

European Forum on Nature Conservation & Pastoralism

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2002 - March 2003

Introduction

Europe's natural and cultural heritage is enriched by the wide variety of regional farming systems which work in harmony with local environmental conditions. However, many of these farming systems are currently under threat. The aims of the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) are therefore:

- To increase understanding that certain European farming systems are of high nature conservation and cultural value.
- To ensure the availability, dissemination and exchange of supporting information, combining research and practical expertise.
- To bring together ecologists, nature conservation managers, farmers and policy makers to consider problems faced by these systems and potential solutions.
- To develop and promote policy options which ensure the ecological maintenance and development of these farming systems and cultural landscapes.

The EFNCP is a pan-European non-profit organisation, bringing together non-governmental and governmental participants from several interest areas. It is a network to exchange information, identify conclusions, and inform policy development. To achieve its aims, the Forum holds conferences every two years, organises workshops and seminars, and produces two issues of the newsletter *La Cañada* per year. It also conducts research into the ecological relationships on high-nature-conservation-value farmland and into the development of appropriate policies for such areas.

Between 1988 and 1996, the Forum developed a network of European scientists, conservationists, and policy makers which interacts with farmers, land managers and agricultural departments through biennial conferences (the Fora), a six monthly newsletter and a series of targeted seminars and workshops. The period 1996-2002 saw the further development of these activities, a crucial time for nature conservation on farmland with the second phase of CAP reforms and subsequent Mid-Term Review of the CAP, enlargement of the European Union and development of Natura 2000. This work has continued in 2002/03, as detailed below. The report is structured around the five main headers which encompass the Forum's work.

ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

- Applied for financial support from DG Environment for 2002/03 under their programme providing support for NGOs working in the field of environmental protection (from which the Forum has obtained funding from this programme in every year from 1997/98 - 2001/02). However, the 2002/03 application was (after a long delay) rejected by the Commission because of a technicality relating to the EFNCP annual accounts not being produced in the way needed by the Commission under the terms of its new programme. This error related partly to a misunderstanding over the way the EFNCP has been required to provide accounts to the Commission in the past, partly because the rules had changed and partly because the information dossier from the Commission was very unclear on what exactly was required. As a consequence of this lack of NGO programme support, the EFNCP budget was subject to strict controls during 2002/03. While this was a situation that the Forum would not like to see

repeated, the remaining content of this report serves to indicate that the Forum was still able to achieve much during the year despite not getting the NGO support grant.

- Subsequent to this non-funded year, the Forum has again been successful in obtaining a grant from this DG Environment NGO support programme for 2003/04. Although the overall amount awarded by the Commission for 2003/04 is lower than the Forum applied for, it is nevertheless very welcome. However in a change from previous years, the Commission have awarded the grant with the condition that it represents a maximum fixed percentage of only 19.75% of the Forum's overall spend on eligible activities. Hence in order to draw down the full amount of the grant from the Commission, the Forum will have to find over 80% of funding for its activities from elsewhere. As this % level of the grant award is far lower than the Forum was originally anticipating, it means that obtaining such additional funding will be major undertaking during 2003/04.
- In line with EFNCP policy, during 2002/03 the Forum secured an increasing amount of Forum's budget from project-specific activities - as indicated below.
- The Forum has always tried to minimise the proportion of resources put into management and administration. In line with this, the Forum currently relies on input from the network participants, in either a part-funded or voluntary capacity.

BIENNIAL CONFERENCES

- It was originally intended that the Eighth Meeting of the Forum to be held in Montpellier and the Causses Méridionaux, France would take place in October 2002. However, severe delays in receiving responses to funding applications submitted by the Forum and its French partners in 2002 meant that the decision had to be taken to postpone the meeting until 13-17 September 2003. Hence during 2002/03, the Forum completed arrangements for this meeting in association with SIME, a French NGO and additional funding and support was sought from other interested organisations, both locally at the EU level. The focus of the meeting will revolve around the environmental and farming system concerns and issues associated with the sheep regime and with approaches to rural development in a High Nature Value area of France.

The 2003 meeting in France will build on the successes of recent Forum meetings adopting a similar structure, especially with regard to incorporating farm visits and discussions into the overall programme. It will focus on the sheep regime and farming systems and the location in southern France provides a good venue for this, because problems faced by sheep producers there are relevant to those in many mountain areas throughout Europe. There will be an opportunity to consider the similarities and differences between the problems of this karst area, the Burren (scene of the last Forum) and other analogous areas of Europe. The French venue will also aid the building of further French-speaking involvement in work of the Forum overall.

