



**PASTINNOVA**



**PRIMA**  
PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

- **PRIMA Call 2021 Section1 Farming Systems**
- **Innovation Action**
- **20 Partners from 12 Mediterranean countries**
- **43 Supporting Organizations**
- **Total requested budget 2.750.000€**
- **Lasting 1 May 2022 – 30 April 2025 (36 months)**

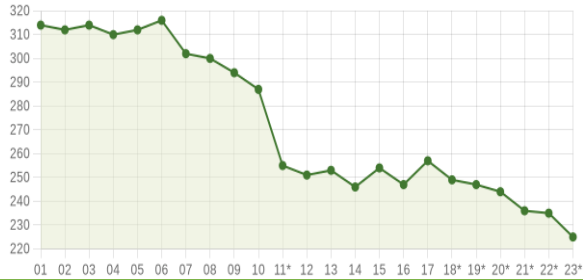
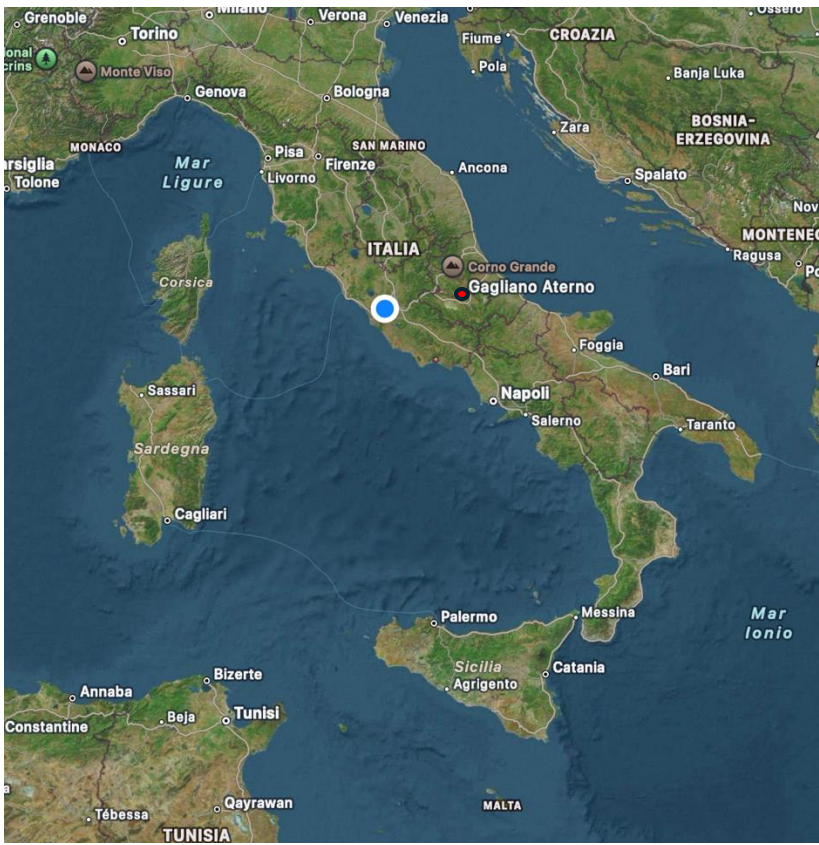


**Innovative models for sustainable future of Mediterranean pastoral systems**



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# Gagliano Aterno: decades of desertification dynamics: population drop-down, cuts in services, shrinking economy, ...



Topped by two earthquakes in the last 18 years



Now retaken by a lively community with the dream-in-progress, to reviving the town and its territory





