



**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY AND WELFARE IN ORGANIC POULTRY AND PIG PRODUCTION  
25<sup>TH</sup>-26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021, ONLINE**

It is with great excitement that [OK-Net EcoFeed](#) announces its final project conference bringing together 4 Horizon 2020 projects: OK-Net EcoFeed, [PPILOW](#), [Freebirds](#) and [POWER](#). Mark the 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 in your calendar and follow us for the joint conference “*Improving sustainability and welfare in organic poultry and pig production*”.

Production systems with monogastric animals rely mainly on high quality feeds from external sources that compete with food for human consumption. Livestock production systems are highly specialised and decoupled from other areas of farming. Such systems prioritise high yields rather than low environmental impact, resilience and sustainability. The imperative challenge is to design systems which overcome an apparent contradiction between animal welfare and “naturalness” on one hand and feed and resource efficiency on the other. Within such a context, the “*Improving sustainability and welfare in organic poultry and pig production*” joint conference is a perfect opportunity to share the unique knowledge acquired during our projects. These include ration-planning tools, sustainable and regional feeding for pigs and poultry, welfare self-assessment tools and the development of the [Organic Farm Knowledge platform](#). The event will also host a policy debate targeting a wide range of audience including policy makers, farmer and animal welfare associations, processors, feed companies and retailers.

To conclude the three-year project, OK-Net EcoFeed joins forces with the multi-actor project PPILOW and the CORE Organic Co-fund projects FreeBirds and POWER.

Information about the projects can be found below:

The [OK-Net EcoFeed](#) - **Organic Knowledge Network on Monogastric Animal Feed** project partners have been working hard to help organic pig and poultry farmers in achieving the goal of using 100% organic and regional feed. OK-Net EcoFeed has four objectives: i) to synthesize the scientific and practical knowledge available about organic and regional feed production for monogastrics, ii) to create a European network of innovation groups to facilitate exchange and co-creation of knowledge among farmers, business actors, researchers and advisors, iii) to collect end-user material and develop new tools adapted to the needs of farmers and business actors, iv) to extend the Organic Farm Knowledge platform to include the topic of monogastric animal feed.

**The PPILOW - Poultry and Pig Low-input and Organic production systems' Welfare (2019-2024).** The PPILOW project “Poultry and Pig Low-input and Organic production systems' Welfare” (2019-2024) aims to co-construct innovations to improve poultry and pig welfare in organic and outdoor farming systems through a multi-actor approach. PPILOW co-creates with end-users welfare self-assessment tools, innovative breeding and rearing strategies and techniques for improving the welfare of animals by i) avoiding beak trimming, feather pecking, piglet castration and the elimination of one day-old layer male chicks, ii) favouring positive behaviours and iii) improving health and robustness in both species. The project will provide a combination of practical solutions for welfare improvement that will be evaluated for their sustainability according to the ‘One Welfare’ concept and can be applied on a pan-European basis with specific adjustments depending on citizen’s expectations and the target market.



OK-Net EcoFeed and PPILOW have received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N°773911 and N°816172 respectively. This communication only reflects the author’s view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided. The organizers acknowledge the financial support for POWER and FreeBirds projects provided by transnational funding bodies, being partners of the H2020 ERA-net project, CORE Organic Cofund, and the Cofund from the European Commission.



**FreeBirds** - Previous studies show that birds with less access to outdoor areas have more welfare problems such as injurious pecking and parasites. Therefore, birds that spend more time outdoors have a better welfare. However, free range access may have negative impacts: it can increase the risk for diseases carried by wildlife, predation and contact with soil contaminants. Manure produced in the free range can also have a negative effect on the environment.

The goal for FreeBirds is to develop more successful husbandry practices in organic poultry production in order to make the chickens spend more time outdoors, in accordance with the intentions of the organic concept. The outdoor stay improves the birds' welfare and consolidates consumer acceptance and marketing of the organic products. The welfare of organic broiler and egg production can be improved all over Europe.

FreeBirds will investigate: i) Different ranging patterns of the birds will be compared using an innovative automatic tracking system, ii) the relation between range use and parasite infections in organic broilers and layers will be investigated, iii) environmental consequences of manure nutrients in the soil of the range area will be studied and iv) suitability of different strains for meat or egg production will be evaluated regarding behaviour, health, performance and welfare.

FreeBirds aims for reaching farmers producing organic broilers and eggs, as well as the advisors in the sector. Farmers and advisors will get knowledge about the results from our project by popular reports and articles in agricultural press.

**POWER** - Based on new scientific and practical knowledge, the **POWER** project will produce practical guidelines to improve the pig welfare and health while reducing nutrient losses from outdoor areas. POWER will investigate the effects of i) farrowing pen design, sow genetics and management strategies on piglet mortality and health before and after weaning, ii) various designs of outdoor runs on growing-finishing pig behaviour, health as well as pen hygiene and ammonia emission. Further, through stakeholder inputs combined with comprehensive data collection in commercial farms across Europe, the project will identify and field-test best practice cases of combined housing and pasture systems. Finally, POWER will evaluate the cost effectiveness, environmental footprints and resilience aspects of the innovations tested and the combined housing and pasture systems.

The joint conference is a perfect opportunity to present the projects' outcomes and share unique knowledge on ration-planning tool, sustainable and regional feeding for pigs and poultry, welfare self-assessment tool and discuss the next steps in the development of the [Organic Farm Knowledge platform](#). The event will also host a policy debate targeting a wide range of audience including policy makers, farmer and animal welfare associations, processors, feed companies and retailers. This conference wants to be a meaningful contribution in improving the sustainability and animal welfare in organic livestock production.

This joint conference aims to be a meaningful contribution in improving the sustainability and animal welfare in organic livestock production. More details on the 4 projects involved can be found following the links embedded in this document.

We have your health and safety at heart. In the interest of all participants, the conference will be held remotely on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2021.

Visit the [OK-Net EcoFeed webpage](#) for news and updates.



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