

EURAF EUROPEAN AGROFORESTRY FEDERATION

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1 EURAF Activities

1.1 Agroforestry lobbying in Brussels

Agroforestry lobbying in Brussels has been an important activity of EURAF early this year, and has continued in 2015 with amendments suggested to Parliament's COMAGRI committee on their draft report on the European Forest Strategy. These amendments were made with the assistance of Mélanie Lamaison of AliënorEU. This lobbying followed discovery at the December meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group for Forestry and Cork that the draft 'Multi-Year Implementation Plan' for the Forest Strategy does not mention agroforestry. Many [amendments](#) have been submitted by MEPs, and all are still under consideration by the COMAGRI committee.

EURAF has also been involved several other activities. The first and most important was participation in the Assembly of the European Network of Rural Development (ENRD). This allows representatives from National Governments, NGOs and other institutions to promote a more sustainable European Agriculture through implementation of the National Rural Development Programs. Commissioner Hogan, present in the Assembly, said:

I am pleased to announce this new, broader forum to discuss how Rural Development programmes work in practice and how they can be further improved in future. The aim is to bring together the successful European Network for Rural Development and the new European Innovation Partnership network with the

aim of improving the coordination of activities and achieving synergies and efficiency gains for achieving Rural Development objectives.

EURAF was also invited to sit on the Steering Committee of ENRD, sharing a seat with the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism.

Finally, EURAF was asked by the European Commission to take part in discussion of the new priorities of the research agenda of H2020, together with research experts from across Europe, including Paul Burgess, the co-ordinator of AGFORWARD. Paul and Rosa advanced the role of agroforestry as a sustainable and ecologically intensive form of land management for Europe. Agroforestry was an issue raised from the floor several times, and was mentioned in presentations by FAO and the IPCC. It was also highlighted in the conclusions of all working groups at the meeting.

Source: Rosa Mosquera - EURAF president, Gerry Lawson - EURAF deputy president, Joana Amaral Paulo - EURAF deputy treasurer, Paul Burgess - AGFORWARD coordinator, February 2015.

1.2 Will agroforestry parcels be fully eligible for CAP basic payments in my country?

The current reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has set new rules regarding the eligibility of agroforestry parcels for CAP first pillar support. The application of the new [Basic Payment Scheme](#) is creating concern for agroforesters, as some of the rules and regulations regarding the presence of trees, shrubs or hedges in agricultural land are becoming more restrictive.

The most relevant changes for agroforestry parcel eligibility are:

(click [here](#) for further details)

- Maximum tree density in agricultural parcels: the 50 tree/ha recommendation is no longer of application, and a [new regulation](#) establishes a compulsory maximum of 100 trees/ha for arable land.
- For permanent pastures, Member States can use the same tree density limit, or apply an alternative “pro-rata system”, where there is no specific limit for tree density. However, the pro-rata system applies progressive “reduction coefficients” that diminish the eligibility of parcels containing trees or other landscape features.
- In any of the two systems, some exceptions are applicable:
 - Trees or other features protected by the Cross Compliance do not restrict eligibility in any way: e.g., such trees will not count towards the 100 tree/ha limit or the pro-rata reductions.
 - In silvopastoral systems, trees and shrubs that can be grazed should not restrict eligibility either. Nevertheless, [these guidelines](#) produced by the European Commission could limit very much the application of this exception to trees. EURAF has already [contested the content of the guidelines](#) in this regard.

Within this European framework, Member States are granted some degree of freedom regarding the application of these rules. Most notably, Member States can:

- Choose their own tree density limit (always below the 100 tree/ha maximum).
- Apply the pro-rata system to permanent pastures, instead of the tree density limit.
- Create exceptions through Cross Compliance rules.

This latter option may be the most interesting one for Member States wanting to make agroforestry parcels fully eligible. The most obvious option is the Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition of land that protects landscape features - including trees and hedgerows (GAEC7). Some early examples are:

- In Spain, [the Ministry has protected by GAEC7](#): i) hedges and boundaries up to 10 m wide, ii) groups of trees with a surface area below 3000 m², iii) patches of natural vegetation below 1000 m².
- In France, the [Minister of Agriculture announced on 1st December 2014](#), that hedges will be protected by GAEC7. A similar protection will be offered for silvopastoral systems of pigs grazing in oak or chestnut forests (see last slides in [this presentation](#)). This approach is generating [in-depth debates among French associations](#).

Any doubts or news from your country? Please don't hesitate to contact us!

