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Climate Resilient Ecosystems

Biodiversity Conference 2015



Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

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Greening Shoots

While no-one can claim that the greening of our Common Agricultural Policy has slipped by unnoticed, perhaps it is still fair to say that amid all the negativity and criticism one thing has remained standing; there is now a broad agreement on all sides that the future of the CAP is inextricably bound to a new idea: Europe's land managers are responsible for environmental care and their provision of public goods should be rewarded.

This is, of course, a strategy that is of benefit to those far-sighted farmers and foresters who recognize the fundamental truth that biodiversity in all its forms sustains our business models. Without good soil, clean water and biodiversity contributions such as pollination our way of life and business cannot continue. These values have now been expanded by 30% in direct payments; a real answer to a genuine concern that is shared by us and the broader European public. Even if the end-results may not be what we wish, such new ways of thinking should be promoted and refined.

So, before we write off greening as a European policy failure, let us take a moment to recognize that we do not yet know much of anything. While we know that some of the intentions have been watered down and we can now see what the Member States wish to do in their implementation plans, we will not have any reasonable data on their outcomes until at least 2017. Until then, we should improve where and when we can, but let us not burn down a future before it has even had a chance to unfold.



Managing Europe's Carbon stocks for climate resilient ecosystems : 2015 European Biodiversity Conference

Europe's soils contain fifty times the amount of Greenhouse Gasses (GHG) that the EU emits annually. This means that soil management is central to the mitigation of the risks associated with climate change and Europe's landowners have an important role to play in this. That is why on the 9th of December 2015, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) organised the annual European Biodiversity Conference on the topic of soil carbon storage. A topic that was especially timely as the COP21 negotiations were taking place in Paris at the same time.

Fons WILMES, ELO



Thierry de l'ESCAILLE opened the 2015 European Biodiversity Conference with a reminder that climate change is a central issue for landowners, who are often the first to notice the adverse effects of global warming: *"The dangerous and destabilising effects of climate change, including droughts, storms and unstable weather patterns have a profound influence on Europe's biodiversity and agriculture"*. The European Landowners' Organization sees the need for sustainable land management, involving the reduction of GHG emissions, but also better management of existing carbon stocks.

The keynote speaker, Daniel CALLEJA CRESPO (Director General of DG Environment) echoed this point on the importance of sustainable land management, noting that climate change is clearly the main crisis facing the EU. Unfortunately, the most recent assessment of the state of Europe's environment by the European Environment Agency showed that there is not enough progress on this issue. He noted that, even though *"there is a range of EU funding instruments which can provide support for implementing these approaches, it is already clear that public financing will not be sufficient. Stepping up financing from the private sector is therefore a key priority."* Other barriers included the lack of data on the existing stock of carbon in Europe's soils and on the effect of certain land management solutions on the potential for carbon storage.

In responding to the issues brought up by the Director General, Alan MATTHEWS (Professor, European Agricultural Policy, Trinity College), emphasised that *"safeguarding and improving European soil carbon stocks implies working at two levels: protecting existing carbon-rich soils and encouraging farmers to rebuild impoverished soils"*. Farmers should have the proper incentives to manage the carbon



Bertrand MONTHUIR and his mother receive the Belleuropa Award from Francesco NATTA, Founder of the Award

It has become tradition that the Biodiversity Conference is also where the Belleuropa Award is presented. This year, the owners of the French *Le Bois Landry Estate* were the winners for their capacity to raise awareness of the environmental measures to a broad audience, as well as for their innovative forestry methods that combine production, eco-tourism and nature preservation.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/belleuropa-award>

(Red)

stocks in their soils. He noted that the European Commission is currently working on addressing this issue, but that if the remuneration is based on the current price of emissions under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), a farmer with a 100 ha farm could earn only 500 to 1000 euros from the good management of soil carbon stocks. A higher price under the ETS could help to provide better incentives. Furthermore, structural policy issues like the fact that pillar 1 payments give incentives for monocultures and intensification, need

to be addressed. However, there is no need to throw out the current regulatory framework completely; cross-compliance and greening measures under pillar 1 are already helping to preserve soil cover.

