

Spain – innovation example 4

FINCA CASABLANCA DEHESA FARM DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

<http://dehesando.com/>

- **Location:** Oliva de Plasencia, Extremadura
- **HNV system:** Extensive beef cattle and native pigs in dehesa. Olives.
- **Scale of operation:** Single farm 400ha
- **Timespan:** Started 20 years ago, developed steadily since then
- **Keys to success:** A private initiative, not supported directly by projects or institutions. The farmer is highly motivated and collaborates with the University of Extremadura and NGOs



Figure 1

Problems addressed by this example

Unsustainable practices in many dehesas (e.g. overstocking, lack of tree regeneration), lack of economic viability (which also drives the unsustainable intensification).

Story in a nutshell

Dehesa farmer practising low-density grazing system to facilitate tree regeneration, local transhumance, grass-based fattening, own butchery, direct sales of organic beef and pork (including to CSA groups), and rural tourism. Also collaborating as a field site for research on management for tree regeneration and into organoleptic qualities of meat.

What does Casablanca achieve for HNV farming?

- The farm began to operate as an organic system 20 years ago.
- Collaborative work with the University of Extremadura began 10 years ago, including ground-breaking work to develop a practical grazing model that facilitates tree regeneration.
- The farm fattens its own stock from pasture, which is very innovative for the region.
- He also maintains traditional seasonal stock movements (local transhumance).
- He has developed direct sales and his own butchery in the face of numerous bureaucratic barriers.

Achievements

The farm has a philosophy of sustainability (ecological and economic) and is innovative in its management, diversification, processing and marketing, all developed gradually over many years.

Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact of the farming system.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

The farm is in many ways a model of HNV dehesa farming, with a low stocking density, seasonal withdrawal of stock to mountain pastures, both of which prevent any overgrazing of the pastures and facilitate tree regeneration.



Figure 2



How does Casablanca respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

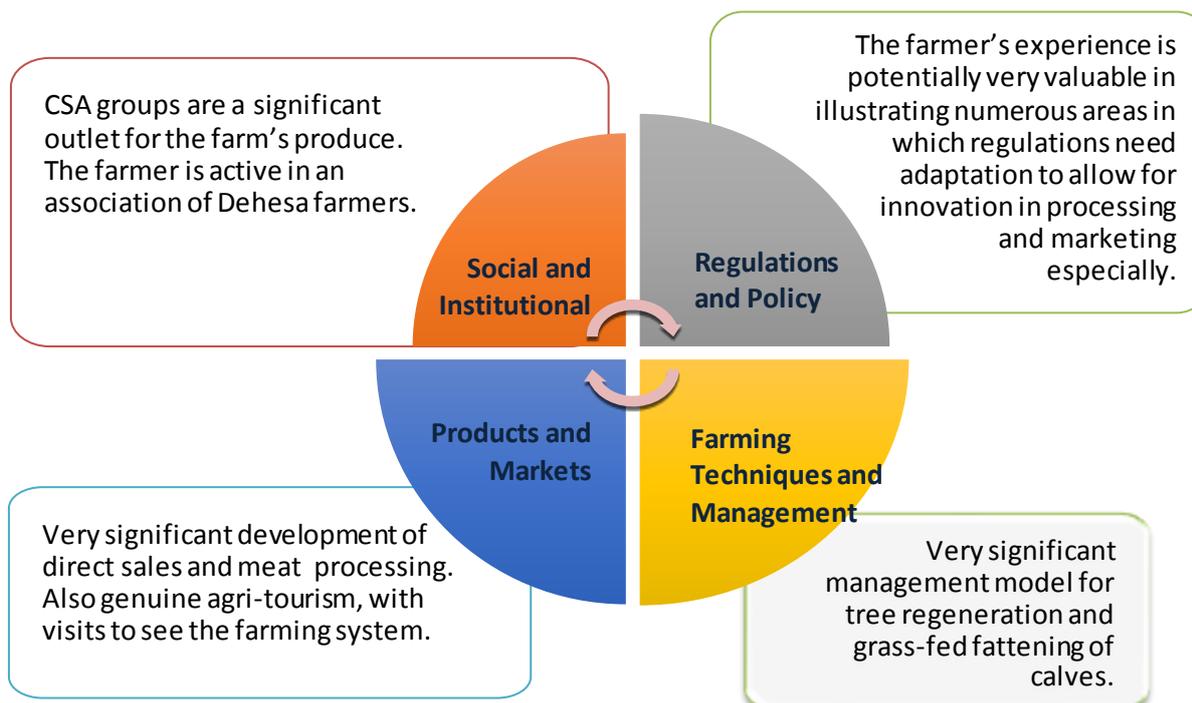


Figure 2 Shows how this innovation addresses the four themes of the HNV-Link innovation framework.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- A private initiative, not supported directly by projects or institutions.
- The farmer is highly committed and motivated.
- Collaboration with the University of Extremadura and NGOs is a source of extra motivation
- Major bureaucratic barriers (see below)

The farmer faced repeated administrative barriers to his plans for processing and selling his own meat, e.g. rules for the transport of meat and establishment of a butchery do not contemplate his type of small-scale operation as an adjunct to the farm business. The farmer was obliged to establish a separate business as a butcher. The government campaign to eradicate TB in livestock is causing additional problems for his transhumance and meat sales.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- Potentially very valuable as a demonstration farm, e.g. for more sustainable grazing and tree regeneration.
- And to test innovative policy measures, such as payments for biodiversity results and adapted food hygiene and animal health regulations.

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