



# INTEGRATING GRAZING INTO FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – SITUATION IN SOUTH FRANCE

Focus on (1) contribution to firebreaks and (2) organization of prescribed and/or pastoral burning

Jean-Claude COULET & Birgit POHLE



SERVICE  
**PASTORALISME**  
de la Chambre régionale d'agriculture d'Occitanie



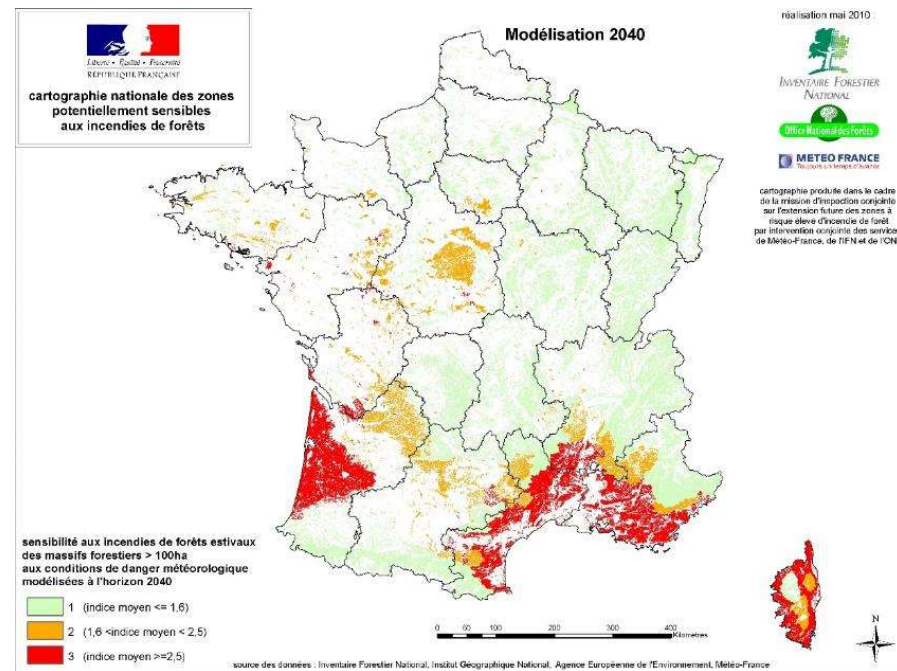
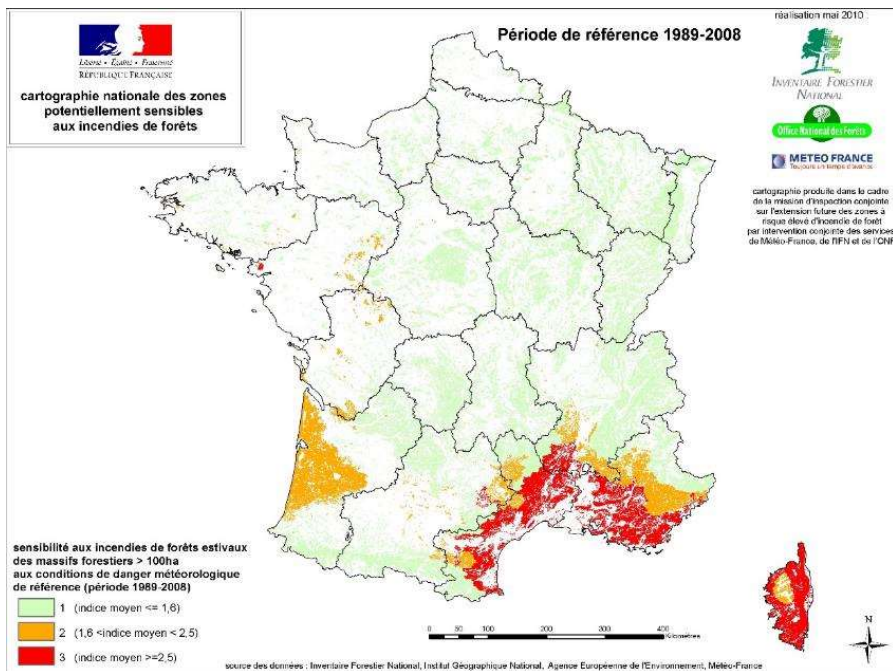
With a little help from :  
Raphaële CHARMETANT (CRA Occitanie)  
Carole DUPERRON (SEPO)



