

Utility of ecosystem services to inform regional livestock management: beyond a choice experiment

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The OVIPRINT research project had as objectives the measurement of GHG as well as the ecosystem services (ES) related to traditional livestock systems. Beside GHG measurements the project provided the opportunity to perform a choice experiment on different ecosystem services delivered by livestock production systems in the Gorbea natural park, in the Basque Country region of Spain. There has been some modelling efforts in the literature on the interaction between livestock and ecosystem services, but in a different methodological approach to multifunctionality the set up of a choice experiment brings the opportunity to take advantage of a complementary view to that of modelling. This consists in the identification of the relevant ecosystem services through a literature review, the qualitative analysis of a set of focus groups with diverse stakeholders (shepards, scientists and technicians, consumers and mountaneers) as well as interviews with managers to collect data on their perception of ecosystem services and finally the gathering of information on subsidies and governance structure. The qualitative and quantitative data were used to undertake a governance analysis that included identification of uncertainties and conflicts. The development of a choice experiment thus allowed for a parallel collection of data on e.g. subsidies and governance structure of livestock systems and protected areas in the Basque Country region, that through an alternative analysis provided useful insights on what was blocking the delivery of certain ecosystem services as fire prevention.