

# Delivering our Promises on Biodiversity

**Tamsin Cooper**  
**Senior Policy Analyst**  
**Agriculture and Rural Development Team**

**[t.cooper@ieep.eu](mailto:t.cooper@ieep.eu)**



Institute for  
European  
Environmental  
Policy



# The Biodiversity Challenge

- **Obligation under the Convention on Biological Diversity to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.**
- **Target unlikely to be met. E.g., the abundance of farmland birds, a key indicator of farmland biodiversity, continues to decline.**
- **Action through Natura 2000 protected sites and through maintenance of HNV farming and farmland features.**
- **Commission Communication on Halting the Loss of Biodiversity (2006) refers to 'optimising the use of available resources, notably to prevent intensification or abandonment of HNV farmland, woodland and forest, and to support their restoration.'**

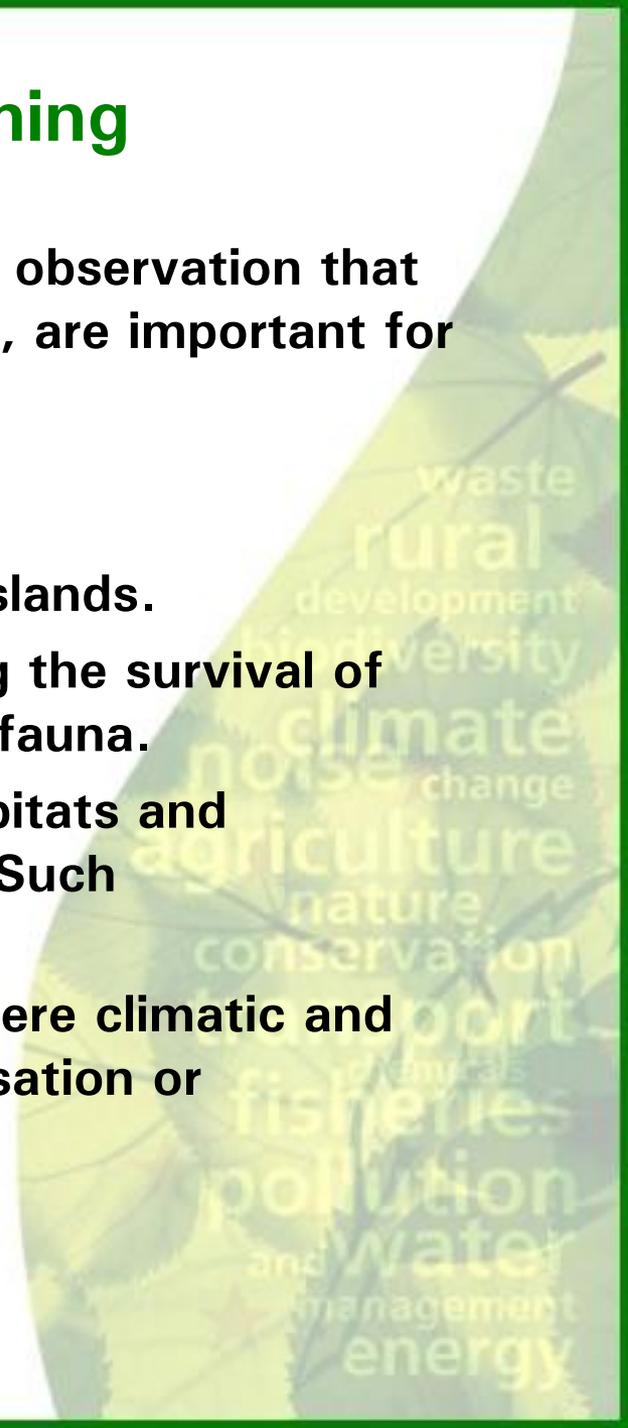


# High Nature Value Farming

Concept originated in early 1990s on basis of observation that low intensity grazing systems, in particular, are important for the maintenance of farmland biodiversity.