Peter WEHRHEIM (Head of Unit, Climate Change and Deforestation at DG CLIMA) stressed that the lack of good estimates regarding the stock of carbon in Europe's soils is largely due to the complexity of the processes involved. For a factory, it is very easy to measure GHG emissions but

storage of carbon in the soil is a complicated process that involves both storage and emission. Nevertheless, he notes that agriculture plays a significant role as both a source of GHG emissions and an opportunity for their removal. He noted that the Nationally Determined Contributions, which are central to the COP21 negotiations, reflect the importance of such measures. Over 100 countries have included land management solutions, which combined would contribute 20-25% to the reduction of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions.

The fact that land management can contribute significantly to the mitigation of the risks was echoed by Pieter de POUS (Policy Director at the European Environmental Bureau), who argued that the efforts in the agricultural sector should come on top of the already agreed upon reductions, they should not be used to compensate a lack of effort in other industries. Soils are central to this as they are the biggest store of carbon, besides the oceans. He emphasised that “*unless we put in place a legally binding EU wide framework, Europe’s soils will be unprotected and at risk of erosion, depletion and being paved over*”. The current framework, and especially the CAP, should be reviewed in order to achieve this. In this sense, the ongoing Fitness Check of the EU’s nature legislation could provide an opportunity for change.

Nathaniel PAGE (Director of Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania) came back on Mr. CALLEJA CRESPO’s point on the lack of good data, noting that the little available data only covers the types of agriculture that are typical in Western-Europe and that too little information is available on agriculture in Eastern-Europe, where land abandonment is a real issue. Furthermore, he noted that preserving landscape complexity – for example mixed cropping, semi-natural grasslands and features such as hedges, trees and wetlands – could greatly increase carbon storage, and increase resilience against changing climate. Through good management “*Europe’s surviving nature-rich landscapes now have an additional role: beyond providing biodiversity, food security and rural livelihoods, they are also models for climate change mitigation and adaptation.*”

The presentations were followed by the debate with the participants moderated by conference chair Tim BREITMEYER, farmer and CLA Vice-President.



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Delivery Workshop on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) Brussels, 15th-16th December 2015

The MAES initiative is an important step towards encouraging and enabling the implementation of ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to safeguard biodiversity. It is also an important initiative to raise awareness of the relevance of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides to society.

Anne TELLER, Senior Expert, DG ENVI, Unit Biodiversity, European Commission

The MAES initiative is an important step towards encouraging and enabling the implementation of ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to safeguard biodiversity. It is also an important initiative to raise awareness of the relevance of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides to society.

The MAES workshop, held before the Christmas break and organised by the European Commission, provided a unique opportunity to review the progress made so far on mapping and assessment of the state of ecosystems and their services in Europe (cf. Action 5 under Target 2 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020). Its opening session highlighted the strong linkages with the regional assessment for Europe and Central Asia being currently undertaken by the Inter-governmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). This first exchange clearly demonstrated how the two initiatives could complement one another and how the community of practice could be reinforced in Europe.

The workshop was accompanied by a Christmas Fair co-organised with the Belgian platform on Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services (BEES). It was well attended especially by stakeholders who presented how the outputs of MAES can be used to support decision making at EU, national and local levels. The ELO took an active part in the fair as well and welcomed interested participants on its stand presenting the landowners’ role in the provision of ecosystem services.

The second day focused on the interface with the scientific community to make Member States and stakeholders aware of the latest scientific developments on ecosystem assessments and to raise questions on issues encountered when implementing MAES work. The workshop, attended by about 150 participants, was very successful and clearly showed that there is a need for continuous exchanges between a broad range of actors at all scales.

European Bee Award Ceremony 2015

Pollinators took centre stage in Brussels at the 2015 European Bee Award Ceremony, hosted by Franc BOGOVIČ MEP. The Dutch project "Bee Deals" and the "Czech Bumblebee" project were awarded for their contribution to biodiversity and bee-friendly farming.



