

FreeWalk |



DEVELOP ECONOMIC SOUND FREE WALK FARMING SYSTEMS ELEVATING ANIMAL WELFARE, HEALTH AND MANURE QUALITY, WHILE BEING APPRECIATED BY SOCIETY

CHALLENGE

The development of cubicle housing increased labour efficiency of cattle farming, but it is a major factor influencing animal welfare. Also, productivity of grasslands and crop management systems has increased over the years, however soil structure, soil life and biodiversity of grasslands are becoming poorer. Moreover, a good integration of housing and farming facilities in the landscape positively contributes to societal acceptance.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this project is to research and further develop economic sound free walk cattle farming systems, which improve animal welfare, longevity, manure quality and soil structure, utilize waste products and have public support.

EXPECTED RESULTS

As innovative house systems, the compost bedded pack barn and the cow garden are applied with a completely free walking and lying area and are compared with cubicle barns for reference. Housing as part of intensive and extensive farming will be examined in a holistic context, encompassing the whole farm: bedding, artificial floor, animal welfare, health, longevity, manure quality, soil structure, NPC-balances and product quality. Greater insights in composting process plays a crucial role in the success of the system.

POTENTIAL IMPACT

The approach will deliver an integrated assessment of case farms spread over Europe, using experimental and modelling methods to evaluate system performance. Societal appreciation of the Free Walk farming system and products is assessed at regional level. A systems analysis and economical evaluation will be performed at farm, national and European level.





EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA ON SUSTAINABLE ANIMAL PRODUCTION



FREEWALK CONSORTIUM

Country	Consortium partners	Funded by
SL	University of Ljubljana	MKGP
AT	HBLFA Raumberg-Gumpenstein	other
DE	Technical University of Munich University of Giessen	BMEL
IL	Agricultural Research Organization	other
IT	Università degli Studi di Firenze	MIPAAF
NL	Wageningen UR	NWO
NO	Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research	RCN
SK	National Agricultural and Food Centre	MPRV-SR
SE	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	Formas
US	University of Kentucky	other



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RUNNING TIME

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