

# CountrySide

European Landowners' Organization

N° 187

MAY-JUNE 2020 - BIMONTHLY - EN



## FFA2020 Regional Online Live: Connecting Brussels and Berlin



**Catherine  
GESLAIN-  
LANÉELLE**



**Gero  
HOCKER**



**Julia  
KÖHN**



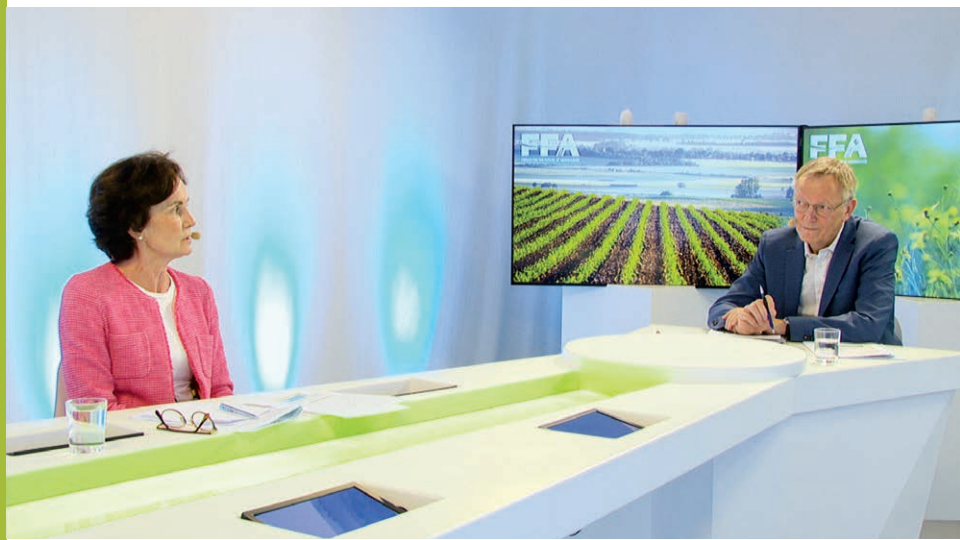
**Felix Prinz zu  
LÖWENSTEIN**



**Janez  
POTOČNIK**



**Heike  
ZELLER**



**Monday, June 15, 2020**





# Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

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## Who will pay?

*As I watched the FFA2020 Live Event on June 15, one thing became abundantly clear from both the speakers and our members; who, exactly, will bear the costs not just of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, but of the shaping of a green and sustainable future for the land management sector?*

*Farmers are far too often not in a position to invest deeply in biodiversity-friendly machinery and techniques, let alone in a whole-scale restructuring of their farm business. Reducing already-meagre income by reducing the amount of food produced does not seem like much of an option.*

*Whenever this EU budget is finally resolved, we can be sure that the CAP will not receive much extra funding. I have previously expressed my concern over the re-nationalisation of these funds and their overall impact on sustainability. The Next Generation EU package for the recovery looks somewhat more promising but lacks the necessary specific ambition for the countryside.*

*Given that so many of our fellow citizens have had their hours reduced or even been laid off, it hardly seems fair to ask them to shoulder the majority of the burden of paying for greening. Although food has become too cheap – and wasted too easily – we should be very wary of asking those who can pay the least to bear the burden.*

*Perhaps if central banks around the world can loan out trillions overnight to support corporations and interest rates go through the floor, a large-scale Green Fund, democratically managed at arms-length through the European institutions, could provide the funds needed?*





# FFA2020 Live Event focuses on building a more resilient and sustainable food and farming system

Mark TITTERINGTON, responsible for FFA strategy and partnerships

In partnership with:



The Forum for the Future of Agriculture returned on June 15 in a new virtual format which linked more than 700 stakeholders in Berlin, Brussels and beyond to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European food system. The meeting came just following the publication of the EU Farm to Fork & Biodiversity Strategies, and just before Germany assumes the Presidency of the European Council.

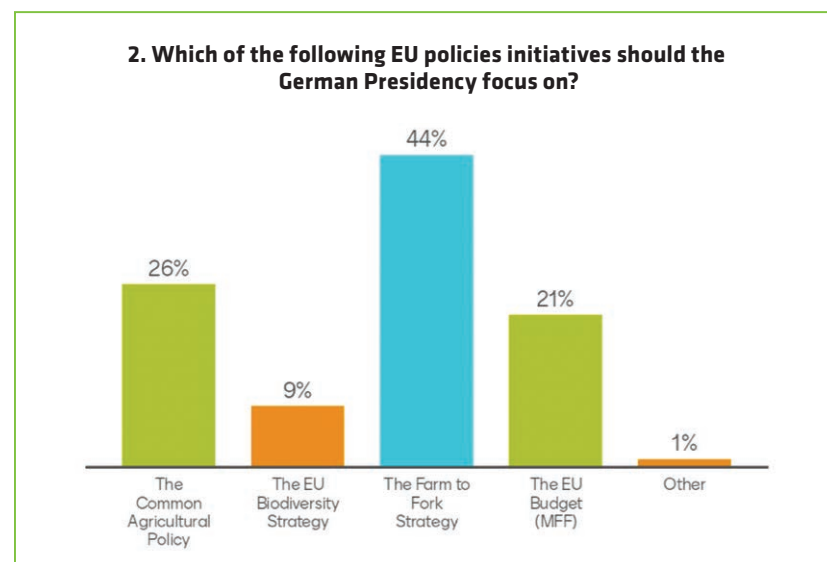
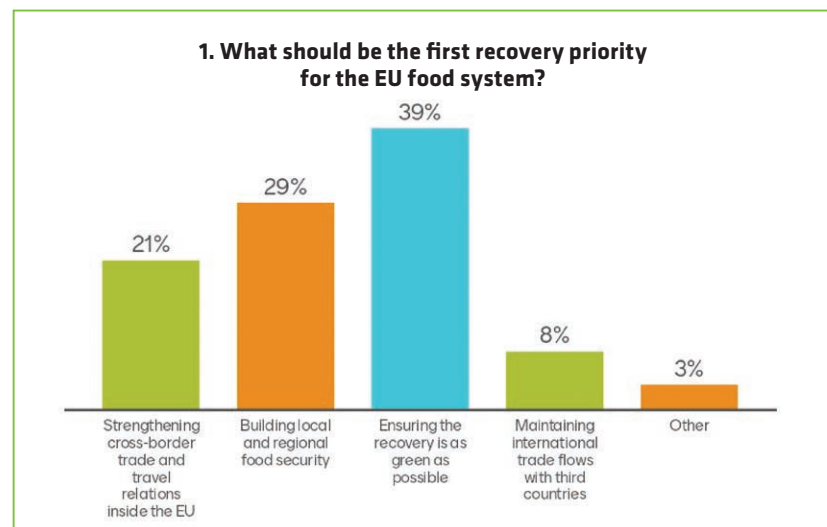
In his opening remarks, FFA Chairman Janez POTOČNIK, said that whilst everything has changed since the onset of the crisis, it is also true that nothing has changed. In this respect, he argued that the crisis had served to highlight the fragility of the world in general, but especially that of our food and agriculture systems. Continuing with this theme, the former EU Environment Commissioner said this could help contribute to a better understanding of the world and enable Europe to build on the momentum now being generated by the recent European policies.

