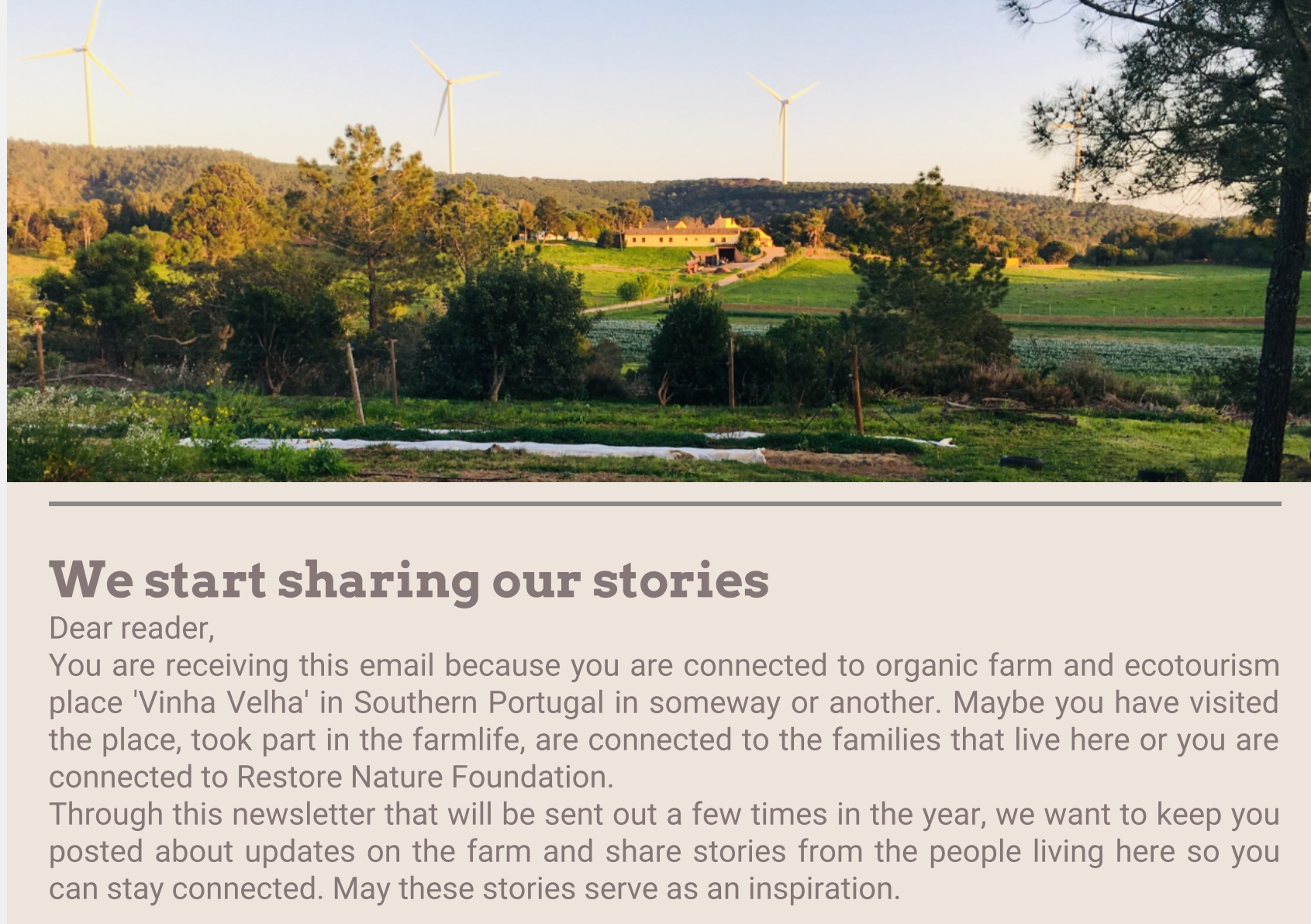


# Vinha Velha News



## We start sharing our stories

Dear reader,  
You are receiving this email because you are connected to organic farm and ecotourism place 'Vinha Velha' in Southern Portugal in some way or another. Maybe you have visited the place, took part in the farm life, are connected to the families that live here or you are connected to Restore Nature Foundation.  
Through this newsletter that will be sent out a few times in the year, we want to keep you posted about updates on the farm and share stories from the people living here so you can stay connected. May these stories serve as an inspiration.

**Important:** It could be that you can't see the whole newsletter as an email or maybe you can't see all the pictures. If so, please click the link at the bottom to open it in a new window.



