

**“2nd International workshop on pastoral landscapes and conservation”**

**Large-scale extensive grazing systems in Europe:**

**Advancing knowledge to improve policy**

**20th – 24th September 2010 Vilm**

# **Estonia – wider issues of HNV farmland identification: is it counted as farmland at all on national data bases?**

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# High Nature Value Farming as Rural Development Programme indicator

Three HNV indicators in the CMEF:

Baseline Indicator 18: Biodiversity: High nature value Farmland and Forestry, measured as UAA of HNV Farmland, in hectares.

Result Indicator 6: Area under successful management contributing to biodiversity and HNV Farming / Forestry, measured as the total area of HNV Farmland and Forestry under successful land management, in hectares.

Impact Indicator 5: Maintenance of HNV Farming and Forestry, measured as changes in High Nature Value areas and defined in terms of quantitative and qualitative changes.

# HNV farmland types

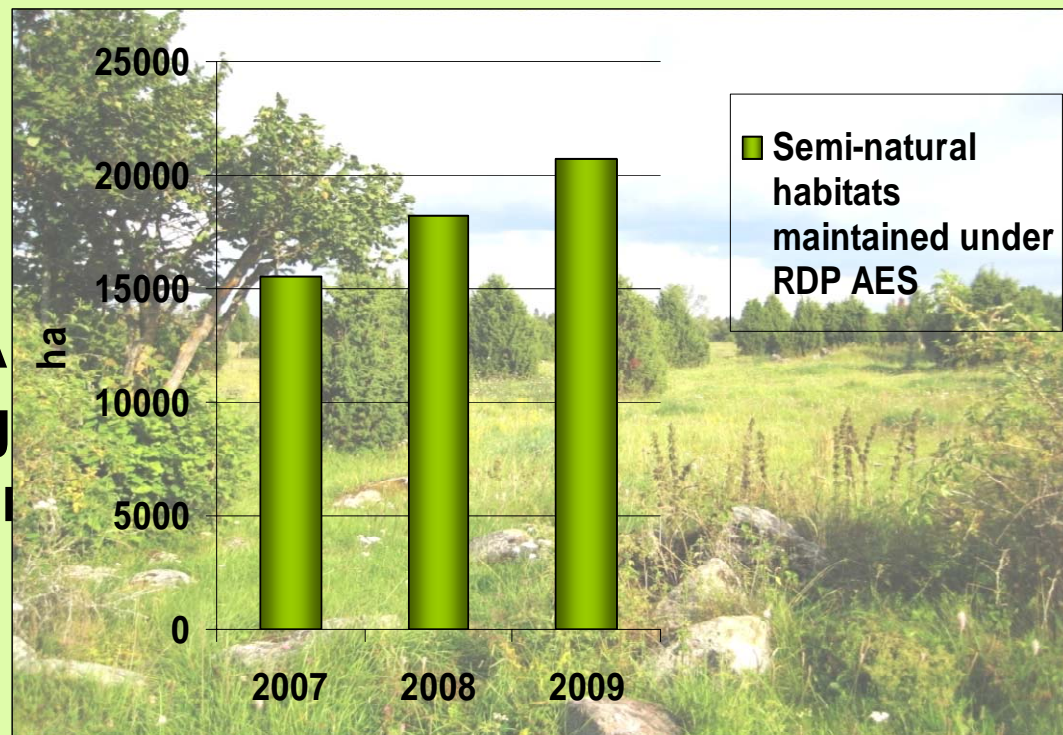
- **Type 1 – semi-natural vegetation**
- Type 2 – mosaic landscapes
- Type 3 – areas for populations of species

(by Andersen et al, 2003)



# HNV farmland in the frame of Estonian RDP

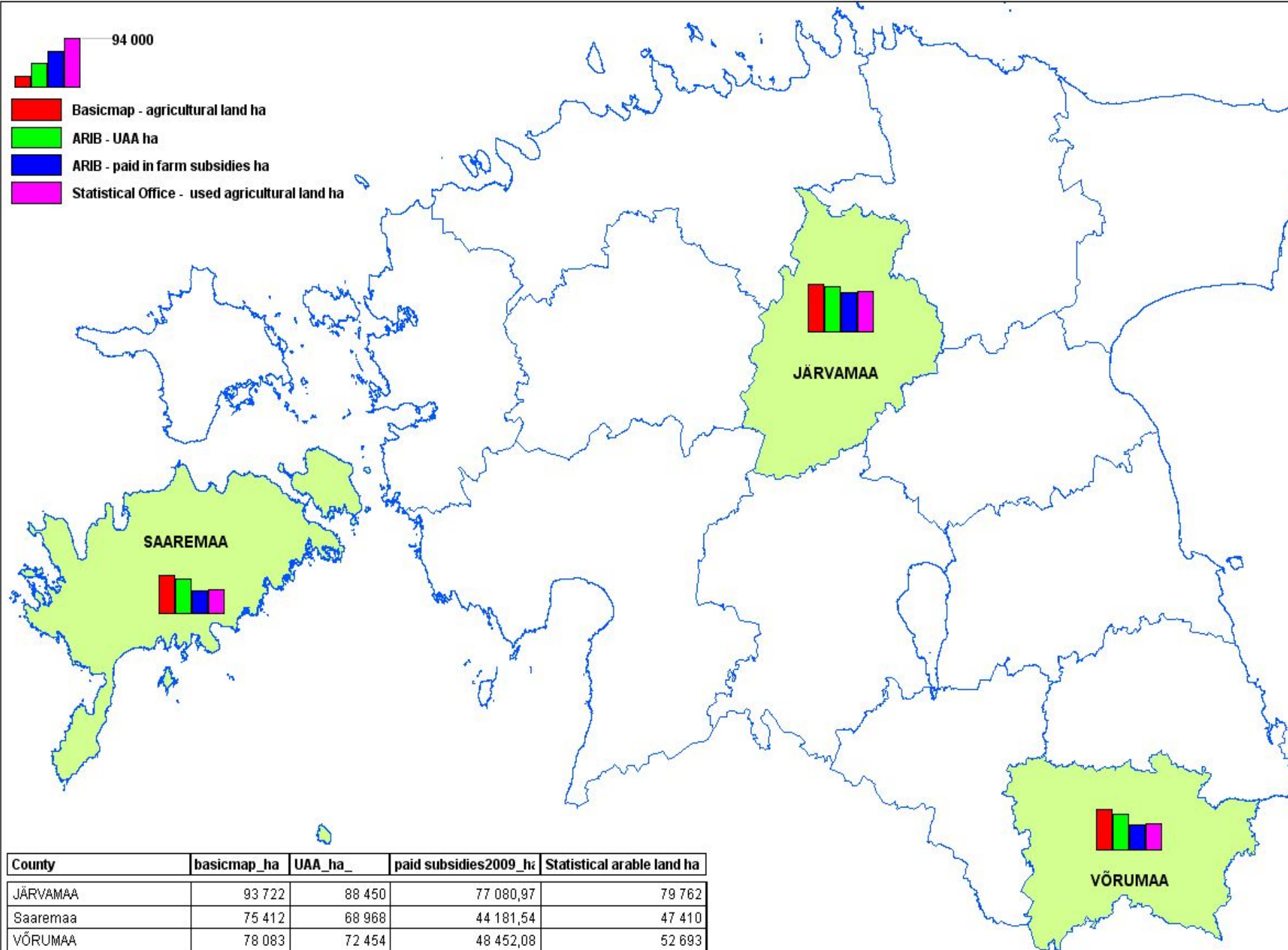
- HNV areas are not finally defined in Estonia.
- Supported HNV areas in the current Estonian RDP context = semi-natural habitats in Natura 2000 under special agri-environment measure.
- HNV work group was established in 2009 in A common understanding development of HNV co suitable for Estonian conditions .



