

SPAIN

Socially inclusive futures

Location

Camino de Purchil

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

Measure

M01 – Knowledge transfer & innovation actions

Funding (EUR)

Total budget* 37 940.77

EAFRD* 34 146.69

National/Regional* 3 794.08

* Annual budget

Project duration

2010 – 2021

Project promoter

Andalusian Institute for
Research and Training in
Agriculture, Fishery, Food
and Ecological Production

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The Andalusian Shepherds School is a training project looking to increase generational relay in rural areas. The project involves traditional and innovative knowledge, together with environmental aspects linked to pastoral livestock.

Summary

The Andalusian Shepherds School annual 540-hour training course is aimed at people who want to work in pastoral or extensive livestock farming. Theoretical knowledge on health, production, economics and marketing is combined with internships.

The School is itinerant, changing location every year. This allows for activities with children and young people in schools and colleges across the region, as well as open days for local farmers and technicians.

This forms a transversal framework linked to gender equality and the collaboration of all relevant institutions covering pastoral livestock in Andalusia.

The school is primarily funded by EAFRD under the RDP, with additional national and regional support.



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Results

The project so far trained 129 students, out of which 30 were women. In addition, 130 shepherds have been trained to give practical classes to students.

Between 60-90% of the total number of trained students settled in pastoral livestock farming. Current demand is triple the number of places available, with each course having more applicants.

There is a strong media coverage, and the project is recognised at regional, national and international levels as a model of training for livestock farmers of the future.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Pastoral livestock farming offers a range of sustainable products, which should be branded in the global market.
- Over 60 public and private entities have participated so far. More than 30 are involved every year which ensures a broad range of up-to-date topics are covered including business management, marketing and tools such as GPS and computer programmes.
- An emphasis on gender equality continually raises the proportion of female students and in the next course 50% of the students should be women.
- The training is aligned with the principles of the European Green Deal, including biodiversity, and the project is in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy. Students learn about the entire value chain of pastoral livestock products and how to better market them.
- The model is transferable to other regions in Europe with pastoral livestock farming.

Context

There is a continuing loss of traditional knowledge about pastoral livestock farming. In addition, innovations that are highly necessary for the future of the sector could improve generational relay.

The main reason for creating this project was to provide alternative employment in pastoral livestock farming due to the lack of young people interested in joining the sector. In many Andalusian regions pastoral livestock is very important but unfortunately, they suffer significant depopulation. This type of programme is an opportunity to alleviate the effects of depopulation, offering rural jobs linked to traditional professions. In addition, the Strategic Commitment to Gender Equality 2016-2019 programme has been the basis for the development of this project.

The project also brings social recognition to the shepherd profession, guaranteeing the survival of a broad historical and cultural heritage. The shepherd profession has a poor image in most countries in the Mediterranean, particularly in Spain, despite all the economic, social and environmental functions they continue to perform.

Shepherds and animals play a significant role in conserving the biodiversity of natural areas (Regional and National Parks) and preventing forest fires. Therefore, there is active participation from managers of protected areas, environmental agents and shepherds who work with their animals in these areas.

Preservation of the genetic heritage of local breeds is closely linked to pastoral livestock systems and many breeds are in a critical situation. The Andalusian Shepherds' School provides local breeds in each course. Andalusia has an important genetic heritage with six goat, six sheep and seven cattle breeds.

Finally, the production of sustainable food respecting animal welfare and the environment is a demand of today's society, which is increasingly concerned about consumption systems. Pastoral livestock farming over a broad area offers a range of sustainable products, and which should be branded in the global market.

Objectives

- The inclusion of young people into this livestock activity, in optimal conditions so that activity is viable, economically profitable, and socially and economically fair.
- Combat climate change and depopulation in rural areas.
- Conserve traditional knowledge, currently in the hands of livestock farmers but without a specific channel for transmission to future generations.

- Raise awareness in society and dignify the profession of pastoral livestock farming and its products.
- Reduce discrimination by promoting gender equality, by integrating more women into the programme.



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Activities

The Andalusian Shepherds School project began in 2010. It is an annual training course, which in 2019 has completed its ninth edition.

The project is managed by the Andalusian Institute for Agricultural Research and Training (Andalusian Regional Government), with more than 30 public and private entities participating every year. These include cooperatives, local breeders' associations, shepherds' associations, companies, professional organisations, health associations, universities, research institutes and cheese factories producing Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products.

This project is an opportunity for people without a family tradition in pastoral livestock, to have their first contact with such farming. Many of them currently own dairy farms.

The training lasts approximately four months and is divided in two parts. A theoretical part of 300 hours over 10 modules cover shepherd and pastoral livestock, shelters for the animals, reproduction, feeding, grazing and the environmental role of the shepherd, health and hygiene of livestock, associations, marketing, accounting, livestock management and innovation. More than 50 teachers participate in this first part.

The second part is highly practical with four modules of 60 hours each. Students can select from 120 livestock farms across Andalusia. Each farmer must participate in 20 hours of specific training.

The Shepherds School takes place every year in a different area. To make shepherding visible in local areas with a high environmental value, the project has worked with schools and colleges across Andalusia, where it explains why livestock is very important in the region, highlighting different traditional livestock systems and bringing the training closer to different rural areas. Currently, this involves more than 700 students.

The School also carries out continuous training, acting as a permanent classroom for pastoral livestock farming issues, holding conferences, attending to queries and participating in livestock farming forums.

Open days for livestock farmers in each course area have had numerous participants.

There has been significant collaboration with regional, national and international media.

Main Results

Between 60-90% of the total number of trained students settled in pastoral livestock farming.

129 students have been trained, 99 men and 30 women. In addition, 130 shepherds have been trained to give practical classes to students.

The demand is triple the number of places available, with each course having more applicants. Students are normally 18-30 years old, with a family tradition in livestock farming, and are currently mostly male (70% men, 30% women). The share of women increases every year, and the next course is expected to be 50% female.

The media coverage has helped to promote the school as a model for shepherds in the future, which includes management innovations with GPS, computer programmes and product marketing, updated training and business management.

The participation of nine Andalusian areas has made extensive livestock farming more visible.

More than 60 institutions and companies have participated in this project.

The project has received awards and promotion at regional (Regional Government), national (Ministry of Agriculture - National Rural Network) and international (European Network for Rural Development) levels. In addition, the project was presented at national and international conferences in Spain, Morocco, Guatemala, Colombia and Italy.

A collaboration network has been created with initiatives linked to extensive livestock training in the Basque Country, Catalonia, the Canary Islands, Extremadura and Asturias.

The training and awareness raising are directly linked with the European Green Deal objectives. Generally, this economic activity is found in areas of high environmental value (Regional and National Parks) and performs environmental functions such as fire prevention, seed dispersal, landscape preservation and the maintenance of wild fauna.



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Key lessons

In order to promote gender equality in the sector, associations of female farmers and experts work with the students on a transversal aspect throughout the whole training process.

The project is in line with the EU strategies and objectives to promote rural jobs for young people.

The training is adapted to the principles of the European Green Deal and environmental aspects are interlinked during the training.

This project is aligned with the Farm to Fork Strategy. Pastoral livestock farming produces healthy food, from areas of high environmental value. Students learn about the entire value chain of these animal products and how to better market them.

The model is seen as highly transferable to other places in Europe.

Additional sources of information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvBFpAnIOz4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI6NCc2dJNc&t=9s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eg4mfdWzv1c>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_x67CiiQMk&t=4s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUnfNoloicQ&t=4s>



*This project has been categorised under 'Socially inclusive futures' by the nominating National Rural Network