

# EIP Group Study Tour

Catalonia 2019

Study Tour Guide Concha Salgero



European Forum on  
Nature Conservation  
and Pastoralism



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



- Concha Salgero Transhumance and Nature NGO- Asociación Trashumancia y Naturaleza  
<http://www.pastos.es/>
  - Own 2000 sheep and goat flock
  - Ongoing project on regenerative grazing at moment



1,7 Arrive/Depart Barcelona

2 Planeses Farm (Sant Ferriol, Girona Province)

## Day 1 10:00-14:30 (including lunch)

Stop 1: Planeses Farm (Sant Ferriol, Girona Province)

<https://www.planeses.com/es/>

Pilot farm on the LIFE Project "Polyfarming":

<http://polyfarming.eu/?lang=en>

<http://polyfarming.eu/visita-virtual/?lang=en>



Planeses is an 80-hactare farm located in the region of La Garrotxa, 40 km North of Girona town. The climate is humid Mediterranean, the soils are limestone and the vegetation is dominated by holm oak forest. These holm oaks were traditionally exploited for charcoal production until the 70s. Later they were abandoned and became a dense forest, with sporadic extraction of firewood.

Planeses Agriculture Regenerative Farm started in 2011 with the aim of finding an alternative to abandonment of Mediterranean mountain farms. The project started with 1.6 ha of orchard plus testing different animal management systems with the aim of creating and maintaining pasture of high ecological and productive value. They keep hens and chickens (in 2 ha) and are currently expanding into ducks and rabbits (in 2 ha blocks). Have dairy cows (in 10 ha of new pastures created in the forest).

They follow the principles of Holistic Management (in hens, chickens, ducks and rabbits) and Rational Grazing (cows), with daily movement of the animals and long recovery periods between grazings (60 days on average). Hens, chickens and ducks have complementary feed of fermented fodder produced in the own farm and organic grain of local origin (without the use of soybean feed). Rabbits stay with their mothers for 45 days feeding on milk, and after they are fed with grass. They have their own slaughterhouse and a food processing unit for preserves. They also participate in the project "Visita Granges" (visit farms) ([www.visitagranges.cat](http://www.visitagranges.cat)), which include a visit to the farm and its facilities, an explanation of the project, product tasting and sale.

## Day 1 10:00-14:30 (including lunch)



### Planeses Farm (Sant Ferriol, Girona Province)

- Guide for Study tour: Concha Salgero Transhumance and Natura 2000 NGO
  - Own 2000 sheep and goat flock
  - Project on regenerative grazing at moment and getting positive results on soil health
- Started with abandoned farm 7 years ago-garden vegetables, needed animals
- 5 years ago started regenerative agriculture project. Include animals in farming system
- Main resource on farm in past was Holm Oak, used for charcoal production
- Project dealing with 5 overriding issues: climate change, biodiversity, nutritional quality of food, peak oil and food sovereignty
- Average farm in area is large intensive arable farms 200 ha- most of work carried out in 5 -7 days in year with big machinery-little employment and rural depopulation
- This farm currently has 5 people working on it; Range of products; 1.5 ha vegetable garden; 12,000 chickens a year produced in free range system on 2 ha, putting fruit trees into this area; 100 laying hens, potential to grow to 300; Raise 20 rabbits per week approx. 1000/year. Have market for these receiving €15/rabbit
- 12 simmental cow dual breed milk and meat, plus 40 cattle; Milk once a day all converted into yoghurt and soft cheese; Aim to grow to 24 cows
- Sold to 5 schools in area €2.70/l for yoghurt. 350l produced per week
- 8 ha of pasture for cows in this system + 10 ha of grazed woods pasture/forest at moment. 500 ha of forest
- Got EU funding to start project- LIFE Polyfarming but also in EIP operational groups on improving productivity in Mediterranean pastures

