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PIANO NAZIONALE
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA

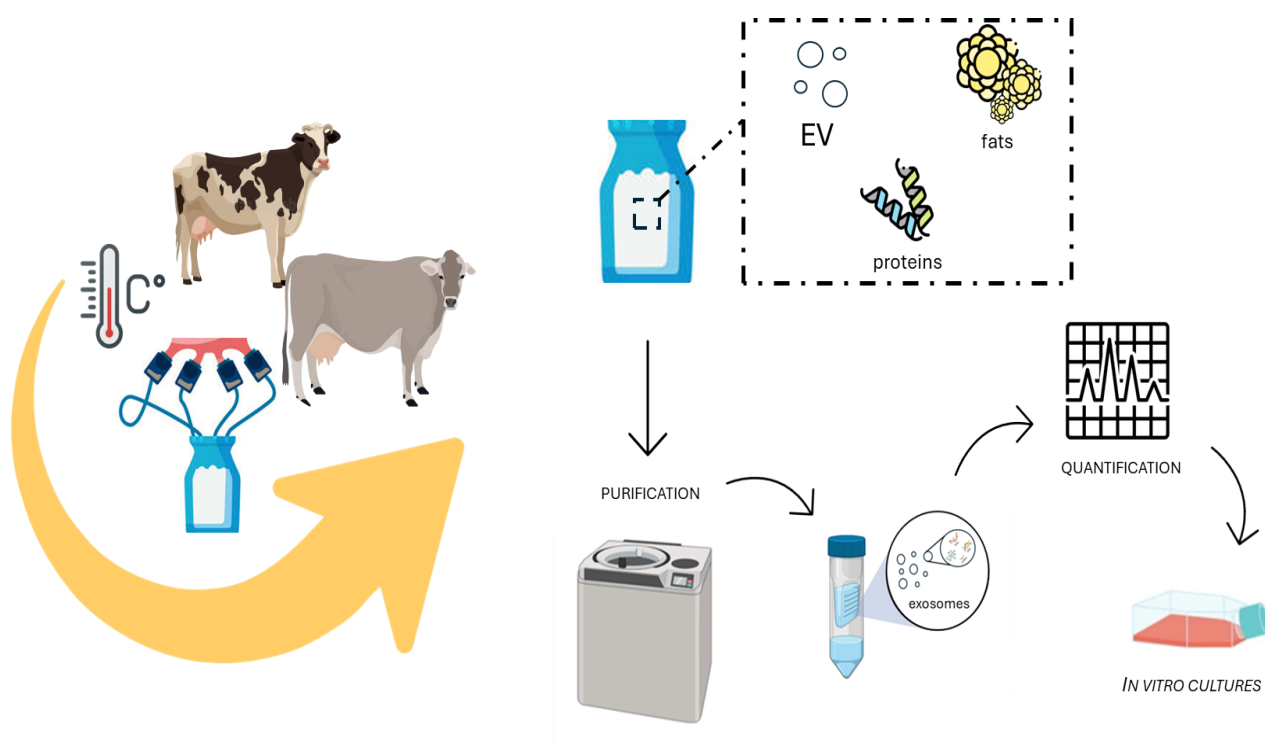


UNIVERSITÀ
della TOSCANA

*PRIN: PROGETTI DI RICERCA DI RILEVANTE INTERESSE NAZIONALE
Bando 2022 Prot. 2022MPWFET*

Resiliency to heat stress: a system biology approach

RESIST



Partner: University of Tuscia (UNITUS), University of Milan (UNIMI)

Scientific Responsible: Prof. Umberto Bernabucci (UNITUS)
bernab@unitus.it

SPI: Prof.ssa Lecchi Cristina (UNIMI)
cristina.lecchi@unimi.it

UNITUS working group:
Prof. Umberto Bernabucci
Prof.ssa Loredana Basiricò
Prof. Nicola Lacetera

UNIMI working group:
Prof.ssa Cristina Lecchi
Prof. Alessandro Agazzi

European Unione-funded project– Next Generation EU

• PROJECT:

This project addresses one of the major issues currently affecting cattle breeding: how climate change affects the health and performance of dairy cows.