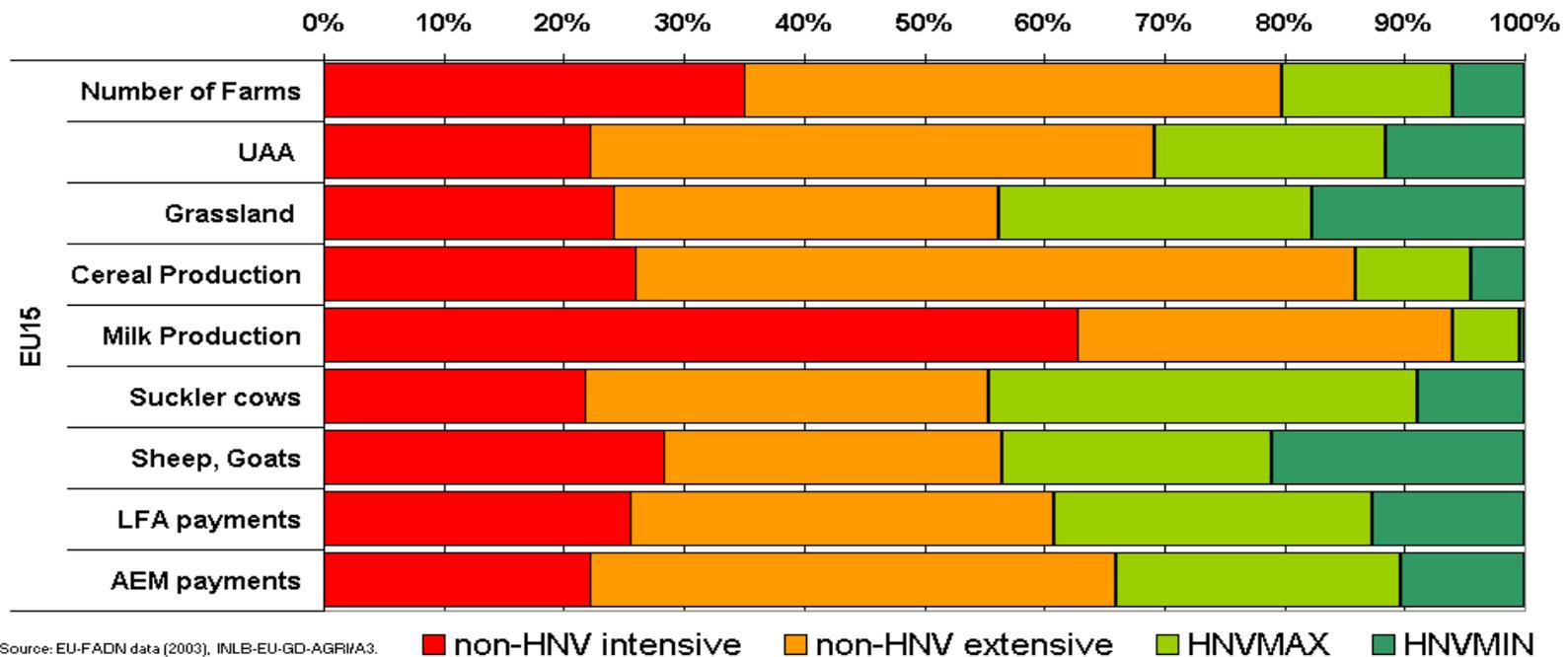
HNV farming systems are characterised by:

- Low stocking densities on permanent grasslands.
- External inputs are generally low, favouring the survival of semi-natural vegetation and its associated fauna.
- A mosaic of arable, grass, semi-natural habitats and landscape elements at a landscape scale. Such heterogeneity promotes biodiversity.
- They generally occur in marginal areas, where climatic and topographic constraints limit intensive utilisation or fundamental alteration of the land.



