

Beyond yes or no!

A governance tool for socially acceptable livestock breeding

What did RUMIGEN look at?

RUMIGEN examined how future livestock breeding technologies can be discussed and assessed in ways that reflect both technical opportunities and societal expectations. We combined stakeholder input, future scenarios and citizen consultation to understand which conditions shape legitimacy.

What was found?

The Room of Acceptance reframes public acceptance as a navigable space shaped by governance choices, not as a fixed public opinion. The main result is a structured framework capable of mapping the room of societal acceptance, and highlighting specific implementation challenges for a given technology or innovation. Citizens paid particular attention to unexpected consequences, animal welfare, environmental effects, openness and access, product quality, and who benefits.

Why is this important?

Policy decisions on breeding technologies can become polarised if public dialogue starts too late. The RUMIGEN approach helps surface likely points of conflict earlier and supports more credible, transparent and evidence-based governance.

Why does this matter?

It gives policymakers a way to move beyond abstract debates and test concrete breeding pathways against societal expectations. That matters for innovation policy, breeding regulation, research priorities and communication strategies.

What does this mean in practice?

When shaping policy or guidance on breeding innovation, the room of acceptance can be employed to understand societal expectations and align innovation strategies. It highlights the need to treat social legitimacy as a design criterion, not as a final communication step.

Key takeaway

Breeding innovation is more likely to remain legitimate when societal conditions are built in from the start. The Room of Acceptance offers a practical way to do that.

RUMIGEN is an EU-funded project working to improve livestock breeding by combining genetic, epigenetic, and phenotypic knowledge to support more sustainable and resilient animal production.