

## Making the most out of 'common land' by using agroforestry

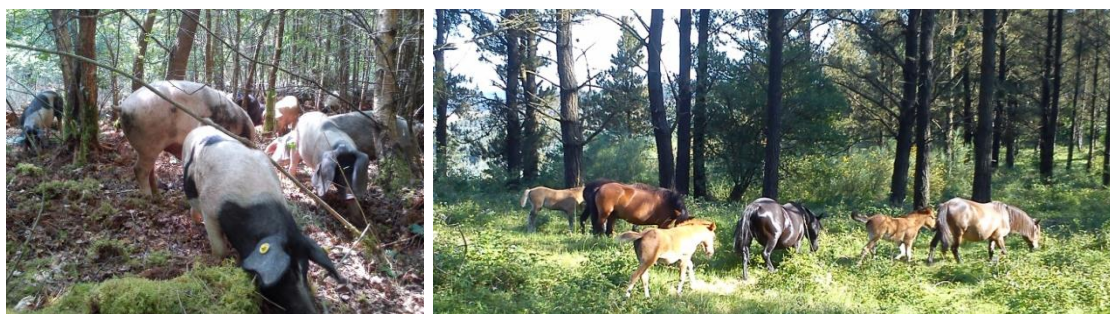
**Source:** Antia Villada and Rosa Mosquera

Galicia has 600 thousand hectares out of 3 Million hectares under the ownership traditionally called 'Monte Veciñal en Man Comun' (MVMC), that can be translated into English as 'Neighbourhood owned Common Land'. The MVMC is a Germanic type of ownership in which the land is owned by the owners when they live on it and people lose the right of ownership when they leave. Most of MVMC are currently destined to be pure forest stands which present a high forest fire risk.

The MVMC of 'De Carballo' is a 'common land' community that is using their land for more than 'just forestry'. 'De Carballo' MVMC is currently formed by more than 50 commoners/families who own about 710 ha in total. Around 270 ha out of the 450 ha of the MVMC are used as a silvopastoral system with Galician horses (30 animals) while about 30 ha is currently allocated to breed Celtic pigs (100 animals), both of them native breeds of North-west Spain (see pictures).

Since 2008, this property has been diversifying their production and moving from having mainly pine plantations (*Pinus radiata*, *P. pinaster* and *P. sylvestris*) to a more diverse agroforestry scheme. This includes newly planted native tree species (birches, chestnut, walnut and cherry trees) in combination with the production of meat (pig and horse native breeds) and other complementary resources such as honey, mushrooms and pine resin. The main reasons why 'De Carballo' community decided to start a silvopastoral land management included productive, environmental and social reasons:

- to increase and diversify production
- to reduce and control the biomass (woody vegetation and the forest understory) in order to prevent forest fires
- to enhance the landscape and aesthetic value of their land
- to achieve a higher involvement of the community in the day-to-day management of their land



Silvopastoral systems with native breeds of Celtic pigs and Galician Horses. Source: MVMC De Carballo

Other productive uses of the land include pine tree resin and organically certified mushroom and honey production (30 beehives). Although the main economic income of 'De Carballo' MVMC is still from the pine plantations, they have successfully managed to introduce complementary agroforestry uses with short-term returns (annual earnings) and lower risks (mainly fires). The implementation of agroforestry has also improved forest management as they have made easier and cheaper silvicultural practices such as pruning and thinning. Agroforestry management

has also made it easier to increase the value of the MVMC 'De Carballo' forest products as this forestland is the first in the region to obtain both PEFC and FSC certification. However, one of their main current concerns is the high number of wolf attacks to horses (some years reaching extremely high mortality rates with more than 80% of the colts). The community demands more support from the administration and practical solutions to help free-range livestock and wolves coexist on the same landscape.



Honey and mushroom production in the forests of MVMC De Carballo. Source: MVMC De Carballo

The decisions about land management are taken in assembly and the community not only manages the land, the forests and the animals, but also carries out social activities such as traditional, educational and cultural activities (e.g. informative events, walks, protection and promotion of archeological sites within their land, a traditional system of gathering of the horses known as 'rapa' with more than 1,000 visitors (see pictures), etc). 'De Carballo' MVMC is also taking part in several research projects such as AFINET (being one of the most active members of the

Spanish RAIN) and several operational groups: about forest biomass management, agroforestry systems with celtic pigs, and on improving the coexistence between wolves and livestock. In order to protect the pigs from the wolves, they have developed an automatic system to gather the animals at night based on a food and sound-based stimuli (see [video](#)) and they are currently trying to get funding to develop a similar but mobile system to manage free-range pigs in the forests.



'Rapa' the gathering of the horses (on the right) and new plantation of native broadleaves as part of collaboration with WWF (on the left). Source: MVMC De Carballo

To find out more about the MVMC 'De Carballo' visit:

Sustainable experiences in the Galician mountains (page 13). Resource only available in Galician:  
<http://es.calameo.com/read/0043559614266878b85c1>

Article about the MVMC De Carballo (resource available in Galician and Spanish)  
<http://www.campogalego.com/es/forestal-es/un-monte-que-produce-mas-que-madera/>

Video of the celtic pig gathering system:

[https://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/noticia/lugo/friol/2015/07/05/vecinos-friol-crian-carballo-105-cerdos-celtas-monte-comunal/0003\\_201507L5C7996.htm](https://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/noticia/lugo/friol/2015/07/05/vecinos-friol-crian-carballo-105-cerdos-celtas-monte-comunal/0003_201507L5C7996.htm)