Workshop 2

Will RDPs deliver for Natura 2000 sites?
Message to farmers

- Make your voice heard proactively and get involved by contributing positive solutions from the start. Try to assess the impacts of policy early on. Co-ordinate your message – it strengthens it.
- Let officials know that you are the focus of policy but be politically aware and as co-operative as possible.
- You need to project a vision of how Natura interest and farming vocation can be combined.
- Recognise the funding limitations and work within them.
- Be open to new concepts/approaches and make the most of the opportunities offered. Look for new ways of getting funding yourselves.
- Recognise that flexibility is desired by all but limited by the legal obligations.
Message to Env. NGOs

- Get a sense of economic reality on the ground
- Policy integration needs to be central in your thoughts
- You need to ask yourself what is acceptable change, not just ask for ‘fossilisation’
- Farmers are humans and experts in their own area – use considerate and humble language and address farmers’ concerns. Progress so far is appreciated.
- Give farmers credit where it’s due – recognise their contribution to the present-day Natura interest and indeed to non-designated High Nature Value farmland
- Press for positive payments for farmers
- Look for the community of interest – bridge the gap
- Make more noise about Natura obligations but as much in the form of continuous support as in occasional criticism
- Be a help to the farmer in getting recognised and in managing positively, not a hindrance
Message to Environmental authorities

- Describing the Natura sites’ management requirements is primarily your responsibility – do the homework and take the lead!
- Decline of farming in farming-related Natura sites is your business – extinction of certain farming systems should be serious concern
- If situation is urgent, show urgency
- Funding follows a 5-year timetable – you must organise your work to that framework
- Don’t antagonise – work co-operatively with farmers and with Agri Ministries
- Speak to farmers on Natura sites!
- Remember you also should be objective-led
- Don’t always come with bad news or be depressed – make your own good news
- Make sure you have people with farming knowledge on your staff – smell of cows!
- Local staff know a lot about local issues – dialogue with HQ needs to be 2-way
- Commission – don’t forget the non-Natura nature conservation interest
- Natura sites exist in a wider countryside – they can’t work as islands of positive management
Message to agricultural authorities

- Decline of farming in farming-related Natura sites is also your business – extinction of certain farming systems should be serious concern and incompatible with Rur Dev Strategies
- You must play your role – once environmental agencies have identified management needs, it’s for you to deliver the measures to farmers in co-operation and consultation with other actors at all stages in the process. Commission needs to ensure this involvement.
- If situation is urgent, show urgency
- Make Natura 2000 a positive thing
- RD policy needs to have higher objectives than maintaining the status quo – you need to believe that redistribution/retargeting is necessary
- Farmers are paying for society’s gains, both nationally and internationally in the WTO
- You need to be better at promoting the good results from agri & RD policy (and compare with results in other policy areas)
- Learn about Natura sites and farmers’ role in them – take ownership. If you think you understand farmers, then it’s your duty!
- Local targeting & objectives, prescriptions, payment rates are highly desirable – easy admin and reporting to Brussels have to be balanced by efficient delivery of objectives on the ground
- Natura sites exist in a wider countryside – they can’t work as islands of positive management
The BIG messages

- Natura 2000 designation must ensure the sustainability of both the “Community Interest” AND the viability of the agricultural community and its management, addressing environmental, economic and social aspirations.
- To achieve that the Commission must ensure real involvement by all actors in Natura management but also insist that they identify the specific funding required in the RDPs.
- Engaging young people should be a key concern.
- Natura sites exist in a wider countryside – they function within larger scale farming and ecological systems.
- Everything has it’s cost – if you say you don’t have the funds, then you’re consenting to losing it.