The FFA Chairman clearly believes that the current moment presents an opportunity which must be taken to build a more sustainable food based on the principles of the circular economy. He argued passionately that the system has to stop socialising the cost of its externalities which impact public health as well as the environment, and instead put a value on the natural and human capital upon which our long-term sustainability depends. Recognising that this does not come freely, and could well translate into higher food prices, he argued that the EU

and the Member States must draw on the wide range of social and economic levers at their disposal to ensure a just transition for all.

Joining Janez POTOČNIK in the Brussels

studio was Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉE-LLE, Deputy Head of Cabinet for EU Commissioner for Agriculture & Rural Development. She took the opportunity to highlight and praise the “extraordinary” responsiveness of the EU’s food system

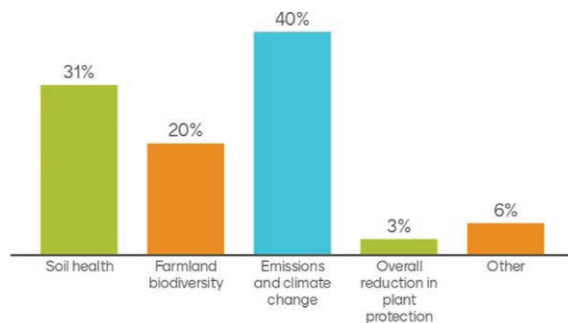


*“We cannot leave the next generation with all the debts. Going back to the old ways that we knew were broken before would be irresponsible: it is the worst thing we could do to ourselves and future generations.”*

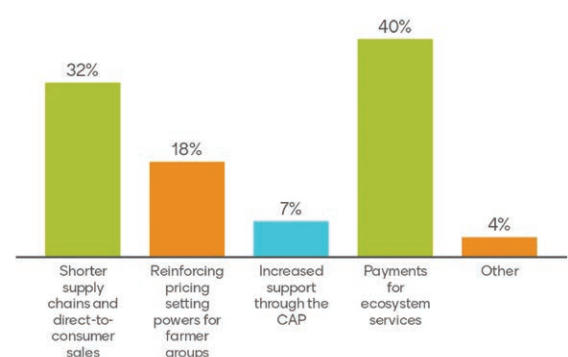
Janez POTOČNIK



### 3. While all below categories are important and related, which area of improving the agricultural environment should be focused on first?



### 4. What would most help the business model of European farming?



and the people working in it during the crisis. She argued that this had kept food on “everyone’s plate” and highlighted what an important asset the agri-food sector is for Europe. Just like Janez POTOČNIK, Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE called on all stakeholders to seize the moment to transform the food system in line with circular economy principles in ways which enable agriculture to contribute to the decarbonisation of Europe’s economy. According to her, the Farm to Fork Strategy represents “a brand-new approach which looks not just at food security and food safety [but] is about building more efficient and sustainable food systems”.

In the Berlin studio, moderator Heike ZELLER was joined by a number of guests from German politics, the food industry and the NGO BÖLW. For his part, Dr. Gero HOCKER MdB, the Agriculture Spokesperson for the Liberal Group in the Bundestag (FDP), also highlighted the vital role played by all those in the agri-food industry during the crisis. He also made clear that high standards are necessary but must be consistently applied across

Europe and warned that, in driving toward a more resilient food and agriculture sector, the regulatory and bureaucratic burden should not fall entirely on the farmer. Likewise, it was noted that there is a large gap between those willing to pay for sustainable food and those who actually do.

This was also reinforced by Dr. Julia KÖHN, Chief Executive and Founder of PIELERS. She has long argued for greater price

transparency to help consumers understand the true cost of the food they pay for and where the money goes. For Julia KÖHN, she sees a growing movement that harnesses the power of technology and innovation to develop a supply chain which reveals and internalises all of the financial, human and natural costs of the agri-food economy. For her, this has to also be an important part of the transition.

