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**Regional Forum for
the Future of Agriculture:
Revolutionizing the
European countryside
to keep up with
our global
commitments**

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Chair of the FFA

FFA

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Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

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The CAP: Change Is Coming

What do Brexit, the immigration crisis, a possibly protectionist United States, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement all have in common? They will all have their own impact on the next CAP reform. This time, even more than before, its budget and the demands on it will be largely shaped by factors outside the control of the farming community.

Given these challenges, it is imperative that Europe's agricultural policies and land managers demonstrate our value to the broader European community. With the CAP budget in such a fragile place, our policy outcomes must be effective, efficient and equitable for all parts of Europe. In my mind, this means grounding our reform in the challenges of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement; both cannot be met without substantial changes to land use, and both are of genuine concern to the European citizen.

The best way to achieve these goals is to use the next CAP to address our most fundamental market failures; a lack of pricing of and payment for the environmental services that land managers across Europe provide. Here, we can make a significant case to the taxpayer. However, we must also make our consumers aware that there is and remains extraordinary value for money in this policy; it guarantees cheap, available, safe food of incredible variety, and delivers surety to our rural areas - for that, the CAP seems a small price to pay.





F. BOGOVIC, B. KALLFASS, G. LODARES, T. STRNISA, E. ERJAVEC, V. AUGUSTIN, V. PETROVICIC

Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture: revolutionizing the European countryside to keep up with our global commitments

It has now been a year since countries signed on to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and some months after they have ratified the Paris Climate Agreement. These global goals now unite us, but how can individuals relate to them at the national and local level? This was the focus of the recent Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) Regional Conference, held in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on December 2nd.

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William de GRUNNE, ELO



The Regional FFA in Ljubljana was opened by Franc BOGOVIČ, Slovenian Member of the European Parliament and host of the event. There needs to be more dialogue between stakeholders, especially since policy creation usually reacts too slowly on the latest agricultural and environmental issues, he stated; *“this key mixture usually never sits together in Slovenia to discuss agriculture related matters.”* Agriculture and humanity are facing monumental challenges, needing both to feed an expanding world, while vastly reducing our ecological footprint, the MEP continued. The key player, agriculture, does provide food and jobs but also provides a heavy burden on the environment, under most of its current

production methods. According to Mr BOGOVIČ, the solution lies in the sustainable intensification of agriculture; producing more with less while taking better care of the environment. While these issues create many questions, there is one thing everyone should agree on; the importance of innovation. New skills, local know-how, technologies, digitization and training for young and old farmers are needed to meet the needs of tomorrow. Such tools would also help attract a new and dynamic generation to the countryside.

Now that people all around the world have signed on to changes in mentality, actions, and responsibilities, we can begin

to define Slovenia’s contribution to food and environmental security; *“I believe Slovenia has a role to play”*. Slovenia’s membership to the EU is the biggest free trade agreement that it ever had, he continued. This membership brought many different consequences, both negative and positive. The exchange of knowledge, services and goods can be considered beneficial, while small farmers are somehow feel they are in on the losing side, as have a tougher time competing on the large European market.

Mr Janez POTOČNIK, Chair of the FFA2017, in his opening keynote agreed with Mr BOGOVIČ on the fact that the key issue of combining food and environmental se-



A. MEDVED, F. BOGOVIC, B. RAVNIK, M. PINTAR

curity is not an easy task. In fact, it is a task that requires fundamental changes in agriculture but as well further down the whole food value chain including the consumers' behaviour and mentality. We need to get rid of this consumerist attitude, especially visible on days like Black Friday (editor: Black Friday took place just a week before the event). As climate change affects everyone, everyone has the duty of fighting it argued Mr POTOČNIK. *"Change will not come from big debates on UN level in New York, it comes from you and me and everyone else from our actions at home. Remember that our planet is not a car with warranty and return policy; it is our common home, our only home."* he said.

Another issue that can be seen in Slovenia and in many other countries is that this integrated problem is tackled in a highly fragmented way, sector by sector. According to Mr POTOČNIK the solution lies in inter-sectorial cooperation and government level changes. He described three critical steps in order to reach the change *"First there is a need for better cooperation and stop thinking in individual sectors and stop blaming others for problems created by our own actions. Secondly we need to realize that the problems we face are global and affect everyone; we need to stop export the task of solving the problem to other countries. We need to help to the best of our capacity. Third we need to integrate public and private sector; they are more related and linked than we think. By working together public and private can reach higher goals."*

The messages of these introductory statements were then taken on to two panel sessions where the first handled the topic of 'Food self-sufficiency vs food security' and the second panel focussed on 'Sustainable management of natural resources'.