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Ireland 2023

# FIRE RISK IN FRANCE

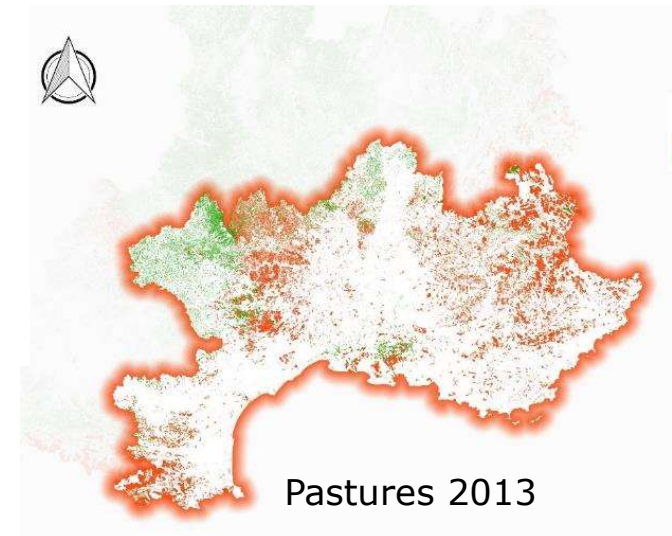
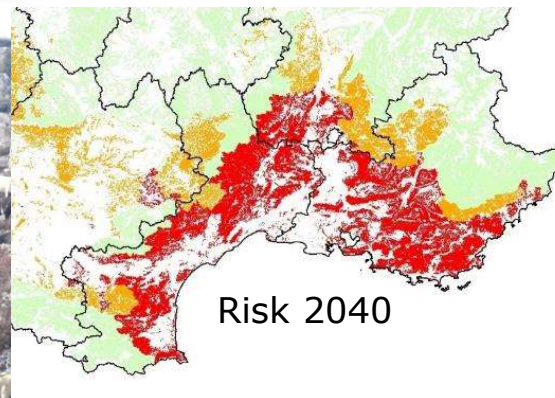
Fire risks are not decreasing; climate change is increasing their scale



# FOCUS ON MEDITERRANEAN AREAS

In the Mediterranean zone (in mainland France), nearly 10,000 sheep, cattle, goat and horse farms graze 1.4 million hectares.

Pastoral livestock farming is very present in natural areas and can contribute to limiting the risk



But contracts are necessary to target maintenance





# **(1) CONTRIBUTION TO MAINTAINANCE OF FIREBREAKS**

Mode than 30 years of partnerships !

[chambres-agriculture.fr](http://chambres-agriculture.fr)

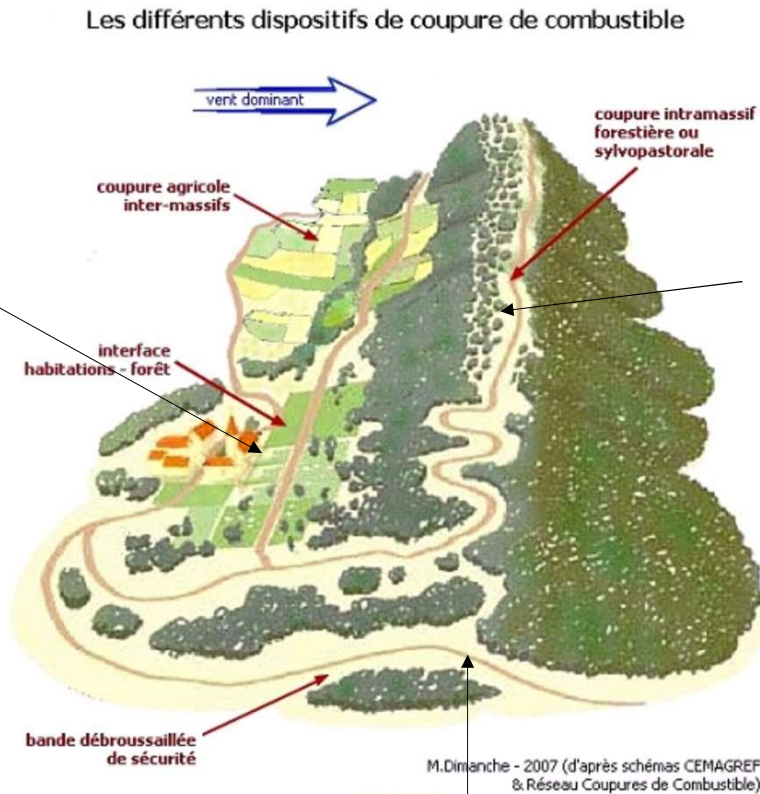


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# What is a firebreak ?