- Marketing products is difficult, how to differentiate products, need to educate and raise awareness among consumers as part of overall marketing programme
- Use regenerative grazing system, area divided in 1 ha plots and animals moved every day in 30-60 day rotation (high growth – low growth). Plots set up with paths and water. Each plot has 7-8 grazings per year. Essentially each plot is rested for 355+ days per year
- Average rainfall = 600mm/annum
- Biochar used in chicken bedding and spread on vegetable plots; Have measured C on plots 1.2% in neighbouring farm now 2.2% on pastures on this farm
- Get very low CAP direct supports approx. €1000/annum.
- LIFE and EIP payments are higher
- All meat and dairy processed on farm-range of cooked products from chicken as well as marinated products; Diverse range of products
- Own forest - use contractor to manage this. Firewood is product; Use charcoal for biochar cut branches from trees in wood pasture area
- Cattle graze forest during periods of low forage availability

## Day 1 15.30-17.00

- Stop 2: ***Ramats de Foc*** (Fireflock) Project
- <https://www.ramatsdefoc.org/en/project/>
- Emma Soy: from Pau Costa Foundation  
<http://www.paucostafoundation.org/ing/index.php>
- Pau: shepherd who participates in Project



The project aims at generating fire resistant woodlands and the continuity of extensive livestock farming (given its double task in food production and landscape conservation). Here is, therefore, the importance of strengthening the links between wildfire management services, farmers and local butchers and restaurants.

It is a multiactor project coordinated by Pau Costa Foundation (<http://www.paucostafoundation.org/ing/index.php>) where fire fighters, shepherds, butchers are also part. They have created a special label for commercializing the products of the shepherd and farmer collaborating.

<https://www.ramatsdefoc.org/en/project/>

## Day 1 15.30-17.00



- Farmers against fire; Goat and sheep farm Catalan breeds
- Fire flocks introduces grazing into strategic areas identified by fire service aimed at reducing fire load
- 17 farmers in Girona area grazing 500ha-equates to approximate 5% of total area of identified strategic areas needing management. Problem not enough shepherds
- Aims to change behaviour of fire plus facilitate movement of fire fighters
- Market meat and dairy products under project label; Labelling and facilitation funded by Catalan government under a fire prevention fund
- Quantity of products that producers can sell under label is proportion to the fire flocks area grazed by farmer; Sold in local butchers and restaurants
- Need to get permission of land owners, organised by project officer and not easy.
- Farmer payments funded by French foundation associated with Danone- €100,000 available per annum. Payments of €140/ha; Estimates of fire avoided are millions of euro per euro spent
- Farmer and owner have agreement and farmer and regional government have contract; Target for grazing is to consume 90% of grassland forage and 65% of woody vegetation (grazeable forage)
- A lot of research work on fire prevention goes into selection of areas by regional fire service.
- Project makes visible service farmers have been providing for centuries in past
- Intense fire period in Spain in recent years, now impacting villages
- Farmers motivation: access to extra land; want to prevent fires;
- Farmers assigned areas close to them for ease of access but also have vested interest in managing this area

- Two inspections per year of areas by regional administration
- Mechanical prevention costs €100 per ha so there is justification to pay
- Don't see possibility of corporate co-funding e.g. insurance companies-something to be explored
- Aim is to improve commercialisation and marketing of products to make viable, need to market lamb better to consumers and consumption falling

## Day 1 17.00-19.00 +evening/night

- Stop 3 Guild of artisane Butchers and “*charcuteros*” of Girona (*Gremi de Carnissers i Xarcuters artesans*)

<http://gremicarn.com/>

- Ferrán Pauné , local expert on pastoralism, founder of Pascuum, a collaborative Platform “ with the objective of improving grazing systems in Catalonia and make it functional in modern society.

<https://www.pascuum.cat/el-projecte-p>



Silvia Aliu, Ricard and Arnau: representatives of the Guild of artesanal Butchers and “*charcuteros*” of Girona (*Gremi de Carnissers i Xarcuters artesans*) who also collaborates in the FireFlocks Project. Ricard has also his own meat processing unit which we will visit.