### Meet our storyteller

Maybe you already met Mattijs, better known as Mattie. He arrived at Vinha Velha 3 years ago and started fulfilling his life mission of restoring nature in the degraded lands of Southern Portugal. Driven to connect people around regeneration and realize deep ecological impact, he founded the 'Restore Nature Foundation' and a landscape regeneration consultancy business.

Passionate to share hopeful stories about the future of our planet and Vinha Velha.

## The urgent water situation

### A regional problem

The South of Portugal is facing serious water problems. This is caused by degradation of the natural ecosystems and a long period of drought. But specifically this year the urgency is noticeable due to the lack of rainfall. The main water reservoirs are drying up, resulting in water restrictions this summer for people living in this region. Big monoculture producers buy their access to water but small farms are facing serious problems this summer.

### Vinha Velha's water situation

Vinha Velha has their own water catchment systems, consisting of a series of lakes on the almost 140 hectares piece of land. But the water lines are alarmingly low this year. This resulted in the decision to decrease the vegetable production immensely this summer to prevent the lakes from drying out completely. And an even more conscious way of (re)using water in the living areas. Delia continues to produce some vegetables and seeds at a befriended farm.

Picture left: Vinha Velha's main lake: 5 years ago you could dive from the wooden platform

Picture right: Delia's vegetable, flower and seed production continues outside of Vinha Velha



### Vinha Velha's actions to deal with the issue

In a search for solutions, Vinha Velha took action. It began with the search for water underneath the ground. After consulting with different sources, a big drilling machine was brought to Vinha Velha to drill a deep hole since there were indications of a water source beneath the surface. Unfortunately after four drilling attempts, reaching depths of nearly 100 meters, the hopes of finding water in the ground disappeared. Then last winter a new lake was dug at the lowest point in the landscape: big machine action for 3 weeks straight. This way more rainwater can be harvested. Also, a new water tank was built on top of one of a hill. This will be filled up with the water of the main lake. This is an attempt to save water from evaporating and using the force of gravity to redistribute water in Vinha Velha.

Photo left: new water tank.

Photo right: digging action

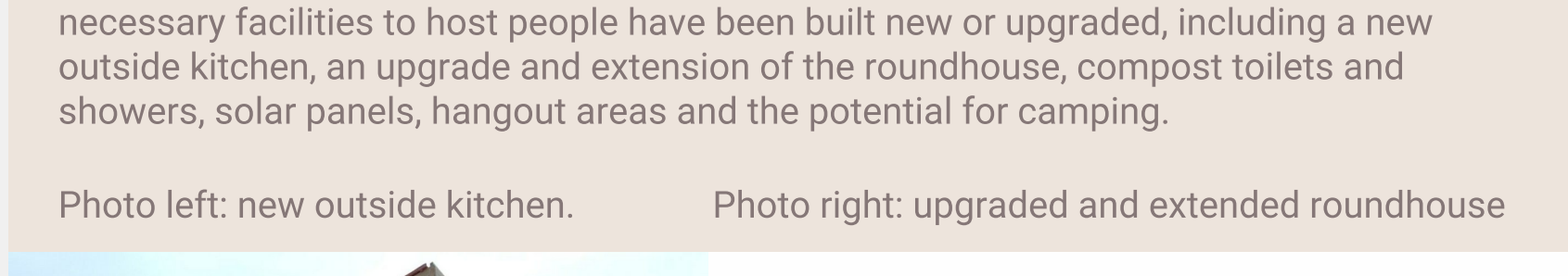


Photo left: endresult: the new lake.

Photo right: digging a borehole



## The new Roundhouse area

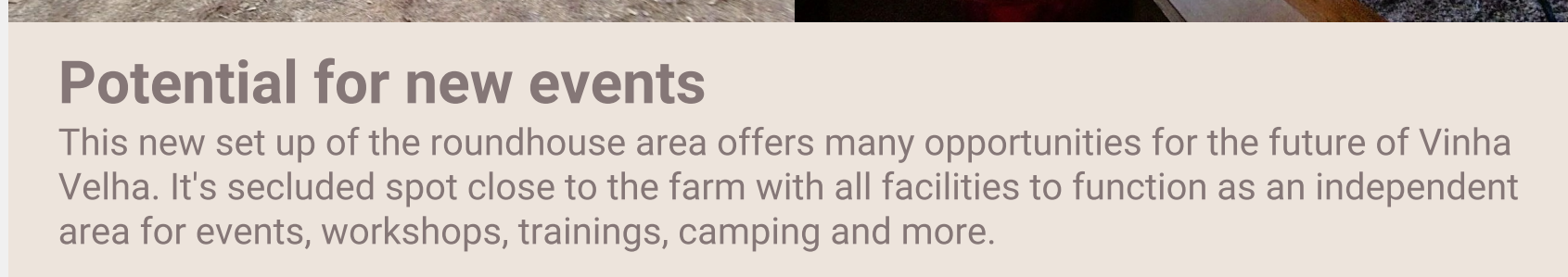


Photo: roundhouse area from a distance

### New building action

Plans to give the roundhouse area a new update were there for some years. This year these plans were realized, creating an area full of potential (see picture above)! All necessary facilities to host people have been built new or upgraded, including a new outside kitchen, an upgrade and extension of the roundhouse, compost toilets and showers, solar panels, hangout areas and the potential for camping.

Photo left: new outside kitchen.

Photo right: upgraded and extended roundhouse

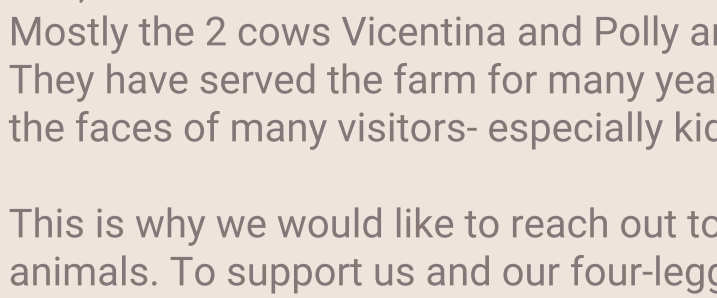
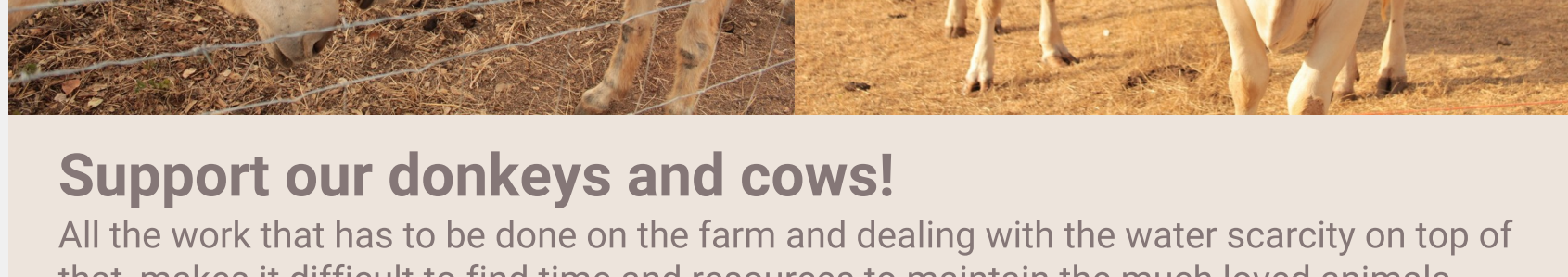


Photo left: showers and compost toilets.

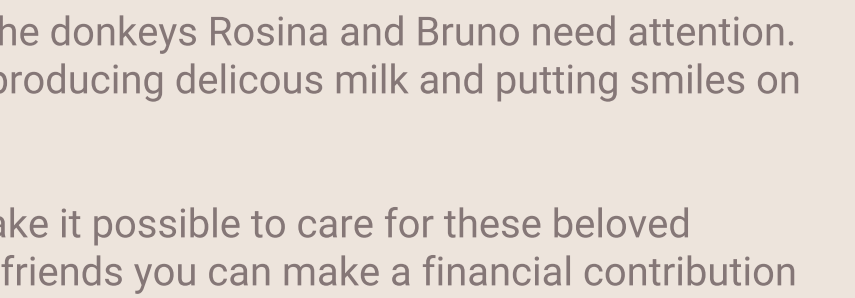
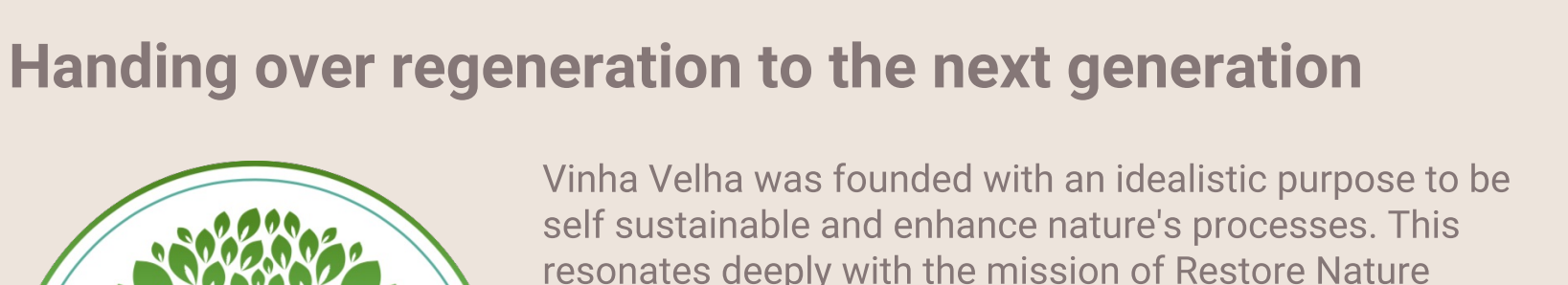


