



Dehesa Maladúa began with the purchase, in 1989, by Eduardo Donato, of a piece of land with that name located in the heart of the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Natural Park, a Biosphere Reserve for UNESCO.

It is a family business dedicated to the organic exploitation, of acorn-fed Iberian pigs, within the Certificate of Origin “Jabugo”, which reflects the philosophy of life and the personal adventure of its founder.



Drawn by the wonderful Mediterranean forest, that Dehesa Maladúa represents, Eduardo Donato decides to abandon his life as a builder in his native Catalonia to dedicate himself to an agricultural activity that the locals had abandoned in the days of the rural exodus.

As many small farmers and ranchers, especially organic ones, who are starting out in these adventures, Eduardo Donato's beginnings were particularly hard. The farmhouse, semi-ruined, lacked electricity and running water, despite being located near the source of a river. The farm could only be accessed on foot or on horseback. The traditional implements and utensils that had been abandoned by the previous owners, were still there and which are on show.

In 2001 he obtained organic certification for his land from the Andalusian Committee for Organic Agriculture (CAAE), which he has maintained uninterruptedly ever since.

The Diputación de Huelva was looking for farmers at that time who wanted to help prevent the complete disappearance of the lineage of Iberian pig known as "Manchado de Jabugo", of which there were fewer specimens than Iberian lynxes. Eduardo Donato was the only volunteer, becoming through personal conviction, the pioneer in the breeding and exploitation of acorn-fed Iberian pigs under an organic production regime.

The "Manchado de Jabugo" lineage, was included as a specific breed of Iberian Pig, in the official catalog of endangered Spanish livestock breeds (R.D. 2129/2008 of December 26). Its singularity also received international recognition by appearing with its own entity within the section of world pig breeds in danger of extinction in the DAD-IS program on conservation of animal genetic resources of the FAO.

Despite representing, in terms of wilderness and quality, the purest essences of the Iberian pig, this autochthonous variety has been ignored by the sector due to its poor economic performance.

The litters of Manchado de Jabugo are, indeed, small (an average of five piglets) The animals are small, and, above all, a large number of specimens have unpigmented hooves. That is to say white, which goes against the current of the association that the consumer makes between acorn-fed Iberian ham and the expression "pata negra".



Oblivious to the arguments that seemed to hinder the economic viability of the "Manchado de Jabugo", Eduardo Donato opted for it. He relied on a fact that seemed essential to him, this was the variety of Iberian pig that the previous inhabitants of his and the surrounding pastures had raised for their own consumption.

He soon verified that the fact that the "Capa Negra" variety (which Eduardo Donato himself also bred at the beginning and which he has gradually abandoned) had prevailed over the others was mainly due to the needs of the large enterprises, rather than the desire to preserve authenticity and pursue excellence.

For decades, going against all odds, Eduardo Donato dedicated himself to raising his "manchaditos", as he calls them. He rescued traditional know-how and, laid the foundations for the exploitation of the Iberian pig under an organic regime. He made a decisive contribution to the organic certification of his entire production chain, and paving the way for those who have followed in his footsteps.



Certifications aside (necessary, in any case, to guarantee consumer confidence), Eduardo Donato is one of those who maintains that "bio" is nothing more than sticking to the traditional methods of production, in line with Nature, allowing us to recover the quality of long ago. Hence its motto, "Ecological Tradition", and the slogan of its brand, "Preserving the authentic".

In addition to the unique genetics of his specimens, Donato attributes the quality of his products to the way of life of the animals. These pigs accumulate up to three montaneras, that is, three autumns and winters. During this period the pigs feed mainly on acorns (and in the case of Dehesa Maladúa also wild fruits), taking constant exercise in a particularly rugged pasture like this.

He is very committed to the animal's welfare. If he notices that any of the animals that are going to the slaughterhouse are nervous, he will remove them from the group to avoid that the rest of the animals get disturbed.

The natural drying of the hams, which can take up to six and even more years, takes place in a traditional drying room in the town of Cumbres Mayores, considered one of the oldest on record. According to the experts, the suitability of this dryer has a lot to do with an underground river that provides the required levels of humidity.

Eduardo Donato began his journey, within the DOP Huelva that would later be called Jabugo, with a very limited production of 100% Iberian acorn-fed hams of the "Manchado de Jabugo" lineage. Due to the importance represented by immobilized goods, since up to ten years can pass between the birth of the animal and the commercialization of the product, he considered that the only way to achieve, not just profitability, but sustainability, was with sales price of this exclusive ham. The ham is sold in an artisan box made from hundred-year-old holm oaks blown down by the wind. The price of each ham is approximately four thousand euros per piece. Little by little, supported only by the authenticity of his product, since he did not carry out any publicity campaign, his product began to gain notoriety and acceptance.



