



European Regional Focal Point  
for Animal Genetic Resources

*Ad hoc action*  
*“Merino network”*



Merino  
and Merino-derived  
breeds in Europe  
state of the art - *in situ* valorization



# MERINO

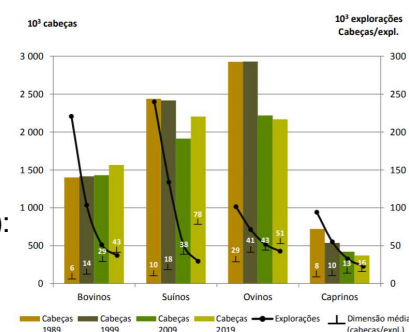
ANCORME PORTUGAL

## THE PORTUGUESE MERINO

## Portuguese Livestock

- Livestock population in Portugal, in 2019(INE):

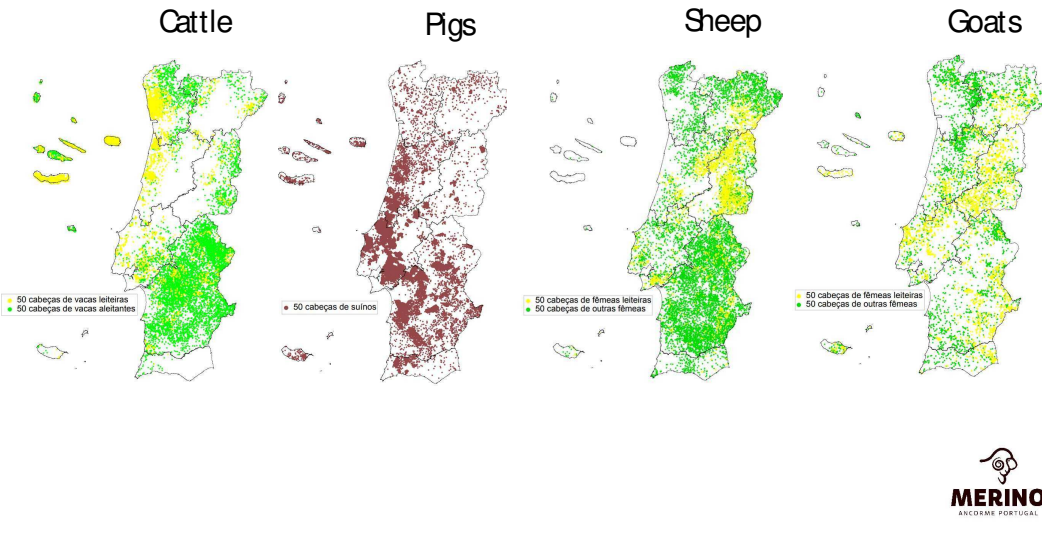
- **sheep- 1 640 000**
- pigs - 2 153 000
- cattle - 1 675 000
- goats - 398 000



- The sheep has not changed significantly since 2009 (-2%), but the average size increased from 43 to 51 heads per farm in 2019, due to the increase in the number of farms large scale with more than 500 heads (+ 12%) and the abandonment of small producers, with herds of less than 10 sheep, whose herd decreased 19%. (AGRICULTURAL CENSUS 2019- Preliminary Results - 18 December 2020)
- Consumption of sheep and goat meat has been declining since 2008. Per capita consumption in 2013 was only **2,4 kg**. The degree of selfsufficiency was always above 70%.

## Distribution of Portuguese Livestock

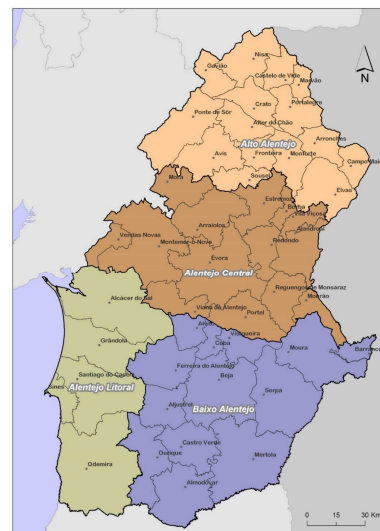
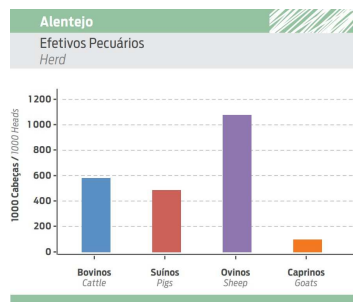
Dairy ●  
Meat ●



