

ANIPLAN: Minimising medicine use in organic dairy farms through animal health and welfare planning

- Denmark:** *Mette Vaarst, Lindsay K. Whistance*
- Austria:** *Christine Leeb, Elisabeth Stöger, Elisabeth Gratzler, Christoph Winckler, Johann Huber*
- UK:** *Pip Nicholas, Stephen Roderick & Madeleine Neale*
- Netherlands:** *Gidi Smolders*
- Switzerland:** *Michael Walkenhorst, Sylvia Ivemeyer & Peter Klocke*
- Germany:** *Jan Brinkmann & Solveig March*
- Norway:** *Britt I.F. Henriksen, Berit Hansen & Cecilie Mejdell*

Objective

To minimise medicine use

in organic dairy herds

through active and well planned

animal health and welfare promotion and
disease prevention

Project structure

WP 1. Coordination and knowledge transfer

WP 2. Development of **principles for animal health planning** in organic dairy farms and assessing the use of health plans.

WP3: Application and testing of **animal based parameters for evaluation of animal health and welfare and development**

WP4. **Communication** about animal health and welfare and disease prevention in advisory systems and farmer groups.

WP 5. Analysing the effect of minimised use of medicine through animal health promotion

On-farm studies in 150 dairy herds

- Dk: • 15 farms; farmer groups + individual planning
- Austria: • 40 farms; farmer groups + individual planning
- UK: • 20 farms; farmer groups & discussion group
- Ch: • 15 farms; farmer groups
- Nl: • 14 farms; observations of farmers' changes
- D: • 40 farms; individual planning process
- N: • 6 farms; individual planning

Research methodologies

- Animal welfare assessments & analyses
- Disease data / epidemiological analyses
- Analyses within and across countries
- Qualitative studies included (not in the original plan):
 - In-depth interviews (UK)
 - Interviews of facilitators in all countries
 - Open-ended questions in combination with questionnaires

ANIPLAN – in practice under different conditions



On farm research & development

Strong links to end-user environments



Objective

- To minimise medicine use in organic dairy herds through active and well planned animal health and welfare promotion and disease prevention.

(Time perspective: 3 year project)

Original hypothesis

- Medicine use in organic dairy herds can be minimised through active and well planned animal health and welfare promotion and disease prevention.

Yes – this hypothesis will be maintained during the project

Intermediate objectives

- Develop animal health and welfare planning principles
- Application of animal health and welfare assessment based on the WelfareQuality parameters in different types of organic dairy herds across Europe.
- Develop guidelines for communication about animal health and welfare promotion in different settings.

Animal health plan

≠

Animal health and welfare planning

Plan: the document



Planning:
The
process

Main results so far

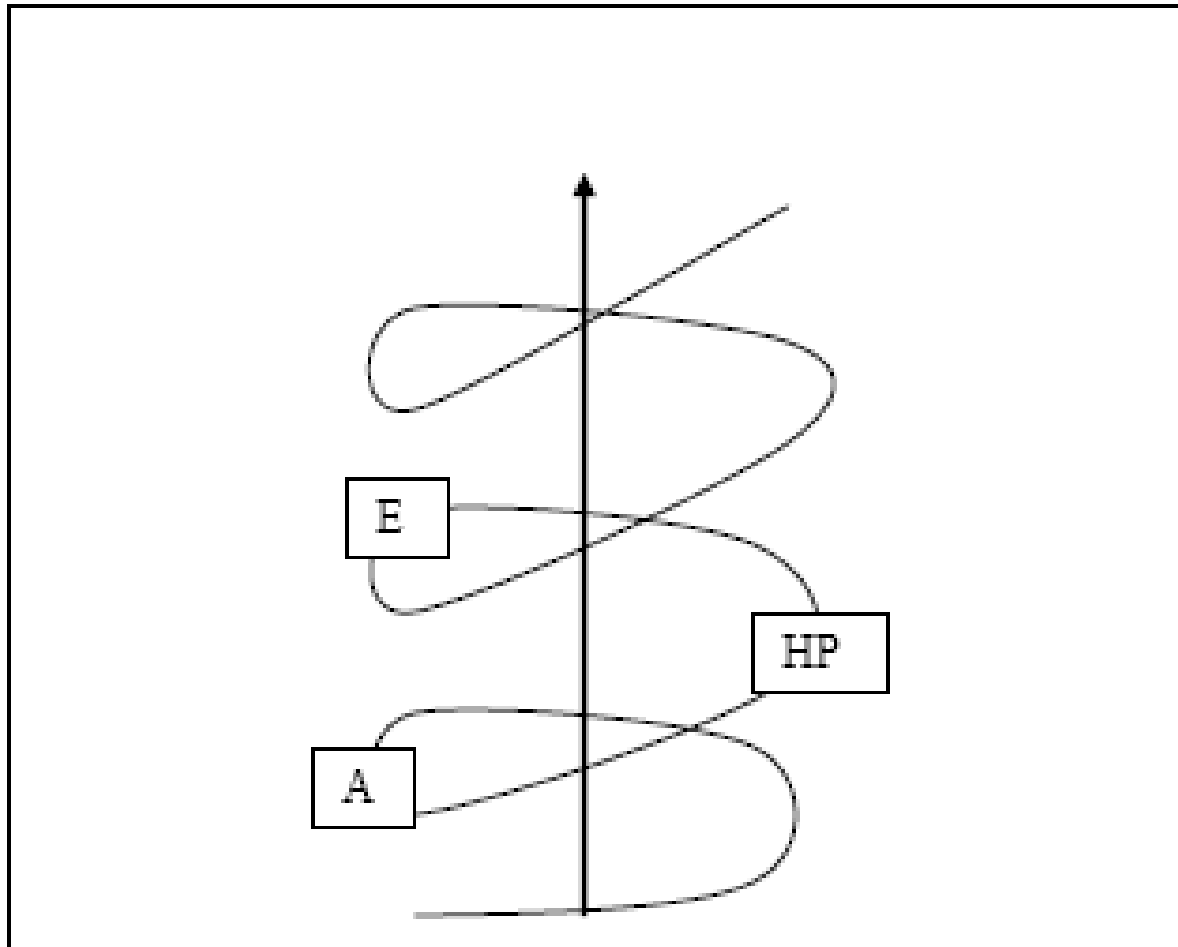
- **Animal health and welfare **PLANNING** the important focus**
- **Principles for animal health planning developed and under research**