# HNV Farming Statistics

- Approximately 20% of UAA under HNV farming (EU-15).
- Majority of HNV farmland is composed of semi natural grassland systems.



Source: EU-FADN data (2003), INLB-EU-GD-AGRI/A3.

■ non-HNV intensive ■ non-HNV extensive ■ HNVMAX ■ HNVMIN

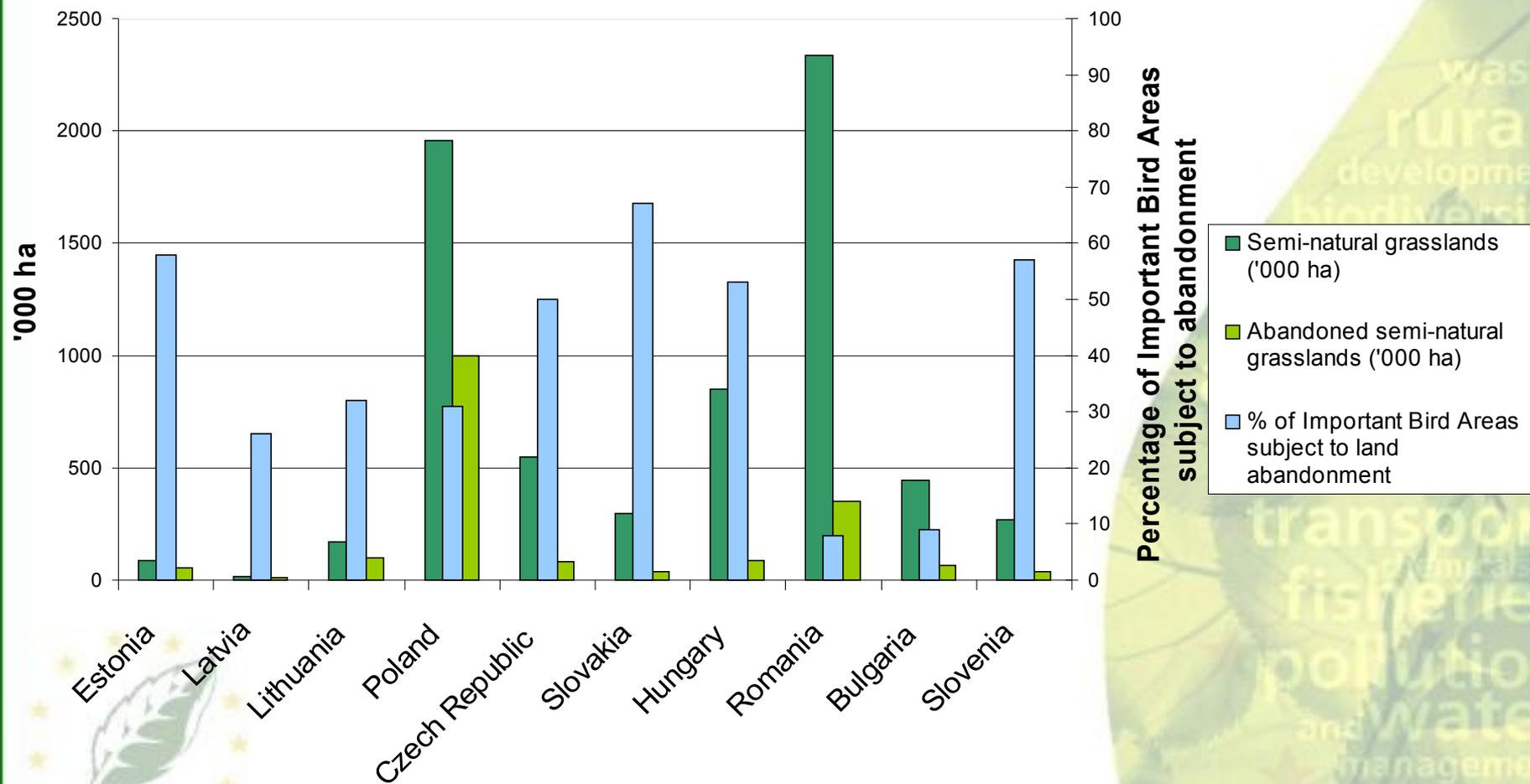
# Key Threats to HNV Farming

- Extensive farming systems face a number of economic and social pressures.
- Economic viability and competitiveness of HNV farming systems is generally low.
- Decline in livestock numbers, progressive marginalisation and abandonment of the land.
- Potential intensification and conversion of grassland to arable land.
- Conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.



# Threats Severe in New Member States

Extent of abandoned semi-natural grasslands and Important Bird Areas in selected central and eastern European countries



Estonia

Latvia

Lithuania

Poland

Czech Republic

Slovakia

Hungary

Romania

Bulgaria

Slovenia

Percentage of Important Bird Areas subject to abandonment

- Semi-natural grasslands ('000 ha)
- Abandoned semi-natural grasslands ('000 ha)
- % of Important Bird Areas subject to land abandonment

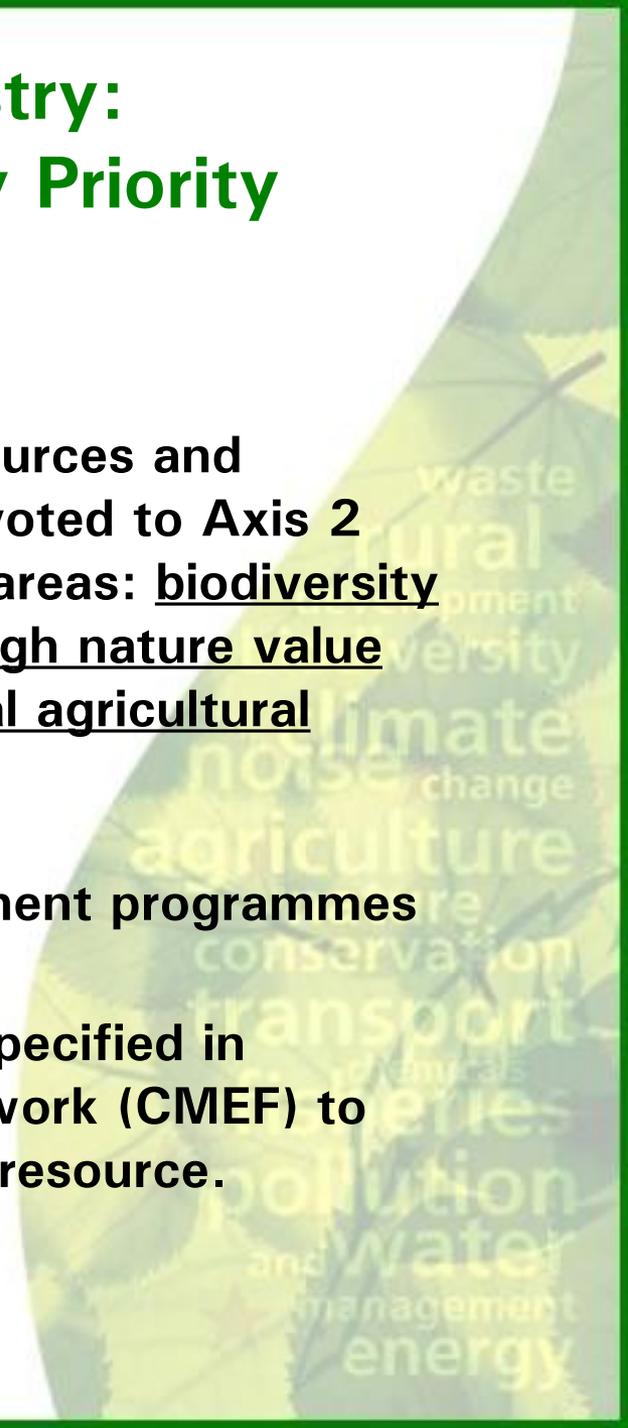
waste  
rural  
development  
biodiversity  
energy  
transport  
fisheries  
pollution  
and water  
management  
energy