# What is farmland in Estonia?

## Agricultural area coverage by:

- Corine landcover 1 522 148 ha (2006)
- Base map 1 321 358 ha (2007)
- Statistics Estonia 906 833 ha
- Paying agency field parcel register
  - agricultural land eligible for single area payment scheme, declared in 2004 - 1 266 971 ha
  - area under the single area payment scheme in 2010 - 861 920 ha
  - area under semi-natural habitat management support in 2010 - 20 723 ha



# **Valuable farmland between nowhere (1)**

Field parcel register was created in 2002.

The digitalized database of agricultural plots is required for payment of area supports from the budget of the European Union.

In 2004 register was closed and no land can be added after that.

Which means, that we have some agricultural land, which is “lost” for the register, even though it is managed.

## Differences between the vector datasets



Basicmap agricultural land and ARIB UAA field “**LOST**” managed farmland  
ARIB UAA field and orthophoto

# **Valuable farmland between nowhere (2)**

What about an area which is in the database as agricultural land, but is happening with the management in reality?

X: 6475525.9 Y: 522554.5  
B: 58°25'10.3" L: 24°23'9.49"



1994

X: 6475247 Y: 520940.9  
B: 58°25'1.58" L: 24°21'29.99"



2002

X: 6475439.2 Y: 520933.9  
B: 58°25'7.79" L: 24°21'29.63"

2006

# **Valuable farmland between nowhere (3)**

Landscape elements reflect the value of the agricultural land, but if they are all gone from the field parcel register?