For Felix Prinz zu LÖWENSTEIN, Chairman of BÖLW (Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft), the need to drive this transition and the publication of the EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies have come at exactly the right time. He strongly argued that what is at stake is nothing less than our collective ability to produce food in the future. In particular, Felix Prinz zu LÖWENSTEIN argued that there are three key points to keep in mind. First, that farmers must be rewarded for the public goods they provide; second, that we need to change our dietary and consumption patterns if we want a more sustainable system; and, third, that we must not use policies and public funds to conceal the necessary changes that need to be made. In addition, he also argued that in supporting growers to reach ever higher standards, we must also ensure that there is a level and competitive playing field with other non-EU countries, and EU trade policy and agreements must ensure this.

Building on this point, Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE argued that “... it is not just about regulating and making good deals with our partners, but also finding a way to ensure that our high level of standards and production methods in Europe is better recognized”. She said that this is why the Farm to Fork strategy is proposing to develop a sustainable food labelling

scheme, “to help consumers [recognize] the efforts made in the food chain to produce sustainable food”.

In drawing the event to a close, FFA Chairman Janez POTOČNIK returned to his earlier theme of ensuring that natural and human capital, as well as finance, is properly accounted for throughout the food system, and doing so would be a critical success factor in making the necessary transitions. This seemed to resonate with many of the participants who joined the meeting with strong support in the online polling for improving soil health, farmland biodiversity, and ecosystem services, as well as the role growers can play in tackling climate change. He concluded by saying that COVID-19 shows how natural and climatic events can disrupt our lives and that these will increase. His clear message was that there is a window of opportunity to prepare and that it must be seized.

*“In Europe, nobody died from hunger or empty supermarkets. This gives us the perfect opportunity to fix our food systems, as the fundamentals of food security are ensured”.*

*Dr. Julia KÖHN*

**FFA2020 will continue to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the food system and build on the ideas and thinking shared by our panel guests and participants in the Regional Online Live event over the coming months.**

**For more information and to watch the replay: [www.forumforagriculture.com](http://www.forumforagriculture.com)**

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**JOHN DEERE**

NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE

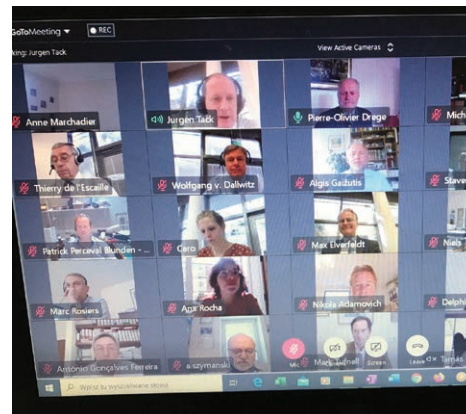
\* Wheat input cost according to Agribenchmark data for France, United Kingdom and Germany. Diesel / ha according to Agribenchmark data for France, United Kingdom and Germany. Input cost reduction for guidance systems with 15 cm is 8% according to Lohnunternehmen 1/2010. In this case we only compare the difference to the less accurate 30 cm EGNOS signal, so the benefit is half of 8% = 4%. Labour cost according to Agribenchmark France, United Kingdom and Germany. Productivity increase according to Landtechnik 6/2006 with SF1 is 14%. Again, we're comparing only to the half as accurate EGNOS 30 cm correction signal, so the gain is 14% / 2 = 7%. Section control input cost reduction according to Profi Dec. 2012. Note, the smaller the field and the less rectangular the shape of the field, and the wider the implement working width and the smaller the individual implement sections, the higher the benefit. For big fields with rectangular shape the section control benefit is minimal.

<sup>1</sup>AutoTrac SF1 provides 15 cm accuracy vs. only 30 cm with EGNOS; <sup>2</sup>BRX tractors; <sup>3</sup>7R, 8R, 8RT, 8RX tractors; <sup>4</sup>6R, 7R, 8R tractors





ELO and Familienbetriebe Land und Forst delegations in Berlin, June 16



ELO GA, June 16

## Pierre-Olivier DRÈGE unanimously chosen for his second term as ELO President

*In view of the continuing difficulties in travelling between the countries of the European Union, the ELO General Assembly was held on June 16 in a hybrid form, giving the possibility to join the meeting in person or "online". It was co-organized with the Familienbetriebe Land und Forst (FABLF), a member organization of ELO from Germany, as the original venue was to be Berlin as Germany is to assume the EU Council Presidency from July 1. More than 50 people took part, representing more than 26 ELO member organisations from 17 European countries.*

Emmanuelle MIKOSZ, ELO

The quorum gathered allowed for the election of the ELO President, whose term expires at the end of June 2020. Pierre-Olivier DRÈGE was unanimously elected for a second three-year term. An economist and forester by profession, formerly associated with the *Association Générale des Producteurs de Blé et autres céréales* (AGPB), a French cereal producer organisation and a member of ELO, an active member of the association of private forest owners. He is currently vice-president of the *François Sommer Foundation*.

Max van ELVERFELDT, President of the FABLF, gave an overview of the organisation background and objectives, representing more than 50,000 members of rural family businesses structured in 11 associations of landowners representing family owned businesses with 2,000 memberships.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, ELO's Secretary General, summarised to the participants the last six months of the organisation's work and presented an action plan for the following months. These will be full of challenges in connection with the work on the European Green Deal and the "From Field to Table" and "Biodiversity 2030" strategies. Further discussions on the implementation of the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery plan for Europe, the multi-annual financial framework for the EU and the budget for the CAP, as well as the state of play of the Brexit negotiations will also be important. He also gave the overview

of the *Wildlife Estates* label which reached over 2.000.000 verified hectares. During the so-called "tour de table", these issues were also addressed by delegates, in addition to the ongoing works on the National Strategic Plans, and such specific issues as droughts, floods, land access & consolidation.

