

Feeding 100% organic to pigs and poultry – a new research project

Two of our researchers, Becky Nelder and Jo Smith, have just returned from the kick-off meeting of a new project – ICOPP for short, or in full, “Improved contribution of local feed to support 100% organic feed supply to pigs and poultry”. This three year project is led by Aarhus University and has 13 partners across 10 countries. In the UK we are working with [FAI Farms Ltd](#) just outside Oxford. Held in Billund, Denmark, the meeting was a great opportunity to get to know our research partners as well as to plan in more detail what work will be undertaken within the project. We also visited an organic pig and poultry (layers) farm which helped set the research in context by highlighting the difficulties faced by organic producers in sourcing 100% organic feed.

The aim of ICOPP is to produce economically profitable feeding strategies based on 100% organic feed across Europe, which will supply poultry and pigs the required level of nutrients in different phases of production and support high animal health and welfare. This is particularly timely ahead of the introduction of the regulation to feed 100% organic feed to pigs and poultry from the 1st January 2012 (although this regulation has now been deferred). The project includes the following tasks:

- Improved knowledge of availability and nutritional value of underutilized or new organic feed ingredients per animal category with a focus on local feed resources
- Improved understanding of the possible benefits of roughage inclusion in relation to nutritional and behavioural needs as well as its impact on health and welfare
- Understanding how direct foraging in the outdoor area can contribute to meeting the animals nutritional needs
- Assessing the economic and environmental consequences of increased reliance on local organically produced feed

The working hypothesis is that it is possible - through an extended knowledge of the characteristics of different local feeds and their wider impact on growth, health and welfare and environment - to produce strategies which comply with the aims for high animal welfare, production economy and environmental concerns. Through cooperation between partners, a range of feeding experiments will be carried out with pigs (sows, piglets and finishers) and poultry (layers and broilers), clustered around concentrate feedstuffs, roughage, and foraging. The insight gained from these activities will be used to analyse and produce feeding strategies adapted to the differences in local feed supply, the economic impact related to different feed procurement, and variations in production structure in different countries/agroecological zones in Europe.

ORC will work on availability of feed stuffs, feed trials on pigs and poultry, assessing the value of the range for feed resources, as well as being responsible for overseeing the knowledge transfer within the project.

