



Deutscher Verband für  
Landschaftspflege



Conservatoires  
d'espaces  
naturels



ASOCIACIÓN  
TRASHUMANANCIA Y NATURALEZA



Noardlike  
Fryske  
Wâlden



**LEGAMBIENTE**



AGRI  
CULTURA  
NATURA  
TRANSILVANIAE

# **The CAP past 2020 – to benefit nature and land users**

**A collective position paper that represents the views of organisations working for people and nature.**

In November 2017 the EU Commission presented its communication paper „The Future of Food and Farming“. The importance of EU’s farmers and farming practices for our natural resources soil, water, air and biodiversity were clearly addressed. Due to the fact, that some farming activities still have unwanted and detrimental effects on our natural resources, we totally agree with the finding, that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should lead to a transition towards a more sustainable agriculture.

Organisations from 6 EU-Member states met in January 2018 in Ansbach, Germany. These are the **Vereniging Noardlike Fryske Wâlden** from the Netherlands, la **Fédération des Conservatoires d'espaces naturels** from France, **Legambiente Lombardia** (Italy), **Trashumancia y Naturaleza from Spain**, **Pogany-havas Regional Association** (Romania) and the **Deutscher Verband für Landschaftspflege/ Landcare Germany**. Our organisations have in common, that they all work to benefit both nature and land users. We all follow a cooperative approach to preserve our natural resources together with our farmers and land owners.

We all together also agree on the finding, that there is an urgent need to reduce the bureaucracy and administrative burden of the CAP and improve its value for money.

Thus, to implement the general principle “Public money for public goods” and to make sure that both land users and nature benefit in the next CAP period, a few important topics must be tackled:

## 1. Need for “targeted payments” – money especially for environmental protection and nature

This can be done by at least two different ways:

- To create a special fund within the CAP for tackling core environmental issues (eg, protection of species that depend on specific agricultural measures and traditions).  
→ *It is crucial that this new fund is fully integrated and in line with the rest of the CAP measures, to avoid double financing or opposing objectives with contradictory results.*
- By “earmarking” certain amounts of CAP money for environmental protection and nature  
→ *EU commission defines objectives, the member states are free to suggest suitable measures;*

## 2. Lasting support for cooperation’s

*cooperation: i.e. farmers cooperatives, Landcare associations*

The support for peer-to-peer exchange, networking and cooperation – not only amongst farmers but also with local communities, administration and NGO’s should be a core element of the next CAP.

*(see: example 1 from The Netherlands in the appendix)*

### 3. Support for better communication

To benefit both nature and land users, a modern CAP should support the strengthening of farm advisory services – and take the knowledge of existing cooperation's (*see example 2 from Germany in the appendix*) into account.

### 4. Better support for grasslands and wood pastures.

Grassland and wood pastures play a crucial role both in European production systems and especially for climate and environmental sustainability, being one of the most valuable types of farmland for public goods and ecosystem services provision.

These systems are so valuable that farmers who maintain them should have priority for receiving CAP payments.

The current CAP not only does not recognize these values but it considers these farming systems marginal and less valuable. There are established CAP rules that discriminate against them (eg: pastures with wood and shrubs).

One priority of the next CAP should be the recognition and support of the crucial role that grasslands and wood pastures play in human life and wellbeing. The CAP rules must be adopted to recognize this special value.

### 5. Further development of agri-environmental schemes

The new delivery model of the future CAP gives the opportunity for more result oriented measures and less prescriptive programs. This gives the farmers a better chance to integrate conservation measures in their farming business.

This could be a chance for some of our most precious production landscapes in Europe like the Dehesas in Spain (*see example 3 from Spain in the appendix*) or the wood pastures in the Carpathians.

But to deliver good and lasting results and high ecological quality, an integrated and efficient institutional system must be installed and run by local governments. It is crucial that farmers and landowners can rely on a simple and fast payment system that does not change after every financial *period* (*see the example 4 from France in the appendix*). The EU commission could use suitable indicators to guarantee this.

