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PARTNERS



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March 2022



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NEWSLETTER

NEWS

THIRD MANAGEMENT MEETING AND C2 WORKSHOP

20.12.2021



From 14th to 16th of December 2021 took place the **3th Management Meeting and C2 Workshop** in Fundación Monte Mediterraneo, Spain, with the presence of the partners from Cesefer (Spain), Innogestiona (Spain), FMM (Spain), Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen (Germany), ARCHNETWORK (United Kingdom), Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik (Austria) and Asociatia Agrom Ro (Romania). There were also virtually present the partners from Associação de Desenvolvimento Integrado da Rede das Aldeias de Montanha (Portugal), Höhere Bundeslehr- und Forschungsanstalt für Landwirtschaft Raumberg-Gumpenstein (Austria) and Agraren Universitet – Plovdiv (Bulgaria).

We also counted with the participation of experts who provided valuable input to the workshop. The experts were:

- **Cara Cameron** from Lochview Rural Training (Scotland)
- **Irene Treitner** and **Michael Prodingner** from Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik (Austria)

The coordination meeting focused on the presentation of project justification update, presentation of next steps and presentation of deadline from Intellectual Outputs.

After that, the Austrian partner proceeded with five presentations about the “**Education system in Austria**”, “**Climate Change in the Alps**”, “**Large carnivores, opportunities and challenges for pastoralism in the Alps**”, “**presentation of the EU-Project Livestock Protect**” and an experience of “**Shepherding in Switzerland**”.

During the Workshop, work was carried out on the Intellectual Outputs:

- The contents of the IO1 were defined based on the necessities identified in the previous analysis of the shepherd interviews.
- Skills required for the trainer profile were defined (IO2).
- A proposal for the virtual platform (IO3) were presented and different agreements were reached.

The good working atmosphere and the willingness of all the partners, together with an excellent management of the workshop by the host (FMM), allowed us to achieve the expected goals, so we can conclude that the C2 Workshop was a success.

VILLANUEVA DE LA SERENA: SHEEP COOPERATIVE, WOOL PROCESSING PLANT

20/12/2021



During the **C2 Workshop** in Fundación Monte Mediterraneo (Spain), a visit was made to Villanueva de la Serena in order to see a sheep cooperative and a wool processing plant.



Firstly, the FOMENTO OVINO EXTREMEÑO S.A.T. (FOVEX SAT) was visited. Their main activity consists in the **TYPIIFICATION AND HOMOGENIZATION** of the lambs coming from their partners' farms. After collecting them, they carry out a selection process by weight and sex category, and after a fattening period in their facilities, they make them available to EA GROUP SC for sale. With this process they achieve a double objective:

- To offer our customers a uniform and homogeneous final product.
- To guarantee a product that complies with all the guarantees of traceability and food safety.



The second visit were to Comercial Ovinos S.C.L., which aim is the centralizing the collection, storage, classification, washing and combing of its members' wool. Currently, Comercial Ovinos S.C.L. groups more than 1,350,000 head of Merino sheep and more than 2,500 farmers in Extremadura and Andalusia. The average annual production exceeds 3,500,000 kilos of dirty or greasy wool, which represents approximately 30% of the production of merino wool in Spain.



The main activity of Comercial Ovinos S.C.L. is the transformation and commercialization of wool. The production process is controlled by the cooperative, since it offers its members the shearing of the sheep, the collection of the wool at the farm and the packaging of the wool. Once sorted, the wool is marketed as dirty, type-graded, washed or combed.

FOURTH EU4SHEPHERDS MANAGEMENT MEETING

23.02.2022



Last February 22nd we had a new Eu4shepherds meeting. The results of the definition of the contents developed by each partner in each of the modules established in the December workshop in Huelva, Spain, for the Shepherd's Curricula were discussed. With the input of all partners we will prepare an attractive curricula for new and experienced shepherds.

The next workshop in Austria is also scheduled for July.

“ Testimonials...

03.03.2021

Through 9 interviews we get to know a little better the day-to-day work of shepherds in different countries. Here are some of their testimonies.



