



EUR^OPEAN AGRO^FORESTRY FEDERATION

EURAF, 14, Rue Pagès, 34070 Montpellier, FRANCE

www.agroforestry.eu

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1. AGROFORESTRY: A STORY THAT CONVINCES

The avalanche of bad climate news can seem relentless. A week ago, the White House published a report concluding climate change is happening right now, and impacting Americans, right now. Three weeks ago, the IPCC said greenhouse gas emissions were accelerating, not slowing down. And a month ago, it said “the effects of climate change are already occurring on all continents and across the oceans.” One could be forgiving for thinking the news is all bad.

But as we know, agroforestry is potentially of huge importance in both mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In Europe alone, researchers last year estimated that it could absorb fully one-third of Europe’s total greenhouse gas emissions. And, encouragingly, the European Commission seems to agree: not only does the new Common Agricultural Policy make the right noises in favour of agroforestry (with much of the bad news coming from the member states rather than Europe), but its long-awaited Climate Communication,



which lays out its climate policy plans over the sixteen years to 2030, explicitly refers to agroforestry as a technique to be used by European farmers to help reduce their emissions. It is one of the only two agricultural techniques to be mentioned in that document (the other is grasslands management, something silvopastoralism can help with too).

Agriculture is a conservative world. And agroforestry seems a radical change for many farmers. But, slowly, the ground is shifting below all our feet. Agroforestry is gaining the respect of policymakers. It is being spoken of more and more, even if still in hushed tones. And that is how the change that really matters, social change, always starts: with the soft buzz of pioneering conversations, of pioneering doers.

It is in this exciting context that Europe’s agroforesters will meet in Cottbus in three weeks’ time to discuss the future of their field. The question that will dominate the debates – how to integrate science and policy to promote agroforestry – seeks to pick up this soft buzz, to understand the drivers of change, and to celebrate the pioneers.

Patrick Worms, ICRAF



2. COTTBUS 2014: A CONGRESS WITH A BREATHTAKING AMBITION

The 2nd EU-Agroforestry conference, to be held 4-6 June 2014, will focus on the interplay between science and policy.

Farmers, policy influencers and scientists will seek to understand why agroforestry, despite its promise, is still a minority interest. They will explore how they can collaborate to bring its benefits to more of Europe's farmers and consumers. Despite Europe's huge variety of agricultural systems, the conference hopes to distill some broadly applicable lessons that can inform research, policy and farming across the Continent.

That the issues facing agriculture are very context-specific is nothing new. A quick glance at the [programme](#) or the [poster session](#) reveals the extraordinary range of questions agroforesters tackle. But, at bottom, the challenges farmers face are similar around the world, irrespective of climate, soils, or degree of development. How can yields be maximized? How can soil quality be protected? How can pest and disease be minimized? How can crops and livestock be made more resilient? What should be done to prepare for a more erratic climate? How can costs be reduced? The simplest expression of that challenge is simply: how can we produce more with less?

We know that, very often (but not always), the answer includes "add trees". Theoretical land equivalency ratios (see for example fig. 1) are confirmed by measurements, despite the complexity of integrating biophysical with market and subsidy variables. Agroforestry systems from Niger (fig. 2) to France (fig. 3) are making farmers richer or, more starkly, can mean the difference between life and death (table 1).

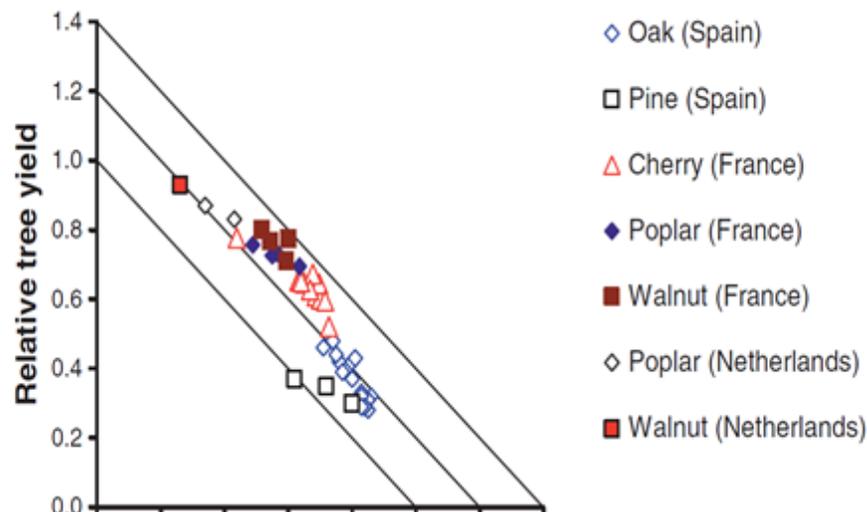


Fig. 1: predicted crop and tree yields in different agroforestry systems

Source: Graves et al, 2007. Development and application of bio-economic modelling to compare silvoarable, arable and forestry systems in three European countries. *Ecol Eng*, 29, 434-49.

But this evidence, tantalizing though it may be, is not yet settled. Agroforestry, being complex, will never offer pat answers. It depends far more than industrial agriculture on the interaction between a farmers' intelligence and his land. This, of course, is what makes agroforestry so fascinating – and why it offers such rich areas for research. This makes for a compelling series of [parallel sessions](#) that will explore temperate agroforestry from every possible angle. The day will be capped by an exchange between EURAF and German farmers.

From an exploration of African evergreen agriculture to an insight into that deeply mysterious creature, the policymaker, the plenary speakers at Cottbus will look beyond the hard science to bring some insights into the wider world in which agroforestry has to find its marks. Understanding that context is crucial to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the wider agricultural community.