# APPENDIX

## Example 1:

### Targeted support for societal services at regional scale, within the new EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in The Netherlands

#### Site: “Noardlike Fryske Wâlden” (NFW) in Friesland

Within the Province of Friesland lies an agricultural cultural landscape, named “Noardlike Fryske Wâlden” (i.e. Northly Frisian Woodlands). This area contains a unique combination of agriculture, nature, and cultural history. Conservation of the area’s unique character is promoted by the “Noardlike Fryske Wâlden” cooperative (NFW; <http://www.noardlikefryskewalden.nl/over-nfw/>). The NFW’s core philosophy is in accordance with the new CAP policy and so the NFW supports it.

#### Action: Experiences CAP 2011 – 2014 and current Dutch collective approach

A previous pilot by the NFW has contributed substantially towards the structure of the CAP 2011-2014 and thereby towards the development of the Dutch Cooperative Approach. Following the development of the Dutch Cooperative Approach, the NFW obtained extensive experience at implementation of the new policies. Drawing from these development and implementation experiences, the NFW can contribute towards the successful development of a new CAP2020.

The Dutch implementation approach is, uniquely, characterised by the implementation of measures and control mechanisms at the level of cooperatives. That means farmers cannot apply for subsidies individually. Instead, they must apply as (geographically) organised groups (cooperatives). The role of a cooperative is thereby, on one side, towards the government, that of final beneficiary for second pillar CAP subsidy contracts. On the other side, the cooperative translates these cooperative (subsidy) contracts to contracts with individual farmers. The cooperative thereby carries responsibility towards the government for the implementation. This policy aims to achieve sustainable goals at the regional scale.

#### Approaches for the new CAP

In order to achieve a more sustainability oriented EU-CAP, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality started the discussion about the following improvements (1) possible sustainability measures per region, (2) monitoring possibilities, (3) possible subsidy reward schemes, and (4) the support for a regional approach. The Ministry asked the agricultural cooperatives to make proposals for these approaches in pilot projects.

The CAP pilot by the NFW serves to design novel measures and mechanisms to increase the (environmental and biodiversity) sustainability of the agricultural sector. This is done by specifying conditions for obtaining subsidies from the new CAP. Within this context, and to achieve profitable farming methods, it is necessary to assure and showcase the contribution of a farm towards societal goals. Also, the administrative burden should be limited for all those involved. A new method will therefore be used within the pilot project to specify the farmer’s personal CAP plan with sustainability measures that contribute to regional goals.

#### Lessons learned

From the different pilot projects will contribute to the discussion of the next CAP period and will be spread.

## Example 2: Farmer advisory service for nature conservation in Germany

### Site: Landcare Associations all over Germany

The German Association for Landcare - Landcare Germany (DVL) is the umbrella organization of 170 Landcare Associations distributed all over Germany. Local Landcare Associations work together with environmentalists, representatives of local municipalities and farmers. All are represented in an equal number on the board of the Associations.

The three main goals of Landcare Associations are to

- 1) preserve our cultural landscapes with their networks of natural habitats and biodiversity,
- 2) encourage landscape management together with land users and thereby offer them a reliable second income from different funding systems
- 3) support rural development and regional products.



photo: Peter Roggenthin

### Action

To reach the goals Landcare Associations act as advisors, plan measures to improve the ecological value of our cultural landscapes, open up financial resources and coordinate the implementation of measures. For more than 30 years, Landcare Associations have successfully implemented nature conservation measures by advising local farmers and supporting them during its implementation. The crucial point is the advisory service of professionals and a tool kit provided by the CAP and national funds.

What makes this advisory service by Landcare Associations successful? The evaluation of different advisory approaches and models showed that trust is the most crucial factor for successful nature conservation advisory. In addition, voluntary participation in counseling plays an important role, as well as the availability of appropriate funding opportunities. The continuity provided by long-term advice also contributes to the successful implementation of biodiversity measures and sustainable land use.

By networking with agriculture, politics and nature conservation, Landcare are already considered a successful model of cooperative nature and landscape conservation. At present, the Landcare Associations in Germany work together with about 10,000 farmers. Through voluntary cooperation concrete measures for nature conservation and landscape management can be advised and coordinated at an early stage between the actors.

