



Workshop 2: Wider implications of semi-subsistence farming for society and the environment

Semi-subsistence farming in the EU: Current situation and future prospects

Report on Workshop 2

Wider implications of semi-subsistence farming for society and the environment

Rapporteur: Gwyn Jones, European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism



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Chair: Aivars Lapins, Ministry of Agriculture, Latvia

Rapporteur: Gwyn Jones, European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism

- **Presentation 1**

Semi-subsistence farming and the delivery of environmental benefits in Romania.

Nathaniel Page, Director, ADEPT Foundation

- **Presentation 2**

Structural change and social security: semi-subsistence farming in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania.

Jana Fritzs, Senior Research Associate, IAMO, Germany

- **Presentation 3**

SSF in Romania

Mihail Dumitru, Pres. of Presidential Commission on Agriculture



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Discussion issues

- What is the role of SSF in the provision of public goods?
- Are SSF sufficiently recognized and remunerated for the public goods they provide?
- How can SSF be further encouraged in the provision of environmental public goods?
- How can SSF be further encouraged in their role of maintaining and strengthening rural communities?





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What is the role of SSF in the provision of public goods?

- Very high! Though link probably stronger to *economically-small* farms than to small farms per se in new AND old MS.
- PG linked to inability to invest (not just unprofitability of investment) combined with motivation to farm – what if household income rises or % agri income falls – but same fact makes them disproportionately important
- Climate change resilience; carbon sequestration; biodiversity; efficient water use; flood & erosion resistance; (poverty safety net); (rural vitality); traditions; starting point for multifunctionality and diversification. Many at LANDSCAPE, territorial, scale
- Small-scale low-intensity mosaic landscape associated with, but not same as, SSF – should be specifically evaluated (and addressed)
- SF also? Their role ignored just now.





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What is the role of SSF in the provision of public goods?

- All types of econ-small farms equally important? Perhaps different according to type of PG??
- Fritzsich presented cluster analysis results of S_FARM project:
 - Pensioners
 - Farmers
 - Job-starters
 - Diversifiers
- No consideration of public goods but categories sound meaningful and may be useful tool for considering relative PG delivery; response to policy tools; outcomes of policy tools





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Are SSF sufficiently recognized and remunerated for the public goods they provide?

- On the one hand “NO!!”
 - most SF/SSF get little or no reward for PG (1/2 land in RO out of scope of payments)
 - CAP rules on trees and bushes hit them hardest and exactly where the PG are!
 - Imp. that *activity* is what is rewarded – common land (& that it is ‘Active Farming!’)
- But also recognition that delivery occurs (at least for time being?) without support in some cases (minimising risk strategy assoc. with poverty)
- Is it ‘money for nothing’ or ‘public goods for nothing’? Consider official poverty line, minimum wage, when delivering public goods!!
- Marginalisation also in the mind. Self-respect built by society’s (Govt.’s) message very important – payments; rules; attitudes part of this. TV!
- Recognition that there are types of SSF and that some may need more or different types of support than others. Life cycle patterns?





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How can SSF be further encouraged in the provision of environmental public goods?

- It's a **EU** question, not just one for MS – they are EU goals too!
- Respect and sense of value (reward could be free services, e.g.)
- Regulation – sort out *real* problems (not all imaginable ones). Could really change regime for economically small farms (like HACCP)
- Recognise (and cope with...) role of the elderly
- Need also to integrate wider economic growth (on farm or off farm) with other policy goals - can be a serious threat to public goods delivery, both through intensification and abandonment
- Range of RD instruments potentially useful, but are they available? (not just in principle, but in practice – role of advisory services key)





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How can SSF be further encouraged in the provision of environmental PG?

- SSF measure? Not really! Should it be in other Axis with other aims?
- *Compensatory* payments (A-E, N2K...) approach – no reward for public goods (though in practice...) – bad news for poor farmers!
- Axis 1 and Axis 3 are very important - Axis 2 can't do everything
- LEADER approach a great opportunity for SF/SSF
 - allows local targeting, delivery, avoiding some scale problems (esp. if involves associations)
 - Needs to escape rut of being de facto an Axis 3 measure in many MS – EE good..
- Payments should reward but also reflect real cost structures – degression justified if small units provide added value (..mosaics)
- Are admin. difficulties considered too early in the RD process??



Increased coherence between 'policy for EU' and 'real policy'
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How can SSF be further encouraged in their role of maintaining and strengthening rural communities?

- Better pensions (probably best overall instrument for supporting pensioners, especially in terms of non-env PG?)
- Reconsider whether assumption that encouraging increasing economic size (from farming) is natural/obvious approach remains valid
- Encourage pluriactivity, but be realistic about the risk minimisation mentality and age of farmers
- Increased coherence between 'policy for EU' and 'real policy' - full complementarity between
 - various policies for EU, e.g. RDP; Regional Funds
 - and with seemingly unconnected policies – pensions; tax paperwork...





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Which 'Bliss' do we want?

Which one are we really paying for?

Are public goods being delivered through poverty?

Can we deliver them without poverty? Do we have the political will?



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