Protect urbanized areas, limit outbreaks (interfaces),



Limit outbreaks, secure access...



Compartmentalize space, facilitate the fight,







L. Roux





## What about the pastoral firebreak ?

- Ensure the **quality of the pastoral resource**
- Ensure a **functional grazing unit**: distance, access, equipment... Importance of the **pastoral reinforcement zone** around the strategic zone
- Ensure a place for the firebreak in the herd's feeding system



# A PARTNERSHIP OF OVER 30 YEARS

Creation of a "fuel cuts" network in the great south of France in 1992, contributions from all stakeholders in pastoralism, forestry, firefighting

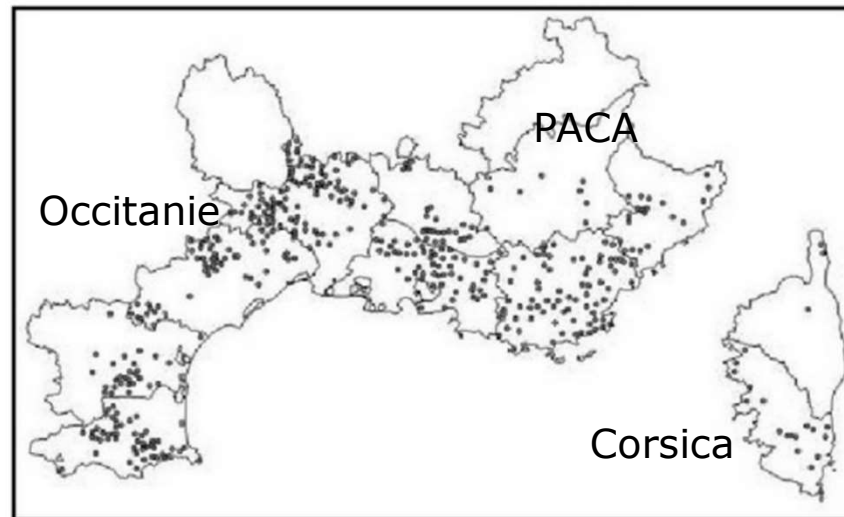
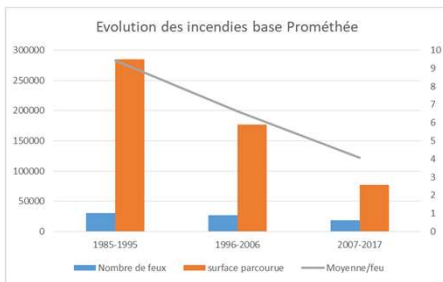
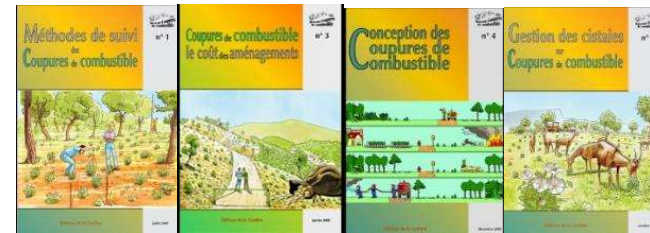


Figure 2. Localisation des coupures de combustible où le pâturage participe à l'entretien D.F.C.I. (Réseau Coupures de Combustible - 2000).



with encouraging results (90s and 2000s)





# IN EACH TERRITORY, PARTNERSHIPS ON FIRE PREVENTION

**Common base of partners in all territories where pastoral prevention measures are developed:**

Administration, local authorities, State

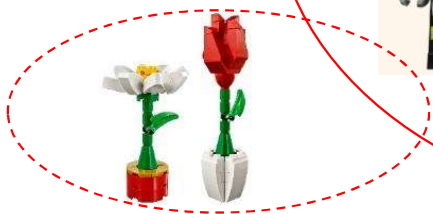


Foresters

Firemen



Farmers and agricultural services



Actors sometimes mobilized but not always (sometimes even divergence of interest): environment (e.g.: natural parks) in certain Spanish regions or in PACA

# WHAT FARMERS HAVE TO DO TO RESPECT THEIR CONTRACTS



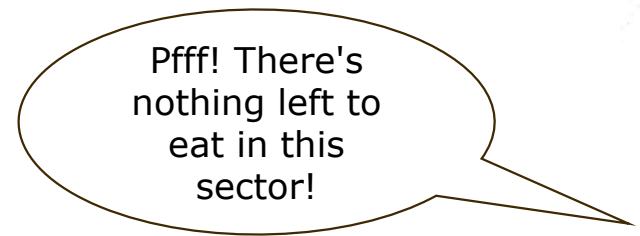
- On the strategic area :
  - Eat all the grass before summer (no dry grass that can burn) and the edible shrubs
  - Clear the shrubs (less than 30% recovery) if necessary and if nobody else does it (depends on regions)



- On the pastoral complementary area : eat the grass and edible shrubs



Hehe, I ate everything before summer!