Landcare Associations as well as similar cooperative organizations could therefore be crucial for a permanent network of qualified biodiversity advisers which it needed to implement a sustainable CAP.

### Lessons learned

For a good advisory service for nature conservation are:

- ✓ Many years of experience in the professional implementation of nature conservation measures
- ✓ High nature protection expertise of the employees
- ✓ Long-term and close cooperation with farms and own good basic agricultural knowledge
- ✓ Experience in cooperative processes with different stakeholders
- ✓ skills in communication between stakeholders
- ✓ Sound local knowledge of landscape, networks and actors
- ✓ Long-term, trusting work on site

## Example 3: Development of agri-environmental schemes in Spain, Extremadura



photo: carnedepasto.com

### Site: Extremadura Region (Spain)

Farm: Mundos Nuevos, Farm owners: Brothers Pedro and Juan Luis Campa. Pedro and Juan Luis Campa are brothers and extensive livestock farmers from the south west of Spain who produce high quality lamb and Iberian pork.

### Action

A few years ago they began to realize that their soil had lost almost all of its fertility due to decades of conventional, intensive soil husbandry, applied in the 'dehesa', a rich but delicately balanced farming system with low rainfall.

They rear pigs and lambs which graze in the extensive dehesa pastures, feeding also on acorns and some crops grown on the farm. Their aim is to produce high quality dehesa lamb, pork and ham, products with great market potential. However if they wish to continue to be productive, their first priority is to recover their soil's fertility. With that aim in mind, for several years they have applied techniques which are now showing positive results, by using their livestock to fertilize the land, avoiding ploughing which turns over the soil and using ways to make the best use of rainfall and minimize erosion.

However, CAP support payments not only do not assist them in this very desirable objective, they actually work against it. For example, that part of their land declared as 'arable' must be ploughed and seeded annually in order to receive the CAP payment, an obligation which goes against the soil regeneration they wish to achieve, and which benefits nobody in any sense at all. This restriction and other CAP rules run contrary to the management practices which are the essence of these mixed and multifunctional farming systems of the South of Europe, and which form the basis of their enormous agricultural and natural richness.

Pedro and Juan would like the CAP to include as one of its priority objectives the recovery of the productive capacity of European soils and to establish support measures for the sorts of techniques that they use. Also to change outdated and counterproductive ideas such as that of an 'active farmer' as someone who is always tilling the soil, whether it is needed or not and regardless of the consequences.

### Lessons learned

For them, to be an 'active farmer' is to work to establish a production system which is healthy and above all resilient, which allows for natural regeneration and which has the capacity to produce high quality food. Support for these measures should be at the center of European agriculture policy if we wish to create a truly **future-proof CAP**.

## Example 4: Development of agri-environmental schemes in France, Forez-plain

### Site

The agricultural and natural site area concerned is very large: 920km<sup>2</sup> and 63 communes. It is a part of the alluvial plain of the Loire river composed with a mosaic of ecosystems, natural or temporary meadows, woods, wet and water lands. Some are Natura2000 areas. The problems are the conservation of great biodiversity, mainly birds, and water supply. We can find mixed farming, not very intensive, using grass resource.

### Action

The implementation of CAP with agri-environment scheme consists to offer to farmers to sign voluntary agreements: the farmer change his practices against an amount of money. The principal different practices proposed are: delayed mowing, protection of areas for remarkable birds and flora, less fertilizer and phytosanitary products, management of hedges, management and restauration of ponds. To choose the best measures, the farmers can get help from organizations of the conservatoire d'espaces (CEN-RA) and the Chamber of agriculture of Loire Department (CA42).

The project is driven by Loire Department, 5 local authorities, and animated by both Chamber of agriculture and CEN-RA. From 2009 to 2013, CEN-RA and CA42 had already co-animated the first agri-environment schemes of Forez Plain. The funding come from European EAFRD, French state, Water Agency Loire-Bretagne, Rhône-Alpes-Auvergne French Region.

### Assessment

The first campaign of agreements with farmers (2009 to 2013) was a success. 130 diagnostics have been done and 110 agreements for measures have been signed with farmers. However, the results of the second campaign, beginning in 2016, has been very far from the objective despite a very good local process. At the beginning of 2018 only 77 diagnostics have been realized and 70 farmers signed agreements (-36%) for measures.