# Differences between the vector datasets

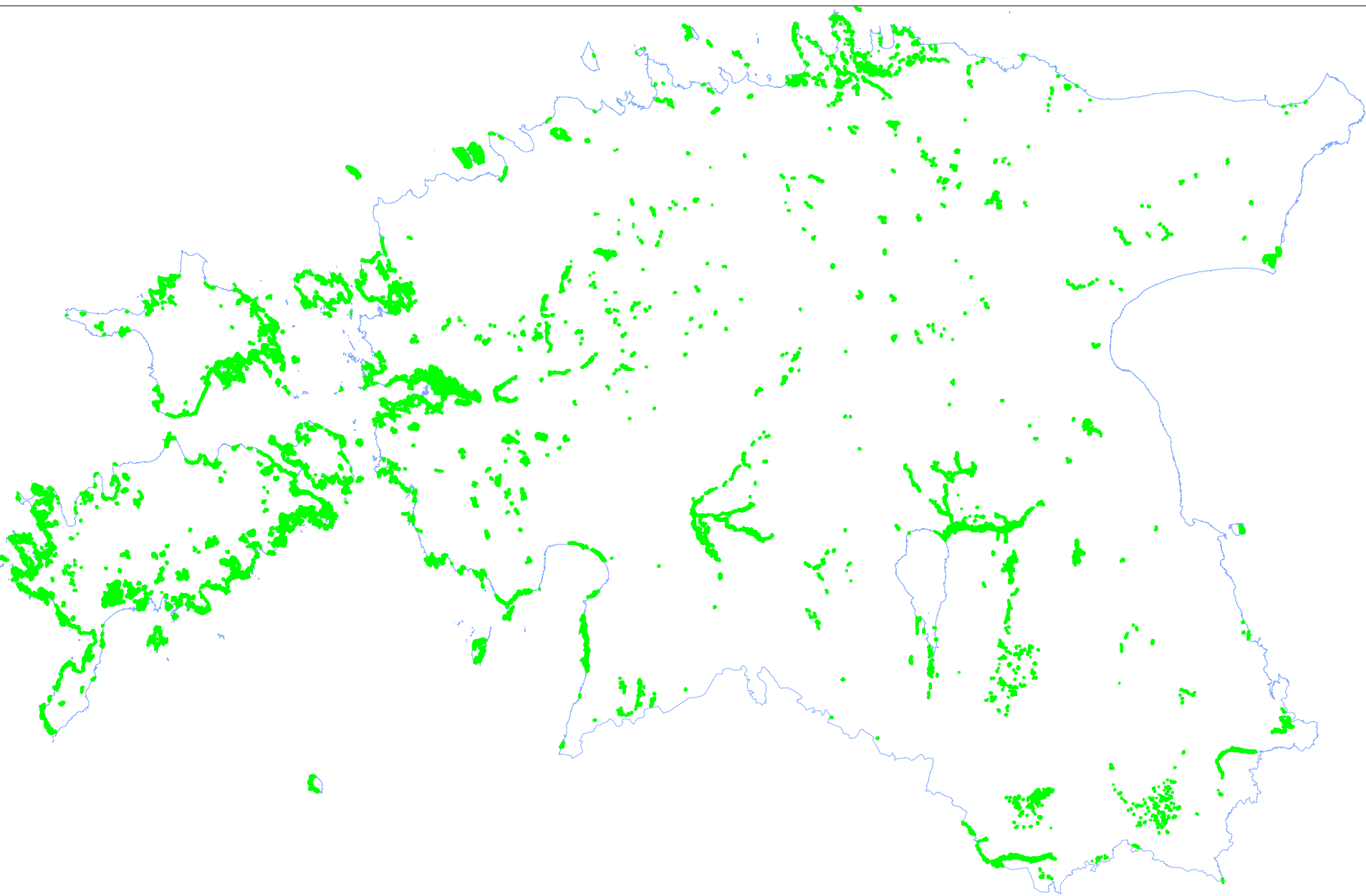


BRS Brumafield and trap

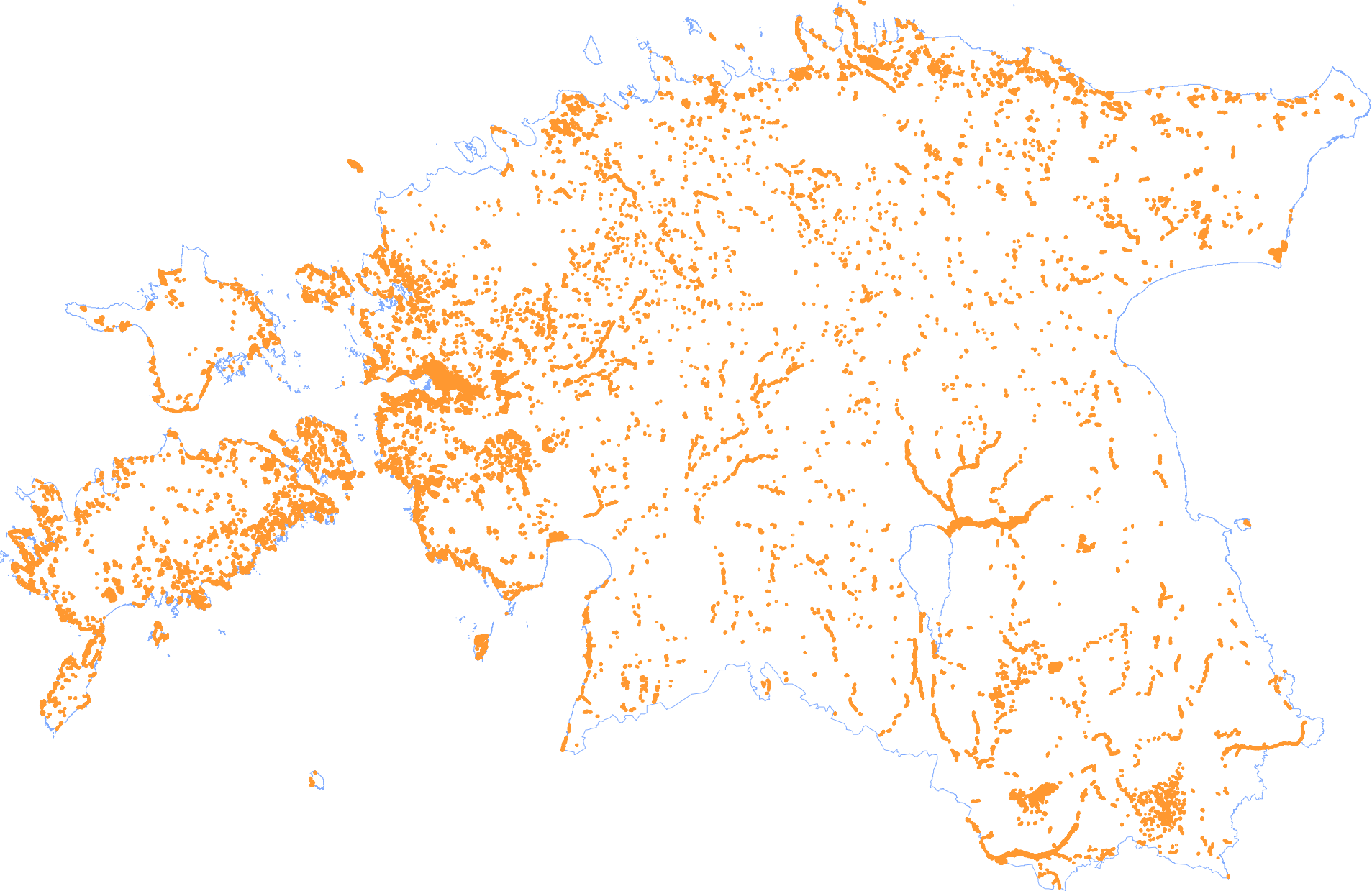
# **Valuable farmland between nowhere (4)**

Areas more than 50 trees, which are still managed, but not considered as agricultural land (mostly semi-natural habitats) (see the case study later on).

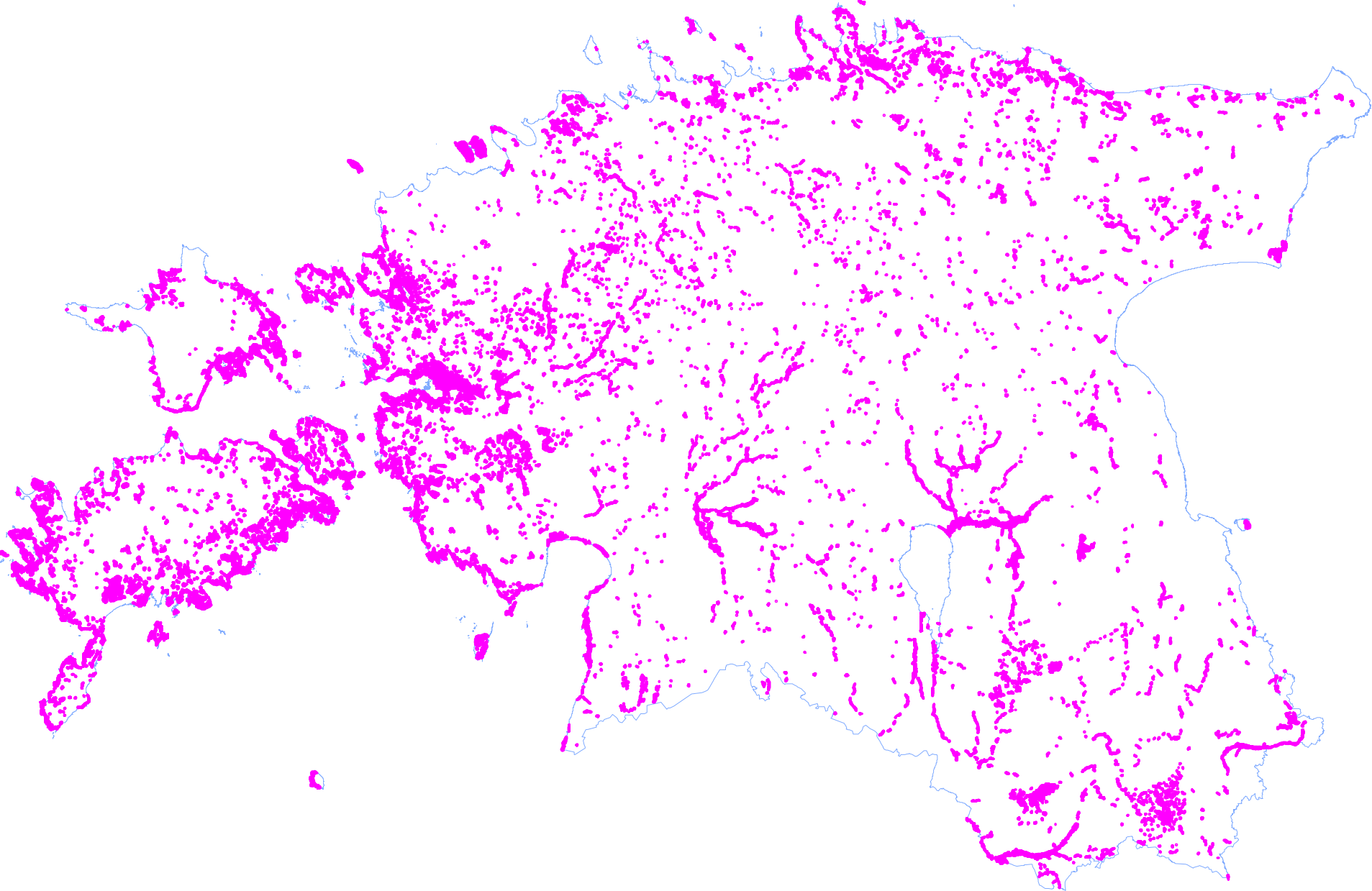
A look on semi-natural habitats in data bases -  
How much do we have semi-natural habitats?