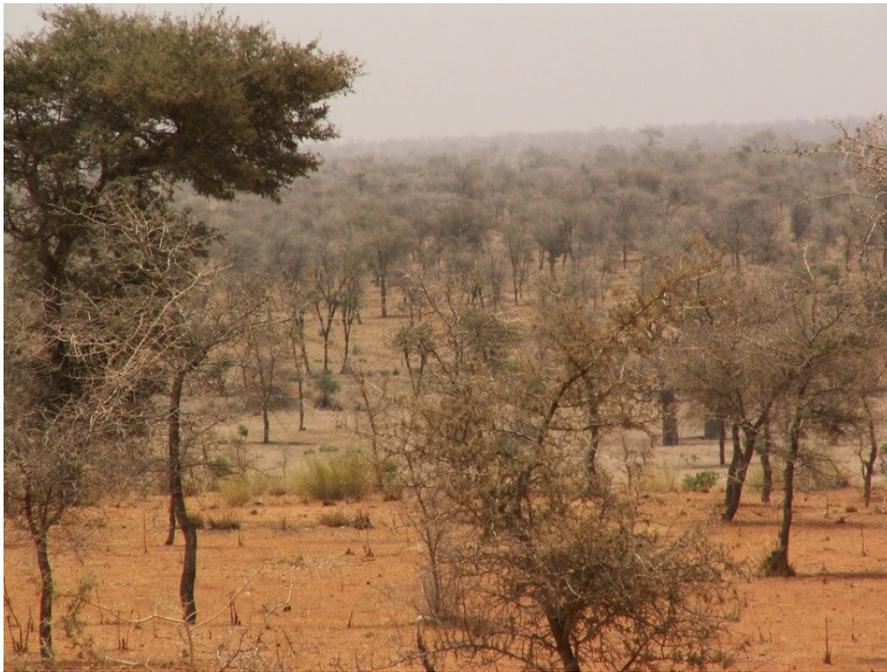


Fig. 2: Faidherbia Albida and cereal agroforestry parklands in Zinder district, Niger

Annual district-wide grain **surplus**:

2007	21,230 tons	drought year
2008	36,838 tons	
2009	28,122 tons	
2010	64,208 tons	
2011	13,818 tons	drought year

Table 1: impact of Faidherbia parklands on livelihoods of Kantché district, Niger

Source: Yamba, B. and M. Sambo. 2012. "La Régénération Naturelle Assistée et la sécurité alimentaire des ménages de 5 terroirs villageois des départements de Kantché et Mirriah (région de Zinder)." Rapport pour le Fonds International pour le Développement Agricole.



Fig. 3: Wheat and walnut system, France



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Most will agree that site visits are the highlight of any gathering of agroforesters. And Cottbus won't disappoint in that regard. The Brandenburg University of Technology is a pioneer in the study and development of agroforestry for both mining land reclamation and the creation of sustainable energy landscapes (figs. 4, 5). Professor Dirk Freese, our host, promises a fascinating day out that includes old agroforestry systems, a pilot alley cropping system, a mining reclamation area, and – last but not least – a vineyard.



Fig. 4: Alley cropping, Welzow



Fig. 5: biomass harvesting, Brandenburg



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3. JOIN EURAF TODAY!

[EURAF](#), the European Agroforestry Federation, represents your interests at European level. Your contributions help sustain the lobbying EURAF is doing to ensure the Common Agricultural Policy encourages agroforestry. It helps convince the EU to fund more agroforestry research. It coordinates the work of dealing with ministries of agriculture within the EU member states. It facilitates the sharing of best practices. And it ensures European agroforestry is connected with agroforesters around the world by asking ICRAF to take part as an observer in its deliberations.

To join, simply send your contribution to IBAN: FR76 1350 6100 0022 3078 4200 075, BIC: AGRIFRPP835, stating your name, address, and affiliation.

See below for the membership fee applicable to you:

Individual member of a national association: 10 € (must be paid by the national association, minimum fee = 100 € = 10 members)

Individual member: 30 € (when no national association available)

4. COTTBUS: REGISTER NOW!

There is still time to register for the conference. [Fees](#) are modest and the choice of good but modestly priced [hotels](#) is plentiful.

Take advantage of this special offer: become a member of EURAF by choosing the Cottbus+EURAF package. It is cheaper than the conference fee on its own. And it means you will have the right to vote in the EURAF General Assembly (see next article).

To register – and to join EURAF – simply mail the following information to euraf@gmx.de: your name, address, contact telephone and email, and affiliation.

You will receive a reply indicating the amount due and transfer details.

Please use the conference [website](#) to book hotel accommodation.

5. EURAF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

June 4th, at Cottbus, 4-6pm

The EURAF General Assembly is the supreme policy-making body of your Federation. Every member in due standing (having paid their yearly fees!) is entitled to a vote there. And voting matters: members will have to select a new Executive Committee.

EURAF's Executive Committee includes 6 officers elected by the General Assembly and two delegates (one full and one substitute) representing each EURAF country having at least 10 national members (these are elected by the members of that country). The current Executive Committee includes 13 delegates from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Kosovo, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the UK. Currently, therefore, there are 19 Members of the Executive Committee.

Nomination for one of the 6 officers to the Executive Committee must be made by members of EURAF in writing and must be in the hands of the secretary of the Executive Committee (Rosa Mosquera, mrosa.mosquera.losada@usc.es); you are invited to express your intention before the General Assembly meeting (Wednesday 4th of June, noon).



EUR OPEAN A GRO FORESTRY FEDERATION

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This is your newsletter! If there's anything you think should be included, please pass suggestions to euraf@gmx.de for inclusion in the next issue.