



ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE



Mountain environment and heritage

In the coming years agriculture will need to produce more with less environmental impact. In this context it is important to analyse how to create synergies between agri-environmental-climate/organic farming measures and marketing of products, how to promote the environmentally-friendly character of mountain products and how to add value to products highlighting heritage. One of the answers could be the valorisation of public goods delivered by mountain production regimes, which should also be discussed.



Policy instruments

The new CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) offers several measures supporting environmental protection in mountain production systems:

- 1st Pillar- **Green direct payments** are given to farmers to respect three obligatory agricultural practices, namely maintenance of permanent grassland, ecological focus areas and crop diversification.
- 2nd Pillar- **Rural development** (EAFRD with the EU Regulation n° 1307/2013) provides a wide range of measures that could have benefits for the environments, such as:
 - Specific programme for mountain areas: Article 32.
 - Specific sub-programme for small farms: Article 19.
 - Agri-environment-climate: Article 28
 - Organic farming: Article 29
 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (mountains included): Article 31
 - Investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems: Article 25
 - Investment improving the resilience and environmental value as well as the mitigation of potential forest ecosystems: Article 21 (1)(d)
 - Forest-environmental and climate services and forest conservation: Article 34



Co-financed by the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Union

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Economountain, Economy of biodiversity in mountainous area of Vila Pouca de Aguiar

Context

Agricultural abandonment has positive and negative effects on biodiversity. The main positive effect relates to the **recovery of natural systems**, when subjected to less productive pressure. The main negative aspects are: 1) the **accumulation of fuel** inherent to the recovery of native vegetation; 2) the **high fire risk** inhibits a rational exploitation of the territory by abandonment of management activities, with consequent feedback of the process of accumulation of combustible; 3) many **species and habitats**, many of them protected, are adversely affected by the progression of ecological succession

In the area of Vila Pouca de Aguiar (Portugal), the members of Aguiar Floresta have adopted a methodology to recover **the use of small ruminants – e.g sheep and goats – as a tool for biodiversity management in mountain areas**. The management of herds is understood as producing services in the management of scrubland, as opposed to its use as an instrument of traditional production.

This recovery is supported by the integration of environmental aspects in the economy through the **promotion of food products** associated with the management model.



The project

During the project, the association has developed five main activities:

- **Activity 1 Fuel management:** the project has demonstrated that the technique of **target grazing** has an immediate effect on reduction of the fuel available, depending on the charge used, but may also have a second effect on the restoration flora resulting from successive interventions over time.

- **Activity 2 Involvement of shepherds** in the grazing land management strategy to obtain their cooperation in a more strategic use of shepherding management in habitats and fuels.

- **Activity 3 cooking workshops:** cooking workshops were organised and were guided by a high-level chef to explain the relationships between food production and the management of biodiversity and landscape. Primarily designed for those responsible for small local restaurants, these workshops were completely open to the public in separate sessions.

- **Activity 4 Communication actions:** the project was disseminated through fairs, the organisation of six conferences, articles in press and television.

- **Activity 5 Monitoring results:** four indicators were used to evaluate the action: the occupied area with low scrubs (until 20cm), the occupied area with developed scrubs (between 20cm and 1,20 m), the occupied area with high scrubs (over 1,20 m) and the agricultural area .

Results

The project has turned out to be tending more for the **resolution of the issue of management of scrubland** and to open opportunities for the dissemination of the technique, decreasing the weight of the more general aspects of economic integration.

The project made a strong contribution to the **growth of appreciation and acceptance of the use of animals in landscape management** and specifically targeted grazing as an autonomous technique of traditional grazing.

Innovative aspects

The biggest innovation is related to **models of sustainable management**. Innovation is the recovery of **small ruminants** as a tool for biodiversity management in mountain areas, using it for targeted grazing. The herd management is understood as producing services in the management of scrubland, as opposed to its use as a subsidiary instrument of traditional production.

The intention is, by one communication programme, to focus on the relationship between food and landscape management able to capture the niche of available consumers to reward better products and services with high positive content biodiversity.

The Flowering Grasslands General Agricultural Competition

Context

The Flowering Grasslands General Agricultural Competition and Comexposium, which resulted from a German idea and is organised by the French Federation of Regional Natural Parks, the French National Parks, the French Permanent Assembly of Chambers of Agriculture (APCA) and the Workers' Production Cooperative in France (SCOPELA) enable for flowering grasslands, which combine **biodiversity in vegetation and feed grain performance**, to be recognised. This competition provided an opportunity to demonstrate to farmers and consumers that it is possible to have large quantities of feed while also having a positive impact on the quality of the meat and the milk, as a result of its biodiversity.

