



— An interview with Yenle Cruz Quispe



About Yenle

Yenle comes from a long family line of cattle breeders. Having been born and raised in Cuzco, eight years ago he decided to move to Madre de Dios to explore farming opportunities in the Amazonian region together with his wife and two sons.



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My ultimate goal is to develop sustainable farming practices that are profitable too. In Peru, farming is not seen as a business, but I believe that developing a small enterprise is possible!

Yenle Cruz
Farmer

How would you describe the region where you live?

Madre de Dios is full of biodiversity. Here at the chakra¹, my land includes over 100 ha. Out of this, 60ha are dedicated to cattle grazing and the rest is reserved for other activities such as chestnut production. This can provide extra income for our family.

What is your biggest challenge as a farmer?

Our biggest challenge is to maximise the space we have. Whilst we dedicate 60% of our land to farming, we would really like to maintain 40% as a reserve. But to avoid deforestation in this reserve, we need to take advantage of silvopastoral systems.

¹ Chacra / chakra comes from the Quechua word “chakra” meaning farm. It’s a common term used in the Andean region.

How is climate change impacting your quality of life?

In 2021, the summer was harsh on us. We had less pastures due to the drought, and consequently many of my cows died when they went into labour as they were not strong enough. The temperatures were so high, and every year we experience more extreme droughts and rainfalls. This threatens our activities as farmers.

What kind of silvopastoral systems are you putting in practice?

I learnt so much in the first workshop! For instance, I didn't know that we can use microorganisms in the soil as fertilisers, instead of using chemicals. We also have started planting *leucocephala* which can be used as green manure, livestock fodder, and for soil conservation, as well as *mehgathyrsus maximus* which can grow with limited sunlight.

What recommendations would you give to farmers in Madre de Dios to stop deforestation?

I think it's fundamental that other farmers receive training. We must apply nature-based solutions and take advantage of these learnings. We need to stop deforestation, stop burning, and maximise the land we have available. With silvopastoral farming methods we can achieve this.

About

The [Alliance for Regenerative Ranching in the Peruvian Amazon pilot project](#) – based in Madre de Dios – has used nature-based solutions to transform deforested pasturelands into silvopasture systems, benefiting the environment and farmers.