# HNV Farming and Forestry: A Rural Development Policy Priority

## EAFRD Strategic Guidelines:

**“To protect and enhance the EU’s natural resources and landscapes in rural areas, the resources devoted to Axis 2 should contribute to three EU-level priority areas: biodiversity and the preservation and development of high nature value farming and forestry systems and traditional agricultural landscapes; water; and climate change.”**

- **Monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes - mid term and *ex post* evaluation.**
- **HNV baseline, result and impact indicator specified in Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) to measure changes in the extent of the HNV resource.**



# Four Implicit Obligations on Member States

- To characterise and identify their HNV farming and forestry resource.
- To specify measures in their Rural Development programmes to preserve and develop HNV farming and forestry.
- To set up a monitoring and evaluation programme.
- To establish a baseline: a measure of the extent and possibly the quality of their HNV resource, in order to measure changes at the end of the current rural development programmes in 2013.



# Meeting These Implicit Obligations

- **Characterising and Identifying HNV Farmland**

**Drawing on the work of Andersen *et al.*, 2003; revised JRC/EEA, 2007.**

- **Provide a definition of HNV farmland areas.**
- **Identifies HNV farmland areas and indicates their spatial location, drawing on CORINE land cover data, and bird and butterfly data.**
- **Development of maps showing regional distribution and extent of HNV farmland areas in the EU-27, to be published by EEA in late 2007. Maps have been sent to Member States for consultation.**
- **However, mapping unit has a low level of resolution; land cover is a weak proxy for nature value; the approach takes no account of the driving forces – the management practices - for nature value; and it is impossible to identify HNV features.**





