

CAP 2020. Towards sustainable agriculture

Conference Summary Report

Conference on the future of the CAP in Tallinn 2017



ESTONIAN FUND FOR NATURE



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of Civil Society



CAP 2020. Towards sustainable agriculture Conference 2017

The environmental and agricultural organisations, agricultural experts and officials of Estonia and other EU Member States attended a conference to discuss the future of European agriculture.

The objective of the conference 'CAP 2020. Towards Sustainable Agriculture' organised within the scope of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU was to promote open discussions on CAP 2020 and to contribute to the establishment of a more balanced and environmentally-sustainable agricultural policy in the European Union. The event took place in two parts: a conference held in Hotel Euroopa in Tallinn on the first day and on the second day, the foreign guests visited two organic farms and had a seminar held at the centre of the Matsalu National Park in Penijõe.

The event was organised by the Estonian Fund for Nature. The Summary Report is written by the organising team.

Friday, September 1, 2017

Marko Gorban

[Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs](#)

CAP future – a view from the Council Presidency

Marko Gorban gave an overview of the priorities of Estonia as Council Presidency: the future of CAP and simplification of CAP are among of the priorities of the Council Presidency in the field of agriculture, next to market and trade issues and sustainable use of soil. The communication from Commission about future of CAP is expected at the end of 2017, after which it is possible to start discussions in the Council. The topic of informal AGRI meeting in September will be risk management.

Mr.Gorban explained that results of public consultation showed significantly increased interest for CAP, mostly because other stakeholder groups outside agriculture sector are more and more interested in CAP. Main conclusions from the public consultation: CAP must be kept in place, it has additional value – mostly in the common market (equal conditions of competition, food security, dealing with issues of climate change). Challenges involve income of the producers (the share of producers in the chain is too small), environmental impact, climate change. The CAP of today does not address all the challenges, is too bureaucratic, especially in the greening measure, application procedures and inspections – some simplification is needed.

The consultations showed that the views of the role of producers/farmers are different – farmers see their main role in providing food security, other stakeholders or groups expect other public goods as well. Future of CAP – must be in changes of the position of farmers in the supply chain, income, addressing the issues of climate change.

EU has presented 5 goals for the CAP as well as 5 scenarios for the EU budget. The future scenarios for CAP are 1) status quo, 2) no policy, 3) different scenarios of changing the current CAP – differences concern mainly the roles of state and farmers. It is likely that the final scenario will be picked from the latter group of scenarios.

The position of Estonia: as Council Presidency, Estonia acts as an honest intermediate, moderator, negotiator. In a longer perspective, the views are related to issues, specifically important for Estonia: CAP must remain common and commonly financed; the share of II pillar must grow; more effective tools are needed to increase readiness in a situation of crisis; direct payments must be equalised; CAP needs simplification. Important tools that need more attention and funding in CAP: risk management, more transparent and cooperative supply chain, rural development (decrease of dependence on subsidies, risk management, knowledge transfer, innovation etc). The direct payments must be preserved, as one important tool of risk management.

Harry Liiv

Estonian Ministry of the Environment

CAP and environment – introduction to the topic

Harry Liiv gave an overview about the condition of Estonian waters: according to data from the year 2015, only 57% of the water bodies are in good or very good conditions (the goal is 100%). One of the main issues is a load of nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) originating from the land to water. The sources of the pollution are different, but greatest share is diffuse water pollution from agriculture. The monitoring results show that trends for nitrate content differ in different points, but the pesticide content in groundwater and drinking water exceeds the limit values in 22% of the monitoring points.

According to Mr. Liiv, possible remedies involve more effective control, especially concerning the problematic water bodies; continuous improvements of animal farms (including manure storages), raising awareness and providing advice to farmers, creating additional buffer zones on banks of water bodies, renewal of fertilization technologies etc. As an example, a survey about Peipsi sub-basin diffuse water pollution sources has been carried out in 2015-2017, resulting in suggestions about

possible measures to improve the situation – publication of more detailed data, implementation of “polluter pays” principle by establishing the requirement of a permit to the farmer etc. However, Mr. Liiv also admitted that implementation of “polluter pays” is difficult in the field of agriculture.

