

# CountrySide

N° 191

European Landowners' Organization

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021 - BIMONTHLY - EN



## Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe

Capercaillie



# Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

## Contents

- 3** Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe

---

- 6** Wake-up call from the Future we Want

---

- 8** Facial Recognition Provides Traceability for Cattle

---

- 10** European Bee Award 2020

---

- 11** Save the Spanish Countryside!

---

- 12** A new project to pave the way to Agroecology in Europe  
AGFOSY official end of the project

---

- 13** IA training course to develop successful social farming activities  
Land Mobility project

---

- 14** Memento of 2020, unleash dynamic 2021!

---

- 15** European Tree of the Year 2021 & Planting for the Future Conference  
Diary dates

---

*Members of ELO support private land conservation and invest in tools and practices that benefit both the environment and society, where biodiversity prospers and ecosystems flourish.*

*We welcome a collaborative strategy to promote biodiversity in our countryside. However, we find the current proposals in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 regarding 'strict protected areas' shocking as it does not reflect the reality of what we must be doing.*

*We invite the European Institutions to rethink their approach on the definition of "strict protected areas" as many of these areas are not in need of strict protection, they are, as mentioned in many reports, in need of 'effective protection'. The current approach is creating further issues such as "fishing, hunting and forestry" mentioned within the same scope as extractive activities. The definition of 'extractive activities' refers to the exploration and extraction of minerals, oil and natural gas deposits, which are non-renewables, therefore, fishing, hunting and forestry should never belong in such a category. This is simply misrepresenting these activities as harmful, when they actually provide the opportunity to enhance biodiversity when carried out the right way.*

*Such an approach is a top-down judgement that misconsidere, once more, the role of the "countrymen." Why reject them when we need the commitment of this sector of society? The impacts of climate change are accelerating and therefore, we need to take more action to maintain our land effectively as a lack of appropriate land management will leave our forests vulnerable to forest fires, disease and pest infestations.*

*With more action needed to maintain our ecosystem, not less, this blanket ban of activities such as hunting and forestry as a top-down measure for 10% of the EU surface area will have serious environmental and socio-economic consequences; not only to landowners, hunters and foresters, but on the Member States themselves as well.*



Grey partridge



© Rudi DEBRUYNE

# Small wildlife of fields and meadows in Europe



For several decades, the agricultural plains have seen a dramatic decline in the number of small wildlife in fields and meadows. This report describes the declining biodiversity of fields and meadows in Europe and how the European Union has acted on this by adopting nature legislation and by developing biodiversity strategies. Even though not have always successful.

Jurgen TACK, Alain SCRIBAN, Valérie VANDENABEELE, Anne-Sophie MULIER, José GOMEZ-ACEBO, Josef JARY, Amedeo MISSIRI di LUSIGNANO, Martin FOX, Stephanie VAN MEENEN & Charles De FIERLANT DORMER

The decline in small wildlife populations is caused by multiple practices including crop intensification, agricultural land consolidation, use of pesticides, urbanisation etc. This study will have a closer look at agricultural production techniques, study the effect of grazing and the use of fertilisers and pesticides. It will also discuss the role of hunting and study the increasing populations of predators and their effects on the small wildlife of fields and meadows.

Once the causes of the decline of these small wildlife species of fields and meadows are known we have a look at the most important management practices to protect the small wildlife in the fields and meadows. This includes habitat related management: hedges, grassed strips and wildlife fallow strips by providing refuge areas and additional food resources to generate small wildlife recovery. Although these developments have demonstrated a positive impact on the fields' and meadows' wildlife and, more specifically, on its avifauna, it has also been found that their effectiveness depends on the consistency with which they are estab-

lished, as well as on the size of their siting areas. Next to habitat management this report describes management practices at the species level, including the regulation of predators and artificial feeding. But we also have a look at more innovative practices such as nature-based agriculture. We question if organic farming is really having a positive impact on biodiversity and we have a look at the potential cooperation between stakeholders in the countryside. We also have a look at the importance of guardianship and how the "Wildlife Estates" label can play a role in the much-needed public recognition towards private landowners.

In order to encourage the implementation of voluntary actions in favour of the environment in agricultural areas, the CAP has launched the programme of Agri-Environmental Measures (AEM) based on multiannual contracts. These allow for the implementation of developments on the edges and within the crops that increase the carrying capacity of the plains, i.e. the capacity of a territory (and its habitats) to accommodate a certain density of individuals for each

species. This report looks forward to the new CAP under development and the role it could play in the protection of small wildlife. Next to CAP-funding, the LIFE-programme can also play a role in supporting small wildlife, be it more specifically in N2000 areas.

We conclude this study with several case studies which successfully used one of the instruments or methods described in the study, as the proof is in the pudding.

## Policy recommendations

### Towards the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030:

- Successive EU Biodiversity strategies have not succeeded to halt the loss of biodiversity within the European Union. The biodiversity of fields and meadows has shown a steady decline and is not slowing down.
- There is a need for more coherence between different successive and parallel strategies related to biodiversity and agriculture.



Great Bustard

- The new EU Biodiversity strategy proposes to increase protected areas by 30%. This can only be realised with the support of private landowners. Private landowners must be made real partners in this process. This can be achieved by including them in every step of the decision process. As voluntary measures have proven to be very successful among private landowners we ask for a broad set of voluntary private land conservation tools. Several Life+ projects have listed such tools and have shown the interest of private landowners. By developing and providing payments for ecosystem services in line with market practice nature conservation can even become a thriving part of the rural economy.

- The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 also suggests that 1/3 of protected areas should be under strict protection (10% land and 10% sea). When not taking into account environmental and climatic change this could have a negative impact on biodiversity.

- The proposed reduction of chemical pesticides should go hand-in-hand with the development of more environmentally friendly alternatives enabling farmers to ensure Europe's and the world's food security. This requires actions to enable faster deployment of biological control methods and products by revising the regulatory approval process for such products. To review the regulatory provisions affecting efforts to internalising plant protection in crop genotypes the best technologies that modern biotechnology can offer should be used.

- An increasing set of tools for private land conservation, include payments for ecosystem services, tax benefits, labels for nature conservation management and sustainable produced natural products which are being explored and should be

implemented to enable private landowners to fully participate and contribute to the conservation of nature.

Observing and hunting small game has been a passion of mine since childhood and yet I am now observing its unrelenting decline.

Breeding pheasants is not the long term solution, which is why I turned to my friend Tony de KETTENIS, then Head of Delegation of the CIC for Belgium, for help. He had the good idea to call on Thierry de L'ESCAILLE and involve ELO to begin a scientific study on the subject.

I sincerely hope that Europe will hear us and that these splendid animals will shortly reappear in the countryside.

Eric JOLLY, member of the Friends of the Countryside

#### Towards the CAP

- Agro-environmental measures (hedges and wooded banks, grassy headlands and field margins, woodland edge land, fallow



Rabbit

land for wildlife, beetle banks, hay meadows, flower strips, over-wintered stubbles, and scrubs) have proven to contribute significantly to the diversity of small wildlife populations

- The impact of modern harvesting and mowing technology is largely negative. However sometimes small adaptations in the use of this technology have a significantly positive effect. Simply adjusting the speed of mowing machines can already give significant results. Mowing and harvesting times also have a major impact on the survival rate and reproduction success of small wildlife.

- Organic farming, in contrast to nature-based agriculture, is not making a significant contribution to biodiversity at the farm or regional level.

- Crop choice plays an important role in the success of small wildlife.

- Low intensity grazing is the most attractive grassland production method for most small fauna, providing cover combined with higher abundance of insects. Although some species, like Lapwing and Grey partridge, benefit from more intense grazing. Use of vermicides and anti-biotics however should be discouraged until their working on dung biotics resides. The effect leads to reduction of an important amount of insect-food and slows down the composting of dung.

- High nature value farming, nature-based farming and circular farming are new farming methodologies which are currently being studied, with promising results towards small wildlife populations. While it is often stated that the greening of the CAP as currently implemented is not enhancing environmental and climate performance, it remains unclear if this really is the case. The period of implementation remains after a very short order which will lead to a conclusive results. During many decades however, we have been subsidising nature conservation while we not being able to halt the loss of biodiversity.

- Within the new CAP, payments for ecosystems are a promising instrument on the condition that the delivered results and not the size of land of an individual farmer will be the basis of the payment.

- Eco-schemes could significantly contribute to the delivery of public goods. It will, however, be difficult to determine the value of e.g. biodiversity to society. Another problem related to the payment for public goods is the need for extensive reporting and verification. To guarantee an equal treatment of all farmers, a binding share of the national direct payment envelope for eco-schemes is a necessity.

# IT'S TIME TO UPGRADE

**N°1 IN TRANSPORT\***



## **JOHN DEERE 6215R VERSUS CLAAS AXION 830, DEUTZ-FAHR 7250 TTV, FENDT VARIO 826 AND NEW HOLLAND T7.270\*\***

When a tractor with a 215 hp decal not only pulls 30 tons much faster, but also with significantly less fuel than the ones with "bigger" decals in the test . . . it's because the 6215R gets the power effectively to the ground, thanks to its superior drivetrain efficiency\*.



**JOHN DEERE**

NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE

\* "Comparing standard tractors (without Unimog) the John Deere achieved the lowest diesel consumption. [...] It is interesting that, despite the low fuel consumption, the 6215R was also the fastest when accelerating with two trailers" Chamber of Agriculture Lower Saxony (Germany) Tractor Test 2020; [www.lwk-niedersachsen.de](http://www.lwk-niedersachsen.de)

\*\* Based on Tractor Test 2020, Chamber of Agriculture Lower Saxony (Germany), where 6215R John Deere AutoPowr™ was compared with Claas Axion 830 CMATIC, Deutz-Fahr 7250TTV, Fendt Vario 826, New Holland T7.270 AutoCommand and Unimog U427; [www.lwk-niedersachsen.de](http://www.lwk-niedersachsen.de)

# Wake-up call from the Future we Want

*The past year has seen a global reset on multiple dimensions. We witnessed a reset of our economic modus operandi, with economies in lockdown and governments releasing the biggest stimulus packages in recent memory. Ecological tipping points have become even more visible, and it became even more obvious that we are out of the “safe operating space” across multiple earth systems. We have witnessed a renewed politicisation of societies - with citizens and politicians debating over and struggling with scientific evidence on how to deal with a global catastrophe unfolding in front of our eyes. More than anything, the global pandemic has forced us to confront fundamental questions about our life on this planet: What makes a good life and how well is that aligned with the future we want?*

Janez POTOČNIK, FFA2021 Chairman & Partner at SYSTEMIQ

In light of this global reset, the European Green Deal (EGD), whose main initiatives were fleshed out in 2020, has demonstrated positive ambition and created a true paradigm change in European politics and beyond. It has been introduced as a new strategic objective, supported by a new cohort of politicians that have staked their entire political weight behind this initiative. The EGD sets a new growth strategy acknowledging that environmental and economic goals are not in contradiction and future economic development depends on how we will preserve and protect our natural capital.

However, much as the EGD has articulated a positive ambition (such as net zero emissions by 2050, the decoupling of growth and resource use, and the need for a fair and just transition), its implementation is highly uncertain. The policy initiatives that make up the EGD in many cases fail to sufficiently address the drivers and pressures that have caused the social inequalities and environmental damage that led us to overshoot planetary boundaries in the past and that have caused us to encroach on natural systems such that zoonotic diseases become ever more likely.

30% of the EU funds are earmarked to fight climate change – the highest share ever of the European budget. However, that still leaves an important part of the budget supporting the status quo and a type of the economy that led us into the problems we witness in the first place. Probably the most obvious case is related to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that locked in budgets until 2027 that take insufficient account of the underlying drivers and pressures of our ecological crises. To achieve the objectives of the EGD, marginal adjustments and tweaks to our past economic model will not be sufficient. Only a real system change can align human economic activity with planetary boundaries and meet the needs of our societies.



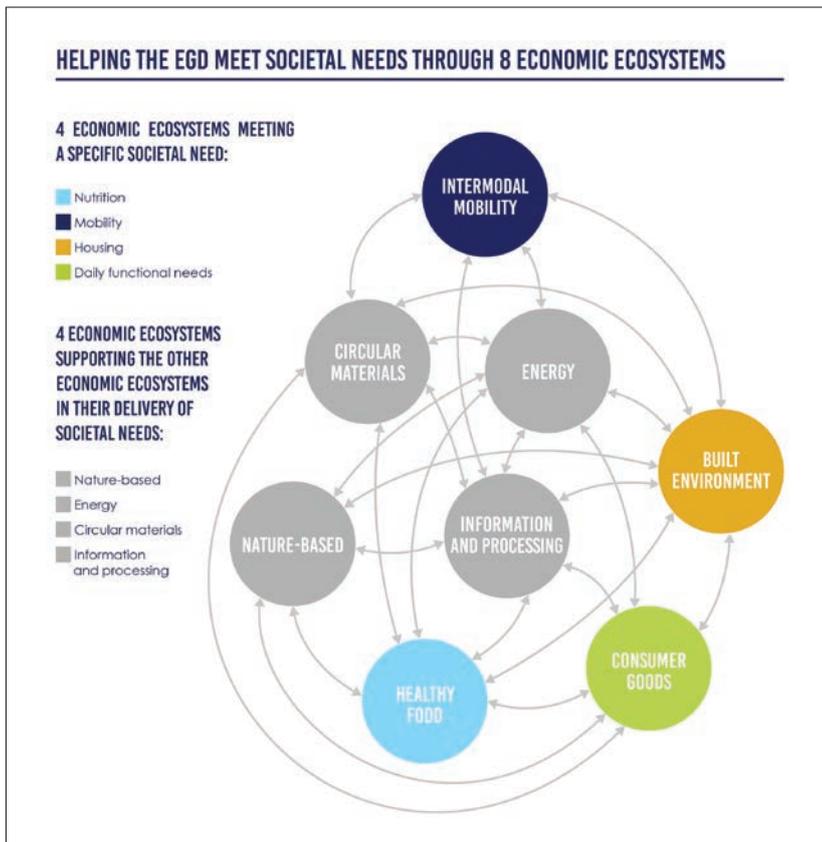
Figure: The System Change Compass. Ten principles to redefine our system in service of people and planet.

One interesting approach to achieve this required system change is the System Change Compass, developed by SYSTEMIQ and The Club of Rome. It comprises ten principles to redefine our economic and societal system in service of people and planet.

The ten principles of the Compass address all levers of the European system. They are premised on the objective to create prosperity and wellbeing through the delivery of societal needs within planetary boundaries. To achieve this objective, the System Change

Compass tackles a series of hitherto unquestioned beliefs and offers a new way of thinking for them.

For example, to achieve true prosperity, we must embrace social fairness and move from a prosperity only defined by aggregate economic growth to one defined by fair and social economic development – with new indicators that directly link to the wellbeing of our society and our planet. As the pandemic has so sorely demonstrated, true prosperity comes not from owning materials and



products, but from the ability to experience and share them jointly with our fellow human beings. The Compass thus also calls for a redefinition of consumption – away from owning products as the central feature of our consumption habits and towards creating a system that puts experiencing and using products and services first.

The Compass also calls for us to “come clean” on the way we use and exploit natural resources in the pursuit of economic activity. Natural capital accounting and new markets for ecosystem services need to be introduced to allow us to recognise the system-level value our natural resources provide. We should begin to tax harmful and unwanted activities – while subsidising those that increase our natural capital and societal wellbeing. Causing so-called “externalities” – negative consequences of economic activity such as water and soil degradation, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or health impacts – should carry an economic burden commensurate with their harm to the society and our natural resources.

The Compass also foresees a more innovative and mission-oriented system of governance. Solving the climate, biodiversity, resource consumption, health and wellbeing challenges of our time will require governments to apply a “DARPA-like” approach to

finding innovative solutions and create platforms of cooperation between the public and private spheres.

All this will require new forms of leadership that involve more systems thinking, a more diverse set of individuals and new intergenerational agreements at all levels of governance. The success of the French *Convention citoyenne pour le climat* and similar formats in other countries demonstrate that citizens are prepared to take seemingly radical decisions to solve societal and global challenges. Just for example, the assembly voted in favour of enshrining the preservation of biodiversity, the environment and the fight against climate change in Article 1 of the French Constitution, introducing legislation on the crime of ecocide, and largely ending domestic air travel.

A new system, that redefines our economic, political and societal *modus operandi* will not just be better for the planet and our societal wellbeing – it will also outperform economically. Already during the pandemic, we witnessed that so-called ESG portfolios (stocks of companies that perform highly on environmental, social and corporate governance indicators) have outperformed those of conventional portfolios.

The critical changes suggested in the System Change Compass will have profound implications for our existing economic systems. The Compass identifies eight economic ecosystems – centred around the delivery of societal needs such as healthy food, mobility, housing and daily functional needs – that each contain a range of development opportunities related to sub-industries that are likely to grow (economically and in terms of positive societal impact) commensurate to the introduction of the System Change Compass principles. These will make up the future industrial backbone of Europe, that is highly capable of delivering on our societal needs without overstepping planetary boundaries.

Almost a decade ago the UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 resulted in designing The Future we Want, which was the basis for 17 SDGs that were adopted in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly. A visionary document setting the trajectory until the end of this decade. Half-way to 2030, we could learn that without touching some of the fundamentals of our economic systems we will fail to deliver on our objectives. It is essential to step up a gear, it is essential to follow the pathways designed by the Compass. They are universally applicable and relevant globally and for any economy, not just the EGD implementation in Europe.

While many are saying that the post-Covid world will not be the same again, the opposite is true. It will be the same. The challenges that were there before the pandemic remain the same, but we will now hopefully better understand them. Likely, the frequency and severity of health-related outbreaks, climate-related extreme weather events, etc. will increase in the future. We need to rethink the way we are managing the risks, as individuals and collectively, as private companies and public policy makers, locally and globally. We need to collaborate more to build resilient societies and be better prepared. The future we want will not come just because we want it.

For more information on the System Change Compass, see <https://www.systemiq.earth/system-change-compass/>

# Facial Recognition Provides Traceability for Cattle

*One hundred years ago, a new technology was about to change people's lives in unimaginable ways. In 1920, the electric light bulb was in use but all the other applications for electricity were just beginning. The electric fan, the electric toaster, and the electric washing machine were revolutionary ideas. These new applications of this technology called "electricity" changed the way people lived.*



Emmanuelle MIKOSZ, ELO

Today, the same can be said of the deep learning of artificial intelligence. It will change our lives. It gives us the ability to analyze and sort massive amounts of data by looking for extremely small differences in individuals using nanotechnology and biometrics. This is the basis of human facial recognition. It is an idea that has been around for nearly 40 years. Now, we are finding new applications for that same technology.

Joe HOAGLAND, founded a new breed of cattle 25 years ago and started the American Black Hereford Association. Now, he has developed a cellphone app to track the movements of cattle using facial recognition technology. It is called CattleTracs.

Photo analytics particularly lends itself to the deep machine learning of artificial intelligence. *"If you are considering going to medical school, don't become a radiologist because by the time you graduate, they will have a machine to do that"* HOAGLAND said. Artificial intelligence can perform that function and many more like it, such as more sophisticated crop management systems using satellite imagery.

Facial recognition based on AI works in two ways. First by locating key facial points it can produce a unique result using the angles and distances between other key points. Second it compares the local binary pattern



For each animal image (1st column), we find the nearest human neighbors in terms of pose. These human neighbors are used to train a warp network that warps an animal to have humanlike face shape.

of the pixels of that photograph. That is to say, it looks at each pixel in a photograph and compares it to the eight pixels around it to detect differences in texture. It also produces a unique result. In combination these two comparisons can identify people even if their image is partially occluded or as they grow older.

People want to know how we can identify cattle as they age, just from photographs. It will always be a question of the probability of a match that identifies an animal over

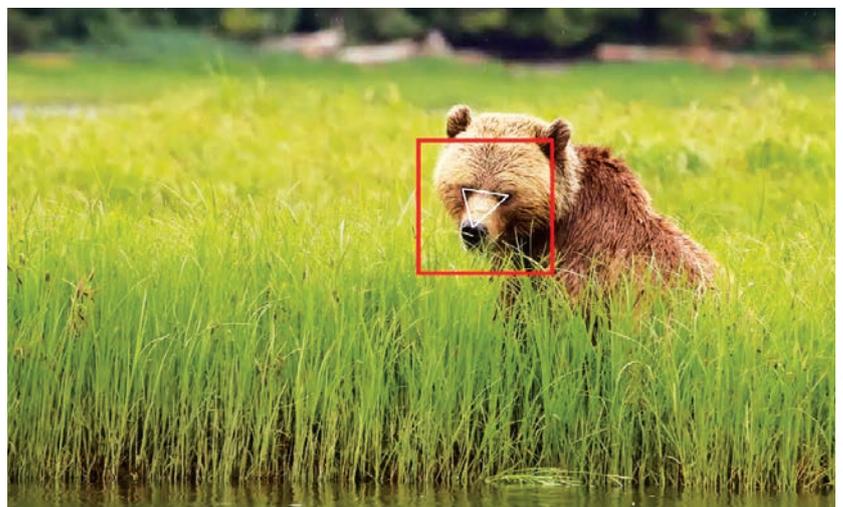
time. The confidence level of the algorithm will improve with practice thru the deep learning of artificial intelligence as the database collects images over time.

In human facial recognition, scientists have identified around 200 of these key facial points. The accuracy rates are near 100%. Interestingly the same type of key points can also be found in the faces of animals.

The technology works on animals just like it does on humans. However, to recognize



Joe HOAGLAND



©M. Clapham PhD.

©CattleTracs

©Rashid M., Gu X, Jae Lee Y, 2017



©CattleTracs

something you must have seen it before. In other words, that animal needs to have been entered into the database for there to be a match or a recognition that it is the same individual.

