A thematic network on High Nature Value farming
Learning, Innovation & Knowledge

Learning Area *"La Vera"* (Spain)

INNOVATION EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS

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Introduction and contents

This report looks at innovation that supports HNV farming in **La Vera**, and identifies the types of innovation that are missing and needed in order to secure a sustainable future for HNV farming.

We present examples of innovation existing in this Learning Area (LA) and examples more widely in **Spain** that could usefully be transferred to address challenges in the LA.

Types of innovation that seem to be absent in Spain, and that we would like to explore in other countries of the HNV LINK network, are also summarised.

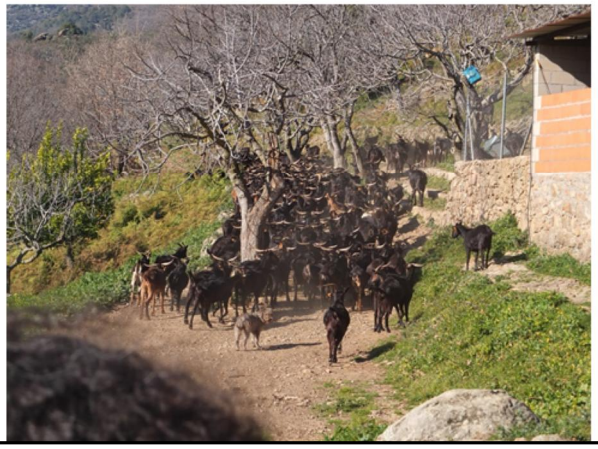
Contents

The challenges facing HNV farming in La Vera

The HNV system, especially goat grazing, is in severe decline. Scrub encroachment and closure of the mosaic landscape are widespread, leading to considerable losses of Natura 2000 values and increasingly damaging wild fires.

Farms struggle with poor economic viability and harsh living and working conditions. They receive very limited support from the CAP (Pillar 1) and RDP compared with other sectors and other Member States.

They face a stifling regulatory system (food hygiene, animal health, Natura 2000, land-use planning) that closes down most of their options for improving the economics of the system.



The challenges facing HNV farming in La Vera

Goat and sheep numbers in La Vera have fallen by 50% in the past 15 years.

Pastures are mostly in shared use (public and private) and are in very poor condition and suffer competition from hunting use. Of the 31 public pastures, only one has a management plan. Authorities do not invest enough in improving pastures and facilities. Farmers face Natura 2000 restrictions on their activities. Moving to indoor feeding systems is the obvious alternative to the many challenges of extensive grazing on unfenced pastures.

On-farm processing (e.g. cheese) and direct sales cannot develop due to rigid rules and bureaucracy. Milk is sold mostly to bulk buyers at low and highly unstable prices. There is a lack of product differentiation for cheeses and goat meat from grazing systems, compared with intensive indoor feeding.

Currently, goat farms are suffering the effects of a very severe, top-down campaign by the regional authorities to eradicate TB. Thousands of goats are being slaughtered, but the test being used has a high incidence of false positives, and TB is carried by increasing populations of wild boar and deer, for which there is no TB eradication or testing programme.

Regional government policy has no vision for the future of upland grazing systems, rather there is a fragmented and dysfunctional set of parallel policies for agriculture, forests, hunting, animal health and nature conservation that between them are driving the HNV system and associated public goods into terminal decline.

Overview of innovation in La Vera

There is no overall project to support the HNV livestock system in La Vera.

Institutional and regulatory innovation are sorely absent, with rigid, top-down structures that create major problems for HNV farming.

There are tentative signs of increasing private innovation at the present time, for example organisation of farmers' associations.

Overall, there is massive scope for increased innovation in support of HNV farming, but first the institutional and regulatory barriers must be unlocked.

Overview of the innovation situation

HNV-LINK is really the first attempt to evaluate the HNV farming situation in La Vera and to try to propose comprehensive solutions. There has been a LAG since the early 1990s, but it's approaches to rural development in the district have been far from innovative, acting primarily as a grant-giving body for local businesses. The LAG has supported only one very limited innovative project for livestock farming, aiming to link farms, cheese production and tourism, a project which was not continued (CarpeQuania – see next slide).

Innovation examples in La Vera: what are their strengths and weaknesses for HNV farming?

- CarpeQuania: LAG project for integration of pastoralism, cheese dairies and tourism
- Caprites: internet sales for Verata goat breed
- Coolosar: cooperative project for micro cheese dairies
- El Berenjenal: CSA consumers' group
- Preventive burning: by forestry authorities in consultation with local cattle graziers

ACRIVER
Asociación Extremeña de Criadores de Caprino de Raza Verata

Strengths

- There are some initiatives to support the local goat breed (the breed is typical of the HNV system BUT many HNV graziers do NOT have this pure breed, so these initiatives do not support the whole system).
- There are some attempts to improve the marketing of local livestock products and to organise alternative relations between consumers and producers.
- There is a pilot project by the authorities to control scrub encroachment through managed use of fire, involving some consultation with local graziers.

Weaknesses

- These existing innovations are on an extremely limited scale, compared with the scale of the challenges.
- Two of them (CarpeQuania and Coolosar micro cheese dairies) are historic innovations, they ceased to exist some years ago.
- These examples of innovation do not address the main challenges facing HNV farming.
- Nor do they address the main challenges facing small-scale processing and sales of products from the HNV system.