The Forum's biennial meetings fulfil a major part of the role as a forum. These review progress on basic scientific work and identify further research needs in order to fulfil the requirements of informing policy development and awareness raising. A further role of main Forum meetings is to use the location to bring into the network a new range of contacts as well as maintaining earlier ones - as well as to see, on the ground, examples of high-nature-value farming systems.

RESEARCH

During 2002/03, the Forum completed input to:

- *PASTORAL: the agricultural, ecological and socio-economic importance of free-ranging livestock rearing in Europe.* This Concerted Action was funded under the European Commission's 5th Framework programme and conducted in collaboration with partners from throughout Europe. During the course of the project, the Forum assisted in the organisation, contribution to and dissemination from four workshops: *Extent & Characteristics of Extensive Grazing Systems* (Spain, July 2001), *Impact of Scale & Accession on Biodiversity Value* (Romania, October 2001), *Ecological principles and nature conservation value* (Scotland, June 2002) and *Rural Policies in Europe: Delivering More for Pastoralism?* (France, December 2002). A series of eight Information Notes (see publications section at end of this report) and accompanying video were produced as part of the output from the project and are intended to provide a brief introduction to some of the issues facing pastoralism in Europe today. Further detailed information on the PASTORAL project and European pastoralism can be found at: www.sac.ac.uk/envsci/external/Pastoral/default.htm

New research projects to which the Forum contributed to in 2002/03 include:

- *PAN: Thematic Network on Cultural Landscapes and their Ecosystems.* This Thematic Network is funded under the European Commission's 5th Framework programme. The project is coordinated by the University of Bergen and will be conducted in collaboration with partners from throughout Europe. The Forum will assist with the organisation of six workshops over a three period and will contribute to these and help with the dissemination of the outputs. The first meeting of the network is scheduled to take place in Portugal at the end of March 2003. Further information on the project can be found at <http://www.cultland.org/pan>
- *Transhumant: A review of the role of transhumance in mountain ecosystem processes and dynamics* This Accompanying Measure is funded under the European Commission's 5th Framework Programme. The project is coordinated by ALTERRA in the Netherlands and will be conducted in collaboration with a number of partners from throughout Europe. The overall objective of this project is to summarise the current status of transhumance in European mountains and its influence on the component fragile ecosystems. The Forum will assist with the organisation of one workshop and one larger conference and with the production of a book summarising the outcomes of these meetings.
- *Developing a High Nature Value farming area indicator* This project is funded by the European Environment Agency and involved a number of partners from throughout Europe, coordinated by the Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning. The objective of the project is to develop and test a suite of High Nature Value farming area indicators at EU level and to analyse the possibilities for extending the indicators to all EEA member countries. The Forum will assist with the conceptual development of relevant indicators and with the testing of the relevance of these in a variety of areas throughout Europe.

Much of the research work of the Forum in recent years has revolved around trying to address one issue - the lack of a structured classification, from an environmental perspective, of European farming systems. What is required is a broad typology which can be related to farms - since farms are the units that are the target of policy and through which management decisions are made. Without such a "common currency" it is very difficult to make progress on policy issues regarding farming and the environment, such as maintaining the status quo, environmental cross compliance, environmental enhancement, or appropriate developments. If we do not have a clear idea of whether European pastoral farming can be divided into more or less discrete systems (from our nature conservation perspective), how can we begin to understand (or influence) management which impacts on these systems through incentives to farmers?

DISSEMINATION

- Produced and distributed issues 16 and 17 of the Forum newsletter *La Cañada*, whose distribution is now 1200 and rising. *La Cañada* is sent to those active in Forum activities, appropriate officials in governments and the Commission, and as part of information provided in response to enquiries about the Forum. It has proven a very effective tool.
- Maintained contacts with a wide variety of interested parties throughout Europe through involvement and representation on other networks (e.g. GAP, Eurosite) and through participation of Forum representatives at a wide variety of meetings, seminars and input to project proposals.
- Maintained a flow of papers and articles for a range of audiences to illustrate the importance of these farming systems (see list at end of this report)
- Continued to develop the Forum site on the internet (<http://www.efncp.org>). It has been recognised that the Forum website has been rather inactive in recent years and the Forum is currently funding ways of increasing activity and effectiveness of the site.

