

## SPAIN

### Agri-food chain integration & quality

#### Location

Ávila

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P3 - Food chain & risk  
management

#### Measure

M1 – Knowledge transfer &  
information actions

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 2 730

EAFRD 2 184

National/Regional 546

#### Project duration

2019 – 2019

#### Project promoter

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A rural women's association used Rural Development Programme (RDP) support to organise wool processing training courses and to create employment opportunities by valorising wool, a by-product of sheep meat production.

## Summary

The province of Ávila in Castilla y León is known for its production of sheep meat. The wool produced as a by-product is sold cheaply outside the region. Wool processing was a common place activity in the past, but it has been abandoned in recent years.



The region of Ávila is also suffering from depopulation. In response to this situation, the local rural women's association invested in a training course on wool, not only to ensure knowledge transfer but essentially as a way of restoring an economic activity linked to livestock production. The association used support from the sub-Measure 1.1 of the Castilla y León Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020, to organise two training activities on wool processing.

## Results

The training was attended by 44 people at the town of El Barco de Ávila, and by 40 people in the town of Piedrahita: all of the participants were women.

As a result of the training several participants have embarked on further training with a view to setting up their own business.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ There is a great potential for generating added value by using by-products to create new products in the framework of a sustainable economy.
- ❑ A key factor identified for the training courses' success was that it was designed to create employment opportunities for women.
- ❑ Training plays a crucial role in stimulating entrepreneurship and hence maintaining the population in rural areas.

## Context

FADEMUR ÁVILA is an association which looks after rural women's rights and interests. The association's core activity is to provide training that will improve women's economic and professional situation. It organises a variety of courses, mainly related to agriculture and animal farming in different locations across the province of Ávila. The association also offers courses in new technologies.

The project idea originated from the work of a person involved in the artisanal weaving of wool. The association detected that there was a local interest for wool processing, a traditional activity in the area but currently in disuse.

Sheep farming is predominant in the area and there are currently approximately 20 sheep farms, with an estimated total of more than 5 000 sheep. Yet sheep farmers, who are mainly focused on meat production, tend not to use this by-product and sell the wool for a low price to other regions. Processing the wool instead of selling it cheaply would increase the income of these farms.

The proposal for the training activity coincided with the existence of another project in the area, which is currently in its definition phase, for the installation of a wool laundry by a group of women.

It should also be noted that the region is suffering from a severe depopulation problem. Hence, this training is essential not only in terms of knowledge transfer, but also as a possible way of recovering an economic activity that could create job opportunities. It facilitates the entrepreneurship and settlement of women in this rural environment and contributes to the economic and social cohesion of the territory, helping to reduced depopulation.

## Objectives

The objective of this project was to stimulate a new economic activity through training in an area suffering from depopulation. The training offered aims to create new employment opportunities for women and economic development in the area.

## Activities

Under the sub-Measure 1.1 of the Castilla y León RDP 2014-2020, two training activities on wool processing were organised in the province of Ávila. The first training activity took place in the town of El Barco de Ávila. In 2019, the population of this town was 2 312 inhabitants, which is 56 inhabitants less than in 2018, according to data from the National Statistics Institute (INE). The second training activity took place in the town of Piedrahita, which in 2019 had 11 inhabitants less than the previous year with a population of 1 822. The content of the training is indicated below:

The evolution of wool processing in Spain. The topic focused on how sheep farming in Spain has changed over the years and how the production of wool has adapted to the new market trends.

The processing and commercialisation of sheep wool and how it can create job opportunities for women in rural areas. The topic examined how to use wool, as a by-product of meat production, and to develop the wool industry.

Wool processing from fleece to dress. This part of the training covered all the processing phases that wool undergoes from the shearing of the sheep to the end product, including washing the raw material, dyeing, combing, spinning, etc.

Participants also learnt about the natural ways of treating wool, for example, how to dye the wool using natural products.

The training included practical demonstrations on using looms and spinning machines. Participants were given the opportunity to see the different types of handmade clothes that can be produced from wool.



### Main Results

The training in the town of El Barco de Ávila was attended by 44 people, all of them women, including 10 young women (under 41 years of age). The second training activity took place in the town of Piedrahita and was attended by 40 people, again all of them women, including four young women under the age of 41.

An anonymous survey was carried out so that students could assess the training received. Some highlights from the survey included:

- The teaching staff used a neutral language, avoided any exclusionary treatment based on gender and, when appropriate, made the presentation with a gender perspective. Score: 10/10.
- Overall assessment of the course. Score: 10/10.

As a result of the training several participants have embarked on further training to set up their own businesses.

The project continues as there was a request made for more specific training actions on the processing of the fleece, wool spinning techniques, horizontal and vertical looms. It will be financed under the financial envelop of sub-Measure 1.1 for the year 2020.

### Key lessons

There is a great potential for generating added value by using the by-products of the primary sector (in this case wool) in the framework of the sustainable economy.

A key factor identified for the training courses' success was that it was designed to create employment opportunities for women.

It is important to be aware of the importance of training as a basis for stimulating entrepreneurship which helps maintaining the population in rural areas.

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### Additional sources of information

n/a