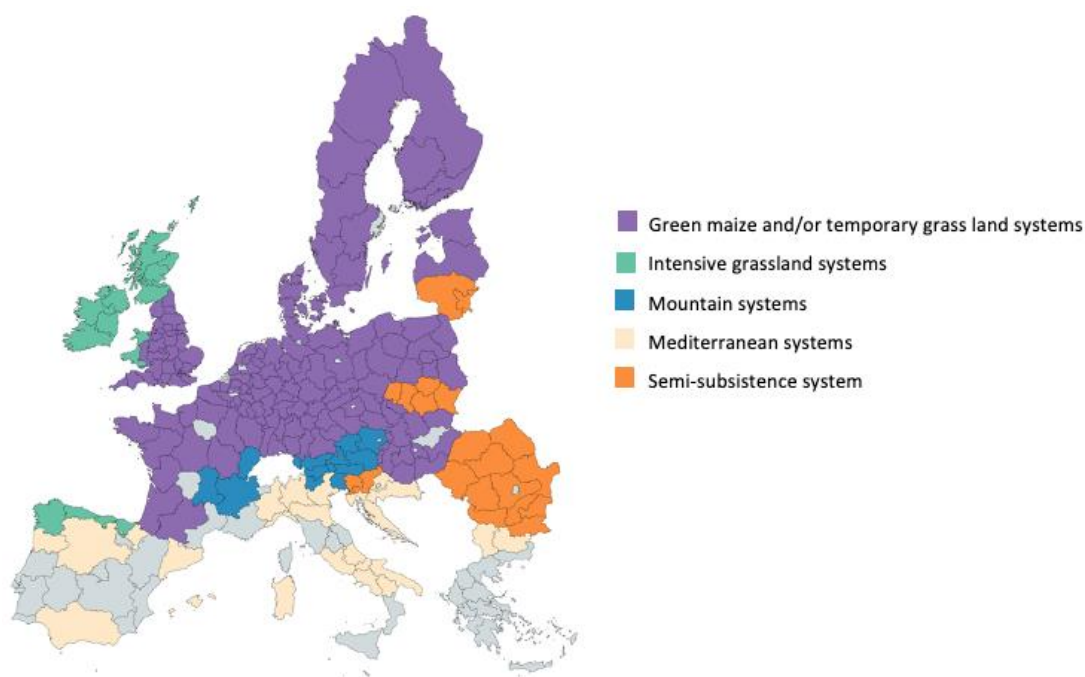


Figure 2: Geographical distribution of the main dairy cattle systems.

3.1.1. Dairy cattle: systems based on green maize and/or temporary grasslands

These systems are the most common in the European Union. In these systems, cows graze for a part of the year on temporary and/or permanent grasslands and are partly fed with maize silage, which can be combined with grass silage.

We can distinguish here the following sub-systems:

1. High green maize system (i.e., Western France and Northern Germany).
2. Temporary grasslands system (i.e., Denmark, Eastern Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary).
3. Permanent grass + green maize system (i.e., the Netherlands and North Belgium).

3.1.2. Dairy cattle: intensive grasslands systems

Intensive grassland systems were defined based on permanent grasslands combined with intensive land or livestock management (i.e., high nitrogen input, high animal densities, large herds, and important use of green maize). Here we could distinguish 2 sub-systems:

1. High N input systems (Ireland)

2. Large herds and land (Scotland)

3.1.3. Dairy cattle: mountain systems

In the Alpine region, the proportion of permanent grasslands is high (from 64 to 99% at the regional level) and the animal density is low (less than 1 LSU/ha UAA).

3.1.4. Dairy cattle: mediterranean systems

According to the European databases, Mediterranean regions were similar because of high dairy cow densities. This can be linked to the differences in indoor systems between Italy, Spain, and Croatia, which showed some particularities.

3.1.5. Dairy cattle: semi-subsistence systems (1.9)

According to European databases, in Eastern regions of the European Union (Romania, South East of Poland, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Bulgaria), the holding density is particularly high, the milk yield is low to medium (around 4000 kg/cow/year), and the percentage of permanent grasslands is high but variable. These farms are very small, owning few hectares (around 10 ha), few dairy cows (around 7 cows), and using a high percentage of home-grown concentrates (50% on average). This system faces financial difficulties and requires a lot of labour, with extra labour provided by the family.