## Alentejo Livestock

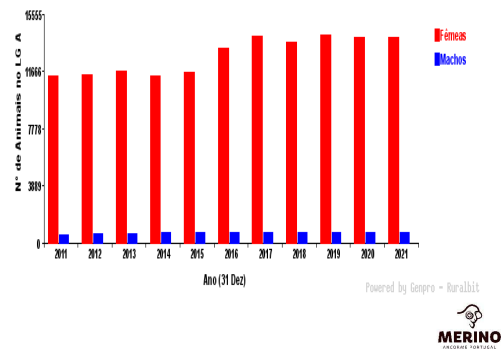
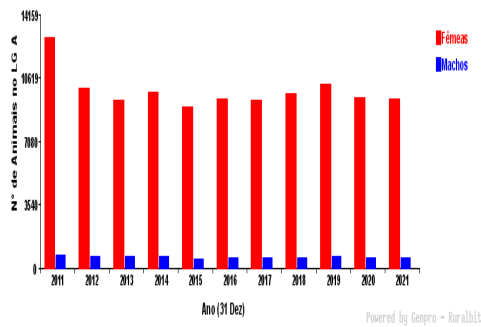
Livestock population in Alentejo, in 2014(INE):

sheep -	858 000 (52,6 %)
pigs -	523 000 (24,4%)
cattle -	630 000 (39,1%)
goats -	78 000 (25,9 %)



**MERINO**  
ACADEMIA PORTUGAL

## Evolution of White and Black Merino herds



## Breeders Location 2021

- White Merino (28 breeders)



568 ♂  
+ 10 923 ♀  
11 491

- Black Merino (61 breeders)



670 ♂  
+ 14 777 ♀  
15 447



## General characteristics of the Merino

- Merino are characterized by the quality of their wool
- Extraordinary hardiness and adaptability to local range production systems
- Good maternal characteristics
- Continuous reproductive cycle
- Meat is the main production objective, but traditionally wool and milk were of some importance



## White Merino

- Colour – White
- Head – Middle size, wide and short, convex profile in rams
- Mouth – Big with big lips
- Eyes – Big and expressive
- Ears – Short and horizontal
- Horns – Absent in females, frequent in males. Coiled, rough, with triangular section.
- Neck – Short well covered with wool sometimes with barb usually without pleats
- Trunk – Average volume with a horizontal dorsal line. Well developed shoulder. Arched side, developed belly, average dorsal and kidney region, short and slightly falling croup
- Skin – Slim, greasy and with no pigmentation
- Udder – Wide and well deployed with short and well inserted teats
- Limbs – Strong and well shaped, large joints, covered with wool under the knees and hocks
- Wool – Well covered sometimes in the face and in the forehead
- Fleece – Very large, with cylindrical or square tresses. Homogeneous. Covers the head until the eyes line, neck, belly and limbs almost to the hooves and testicles





## Black Merino

- Colour – Black (Cocoa, Chocolate, Honey-Serrubeco and Gray-Jardo)
- Head – Middle size, wide and short, convex profile in rams
- Mouth – Big with big lips
- Eyes – Big and expressive
- Ears – Short and horizontal
- Horns – Absent in females, frequent in males. Coiled, rough, with triangular section.
- Neck – Short well covered with wool sometimes with barb usually without pleats
- Trunk – Average volume with a horizontal dorsal line. Well developed shoulder. Arched side, developed belly, average dorsal and kidney region, short and slightly falling croup
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## White Merino versus Black Merino



Index	White Merino	Black Merino
Weight at birth <sup>1</sup>	3,5 - 4,0 kg	3,0 - 4,0 kg
Weight at 70 days <sup>4</sup>	19,35±4,03	18,66±4,07
Weight at 120-150 days <sup>1</sup>	25-30 kg	20-25 kg
Ram weight <sup>1</sup>	80-85 kg	70-80 kg
Ewe weight <sup>1</sup>	45-60 kg	40-50 kg
Carcass yield adult <sup>1</sup>	42-45%	40-45%
Carcass yield lamb <sup>1</sup>	48-50%	48%
Wool weight male <sup>3</sup>	4,5-5,0 kg	4,5 kg
Wool weight female <sup>3</sup>	2,5-3,0 kg	2,5 kg
Wool Yield <sup>3</sup>	50-52 %	50-52%
Milk production (90-100 days) <sup>2</sup>	20-25 litres	20 litres
Fertility <sup>1</sup>	80-90%	80-85%
Fecundity <sup>1</sup>	90-130%	95-100%
Prolificity <sup>1</sup>	110-140%	110-120%
Productivity <sup>1</sup>	90-130%	80-90%



