



**CIPRA**  
LIVING IN  
THE ALPS

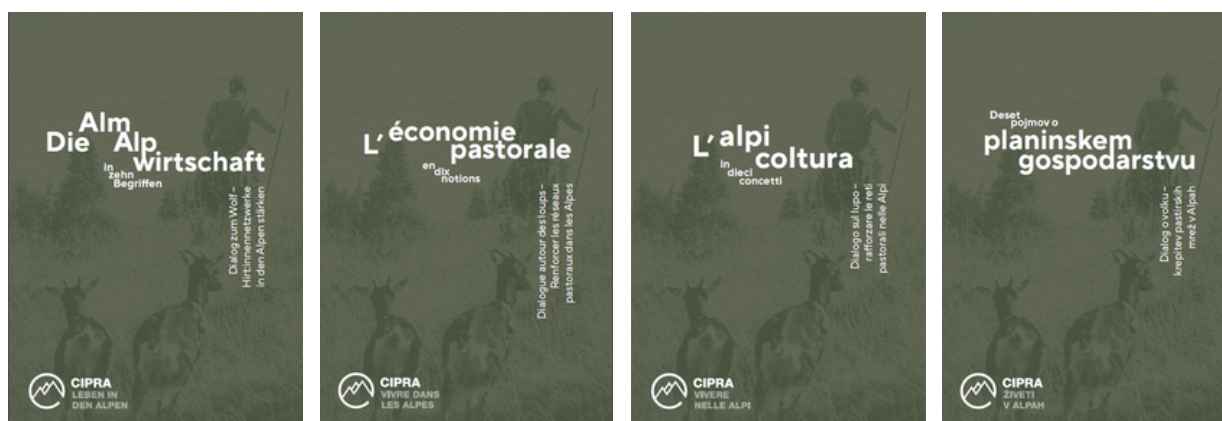
# Pastoralism schools

Dialogues on wolves –  
Strengthening shepherds’  
networks in the Alps

# Pastoralism across the Alpine Arch

## in ten key concepts

When shepherds, farmers and all the mountain farming experts meet, they often talk about the same things: the alp, the fencing, the cheese production and the life in the mountains. But be careful, very often these exact same terms are very different in their content, depending on the language, regional cultural characteristics and the sometimes quite different conditions of the respective mountain world. In order to not just talk at cross purposes but to actually understand each other better, CIPRA has created this brochure. Four alpine farming experts explain 10 terms. As each language version contains all four explanations, this brochure serves as a kind of indispensable, unique vade mecum for cross-border dialogue.



[https://www.cipra.org/en/publications/10-key-concepts-of-the-pastoral-economy?set\\_language=en](https://www.cipra.org/en/publications/10-key-concepts-of-the-pastoral-economy?set_language=en)

The International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, CIPRA, is a non-governmental umbrella organisation with national representations in seven Alpine countries, bringing together over 100 associations and organisations. It promotes sustainable development in the Alps, in particular the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, as well as regional diversity, and proposes transnational solutions to problems encountered in the Alpine region.



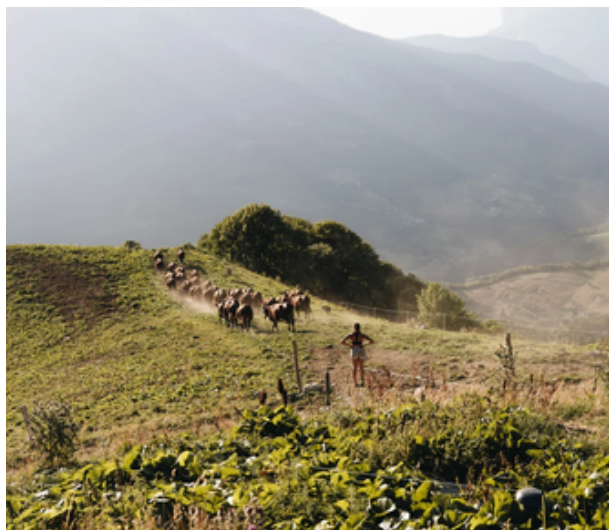
Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



# Mountain pasture school of Sulens

## Context

The mountain pasture school is an essential educational tool for passing on the specific know-how involved in the harmonious, integrated management of a mountain pasture and the processing of farmhouse cheese. Although pastoral practices go back a long way, they require specific agro-ecological knowledge if they are to be adapted to today's agricultural context and environmental challenges. The increasing scarcity of land on the plains is making it more and more necessary to develop high-altitude pastures. In the mountain pastures, the great diversity of flora enables the production of quality milk, which contributes to the rich flavour of the cheeses. It plays an important role in the agricultural economy of the Northern Alps.



