EURAF European Agroforestry
Federation

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1. EURAF ACTIVITIES

EURAF has worked intensively in Brussels during the past two months. EURAF representatives fostered agroforestry in the civil dialogue group (CDG) on arable crops thanks to Dario Arias Martínez and José Javier Santiago Freijanes, global market issues were tackled in such as meeting. María Rosa Mosquera-Losada and Nuria Ferreiro-Domínguez were representing agroforestry practices in the Direct Payments and Greening CDG as well as Gerry Lawson and María Rosa Mosquera-Losada in the Forestry and Cork CDG, where EURAF asked for a European Commission summary of the latest agroforestry and forestry measures implementation. However, the first meeting of the Agroforestry Focus Group organized by the EIP-Agri was the most important event dealing with agroforestry in the past two months. Several members of the Executive Committee of EURAF participate in the Focus Group (María Rosa Mosquera-Losada, Fabien Balaguer, Robert Borek, Yousri Hannachi, Mareike Jäger, Bert Reubens and Andrea Vityi). National events to highlight agroforestry invited the EURAF president to present the advantages and drawbacks of agroforestry in Europe, like the National Spanish Research Event (Bioeconomy InfoDay Workshop) where María Rosa Mosquera-Losada explained the new EURAF project "AFINET: Agroforestry Innovation Networks" or the Spanish event where Agroforestry and Chestnut trees were developed. The president of EURAF was also invited to the Ecocitric event, where the use of orange trees as source of biomass, animal feed, aromatic compounds and animal bed was described. The potential of agroforestry practices through the promotion of AFINET was highlighted in the Ecocitric event. Finally the 20th December the event "Europe´s response to sustainability challenges. Delivering the 2030 Agenda" was held, where it was discussed how to approach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Agroforestry can help to fulfill the EU requirements for the 2030 Agenda as it will be key to meet the objectives related to resource efficient and low carbon economy (Sustainable Development Goals 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13).

Source: María Rosa Mosquera-Losada (EURAF President), February 2017.

2. REGIONAL AGROFORESTRY NEWS

2.1 The 5th Agroforestry Forum in Germany

The 5th Agroforestry Forum "Trees in (agricultural) landscapes – from theory into practice" organized by the Innovation Group "AUFWERTEN" took place on 31 November and 01 December 2016 in Brieske, Germany. AUFWERTEN stands for "Agroforestry for Environmental Services, Energy

Production and Added Value" and is a project funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany (BMBF, Reference N° 033L129AN). The 170 participants in the Forum represented by scientists, farmers, local authorities, and other interested visitors came together in the attempt to answer the main questions: How can we once again plant more trees on agricultural land and what does that bring?

Among the initiatives of the Innovation Group was presenting a comprehensive geographical map of agroforestry systems and actors in Germany and a model of agroforestry (Figure 1). The Forum started by showing a short video explaining the meaning and variety of agroforestry and its main advantages. The presentations were organised around the main themes of the status of agroforestry in Germany; ecosystem services; technology, management and utilization of wood; and economic considerations. Regional aspects including the development of a GIS tool to assess the suitability of agricultural land in southern Brandenburg for establishing agroforestry and the use of wood for energy production to supply a biomass heating plant in Massen-Niederlausitz, should strengthen the future potentials of establishing agroforestry and utilizing its products.

In Germany the agricultural land and grassland cannot be simply planted with trees. It is precisely the attempt to overcome the strict separation between agriculture and forestry, that prompted the discussion of agroforestry advantages, such as protection from soil erosion, reduction of evaporation especially in dry areas with sandy soils which are common in the region of Lausitz, nitrogen fixation, protection of surface and groundwater from nitrate leaching and advantages for animals (Figure 1). Nevertheless, the research in Germany is still in its initial phase and there is a need for more reliable data and knowledge gained from practical experiments.

Figure 1: On the left, a model of agroforestry (Source: https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CygOBWKWIAA0v9n.jpg:large) and on the right, a discussion round at the 5th Agroforestry Forum in Brieske, Germany (Source: Christian Böhm).

