

High Nature Value grasslands:
securing the ecosystem services of European farming post 2013

**“Natural Resource Management and
Common Land:
Examining the Plan-42 project in Northern Spain”**



Álvaro Picardo
Direction General in Natural Environment
Junta de Castilla y León (Spain)

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1.-Introduction to common land in Spain

1.1.-Relevance

Spain maintains **9 o 10 mill. ha.** of common land

20 % of total land
1 / 3 of forest land

In some regions they are even more relevant:

In Castilla y León there are 3 mill.ha.:

1 / 3 of total land

60% of forest land

In La Rioja and Navarra:

they represent ***more than 90% of forest land !***

They play an essential role in the country !

1.-Introduction to common land in Spain

1.2.-Origin

All of them **were established** - *in the present conditions* -

- **between the IX and XV centuries,**
- after the Re-Conquest of the peninsula to the Moors,
- **with the establishment of the present village's system.**

. . . But they probably **root in the Neolithical organization**
established for the use of the land.

In the XIXth century **3 major changes** took place:

1.-**The selling of** considerable ammounts of **public land**,
(between 4,5 and 9 mill.ha)

2.-The establishment of a **unified local administration**,
based in **mucipalities**.

3.-The creation of a **technical administration for forest management**

The effect of changes: The XXth century

In 1950 began what should be considered the
“Spanish Agrarian Revolution”
solving the problems detected by Jovellanos 200 years before.

**In 25 years, our agriculture went through changes
that had taken 250 years in Western Europe**

And **the trigger was** not selling the land, ...
but

the emigration of 5 mill. people (*20% of total population*)
to cities and other countries

Deep socioeconomic changes
have altered our villages . . .



People have changed . . .



Farmers have changed !



Subsistence farming completely disappeared by 1995 . . .

And **new conditions** for pastoralism

and for the management of commons

are needed !

2.-New conditions for pastoralism

For the analysis of grazing I am going to refer specifically to **Castilla y León**, a region of North Interior Spain, with:

10 mill. ha.

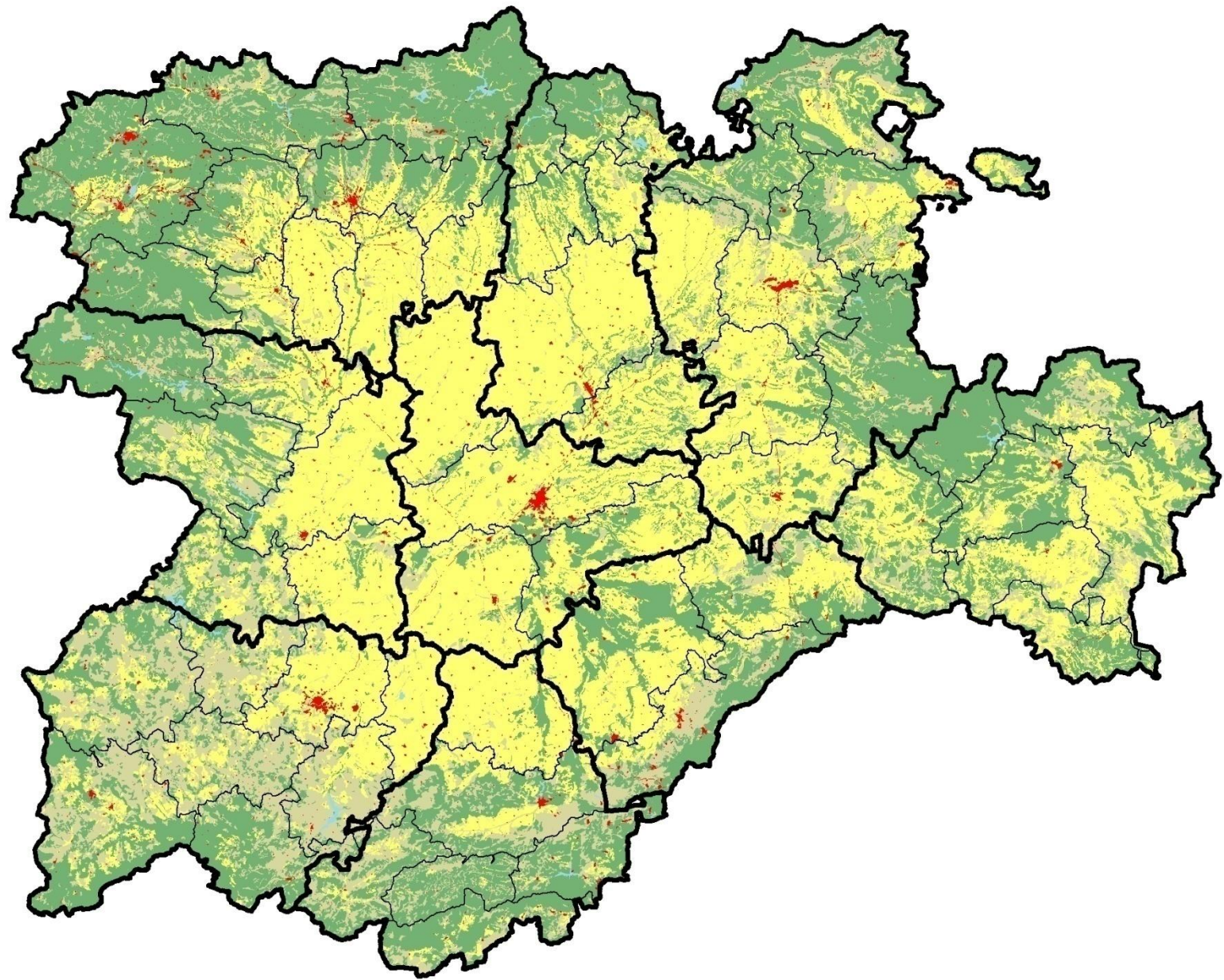
2,5 mill. people

There are around **7.000 villages**, in 2.250 municipalities.