3.2. Suckler cows

Analysis of Eurostat data identified 5 systems. The clusters were differentiated by herd size, stocking intensity, and grassland types. Scandinavian and central French systems utilize more temporary grasslands but differ by herd size and intensity, while intermediary clusters utilize more permanent grassland. For the FADN analysis, the selection of regions was more complex due to the farm type identifying beef farms rather than suckler cow or fattening systems specifically. Therefore, extremely high stocking densities (i.e., the Poland Valley, Italy, and parts of Belgium) were excluded as they were assumed to be cattle-fattening regions. This was manually cross-checked between the more detailed cattle types within the Eurostat region data. The FADN technical data identified 3 clusters that extended from a high-intensity system to systems with permanent grassland and either a high or low homegrown concentrate level. The FADN economic analysis also identified 3 clusters, with farm size (UAA and economic) and labor input (family vs. hired), and two key variants as clusters extended from smaller through to very large. When the database clusters were merged, many system combinations were identified. This was partly due to the high number of clusters for the economic and labor data. From the expert questionnaire, 23 systems were defined according to the main feed (i.e., usually grazed grass, grass silage with hay or occasionally straw), the breed, the type of production (i.e., conventional, organic, labeled or “regenerative”), the quantity of concentrates, and whether systems sold weaned calves or all finish the cattle on the same farms. Most systems had a high percentage of permanent grassland, though Swedish, Italian, and French systems also utilized temporary grasslands for suckler production. Breeds varied from specialized classic beef breeds, such as Charolais, to native local breeds, utilizing extensive grasslands. All systems utilized grazed grass, with some not using any concentrate, while others adopted a higher intensity and used a much greater quantity (i.e., French lowland systems). Manure systems were generally for solid waste (i.e., with straw-bedded animals) or slurry systems (i.e., the most common one in the UK).

Finally, the synthesis process identified 5 main suckler cow systems, as shown in Figure 3.

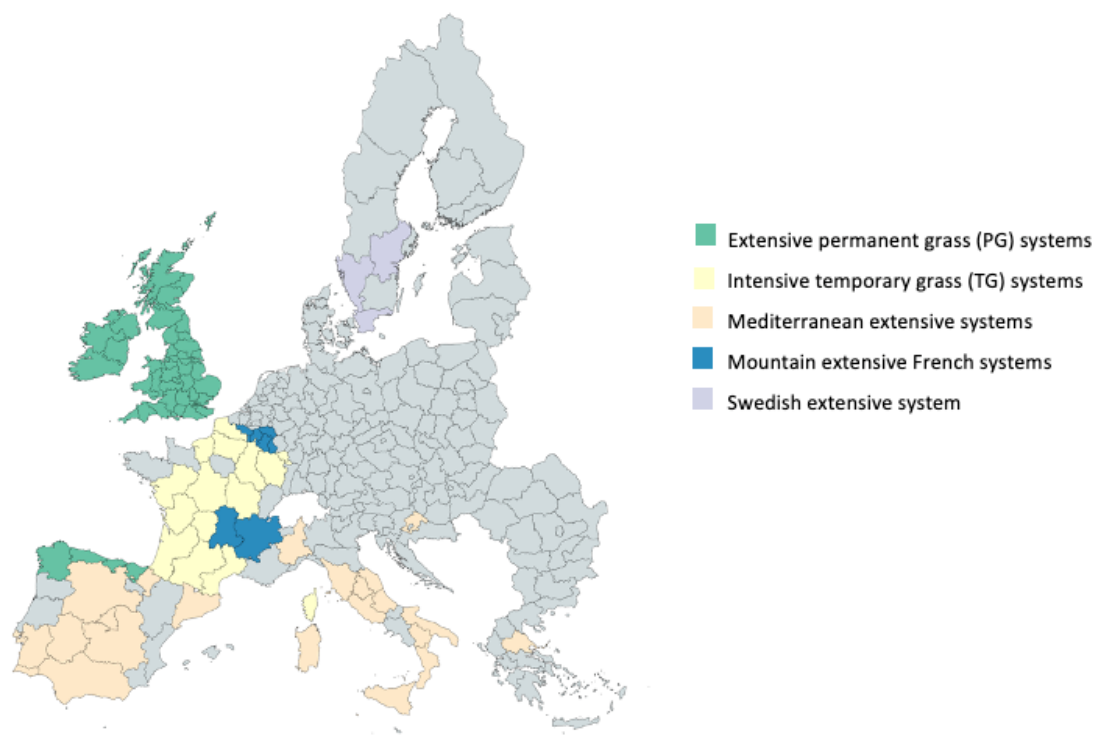


Figure 3: Geographical distribution of the main suckler systems.

