

What happened on the farm in February?

A forty strong group (some of whom are in the photo) visited the farm and dairy on the 15th as part of an excursion to Karrantza organized by the local Tourist Office.



On the 25th, Mertxe, Unai and Blanca visited us as part of their sea

for certified, local organic produce from small farms.



On the 26th Edurne from the Basque Organic Council undertook

the inspection of the farm and dairy in accordance with the EU

norms for organic production and certification.



On the 27th three farmers from Gipuzkoa visited us,

both to gather information about our project and to

answer loads of questions we had ready for them. It

was a most interesting and encouraging exchange.

Flower of the month: Peach (*Prunus persica*)



The peach is a deciduous tree native to northwest China where

it was first domesticated and cultivated. The specific name

“persica” refers to its widespread cultivation in Persia (nowadays

Iran) and the early belief that this is where peaches originated as it was from Persia that peaches were taken to Europe, both as fruit and for cultivation. The edible fruit is known as either a peach or a nectarine, which are not, contrary to popular belief, different species. In fact, it is thought that a mutation in a single gene is responsible for the hair or no-hair difference between the two. Nowadays there are hundreds of peach cultivars, the tree from which the above photo was taken has grown from a cutting taken from a peach tree in the Rioja area of the Iberian peninsula and no name was recorded of the original cultivar.

Three bull calves and two heifers calves were born in February.

What was the weather like?

February has been unusually dry and we only collected 21 litres in

the rain gauge during the first three weeks of the month and then

a further 23 litres in the last week. Frequent strong southerly winds

were behind this lack of rain and so the little rain we did have during

the month was very welcome. The minimum temperature was high

considering the time of year, 10-13°C although some mornings were

actually much cooler, with lows of 2.3°C for example. Maximum

temperatures of over 20°C were clearly very unseasonable. The warm

sunny days encouraged ~~Phainopepla~~ lizards () to appear.



The same days we usually had very colourful dawns.



What did the cows eat?

Once again, the cows ate forage (alfalfa, etc) and a little concentrate

but were this month were not able to graze outside. Towards the last

week of the month, with dry, sunny weather, we were able to mow and

take fresh grass to the cows in the barn, although several days of rain

then meant we could no longer do so the last few days of February.



Apart from the normal daily chores we also spread slurry, cleared brambles

along field margins and ended fences.

Recipe of the month: Sticky whisky marmalade pudding

This is a variation of the traditional bread and butter pudding

we included on the website in March 2012.

300g butter

300g bread (suggest day old loaf)

Marmalade (with or without rind according to taste)

3 eggs

60g plus 1 tbsp organic brown sugar

2 tbsp whisky

275ml whole milk

75ml nata

Nutmeg to taste

Zest of small lemon

Zest of small orange

To serve: thick double cream or crème fraîche

Slice bread (quite thick slices) and butter both sides, placing a

layer in the bottom of an over proof dish. Spread marmalade over

these slices. Cover with another layer of buttered slices of bread.

Whisk eggs and 60g sugar, then whisk in whisky, milk, cream and

another spoonful of marmalade. Grate in nutmeg, lemon and orange

zest. Pour the mixture over the bread pushing bread into liquid until

completely covered. Leave to rest 30 minutes.

Heat oven to 180°C.

Scatter the last tablespoon of sugar over the top of the pudding and

bake for 35-40 minutes, Cool for 10 minutes

before serving with cream or crème fraiche.

We went to the farmers market in Bilbao every week.

The quality of our milk

Parameter

Optimum result

Farm result

Fat content

>3,70

3,74

Protein

>3,10

3,09

Bacteriology

<100.000

10.000

Somatic cell count

c.150.000

146.000

Presence / **absence antibiotics**

Absence

Absence