

# FARO Estates: Certifying Legal Water and Land Use in Doñana

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*Raúl Ahijón inspecting the water intake during a technical farm verification.*

We're sharing a story in which Ahijón Albarrán appears as an active participant in a project we're proud of: the FARO Doñana initiative, driven by WWF Spain together with the Spanish Society of Organic Farming and Agroecology (SEAE) and the Puerta de Doñana Farmers' Association, with funding from the Biodiversity Foundation (Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge).

## What the project involves

FARO Doñana requires every farm that wants to take part in the programme to first certify the legal use of its water and land resources. It is a direct response to a well-known problem in the area: an estimated 3,983 hectares draw water from the aquifer irregularly (14.37 hm<sup>3</sup> per year), and unauthorised irrigation exists outside the recognised agricultural zones. The project's aim is precisely to reverse that situation through transparency and responsible management, protecting a space as sensitive as Doñana.

## Our role

As an agricultural engineer and agronomic advisor, with more than 20 years of experience and the last decade focused on agriculture and sustainability projects, my team and I carry out the documentary review and technical verification of candidate farms, including on-site visits to inspect water intakes, irrigation infrastructure and control systems.

As I explain in the article:

*"It's not enough to check a farm's current situation. We also review its historical evolution..."*

It isn't just a snapshot of the present: we analyse how each farm has evolved over time to make sure that the legality of water and land use is real and sustained, not just a one-off. Once our verification is complete, independent CAAE auditors carry out the external check that certifies compliance.

Being part of this process is a concrete way of putting our technical work at the service of Doñana's conservation, and of accompanying farms in the area on their way toward fully legal and transparent water and land management.

 You can read the full story in [Revista Ae: Fincas FARO certifies legal water and land use](#).