3.3. Finishing cattle systems

All the data sources were examined and manually matched for the key parameters, including stocking density, location, primary feed type, and socio-economic factors. This process identified 3 main finishing cattle system clusters (Figure 4), described subsequently.

1. Intensive system based on feed compounds (mainly cereals fed).
2. Systems based on grass silage
3. Intensive systems based on maize silage

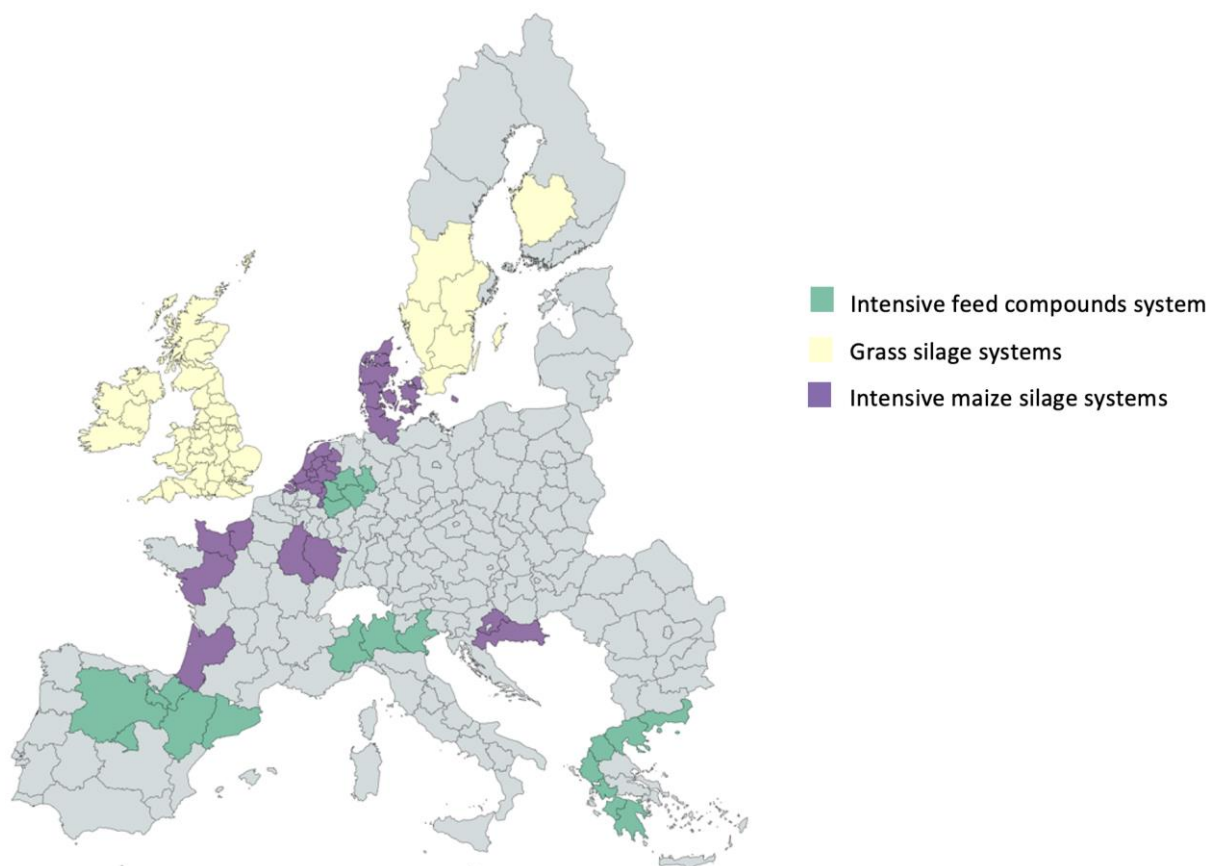


Figure 4: Geographical distribution of the finishing cattle systems.

3.4. Sheep meat systems

All the data sources were examined and manually matched for the key parameters (i.e., stocking density, location, primary feed type, and socio-economic factors), identifying 6 main meat sheep system clusters (Figure 5) as followed:

1. Intensive grazing systems.
2. Semi-extensive systems.
3. Intensive indoor systems
4. Systems based on meadows
5. Systems based on meadows and rough grazing
6. Systems based on rough grazing

