HNV farming in France

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An overview of French agrarian geography

- France at the crossroad of the main biogeographic zones
- A great variety of geographical zones
  - mountains, hills, plains
  - X humid and dry
- A great variety of « terroirs » inherited from the XIXth century
An overview of French geography for EU citizens (in 1 mn)

Petites régions agricoles
When a large part of French farming systems used to be HNV

Livestock system

- Export of animal products
- Cultivated forage
- Manure
- Natural forage

Cultivated land = AGER

- Legumes
- Cereals
- Tilled crops
- Export of crop products

Semi-natural vegetation = SALTUS

- Export from saltus
- Nutrients from the soil/ground

Permanent grassland

Scrubland

Wetlands
Map of rural landscapes in 1950
Main trends affecting French agriculture

- **Modernisation of agriculture**
  - More fertilisers
  - More plant protection products
  - More tractors
  - Less farmers!

- **Saltus decreases (-30% permanent grassland between 1970/2006)**
  - Fertilised permanent grassland
  - Forage maize
  - Cultivated grassland
  - More crop

- **Specialisation of farming systems**
  - Crop system
  - Grass-based systems
  - Imported protein crops (soyabeans)
Cereal yield 1970 - 2007

Production index herbivore/ha (constant €/ha)
Price index for main productions
(real terms, base 100 = 1960)
source: INSEE (France)

between 60/00:
- wheat: -79%
- poultry: -74%
- pig: -76%
- beef: -46%
Evolution des surfaces agricoles françaises

1950 : permanent grassland fertilised
1982 : permanent grassland fertilised 40%
1998 : permanent grassland fertilised 66%
Chargement : total UGB herbivore/ha SFP

Evolution de 1988 à 2000

Likely density of type 1 HNV farming systems

Likely density of type 2 HNV farming systems
Type 2 HNV: the most drastic decrease in the last decades

- Mixed farming is the most affected
- Loss of permanent grassland is the most visible in the mixed regions
- Low intensity dairy production hardly resists in such conditions
- What does happen when you go from 3000 kg milk/cow to 7000 kg?
- Permanent grassland are then intensified
Livestock: = forage: -

Pays d’Auge
What does happen to type 1 HNV?

Still large share of permanent grassland in France

But in detail:
- Intensification
- Abandonment

An insidious shift
Towards type 2?
Mostly intensification (dairy and beef)

Black & white: Abandonment vs. intensification (dairy and sheep)
Vercors, where permanent grassland is 98% of UAA in 2000
In practice: mainly N2000 sites for birds

The example of the little bustard (*tetrax tetrax*): rare and endangered bird with hardly no SNV

Is that still HNV?

Can it support other components of biodiversity (including saltus)?
Conclusions

- HNV farming is still rapidly decreasing in France
- Can we recover large share of type 1 HNV?
  - Maintain the common pasture lands
- Maps and monitoring should show the main threats (e.g. according to regions and productions)
- Needs to understand which farming systems should be supported
At landuse and landscape level

A bit of everything in each FS? (± type 2)

Crops

Intensified permanent grassland

Extensive permanent grassland

HNV and LNV farming systems?
The future of HNV farming in France

- Very difficult as « extensification » is rejected by most parties (ex of Saône et Loire)
  - Exception: Beaufort and, in a way Jura

- What is accepted is a share of agro-ecological infrastructures (=SNV) in a more intensive context (type 2)

- Government is quite reluctant to HNV
  - OK for « grass » and « permanent grassland »
  - Not for extensive grassland

- Preferred approach: biodiversity in PDO