



EURAF European Agroforestry
Federation

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1. EURAF ACTIVITIES

Agroforestry EURAF activities during March-April 2017 were dealing with research, communication, innovation and policy commitments. [Clima-Tree Life](#) project meeting was extraordinarily conducted by the Project Coordinator Prof. Kostas Bithas in Matera (Italy) highlighting the enormous potential to sequester carbon of fruit trees in Mediterranean countries. Prof. Kostas invited María Rosa Mosquera-Losada to link fruit tree plantations with agroforestry practices such as silvopastoralism to foster carbon sequestration in Mediterranean areas. The innovation and communication to farmers has worked out thanks to the extraordinarily organized Focus Group of "[Agroforestry: introducing woody vegetation into specialised crop and livestock systems](#)", that was hosted thanks to the facilitation of our former EURAF Vice-President Giustino Mezzarila. Innovation and communication played also a key role in the [European Structural and Investment funds](#) on which María Rosa Mosquera-Losada was defending the promotion of agroforestry on behalf of EURAF as a form to enhance rural livelihoods and food security, while Dario Arias carried out a similar job in the two [arable Civil Dialogue groups](#) hold last March and April.

The kick-off meeting of the AFINET project took place in Lugo (Spain), where EURAF delegates from nine countries started to think how to work with farmers to spread agroforestry practices in Europe to adapt and mitigate climate change.

María Rosa Mosquera-Losada was also invited by the JRC-Seville and the European Commission DG Agri to prepare the impact assessment on modernising and simplifying the CAP that will be presented in June 2017. For this purpose, María Rosa Mosquera-Losada explained the main advantages of agroforestry sequestering carbon and the huge potential it has in Europe due to the reduced amount of agroforestry regional implementation at the European Commission Workshop entitled "Best practices, environment and climate change".

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

2. REGIONAL AGROFORESTRY NEWS

2.1 Participatory Agroforestry Development in Switzerland

Since 2014, agroforestry on-farm demonstration plots have been established in different parts of Switzerland. The aim of the project “Agroforestry Network Switzerland” (2014 – 2018) is to develop the experiences with silvoarable agroforestry systems in Switzerland under practical conditions. Interested farmers are given intensive advice on the plant and the choice of tree species and subcultures. A simple on-farm monitoring supports and accompanies farms in the initial phase of agroforestry farming. The monitoring includes regular surveys to farmers on their experience with this system and their observations on biodiversity. In addition, on certain farms the soil structure is regularly observed, tree growth is measured and business data collected. The variations of trees and the components of the bottom layer are diverse. The standard fruit trees for fruit production (juice and fruits for processing) dominate the agroforestry systems in Switzerland, but walnut trees and wild fruit species were also planted. The components of the bottom layer are arable crops, but also herbs, berries and vegetables.



Figure 1: On the left, new agroforestry system with apple and pear trees, where vegetables and arable crops are cultivated; in the middle, a 7 year-old agroforestry system with apple trees and on the right, chestnut trees and arable farming in the north of Switzerland, region where chestnut trees are uncommon.



Figure 2: Walnut trees and arable crops.

On the other hand, in 2011, the “Interest Group on Agroforestry – IG Agroforst” was founded. This is a platform which connects people working on farming, consulting and research. The platform regularly organizes conferences and courses, as well as field visits. They take also position on agricultural policy,

concerning agroforestry. In March 2017, the “Plateforme Agroforesterie Suisse Romande” was founded in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Within the framework of the project, a technical leaflet for agroforestry systems has been developed for farmers at the end of 2016. This leaflet is freely available in German and French at this [link](#). In addition, the website www.agroforst.ch (currently only available in German) regularly informs about upcoming events and new publications.



Figure 3: Innovations in the field of the silvopastoral systems, alternative grazing in the vineyard with willow geese, miniature sheep and mini ponies and cultivation of standard plum trees in a grazing system with deer.

Further Information's: Mareike Jäger, AGRIDEA, Project coordinator “Agroforestry network Switzerland”, Mareike.jaeger@agridea.ch

Source: Mareike Jäger (EURAF National Delegate for Switzerland), April 2017.