Allan BUCKWELL, ELO's Policy Group co-chair, presented the main points of ELO's latest position paper "Land management at a time of great challenges: the EU Green Deal and its forthcoming strategies". He underlined that farming and forestry are key to achieve the success of the presented strategies. He pointed out, however, that the European Commission first needs to provide economic, social and environmental impact assessments as these documents are pointing at agriculture disintensification without explaining the impact on food price regime and trade implications.

The participants also had the opportunity to listen to the priorities of the German Presidency for the EU from a representative of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and to ask a number of questions in an over an hour-long discussion with Secretary of State Dr. Christiane PAULUS from the Ministry of the Environment. The "ELO's main messages for the German Presidency for its agricultural and environmental priorities" were to hand over to the "virtual hands" of the speakers from both ministries.

The next GA will take place on **December 1-3** in Portugal.

# Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic – ELO members survey

Danaé STEISEL, ELO

In April 2020, the national members of ELO were asked to complete a survey about how their members' sectors of activity have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. From this survey, it was found that the sectors facing the greatest decline in activity due to the health crisis are wineries, meat and dairy products, tourism and flowers.

This is mainly due to a considerable drop in demand for such products especially from the service industry as a consequence of the closing of most of the hotel and catering business. The limited availability of workforce induced by the travel restrictions on seasonal workers has also been identified as one of the most urgent problems to resolve for the agricultural, forestry and flowers' sectors. Lastly, numerous agribusinesses are facing difficulties regarding the transportation of their products, leading to a pressure on the downstream supply chain.

Most concerned sectors are beneficiaries of state support measures such as access to funds for employees' remuneration, the promotion of domestic food products as



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well as extensions of application deadlines for CAP payments. In some countries such as Finland or the Czech Republic, members active in forestry have not benefitted from such support measures.

Interestingly, a significant number of ELO national members uses digital means to sell products online as well as to increase the on-farm sales to remedy the loss of sales.

**The sectors most impacted identified the reopening of restaurants and hotels as well as the lifting of restrictions on foreign trade as key to help ease the pressure on their businesses.**

Please note that the survey is still open for your contribution. If you would like to access the survey, please contact [danae.steisel@elo.org](mailto:danae.steisel@elo.org).

 The advertisement features a background image of several bees on a wooden surface. The text is overlaid on this image.
 

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Board Members of the "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" Intergroup.



## A solid basis to start the work for the "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" Intergroup

Delphine DUPEUX, ELO

The "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" Intergroup constitutes an essential part of the dialogue between the European Parliament and rural stakeholders. It is instrumental in bringing together the perspectives of key rural actors in shaping major policy discussions of the EU Green Deal, namely the next EU Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

On February 13, the Intergroup agreed on the President and Vice-Presidents for the term 2019-2024. Álvaro AMARO (Portugal, EPP) was elected as President, with Simone SCHMIEDTBAUER (Austria, EPP), Alex AGIUS SALIBA (Malta, S&D), Elsi KATAINEN (Finland, Renew Europe), Marco DREOSTO (Italy, ID), Andželika MOŹDŹANOWSKA (Poland, ECR), Carmen Avram (Romania, S&D), Jeremy DECERLE (France, Renew Europe), Juan Ignacio ZOIDO ÁLVAREZ (Spain, EPP) and Annie SCHREIJER-PIERIK (Netherlands, EPP) as Vice-Presidents.

The Intergroup's board is a clear illustration of a large panel of actors involved, sometimes with very different interests. Consisting of 10 members in total, from 10 different Member States and 5 different political groups comprising of 5 men and 5 women, the Intergroup provides a wide geographical and ideological scope as well as a perfect gender balance! This is precisely why the Intergroup creates opportunities to listen and share different opinions. As a priority, ELO & FACE invited the Intergroup members and a larger audience to discuss the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy and its impact for the rural community on June 30.

## TRANQUILITY THRESHOLD® Wildlife Estates Project

Dr. Carlos OTERO,  
Wildlife Scientific Committee Chairman



Over the past two to three months when most of us were confined to our homes in prudent confinement, one of the facts that stands out in purely ecological terms is that we gave up our areas of "occupation". Our urban and rural habitats have been left alone, completely abandoned and totally accessible to other vertebrates and invertebrates, who have certainly not given up the opportunity to explore them and have found favourable ecological conditions for a surprising and unexpected temporary occupation.

The *Wildlife Estates* project, which grants quality certificates for those territories that have excellent wildlife management, analyses in detail during its evaluation process several Specific Indicators related to the management of the environment. The first and most important of these indicators studies what we have called the *Tranquillity Threshold*. It can be defined as the degree of normality that should reign in a territory so that the exchange and natural interaction between the fauna and its environment take place, so that the existence of an ecological balance and the permanence of the capacity of response and the capacity of recovery in this ecosystem before situations of natural crisis are guaranteed. The *Tranquillity Threshold* is in turn determined by another environmental parameter that we have called the *Quietness Level*. Each natural ecosystem, each agrosystem or each urban or semi-urban environment has a different *Quietness Level* value, which conditions its *Quietness Threshold*.

This *Threshold of Tranquillity* is the parameter that holds the true attraction in an ecosystem for fauna. It may have an extraordinary abundance of food or water, of hidden places or ancient forests, but if this ecosystem does not enjoy the tranquillity and peace that are essential for the fauna...it simply becomes extinct, disappears or is absent.

We should not be surprised, therefore, by the presence of animals that are not usually present in the fauna catalogue of the area.

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



# What waits for us Hunters after COVID-19?

*COVID-19 has an impact on all parts of society, the economy and the environment. It is making us brutally aware of just how volatile our existence as humans in this world is despite our technological and scientific know-how.*

Tamás MARGHESCU, Director General of the CIC



Sika deer cross an empty road due to coronavirus in Nara, Japan

The reduction of international trade, the interruption of international cargo, the closing down of country borders, the prescribed curfews and restrictions of movement – all result in concrete actions and plans, which point towards a trend away from globalization towards more localization. Self-sufficiency has again become a target for many.