The science is called Biometrics. It is the measurement of unique angles and distances of key facial point features. It works the same way in animals. Just as Huawei's "Safe City" technology has been used to locate and track people of interest at subway stops and train stations, it has been used to identify and track bears by a California based company called BearID.

Locating these biometric key features is tedious work. In bears it took nearly two years to locate a dozen or so key features. Those have produced an identification confidence rate of nearly 85% in the grizzly bears studied.

After three years of research, Black Hereford Holdings, Inc. which was founded by Joe HOAGLAND, a member of the Countryside, has identified more than two dozen such biometric key identifiers for cattle. They have developed an algorithm for producers to use around the world to identify and track individual animals in the beef supply chain. "Knowing where our food comes from makes us healthier and safer than if we do not know" HOAGLAND said.

This new product is an inexpensive non-invasive way to use facial recognition technology to provide age and source verification for cattle. It uses a free cell phone app called CattleTracs.

It activates the camera function in a cell-phone which will only photograph a bovine face. It takes that photo automatically when the phone is positioned at the correct angle and distance for facial recognition.

The image is then uploaded to a secure database with the date and GPS location. That information is stored in Blockchain so it cannot be altered but only added to when another image matches a previous photograph in the database. In that way, as an animal moves thru the beef supply chain it can be traced right up to the point of harvest.

Researchers at Kansas State University have collected images of over 1000 head of cattle to test the CattleTracs technology. Their proof-of-concept study found a 94% accuracy level. As with all facial recognition, the larger the database, the more robust the identification becomes. That is the wonder of artificial intelligence.

The cellphone app is free. Anyone can use it. There is no record of user information. CattleTracs just records cattle by their photograph taken at a certain place and at a certain time. Just download it from an App

Store near you. Visit [www.cattletracs.com](http://www.cattletracs.com) for details to download the app. Age and source verification will reward producers for the quality of their product. In the event of a disease outbreak in cattle similar to African Swine Flu in the pork industry, the traceability this app provides will make our food supply chain safer and healthier for all of us.



  
 webcast  
 streaming  
 video services  
  
 Contact:  
 Emmanuel De Groef  
 Tel: +32 2 709 10 50  
[manu.de.groef@telemak.com](mailto:manu.de.groef@telemak.com)  
[www.telemak.com](http://www.telemak.com)



©Bee Award 2020

Let it Be



©Bee Award 2020

StopVespa

## European Bee Award 2020:

**'Let it Bee' by NFGWS and 'StopVespa' by Università degli Studi di Torino receive the top prizes**



With an online award ceremony hosted by MEP Franc BOGOVIČ, the VII edition of the European Bee Award recognised the work and commitment put in place through innovative ideas and practices to protect and promote bees and pollinators so essential in preserving and restoring biodiversity in European farmed landscapes.

The prize was established by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Agricultural Machinery Industry Association (CEMA) in 2014 as a way to acknowledge innovative, efficient and scalable projects that protect bees and pollinators in Europe.

The European Bee Award competition received a resounding 21 applications from 12 different countries. The ceremony was watched by over 250 participants on December 9, 2020.

The winners of the 2020 European Bee Award are:

- Land management practices prize: **'Let it Bee' by NFGWS**. The National Federation of Group Water Schemes put in place a comprehensive project to promote sustainable farming practices that lead to improved water quality at sources, increased biodiversity, and enhancement of climate awareness. The project includes a pilot programme that provides farmers with honeybees, hives, suits, necessary equipment and training & mentoring, and encourages them to act as ambassadors for biodiversity enhancement.
- Application of innovative technological solutions prize: **'StopVespa' by Università degli Studi di Torino**. The Life StopVespa project developed an innovative harmonic radar technology for tracking flying hornets of the Asian yellow-legged hornet (*Vespa velutina*), an invasive species that threatens honeybees and wild pollinators of Europe.

- The **'Copenhagen City Bee Association (Bybi)'** was awarded the Jury Special mention prize for their impressive work of the promotion of apiaries and honey-making in an urban collaborative environment.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General of ELO highlighted that "Protecting pollinators goes hand in hand with protecting our environment and food system. With climate change on the horizon, we cannot be passive, we must take control as soon as possible. This is an unavoidable responsibility that we must uphold and in doing so, we will be rewarded."

Gilles DRYANCOUR, Chairman of the CEMA Strategic Committee and member of the Bee Award Jury acknowledged that "The European Bee Award remains a crucial tool for identifying and demonstrating good projects aiming at protecting European pollinators' health. Upon its creation in December 2013 Walter HAEFEKER (chairman of the European Professional Beekeepers Association)

*and I did not know we were anticipating the Biodiversity Strategy Goals laid down by the European Commission in May this year, and the specific goal of halting and reversing the decline of pollinators. It is an objective CEMA members fully share as we strongly believe that sustainable farming is the only way to keep EU strong and competitive. In our mind, there is no doubt that the new precision technologies our industry puts on the market will help to reach these challenging goals."*

The event also saw the contributions from Humberto DELGADO ROSA, Director for Natural Capital of the European Commission's DG Environment and from Dr Michael GARRATT from the University of Reading, President of the European Bee Award Jury.

To learn more about the winners:

-  [www.europeanlandowners.org](http://www.europeanlandowners.org)
-  [www.cema-agri.org](http://www.cema-agri.org)
-  #EUBeeAward



©Bee Award 2020

Copenhagen City Bee Association (Bybi)



© José María FINAT



© José María FINAT



© José María FINAT



© José María FINAT

## Save the Spanish Countryside!

*There are many who in the management of our peninsular countryside have, either through conviction, necessity or geographical location, historically respected the territory, the Mediterranean woodland, the pasture and have respected the essence of the ecosystem, along with the fauna that inhabit those spaces.*

**José María FINAT, member of the Friends of the Countryside**

These territories, full of wealth, are nowadays subject to intense restrictions and controls by various administrations, such as the ZEPA, LIC, Natura Network etc. who subject authentic Mediterranean woodlands, in their wildest forms, to restrictions and strict controls that severely limit economic activity.