Competition

Each candidate parcel is evaluated by experts to judge its agro-ecological value. The properties of the parcel which are studied to ascertain its value are: 1. the **agricultural and ecological functionalities** 2. **productivity** 3. **the ease of operation** 4. **the food value** 5. **the renewal of the diversity of vegetation** 6. **the value of the landscape and its heritage**.



Innovative points

This initiative demonstrates that **biodiversity in vegetation, quality and feed grain performance** can all be linked to one another.

1. The **work of the farmers is recognised** both individually and collectively, often in connection with recognition of the quality of the local produce.
2. **More is known about the flora found in grassland**, in particular in regard to the properties of the land (productivity, feed grain value, flexibility, bee-keeping value).
3. **Communication on livestock breeding** and its role in maintaining permanent grasslands as well as the ecological interest of the farming community is improved among farmers, inhabitants, elected representatives and stakeholders in the territory.
4. **Meetings and discussions between the different types of stakeholders are encouraged** (agronomists, botanists, bee-keepers etc.)
5. The links between **the quality of grasslands** and **the quality of the products** are better understood.
6. A commitment is made to use **agro-environmental measures in the territories**.
7. Discussions promote **pedagogy** and improve the links between agriculture, the environment and the territories. Biodiversity in vegetation, quality and feed grain performance can all be linked to one another.

A new CAP
Mountains of opportunities



Evolution of the initiative

The competition, which was launched in 2007 with 12 farmers taking part, brought together 500 farmers and 250 different organisations in 2014. Beginning with a local initiative in the Massif des Bauges (Alps) it spread across the whole of France and even as far as Switzerland, Italy and Spain..

Flowering grasslands

These are grasslands in which seeds have not been planted and which are rich in different species (clovers, trefoil, alfalfa and vetches) which are mowed or grazed to feed livestock. Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that these grasslands, which have significant biodiversity, can improve the quality of farming products (milk—butter—cheese—meat) thanks to the fact that they contain high amounts of minerals and vitamins as well as aromatic compounds.

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Using Biodiversity to promote Mountain Agricultural Products

Context

The **conservation of biodiversity** is considered a crucial factor in maintaining or increasing the sustainability and stability of farming systems. In **Douro Wine Region** in Portugal, some producers have decided to maintain and increase the biodiversity of their farms, to add value in the promotion of their mountain wines.

The project

To promote a management at the farm level to protect, use and enhance biodiversity, farmers undertook several measures, such as:

- Implementing a **Conservation Plan** for certain species (bird species)
- **Monitoring Biodiversity levels** (at birds level)
- Using **Functional Biodiversity** with plants to control erosion (inside and around vineyards), pests and to enrich nutrient and moisture of the soil
- **Sowing fields** for fauna feed support
- Placing **artificial sources of providing water and seeds to wildlife** at the farm (drinking and food trough)
- Placing Apiaries to increase **Pollination** (and other biodiversity and feed on bees - birds)
- Creating of small **woodlands** to increase habitat for biodiversity (and aesthetics)



Results

Consumers are paying attention to sustainable products and wish to have environmental-friendly products.

Duorum Vinhos S.A (the wine company) has become a member of the European Initiative on Business and Biodiversity. Their bottles of wine have its logo to show to the consumers they respect biodiversity.

This opens new and more demanding markets, helping to increase the sales and profits of the company.

In addition, wine tourism can be easily encourage, as another source of income.

Innovative aspects

The marketing of the product is better: thanks to the logo of the European Initiative on Business and Biodiversity, consumers know at first glance that producers are actively encouraging biodiversity.

This is also a plus when accessing more important and demanding markets worldwide, such as Norway, Netherlands, UK, USA, Canada and Japan.

A new CAP
Mountains of
opportunities

The European Initiative on Business and Biodiversity

The European Business and Biodiversity (B@B) Platform provides an **EU level forum for sustained and strategic dialogue about the links between business and biodiversity.**

This platform works with businesses to develop **tools and approaches** that promote the integration of biodiversity considerations into Business practice.

It supports the actions being undertaken by Member States by encouraging and promoting potential synergies between different national actions and between the EU level and the national level.

It also promotes better communication, increased awareness and improved co-ordination in relation to business and biodiversity activities.

Biodiversity can represent opportunities for businesses: to access **other lenders and socially responsible investment funds** ; to improve or **differentiate their brand** from competitors. By introducing new more efficient technologies and processes that reduce the dependence and impact on ecosystem services may also have significant **financial benefits**.

Extracted from: the official website of B@B: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/index_en.html



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