In Europe for example, many sources are reporting the appearance of game in ar-

reas where they have not been reported for decades. Some game species, which have become shy or even nocturnal as a result of anthropogenic disturbances, including hunting, are sighted again during broad daylight. Some might say that this is wonderful, but the undisturbed game is also feeding undisturbed in agricultural fields, causing immense damage. Hunting in some countries is restricted due to prescribed, general curfews or even through hunting moratoria, declared in part due to the uncertain connections between the spread of virus diseases and wildlife trade. If a government authority is restricting hunting activities, the responsibility for compensating farmers for wildlife damages in the agricultural sector moves from the hunter to the relevant government authority. There are likely to be legal quarrels on this issue after COVID-19.

We were in the midst of the spread of the African swine fever in Europe, depleting the wild boar populations in many countries. Many professional hunters are still out in the fields and forests trying to monitor the development of the disease. The culling of wild boar populations is likely to have been reduced in intensity, which could speed-up the spread of the disease. The situation will have to be reassessed once Covid-19 has passed. Established lines of defence against the disease will probably need to be modified.

If hunting can start again after the crisis, we hunters will be under pressure to make up for lost time in fulfilling the prescribed hunting quotas. We might prioritise forms of hunting which quickly bring down the numbers of game populations, such as driven hunts. With this comes the risk of more mistakes being made in selecting the correct animals to harvest and reduces the likely income from hunting tourism. It is clear that the experienced collapse of hunting tourism and other forms of wildlife tourism world-wide as such is going to result in huge financial damage and loss of employment within the sector.

This has unforeseeable consequences. Already, there are reports that poaching has increased due to reduced anti-poaching measures. Employees of outfitters, who lost their jobs, might be forced to engage in poaching to earn income for their families. It is also clear that outfitters need to rethink the structure of their businesses, diversify their activities and production profile, in order to be less dependent on just tourism. We as the hunting community, need to assist.

The CIC has already called upon its members not to cancel booked hunts, but to postpone them in order to assist outfitters to at least have a planning horizon for the future. The CIC also calls upon its state members to consider means of easing the economic burden felt by individuals, companies and organisations in the wake of COVID-19, including in the wildlife tourism sector, in order to prevent its collapse and avoid the depletion of wildlife populations.

If anything, this crisis highlights the necessary role that hunting plays in wildlife conservation globally, and in the control and sustainable management of wildlife populations. Any proposed bans on wildlife trade, will undoubtedly endanger the very essence of wildlife conservation through sustainable use. We must remain alert, united and informed going forward. This requires close attention by the CIC and all hunters now and after the crisis.

**For more information:**  
[www.cic-wildlife.org](http://www.cic-wildlife.org)

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## 4<sup>th</sup> Transnational Meeting at the “Enchanted Hill”

Juliette OLIVIER, ELO

The partners of the REWARD project aiming at raising the employability of women in rural areas met in Krakow, Poland on March 9 and 10 and were hosted by CDR Krakow.

On the first day, the partners met and overviewed the final case studies developed by each partner in their country. All these case studies presenting rural women who developed multifunctional activities on their farms will soon be available on our website. Based on the results of those case studies, the next step of the project consists of the development of training resources aimed at providing women with basic knowledge to become promoters of multifunctional farming initiatives on their farms.

The following day, the partners visited the “Zaczarowane Wzgorze” farm – in English “Enchanted Hill” - in Czaslaw. This 11ha farm is run by two friends, both women, who bought it 15 years ago and transformed it into a wonderful agritourism farm. One of the owners deals with horse breeding and the other with tourist services based on the farm (accommodation, gastronomy, education, organization of events). The farm holds 50 tame horses of various breeds and specialises in horseback riding and rally organisation, for both beginners and advanced riders. On this beautiful farm, green camps are organised for children from the surrounding area where they can learn horse riding, follow didactical activities, take care of the various animals and much more.

Our next meeting will be held in Prague, Czech Republic at the end of October. By then, the training modules will be finalized and presented to the consortium.

[www.reward-erasmus.eu](http://www.reward-erasmus.eu)  
[REWARDERASMUS/](#)  
[REWARD\\_ERASMUS](#)



## Promoting the delivery of Agri-Environmental Climate Public Goods

Flora AMERY, ELO

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

The 3rd meeting for the CONSOLE project was set to take place on March 18 - 20, in the centre of Brussels. Due to the current adverse circumstances and many partners not being able to travel, the decision was made to hold the meeting virtually. The meeting provided an opportunity for partners to discuss the progress of the project. Contingency plans were also discussed for any anticipated delays the project may incur due to the virus.

In the run up to the meeting, information from case studies was gathered to generate factsheets to build an inventory of successful and failed initiatives in Europe and beyond (involving key experts from Australia, US, Canada, Sweden and Switzerland). The fact sheets will present the reasons behind the successes and failures of these cases. These will feed into key lessons that will be summarised to give an overview for policy makers on innovative and successful solutions “outside the box” as well as policy design towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

[www.console-project.eu](http://www.console-project.eu)  
[Console.project](#)  
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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 817949.







## Phosphorus REcovery for Fertilisers frOm dairy processing Waste

Lindsey CHUBB, ELO

REFLOW is an interdisciplinary cross-sectoral European Training Network combining world-leading scientists and key stakeholders in dairy processing, fertilizer production and phosphorous recycling with early stage researchers to address important technical and socio-economic challenges associated with the recovery of phosphorous from dairy processing waste water and its recycling into fertilizer products enabling sustainable expansion of the dairy industry in Europe.