In addition, because these territories are administered by traditional methods such as hunting, bullfighting or even livestock farming, they are frowned upon. The economic impact is important, as the old uses are no longer viable, for obvious reasons of globalisation. These quasi desert-like areas cannot compete with the global market and global competition where production is much cheaper. And yet hunting and extensive livestock farming are the only activity possible in these areas, activities that society is turning increasingly against.

It should be made clear that these territories have always respected the environment, that this rural environment was productive. It was not forced to compete with the whole world, with globalisation.

As for the way these territories are legislated, they go against the fauna because the laws defend the game and yet it should be the opposite: the fauna should be defended from hunting pressure, as well as from social pressure. It is absurd that in areas where extensive restrictions, from ZEPA, LIC etc., apply, areas of less than 1000 hectares, for example, cannot be fenced or that impermeable fencing cannot be placed by roads to avoid being run over. In other words, the aim is to restrict small, well-kept and guarded areas, but to leave the labyrinth of roads around them and on their margins free. So, either the measures are equalised to the whole of society and territories, or wildlife corridors are created, because if it only de-

pends on the areas with old uses, I believe that the ecosystem is not going to hold up, as is happening and species are being lost.

At the same time there are other territories, which were also once rich native forests, that have been transformed by economic interest into large extensions of olive groves, orchards, irrigation, vineyards, or asphalt, housing developments, golf courses, orchards, etc. On the coast, thousands of hectares of intensive agriculture, olive groves, or the Rioja itself, well, in these ecosystems, in many cases the native fauna is not bred, and they have been exterminated.

In these latter territories, there is no restriction or control; they can do whatever they want, and generally they have an easier time to survive economically.

**For more information:**  
[www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)



## A new project to pave the way to Agroecology in Europe

Juliette OLIVIER, ELO

Agroecology, defined as using ecological processes in agricultural production systems, has been identified as a means to overcome the challenges of climate change and to provide healthy and sufficient food, as well as bioresources. The ALL-Ready project, funded by the Horizon 2020 program and launched in November 2020 aims to amplify the transition to agroecology in Europe and to strengthen the European ecosystem of agroecological research and innovation.

The ALL-Ready consortium brings together 12 organisations across Europe with a wide range of skills, disciplines and networking capabilities, and ensures the network's outreach on the global European level.

The specific aim of ALL-Ready is to prepare and pilot a European network of Living Labs (LL) and Research Infrastructures (RIs) that will enable the transition towards agroecology throughout Europe. For that purpose, ALL-Ready will build this network to answer the following questions:

- What criteria can be used to characterise agroecological systems and monitor their transition? What methodologies have been used to co-design and co-create new systems?
- Who are the actors involved (farmers, cooperatives, water and landscape managers, NGOs, consumers, ...)? In what (kinds of) activities and with what governance?
- How diverse are the transitions and how can mutual learning be promoted across Europe?

ELO will be involved in the construction of the network, will help develop policy recommendations and will participate in the communication of project results to relevant stakeholders.



Grant Agreement number 101000349



Agroforestry system design  
143 000 views · Nov 29, 2020



## AGFOSY official end of the project

Daniel MONTELEONE, ELO

On November 30, 2020, the AGFOSY project officially ended. In addition to the Final Conference (mentioned in our previous issue), the project saw two other major updates. The first of these updates was Intellectual Output 5 and consists of YouTube videos in multiple languages that have been posted under the name Agroforestry Systems. These videos, several minutes in length, teach farmers and landowners about agroforestry in small, easy-to-understand sessions. Several case studies were presented in the videos, including ELO affiliated landowners. We welcome your free subscription to the channel so you can stay up-to-date on all the latest developments in agroforestry.

The second, and final update to the project, was Intellectual Output 6, Pilot Testing. Originally intended for an in-person session, the situation in Brussels in 2020 made that impossible. Instead, we met individually with dozens of landowners (virtually, of course) and reviewed the previous five outputs with them. Nearly all responses to our years of effort were extremely positive.

Though the project officially ended, we are excited that the websites, YouTube videos, training modules, social media accounts, and all the various intellectual outputs will remain online to allow farmers, landowners, and trainers to study and learn about Agroforestry at their own pace in several European languages. For more information, please contact us at [Daniel.monteone@elo.org](mailto:Daniel.monteone@elo.org) or on our social media platforms and we will help you learn the sorts of agroforestry that work best for you or put you in contact with other agroforestry experts.

[agfosal\\_erasmus](#)

[agfosal](#)

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



SOEKKKNONPROFIT KFT.  
Szársági Egyetemes Kereskedelmi Kertészeti Kísérleti Társaság





## A training course to develop successful social farming activities

Juliette OLIVIER, ELO

The FARCURA partners met online on January 14-15 to discuss the finalisation of the training course aimed at equipping farmers and social/health/education workers with the necessary knowledge, skill-sets and competencies to develop and enhance social farming.

This course was developed on the basis of surveys that partners conducted about the main issues and challenges of social farming, as well as on the evaluation of existing materials through interviews with practitioners and experts. This process enabled the project consortium to identify areas where further training is needed. By creating appropriate training and blended learning resources, the project enables more farmers to develop expertise on ways to work with the needs and capacities of participants; and to learn how to communicate effectively, especially with participants who are non-verbal.