Estonian Nature Infosystem, **73 407 ha semi-natural habitats under Natura 2000 (2010 )**



Estonian Seminatural Community Conservation Association,  
**85 436ha of semi-natural habitats in total (2010)**



Combined and overlap removed → **ca 100 000 ha of semi-natural habitats in Estonia**

Closer look...

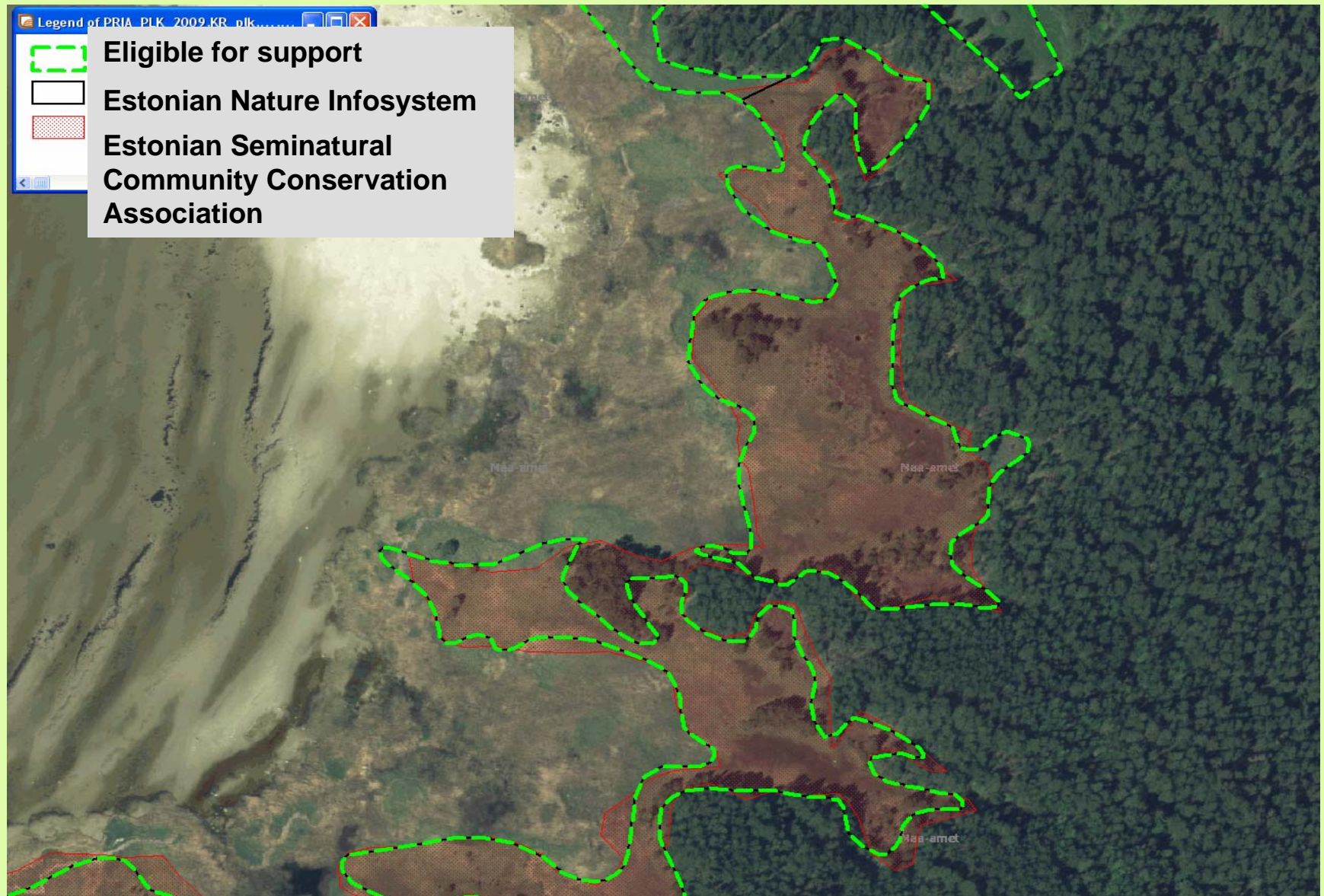
data reliability



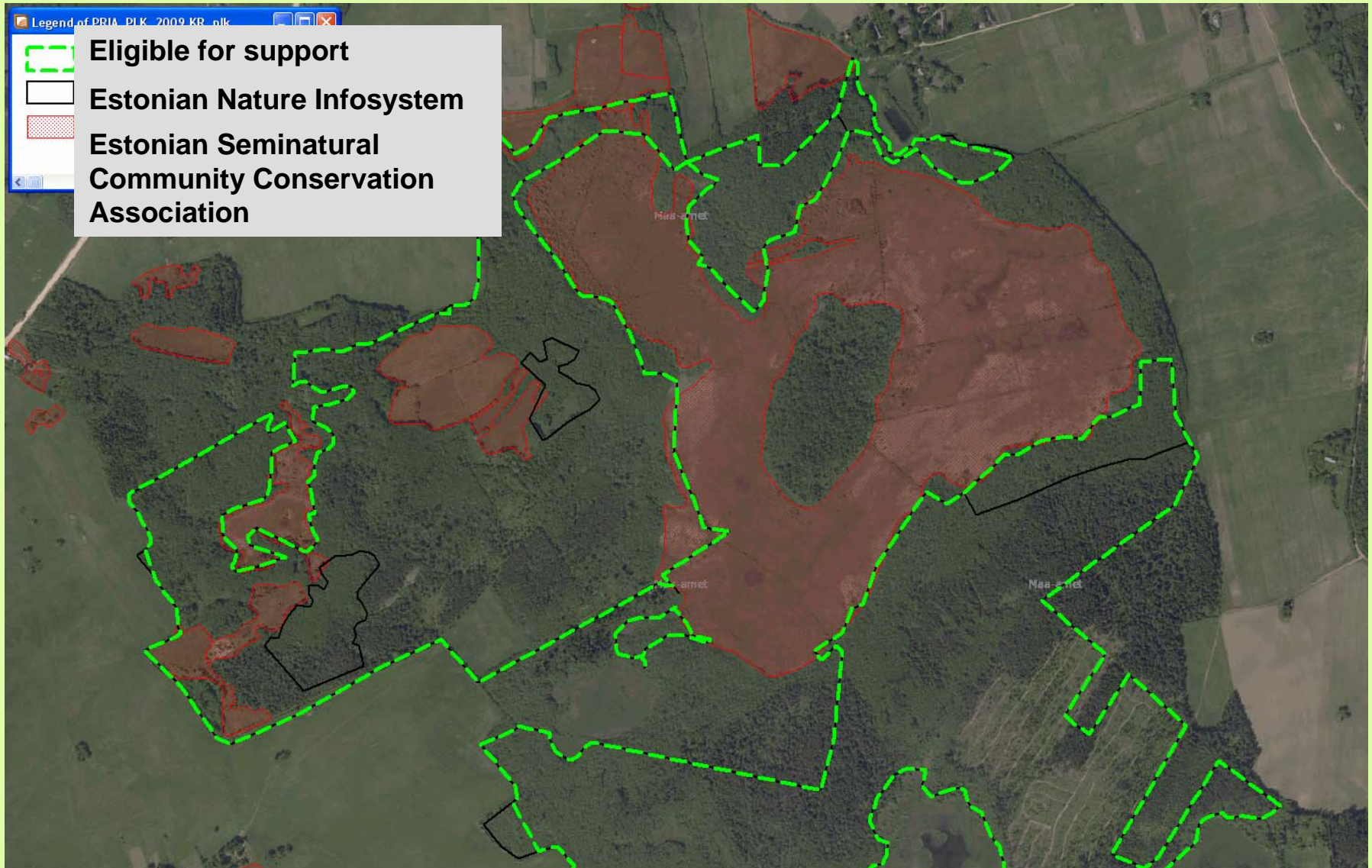
2002-2008



# Good coherence



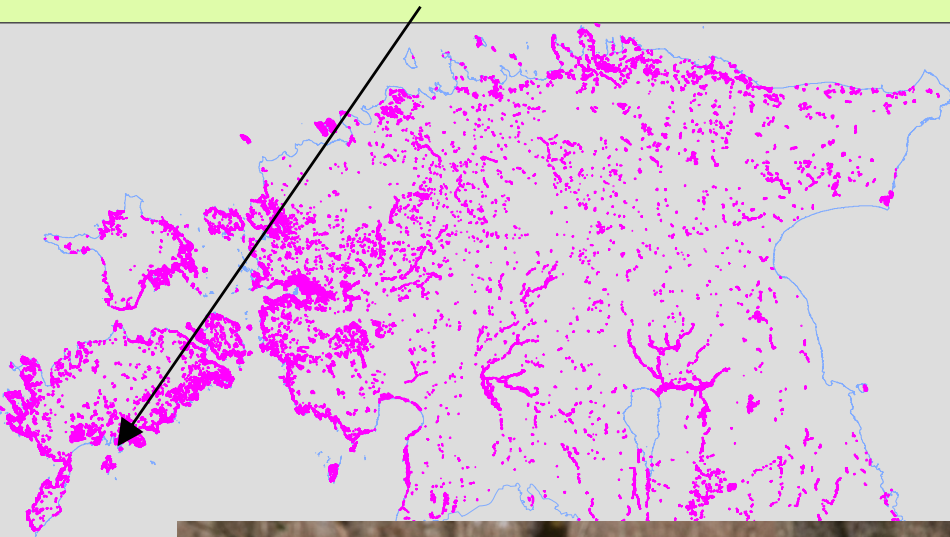
# Coherence?



# HNV farmland: is it counted as farmland?

## Case study – Metsa Johani farm

### Metsa Johani farm



#### Farm's land use

covered with supports in **2009**:

