Integrating science & policy to promote agroforestry in practice – A nature conservation perspective

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Status quo from nature perspective

Current farmland situation shows negative trends:

→ loss of biodiversity, e.g. 26 out of 30 farmland birds with negative trend, similar with other plants and animals

→ monotonisation of land use practices (e.g. large-scale maize monocultures, loss of fallow and scattered structures, decrease of crop rotation).

→ nitrogen and pesticide applications remain high

→ counterproductive developments in climate change mitigation (grassland conversion)

→ growing demand for food and biomass causes price increase leading to intensification and profitability loss for low-intensity farming
Common Agriculture Policy 2014-2020

• Long and heated debate on future direct payment allocation and Greening of agriculture policy (crop diversification, grassland protection, Ecological Focus Areas)

• The idea was integration - the outcome is weak: Cross compliance less important, not updated on latest policies (water, pesticides), greening with too many exemptions, EFAs too little quantity, no guaranteed quality

• Rural Development budget shrinking while prices are increasing
Better eligibility - more flexibility without losing direct payments:
„Scattered features which cover up to a certain percentage of the reference parcel can be considered as being part of the eligible area” - maximum density up to 100 trees/ha

Ecological Focus Areas: 5% of arable areas to be designated as EFAs (for farms beyond 15 ha and with less than 75% grassland), including buffer strips, short rotation coppice, agro-forestry areas and strips of eligible hectares along forest edges. Possibility to increase percentage to 7% in 2017

Member States to define list of EFAs and tree species qualifying for SRC by August 2014
CAP – new opportunities

• EFA options and weighting factors lead to focus on catch crops and nitrogen fixing crops

• Pillar II implies higher co-financing rates for agri-environment and new funding options (Art. 21/ Art. 23 „establishment of agroforestry systems“ (up to 80% of eligible investment), Art. 35 for co-operation between different actors)
Conclusions

legitimacy of direct payments keeps being under high pressure
further segregation of land use and intensification on productive land very likely
decreasing willingness of farmers for extensive farming systems =>
agro-forestry restricted to marginal areas?
legal baseline and environmental legislation increasingly important (e.g. Natura 2000, Nitrates Directive, Water Framework Directive)
Pillar II has to focus on „dark green“ measures with high environmental benefits

⇒ Agro-forestry can show an added value as integrated farming system with many benefits between voluntary measures and legal requirements
Thank you for your attention!

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