



A collective of farmers preserving biodiversity – Pegarou Farm, France

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Federation of natural areas conservancy
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A collective of farmers preserving biodiversity

Restoration of Permanent Wet Meadows



©Photo: ANA-CEN Ariège



Farm overview

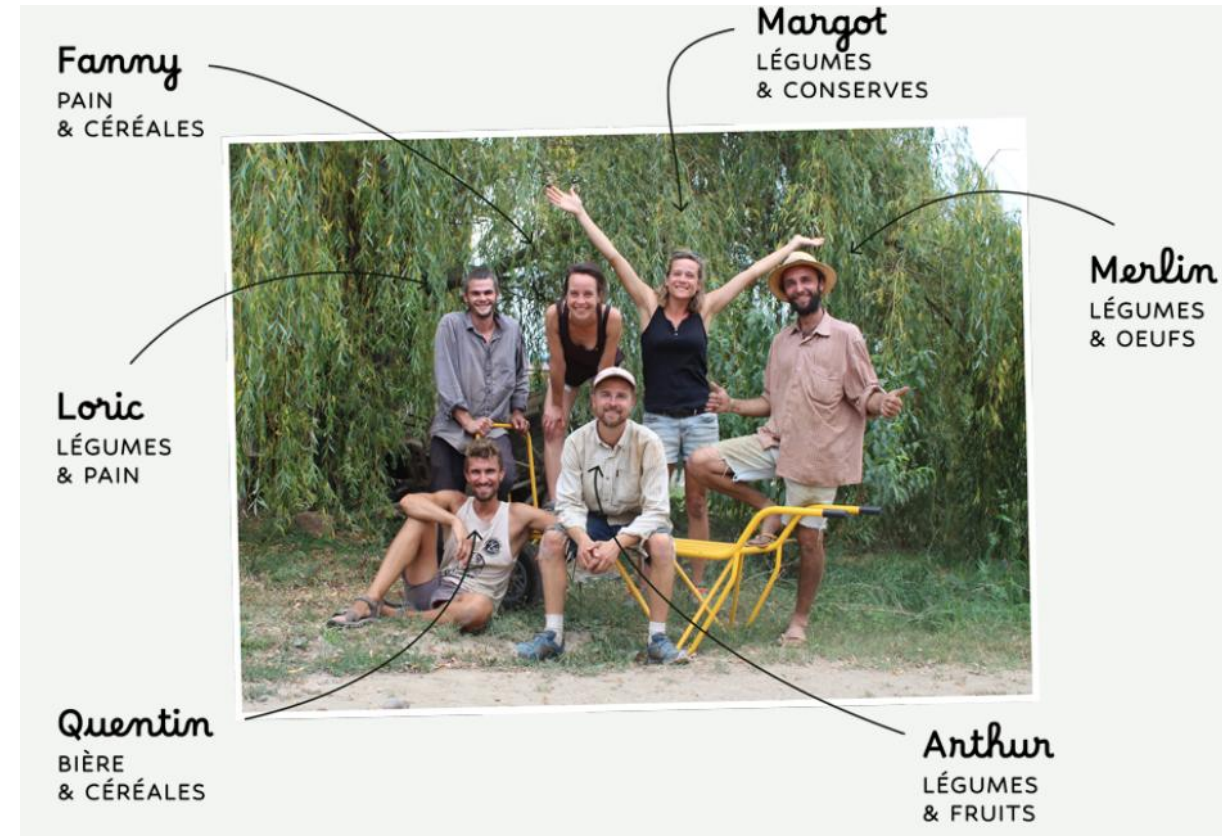


Pegarou Farm

- Location: Ariège, Occitanie (South West of France)
- Size: 32 ha
- Farm type: GAEC (farmers' collective)
- Established: May 2022
- Organic farming system
- Diverse production activities:
 - Vegetable production
 - Grain crops
 - Vegetable processing
 - Egg production
 - Bakery
 - Brewery

Main Objective

→ Develop a resilient agroecological farming system while preserving biodiversity



A Collective and Territorial Project

A Shared Vision for Sustainable Farming

- Four farmers established the collective in 2022.
- Environmental Rural Lease signed to ensure biodiversity-friendly land management.
- Strong local roots and commitment to agroecology.
- Long-term goal:
 - Secure agricultural use of the land.
 - Facilitate future farm succession.
 - Reduce barriers for future farmers.