2 Regional Agroforestry News

2.1 Cross border meeting with Flemish and Walloon organizations active in agroforestry

On 3rd of February the 2nd cross border meeting between Walloon and Flemish organizations involved in agroforestry took place in Vollezele, near Brussels. The objective of this meeting was to set up a closer cooperation and to facilitate the knowledge exchange among agroforestry actors in Belgium. In total ten Flemish, eight Walloon organizations and several agroforestry pioneers from both regions participated.

In the morning we went to visit Louis-Marie Tennstedt's four year old plantation (see pictures below). He was happy to share his motivation to start with agroforestry and his first experiences and strategy for producing good quality timber from walnut and wild cherry. He believes that production on arable land should remain the main focus, but also thinks that the combination with trees could increase both, productivity and biodiversity. Louis-Marie Tennstedt established a windbreak in an alley cropping system by combining a wide variety of densely planted tree & shrub species and tree species with the potential to produce valuable timber. The windbreak acts as a buffer against runoff and erosion and as a shelter for a varied fauna. In addition it creates an optimal situation where the targeted species for valuable timber production are stimulated to grow tall and straight.



Fig. 1: Visiting Louis-Marie Tennstedt's four year old plantation.

In the afternoon participants had the chance to get to know better EURAF, and the different current projects and ongoing actions in both regions. This way people could get insights in how projects or initiatives can be matched, where to find relevant information or how collaboration can be forged.

This was elaborated more in depth during three parallel workshops on (1) the possibilities for research collaboration, (2) challenges with regard to subsidies and legislation and (3) actions on communication. Through this type of initiatives we hope to create a strong national and European network to improve collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Source: [Pieter Verdonckt](#), *Inagro*, February 2015.

2.2 Agroforestry news from Denmark and Sweden

Hedgerow planting in Denmark

Despite the great extension of agricultural land and farming tradition in Denmark, few formal agroforestry systems can be easily found. However, Denmark has a long tradition in hedgerow planting which has shaped and delineated Danish landscapes.

A detailed journey through the history of hedgerow planting in Denmark can be found on EURAF's [website](#).



Fig 2: Planting activities in Denmark with "Flying squads"

Source: [Mario Torralba Viorreta](#), Dep. of Geoscience and Natural Resource Management, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, February 2015. Mario started his PhD on silvopastoral systems in May 2014 and is contributing to the Agforward project's WP7.

Picture Source: [Det Danske Hedeselskab](#) (Danish Land Development Service).

Puttmyra Forest Garden, Sweden

Forest gardening has been on the rise in Sweden for a few years and is probably the most widespread agroforestry practice in use. There are many dozens of forest gardens in the country now, ranging from tiny backyard forest gardens to several thousand square meter large sites.

Discover the site characteristics, design and information about yields and practical experiences on EURAF's [website](#).

Source: [Philipp Weiss](#), [Puttmyra Forest Garden](#), February 2015.

2.3 Cultural oak landscape in Sweden

Sweden is one of the few countries in Europe in which remnant cultural oak landscapes still exist. Östergötland County has the largest remnants of cultural oak landscapes, and these currently cover around 18,000 hectares (Figure 3). Such oak landscapes are open wooded grasslands with scattered pediculate oak trees (*Quercus robur*), with a high diversity of beetles, butterflies and lichen species. Traditional mowed meadows and semi-natural pastures are also very valuable in terms of cultural heritage and recreational values for human well-being. These landscapes were traditionally used for animal husbandry, including grazing and hay-making. Restoration of the traditional landscape management has been implemented in some areas in order to restore the biodiversity and associated cultural values.

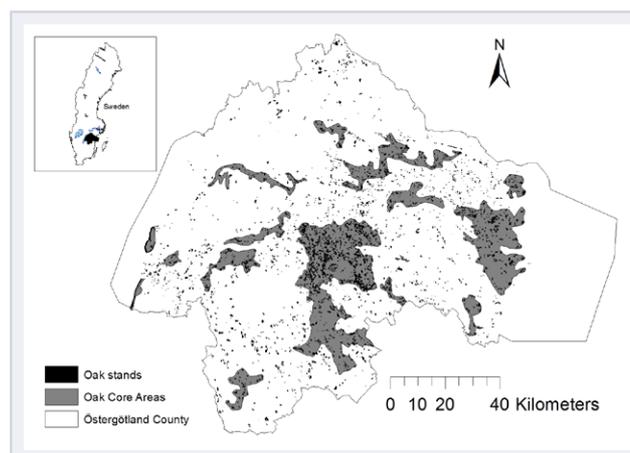


Fig. 3: The Östergötland county study area in Sweden. Valuable remnants of cultural oak landscapes are shown. Oak stands with high natural values (black areas) are a small proportion of the total oak stands. Oak core areas (grey areas) are high-value tracks.