During the discussions participants agreed that there is a serious problem of food waste within Europe and around the world. While in the developing world a third of the food is wasted due to poor technology at the farm and processing levels; in the developed world even more is wasted, mainly due to quality or aesthetic standards and consumer behaviour.

Furthermore, although Europe as a whole is the largest net exporter of food there are still member states that are not self-sufficient and depend on the free trade within the EU to feed their population. This means that for several countries the balance between food security and food self-sufficiency plays a key role. Maybe it would be worth putting food security on a lower priority at EU level and first perfection redistribution of the produced food.

Even if Slovenia is a small country with a small scale agricultural sector that is beginning to familiarise with the concept of food self-sufficiency it can still help solving these global scale issues. Sending food resources might not be in its best interest; sharing its knowhow, technology and new competences with those in need can make a big difference.

Europe must also be careful to change from its past ways, where intensification was viewed as the solution; today we realise that further intensification is too much of a strain for the environment. We need innovation, precision and development of new strategies.

Sustainability in the farming sector starts by having a farmer that earns enough money to live and maintain his livelihood; this is the basis of durable European agriculture. Sustainability has a price which is too often paid by the farmer; the consumer should be similarly held responsible for the consequences of their behaviour. Food security remains a priority for farm support systems like the CAP, but it should be modified to include more incentives to create sustainable farming. Another issue is that farmers need maintain life-long learning, including not just new technologies and production methods, but also about the vital importance of biodiversity.

We too often forget that at its essence agriculture is sustainable; however it has been greatly influenced and modified by our modern concept of industrialisation, intensification and globalisation. Taking a step back, rethinking and changing is now urgently needed to meet the demands of the 21st century.

For more information, please visit the FFA's website at www.forumforagriculture.com. Next regional FFA will take place the 25th January in Reims.

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F. NATTA, M. Graf VON WESTPHALEN, K.-H. FLORENZ

Biodiversity friendly farming: is Organic the future?

Each year, the European Landowners' Organization holds its Biodiversity Conference to discuss areas of importance to the European environment. This year, the conference focused on the link between organic farming practices and biodiversity: "Is organic farming the future?" Speakers from the academic, political and agricultural worlds gave an overview of the current situation in their own field, which allowed a nuanced and enriching debate on this very sensitive but critical topic.

Johnathan GOFFIOL, EHHA

After an insightful introduction from Karl-Heinz Florenz, MEP and Chairman of the European Parliament Intergroup on Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside, the keynote speaker of this conference, Beate Strandberg, summarized recent academic developments on biodiversity and organic farming. Her experience as a Senior Scientist at the University of Aarhus and expert for different governmental agencies provided a very good basis for the rest of the debate.

As head of the Land Use and Management Unit (DG for Environment – European Commission), Claudia Olazábal presented the European Commission's position on organic farming. The Commission supports organic farming practices and has already legally recognized its positive effects on biodiversity. However, as she reminded the audience, organic farming cannot be the only solution for biodiversity: the European Union also needs conventional farming. This is why the Commission is working on new ways to integrate further biodiversity in agriculture in general, and not only through organic farming. Martijn Buijsse, Policy Officer

for the European Initiative for Sustainable Development in Agriculture (EISA), echoes this by promoting a holistic and integrated farming approach. Although he firmly believes in sustainable agriculture, Mr. Buijsse insisted that organic farming was not the only way to achieve these environmental goals.

On the other hand, Stephen Meredith, Deputy Policy Manager for the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), stresses the importance to further develop organic farming through an incentive-based policy framework for farmers. New and heavy regulations are, he argued, not sufficient to strengthen these kind of practices: the European Union needs to provide rural entrepreneurs with the right environment and conditions to encourage them to produce sustainable products. The last speaker, Zeno Piatti, co-manager of an organic farm in Austria, demonstrated that organic farms were not only good for biodiversity, but also economically viable in a long-term perspective. However, this first requires a good knowledge of the right technics and practices.

These presentations were followed by an interesting "questions & answers" session with the audience. Although the topic could have been divisive, the audience had fruitful dialogue, mainly centered on the notions of conventional, organic and integrated farming. It appeared that the line separating these three sectors were not that prominent: sustainable agriculture is becoming a common goal shared by more and more farmers, and it is therefore crucial to find new ways to work together to achieve this goal.

