



Editorial

Circular Economy

€600 billion net savings, two million jobs and 1% GDP growth, according to the Commission's own figures, and yet the Circular Economy Package has been thrown overboard. For farmers and land managers, this is a difficult concept to grasp: we know that a reduction of waste is essential.

For us, waste reduction should occur on two tracks; the first is the reduction of waste in the food chain: that Europe still misuses 100 million tons of food on an annual basis is not only a frightful waste, but it is also a statement on the value that our society places on farm and forest products.

The second track is a much-needed reduction of wasted inputs. This is not only a financial burden as inputs such as fertilizer, water and crop protection must be paid for, but any that are not applied correctly can end up putting additional pressures on our environment and as a consequence in the landowners' budget.

A move towards greater recycling and a reduction of the sometimes appalling amount of waste in our food chain should have been welcomed, especially as it was designed with input from all stakeholders, from industry to farmers to NGOs. We therefore hope to see a new proposal put forward.

The ELO will be highlighting the importance of the circular economy at our 8th Forum for the Future of Agriculture. With Commissioners HOGAN and VELLA, as well as FAO Secretary General José Graziano da SILVA among its speakers, the Forum promises to once again be the highlight of the Brussels agri-environment calendar.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE
Secretary General



J. POTOČNIK

A New Chairman for a Successful Forum



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FFA 2014

From the 1st Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA), the chairman of this premier event has always been former Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Franz FISCHLER. After building and growing this forum for many years, he has decided to step back and hand the chairmanship over to Janez POTOČNIK. In this interview, the former Commissioner for the Environment expresses his views on the FFA and the future of food and environmental security.

FFA Team: The 8th edition of FFA will be chaired by you, Mr POTOČNIK.

Janez POTOČNIK: Yes, I'm planning to assist in the continued success story of the FFA just as Franz FISCHLER has so greatly done for the past seven years. As the son of a farmer myself, my main motivation in accepting this invitation is to support farmers to prepare for the changes which are inevitable. These transformations are mainly connected with 2 elements: the sustainability of our resource management, and the eradication of poverty; in both elements, farmers play an essential role in addressing the issues. As the former Commissioner for Environment I have attended the past editions of the FFA, and I believe that this is a formula which is worth investing time and thought into. We have to think about a new path for farmers, one that works for our environment, for their businesses and for their families. The FFA has always brought together a wide range of different interest groups, as if we want to succeed in confronting the future challenges, we need to work together, and to do that, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach and think in an interdisciplinary manner.

FFA Team: In your opinion, and given the current global economic, environmental and social developments, what is the future role of European agriculture?

JP: Agriculture has a crucial role in supporting our future food security on the one hand and ensuring that production is sustainable on the other. Farmers should be protecting our water sources, not polluting them; they should be protecting our soils and ensuring the preservation of our biodiversity rather than its destruction. Unless farmers work in a way that ensures the preservation of these crucial public environmental services, we will be severely undermining our ability to produce in the future. Ensuring sustainable production is clearly in the best interest of the farmers themselves. They need to think more in the long term and safeguard the interests of future generations. If we are to support an agriculture that has a key role in supporting our food security, we need to prepare farmers for the future that is coming. They should be recognised for the public goods they are provid-

ing through public support, but budgets are tight, and new ways of supporting the provision of public goods must be found.

FFA Team: Do you think the UN Sustainable Development Goals will help us to face future challenges such as ensuring food security for all?

JP: It is indeed a very important process, hopefully leading us to a new global agreement engaging the world in the unavoidable transformation to sustainable future (economic, social and environmental). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, to be decided upon by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, will replace the Millennium Development Goals. As declared by UN they aim to “prepare an ambitious global agenda to eradicate poverty and hunger and safeguard economic development in the world, and to do so within global sustainability goals for climate, oceans, biodiversity and freshwater, described as the first contours of a new paradigm for world development within a safe operating space on Earth”.

Those are very important goals to future food security – especially achieving that in a sustainable way. The EU has put in place and the new Commission has recently expressed its strong support tools in order to make those goals a reality, but we need to do more. We are very active here - especially with regard to the eradication of poverty. We have to continue with our efforts, but SDGs are not only about developing world. They are also about the developed part of the world and the emerging fast growing economies. We all need to show that we understand the seriousness of the challenges we are together facing and align our domestic policies and investments. Transformation can of course not be done without strong involvement of the private sector.

FFA Team: Potential trade deals are on the horizon: how are these going to impact the development of global agricultural trade (standards, quality and harmonization)?

JP: Trade has brought a lot of good but a lot of questions remain. For agriculture we need to also think “local” to decrease our environmental footprint. As the new FFA Chair I will propose to bring some additional international aspects for the next editions of the Forum.

FFA Team: Last November you became the new co-chair of the International Resource Panel (IRP), launched in 2007 by United Nations Environment Programme.



To watch the full video with J. POTOČNIK and F. FISCHLER please visit the FFA website

JP: Yes, and as a panel we provide independent, coherent and authoritative scientific assessments of policy relevance on the sustainable use of natural resources and, in particular, their environmental impacts over the full life cycle. We also contribute to a better understanding of how to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

A healthy environment, including fertile soils, good water and clean air, is the very basis of sustainable and long-term food production. The fact that the UN General Assembly has declared 2015 as International Year of Soils shows that there is global awareness of its importance. I hope we can use this year to do more to raise awareness and educate not just farmers, but the whole of society on the importance of soil.

FFA Team: The 5th IPCC Synthesis Report in 2014 stressed Climate Change as threat to security, food and humankind, with the report stating that rural areas can expect, among other consequences, impacts on water availability and supply, food security

and infrastructure issues, and a shift in production areas.

JP: Yes, we have to be more consistent to adapt and mitigate the Climate Change. Innovation and technology transfer for farmers will be crucial here. Moreover the EU has to assume a leading role during the COP21 in December in Paris, but together with other global actors, like the US and China. Public expectations are high and rightly so; answers are expected and needed and Copenhagen should not repeat. Finally, as the incoming chairman, I would be remiss if I did not extend a warm welcome to CountrySide readers to join us this year on the 31st of March at the Square for the 8th FFA.

FFA Team: Mr POTOČNIK, thank you very much for your time and the interview.

To register for the FFA,
please visit
www.forumforagriculture.com



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Innovation takes centre stage

New practices and technologies for the agri-food chain took centre stage in Brussels on the 3rd of February at the first Food Innovation Summit, organised by Premier Cercle with the support of the ELO. With the European Commissioners for Agriculture and Health and Food Safety present, as well as representatives from the food chain leading from farm to fork, the conference not only demonstrated the need for innovation, but also highlighted the key challenges and upcoming innovations that would impact European farms in the coming years.

Throughout the conference, speakers and participants made clear that there is a high percentage of investment of their turnover back into research and innovation all along the food chain. As innovation is vital to maintaining competitive all along the food chain; from farmer to retail, its stimulation at the European level is a vital component of shaping a growing the economy. However, as DSM Vice-President of Innovation Hans-Christian AMBJERG warned, many businesses currently feel that the EU's over-regulation "is causing a slow-down" in the pace of innovation, as they are becoming too hard for businesses to grow on the continent.

Investing in innovation was one of the key themes of the Summit. With Commissioner for Agriculture Phil HOGAN identifying this as a "key priority" on his agenda, conference speakers called on farmers and policy makers to not only identify but also use all skill-sets, including urban farming, to create the next leap forward, which would help create employment and growth in the sector. From the side of the Commission, support would primarily come through the European Innovation Platform for Agriculture as well as the Horizon 2020 and FP7 programs, which have been doubled in size. With a conference full of new 'disruptive' technologies, it was vital to remember that "new technologies are more than just genetic modification alone", as the scientific direc-

tor for Limagrain, Valérie MAZZA reminded the audience. During the first session, MEP Jan HUITEMA identified three key areas of innovation: plant and animal breeding that could help reduce input use and increase yields. According to the MEP, investment in new production systems, climate control and housing systems would help processing and product developments, however he emphasized that such innovation should place a priority on nutritional value.

Among the key future tools for agriculture, multiple speakers identified the further adaptation of IT as a vital part of Europe's innovation strategy. The uptake of faster broadband in the countryside, identified by Commissioner HOGAN as another key priority, would also allow for the

integration of smart farming systems and big data into precision farming tools and innovation – such data would also help to add value to farm products and assist small farmers. Questions remain, however, as to how these new data flows would be protected in terms of who has access, as well as the property rights associated with them.

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety ANDRIUKAITIS stated that his Directorate-General would work with the EU's Digital Agenda to develop mobile phone apps and other instruments to help combat the problem of obesity, which "accounts for 10% of global health costs", as well as helping to combat food waste – "innovation" he said "should not only encourage safe eat-



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ing but also healthy eating". He further expressed an interest in the development of new crops, saying that "the second generation of GM crops looks promising". A new online model for farmers would also be necessary in the face of a growing online market, which could be 50% of all food shopping in 2020, according to Philippe NOBILE of the Javelin Group.

Even though the Circular Economy legislative package has just been withdrawn by the new Commission, the theme of reducing food waste and increasing recycling remained a key theme for the day, with both Commissioners echoing the call of reducing waste and increasing efficiency. To do this, Commissioner ANDRIUKAITIS stated that a review of the 'best before' and 'use by' categories on packaged foods could be in order. The reduction of waste would, according to DSM Vice-President of Innovation Hans-Christian AMBJERG, also allow start-ups and small businesses to work together with the large agri-food businesses to more quickly bring their innovative ide-

as for reducing waste to the marketplace.

Further cooperation was also highlighted by Commissioner HOGAN, who said that Europe's support for research and innovation was to allow "the public and private sectors to work together in making innovation happen".

Safety, however, would still be key in any innovation along the food chain, with Commissioner ANDRIUKAITIS warning the audience that a 2012 Eurobarometer showed that customers are still reluctant to accept innovation, and list the use of new technologies in food as among their biggest worries. To help allay the concerns of EU consumers, the new Commissioner stated that he would finish the legislative proposal on animal welfare. While respecting the customers' worries, MEP Jan HUITEMA also cautioned that we should "take precaution with the precautionary principle so that we create a policy space for entrepreneurship", as an over-reliance on this principle could harm Europe's innovative ca-

capacity. To ensure that the EU's food supply would remain safe, the Commissioner announced that he would look at delivering a new proposal on novelty foods.

While the panellists of the retail section broadly agreed that their market is highly competitive and has its own pressures to reduce costs all along the supply chain, they also agreed that putting the weight of these pressures on farmers would be unreasonable. Martha CUNHA, head of innovation management at Sonae (Portugal's biggest retail company) stated that the savings would first have to be found in their own retail process, by making stores both better and more efficient. Fortunately, "consumers are willing to pay from 10 to 50% more for fresh food" when the advantages are properly explained. This was argued by Alexis NYS of Avure Technologies, who further stated that EU consumers are now reading food content labels in a way they did not do before, which comes from a renewed concern over their food sources.

During the final sessions of the day, tailored to discuss many different elements of the food chain, practical agricultural innovations and technologies such as better irrigation and fertilization systems were showcase by speakers from industry and society during the session on agriculture. Among the new ideas was the concept of 'fertigation', demonstrated by Hans GOOSSENS of YARA, who stated that mixing nutrients with irrigation water could provide much higher efficiencies and reduce water use at the same time. While still in its testing phases, David DENT of Azotic technologies showed the audience the scientific possibilities in molecular technologies that could allow all crops to improve through the application of a seed coating containing nitrogen-fixing bacteria – a technology that he stated could be used in organic as well as conventional farming, as it does not involve the use of GM technology.

The conference showed that the spirit of innovation is alive and flourishing in Europe, but that work also remains to be done to ensure that Europe wastes less food and produces a fresh and healthy diet for a global citizenry in the 21st century.

Robert de GRAEFF, ELO

For more information,
visit the conference website at
www.foodsummit.eu



Renewal of ELO Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside”

On February 12, 2015 the “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” Intergroup was officially renewed in Strasbourg. The new President Karl-Heinz FLORENZ, MEP and the members of the bureau were elected; Bendt BENDTSEN, MEP, Renata BRIANO, MEP and James NICHOLSON, MEP as Vice-Presidents and Annie SCHREIJER-PIERIK, MEP as Secretary-General. The ELO will remain the secretariat together with FACE (European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation).

The participants agreed that the reestablishment of the Intergroup is of critical importance, as new challenges are coming that need to be addressed, such as the problems of land use and resource efficiency, the implementation of the greening measures, the expansion of large carnivores and the fitness check on nature legislation. The Intergroup will therefore be an essential platform that allows European decision makers and organisations to meet, discuss and debate on these important issues related to biodiversity management, sustainable hunting and countryside activities.

In the coming years, the ELO will ensure that we address the vital issue of how to reconcile the economy with the preservation of the environment. We further believe that we should have a common position with regard to climate change this is why we proposed the intergroup to address this question just before the COP 2015 in Paris.

As part of the meeting the Intergroup Work Plan was adopted, which envisages the next meeting scheduled for April 14, 2015 in Brussels with the title “Enhancing our Natural Capital”. In this meeting, we will stress the importance of natural processes, ecosystem services (clean air, soil preservation etc.) in sustaining development and growth. We will particularly address the question of how the EU legislations tend to value natural capital through the implementation of the greening measures, forestry and biodiversity strategies.

Julianna NAGY, ELO

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T.de L'ESCAILLE; K.KOSTOPOULOS; MEP K. HEINZ-FLORENZ; G. de TURCKHEIM

15th meeting of the CIC Coordination Forum for Central Eastern Europe in Arad



The 15th annual meeting of the Coordination Forum for Central and Eastern Europe of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) was held from 8-9 January 2015 in Arad, Romania. This yearly meeting was organized in close collaboration with the Romanian Hunting Association (AGVPS) and the CIC Headquarters.

Two topics were chosen for this workshop: the implementation of the four strategic priorities of the CIC in the region, and the status and proposed management of the golden jackal in response to its spread towards Western Europe.

The presence of FACE Secretary General Filippo SEGATO was heartily welcomed by participants, as most delegates of the CIC Coordination Forum are also members of FACE. Coordinated efforts within the hunting community are very important to implement concrete actions at the international level. The European Commission was represented by Dr Andrés DEMETER, Advisor to the DG Environment.

The event followed the tradition of organising technical events on large carnivores since 2010. This year, large carnivores will also be on the agenda of the 62nd General Assembly of the CIC in Bulgaria which will be hosted in Pravets, a small and picturesque town in Bulgaria, 23-25 April 2015. Healthy People, Healthy Wildlife will be the motto of our annual meeting, to allow us to intensify our collaboration with the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE, www.oie.int) and the development of a joint OIE/CIC program of work.

CIC Team

Further information: www.cic-wildlife.org

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CAP Communication Awards

The **CAP Communication Awards Ceremony** took place for the third time on the 29th of January in Brussels. This event shared the very best practices and examples of communication related to the CAP in three categories: Stakeholders, Communication to the Public and Innovative Communication, as well as grant a special prize of the public. The closing speech was delivered by Phil HOGAN, Commissioner in charge of Agriculture and Rural Development.

From a total of 146 projects, the ELO was for the third time shortlisted for its **Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA)**. Moreover, Forest Owners Association of Lithuania (FOAL) – an ELO member- was also shortlisted for the second time for its annual contest for the **Exemplary Managed Private Forest Area**.

The idea of the Exemplary Managed Private Forest Area of the Year contest and award was created in 2004 by FOAL and the Ministry of Environment. The ambition of this project is to encourage initiatives among private forest owners, for the efficient use of forests and to ensure the sustainable development of the whole environment. The first contest was organized in 2008 with the help and funding of Ministry of Environment. Since that year the contest has become an annual event with its traditions, best practices and the involvement of more and more forest owners each year. Since 2010 Ministry of Agriculture and National Paying Agency are active sponsors of this event. For forest owners this contest is not only important because of the honor and prizes, but it also gives an opportunity to introduce one's private forest area, evaluate it and find "weak" points that can be improved, to share



and spread experience and best practice and encourage other forest owners how to manage in their private forest area in the efficient and sustainable way. It is therefore a wonderful method of communicating among common-minded forest owners.

The list of winners, pictures and video of the CAP Communication Awards can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-communication-network/awards/winners/2014/index_en.htm

Do not hesitate to apply this year for the award for your projects.

Emmanuelle MIKOSZ, ELO
Neringa ŠIDLAUSKAITĖ, FOAL

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The InBev-Baillet Latour Environment Prize – Wallonia 2014

The 2014 InBev-Baillet Latour environment prize was awarded on 2nd October 2014 by the Governor of the Namur Province Denis MATHEN and Baron Jan HUYGHEBAERT to Mr. and Mrs. Charles de QUIRINI for the Baya farm in Goesnes (Ohey). The prize recognises their hard work over many years for the ecological restoration of the farm, ensuring that their magnificent estate of Chateau-Ferme de Baya became an excellent example of cultural heritage side by side with biodiversity and a tranquil landscape.

The 2014 InBev-Baillet Latour environment prize was organised by the Fondation Wallonne pour la Conservation des Habitats, overseen by President Baron Edgar KESTELOOT. Each year, a panel of independent environmental experts and landowners assess the candidates according to a number of fixed criteria.

The InBev-Baillet Latour environment prize was founded 18 years ago. This prize, worth €20,000, is our country's greatest recognition of the sustainable management of the environment by private landowners. Each year, it rewards a private owner or manager responsible for the land management or ecological management of an estate in Belgium. The annual award is alternated between the Flemish and Walloon branches of the Belgian Foundation for Habitat Conservation (the *Stichting Behoud Natuur en Leefmilieu Vlaanderen* and the *Fondation Wallonne pour la Conservation des Habitats*).

Source: www.inbevbaillatour.com (red.)



Czech TY

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European Tree of the Year: a growing contest

The 2015 edition of the European Tree of the Year is currently taking place with the winners of the fourteen countries participating in the European Tree of the Year contest. This year, trees from Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Scotland, Slovakia, Spain and Wales take part in the contest. Four new countries have joined this year: Belgium, England, Estonia and Spain. These four trees have already drawn the attention of the local media, driven by the enthusiasm of their local supporters.

The procedure for each year is that participating countries elect a national Tree of the Year. The tree that wins this contest moves on the European round of the contest, where it will compete for the title of European Tree of the Year. During the month of February, people from all over Europe have voted for their favourite trees online. There has been a fierce competition, especially among the higher scoring trees. The last week of the vote is secret, so the supporters of each tree will closely follow the announcement of the winner on the 5th of March.

The winning tree will receive its European recognition on the 22nd of April, Earth Day, in Brussels. The event will gather national organisers, policy makers, NGOs, European organisations, to raise awareness for the protection of our shared natural capital and cultural heritage. The Award ceremony has been organised since 2012 with the support of the European Landowners' Organization and TetraPak. Last year, more than 200 people were present at the event, hosted by Pavel POC, MEP and under the

patronage of Janez POTOČNIK, at the time European Commissioner for the Environment.

The purpose of the European Tree of the Year contest is to highlight the importance of old trees in natural and cultural heritage, and to gather together communities around its protection and care. The winner is not chosen for its beauty, size or age, but for having the most touching story, a tree whose roots are deep in the lives of the local people that live, work and play around them.

The contest was started in the Czech Republic by Nadace Partnerství (Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation) and run for many years before becoming European-wide. In 2011, 5 countries participated in the European round of the contest, and this year already 14 countries take part on it. If you wish to discover the stories of 2015 trees, visit: www.treeoftheyear.org

To be up to date on the development of the contest, follow the European Tree of the Year facebook page:

www.facebook.com/treeoftheyear. For more information on the contest, contact Ana CANOMANUEL, PR European Tree of the Year at ana.canomanuel@nap.cz. We are always looking for new partners in European countries!



Belgium TY

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New financial instruments for environment, energy efficiency and climate action projects

The European Commission and the European Investment Bank are launching two new financial instruments to drive investment in energy efficiency, efforts to preserve natural capital, and adaptation to climate change. The instruments will unlock public and private investments by combining EIB funding with financing under the EU LIFE Programme for Environment and Climate Action.

The first instrument – **Private Finance for Energy Efficiency (PF4EE)** – aims to increase private financing for projects designed to help Member States achieve the EU's agreed targets on energy efficiency. The Commission has committed €80 million for 2014-17, anticipating an 8-fold leverage effect.

The PF4EE will combine lending from the EIB to intermediary banks in Member States with protection against losses associated with making loans for energy efficiency projects. It will be complemented by technical assistance to financial intermediaries.

The instrument targets SMEs, private individuals, (small) municipalities and other public sector bodies undertaking small energy efficiency investments. It will be implemented through banks in Member States. The size of the loans could range between €40 000 up to €5 million or more in exceptional cases.

The second instrument – the **Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF)** – will provide loans and investments in funds

to support projects that help preserve natural capital, including adaptation to climate change. Eligible projects will include payments for ecosystem services, green infrastructure, biodiversity offsetting and investments for innovative pro-biodiversity and adaptation businesses.

A budget of €100-125 million is available for the period up to 2017. The European Commission provides up to €50 million as a guarantee for the investments with an additional grant support facility of €10 million for technical assistance.

Recipients for NCFF could include public and private entities, including public authorities, land owners and businesses. Project size will typically be between €5 and €15 million.

At any time, potential project developers can contact the EIB to express an interest in the facility and discuss the suitability of their ideas. Proposals will be considered for approval by the Bank, after satisfactory due diligence and selection by the Bank, within the constraints of the available budget.

Source: European Commission DG Climate Action

(red.)

For more information please visit : http://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/articles/news_2015021601_en.htm

European Rural Networks (ERN) Assembly

The 1st Assembly of the European Rural networks took place in Brussels on the 26th of January. The event was widely attended, gathering more than 200 participants. Commissioner Phil HOGAN delivered a speech, and Kersti KALJULAI, Member of the European Court of Auditors, presented a very interesting analyse on irregularities and performances in the expenditure of Rural Development Funds..

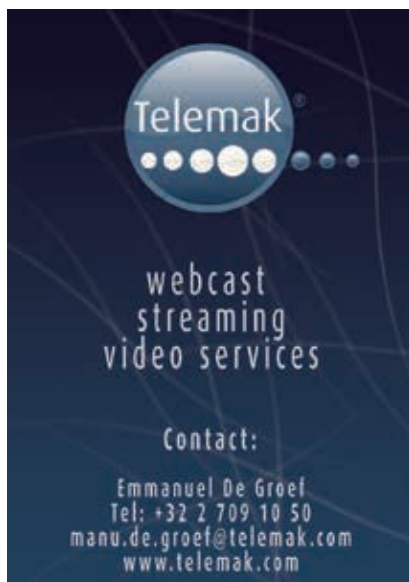
The base for the discussion was the EU Rural Networks Strategic Framework and governance bodies – a network for sustainable rural development and innovation in agriculture productivity and sustainability.

The Assembly confirmed the launch of Steering Committee, and like many other representatives of the Civil Group, the ELO has supported the idea to apply for its members a rotation system per group.

Additionally, the Assembly confirmed the creation of the **Subgroup on Innovation**, composed of a maximum of 60 members. A minimum of three face-to-face per year is expected as well as regular exchanges and contributions during the year. The first meeting is provisionally scheduled for 10 March 2015.

(red.)

For more information please visit : <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>



Food security: the end of a golden age



The golden age of agriculture is over. Growth based on the expansion of cropland area as seen until the 1950s, followed by improving land productivity through new technologies and productivity-based agricultural policies will fail us. It resulted in dramatic yield increases leading to what critics have called 'huge stores of unwanted grain', 'butter mountains', and 'milk lakes'. Nevertheless the world's food output is losing momentum as the backlog of agricultural technology fades, soil erodes, available arable land shrinks, and water becomes scarce. It is a struggle to find ways to feed our growing population.



Just imagine that in 2020 one hectare will be required to feed more than five people compared to 1960 when it only had to feed two. This means that we have to be extraordinarily efficient with our resources.

The pressure of agriculture on natural resources is intense. The availability of land for agriculture is restricted; within the 13 billion hectares of total land only 1.6 billion is under farmland production. Meanwhile since 1960 one-third of the world's arable land has been lost through erosion and degradation. Looking at water; only 3% of the world's water is fresh with one-third being economically accessible. Global water scarcity has a critical impact on food security when agriculture accounts for almost 70% of freshwater withdrawals. With a growing wealthier and active population the demand for water will continue to surge exponentially as we've already seen it triple over the last 50 years. Adding a changing climate on top of this has a clear potential to affect our scarce soil and water resources, nevertheless the ac-

tual damage that would result from such change is unclear.

Times have changed and if we're planning to feed 8 billion people by 2050 then its time we start rethinking our agricultural systems and make a mental shift of looking at agriculture and environment separately.

What happened in Russia and Sahel during the summer of 2010 is a warning that we can't ignore our environment anymore. Extreme weather events are more frequent and impact the world's food supply with global repercussions on food prices, people's livelihoods, disrupting national economies, and in some cases leading to severe impacts on the stability of our societies. It's not just about food production or biodiversity, but it's about both coming together while accounting for climate change in a holistic way.

With the right incentives and practices it will be possible to overcome the threat of stagnant yields. We need to think about

climate-specific solutions. Increase water use efficiency through technologies such as drip and pivot irrigation. Reduce leaching and erosion with minimum/no-tillage practices. Close the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles by appropriately applying livestock and human wastes. Invest in the production potential of millions of small-scale farmers. Substantially greater public and private investments in technology and knowledge are needed internationally, especially in low-income nations, to make agricultural systems more sustainable. Moving away from the 'industrial' to a 'climate smart' agriculture is our solution. There are good examples of climate smart agriculture as seen in Niger where agroforestry techniques applied on five million hectares have benefited over 1.25 million households, sequestering carbon, and producing an extra half-million tons of grain per year.

