

# Communal Land in Galicia (Spain)

Pasture management, problems and solutions

**I Networking Event on Common Grazing in Europe.**

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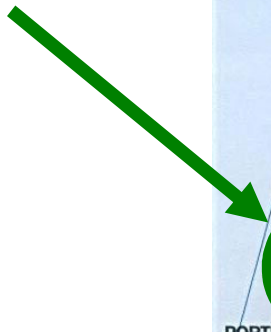
Galician Grass and Forage Society



**Sociedade  
Galega de  
Pastos e  
Forraxes**



Galicia



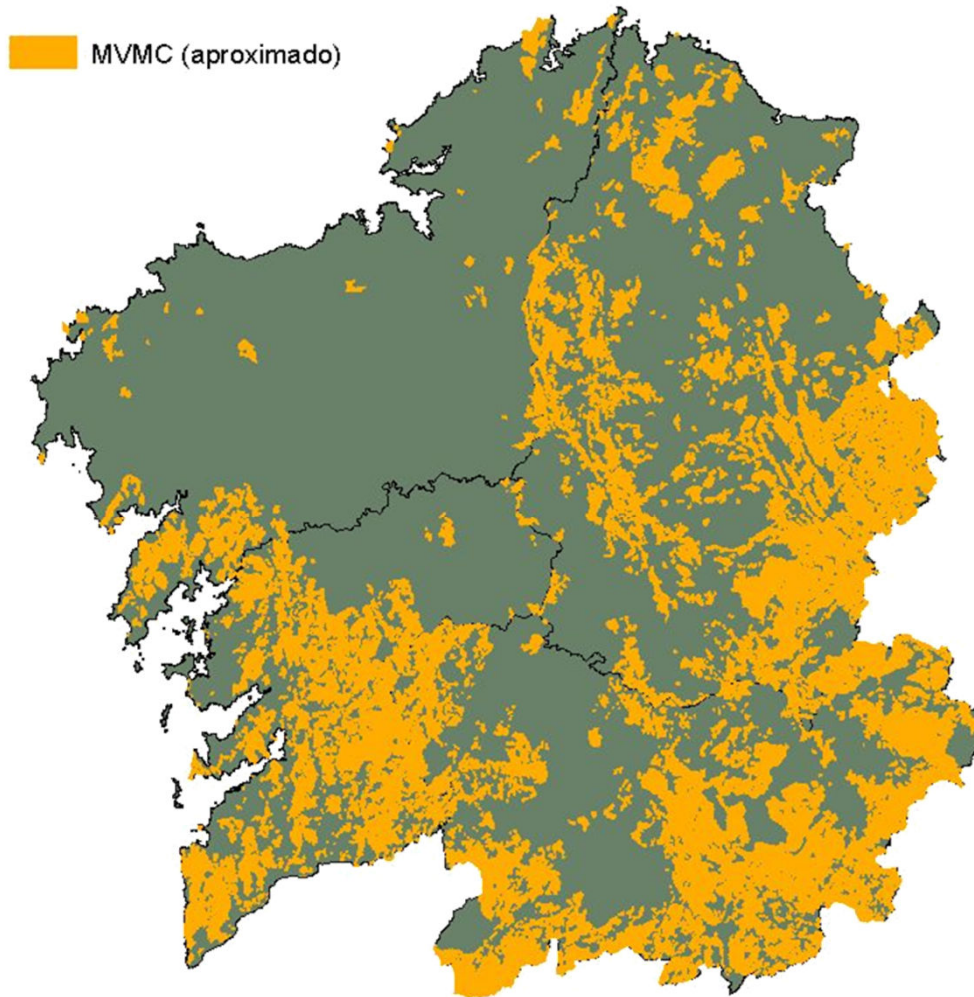
# Scale and importance

- Usually communal lands in Spain are municipal property, except in Galicia.
- In Galicia the most important communal lands are property of local communities (parishes or villages). They are called 'Monte Veciñal en Man Común': MVMC.
- 22% of the country is MVMC.
- The situation in north Portugal is very similar (Baldios).