- Butchers: local community sustainability and animal welfare are guiding principles of what they do
- Slaughter houses closing around area
- Move to larger centralised production in general
- Farmers and butchers market and distribute product.
- Building supplied by village, maintenance and running costs paid fro by farmers and butchers
- In centre of village owned by butchers and farmers as a cooperative
- Building owned by Town-building maintenance by operators

## Day 2 9:30-11:30

Stop 1: Casa Soler de N'hug  
Farm

<https://www.facebook.com/eltaulelldelsoler/>



Family farm located in Prats de Lluçanès, in the province of Barcelona, where they raise cows, pigs, sheep and rabbits. Meat and charcuterie products. They provide fresh milk through a vending machine and are part of the local cooperative. They also sell directly from the farm and they have their own on farm slaughter house and have butcher shop in the village.

## Day 2 9:30-11:30



- Family farm 70ha + 80 ha wood pasture, 50 dairy cows, 800 sheep and 35 breeding sows. 5<sup>th</sup> generation renting the farm. 70 ha cereals, sorghum and teff (Ethiopian grain).
- Dairy cows indoors while milking, outdoors when dry. No calving during hot months June/July
- Pigs indoors. 70% of pork produced in area is for export
- Sheep outdoors once lambs weaned, market for milk lamb
- Sell all produce to small distributors. Not organic but sell under label of proximity (local label). 23 years ago started butcher shop and focus on direct selling.
- Slaughterhouse closed 18 years ago and would have had to travel 45 km to next one, 170km a week on average.
- 2 years ago invested in own slaughter unit on farm. Part of pilot project-fixed lorry unit on farm. Considering mobile slaughter unit in collaboration with other farmers. Local administration takes offal from farm
- 2004 new EU regulations adopted without any adoption to local condition by authorities led to closure of many local slaughter houses.
- Majority of pig production in control of 4 large companies; companies supply pigs which are reared by farmers under contract.
- Milk prices ~30c/l
- Being able to distribute own produce ensures farm is not in company system
- No inorganic fertiliser bought in

## Day 2 11:30-17:00

### Stop 2: **Edu Balsells**

Querol, in the province of Tarragona

<https://www.facebook.com/edu.b.martinez.5>

<https://surtdecasa.cat/centre/entorn/entrevista-edu-balsells>



Sheep and goat Shepherd whose grazing management focuses on three objectives: food production, fire prevention and raising awareness and education. He practices mobile pastoralism and offers his services to different municipalities.

## Day 2 11:30-17:00



- 12 inhabitants in village of Querol. Edu lives approximately 30km away.
- Grazes fire breaks receives €100/ha, transhumance shepherd with ~200 sheep
- Natura 2000 site is pine forest, grazing used to prevent fire. Appears there may be conflict between fire prevention strategies and maintain sites in favourable conservation status but Edu not sure what is favorable conservation status/target for area?
- Pyrenees mountain dogs used to protect sheep
- Moves sheep between Querol, Barcelona and the Pyrenees. Dec-June Barcelona then onto Pyrenees and Querol at end of year.
- Uses electric fences to keep sheep in areas
- Max payments for grazing fire breaks in Querol is €10,000 per annum
- Would previously have cleared vegetation by machine which is main practice in area
- Pasture is of poor quality but goats are not economical so keep local breed of sheep – local merino breed adapted for mountain terrain
- While in Barcelona gets paid for grazing vegetation, grazing around houses and education programme (teenagers and family activities)
- Approximately €800/ha for up to 25 ha
- Generally maintains sheep in 1 ha block for 4 days.
- Pays rent for summer grazing of ski slopes in Pyrenees
- Lambing 15<sup>th</sup> Oct – end November. Sells lamb direct. Major demand for Christmas market ~€10/kg compared to conventional market of €6/kg.
- Receives approx. €3000 per annum from CAP €11/ha coupled payment

Wonderful hospitality from  
our hosts

Thank You