The case of Dehesa Maladúa is one more example of a Spanish producer who, without having sought it, first received public recognition from abroad. Specifically, from the largest ecological fair in the world, Biofach, which is held in the German city of Nuremberg and in which more than 45,000 professionals from some 130 countries vote for the best product.

In 2016, having attended this fair at the hands of EXTENDA and the Andalusian certification body CAAE, the one that received the most votes from international professionals was the pure Iberian acorn-fed ham of the "Manchado de Jabugo" lineage from Dehesa Maladúa.

It was the first time (and to date the only time) that a Spanish organic product received the award from the

most important world organic fair in the category in which all kinds of products from around the world compete (that is, it is not an award reserved for producers of organic oil or wine, which compete in their respective category).

Curiously, the award bears the nickname "Best New Product", which led Eduardo Donato to declare that the "novel" character of his ham is because it recovers flavours and textures of long ago, unknown to the new generations.

This maximum international recognition highlighted not only the quality of a specific product, but also the ability of Spanish producers to guarantee the highest standards in terms of animal welfare, an aspect that had significant media coverage.

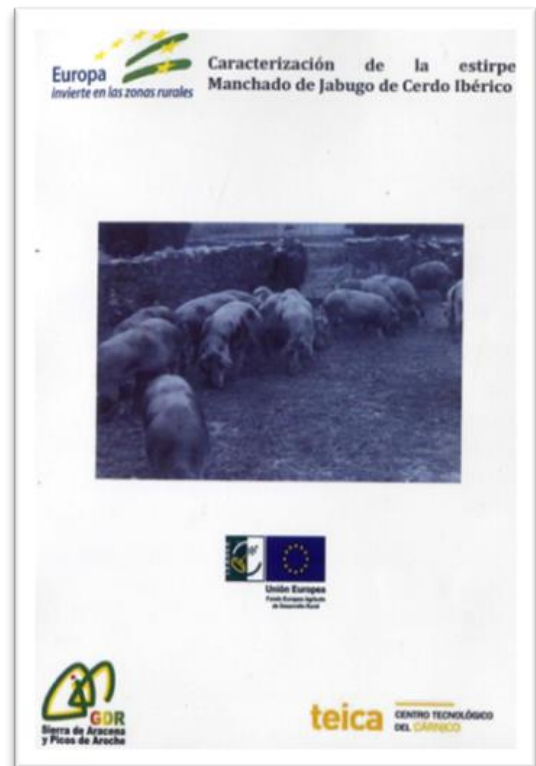
Another international recognition for dedication over the years would come from the European Union itself, which financed a study on the characterization of the line of Iberian pig "Manchado de Jabugo".

The conclusion of the study, for which Dehesa Maladúa provided samples, is that the meat of the pigs of this line finished in montanera is the healthiest of all the meats present on the market, highlighting its high level of "favourable levels of fatty acids, from the point of view of the cardiovascular health of consumers".

The professional tasters who participated in the tests recognized, with a confidence level of 99.9% the samples of this line of Iberian pig.

Considering the morphological, phenotypic, genetic, productive and quality points of view, the study classified the specimens of this lineage as an "autochthonous animal genetic resource of incalculable cultural value and, therefore, deserving of all the efforts necessary to preserve it, taking into account their critical census situation".

The international media impact achieved by Eduardo Donato, thanks to journalists and



television crews from all over the world (Japan, Germany, United States, Russia, China...), led the Guinness organization to nominate him with the "World Record" certificate, which Dehesa Maladúa has held for five years, until, at the end of 2020, in a contest on a Japanese television channel, someone paid around twelve thousand euros for a ham.



Within the company, the person responsible for the breeding, management and fattening of the Iberian pigs of the “Manchado de Jabugo” lineage is Marta Donato, Eduardo's daughter, who is considered a “young breeder” accepted by the rural development program of Andalusia 2014-2020.



Dehesa Maladúa outsources a significant part of its production process for the benefit of family and artisan businesses in the area, which employ women and young people, including all kinds of services (transport, supplies...) used by the company in this rural area.

Dehesa Maladúa trains and accompanies other farmers in the area in the organic farming regime, and then purchases their products indirectly creating jobs and ensuring the continuity of this activity under the organic farming regime.

The “Diputación de Huelva”, (Provincial Council of Huelva) maintains a collaboration agreement with the company, in the form of a decree, for the exchange of reproducers of the Manchado de Jabugo lineage, to avoid consanguinity.

Specimens of this lineage leave from Dehesa Maladúa for some of the fourteen farmers who have followed in the footsteps of Eduardo Donato, so that in a few years the first hams from these farmers will be on the market.