# Scale and importance

| Province      | MVMC<br>Sup. (ha) | Total Sup.<br>(ha) | %     |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------|
| A Coruña      | 43.512            | 793.086            | 5,5   |
| Lugo          | 209.203           | 980.298            | 21,4  |
| Ourense       | 268.439           | 727.830            | 36,9  |
| Pontevedra    | 130.486           | 446.456            | 29,3  |
|               |                   |                    |       |
| Total Galicia | 651.640           | 2.947.670          | 22,21 |

# Communal land in Galicia



In some mountaneus areas MVMC represent more than 50% of territory.

# Scale and importance



Land uses in MVMC are diverse from one to another, but in general:

- Scrublands are the main cover, in some cases grazed, in some not
- Forest, in many cases pine plantations (coming from previous times)
- Herbaceous grasslands
- Other crops, rarely. Although in the past cultivation of cereals was an important activity in MVMC.

# Extensive grazing



Three different situations of well managed shubbry grasslands in communal land.

# Institutional context

- Communal lands in Galicia are regulated by:
  - Spanish Law 55/1980 (only applied in Galicia)
  - Galician Law 13/1989 of MVMC
  - Regulation for communal lands (MVMC) 260/1992
  - Other:
    - Civil Law of Galicia 2/ 2006
    - Forestry act of Galicia 7/2012

# BUT

- During the 40's MVMC were transferred to the municipalities, like in the rest of Spain. During the 70's a new law returned them to local communities.
- Much of the area was afforested, sometimes by force, with unequal results.
- This process still affects current management and view of MVMC.

# Governance structures

- The holder of the rights is the community itself
- MVMC cannot be taken away by proscription, seized or transferred
- All families living in the village or parish where the MVMC is located are part of the community:
  - If you move, you lose your right.
  - If you come, you get your right (*'houses with fire and smoke'*)
- Governance:
  - Assembly:
    - One representative of each family
    - Must meet at least once a year.
  - Steering Board: a president, vocals, secretary and treasurer. Elected for a period of 4 years or less.
- If the community disappears, the responsibility for the protection and management goes (temporarily) to the Galician Government.

# Main issues being faced

- Demographic decline:
  - Some MVMC without Steering Board
  - Even some without community at all
- Legal uncertainty:
  - processes of declarations as communal land or of reversion still going on
  - boundary conflicts
  - Illegal occupation by private or public actors
- Land use conflicts:
  - Forest vs. Livestock
  - Livestock vs. Environment (much less)
  - Land grabbing?: mining projects, windmill parks, industrial developments...
- Not understood by Common Agricultural Policy
  - Coefficient of eligibility for pastureland (CAP)
  - Implementation of Climate-Environment measures

# CAP: 0 %



- The Coefficient of eligibility for pastureland (CAP) in pastured bushy areas.

# Innovative actions



Program for maintenance and recovery of grazing systems in MVMC (Since 1984)

# Main issues

- At the present time the process for claiming more communal lands is open.
- Occupy much of the surface in the areas of greatest neglect, demographic decline and fires.
- Represent a ideal base for new projects for silvopastoralism activities.
- Also in heavily populated areas (SW Galicia), are again interested in recovering grazing in forested hills.

# Consequences of the lack of grazing



# Grazing, a solution against wild fires



Extensive livestock controls spontaneous vegetation and **reduces fuel!**

# Innovative actions

- Since 1984 several programmes were developed to improve and maintain pastoral systems on communal lands.
- It was a successful process that has enabled improvements in both sides, the management of pastures and working conditions and the economy of the people who live there.
- More than 500 projects have been developed.

# Innovative actions



Three different situations  
of well managed pastures  
under trees in communal  
lands

# Livestock: a strong weapon



Starting grazing in shrubby grassland 1990, and 8 years later,  
after increasing stocking rate.