13 ESRs have been recruited in a network of 10 beneficiaries and 14 partner organisations who bring complementary expertise and experience of delivering technical solutions, socio-economic modelling, environmental analysis, policy frameworks, high level training and commercial entrepreneurship.

Due to the COVID-19 situation in Europe all project activities and workshops have been taking place online. The University of Limerick & Teagasc (Ireland), hosted the first "Training School" of the REFLOW project. The University of Limerick and project partners organised several online meetings and collaborative activities in order carry out project objectives and provide dedicated training activities/workshops that promote development of the ESR skills.

The objective of the Training School was to give an overview of the REFLOW project, by specifically highlighting the training dimension of the project and its aim of enhancing the ESRs career perspectives. Moreover, instructions on management, dissemination and communication activities were illustrated since the very beginning of the training school. The main topic of the Training School was Fundamentals of Research Practice, which comprised the following thematic areas:

- Research methodologies and approaches (such as design of experiments; project management, time management; dissemination strategy, IP and data management; research ethics and integrity; career development; stress management and work/life balance; realizing your research value).
- Leadership for the agri-food industry; statistics and scientific communication.

The project partners and ESRs will continue to work remotely until COVID-19 measures are gradually lifted in their respective countries, so researchers are able to conduct essential research in laboratory settings, which for the time being are heavily restricted.



The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 814258.

This publication reflects only the authors' view and that the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.



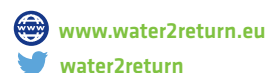
## Recovery and recycling of nutrients from slaughterhouse wastewater

Daniel MONTELEONE, ELO

The Water2REturn General meeting, originally scheduled for Seville, Spain, was held virtually on April 1-2. Water2REturn is an Innovation Action that is co-funded by the European Commission under its Horizon 2020 (H2020) programme. It is coordinated by BIOAZUL (Malaga, Spain) and is focused on the recovery and recycling of nutrients from slaughterhouse wastewater. These nutrients are recovered and turned into value-added products for the fertiliser industry and, consequently, for the agricultural sector.

The first day began with amendments and a review of changes caused by the COVID-19 outbreak as well as a discussion of the schedule for the two days. An innovation management session was held, followed by a round table. After lunch, the meeting continued with discussions on Matadero Del Sur, the plant at the heart of the pilot programme and contingency plans in case COVID-19 outbreak worsens. Other activities that day included environmental, social and risk assessments and individual presentations on different aspects of the project. A scheduled visit to Matadero Del Sur was not possible, of course, due to the fact that the meeting was not held in Spain and thus images of the plant were shared instead.

The second day opened with a team meeting on innovations and key exploitable results followed by a large group discussion. Stakeholder engagement and dissemination activities were also discussed before lunch. Finally, the General Assembly met to discuss changes in the timeline due to the COVID-19 outbreak.





## Looking for volunteers to join the pilot training

Daniel MONTELEONE, ELO

Originally scheduled for Sopron, the fourth AGFOSY meeting was held virtually on May 6 and 7. Since a large part of the planned trip consisted of field visits, the duration of the conference was considerably shortened. The main goal of the project is to develop a complex but simultaneously flexible training system for agroforestry, based on the collection of a number of case studies and good agroforestry practices from several countries.

On the first day, the discussion focused primarily on Intellectual Outputs 3 and 4. Intellectual Output 3 is the creation of methodological sheets. These informative documents explain some of the various aspects of agroforestry such as how to develop silvopastoral systems. Meanwhile, Intellectual Output 4 seeks to create training courses that can be used in classrooms or virtual courses.

The second day included planning for Intellectual Output 5. This output will include videos that can be shared on YouTube, Facebook, or through email, to help people learn more about agroforestry. Also included in day 2, was project reporting and the discussion of testing the developed materials.

Currently, ELO is looking for farmers and landowners who are interested in learning more about agroforestry to be part of our pilot training. These participants will be among the first to see these newly developed products. Participation will require a two-hour virtual meeting followed by reviewing the documents at your own pace.

If you are interested, email [Daniel.Montealeone@elo.org](mailto:Daniel.Montealeone@elo.org) and if you'd like to see some of the training materials that have already been developed, visit our website.

[www.agroforestrysystems.eu](http://www.agroforestrysystems.eu)  
[agfosy\\_erasmus](https://www.facebook.com/agfosy_erasmus)  
**AGFOSY**



## Promoting the uptake of agro-ecological farming

Daniel MONTELEONE, ELO

On May 12 -15 the UNISECO project team met virtually for the project meeting (with a stakeholder meeting held on 13 and 14). Although the meeting was originally intended for Romania, the COVID-19 pandemic made this impossible. Nonetheless, the four-day meeting was productive.

The objective of the UNISECO project is to promote the uptake of agro-ecological farming approaches in Europe. It will create knowledge about the settings and circumstances in which particular agro-ecological farming systems are suitable for increasing productivity, the provision of public goods, and employment.

The first day consisted of discussions of work package progress and workshops on the various case studies and online tools being developed by the project, followed by preparation for the stakeholder meeting. The second day, stakeholders including scientists, farmers, and labor leaders joined the project partners, with an attendance of over 70 people. During the day, they discussed EU policy implications, market assessments, and visualizing the agro-ecological transitions such as story makes and the new SESSIT tool being developed.

Day three continued with the stakeholder portion of the meeting and included reviews of the innovative scenarios, looking at what the EU might look like in 2050 with different levels of implementation of agro-ecological practices. It was interesting to imagine how agriculture and goods would develop over the next 30 years. The stakeholder portion of the meeting concluded with an evaluation of the Multi-Actor Platform and finally an executive meeting to round off the day.