*The facilitators identify several drivers:*

- In 2014 new institutional organization has been very struggling to appropriate the UE technical and funding rules. Each funding partner has its own rules to calculate the amount of aid. A consequence was a delay to sign new agreements with farmers.
- The new way to choose the projects has been very difficult for candidates. In the end, every project, had been accepted without ecological quality criterions.
- The financial set-up has been very complex because of great number of funding partners, needing a very long time of negotiation.
- The amount of the aid to farmers have decreased (about -30%).
- A few measures have disappeared: low level of fertilizer for example; this measure was considered not efficient enough to improve quality water by Water Agency, the main funding partner of this measure, but it was efficient for remarkable flora.
- Good practices already implemented by farmers before agri-environment schemes, are not clearly identified, there is confusion about them.
- Several farmers agreements have not been paid for 2 years because of a computer bug of the French payment Agency. Farmers and advisors have great financial difficulties.

## Lessons learned

- ✓ Set up an integrated and efficient institutional and governance system with every partner and ensure the ecological quality of the projects.
- ✓ Set up an integrated, strong, fast, long-lasting funding systems allowing to finance every ecological issues.
- ✓ Set up simple, reliable, fast payment system for farmers and advisors and facilitators.
  - if a change is necessary, anticipate to avoid any break.
  - offer more incentive aids to farmers and maintain them in time.
  - plan clearly payments for production of public goods by farmers.

## Example 5: Contribution to the development of agri-environmental schemes and enhanced nature conservation approaches within and beyond the borders of Romania

### Site: Eastern Carpathians, Romania

Romanian cultural landscapes include the traditional rural countryside, heavily affected by rapid changes of the past decades. Some of the most sensitive components of this system are semi-natural hay meadows and wood pastures. It is widely accepted that extensive hay meadows are of high nature value and are in a continuous decline. For example, the decrease of animal stock numbers, the shortening of the winter season, the transition from mixed farming system to a sheep-based farming system are all ongoing and detrimental processes in this context in the Romanian countryside. On the other hand, Transylvania has the largest amount of wood pastures in SE Europe that are also at risk by a series of similar factors. However, the biggest threat to these national and European treasures is the lack of understanding and acknowledgement of their value.

### Action

There has been some improvement in the National Rural Development Plan of Romania such as the distinction of meadows and pastures in the agri-environment schemes as compared to the 2007-2013 programming period. However huge gaps remain in terms of understanding the details of biodiversity value, spatial distribution and ecosystem services provided by them, which have to be at the basis of policies that attempt to have a meaningful effect on the negative trends on the large scale.

Wood pastures are not even mentioned in the national RDP as an entity, and after some research we learned that the lack of formal acknowledgement of these habitat types is Europe wide a great problem. This is the key reason for the lack of Natura 2000 or other types of payments for wood pasture management and conservation. Without such opportunities Europeans risk the complete loss of wood pastures including the irreplaceable several hundred years old ancient trees in a timespan of a few decades.

Given the importance of the role played by rural communities in the maintenance of the mentioned landscape elements and cultural landscapes in general, including the associated public goods and services to society, there is a high need for a transition from compensating to incentivizing payments. Compensation logic cannot be used in areas where farming was never intensified therefore farmers don't have a loss when producing a high biodiversity farming landscape. These good (partly traditional) practices should be incentivized through schemes such as the Results-based Payments Schemes and other European initiatives.

### Lessons learned

- ✓ In countries/regions with (traditionally) high biodiversity agricultural, agri-environmental or Natura 2000 payments should incentives to keep up the good natural status instead of compensating farmers for losses in product quantity/quality i.e. loss of incomes.
- ✓ Specific research is needed to identify the many benefits what biodiverse grasslands and wood pastures provide to the public.
- ✓ The formal acknowledgement of Wood pastures as key habitat types for biodiversity is an urgent task for Europe.
- ✓ Based on this formal acknowledgement wood pasture management practices should be identified and incentives should be introduced.