

# WOOL, WILD FRUIT AND WHAT ELSE?

Livelihoods, biocultural diversity and nature-based lifestyles supported by agroforestry



## THE WHAT AND WHY

### Innovations from the past: the case of wood pastures

A key characteristic trait of agroforestry systems is diversity. Wood pastures are primarily known for the diversification of grazing land, they take advantage of the different conditions provided by the trees and form a mosaic of habitats managed less intensively. Besides providing shade, another important feature that trees offer is their role in nutritional supplementation. Selection of planted or retained trees may also include a consideration of their nutritional value for livestock.

Additionally, agroforestry systems can promote the renewal of traditional practices (e.g. combining trees and livestock, handcraft, gastronomy etc.), which have been forgotten throughout much of Europe. An example is the use and processing of wild fruits and wool. In this case study, the farmers combine their background in folk art and folk culture with their experience as modern shepherds in order to produce good quality and unique products from the “fruits” of their wood pasture system.



Edible wild fruits (e.g. wild pear) were traditionally an important income from wood pastures. It was used as forage, but for gastronomy also. Wood pasture restoration could improve those uses as well (Bogyiszló, Hungary). Anna Varga



An abandoned wood pasture was renewed by a family and give their livelihood today. Main trees are wild pear, wild apple. They are mainly grazed by sheep, but also cattle and pigs (Vácza-kő Farm, Bakony, Hungary). Anna Varga

## HOW IS THE CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

### Discover you forest patches and change policy

Diversification of use is based on the diverse properties dominating agroforestry systems. In the case of wood pastures, this effect can be based on the selection of a wide variety of trees. An excellent example includes the caring for and planting of wild fruit trees. Eating their fruits raw or in some processed form may be of great benefit for the farmer as it is also an extra source of income when sold. Besides growing and processing wild

fruits, people also deal with the processing of the wool of their grazing sheep livestock in Vácza-kő Major in Bakony region in Hungary. When wool dyeing is carried out plants found on the wood pasture may be used. Finished products are sold on the farmer market or by direct ordering, while the procedure of traditional wool processing is disseminated and taught in folk-playhouses and camps.



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## HIGHLIGHTS

Silvopastoral systems are harmonious and balanced livestock farming systems, which could provide animal and plant products at the same time (eg. wool, wild food products). Beside the revitalization of our gastro-cultural heritage, agroforestry and in particular silvopastoral systems allow to enjoy and experience a modern and environmentally aware livestock-keeping and slow lifestyle, to be handed down to next generations.



Artistic board game with woolen pieces - handcraft wool product from the wood pasture of Vácza-kő Major, Bakony region, Hungary  
Andrea Vityi

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Vácza-kő Major (Farm) is small, family owned, restored and managed wood pasture and farm in Bakony region. Most typical trees of their wood pasture wild pear and wild apple and mainly grazed by sheep. Owners are produce artisan wild fruit and wool products.

Wood pasture & Gastronomy, film introduce herders and families, who manage wood pastures in different ways in Bakony and Balaton region in Hungary, with English subtitle. It was made by Gasztroangyal (Gastroangel), Marcsi Borbás.

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Varga, Anna (2017) 'Innovation from the Past.' Silvopastoral Systems in Hungary in the Light of Hungarian Ethnographic Literature. *ACTA ETHNOGRAPHICA HUNGARICA*, 62 (1). pp. 135-162. ISSN 1216-9803

## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

### Nature and market-based lifestyle co-producti on

In relation to the efforts made to establish a slow and nature-based lifestyle, a cornucopia of opportunities offered by nature is explored, allowed by the specific observations made as a result of a lifestyle continuously conducted close to nature and the implementation of new ideas derived from such observations. Local traditions inevitably turn up when new ideas are discussed and by their re-consideration they foster the potential of improving the quality of life. Preparation, consumption and marketing of non-pasteurised, beneficial vinegar from wild fruits established in wood pastures has gained more popularity besides fruit jams and juices. Their own sheep's wool used for training activities and the development of unique products such as personal effects and jewelleryes. It is a high standard starting material, being also environmentally sound as a local product. Wild fruit products were part of the traditional and local gastronomy, the recovery of their production could be recognised as good example for slow food production. As regards the disadvantages, the scarce availability of time for both the occupation of the primary producer and of the folk artisan that allows a low volume production, albeit high quality output has to be mentioned. Wool, produced by many hours of labour is prohibitively expensive for prospective customers, thus - the same way as the products made from wild fruits, or even more so - can be marketed and sold with strong difficulties. In spite of the huge amount of interest it raises and superior quality and specificity of the products, it is not nowadays competitive in terms of price with the cheap imported products usually associated to petrol processing.

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