

# Training offer for Italian shepherds



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## 'The shepherd is a guardian of future'

'Il pastore è un guardiano del futuro' (The shepherd is a guardian of future) is an online training course which was held in February and April 2022. The course had the aim 'to reflect on pastoralism, safeguarding and regeneration of territories'.

It addressed the following topics:

- Landscapes, stories and bio-cultural heritage of pastoralism;
- Ecosystem services and relationships with territories;
- Sustainable pastoralism and agriculture, mountains and lowlands, movement routes and protection of shepherd heritage;
- Biodiversity, zotechnical knowledge, interspecific relations, animal wellbeing;
- Politics and shepherds' rights;
- Multifunctionality of farming businesses and tourism linked to pastoralism.

Discussions during the course addressed topics such as income diversification as a way of dealing with the transformation of rural economy and way of life. Multifunctionality could cover primary products (milk, meat, wool), transformation of raw materials and activities connected to tourism and cultural heritage.

Alternative uses of wool received special attention. Developments in, for example, the bio-construction industry and clothing may provide new opportunities for wool producers.

**References:** <https://www.iisgaribaldimacerata.edu.it/pagine/corso-di-formazione-il-pastore--un-guardiano-del-futuro> | <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/project/LIFE20-NAT-IT-001076/shepherds-for-biodiversity-in-mountain-marginal-areas> | <https://www.italiachecambia.org/2022/08/scuola-nazionale-pastorizia/>

## Participants and their needs and interests

The course was open to everybody, and the organizers received more than 50 applications from Italy, Brazil, Canada, France, and Spain. The professional background and training varied greatly among participants. Participants were young shepherds and farmers, mountain guides, students, bloggers, and journalists.

A selection of participants – shepherds, artisans working with sheep wool, a veterinarian, and farm owners – shared their experiences and challenges on a public meeting. They pointed out that efforts should be made to include other stakeholders in the sharing of knowledge, such as immigrants employed as transhumance practitioners, and regional and national politicians responsible for legal issues and agricultural policy.

## National School of Shepherds (SNAP)

The course is part of an effort to establish a National School of Shepherds (SNAP) in Italy. Among others, the following organizations developed and offered the course:

- The institutions involved in the development of SNAP
- The Macerata Institute for the history of Resistance movement and Contemporary age, which after the earthquakes of 2016–2017 has started to work with local communities with the aim of preserving their identities;

- Macerata Agrarian Institute which was planning to provide courses about mountains-lowlands systems.

SNAP will be organized as a network of regional schools providing courses. Some have already started such as the Sardinian School for Pastoralists by the local action group.

'Anglona Coros' and the Casentino Schools of the Eu-financed LIFE Project 'Shep4Bio'. The project is located in the National Park of Foreste Casentinesi (in the Apennines, between Tuscany and Romagna).