

FREE-RANGE ORGANIC BREEDING SYSTEM

CASE STUDY FARM_IT_05

History farm

The farm_IT_05 is located in southern Tuscany, an area characterised by a Mediterranean climate with relatively cold/moderate winters and hot, sultry summers. Unfortunately, this climate also leads to periods of severe soil dryness, making grazing management crucial.

They currently produce crops for animal feed and medicinal plants (their core business - they have a large industry). The pig farm was started in 2014 and occupies more than 30 hectares. About 300 pigs, 150 beef cattle and several hundred poultry are reared on the farm.



Pig rearing

The breed of pigs raised is “Nero dei Nebrodi”, selected for its productivity. This breed was chosen for its innate ability to adapt to outdoor breeding since its breeding has developed in the Sicilian woods for hundreds of years. Furthermore, the Nebrodi black is characterized by its resistance to disease, adaptability to soil and climatic conditions, good frugality and aptitude for grazing. The meat is lean and very tasty. There are about 300 pigs on the farm, about 150 animals are slaughtered every year. All the animals are reared outdoor in large paddocks with huts. The idea is to create a natural environment for the animals.

Sows and piglets

The piglets and sow are separated after weaning according to organic rules, after 40 days of age. The sow returns to the service and gestation area with other sows and the boar, while the piglets go to a new pen with other piglets of the same age. During the growing and finishing period, the pigs are moved to larger paddocks with wood and ample pasture. The paddock is emptied, the pasture is restored and then new pigs can be introduced. The pigs are

slaughtered at approx. 15 months at approx. 140 kg Live weight during the whole year. The small pigs live in paddocks in a wooded area, the heavy pigs are reared in very big paddocks (hectares) with meadows and woods.



Pasture menage and feeding

When the pigs are moved in another paddock or slaughtered they sow new seeds to improve the pastures, they wait for months to restore the vegetation and after they introduce again a new group of pigs. Only few large paddocks are included in the crop rotation. The idea is to use the paddock for pigs and after few years use them for crops to regain the nutrients that the pigs have spread. The benefit is environmental, after few years we regain the nutrients and avoid leaching and pollution of soil and water, also the nutrients increase the grow of feed or food crops. The challenges are that we need more space for our pigs, because the paddocks are used by crops.

Some paddocks have wooded areas or are totally in the forest. The trees are precious for pigs, cool and shade are important for pigs, the trees are also a protection against rain and wind. On the other hands we have to pay attention to the damage that pigs can due to the trees. Concentrated feeds are placed in large silos, fed ad libitum, and at the same time have large paddocks with pastures or trees.



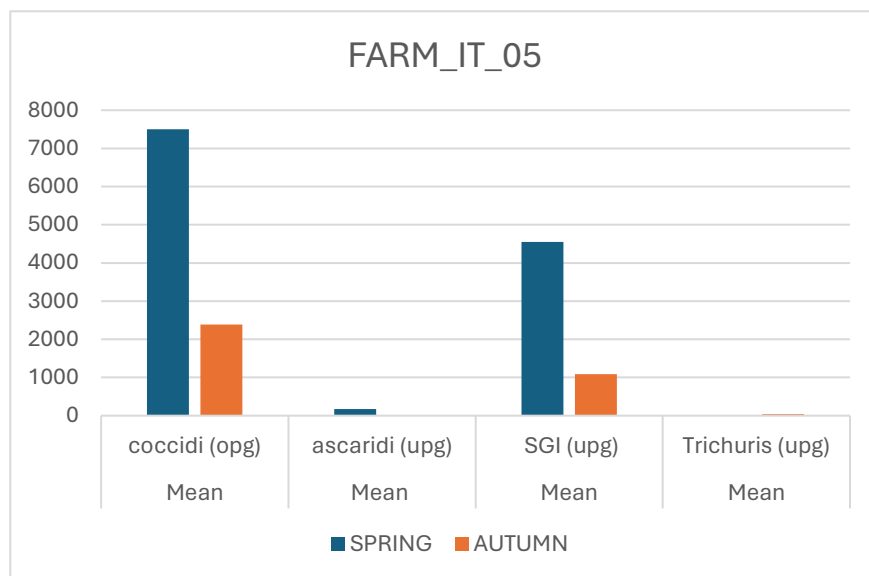
Environmental aspects

Pigs can pose a challenge to soil health due to compaction and erosion, but with crops or trees we can reduce leaching of nutrients.

Economic aspects

Pigs have a very high conversion rate, about twice as high as a normal industrial pig. The farm maximises income from pig farming by offering a wide range of products (pork and beef). Sales are exclusively direct, there is a restaurant and a shop, as well as an online market.

Parasities



Analysis of faecal samples collected between 2022 and 2023 reveals that parasite levels among animals are well managed. Seasonal variations in the presence of intestinal parasites are observed, particularly in Coccidae and Strongyles. As the graph shows, values are much lower in autumn than in spring.

PIG LOW and welfare

The farm's pig farm enjoys excellent health, having never had any major health problems. They do not use drugs or medical treatment, and the animals only receive the obligatory vaccines.

The farmer notes several advantages for the welfare of the pigs. These include ample room for movement, exposure to fresh air and contact with the soil. The pigs can express their natural behaviour, contributing to their general well-being. Furthermore, the farm has not recorded any major epidemics among its pigs, underlining the success of its approach to breeding and management.

The welfare of the pigs is monitored regularly, including seasonal faecal sampling for parasite analysis. The PIGLOW application is used to assess the welfare of the animals, with parameters generally showing high scores, with the exception of reliance on humans, which improves over time as the pigs become more familiar with human presence.

The graph illustrates the different parameters used to assess animal welfare in pig farming. High scores are evident for most parameters, except for one: trust towards humans. The pig, which by nature is very curious, needs a certain amount of time to get close to man. Overall, the company's approach combines sustainable practices with a focus on animal welfare and product quality, while facing challenges such as soil erosion and feed management.

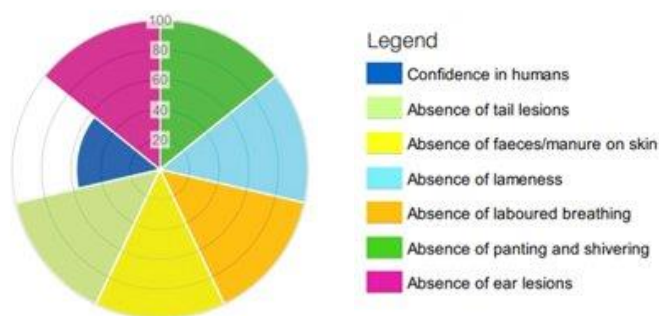


TABLE FARM_IT_05

Free-range production system - FARM_IT_05	
Farm category	Organic
Number of sows	-
Breed	Nero dei Nebrodi
Food	Pasture and integration with feed concentrate
Average farrowings per sow	
Farrowings per year	
% live born piglet mortality	
Mutilations	None
General health	The animals are in excellent health.
Weaning	After 40 days
Weight when sold on or slaughtered	15 month, 140 kg