The final day concluded the meeting with the project partners and consisted of breakout groups for each of the current work packages, such as policy briefs and multi-actor engagement. Finally, the meeting ended with economic modeling and a review of the project progress.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November, however this date depends on the safety and security of travel arrangements and locations based on COVID-19.

[www.uniseco-project.eu](http://www.uniseco-project.eu)  
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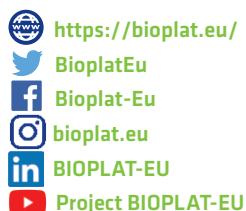
## The potential to produce biomass

Lindsey CHUBB, ELO

EU policies are encouraging bioenergy production, but there are concerns on the sustainability aspects as biomass for bioenergy production might compete with food/feed production. The BIOPLAT-EU project investigates marginal, underutilised and contaminated (MUC) lands with the potential to produce biomass for bioenergy production. Bioenergy production on MUC lands is not well known to stakeholders but it has proven to be economically feasible. The project is developing an online platform that supports and promotes the sustainable use of MUC lands for bioenergy production in Europe and in neighbouring countries.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, the BIOPLAT-EU consortium decided to hold its 3<sup>rd</sup> Consortium meeting online on March 26 and 27. ELO and the project partners have finished collecting GIS data for MUC lands in Europe. In-depth feasibility studies in the case study countries (Italy, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine) are being conducted for selected bioenergy value chains.

The scientific partners are now in the process of analysing the data that has been collected thus far and generating the STEN tool (STEN: Sustainability Tool for Europe and Neighbouring countries) that will assess the environmental, social and techno-economic sustainability aspects of scenarios and value chains with respect to specific economic and noneconomic conditions (technical feasibility of RES project) for bioenergy production on MUC land. The GIS maps and the STEN tool will be merged to form the WebGIS tool which will be accessible through the project website in Autumn 2021.



This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 818083.

This publication reflects only the author's view and that the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.



## BioWILL - a biorefinery model for Northwest Europe

Lindsey CHUBB, ELO

BioWILL is an Interreg NWE funded project focusing on Integrated "Zero Waste" Biorefinery utilising all fractions of Willow feedstock for the production of high to medium based Bio-Chemicals/Materials, Renewable Energy in the form of Bio Methane production and Natural Fertilisers.

Coordinated by the University of Limerick, BioWILL consists of 10 project partners in four countries across Northwest Europe (Belgium, France, Ireland, and United Kingdom). The consortium comprises research organisations (3 HEIs and 3 research institutes), 3 SMEs, 1 consultancy, and 1 organisation representing farmers and landowners across the EU (European Landowner Organisation).

BioWILL will deliver a biorefinery model for Northwest Europe using Willow, by producing high value salicylates from willow bark for medical applications. The bark residue and bark-free willow pulp will be converted into safe food quality packaging material to replace fossil derived plastics. The end of life packaging will be hydrolysed and used as a feedstock in an innovative bio-energy anaerobic digestion system producing biogas suitable for grid injection. Technology demonstrations will validate how technology integration can increase efficiency, qualifying as "best available practice". Intensive market, regulatory, financial, technical and environmental analysis will produce a "toolkit" (LCAs, business models, etc) for dissemination to all market actors via an extensive communications programme.

BioWILL held its Kick-off Meeting in Brussels on 9<sup>th</sup> March. As COVID-19 restrictive measures were quickly setting into place, some project partners joined remotely from their home countries. Project Coordinator, J.J. LEAHY (University of Limerick) introduced the overview and background to the project, followed by a discussion among project partners of next steps in the early stages of the project. Like the rest of Europe, the countries of all the BioWILL partners have experienced lockdowns of various degrees due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The partners are working hard from home and remain connected with each other to continue their progress while maintaining the safety of their community.

Project No. NWE 964



## Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) dismiss a case filed against wood biomass

Oskars ZEMITIS, ELO

On March 4, 2019, a landmark lawsuit was filed against the *European Union* (EU) with plaintiffs from five Member States – Romania, Ireland, Slovakia, France and Estonia along with the United States charging that the EU's 2018 *Renewable Energy Directive* (RED II) will devastate forests and claiming that "burning wood for energy puts more carbon in the atmosphere than burning fossil fuels, including coal; and the vast increase in industrial logging which it necessitates destroys the very forest systems that have absorbed carbon from the atmosphere."<sup>1</sup> The plaintiffs were asking the CJEU to dismiss the forest biomass provisions of the RED II in order to render forest wood, and its energy derivatives such as wood pellets, ineligible for meeting EU Member State renewable energy targets and subsidies.

Recently the court ruled the inclusion of wood biomass in the RED II. With this procedural ruling, the CJEU clears doubts on the future of the EU's largest renewable energy source. Since the early stage of the consultation, bioenergy industry stakeholders and trade bodies on both sides of the Atlantic have fully supported the introduction of sustainability criteria for solid biomass. These ensure that biomass is produced sustainably, irrespective of its geographical origin. If sustainably sourced and produced, bioenergy brings considerable environmental and socio-economic benefits. According to *Bioenergy Europe*, bioenergy accounts for almost 60 percent of all renewable's energy used in the EU. It is a major industry player in the EU and contributes to local and regional economic development with more than 703 000 jobs and is a key technology for achieving the bloc's climate goals set out in the *European Green Deal*.

<sup>1</sup> <http://eubiomasscase.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/EU-Biomass-Case-Main-Arguments.pdf>

## Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 triggering discussions

Oskars ZEMITIS, ELO

With the release of *Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*, several forest-related actions were proposed and are now subject to intense discussions led by the Directorate-General for Environment. Namely issues regarding biodiversity-friendly concepts such as closer-to-nature-forestry, which is pushed to be better defined and expanded. To support this, the Commission will develop guidelines on closer-to-nature-forestry practices and biodiversity-friendly afforestation and reforestation. The Commission has set a goal to plant at least 3 billion additional trees in the EU by 2030 in full respect of ecological principles, with particular focus on cities and agroforestry. This will be carried out in parallel with the new *EU Forest Strategy*.