It can be concluded on basis of monitoring, water management plans and new surveys that the CAP should support all the measures, already foreseen in water management plans, directed to reduce an impact of pollution from agriculture. Most importantly, CAP should turn more attention and provide support measures to water bodies that are in bad or very bad condition. In addition, there should be measures established for decreasing use of pesticides and replacing them with more environmental-friendly solutions as well as supporting environmental-friendly land improvement systems. The support schemes should motivate farmers to follow environmental requirements, the environmental monitoring should be obligatory for the receivers of the support. The reconstruction and establishment of manure storages are important, and the measures should promote early completing of the fertilisation in autumn.

Ottilia Thoreson

WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

CAP and the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea

Ottilia Thoreson from the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme stressed the uniqueness of the Baltic Sea region as an ecosystem that is under constant pressure from different economic activities – wind farms and shipping. The pressure is not only coming from the activities at sea, but also from the mainland – from all of the catchment areas that is four times bigger than the sea itself.

Ms. Thoreson introduced several projects and activities of WWF throughout the years for studying ways to develop agriculture with smaller impact to the environment – one example being the Snowbal project where different ways of animal farming showed significant reduction of impacts to the environment. However, such individual projects are not sufficient. Although the condition of Baltic Sea has improved since the 1990s – largely thanks to joint efforts of different stakeholders – there is increasing economic pressure – wind farms, shipping. But the biggest problem is eutrophication that results in dead zones at the bottom of the sea. The biggest part of pollution in sea – 80% - comes from the land-based sources, from agriculture. For reducing this impact, single projects are not sufficient, but a significant reform of CAP is necessary. A sustainable Blue Economy requires an equally green and circular economy on land. Public money should be paid for public goods only – only for environmentally sustainable agriculture that creates more public goods without endangering the environment.

Ms. Thoreson also made the official announcement about the opening the competition for the **WWF award of Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year 2018**. The award will be given to the most Baltic-friendly farmers in recognition for leading the way in innovative measures to reduce nutrient runoff to the Baltic Sea. WWF is inviting individual farmers, family farms and farm enterprises – conventional as well as organic to apply to the competition. The deadline for nominations is 31 March 2018.

Juhan Särgava

Saidafarm OÜ

What kind of CAP would ensure the development of organic production?

Juhan Särgava from Saidafarm OÜ, winner of the Baltic Sea Friendly Farmer award in 2013, presented the views to CAP from a perspective of organic farming. He referred to the many good sides of the organic agriculture – by using only ecological nutrient cycles and no chemical or synthetic pesticides, the organic farming is good for biodiversity, including pollinating insects – including bees. Organic agriculture also allows reducing the pollution load to the ground water and Baltic Sea.

Mr. Särgava introduced the position of the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming – IFOAM EU towards CAP: the current agricultural policy is outdated and too complicated, the laws are incomprehensible for an ordinary farmer in his daily work; good food is not reaching actual people and a lot of it goes to waste. Also, public money should be paid for the public goods, provided by the sustainable agriculture – not as a support mechanism, but as justified payment for providing the environmental services to the public, for enabling public goods such as clean water and air, agricultural biodiversity, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

Mr. Särgava stressed that the two-pillar policy is outdated and the reform of CAP should provide for a gradual transition to a one-pillar structure where all the payments would support public goods. On a national level, the distribution of payments should be amended in favor of environmental-friendly and organic farming. The organic farmers need additional support, to maintain their competitiveness. The supporting mechanism should help to enlarge the areas of land under organic agriculture, which would enable to reduce the pressure to the environment.

Roomet Sõrmus

The Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce (EPKK)

Modernising CAP from view of agriculture and food production

Roomet Sõrmus from the Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, an association of agricultural producers and their unions, stressed the positive sides of CAP: in Estonia, it has enabled to bring ca 200 000 ha of agricultural land back to active use since the 1990s. Also, CAP has enabled to establish many requirements for the producers, including environmental requirements. In Estonia, a big part of payments is provided under the agri-environment measure, so the agriculture is indeed ready to offer the public goods, expected by the society. Also, thanks to CAP, organic farming constitutes a large part of Estonian agriculture.

