

Living Lakes Webinars

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Land stewardship, farming and wetland conservation

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Some basic ideas

Sustainable farming, a shared responsibility

Sustainable agriculture produces food but also other goods the whole society benefits from. In most cases the real scenario is a demanding society that does not share the responsibilities.

Supporting farmers

Supporting vs. imposing. Voluntary agreements with farmers and other stakeholders seems to work best. Smart innovation, shared innovation.

Wetlands conservation and human activities in Spain

Even the best preserved ecosystems in Spain have been historically altered by humans. Human activities occur around most of the wetlands and are directly related to their conservation.

Two case studies

Two examples for understanding our farming supporting approach.

Further steps

Some ideas to develop in the future.

Sustainable farming, a shared responsibility

Sustainable agriculture produces something more than food

The EU approach points out 3 benefits derived from agriculture: food security, environmental services and rural development.

Environmental services are of general interest

We all benefit from these environmental benefits, thus it seems obvious that we should promote them. I.e.: according to the EEA-EU, almost half of the wild plants and animal species depend on farming ecosystems, and some of them are in a critical situation.

In general terms, the actions that produce these environmental services rely on a single actor

Farmers are people, like you and me. In most of the cases the slightest support is welcome.



Supporting farmers

What do we mean by supporting farmers?

Building trust. Addressing problems together with mutual interest, in most cases with innovative approaches and tools. We are not a farm advisory service (other professionals do this), we try to face challenging and new issues, we learn together.

Why do we support farmers?

Because we think we all can benefit from this

Farmers can increase competitiveness through a better knowledge of their farms, can save farming inputs, energy, give an added value to their products, better adapt to environmental regulations, etc.

Retailers have a better control on the products' quality purchased, can improve their environmental standards, can transfer the added value of farming products to consumers.

Consumers can buy better and safer products, they can decide which farming model they want to support



Wetland conservation and human activities in Spain

Wild (water) ecosystems in the Mediterranean?

Nearly all the Mediterranean ecosystems have been deeply influenced by humans. Agriculture, industrial development and tourism are the sectors that have contributed the most to modify the wetlands on which we work.

Any benefit from keeping these activities?

Yes, if these activities include sustainable approaches. Rice farms are a very good example around the Albufera lake (Valencia, Eastern Spain), as well as cereal and legume arable lands around shallow steppe lagoons in central Spain... These activities significantly improve the biodiversity value. Do not forget another important benefit: it gives incomes to local people, it is their way of living!... but beware, not any farming necessarily supports biodiversity.

What specific benefits for lakes?

Less N and P leaching, less pesticides leaching, more attractive areas for biodiversity (feeding, breeding, hunting, etc.), etc.

What specific benefits for humans?

Added value to farming products, new business opportunities (tourism, educational resources, etc.), better adaptation to increasing environmental regulations, better preparation further challenges (adaptation to climate change)... keeping the rural areas alive is the key.