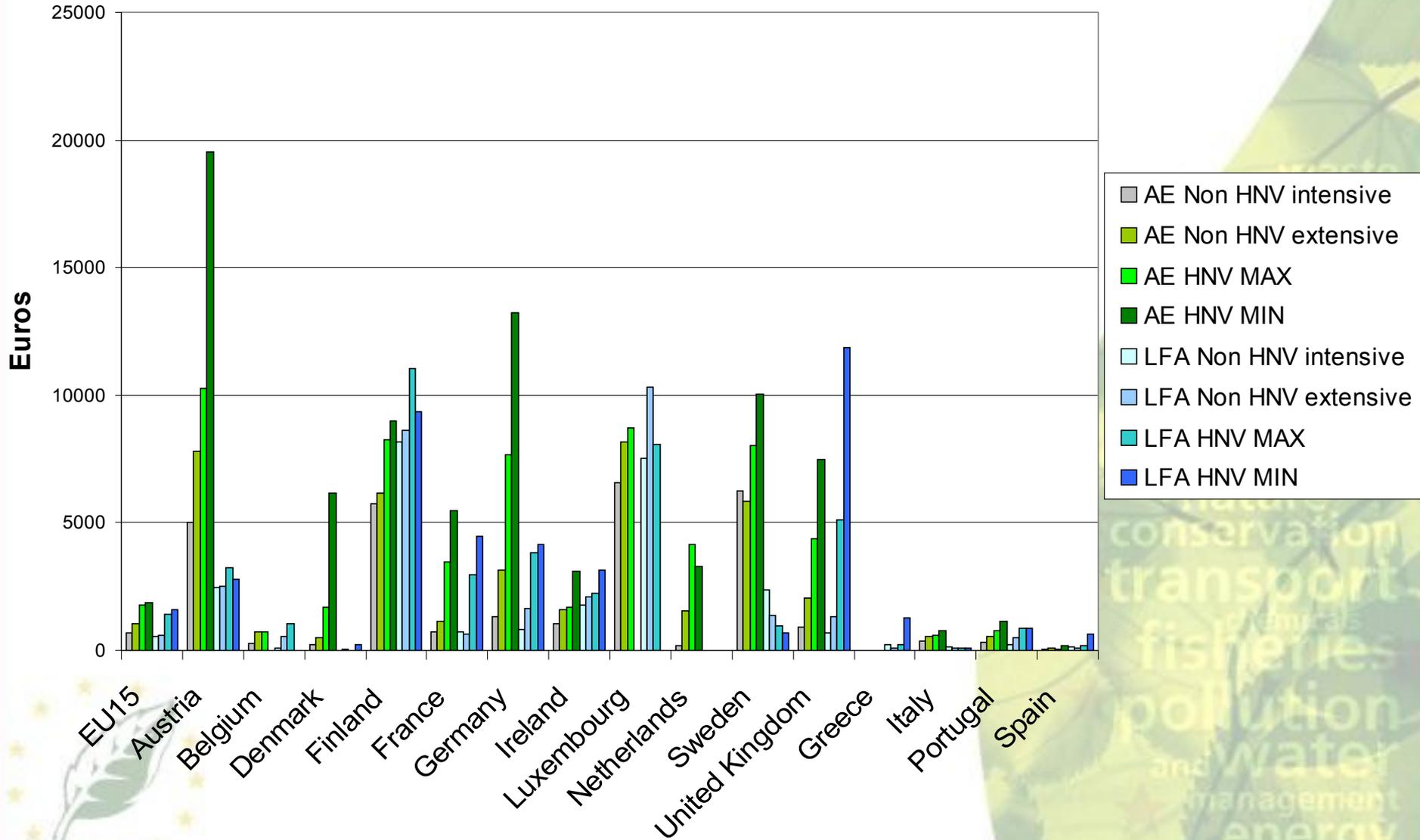
# Meeting These Implicit Obligations

## 2. Through the application of Rural Development measures under the EAFRD.

- **Axis 1 and Axis 3 could provide support to improve family farm incomes, build farmers' managerial and technical capacity, and to develop markets for the produce of HNV farms.**
- **Axis 2 measures offer support for areas with natural handicaps, for agri-environment schemes, organic farming, Natura 2000 compensation investment and non-productive (environmental) investments.**



# Agri-Environment and LFA Payments per Farm, EU-15



conservation  
transport  
fisheries  
pollution  
and water  
management  
energy

# Meeting These Obligations

**4. To measure changes in the HNV resource and evaluate the impact of rural development programmes.**

**Drawing on the work of IEEP *et al.*, 2007 (in prep.) commissioned by DG AGRI.**

- **Key output is a set of indicators to measure changes in the extent and quality of HNV farming and forestry, 2007 - 2013.**
- **Indicator set could include measure of stocking density, Nitrogen input, proportion of semi-natural vegetation, arable weeds, farmland birds, farmland butterflies, point and linear features, area of naturally dynamic and semi-natural woodland.**