The conference ended with the Award ceremony for the "Belleuropa Award", rewarding a Wildlife Estate Label territory owner for his contribution to biodiversity and the environment. This year, the prize was given to Matthias Graf von Westphalen, owner of the Land-und Forstbetrieb Rixdorf located in Schleswig-Holstein.

For more information please visit www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/belleuropa-award

Can Consumer Demands Be Met?

In a world where the expectation of the European consumer seems to rise every year, not just in terms of food safety, but also in its locality, quality, and desires to be free of pesticides and GMOs – we held on the 7th of December the “Innovation Conference”- where farmers, industry, and other discussed these issues, and examined whether or not the innovation that could fill the gap between price expectation and quality demand could be fulfilled through new technologies.

Robert de GRAEFF, ELO

Whether such technologies would even be allowed was the topic of Paul LEONARD, Head of Corporate Innovation and Technology Policy at BASF, who rightly asked whether or not Europe's current attitude to some agricultural technologies would scare away the next generation of innovation. After the departure of most biotech-research following the ban on GM crop production in Europe, there are now sincere doubts on whether or not global R&D would even consider Europe any longer, he warned. On the long run, such abandonment would have serious negative consequences for the consumer as well, as food prices and availability would become more difficult as a result European isolation from global markets in the future.

Fortunately for the farming community, Europe has less issues regarding the application of digital technology to agriculture. During the conference, two fine examples were given; one to improve biodiversity monitoring on farms, and the second on how the next digital revolution will impact farm machinery. Richard BURKINSHAW,



Cool Farm Tool advisor, demonstrated the new biodiversity and environment monitoring component to the existing tool, which allows any farmer to assess how he or she is performing for free. This tool, he argued, was already helping hundreds of farmers and not just analyses current results, but allows them to ‘play’ digitally with their data and see if different farm strategies would have different results. As biodiversity results are among the core concerns for consumers, these digital tools can help land managers make measurable differences.

The second digital example was given by Francesco TARONI, R&D Electric and Electronic Manager for Same Deutz-Fahr, who showed off the advances in digital machinery technology that are already helping farmer be much more accurate and environmentally friendly by reducing input use and reducing pressures from overuse in different categories. The new technologies that combine machinery with sensors, GPS and satellite data are already

on show in a vineyard in France, and will become standard in the near future, Mr. TARONI predicted.

Two land managers, Mr. Otto von ARNOLD and Francesco NATTA, were also present to share their visions for innovation on the farm. Mr. NATTA's Italian risotto farm is among the earliest adapters of many innovative solutions such as rice field margins and allowing biological processes, such as feeding birds, instead of using chemical insecticides. His “natural farming” methods are among those pushing the standards in Europe. On Mr. von ARNOLD's Jordbega Estate, he is working with different innovative tools such as bringing guests to the farm for weddings, functions and education. In this way, he noted, consumers are able to get a much better sense of what the modern farm looks like, and reduce the distance between farm and city, where now more than 85% of Europeans live.

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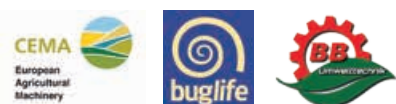


T. de l'ESCAILLE, M. SHARDLOW, M. BANNASKI, G. DRYANCOUR, F. BOGOVIC

Bee-friendly farm machinery & wild-flowering landscapes presented with the European Bee Award 2016

In a ceremony hosted by MEP Franc BOGOVIČ at the European Parliament in Brussels, this year's award was presented to two projects for their contributions to pollinators' wellbeing & bee-friendly farming practices.

Ana CANOMANUEL, ELO, Beatriz ARRIBAS, CEMA



Designed to distinguish innovative & practical ideas to protect pollinators in European farming, the European Bee Award, established by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Agricultural Machinery Industry Association (CEMA), was handed over to this year's winners:

- "B-lines - connecting the landscape for pollinators", a large-scale initiative developed by Buglife from the UK, is the winner of the "land management practices" award; while
- "Double knife" mowing technology from BB Umwelttechnik in Germany was awarded the "innovative & technological solutions" prize.

Matt SHARDLOW, Chief Executive of Buglife, and Max BANNASKI, founder and CEO of BB Umwelttechnik received the

prize in the presence of Janez POTOČNIK, former EU Commissioner for the Environment.

Franc BOGOVIČ MEP, Member of the Jury, underlined the growing prominence and popularity of the award, stressing that "application numbers keep increasing year-on-year. This shows there is a widely-shared commitment to protecting pollinators in European agriculture".

