

Nuffield Report: 2011 Associate Scholar Henk Smith (The Netherlands)

Study:

'Marketing biodiversity in the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)'

Summary:

- Changes in the CAP are based on environmental issues and a social point of view towards agriculture. Biodiversity will be a main focus and will become even more important in the near future.
- Governments are trying to improve biodiversity: by letting farmers participate voluntarily in agro environmental measures (e.g. agricultural nature conservation) at relevant places. Payments should at least be in conformity with the yields a farmer would normally harvest.
- Farmers who want to work in a group (collective), bottom up, within the greening of the CAP in pillar 1 and who are willing to make the combination with agro environmental measures in pillar 2, seem to contribute positively to improving biodiversity in the future.
- The market, and with that the entire food-chain, has to show the consumer more and more how products are produced. What has been done to improve for example biodiversity. The producers will be asked to show clearly how sustainability has been implemented in water- and energy-efficiency and biodiversity.
- Farmer driven collective's who can bind together social needs from society to farmers, can influence biodiversity by creating a green/blue nerve system within a landscape.
- Involvement of farmers themselves in the planning of integrated territorial approach to providing environmental services, is a very important factor. It will be more efficient and effective if you use local knowledge.
- Through taxes society pays for its needs, for example agricultural nature conservation. When commercial companies within the food-chain are willing to pay for these services, we have to be alert. Is this a service which is asked for down the chain by the consumer or is there a hidden agenda for the company.
- In the case a farmer wants to sell his product to a retailer or consumer he has to be clear about the four p's: The product (how was it produced), The price (what is the surplus value), The Promotion (make biodiversity visible and measure it), The Place (connect to community and give information).

Report

For the coming years agriculture is going to face a lot of challenges. The growing world population, up to nine billion in 2050, will increase the demand for food. At the same time not just the product but also the way of producing will be more highlighted. In the entire food-chain, but especially at farm level, producers will be asked to show clearly how sustainability is implemented in water- and energy-efficiency and biodiversity. In particular for biodiversity, the degree of variation of life forms within a given species, ecosystem, biome, or planet, it is hard to adjust to changes. Biodiversity will decline caused by climate change and make conservation more difficult. Intensive agriculture has caused a decrease of natural species in the agricultural landscape. The Netherlands is one of the countries where biodiversity diminishes fastest in numbers of species and in speed.

The Dutch government acknowledges the problem and works together with other countries in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to improve biodiversity: by letting farmers participate voluntarily in agro environmental measures (e.g. agricultural nature conservation) at relevant places. Besides that,



every crop farmer with more than 30 hectares land, has to crop rotate compulsory with at least three crops. Also he has to implement Ecological Focus Area's at 5% of his land in the near future.

Also the market, and with that the entire food-chain, has to show the consumer more and more how products are produced. What has been done to improve for example biodiversity. A company like LU (producing cookies and crackers) already has marketed biodiversity and uses it for coping with the 4 P's (product, price, promotion, place). Also businesses in general can profit from increasing biodiversity. The farmers however who do not want to move in that direction, might experience difficulties in their sales, in the future

It is not just earnings. The Gaia biodiversity scale gives information and understanding to farmers by comparing their farm with other farms on a biodiversity scale. In The Skylark Foundation systematic it is the farmers who come together and give their critical opinion about each other's farm. By doing that it gives the farmers a moment to pause and reflect, this way the farmers can improve their farms continuously. At all times we have to be clear and deliver the product that is asked for, what is delivered is decided by the consumer through the food-chain. The example of Ducks Unlimited shows that the aim can be clear, however different interests can be on the bases of these aims. The consumer is king!

Farmers who as a group (collective) want to work bottom up within the greening of the CAP in pillar 1 and who are willing to make the combination with agro environmental measures in pillar 2, seem to contribute positively to improving biodiversity in the future. For this they will also be appreciated by their community at the same time. Farmers who don't want to fill in this social and environmental issue, will be punished financially and could at longer term probably even loose the support and understanding of their community for their daily work at the farm.

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