



Workshop 4: Reaching and supporting semi-subsistence farming

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

Report on Workshop 4

*Reaching and supporting semi-subsistence farms*

**Rapporteur: Yanka Kazakova, Bulgaria**



*Connecting Rural Europe*



## Workshop 4: Reaching and supporting semi-subsistence farming

**Chair: Takis Photiou**, Cyprus

**Rapporteur: Yanka Kazakova**, Bulgaria

- Presentation 1

Evolution of policies for semi-subsistence farming in Poland.

**Jan Falkowski**, Warsaw University, Poland

- Presentation 2

Crofting in Scotland: policies to address semi subsistence farms' needs.

**Angus McHattie**, Crofters commission, Isle of Skye, Scotland



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### SSF in Poland ppt

- Excellent uptake exceeding expectations -> good lessons
- Smallest farms (0-2 ESU) are not considered at all in m.SSF
- Discrepancy between the ESU criteria, the land size of farms and the flat rate of support offered
- Imprecise goals related to agri aspects mostly
- Expectations vs economic reality
- > Support to SSF should continue despite drawbacks
- > Needs coordination with other policies not only agri and RD





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### Crofters in Scotland ppt

- Tourism and non-farm income more and more important
- Livestock important for crofting and has environmental benefits
- Policies designed to keep things going but decline in animals continues and land is being abandoned – ‘one size fits all’ not working
- Support more difficult (time & efforts) to access
- Advising and skills transfer very important -> people on the ground are needed
- Optimistic for the future -> lots of opportunities that should be used





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### Discussion issues: RDP SSF measure

- SS farmers are very diverse group in reality
- Policy needs to define clearly why SSF should be supported
- And at which level support should be designed and targeted
- Combining all aspects and goals complicates implementation
- Duration and type of support will vary if restructuring or environment is chosen
- Can society impose to farmers what to do?
- What compromise is acceptable?
- Should policy address smallest (0-2 ESU) at all?







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### Discussion issues: Current RDP Implementation

- In BG, very unrealistic that 1 ESU farmers will restructure
- Small farmers are afraid of administration
- Penalties for not restructuring is not a good option; stimulation is better [higher payments last 2yrs or secured budget in m.121]
- Amount of support (1500 euro/year) very low to motivate uptake and enable restructuring
- In RO, small farmers are very flexible but business plan requirement is too much – simple criteria are needed instead





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### Discussion issues: Other policy measures needed

- SSF measure needs to facilitate change and cannot do it alone
- 'Packaged' approach is a good concept but the devil is in the details
- Effective advice and training are critically needed but have to be farm/ farmers specific not uniform across the country
- Links to cohesion policy – services and health care at local level
- Prepare farmers to use the market – whether for food products or environmental services [not yet existing but still state support cannot go on forever]
- Low intensive small scale livestock farmers still not targeted





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### Discussion issues: Reaching and Advising SSF

- More interdisciplinary advisors are needed not only farming related
- Producer groups are another option but how to encourage participation?
- High transaction costs especially in the first years for both farmers and administration
- Most important give farmers the self-confidence to do it themselves







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### Discussion issues: Reaching and Advising SSF

- In BG, currently low interest -> dialogue needs to be improved
- National Advisory Services, NGOs, farmers associations are all complementary options
- In RO, most SSF in nature important areas where many NGOs are working as well – their capacity should be used





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### Discussion issues: Networking and cooperation (N&C)

- Networking can be an efficient way of spreading information and good examples as well as mistakes
  - Different communities work in different ways
  - N&C can help overcome high transaction costs
  - Tools and cooperation measures have to be adjusted to small farmers addressing the obstacles they face
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- Slow set up of official RD networks in some MSs
  - Broadband and IT well intended but ill suited to SSF reality





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### Key outcomes

- SSF considered unwanted feature and hindering competitiveness but in reality they are providers of public goods
- Policy linkages should work together across different sectors
- Administrative burden and transaction costs are an issue to farmers and administration alike
- Better targeting is needed both in terms of policy goals (economic vs. environmental) as well as make POTENTIAL support REAL support (local& farm levels)
- Is it really necessary to ask SSF to become commercial? What about pluri-activity?

