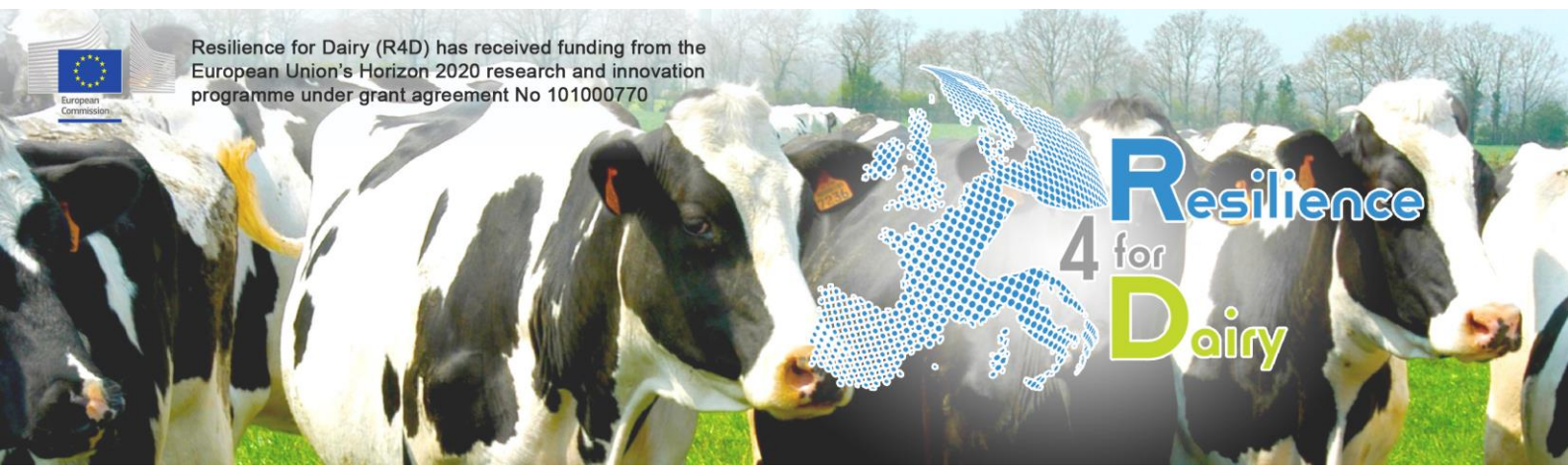




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## **BASQUE COUNTRY R4D - EUROPEAN WORKSHOP**

From 9 to 12 April, a dozen European partner countries of the *Resilience For Dairy (R4D)* project met in the Basque Country to continue their search for the best and most innovative sustainable development techniques for the dairy cattle sector at an international level.

Within the framework of this meeting, which was based in Bilbao, a series of points of special relevance in the primary sector of the Basque Country were visited.

First, on Tuesday the 9th, some participants were able to go to the "Aberekin" artificial insemination centre, in Derio (Bizkaia), on an optional visit.

As explained to us by its managers, Carlos Ugarte and Jordi Farré, the centre was a pioneer in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country in the 80s, thanks to the association between farmers with a single purpose: the genetic improvement of both dairy and beef cattle.

Currently, they have about 50 "client countries" thanks to the care and selection of their more than 50 stallions.



We enjoyed a different day in which many participants commented that, certainly, we are not used to visiting centers like this, but that it is no less important, since in the improvement of the sector we must take into account all the links in the chain.

On Wednesday, the workshop officially began, visiting two farms in the Carranza Valley: "El Haya-Matienzo" and "Sarobe Farm".

The first focused, firstly, on the type of associationism, since the merger of two pairs of cousins were the creators of this farm, which now allows them to take several days off a month and have 15 days off at the end of the year; In addition, they have a young worker, but experienced in the sector. Then, we divided the group into two: Vicente Albusua explained how they obtain the unifeed on a daily basis thanks to the cooperativism between cattle ranchers in the valley; and Txutxi Herboso explained in detail the operation of the new milking parlor and the water cooler and heater for the milk collection process. Both aspects surprised visitors and gave rise to numerous questions.