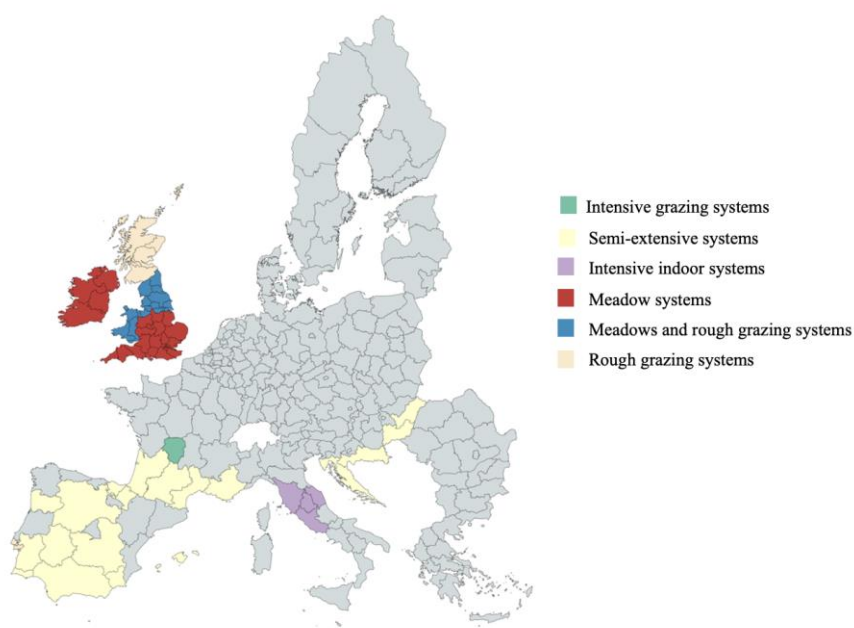


Figure 5: Geographical distribution of the meat sheep systems.

3.5. Sheep dairy systems

All the data sources were examined and manually matched for the key parameters (i.e., stocking density, location, primary feed type, and socio-economic factors), resulting in 4 main dairy sheep system clusters (Figure 6). The main dairy sheep system clusters are:

1. Extensive and semi-extensive systems.
2. Greek systems.
3. Intensive grazing systems
4. Intensive indoor systems

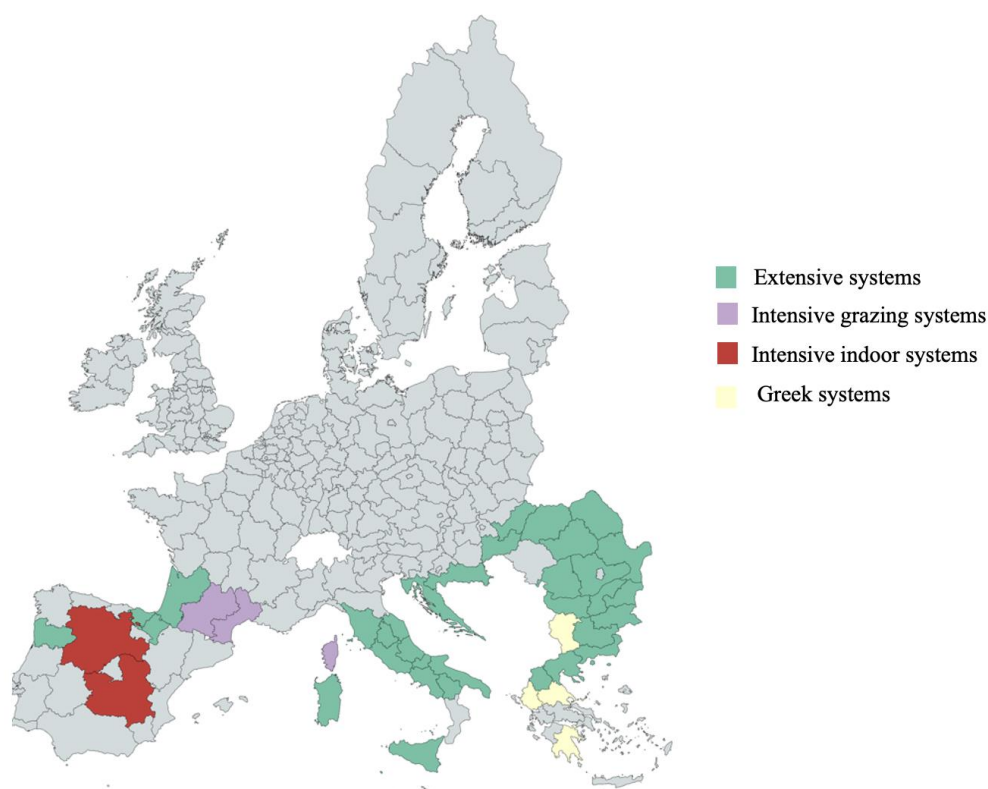


Figure 6: Geographical distribution of the dairy sheep systems.