Kerstin Schmölz. Age: 33. Country: Austria

How long have you been working as a herder? **15 years**

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *My grandfather already had sheep and the mother always raised bottle lambs. I myself came to sheep farming through my interest in herding dogs. I breed and train BorderCollies, train puppies and also the owners with their dogs. I completed my training for this in England.*

In the field of sheep farming, I have completed specialised courses at the Rural Training Institute. Topics here were feeding, claw care and birth preparation (lambing management)

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *I love working with dogs, moving sheep from one meadow to another. I also like the nature of sheep. They are always peaceful, happy and honest. If you make mistakes, they show you. For me as a woman, another advantage is that sheep are not as big as cows. You can't trade cows and pigs if they don't want to.*

What would you like to change about your profession? *I would love to earn fair money for my work. I see opportunities for sheepfarmers in direct marketing.*

In addition, training opportunities would be important, especially herd management in the direction of health, especially for sheep. That would be important for sheep farmers, but also for veterinarians. Especially in the direction of diagnosis, because in case of health problems in your sheep flock you can usually only help

yourself for cost reasons. For example, a lack of copper in my flock was only recognized with the help of a sheep farmer on the internet.



Ferdinand Ringdorfer. Age: 65. Country: Austria

How long have you been working as a herder? *2021 I worked for the first time as a shepherd on the mountain pasture. That was in the period from early May to late September. We were two shepherds and had 658 sheep and 19 goats to look after.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *I studied agriculture and worked as a scientist in sheep and goats for 38 years. After my retirement in March 2021 I wanted to experience the practical work of a shepherd.*

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *The most beautiful thing is to move with the flock of sheep from one pasture to another when the weather is nice. It is also a good feeling when all the sheep are healthy. Being a shepherd on the mountain pasture is also very good for physical fitness.*

What would you like to change about your profession? *Since herding is not my profession, I cannot give an answer to this question. In Austria we have a lot of small sheep farms and the profession of shepherd is not common.*



Sider Sedefchev. Age: 50. Country: Bulgaria

How long have you been working as a herder? *I have a Master's degree from the Academy of Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria, I am an painter by profession, but by the decision of fate 25 years ago we launched an initiative for the preservation of old autohtonomous Bulgarian breeds of farm animals – Karakachan sheep, Kalofer longhaired goat and Karakachn horse, and since then I have been raising my herd of sheep.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *I learned from the experience of working with the herd. From the beginning we started to practice transhumance, as in the summer the herd grazes in high mountain pastures where we spend 3-4 months.*

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *I like that be a shepherd is honest and worthy work. The effort and care that is put in, comes back as benefits. How more effort and work is put in, the more it will*

return from the animals, and as a satisfaction for myself. I am always in the nature, for better or worse - this is an irreplaceable feeling. I like loneliness in the mountains. Maintaining ancient traditions and livelihoods that are as close as possible to the earth and our roots. I see life from birth to death. I like to see the results of the selection in my animals, in my herd.

What would you like to change about your profession? *I would like to change the attitude towards the people engaged in livestock husbandry in Bulgaria. I don't like the attitude of, everything and everyone about people dealing with livestock, I don't like it, I feel like a criminal, I'm trying to make a living by this way.*



Christina de Jong. Age: 43. Country: Germany

How long have you been working as a herder? *I have worked as a shepherd for 15 years.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *No, I completed an apprenticeship as a farmer. I have acquired specific knowledge about sheep myself and have asked other shepherds.*

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *I like being my own boss. I can organise the work myself. I also love working with the animals and being out in nature.*

What would you like to change about your profession? *I would like to see more recognition for our profession from society and politics. Especially with regard to coastal protection.*

Furthermore, I would like to see better support for the threat posed by the wolf.