Ana CANOMANUEL, Award coordinator

The Dutch project "Bee Deals" and the "Czech Bumblebee" project, emerged from the 23 applications received by the jury in the second edition of the award, established in 2014 by the European Landowners' Organization and the European Agricultural Machinery Association (CEMA). As Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General of ELO said during the ceremony: *"there are many ways that we can show our support for bees, but I believe today's winners have shown us that the best way of protecting pollinators in the field is by acting together."*

With pollination a vital component of the entire European countryside, the Bee award is given out to those farmers and land managers who help these vital species flourish through practical and innovative projects. The contest was launched in 2014 by the European Landowners' Organization and the European Agricultural Machinery Association (CEMA) with the aim of contributing to the promotion of common solutions for the benefit of biodiversity.

The Award rewards farmers, landown-

ers, land managers or rural entrepreneurs who contribute with an outstanding and innovative project to the protection of bees and other pollinators in the farmed environment. Two prizes are awarded: the winning project receives a prize of 5,000€ and the second highest ranked project will receive a prize of 2,500€ together with a diploma.

More than 100 participants attended the award ceremony, including representatives of the EU institutions, civil society and the agri-food sector who came together to celebrate bees, exchange best practices, and show the best way forward. A bee hotel from the winning project was displayed and participants received a sample of homemade Belgian honey and a seed mixture bag to encourage them to plant more wild flowers in their own gardens.

An independent jury chaired by Professor GODFRAY (University of Oxford) and supported by international experts, members of the European Institutions and NGOs is in charge of assessing which practices and innovative ideas in agricul-

ture can contribute to preserve the health of pollinators in Europe (e.g. honey bees, bumble bees, flies, butterflies). Walter HAEFEKER, President of the European Beekeepers Association and Ladislav MIKO, deputy Director General of DG SANTE, represented the Members of the Jury during the Award Ceremony.

"On behalf of the agricultural machinery industry, we are pleased to see the winner projects clearly showcased that research and the use of smart technologies in agriculture, especially in spraying operations, can greatly contribute to preserve pollinators' environment" said Gilles DRYANCOUR, CEMA Honorary President and partner of the award.

To learn more about the 2015 winners, visit: www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/bee-award

For more information on the European Bee Award, please contact the Award Coordinator at ana.canomanuel@elo.org



Winners Jenneke van Vliet (Bee Deals) and Jan Nedelnik (Czech Bumblebee) with the members of the Jury (from left to right): Walter Haefeker – EPBA, Thierry de L'Escaille – ELO, Franc Bogovic MEP, Ladislav Miko – European Commission, Gilles Dryancour – CEMA.

UK referendum on the EU – implications of Brexit for UK agriculture

A UK referendum to remain or leave the European Union will take place on 23 June 2016.

Allan BUCKWELL



Should there follow a decision to ‘leave’ the Treaties define a two-year withdrawal negotiation period. During this time Britain will have to settle its trading relationship with the EU, with the rest of the world, and it will have to define British Agricultural Policy (BAP) to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The earliest date of exit would be 31/12/2018, and this could slip to 2021, i.e. after the end of the current financial and CAP period.

The EU trade question is fundamentally a choice between remaining close to the EU single market, and therefore having to retain most EU existing regulation, and contribute to the EU budget, or leaving the single market in order to allow de-regulation.

Whichever outcome, there will be more customs controls, and thus higher trading costs, than now on trade with the EU (both ways). These could depress UK farm prices and raise some consumer costs – the more so if tariffs are introduced in trade with the EU. If the UK then chooses lower protection levels on agriculture with the rest of the world this would also depress some UK farmer prices, but reduce consumer costs. Therefore, UK farmers might face weaker prices, whilst consumer food prices, on balance, may not be much affected.