3.6. Goat systems

All the data sources were examined and manually matched for the key parameters (i.e., stocking density, location, primary feed type, and socio-economic factors), resulting in 4 main goat system clusters (Figure 7). The goat system clusters are:

1. Semi-extensive grazing systems
2. Intensive grazing systems
3. Intensive indoor maize systems
4. Intensive indoor grass/alfalfa hay systems

The extensive system cluster covered a range of countries, and it could be possible to divide this cluster further.

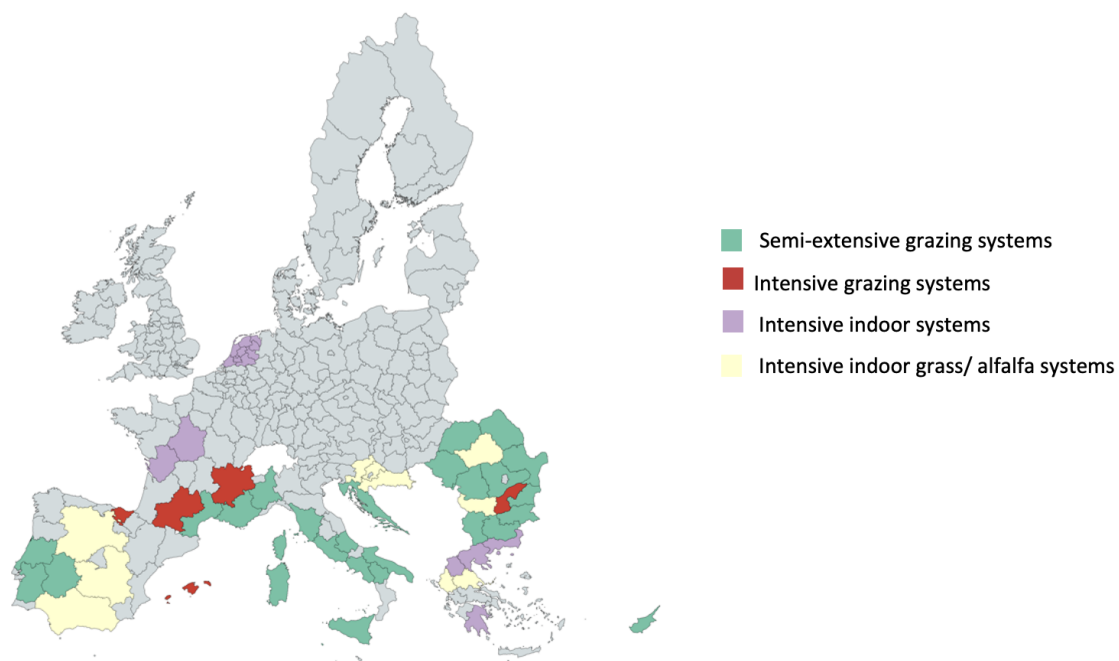


Figure 7: Geographical distribution of the goat systems.

3.7. Pig systems

It was not possible to differentiate between breeding and finishing systems in the Eurostat and FADN databases, but the questionnaire allowed experts to describe these systems separately.

For the synthesis, all the data sources were examined and manually matched for the key parameters (i.e., stocking density, location, primary feed type, and socio-economic factors), resulting in 4 main pig system clusters (Figure 8). The pig system clusters are:

1. Indoor conventional systems
2. Outdoor intensive systems
3. Outdoor extensive systems
4. Semi-subsistence systems

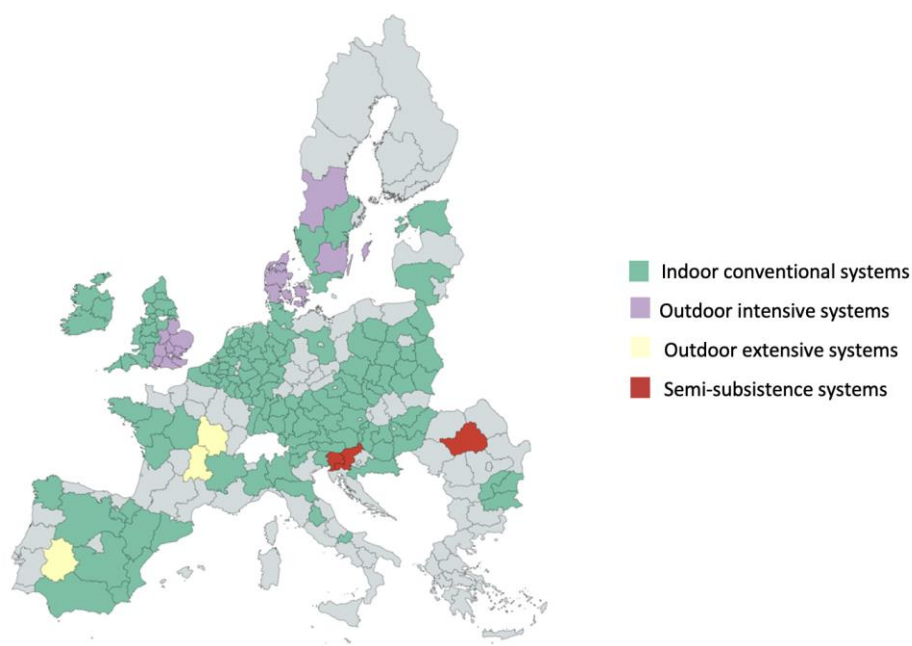


Figure 8: Geographical distribution of the pigs (breeding and fattening) systems.

3.8. Laying hens systems

For the poultry system analysis, it was not possible to differentiate between laying hen and broiler systems in the FADN databases. Still, the questionnaire allowed experts to describe these systems separately. Due to the common data between poultry sectors (i.e., Eurostat and FADN), a formal data merge was not undertaken. From the expert questionnaire, 22 laying hen systems were defined according to the type of housing, intensity of production, type of production (conventional, organic), amount of concentrates, and presence of outdoor production. The egg systems included the old caged system, barn systems, and free-range (with outdoor access), though semi-subsistence systems allow full free-range.

For the synthesis, all the data sources were examined and manually matched for the key parameters (i.e., stocking density, location, primary feed type, and socio-economic factors), resulting in 5 main laying hen system clusters (Figure 9), in which the first four are under the same overall system ('usual commercial system') with no differentiation across NUTS 2 regions. The details of the laying hen system clusters are:

1. Commercial (cage, barn, outdoor, and outdoor organic) systems
2. Semi-subsistence systems

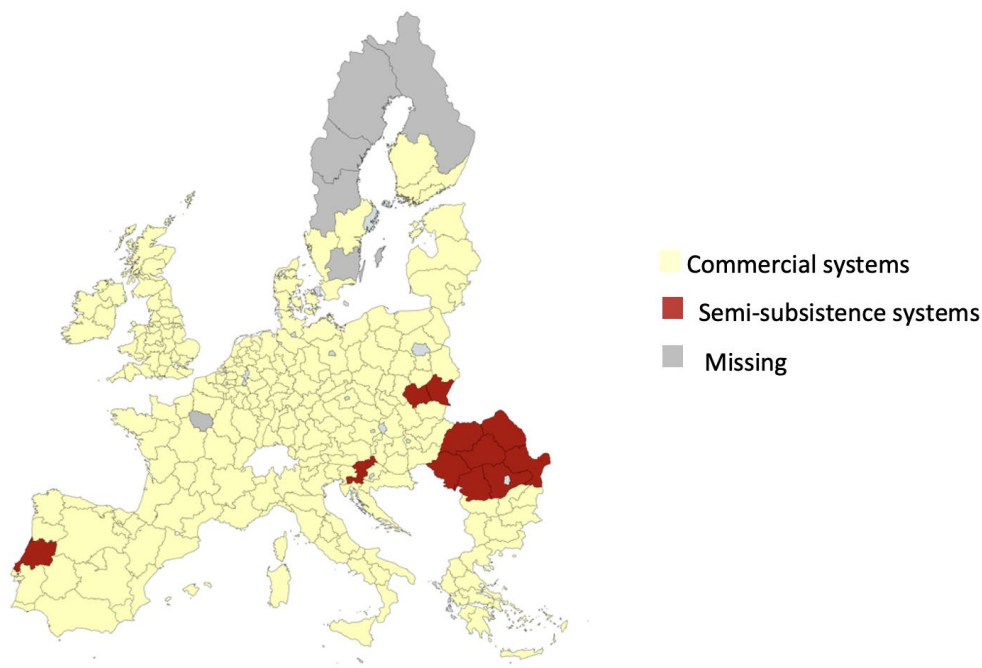


Figure 9: Geographical distribution of the laying hens' systems.

3.9. Broilers systems

For the poultry system analysis, it was not possible to differentiate between laying hen and broiler systems in the FADN databases. Still, the questionnaire allowed experts to describe these systems separately. Due to the common data between poultry sectors (i.e., Eurostat and FADN), a formal data merge was not undertaken. From the expert questionnaire, 18 broiler systems were defined according to the type of housing, the intensity of production, the type of production (conventional, organic), the number of concentrates, and the presence of outdoor production. The broiler systems included many indoor systems designed for fast-growing breeds and maximum efficiency (up to 8 cycles per year).

