



HERDADE DA DEFESA DA PEDRA ALÇADA - family farm



Luís Mendes



680 hectares



improvement of
grassland
management

THE IMPORTANCE OF MONTADO AND THE GENETIC DIVERSITY OF ANIMALS

Herdade da Defesa da Pedra Alçada, located in the municipality of Alandroal, in Santiago Maior, covers 680 hectares, predominantly dryland. It has an olive grove of 6 hectares and natural grasslands with holm oak and cork oak forests. The cork oak occurs in wetter areas, near the water lines. Currently there are 180 adult cattle and a small nucleus of 60 sheep. These control the vegetation in the olive grove and are used for self-consumption.

The new management has prioritized the cork oak forest, has implemented a forest management plan and has reduced the size of the fenced parks to around 30 hectares to optimize the farm. The increase in the number of parks and the reduction of the area of the plots are very important to improve the management of the animals (better use of the pastures), and reduce the requirements for labour.

The forest management plan was hired to an external company that specializes in the management of mixed farming in Portugal.

They did a long-term planning of the farm, which is now being implemented. The increase in the number of trees (through the protection of natural regeneration) has been a priority, because this was not done for decades and there was a lot of mortality in the last 30/40 years. Cork trees provide shadow for the animals and are an important economic return. As for livestock, the breeds have evolved over 30 years. They started with the Alentejo breed, then introduced the Charolês and, recently, Limousine bulls. They have always maintained genetic diversity in the females. Despite attempts to establish permanent grasslands two years ago, low rainfall has limited the success of this initiative. Permanent grassland is less costly in the long term and better for the regeneration of the soil.

Farmer Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-z3YW9hyE4>



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