

Spain – innovation example

FARMERS BUILDING DIALOGUE

Asociación de ganaderos de La Vera y Norte de Extremadura

- Location: La Vera, La Vera, Extremadura
- HNV system: Extensive goat and cattle grazing on common pastures
- Scale of operation: District
- Timespan: 2017-ongoing
- Keys to success: The dedication and persistence of a small number of farmers is key. HNV-Link was able to support the farmers' association and to facilitate the dialogue with the authorities.



Problems addressed by this example:

Devastating campaign by authorities against TB, top-down implementation, lack of dialogue, failure of authorities to understand local farming conditions.

Story in a nutshell:

It is not a specific project, it is the story of an initiative or process by which the local livestock farmers' association organised itself and opened a dialogue with the regional government on the sensitive issue of TB control, with support from the HNV-Link project. So far, two meetings have been organised between the farmers and the authorities to discuss practical issues with facilitation from HNV-Link. There has also been an open meeting between farmers and animal health experts, held in La Vera. The farmers' association already existed before this initiative, but the catalyst for becoming more organised and for building dialogue with the authorities was the regional government's new campaign against TB in goats from 2016. This campaign was implemented in a very rigid, top-down way, leading to the slaughter of many goat flocks and increasing frustration among goat farmers who perceived the campaign as devastating their livelihood but ineffective in terms of its objectives.

What does the initiative achieve for HNV farming?

- Gives pastoralists the opportunity to engage in dialogue face-to-face with the regional authorities and make their own proposals for changes to the way the TB controls are implemented, in a facilitated environment rather than confrontational.
- Transmits the critical situation and proposed solutions to the authorities who have the competence to implement them.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success:



- A new campaign against TB in goats was the catalyst, as it put pastoralists in a desperate situation.
- One or two specific goat farmers became more active in the farmers' association which previously had been more dominated by cattle farmers.
- A member of the HNV-Link team was available locally and dedicated time and enthusiasm to understanding the farmers' concerns and acting as a bridge between farmers and authorities.
- Specific individuals in the regional animal health authority showed willingness to listen and engage in dialogue.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication:

- Very good potential for replication in all areas of extensive livestock grazing, especially where there have been no previous initiatives to build dialogue.
- Starting a dialogue with farmers and authorities is a very time-consuming process.
- Needs dynamic and committed individuals with ability to collaborate with different institutions.
- Lack of continuity of the HNV-Link support role is a weakness.

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