Pfff! There's nothing left to eat in this sector!



# SOME GENERATIONS OF AECM CONTRACTS



**Agri-environmental contracts (5 years)**  
**Financing: CAP (2<sup>nd</sup> pillar)**  
**The rules change with each reform**



Local operations (first experimentations): local specifications, local control

Regional devices

National system (catalogue of measures) with regional variation

No Fire prevention (officially) anymore

*It was more simple before !*

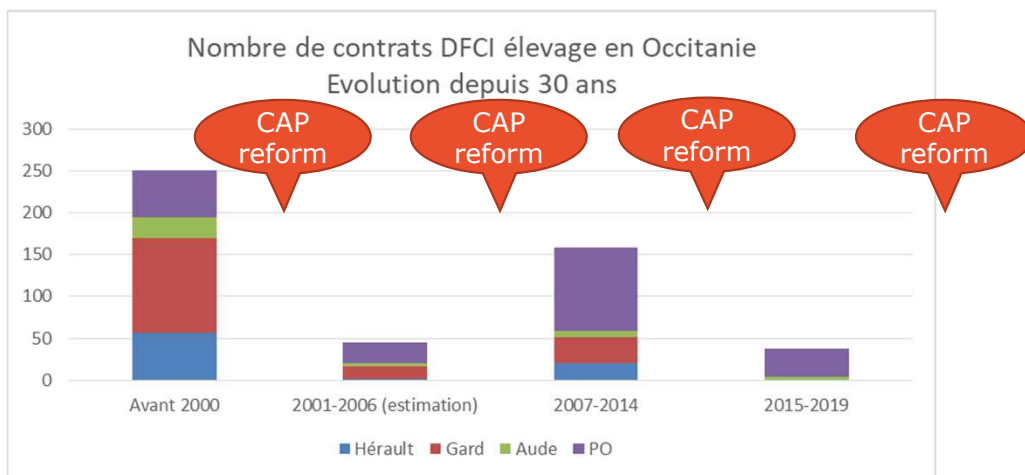


*Less and less specific specifications  
 Less and less appropriate remuneration and controls  
 Increasing complexity*

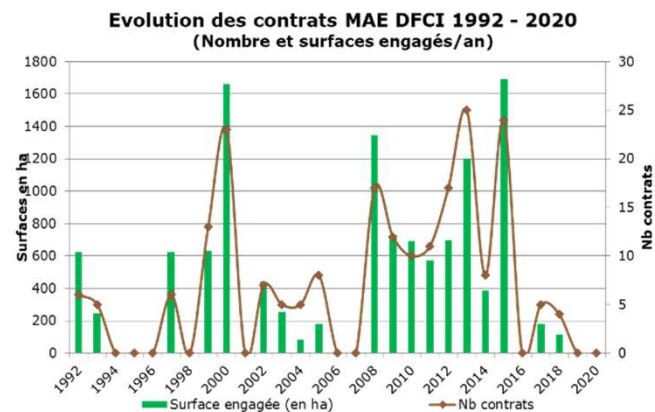
## Weaknesses in coherent long-term funding...

A slowdown since the 2000s: refocusing of state funds on control and surveillance, less targeted and less remunerative agro-environmental measures.