The Cultural Oak Landscape in eyes of stakeholders

Ecosystem services provided by the cultural oak landscape vary among sectors and levels of governance. Civil, private and public sectors' stakeholders at local and regional level commonly appreciate biodiversity (supporting services), landscape beauty, recreation and eco-tourism (cultural services) as important for their well-being. Overall, cultural ecosystem services were the most important both at local and regional levels for all sectors, except for the private sector locally. At the local level, provisioning services (pastures, meat and crops) was more relevant for farmers and landowners. Traditional land management was considered crucial to generate the ecosystem services that people care about. In other European countries, the importance of cultural oak landscapes for biodiversity and human well-being has also been recognized; however, these landscapes are currently globally threatened by regeneration failure, land abandonment, land use intensification, urbanization, oak diseases, and overgrazing.

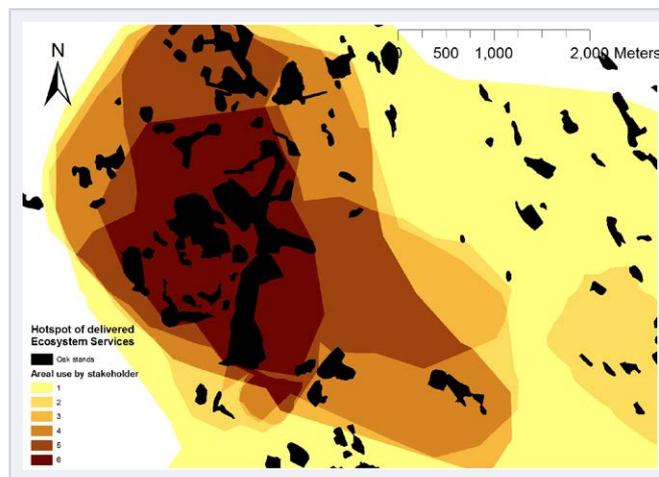


Fig. 4: Map of a nature reserve where the ecosystem services important for well-being of different stakeholder categories converged. Yellow symbolizes a single stakeholder's use, whereas dark represents the core area utilized by all seven stakeholder categories. Black patches denote the location of oak stands.

Cultural oak landscapes as a green infrastructure for human well-being?

The oak landscape in Östergötland serves as functional green infrastructure for people and their well-being at local level because it provides a wide range of ecosystem services to multiple users (figures 4 & 5). The role of active farmers enrolled in traditional management practices is crucial to maintain the landscape values important for people. Current challenges for sustaining the oak landscape in Sweden include oak regeneration failure, financial impediments related to Common Agricultural Policy, lack of farmers that practice traditional land management, urban sprawl and land use change.

There is a need to initiate integrated rural development alternatives to support traditional management practices, and thus secure the maintenance of multiple ecosystem services delivered by cultural oak landscapes. Comparative studies with reference oak landscapes, such as the dehesa system in Spain, are important to develop viable alternative solutions in the long term, and facilitate mutual learning among stakeholders from different sectors and at different levels of governance.



Fig. 5: The picture illustrates the identified hotspot area related to figure 4.

Source: [Pablo Garrido](#) and [Marine Elbakidze](#), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, School for Forest Management, Skinnskatteberg, Sweden, February 2015.

Further reading: [Cultural oak landscapes as green infrastructure for human well-being \(link\)](#); [Multi-purpose management of oak habitats. Examples of best practice from the county of Östergötland Sweden \(link\)](#).

3 Featured "Farm": Agroforestry on municipally owned sites - example Donzdorf (Germany)

Donzdorf is a city of 11.000 inhabitants in the Stuttgart area of Germany at the fringe of the Schwäbische Alb mountains. The region is located in the transitional zone between urban and rural area and characterized by its traditional fruit orchards.

Between 2007 and 2010 the city established five agroforestry plots with trees for valuable timber production on city-owned land, sized 0,15 to 0,75 ha. The city decided for valuable timber trees, among other reasons because it couldn't guarantee the maintenance of traditional orchard trees on the selected plots in the long-term.