UK domestic agricultural support will not be higher than now under the CAP, and could well be lower. It is likely that a UK government will continue with some direct payments to farmers – but for how long, with what conditions is unknown. Aspects of rural development policy are also likely to continue. UK policy could be less risk averse and more positive with respect to agricultural technology. The details of these policies will diverge between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

These large uncertainties will reduce confidence and investment in agriculture. Badly handled, they could turn the current farming recession into depression. Land rents could adjust fast, lending to agriculture may tighten and land prices could fall. Everything depends on the speed and clarity of the emergence of the new British trade and agricultural policy.

EU direct payments are decoupled from production, so agricultural production effects of any payment cuts will be small; producer and consumer effects will mostly arise from changes in trading arrangements.

The effects of these changes will cause some disruption and hardship in the short run. Farms most vulnerable are those most dependent on current payments, for

example the grazing livestock sector, and farms which are heavily borrowed.

However, markets for all inputs and services to farming will adjust to these shocks, and processors and retailers will be concerned to ensure continuity of supplies. Farmers themselves will adjust; there is much scope to improve UK agricultural productivity which has slipped compared to other EU countries. There could be a catalytic effect of Brexit with beneficial long-run effects for the sector as a whole.

A UK exit could have profound impacts on the EU itself. It would be a severe political shock, and could precipitate other exits. At very least it will necessitate a revised budget to remedy the short fall of the UK contribution, and this may itself lead to a re-think of the CAP.

From a UK countryside and environmental perspective there are strong downside risks associated with these potential developments. Much therefore depends on how the opportunity to design a new British rural policy better tuned to UK needs is grasped.

It is hard to predict the outcome of the referendum. The polls to date show ‘remain’ and ‘leave’ fluctuating and closely balanced but with significant numbers still undecided. This author expects the uncertainties surrounding ‘leave’ will mean the status quo will prevail and the UK will remain in the EU. However, the referendum debate will expose, yet again, that current CAP is not well tuned to support environmentally sustainable and viable farming. The so-called ‘reformed EU’ will still have an insufficiently reformed agricultural policy.

Editors' Note:

This article is based on the author's report for the UK's Worshipful Company of farmers "Agricultural Implications of Brexit", which is available through the website <http://www.farmerslivery.org.uk/>

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The Internet of Rural Things

Here in Brussels - and presumably in many capitals and villages across Europe - we often tend to make a fundamental mistake. If someone were to mention "agricultural innovation", many would first think of GM technology and the (interminable) debate over its benefits and drawbacks.

Robert de GRAEFF, Policy and Research Officer, ELO

However, behind all that rhetoric and noise, there are other changes coming to a hectare near you: new tools, techniques and technology that can change the world of farming as we know it today. Drones, ground sensors, Big Data, short supply chains, and so much more are being developed in Europe today, and there is no doubt about the benefits of these technologies, or the willingness of most to accept them.

The arrival of the high-speed, high-tech data revolution is at the forefront. At so many events, including our own yearly Innovation Conference, we have seen extraordinary images and new tools emerging from rural broadband connections. We are now seeing the first (relatively) affordable generation of drones floating above our fields, and with their feedback farmers will be able to micro-manage their pesticide and nitrogen loading. This will not just benefit their businesses by reducing excess use, but by preventing run-off and overloading, they provide immense benefit to our ecosystems as well.

Combine a new drone with a high-tech tractor and the next generation of soil sensors that can tell you about irrigation and soil nutrition, and the results can be spectacular. Together, these dispa-



rate innovations cannot just help farmers and foresters be more environmentally friendly and profitable, but they will also be of immense use as a feedback tool. If we can properly automate our system we could do away with the entire bureaucracy of farm spot checks, endless reams of papers to be filled out and lack of sufficient data to see if, for instance, the new greening of the CAP has the right effects.

However, in this new age dominated by Big Data, we must not forget to be critical. There is still too much that is unclear when it comes to who owns all this data, who can share it and who makes use of it. The question of data ownership is already on the front page when it comes to social media, email traffic and other personal questions, and it would be wise to develop a legislative framework for countryside applications. While the premise of Big Data technology inevitably rests on being able to bundle data streams to make sensible conclusions, we should have a genuine concern over data ownership and privacy concerns, especially when it comes to profiting off such data and its use.