Key Actor

Terre de Liens

Conservancy of natural area of Ariège

Solagro



Project Partners



Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Terre de Liens

- Farm ownership and land stewardship
- Support for long-term farm transmission

ANA-CEN Ariège

- Biodiversity inventories
- Ecological monitoring
- Recommendations for habitat management

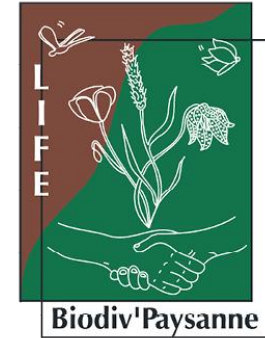
Solagro

- Agronomic assessment
- Technical advisory services

The project « LIFE Biodiv'Paysanne »



LIFE Biodiv'Paysanne (2022-2027)

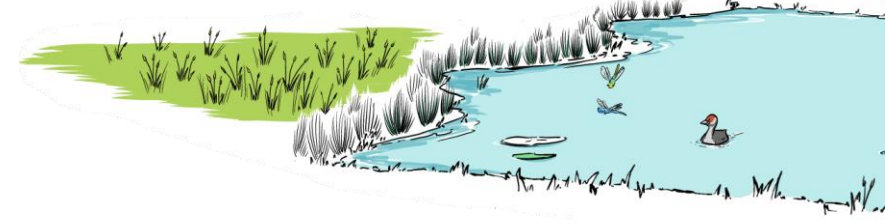


"Preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Occitanie region by preserving a network of 26,000 hectares of sites representative of the region's green and blue infrastructure ecosystems."

What actions?



❶ Expand and preserve the **network of protected and managed sites** in Occitanie



❷ Participate in the **agroecological transition of territories** and **involve farmers**

➡ Experiment with an **agricultural model dedicated to biodiversity preservation** that is financially autonomous and demonstrative

➡ Test and generalise **practices that promote biodiversity on 60 partner farms** and **provide financial assistance to farmers** to help them implement these best practices

One of them is « Pegarou Farm »



