

AZIENDA AGRICOLA LA CHIONA

Good Practice Collection



Introduction

Azienda Agricola La Chiona is a family-run business that has been handed down with passion for generations. It all began with Grandfather Alfonso, who passed on to his children and grandchildren his love of the land and the importance of cultivating it with respect and dedication. Today, the company is led by engineer Sandro Della Vedova and Dr Paola Conedera, who combine tradition with constant research and innovation. Their goal is to continuously improve the quality of their products, selecting the best varieties of legumes and cereals and adopting sustainable farming practices that preserve the environment and the soil.

La Chiona has always favored organic production, focusing on preservation techniques that allow the products to maintain their freshness and authentic flavour as if they had just been harvested.

In recent years, the company has expanded its commitment to the rediscovery and valorising typical local varieties of legumes and cereals. With passion and dedication, these ancient crops are cultivated, packaged and marketed under the La Chiona brand, bringing genuine products, rich in history and tradition, to the table.

The Farm

Azienda Agraria La Chiona was founded in the early 1900s by grandfather Alfonso Cipolloni, an expert connoisseur of the Umbrian territory and specialised in the cultivation of olives and cereals. His expertise and dedication have left a valuable lesson to his children and grandchildren. After his death, the company was passed on to his daughter Maria Antonietta and her husband, engineer Pierfrancesco Della Vedova, who continued the activity with a sustainable approach, favouring respect for the land and the minimal use of chemicals. Precursors of sustainable agriculture, they have passed on these values to the third generation, who have focused their attention on the promotion of valuable Umbrian legumes and cereals: lentils from Castelluccio di Norcia, dicocco spelt from Monteleone di Spoleto, chickpeas from Spello, roveja from Cascia, monococcus spelt and ancient soft and hard grains such as cappelli, gentilrosso and khorasan.

The Azienda Agraria La Chiona covers approximately 33 hectares in the Spello area of Umbria. In addition to this area, land is cultivated annually in cooperation with other farmers through cultivation contracts.





The Location

Spello is an enchanting Umbrian village located on the slopes of Mount Subasio, immersed in a hilly landscape that alternates between forests, centuries-old olive groves and vineyards. The area around the La Chiona farm is characterised by gentle hills covered with olive trees, which produce one of the most renowned extra virgin olive oils in the region. Cultivated fields blend harmoniously with patches of wild vegetation, creating a natural environment rich in biodiversity.

In the surrounding area, the view opens onto the Umbrian Valley, with suggestive glimpses towards Assisi and Foligno, while the nearby Mount Subasio offers a fascinating contrast between unspoilt nature and historic villages perched on the heights. The presence of watercourses and the variety of the terrain favour flourishing agriculture, with crops ranging from cereals and vegetables to vines and fruit trees.

Agricultural regeneration objectives

The La Chiona company is very attentive to the environment, to preserving the natural nutrients of the earth and the products that come from it, and consequently applies regenerative farming practices such as green manure, a very old technique to nourish the soil naturally, thus avoiding the use of chemicals, which can damage the soil.

This technique consists of planting, in the middle of the rows of vines (for example), specific crops that will then nourish the soil, enriching it with nutritional properties that in turn will allow a lush harvest without the use of chemicals.

Best Practice Focus

Green manure is an agricultural practice that consists of growing plants not intended for harvesting, but incorporated into the soil to improve its structure and fertility. The most commonly used crops belong to the leguminous, grass and brassicaceous families, often combined in a mix to provide different benefits. Leguminous crops, such as alfalfa, soya and peas, fix atmospheric nitrogen, while grasses, such as oats and rye, provide carbonaceous organic matter. Brassicaceae, on the other hand, help aerate the soil and fight nematodes. In addition to fertilising naturally, green manure protects the soil by limiting the growth of wild grasses and preventing erosion. Sowing takes place at various times of the year, but mainly in autumn, with October being the ideal month. In addition, green manure can be used as a temporary crop to prevent the soil from being exposed to the elements, favouring soil regeneration between cultivations. This technique is considered a valid alternative to the use of chemical fertilisers, as it enriches the soil naturally. Its application maintains the balance of the agricultural ecosystem, improving the overall health of the soil in the long term

Financial aspects of regenerative measure implementation

The initial challenges involved in using this agricultural technique are various, for example, very important, is the selection of suitable crops - The choice of the most suitable plant species (legumes, grasses, cruciferous plants) must be made according to the type of soil, climate and subsequent cropping requirements, but also take into account the timing of agricultural management - Green manure requires careful planning because the land is occupied for weeks or months before it can be used for the main crop, affecting crop rotation.

Costs refer especially to the purchase of plant species, which can vary greatly.



Main Slogan

“ We love growing healthy food on healthy soil to have healthy Clients “

Categorisation, keywords

This type of ReGenerative agriculture method falls under the Macroarea of Land Management within the category of SOIL AMENDEMENTS/ADDITION OF ORGANIC MATTER with the following measures: GREEN MANURE.

green manure; soil; nutrient properties; regenerative agriculture; soil amendments; addition of organic matter; soil management; natural fertilisation; healthy soil; improved soil fertility; soil structure; cover crop management; biodiversity

Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Improved soil fertility - Green manure plants, especially leguminous plants, enrich the soil with organic nitrogen and other nutrients, reducing the need for chemical fertilisers.
	Increased organic matter and soil structure - Burying crops improves the physical structure of the soil, promoting humus formation, improved water retention and increased aeration.
	Weed control and erosion reduction - Green manure crops cover the soil, limiting the growth of weeds and protecting the soil from erosion by wind or rain.
Disadvantages	Additional costs and labour - Green manure requires sowing, managing and burying crops, with expenses related to seeds, labour and machinery.
	Land occupation - During the growing period of green manure, land is not available for other crops, which can reduce productivity in the short term.
	Risk of inappropriate species selection - Incorrect selection of green manure crops can have negative effects, such as allelopathy (release of harmful substances) or an increase in specific diseases and pests.

Learning points

Knowledge	Improving soil fertility - Understanding the nutrient cycle and how green manure crops enrich the soil, particularly the action of leguminous crops in nitrogen fixation.
	Cover crop management - Learning which species to choose according to climate, soil type and agronomic goals (e.g. soil structure improvement, weed control).
	Influence of green manure on biodiversity - Understanding the positive impact this practice has on soil microbial life, beneficial insects and overall agroecosystem health.
Skills	Agronomic planning - Knowing how to include green manure in the crop rotation, assessing the best time for sowing and burial.
	Soil management - Being able to work the soil properly to maximise the benefits of green manure without causing compaction or loss of organic matter.
	Monitoring and evaluation - Ability to analyse the state of the soil before and after green manure, assessing improvements in fertility, structure and biodiversity.

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



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