MultiSward
Multi-species swards and multi scale strategies for multifunctional grassland-base ruminant production systems
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Collaborative Project
SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME
Priority: Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology

Deliverable D6.4
Session at the EGF meetings

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Workpackage concerned: 6
Concerned workpackage leader: INRA
Dissemination level: PU
1. Objectives
The objective of WP6 Task 1 is to ensure the provision of forums at national and in particular international conferences to disseminate and to discuss MULTISWARD scientific approaches and achievements. Relevant international conferences, i.e. the European Grassland Federation (EGF) General Meetings and the conferences of the International Grassland Society (IGC) are a major pathway to this objective.

2. Deliverable procedure
The EGF General Meeting 2010 was held from August 29 to September 2 2010 at Kiel University, Germany (www.egf2010.de). EGF General Meetings offer an excellent environment for the purposes of MULTISWARD as they are attended by research workers, advisors, teachers, farmers and policy makers with an active interest in all aspects of grasslands from the whole of Europe.

A large number of MULTISWARD principle investigators and consortium-members attended the EGF2010 conference. A Satellite Meeting of MULTISWARD on multifunctional grasslands was organised on September 2, from 14.30 to 19.00 h, with the purpose of strengthening the links with stakeholders and scientists from outside the consortium (see also deliverable 1.2). This satellite meeting was attended by twenty five people, representing six stakeholder groups (farming practice, adviser, education, Industry, policy, research) and the main five European regions (+ one people from USA). Representation was skewed towards Education and Research, probably as a result of the choice to link the meeting to the EGF. Within the meeting sub working groups were set up to discuss the framework for multifunction grasslands in the European Union. The main topics were the future modifications and development of the common agricultural policy (CAP) and implications for grasslands. Stakeholders placed emphasis on the urgent need for a better adapted policy to the particular requirements of grasslands and their agricultural management. This could be done within pillar two of the CAP which is already well established since the last amendments of CAP during the last decade. However, it was pointed out that grassland should become also a focus in pillar one. This would enhance the options to maintain and further develop multifunction grasslands.

This discussion on the socio-economic and political framework was accompanied and complemented by the view of grassland scientists on future research needs. A main strain of this discussion was a better control of trade-offs between functions by improved grass swards and related grassland management.
MULTISWARD members strongly contributed to the one-day EGF Working Group ‘Grazing’-Meeting on ‘Research methodology of grazing’, in Kiel, Germany, August 29, 9.00 - 17.00 h. About one third of the presentations were given by MULTISWARD partners and MULTISWARD topics played an important role. There were four sessions, 1. Setting the scene, 2. Modelling of grazing, solutions for grassland-based production systems, 3. Field measurements, and 4. Evaluation of the day and topics for the future. Particularly relevant for MULTISWARD were overviews on grassland and grazing management in Europe (Agnes van den Pol-van Dasselaar, Alex de Vliegher), definition of grazing (discussion round), development and utilisation of grazing models (Delagarde, Peyraud), sward heterogeneity and multi species swards (Hutchings) and various case studies from different countries in Europe. In general methodological aspects relevant for the MULTISWARD were thoroughly considered.

The EGF2010 Conference was also used for organisational and administrative short meetings among the MULTISWARD partners.

The next EGF General Meeting will be held in Poland in 2012. The Organising Committee of EGF2012 and the EGF secretary have been approached by MULTISWARD in order to obtain space for a regular session of the Scientific Programme. At that time MULTISWARD will have delivered a wide range of scientific results which will have to be presented to and discussed by the European scientific community.

3. Conclusion
The EGF2010 General Meeting proofed to be a valuable forum to disseminate and discuss MULTISWARD initial achievements and the further project progress. The EGF2012 Conference will be used to build on the excellent relation between EGF and MULTISWARD. This will be a strong tool to achieve main milestones of MULTISWARD.