Another relevant topic is protection of old-growth forests, with the European Commission proposing to define, map, monitor and strictly protect all of the EU's remaining primary and old-growth forests. The Commission, working with Member States and the *European Environment Agency*, will put forward in 2020 criteria and guidance for identifying and designating additional areas, including a definition of strict protection, as well as for appropriate management planning.

These topics will be discussed in several events, including the *Working Group on Forest and Nature*, where ELO is a participant.

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# Workation retreat start-up, Coconat this year's Famigro award winners'

*The Famigro Award is open for young rural entrepreneurs (between 18-40 years old), made possible thanks to the generous contribution of Karl GROTFELT. The Award is presented annually to a young entrepreneur whose initiatives have brought about developments that support the future of an estate or the countryside in general.*

Robert EVANS-BEVAN, ELO & Alberto HERMOSEL, YFCS



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This year the award went to an innovative and community driven start-up in Rural Brandenburg, Germany. 'Coconat', founded by Iris WOLFER, Philipp HENTSCHEL, Julianne BECKER and Janosch DIETRICH, offers a unique and novel 'workation' retreat where guests are able to concentrate on work while surrounded by nature. With this unique combination, they opened in 2017, their workation retreat as a place dedicated to remote (often digital) work which is used by start-ups, freelancers, scientific workers and also big corporates. To encourage optimum coworking, 'Coconat' offers 'the perfect balance between peaceful solitude and company'. This winning formula provides guests with a productive aptitude enabling them to get work done and enjoy their stay. And there certainly is plenty to

enjoy. 'Coconat' encourages guests to discover the area which offers a broad range of activities from treetop walks to yoga, campfires and much more.

'Coconat' is an 'impact driven' company which bases its value on its positive impact rather than its capital growth. Circular economist Kate RAWORTH calls entrepreneurs like the 'Coconat' founders '21st Century designers' who have considered the environment, the community and sustainability amongst other things, in its design rather than just financial and practical factors. A particular demonstration on how this approach is put into daily practice is the way meals are provided at 'Coconat'. Whilst being inspired by dishes all over the world, the food is seasonal and local in

practice. Fortunate diners are given a fantastic set menu to avoid food waste. They are also treated to a delightful and cosy dining atmosphere with the other guests, giving way to the opportunity to exchange and engage with others.

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, people began to examine and reflect on the way we now work. The notion of society living to work rather than working to live has gained momentum of concern in recent years and has been further brought into the light during this pandemic. Most offices today were designed before the modern communication tools such as the internet which we now rely upon. Some argue that in light of this, the original functions of working in offices today are obsolete. The option many have suddenly become accustomed to, home working, meanwhile takes away much of the peer interaction and physical working community benefits. Coconat's full package of high speed wifi, human interaction and nature provides perhaps a pioneering insight into the way in which we could work in the future.

The 'Coconat' team expressed that they were 'thrilled' to have won this year's award and look forward to taking the project further and developing the business. In the long term they want to make the Hoher Fläming a rural hotspot for innovation in Europe, transfer the learnings to many other regions in Germany and beyond and expand their business with new branches and new products. Watch this space!

The following applicants were awarded with a Diploma for Outstanding Developments:  
**Domaine Le Grand Castelet,**  
**Flourish Produce,**  
**Lynbreck Croft** and  
**Vanhakylä gård.**

For more information visit: [www.yfcs.eu](http://www.yfcs.eu)



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Coconat founders



**The Human Planet: Earth at the Dawn of the Anthropocene**

**George STEINMETZ, text by Andrew REVKIN**  
**Abrams Books, April 2020**  
**ISBN-13: 978-1419742774**

A dynamic aerial exploration of our changing planet, published on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. “Though the term has sparked much debate, aerial photographer George STEINMETZ’s new book, *The Human Planet: Earth at the Dawn of the Anthropocene*, leaves little doubt that our footprint on the Earth is profound and vast.” For more information discover his interview with the TNC orgqnisqtion on [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

**The Future we choose – surviving the climate crisis**

**Christiana FIGUERES, Tom RIVETT-CARNAC**  
**ISBN-13: 978-1838770822**

**THE FUTURE WE CHOOSE**



**Surviving the Climate Crisis**

**Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac**  
Architects of the 2015 Paris Agreement

We have just entered the most consequential decade in human history. The scientific assessment of climate change suggests this can either be our final hour, or our finest. *The Future We Choose* is an inspiring manifesto from Global Optimism Co-Founders, Christiana FIGUERES and Tom RIVETT-CARNAC. It explains what’s to come, how to face it and what we can do.”

Ch. FIGUERES is an internationally recognized leader on global climate change. She was Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2010-2016. Together with Tom CARNAC she founded Global Optimism Ltd., a purpose driven enterprise focused on social and environmental change, under which run various initiatives including the podcast *Outrage and Optimism*.

For more information: [www.wechoosethefuture.com](http://www.wechoosethefuture.com)

**Diary dates**

**30 June, Brussels, virtual, 4.30pm-6pm**

“EU Biodiversity strategy reloaded: making sure it works”; organized by Intergroup “Biodiversity, hunting, countryside” in conjunction with ELO and FACE  
[www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org)

**2 - 3 September, Wolfsburg, Germany**

Wildlife Estates General Assembly  
[www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)

**1 - 3 December, Lisbon, Portugal**

ELO General Assembly  
[www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org)

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