What are the main innovation needs in La Vera, and how could they be addressed?

Social and institutional innovation

Social and institutional - innovation needs	Possible approaches
Establish long-term HNV "animation" project for La Vera, employing a project officer	Design a Project for LAG funding
Establish a common voice for goat farmers to communicate with authorities at different levels	Create an association of goat farmers. Possible EIP Operational Group
Integrate the approach of government departments towards pastures and pastoralism	Regional authorities develop a strategy and a cross-departmental working group
Consult local farmers in design of support measures, application of rules (e.g. animal health), Natura 2000	Regional authorities establish dialogue with local actors for development of approaches

Social and Institutional Innovation Needs

Local development agents are employed in some municipalities, and the LAG exists since the early 1990s, but these do not have the traditional livestock system as an objective for support. There is no group or project with this focus. To establish a long-term HNV livestock project, employing a dedicated project officer to work hand-in-hand with farmers and authorities, would be a key innovation.

A livestock farmers' association has been formed recently, in response to a highly problematic campaign from the authorities aimed at eradicating TB. The HNV-LINK team in La Vera is encouraging this as far as possible, and working to improve the voice of goat farmers in particular. The Association could apply for EIP funding as an Operational Group.

Several government departments have a role in the future of pastures and grazing systems, but there is no joined-up approach. The public grazings, that make up a large part of the pasture resource, are under the competence of the Forest department; whereas livestock are the competence of Agriculture; and the SAC which covers most of the upland pastures is under the Conservation authorities. There is an urgent need for these authorities to work together to develop an integrated strategy for the area and its grazing systems.

The different authorities apply their policies without talking to local farmers about best approaches. This creates major problems, and ineffective programmes. A very significant innovation would be for the authorities to engage with local farmers in designing and implementing policies.

Regulatory framework innovation

Regulatory framework - innovation needs	Possible approaches
Solve the severe limitations of Pillar 1 support to extensive grazing systems, especially goats and woody pastures	National government increases goat coupled payment to EU average; and adapts eligibility rules using EU options.
Use RDP measures to support HNV grazing systems on large scale, for biodiversity and fire prevention	Regional government implements the agri-environment measure that is in the RDP, targeting it on upland areas.
Adapt application of food hygiene rules to facilitate small-scale and on-farm processing (e.g. cheese)	Training for officials and producers so that they are aware of the flexibility including in the EU rules.
Adapt application of TB eradication programme to address the key problem of wildlife vectors	National and regional governments design a new programme in consultation with graziers and experts.
Make a clear plan for Natura 2000 pastoral habitats, with objectives and funded measures	Based on current plan, identify target habitats, define objectives and use RDP to implement measures.

Regulatory Framework Innovation Needs

Economic support for extensive grazing systems is far lower in Spain than in most Member States. Goats are especially discriminated against, because the coupled payment is very low in Spain (7 euros per head compared with 15 euros in France and 23 euros in Bulgaria) and because they are specialists in exploiting woody pasture, which is heavily penalised by the Spanish application of CAP pasture eligibility rules. The Spanish authorities have the competence to change this situation, by allocating a larger part of the Pillar 1 budget to goat and sheep payments, and applying a much better adapted eligibility system, e.g. following the French model.

Compared with most other Member States, Spain makes very limited use of Pillar 2 measures for supporting extensive grazing systems. The Extremadura RDP includes a measure for this purpose, but it has not been implemented. An additional problem is that the Spanish authorities apply the same eligibility rules to Pillar 2 payments for farmland as they apply to Pillar 1 payments. The extent of land potentially eligible in Extremadura is so large that it would make sense to target the measure on Natura 2000 and upland areas. Forest authorities have invested in grazing on public land in the past, but the new CAP does not allow RDP measures to be applied on permanent pastures by the forest authority.

Implementation of food hygiene rules is done in a way that prevents innovative small-scale processing of HNV products.

Natura 2000 is implemented in a top-down and rigid manner, with no involvement of the actual users and managers of the land. The management plan for the main SAC in La Vera includes many laudable objectives for pastoral habitats, but no concrete measures or quantified targets. There is an urgent need to use RDP measures in support of Natura 2000 objectives.

Products and markets innovation

Products and markets - innovation needs	Possible approaches
Promote (legal) on-farm cheese dairies	Grants (e.g. from LAG) to establish new on-farm dairies or convert existing unlicensed dairies into legal dairies.
Promote (legal) direct sales of cheese and meat by producers	Campaigns to inform producers and consumers of the possibilities for direct sales. Could be funded by LAG
Marketing initiatives for local goat meat and cheese, to improve demand and prices	Information campaigns, e.g. with restaurants and tourist offices, could be funded by LAG

Products and Markets Innovation Needs

Goat meat is not promoted as a local delicacy. The price received by producers is so low that it barely covers the costs of feeding the kid goat.

Milk is sold mostly to bulk buyers at low and highly unstable prices. There are only 3 licensed cheese dairies in the district, and these are semi-industrial. There are no artisan dairies selling high value cheeses through direct sales, only unlicensed producers.

There is a lack of product differentiation for cheeses and goat meat from grazing systems, compared with intensive indoor feeding.

The closure of local abattoirs due to strict hygiene and animal health rules, plus economic competition, has been a widespread phenomenon in Spain, as in the rest of the EU.