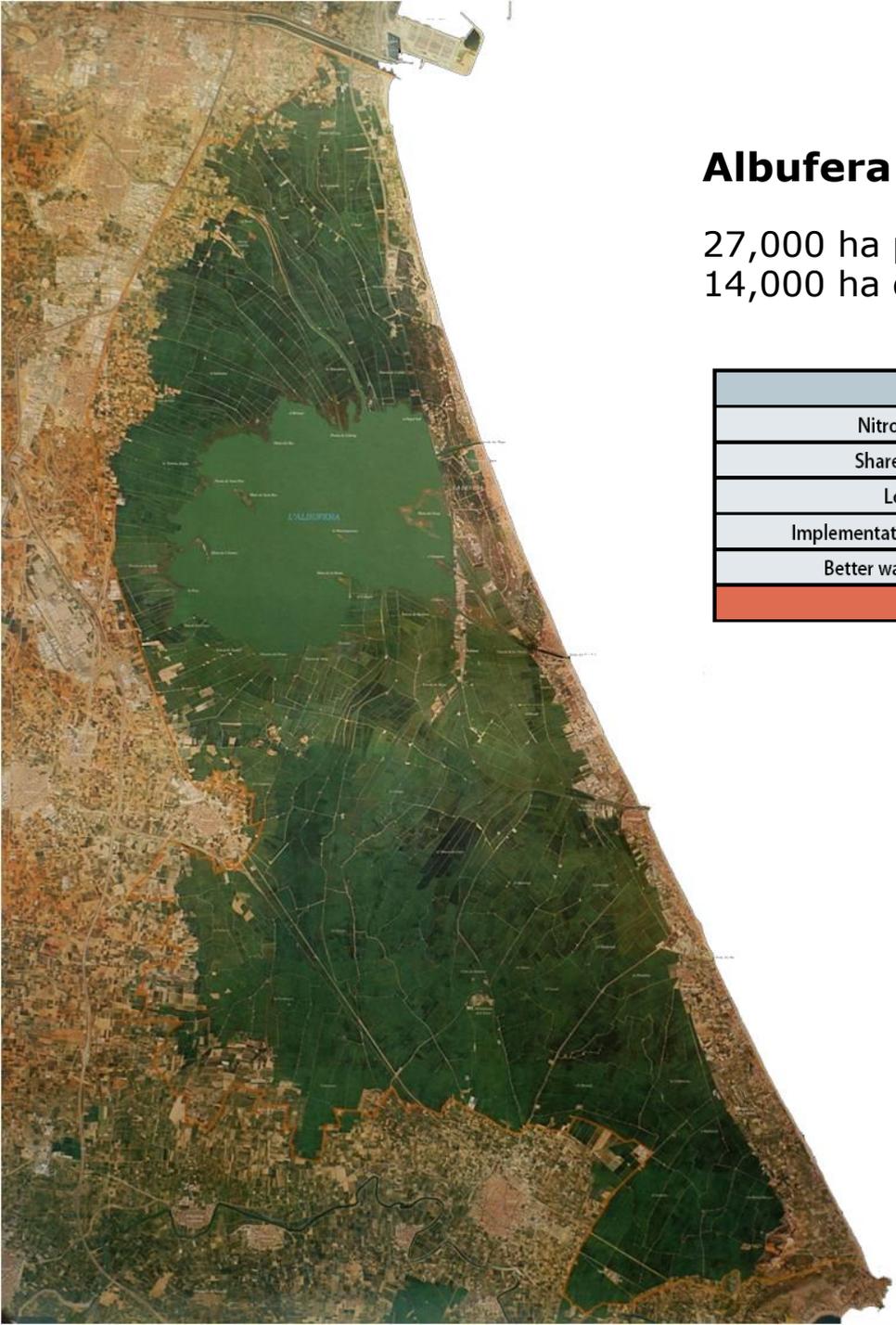
Case studies: AgriClimateChange and EmpleaVerde



Two similar projects coordinated by Fundación Global Nature aiming at:

- Supporting, training and assessing farmers to implement mitigation measures at farm level, but taking into account cross-cut benefits
- Lobbying decision-makers at the EU, national and regional level to regulate mitigation measures that are realistic and with a bottom-up approach
- Helping farmers to address future regulations and to face future environmental challenges





Albufera Natural Park

27,000 ha protected land

14,000 ha devoted to rice cultivation

Measure	Energy reduction	GHG reduction
Nitrogen fertilizer reduction	8%	6%
Shared machinery and works	4%	1%
Lower sowing density	2%	0%
Implementation of ecological infrastructures	2%	0%
Better water and straw management	0%	23%
TOTAL FARM	15%	31%

Case studies: Grain legumes in Tierra de Campos and La Mancha (Central Spain)



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Mitigating emissions, preserving biodiversity and improving competitiveness

FGN owns and manages several steppe wetlands in Central Spain. The shallow lagoons are surrounded by extensive and intensive arable lands. Cereal crops have increased in surface during the last years due to better prices in markets. Additionally mineral fertilizers and pesticides help to intensify the traditional rotation system with grain legumes. On the one hand, legume rotation has been assessed and implies a lower energy consumption as well as lower GHG emissions and a richer biodiversity (measured directly using segetal plants and indirectly steppe birds). This has a significant impact on the shallow lakes conservation (less N and pesticides leaching, more diverse areas for birds feeding/hunting/breeding). On the other hand, farmers have to survive and smart solutions have to be offered to meet sustainable practices and competitiveness.

Voluntary land stewardship agreements are reached in order to implement actions and FGN gives an added value to the products making it possible to achieve both biodiversity conservation and economic profitability.



Reliable and transparent indicators, the best bet for everyone

We aim at developing environmental indicators at farm level (for energy, GHG, water, biodiversity, etc.) that will benefit all the stakeholders. Creating and testing assessment tools and standards for different farming systems and regions is therefore needed.

At the same time we aim at keeping all this integrated approach simple (both in terms of assessment methods and regarding the actions needed at farm level to meet these objectives). We want to support farmers, not to make their life more complicated.

Environmental farming indicators are the best way to know the real contribution of the farming sector to environmental services, thus an opportunity to add value to farming products. We want to work with different ecosystems, to explore sustainable farming practices, etc.

We do believe in bottom-up approaches, thus including all the food chain stakeholders. All the stakeholders will benefit from this smart innovation process. Environmental services from agriculture are produced by someone, let's support them!



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Gracias!



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