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General of ELO, congratulated the "B-lines" project on their successful cooperation between landowners, farmers, NGOs, governments, and local groups to act together to set up non-stop habitats for pollinator communities in the farmed environment.

On behalf of the agricultural machinery industry, Gilles DRYANCOUR, CEMA Honorary President, welcomed the development of farm equipment technology that can reduce the impact of farming activities on pollinators' populations, as showcased by the winning project "Double knife".

In 2016, the European Bee Award competition received 27 applications from 17 dif-

ferent European countries. The award ceremony gathered over 100 participants: bee-keepers, policy makers, landowners, academia and representatives of the agri-food sector exchanged best practices, while enjoying a festive networking evening celebrating bees and biodiversity.



To learn more about the winning project of the 2016 European Bee Award, visit: www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/bee-award

For more information, you can contact: ana.canomanuel@elo.org

Will European tractors be mandatorily equipped with useless ABS?

In the coming months, the European Commission will decide whether European tractors reaching speeds above 40 km/h should be equipped with anti-lock braking systems (ABS) by 2021.

Gilles DRYANCOUR, CEMA – Honorary President



According to the statistical data gathered by the European Agricultural Association (CEMA), no road safety rationale could justify such a legal requirement. Effectively, if we would accept the hypothesis that ABS actually improves tractor road safety, the available statistics on road fatalities show that we should wait more than twenty years before a single fatal accident would be avoided.

This is of course linked to the negligible share of fatal accidents in which tractors are involved and also the renewal rate of their fleet, currently evaluated at 1.7%.

To the contrary, the incompatibility of ABS technology with the braking systems of the trailers and towed equipment, owned by the European farmers, could lead to a significant increase in road accidents in which tractors are involved. Also, ABS will increase the braking distance in many cases. On narrow rural roads, where it's difficult to manoeuvre for escaping a collision, new forms of road accidents will occur we cannot anticipate all the safety consequences for individuals. As a matter of outcome, all the statistical benefits expected from a regulation making ABS compulsory would be wiped off.

Meanwhile CEMA has been recently told, by its institutional interlocutors, that

avoiding one single fatal accident, even in one generation from now, constitutes a reason enough for making ABS compulsory for tractors. That is pushing the precautionary principle to the limit of absurdity for vehicles running at an average speed of 28 km/h.

As everyone will understand, no common sense is at work here. The excessiveness of the likely ABS regulatory requirement is also in its economic cost. The first years, farmers buying a new tractor equipped with ABS will have to pay between €3,000 and €5,000 more. When we think that the average net profit per EU farm holding is around €2,500, we can measure the disproportion of the envisaged measure. This, not counting the astronomical cost of replacing all the incompatible trailers and towed existing equipment.

The potential ABS legal requirement appears even more preposterous given that EU farmers face a crisis of a catastrophic scale, which leads to the impoverishment of a large fraction of them. For instance, the French farmers social mutual (MSA) revealed, on last October 12th, that 30% of the French farmers declared a professional income below €4,248 € in 2015, i.e. €354 per month.

In a context dominated by social fragility,

also marked by a unprecedented increase in the number of suicides in the rural areas, we could legitimately ask ourselves what is the real goal pursued by an EU regulation forcing tractors to have ABS? Furthermore, this regulation would not take into account the real impact on road safety nor on the competitiveness of EU agriculture! Is the intention of this measure to support the vested interests of two or three automotive suppliers at the expense of ten million EU farmers? The answer to this question will be given by the end of May, when the European Commission will receive the outcome of the feasibility study outsourced to a British consulting company specialized in the automotive sector.

Meanwhile, CEMA proposes to improve the European tractor road safety by adopting a cheap and practical measure: equipping tractors with reflective strips to enhance their visibility. Several studies show that better lighting and signaling of tractors could avoid up to seventy fatal accidents per year.

70 real lives the value of which should hopefully illuminate the final decision of the European regulator in this dossier.





ELO General Assembly in Malta

Every six months ELO members gather for their General Assembly in the Member State preparing for its Presidency of the EU Council. On the 29th of November the meeting took place in Malta.

