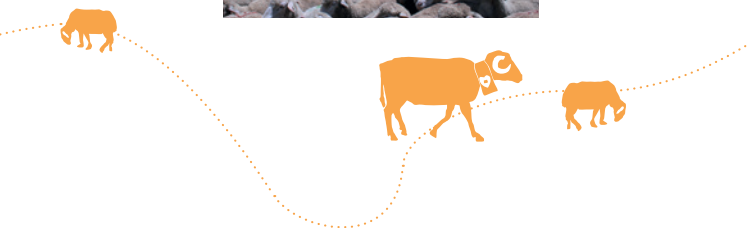




# EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RESOURCE CENTRE ON TRANSHUMANCE

Domaine du Merle / Salon-de-Provence / France



**MAISON  
DE LA  
TRANSHUMANCE**

**l'institut Agro**  
agriculture • alimentation • environnement

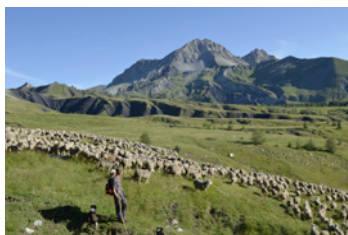
Montpellier  
**SupAgro**



## THE DOMAINE DU MERLE

### **The Euro-Mediterranean Resource Centre on Transhumance**

can be found at the Domaine du Merle, property of Montpellier SupAgro, now *L'institut Agro*, in the heart of the La Crau plain. Bequeathed in 1920 by the widow of a Marseille banker, Félix Abram, who was passionate about agriculture and livestock farming. This large estate, comprising irrigated grasslands and “coussouls” (dry grasslands), became, in accordance with the wishes of the beneficiaries, a central location for experimentation and training. It was there that the modernisation of sheep farming in south-west France began and was organised, after the second world war, with the introduction of training for departmental shepherd assistants, livestock farmers and transhumant shepherds and, in 1955, with the creation of a stud farm for rams of the local transhumant breed, Arles Merino. Today, the Domaine du Merle still continues its animal husbandry training and experimentation work, undertaken in collaboration with the INRA (Institut national de la recherche agronomique – National Institute for Agronomic Research) and the regional sheep industry. It is home to the oldest training centre for transhumant shepherds in France, comprising two mountain pastures in Alpes-Maritimes, including one in the heart of the Mercantour National Park, and is the subject of a strategic plan that should enable it to become a benchmark centre for Mediterranean agropastoralism, within the next few years.





## THE RESOURCE CENTRE

**Located in 2019 in the east wing of the estate's main building,** it comprises an 80 m<sup>2</sup> space, specially designed for the preservation of various collections, and a 15 m<sup>2</sup> space for their management and consultation.

These collections comprise specialist books, magazines and periodicals, archives, research materials and reports, iconographic documents (mainly photographs) and analogue and digital audio files, from associations, institutions and private individuals. This collection constitutes a unique set of documentation in France on the great sheep transhumance, aimed at researchers, livestock farmers, students, professional organisations, authorities, associations and private individuals, etc.

In addition to the onsite management and consultation of the collections, the Resource centre's own website will soon be available online thanks to archive processing software. Significant document digitisation work has just begun in order to facilitate online consultation. The centre aims to gradually welcome several other collections linked to transhumance and pastoralism.





# THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN NETWORK

■ One of the Resource Centre's objectives is to promote the cross-disciplinary approach needed for the study of transhumance, through agronomic cooperation, animal husbandry, ecology, geography, economics, anthropology, history, linguistics, etc. Input and crossover is required from many disciplines for this study.

■ This Centre must also confirm Le Merle's national mission to become France's spiritual home of remembrance and living culture of the great sheep transhumance and to assert its place within the network of structures active in this field, both in France and in the countries of the Mediterranean region, thus providing access to the Euro-Mediterranean scientific community, those involved in pastoral livestock farming as well as the wider public.

■ For this purpose, it benefits from the vast network led by Montpellier SupAgro within the CIHEAM (Centre international de hautes études agronomiques méditerranéennes - International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies), as part of the IAMM (Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier), in particular, as well as the one the Maison de la transhumance has been working to establish since its creation.





Moreover, the Maison de la transhumance is in dialogue with several international institutions, including the IUCN, and remains in constant contact with neighbouring organisations and those sharing similar objectives (Bergerie nationale de Rambouillet, Maison du berger de Champoléon, etc.).

The Centre figures highly on the inventory sheet, which made it possible, in June 2020, for transhumance practices and expertise to be registered on France's Intangible Cultural Heritage, and to be included in a registration file of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, as part of a multinational application to UNESCO.

This map is still incomplete. Knowledge of the history of transhumance, its common characteristics as its differences remain to be established across the entire Mediterranean basin. / Research data: P. Fabre, J.C. Duclos / Cartography: N. Esperguin (CPI Musée dauphinois) and I. Caplain, Visual Art Design, 2012. / Sources: F. Braudel, The Mediterranean, Space and History, Paris 1977 - J.C. Duclos, Man and Sheep, Grenoble, 1994.





## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Domaine et Centre de Formation du Merle

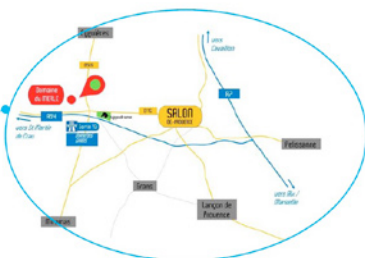
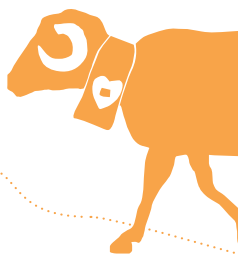
Route d'Arles  
13300 Salon de Provence  
France

GPS

43.643394

5.016207

Le Merle



The Resource Centre located at Domaine du Merle is accessible by appointment.

Tel : +33 (0)4 90 17 06 68 or +33 (0)4 09 17 01 50

Email: [mdt@transhumance.org](mailto:mdt@transhumance.org)

The documents can only be consulted onsite. Since the consultation room is not accessible by persons with reduced mobility, an adapted room on the ground floor is available, the required documents will be provided for consultation.

For more information :

Maison de la transhumance : [www.transhumance.org](http://www.transhumance.org)

Montpellier SupAgro : [www.montpellier-supagro.fr](http://www.montpellier-supagro.fr)

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