

Dream contract factsheet 6: Hautes-Pyrénées (France)



Dream farming-landscape

Objective

The “dream mountain” is made of a multitude of open environments (lawns, high meadows) and closed environments (chestnut forests, fir trees). Grazing contributes to the maintenance of these landscapes, including the most difficult areas. The development of undergrowth and isolated trees which constitute habitats for wild fauna and which contribute to the maintenance of the soil are controlled. The “dream mountain” is then a hotspot of biodiversity, endowed with a common flora and fauna enriched with many native species. The mountain is clean and the water is clear and plentiful.

In these mountains the summer pastures are places of life closely connected with villages. Small and large herds of various domestic species (sheep, cows, goats, horses, donkeys) circulate in dedicated areas, each contributing to maintaining the environment according to a suitable guarding method and according to “his tooth and his digestive system”.

Collective land managers coordinate the work of shepherds and breeders. They allow a great diversity of “local” and “outsider” mountain users (breeders, walkers, athletes or hunters). The sharing of this exceptional space is based on the adoption and promotion of common values and a dialogue based on mutual recognition of everyone's knowledge and experiences.

The “dream mountain” is alive, dynamic. A bearer of traditions, it is also a place of progress and innovation. It is constantly evolving according to the climate and the redistribution of uses. Under these conditions, it contributes to the development of economic activities producing quality products in a healthy environment where the animals are well fed and in good health. It is attractive to breeders and shepherds who find good working conditions there, which facilitates the renewal of farmer generations.

Enablers

- Increased recognition of pastoralism actors as environmental actors
- Positive communication of pastoral activities around the notion of quality products and the well-being of animals
- Regional support for maintaining pastoral activities and shepherds training

Inhibitors

- Climate change and lack of water
- Young people no longer want to settle, and agricultural aid turns out to be unsuitable or harmful to collective dynamics
- Predation will increase to a point that no more breeders will send their animals in the mountain
- The mountain faces a massive tourist influx of people who do not know pastoral uses

Actors involved in defining the dream landscape

Collective land managers, livestock farmers, shepherds, local elected persons, AECM's intermediaries/facilitators, natural protected areas managers, representatives of administration, environmental NGO's.

Method used

Mostly via “traditional” working groups (**Figure 1**). As an introduction, participants were asked to close their eyes, representing themselves walking in the mountain. Each one was then asked to share what he could see, hear, smell, etc.



Figure 1. Dream contracting meeting in Tarbes.

Dream contract

Objective

The environmental objectives cannot be defined in a top-down manner. Their identification will be the result from a shared understanding of pastoral and ecological challenges and a co-construction of the territory's actors (farmers, elected persons, hunters, forest managers, protected areas managers, etc.).

The environmental and climate objectives will therefore be defined locally, for each summer land, by a working group following a shared ecological and pastoral diagnosis.

Measures

Three types of measures are considered 1) maintain current collective management, 2) reopening pastoral land and 3) fine-tuned integrated environmental management with possible experimentation.

Benefits envisaged

- Benefits for farmers: depending on internal distribution rule: partly financial, but mostly non-financial and indirect (e.g., collective funding of guarding, financing collective infrastructures).
- Other beneficiaries: tourists, hunters, forest managers, conservationists, etc.

Application domain

- Farm types: Pastoral farms
- Land use: heterogeneous land use (mosaic-like): grassland, forest, barrens, shrubs.
- Land tenure conditions: Communal land (90%), used by a group of farmers and other land users (hunters, hikers, etc.), managed by elected people (with or without the farmers) or a group of farmers and some under the regulation of the natural protected areas administration.

Contract duration

- 2–7 years depending of the type of commitment, however the programs/schemes must be stabilised over the long term

Actors

- A working group which brings together the different actors of the territory will prioritise the environmental issues, co-edit a management plan leading to the identification of appropriate sustainable management measures, of suitable indicators, and the monitoring indicators. The collective land manager will also update the collective grazing rules and edit a charter to be signed by the breeders.
- Two intermediaries (a pastoral expert and an ecologist one) will be funded to facilitate the contractual process upstream and downstream:
- Upstream: realise the eco-pastoral diagnostic, support the creation of a local working group, advise on the environmental priorities and the measures/practices to be contracted accordingly, co-edit the management plan
- Downstream: facilitate annual meetings for monitoring and adapting the practices, facilitate the reporting to the administration

Access to land

Each year, farmers are expected to sign a charter before sending their animals on collective land.

Payments

The payment will be mainly public and will be based on the coordination costs supported by the collective land manager to maintain the current collective land management, interact with the environmental actors to prioritise environmental challenge, in co-editing and implementing collectively the management plan and monitoring the actions.

Monitoring

To be determined during further workshops.