

SPAIN

Farm's performance, restructuring & modernisation

Location

Andalusia

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P2 - Competitiveness

Measure

M1 – Knowledge transfer & innovation actions

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 37 940.77

EAFRD 34 146.69

National/regional 3 794.08

Project duration

2017 – 2017

Project promoter

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In order to maintain the traditional activity of extensive sheep and cattle grazing, the government of Andalusia created a pilot training programme on pastoralism for those that wanted to pursue a new career.

Summary

Shepherds contribute to the socio-economic and environmental development of rural areas. The project provided the necessary training to those who wish to find a professional path in pastoralism.



The modular courses give students all the necessary knowledge on traditional extensive cattle and shepherd activities while incorporating the tools and innovations needed to face the challenges of the current livestock systems, emphasising the environmental protection function of grazing.

Results

Trained over 100 students during the seven editions of the programme.

Trained 100 shepherds as mentors for the practical cases and field work.

Reviewed the state and prospect of six local goat breeds (three at risk of extinction) and five local sheep breeds (two at risk of extinction).

60% of the trainees were professionally engaged in livestock activity.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ It is necessary to ensure the collaboration of all relevant livestock stakeholders (administrations, organisations, research institutes, etc.).
- ❑ According to the managing authority, shepherds have valuable knowledge even if sometimes it isn't recognised. Therefore, they must take part in the activities and be involved in the project from the beginning.
- ❑ Continuity of such programmes is also very important – in this case seven annual training editions were held.

Context

Andalusia has a great diversity and richness in terms of extensive pastoral systems (among which are the *dehasas-agro-forestry* systems in semi-arid land, high plateaus and mountainous areas) and biodiversity in terms of native breeds. In this context, it is necessary to have the specialised knowledge needed for carrying out shepherding in a professional way while ensuring environmental protection.

At the same time, young people tend to abandon rural areas and traditional professions like shepherding, which provide great services to society, such as fire prevention and provision of high-quality dairy and meat products. However, an increasing number of young are seeking alternative ways of living. Some of them, who were about to leave their rural communities, or could not find job opportunities in urban areas, wanted to become shepherds but didn't have the minimum necessary knowledge.

In order to maintain this traditional activity and improve the socio-economic situation while ensuring generational renewal in the agricultural sector, the government of Andalusia decided in 2010 to create a pilot training programme that would make shepherding attractive for those that wanted to pursue a new career.

This programme was developed over seven years and is now part of the training element of the 2014-2020 RDP programming period in Andalusia. The following information relates to the VII edition.

Objectives

The programme aims to:

- Contribute to the socio-economic development of the region with a high presence of livestock;
- Re-evaluate grazing systems and management to maintain this activity in a profitable way; and
- Facilitate generational renewal in extensive livestock farms and reduce unemployment in rural areas.

Activities

The VII edition of the Andalusian School for Shepherds covered the municipalities of Granada and Jaén (Santiago de la Espada-Pontones), the livestock region of the Sierra de Segura and the Natural Park of Sierra de Cazorla, Segura and the Villas.

The cattle systems of these territories are characterised by the *trashumance* activity, in which the shepherds travel with the animals; during the winter and spring the flocks of Segureña sheep and the Andalusian white and

black goats are kept in the foothills of Sierra Morena, and then spend the summer and part of the autumn in the Sierra del Segura. It is one of the few areas of Spain where this sustainable animal management is still carried out.

In addition to the regional administrations of agriculture and environment, a large number of public and private entities participated in the implementation of the project. These included the associations of local breeds of sheep and goats, cooperatives, entrepreneurship centres, town halls, farmer unions, councils, private companies, etc. In total, over 50 teachers participated from different organisations and backgrounds. The School of Shepherds has also a group of about 70 mentors – all shepherds – who, after a period of training, welcome students on their farm to carry out field work and on-site practice.



The project is structured around annual circles of training. In a first round the location (region) is selected to set up the school, and in a second phase applications for training are received and evaluated. These applications include a business plan that must be linked to the extensive livestock activity. The applications are assessed against the quality of the business plan, and the students are admitted to join the programme, which starts every year in March.

During the first five weeks training is provided at the IFAPA (Andalusian Research Institute) Centre of Camino de Purchil, and focuses on four introductory and cross-cutting modules: extensive livestock, facilities, and food and risk prevention. Next, the first period of internships in livestock farms begins. Once this first internship period is over, the school moves to the chosen livestock region to continue with the next five weeks of training, where two other internships take place. In these five weeks the topics covered include: the environmental role of the shepherd, health, farming enterprise, marketing and aspects linked to new technologies. Coinciding with the first week in the region, training for local shepherds is also carried out, in order to continue to expand the number of mentors available for students.

The School of Shepherds, in addition to the training, serves to showcase and recognise the value of extensive cattle in these region. Open days are held for breeders dedicated to some specific subject demanded by the sector itself, and other activities for the general public (events and fairs) are organised.

“In this function of promoting extensive livestock and its image, we participate annually in different media: television, press, radio ... It is amazing the amount of interest that this programme raises”

Francisco de Asís, responsible for the VII Edition.

Main Results

The results of this programme were analysed together through the experience carried out in seven editions held annually, as it is the best way to see the added value of continuity of the programme:

- Training over 100 students (total of the seven editions).
- Training of 100 shepherds as mentors for the practical cases and field work.
- Characterisation of the current state of seven extensive livestock regions in Andalusia.
- Review of the state and prospect of six goat local breeds (three risking extinction) and five sheep local breeds (two risking extinction)
- 60% of the trainees were incorporated into the livestock activity (or chose a job closely related to farming).
- Participating sheep have become ‘firemen’ as they are

taken to places that need to be cleared of wood and bushes in order to prevent summer fires.

Key lessons

- A factor to take into account when transferring this project is the need for all extensive livestock stakeholders to collaborate (administrations, organizations, research institutes, etc.)
- Another key element is integrating environmental protection and management when considering this kind of profession. There is an obvious link between livestock and environment, but when it comes to extensive grazing it is even more important to look at it from the public goods perspective. In some areas this activity takes place in protected areas, either from National or Natural Parks or Natura 2000 sites, where shepherd activity has preserved breeds, seeds, landscape and prevented forest fires. Therefore, all environmental bodies and stakeholders must be involved in these kind of programmes.
- According to the managing authority, *“One must never forget the professionals that have been carrying out a good job in the extensive livestock sector. They have the knowledge, even if sometimes this wasn’t recognised. They must take part on the activities and be involved in the project from the beginning.”*
- Continuity of the programme is also very important (seven training editions up to now have been held annually).



Additional sources of information

www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_x67ClIQMk&t=2s

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUnfNoloicQ