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European Landowners' Organization

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Mini TRK
GURKEN
1 90
1/2 kg

DELICIOUS
1 kg 1 99

WASHINGTON
ORANGEN
1 kg 1 80

AUSTENPILZ
1 kg 1 50

Shitake pilz
1 kg 1 99

BRACCOLI
1 20
1/2 kg

WERUBEN TRK
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RAB
1 2 kg

Europe's food and rural land use – are we agreed on the direction of travel?



Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

Contents

- 3 Europe's food and rural land use – are we agreed on the direction of travel?

- 6 Ploughing our own furrow – Agriculture policy in the UK

- 8 Growing trees on farmland – smart choices to plant 3 billion additional trees

- 11 Exceptional Nobel Prize winners for an exceptional year

- 12 Wildlife Estates Plenary Session 2020

- 13 Some autumn news from the Spanish Wildlife Estates delegation

- 14 Promoting the delivery of Agri-Environmental Climate Public Goods
FARCURA PROJECT: The state-of-the-art report on social farming is available!

- 15 InnoForEst Multi-stakeholder Workshop

- 16 Forest Fire Failure
Study on defending forests against fire
Diary dates

The Green Deal is a necessary project for the future that we certainly welcome, but its main elements must be based on serious impact analysis in order to avoid wishful thinking. In the meantime, constructive contributions are being made with proposals on desirable as well as feasible aspects, such as the planting of 3 billion trees.

In the short term however, the Green Deal seems to have been ill prepared due to the responsibility of some of its initiators and a few ill-advised supporters: a "top down" approach to the agricultural component gave the impression that the food and agriculture sector was being infantilized, whereas today it in fact incubates so many initiatives that bring hope and at the same time so many responsibilities.

The decision of the Council of Ministers and the current votes on the CAP in the European Parliament show how important it is to return to a tangible aspect if the essence of the Green Deal is to be developed into a real project for society as we wish it to be.

European society, for its part, must move away from the rosy and idealised image of agriculture in the heydays of our grandparents. Children at school hear that there is a conflict between organic and intensive agriculture. Nothing could be further from the truth or more caricatured, often relayed by people with little training in these matters. How can we blame them? The low number of farmers means that the quality of their work and their hopes to produce healthily for the common interest are not well known. It is time for them to make the reality of their profession understood, just as it is time for the promoters of idealised solutions to make a real effort to understand the farmers: it is not through violence, at the very least verbal, which some people allow themselves, that we will achieve the goal.

If decision-makers are not careful, forestry is likely to face the same resentment.

In order to avoid such polarisation, which can lead to failure, I call to bring together the good will and skills that are present among the various protagonists. Let us make this debate more positive by establishing an unbiased Green Deal that respects its primary actors: those who make up the economy of rural areas and that respects the real expectations of society.

There is an urgent need to lift out of the rift: climate and biodiversity cannot wait.



The rosy past – the milk is spilt, goodbye calf, cow, pig, chicks



© Shutterstock

Trenches cut into deep Peat of wetland moors near Drinan on Isle of Skye Scotland with Loch Slap and Beinn Na Caillich mountain peak

Europe's food and rural land use – are we agreed on the direction of travel?

The European Commission was brave and adventurous in proclaiming a Green Deal as the opening gambit of their five-year term of office. They have followed it up with remarkable speed in producing important new strategies for Europe's food system and land use with the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. They have put in place an energetic work programme touching many critical issues in the way food is to be produced and land deployed. The broad objectives of these initiatives have commanded general support.

Who could be against reducing harmful climate change and seeking a sustainable food system which also properly rewards all those producing food?

Emeritus Prof Allan BUCKWELL, Imperial College, London

However closer examination of the specifics of what is proposed raises a number of difficult issues which are far from resolved and could turn out to be significant obstacles in achieving the laudable goals of the Green Deal. Two of these issues will be considered here, food prices, and international trade.

Broadly there is common agreement that Europe is not sufficiently confronting four challenges: the climate and biodiversity crises, the diet and health problem and the structural imbalances in the food chain. The first two have been so widely exposed in the last few years that they need no further explanation here. The diet and health issue is that we are eating ourselves into premature death. Over-consumption of calories, fat and protein compared to dietary recommendations is so common that an alarming proportion of the population is overweight and obese leading to metabolic disorders, diabetes and heart disease. Life expectancy is ceasing to rise. This is a public health problem that creates a large economic cost. Together with the level of food waste, the underlying unnecessary production also represents an avoidable environmental cost.

Without going into detail, what are the

strategies for dealing with these challenges? The strategies published to date have approached the challenges unevenly. As far as agriculture is concerned, the core of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies is to de-intensify food production. This is not surprising. For decades every analysis of the well-documented water and air pollution and biodiversity degradation associated with agriculture has pointed to intensification as one of the major contributors. The recommendation is therefore to reverse this process. This is to be done by restraining the use of mineral fertilisers, pesticides and antibiotics and by encouraging a shift in production system to nature-based agroecological systems. These measures would be expected, indeed designed, to reduce intensity and thus yields per hectare. Before considering how these targets might be reached and their implications, let's turn to the Climate challenge.

The problem here is that agriculture and land use are currently net emitters of climate damaging Green House Gases (GHG). It is generally acknowledged that reducing agricultural emissions (chiefly methane from enteric fermentation in ruminants, and nitrous oxide from the soil during crop production) is possible but not easy. Emission reduction must be a key part of the

strategy. But eliminating these emissions by 2050 to match the EU's climate ambition of net zero is not possible. Indeed, it may never be possible. Therefore, continuing agricultural emissions beyond 2050 will have to be matched by redeploying agricultural land from food production to carbon sequestration in biomass and soils. This means a significant increase in forests, and perhaps land devoted to bioenergy (with carbon capture and storage) in the form of perennial crops such as short rotation coppice and miscanthus. It will require a big reduction in emissions from peaty soils which have been converted for agricultural production. In the uplands these soils have been drained for livestock grazing and in the lowlands for intensive vegetable production. The remedy is to rewet the peat so it stores rather than emits carbon dioxide. The scale of these land use changes will vary widely between Member States. Unfortunately, the strategies for climate and its implications for agriculture, land use and forestry have not yet appeared.

Bringing these big picture elements together, how feasible is it both to de-intensify agricultural production and to significantly reduce the agricultural area in Europe? This does not seem to have been well considered. Both sets of actions are likely to re-

duce domestic EU production. How could this be accommodated? Some argue that new technology is the answer: precision farming, new breeding techniques, biological control products. Others say this is more techno over-optimism which got us to the present state. The balance of these arguments is an under-researched question.

Another answer is to reduce over-consumption and waste. These clearly have to be part of the strategy. The scale of change often mentioned, halving food waste and per capita meat consumption, indicates what may be necessary. There is already a live debate across Europe about reducing red meat and dairy product consumption, and downward consumption trends are already evident in many Member States. The consumption and waste issues are prominently discussed in the Green Deal but strategies and policies to bring this about are less developed. This indicates a governance challenge; EU institutions have few instruments available to them to influence consumer behaviour and Brussels is highly nervous of accusations of top-down interference in how people live. However, suppose that policies to de-intensify production and entice land out of agriculture succeed and there is little commensurate action on consumption and waste, the outcome could be an increase in food and feed imports. In the opposite case, EU net exports might rise. The net effect of either of these on the global commons – climate and biodiversity – is not clear. We do not have robust data on the relative environmental effects of production around the world. Suffice to say that EU farming lies at the high intensity end of the spectrum.

Another vital aspect of a de-intensification strategy is the impact on food prices? Some are brave enough to argue that these must rise. Current production systems and prices do not take into account the spill-over costs to the environment and health. These costs should be internalised so that producers can 'afford' to farm in a more environmentally friendly way and consumers will contribute more to these real costs of production.

It is well established that environmentally friendly produce command an organic or bio-premium. This is necessary at farm level to offset the lower yields of such products (even recognising that there are cost savings on fertilisers and pesticides). However, bringing about the situation where significantly more consumers will willingly pay for higher-cost but less-environmentally-damaging products when cheaper products are adjacent in the supermarket, is far from simple. If the dynamics of this go awry, and the supply of more expensive products is encouraged to grow faster than the growth in consumption the outcome is obvious. Collapse of the bio-premium and strong disillusionment of the producers.

The other difficulty about nudging the food

system to more socially realistic, higher food price regime is food poverty. The EU in its first three decades of existence had a highly effective border regime of variable import levies and export subsidies. This (which was progressively abandoned after 1995) maintained farm commodity prices far above international market levels. Apart from the budget costs of the policy and the bad odour it caused with trading partners it was always argued that it was a highly regressive policy socially. It hurt most those households with the highest proportion of expenditure on food. These were the poorest, largest and most elderly households. The motive for a higher food price policy now to protect environment and health might be morally more defensible, but only if there are credible policies in place which really do offset the burden on the poorest.

Supposing resolutions can be found which induce farmers down the path to less-intensive, more sustainable, farming systems, and enabling more consumers to pay the necessary price for the more sustainable food, can this be squared with the liberal trading system? WTO rules and disciplines are based on the concept of 'like product'. Any restriction to trade on health or environmental grounds must be non-discriminatory and solidly justified by scientific evidence of harm. This is a big subject in its

own right. It means that the international trading system may have to be modified as different blocs, such as the EU move at a different pace towards more sustainable food systems for climate and biodiversity protection. Carbon border adjustments are on the agenda, but can they apply to such complex multi-product and process sectors such as food? This also requires urgent attention.

To close, it is claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic is a game changer. Many are arguing that a lesson from the pandemic is the need to re-examine the sustainability of Europe's food supplies. This is true. First, it is very clear that a shockingly high proportion of victims of the pandemic have been the elderly especially those with pre-existing disorders such as diabetes and heart disease. Second, there has been an alarming rise in food poverty – not because food supplies have dried up, they have not, but because large numbers of especially the poorest in society in low-paid jobs in the hospitality sector have lost their jobs and income. Europe's food security depends on moving towards more sustainable production and consumption. The Commission has elevated these issues high in the agenda. The very broad direction of travel is agreed, but there is a need for a great deal more analysis and debate to think through what it means and how to bring it about.

INTERGROUP ON "BIODIVERSITY, HUNTING, COUNTRYSIDE"



FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

Ensuring a healthy balance between Europe's food systems and biodiversity conservation

29 Sept 2020
16:30 -18:00
[online event]



INTERGROUP
BIODIVERSITY
HUNTING
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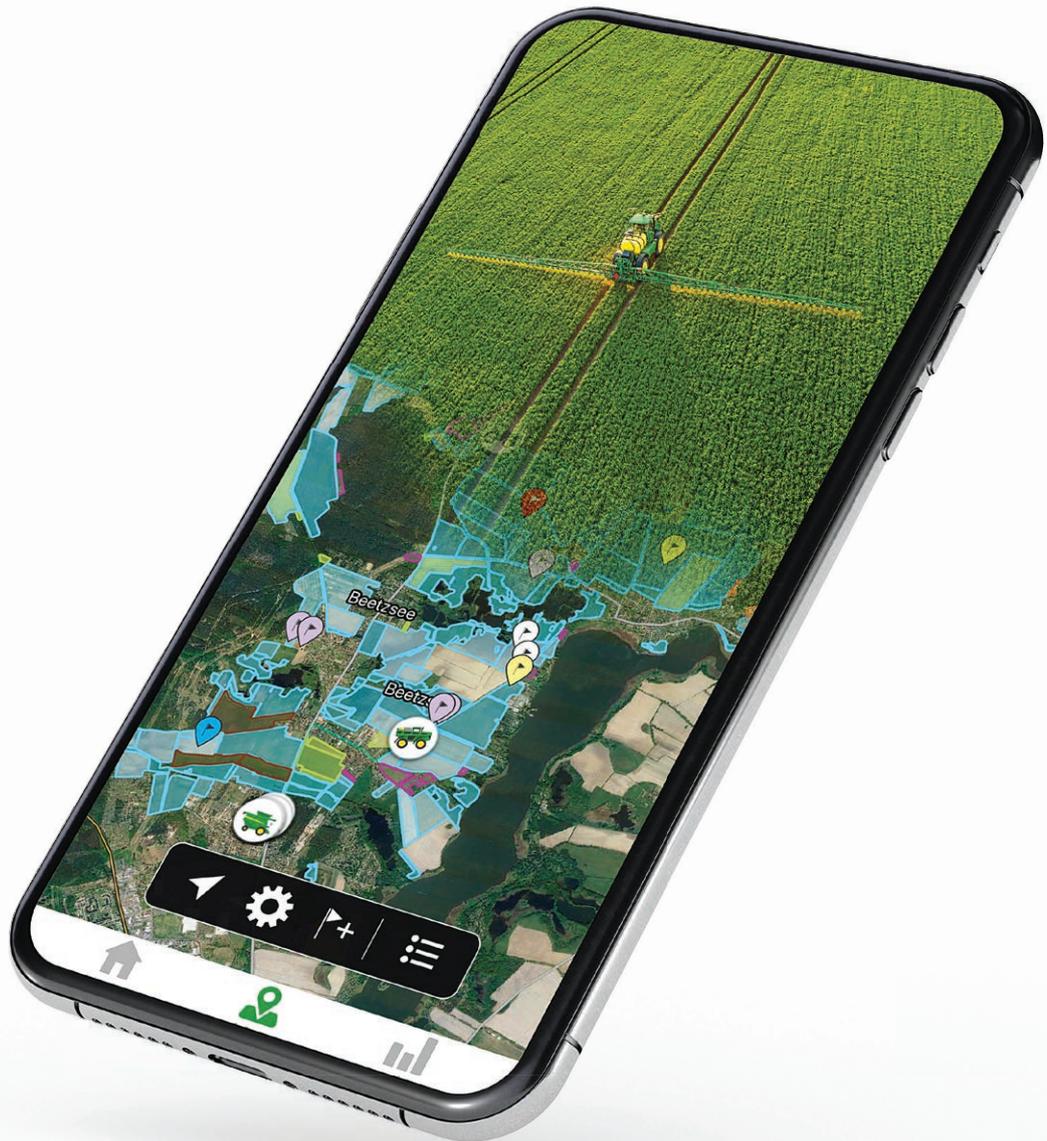
On September 29, the European Parliament's "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" Intergroup held a high-level conference on the **"Farm to Fork Strategy: Ensuring a healthy balance between Europe's food systems and biodiversity conservation"**.

The event was hosted by the President of the Intergroup, MEP Álvaro AMARO (EPP), and Intergroup Vice-Presidents, MEP Jérémy DECERLE (Renew Europe) and MEP Carmen AVRAM (S&D). During the conference, together with Alexandra NIKOLAKOPOULOU, Head of the Farm to Fork Strategy Unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), Dr. Francis BURNER, Senior Conservation Scientist and Head of PARTRIDGE Interreg NSR project, Zeno PIATTI, a second-generation organic farmer and ELO member, based in Austria, and Emeritus Prof. Allan BUCKWELL they have provided their views on the ambitious path to a sustainable food chain which will require necessary nature conservation actions.

For more information: www.biodiversityhuntingcountryside.eu

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Ploughing our own furrow – Agriculture policy in the UK

It is now four years since the UK voted to leave the European Union, two years since the first Agriculture Bill, one year since the snap General Election that reset the timetable, six months since the second Agriculture Bill was introduced, and only two months until the end of the implementation period in December 2020, and UK is a full sovereign state.

Susan TWINING, Chief Land Use Policy Adviser at the CLA

There have been a lot of political discussions, negotiations and legislation during the last four years, but from an agriculture policy point of view, the prospect of leaving the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) in only a few months time brings out mixed emotions. Gone is the relative certainty of ring-fenced agriculture budgets and in comes negotiation with Treasury and a major shake up in principles and policies. Many argue that this is not before time, and moving away from programmes that deliver poor value for money and are poorly targeted, based on land area rather than how the land is managed, is long overdue. The CAP is also going under scrutiny and review, with changes outlined in the 'Farm to Fork' strategy, making similar shifts towards more environmental delivery.

UK agriculture legislation

The Agriculture Bill is the legislative backdrop to the new agriculture policy and was first introduced to Parliament in September 2018. However, it was plagued by delays due to impending 'no deal' Brexit in early 2019 and on-going political difficulties, culminating in a General Election in

December that year, at which point the first Bill fell. It was reintroduced after the election in early 2020, with many improvements and is expected to get Royal Assent in October 2020.

The UK is made up of four countries, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Agriculture Bill is primarily related to England. There is a specific schedule for Wales, as an interim arrangement, before they bring forward their own legislation in 2021. Scotland and Northern Ireland have made separate provisions. There is related work looking at the UK internal market based on principles of mutual recognition and non-discrimination in policy development.

The Agriculture Bill is an enabling legislation and sets the scene for a seismic shift in agriculture policy. In England, the bill sets out the transition from direct payments (Basic Payment Scheme) starting in 2021 with no further payments after 2027. The bill contains provisions for financial assistance for the delivery of a wide range of public goods including for climate change, biodiversity, resource protection, heritage, public access and genetic diversity, as well as for improving productivity growth in agriculture and forestry. There is a range of other provisions, some to allow amendments to repatriated EU legislation such as market interventions, and new provisions to address fairness in the supply chain.

The Agriculture Bill does not stand entirely alone, and the provisions in the Environment Bill, which is also making its way through Parliament, and the Climate Act 2008, as amended in 2019, will be key. These will ensure targets are set for nature, water, air, resource efficiency and climate mitigation and will be key drivers of priorities in the agriculture and land use sector.

Policy development

While the Agriculture Bill has been limping through Parliament over the last two years, there has been progress in develop-

ing the new policies in England and Wales. England is arguably the most ambitious and most advanced with some new policies starting in 2021, including the start in cuts to direct payments. Wales is a little behind and has agreed that direct payments will not be cut until at least 2022, while Scotland is not intending any changes until 2024.

For England, the key features of the new policy include:

- Removal of all direct payments over a period of seven years starting in 2021.
- New productivity programmes for agriculture and forestry in 2021.
- New innovation, research and development programme launching in 2021.
- New domestic Countryside Stewardship scheme in 2021.
- New Environmental Land Management Scheme in 2024, with a pilot programme running from 2021-2023.
- New tree health grants introduced by 2024, with trials and pilots running from 2020-2023.
- Introduction of new Animal Health and Welfare programmes in 2024, with pilots running from 2021-2023.

This is an ambitious programme with the flagship Environmental Land Management (ELM) Scheme at its centre. The Department of Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) has invested an enormous amount of time to its development using a co-design framework, where stakeholders are involved at all stages. This has included running a programme of ELM test and trials, where projects were proposed by stakeholders to test out various parts of the scheme. The test and trials have reached over 3,000 farming businesses and have informed the design of the pilots that will be starting soon.

The CLA involvement

The CLA is supportive of the shift away from direct payments towards payments for public goods. In fact, the first paper on payments for public goods was published

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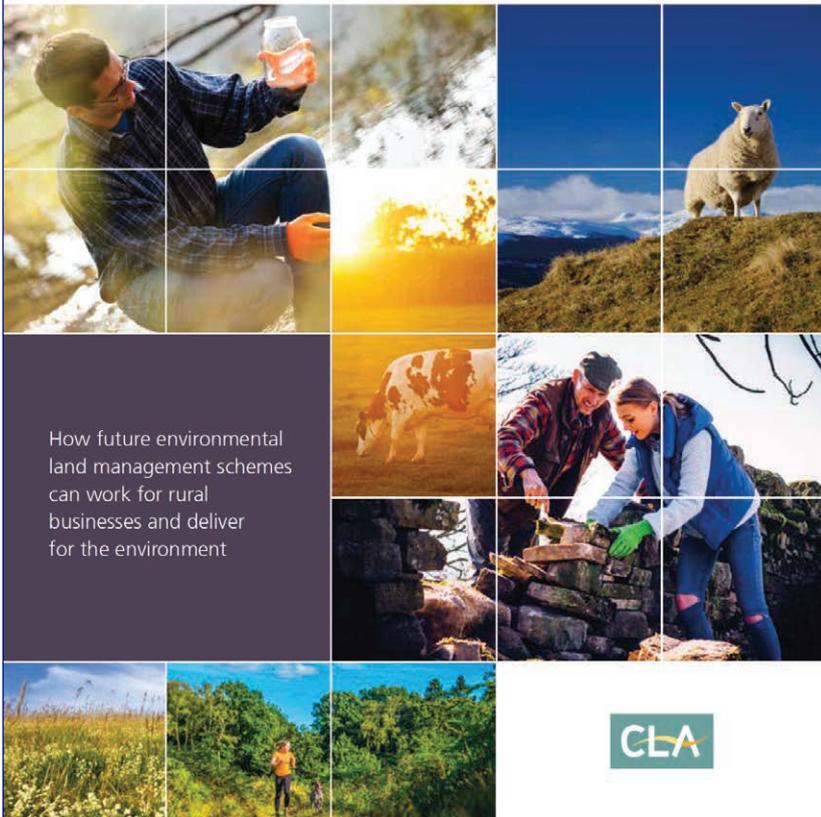
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THE LAND MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

DESIGN AND DELIVERY IN ENGLAND



in 2010, and the CLA developed a vision for the new policy called the Land Management Contract in May 2018 (available on www.cla.org.uk) that has been influential on the design of ELM.

The CLA has also run two ELM test and trials, working with members to investigate how sustainable farming and forestry practices could be included in ELM, and how the wildlife estate accreditation can contribute.

The Defra co-design principle means that there has been a high level of engagement in the policy development. The CLA policy team sit on a range of ELM stakeholder groups to reflect member's interests, including thematic groups related to the ELM tests and trials, and specialist groups looking at things such as outcome framework, advice provision and payment rates.

Clearly, while ELM is the flagship of the new agriculture policy, there are many other programmes that will be equally important for the industry, particularly those related to increasing farming and forestry productivity and competitiveness. The emerging trade agreements with the EU and other nations present opportunities and threats, and it is clear that productivity growth in the sector is overdue, so the early introduction of productivity and innovation programmes are welcome. The CLA has proposed a Business Adaptation Programme that includes grants from investment in machinery, buildings and infrastructure to boost productivity growth, but also provide access to funding for business advice and training to help individual businesses and the industry as a whole restructure.

Aside from the lack of concrete information only two months before the changes start in 2021, the key concern for many CLA members is the early transition period, when direct payments will be reduced over a four-year period before the new ELM Scheme is open to everyone. The cuts in direct payments have only been set out for 2021, with progressively higher reductions for recipients of larger payments. If further cuts are then spread equally across the remaining year, recipients could lose up to 50% of their payments before they are able to enter ELM in 2024. While this might stimulate change in the industry, it might also result in viable businesses failing in the short term. The CLA is lobbying for shallow cuts in the early part of transition to mitigate this 'valley of death' and investigating other possible solutions.

Conclusion

There is a lot to like in the direction of the new policy in England, but being the pioneer comes with its challenges. It is useful to remind our members that there are similar changes in the CAP, although whether they will go as far and as fast remains to be seen. But whatever happens in agriculture policy and trade negotiations, we wish to build a positive relationship with Europe in the future. The climate emergency and nature crisis do not respect political boundaries, and feeding the growing global population needs international collaboration. So, the bigger picture isn't so much about ploughing our own furrow after all.

7

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Growing trees on farmland – smart choices to plant 3 billion additional trees

Extracts of the policy brief by ELO & WWF



Smart choices to plant 3 billion additional trees

A policy brief by ELO & WWF



The 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives', published on May 20, includes as one of its flagship targets to plant "at least 3 billion additional trees in the EU by 2030, in full respect of ecological principles". It is announced that the new EU Forest Strategy, planned for 2021, will include a roadmap, likely with further details on how this initiative will be implemented.

The European Landowners Organization and the WWF European Policy Office welcome this initiative of the European Commission. We strongly believe that planting

trees and shrubs can bring multiple benefits to nature and people, but only when this is done appropriately and it is complementary to managing existing forests in a sustainable manner.

Besides proposing an increase of the quantity, quality and resilience of European forests, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 recognises that "tree planting is particular-

ly beneficial in cities, while in rural areas it can work well with agroforestry, landscape features and increased carbon sequestration", thus underlining the multifunctionality of trees.

This policy brief will focus specifically on the planting of trees and shrubs on agricultural land. We aim to contribute to the policy debate showcasing some of the best choices available for doing so, seeking co-benefits and supporting the restoration of farmland biodiversity. Considerations about the quantification of the tree planting target¹, or any detailed technical recommendations² are beyond the scope of this policy brief, which primarily aims to provide general guidance and policy recommendations.

Why grow trees on farmland?

Producing timber and other wood and non-wood products are one obvious reason to plant trees, as it can increase the income on the farm, even if it will take time before it provides revenue. Additionally, farmers and landowners are increasingly being encouraged to have more environmental considerations when farming, and reintroducing trees and shrubs on farmland, as well as preserving existing ones, can become one of their main tools to contribute to flood protection, capture and store carbon, diversify landscapes, regenerate soils, prevent water pollution or restore biodiversity.

Trees and shrubs enrich the farmland environment by providing a habitat for many types of flora and fauna. Biodiversity-rich farmland in Europe typically combines semi-natural vegetation such as pastures, with a high density of landscape features like trees, large hedges and copses, which also increase ecological connectivity. But woody vegetation can also offer multiple co-benefits for very diverse types of farming, boosting their resilience and even their productivity in certain conditions.³

Some typical examples of co-benefits include reducing the negative impact of wind on crops, providing shade in pastures and

¹ For a full list and description of protected habitats, see the Interpretation Manual of EU habitats.

² It goes without saying that it would be completely outdated (and in some cases illegal) to drain such lands and/or convert them into other land uses.

³ Myriad examples and scientific evidence is available on the Agforward project website.



A traditional fruit orchard in blossom in Bavaria, Germany.

additional fodder for livestock, or extending the growth season of pastures, which are all relevant in the face of current environmental challenges. Recent research is also pointing at other benefits, like protecting pollinators and pest regulators, increasing the protein content of cereal grains, or enhancing the capture of air moisture. Trees can also cause some disbenefits to adjacent fields or to certain wildlife. Examples of these are excessive shade, water competition, increasing the risk of weed spread or hosting wildlife that can cause damages to crops or ground-nesting birds.

In order to avoid undesirable effects and maximise benefits, there are multiple factors and conditions that need to be assessed when planning to grow trees and shrubs. Some choices, like opting for a resilient and ecologically appropriate species, could seem relatively straightforward, but

expert advice may be needed to factor in the long-term changes expected in the climatic conditions. Indeed, given the lifespan of trees, the standard local provenance seedlings may need to be diversified with more heat and drought resistant provenances.

Identifying the best design and locations for planting requires expertise, as well as foreseeing the maintenance and protection the seedlings will need. Additionally, longterm interdisciplinary research and further exchange and demonstration projects will be needed to overcome the fear around the complexity of agroforestry systems and to assess their agronomic and financial performance. All in all, good technical guidance, ideally provided by experienced and/or well trained agroforestry advisors, has a key role to play in making tree planting a long-term success.

A supportive policy framework

Growing trees and shrubs is not a one-off operation of planting but a long-term commitment for land owners and managers. The first years after the plantation or seeding are critical as the seedlings and young trees will need some protection from unfavourable weather conditions (such as frost, or drought) and to prevent damages made by wild animals like roe deer, or by domestic livestock. Replanting may be necessary if something went wrong and, in later stages, pruning or thinning could be needed to ensure a good shape and growth of trees.

While these systems increase the resilience of the farming activity, often leading to a decreased use of inputs and allow for a degree of diversification, the reduction in yields can still be a limiting factor. Additionally, planting trees can in some cases entail a loss in the value of farmland, or may be difficult to do when tenant farmers and landowners do not agree. Sequestering carbon has become almost a duty for land managers, but the economic incentives are rarely there. And when there is more limited experience and evidence available, as with innovative agroforestry systems, land managers may be reluctant to plant trees, unless they receive qualified reliable advice.

All in all, encouraging farmers and other land managers to plant trees and shrubs requires more than just covering the initial costs. A more comprehensive and favourable policy environment will be needed to achieve the ambitious target pursued by the Biodiversity Strategy. Below we underline five key elements that could be improved in the near future and be very relevant in this regard.



Dense network of trees and shrubs on pastures in León, Spain (© Víctor Casas)

1. Common Agricultural Policy - Eligibility of farmland for CAP direct payments.

A complex set of definitions and rules makes it more difficult -in many Member States- to claim CAP direct payments on land with abundant trees and shrubs, even if the land is actively farmed. Such restrictions operate as a perverse incentive against the presence of shrubs and trees, and must be changed to ensure that all the aforementioned types of agroforestry, including recently established copses and woods, are not excluded from the basic CAP support.

2. Common Agricultural Policy - Investment and advice. Sufficient Rural De-

velopment funds should be made readily available by Member States to support the advice and the investments required for tree and shrub planting, and for their maintenance in the first few years. Additionally, all types of agroforestation should benefit from the increased support rates already foreseen for afforestation and non-productive investments. Public authorities should ensure the availability of farm advisors with the adequate expertise, foster farmer-to-farmer exchanges and provide innovation support.

3. Common Agricultural Policy - Green architecture. The CAP's green architecture

must be conducive to a higher presence of trees on farmland. As a baseline, a fair proportion of landscape features and a minimum width for buffer strips should be set for all CAP beneficiaries. Incentive payments should be made available by Member States through the innovative eco-schemes, or the well-established Rural Development schemes, to reward farms that go beyond the baseline. Such payments should be multi-annual and proportional to the environmental benefits expected from higher amounts of landscape features, or from the enhanced management of trees and natural vegetation.

4. The recently announced EU Carbon farming initiative and Regulatory framework for certifying carbon removals should

cover the activity of growing trees on farms in full detail, as it is one of the major tools available for land managers to sequester carbon. The potential access to additional income from carbon markets, or from a public or private carbon farming scheme could help develop new business models for farms, and further incentivise land managers to grow trees.

5. National or Regional regulations. Legal

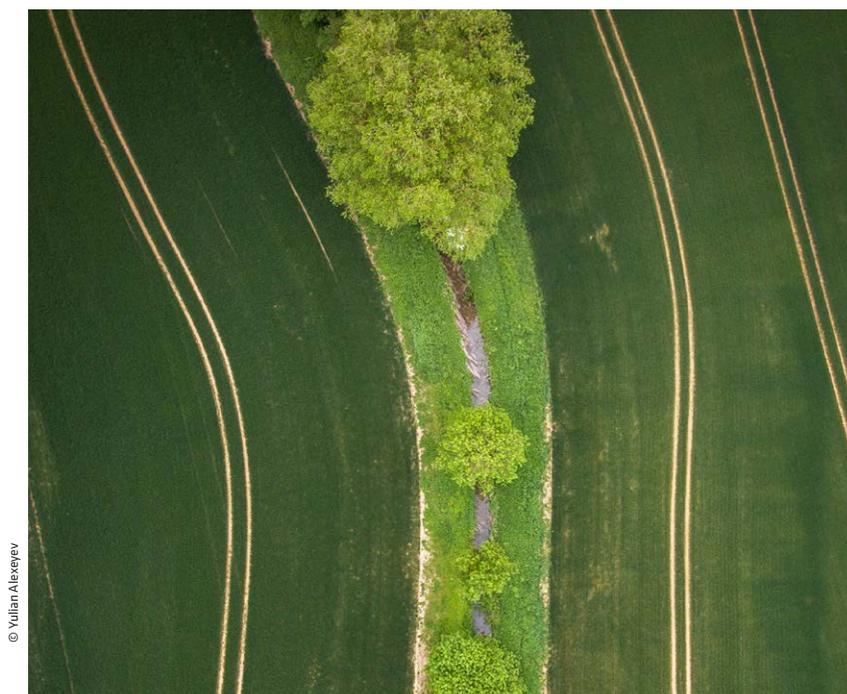
definitions of agricultural vs. forest land in official registers (which may be affected by the size of the parcel or the tree cover) should be revised where having more trees on farmland creates a loss of land value or disproportionate restrictions to management. Additionally, the laws governing farmland leases between owners and tenants should include a fair framework delimiting the roles and responsibilities of each actor as regards growing trees on leased land. Innovative governance approaches like land stewardship, as well as the scaling up of payments for ecosystem services can also be instrumental in facilitating the uptake of tree planting initiatives.

Looking into the future, and taking into account the increasing and competing demands placed on land use, a more holistic and territorial approach to policy making seems to be desirable for our rural areas. One option that would facilitate the growing of more trees in Europe would be to broaden the scope and governance of the CAP, so it becomes the principal policy for EU rural land management, embracing forestry.

Planting trees in the wrong places, or using the wrong species, are well-documented errors we have made in the past, and must not be repeated. This is particularly the case for some EU-protected habitats⁴, such as many wetlands (e.g., bogs, moors, etc.)⁵ and certain biodiversity-rich grasslands, which are best preserved when kept free of trees. Any conversion of these habitats should be avoided, so they are no-go areas for tree planting. When available, specific recommendations on tree planting found in guidance documents for habitat conservation or in management plans for protected areas should be followed.

Additionally, it can also be counterproductive to plant trees or shrubs on land where natural regeneration is already taking place, particularly if it involves substantial preparatory work disturbing soils and existing woody vegetation. Tree planting is frequently inappropriate also in rural areas which already host a high proportion of forests and natural vegetation, especially where maintaining open areas with pastures or cropland helps preserve biodiversity-rich mosaic landscapes.

⁴ For a full list and description of protected habitats, see the Interpretation Manual of EU habitats.
⁵ It goes without saying that it would be completely outdated (and in some cases illegal) to drain such lands and/or convert them into other land uses.



© Yulian Alexeyev

Trees along a water creek in Pontruet, France.

The full version of the policy brief is available on the website www.europeanlandowners.org

Exceptional Nobel Prize winners for an exceptional year

The 2020 pandemic and economy crises, in addition to climate and nature crises once again proved how crucial it is for our future to act now, while keeping in mind long-term solutions.

Emmanuelle MIKOSZ, ELO



© Nobel Media. Ill. Niklas Elmehed.
Emmanuelle CHARPENTIER
The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2020



© Nobel Media. Ill. Niklas Elmehed.
Jennifer A. DOUDNA



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The Nobel Peace Prize for 2020

ploded. It has been underlined that: “this tool has contributed to many important discoveries in basic research, and plant researchers have been able to develop crops that withstand mould, pests and drought. In medicine, clinical trials of new cancer therapies are underway, and the dream of being able to cure inherited diseases is about to come true. These genetic scissors have taken the life sciences into a new epoch and, in many ways, are bringing the greatest benefit to humankind.”

ELO, has for many years, advocated with its members for solutions that ensure food and environmental security. As such, ELO conveys special words of recognition to all humanitarian workers around the world. ELO also conveys special words of appreciation to Emmanuelle CHARPENTIER and Jennifer DOUDNA for the Crispr-Cas9 mechanism, which is bringing new hope in the battle to feed the world sustainably.

The determination to “act now” has been rewarded by the Nobel Peace Prize for the work of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) for its efforts to combat world hunger, particularly in conflict zones. This is a very symbolic gesture, certainly much better understood in today’s reality by European citizens who have lived for many years on a continent rarely touched by war and surrounded by peace, with the last regional conflict taking place more than 20 years ago in the Balkans. The COVID-19 crisis has underlined even more so the urgent need to fight global food insecurity, so clearly depicted by the images of such places as the Moria refugee camp in Greece. The Nobel Peace Prize for 2020 shows just how much still needs to be done in this field.

The “long term” perspective has been recognized by the outstanding achievement of the discovery of the “genetic scissors”: a tool that can rewrite the code of life, as described by the Nobel Committee. Emmanuelle CHARPENTIER, a French microbiologist, Director of the Max Planck Unit for the Science of Pathogens, Berlin, Germany; and Jennifer A. DOUDNA, American biologist, Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, USA; have discovered one of gene technology’s sharpest tools: the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors. It allows you to change the DNA of animals, plants and microorganisms with extreme precision.

As explained by Claes GUSTAFSSON, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry: “There is enormous power in this genetic tool, which affects us all. It has not only revolutionised basic science, but also resulted in innovative crops and will lead to ground-breaking new medical treatments”. The Nobel Committee brought special attention to the fact that since the discovery of the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors mechanism in 2012, the use of this tool has ex-





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Wildlife Estates Plenary Session 2020

This year Wildlife Estates Plenary Session took place on 2-3 September in Wolfsburg (Germany).

José M^a GÓMEZ-ACEBO ROSAS



The Steering Committee met to update the situation in each country within the label and all the progress made thanks to the hard work of the national delegations. We were able to count on the physical assistance of the national delegations of Germany, France and Belgium. The rest of the members did so by telematic means. The Scientific Committee updated the changes that are being made within the current methodology to follow the guidelines of the new CAP along with new projects. The Wildlife Estates label is not only the largest European private certification but also the most up to date. Konstantin KOSTOPOLULOS, the current director of the project, informed us of the current situation at a European level and the evolution of the different policies that will be adopted in the EU.

During the plenary session, 5 diplomas were awarded to the following estates: Forstrevier Basedow, Territory "Forstgut Boden-stein" on the estate "Forstbetrieb Wintzingerode", Forstgut Eickhof, Gut Basthorst and Frhr. Knigge'sche Miteigentümerge-meinschaft. The addition of these 5 estates has grown the total area managed by the project by 5320 hectares.

The difficult nature of current circumstances required an unusual logistical arrangement by our host, Günther Graf von der SCHULENBURG, in order to comply with German health regulations. The WE Secretariat kindly thanks the efforts made to ensure that the event took place.

The plenary session also saw the confer-ence "Rewarding ecological system per-

formance as an exceptional chance for the Wildlife Estates" where MEP Lena DÜPONT presented an update on the current situa-tion in the European Parliament, Professor Ernst SCHULZE explained the "Biodiver-

sity and Forest Management, A German view" in detail. The subsequent colloquium between Günther Graf von der SCHULENBURG, Susanne WITTIG (Co-founder of Brainforest), Helmut DAMMANN-TAMKE (UCD Parliamentary Party Leader) and Professor Ernst-Detlef SCHULZE highlighted the benefits of having an environmental label and what benefits the owners should reap. Finally, Dr. Jurgen TACK (ELO Scientific Director) explained the advances of the LIFE (Land is forever) project where he explained the different tools used in the project to highlight the fundamental work of private owners in terms of environment and biodi-versity.

As a culmination, a visit was made to the Biodiversity Project Bisdorf composed of waterlogged meadows, wet woodland frag-ments, shrub areas, hedgerows, dry grass-lands and populations of wild pears and apples.



In the photo from left to right: Christoph zu STOLBERG-STOLBERG, Roderich FREIHERR VON LOE, Milana Freifrau von RUFFIN, Günther Graf von der SCHULENBURG, Dr. Jobst Graf von WINTZINGERODE, Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Jens JACOBI and Alexander SCHÖNBURG-HARTENSTEIN

ERRATUM concerning the text published in the CountrySide Magazine n°188

The Wildlife Estate Secretariat is happy to announce 3 new labels awarded in the Netherlands this year to the estates of Heerlijkheid Mareinwaerdt, Landgoed De Noetselenberg B.V. and Landgoed Middachten. We would like to thank Seger Baron VAN VOORST TOT VOORST and his Team for having organized the presentation of the Wildlife Estates Labels in De Hoge Veluwe National Park (a Wildlife Estate Label itself).

F.W.F.L. Graf zu ORTENBURG, owner of Landgoed Middachten quoted: "Wildlife Estates highlights the importance of a Europe-wide initiative that reflects the work of private owners in preserving biodiversity. This is a very important statement to make society and politicians become aware of this work by private landowners. I encourage owners to join this initiative, as the more labels we have, the more awareness we will create for the Label."

Some autumn news from the Spanish Wildlife Estates delegation



The Escalona Dehesas, Toledo, and the conservation of the Imperial Eagle in Iberia

Dr. Carlos OTERO

(Wildlife Estate. La Ronca
WE Code: ES.WE9.2017)

The young Imperial eagles known as *Dameros* although they were already present sporadically in this region, in the west of the province of Toledo, began to be observed repeatedly from June 2018 onwards in the La Ronca Wildlife Estate and especially from the summer of 2019, coinciding with the consolidation of the Rabbit, Red partridge and Woodpigeon populations in this area, their favourite preys.

The couple of imperial eagles nest in the historic dehesa of Escalona and Paredes de Escalona. Their chicks leave the vicinity of the nest from June onwards, when it is common to see them perched in evergreen oaks from where they dominate extensive hunting areas in La Ronca. The permanent presence in this dehesa of the adult pair and the young of the Imperial Eagle confirms the slow but continuous recovery of this species in Spain.



Juvenile Imperial Eagle (© A.M. Romero)

The drought in Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, threatens the population of the Houbara bustard and the Cream-coloured courser.

Dr. Carlos OTERO

Wildlife Estate: Fuerteventura Island

Código WE: ES.WE3.2017

The scant 260 mm of rain that has fallen in 2020 to date on the island of Fuerteventura has created extremely hostile conditions in the desert habitat of species as important to the Macaronesian Bioregion as the Houbara bustard and the Cream-coloured courser.

The UMECAH strategy developed by WESC for the conservation of the Houbara bustard and implemented by the Biosphere Reserve

and the Fuerteventura Island Council will mitigate these effects by implementing 8 conservation initiatives during 2020-2021.



UMECAH Fuerteventura (© C. Otero)



Cream-coloured courser (© A. M. Romero)



Houbara bustard (© A. M. Romero)

The cranes have already landed in Extremadura for their wintering season.

Maria LEDESMA

(Wildlife Estate: San Antón Abad
WE Code: ES.WE8.2010)

With the arrival of the first cold weather, you can already hear the roaring and trumpeting of the cranes at the Wildlife Estates of San Antón in Navalvillar de Pela (Badajoz, Spain).

As every year, the majority of the cranes from Norway, Sweden and Germany choose the Vega Alta in Guadiana basin as their wintering destination, taking advantage of the diversity of optimal habitats for their rest and feeding.

Specifically, the birds that settle in the area around Navalvillar de Pela and other neighbouring municipalities (reaching figures of up to 45,000 specimens well into January) take advantage of the day to feed on acorns and bulbs in the increasingly scarce pastures, in the stubble fields of corn and rice, but also in the olive groves and fields where winter cereals are sown.

In the evening, you can see the spectacle of endless crane phalanxes passing from the feeding areas to the roosts, which are usually established on the banks of the Orellana and García de Sola reservoirs, and in the stubble fields themselves on the irrigated crop terraces which are flooded during the winter by rainwater.

During their stay, it is common to see them in large flocks of hundreds, like herds of sheep, in which the family groups made up of the adult couple and the yearling can be clearly distinguished.

For the enjoyment of birdwatchers who come to visit them, they are accompanied in this enclave by many other wintering birds such as the Greylag goose (*Anser anser*), Common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*) or the Golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) among others.



Common Crane (© C. Otero)



Promoting the delivery of Agri-Environmental Climate Public Goods

Marie-Christine BERGER, ELO

The CONSOLE project focuses on promoting the delivery of Agri-Environmental Climate Public Goods (AECPGs) by agriculture and forestry through the development of improving contractual solutions between the public administration (at different scales) and the farmers. The CONSOLE multi-actor and multidisciplinary team brings together 24 partners from 13 countries, covering a range of representations from farmer organisations, regional administrations, consultancy companies, research institutions and water and forest management bodies.

A workshop titled “New instruments for the provisions of public goods by agriculture and forestry: insights from the CONSOLE project” was held virtually on October 19 to highlight the 60 case studies collected. Over 100 participants from across the EU and beyond joined. An introduction by the Project Coordinator was followed by a presentation on new contract solutions for the improved provision of public goods from agriculture and forestry, where some of the 60 case studies were highlighted. Afterwards, an interactive session with polls was held where the audience could answer questions regarding lessons learned from the case studies. The answers were then used to facilitate a lively discussion with the audience on future designs of contract solutions. The workshop was a success with many interesting points raised by the audience.

The presentations will be made available on the project website. To find out more about the case studies, please visit our website <https://console-project.eu/>

- console-project.eu
- [Console.project](https://www.facebook.com/Console.project)
- [ProjectConsole](https://twitter.com/ProjectConsole)
- [console-project](https://www.linkedin.com/company/console-project)

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 817949.



The state-of-the-art report on social farming is available!

Juliette OLIVIER; ELO

We are pleased to announce that, after hard work by the FARCURA project partners, the **state-of-the-art report on innovative models of social farming is now available. This report captures the diversity of social farming** in four European countries (Slovenia, Germany, Portugal and Ireland).

The starting point for this report is the recognition that European citizens increasingly see agriculture not only as a means of food production and food security, but also as a means of providing services that benefit society. In recent years, this understanding of agriculture has led to the conviction that it can also contribute to the development of social and health services for vulnerable groups.

This is the aim of social farming - a movement that stems partly from the tradition of rural communities, where there have always been informal forms of assistance to vulnerable groups, and partly from modern scientific and professional knowledge about the therapeutic effects of working in nature with animals or plants.

Social farming has developed differently among the EU countries, where different forms of agriculture, different support policies, different ways of involving participants from target groups in the work and life of social farms and rural communities have evolved. Our report has tried to bring together and explain these different approaches, and to give an insight into the complexity and demands of social farming.

If you wish to read the summary report (available in English, French, German, Portuguese and Slovenian), please visit our website: www.farcura.eu

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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InnoForEST Multi-stakeholder Workshop

On 28 September 2020, the InnoForEST consortium gathered key stakeholders in the supply and financing of forest ecosystem services (FES) to discuss central findings from selected Innovation Regions (IRs), lessons learned from accompanying research, and to further refine project recommendations.

Lindsey CHUBB, ELO

Part 1: Governance innovations for forest ecosystem services in practice

Governance innovations included new payment schemes and business approaches for the provision of FES with contributions from the Waldaktie innovation in Germany and the Finnish Innovation, Habitat Bank.

The common idea of alliances and networks compiled insights from the innovations in Austria, Italy, and Sweden. The innovation in Italy uses forest pasture management for scenic beauty, tourism, and biodiversity conservation to encourage the revival of the traditional rural landscape.

Part 2: Enabling governance innovations development

WP2: Mapping and assessing FES and institutional frameworks, collates a broad understanding of FES with the innovation potential from recent and emerging niches, in interaction with the existing socio-technical regime in the forest sector. For this purpose, WP2 merged European level information on ecosystem services and various governmental and industry sources to map the socio-economic and institutional landscape across Europe. From the analysis, a map and framework were produced, onto which further detailed innovation analyses can be based, and gain a deeper understanding of the social-ecological and institutional conditions for policy and business innovations. These maps can be found online.

WP3: Smart ecosystem services governance innovations, raised 2 key questions: (1) 'What kind of governance innovations can

support sustainable provision of FES in the long term?' and (2) 'What are the influencing factors (fostering/hindering) for governance innovations?' To describe preferred future development for each IR there must be operationalisation of the SETFIS framework factors in innovation process, testing of reconfiguration of these factors, and prototypes to then upgrade and upscale these innovations. Factors in the SETFIS framework include actors, institutions, biophysical conditions, forest management systems, innovation systems, external factors, and governance innovation processes. Key preconditions were derived from the experiences of the 6 InnoForEST IRs. These include institutional robustness of local long-lasting institutions, local biophysical conditions and ecosystem and pro-environmental behaviour supported by informal institutions and mutual trust among forest community members.

WP4: Innovation platforms for policy and business, is dedicated to selection and matching, co-design and establishment of prototype development in WP3, and an implementation analysis of innovation networks in a real-world context. A mixed-methodological approach was used for matching the prototypes and case studies, as it can capture complex social-ecological system related interactions.

WP5: Innovation process integration, serves as the basis for the integrated multi-disciplinary, multi-actor and multi-layer approach of InnoForEST. WP5 compiled and connected the decisive economic, socio-technical, political-institutional, and biophysical-ecological conditions, as assessed in WP2 and identified in WP3, with the objectives of generating and integrat-

ing knowledge and innovations that serve as real-world input as well as empirically informed and holistic validation, sharing and merging the analytical and practical knowledge in InnoForEST.

Part III Preliminary findings and recommendations

Five overarching themes have emerged despite the variability in IRs' local contexts, FES-related objectives, and asynchronous developments during InnoForEST. They relate to issues that demand consideration during the entire process of working towards an innovative governance mechanism for FES provision and financing. As such, they serve as the structuring backdrop to the target-group specific recommendations and options for action that follow.

The project results suggest that all six targeted actor groups can contribute to securing FES provision and financing by catering to one of more of these overarching themes, or by addressing them through different means. Information about these recommendations can be found in Deliverable 6.3 and our targeted policy briefs, available soon on the project website.

 @InnoForEST

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The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 under the Grant Agreement number 763899, InnoForEST project, within the innovation Action.





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Forest Fire Failure

Study on defending forests against fire

Christian PINAudeau

L'HARMATTAN, JUNE 2020

ISBN : 978-2-343-20133-7



Every summer, Mediterranean forest fires become a political and media issue. But both always forget that forest fires are not inevitable. The solutions are known to limit and reduce the risks: adapting silvicultural management to each massif and adopting a systematic prevention policy organising the defence against fire (fr. Défense des Forêts

Contre l'Incendie - DFCI). In the south-west of French, 30 years of conflict and 11 years of litigation were necessary for the DFCI to be recognised as the only efficient policy for mitigating forest fire risk. The results can be seen in the Gascogne forests that implemented this. This book shows that the variety of means to fight forest fires is more costly and less effective than a prevention policy.

Diary dates

2 November, Brussels - Online

AGFOSY virtual final conference
www.europeanlandowners.org

23 November, Brussels & Rio de Janeiro - Online

Dialogue on Sustainable Food and Agriculture: Leading the transition Sharing experiences on carbon farming & precision agriculture; co-organised by ELO and APEX
www.europeanlandowners.org

1 - 2 December, Lisbon

ELO General Assembly
www.europeanlandowners.org

8 December, Brussels - Online

Annual conference on Biodiversity, followed by the Ceremony of the European Bee Award
www.europeanlandowners.org

10 December, Brussels, European Parliament

6th EU Young Farmers Congress, followed by the awarding ceremony of the European Young Farmers Prize 2020
<https://euyoungfarmers.eu/>

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