According to Mr. Sõrmus, the priorities when discussing future of the CAP should be fair and equal competition for producers in all EU Member States, simplification, greening and environmental protection, risk management, support for less favourable areas, change of generations, support for joint activities etc. First of all, the CAP should offer farmers a stable and fair income. The direct payments play an important part. As for the greening, simplification is necessary and should take the environmental differences in different countries into account. The environmental protection would benefit from precision agriculture – digitalisation would be of great importance, as the digital gap between big and small agricultural producers is significant.

Kaul Nurm

Estonian Farmers Federation

What kind of CAP would keep family farms alive?

Kaul Nurm gave an overview of how the agricultural land in the European Union is concentrated to a very small number of farmers: 3% of the farmers use 50% of the land, but 80% farmers control only 14,5 % of the land. This is caused by the direct payments under CAP; the small farms are not able to compete with the ones with bigger areas of land and bigger share of direct payments – in the result, small farms lose and disappear. The European Parliament has determined in its report A8-0119/2017 that in the result of such concentration of land use, the profits, including subsidies and tax payments move from the rural areas to the offices of big companies.

According to Mr. Nurm, new CAP should hinder such concentration of agriculture and put the young farmers in focus, as well as provide for food security, avoid degradation of soil and biodiversity and be environmentally sustainable. The bureaucracy

should be significantly reduced, small production, and short supply chains should be promoted, as well as cooperation between the farmers.

More specifically, the two pillars of CAP should be balanced as 50/50 and a thorough reform of the first pillar is necessary. The payments under the 1st pillar should be based on conditions of nature and climate, payments should be progressive, favouring the small producers by giving the bigger weight of payments to first hectares; the upper limits for one producer should be lower. The rural development support should be used for development of organic farming and production, restoration of the humus in the soil, preservation of the biodiversity, promotion of local food, small production and short supply chains, investment support for small producers, and use of innovation and science in agriculture.

Sofia Björnsson

The Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF)

Farmers on CAP – a view from Sweden

Sofia Björnsson gave an interesting insight to the Swedish agriculture and Swedish farmers view to the CAP. According to her, Sweden is very dependent on food import and large areas of the country are used for extensive production. The farmers are considered as entrepreneurs which means that risk management should be dealt on farm level. However, there are many cooperatives in Sweden that help to mitigate the risks.

Swedish CAP payments per hectare is a little bit under the EU average; Rural Development budget is used for measures like Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC, in areas where farming is more difficult, major measure in Sweden), agri-environment (also a big share of the CAP budget), promotion of organic production etc. In general, Swedish farmers are satisfied with the implementation of CAP.

As for the future of CAP, Ms. Björnsson explained that main interest for the Swedish farmers is to have a stable and understandable policy and ensure level playing field on competitiveness in EU and Sweden. Big reform is not wanted, the current system needs keeping and improving, also considering that only a few years have passed since the last reform. Direct support under the 2nd pillar of CAP is important for the secure income of the farmers. Improvements are needed in issues like enabling change of generations in agriculture, greening efficiency through more alternatives of flexibility, and simplification of CAP.

Aleksei Lotman

Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF)

Is CAP sustainable? A view from the environmental side

Aleksei Lotman presented the views of Estonian environmental NGOs. He stressed that the NGOs acknowledge the importance of agriculture – after all, the food is produced thanks to farmers. He also stressed that agriculture is contributing to sustaining important nature values in Europe, but on the other hand is driving several environmental problems. The agricultural policy needs to be environmentally sustainable and fair to the farmers.

Mr. Lotman highlighted the inequality between direct payments under the 1st pillar of CAP in the different EU Member States, concluding that the Common Agricultural Policy might not be very “common” after all. He also stressed that the direct payments are in direct connection with the negative impacts of agriculture on the environment. This has proven by a recent study that showed a reliable connection between the amount of payments per ha and use of mineral nitrogen as well as farm animal density. These two factors are also driving the nitrogen surplus and greenhouse gas emissions, that are therefore also correlated to the payment levels per ha. And the pesticide sales per ha are also connected to payment levels.

Mr. Lotman concluded that the 1st pillar of CAP is harmful to the environment and CAP needs a thorough change. Public money should be paid to serve public interests – environmental protection is one of such interests.

