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Developing the protein autonomy in ruminant farming : 330 farms share their know-how

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The protein autonomy of French herbivore farms is an issue of sovereignty, farm competitiveness and appropriate transition in the face of climate change. In practice, breeders are developing solutions to strengthen the protein autonomy of their livestock farms. They implement a combination of several agronomic and zootechnical levers to achieve better autonomy. 330 breeders and 120 advisers from the Cap Protéines pilot farm system have mobilized in 2022 to testify, describe and publicize these solutions on a large scale.

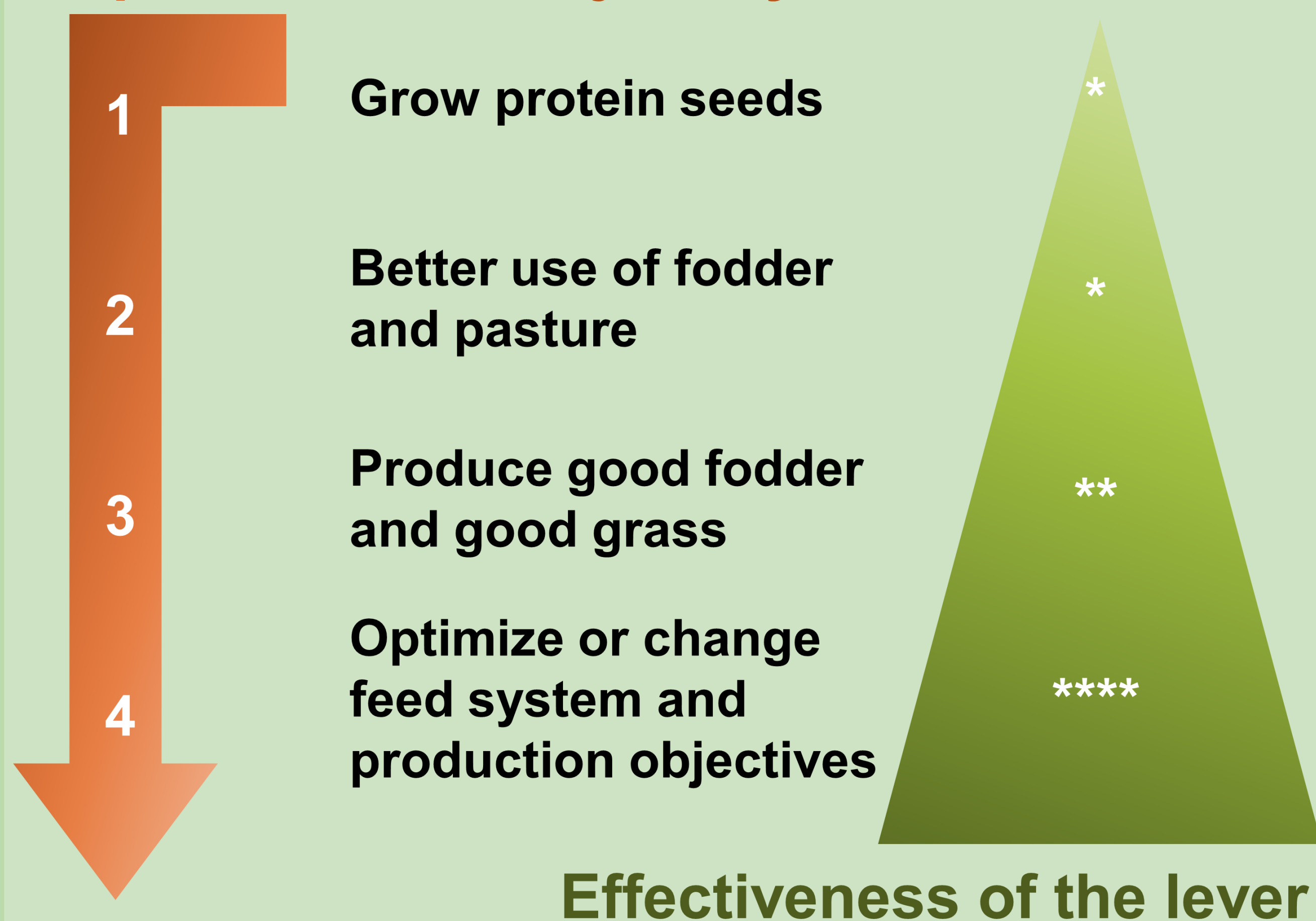
Results

3 families of fodder levers are frequently mobilized by ruminant breeders to gain protein autonomy:

- **grazing:** lengthening of duration, dynamic rotation,
- **cultivation of grass and grassland** to improve quality (finger grass-legume mixtures, multi-species grassland),
- **the establishment of fodder legumes** (alfalfa, clovers).