Source DGP1992<sup>1</sup>; CCRA2001<sup>2</sup>; SPCC2009<sup>3</sup>; ANCORME2017<sup>4</sup>



## ANCORME - History

- ANCORME was created in 30/05/1990 and is dedicated to registration and improvement of White and Black Merino
- From 1990 to 1994 we have chosen the best flock with the ideal characteristics to be included in the herd book
- In 1994 we have started to work the Black Merino which were almost extinct. The support given by CAP helped the breed to grow until now
- On late 80's the White Merinos grew until 15.000 ewes and was considered not in danger and was no longer supported by CAP. After that, the number of ewes was reduced to less than 10.000



## ANCORME – Our mission

- Management of the herd book
- Breeding Program
  - Performance Control of lambs
  - Electronic Identification of Flocks
  - Genetic characterisation by DNA analysis
  - Parenthood analysis by DNA
  - Portuguese Germoplasm Bank
  - Genetic evaluation
  - Artificial Insemination
  - Wool typification
  - Andrological exams
- Wool concentration
- Breed promotion actions
- Burocratic support



## ANCORME – Genetic Evaluation

**Nº LG: 100798**

**SIA**

**Electronic Identification (chip)**

**Wool classification**

**Date of birth**

**Identification of the breeder and the owner**

**Genealogy**

**Genetical value**

**Precision of genetical value**

**Graphical representation of genetic value**

**Avaliação Genética**

Métrica	Valor Genético	Valor Genético
Peto aos 70 dias	4.4 Kg	69%
Peto aos 120 dias	0.8 Kg	71%
Produtividade	0.01 Filhos/Parto	50%
LA Espessura	<0.31	58%
LA Comprimento	<0.30	

**MERINO BRANCO**



## Wool

### The present and the future

- Wool certification process (under development)
- Classification of animals according to wool characteristics
- Shearing
- Wool concentration and classification
- Wool Trade (by types and classification)
  - Special lots
  - General lots
- Wool analysis laboratory



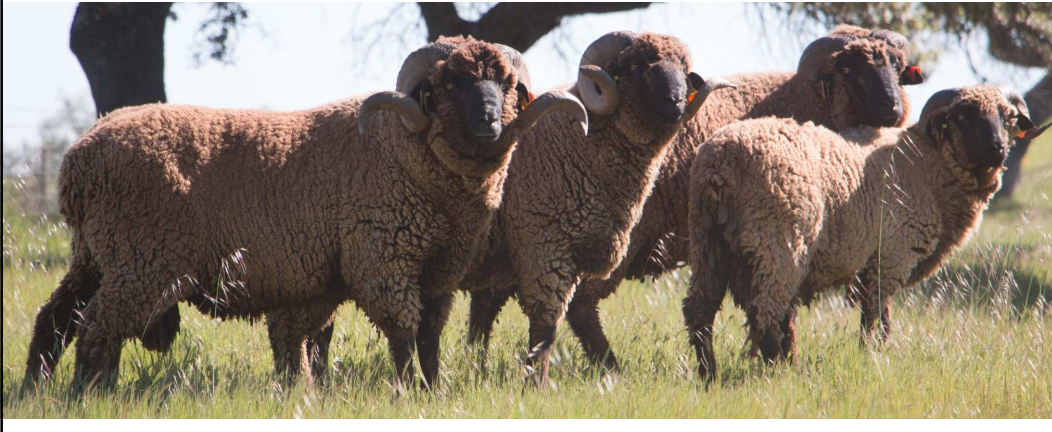
### Animal trade

- Meat Trade

A joint objective that has not yet been achieved, in which we are working through the definition of differentiated products.

- Breeding trade

Promotion of events (auctions and exhibitions) and dissemination between farms



Thanks for your attention



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