The second visit, to "Sarobe", enchanted the visitors due to the youth of a married couple with a lot of training in dairy cows, one of the important points to study in the project. Visitors were surprised by the organization and cleanliness of the pavilion, some even described it as the farm "of dreams"; What many didn't know is that we were about to suspend the visit because one of the arrobaderas broke down at 7 a.m. the same day, but the



effort and resilience made it possible for them to finish fixing it minutes before arriving. From here our thanks.



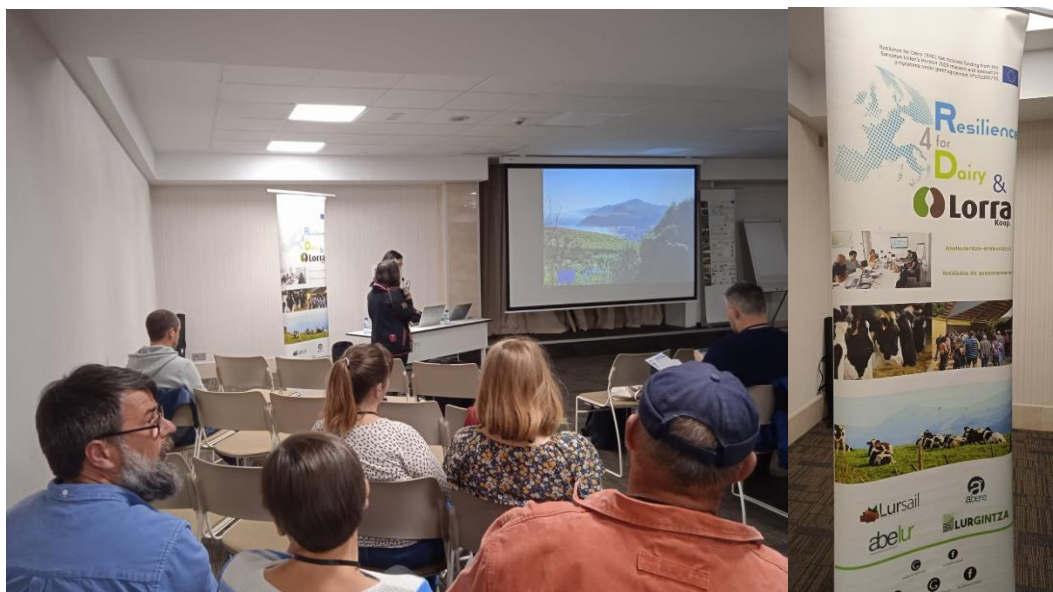
The next day, we went to Aramaio (Álava), to visit one of the few extensive dairy farms in the Basque Country, "Behi-Alde S. Coop." which, as its members explained to us, is an associated work cooperative in which 17 members participate, one worker and one person on a dual contract.

With 360 hectares of pasture and maize cultivation, the aim is to ensure that livestock feed is as independent as possible. The herd is made up of 530 milking cows, resulting in an annual production of more than 5 million liters of milk.

The farm is preferably carried out in grazing, which is an important quality differential. This exploitation is based on the social model that allows them to maintain attractive working conditions, ensuring generational renewal.



In the afternoon, "Lursail" ("Aberre" and "Lorra" S. Coops.) organized a presentation on the primary sector of the Basque Country. It was very didactic because the audience asked very interesting questions. Afterwards, a workshop was held between the farmers, technicians and researchers of the project to analyse and share the most important points of R4D.





After this, we were able to enjoy the atmosphere in Bilbao thanks to Athletic Club winning the Copa del Rey days before; After 40 years, the "barge" left for the Bilbao estuary, right next to the hotel where we were staying.



Finally, on Friday, we visited the "Soloitza" cheese factory, in Respaldiza (Álava). It is a traditional establishment that produces yogurt, blue cheese and fresh cheese through the milk of its own cows. It is thus based on Km 0 and local distribution chains, such as nearby school canteens.

In the meantime, a few technicians focused on the different WPs of the project, as well as on the points that remain to be completed before the next trip to Rennes.





Horizon 2020  
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We were very lucky because the weather was good during the 4 days and, in addition, we had the visit of different media such as "EiTB" (Basque regional TV), the newspaper "El Correo" and the radios "Onda Vasca" and "Radio Bizkaia".



**¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!**

**ESKERRIK ASKO!**

**THANK YOU!**