



Policy mechanisms affecting permanent pastures – issues and instruments

Guy Beaufoy
www.efncp.org

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EUROPEAN FORUM ON
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CAP has specific aims for permanent pasture since 2003, because of its positive environmental effects

- to maintain the existing area of permanent pasture
- to maintain it under minimum maintenance
- to avoid habitat deterioration



New biodiversity targets proposed by EC – integral part of Europe 2020 Strategy

- ❑ Aim is to maintain all habitats covered by EU legislation
- ❑ 20% of these habitats are farmland habitats
- ❑ These are ALL semi-natural permanent pastures
- ❑ They are the EU habitat group in worst condition and most threatened by agricultural intensification on better land and abandonment on poorer land



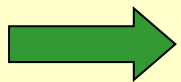
Commission Communication on CAP towards 2020 – some good pointers for reform

- ❑ **active management by farming** is one important tool to maintain the rural landscape, **to combat biodiversity loss...**
- ❑ adaptations of the direct payment system relate to the **redistribution, redesign** and better **targeting** of support, to add value and quality in spending.
- ❑ criteria should be both economic, in order to fulfil the basic income function of direct payments, **and environmental**, so as **to support** for the provision of **public goods**



Joint Commissioners' letter on CAP reform summarises nicely how Pillar 1 should work

- ❑ The CAP today makes a crucial contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources by ensuring **through direct payments** an active presence across the EU of farmers managing land...



BUT this is NOT the reality for large areas of semi-natural permanent pasture

Pillar 2 IS doing this in some areas but not consistently “across the EU”



To make these aspirations a reality, policy makers need to be clear about:

- What is permanent pasture, and what is its true extent?
- What are the public goods of the different types of permanent pasture?
- What is « active farming » of permanent pasture, especially for delivery of public goods?
- What are the **threats** to this **activity** and to these **goods**?
- What is best policy response to these threats?



Policy mechanisms we are considering

- ❑ Permanent pasture definition under the CAP
- ❑ Eligibility criteria for direct payments
- ❑ Control of permanent pasture area (ratio to UAA)
- ❑ Cross-compliance:
 - GAEC minimum maintenance, avoiding deterioration of habitats, landscape features, unwanted vegetation
 - SMRs – EIA Directive
- ❑ Pillar 1 « greening » options for permanent pasture



Permanent pasture (PP) definition for CAP

- ❑ *Land used to grow grasses or other **herbaceous** forage naturally (self-seeded) or through cultivation (sown) and that has not been included in the crop rotation of the holding for five years or longer*
- ❑ Under this definition we include PP that is ploughed and reseeded as grassland every 2-3 years – in what sense is this permanent? Should it be in PP?



Eligibility criteria for CAP direct payments are necessary, and seem reasonable:

- ❑ Total parcel area is eligible according to « customary standards of the Member State... »
- ❑ Landscape features may be included according to « good agricultural cropping or utilisation practices... »
- ❑ *“an agricultural parcel that contains trees shall be considered as eligible provided that agricultural activities or, where applicable, the production envisaged **can be carried out in a similar way as on parcels without trees in the same area”***



But does EC guidance then get too specific?

- >50 trees / ha ineligible as a general rule
- Hedges max width 2+2 metres
- Member States are not OBLIGED to apply these quantified criteria
- So should they be defined at EU level at all?



Control of permanent pasture area - ratio to UAA

- Baseline is « area under permanent pasture » in reference years 2003, 2004 and 2007.
- How is this area determined? What data are used? Only « herbaceous » pasture?
- If Member States count only the area claimed by farmers for direct payments, then clearly the figure will not be correct.
- Yet the farmer is obliged to comply with GAEC on the unclaimed area...



GAEC minimum maintenance and avoiding deterioration of habitats

- ❑ Rules on « unwanted vegetation » can have perverse effects:
 - Removal of semi-natural habitats and thus **deterioration**
 - Abandonment, if complying with rules costs more than the value of the direct payment
- ❑ But vegetation and conditions are useful indicators, so what rules to have and how to apply?
- ❑ How to define minimum maintenance and habitat quality – in LU/ha, mowing, ...?



If a parcel has shrubs and trees that raise questions for authorities, should they:

- Exclude this land from payments and penalise farmer's application under eligibility rules?
- Or allow time for farmer to correct the condition of the land, under GAEC?



Pillar 1 « greening » options for permanent pasture

- Part of the « agronomic package » for all farmers, alongside crop rotation, soil cover etc.?
- New restrictions, e.g. on ploughing, reseeding?
- New obligations to maintain ratios at farm level?
- A separate mechanism for maintaining permanent pastures delivering greater environmental benefits?
- Top-up payment for these permanent pastures?



Focus on EU coherence, problem solving, good practice

- ❑ There are plenty of examples of sensible rules and application, well adapted to environmental and farming conditions.
- ❑ But also too many examples of poorly conceived rules, inflexible application, failure to resolve problems in a way that avoids negative impacts.
- ❑ We should focus on practical solutions to issues, on extending good practice and achieving a coherent approach across the EU that fits with policy aims.