For the synthesis, all the data sources were examined and manually matched for the key parameters (i.e., stocking density, location, primary feed type, and socio-economic factors), resulting in 3 main broiler system clusters (Figure 10). The broiler system clusters are are:

1. Indoor system
2. With outdoor access
3. Organic

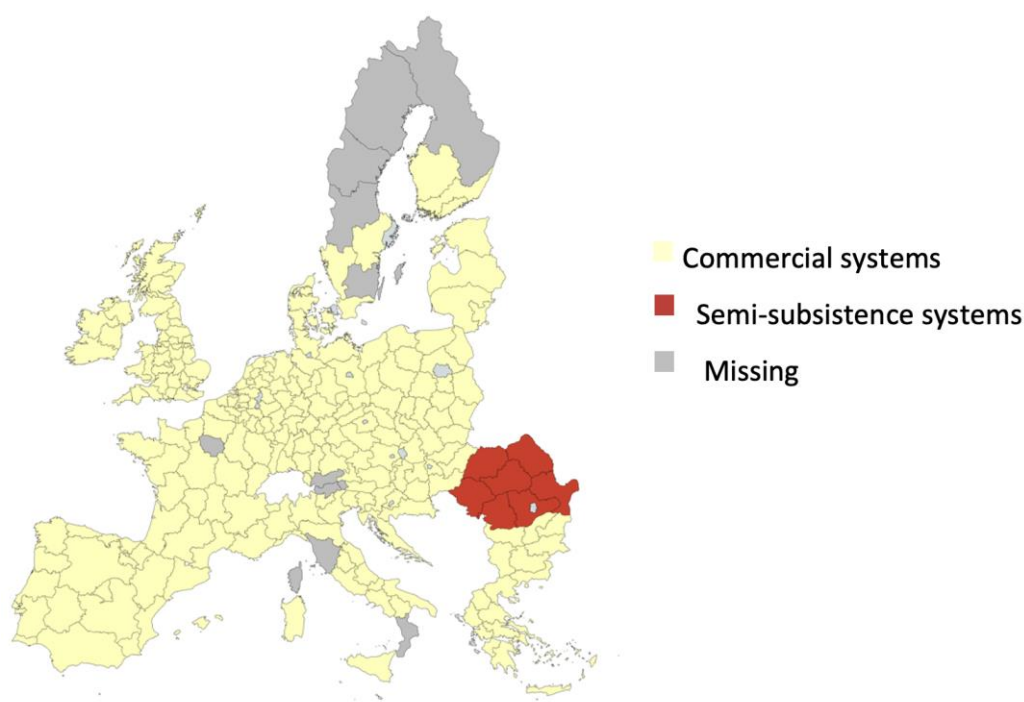


Figure 10: Geographical distribution of the broilers systems.

Table 1. Glossary of all systems by livestock category.

Dairy cattle	1. Systems based on green maize and/or temporary grasslands 2. Intensive grassland systems 3. Mountain systems 4. Mediterranean systems 5. Semi-subsistence dairy systems
Suckler cows	6. Extensive permanent grass (PG) systems 7. Intensive temporary grass (TG) systems 8. Mediterranean extensive systems 9. Mountain extensive French system 10. Swedish extensive system
Finishing cattle	11. Intensive system based on feed compounds 12. Systems based on grass silage 13. Intensive systems based on maize silage
Sheep meat	14. Intensive grazing systems 15. Semi-extensive systems 16. Intensive indoor systems 17. Systems based on meadows 18. Systems based on meadows and rough grazing 19. Systems based on rough grazing
Sheep dairy	20. Extensive systems 21. Intensive grazing systems 22. Intensive indoor systems
Goat dairy	23. Semi-extensive grazing systems 24. Intensive grazing 25. Intensive indoor maize systems 26. Intensive Indoor grass/alfalfa hay systems
Pigs	27. Indoor conventional systems 28. Outdoor intensive systems 29. Outdoor extensive systems 30. Semi-subsistence systems
Laying hens	31. Commercial systems (Cage, Barn, Outdoor, Outdoor organic) 32. Semi-subsistence
Broilers	33. Commercial systems (Indoor, outdoor access, organic) 34. Semi-subsistence

Table 2. Synthesis of all systems by livestock category and other features relevant to Step-Up project.