Mechtelt de Vos van STEENWIJK, ELO

During the first session Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, ELO Secretary General, gave an overview of the current policy environment in the EU. Taking into account the consequences of Brexit and the consequent reductions of the overall EU and therefore CAP budget, belt-tightening is to be expected. Bringing possible solutions, the RISE Foundation is preparing a white paper document on the future of the CAP, which will be presented during the FFA on the 28th of March. The future of the Paris Climate Agreement, said Mr. De l'ESCAILLE, hangs in the balance due to the American election victory for Donald Trump, who is appointing a cabinet full of skeptics. The EU itself has committed to action and has formally ratified the accord, committing itself to a 40% emissions reduction from 1990 levels by 2030, and has proposed a new Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation. The upcoming Member States elections, especially France, Netherlands and Germany, offer further uncertainty in relation to possible further restrictions or banning of the herbicide glyphosate. Any ban or severe restriction would have big impact on crop production and European food safety. Continuing, Mr de l'ESCAILLE dis-

cussed the issue of land access, land concentration and land grabbing. Next to preparing an in-depth study to set the facts straight, the ELO is actively involved in the debate in as well as outside of the European Parliament.

Taking the floor, former ELO President Corrado PIRZIO-BIROLI presented an overview of the consequences and legal impact of Brexit for the UK and EU. He showed many difficulties ahead, especially for the UK, which will have to put its house in order as fast as possible to manage its exit and establish new trade agreements.

Closing the first session an overview was presented of all the ongoing and upcoming projects, events and awards, such as: Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside Intergroup; Forum for the Future of Agriculture 2017 (FFA) and Tree of the Year award; as well as the achieved successes and future steps of Wildlife Estates.

The second session was opened with a speech of Hon. José HERRERA, Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change. Discussing the difficulties Malta is facing today, the Minister spoke about the inheritance reg-

ulations which crippled the land through endless property divisions, which has created unviable pieces of farmland all over Malta. To counter the problem actions will be taken to develop better land systems and property rights. During a lively question and answer session, the Minister stated that creating clarity regarding the legal definitions of GM crops would be part of the Maltese agricultural agenda. Finally, the Minister stated that agricultural sustainability is vital for Europe, the CAP and the future of farming itself.

During the gala diner the Lithuanian delegation awarded Mr. de l'ESCAILLE the Order "For Strengthening Agricultural Self-government" attributed to him by the Chamber of Agriculture of Lithuania celebrating a double anniversary - 90 years since establishment, and 25 years since re-establishment.

The next ELO GA will take place on the 13th and 14th of June 2017 in Tallinn, Estonia.

Private landowners rewarded for conservation efforts

Every other year the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) awards and celebrates outstanding conservation performance by individuals, private or public institutions, enterprises, or projects that link the conservation of biodiversity to human livelihood, through the principles of sustainable use, in particular hunting, as part of wildlife and ecosystem management.

The CIC Markhor Award is granted at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP), of which the 13th is taking place in Cancun, Mexico this year.

Private reserves and community based conservancies all over the world protect critical habitat in various ecosystems and play a crucial role in the protection of highly endangered species, especially in Africa, where a minimum of 60 million hectares of private land is under some form of wildlife protection or sustainable wildlife management. Therefore, on the continent, the consumptive use of wildlife is of significant value and these values are, in principle, measurable.

This year the winner is the privately owned Sango as part of the Save Valley Conservancy in Zimbabwe, which is a role model to the private sector implementing a comprehensive community participation and conservation development program. At the basis of the program, the agreement between the conservancy and the local communities sets out mutual obligations to develop tourism in the area in such a way that maximizes benefits to the local communities. The Save Valley Conservancy holds more than 4 000 buffalo, 1 600 elephants, and over 160 black and white rhinos; has brought poaching under control; and have wildlife population which show high growth rates, despite serious poaching threats particularly for rhinos.

The success of this "safe harbor" conservancy demonstrates what many have previously argued was impossible: that landowners would embrace conservation of endangered species and show considerable willingness to protect and restore their habitat through the financial support generated from the sustainable use of wildlife.