The following tree species were planted, the bolded tree species are prevailing:

- Wild fruit trees: ***Prunus avium***, ***Sorbus torminalis***, ***Sorbus domestica***, *Malus sylvestris*
- **Traditional, fast-growing fruit varieties:** pears ('Gute Graue', 'Palmischbirne', 'Gellerts Butterbirne'), plums "Bühler Frühwetschge", 'Ersinger Frühwetschge'
- Walnuts : ***Juglans regia***, *Juglans nigra*, *Juglans x intermedia*
- Black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)

The trees were planted on extensive grassland. The land is mown, mulched and/or grassed by sheep.



Fig. 6: Traditional pear tree 'Gute Graue', *Prunus avium*, *Juglans x intermedia*, *Sorbus domestica*

Georg Krause, Donzdorf's environmental officer, explained that the agroforestry plots with valuable timber trees are not an alternative to traditional orchards, but a possible additional form of land use. Due to the use of fast-growing fruit varieties the plots resemble the traditional orchards and fit into the local landscape. The tree's ecological value is very important for the city: Georg Krause assumes that not all trees will show perfect growth; the trees concerned will not be replaced but can remain as habitat trees. He also explained that cultural landscapes with orchards were once developed and cultivated by man. Nowadays many orchards are in poor conditions or even disappear, e.g. because the market situation for orchard fruits is depressed. Using fruit trees to produce valuable timber generates an additional value and brings back the concept of use to areas with fruit trees.

In the meanwhile two of the plots have been approved as an eco-account (compensation balance) measure by the responsible local nature conservation authority. One of the areas is a 0,75 ha plot, planted in 2009 and 2010 with traditional orchard varieties, *Prunus avium*, *Sorbus torminalis*, *Sorbus domestica*, *Juglans regia* and *Juglans x intermedia*. The land is grassed by sheep. The distance between tree rows is 15m and within the rows 11m. The area integrates five traditional orchard trees. For the measure the city volunteered to make the following commitments:

Long-term preservation of remaining traditional orchard trees;

Permanent extensification of understory (grassland);

Trees can be cut at the earliest after 60 years, cut trees need to be replaced;

No clear cuts. Different tree species have varied growth rates, therefore a continuous regeneration of the tree stock is guaranteed;

10 % of trees remain untouched as habitat trees;

Installation of 5 nesting aids.



Fig 7: Grasslands with valuable timber trees around Donzdorf

When asked for practical tips for other communities or farmers, Georg Krause shared the following points: You have to pay sufficient attention to the trees in the establishment phase, mainly for pruning and tree protection measures. In the first years pruning requires sufficient time to examine the trees, e.g. *Prunus avium* and *Sorbus torminalis* grow very differently. The initially used wire meshes were repeatedly damaged while mowing or sheep rubbed against them and this led to tilted trees. For this reason Georg Krause is now installing more resistive protection (see above figures). Bent terminal leaders are a problem on one plot without grove structures in the surrounding. The trees are used as raised hides, e.g. by red-backed shrike, yellowhammer and dunnocks. Larger poles attached to the tree protection may be a possible solution in rather featureless landscapes.

Although working intensive in the establishment phase the management of the valuable timber plots can be mastered more easily by the city in the long-term compared to traditional orchards, e.g. longer trunks facilitate the management of the grassland and pruning is less labour intensive. This is one of the reasons why this new approach found broad approval and support within the local community and administration.

Source: Georg Krause, Donzdorf's environmental officer. Interviewer and author: Anja Chalmin (EURAF staff), February 2015.

Portugal: Acorn Symposium. Future of a food with a past.

Venue: Herdade do Freixo do Meio, March 20, 2015

A symposium dedicated to reinvigorate non-wood forest products from the Montado system for human consumption. [Link](#) to the programme. [Email address](#) for inscriptions/inquiries.

Source: Joao Palma, February 2015.

France: Agroforestry Symposium - Trees in Agriculture

Paris, Université Paris Descartes, March 20-21, 2015

The event is organized by AFAF and the Botanical Society of France. Please follow the [link](#) to learn further details (in French).

Source: AFAF newsletter, February 2015.

USA: 14th North American Agroforestry Conference

Ames (Iowa), May 31 - June 3, 2015

The conference is organized by AFTA (Association for Temperate Agroforestry). Invitation to submit abstracts via [email](#) before March 1st. Online conference registration will be opened on December 1st 2014 with early bird registration ending on March 15th 2015. Late registration will end on May 15th 2015. The conference registration link is [here](#).

Source: AFTA, February 2015.

This is your newsletter! If there's anything you think should be included, please pass suggestions to [euraf \[at\] agroforestry \[dot\] eu](mailto:euraf[at]agroforestry[dot]eu) for inclusion in the next issue.

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