Farm techniques and management innovation

Farm techniques and management - innovation needs	Possible approaches
Integrated management plans for the approx. 30 public grazing lands in La Vera (only one plan exists at present)	Pilot Project for integrated approach to be started by HNV-LINK. Regional authorities are putting out tenders for conventional management plans
Public authorities carry out pasture improvements, in full consultation with graziers	Management plans should be agreed first. Measures can then be programmed under RDP
Improve infrastructure for livestock and for graziers on common grazings	Ditto
Use grazing as a tool for reducing fire risks in critical areas	Start with Pilot Projects to test the approach. Funding from RDP or possibly from LAG

Farm Techniques and Management Innovation Needs

The extensive grazing system depends largely on the shared use of large, unfenced pastures, whether in public or private ownership. Graziers pay for the use of the land, but have a very limited say about their management, maintenance of infrastructure, and restrictions on their use. The pastures generally are in poor condition, due to scrub encroachment and deteriorated infrastructure, but also in some cases due to inappropriate grazing patterns. These issues should be addressed through long-term participatory management plans and corresponding investments in improved infrastructure and improved management practices.

Other areas for potential innovation include stock management through techniques like GPS tracking and electric fencing; mechanical milking systems (as many as 50% of goat farms still use manual milking, which is highly labour-intensive); and new developments are needed in the field of cheese-making, such as mobile dairies for accompanying seasonal movements of flocks, and low-energy dairies that can operate without mains electricity.

Innovations from outside the LA that could help address LA needs

Landscape-scale integrated fire-prevention projects

Mosaico: landscape project across several municipalities with local participation, Sierra de Gata and Hurdes - Extremadura

Plan 42: fire prevention through integrated support programme for grazing systems – Castilla y León

Payment for environmental services

RAPCA: results-payments for fire prevention through grazing – Andalucía

Market differentiation initiatives

Quebrantahuesos project, Picos de Europa: marketing local livestock products through restaurants, linked to conservation - Asturias

DeYerba: internet sales of grassfed products – National

Innovation at scale of individual farms

Finca Casablanca: HNV dehesa farm developing sustainable management with organic beef production, grass-fed fattening, direct sales, agritourism - Extremadura

Cabrero de Bolonia: HNV farm and cheese dairy, direct sales - Andalucía

Innovation examples for which La Vera is looking to other Member States

- Use of RDP payment schemes to support HNV grazing systems on a large scale, especially on common land
- Locally-led projects that set objectives for pastoral land with the users, and apply a « payment for results » approach to promote these objectives
- Flexibility in the application of food hygiene rules to small-scale, on–farm processing units.
- Approaches to dealing with animal health controls (TB) in extensive systems on common land with wild fauna vectors.

INNOVATION FICHES FROM SPAIN

1) Plan 42 - integrated programme to reduce fire risk through support for extensive grazing
2) QueRed – national network of artisan cheese makers
3) Mosaico – landscape-scale project with local participation
4) Finca Casablanca – HNV dehesa farm developing sustainable management, grass-fed fattening, direct sales

Spain – innovation example 1) Plan 42 - integrated programme to reduce fire risk through support for extensive grazing

Location: Castilla y León, Spain

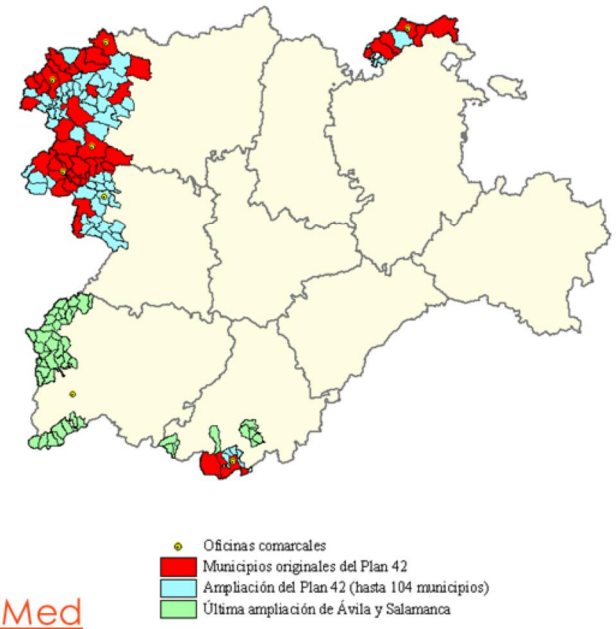
HNV system: Extensive grazing, mainly beef cattle on rough upland pastures

Scale of operation: 42 administrative districts, 1,300 holdings and 250,000 ha of grazing land

Timespan: Operated for approx. 10 years from 2002, ended due to lack of funding, no longer running

Keys to success: government commitment and funding, local project officers, dialogue with graziers, integrated approach, use of RDP funds for incentive payments to graziers

http://www.medioambiente.jcyl.es/web/jcyl/MedioAmbiente/es/Plantilla100/1132926921318/_/_/_



Problems addressed by this example

Increasing incidence of wild-fires, high prevalence of farming-related wildfires, difficulty of engaging graziers in efforts to stop use of fire as pasture regeneration tool, decline of grazing and pastoral farming, scrub encroachment, loss of pastures, poor valorisation of livestock products. The programme targeted the 42 districts with the highest incidence of wild-fires, and was later extended to more municipalities.