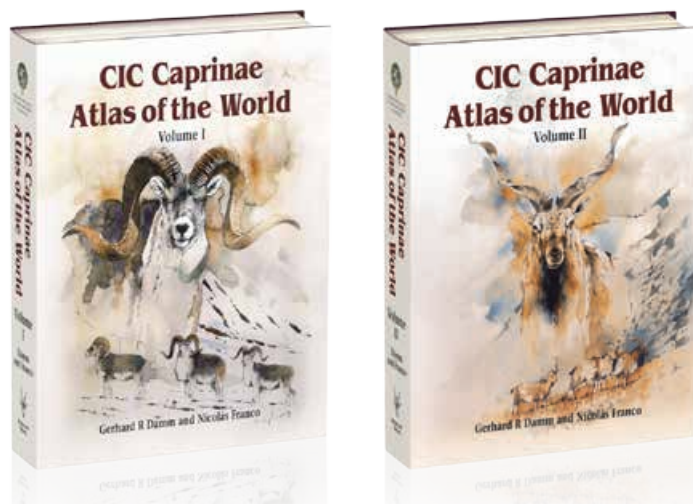
CIC Caprinae Atlas of the World

Dr. Nicolas FRANCO, Gerhard R DAMM
ISBN 9780992187057



The CIC Caprinae Atlas of the World presents an overview on the distribution ranges of the wild sheep, goats and their relatives; their physical appearance, life history, conservation status and sustainable use and addresses a wide variety of stakeholders: policy makers who create the administrative and legislative frameworks for Caprinae conservation; field researchers and taxonomists who are at work to fill knowledge gaps; public, communal and private landowners on whose lands wild Caprinae dwell; management authorities who need to find holistic conservation solutions; hunters who are getting intense emotional rewards from pursuing wild sheep and goats and their relatives; and last but not least the women and men who follow the tracks of wild sheep and goats to admire and photograph them in their wild and magnificent mountain homes.

Published jointly by the CIC International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, Budapest and Rowland Ward Publishers, Johannesburg the Atlas includes over 1000 spectacular colour photographs of wild Caprinae taken in their natural habitats and closeup photos of horns and skulls from worldrenowned museum collections. The 130 detailed colour distribution maps were drawn specifically for this book by renowned cartographer Mike SHAND, University of Glasgow. Bodo MEIER, German wildlife aquarellist par excellence created the majestic markhor and argali aquarelles on the dust covers (standard edition) and the frontispieces (collectors' edition).



From Erasmus to Erasmus+: a story of 30 years

In 2017 Erasmus + Programme for education, training, youth and sport will celebrate its 30th anniversary.

The aim of Erasmus+ is to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion, as well as the aims of ET2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training. Erasmus+ also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners in the field of higher education, and contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy.

The programme has opportunities for people of all ages, helping them develop and share knowledge and experience at institutions and organisations in different countries. It has also a wide range of opportunities for organisations, including universities, education and training providers, think-tanks, research organisations, and private businesses.

(source: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)

ELO and its partners are proud to present the 3 projects run actually under Erasmus +.

REVAB: REuse and Valorisation of Agricultural Buildings through training based on real experiences

Started in 2016 the aim of the project is to produce the first comprehensive, flexible and fully open-source training system for the reuse and valorization of agricultural buildings. The project is well advanced, as the 3rd transnational meeting took place on 18th and 19th of October in Augsburg in Southern Germany. During the first day short profiles of preselected successful national case studies of reuse and valorization of agricultural buildings were presented by the partners of the project. It was a diverse first insight to experiences in practice together with the different types of concepts and different personality of entrepreneurs.



After finishing the presentation about management and financial aspects of the project main part of the program of day 2 was the field visit to „PizzaStadl“ in Kirchdorf 50km Southern of Augsburg. The HIENLE Family showed the REVAB partners the dairy farm and the restaurant, that was built up step by step from year 2002 on. The former barn was reused for this gastronomy purpose. Mrs. HIENLE is leading the Restaurantbusiness, and together with her husband and the children they are continuing their dairy farm in the same scale as before. They are both working full time on the farm and have employees in the restaurant business. After the insights given and then having lunch in “PizzaStadl“ all partners had a close impression what it means to develop, implement and work on a success story of a reuse concept.

For more information please visit the website www.revab-erasmus.com or follow us on twitter: #REVAB_PRJ



CO-FARM: Enhancing COoperation amongst FARMing entrepreneurs

CO-FARM project aims at developing a flexible training system based on Case Studies that will provide to rural entrepreneurs, rural landowners and farmers skills and knowledge to implement initiatives of cooperation amongst farming entrepreneurs. People living in rural areas are a group at risk of exclusion, therefore access to VET is an important alternative for accessing information and education. To make the access to training easier and in order to overcome barriers, training materials of the CO-Farm-project will be flexible and fully available free of charges.

The project started in November 2016 for a total duration of 30 months and the consortium will gather 8 partners from different EU countries.

The Kick-off meeting took place in November in Thurles/ Ireland. The first day was dedicated to the presentation of the partners, the second day was dedicated to the workshop on “Cooperation Amongst Farmers: An Overview”.