Mikhail Durkin

Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB)

Is CAP contributing to the clean Baltic Sea

Mikhail Durkin from Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), a network of grass-root environmental NGOs that work in the Baltic Sea basin, approached the questions about future of CAP from the point of view of the environmental condition of the Baltic Sea. According to data from his presentation, the eutrophication status of Baltic Sea open sea areas is not corresponding to “good ecological status”.

In 2007, it was agreed that each country around the Baltic Sea will have a responsibility to reduce its flow of nutrients into Baltic Sea – main concentrations of phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) from agriculture. However, a report in 2016, based on the 3-year study, showed only limited progress in the reduction of nutrient inputs to Baltic Sea. The relevant MS action plans lack ambition and indicators, the EU Nitrate Direc-

tive is not effectively implemented and EU co-financed Rural Development measures in 2007-2013 have had little effect on reducing nutrient pollution.

CAP is as much about the environment as producing the food – agriculture is dependent on natural resources, but at the same time is shaping the environment that provides habitat for a diversity of fauna and flora. Environmentally sustainable farming is therefore essential for our food production and quality of life. Efforts are necessary, to reach the good ecological condition of the Baltic Sea and sustainable agriculture is the key actor. CAP can support the Baltic Sea Action Plan, only if the ecosystem approach is integrated into agricultural policies, agricultural practices with least environmental impacts are developed and applied, the nutrient losses are minimized and farm nutrient management is improved, including fully utilising manure nutrient content, applying nutrient-balanced fertilization, and nutrient accounting.

Ines Jordana

[SEO/BirdLife](#)

CAP and farmland birds

Ines Jordana from BirdLife, the international NGO partnership working for the protection of birds brought attention to the connections between agriculture and biodiversity. Farming land creates conditions for endangered species as well as ordinary bird species and hunting species, affects fauna and soil microflora. High Nature Value Farming means high proportion of semi-natural vegetation, mosaic types of low intensity agriculture and features like hedgerows, woodland margins, wetland – spaces for nature. It is closely linked to traditional farming and landscapes.

Ms. Jordana reminded us that biodiversity loss is a fact and agriculture is one of the main reasons for it (eg according to the EU State of Nature Report 2015), especially for bird species. The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) has provided data about all Member States and groups different species that are specialised in different ecosystems – forests, fields etc. The trend for bird species specialised on agricultural land has been documented as declining since end of the 1990s. Also, the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS) shows that for common farmland birds, trend is negative - the losing is not so fast than in the 1980s, but still negative. Conclusion: our common birds are beginning to be threatened. Reasons for biodiversity loss in agriculture lie mainly in intensive farming: bigger farms with fewer employees, using more fertilisers. In intensive agriculture, the diversification elements are removed from the fields, semi-natural habitats are converted, nests are destructed, there is less nesting habitats and less feed available for the birds. The loss of biodiversity means also declination of the level of necessary agents for crop pollination, pest management, air quality and climate change.

In the last reform of CAP, the environmental challenges were well listed – biodiversity, quality of water bodies, air pollution and greenhouse gases. Officially, the last reform made CAP 155% “greener” and expressed that sustainable agriculture is a priority. In reality, the agri-environment spending is small, compared to the direct payments under the 1st pillar of CAP that often promote intensification and harmful developments. In result, the challenges were not properly addressed and are same today. A reform of CAP is needed, biodiversity needs adequate financial support and transition for sustainable farming needs to be promoted. The CAP should become much more Food and Land-Use Policy – we need to talk more about how our food is produced.

Jabier Ruiz

WWF European Policy Office

Is CAP fit for purpose?

Since **Ms Faustine Bas-Defossez** from **EEB** could not participate for imperative personal reasons Mr. Jabier Ruiz from WWF European Policy Office presented her main talking points. He introduced the results of “shadow” fitness check for the CAP. An official CAP fitness check has been requested by civil society organisations, MEPs and members of the scientific community, but was rejected by DG Agri of the European Commission. European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and BirdLife have decided to carry out a shadow fitness check, in order to answer questions about CAP effectiveness, efficiency, internal and external coherence, relevance and EU added value.