ORGANISATION OF SEMINARS & REPRESENTATION ON EC COMMITTEES

- Held a seminar in Brussels on *The use of Area Payments in the EU livestock sectors and the LFAs* (July 2002). This one-day seminar was mainly aimed at European Commission officials and was organised and hosted by EFNCP.
- Held a seminar in Brussels on *The integration of forestry, biodiversity and agricultural concerns on High Nature Value open grazed land* (February 2003). This one-day seminar was mainly aimed at European Commission officials and was organised by EFNCP with support from DG Agriculture's Information Action programme.
- Contributed to a seminar in Brussels on *Roles and Instruments for the First Pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy* (March 2003) This one-day seminar was organised jointly by WWF European Policy Office, EFNCP and Stichting Natuur en Milieu. It provided an opportunity for experts from a range of interests (economic, farming, environment and national implementation of policy) to present their views interests and concerns on the Commission's proposal to introduce the single payment scheme.
- The Forum is currently preparing two seminars in Brussels in early 2004 aimed at *Exploring the impact of the Mid Term Review (MTR) of Agenda 2000 and Accession on High Nature Value farming systems*. These seminars will be organised by EFNCP with support from DG Agriculture's Information Action programme. There has been strong encouragement from European Commission officials, particularly in DGs Agriculture and Environment, to develop further the successful formula of seminars held in Brussels and elsewhere
- The Forum has continued to have representatives nominated to attend meetings of the Consultative Committees on 'Rural Development', 'Agriculture and Environment' and 'Animal Products' established by DG Agriculture. Following the decision of the Agricultural Commissioner, Dr Fischler, DG Agriculture restructured its consultative committees, with one of the procedural changes being the incorporation of environmental NGOs into many of the committees. Four networks (World Wide Fund for Nature, BirdLife International, European Environment Bureau and the Forum) are working together to provide this input. Regular

cancellation and short-notice rescheduling of these Committees by DG Agriculture has, however, made it difficult for the Forum representatives to attend.

PUBLICATIONS

In addition to the newsletter *La Cañada*, publications arising from the work of the Forum include:

- Beaufoy, G., Guttentstein, E., Bignal, E. & Jones, G. (2003) *2003 Reform of the CAP: A Long Term Perspective for Sustainable Agriculture*. Stichting Natuur en Milieu, WWF and the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism.
- Jones, D.G.L., Bignal, E., Lysaght, L., Baldock, D. & Phelan, J. (2003) *A review of the CAP Rural Development Plan 2000-2006: implications for natural heritage*. Dublin, The Heritage Council.
- PASTORAL (2003) *An introduction to European pastoralism*. PASTORAL Project Information Note 1. 4 pp.
- PASTORAL (2003) *The need for a typology of European pastoral systems* PASTORAL Project Information Note 2. 5 pp.
- PASTORAL (2003) *The nature of European pastoralism* PASTORAL Project Information Note 3. 6 pp.
- PASTORAL (2003) *Examples of European pastoral systems* PASTORAL Project Information Note 4. 9 pp.
- PASTORAL (2003) *Trends and threats to the viability of European pastoral systems* PASTORAL Project Information Note 5. 6 pp.
- PASTORAL (2003) *Potential policy approaches to support European pastoralism* PASTORAL Project Information Note 6. 5 pp.
- PASTORAL (2003) *Gaps in the understanding of European pastoralism* PASTORAL Project Information Note 7. 5 pp.
- PASTORAL (2003) *European pastoralism: farming with nature* PASTORAL Project Information Note 8. 8 pp.

CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Forum operates on a 1 April - 31 March financial year. The following Table shows the relevant information from each of the EFNCP's Financial Statements for the last 8 financial years (1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003). The financial figures provided are in £ sterling.

	Year ended							
	31 March 1996	31 March 1997	31 March 1998	31 March 1999	31 March 2000	31 March 2001	31 March 2002	31 March 2003
Balance brought forward from previous year	-	26,875	-	24,227	52,167	45,539	46,435	50,812
Income during year	44,705	61,710	118,069*	159,840	176,079	180,576	92,596	63,794
Expenditure during year	18,147	60,540	95,031	133,111	183,497	180,544	88,509	71,756
Operating Surplus/(Deficiency) during the year	26,558	1,170	23,038	26,729	(7,418)	32	4,087	(7,962)
Interest during the year	317	565	1,189	1,211	790	864	290	271
Retained Surplus/(deficit) for the year	26,875	1,735	24,227	27,940	(6,628)	896	4,377	(7,691)
Balance carried forward	26,875	28,610	24,227	52,167	45,539	46,435	50,812	43,121

* Income for 1998 also included an exceptional item relating to a gift by resolution of the net assets of the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism unincorporated, amounting to £28,610

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