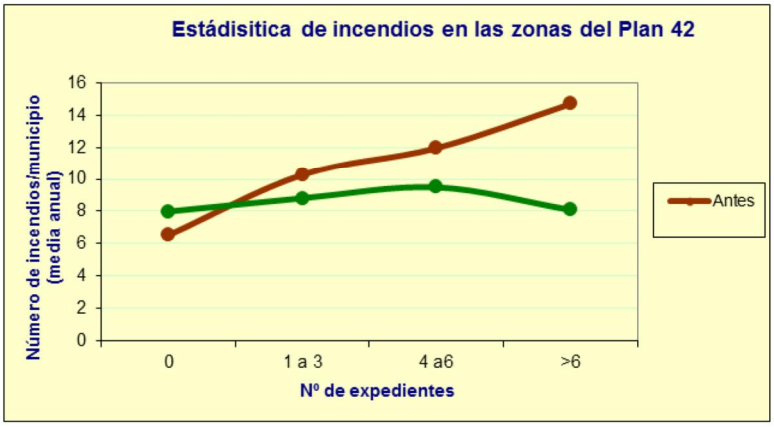
Story in a nutshell

This was an integrated programme for fire prevention, set up and run by the regional environment authority. The programme approach was focused on social aspects of wildfires. A key action was trying to build an alliance with graziers through dialogue and by helping to address their problems, in order to get cooperation from the graziers in reducing fire risks.

The programme worked directly with graziers through local project officers, with the incentive of RDP aids for mechanical scrub clearance and pasture improvement, as a substitute for traditional use of fire as a management tool, and as part of locally-developed pastoral planning. It included marketing initiatives (direct sales, funding for a shop), and organisation of graziers' access to land owned by absentee owners.

What does Plan 42 achieve for HNV farming?

- Impact on 1,300 holdings and 250,000 ha of grazing land.
- Reduced incidence of wildfires in the target districts (see graph).
- Greatly improved level of dialogue and understanding between the authorities and farmers.
- A more positive and optimistic vision of the future.



Achievements

In the period 2002-12, the action targeted 42 administrative districts (later extended to more) and had an impact on 1,300 holdings and 250,000 ha of grazing land.

Plan 42 helped to start innovation and development initiatives related to extensive farming and community-based natural resources.

At least 5 farmers' associations and a federation integrating all of them were promoted by Plan 42.

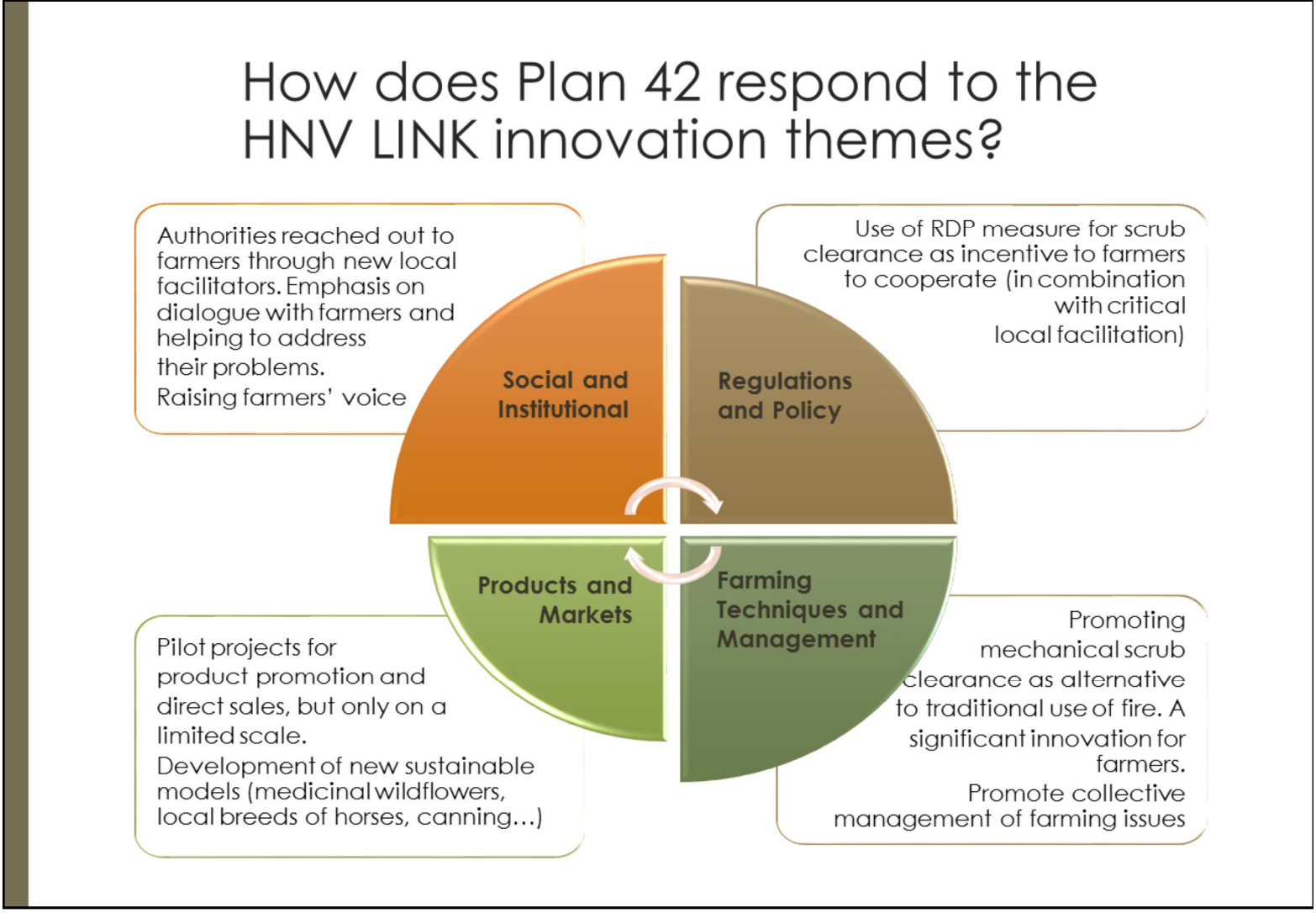
Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact of the programme for HNV farms.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

