



LANDSCAPE 2024

**AGROECOSYSTEMS IN TRANSFORMATION:
VISIONS, TECHNOLOGIES AND ACTORS**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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The 10 PTs are related to: Farmers' cognitive and affective shift of norms, values and identity that are in line with biodiversity conservation (1 to 3); Forming horizontal and vertical knowledge networks linking policy, practice and research in order to facilitate knowledge building, experimentation and stimulate policy development (4 and 5); Establishing new contractual and financial arrangements that stimulate biodiversity restoration practices (6 and 7); Engaging supply-chain stakeholders and consumers to create a level playing field (8); Ensuring representation of local and regional farming communities (9) and Aligning policies and regulations with regional programs that stimulate biodiversity restoration (10).

These 10 PTs provide context-specific knowledge necessary for farmers, farmers' organizations, policy makers, researchers, agribusinesses, and NGOs to transition toward biodiversity friendly agricultural landscapes. The follow-up study provided insights into the relative importance and sequence of the individual PTs in different settings, including context-specific influences. These 10 PTs are considered key for the design and implementation of biodiversity restoration programmes to guide farmers' behavioral change toward biodiversity conservation.

Instruments for promoting biodiversity in the Common Agricultural Policy – Assessing Farmers' Perception

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Keywords: CAP, biodiversity measures, assessment by farmers

The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) provides an important framework for promoting biodiversity in the agricultural landscape. The latest reform puts in its start a stronger emphasis on climate and environmental goals.

In this article, we focus on two options for promoting biodiversity within the framework of the CAP: GAEC 8 as a mandatory component of conditionality and (some of) the eco-schemes as voluntary one-year measures. To elicit the farmers' perception of the new CAP funding instrument, we conducted guideline-based interviews in spring 2023. In early spring 2024 a follow-up was conducted with the same set of farmers.

When considering GAEC 8, the farmers' principal motivation is to limit the changes to the absolute limit. This means that areas are used to fulfil the requirement that were not previously used for agricultural production, but were used for biodiversity measures as part of various funding programmes, for example. In this context, concerns are expressed that the land management within this framework will be less beneficial for biodiversity compared to other programmes.

In 2024, the negative assessment of the political process leading to the abandonment of GAEC 8 clearly outweighs any expected „relief" from this decision. The process is likely to negatively affect the participation in the eco-schemes. Due to the new adjustments and late decision, farmers criticise the lack of planning certainty. For some, this leads to a loss of confidence in political decisions.

Overall, the interviewed farmers' decision to participate in eco-schemes is strongly influenced by external factors. The instrument is of little relevance for nearly all farmers, as they either „focus on mandatory aspects" or other issues are more relevant (e.g. fertilizer regulation or animal husbandry). For many, participation is therefore not even seen as an option and some of the respondents have no knowledge of the funding opportunities under the eco-schemes. This assessment did not change between the initial and the follow up interviews, so that familiarisation and learning processes appear to play only a minor role.

In the farmers' assessment of these two instruments, the perceived obstacles clearly predominate. For example, potential opportunities, such as the one-year duration of the eco-schemes, are only confirmed in individual cases and when explicitly addressed.