All of this means that the lineage is now not as badly in danger of extinction. This also affects the rural area, in socioeconomic terms, as well as at a cultural level and

awareness in terms of biodiversity, preservation of the environment and promotion of animal welfare.



Due to its family nature, the company selectively participates in promotional and prospecting actions at a national and international level, attending fairs, particularly dedicated to organic products, in Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium.

The strong point of the company's corporate image is its ability to put a face on the product and the sector, an aspect that distinguishes it on the Spanish scene and which has led "Forbes" magazine to consider Dehesa Maladúa "the benchmark world of Iberian ham.

The company is waiting for the Junta de Andalucía to give the go-ahead on the rehabilitation of one of the building to make an interpretation centre for the Iberian pig lineage. "Manchado de Jabugo", based on the restoration of this existing traditional building within Dehesa Maladúa:

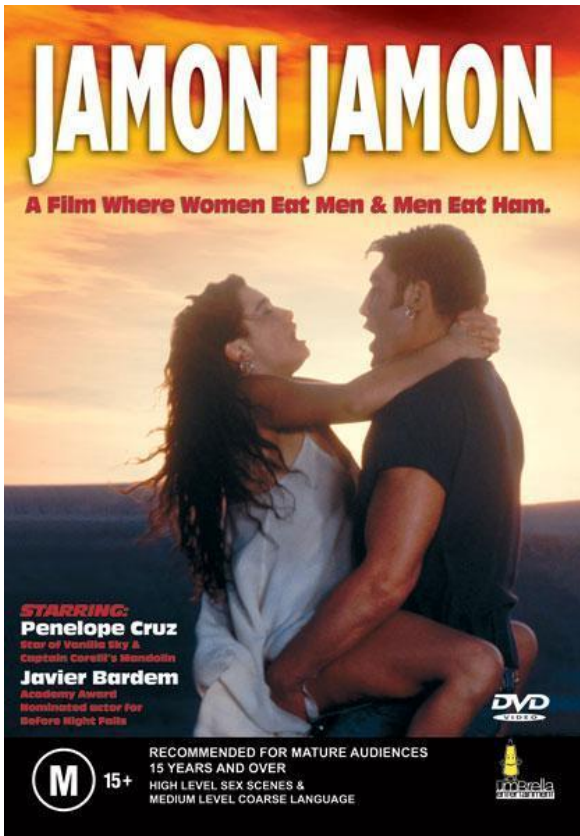


The centre will include a reception, screening room, library, kitchen and tasting room. In this way, it will be possible to better attend the continuous movement of visitors interested in learning first-hand about this lineage of Iberian pig, and also come into contact with rural life in the natural park, a biosphere reserve.

Currently, in Dehesa Maladúa, some two hundred specimens of Manchado de Jabugo graze in freedom, which have three times the space required by the Iberian pig standard for the diet based on acorns.

Within the industry standard, and always in the 100% Iberian acorn-fed category and under a certified organic production regime, the Dehesa Maladúa range covers, in addition to hams, other derivatives such as shoulder, loin, tenderloin (shoulder dam), sirloin, chorizo, salchichón, as well as its original, and highly appreciated by those who have tried it, sobrasada cream.