The programme was not designed to achieve specifically HNV or conservation objectives, but probably had benefits as a result of maintaining extensive grazing systems and reducing scrub encroachment.

The main landscapes targeted belong to Natura 2000 sites, contributing to preserve them from damaging wildfires. Potentially the programme could have been adapted to give it a more explicit HNV focus, for example, with greater involvement of the nature-conservation authorities.



Social and institutional: Developing farmers' associations and building their capacity, promoting social linkages between stakeholders. While using a large set of classic measures for fire prevention - such as firebreaks, infrastructure and preventive silviculture – Plan 42 was focused on the use of social tools as instruments of change. They introduced new approaches to intervene in rural areas, including the proximity between technicians and population, restoring effective links between people and their environment, networking and a long-term focus and on local active agents. The participatory work with local people typified by Plan 42 allowed a wildfire prevention approach that focused on governance, development and sustainability. Those factors were shown to be inseparable from the social context where wildfires spread. As a result of these works a great number of people's proposals were gathered from participatory activities. Participatory works with people in Plan 42 were started by technicians working to mobilize local populations into fire prevention. Coordinators of the programme started to hire a cluster of small companies with experience in mediation and facilitation of participatory processes. The collaborative work between participation professionals and local technicians was successful in terms of social involvement, developing new ideas.

Regulations and policy: The measure for scrub clearance is not innovative in itself, but the way it was integrated with local facilitation and the other social aspects of the project created an innovative synergy.

Products and markets: Other initiatives included developing new markets for horse meat (training local restaurants and butchers on meat preparation, promoting trademarks, communicating their HNV advantages), promoting conversion to organic farming.

Farming techniques and management: Also developing farmers' animal health associations (ADL), developing training with specialists (reproduction, parasitism…); developing participatory plans for scrub clearing and grazing-maintained clear-cuts around villages.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- It emerged from a small group of people in the regional environment administration, championed by the Director General and his advisor. It was set up by this administration, with its own staff and funds
- The strong social focus grew from involvement of individuals with a background in environmental education and public participation.
- Staff living on the ground in the targeted districts created a participatory framework to regain control of land, and rebuild social fabric and relationships among farmers and other stakeholders.
- Collaboration between civil servants, project staff and external consultants, and improving coordination between local and regional authorities, led to agreements on land management.

The key for success was betting on professionals living in the local areas, specifically trained to develop this project, supported by external consultants and inserted in the local networks. The implementation of participatory frameworks allowed farmers and other stakeholders to be directly involved on decision-making. The participation of extensive farmers was a first for these areas, and established new paths of dialogue. The creation of farmers' networks was another great success of the project, farmers started to visit other farmers, share their problems and strategies and plan a new model of representation.

The locally-based action of technicians and professionals and the specifically designed training for them in group dynamics, participatory processes and communication helped to boost the project's outcomes. At the peak there were 8 technical staff living in the targeted communities and 4 consultants developing specific tasks (participatory planning, training, supporting activities).

Workgroups with farmers were pivotal to develop most demonstration and pilot projects, some of the farmers associations created by the project are still running. The use of participatory tools led to a better understanding between technicians and farmers. When they began to meet, graziers scoped a more active role in fire prevention and technicians developed a better understanding of the farmers' situation. An unexpected benefit of Plan 42 was its influence in the organization of extensive livestock farmers. Early in the participatory processes some groups of extensive livestock farmers started to ask for separate meetings and social organization among them emerged.

The support of the regional government was key for the relationships with municipalities, starting new collaboration processes that eventually engaged other actors.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- The coming together of certain people in the "right place at the right time" is a key factor.
- Commitment from the administration is essential, as is coordination among government levels.
- The social approach is a cheap and effective approach to wildfire prevention
- Local population can take back control of their territory, establishing alliances with key stakeholders to maintain its values and services. The role of graziers is central in this scheme
- Extensive farmers and shepherds play a star role in land management and wildfire prevention, as they can intervene in broad sections of land and move among them

The overall lesson of Plan 42 was that social approaches to prevent wildfires are cheaper, more effective and successful than conventional lines of work. The involvement of farmers and stakeholders led directly to reduce the incidence of wildfires. The implementation of participatory strategies, developed collaboratively with local population and stakeholders, can be developed as the main tool for preventing wildfires.

