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Nationality: Italian
Date of birth: 03/12/1998
Place of birth: Padova (PD), Italy

Education:

- PhD student in Animal and Food Science, University of Padua (November 2024-continued)
- Research grant: Reproductive and growing performance, behavior and One Welfare of group-housed rabbits, Dafnae, University of Padua (November 2023- October 2024)
- Master student in Animal Science and Technology, University of Padua (2021-2023)
- Bachelor student in Animal Science and Technology, University of Padua (2017-2021)

Research areas:

- Rabbit production
- Reproducing rabbits
- Housing systems
- Animal welfare

Brief description of Ph.D project:

Effect of litter size on the performance, welfare, behavior and energy balance of rabbit does

The PhD project will preview a comprehensive evaluation of the effects of the litter size on rabbit does housed in singular or collective cages. In recent years, genetic and technological improvements led to an increased production and efficiency in the rabbit sector. In this context, the use of commercial hybrids selected for their high prolificacy and production performance has played a key role, with rabbit does able to produce a high number of kits per kindling (up to 12-13 born alive). However, in current practices, some kits are often discarded due to the insufficient milk production especially at the first parities (primiparous and secondiparous does). This would bring to ethical concerns and loss of production for rabbit farms. Nevertheless, current genetic lines seem to be able to sustain litters with a high number of kits (10-11 kits per litter), without detrimental effects on doe reproductive carriers. However, there is a lack of knowledge about the optimal litter size for current commercial hybrids. Therefore, this project aims to evaluate the effect of increasing litter size on the performance, welfare, behavior and energy balance of doe rabbits to safeguard the productivity and welfare of the does and litters. The results obtained from this project will be used to identify best management practices of reproducing rabbits to improve breeding productivity by avoiding the culling of exceeding kits, with a relevant ethical value.

Supervisor:

Prof. Gerolamo Xiccato

Co-supervisor:

Prof.ssa. Angela Trocino, Dott. Francesco Bordignon

Publications: [Google scholar link](#)

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Matteo-Molin-2>