### Occitanie



### Pyrénées-Orientales





## **FARMING AGAINST FIRE : A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN OCCITANIE?**

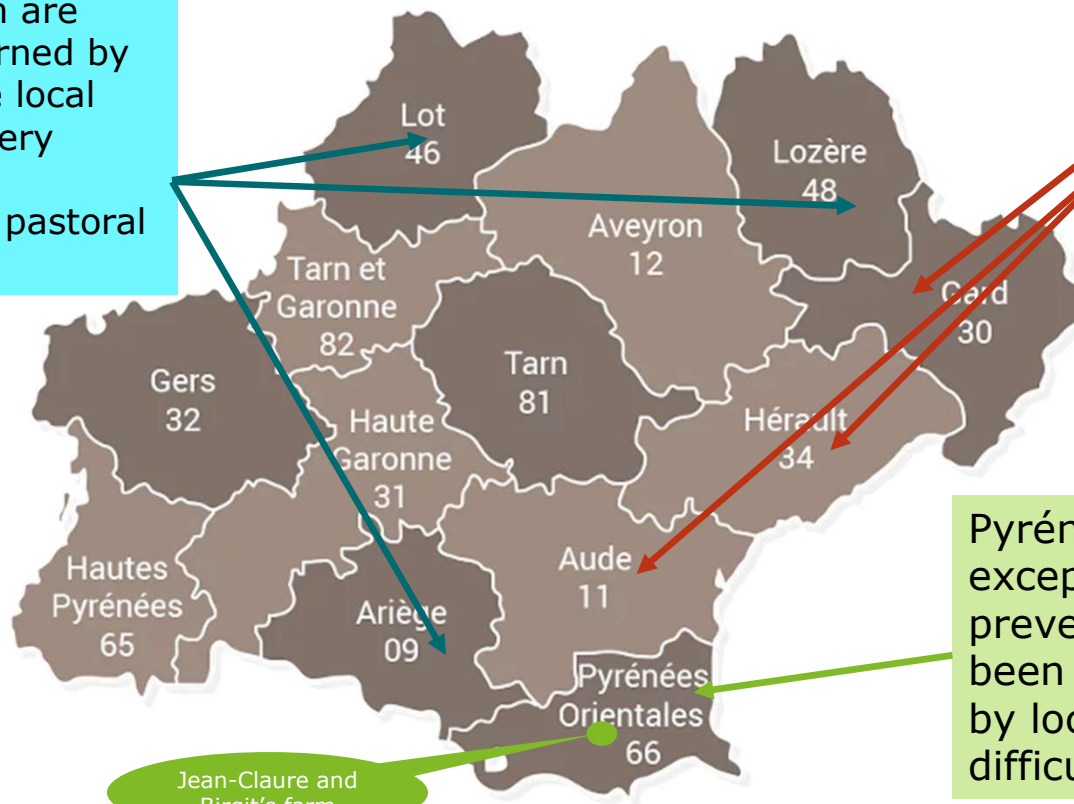
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- In the 90s-2000s: strong dynamics, multidisciplinary working groups in each coastal department
- A gradual unraveling of pastoral firebreaks with centralized AECM systems, less and less targeted and adapted to the fire prevention -> actors who have demobilized in most departments, with a gradual sidelining of agricultural actors in the groups fire prevention of several departments
- The development of mega-fires which calls into question the strategies developed in the 90s.
- 2023 : Fire prevention officially possible again in AECM contracts but with few funds and binding rules (ex : strict zoning, capping of aid...)

# ▶ CONTRASTING SITUATIONS IN OCCITANIE

Ariège, Lot, Lozère: departments which are increasingly concerned by fire risk and where local stakeholders are very interested in the implementation of pastoral firebreaks

Gard, Hérault, Aude: a very strong mobilization in the 90s-2000s but which resisted poorly to the yo-yo effects of Agro-Environmental Measures systems. Restart from scratch in 2023 !



Pyrénées-Orientales (the exception!): a pastoral fire prevention policy which has been continually supported by local actors, despite the difficulties.