The course consists of 6 modules separated in 3 topic areas:

### Topic 1: Models of Social Farming

Module 1 - Introduction to social farming

Module 2 - Presentation of the models based on case studies

### Topic 2: Success factors of social farming

Module 3 - Success factors based on case studies

Module 4 - Communication and conflict management

### Topic 3: Business planning and management for successful social farming

Module 5 - Corporate Planning / Business Plan

Module 6 - Business Management

The course is available in five languages (English, German, Portuguese, Slovenian, French) and is free of charge.

If you are interested in this course, please visit our website [www.farcura.eu](http://www.farcura.eu).

@farcura\_erasmus

@farcura



Project No: 2019-1-IE01-KA202-051446



## Land Mobility project

Daniel MONTELEONE, ELO

The Land Mobility project met on December 14, 2020 for its 3rd transnational meeting (TNM). As with the previous meeting, the TNM was held entirely online due to travel restrictions across Europe.

After a short welcome from the University of Bedfordshire, the project coordinator Macra na Feirme updated all partners on the progress of the project. Patrick BRADY noted that despite the COVID-19 situation facing Europe, the project's outputs remain on time and there will be no need to extend the timing of the project. Future events, which were intended to be large in-person events will either be scaled down or moved online virtually.

Next, was a discussion of the Intellectual Outputs (IO). The first output details the aims and objectives of the course and course design/management. The various key partners explained the EQF standards, modules, and when the course will be completed by.

This was followed by a presentation of slides, on outputs 2 and 3. Several versions of animated slides were presented and the group made decisions on which art style would be used. Several were particularly exciting and we look forward to showing them!

As to the rest of the project, things continue to run smoothly and there will be a final conference this summer. We're hoping that the conference will be face to face, but it all depends on the situation in the member states and whether such meetings are possible. Our next transnational meeting will be in June. Be sure to follow us and stay tuned for the date of our final conference.

<http://land-mobility.eu/>

@LandMobility

@Land Mobility



*This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This website reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project number: 2019-1-IE01-KA202-051449*



# Memento of 2020, unleash dynamic 2021!



*During the extraordinary year of 2020, the YFCS like so many others has had to adapt and keep in touch with our members through online events.*

Leonor CESAR DAS NEVES, Strategy Coordinator, YFCS

Our first monthly webinar was launched in November 2020, fulfilling our objective to inform our members and others about rural affairs and create interconnectivity, supplying our young members with an interesting network, that will last for years.

We would like to particularly thank our speakers, Dr. Leonard MIZZI, Head of Unit at the EU Commission, DG for International Cooperation, and Development and Dr. Prof. Allan BUCKWELL, Research Director of the RISE Foundation. Their discussion on Food security was fascinating and showed the two sides of a coin. An issue of Affordability/Demand and Supply/Access.

Our December webinar gave an insight into becoming an entrepreneur.

*Coconat*, represented by Julianne BECKER, and *Timtrack*, represented by Gaëtan



de BRIEY, kindly shared their experiences in setting up a successful business. Additionally, inspirational words were heard from Karl GROTFELT, an advocate and supporter of entrepreneurs and founder of the FAMIGRO Award.

Sadly, due to circumstances, our January Webinar had to be postponed. We've had a fantastic webinar on Brexit in February with Richard ANDERSON from DEFRA. And look forward to presenting Georgios MATHIOUDAKIS from the EU Commission in March for a debate on Rural Connectivity.

We would like to remind all readers that these webinars, while targeted to our YFCS members, are of course open to anyone interested! Therefore, for your diary, may we suggest keeping each second Monday of the month at lunchtime available for our webinars! For more information, please check our website.

We have been informed by certain members of struggles with trespassers who are desperate for outdoor activities during these restrictive times some of who sadly cause damage to private property in an effort to avoid public areas. Therefore, YFCS Research has launched a survey. Its results will be discussed in April in a Webinar on Rural Disorder. YFCS research welcomes anyone to fill out and share our survey! (google YFCS-Rural Disorder).

We were happy to have had our first digital General Assembly via video chat. It was so lovely to see old faces and recognise that

our network stayed strong during these lockdowns.

We launched our Coffee Roulette, in an effort to let members get to know each other better, despite the long distances and restrictions. By filling out a form, YFCS members connect with a new member each month and start chatting. Sign up at [yfcs.eu](mailto:yfcs.eu) or look out for our regular newsletter.

We are always on the lookout for new context. Therefore, if you or anyone you know, has an intriguing project, we invite you to send us a little article to our email [info@yfcs.eu](mailto:info@yfcs.eu). And you might see your name in the next edition or on our Instagram/Linked-in page!!

Obviously, nothing beats a proper get together in person. We had several events planned for 2020. We do hope they can take place in 2021! A GA for YFCS, next to the GA organised by the FCS in Córdoba. Perhaps a Christmas Market or smaller reunions, of regional bubbles, where members in the same region, city or county get together.



We wish everyone a happy 2021. I, for one, am very excited, as we have several partnerships, discussions and activities brewing for our members and others to enjoy!