# PASTINNOVA

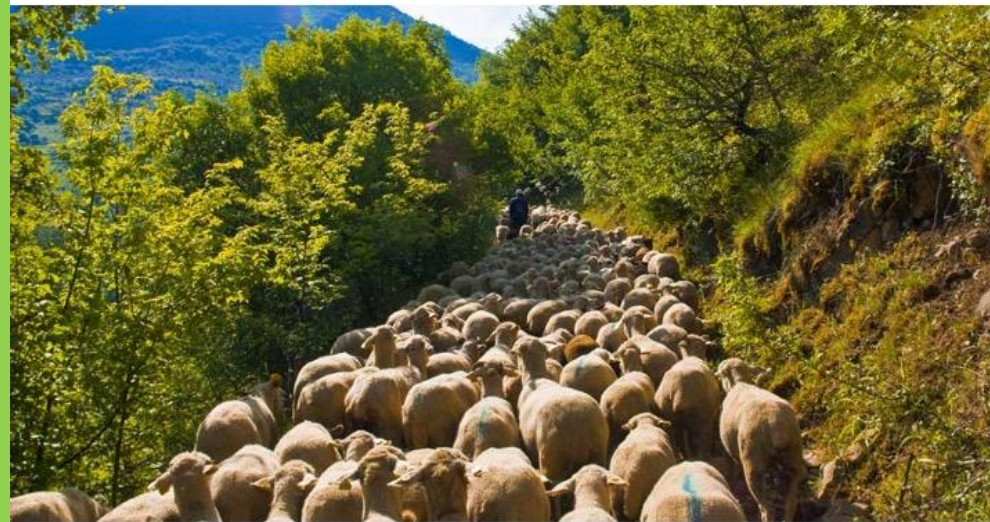
*Innovative models for sustainable future of Mediterranean pastoral systems*  
*Modelli innovativi per un futuro sostenibile dei sistemi pastorali mediterranei*

## **Regional Workshop - Living Lab**

*Condividere esperienze su innovazioni comuni*  
*Sharing experiences on common innovations*

**Gagliano Aterno, Anversa degli Abruzzi, (AQ) 26-27 March 2025**

Organized by:



PASTINNOVA partners



The PRIMA programme is supported under Horizon 2020, the European Union's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

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**Framework: 1 – local policies and measures to attract inhabitants and counter the “human extinction” trend**

**Framework: 2 – animal husbandry and the next CAP future of extensive animal farming and mountain areas**



**Innovation 1 - Pastoral Schools**



**PASTORALISM DOES NOT STAND ALONE**

Rural communities need infrastructure, public services (health care, public transport, schools, ...) housing policy and measures to boost local economy, but also social spaces, festivals and cultural life

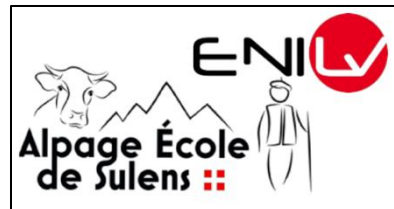
The Green Deal comes with a call to extensive farming, but specific measures to defend those who never quit this kind of systems are yet to be approved, and they depend very much on local policy makers. Strategic lobby is necessary, e.g. to favor access to land, recognize ecosystem services (Natura 2000), acknowledge forest husbandry , among others. To date, hardly any of these is in place

These initiatives are growing in number and gaining attention, in many regions around the lowlands and mountain areas where pastoralism used to be (in some cases still is) fundamental to provide food, to fuel the economy, and to inspire culture and identity. Permanent schools are found in Spain, France, across the Alpine region (CH). In Italy there are a few spot experiences, with a shared curriculum (SNAP) designed by the “Appia Network” that is trying to promote its implementation

The experience of Pastoral Schools from France, Spain and Italy highlight the importance of tuning the courses to the specific features of local ecosystems, territories, and traditional farming systems.

A set of key subjects is found in most courses, yet they are given different weights, depending on the mission and vision of each school. They include the emerging issues and opportunities, such as predators, economic opportunities, the consequences of climate change (water management, fodder production, ...).

In all cases, a fundamental part of the training is entrusted to local pastoralists, as tutors of the field/farm trainings, custodians of deep knowledge, potential employers of students.



There seems to be no great awareness of the “superpower” of pastoralists to deal with unpredictable changes in the environmental and seasonal conditions, that is not explicitly mentioned in the courses.

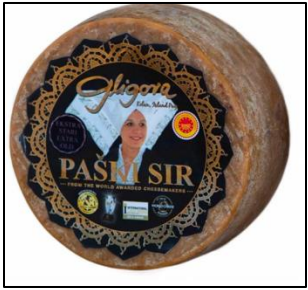


The pastoral schools cannot represent the solution for all the problems of pastoralism. Yet they seem to have an important role to facilitate exchange among stakeholders, nest and test innovation, create awareness among the general public of the importance of pastoralism for food security and biodiversity, and counter the narrative of pastoralism as a “loser” option.



The existing schools could network/twin and help filling the gap in the Western Balkans and Middle East (matching a clearly expressed demand).

## Innovation 2 – Valorization and Labelling of products



From the exchange among PASTINNOVA partners it emerges that in local markets and rural areas, labeling is much less important than direct knowledge of products, areas of origin and single producers. Consumers' choices are guided by personal awareness and beliefs and many times, the labels that should guarantee the same concepts are not even known in the areas of origin of the products.