Although the situation might seem doomed there is hope if we start finding solutions to increase farm productivity while strengthening farmers' resilience to climate change. This can be achieved through a three-way approach based on a rapidly expanding array of biological and agronomic knowledge specific to agroecosystems and regions. Firstly by preserving our current natural assets, followed by increasing farm productivity with 'climate smart' technology and knowledge, and finally by investing in the potential of small-scale farmers globally. The new mindset must be directed to raising yields from existing farmlands in order to save land for nature. Only at that instant we will be able to overhaul the environmental deficits that are driving our food security to the edge.

Robert de l'ESCAILLE, YFCS

Robert currently works for the Agriculture Unit of the World Bank Group. You can follow him on Twitter at @rdelescaille or on OpedSpace. (red.)

Applications for the FAMIGRO AWARD are open!



The Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS) are very happy to open the applications for the FAMIGRO Award! YFCS' especially aims to foster the spirit of entrepreneurship and to provide concrete support to the ideas and projects of young entrepreneurs. Because YFCS consists also of members who manage family businesses, we aim to facilitate the exchange of knowledge about family businesses, but also to encourage the young generation when starting their own business.



Together with Mr Karl GROTENFELT and the EDMOND DE ROTHSCHILD group, YFCS has launched the Famigro Award at the beginning of 2014. The winner will be awarded a price of €5, 000 and will receive targeted consultancy from the EDMOND DE ROTHSCHILD group. In addition, the winner will also receive a testimonial plaque.

Applicants must be a young European between the age of 18 and 35 and the business should be registered within the EU and have its head office in the EU.

The criteria for applications include:

- Be a member of the YFCS, or any other member organisation of ELO, or recommended by a member of such organisations,
- The project should offer innovative solutions,
- The project should present a viable business plan,

- The business should aim to develop innovative solutions for the creation, the conversion and the development of local economic development and the fostering of business opportunities in the countryside,
- The business should provide an example of good practice to other (rural) communities and be adaptable to different rural contexts,
- The applicant must be able to demonstrate the long-term scope of the project.

Furthermore, the jury encourages applicants to keep the following questions in mind when preparing their applications:

- Is this business a growing asset to its community and making a real contribution?
- Is this enterprise inspiring for other (rural) entrepreneurs?
- Would winning this award be a well-deserved boost and help the business

contribute to the development of the (rural) community?

- Is the enterprise saving something that may otherwise have been lost or promoting something that is fundamental to rural life?
- Will the business proposal focus on the efficient re-use of waste products coming from rural activities?

Business proposals, which involve significant change in land use, soil capping or would result in a permanent negative alteration of the local landscape will not be accepted. Priority will be given to business proposals which in some way contribute to the improvement of the environment in the surroundings (soil and water protection, biodiversity). However, this is not exclusive, every candidate is encouraged to present its business model and makes a chance to win!

YFCS encourages the entrepreneurial spirit and therefore even if countryside businesses are privileged, everyone is welcome and will have a chance to win the award. We also encourage rural start-ups to apply. Please do not hesitate to contact the General Secretary Francesco KINSKY DAL BORGO at sg@yfcs.eu.

And do not miss out on the upcoming Forum for Countryside Entrepreneurship (Brussels, 20-22 March 2015), where we will give all the information for preparing and submitting applications to the Famigro Award.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Marie Christine SCHOENBORN, YFCS



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The “European Heritage Alliance 3.3”: Resources for Cultural Heritage



The European Heritage Alliance 3.3¹, an informal European platform composed of 32 European and international networks and organisations active in the wider field of cultural heritage, was launched in June 2011 on the occasion of the European Heritage Congress 2011, organised by Europa Nostra in Amsterdam.

The title of this Alliance refers to the article 3.3. of the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union which states that “[The Union] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.”

The “European Heritage Alliance 3.3” is Europe’s major heritage network, representing a large constituency composed of tens of millions of Europe’s citizens. Its founding members bring together Europe’s civil society organisations, historic cities and villages, museums, heritage professionals and volunteers, (private) owners of collections of artefacts, historic buildings and cultural landscapes, educators, town planners, and many others in the field of culture and heritage.

