

This morning in the plenary hall of the Formentera Council, councillor of rural affairs Bartomeu Escandell met with Mateu Ginard, the Govern Balear's director general of agriculture and livestock, as well as the heads of three different local groups – the irrigation organisation of Formentera, the local assocation of livestock farmers and the Formentera farmers' cooperative.

Palma's head of agriculture and livestock described the project currently overseen by his department and valued at €294,000 to “get Formentera's effluent water-fed irrigation pond up and running”. Ginard reported that the project, entrusted to the Tragsa company, is expected to be completed by next summer, at which time, “five years after construction, the pond will finally be operational”.

Help for local irrigators

Councillor Escandell announced “during the first two years, the Formentera Council will cover the €30 fixed monthly fee required for use of each water main”. Acknowledging what he called a «lack of culture of irrigation” among Formentera farmers, Escandell proclaimed, “we want to do everything we can to promote use of the irrigation pond and help out our local community of irrigators”.

Agriculture, Escandell told Ginard, has been a top priority for the Formentera administration, pointing to the support given to the Formentera farmers' cooperative (la Cooperativa del Camp) and the creation of an industrial space for that group earlier in the year. “Our goal is to support action to improve the natural beauty of our surroundings and strengthen our agricultural and livestock sectors”.

To the local representatives of these groups, Ginard highlighted the grant money the Govern plans to make available to mitigate the effects of this year's dry season. “For one thing, there will be feed subsidies of €9.20 per animal”, he reported. Moreover, and of particular interest to associations, he said, are credits of between €20,000 and €100,000 at near-zero percent interest rates that the Govern also plans to provide. He also spoke about the possibility of

additional funding for certified seed.