Another question is that of privacy in an age of drones; a number of our members have already seen recreational drones, often equipped with cameras, float over their land. We would hardly be tolerant of any person snapping pictures in our gardens or on our farms, and drones are essentially little different. Here, too, both those using drones and those caught in their lenses need clarity and sensible regulation.

Finally, all the promise held by these revolutions rests on the currently weak shoulders of rural access to fast and reliable broadband connections. Today, some members states such as Malta and The Netherlands have already achieved 100% coverage, but many countries still (far) behind. It is unacceptable that only 25% of those living in rural, remote, and mountainous areas have the vital arteries that can transmit our data. Europe, its Member States, and the private sector should act now so that land managers everywhere are in a position to transform their business.

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Fostering Sustainable Feedstock Production for Advanced Biofuels on underutilized land in Europe (FORBIO)

Together with 11 partners, the ELO has signed a Horizon 2020 grant agreement with the Innovative & Networks Executive Agency (INEA), starting as of January 1st 2016 and running for three years. The Kick-off meeting took place on the 14th and 15th of January in Budapest.

FORBIO

The main goals of FORBIO is to demonstrate the viability of using land, in EU member states and beyond, for non-food bioenergy feedstock production without affecting the production of food and feed, or interfering with land currently used for recreational and/or conservational purposes.

As underlined in the proposal, the competition with other uses of the land is only one component of the sustainability of bioenergy and a number of cross-cutting environmental, social and economic aspects may present challenges to the extended deployment of competitive bioenergy value chains, while assuring that biofuel sustainability standards are met.

Therefore, FORBIO's target is to develop a methodology to assess bioenergy production potential on available "underutilized lands" in Europe (contaminated, abandoned, fallow land, etc.) at national and local level. The project will provide multiple feasibility studies in selected case study locations – Germany, Italy and Ukraine - aiming to set the basis for building up local bioenergy value chains that meet the highest sustainability standards and improving efficiency and sustainability of those already available in the case study sites through the provision of roadmaps for bioenergy development.

The project identified 5 objectives to be achieved, divided in six Work Packages:

1. Identification of social, economic, environmental and governance-related opportunities and challenges for advanced bioenergy deployment through a series of multi-stakeholder consultations
2. Evaluation of the agronomic and techno-economic potential of the select-



- ed advanced bioenergy value chains in the case study sites of the target countries
3. Assessment of the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the selected advanced bioenergy value chains in the target countries
4. Analysis of the economic and non-economic barriers to the market uptake of the selected sustainable bioenergy technologies; and development of strategies to remove the aforementioned barriers, including identification of roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders
5. Encouraging European farmers to produce non-food bioenergy carriers and capacity building of economic actors and other relevant stakeholders for setting up sustainable bioenergy supply chains

For more information on the project and our activities please visit www.forbio-project.eu or contact Marie-Alice BUDNIOK or Emmanuelle MIKOSZ.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No691846.



The Thousand Year Old Lime

European Tree of the Year 2016: 15 trees from 15 countries on competition

The voting period for electing the European Tree of the Year takes place during the month of February. Fifteen magnificent trees compete for the title this year, and everyone can have a say on the ranking by voting online for their favorite one!

Winners will be announced in Brussels on April 20th at a festive Award Ceremony organized together with the Environmental Partnership Association, the European Landowners Organization and Tetrapak.

Ana CANOMANUEL, Communication officer



During the month of February, people from all over Europe voted online at www.treeoftheyear.org for their favorite candidate to become the European Tree of the Year 2016. The competition promises to be intense, with fifteen fascinating stories and remarkable trees from Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech republic, England, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Poland, Scotland, Slovakia, Spain and Wales.

"We are very keen on the social and environmental impact of the contest. This is why this year we are also promoting individual donations to help protect European trees, by encouraging people to think of their donations as hugging a tree" explains Michal VESELY, Managing Director of the Environmental Partnership Association, organiser of the European Tree of the Year.