The report is almost finished and will be published soon; first conclusions show that some instruments are working well, but do not counteract agricultural intensification, environmental degradation and biodiversity decline. Environmental efficiency is poor, low budgets are assigned to the most effective instruments compared to the less effective ones. In conclusion, CAP has some successes, but generally is highly inefficient and wasting a lot of money; some of its objectives are not relevant and its acceptance by farmers and the public is low.

The CAP needs clear, coherent, overarching objectives as well as strong monitoring and indicators to support the policy outcome. There is much knowledge about agri-environment measures and how to reduce agricultural impact, but it is not used in EU and global scale.

Reforming the CAP to facilitate the transition to sustainable food and farming in Europe

Mr Jabier Ruiz also spoke more about possible contents of CAP reform, as seen by the NGOs. According to the timeline, the new CAP is expected in January 2021 or later. The Civil Society Organisations have initiated a joint campaign “Living Land” that got a large response during the public consultations – over 250 000 European citizens and organisations participated in the campaign and shared the messages. According to the Living Land Initiative, a reformed CAP must be fair for farmers and rural communities, environmentally sustainable, healthy, and globally responsible.

WWF position paper from April 2017 is requesting from the new CAP that programmed and targeted schemes would become the core of it and that CAP would be coherent with other EU and global policies and a widened governance structure. Details of suggestions by NGOs include co-management with environmental authorities who should be deciding and implementing the instruments of CAP; a fair and sustainable alternative to direct payments – including paying for the public goods, respecting the polluter pays principles, ending with environmentally harmful subsidies; a stronger and more ambitious rural development with more funds and participatory, locally-led approaches in the design of the schemes.

As for the greening measures, the Institute of European Environmental Policy (IEEP) has proposed in April 2016 some ideas, including 1) abolishing separate green direct payments; 2) retaining the greening payments in the 1st pillar, but raise the environmental ambition; 3) shift the greening payments to the 2nd pillar, converting them into compulsory and programmed basic environmental measures or 4) develop an integrated option, redesigning the overall architecture of the CAP as a single set of measures.

Sönke Beckmann

Landcare Germany

The Public Goods Bonus – a new approach for remunerating environmental services by farmers as part of the CAP post 2020

Sönke Beckman from Landcare Germany, an umbrella organisation that links nature conservation groups with local farmers and local communities, shared an insight to an interesting approach for remunerating the environmental services by farmers. It is based on the idea that CAP post-2020 should allow paying money only for public goods.

The details of the this approach as explained by Mr.Beckman: payments should be considered as a Public Good Bonus (PGB) – environmental measures should be seen as public goods and the farmers should be paid for providing them. The better

the effects on the environment, the more points and the more money the farmer would receive. Mr. Beckman introduced a specific example from Northern Germany about calculating the exact sums of bonus of public goods: on basis of specific parameters and effects to biodiversity, water protection and climate protection, points are calculated which are then recalculated to euros. This way, specific environmental measures (eg mowing after 21st June) would be awarded a specific amount of points (euros).

All farmers would be treated equally, the system would be result-based instead of area-based. The farmer as an entrepreneur with his measures and results would be the center of the system, not the administration. The system should be tied to the already existing administrative and controlling system of CAP and be implemented in all Member States. The PGB method would be easy to follow for the farmer, simplification can be made with help of technological solutions like PG-Bonus evaluator application on iPad and more monitoring by satellites. The overall benefits of the system include motivated farmers (do-it-yourself calculation, good reputation in society), improving the efficiency of greening measures etc. In result, there would be overall positive effect on biodiversity, water quality and climate.

Saturday, September 2, 2017

[Kaja Lotman](#)

[Environmental Board, Europark](#)

Nature-friendly agriculture in European protected areas

Kaja Lotman started her presentation by noting that more and more protected areas are relying on traditional agriculture. Unfortunately, it is difficult to keep this tradition alive. She proceeded to introduce the EUROPARC Federation – network of protected area managers that have the goal to improve the management of protected areas in Europe through international cooperation, exchange of ideas and experience (E.g. how to raise funds), and by influencing policy. One of the important working areas is promoting the nature-friendly agriculture across protected areas in Europe. Activities of EUROPARC in the field of agriculture include competitions for farmers (E.g. Flowering meadows in France) and sharing positive examples. Agriculture and Protected Area Commission in the body of EUROPARC Federation that coordinates the activities in this field and shares good experiences.