A major obstacle to the establishment of agroforestry is that the system is currently not eligible for area payments, which constitute a significant source of income for the farmer. The management of agricultural land typically involves yearly investments for planting and harvesting of crops. This is not the case when managing agroforestry which is a long term investment. Even the cultivation of fast growing trees is usually for at least 20 years. As the contracts for renting land last no longer than 20 years, planting high value wood growing for several decades is not even possible. As a reference about 80% of the land in East Germany is rented. To overcome this obstacle, the Innovation Group

AUFWERTEN has proposed a controllable definition of an agroforestry parcel which will be presented to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and if approved, it will allow the issuance of a land use code for agroforestry which will make the system eligible for subsidies.

Currently the establishment of agroforestry is limited among others to a specific list of trees and a minimum size of 0.3 ha for each parcel planted with trees. These considerations were taken into account in the newly established agroforestry system in 2015 in the farm of Thomas Domin in Peickwitz, which was the excursion destination for the Forum participants. The 90 ha field with approximately 5 % trees proportion is situated in an erosion-prone area, but since the planting of tree stripes, the farm is no longer classified as a particularly vulnerable to erosion area. Moreover, the shadow provided by poplars and alder trees was in addition advantageous for the animals in the farm. An experiment with free ranged poultry among the young alder trees was partially successful. The poultry was useful to clear the herbs in the field; however, 75% of the chickens were lost due to an attack by raptors. For that, suitable solutions are required. Nevertheless, the range of products in agroforestry is extended and a major potential for this system is seen in the establishment of regional value chains.

For more information and regular updates on the activities of the Innovation Group please visit http://agroforst-info.de/

Source: Penka Tsonkova (Brandenburg Univerty of Technology, Cottbus, Germany), December 2016.

2.2 Workshop on Agroforestry in Italy

The workshop was held in Florence at the "Accademia dei Georgofili", the prestigious academy established in Florence in 1753 to promote, amongst scholars and landowners, the studying of agronomy, forestry, economy, geography, and agriculture. The meeting was aimed to highlight the potential implementation of agroforestry systems and practices in Italy, in response to the need, in the next decades, to satisfy the increasing demand of food and non-food products safeguarding landscape, natural resources and mitigate climate change. Researchers in animal husbandry, agronomy and forest sciences as well as regional policy makers and agriculture extension advisors discussed how to promote the maintenance of traditional agroforestry systems and to introduce new and innovative practices in the multifaceted Italian rural landscape.

M. Mele (University of Pisa), introduced the workshop highlighting that in Italy various traditional agroforestry systems still characterize many rural areas, shaping them in a huge amounts of diversified landscapes. Together with the main constraints mainly related to management issues, Mele stressed the benefits linked to agroforestry (land restoration, carbon sequestration, mitigation to climate change, biodiversity conservation, etc.). The role of silvopastoral systems in increasing animal welfare and enhancing product quality in Italian marginal areas were underlined. In the following presentations, G. Lombardi (University of Turin), A. Mantino (Scuola Superiore S. Anna, Pisa), R. Primi (University of

Tuscia, Viterbo), A. Sevi and M. Monteleone (University of Foggia), G. Pulina (University of Sassari) assessed the potential adoption of agroforestry systems in some representative Italian regions, such as Piedmont and Veneto (Northern Italy), Tuscany and Latium (Central), Apulia and Sardinia (island and Southern). Their studies estimated the territorial areas, within each region, where agroforestry systems could be introduced (or re-introduced) to protect fragile ecosystems, in particular because of soil erosion, biodiversity loss, climate change. A. Rizzi (Italian Agroforestry Association, AIAF) reported the example of a farmer in Veneto who applied to the former measure 222 (RDP 2007-2013) to establish agroforestry systems in his arable land. The main farmer's objectives were to increase the economic value of the farm, to diversify the income and to improve habitats and the landscape. AIAF expects to create a national network of stakeholders testing different agroforestry practices in demonstrative on-farm trials. A. Pisanelli (CNR-IBAF, Porano) illustrated how European policies (CAP) recognized the ecological and social value of agroforestry since 2005. The data concerning the implementation of the measure 222 in the former RDPs, as well as the opportunities in the current CAP (2014-2020) were presented. The efforts carried out by EURAF to improve CAP supporting agroforestry in Europe was particularly evidenced. F. Camilli (CNR-IBIMET, Florence) introduced the participatory approach adopted in the framework of AGFOWARD project and presented the data collected in the stakeholder workshops that were organized in Italy. A. Nardone (Accademia dei Georgofili) concluded the workshop underlining the important role of the agroforestry working group that has been started up at the Academia, in enhancing the knowledge on agroforestry and arising the interest of national and local stakeholders.