The importance of Labels (geographic origin, breed, processing, ...) grows with the distance, the purchase power of consumers, their need/possibility to choose among market options. Therefore, the target market should be considered when adopting to specific labels.



Proper labeling can make a difference in the added value of a product, but it should go along with sensitization and promotion. The latest requires specific expertise and it cannot ordinarily be entrusted to single farmers and pastoralists.

Also, labelling is important to protect local breeds and territorial productions from unfair competitors, guaranteeing consumers and local producers, and preventing frauds.

## Innovation 3 - Virtual Fences



Among other innovations, PASTINNOVA partners tested virtual fences, that is, devices placed on the neck of livestock, connected to GPS and GSM systems that “alert” animals with a sound when they approach a virtual fence, and produce an electric shock if they trespass it. The good results achieved make this innovation look promising also for large herds grazing over huge areas, reducing the workload of pastoralists.

## Innovation 4 - Adopt a Sheep, enhancing farm offer, strengthening farmers' capacity

A daily field visit allowed participants to meet the success story of a farm with 1300 sheep and 15 full-time operators. Smaller but similarly diversified and successful/promising experiences were shared, of family farms run by young pastoralists/entrepreneurs.

Over the last 3 decades the farms who did not want just “survive” in rural settings learned how to increase and diversify their activities, without “watering” the core business and its identity. Besides sheep farming, they provide hospitality, restaurant, slaughtering and dairy making (with 38 different cheese types) direct selling on place and online, education, awareness raising.

A constant communication, promotion, and customer relation activity seem to play a very relevant role to build and strengthen these business, while also contributing to spread awareness about pastoralism as a rewarding lifestyle. At the same time, this kind of farms clearly require a growing number of operators, with increasing specialization.



## Round tables:

- Innovations in the pastoral domain: What and How

- Challenges and strategies for the next generation of pastoralist, to increase sustainability, add value, move back to nature

Many lessons learned during the last 3 years were stressed and shared among the participants.

An essential **list of priorities and lessons learned** should include (1/2):

- Sensitizing local decision makers and having them engaged in improving the quality of life in rural settings, and to lobby for better policies at regional and EU level (upon full understanding how the CAP measures are designed, and how they can be discussed, amended and adopted locally!)
- Strengthening local communities, supporting pastoralists within a wealthy rural environment and acknowledging the value of the legacy that they carry from past generations, also as invaluable knowledge for preserving ecosystems and facing uncertainty
- Fueling the development of pastoral schools, their outreach and networking at regional scale (having in mind that they cannot face *all* pastoral problems)
- Being ready to deeply understand what technology and AI can make to empower pastoralists and improve their life, and co-design applications and tools.
- New technologies such as virtual fencing, remote diagnosis of animal wealth through images and the like may take another full generation to be available, yet we must start now watching the governance of these innovations, in order to guarantee the right to access data, information, and the benefit they can generate.



## Round tables:

- Innovations in the pastoral domain: What and How
- Challenges and strategies for the next generation of pastoralist, to increase sustainability, add value, move back to nature

## Priorities and lessons learned (2/2)

- Taking advantage of the potential of AI for research, gathering and processing data to increase the evidence of the multiple benefits of pastoralism considering a wider range of aspects, such as husbandry under forest coverage, food-production efficiency based on scarce resources and unpredictably changing environments (that would otherwise be unproductive...), ecosystem services, fire-risk protection, among others
- Encouraging and accompanying young pastoralists, with specific assistance/training, and facilitating access to land, credit, market, as well as the possibility to exchange with pairs and experts regularly. Understanding, and addressing their push for innovation vs the resistance of elder farmers – especially when nested in family business.
- Testing and adopting new technologies and other forms of management and innovation, to make the workload lighter for pastoralists, diversify the activities, shorten the value chains and increase their income
- Involving pastoralist and livestock farmers regularly in debates and living labs, to empower them. Enabling them to tell priorities and guide innovation, involve them in testing and improving new technologies, co-deciding what solutions to adopt, how, and when (no longer work for them, without them)

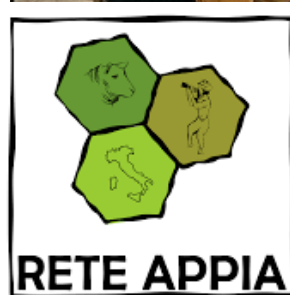
Thanks  
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attention!



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