

ABC RURALE

Good Practice Collection



Introduction

ABC rural is a farm, with a main farmhouse of ancient origins that the young owners, Michele and Nancy have renovated and made comfortable for themselves and their guests. They have managed to retain the charm of the “old country house”, those of yesteryear. There are several outbuildings and functional structures that create a small hamlet. Michele and Nancy have totally changed their lives to venture into this new adventure starting from scratch, but with the clear idea of building a place to enjoy nature, far from the noisy city, a way of living based on the concepts of ecology, sustainability, energy saving and self-sufficiency. Moreover, their garden is based on a regenerative farming method to try to combat climate change and where the watchword is sustainability and biodiversity.

The Farm

QABC Rurale is that place where you can experience “country life”, tuning into the rhythms of nature and being enraptured by an almost absolute silence (there is no noise from roads or anything similar). It is also a place where it is possible to taste one's own produce, genuine and linked to local traditions, as well as to spend time doing country-related activities with Nancy and Michele or simply to find peace and quiet. They organise cooking classes to learn how to make egg pasta with freshly produced and milled flour, they can organise walks to look for truffles or try being a beekeeper for a day. ABC is also an educational farm that creates attractions for both adults and children. ABC Rurale fits perfectly into a precisely rural context, immersed in a serene and authentic environment where nature and agricultural activities coexist harmoniously. The main part is the barn, which has been renovated while leaving the true essence of what it once was, adding new elements and a new design. It is here that breakfasts and tastings can be enjoyed. Then there is a multi-purpose, cosy and relaxing room that serves as a place where one can read a book and where educational tours and workshops are organised. A sustainable swimming pool made of sustainable materials and environmentally friendly technologies and the fabulous garden complete this place. The farm covers a land of about 18 hectares.

The Location

Located in the heart of Umbria, Todi is surrounded by a hilly landscape that expresses all the beauty and authenticity of the region. Gentle hills alternate with vineyards, olive groves and cultivated fields, creating a picturesque scenery that changes with the seasons: the deep green of spring gives way to the golden hues of summer, while in autumn the warm colours of the leaves transform the countryside into an evocative picture. The country roads, often lined with cypresses and centuries-old oaks, lead to small medieval villages and stone farmhouses, symbols of Umbria's rural tradition. The Tiber River, which flows nearby, enriches the area's microclimate, making the soil fertile and ideal for quality crops.

A few kilometers away are the towns of Orvieto (35km), Perugia (45km), Spoleto (55km) and Assisi (60km).

Agricultural regeneration objectives

Here at ABC RURALE, regenerative agriculture is used as a method to support crops that only meet the farm's own needs without overexploiting the land and resources. The farm produces ancient grains and barley. In their vegetable garden one can find tomatoes, melons, courgettes, cabbage, aubergines, pumpkins, artichokes and onions. All this is possible thanks to ABC RURALE's commitment not to exploit the land intensively, thus causing soil impoverishment, and not to resort to chemical remedies to increase their production.



Best Practice Focus

Crop diversification consists of alternating or combining different plant species to favour the balance of the agricultural ecosystem.

Cultivating different species helps reduce soil depletion, as each plant absorbs and returns nutrients differently.

The use of leguminous plants, for example, enriches the soil with natural nitrogen, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers

The different plant roots act as a network that stabilises the soil, reducing the risk of erosion and increasing the soil's capacity to retain water.

Cultivating a variety of species creates a more complex environment that is less favourable to the proliferation of pests and diseases, thus reducing the need for pesticides. Pollinating insects and beneficial microorganisms find a more favorable habitat, improving the balance of the agricultural ecosystem.

Financial aspects of regenerative measure implementation

The implementation of crop diversification on a regenerative farm entails high initial costs, related to the purchase of seeds, equipment and agronomic training (around 5,000–15,000€ depending on the scale). Labour and management costs also increase, but fertiliser and pesticide expenses are reduced due to improved soil fertility. The main challenges include complex planning, the need for new sales channels, soil adaptation and diversified production management. However, the practice offers long-term economic benefits, such as increased climate resilience, improved product quality and access to public incentives for sustainable agriculture.



Categorisation, keywords

This method of regenerative agriculture falls under the Macro-area Land Management (crop and soil) in the category 'CROP' with the following sub-categorisation: DIVERSIFICATION OF CROPS.

Crop Diversification; Soil Sustainability;
Biodiversity; Soil Enrichment; Crop
Organisation; Sustainability; Climate Change;
Natural pest control



Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Improves soil fertility - Different crops provide different nutrients, reducing the need for chemical fertilisers.
	Increases climate resilience - If one crop fails due to extreme events, others can compensate for the losses.
	Reduces pests and diseases - The variety of crops interrupts pest cycles, decreasing the use of pesticides.
	Improves profitability - Diversified productions allow access to more markets and reduce economic risks.
Disadvantages	High initial costs - Requires investment in seeds, specific equipment and agronomic training.
	Increased management complexity - Detailed planning is needed for effective rotations and associations.
	Increased labour - More variety means more work for management and harvesting.

Learning points

Knowledge	Soil fertility management - Understanding the role of crop rotation and intercropping in improving soil quality.
	Biodiversity and natural pest control - Understanding the interactions between different species to reduce diseases and pests without excessive use of pesticides.
	Agronomic planning and seasonality - Knowing how to organise crops in time and space to maximise productivity and sustainability.
Skills needed	Agricultural planning skills - Know how to plan rotations, choose complementary crops and optimise resources.
	Economic and commercial management - Be able to evaluate costs, find markets for different products and diversify sources of income.
	Use of sustainable agricultural techniques - Apply methods such as cover crops, agroforestry and regenerative practices to maintain soil and ecosystem health.

References/Bibliography

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Regenerative Agricultural Practices for Environmental Rejuvenation and Sustainable Ecosystems on European Farms



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