Photo right: kitchen view



### Potential for new events

This new set up of the roundhouse area offers many opportunities for the future of Vinha Velha. It's secluded spot close to the farm with all facilities to function as an independent area for events, workshops, trainings, camping and more.

## Our animals

### Animal diversity

From the start one of Hubert's main goals was to make the farm as diverse as possible. Investments were made both in forest and plant cultivation, but soon also in animal husbandry. Over the years, pigs, chickens, ducks, sheep, horses and donkeys were added and soon a small herd of cows. Good fences were and are needed to keep the animals from breaking out and eating the cabbages from neighbours. Also, the water problem has effects on the possibilities to produce food for the animals and take care of them.

Photo left: Bruno and Rosina.

Photo right: Polly and Vicentina



### Support our donkeys and cows!

All the work that has to be done on the farm and dealing with the water scarcity on top of that, makes it difficult to find time and resources to maintain the much loved animals. Mostly the 2 cows Vicentina and Polly and the donkeys Rosina and Bruno need attention. They have served the farm for many years, producing delicious milk and putting smiles on the faces of many visitors- especially kids!

This is why we would like to reach out to make it possible to care for these beloved animals. To support us and our four-legged friends you can make a financial contribution one-time or on a regular basis. The collected amount is used for all the ongoing costs: animal feed, fences, veterinary, water supply etc.

VINHA VELHA AGROPECUARIA  
IBAN: PT50 0045 7191 4000 7936 9564 3  
SUBJECT: DONATION

## Restoring Nature

### Handing over regeneration to the next generation



Vinha Velha was founded with an idealistic purpose to be self sustainable and enhance nature's processes. This resonates deeply with the mission of Restore Nature Foundation (see [website](#)). It's an honour to continue the regeneration process of Vinha Velha that it's founder Hubert started 40 years ago.

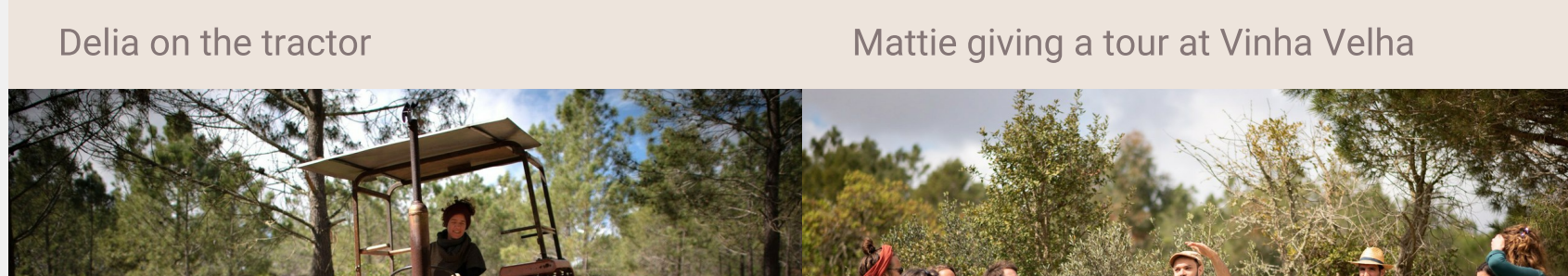
Photo left: core team Restore Nature Foundation.  
Photo right: planting action



### Actively restoring landscapes

Restore Nature Foundation is a non profit organization that aims to restore natural ecosystems and connect people to their environment. Starting in Southern Portugal, on the frontlines of Europe's desertification and climate change processes. Empowering people to realize deep ecological impact through educational events, knowledge, tools, resources and a support network.