Livestock category	Main system	Sub-system	Conventional/Organic	Regions	Code
Dairy cattle	Intensive indoor	Large systems	Conventional	Spain, Italy	1.7
		Small systems	Conventional	Croatia	1.8
	Intensive grazing	Intensive grassland high nitrogen input systems	Conventional	Ireland	1.4
		Intensive grassland large herds and land systems	Conventional	Scotland	1.5
		Intensive grassland and low-density systems	Conventional/Organic	Alpine region	1.6
	Semi-extensive grazing	High green maize systems	Conventional/Organic	Western France and Northern Germany	1.1
		Temporary grasslands systems	Conventional/Organic	Denmark, Eastern Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary	1.2
		Permanents grass and green maize systems	Conventional/Organic	The Netherlands and North Belgium	1.3
		Semi subsistence systems	Conventional/Organic	Romania, South East of Poland, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Bulgaria	1.9
Suckler cows	Intensive indoor	Temporary grassland systems	Conventional	France	2.2
	Semi-extensive grazing	Permanent grass systems	Conventional/Organic	Ireland, UK, and Northern Spain	2.1
		Mediterranean systems	Conventional/Organic	Spain and Italy	2.3
		Mountain French systems	Conventional/Organic	Massif central	2.4
		Swedish systems	Conventional/Organic	Sweden	2.5
Finishing beef cattle	Intensive indoor	Indoor finishing feed compounds systems	Conventional	Spain, Italy (Po Valley), France (Brittany), and Germany	3.1
		Finishing based on maize silage systems	Conventional	France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, and Croatia	3.3
	Semi-extensive grazing	Systems based on grass silage	Conventional/Organic	Ireland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland	3.2
Sheep meat	Intensive indoor	Intensive indoor	Conventional	Spain and Italy	4.3
	Intensive grazing	Intensive grazing	Conventional	France (Limousin and Aquitaine)	4.1
		Based on meadows systems	Conventional	Ireland and England	4.4
		Based on rough grazing systems	Conventional	Scotland	4.6
		Based on meadows and rough grazing systems	Conventional	UK (NW)	4.5
	Semi-extensive grazing	Semi extensive sheep meat systems	Conventional/Organic	Spain, South of France, and Croatia	4.2
Sheep dairy	Intensive indoor	Intensive indoor	Conventional	Spain	5.3
		Intensive systems	Conventional	South of France	5.2
	Semi-extensive grazing	Semi extensive systems	Conventional/Organic	Northern Spain, Italy, Croatia, and Romania	5.1
Dairy goats	Intensive indoor	Intensive indoor dairy goats' systems	Conventional	Spain, Italy, UK, the Netherlands, and France (Nouvelle-Vendée, Deux-Sèvres)	6.3
	Intensive grazing	Intensive grazing dairy goats' systems	Conventional	France (Loire, Rhône, and Ain)	6.2
	Semi-extensive grazing	Semi extensive dairy goats' systems	Conventional/Organic	Spain, South of France, Italy, and Greece	6.1
Pigs	Intensive indoor	Indoor breeding and fattening pig systems	Conventional/Organic	Everywhere in the EU	7.1.a
		Labelled breeding and fattening pig systems	Conventional	Italy and Spain	7.1.b
	Intensive outdoor	Organic breeding and fattening pig systems	Organic	Uk, Denmark, part in France	7.2.a
		Labelled breeding and fattening pig systems	Conventional	Uk, Denmark, part in France	7.2.b
		Semi-subsistence and fattening pig systems	Conventional	Romania and Slovenia	7.4
	Semi-extensive outdoor	Labelled breeding and fattening pig systems	Conventional	Spain (Dehesa region) and France (Auvergne)	7.3



Table A1 cont. Glossary of all systems by livestock category.

Livestock category	Main system	Sub-system	Conventional/Organic	Regions	Code
Laying hens	Intensive indoor	Cage laying hens systems	Conventional	Everywhere in the EU	8.1
		Barn laying hens systems	Conventional	Everywhere in the EU	8.2
	Intensive outdoor	Outdoor laying hens' systems	Conventional	Everywhere in the EU	8.4
		Outdoor organic laying hens' systems	Organic	Everywhere in the EU	8.3
	Semi-extensive outdoor	Semi-subsistence laying hens systems	Conventional	Romania, South East of Poland, Slovenia, and Portugal	8.5
Broilers	Intensive indoor	Indoor broilers systems	Conventional	Everywhere in the EU	9.1
		Labelled with outdoor access broilers systems	Conventional	Everywhere in the EU	9.2
		Organic with outdoor access broilers systems	Organic	Everywhere in the EU	9.3