For more information please follow us on twitter: #COFARM_ERASMUS

Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication 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.

FEAL: multifunctional Farming for the sustainability of European Agricultural Landscapes



multifunctional Farming for the sustainability of European Agricultural Landscapes
Project No: 2016-1-SRO1-KA-002-022502

Around half of the EU's land is farmed. That makes agricultural activity essential for emergence and maintenance of the cultural landscapes, including the preservation and the promotion of landscape elements and landforms. Farming is highly important, for the farmers themselves as well as for all people living in the countryside. Therefore not only rising awareness of the various aspects of the farmers activity is necessary, but also rising awareness of the worth and cultural value of European Agricultural Landscapes (EAL) serving as production factor and added value for the farmer.

In addition the aim of the project is to en-

hance the entrepreneurial approaches in the linkage of farming and landscape. It aims at developing a flexible training system based on exchange of practices that will provide young farmers, young rural entrepreneurs and family farmers the skills and knowledge to implement sustainable farming activities realizing win-win-situations within EAL. The target is also to face the issue of depopulation, training farmers in conceptualisation and implementation of innovative farming linking the diverse interests of farmers and rural society within EAL.

The project starts in December 2016 for the duration of 30 months. The consorti-

um will gather 7 partners all over EU.

The Kick-off meeting took place beginning of December in Zvolen/ Slovakia. It was dedicated to the presentation of the partners, and a very interesting workshop amongst the partners about the situation of farming and European Landscapes in the countries involved and on European level.

For more information please follow us on twitter: #FEAL_ERASMUS



Natura 2000 Seminars - second round of meetings

The second Boreal Natura 2000 Seminar took place in Vilnius, Lithuania from 5-7 October 2016. It brought together 86 Natura 2000 practitioners and expert stakeholders from the Boreal region, including ELO members and delegates of the ELO Secretariat. Issues of common interest were discussed in the field and during working group discussions, and a number of presentations on a variety of topics were given by participants.

The presentations covered, for example, innovative approaches used and being developed in different countries to implement Natura 2000 areas and target resources for restoration priorities and projects. Other presentations covered the Low Hanging Fruit approach, stakeholder engagement, and the LIFE financing programme. Group discussions were a core element of the Seminar; participants could choose to join one of four thematic working groups and one of four habitat working groups.

Further remarkable elements of the programme were the two field visits, respectively on forest and grassland

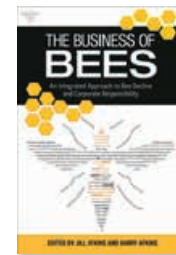
habitats and on freshwater and wetlands habitats and the 'Knowledge Market' where participants could discuss in the field or around information stands concrete examples of habitat management and a large number of relevant cases studies. Finally, in the margins of the knowledge market an informal round table discussion took place on the feasibility of developing regional approaches to large carnivores management.

The discussions at the Seminar led to a range of ideas for concrete cooperation and the future development initiatives to improve the management of Natura 2000 including a number of specific follow-up events.

This event was followed by the Second Atlantic Natura 2000 seminar which took place in Ireland.

source: ECNC report

For more information please visit http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/events/260_second_boreal_natura_2000_seminar_en.htm



There have been countless books written about bees and beekeeping. But this one stands out, because it offers a whole new perspective.

As President of the European Professional Beekeepers Association, I frequently have to remind people, that beekeeping is not just a hobby, but also a business. Usually a family business. But what is happening to our bees not only affects the business of professional beekeepers but also many other enterprises as well. Many economic activities in turn have an ecological footprint on bees and pollinators.

At a time, where shareholder value seems to trump (no pun intended) all other values, too much of the time of the beekeeping associations has to be devoted to be an external corrective on dysfunctional corporate governance ignorant of their impacts and dependence on bees. This book makes an invaluable contribution to encourage a more holistic thinking and integrated reporting about such impacts. I'm extremely grateful for this effort, which has already sparked new initiatives and will continue to do so.

This is more than just another book about bees. This is a catalyst for a more harmonious relationship between business and bees. And harmony is the secret to the incredible performance of the honey bee colony!



Even weakened, Europe must respect the rules of the treaties, including those in the agricultural sector

For Stéphane GERARD, French farmer living and farming in Poland, both the European Commission and France seem to give up protecting the European farmers settled in the countries of Central and eastern Europe.

Stéphane GERARD, French farmer living and farming in Poland

French farms have to face various crises and need all their strength to regain their status as the first European agricultural power. Yet, French agriculture does not only represent French farms but a network composed of thousands of farmers who have invested all around Europe and have chosen to link their private and professional life with other countries.