She proceeded by sharing a local experience of integrating agriculture and nature conservation in Matsalu National Park with more attention to one success story: the Väinamere project. In Matsalu and other sites around Väinameri (Western Estonia), there is a huge amount of semi-natural grasslands that have to be maintained tradi-

tionally and together with WWF and other partners a holistic approach including animal husbandry and other rural activities like nature based tourism and handicraft was developed. While no project is 100% successful, Väinamere project definitely contributed to sustainable agricultural development and nature management in the area.

There are many good examples of sustainable agriculture in protected areas. While some of these get the CAP support, some don't. The general message is that CAP needs to integrate environmental goals in a clear way so that farmers would understand it easily and would thus contribute to solving environmental problems in the future.

More information about Europarc: <http://www.europarc.org/>

Gwyn Jones

European Forum of Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)

Is CAP good for High Nature Value Farming?

High Nature Farming (HNV farming) is farming which supports high levels of biodiversity and the farmland itself is semi-natural (in a broad sense). HNV farming can occur in different scales. It can be both within and outside Natura 2000 sites and often does not fit into the image of farmland understandable to policy-makers in Brussels.

Mr. Gwyn Jones acknowledged that there are several problems with HNV farming. The general problem is that the people spend less on food, so farmers tend to fall behind the society - the whole of farmers is getting poor. HNVfarmers tend to fall behind even more, compared to intensive farms, therefore they are able to survive where there is no alternative of intensification, but where it's not quite bad enough for abandonment – it is a constant struggle with the little market, bureaucracy, unfair competition and the lack of regulations for the intensive farming etc. Also, the reality of high nature farming does not fit into preconceptions at people heads, so that many farmers have to convince the system that they really are farmers. As HNV farming has a lot of costs but the income cannot be compared with intensive farming, it is very dependent on subsidies. Unfortunately, subsidies rarely give a holistic, positive message to the system.

Mr. Jones stated that the CAP is necessary for HNV farming, but the current CAP fails to support it in many ways and lets HNV farmers to fall even further behind the society. Real needs of the farmers should be taken into account in the future. E.g. support payments should reflect how farms ARE, all farmed land should be eligible, and farming should mean farming; payment system should be changed in order to secure viability of HNV farming in the future.

Lennart Gladh

Gladh et Plana

Reflections on nature and farming from two sides of the sea

The situation of the Baltic Sea is problematic. One part of the problem is the runoff of nutrients originating from agriculture. So, reducing phosphorus and also maintaining semi-natural biodiversity was/is a challenge.

Mr. Lennart Gladh explained that back at 90's, the Baltic States were rapidly changing, CCCP's (Soviet) agricultural system collapsed and suddenly there were a lot of private farms and a lack of knowledge. Also, there were high nature values in different coastal areas, in Estonia (Matsalu), Latvia and Sweden, that needed attention. The habitats are really dependent on traditional agriculture in these areas.

He recalled cooperation in preparing the management plan for Matsalu and later efforts of practical management, including Väinamere project. So the goal in Matsalu was to introduce new ideas (E.g. modern systems for beef cattle, new agriculture practices) and support the locals with small equipment. Mr. Gladh emphasised that in order to be effective as an NGO, you have to do things on the ground with local people, you have to have something to show. It was also important to link agriculture, tourism, and nature. The Matsalu project became a role model for similar projects in Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia. Several other important changes took place: WWF became an important player in HELCOM and in the GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project etc. Also, Baltic Ecoregion Programme and Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award became a reality.

Though the Baltic Sea water quality has slowly improved, the nutrient runoff still needs to be reduced and the CAP has an important role to play. It needs to be reformed and live up to the demands of WFD and the MSFD. To change the CAP, it is important to have many partners, not only environmental NGO's (E.g. insurance companies, food producers). We need allies in order to change the CAP – let us do it!

Read more about Väinamere project:

http://www.wwf.se/source.php/1119653/Vainameri_report_book.pdf

Jaanus Elts

Estonian Ornithological Society (EOÜ)

Did the CAP pull a bird out of a hat?