2.2 Bulgarian Agroforestry Association (BAA)

Constitutional meeting of the Bulgarian Agroforestry Association (BAA) was held on March 22nd 2017. The meeting was attended by 18 people, all of them scientists from the [Forest Research Institute - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences](#) who work or have an interest in the development of Agroforestry in Bulgaria. Farmers from 4 different corners of the country, scientists from the Institute of Animal Breeding in Kostinbrod, were also in the meeting. Assoc. Prof. Stefka Atanasova from the Thracian University - Stara Zagora, where there is accredited specialty in "Agroforestry", has already been visited. The Assembly unanimously agreed to officially establish BAA, as a non-governmental organization for public benefit and to register this organization in court. It has been explicitly accepted that BAA will be part of EURAF and will adopt all its rules and regulations. The association's statute sets out the main objectives for which the members of the association will work for: promoting the adoption of agroforestry practices in Bulgaria; disseminating information on the topic and strengthening the links between the specialists in the field, the general public and practitioners; supporting the introduction of scientific results in agroforestry; working on political decisions encouraging the use of tree species on farms in Bulgaria and Europe. The meeting elected the chairman of the BAA, Asst. Prof Vania Kachova, who is already working in the field of agroforestry, and the secretary of the association, Assoc. Prof. Emilia Velizarova, specialist on Forest soils and Ecology in the Forest Research Institute.

The meeting also elected a national delegate in EURAF, who will be Assoc. Prof. Emil Popov, specialist on Forest Plantation at the Institute.



Figure 4: Pictures taken during the constitutional meeting of the Bulgarian Agroforestry Association (BAA).

Source: Vania Georgieva Kachova (President of the Bulgarian Agroforestry Association), April 2017.

3. FEATURED FARM: Andy Cato's Farm, Southwest of France

Andy Cato is a farmer who combines beef cattle and crops on his farm in the Southwest of France. In 2012, he bought 100 hectares of land with an initial plan to farm cereals organically with standard soil cultivation practices. The soil was unpromising, heavy clay with very little visible topsoil remaining, a pH of around 8 and an amount of organic matter around 0.6% which is about average for a region where maize fields have been ploughed and sprayed for 50 years. After two years of standard organic practices, it became clear that the soil was severely depleted and that it was not getting better. Based on observations of the abundant fertility in the unfarmed land and forests around the farm, Andy felt he urgently needed to do things differently, namely: i) follow nature's lead in restoring the mix of animals and plants by bringing animals, trees and hedgerows back to the farm; ii) find ways of growing which did not involve the compaction and cultivation of the soil; iii) return to heritage crops varieties; iv) introduce the widest possible diversity of plants.

Forest ecosystems, with their unsurpassed productivity, inspired Andy to rethink the design of his farm, to re-establish a basic framework of diversity and nutrient recycling. He began working with the association [Arbre et Paysage 32](#). Thanks to this collaboration, each year around 3 km of hedgerows are planted and an ambitious agroforestry programme has been launched.

His herd of beef cattle is essential to the equilibrium of the farm. He has put in place a system which combines the current mob grazing ideas popularised by Joel Salatin and others, with the pasture mixes pioneered by revolutionary 1950s farmer Newman Turner. Mob grazing seeks to re-establish the

relationship between cattle and grass as it existed in the wild. The herds are always moving from one field to the next, grazing in tight groups. This has important consequences. The animals always leave their dung behind them, thus avoiding disease. The grass recovers much more quickly, the soil remains protected, and fertility steadily increases. It avoids the steady degradation of pastures that occurs when extensive grazing allows the animals to come back to the most succulent plants time and again whilst leaving 'weeds' to proliferate.

Throughout 2015, Andy was confronted with the problems of shade and water for his cattle. Almost all of the trees were removed from the farm in the 1960s, meaning that until the new hedges and trees planted have developed, there is barely any shade. Hauling water daily was also very time-consuming. He began experimenting with 'cow corridors', i.e. every field can be accessed from a network of corridors that lead back to the barn where there is shade and water. These cow corridors have had a huge impact: i) it is easy to send the herd to any part of the farm, that all grazing opportunities can be quickly seized upon, ii) longer term pastures can always be grazed to the correct height, leaving plenty of residues for rapid regrowth, iii) it has been observed a rapid increase in drought resistance and the amount of growth produced per year, iv) the diversity of aromatic herbs, grasses and legumes has led to a complete absence of disease. The next step in the development of grazing equilibrium is a project to plant thousands of trees that will provide grazing foliage in times of drought, harvestable nuts and fruits, shade, timber, while also restoring habitat and diversity and the related benefits to the crops.