# Livestock: a strong weapon



# Livestock: a strong weapon



Heather grazed by goats  
April 2006



Heather recovering after grazing  
June 2006

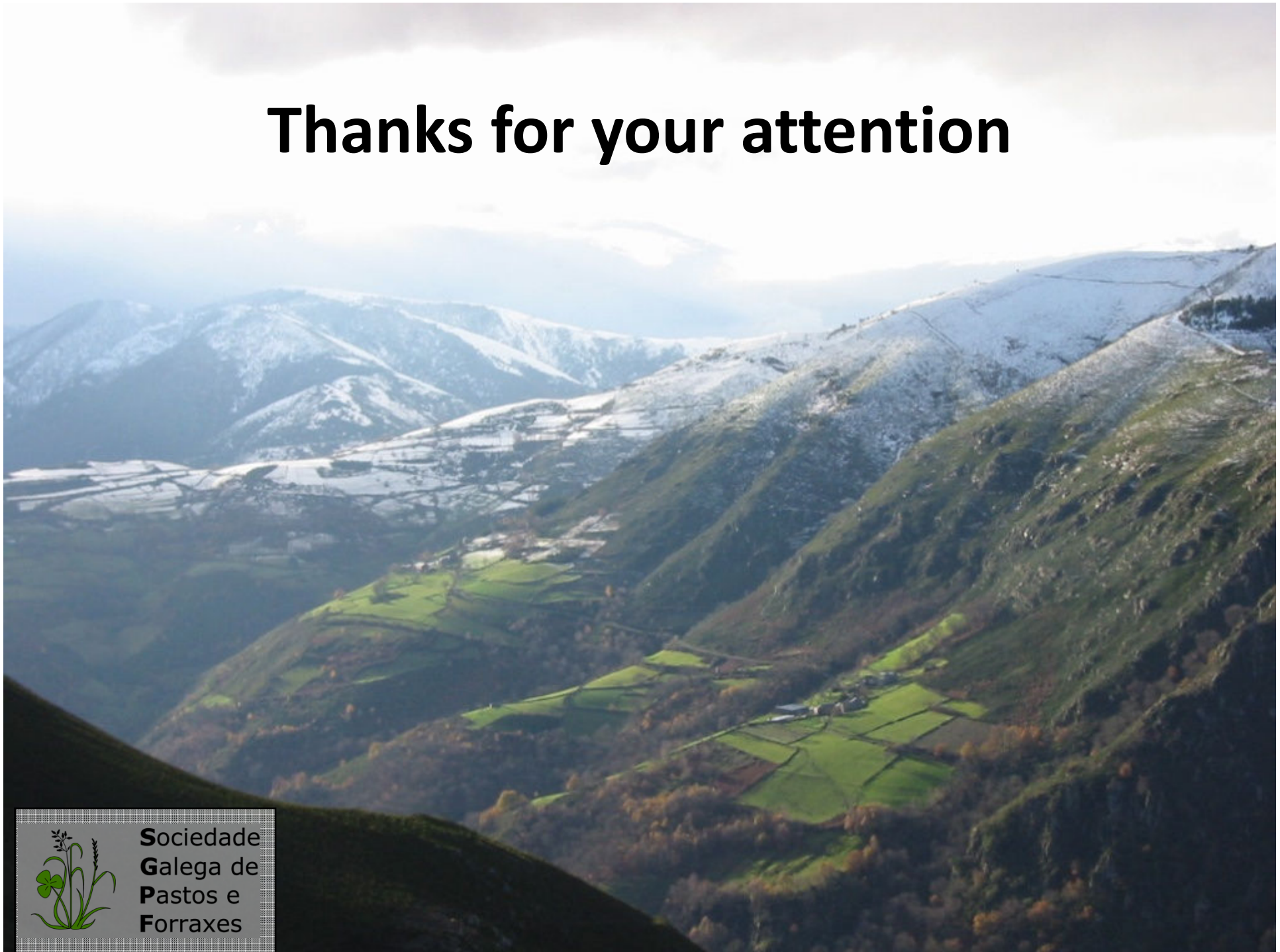


Broom grazed by goats



Approximately 5 years later

# Thanks for your attention



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