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## Good practice(s)

Serving education and the farming profession, the mountain pasture school aims to train young people and adults in pastoral activities, from animal husbandry to cheese-making, while respecting the environment, local practices and available resources. With the help of numerous partners, the site aims to become a genuine resource and innovation centre for pastoralism, in terms of teaching, applied research, economic activity and raising public awareness.

## Location

Municipalities of Serraval, Les Clefs,  
Le Bouchet-Mont-Charvin /  
Community of municipalities Vallées  
de Thônes, Haute-Savoie (France)

## Stakeholders

Auvergne Rhône Alpes region,  
Department of Haute-Savoie,  
Professional higher agriculture school  
of Contamine-sur-Arve National  
School of Milk and meat industry,  
Community of municipalities Vallées  
de Thônes...



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## ADDED VALUE

The mountain pasture school is a unique concept in France. Educational training on cross-cutting topics and not only farming.



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## CHALLENGES

In general, the living and work conditions of shepherds, social recognition of the profession.

# Plantahof mountain pasture trainings

## Context

Plantahof is the official school and consulting institution for agriculture in Kanton Graubünden. Including the subjects of traditional pastoralism on our alps as herding sheep, goat, cattle, workingdog and livestock guardian dog including animalhealth, -treatment with complementary medicine, homeopathy, modern medicine, as well as alpine cheese making. B Traditional and state of the art professional pastoralism implies life in and on top of our alps in the midst of an unspoilt natural environment that has been transformed over the centuries into an extraordinarily diverse cultural landscape shaped by humans - not at least because of professional herders.



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## Good practice(s)

Pastoralism means working together with and based on the natural environment while respecting the natural resources. innovative practical trainings and internship for shepherds, cheesemakers, cowboys and farmers relate to these basics. All the trainings and courses are time-phased to the practical work.

## Location

Landquart,  
Canton of the Grisons/Graubünden,  
Switzerland

## Stakeholders

Kanton Graubünden. Partner: Kanton Wallis, farmers, breeders and shepherds in GR, IG Alp, SAV, ssds, HSH-CH, BBV



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## ADDED VALUE

Numerous trainings and courses to pass flexible, suitable to the personal working season.



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## CHALLENGES

Strengthen the recognition of people doing professional work on the Alps.

# Agricultural Centre Visp

## Context

The Landwirtschaftszentrum Visp (LZV) in Switzerland has transitioned its operations from dairy farming to organic sheep and goat husbandry, establishing itself as a national centre of expertise for small ruminants. In collaboration with the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), LZV has initiated research and implementation projects focusing on parasitic diseases in these animals. Additionally, LZV offers a comprehensive range of advanced training courses designed to equip farmers and agricultural professionals with the necessary skills to adapt to the evolving agricultural landscape. These courses cover various topics, including technical, economic, marketing, and legal aspects of modern farming, ensuring participants are well-prepared for future challenges.



## Good practice(s)

One notable outcome of the LZV's and FiBL's work is a jointly produced video illustrating best practices for controlling pasture parasites in sheep and goats, aiming to reduce and optimize the use of anthelmintics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNrH4cDrCHY>

## + Location

Viège/Visp,  
Canton of Valais/Wallis,  
Switzerland



## ADDED VALUE

The centre offers a great variety of trainings, from cheese production to grazing techniques and from milking to claw care.



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## CHALLENGES

The LZV is advocating and working for more sustainability and organic farming.



