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AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION



Agroforestry: introducing woody vegetation into specialised crop and livestock systems

Developing agroforestry as a sustainable farming system to boost agricultural productivity and profitability

Agroforestry practices have the potential to be regenerative, improve and increase the provision of ecosystem services at the farm and landscape level, while improving farm productivity and profitability. These services include the possibility to improve carbon sequestration, biodiversity, erosion control, and water management, all of particular long-term interest. However the short-term transition from specialised crop and livestock systems to agroforestry can be challenging. The EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Agroforestry brought together 20 experts from across Europe to investigate existing practices, list challenges and opportunities, and discuss ways forward to further develop economically profitable, sustainable agroforestry systems in Europe. The focus was on specialised crop and livestock systems.

Agroforestry systems are more complex and knowledge-intensive to manage. Their success relies on conditions which go beyond the farm level. The experts made some general recommendations to face these challenges:

- ▶ Improve the systemic understanding of farm systems through participatory approaches
- ▶ Promote adequate training through several means to reach all concerned actors and provide relevant practical examples for learning purposes
- ▶ Support design and decision-making through networking. Information, guidelines and tools should be easily accessible
- ▶ Facilitate producer-consumer contact and promote the value of agroforestry products
- ▶ Adapt legal frameworks to ensure consistency, allow the development of local best practices, and facilitate day to day management of agroforestry systems
- ▶ Monitor agroforestry systems to assess changes and to evaluate possible success

"More needs to be done to implement this multifunctional approach in sustainable and profitable ways for farmers and society. Grassroots innovation and experience have to be analysed and shared through networking initiatives at all scales."

- Fabien Balaguer (France), expert from the EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Agroforestry -

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Ideas for Operational Groups

- ▶ Test climate-smart agroforestry practices for ecosystem services at farm level
- ▶ Increase agroforestry profitability through innovative value chains (e.g. wood or energy related) and increased added value products (e.g. carbon storage labelling)
- ▶ Experiment with setting up appropriate agroforestry systems at different scales
- ▶ Share practical experiences and knowledge: collect data at local level, create platforms and helpdesk services, peer to peer learning, and demonstration plots
- ▶ Create new opportunities and added value for shelterbelts

Areas for further research and development

- ▶ Methods to increase profitability by organising the added value of agroforestry and raise social awareness e.g. via dedicated labelling
- ▶ Boost education on agroforestry: development of agroforestry at all educational levels
- ▶ Digitisation opportunities: foster access to open and available databases, develop geographic information systems (GIS) based decision support tools
- ▶ Tree-related knowledge: test new tree species or varieties which are suitable for agroforestry systems, good practices in tree cultivation and care
- ▶ Explore economic incentives (subsidies, grants, taxes and schemes) to recognise and compensate the benefits delivered by agroforestry
- ▶ Agroforestry at landscape level: good practices, impact of land tenure and structure in fragmented landscapes, contribution to adaptation and mitigation of climate change
- ▶ Assessment and payment for ecosystem services as a way to recognise the potential contribution of agroforestry to global change and increase awareness

More ideas for Operational Groups and research needs available in the Focus Group report



More information

Focus Group webpage	Inspirational ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agroforestry: a win-win for nature and the farmer• Livestock agroforestry - combining forestry with livestock husbandry: woodland eggs and poultry p. 18	Other agroforestry projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AGFORWARD• AFINET Horizon 2020 thematic network• AGROFE EU Lifelong learning programme• AGROF - MM Erasmus+ project
Final Report		

Contact: EIP-AGRI Service Point - - Avenue de la Toison d'Or 72 - 1060 Brussels - BELGIUM
Tel +32 2 543 73 48 - servicepoint@eip-agri.eu - www.eip-agri.eu

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