PRESS RELEASE

Enagás and Redeia are making progress in measuring the ecosystem services generated by grazing, with a view to developing ways of compensating livestock farmers for providing them

La Pola de Gordón (León) hosted the 4th edition of the Grazing on Grids Conference, promoted by Enagás and Redeia and organised by Agrovidar in collaboration with the Fundación Global Nature and UNED in Ponferrada.

Livestock farmers, experts, researchers and organisations shared their experiences and insights on how to value the services that extensive livestock farming provides to ecosystems and society, and how to compensate farmers for them.

León, 3 November 2026

The ecosystem services generated by extensive livestock grazing - such as reducing biomass in forested areas and thereby helping to prevent fires, or increasing biodiversity - **are valuable, measurable and potentially eligible for financial compensation**.

This was one of the conclusions of the **4th Grazing on Grids Conference**, an event promoted by Enagás and Redeia and organised by Agrovidar in collaboration with the Fundación Global Nature and the UNED Associated Centre in Ponferrada. The event in La Pola de Gordón (León) brought together livestock farmers, experts, researchers, and organisations at the forefront of assessing the environmental benefits of extensive livestock management.

For the past five years, Enagás and Redeia have been using herds of cattle, sheep and horses to keep vegetation growing over gas infrastructure and beneath electricity transmission lines in the mountains of central León under control, with technical support from Agrovidar and local livestock farmers, as a complement to mechanical vegetation clearance. This initiative is accompanied by a **comparative biodiversity study of grazed and ungrazed areas,** aimed at measuring the impact of livestock on vegetation and soil.

To date, **the study has confirmed that plots managed through grazing support more plant species and botanical families, as well as a greater abundance of arthropods** (a group that includes insects and other invertebrates essential to ecosystem functioning) and a higher presence of pollinators, such as bees, bumblebees and wasps. The study has also found that grazing, combined with earlier vegetation clearance, **encourages herbaceous cover**

rather than trees and scrub. This ultimately means a lower vegetative fuel load and fewer forest fires. **This study is one of the few of its kind in Spain and is proving crucial** in driving progress in the emerging field of the objective measurement of the ecosystem services provided by extensive livestock farming and the financial compensation for those services.

José Miguel Tudela, Enagás' director of Sustainability and Climate Action, said that "using herds to manage vegetation around energy infrastructure, as a complement to mechanical clearing and in line with Enagás' overall sustainability strategy, **helps to open up the landscape and create breaks in the terrain. These are key factors in preventing forest fires or reducing their intensity once they have started**".

"Grazing brings environmental benefits that are not being sufficiently recognised. **We need to stop viewing the extensive livestock sector solely as a food producer. It is also a steward of the land that delivers public benefits**: grazing livestock help prevent forest fires, conserve habitats, maintain the landscape and increase biodiversity. The debate must now focus on how to measure and provide financial compensation for these benefits. It is to this debate that Redeia aims to bring greater insight and understanding through this biodiversity study in the mountains of León," said Laura Quintana, Redeia's Director of Sustainability, during the conference.

Laura García, grazing manager at Fundación Global Nature, added: "Thanks to initiatives such as the one we are carrying out in El Baldío in Extremadura, we are seeing how **sustainable livestock farming practices help maintain mosaic habitats, promote diversity in flora and fauna, and contribute to the conservation of native livestock breeds**. With these verifiable measurements of ecosystem services now available, we will be helping the livestock sector access new sources of funding".

Juan Busqué, president of the Sociedad Española de Pastos, echoed this sentiment in his opening address on the Cantabrian Mountains, one of the main mountain ranges on the Iberian Peninsula, which provides and regulates resources essential to human survival. "Livestock farming has been one of the most efficient ways of utilising and conserving these mountains. Today, large areas are being abandoned, management is lacking, and both land users and managers are pessimistic. Large-scale forest fires are partly a reflection of this," said Busqué, who is confident that **technologies based on electronic sensors, communications, and AI will help improve grazing and land management**.

Three projects already measuring ecosystem services

The 4th Grazing on Grids Conference **presented three initiatives that are already working to transform the way in which the livestock sector is financially recognised** for protecting ecosystems and biodiversity. One is the project run by Enagás and Red Eléctrica in the mountains of León. Another is the project run by Fundación Global Nature in the El Baldío dehesa (pasturelands) in Cáceres, a leading example of planned rotational grazing and regenerative land management.

The third initiative is run by Orekan, the Navarre Government's public company specialising in environmental management and protection. It has designed a support scheme under the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan for high-nature-value hay meadows. Farmers applying for the scheme receive payments that vary according to the biodiversity found in their meadows. As Silvia Zabalza, head of the Agrodiversity and Rural Development Programme (RDP) Team, explained, this is **the only scheme in Spain where state funds are paid out based on results**.

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