# Salern Agricultural and Home Economics Professional School

## Context

Salern is the youngest agricultural vocational training centre in South Tyrol and has been in existence since 1987. In a short space of time, it is important to have a professional profile for vocational training and practice, as well as advice on the subject of mountain farming. The Bruggerhof organic farm is part of the school.

Providers design teaching units on healthy food production and rural culture on the farm. The offer covers the creative field, didactics, food quality and the target group's pedagogical approach. Occupational health and safety is covered in accordance with the latest legal regulations. The target group is farmers and other farm workers who want to specialise in school work on the farm.



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## Good practice(s)

The school takes into account the challenges of the future by providing training in sustainable mountain farming, including subjects such as alternatives to dairy cattle, organic farming, rural milk processing, acquiring a farm holiday diploma and product processing and direct marketing.

Sound basic knowledge, learning by doing, lifelong learning, ecological farming, gentle and innovative processing of high-quality staple foods are the focus of work at Salern.

A unique feature is the school's own certified organic farm, where all practical units are carried out.

## Location

Salern,  
39040 Varna,  
South Tyrol (Italy)

## Stakeholders

Forestry, agriculture, veterinary medicine, social and agricultural cooperatives, agricultural associations, school networks, families and youth associations, technical schools, LLAs...



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## ADDED VALUE

The school offers cross-disciplinary training leading to a wide range of careers: farmer, entrepreneur, wood and metal processing, agricultural and automotive technology, butcher, etc.



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## CHALLENGES

In 2017, many ethical issues, problems and challenges were identified in the areas of agriculture and animal production; in December 2018, sustainability and eco-efficiency of dairy production were in the area of particular interest of the South Tyrolean agricultural economy

# School for shepherds and breeders / LIFE ShepForBio

## Context

The Shepherd School was created as part of the LIFE project ShepForBio, a project co-financed by the European Union under the LIFE programme which aims to improve the conservation status of grassland habitats and their biodiversity through pastoralism.

The school was founded with a twofold objective: 1) to try to counter the problem of lacking generational renewal by offering theoretical and practical training to those who want to start this job; 2) to promote, through training activities, a new role for shepherds and pastoralism, no longer solely related to the production of goods, but as an essential "tool" for the conservation of biodiversity, landscape and provision of ecosystem services. The school is located in the Casentino Valley, among the intervention areas of the LIFE project, in the northern Apennines, a region with a deep pastoral tradition that has suffered from depopulation and abandonment of traditional economies.

## Good practice(s)

The training activities include a theoretical part lasting about 180 hours, during which students face 14 training modules, and navigate practice-oriented 30-day internship in local enterprises/businesses. During this time, students have the chance to flank shepherds and breeders. In addition to topics focused on pastoralism (including bureaucratic aspects, nutrition, health management, production chains, conflict with predators), the school deepens the role of the shepherd in the conservation of biodiversity, the Ecosystem Services linked to pastoralism and the application of agroecology and silvo-pastoralism techniques. Of the 15 participants who completed the course in the first two years, 5 have started their own business, one is currently employed and 3 who already had their own holding, have either increased the number of owned animals or significantly improved their production and marketing skills.

## Location

Municipality of Pratovecchio Stia, Arezzo, Tuscany, Italy

## Stakeholders

The LIFE ShepForBio project is co-financed by the European Union within the framework of the LIFE programme; the school's activities are carried out with the contribution of Dream Italia, Tuscany Region, University of Florence, and Foreste Casentinesi National Park.



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## ADDED VALUE

The added value of the school lies in the promotion and enhancement of the ecological role of pastoralism, while it offers basic knowledge on the importance of grazing in the conservation of biodiversity, the landscape, the climate change mitigation and, more generally, the provision of ecosystem services.

We firmly believe that a proper recognition of this role, to be possibly translated into concrete activities to support pastoralism (including payment for ecosystem services as well as an improvement in the relationship with protected areas), need to make farmers aware of the importance of their work.



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## CHALLENGES

The school's activities are linked to the funding of the LIFE project, ending in 2027. We therefore need to find a different future funding mechanisms to allow the continuity of the school activities beyond the end of the project.