[www.yfcs.eu](http://www.yfcs.eu)

[@yfcs\\_official](https://www.instagram.com/yfcs_official)

YFCS

**AGRILAND**

Exploitant et/ou coordinateur d'exploitations agricoles

**Belgique**  
support@agriland.be  
© +32 (0)10 23 29 00

**France**  
damien.deriberolles@agrilandfrance.fr  
© +33 (0)6 50 98 17 13

[www.agriland.be](http://www.agriland.be)



Lime of Liberty



## European Tree of the Year 2021 & Planting for the Future Conference

*In 2021 the European Tree of the Year contest (ETY) entered its second decade. Since 2010 people across Europe have been participating in the search for their favorite tree. So far no fewer than 1300 trees have been included in the national competitions.*

Josef JARY, EPA

This year fourteen countries participated with their candidates elected through national contests. Two partnering countries were unable to participate due to stricter lockdowns. Fortunately, interest among the public continues to rise and thus far, almost half a million votes have been cast for our candidate trees.

As a result, we have decided to upscale the contest and organise a high-level policy conference on the European Commission's plan to plant an additional 3 billion trees in Europe by 2030. We aim to bring together all the relevant stakeholders and send the EC a message that we are ready to fulfil this ambitious project. There will be cities, regions and countries presenting their plans, companies showing their commitments, NGOs, and tree planting initiatives confirming their capacities to help and mobilise all relevant sectors.

The conference will be organized as a joint event with the Award Ceremony of the ETY winners and all readers are very much welcome to watch them both on **March 17 at 1 pm CET** when it will be streamed on Facebook and Twitter. Addressed with a keynote by EC EVP Frans TIMMERMANS and under the auspice of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Tomáš PETŘÍČEK and MEPs Luděk NIEDERMAYER and Michal WIEZIK the event will be worth watching for sure!

For more information: [www.treeoftheyear.org](http://www.treeoftheyear.org)



### CountrySide

is a publication of the ELO  
in English and French

5 Euros

**Publisher :**  
Thierry de l'Escaille

**Chief editor :**  
Emmanuelle Mikosz

**Text editor :**  
Sophy Smits van Oyen-Maltzoff

Let's increase our food supply  
without  
reducing theirs

the  
good  
growth  
plan

Syngenta Brussels Office  
Avenue Louise, 489,  
B-1050 Brussels  
Tel: +32.2.642 27 27  
[www.syngenta.com](http://www.syngenta.com)  
[www.goodgrowthplan.com](http://www.goodgrowthplan.com)

syngenta

Discover these beautiful country estates  
that offer a rich diversity of activities  
set in beautifully scenic, historical and  
natural surroundings!

For the latest news from all estates, please  
follow us from your Instagram App.  
Now more than 1000 followers!!

Welcoming  
Estates  
Website

[www.welcomingestateswebsite.com](http://www.welcomingestateswebsite.com)

## Diary dates

### 3 - 4 March, online, Bydgoszcz

7th EKMA - Congress for Agri-Business Managers (Poland), co-organised by ELO

<https://kongresagrobiznesu.pl>

### 8 March, online, Brussels

YFCS webinar on Rural connectivity  
[www.yfcs.eu](http://www.yfcs.eu)

### 18 - 19 March, online, Brussels

UNISECO final conference  
<https://uniseco-project.eu/>

### Design & proof readers

Jehanne de Dorlodot - Verhaegen  
José M<sup>a</sup> Gomez-Acebo Rosas  
Athena Lefebvre

**Back office:**  
Alberto Hermsel

Rue de Trèves, 67  
B - 1040 Bruxelles  
Tel. : 00 32 (0)2 234 30 00  
Fax : 00 32 (0)2 234 30 09  
[countryside@elo.org](mailto:countryside@elo.org)  
Internet Site : [www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org)



**Register now for the FFA2021  
Annual Conference**  
Food system renewal  
**March 23, 2021**



## FFA2021 Month of March – full list of events

Date	Time	FFA2021 Solutions Week
Mon, March 8, 2021	14:30 - 16:00 CET	Accounting for water: The present and future of nature-based approaches
Mon, March 8, 2021	16:00 - 17:30 CET	New tools and instruments for private land conservation in Europe
Tue, March 9, 2021	10:30 - 12:00 CET	Striking the right chord to support nature-friendly farming
Tue, March 9, 2021	14:00 - 15:30 CET	Sustainable solutions from Syngenta
Wed, March 10, 2021	10:30 - 12:00 CET	Racing to scale regenerative farming
Wed, March 10, 2021	14:00 - 15:30 CET	Fostering a sustainable environment for EU plant-based proteins
Thu, March 11, 2021	10:30 - 12:00 CET	RISE: A conversation on the future of European soil
Thu, March 11, 2021	15:00 - 16:30 CET	Carbon Farming: linking agriculture with climate and biodiversity goals

Date	Time	FFA2021 Policy Week
Tue, March 16, 2021	10:30 - 12:30 CET	Farm to Fork Strategy: building a sustainable EU Food system framework
Tue, March 16, 2021	14:30 - 16:00 CET	Will the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) deliver for society?
Tue, March 16, 2021	16:15 - 16:45 CET	Soil Award
Wed, March 17, 2021	16:00 - 17:30 CET	Forestry Management in Europe
Thu, March 18, 2021	16:30 - 18:00 CET	Strengthening the transatlantic cooperation for research and innovation in the agri-food system

Date	Time	FFA2021 Annual Conference Week
Mon, March 22, 2021	14:00 - 17:00 CET	FFA2021 Annual Conference – Virtual platform preview & exhibition
Tue, March 23, 2021	09:00 - 17:00 CET	FFA2021 Annual Conference – Food System Renewal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewing leadership within the food system</li> <li>Making the food system climate resilient</li> <li>Healthy food for all at scale</li> <li>Learnings from COVID to build the food system transformation</li> <li>Towards global food system renewal</li> </ul>

### Founding partners



### Strategic partners



### FFA Friends



**Visit [www.forumforagriculture.com](http://www.forumforagriculture.com) to register for the FFA2021 events**