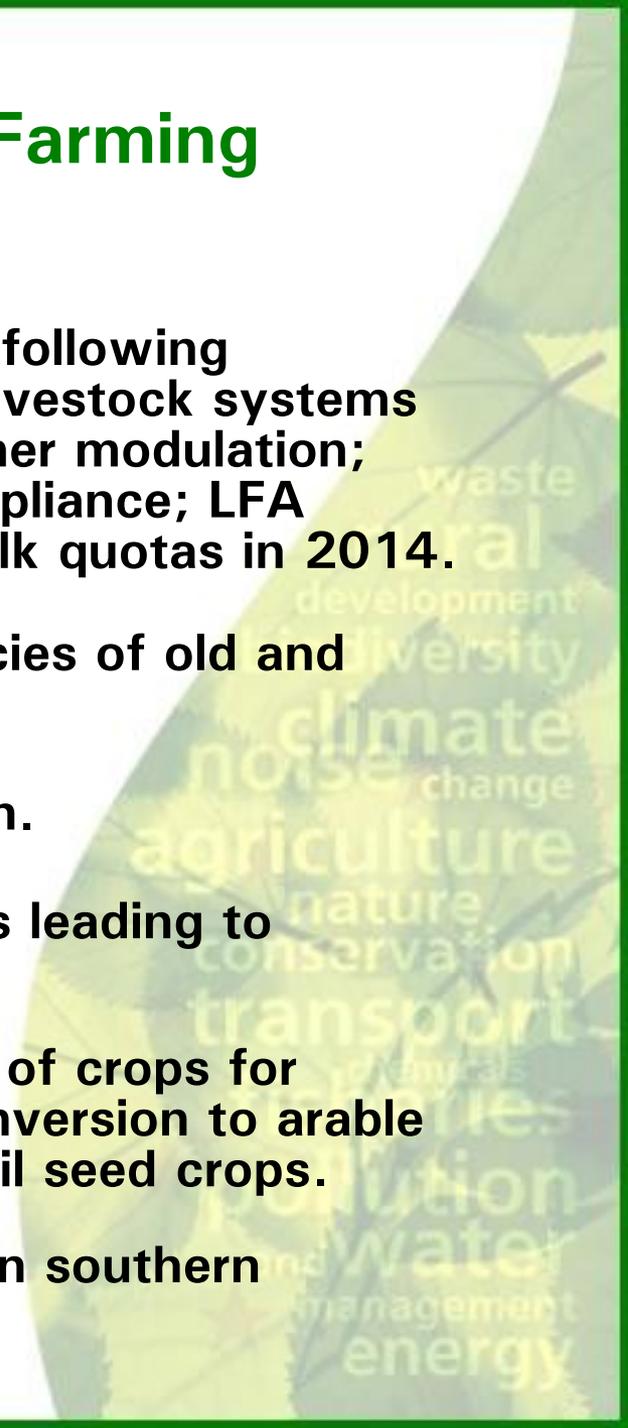
**Production of a Guidance Document for Member States explaining how to use these indicators to assess the impact of rural development programmes.**



# Future Prospects for HNV Farming

## Drivers of Future Countryside Change

- Ongoing reform of the CAP – adjustments following decoupling continue; full decoupling in all livestock systems anticipated; possible end of set-aside; further modulation; decrease in overall CAP budget; cross compliance; LFA reform in 2010; possible phasing out of milk quotas in 2014.
- Convergence between the agricultural policies of old and new Member States.
- Trends in food production and consumption.
- Further liberalisation of agricultural markets leading to structural change.
- EU energy targets encouraging the growth of crops for biofuel production. Potential to lead to conversion to arable and to impact on the commodity price of oil seed crops.
- Climate change – severe water shortages in southern Europe.



# Possible Options to Support HNV Farming

In the context of these anticipated drivers of change, it is unlikely that rural development measures alone will be sufficient to maintain HNV farming systems.

- Realistic approach to managing structural change for biodiversity.
- Adjust payment levels in line with provision of public goods rather than being tied to historic receipts.
- Maintain coupled payments in livestock sector - hard to defend and WTO incompatible.
- Targeted recoupling - pressing need to identify HNV systems.
- Support to HNV farmers through training, marketing of products, producer groups etc.
- Reform of the LFA measure.
- AEM tailored to HNV management practices.
- Improved form of cross compliance with specific standards in HNV areas.
- Develop a market for 'HNV products' - both food and ecosystem services.



## Delivering our Promises on Biodiversity: Core Message

- **Need to strengthen the Pillar Two budget, along with tailoring of measures to preserve and develop of HNV farming, forestry and features.**
- **Biodiversity challenge needs to be addressed in forthcoming European Budget discussion in 2009.**
- **Investment in a properly resourced biodiversity fund.**