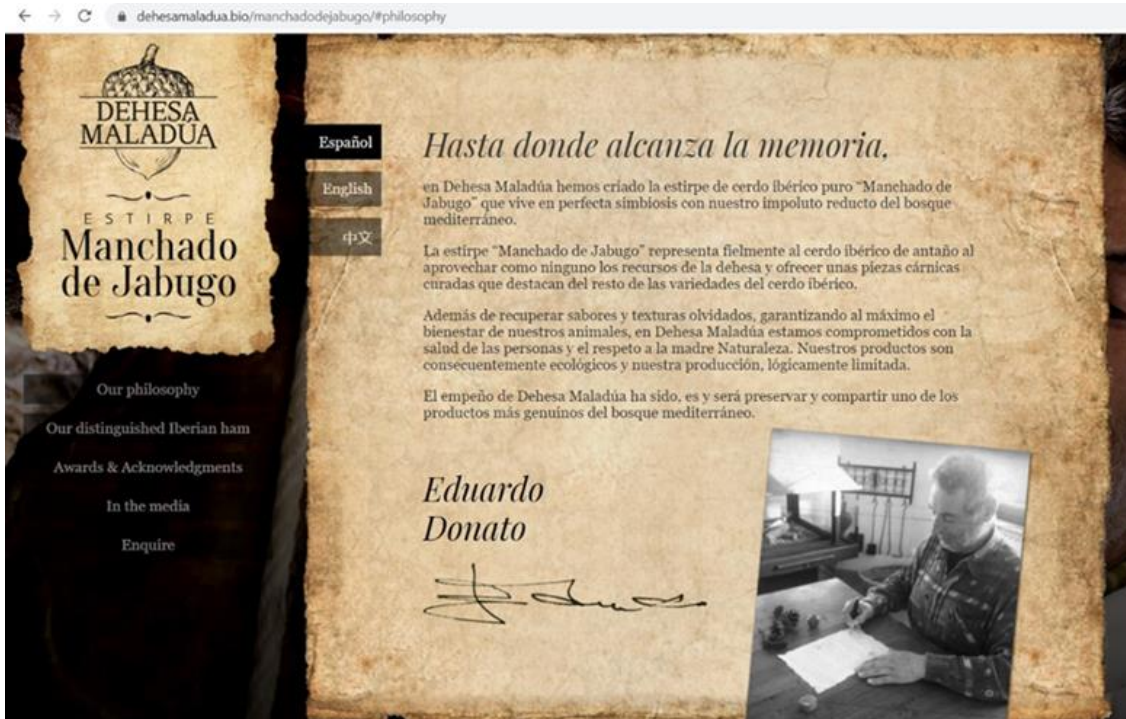
In addition to the prize for the best organic product at the Biofach-Nuremberg fair, Dehesa Maladúa has received other distinctions, such as the one from the Andalusian Regional Government's Presidency and Local Administration Council, which recognized, through its Brussels delegation, its European projection as an Andalusian company respectful of the environment and tradition, dedicated to the preservation of a native species.



Despite not having an official character, one event that Eduardo holds in highest esteem was when the filmmaker Bigas Luna, just a few months before dying, sponsored his ham at a public event held in Barcelona. For Dehesa Maladúa, it is a special motivation to honor the memory of the filmmaker who, with his film “Jamón, Jamón”, launched Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem to stardom.

Vision, tenacity, passion, patience, and coherence with a philosophy of life based on respect for Nature, have been the key for the entrepreneur Eduardo Donato, owner of the Dehesa Maladúa brand and the company Jamones Ecológicos de Jabugo, S.L.U. He has managed to preserve and relaunch, as evidenced by the fact that fourteen farmers have followed his example, an exceptional variety of Iberian pig in danger of extinction.

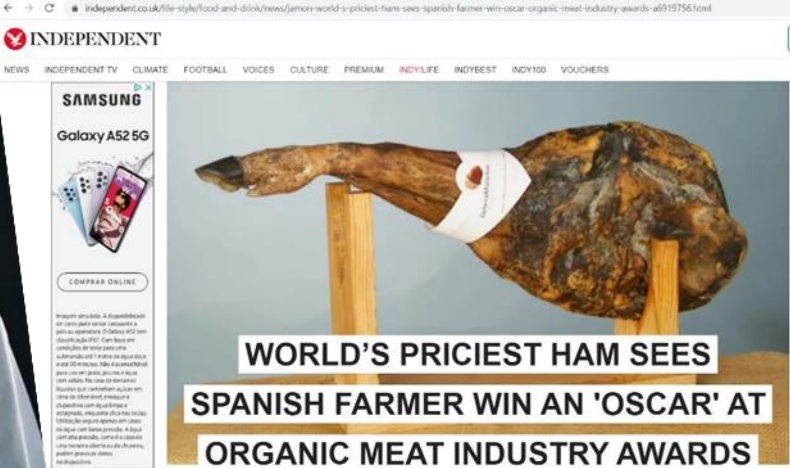
The company's website, www.dehesamaladua.bio, contains general information, with special emphasis on the Manchado de Jabugo:



The number of foreign visitors who come on their own initiative to Dehesa Maladúa is surprising, as it's the only possibility, according to them, of getting to know first-hand the way of life of a genuine acorn-fed Iberian producer. As an example, the German family in this photo that showed up, accompanied by a guide who acted as an interpreter, bringing with them an article dedicated to Dehesa Maladúa that appeared in the German press under the headline "Happy pigs".



Eduardo Donato's personal adventure has led to magazine covers in places as far away as Hong Kong. It is enough to launch a search on the net to verify the international notoriety of Dehesa Maladúa.



The main Spanish media have also echoed on numerous occasions this vital project of Eduardo Donato, reflected in the business activity of the company Jamones Ecológicos de Jabugo, owner of the Dehesa Maladúa brand.



Dehesa Maladúa has received numerous distinctions, although the greatest reward to which Eduardo Donato and his team can aspire will continue to be the satisfaction of a job well done at the end of every day.





www.dehesamaladua.bio