Jean-Claire and Birgit's farm







Photos SEPO

# PRESCRIBED AND PASTORAL BURNING

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## Réseau de l'Emploi



Intégré du Feu

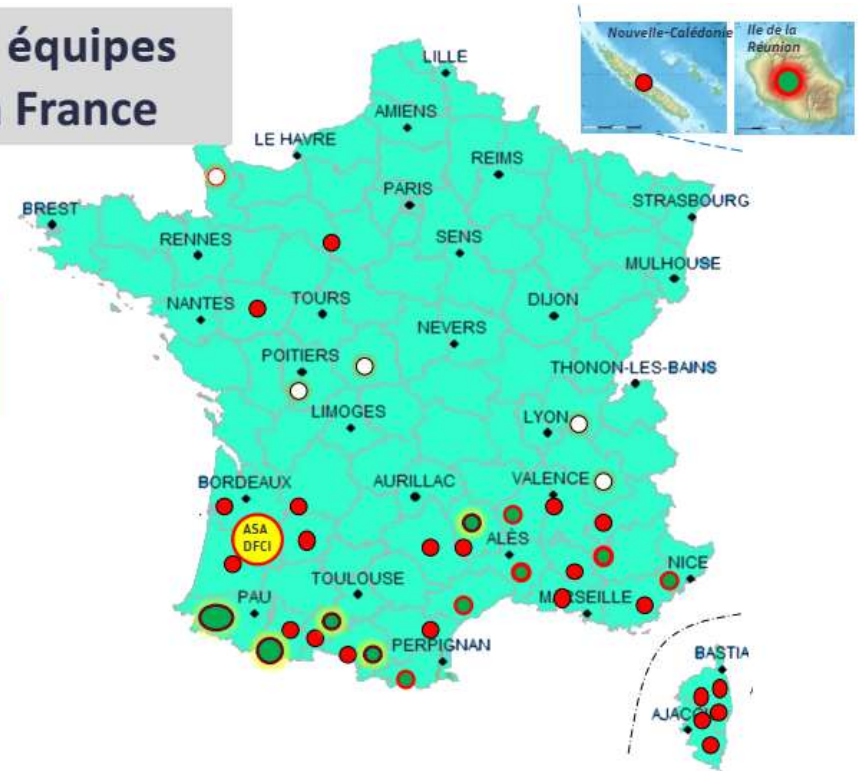


## ➤ A NATIONAL NETWORK

- 600 persons from different organizations

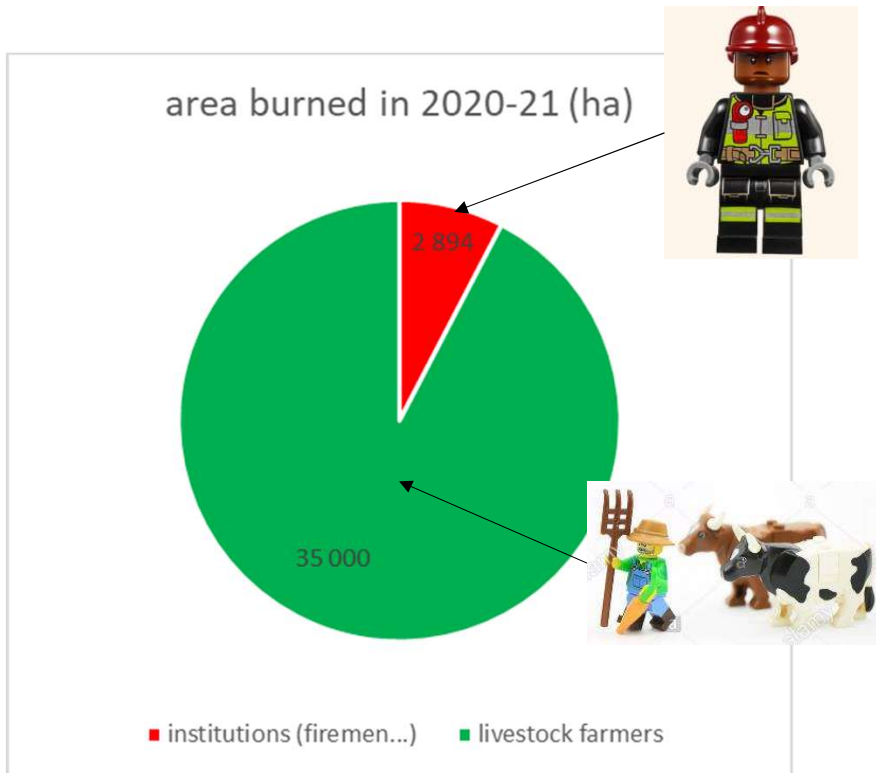
### Localisation des 40 équipes pratiquant l'EIF en France

- 5 équipes de gestionnaires de Réserves Naturelles et/ou de milieux naturelles
- 24 équipes de lutte contre les incendies de forêt (SDIS, FORSAP, UIISC...), spécialisées en brûlages et feux tactiques
- 6 équipes mixtes composées des services pastoraux et des équipes de lutte contre les incendies spécialisées en brûlages et feux tactiques
- 5 services pastoraux qui accompagnent la pratique des brûlages des éleveurs, (CLE)....





# DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS



2 examples in the Pyrénées:

- 66 (Pyrénées Orientales): mainly institutions (firemen) burn. Departmental Commission. Farmers (~300 in the department) can ask for prescribed burning.
- 64 (Pyrénées Atlantiques): mainly farmers (~3 000) burn. There is a local reglementation. In each village, there are CLE « Local Commissions of Ecobuage » where the projects are discussed and programmed with local authorities, administrations, farmers, specialists of flora and fauna, etc.