Figure 2: Participants at the agroforestry event organized in the prestigious location "Accademia dei Georgofili", Florence.

Source: Andrea Pisanelli (EURAF National Delegate for Italy) and Francesca Camilli (Italian National Research Council, Rome, Italy), December 2016.

3. FEATURED FARM: "Nicharee Farm", Wexford, Ireland

This old 40 ha farm has seen many changes over the centuries. Lying just 2 km from a coastline, wildly exposed to the south-westerly prevailing winds sweeping up across the Atlantic Ocean, its soil was formed from Irish Sea mud, plastered across the flattened landscape by a glacier that receded about 9000 years ago. Challenged by exposure and heavy and poorly-drained soil, "Nicharee Farm" has provided a tough living for a succession of families through the centuries. The present steward, William Considine has decided using trees to combat those issues and to create calmer microclimates and niches within which a more diverse range of crops can be cultivated and within which both human and animal life can be enhanced.

Figure 3: Satellite picture of the farm.

A major challenge was to find tree species that would endure both the exposure and the soil type. Initially, finding trees that would grow well have taken precedence over all other criteria. The common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) are the main trees in the 200m wide shelter belt installed around the edge of the farm. Planted between 2003 and 2006, the trees now provide a 7m high windbreak, the benefits of which can already be felt in the enclosed fields. Within the outer shelter belt, smaller blocks of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Italian alder (*Alnus incana*) have been used to create sun traps within which apples, pears and walnuts have been planted. Meanwhile the herd of exclusively pasture-fed Aberdeen Angus cattle, are thriving in the sheltered pastures and meadows thus created.

Wood from the ongoing thinning activity has added a new line of farm income to supplement the sales of "Nicharee Farm" organic beef. Future income is envisaged from the fruit trees that have been planted along with further plantations as the shelter effect deepens. Small plantings of willow (*Salix Alba*) and alder have been installed in hollows and wet areas to increase soil infiltration rates and help lower the perched water table to improve drainage. Wood chips harvested from thinnings and prunings are used for animal bedding, producing a very valuable compost to enhance the fungal life in the grassland and create a lively soil which can renew and re-build itself and sequester more carbon in its increasing organic matter. To assist and accelerate the process of carbon sequestration, the cattle are managed by holistic grazing. This involves mobile electric fences to replicate the long-rest, rotational grazing and manuring that characterised the natural associations of ruminants and grassland in the great prairies and savannahs. Attractive paths, walks and trails are also being designed into the overall farm plan.

"Nicharee Farm" demonstrates how strategic additions of trees and shrubs to a farm, or to agricultural landscapes, can greatly enhance key values such as resilience, sustainability, biodiversity, amenity, human and animal health. It is planned to increasingly use the emerging attractive environment to also enhance social values. The farm already accepts woofers and interest groups and a redundant barn has been converted for meetings and courses. It is still very much a work in progress with lots of unfinished elements. However, the cumulative growth exhibited by trees, which contrasts greatly with the stop go, zero based growth patterns of grass and conventional annual and biennials crops, has created a changing horizon which can truly lift the human spirit and banish the drudgery so often associated with conventional farming. This alone will ensure that future generations will be happy to live on, and to work with, "Nicharee Farm" in decades and centuries to come.

Figure 4: on the left, apple trees at 7m x 7m spacing planted on mounds in sheltered niches around the farm; in the middle, the herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle holistically grazing beside the trees; and on the right, a group of woofers enjoying their working holiday at "Nicharee Farm".

Source: William Considine, farmer/owner of the "Nicharee Farm", January 2017.

