



Sheep breeders development group - GDAEBN



For a professional sheep breeding

Context

A neglected sector that a group of breeders is seeking to strengthen

Northern Tunisia is known for its natural resources and its favorable agronomic and climatic conditions, that offer the region a greater potential for agricultural production than the rest of the country. Traditionally a cereal-growing region, the government has given a lot of support to this strategic sector, neglecting the breeding of small ruminants (sheep and goats). For some northern Tunisian farmers, sheep breeding is nevertheless important: in some cases in terms of income, and also because it allows them to use rangeland that can't be used otherwise as well as enhances the viability of farming systems (integrating forages into rotations, valorizing crops' residues, etc.), or because it remains culturally important.

In 2011, a small group of farmer leaders created the Groupement de développement agricole des éleveurs de brebis du Nord (GDAEBN) with the ambition of professionalizing sheep breeding. Since its creation, the group has initiated various projects: the organization of mechanical shearing was the starting point for its field action and remains exceptional in Tunisia. Forage production, genetic improvement, advice to breeders, adding value to meat... these are just some of the challenges the group is gradually addressing.

Fert started supporting sheep breeders in the North in 2014, and has been GDAEBN's partner since 2017.

Objectives

Concrete and tailored services to breeders to improve the technical and economic performance of their farms

Consolidating and developing advisory, training and experimentation services

Steering genetic selection schemes to improve sheep performance

Organizing breeders to federate them and thus contribute to the development of the whole sector and region

TUNISIE

- Gouvernorats d'intervention du GDAEBN
- Capital city, Tunis



100

farmers supported, including 60 GDAEBN members

18 000

ewes shorn per year

5

discussion groups

2

genetic selection programs developed and implemented



Actions

Technical and organizational strengthening of the group, for more efficient services

Fert, with the involvement of CDEO64 and BTPL, is supporting GDAEBN in:

- The development of herd management advice (feeding, watering, reproduction, hygiene, housing, milking, etc.): individual advice, discussion groups, training, exchange visits, etc.
- The experimentation of forage production, including meslin
- The implementation and steering of genetic selection schemes to improve the performance of sheep breeds (Noire de Thibar and Sicilo-Sarde): definition of selection objectives and protocols, performance monitoring and genetic valorization
- The development of other economic services (mechanical shearing, echography, tags assistance, etc.) and support to collective initiatives (group purchasing, shared equipment, etc.)
- Enhancing the value of livestock products: setting up a mobile slaughterhouse, developing a label for Noire de Thibar meat, creating a dedicated SMSA (cooperative) and reflecting on how to add value to wool...
- Strengthening associative life and leadership within the group

News

The reorganization of genetic and advisory services



Safeguarding local breeds and improving their performance is a priority for breeders in Northern Tunisia. Since 2011, GDAEBN has been collecting data on herds: growth, prolificity, genealogy, etc. A partnership with CDEO64 has enabled the development of the genetic services. Breeders have specified their selection objectives for the Noire de Thibar breed; the data collection protocol has been revised to be in line with these criteria and more operational; the team is receiving practical training and is being reorganized for greater efficiency. Starting with the late 2023 lambing, all these changes have been implemented in the field in order to improve the breed and provide more appropriate advice to breeders. The same work is underway for the Sicilo-Sarde selection, starting with the late 2023 milk campaign.

BUDGET :

50 000 €

Average annual budget
(including Fert support)

PARTNERS :



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Fert is a member of the *Céréaliéristes de France* group and the international alliance AgriCord



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