Principles developed

1. The process => continuous improvement
2. Farm specific
3. Farmer ownership
4. External person(s) should be involved
5. External knowledge
6. Organic principles framework
7. Written
8. Acknowledge good aspects

1. Health planning as a process for continuous improvement



A= Assessment

HP= Health planning

E= Evaluation

Resource and animal based parameters

Influencing factors
= indirect parameters

Output
= direct parameters



Housing



**Management,
human-animal
relationship**



Genetics, ...

WELFARE?



Health, injuries



Behaviour



Records



Assessment Protocol

(adapted from WelfareQuality® Dairy)

1. Avoidance distance at feeding rack (ADF)
2. Qualitative Behavioural Assessment (QBA)
3. Behavioural observations
4. Assessment of individual animals
5. Ressource – Check list
6. Management – Check list
7. Disease treatment records
8. Milk recording data



External persons
External knowledge
Evaluation of condition

Report
Recommendations

Planning process

**Farmer
ownership**

*'Animal health and
welfare plan' = what
the farmer plans to
do and how*

Which challenges for the organic sector will project results contribute to solve, and how?

- Improve the understanding of the role of the herd and the wants and needs of individual animals according to organic principles
- Give guide lines to the 'right approach' to medicine reduction: better animal health and welfare
- Develop a process for conscious and continuous planning for the future, meeting concerns for animal health and welfare in organic herds

Animal welfare and organic principles framework



- Welfare (e.g. 5 freedoms)
- Emphasis: Natural behaviour, feed, naturalness
- No hunger, no thirst, no disease, no death, no suffering, good human-animal contact

Which challenges remain for the organic dairy sector ?

- Modify the protocol for assessments to a realistic level for practical decision making
- Link it to the advisory and farmer environments
- Evaluate long term effects of the process of animal health and welfare planning

Which challenges do you see in the future for the organic sector (in the domain of the project participants) and which research needs do they point to?

- Resilience ; meeting climate change challenges
- Farm to principles
- Strengthen farmer responsibility and ownership within the sector
- Regional farming and food systems
- Pasture systems, group housing, structural development

b- new research ideas and their potential importance for the sector

- Evaluation of a long term process of conscious health and welfare planning
- Similar approaches taken to other animal production systems, species & age groups
- Compare different advisory systems and intensity depending on farmer expectations and economy
- Complementary medicine and herbs

c- experience with transnational research, added value, scientific inspiration and perspectives for the European sector.

- Synergy
- Greater external validity for European farmers
 - Common framework & context specific adjusted: relevant under all conditions
- Interdisciplinary approaches are strengthened
- Networks between national + international platforms
- Understanding of 'organic' is constantly challenged

c- experience with transnational research, added value, scientific inspiration and perspectives for the European sector: more general and recommendations

- An advantage with previous collaboration
- ANIPLAN: very different backgrounds but all with tradition of on-farm-research
- Good, long and intense workshops
- Regular communication very necessary

Cross-cutting issues to be raised later: Recommendations to CORE-2

Emphasise the need to see projects as joint cross-national projects and with common interest:

- Commitment of all countries to common decision made by the project review committee / how to deal with country-specific priorities and restrictions ?
- Sub-contract issues
- Critically evaluate which on-going / future national projects a CORE project links up to
- Need for a process after approval of project but before actual project start where there is a project meeting and negotiation – where details are settled OR a phase 1 and phase 2 submission



Thank you for your attention