4. FOCUS GROUP ON AGROFORESTRY

On 30th November - 1st December 2016, the EIP-Agri Focus Group on Agroforestry "Agroforestry: introducing woody vegetation into specialised crop and livestock systems" held its first meeting at Melle in Western France. The meeting was excellently carried out by the EIP-Agri members of the European Commission and the leaders of the group Ms. Karin Ekvärd and Ms. Celine Karasinski. The meeting was attended by 20 experts on agroforestry with a clearly different background, including María Rosa Mosquera-Losada, Fabien Balaguer, Robert Borek, Yousri Hannachi, Mareike Jäger, Bert Reubens and Andrea Vityi who are members of the Executive Committee of EURAF. The aim of the Focus Group is to develop agroforestry practices as a sustainable farming system which can boost agricultural productivity and profitability.

During the first day, the participants visited the walnut-cereal agroforestry system of Mr. Claude Jollet at Les Eduts and the rest of the meeting was held as a workshop at the Agricultural School of Melle. The sessions were intensively developed and several minipapers will be delivered. The topics of the minipapers will be: 1) Organising Added Value Agroforestry, 2) Education and Information, 3) Tools for Optimal Design and Management, 4) National and European Databases, 5) Practical Tree Knowledge at Farm Level, 6) Economic Performance Assessment, 7) How to Work on Agroforestry at Landscape and Territorial Level, 8) Monitoring Ecosystem Services and Environmental Benefits and 9) Mitigation and Adaptation Tools. The next meeting will be held in March in Portogruaro (Italy).

Source: María Rosa Mosquera-Losada (EURAF President), January 2017.

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5. DIRECT PAYMENTS AND GREENING

Nuria Ferreiro-Domínguez and María Rosa Mosquera-Losada were present in the Civil Dialogue Group on Direct Payments and Greening where the impact of Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) in the first year of implementation was presented. EURAF took the floor and asked about the access to all the data (not only number of hectares affected) to keep working on the European projects that EURAF has. Within the presentation it was mentioned that "Qualifying or not the landscape features protected under cross-compliance EFA may affect greening" and EURAF commented that there should be clear numbers about how landscape features are affected by cross-compliance, greening and rural development payments, mostly due to the information delivered by the EU court of auditors informing that cross-compliance is ineffective due to complexity of implementation. EURAF also acknowledged that an evaluation on the impact of EFA has been evaluated with regard to productivity. However, it is not considering the impact of EFA on ecosystem services, while the EFA are strongly related to climate change. Finally, EURAF highlighted that it is true that the degree of adoption of agroforestry was very low, probably due to the restriction that only those agroforestry systems established under 222 and 8.2 measures are eligible, so EURAF proposes to the European Commission that farmers implementing agroforestry outside 222 and 8.2 should be also able to claim agroforestry as EFA.

Regarding the simplification of the EFA implementation, it is mentioned that some types of landscape features will be merged in just one data when the farmer declare. One of the cases is the trees in line, wooded strips and hedges make it difficult to evaluate the impact of these EFA from a carbon sequestration point of view, as the potential of these landscape features is different, and therefore the mitigation potential of these EFA landscape features will be just broadly estimated. EURAF suggested that in spite of acknowledging the need of simplification, the lack of separation of these three types of landscape features in the declaration of the farmer may facilitate developing payment mechanisms for ecosystem services related to the distinct mitigation potential of the different landscape features.

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6. AGROF-MM PROJECT

The Agrof-MM project aims to educate and train in the field of agroforestry. Titled "Training in Agroforestry – Mediterranean – Semi-Arid Zones – Mountain", the objectives of this Erasmus Plus project are to: train over a three-year period between 130 and 150 agricultural professionals in Europe; improve and develop educational tools for training to make it long-lasting and develop an unique agroforestry qualification program in each European country.

Agrof-MM sets different types of training addressed to students, farmers and future farmers, workers, teachers, instructors and agricultural consultants: classes, group work and conferences; in-field and online training; self-training; thematic workshops; case studies; visits to agroforestry plots; tutored work placements on farms.

The project both reinforces and complements the European project AgroFE, which was completed in December 2015. It extends the geographical boundaries of the AgroFE project to encompass the Mediterranean and the mountain areas, broadening the level of training and opening it up to new players. It is run by a consortium of 13 partners from 10 different countries: France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Albania, Turkey and Lebanon.

The European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF) is working in cooperation with the Agrof-MM project. In May 2016, the Agrof-MM partners attended the 3rd Congress of the EURAF organisation in Montpellier, France. One of the Agrof-MM coordinators, Professor Charles Burriel of the Dijon AgroSup Institute, presented the Agrof-MM project to the round table titled "Agroforestry - the experiences of farmers and instructors". Those who were present received the opportunity to discover further the nature and objectives of the Agrof-MM project.