Two new countries have joined this new edition of the contest, organized at European level since 2011, Germany and Northern Ireland. The German tree is a remarkable lime tree under which the champion marksman of the municipality is proclaimed every year. The Northern Irish candidate stands a historical reminder of peace and remembrance.

Beccy SPEIGHT, Chief Executive of the Woodland Trust, organizer of the Tree of the Year in the British Isles said: *"Tree of the Year connects people to their heritage and demonstrates that people all over Europe love trees. All important trees need to be protected so that future generations can continue to enjoy them"*.

The 2016 Award Ceremony of the European Tree of the Year will take place at the

The European Tree of the Year highlights the significance of trees in the natural and cultural heritage that deserves our care and protection. The contest is not looking for the most beautiful tree, but for a tree with a story, a tree rooted in the lives of the people and the community that surrounds it. The winning trees are celebrated in Brussels at the Award Ceremony taking place in spring.

www.treeoftheyear.org

Cercle Gaulois in Brussels on April 20th under the patronage of RNDr Pavel POC MEP, Vice-Chair, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety of the European Parliament.

Hug a tree!

Donate to protect trees in Europe and join our community of tree lovers by sharing your tree hugging picture with the hashtag #ETYtreehugger on Instagram @treeoftheyear www.treeoftheyear/donate.aspx



Halting Europe's Biodiversity Crisis: the Role of Rural Stakeholders



The Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside" organised a meeting on the 27th of January 2016 dedicated to the "Mid-Term Review: The Role of Hunters and Rural Stakeholders in Financing Biodiversity Conservation".

Delphine DUPEUX, ELO

The purpose of the meeting was to better understand which policies can contribute to halting the ongoing loss of biodiversity within the EU in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The workshop emphasized the importance of rural stakeholders in the management of biodiversity and the need of appropriate instruments and incentives. Among the speakers were Dr Justin IRVINE from the James Hutton Institute in Scotland, Konstantin KOSTOPOULOS, Advisor at ELO, Dr David SCALLAN, Wildlife Policy Officer at FACE and Dr Norbert LINS, German MEP and Shadow Rapporteur for the Report on the Mid-Term review of the Biodiversity Strategy 2020. A particular focus was set on the financing of biodiversity with regard to the targets set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

"The Common Agricultural Policy remains the strongest tool we have, certainly in



terms of funding, that we can use to create sustainable agricultural systems that work for farmers, foresters, hunters as well as biodiversity and our ecosystems. In the coming years, we will see if the new greening approach has worked, and what more we can and should do in order to halt and

reverse losses in biodiversity" argued Mr KOSTOPOULOS.

For more information please visit:
<http://www.europeanlandowners.org/intergroup>

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REVAB: REuse and Valorisation of Agricultural Buildings through training based on real experiences

In the last years rural areas have been facing hard challenges: the unemployment rate in predominantly rural regions of the EU is 11% compared to 8.5% in the EU and the enormous consumption of agricultural land for settlement, traffic and industry. This has led the loss of centers of rural living when there are no further uses for existing agricultural buildings. The potential for reuse of existing agricultural buildings is huge, but there is a lack of possibilities to get to real experiences in this field from entrepreneur to entrepreneur.

Access to training is a key factor that needs to be improved: the share of population participating to lifelong learning courses in rural areas of the EU-27, reached 6.6%, which was lower than in urbanised (8.4%) and densely-populated areas (11.1%).

Another challenge that EU rural areas are facing is the enormous consumption of agricultural land. According to the Corine Land Cover data, between 2000 and 2006 the surface reduction of arable land, permanent crops, pastures and mosaics has been of more than 500.000 ha in Europe. At the same time traditional centres of rural living get lost because there are no further concepts for the use of existing buildings. This is especially worrying when one realizes that the main use most village centres is or was agricultural. The use of such real estate is essential for the attractiveness of villages as living spaces provide one of the main attractions of rural life.