Finally, the big question was how to grow nutritious and abundant crops without disturbing and damaging the soil. The basic idea was the creation of weed suppressing mulch on a field scale and the planting of cash crops through this mulch. The yields of maize and soya successfully grown this way far surpassed those of the crops sown into cultivated soil. However, even with a reduced tractor use, the problem of soil compaction remained. For this reason Andy decided to farm with horses as the Amish of Pennsylvania. Andy thinks that for a farm like his of around 100 ha with a diversified crop rotation, horse-drawn farming has large economic, environmental and agronomic benefits. Now the goal at the farm is to return to locally-adapted crops growing in fertile soil, and to go from field to plate via on-farm transformation into flour and bread. Andy strongly believes that a return to local, sustainable agriculture based on a restoration of the soils not only has the capacity to tackle public health and climate change issues at source, but also to recreate the links at the heart of society that hold us together.

More information [here](#).



Figure 5: Some pictures of the Andy Cato farm, Southwest of France.

Source: Andy Cato (farmer) and Fabien Balaguer (EURAF Treasurer), April 2017.

4. FOCUS GROUP ON AGROFORESTRY

The second meeting of the [EIP-Agri Focus Group on Agroforestry](#) “Agroforestry: introducing woody vegetation into specialised crop and livestock systems” took place last 21-22 March 2017. The meeting led by Karin Eksvärde and the EIP-Agri team (Fabio Cossu, Céline Karasinski, and Beatriz Guimarey Fernández) was excellently organized. The meeting was hosted by Giustino Mezzarila in the beautiful place of Portogruaro in the Veneto region of Italy. A visit to a farm, which is awarded with three Life projects, including one with agroforestry, was also organized. Hedgerows planting and the role they have in facilitating productivity of crops were shown. María Rosa Mosquera-Losada as president of EURAF and Karin Eksvärde as the coordinator of the Focus Group were honored with the plantation of the last two trees of a new agroforestry experiment.

During the meeting the group made progress on a number of “mini-papers” which seek to highlight the current and potential role of agroforestry. Topics include organising added value, agroforestry education, tools for design and management, databases, practical knowledge, financial assessments, agroforestry in the landscape, and the roles of agroforestry in providing ecosystem services and addressing climate change. The final results from the Focus Group should be available in late 2017.

EURAF congratulates the [EIP-Agri](#) for the excellent job carried out and the facilitation of the delivery of important outputs from this meeting regarding research, policy and innovation.

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

5. Agrof-MM TRANSNATIONAL MEETING IN BULGARIA

Agrof-MM (Training in Agroforestry - Mediterranean - Semi-Arid Zones – Mountain) partners met from 13 to 16 of March 2017 in the Bulgarian city of Stara Zagora, at an important time since the project is at mid-term. This transnational meeting allowed the partners to evaluate the actions implemented after one and a half years and to launch new ones for the second half of the project. Several partners presented the agroforestry systems that are applied in their country. Another occasion to see how agroforestry is rich and proteiform. For instance, Jean-Michel Ecurat from EPLEFPA des Vosges (France) presented Mediterranean agroforestry as well as measures implemented in a springs and mountains area: Les Vosges. Mr. Angelov, a Bulgarian farmer, shared his own very interesting experience in planting paulownia in combination with poultry and sheep breeding as well as market gardening. The results are convincing with the production of quality wood and real market outlets.

In a neighboring country, Greece, the main used agroforestry system is also the oldest: silvopastoralism. According to Dra. Anastasia Pantera of the TEI Stereas Elladas (Greece), the role of education and training is fundamental for farmers to become aware of their environmental heritage and develop agroforestry. A change of mentality is clearly necessary. A declaration that has been approved by the other partners while stressing, like Francesco Carbone of the University of Tuscia (Italy), that the economic dimension and the added-value of products are also essential.

Moreover, the partners pursued their reflection work on the core content of the trainings. A key element of the project that would give any relevant stakeholder the framework within which agroforestry training activities should be carried out. Two working groups worked on this subject in Stara Zagora.