These ambassadors are the essential link for the French agricultural commercial fighting force. They show a unique national knowhow experienced in various sectors (wine, seed production, fertiliz-

ers, machinery, animal breeds...) which benefits to the French economy and its trade balance. Beyond the agricultural sphere, these farms participate in the implantation of French activities and influence and give a positive image of the entrepreneurial dynamism of France.

However today, some of these investing farmers have to face new challenges which question their existence and future development. On top of that, due of the rising of populism and the temptation of protectionism, many European countries, especially Central and Eastern Europe, are taking discriminatory actions to expel and

weaken these French expatriate farmers.

Countries which entered the European Union after the Cold War such as Hungary, Poland or Slovakia got a transitional period to avoid an abrupt liberalisation of the agricultural market. Despite a strict legal framework, some of these countries misappropriated this alternative and derogatory regime or duly extended it in order to expropriate farmers from other European countries and to maintain a discriminatory regime contrary to the fundamental principles on which EU was created. This is the case for Poland which voted a law that excluded 30% of the cultivated area



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of large farms (1085 farms of more than 465 ha) in September 2011 during its transitional period. This same law requires applicants to land to provide a certificate proving a residency on the municipality of 5 years for the Polish and of 10 years for foreigners.

Furthermore in April 2016, Poland voted a law forbidding any land selling in order to extend the transitory period while in the meantime, Poland had privatized some of its lands to its population. At the moment and under pressure from local authorities, the Polish government does not renew any leases to foreigners.

Obviously, these transitional periods reduced the attention of European Institutions from whom no reaction has been noticed concerning these discriminatory measures. The EU itself continued in the meanwhile on distributing dozens of bil-

ions in CAP subsidies to these countries. Indeed, the European Commission did not try to protect the expropriated farmers' investments and even rejected complaints sent by these entrepreneurs, neglecting its role to play as the guardian of freedom of movement and of good investment conditions.

Even worse, the protective net as a last resort of the bilateral investment agreements signed by the Member States among themselves are gradually being called into question by the same European Commission. In the context of negotiations for free trade or investment agreements such as TAFTA, CETA or the negotiating agreement with China, to end these agreements is to favor international investors compared to European investors. Thus a Chinese or a Canadian could be compensated in case of expropriation of his farm, whereas a Frenchman would not be compensated, which paradoxically could incite the "land grabbing" by non-European investors. It has to be said that French diplomacy has not been very valiant in defending its nationals, whether through community instruments or bilateral tools.

This situation cannot continue; it calls for clear answers from Europe and France. The European Commission has the urgent task of enforcing respect for the rules of treaties, including for the agricultural sector. European farmers need a framework where discrimination is replaced by stability allowing development and investment. The weakening of Europe caused by Brexit and the rise of protectionism is no excuse for giving up its DNA; the free circulation of goods, services and invest-

ments. France itself was already made aware on this subject by many members of parliament; it has to take better care of its expats in the same way as the determined diplomacy of the Netherlands. It must speak up about these arbitrary interpretations of the Membership Treaty and the unfair expropriation measures. France will never be able to reclaim its statute as first agricultural nation of Europe if it doesn't double its efforts to associate itself with a strong and active diplomacy towards producers in France or elsewhere in Europe.

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Since many years ELO is actively engage in the debate about Land access and property rights. We endorse the European Commission's finding that land is a finite resource which is already under much pressure as a result of climate change, soil erosion and over-exploitation. We believe that the debate around small vs large farmers is irrelevant, as this is not a question about whether one is better than the other, but rather wheter or not the enterprise is profitable or not.

We will continue to take an active part in that discussion also in 2017. If you wish to join us don't hesitate to contact us.

(red.)

SAVE THE DATE



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CAP – Out of the box thinking; Lunch debate chaired by MEP Karl-Heinz FLORENZ, opening address by Janez POTOENIK
www.elo.org

20 January, Berlin

The Cork 2.0 Declaration – from reflection to action
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/cork-20-declaration-reflection-action_en

20 - 29 January, Berlin

International Green Week
www.gruenewoche.de

25 January, Reims, France

FFA regional event in France
www.ffafrance.eventbrite.com

7 February, European Parliament, Brussels

Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside”: Exchange of views on the use of farmland in the EU
www.elo.org

27 - 29 March, Brussels

3 days around FFA 2017 (for ELO members only)
www.elo.org

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