Semi-natural habitat management -  
83,81 ha

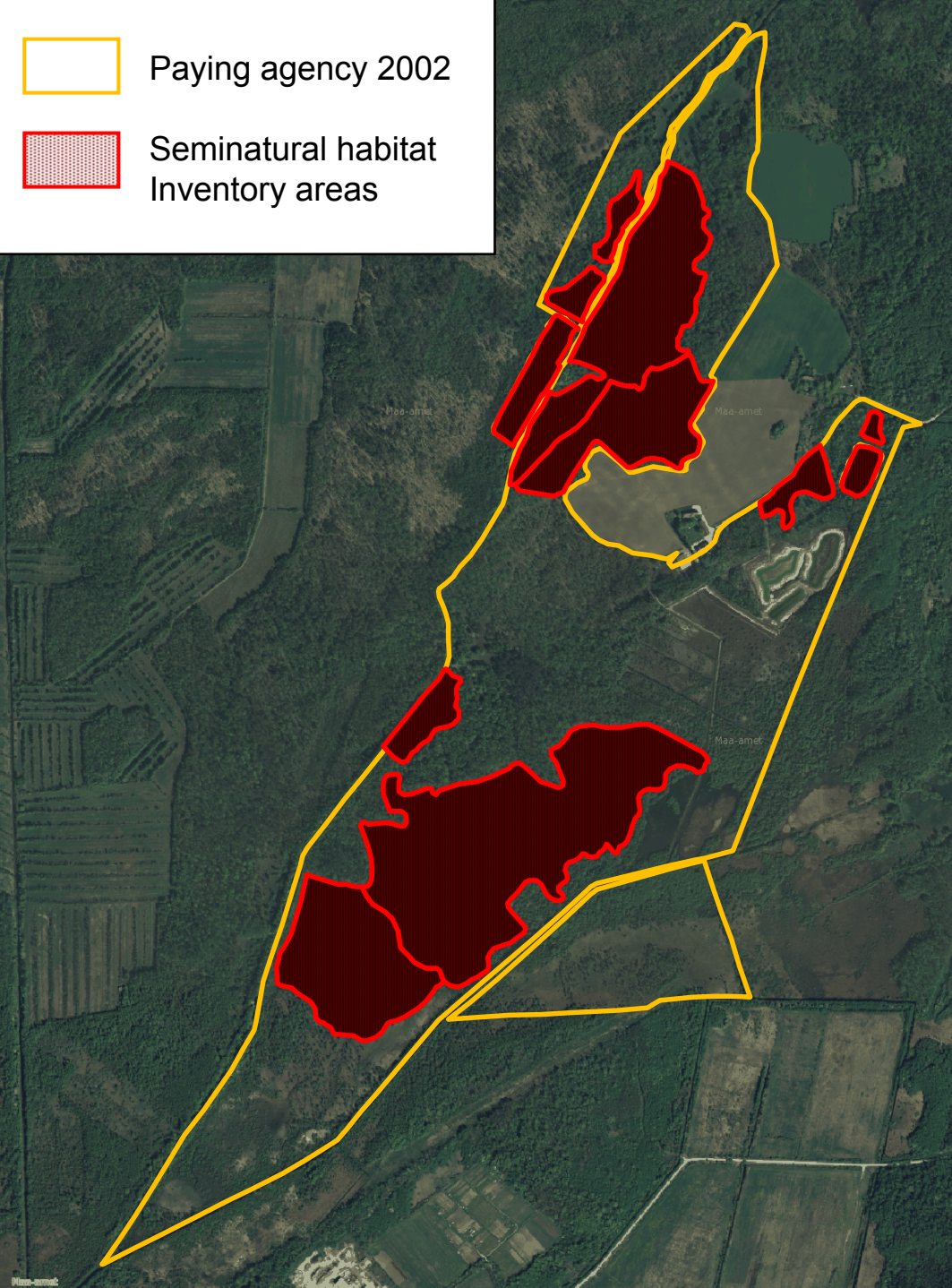
Area under organic farming 122,48 ha,  
out of which :