Below: Our planting sites in the region on mapping tool [explorer.land](#), including [Vinha Velha](#): the big one in the middle

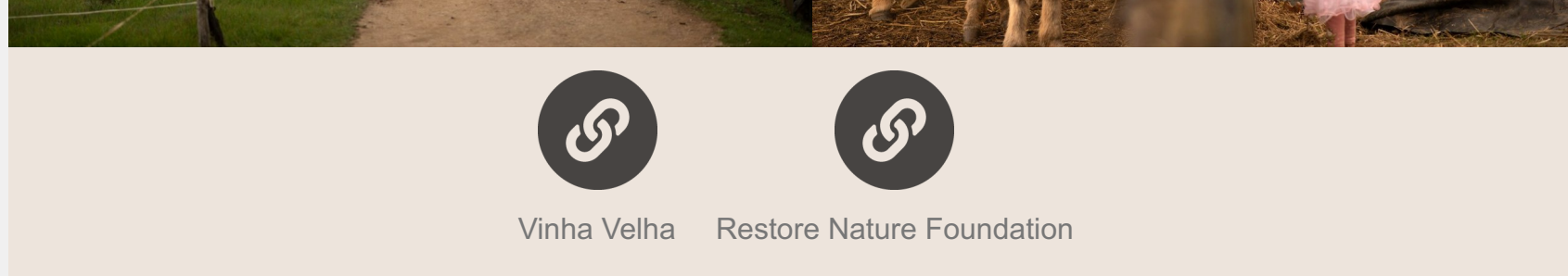


### Accessible events to promote regeneration

Restore Nature Foundation's 'Fridays for Future' often take place at Vinha Velha. These are accessible events on Friday morning in nature open to the public. Here we learn about, connect to and have a positive impact on our environment through hands on actions to restore the forest ecosystems that once covered Portugal.

Photo left: Fridays for Future actions.

Photo right: kids are the future regenerators!



### Syntropic Agroforestry course at Vinha Velha!

Mattie (founder Restore Nature Foundation) and Manuel (experienced agroforester) offer a 5 day course in Syntropic Agroforestry facilitated by experienced teacher Felipe Amato. Inspired by the way forests develop naturally, Syntropic Agroforestry combines ecological, social and economic impact with high productivity. For us this is one of the most promising methods that can be applied in any kind of climate, even in the dry Algarve.

For more info or registration contact +31634546373 or [matthijswansink@gmail.com](mailto:matthijswansink@gmail.com). Spaces are limited to ensure a quality learning experience for all participants so register soon!

### SYNTROPIC AGROFORESTRY COURSE

Do you want to learn how to regenerate land while producing an abundance of food? In 5 days we learn:

- tools to tackle regional challenges of drought, desertification, loss of biodiversity and more.
- how to understand and mimic natural processes that can be applied in any kind of climate.
- highly productive planting methods that also regenerate the original forest ecosystem

**Dates:** 15-19th October  
**Place:** Barão de São João  
**Language:** English  
**Including:** organic lunch & snacks  
**Social sliding scale:** €450-€600\*  
**Contact:** +31634546373  
[matthijswansink@gmail.com](mailto:matthijswansink@gmail.com)



**Felipe Amato** has vast experience with Syntropic agroforestry. He has been teaching over 10 years in Europe and Brazil. Open and charismatic, using lots of practical and audiovisual examples.

### Find out more

Find out more about our work and virtually visit the land that we are restoring [here](#). If you want to support our mission, consider 'adopting' a piece of land (€10 per square meter) through us that we will restore in your name.

Support us

### Have a good end of the summer!

Delia on the tractor

Mattie giving a tour at Vinha Velha



Woofler Ram returning to the farm

The donkeys receiving some love



Vinha Velha Restore Nature Foundation

Deze e-mail is verzonden aan [{{email}}](#). • Als u geen nieuwsbrief meer wilt ontvangen, kunt u zich [hier afmelden](#). • U kunt ook uw [gegevens inzien en wijzigen](#). • Voor een goede ontvangst voegt u [matthijswansink@gmail.com](mailto:matthijswansink@gmail.com) toe aan uw adresboek.

