TWO SITES IN CHILE RECOGNIZED IN 2025 AS GIAHS GLOBALLY IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE SYSTEMS

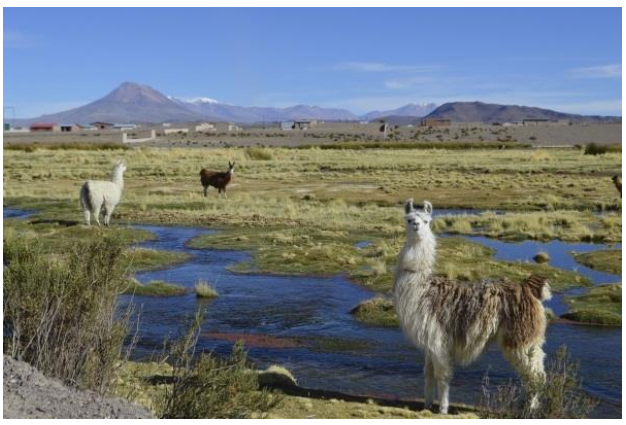
February 2026

In November 2025 two traditional agricultural systems rooted in the ancestral knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples in the northern Andean highlands and the southern mountain ranges of Chile have been recognized as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

These living systems have evolved over centuries in high-altitude Andean landscapes shaped by extreme climatic conditions, as well as in the forested valleys and mountains of the Pehuenche territory. Across these diverse environments, practices such as homegardening, camelid herding, and seasonal transhumance, continue to sustain food, cultural identity, and community life.

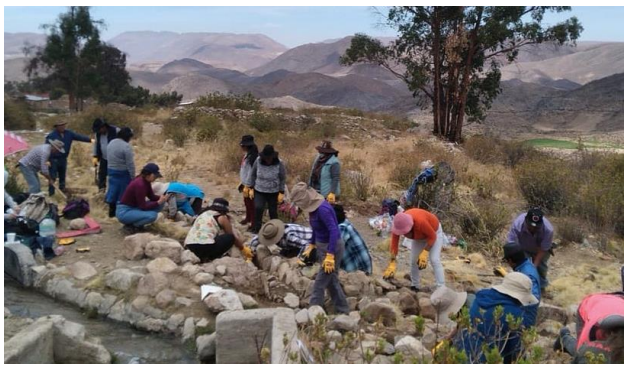
With these designations, Chile now counts three GIAHS systems, and Latin America as a region has 11 designated systems across five countries. These recognitions are also linked to long-term efforts in Chile to document and strengthen agricultural heritage, supported through a Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded initiative implemented by FAO together with the Ministry of Agriculture of Chile.

The article presents the two new GIAHS included in the list:



Integrated system of camelid livestock and agriculture in northern Chile's High-Andean and Pre-Andean regions

In the regions of Antofagasta, Arica y Parinacota and Tarapacá, Aymara, Quechua and Likan Antay Indigenous Peoples sustain a system that integrates camelid herding - primarily llamas and alpacas - with the cultivation of native Andean crops such as quinoa, maize and potatoes. Found between 3,000 and 4,500 metres above sea level, the system is adapted to extreme climatic conditions, including temperature variation, aridity and limited water resources. Rotational grazing and seasonal transhumance help maintain fragile high-altitude pasturelands, while terraced fields and micro-irrigation systems support agriculture in steep and dry environments. Collective water governance, grounded in customary norms, ensures equitable and sustainable use of water resources. In this system, women play a central role in seed conservation, food processing and intergenerational knowledge transmission, strengthening cultural continuity and nutrition. The system contributes to conservation of genetic diversity for food and agriculture, food security and climate resilience, and is closely linked to cultural practices that honor the land and its living beings.



Ancestral system of the Pehuenche mountain range: homegardens, gathering and transhumance in the Ngulumapu territory

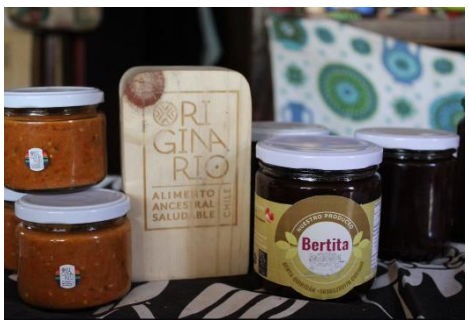
In the southern Andes, Mapuche-Pehuenche Indigenous Peoples maintain a diversified system that combines biodiverse homegardens, forest gathering, and seasonal livestock movement between highland and lowland pastures. The system is deeply connected to the pewen (Araucaria araucana), whose edible seeds (piñones) play a central role in nutrition, social identity and ceremonial life. Home gardens, managed primarily by women, contain hundreds of cultivated and medicinal species, supporting food security, health and the conservation of agrobiodiversity. Transhumant herding sustains the productivity of high mountain ecosystems, while forest gathering reinforces cultural ties and ecological knowledge. The system reflects principles of reciprocity, collective work and respect for all life (Itrofil Mogen in the Mapuche language), expressed through ceremonies, exchange networks and territorial governance. The landscape includes native forests, wetlands and volcanic soils, intersecting in some areas with national protected lands and UNESCO-recognized sites.

With this latest addition to the global agricultural heritage systems list, showcasing their unique contribution to heritage, biodiversity and food diversity, climate resilience, livelihoods, and culture, FAO's worldwide agricultural heritage network now comprises of 104 systems in 29 countries.

The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) are agroecosystems inhabited by communities that maintain an intricate relationship with their territory. These evolving sites are resilient systems characterized by remarkable agrobiodiversity, traditional knowledge, invaluable cultures and landscapes; they are sustainably managed by farmers, herders, fisherfolk, and forest people in ways that contribute to their livelihoods and food security. Under FAO's GIAHS (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems) initiative, the selected sites demonstrate global importance through their contributions to food and livelihood security, agro-biodiversity, sustainable knowledge systems and practices, social values and culture as well as outstanding landscapes. Many of these sites showcase exemplary practices that enhance the resilience of agrifood systems to climate change, promote biodiversity use and ensure the sustainable management of ecosystems.

Traditional agriculture systems continue to provide food for nearly two billion people worldwide. They also sustain biodiversity, livelihoods, practical knowledge and cultural heritage. This global agricultural heritage needs to be recognized and supported in ways that enable it to evolve while continuing to provide essential goods and services for the present and future generations.

The GIAHS website allows users to check the list by region and country of the global agricultural heritage sites. In this section it is possible to visit each designated system's dedicated webpage to discover further information, photos, videos, news and stories.



To know more

News in FAO website

The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Initiative

[Twenty years of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems - 2022 FAO publication]

[GIAHS around the world]

[Preparation and submission a GIAHS proposal]