



Over the first trimester of 2015, the Formentera Council, by way of the administration's office of agriculture, livestock and fishing, will organise seven free courses in continuing education on topics related to farming and stockbreeding. The goal behind such learning opportunities, according to agriculture councillor Santiago Juan, is to “assist the agricultural and stockbreeding workers on the island who seek to increase and diversify their abilities” and at the same time “give a leg up to all those young people interested in breaking into the field”.

The first course will be basic level food and food product safety and handling. Twenty-five hours in length and scheduled for 9-13 February, the course will be overseen by professors from the Servei de Millora Agrària, or Semilla, a agricultural assistance service of the Govern Balear. Enrolment begins next week at the Council's Citizen Information Office.

Further off on the horizon though still awaiting final confirmation, another three courses are scheduled for the month of February. The first of the bunch is a 20-hour course imparted by Bernat Canyelles to focus on fruit tree pruning. Then, 15 hours in length, a course on plagues and diseases affecting vineyards will be given by Joan Rallo. Closing out the set: another course by Professor Rallo, this time 25 hours in duration and proposing an informed biological control of the plagues that commonly affect local plants.

Not to be outdone, the month of March will host its own set of three continuing education courses. Firstly, a ten-hour course will look at good watering practices when the water source relies on treated, purified water. Imparted by Joan Mayans, this course is all the more relevant given recent talk of installing irrigation systems that use recaptured and purified water. Of the two March courses that remain, both will be led by Jordi Masip. The first, which lasts five hours, aims to train workers in animal health and hygiene. The second focuses on diseases that affect goat and sheep populations.

These courses complement a perennial initiative, extremely popular, which was last seen in November with a course on controlling the red beetle plague. The course, 20 hours long, was taught by Juan Argente.