

1st European Symposium on Livestock Farming in Mountain Areas 20.-22. June 2018

Technical Assistance in Alpine Cheesemaker Huts of FVG (IT)

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Since 2001, Ersa has activated an experimental program of technical assistance. Every grazing season, alpine farms of FVG (Italy) are visited, in order to follow the processing pathway of dairy production. Some suggestions and advices, addressed mainly to guarantee milk quality and to improve the productive technology, are given. The main productive and technological parameters are registered to create a database that shows the trend of the season. During summer 2016, 33 traditional dairy productions were followed. The 64% of cheesemakers still employ wood as combustible to confer typicality to the taste of the products. This choice is important because it keeps the essential role of multi-functionality of the alpine farms that contribute to manage the forest trees in the surroundings. The ancient tradition to employ caprine milk, that imparts an inimitable flavour to the product, is gradually reducing year by year. From the sanitary point of view, the Californian mastitis test highlights that the 70% of the cattle doesn't show the preliminary evidences for mastitis, a good result that confirms a particular attention for the health of the herd. Quantitative data show that mainly these farms are of medium size. A good level of milk acidity indicates a correct way to store the raw material. The average total duration of the dairy transformation is adequate for this type of products. It is evident the role of the employed starters that contribute to the milk acidification during the fermentative process. The storage conditions of cheese and the parameters of brine were suitable for an excellent final result. These surveys confirm the improvement of all the productive parameters. The dedications of the cheesemakers together with the technical assistance of ERSA permitted to ameliorate the quality of these typical productions. Further efforts have to be afforded to preserve the unique features of these 'inimitable treasures', fruit of both the tradition that assures specificity, originality and authenticity and both the ability to conjugate the ancient knowledge with technology and innovation.