

About Fatty Pig

Fatty pigs are old, autochthonous, rustic breeds well adapted to their environment that make an advantageous use of local natural resources and are highly appreciated as sources of traditional meat products, not only for their high sensorial quality, but also for being considered as an important part of the national and regional heritage. Fatty pig breeds can be found worldwide, from Japan to the Eastern and South-Eastern continental Asia, Europe, South Africa and Latin America.

These breeds are highly valuable genetic resources with a great potential for a high market value in some breeds and a highly prized quality standard in other cases, like the Iberian, Mangalica and Agu. Although, they have been neglected in the past as meat producers due to the value loss of animal fat and their slower growth rate in comparison to modern breeds, the current interest of worldwide consumers for the high-quality of local fatty-pig products is favoring the recovery of some of their populations. On the other hand, some “fatty pig” breeds possess traits which make them valuable models for human medical research.

Despite the revival of certain breeds such as the Iberian and the Mangalica, some of the less productive fatty pig breeds and strains are still highly endangered or extinct. Local pig breeds with low population numbers and limited distribution areas are at an increased risk of extinction by natural disasters or epidemic diseases.

Furthermore, fatty pig production faces important technical challenges arising from their peculiar physiology, metabolism, growth rate and behavioral and reproductive management. Intensive production often ignores the physiology of fatty breeds and decreases the sustainability and resilience of their production systems. In contrast, traditional extensive systems not only allow the sustainable use and welfare of the pigs and the quality and health benefits of their products, but also contribute to the sustainable use and preservation of the local ecosystems, therefore contributing to economical and societal sustainability of rural areas by increasing their profitability and business and employment opportunities.

Our aim is the maintenance and the most efficient use of fatty pigs which possess real or potential value for human societies. Therefore, the main objective of this conference is to congregate producers, technicians, researchers, policy makers and

representatives of breeders associations from various countries, thus encouraging the exchange of knowledge and expertise in order to preserve valuable populations and to optimize fatty-pig production systems and related industry, so their products become more profitable, healthier and environmentally and economically sustainable. In this regard, these meetings are intended for those involved in research, technological transfer, knowledge dissemination, animal production and meat product processing and marketing within this or related sectors.

The first three Fatty Pig Conferences were held in 2011, 2013 and 2015 in Hungary thanks to the enthusiastic endeavor of Prof. József Rátky former head researcher of the Hungarian NARIC-ATK research institute (currently professor at The University of Veterinary Medicine, Budapest). Since the first meeting, the number of visitors of the Fatty Pig Conferences has been increasing and the last meeting was held in Badajoz, Spain with great success indicating a worldwide growing interest in this area.