The role of graziers was fundamental in both wildfire prevention and land management. Early diagnostics already defined their main role in the current situation, but also the decline of their activity, improving sustainable livestock extensive farming (making it more profitable, more sustainable and more land-based) produced immediate benefits in wildfire prevention and consequently in HNV conservation

This kind of innovation is highly replicable, as the participatory framework adapts solutions implemented in each territory to their own characteristics. To replicate this kind of solution you need, at least, stability and long-term vision, local people involved from the very beginning, technical capacity on participation and land management and a minimum of resources to develop the main agreements.

The main threat for Plan 42 was always the lack of political vision from the regional government; once the main promoter was separated from the Directorate General, the project started to decline, and eventually ended with the financial crisis.

Another question that hindered the process was the lack of understanding of timing and needs: participatory processes in such abandoned areas, with small populations and very conservative, wary and individualistic farmers take a long time to form and stabilise. The pressure for short term results, the lack of confidence and eventually the government ending its commitment gave the project a bitter end.

Spain – innovation example 2) QueRed association of artisan cheese makers

Location: National network (also part of a European network FACE)

HNV system: Dairy (goats, sheep, cows), farms are mostly grazing systems

Scale of operation: 300 members throughout Spain (200 are producers)

Timespan: Established in 2013

Keys to success: Association directed by small-scale producers with full transparency, independent from government and public funds, active members encouraged by a dynamic director, low members' fees at the beginning.

www.redqueserias.org

QUESERÍAS DE CAMPO Y ARTESANAS
RED ESPAÑOLA

Problems addressed by this example

One of the main problems for HNV Farming is the economical weakness of farms. One way to become more profitable is adding value selling cheeses or meat in short supply chains. But the poorly adapted legal framework (especially the implementation of EU food hygiene rules) is a real constraint for small-scale producers that face expensive requirements that make business unfeasible. This is the problem addressed by QueRed.

Story in a nutshell

QueRed is a national association of artisan cheese producers for the adaptation of rules and bureaucracy to the reality of artisan cheese dairies. The association also organises training for producers, exchanges among producers in a googlegroup, collective participation in cheese festivals and markets, looking for collective contracts for transport and insurance. Besides cheesemakers, QueRed has also an important group of future cheesemakers that find in the association support and help from more experienced producers, and it is also a way to assure the continuity of the association. QueRed is the only association in Spain that represents the interests of small-scale cheese dairies at national level and in 4 years of life has achieved legal reforms that are improving the situation of farmers on the ground.

What does QueRed achieve for HNV farming?

- Specific legal changes in Spain.
- Publication with official approval of several crucial documents on adaptation of rules and bureaucracy to the reality of artisan cheese dairies (see notes).
- Training for producers, exchanges among producers, collective participation in cheese festivals and markets, looking for collective contracts for transport and insurance.
- Support for future cheesemakers.

Achievements

Approval and publication, by the Public Health Ministry, of a document with examples of interpretation of EU food hygiene rules in small-scale cheese dairies. This work was done by QueRed and negotiated with national (Public Health Ministry (Aecosan), Agriculture Ministry (Mapama) and regional competent authorities).
http://www.aecosan.msssi.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/noticias_y_actualizaciones/noticias/2017/aplicacion_higiene_queserias.htm

Guidelines for the improvement of the hygiene package implementation and proposals of exceptions and adaptations for farmhouse and artisan cheese dairies. This work was done in collaboration with Slow Food Italy, Slow Food Macedonia and Ardahan University (Turkey) and the aim is to help EU candidate countries to implement EU Food Hygiene Regulations in a adapted way for small-scale productions. http://www.pmproje.com/upload/icerik/flex.pdf

Approval of the European Guide for Good Hygiene Practices in the production of artisan cheese and dairy products. https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/biosafety_fh_guidance_artisanal-cheese-and-dairy-products.pdf

Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact of QueRed's work for HNV farms, but positive effects can be expected for farms that choose to develop small-scale cheese-making.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

Indirectly, the work of QueRed should help to maintain some individual HNV farms.

How does QueRed respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

Empowering a sector not previously represented, building mutual support and the means to lobby the administration for adapted policies and rules.

QueRed is working directly and successfully to achieve an improvement in rules and policy for small-scale artisan cheese makers, with possible knock-on benefits for other sectors

QueRed promotes awareness of artisan and farm-house cheeses, organises training of future cheese-makers and facilitates learning about product innovation across its network.

QueRed exchanges ideas and experience for innovative solutions to challenges such as small-scale, low-cost, low-energy cheese dairies, mobile production linked to transhumant flocks, etc.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- A brave and risky beginning, starting without funds, and undertaken actions of a high level.
- Independent from government and public funds.
- Association managed and directed by small-scale producers, with complete transparency.
- Active involvement of members, encouraged by a dynamic director.
- Low members' fees at the beginning, to recruit members and show them over time that the association is working well.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- QueRed could be replicated in other countries and also for other kinds of products, not only cheese.
- It is important to have a technical team of a high level for preparing reports and proposals to administrations, showing the problem but also offering the solutions.
- With transparency and good purposes, interesting supporting people approach the association ready to help.