The project is based on a systems biology approach, using omics sciences (metabolomics and transcriptomics) to investigate the molecular basis of HS tolerance in dairy cattle. Samples are collected under different field conditions, comparing Brown Swiss and Holstein breeds raised on the same farm. Exosomes obtained from blood and milk are characterized to identify several potential biomarkers. The biological function of exosomes is subsequently validated in ex vivo and in vitro studies, with the aim of evaluating the effects on tissues that play a key role in the efficiency and welfare of dairy ruminants (mammary gland, intestine, immune cells).

Results of the studies will be integrated and analyzed to identify significant associations of markers with HS responses with already known clinical, physiological and production indicators. As the project addresses a topic with a high impact on livestock production and sustainability, the project aims to involve all stakeholders (farmers, livestock associations, animal science associations, companies trading in agricultural cooling systems, dairy companies...) for effective and rapid transfer of scientific knowledge to the field application phase.

• KEYWORDS:

Climate change, Heat stress, Environmental aspects of animal husbandry, Adaptation, Dairy cattle, Animal welfare.

• OBJECTIVES:

The project analyzes how climate change affects the health and performance of dairy animals. It aims to study: 1) physiological responses to heat stress in two cattle breeds (Holstein Friesian and Brown Swiss) 2) gain knowledge on the role of exosomes, their microRNA (miRNA) content and metabolites in modifying tissue functions during heat stress (HS) 3) identify miRNAs and biological markers in biological fluids for early and effective detection of HS condition in dairy cattle.

• WORK PACKAGES:

- **WP1.** The impact of heat stress on lactating Holstein Friesian and Brown Swiss breeds.
- **WP2.** Blood and milk exosomes isolation and characterization.
- **WP3.** Validation of OMIC results on samples collected during *in vivo* studies.
- **WP4.** *In vitro* evaluation of EXO activities.
- **WP5.** Coordination of the project and overall management.
- **WP6.** Dissemination and communication.

• EXPECTED RESULTS:

The expected results of this project will impact the livestock production field. Dairy livestock plays a major role in human food production, converting non-human edible plant material to high-quality products such as milk. The knowledge generated within the project will be useful for dairy livestock farmers to adopt management strategies, including breeding and nutritional strategies, to help with heat stress, improve animal health and contribute to the sustainability and competitiveness of the agro-food sectors.

PARTNER



The **Department of Agriculture and Forest Sciences** (DAFNE) at the University of Tuscia is a distinguished institution committed to scientific research and innovation. DAFNE stands out for its modern infrastructure and high-quality research laboratories.

In 2022, DAFNE once again demonstrated its high level of scientific research, achieving **first place** in Italy in the field of Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences (Area 07) among the 180 selected **"Departments of Excellence"** by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR). This success ensured funding for the new project **"Digital, Intelligent, Green, and Sustainable"** (acronym: D.I.Ver.So), to be carried out from 2023 to 2027.

DAFNE is dedicated to advancing scientific knowledge and sustainable development, actively engaging in European Union initiatives, national strategic planning, and partnerships with prominent research centers in the field of agriculture and forestry.


The **Department of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences** (DIVAS) of the University of Milan carries out research and teaching activities in the field of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences. General objective is to promote animal health and welfare by supporting biodiversity and environmental.

The Department organises and guarantees the facilities for research and promotes their strengthening and adaptation in order to allow research programmes, also in cooperation with public and private institutions, national and international companies.

The Department is responsible for identifying the most appropriate measures to promote the harmonious development of its scientific activities and policies of quality and transparency, also taking advantage of the tools and resources allowed by the University.

INFO AND CONTACT DETAILS:

 VIA SAN CAMILLO DE LELLIS SNC, VITERBO (VT)


 0761.357438-554

 <https://www.unitus.it/dipartimenti/dafne/>

 dafne@pec.unitus.it

INFO AND CONTACT DETAILS:

 VIA DELL' UNIVERSITA' 6, LODI (LO)

 02.50334500, 02.50334597, 390250334532

 <https://divas.unimi.it/it/home>

 direzione.divas@unimi.it