

Actuaciones hacia la mejora de la ganadería extensiva en el valle de Karrantza y entorno (Bizkaia) en relación con los daños y riesgos por predación de lobo.

PROYECTO 30-2016-00017

Actuaciones hacia la mejora de la ganadería extensiva en el valle de Karrantza y entorno (Bizkaia) en relación con los daños y riesgos por predación de lobo

GRUPO OPERATIVO GANADERÍA-LOBO



crn
Consultora
de Recursos Naturales, s.l.

neiker
tecnalia

Lorra
Koop.



Proyecto LOBOGAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Rural:
Europa invierte en las zonas rurales



EUSKO JAURLARITZA
GOBIERNO VASCO

EKONOMIAREN GARAPEN
ETA AZPIEGITURA SAILA
DEPARTAMENTO DE DESARROLLO
ECONÓMICO E INFRAESTRUCTURAS

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Resumen ejecutivo del proyecto LOBOGAN

Coordinación general-Líder del Grupo Operativo (Consultora de Recursos Naturales, S.L.)

Mario Sáenz de Buruaga Tomillo

Equipo técnico

Consultora de Recursos Naturales, S.L.

Miguel Ángel Campos Marcos

Gaizka Calvete Larrauri

Felipe Canales Basabe

Nieves Navamuel Muñoz

Aroa Albareda Martínez

Lorra, S. Koop.

Karlos Mas Bilbao

Jagoba Batiz Lejarza

Neiker-Tecnalia

Roberto Ruiz Santos

Raquel Atxaerandio Galdós

Xabier Díaz de Otálora Aguirre

Iker Bilbao Guerrero

Nerea Mandaluniz Astigarraga

A.D.R. Enkarterrialde

Jesús Gómez Moro

Equipo administrativo

Consultora de Recursos Naturales, S.L.

Begoña Gómez Gil

María Jesús Ascariz Gayoso

Neiker-Tecnalia

Idoia Ziluaga Amigó



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Lorra, S. Koop.

A.D.R. Enkarterrialde

Isabel Gárate Alberdi

Arantza Suso Romero

Elsa Fernández Hoyos

Equipo de campo para la vigilancia mancomunada

Consultora de Recursos Naturales, S.L.

Consultora de Recursos Naturales, S.L.

Álvaro Arnaiz Barreras (2017 y 2018)

Josu Galdós Herboso (2017)

Urko Barreras Edesa (2017)

Julián González Portillo (2018)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, 4 entities, under the "Livestock-Wolf" Operative Group (OG), submitted a proposal within the framework of the funding programme for cooperation according to Regulation (EU) No. 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December, and the Rural Development Program of the Basque Country 2015-2020. In accordance with the provisions of the RDP of the Basque Country 2015-2020, the aids are 80% co-financed with the help of the FEADER community funds and the remaining 20% by the Basque Country Regional Government.

The initiative aims to establish preventive mechanisms to reduce the vulnerability of extensive livestock to wolf predation, seeking for a better cohabitation between livestock and this species.

The area of study is Karrantza valley (Vizcaya) and surroundings which includes 2 Natura 2000 Network sites where there have been several attacks of wolves on cattle in recent years: SAC Ordunte (ES2130002) and SAC Armañón (ES2130001)/Armañón Natural Park. The area code is ES213, according to the common nomenclature of territorial units of statistics (NUTS).

The working lines, some of them are novel in the study area, were:

- a) Joint and professional surveillance of extensive livestock.
- b) Protect the livestock, mainly cattle, with livestock guarding dogs (LGD).
- c) Test of locating devices of cattle and LGD.
- d) Analysis of the technical and budgetary possibilities of relating the presence of wolves with extensive livestock farming in the food products marketed within the area, suggesting when



applicable, the basis of a system in which the wolf presence could suppose an added value to the farms that graze in these places.

The project began its field execution in February 2017 and ended in December 2018.

17 extensive livestock farms have been involved in the project.

It has counted on the active participation of 17 extensive livestock farms.

2,349 hours of work have been invested in 291 days in relation to joint surveillance. It was carried out in two phases:

a) Phase I: 4 people worked for 26 weeks between September and October 2017.

b) Phase II: 2 people worked for 38 weeks between March and August 2018.

Regarding the LGD (mastiff breed), 10 puppies of high quality, 6 males and 4 females were given to 9 farms. All the dogs arrived at the farms already impregnated with the specific type of targeted livestock (6 LGD were assigned to cattle and 4 to ovine and caprine livestock). As a previous step, LGD were submitted to veterinary review. LGD had to meet the official identification requirements (microchip implant and registration in the General Register of Animal Identification of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country); in addition, they have to be covered by a Civil Liability insurance with a minimum coverage of 150,000 € / claim. All the costs generated by the puppies until the moment of their delivery to the farms, was payed by the project. The OG carried out a continuous follow-up of the LGD. There were 40% casualties of the animals delivered (2 males and 2 females), while two births occurred. The degree of satisfaction of the recipient farms with the mastiffs was described as medium-high, although the youth of the dogs did not allow them to develop all their potential work.

In relation to GPS equipment for locating livestock, 14 farms in 2017 and 27 in 2018 were provided with a total of 20 equipments. In the first year, the devices proved not very effective, as signal coverage failed. In 2018, the system was changed (the devices used 2G technology), and the degree of coverage improved significantly (96.3% of the equipment worked correctly). The degree of satisfaction of the farms with the tested equipment was very high. It was also useful for the clarification of some incidents that arose with some project LGD.



LOBOGAN also designed a payment program for agri-environmental services for herds that commit themselves to the management of the territory by grazing in areas susceptible to predation by wolves. It was elaborated from a detailed analysis on the possibilities of supporting the farms for maintenance of grazing activities in areas with wolves, aimed to contribute to the sustainability of farms based on the management of the territory, reducing the social conflict generated by the incidents of predation, and facilitate cohabitation with extensive livestock and an emblematic species of the Iberian fauna. The aim is to contribute to the preservation of pastoral habitats and high-value species for the conservation of biodiversity, as well as to avoid grassland degradation.

The LOBOGAN project was completed with various educational activities to both the farmers and the joint surveillance staff. Also, the project was circulated in different forums, both scientific (XIII SECEM Congress, EAAP 69th Annual Meeting and International Congress Management and Conservation of the Wolf in North America and Europe), as in the press and television. Other forms of dissemination of the initiative have been through the Internet (hosting information on the website of the project leader), as well as the EIP AGRI Network on productivity and keeping the Department of Sustainability and Natural Environment of the Provincial Council of Vizcaya and Ararteko (Ombudsman of the Basque Country) informed promptly.