In France (source : REIF 2022)



# ➤ The challenges of integrated use of fire

- An historical and cultural practice, but... decreased activity
- Brush
- Loss of know-how
- more and more misunderstandings around this practice
  - Increasingly difficult societal acceptance
  - Smoke



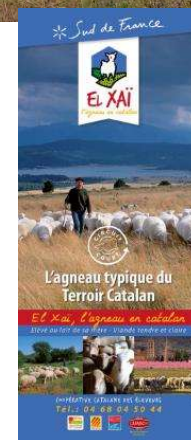


## **(3) Jean-Claude and Birgit's farm**

GAEC dels Serrats

# The GAEC Dels Serrats

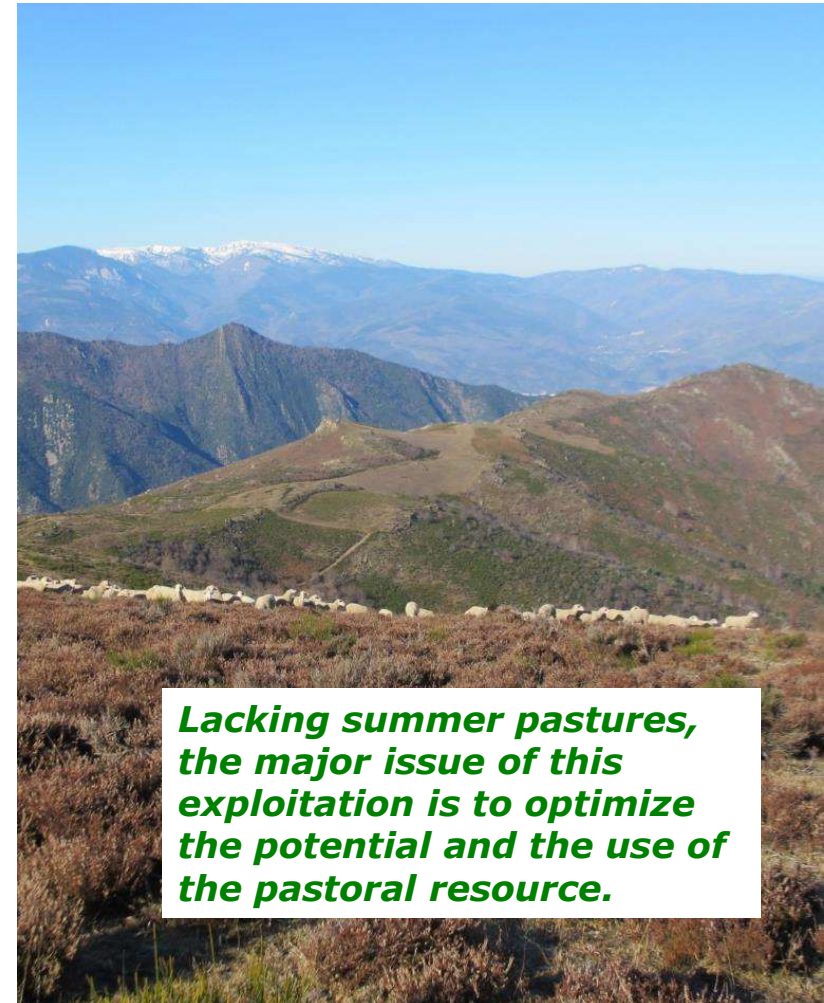
<b><u>Breeding system :</u></b>	Pastoral exploitation in semi-open air, breastfeeding
<b><u>Productions :</u></b>	~50 to 60 beef cattle (Aubrac) ~200 sheep meat (Blanche du Massif Central)
<b><u>Buildings and infrastructures :</u></b>	Semi-open buildings: stabling and sheepfold Fenced Parks (active electric fence)
<b><u>Consumption :</u></b>	Hay, straw and cereals
<b><u>Equipment :</u></b>	Tractors + rotary trimmers
<b><u>Type of products :</u></b>	Local quality brands marketed by the departmental cooperative ("El Xai", "Rosée des Pyrénées")