Spain – innovation example 3) Mosaico landscape-scale project for fire prevention

Location: Sierra de Gata and Hurdes, Extremadura

HNV system: Extensive goat grazing, trees crops (e.g. chestnuts)

Scale of operation: 24 municipalities

Timespan: Started in 2015, funding is secured until 2018

Keys to success: The trigger was a massive wild fire in 2015. University academics put together the project and convinced the Regional authorities to support and fund it. Funding is key, but equally the dedication of specific individuals who set up the project and the positive response of the local population and institutions.

http://www.mosaicoextremadura.es/el-proyecto/

Problems addressed by this example

The project addresses the problem of wild fires, by going to the root cause: the gradual abandonment of the traditional mosaic landscape and the farming systems that constitute this landscape. The project provides a support service to help local people to overcome barriers, such as bureaucracy and market limitations, that prevent the continuation of small-scale farming systems.

Story in a nutshell

Multi-actor project aiming to restore productive and fire-resistant mosaic landscapes in a very large area that has been suffering from severe wildfires in recent years. The project is highly participatory, involving the local population. The project supports individuals and communities that wish to start or maintain appropriate farming or forestry activities that will contribute to creating and maintaining a mosaic landscape.

What does Mosaico achieve for HNV farming?

- New social dynamic in the area, with the local population and authorities working together to maintain a mosaic and fire-resistant landscape.
- New forest management associations and restoration plans for the burnt area, incorporating farmland as fire-breaks.
- Collaborative projects with 3 municipalities and with NGOs to undertake planning and restoration.
- More than 100 individual projects in the pipeline, including a pilot project with 8 goat farmers for fire-prevention grazing.

Achievements

To-date, the main achievement is a new and extremely positive and optimistic social dynamic in the area, with the local population and authorities working together with the regional government to address the question of how to maintain a mosaic and fire-resistant landscape. There have been numerous workshops and public meetings to generate ideas and actions. Many individual projects are now in the pipeline.

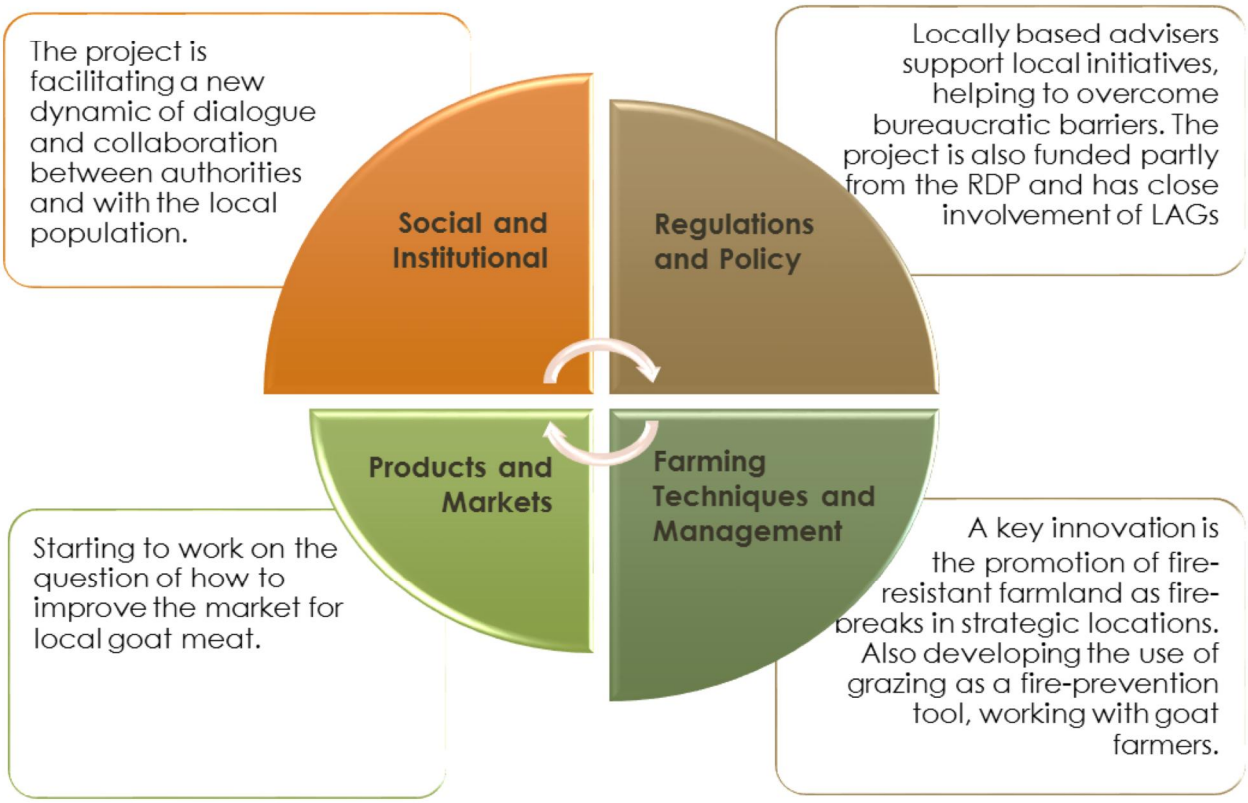
Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact of the programme for HNV farms.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

The project is not designed to achieve specifically HNV or conservation objectives, but undoubtedly has important potential benefits in terms of maintaining extensive grazing systems and traditional tree crops.

How does Mosaico respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?