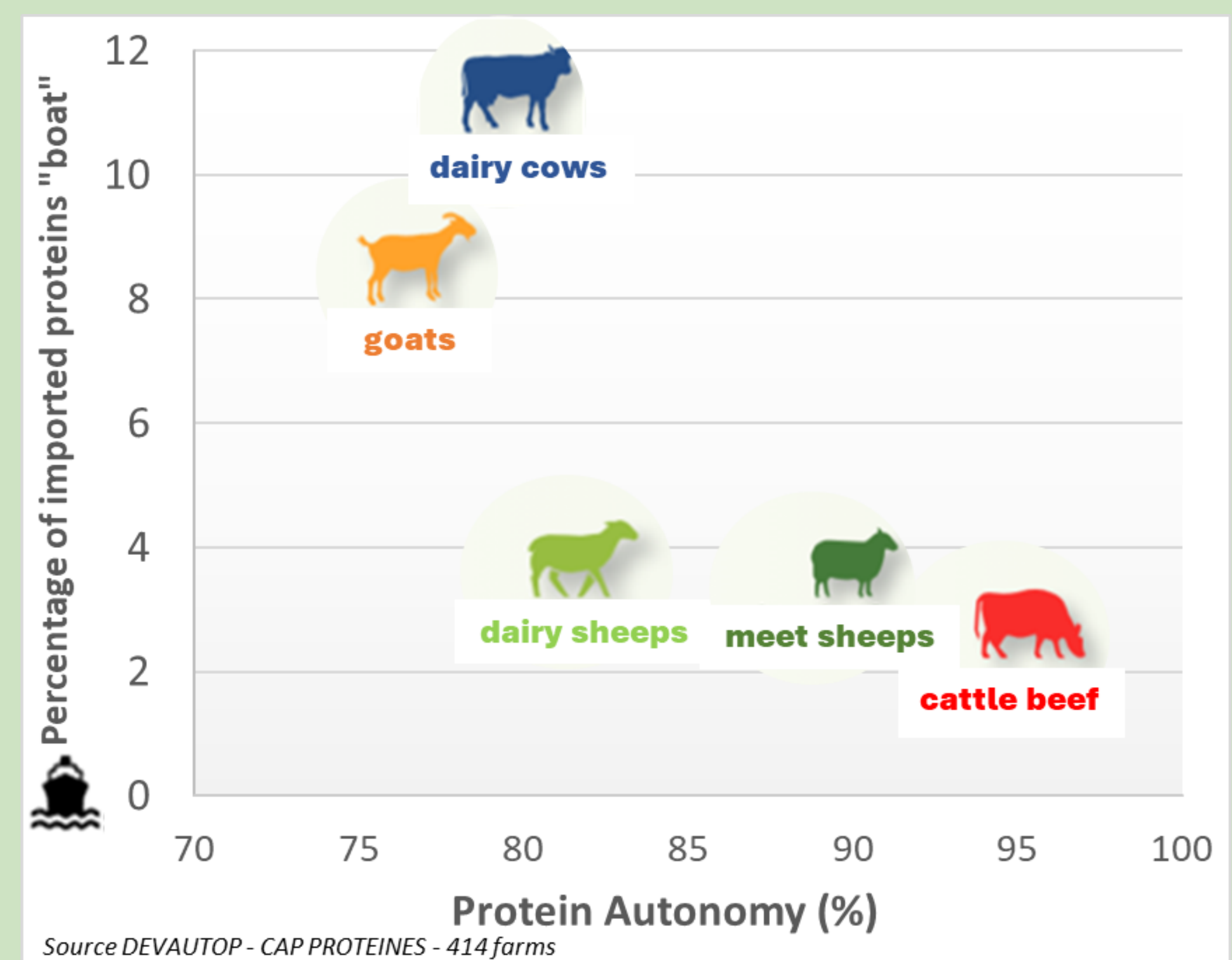
In the field, these levers are put in place in the reverse order to their theoretical classification by efficiency gradient. Breeders start with the implementation of a simple lever "to try" then by a succession of changes and technical adjustments related to the constraints of the exploitation. All farms combine several levers to gain autonomy. The transition lasts 10 years: this is the time that elapses in practice between the start and the achievement of a high level of autonomy.

Implementation trajectory



Perspectives

In the pilot farms, protein autonomy is on average 91% for the meat farmings (sheep and beef) and between 75 and 80% on average for the dairy sectors (goats, cattle, sheep). Residual dependence on imported soya is low on average: around 2-3% of needs for the suckling sectors, 8-12% for the dairy cattle and goat sectors. In all sectors, we observe farms are autonomous, so it is possible to achieve this.



Bottom-up and dissemination of knowledge

300 testimonials and 80 videos are available on www.cap-proteines-elevage.fr. They describe winning trajectories and practices for protein autonomy in meat and dairy farming.

