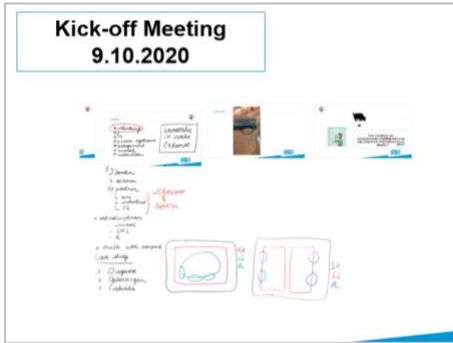




The Belgium Pig Living & Action Lab



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Intensive pig production

Pigs

The Belgian pig Living Lab (LL) consisted of approximately 20-25 stakeholders coming from Industry, Government, NGO's and farmer & veterinary organizations which online joined during 4 sessions to develop a problem tree 'why AMU'. Based on these discussions, strategies to be tested in "action labs" were chosen. 5 sessions with 8 vets and 6 farmers resulted in the recruitment of 22 pig farms that are currently in the process of implementing strategies with regular follow-up visits (Jan 2023).



The strategy tested in the Living Lab

For the Belgian pig sector, the following main causes for antibiotic use were identified ('the problem tree of 'why AMU'): a poor animal gut health, a poor farm management, economic reasons and societal pressure. Following the identification of problems, several potential solutions or actions were identified: tailored advice, "measuring is knowing", decision tree AMU, consumers awareness, raising awareness concerning euthanasia, ... Within the ROADMAP Project, it was decided to merge some of the solutions and to establish two action labs (advice + decision tree & Measuring is knowing + awareness regarding euthanasia).



The roadmap to implementation

For each option, an initial action lab was held in May 2020 to discuss the purpose. After this, it was decided to stop the action lab on the demonstration of the advantages of preventive and alternative methods over the long run as farmers did not want to participate anymore due to the bad economic situation of the pig sector. For the action on the establishment of the advisory role of vets, 3 additional action labs were organised before a concrete strategy was being implemented and tested on farms in April 2022. Farm visits are currently ongoing (Jan 2023). Interventions tested are: optimisation of colostrum management, cleaning and disinfection and the advisory role of the vet.

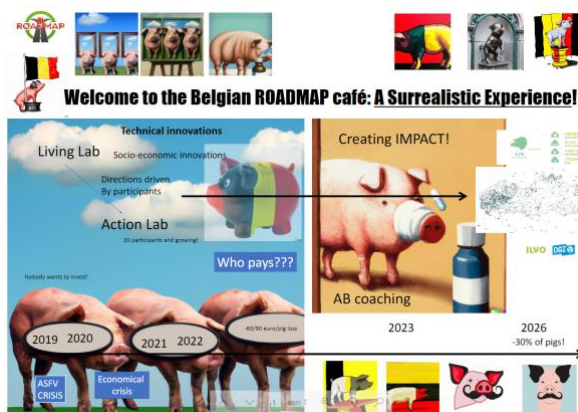


The impact created by the Living Lab

Action labs are not yet finalized and ongoing in 2023.

Preliminary impact of the Belgian pig LL are situated in:

- Animal Health: the members of the LL were clear that still a lot of progress can be made here to demonstrate business/farm blindness. Implementing change in health takes a while so it remains difficult to measure improvement within the time period of the project
- Costs and savings: during the economic crises, it become obvious that responsible AMU comes with a cost (e.g. vaccines, hygiene, etc.), where consumers/retail is not ready to contribute to this cost
- It is within the scope to monitor the AMU of the pig herds enrolled within ROADMAP
- Feedback loops towards the entire pig community should encourage further initiatives



Challenges

- “It takes a village to raise a child” vs “it takes the entire stakeholder community to change habits on AMU and motivate them...”
- Limits in time period and “economic malaise” of the pig industry hampering change
- The recurring sentiment that solutions exclusively have to come from farmers and vet

Successes

- High level of understanding and agreement between different stakeholders
- Motivating people in difficult time (prospective of the industry)
- Open discussions, common understanding of barriers
- Involvement of new stakeholders

Changing habits and innovation in AMU comes with a cost.

www.roadmap-h2020.eu



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