The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- The catalyst/trigger for the initiative was the disaster of a massive wild fire in 2015.
- Key actors are the University academics who put together the project and convinced the Regional authorities to support and fund it.
- Funding is a key factor, but also the dedication of specific individuals who set up the project, and the positive response of the local population and institutions.
- Different levels of government are showing willingness to work together.

The project is run by the University of Extremadura (Forest Faculty), with funding from the Regional Government (Department of Environment, Rural Development and Agriculture). It is truly a multi-actor project (University; Regional, Provincial and Local authorities; 2 LAGs).

Support for projects from local people is delivered by 4 dedicated project officers at local level, offering a range of technical, administrative and commercial advice.

The main problems have been the very slow pace of the public administration, and the lack of training of the local people with an interest in developing projects (the intention of Mosaic is to harness the ones with most knowledge to train the others).

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- Very good potential for replication in all areas of extensive livestock grazing.
- Requires funding and institutional commitment over the long term.
- Needs dynamic and committed individuals with a clear vision and ability to convince and collaborate with different institutions

Spain – innovation example 4) Finca Casablanca dehesa farm developing a sustainable model

Location: Oliva de Plasencia, Extremadura

HNV system: Extensive beef cattle and native pigs in dehesa. Olives.

Scale of operation: Single farm 400ha

Timespan: Started 20 years ago, developed steadily since then

Keys to success: A private initiative, not supported directly by projects or institutions. The farmer is highly motivated and collaborates with the University of Extremadura and NGOs

http://dehesando.com/

Problems addressed by this example

Unsustainable practices in many dehesas (e.g. overstocking, lack of tree regeneration), lack of economic viability (which also drives the unsustainable intensification).

Story in a nutshell

Dehesa farmer practising low-density grazing system to facilitate tree regeneration, local transhumance, grass-based fattening, own butchery, direct sales of organic beef and pork (including to CSA groups), and rural tourism. Also collaborating as a field site for research on management for tree regeneration and into organoleptic qualities of meat.

What does Casablanca achieve for HNV farming?

- The farm began to operate as an organic system 20 years ago.
- Collaborative work with the University of Extremadura began 10 years ago, including ground-breaking work to develop a practical grazing model that facilitates tree regeneration.
- The farm fattens its own stock from pasture, which is very innovative for the region.
- He also maintains traditional seasonal stock movements (local transhumance).
- He has developed direct sales and his own butchery in the face of numerous bureaucratic barriers.

Achievements

The farm has a philosophy of sustainability (ecological and economic) and is innovative in its management, diversification, processing and marketing, all developed gradually over many years.

Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact of the farming system.

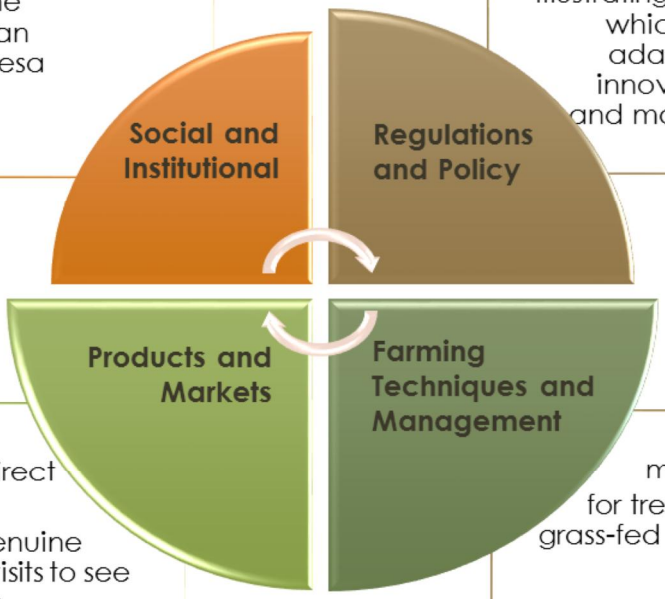
Maintaining or improving HNV values

The farm is in many ways a model of HNV dehesa farming, with a low stocking density, seasonal withdrawal of stock to mountain pastures, both of which prevent any overgrazing of the pastures and facilitate tree regeneration.

How does Casablanca respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

CSA groups are a significant outlet for the farm's produce. The farmer is active in an association of dehesa farmers.

The farmer's experience is potentially very valuable in illustrating numerous areas in which regulations need adaptation to allow for innovation in processing and marketing especially.



Very significant development of direct sales and meat processing. Also genuine agri-tourism, with visits to see the farming system.

Very significant management model for tree regeneration and grass-fed fattening of calves.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- A private initiative, not supported directly by projects or institutions.
- The farmer is highly committed and motivated.
- Collaboration with the University of Extremadura and NGOs is a source of extra motivation
- Major bureaucratic barriers (see below)

The farmer faced repeated administrative barriers to his plans for processing and selling his own meat, e.g. rules for the transport of meat and establishment of a butchery do not contemplate his type of small-scale operation as an adjunct to the farm business. The farmer was obliged to establish a separate business as a butcher. The government campaign to eradicate TB in livestock is causing additional problems for his transhumance and meat sales.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- Potentially very valuable as a demonstration farm, e.g. for more sustainable grazing systems and managed tree regeneration.
- The farm provides a potential model for testing innovative policy measures, such as payments for biodiversity results
- The business is a test case for potential adaptations to food hygiene and animal health regulations.