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Figure 6: Pictures taken during the AGROF-MM transnational meeting in Bulgaria.

Source: AliénorEU team, April 2017.

6. SustainFARM CONSORTIUM MEETING

Agroforesters, it is clear, must collectively have done some pretty awful things in their previous lives. How else to explain them being forced to meet in the insalubrious settings of a fresco-adorned palazzo set amongst rare trees high up in a hill-town overlooking Italy's Umbrian countryside? Furthermore, instead of enjoying the bracing rains of, say, Novosibirsk, fate condemned them to a succession of horrible days cursed with full sunshine, birdsong and the perfume of spring wafting in through open French windows. Worse, the only thing the poor agroforesters had to sustain themselves was home-cooked Italian food. "The horror!"

Such was the sorry fate of twenty-odd members of the tribe meeting for the third Coordination Committee of the SustainFARM (innovative and sustainable intensification of integrated food and non-food systems to develop climate-resilient agro-ecosystems in Europe) research effort.

SustainFARM is trying to put some numbers to something we all know in our bones is true: that integrating food and non-food production such as fuelwood on the same parcels or farms will deliver higher benefits, be they financial, environmental or even social. The awful working conditions faced by the team at the Istituto di Biologia Agroambientale e Forestale in Porano did not prevent them from reporting good progress on this effort. From work packages on schedule to a refreshing take on communicating results, the drive and purpose of participants was a joy to behold.

The focus thus rapidly turned to the meat of the effort: the details of how to feed models like YieldSAFE and FarmSAFE with the data required to accurately represent the real world - and how to improve the models themselves. Linkages to non-European agroforestry experiences were discussed; strategies for influencing the looming CAP reform discussed; and a review of the whole communications and advocacy effort engaged.

Any meeting that concluded that agroforesters could learn from the marketing of soap, convertible cars and anti-smoking patches is, you will agree, one that explored a wide range of issues, something that was confirmed by the field trips. These featured everything from dozens of wheat varieties and wonderful local wines to a communion with hundreds of spiders in a 2,500 year old Etruscan tomb.

Perhaps the only unhappy person was the SustainFARM coordinator, Bim Bahadur Ghaley, and our host, Andrea Pisanelli. As those responsible for the truly horrifying working conditions, they had to endure the laments of the participants for three whole days.



Figure 7: Pictures taken during the SustainFARM consortium meeting.

Source: Robert Borek (EURAF National Delegate for Poland) and Patrick Worms (World Agroforestry Centre), April 2017.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

Agroforestry in 12 principles

Agroforestry in 12 principles – French Agroforestry Association – Download the PDF version in English [here](#).

International Congress on Cork Oak Trees and Woodlands: conservation, management, products and challenges for the future

The International Congress on Cork Oak Trees and Woodlands: conservation, management, products and challenges for the future will take place in Sardinia, Italy, during 25th - 26th May 2017. This event is part of the activities of the regional research project “Multifunctional role of Cork Oak Forests” and will coincide with the 3rd National Congress of Cork. More info [here](#).

Seminar on Agroforestry Systems: an inheritance with future

The Seminar on Agroforestry Systems: an inheritance with future will take place in Bragança, Portugal, during 2nd – 3rd June 2017. 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 addressed to 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 to 22nd September 2017. The Congress will include an agroforestry session “Agroforestry - the future of land use management?”. More info [here](#).

XI Congress of the Italian Society of Forestry and Forest Ecology

The XI Congress of the Italian Society of Forestry and Forest Ecology will take place in Roma, Italy from 10th to 13th October 2017. A session focused on agroforestry will be organized. More info [here](#).

Conference on Non-Timber Forest Products and Bioeconomy

The Finnish Natural Resources Institute and the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland will host a joint conference covering basic and applied research about Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) as a part of the bioeconomy. The Conference will be held during 28th - 30th November 2017 in Rovaniemi, Finland. More info [here](#).

2nd European Symposium on Pollarding

This 3-day event, open to all agricultural practitioners and stakeholders, natural resource managers and researchers, will take place in Basque Country, France, during 1st – 3rd March 2018. Call for contributions will be open soon. Save the date!



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.

This newsletter is carried out in collaboration with the European [AGFORWARD](#) and [AFINET](#) Projects.

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