## The GAEC Dels Serrats

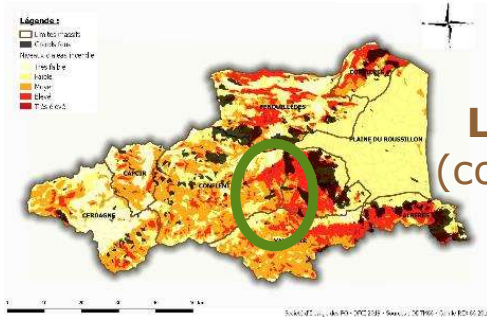
<b><u>Area :</u></b>	~330 ha
<b><u>Type of territory :</u></b>	Meadows : 0% Pastoral careers : 100%, with 30% of grazed wood (green oaks and pubescents, beeches) and 70% of heathland (heaths with sarothamnes and ferns, heather callunes).
<b><u>Summer pastures (estive):</u></b>	None
<b><u>Use of territory :</u></b>	Large parks grazed in rotation and let go-headed
<b><u>Maintenance of territory :</u></b>	Significant pastoral reconquest work since the creation of the farm (1995): creation of fences, tracks, water points, carrying out of numerous openings and maintenance burns + rational grazing <b>No self-production of fodder or cereals</b>



***Lacking summer pastures, the major issue of this exploitation is to optimize the potential and the use of the pastoral resource.***

# The firebreak of Baillestavy & Glorianes (66)

## Localisation :



# The firebreak of Baillestavy & Glorianes (66)

## The AECM contract:

### **AECM contract (2015-2023) :**

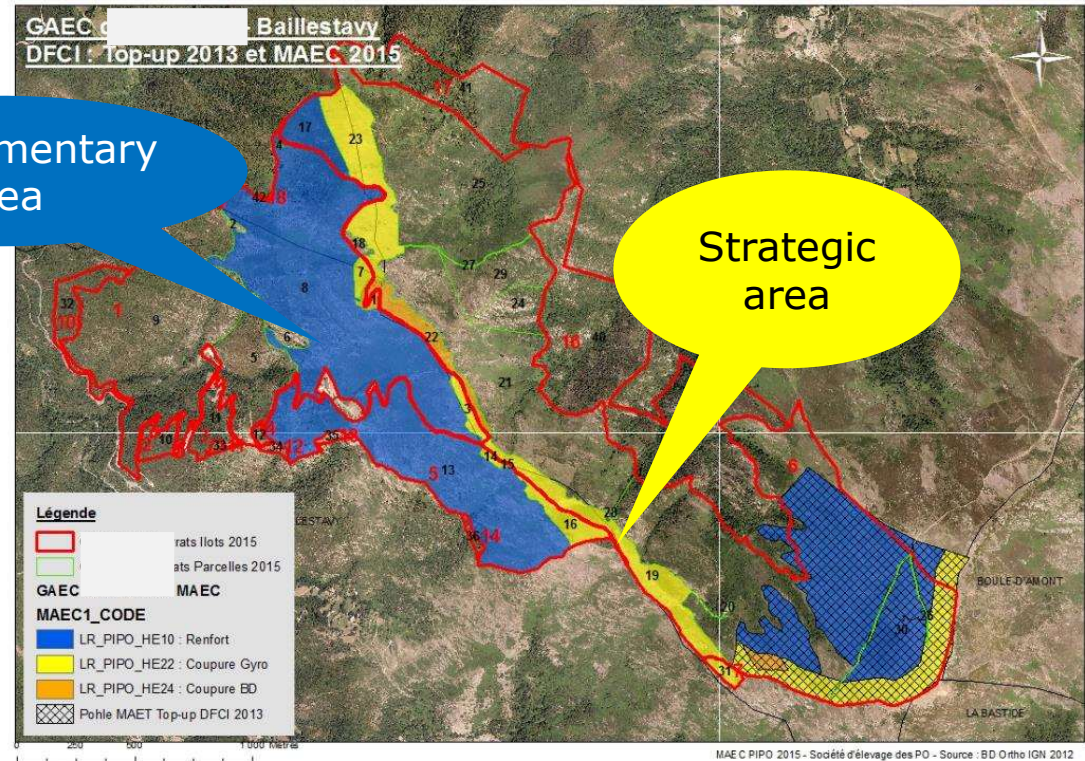
**Fuel break :** 31,46 ha (3 569€/yr), of which 4,41ha by controlled burning

**Reinforcement :** 95,01 ha (7 168€/yr)

**+ Grazing/Pastoral Systems Measure (SHP) :** 319,20 ha (18 606€/yr)

Complementary area

Strategic area







# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !



Please discover our film (7 min) :



<https://youtu.be/201-ShKmxew?feature=shared>