permanent grassland - 70,08 ha

short-term rotational grassland –  
10,98 ha

cereals - 8,49 ha

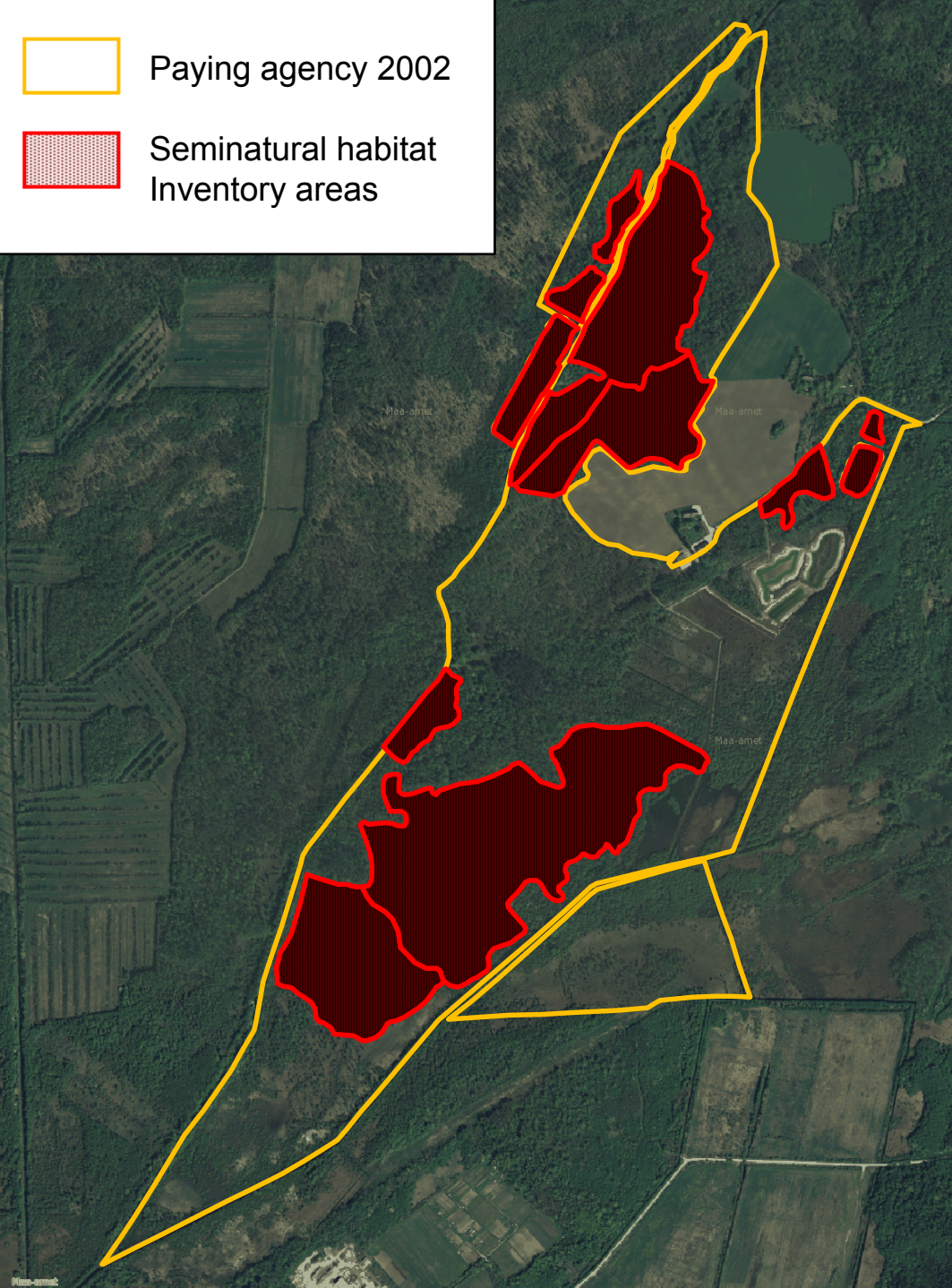
leguminous crops - 32,93 ha



## Area of the Metsa Johani farm farmland

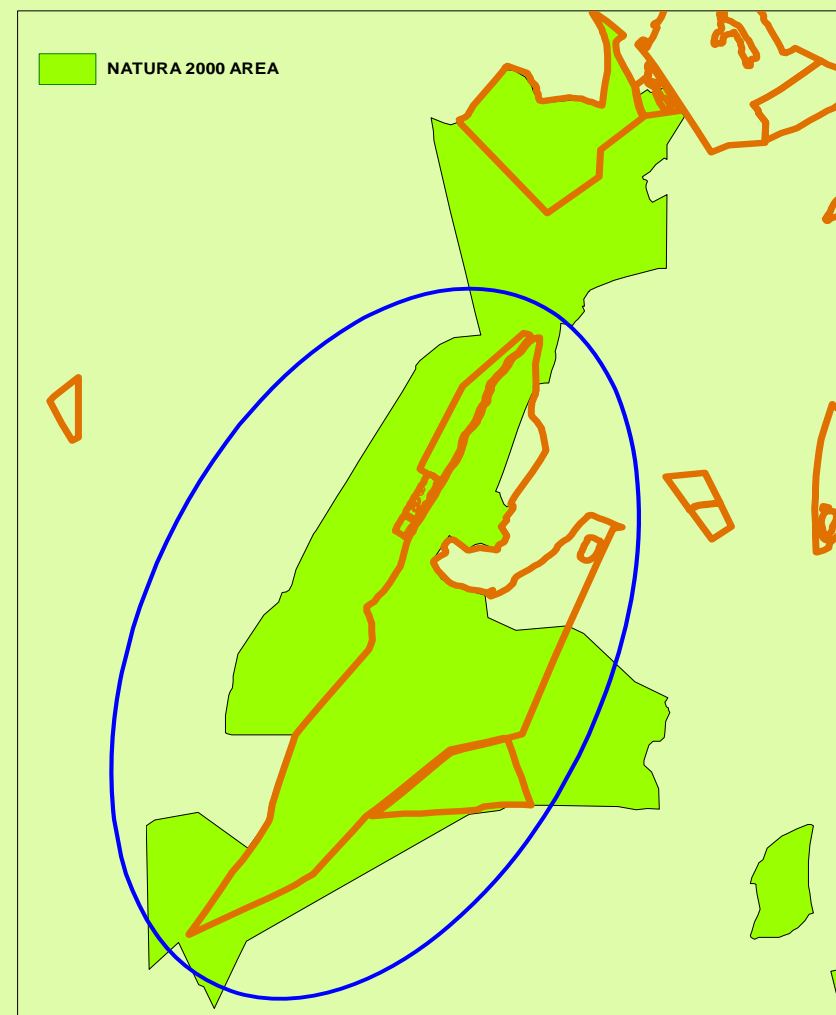
In 2002 farmer marked its grazed areas, it was digitalized by paying agency without any additional control, this was base for support payments. These borders have remained same from 2002 to 2005.

These areas have been grazed throughout the period and since 2000 it received support for land management under Ministry of Environment



Area information was based on inventory data by the NGO Seminatural communities conservation association and inventory of Natura 2000 areas.

Ca 90% of the area is covered with Natura 2000 area



## **...and the story...**

- In 2004 farmer applied for the single area payment and Rural Development Programme area based supports (organic farming support, less-favoured area payment), which were paid out.
- In 2005 paying agency controls argued the eligibility of wooded pastures as there were more than 50 trees per ha and farmer had to pay back all previously received supports (more than 35 300 EUR). No support was approved for 2005.
- Farmer argued the decision in court as the land was used as agricultural area - grazed with animals and paying agency should have given the right maps at first place if the area is not eligible.

