



eip-agri
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

Wildlife and agricultural production

How to promote innovative and sustainable practices to prevent and control wild animal damage on farms while at the same time protecting wildlife?

This was the main question for the EIP-AGRI Focus Group 'Wildlife and agricultural production'. The 20 Focus Group experts from across Europe identified common types of damage, available solutions and good farming practices, as well as ideas for innovative projects and research needs.

Most animal groups were included in the analysis (birds, carnivores, ungulates) and damage prevention and control measures were specifically described for each of them. Most of the losses and damages wildlife cause to agricultural production are predation on farm animals, game and fish, crop damage by wild herbivores or birds and the spreading of diseases. Damage to crops is frequently caused by wildlife roaming at the edge of agricultural land where natural habitats offer breeding or resting sites. Livestock is more often attacked by predators, the number of these predators has been increasing in recent decades even though their natural habitat has reduced. Disease spreading between wildlife, livestock and humans has also become a growing problem and biosecurity measures are often still not sufficient to avoid outbreaks.

The type of preventive and control measures most frequently adopted in Europe are exclusion systems, specifically fencing and frightening devices, but hunting, culling, dissuasive feeding and habitat modifications are also used depending on the problem species. Some important work is also being carried out on cultural habits, trying to help farmers and others to change their behaviours, especially those that have a direct impact on human-wildlife conflicts and that can significantly reduce losses.

“Through technology we find solutions that make the coexistence between livestock and wolves possible.”

- Ana Bogueiro (Spain), Operational Group “Gelob” and guest speaker of EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Wildlife and agricultural production -

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Ideas for Operational Groups

- ▶ **Wildlife as a resource.** Explore possibilities for farmers and other stakeholders to create additional sources of revenue from game meat, if a system that guarantees meat is safe for consumption and allows it to be commercialised is in place.
- ▶ **Assessment of territorial strategies for wildlife damage control.** Develop efficient farming practices and land management tools that intentionally include functional biodiversity at multiple spatial and temporal scales, seeking a productive coexistence with wildlife that could maintain key ecosystem services for agriculture, such as soil fertility, pest and disease control, water use efficiency, and pollination.
- ▶ **Involving farmers in wildlife decision-making.** Find a way to better engage farmers and involve them in sharing information, monitoring wildlife numbers, observing their behaviour and assessing damages, taking a more active role in wildlife management and gaining value from this participation.

Research needs

- ▶ Find ways to mitigate damages and design compensation mechanisms
- ▶ Develop new tools for data collection and data analysis to assess, monitor and control damages
- ▶ Explore participatory ways to assess farmers' perspectives and needs
- ▶ Bridging the urban-rural gap in addressing agricultural-wildlife conflicts
- ▶ Economic sustainability of farm business models in areas where human-wildlife conflicts are present
- ▶ Develop land-based tools to improve land management to avoid human-wildlife conflicts
- ▶ Explore the use of communication and mediation tools to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders and to enlarge participation and improve governance

More ideas for Operational Groups and research needs are in the Focus final report



More information on the EIP-AGRI website

[Final report](#)

Inspirational idea:

[Focus Group webpage](#)

[Italian Operational Group develops ultrasonic technology to protect crops from damage by wild animals](#)

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