



the initiative

The awareness raising campaign that our organisation, based in Anversa degli Abruzzi in the heart of the Parchi d'Abruzzo is conducting, is aimed at involving the entire population on an important problem: the abandonment of the mountain habitat and environmental degradation.

Stock farmers are more and more alone in the protection of mountain areas, and the concepts of productivity, efficiency, and profitability are becoming more important also in political and operational decisions of our local administrations.

The safeguard, protection, and conservation of nature and of the culture that has led to utilise and enhance it down to our own times and claims to have established the oldest National Park in Europe as well as other newer parks and protected areas, is a value that is increasingly threatened by extinction, as semi-wild stock-rearing gradually disappears. Few people know and acknowledge the importance of high quality semi-wild stock-rearing both for the nutritive value of its products and for its role in protecting the environment by preventing fires, protecting the hydrogeology of the land, and guaranteeing biodiversity.

Our initiative, "Adopt a sheep and defend nature", is meant to invert this serious trend, and propose naturalists, environmentalists, and gourmets, the distance adoption of a sheep, that in exchange of maintenance and rearing expenses, will yield its fruits (lambs, milk, cheese, ricotta, wool, manure) as well as protection of the portion of land it defends together with the rest of the flock. Stock farms taking part in the initiative guarantee their products, including biological products, with quality marks, and among other things offer agritourist accommodation. Therefore the person adopting the sheep will be able to stay at the chosen stock farm and periodically follow the farm activities: grazing, lambing, milking, sharing, and transhumance. All this in full respect of the animals' needs and habits, as dictated by the regulations of biological production.

The initiative will be regulated by a written agreement, in great seriousness, correctness, and transparency, and everything will be appropriately recorded, invoiced, and documented with regular book-keeping according to law.

The advantages of the initiative "Adopt a sheep and defend nature" to the user are the following: a saving of over 12% of the market value of the products obtained, products that are certainly genuine, the option of using products derived exclusively from the adopted sheep (at the discretion of the user), since the adoption is nominal apart from the cheese products that need the milk of a number of sheep, which would still be guaranteed by being reared following the same criteria.

Considering the continuous reduction in the numbers of those who, though heirs of the millennial knowledge of sheep rearing, that is part of the pathway of human civilisation, are masters in the skill of managing domestic animals through the use of environmental resources without altering them, on the contrary conserving and enhancing them, we feel obliged to launch this initiative.

Adopt a sheep

Help the survival of a millennial culture

Protect the environment

Guarantee the preservation of transformation techniques that have given our civilisation that infinite range of cheeses, which together with sheep rearing are threatened by extinction today

Treat yourself to the honour of contributing to relaunch such an ancient and noble trade

Guarantee yourself a supply of healthy genuine products.

It has been documented from a number of sources that sheep rearing is the first link in the chain of environmental balance, that guarantees the mowing of pastoral essences and therefore the permanent presence of smaller avifauna, the cultivation of inaccessible and inhospitable areas, the conservation of poorly infrastructured

land, the continuity of the food cycle for the conservation of the large carnivores such as the Apennine wolf and occasionally the bear; the protection of wood fires and an active garrison also of difficult areas less exposed than others to the influence of man.

Furthermore, stock rearing, and in general, country life are closely related to ethical values that support and materialise the harmonious union between man and the environment, indispensable opposition to the "technological culture" that is so popular today.

To lose these ties means to lose one's identity, to deny history, the origins, the traditions that have made our civilisation so important.

The initiative of offering our flocks in adoption is meant to attract the public interest and attention on problems that are greatly felt by persons who, like us, perhaps against the stream, have decided to dedicate their lives to the safeguard of activities, so noble, though difficult and painful.

Moreover, the attempt is aimed at bringing together persons who can understand and feel the environmental and cultural problems of the pastoral world today, who appreciate its rich values, sensations, sentiments, material actions, and rural humble gestures.

The third objective is to offer certified biological products directly to the public, without expensive intermediaries, and also to guarantee the consumer the possibility of a direct control of production and rearing and transformation techniques, by closely following the process in each of its moments.

The rearing stages can be controlled from a distance, by e_mail or by conventional correspondence, and a periodic bulletin with articles on the important phases of production, the selection of the reproducers, coupling, milking, shearing, transfer to the summer mountain grazing fields, litter composting, participation at fairs, and so on, will be drawn up and sent.

Over the Internet it will be possible to take active part in the life of the farm with suggestions, indications, or simply with a request for information.

The contribution is only an advance capital, which will be returned with interests, in the form of products.

With an annual contribution of € 190,00 we will be able to count on a capital that will help us by anticipating the shelter and feeding expenses and encourage us in carrying on our activity.

Upon signing the convention, the "adoptive parent" will establish whether and how to collect the products, how to assign them, and how to benefit from them.

Special concessions, discounts or promotions for all the events and shows related to pastoral life will be reserved to those who join: the shearing festival in April - May; the transhumance festival at the end of May - beginning of June; the guide to the flocks at the summer mountain pastures on foot or on horseback in mid June; guided excursions in high altitude pastures in July - September; thematic evenings on production, pastoral activity, and taste laboratories, according to a calendar that will be updated every six months.

Identity documents are available for each sheep ready for adoption, as well as an illustration handbook on the project.

To take part in the project or simply to ask for further information, it will be sufficient to contact:

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