Most of those villages have a “local government”,
really close to the
people !

Each village worked as a **land management unit**, with an
average **size of around 1.000 to 1.500 ha.**

(From 500 ha. in the N. to 5.000 ha. In the S.)





Unlike in
Central and Western Europe
**... 80 % of the forest land
is grazed !!!**



2.-New conditions for pastoralism

Several major changes have occurred:

- 1.-The number of holdings has been dramatically reduced.** Now there are **around 25.000 holdings grazing in CyL**, probably 10 times less than in 1950, when every house in a village was a farming unit, participating in the collective system.
- 2.-The size of the holdings in number of animals has increased probably 10 times (From 5 to 50 LUs)**
- 3.-It's impossible to find shepherds to take care of the animals.**

2.-New conditions for pastoralism

4.-Intensive farming has appeared and **an open and well developed market has been established, falling down prices.**

5.-**Marginal** cultivated land has been abandoned, resulting in more than **1.000.000 ha. of “new forest land”**, mostly in very small plots, creating a serious ownership problem.

6.-Grazing animals have lost control of the natural vegetation, leading to an explosion, that explains both **the sudden increase in forest fires** and the expansion of forests.

7.-**Lots of villages have lost their population and their functionality** as working economical entities.

One big problem ! . . .



. . . **Fire !** . . . *Due to pastoral burning*



3.-Towards a new model of pastoralism

In this scenario, **the Regional Government wanted:**

1.-To maintain pastoralism for biodiversity reasons, for landscape conservation and for the control of forest fires.

2.-At the same time to reduce forest fires, that were primarily set by farmers.

3.-To respect local autonomy and to develop organizational capacities at the local level.

For that, a new culture in pasture management was needed and a pastoral program and a fire prevention program called “Plan-42” were defined.



Plan-42

is a fire prevention program
of social action

in the 42 municipalities that concentrate 50% of fires.

Working at local level

Promoting **close contact withr farmers**



42
PLAN

Plan-42 and the farming sector:

OBJECTIVES

- Cultural change in the use of fire
- Sector improvement
- Profitability and working conditions
- Training and education
- Product quality and marketing
- Social recognition

ACTIONS

- Support and advice
- Cooperatives promotion
- Exchange of experiences
- Organization of sectorial meetings
- Integrate the sector with other sectors, like tourism or mycology



We need to rearrange the grazing land base:

Land owners have to sign **land access contracts** with farmers ...

And that might involve more than 500 people in one village (900 ha)

...



like in Proumbrías,
in Ávila



But in the case of public communal land we think that:

- 1.-The same rearrangement of holdings is needed
- 2.-New land access rights are needed

“From collective grazing to individual farming”



*A public “forest”
in Arnedo village,
in Burgos
has been divided
in 6 holdings
or lots*

And the new arrangement
has to be reflected
on the ground,

reducing the need
for non-existing shepherds
&
making work
more comfortable

...

*The XXI century
will be the
Century of the Enclosures

*in Spain**



Since 2003, Junta de Castilla y León applies the

“Regional Pastoral Program”

1.300 farmers
560 villages
250.000 ha.



Average farm: 200 ha.
75 LU

0,37 LU/ha (=> Extensive grazing)

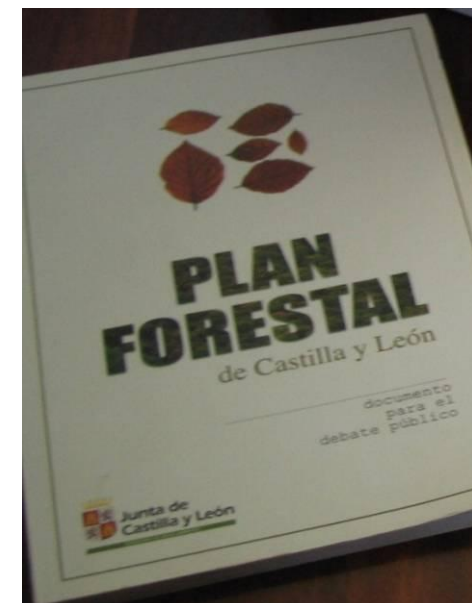
25 €/ha/year

5.000 €/year * 5 years

= 25.000 €/farm

2,9 mill.€/year

23 mill. € in 6 years



The results are
quite positive !



*In the more affected municipalities of the province of
Burgos fire numbers have decreased by 70 %*

and what is more important ... but difficult to evaluate...

farmers mentality is changing considerably !

4.-Conclusions

- 1.-**The local administration will have to adapt** to the new scenario. *They will be the key actors for the management of common land.*
- 2.-**Farmers**, like the rest of professional groups should develop their **professional associations**, in order to negotiate the new rules with local administrators and regulators (agrarian and forest administration).
- 3.-**Land contracts will be a key** piece of the new land management system.
- 4.-**Fences will be another essential piece** of the new collective land management system.
- 5.-**Grazing plans are needed** to define management rules for the land. **Traditional knowledge** shouldn't be lost but incorporated in these plans.

5.-Conclusions

Empowering local actors, . . .



and specific incentive programs . . .



**is the way
to success !**

A landscape photograph showing a mountain valley. The foreground is a grassy slope with a single tree and some yellow flowers. The middle ground shows a valley with green hills and a dirt road. The background features a large mountain range under a cloudy sky.

***Thanks
for your attention !***

Alvaro Picardo
picnieal@jcyl.es