Therefore the ELO together with Hof und Leben GmbH, On Projects Advising SL, Asaja - Granada, CIA Toscana and AGRITOUR Ltd. signed a grant agreement under the funding programme Erasmus+/KA2/Strategic Partnerships for VET with as starting date the 2nd of November 2015 for the duration of 30 months. From the beginning of February the *Związek Pracodawców-Dzierżawców i Właścicieli Rolnych (ZPDIWR)* based in Bydgoszcz will support the coordinator, ELO, in all tasks linked to Polish cases as well as in the dissemination of the final results of the e-learning course.

The aims of the **REVAB** project are:

- to foster the entrepreneurial approach of the use of existing agricultural build-



La Casinazza, agricultural building transformed in conference venue

ings in different regions of Europe (IT, ES, BG, DE, PL)

- to stimulate rural entrepreneurs, rural land and real estate owners and young farmers to think about possibilities of (re-) use and valorization of existing agricultural real estate and farmstead respecting economic, ecologic and social effects
- to avoid further consumption of agricultural land through settlement and industrial real estate.

In the end, the REVAB project will produce the first comprehensive, flexible and fully open-source training system for the reuse and valorization of agricultural buildings. As one of the main training tools of the system will be case studies, trainees will have the opportunity of

learning through real successful experiences and, for the first time, an entrepreneurial exchange about the topic will be possible on regional, on national as well as on European level. The **REVAB** training system will include all the aspects of sustainability (social, environmental and cultural) in addition to pure economics and will be achieved through the use of ICT and e-learning.

For more information follow us on www.revab-erasmus.eu or contact directly Marie-Alice BUDNIOK or Emmanuelle MIKOSZ.



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63rd General Assembly of the CIC 22-23 April 2016, Brussels

In 1967, Belgium hosted the General Assembly of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation and there debated the great issues around hunting at the time. Forty years on, one can immediately recognize that hunting is quite different today than it was then.



One thing, however, has not changed: hunting still has to be explained, justified and stood up for. Its legitimacy as an activity is constantly questioned. Is hunting useful or necessary? Does it still have a *raison d'être*?

This is the reason why we chose the following (somewhat provocative) statement as the topic for our next Assembly: „Hunting is conservation“. While we know this is an absolute certainty, the hunting situation today begs the question: what if hunting was to disappear? This is an important debate, especially during our meetings and discussions with all the actors of nature conservation; amongst others within the CPW (Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management).

What would happen if hunting was to disappear? In terms of overpopulation, overgrazing, poaching, damage or confrontation against a demographic pressure that is more and more present. What would happen if hunting's mission of habitat conservation was to disappear? In terms of widespread exhaustion of the natural environments and of biodiversity? In terms as well of the total disappearance of certain biotopes, vital for our planet's survival? And what about the socio-economic impact?

CIC Team

Please visit the website of the General Assembly for more information:
www.cicbrussels2016.eu.

The ELO thanks Dr. Jürgen HARTMANN



After 17 years of intense activity for the Association of Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany, Dr. Jürgen HARTMANN said farewell to his colleagues of all German Landowners Associations. Since 1997 he was both the German delegate to the ELO Policy Group in Brussels as well as board member in the German Federation of Landowners Associations in Berlin. At the same time he acted as managing director of the board of his association (Rhineland- Palatinate and Saarland).

He made his successful political carrier as Secretary of state in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest Affairs of Thuringia before turned his profound knowledge and experience to the care and protection of German and European landowners. All those who met him gained immeasurably from his knowledge and experience. We are extremely grateful for his contributions and wish him all the best in the future.

The ELO Staff

EU Agricultural Outlook Conference

This two-day event took place in Brussels in the beginning of December 2015, providing an opportunity for a broad exchange of views on the state of agriculture, and the global issues which lie ahead.

On the first day of the conference, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil HOGAN and US Secretary for Agriculture Tom VILSACK discussed the challenges facing the farm sector. In addition, high-level panel discussions took place highlighting the challenge for agriculture to provide food in an environmentally sustainable way while adapting to/mitigating the effects of climate change. The functioning of the food supply chain was also at the centre of the debates. Senior representatives of the European institutions, and leading experts from international organisations participated in these debates.