Within 30 years, the number of farmland birds in Europe has dropped 52% - this means 300 million birds! Also, the area of grasslands is decreasing, especially the

area of permanent grasslands. Fertilising the grasslands has a negative effect on the biodiversity. Also, the density of crops is a problem for many birds, though in agriculture it is considered bad to leave some land without any crop on it and farmers can get penalised by cutting their CAP payments. In effect the CAP has promoted homogenisation of agriculture, that is bad for the birds. Many measures are good for the soil quality, are bad for farmland birds.

The agri-environmental measures cannot be the same everywhere and for every bird species. Mr. Jaanus Elts explained that the protective measures that are focusing on particular species are the most successful. There is no one solution for all the farmland birds.

E.g. the number of ortolans (*Emberiza hortulana*) is decreasing in whole Europe. If it keeps on decreasing exponentially, they will probably disappear. The species is still hunted in France, though the species should be strictly protected. But actually, the main problem is not the hunting, the problem lies somewhere else. For example in crop density and homogenisation of the agricultural landscape.

As another example, the number of eurasian curlews (*Numenius arquata*) has decreased on agricultural landscapes in Estonia. Thanks to GPS transmitters, we understand now, that they move around a lot more during the day than before because the fields have become larger. This impacts negatively on their breeding success.

So, it is important to have clear goals. It is important to be sure that the CAP agri-environmental subsidies really have an effect. Farming communities and environmentalists should be working hard. It is very important to test the measures beforehand for many years and then use them! Also, it is important to use local information while designing the agri-environmental measures because the environment differs drastically in different regions. Finally, the subsidy of voluntary agri-environmental measures must not be smaller than the subsidies for intensive agriculture.

Henriette Christensen

Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN-E)

Does the CAP deliver on pesticide reductions?

The short answer to the question „Does the CAP deliver on pesticide reductions?” is „No!”. Mrs. Henriette Christensen introduced shortly many scientific papers that prove it. Ms. Christensen introduced Pesticide Action Network in Europe (PAN-Europe) that unites 38 member organisations and works to replace hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives.

She proceeded to explain why working with pesticides is important. Starting from Rachel Carsons famous „Silent spring” the evidence about ecological consequences of pesticide use has been growing. There are also different papers that put a price

tag on the negative effect of the pesticides and it shows that using pesticides does not pay off. On top of that, different Eurobarometer polls show that most of the consumers consider pesticides to be a risk/problem, so citizens do not support the pesticides as well. There are studies that show that it is actually possible to drastically reduce the amount of pesticides used without any consequences (Jacquet F. et al. 2011; Lechenet et al. 2017)

Still, we are not heading in the right direction. Every year alerting 400 000 tons of active substances are sold in the EU to be sprayed on the fields. It is also remarkable that the Member States receiving the highest CAP direct payments/hectare are the ones selling the most pesticides/hectare!

The farmers are not reducing the use of pesticides for several reasons. One of them is that farmers try to avoid taking risks. As farmers specialize more and more because of the market pressure, the systems get more fragile and more dependent on pesticides. Also, there are only few tax rules to compensate negative consequences of using pesticides. Last but not least, the CAP support is not fit for the purpose. EU Directive 128/2009 on sustainable use of pesticides is not properly implemented and Regulation 1107/2009 on placing plant protection products on the market allows emergency authorizations too easily. Mrs. Christensen explained that although the sustainable use of pesticides directive (SUD) was to be included in cross-compliance from 2014, the current regulation now makes that timeframe uncertain. Also, farmers receive CAP direct payments even when using banned pesticides as emergency authorizations are often granted by the Member States. There have been cases where farmers keep illegal pesticides on their farms but as there is no direct proof that farmers have used them, nothing can be done about it. There are other different first pillar rules (E.g. Good Agricultural and Environment Conditions, Greening, Farm Advisory Service) that are related to pesticide use, but there are various loopholes and problems with those rules.

So, the real challenge for the 2020 CAP is to promote the uptake of non-chemical alternatives ensuring the transition to low impact farming systems. In order to engage the farmers in non-pesticide practices in the long term, we need to be able to support them with advice, risk management etc. If we want to make a change, we need a lot of finances for it. The abolition of unjustified CAP income supports would give room for real environmental payments.