High Nature Value Farming in Italy

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Rural development:
a critical opportunity for people and biodiversity.
With a spotlight on the Alpine region.

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**High Nature Value Farmland**

HNV farmland (HNVF): “Those areas in Europe where agriculture is a major (usually the dominant) land use and where agriculture supports or is associated with either a high species and habitat diversity or the presence of species of European conservation concern or both” (Andersen, *et al*, 2003)
High Nature Value Farming

- HNVF is typically characterised by a combination of low intensity land use, the presence of semi-natural vegetation and unfarmed features, and a diversity of land cover and land uses (Beaufoy and Cooper, 2008)

- Broad types of farming that, because of their characteristics, are inherently high in biodiversity (Beaufoy, 2010)

- HNV farming system: interaction of farmland characteristics and associated farming practices
High Nature Value Farmland in Italy

- 6 main HNV farming systems:
  - permanent grassland, extensive livestock, arable crops, permanent crops, mixed crops, mixed livestock and crops.
- Methodology (Census data, 2010)
  - Presence/absence of livestock
  - Prevalence of land use
  - Livestock density
  - Presence/absence of irrigation
  - Organic farming
  - Presence/absence of unfarmed features (e.g.: stonewalls), fallow land, cover crops/understorey
  - Presence/absence of olive groves
- 3.24 million ha
  - 25% of UAA; 10,4% of Italian territory;
  - 17% of Italian farms.
- Regional differences: from 11% to 70%
HNV farmland and farming systems in Italy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HNV Farmland in Italy</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.24 million hectares</td>
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- 25% of total UAA

- Mountain 43%; Hill 47%; Plain 10%

Avg UAA of HNV farms: **12 ha** (Avg UAA of Italian farms: **8 ha**)

**HNV farmland**

- Permanent grassland: 36%
- Arable crops: 10%
- Permanent crops: 11%
- Mixed crops: 1%
- Mixed livestock and crops: 2%
- Extensive livestock: 40%

**Geographic distribution of HNV farmland**

- Mountain: 10%
- Hill: 47%
- Plain: 43%
HNV farms and farming systems in Italy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HNV Farms in Italy</th>
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<td>267,830 farms</td>
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- 17% of total farms
- Mountain 26%; Hill 58%; Plain 16%

HNV farms

- Permanent crops 53%
- Permanent grassland 25%
- Arable crops 10%
- Extensive livestock 8%
- Mixed crops 3%
- Mixed livestock and crops 1%

Geographic distribution HNV farms

- Mountain 16%
- Hill 26%
- Plain 58%
HNV farmland
Share of Alpine HNV farming system on total HNVF

- Extensive livestock: 20%
- Permanent grassland: 35%, 30%
- Arable crops: 13%, 0%
- Permanent crops: 8%, 1%
- Mixed crops: 8%, 0%
- Mixed livestock and crops: 4%, 0%

17% of Italian HNV farmland
HNV farmland in the Italian Alps

Prevalence of HNV grazing systems, i.e. extensive livestock (35%) and permanent grassland systems (56%) Great relevance in Italy in terms of UAA, social patterns and environmental services

Share of HNV grazing systems on total HNVF (Alpine Regions)
**HNV farms**

### Alpine Regions

- Grazing livestock: 52%
- Permanent grassland: 16%
- Arable crops: 22%
- Permanent crops: 9%
- Mixed crops: 1%
- Mixed livestock and crops: 1%

### Alps

- Grazing livestock: 70%
- Permanent grassland: 12%
- Arable crops: 0%
- Permanent crops: 0%
- Mixed crops: 0%
- Mixed livestock and crops: 0%

### Extensive livestock

- 19% HNV Farms in Italy
- 13% HNV farms in the Alpine Regions
- 12% HNV Farms in the Alps

### Permanent grassland

- 34%

### Arable crops

- 27%

### Permanent crops

- 7%

### Mixed crops

- 6%

### Mixed livestock and crops

- 1%

**6.5% of Italian HNV farms**
Current support to HNVF: main RDP’s measures

- **Agri-environment** (Measure 214), supporting management practices, such as:
  - Maintenance and management of permanent grasslands (only in a few cases management regimes according to type of grassland)
  - Alp-system, named “Alpeggio” i.e. vertical transhumance (Aosta Valley, Bolzano, Lombardy)
  - Input restrictions on grasslands
  - Conversion of arable land into permanent grassland
  - Appropriate grazing regimes

- **LFA** (Measure 211). Levels of payment are sometimes raised where farming shows HNV characteristics, such as steep alpine pastures in Aosta Valley, terraced vineyards in Valtellina and Camonica Valley in Lombardy

- **non-productive investments** (Measure 216). I.e. establishment/recovery of landscape elements and ecological infrastructures. Among the Alpine Regions, this measure is implemented only in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardy and Veneto
Other tools supporting HNVF

- Regional laws: i.e. in Aosta Valley: recovery of Alpeggi; consistent mix of measures supporting low-intensity livestock systems taking into account socio-economic and environmental aspects.

- LIFE+ programmes: a relevant tool for the improvement of effectiveness of AE schemes and the conservation of species and habitats. I.e. those targeted to specific types of grasslands, like the alpine Nardus grasslands in Piedmont (LIFE02 NAT/IT/008574)
Priorities for future support to HNVF

- *targeting* support to HNVF

- farm-level eligibility criteria (based on HNVF/farming systems characteristics)

- integrated and territorial approaches: a coherent *mix* of measures and actions combined and tailored as to address HNV farms needs taking local characteristics into account

- involvement of local communities and potential beneficiaries in scheme design

- addressing socio-economic challenges of HNV farms encouraging economic viability and profitability (I.e. investment aid, support for joining food quality schemes; diversification into non-agricultural activities; advice and training)
Priorities for future support to HNVF

- Integration of key HNV characteristics into agricultural statistics (i.e. Agricultural Census, FSS, FADN) and LPIS-IACS databases to target measures and monitor HNVF trends.
- Availability of data on a geographical basis (environmental, socio-economics, RDP measure uptakes).
- Cooperation between agricultural and environmental departments.
- Synergy among funds, and policies (socio-economic, agricultural and environmental).
Thank you for your attention!