## **...story continues...**

- There were more than 400 farmers in Western Estonia (Saare- Hiiu- Lääne and Pärnu Counties) who had same problem with the wooded pastures, which were grazed, but not considered as agricultural area.
- In 2007, the court gave the right to the farmer, saying that paying agency has to review the decision again.  
The paying agency interpreted the decision as it has to be explained better, why these wooded pastures are not eligible and not to change the decision.
- Court found that paying agency did not had sound reasoning on their decision, why on the Metsa Johani disputable land, where there were trees growing, it was not possible to graze animals in the same way as in the other parcels in the same region without trees.

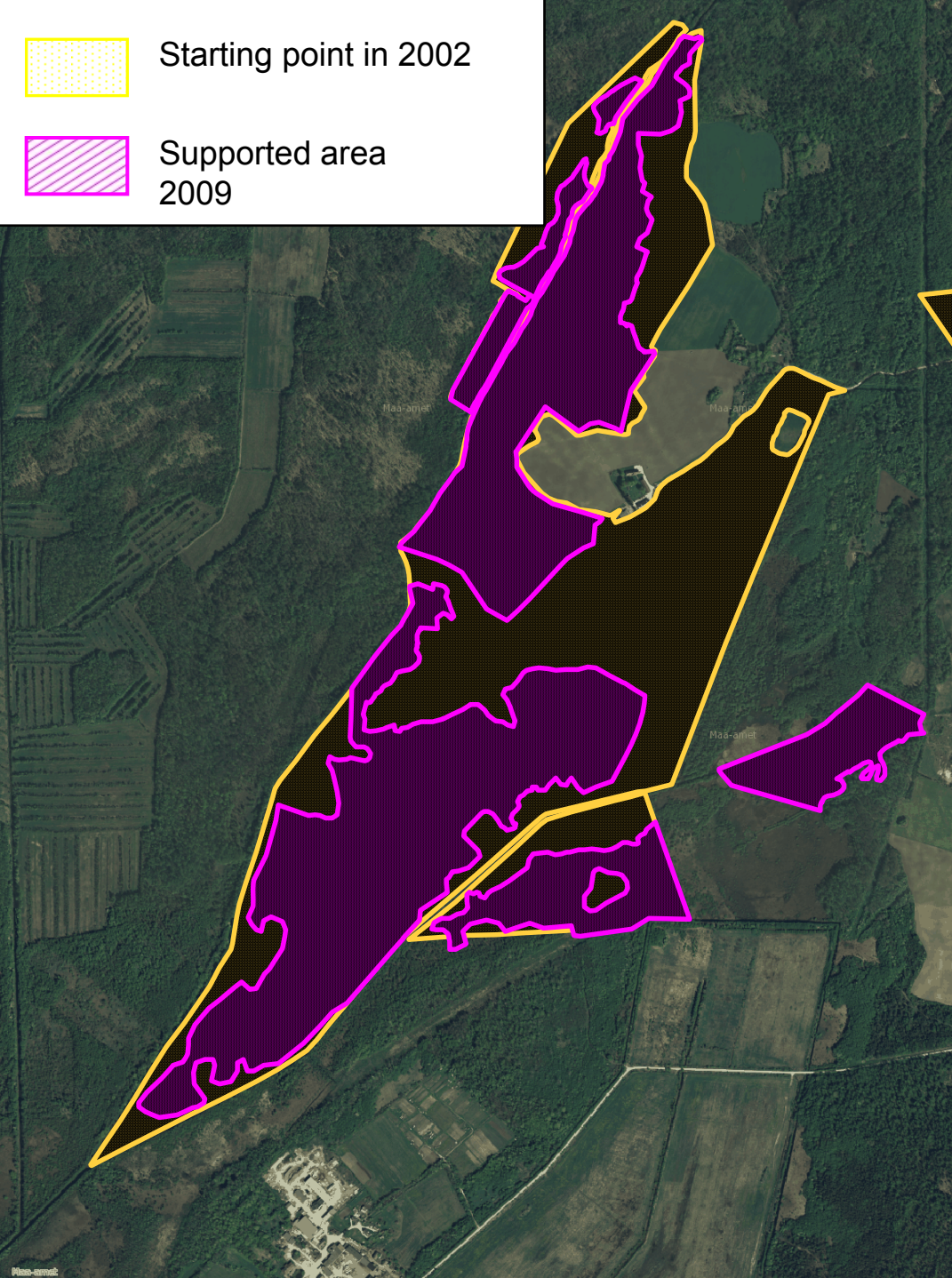
- By the EU law land with the trees is considered as agricultural land for the support programs if the agricultural production is possible in the same way as in the other parcels without trees in the same region.
- In the EC working document it has been said that land can't be considered eligible, if it has more than 50 trees per hectare. But at the same time trees which can be used in timber production were meant.
- In summer 2007 the political decision was made that farmers, who had grazed their pastures and applied for the agricultural area based supports, don't have to pay back the previously received the supports, but paying agency didn't accept this on this case.