Sitting in congruence with the Agrof-MM project are the European Union's policy of rural development. In combining education with innovation in aspects of agriculture and forestry, the project acts in the same spirit as that which has been expressed in the Cork 2.0 Declaration on European rural development, with its mission of "A Better Life in Rural Areas". The declaration places importance on training and innovation. Point 7 of the declaration is the "Boosting of Knowledge and Innovation", which calls for a stronger policy focus on education and vocational training, particularly in rural communities.

Training and education are core elements of the Agrof-MM project, and it is with these objectives in mind that the project has carried out some important initiatives. One of the most important initiatives is

the development and publication of training materials. The partners in the project are currently cooperating on developing a book of professional reference on agroforestry, as well as a thesaurus which maps the terminology pertinent to agroforestry. Additionally, the partners in the project have been able to participate in joint training programs. In November 2016, an online training conference was held with the agroforestry expert Dr Nick Pasiecznik. During the online training conference, Dr Pasiecznik shared his knowledge and experiences in training and agroforestry, and also provided some recommendations on how to best succeed in agroforestry training.

With its commitment to training and education, the Agrof-MM is on a clear path to achieving its objectives of broadening the scope of the practice of agroforestry, and thus contributing to efforts in improving rural development.

Source: AliénorEU team and Anastasia Pantera (EURAF Deputy Secretary), January 2017.

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7. MISCELLANEOUS

Open PhD position at INRA on assessment of agroforestry resilience to climate change

The topic of the thesis will be "Assessment of agroforestry resilience to climate change by field experiment (partial rain exclusion and temperature control) and modelling in a mature agroforestry system".

The application for the PhD grant should be done before 5th March 2017 by the applicant to the Fondation de France, in liaise with the research unit. More info of the call here.

New Agroecology Knowledge Hub

FAO has launched a new online Agroecology Knowledge Hub. The website is aimed at maintaining and promoting information and updates on agroecology, as well as providing a space to share experiences. More info here.

Open Public Online Consultation on modernising and simplifying the common agricultural policy (CAP)

Deadline: 02/05/2017

More info here.

Acorn Week

The "Acorn Week" will occur in Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal during 1st - 11th March 2017. A whole week dedicated to the human consumption of the fruit from Montado agroforestry system. During the week you can find acorns around the restaurants menus, cooking shows, products, round tables, walking tours, pic-nics...More info here.

19th European Grassland Federation (EGF) Symposium

The 19th European Grassland Federation (EGF) Symposium will take place in Sardinia, Italy, during 7th - 10th May 2017. The title of the Symposium is "Grassland resources for extensive farming systems in marginal lands: major drivers and future scenarios". More info here.

Agroforestry 2017: improving productivity for farmers and foresters

The meeting will take place in the Cranfield University, Cranfield, UK, on 22nd June 2017. The meeting is organised by Woodland Trust, Royal Forestry Society and Soil Association and supported by Cranfield University and Farm Woodland Forum. More info here.

15th North American Agroforestry Conference

The 15th North American Agroforestry Conference will take place in Virginia, USA, from 27th to 29th June 2017. The title of the Conference is "Agroforestry for a Vibrant Future: Connecting People, Creating Livelihoods, Sustaining Places". The Conference is for agroforestry producers, researchers, educators and those involved with related work in the fields of permaculture and agroecology. More info here.

15th International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology

The 15th International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology will take place in Rhodes, Greece, during 31st August - 2nd September 2017. An Agroforestry session is organized within the conference. More info here.

IUFRO Anniversary Congress 2017

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) is organizing its 125th Anniversary Congress "Interconnecting Forests, Science and People". The congress will take place in Freiburg, Germany, from 19th - 22nd September 2017. The Congress will include an agroforestry session "Agroforestry - the future of land use management?". More info here.

4th European Agroforestry Conference

The 4th European Agroforestry Conference will take place in Nijmegen, Netherlands during 28th - 30th May 2018. More details to follow in due time.

This is your newsletter! If there's anything you think should be included, please send suggestions to euraf@agroforestry.eu for the next issue.

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