

>> SYNTHESIZE MOUNTAINS OF KNOWLEDGE <<

**Submitted Abstract**

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<b>First Author</b> First Name Last Name	Helene Rapey
<b>Submitting Author</b> First Name Last Name	Helene Rapey
<b>Correspondence</b>	helene.rapey@inrae.fr
<b>Co-Authors</b> >> E-Mails will be not listed	
<b>Organisations</b>	INRAE, France
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## Abstract

In mountains area of French Massif Central, many farms are multi-species livestock systems, with various associations of animal productions. This farm diversification is well adapted to heterogeneous productivity of mountain areas. However, in the global context of pressure to minimize costs and to concentrate productions in economic sectors, the challenge is hard for the livestock sector to maintain these diversified systems. Situation, prospects and diversity of mixed-livestock systems in mountain areas are insufficiently analysed in order to define supports for the future of these livestock farms. There is a lack of knowledge about their size of production units, labour force, demography, types of products, paths to commercialization and future changes. Recently, the French mountain pig sector coordinate an original research-development program focus on livestock farms combining cow and pig productions in the Massif Central. The objective is to characterize the diversity of the 1000 mix cow-pig systems in this mountains area to precise their location, forms, dynamics, strengths and weaknesses, need support. We mobilize several sources of information: a professional database on all pig units of the Massif Central, a postal survey on 1/5 of the pig breeders, and some direct surveys of breeders. The analysis highlight contrasted spatial concentration, size, markets and prospects of the mix cow-pig systems in the Massif Central. The spatial concentration of pig units is more marked in parts of the Massif edges, and each part is different in term of ruminant associated to pig production and in term of pig marketing organisation. Size and prospects of the pig units are significantly different between beef and dairy cattle farms and areas. Such geographical, technical and economical differences among these multi-species livestock systems in a mountain area indicate their strong potential of adaptation in spite of their low number of farms and in spite of the global pressure for their standardization. The links of these livestock farms to pig market actors is also variable in the territory, in view of their relation to producers groups, to independent animal merchant or to consumers. Consequently, in some areas, the maintenance of these diversified pig units will depend mainly of local actors and their supports to local markets and process tools ; in others areas, this maintenance will depend of marketing strategies adopted by producers groups to compensate the low concentration of productions.