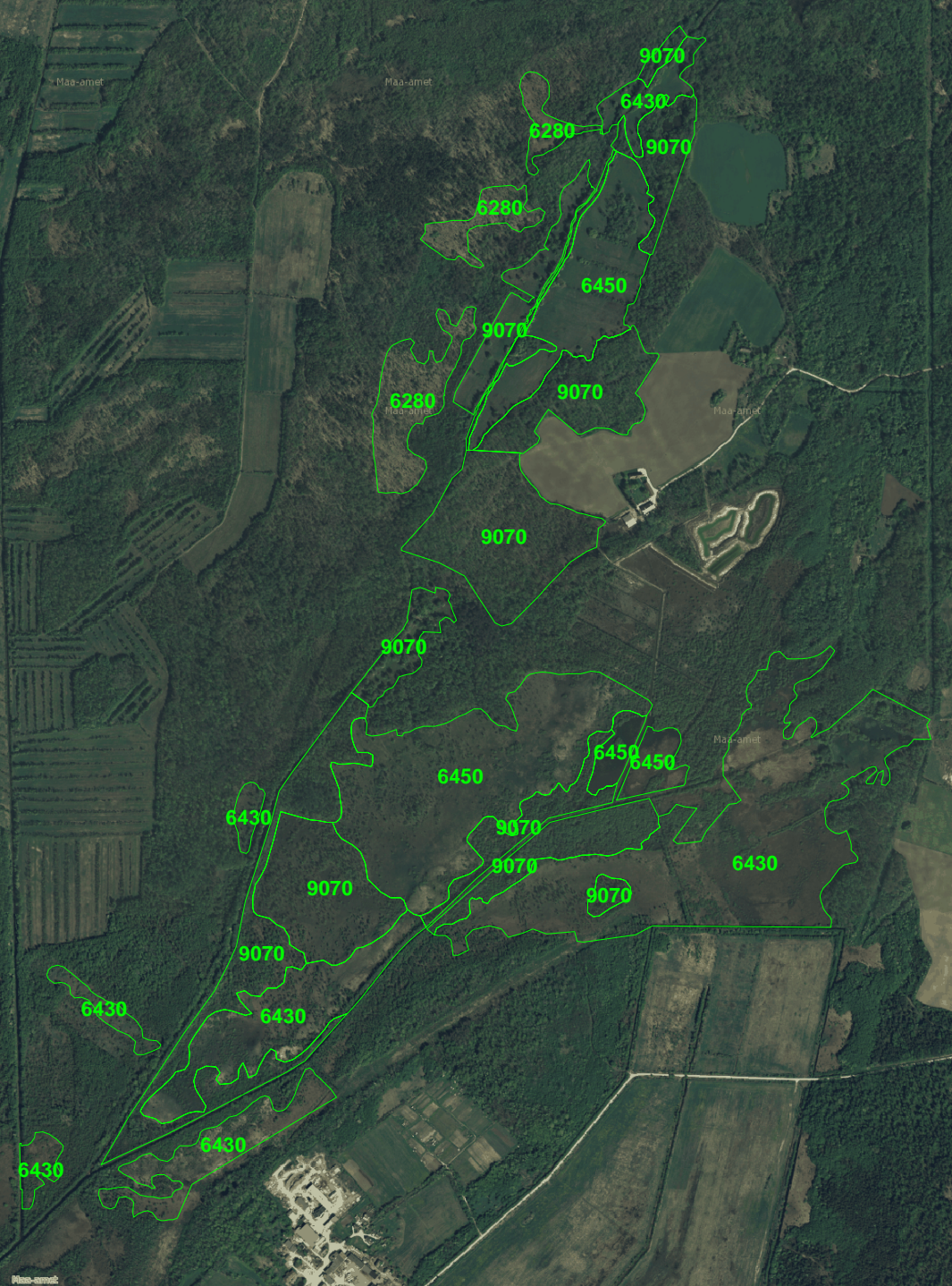
Starting point in 2002



Supported area  
2009



After the court dispute it reached to the stage where in 2009 there are changes in the supported area.



Natura 2000 habitats in the area:

6280 – Nordic alvar and precambrian calcareous flatrocks

6430 – Hydrophilus tall herb fringe communities

6450 – Northern boreal alluvial meadows (flooded meadows)

9070 – Fennoscandian wooded pastures





Lady slipper,  
*Cypripedium*  
*calceolus* L.

# Where goes the line for agricultural land?



**While the land eligibility was disputed, the Rural Development Foundation chose the best dairy cow and beef breeder in Estonia in 2008 – Andrus Sepp from Metsa Johan's farm**



# Final remarks on case study

This case crossed the bridges between agriculture and environment and enhanced remarkably knowledge on semi-natural habitats among officials and public.

# Conclusion

- Data from different sources:
  - Basic Map
  - Statistics Estonia
  - Field Parcel register managed by paying agency (under Ministry of Agriculture)
  - Estonian Nature Infosystem (under Ministry of Environment)
- Considering:
  - Areas that might be “lost” for some databases
  - Area which is in the database considered as agricultural land, but is abandoned in reality
  - Landscape elements are not considered as a part of agricultural land
  - Data reliability
  - What land and activities are considered for agriculture after all

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

THE  FILES

# Thank you for attention!

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