Natália Lopes. Age: 57. Country: Portugal

How long have you been working as a herder? *Since my parents were also shepherds, I've been my whole life a shepherd and I'm 57 years old.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *No, I have been only in regular school, everything I know I learned from experience and from my family's knowledge. My parents were also shepherds.*

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *The freedom of not having someone giving you orders, I'm doing what I love. For instance, welcoming clients in my cheese production site (which is also my home) is a great experience. Our clients are the best, they give us so much strength and affection. When we receive clients like children or a group of female (in the International Women's Day) is amazing.*

What would you like to change about your profession? *Bureaucracy is one of the worst part of being a shepherd, everything is slow and paper consuming. Another thing is the lack of respect from tourists. Sometimes, in the summer in the mountains, while we are doing transhumance, people come very close to the animals and start taking pictures without asking or even trying to pet the herd! That's very abusive, and sometimes the dogs attack strange people, because that's what they were trained to do. Also the new trend of using drones to film is very bad to shepherds, because it scares the animals and it's very dangerous to control the herd.*



Mohanu Iliuta Catalin . Age: 40. Country: Romania

How long have you been working as a herder? *For over 20 years, I have been a herder and a shepherd and I have about 1000 sheep, which, with the help of the association, I have introduced in a selection and improvement program, obtaining better and better results every year.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *Yes - Milk processing courses, Tyrol, Italy, November 2018*

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *I love this occupation because I inherited it from my father and grandfather, it helps me to ensure a decent living for my family, it is the only job that, although it is hard, I practice it with great pleasure. I like to have beautiful animals, to make milk and sheep meat preparations which are the best. I even have hopes that my daughter will also love animals and have continuity in shepherding.*

What would you like to change about your profession? *I would only like to change the fact that I need to find herders to help me in the care of animals, and the authorities to help us in renting pastures in decent conditions, to provide us with conditions for transhumance, which is vital for the shepherds from the mountain area.*



Cara Cameron. Country: Scotland

How long have you been working as a herder? *I have been working with sheep for 15 years, I started with a small flock and as my knowledge and experience grew the flock size increased.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *Although I have not received training for pastoralism, I do have agricultural qualifications including a degree in agriculture and a masters in organic farming. As part of these academic course's animal husbandry is very much key and almost forms the foundation for the course. Pastoralism is not a key area of training in Scotland or the UK as we tend to manage our livestock in more condensed areas, and we are not necessarily herding them on a daily basis from one area to another. We*

tend to turn our livestock onto hill ground and as our livestock is hefted to that area they now not to wonder away and then we do a gather when the time is right for them to come back to our inbye ground.

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *I love to spend time in the outdoors, working with the sheep and understanding the natural behaviour of them. Being out in a natural environment and seeing the biodiversity of our landscapes. As founder of Lochview rural training centre in the far north Scottish Highlands I love to be able to train and inspire young people to consider a career in working with sheep.* <https://lochviewruraltraining.co.uk/>

What would you like to change about your profession? *More understanding of the importance that sheep and other play in the role of habitats and nature and how they fit into our management of biodiversity. More recognition for the hard work that is involved with the management of sheep.*



Antonio Solís Vázquez. Age: 57. Country: Spain

How long have you been working as a herder? *Since June 2021. Now I am working with a different herd but want to go back to transhumance in summer 2022.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *60 hours theory online. 4 months practical training in the Palentine Mountains (north Spain) with a professional shepherd in 2021*

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *The contact with nature, with the animals and to be with myself.*

What would you like to change about your profession? *Recognition and appreciation of the profession by farmers, authorities, administration and society in general: the image of the job is negative, wrong and nobody really recognizes or appreciates the job of the shepherds.*



Daniel Mora Martínez. Age: 31. Country: Spain

How long have you been working as a herder? *Since November 2021 I am working as a shepherd on a farm in Córdoba province.*

Have you received any training in pastoralism? *I have not visited any of the Shepherd Schools but was trainee in in the project OVINNOVA staying 4 months in the North of Spain with sheep herds from the South of Spain. My professional training: I am technician in forestry and natural environment management.*

What do you like best or most about being a shepherd? *I enjoy working outdoor with fresh air and be in touch with the mountains. I can learn a lot of connections that nature is hiding for us. Although it is hard work, it provides peace and tranquility.*

What would you like to change about your profession? *Labor conditions are very different to the ones in other sectors. Although livestock does not understand of weekends, days off, etc., but for persons working with livestock there should be more facilities more similar to the conditions in other sectors.*

NEWSLETTER 2 · EU4SHEPHERDS PROJECT

March 2022