

POULTREE

Good Practice Collection



Introduction

Jose Luis Garcia de Castro, is a veterinarian and owner of the regenerative farm 'Poultree' located in Villanueva de la Vera, in "La Vera" region of northern Extremadura (Cáceres). They are dedicated to the production of pasteurised chicken and 100% grass-fed beef, an alternative form of extensive poultry farming. They also sell their products directly in both Spain and Portugal.

Their aim is to be able to design production systems that combine:

1. the improvement of the quality of life of our animals as a central axis.
2. The regeneration of soil biology. At Poultree, we believe that well-managed livestock farming should be one of the fundamental tools in the fight to restore the health of our soils.
3. The restoration of national farmers to regenerative grain production.

The Farm

The chickens at Poultree are grazed and reared in portable houses with free-range runs that are changed every 3 days. By moving them around in this way, they always have access to fresh grass, which encourages their consumption and provides the great benefits of pasture-raised meat. They make it clear that the key to their farm is not that the chickens graze: "In order for the chickens not to damage the soil and to have constant access to fresh grass, it is essential that they are kept in constantly moving portable houses. If it does not move, it does not regenerate! Animals in nature are not always in the same place, they are constantly on the move, and this effect can only be achieved if the poultry houses are mobile.

The Location

Located in Villanueva de la Vera, in “La Vera” region of northern Extremadura (Cáceres), the regenerative farm is an example of sustainable agricultural practices aimed at restoring and improving soil and ecosystem health. It uses rotational grazing and regenerative farming methods to restore local biodiversity, improve soil water retention and encourage the regeneration of native flora. Animals are managed holistically, ensuring their welfare and promoting natural balance. The farm also uses organic crops that are integrated into the natural cycle without the use of synthetic chemicals. The farm aims to be a model of sustainability, respecting the environment and contributing to the fight against climate change.

Agricultural regeneration objectives

Their main aim is to improve the health of the soil through regenerative livestock farming: by grazing continuously, they manage to sequester huge amounts of atmospheric carbon by increasing the organic matter in the soil and the growth of grass. In addition, by using local producers, they reduce the carbon footprint of transporting the grain they use to feed the animals. Moreover, they use no external sources of light or heat except for the first 2-3 weeks, reducing the energy used to rear them. By living in a relaxed, natural environment and in constant rotation, the chickens do not require antibiotics or anti-parasitic treatments as their immune systems are competent. As a result, they do not develop antibiotic resistance and we do not release these residues into the environment. On the other hand, they work with distribution systems that allow us to reduce the use of plastic and cardboard (for example, in Madrid, their delivery drivers deliver the product by hand, so we do not need cardboard packaging or additional plastic).



Best Practice Focus

Holistic management consists of a new grazing concept based on a constant rotation of animals (less than 3 days on each plot). The soil is then left to rest for a long period, allowing the grass to regenerate and grow back. In short, the aim is to mimic the natural biological cycles that occur in every grassland in the world. In this way, we get all the creatures that make up the ecosystem to work for a livestock system that helps and benefits them.

The production of 'pasture-raised meat' and 'holistic management' has been proven for years throughout the world to not only improve the quality of life of our animals and the nutritional quality of the products they produce, but also to provide environmental benefits such as restoring the structure of our soils, increasing water-holding capacity and fixing atmospheric carbon.

Financial aspects of regenerative measure implementation

There is not enough supply to meet the demand for pastured chicken, it is a relatively new and novel model, so they have to use trial and error until they are able to standardise their production process. Once they are able to create a sustainable and efficient model, they can increase production and sell virtually everything (taking into account their production costs) as there is not enough supply.



Main Slogan

On the move!

Categorisation, keywords

This sustainable poultry farming method falls under the macroarea of Sustainability, within the category of Ethical Farming and Resource Management, with the following measures:

Animal welfare; sustainable poultry management; eco-friendly feed; biodiversity promotion; waste reduction; sustainable farming techniques; ethical food production; environmental impact reduction.

Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages	Soil Health Improvement: regenerative livestock farming promotes practices that restore soil health, increasing fertility, water retention, and biodiversity.
	Carbon Emission Reduction: by promoting practices like rotational grazing, it helps sequester carbon in the soil, contributing to climate change mitigation.
	Animal Welfare: the holistic management of animals prioritizes more natural and healthy living conditions, improving their quality of life.
Disadvantages	Non-standardised model and land required for grazing.
	Time-Consuming Results: the benefits of regenerative approaches, such as soil restoration and increased biodiversity, can take years to become noticeable.
	Initial Economic Challenges: regenerative practices may involve higher initial costs and slower returns on investment, which can be a barrier for some producers.

Learning points

Pasture-raised or free-range chickens provide healthier meat because they contain less fat than conventional chickens, but more importantly, this fat is healthier than the fat deposited by chickens fed exclusively on cereals. It is richer in omega-3 and vitamins.

References/Bibliography

- <https://poultree.es/>
- <https://www.canalextramadura.es/video/el-pastoreo-regenerativo-una-forma-alternativa-de-produccion-avicola>

Contact details

<https://poultree.es/>





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



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