On the second day of the conference, the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development presented its latest projections on the outlook for EU dairy, meat and arable crop markets for the next ten years.

All presentations are available through the link http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/2015-outlook-conference_en.htm

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Diary dates

3rd March, Brussels, Committee of the Regions

Solid biomass in European Protected Areas: Sustainable supply chain models
www.bioeuparks.eu

31 March to 2 April, Kaunas, Lithuania

AgroBalt 2016 – largest international exhibition in the Baltic region
<http://www.agrobalt.lt/en/programmeofexhibition/>

4 – 6 April, Czech Republic

International conference on current situation of family farming within the EU – organised by the Association of Private Farming of the Czech Republic (ELO member); followed by International Fair Trade TECHAGRO (in Brno)

Please contact kamila.lohrova@asz.cz

20th April, Brussels

Award Ceremony of the European Tree of the Year 2016 – organised by the Environmental Partnership Association (EPA) and ELO

www.treeoftheyear.org

22 - 23 April, Brussels

CIC General Assembly
<http://cicbrussels2016.eu>

11 - 12 May, Bratislava

Forest Europe Expert Level meeting
www.foresteurope.org

18 – 20 May, Oeiras, Portugal

2nd International Meeting on Mediterranean Stone Pine for Agroforestry
<http://agropine2016.iniav.pt>

21st May, European Natura 2000 Day, all over EU

European Natura 2000 Day & Natura 2000 Award Ceremony – organised by the European Commission DG Environment
<http://www.natura2000day.eu>

26 - 29 May, Wolfsburg, Germany

19th General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside in Lower Saxony
<http://www.friendsofthecountryside.org/>

30 May to 3 June, Brussels

Green Week 2016 “Investing for a greener future”
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/index_en.html



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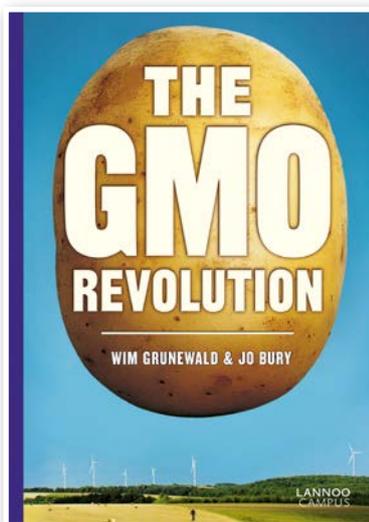
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The GMO revolution

Wim GRUNEWALD, Jo BURY

Ed. LannooCampus

ISSN 9789401432191



With this book Belgian scientists want to offer insight into how GM crops can be useful in solving the current and future issues facing agriculture. The book focusses on what benefits of this technology there for the environment, the farmer and the consumer rather than on how recombinant DNA technology works.

The GMO revolution gives a facts-based and nuanced overview of the impact of current and future GM applications and introduces the reader with a plethora of different crops: from potato to brinjal, from rice to corn, from eucalyptus to cotton, from banana to papaya.

The GMO revolution is a highly accessible and easy to read book and is a must for anyone who wants to know more about GM crops and the opportunities that plant biotechnology can offer. The book can be ordered online through www.bol.com, through the online shop of Lannoo Campus (<http://www.lannoo.be>) or through Amazon.

Wim GRUNEWALD is a bioengineer and obtained his PhD in applied biological sciences. After having worked as a researcher for 10 years in various fields of molecular plant biology, he is now employed by the VIB life sciences institute as an agrobiotechnology expert.

Jo BURY is a qualified pharmacist and has a PhD in biochemistry. After having served as a scientific advisor at IWT, he founded VIB together with Rudy DEKEYSER. He has been managing director of VIB since 1996.

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Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission (EC)

Janez Potočnik, Chair FFA2016, Chairman Rise Foundation

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of The Earth Institute, Columbia University

Achim Steiner, Director General, United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP)

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