Initial Assessment

Farm Diagnosis

- Soil characteristics
- Crop management practices

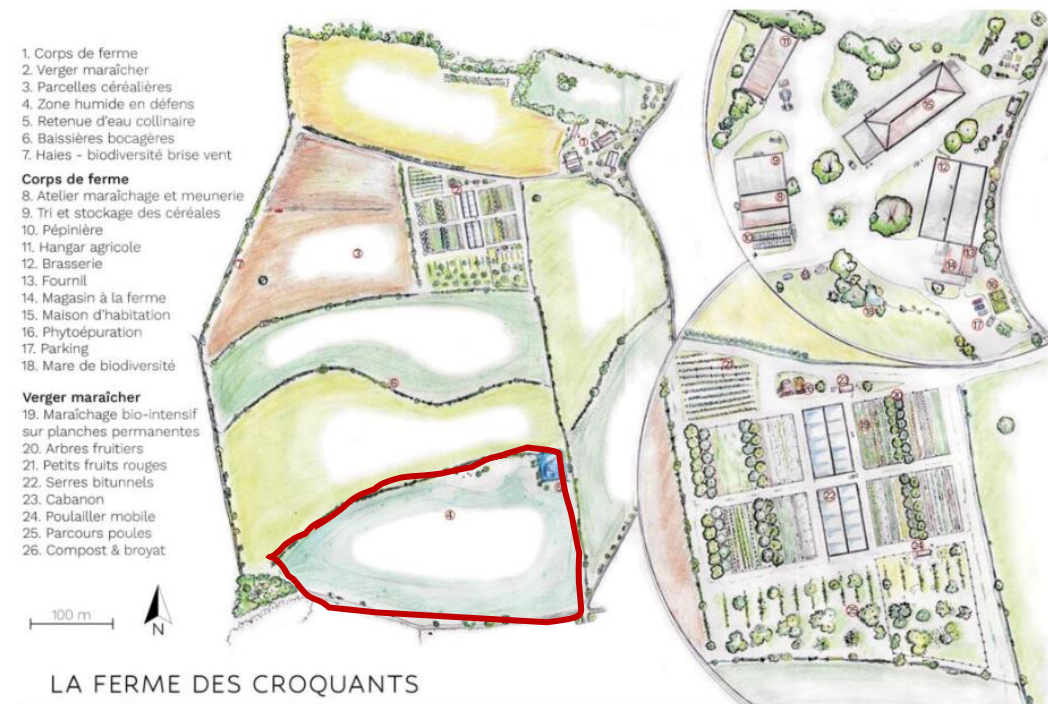
Ecological Analysis

- Biodiversity inventories
- Habitat mapping

Key Findings

- ✓ Presence of farmland biodiversity (birds and arable flora)
- ✓ **Existence of a degraded wetland on hydromorphic soils**
- ✓ Rare wetland habitat within a landscape dominated by arable crops

DÉCOUVREZ NOTRE EXPLOITATION



Why Restore the Wetland?

Importance of Wet Meadows

The degraded wetland represented a major ecological opportunity:

- Flood regulation
- Groundwater recharge
- Water purification
- Sediment retention
- Nutrient regulation
- Drought resilience

Climate Context

Increasing frequency and intensity of summer droughts in southern France make wetland restoration particularly important.



Restoration Strategy

Converting Cropland into Permanent Wet Meadow

Decision Taken by the GAEC

- 5 hectares dedicated to restoration
- Cultivation stopped within the wetland area
- Permanent wet grassland established

Objectives

- Restore wetland biodiversity
- Improve ecological functionality
- Produce quality late-season hay
- Maintain farm flexibility and economic viability



Restoration Techniques

Delimitation

Wetland boundary marked with bamboo stakes in 2024.

Management

- Single annual late mowing
- High cutting height (8–10 cm)
- Biomass removed from the field

Future Actions

- Establishment of a buffer zone
- Natural shrub layer development
- Potential reseedling through natural seed dispersal



Biodiversity Measures Beyond Wetland Restoration

Broader Agroecological Actions

Biodiversity Enhancement

- Densification of native hedgerow networks
- Creation of ponds
- Biodiversity monitoring

Species Monitored

- Wetland flora
- Pollinators
- Birds
- Other indicator species

Soil Management

- Soil analyses
- Reduced tillage
- Adapted farming practices



Funding and Support

Financing the Project

Main Investments

- €186,500 land purchase through Terre de Liens
- Grants for hedgerow planting
- LIFE Biodiv'Paysanne Project support

Supported Actions

- Biodiversity assessments
- Purchase of plant material
- Soil analyses
- Pond creation
- Wetland restoration planning



Expected Results and Transferability

Benefits of the Project

Environmental Benefits

- Wetland habitat restoration
- Increased biodiversity
- Improved water management
- Greater climate resilience

Agricultural Benefits

- High-quality hay production
- Operational flexibility
- Sustainable soil management

Replication Potential

- Transferable through:
- Terre de Liens
- SAFER
- Applicable to other farms facing wetland degradation and biodiversity loss.



Key Takeaways



Lessons Learned

- Biodiversity conservation can be integrated into productive farming systems.
- Wetland restoration can be achieved without jeopardizing farm viability.
- Collective governance and land stewardship are powerful tools for long-term sustainability.
- Partnerships between farmers, conservation organizations, and technical experts are essential for success.

Further Information

[Ferme des Croquants](#)

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Thank you for your attention

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