Protecting permanent pastures in France

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Protecting permanent pastures

- Maintain the envelope
  - Conversion into artificialised land
  - Not in the scope of CAP

- Maintain the ratio of PP/UAA
  - Conversion into arable land
  - Abandonment
  - GAEC ratio PP
  - Admissible areas SFP

- Maintain the quality of PP
  - Intensification
  - Eligibility criteria of payments
  - Admissible areas SFP
  - (GAEC good maintenance)
  - Encroachment
Definitions of permanent pastures in France

- **Agricultural science**
  - Areas not included in rotational systems (i.e. succession of different crops) and used as forage for livestock
  - Grass is not the only forage
  - The case for moorland/heather (« landes ») in habitat directive: explicit pastured ligneous vegetation

- **Official definition of PP**
  - “areas devoted to grass production or other herbaceous forage crops, in place for 5 years or more (except fallow lands). These permanent pastures are named whether permanent grasslands, temporary grassland more than 5 years old, moorland, heath and rangelands”
  - Should comply with the “local usual norms” as set at départemental level (NUTS 3 – 95 départements in France)
**Grassland**

permanent grassland devoted to hay sold off farm [F1]
permanent grassland [PN]
temporary grassland devoted to hay sold off farm [F2]
temporary grassland more than 5 years devoted to hay sold off farm [F3]
temporary grassland more than 5 years [PX]
alpine and summer mountain pastures ("alpages et estives") [ES]

Moorland, heath and rangeland ("landes et parcours") [LD]
lineeous rangeland (for Corsica only) [C6]
Payments attached to surfaces

- **All forage areas:**
  - Decoupled SFP
  - SFP productive grassland “herbe productive”
  - LFA payments (in designated areas only)

- **On grassland only:**
  - Pillar 2 AE grassland premium (PHAE II)
The importance of « local usual norms »

« Arrêté préfectoral » (local decree) sets:

- The admissible forage area and defines permanent pastures (a de facto GAEC as it sets effective use by cattle)
- The minimal maintenance rules (GAEC):
  - minimum stocking density and productivity
  - By default in France: 0.2 LU/ha – 1 t dry matter/ha
- Management of landscape features (hedges, ponds,...) and their share in admissible forage area
- Some départements issue photographic reference guide
3 examples

Saône et Loire

Gard

Ariège
Example 1 : Saône-et-Loire

- Definition of permanent pastures: strictly grass – need to be used for livestock production

Admissible GAEC OK

Non admissible

Admissible but GAEC not OK
Example 2 : Ariège

- Definition of permanent pastures: mainly grass, but particular cases – need to be used for livestock production

Admissible GAEC OK

Non admissible

Admissible but GAEC not OK
Example 3 : Gard
(photos from a technical note Aude)

- Definition of permanent pastures: need to be used for livestock production, ligneous admissible
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admissible GAEC OK</th>
<th>Non admissible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTUAL USE BY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NOT USED BY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVESTOCK AND DEGREE</td>
<td>LIVESTOCK (OR TOO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OF “OPENING”</td>
<td>OCCASIONALLY)</td>
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Setting the limits and thresholds is crucial
Find a balance between control simplicity and variety of livestock systems
Maintenance of permanent pasture

- Loss of 160,000 ha of permanent grassland in 2009
  - 2005 ratio altered by 2.3%
- Implementation of a on farm requirement from 2010 onwards
- Maintenance of the surface of each category
  - Temporary grassland more than 5 years old
  - Permanent grassland
  - (50% of area of temporary grassland <5 years must be maintained)
- Not applicable for designated area:
  - Possible to plough a PP and declare a field newly seeded with grass as a PP (!)
- Reference year: 2010 (re !)
Intensification

- A background trend in France
- A payment system favourable to an intensification up to 1.4 LU/ha of forage area
  - Maximum for PHAE II (76 €/ha)
  - Productive grassland premium 80 €/ha if LU/ha > 0.8 and 50 €/ha below
- A logical strategy: decrease the permanent pasture area lowering the stocking density
  - Concentrate on the ‘easiest’ areas
  - In larger farms, replace natural forage with purchased feed
- A side effect on land abandonment
Three key messages

- Needs of local norms in order to adapt to the variety of livestock systems — France shows that it is feasible
  - Science based studies in order to set the limits
  - Most important criteria: effective use by livestock

- On-farm requirements for the maintenance of permanent pastures: a major step but needs to be more explicit on the PP aimed at (extensive ones)

- Risk of on-going intensification not addressed: towards a pillar 1 payment?