The Alliance meets twice a year so it can work more closely together to promote the untapped potential of Europe’s heritage, cultural and natural, immovable and movable. During the last meeting of the Alliance 3.3 of February the 4th, the European Historic Houses Association was particularly attentive to the cultural policies developments at the EU level linked to the Conclusions of the European Council under Italian presidency dating back from May 2014 and the Communication of the European Commission “Towards an integrated approach to



cultural heritage for Europe” adopted in July 2014.

These decisions are essential as they acknowledge how big the role of cultural heritage is in the valorization of the social and economic capital of Europe. They underline the need for more resources to be invested in cultural heritage. These developments thus strengthen the importance of the Alliance 3.3 in the realization of the Europe 2020 strategy goals for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Moreover, EHHA had the occasion to meet actors from these institutions, notably

from the Directorate General Education and Culture and discuss possible actions at the EU level. At this level, cultural heritage can be principally defended through smart use of the European Structural Funds and making use of the financing facilities allowed by the Investment Plan for Europe, for example for the construction and renovation of historic buildings.

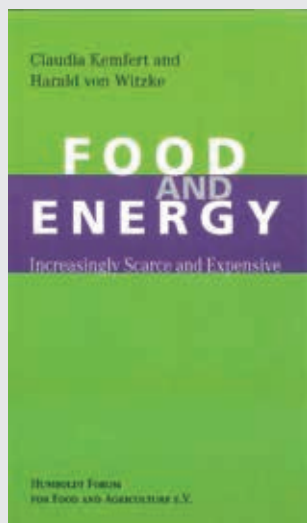
The European Historic Houses Association, notably through the Alliance 3.3, is also in a dialogue with the newly elected European Parliament and the Commission. It is important for us that we work with these institutions under programs such as “Creative Europe” which gave funds to Europa Nostra for managing the Alliance. We are particularly interested in answering the new Commission’s objectives such as innovation so we can promote new approaches for cultural heritage – the use of the digital tools to promote tourism provides an excellent way to combine innovation and heritage. In 2015, our organisations will keep working together so that the Alliance 3.3 will remain an active and efficient network.

Juliette POLIZZI, EHHA



Middachten

Food and Energy- Increasingly Scarce and Expensive



Claudia KEMFERT, Harald von WITZKE
Humboldt Forum for Food and Agriculture e.V.

Olbaum Verlag
ISBN 978-3-927217-50-8

Energy and food production are both indispensable societal needs. Consequently, their development and inter-relationship are the subject of many debates. This book provides an overview of the complex relationship between food and energy, and shows the importance and roles of different aspects such as the production of renewable energy through agriculture.

This new publication also highlights when and where non-fossil energy sources are expected to

play a major role - and what the impact of increasing energy prices could mean for agriculture.

The HFFA (www.hffa.info) is a think tank chaired by Professor Harald von WITZKE that brings together leading international experts and opinion leaders from government, civil society, academia and business. BASF is a founding member of the HFFA.



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DIARY DATES 2015

2015 - FAO International Year of Soils

<http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/en/>

3rd March, World Wildlife Day

Celebrating the day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

<http://www.wildlifeday.org/about>

16 - 18 March, Montpellier

Third Global Science Conference on Climate-Smart Agriculture

<http://csa2015.cirad.fr/>

20 - 22 March, Aynhoe Park, nr.Oxford, UK

European Historic Houses Next/Gen Conference 2015

<http://www.europeanhistorichouses.eu/>

21 - 23 March, Brussels

Forum for Countryside Entrepreneurship organized by YFCS

www.yfcs.eu

22nd March, World Water Day

This year's theme is 'Water and Sustainable Development'

<http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/about/en/>

23 - 24 March, Brussels

4th European Water Conference organized by EC DG Environment

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/2015conference/index_en.htm

31st March, Brussels

8th Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) at The Square

www.forumforagriculture.com

14th April, Brussels

Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" meeting on "Enhancing our Natural Capital"

www.elo.org

23 - 25 April, Pravets, Bulgaria

62nd General Assembly of the CIC

<http://www.cic-wildlife.org>

22nd April, Brussels

European Tree of the Year Award Ceremony

www.treeoftheyear.org

21 - 24 May, Newmarket, UK

18th FCS General Assembly

<http://www.friendsofthecountryside.org/>

8th Forum for the Future of Agriculture

Meeting the Food & Environmental Challenge



Tuesday, March 31, 2015 – Square Brussels Meeting Centre

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