

# ***New CAP – better or worse?***

Trees Robijns - Senior EU Agriculture and Bioenergy Policy Officer - BirdLife Europe

Brussels – 17 November 2015

# The premise of last CAP reform

- Public money for public goods
- Budget versus delivery:
  - 2: sustainable growth of natural resources
- Lift the baseline
- Context
  - EU biodiversity strategy – target 3 agriculture
  - first time co-decision with 28 Member States

# HIGH NATURE VALUE FARMING

HOW DIVERSITY IN EUROPE'S FARM SYSTEMS DELIVERS FOR BIODIVERSITY



## farmin as HNV

# for the new CAP



## CAP reform 2013

last chance to stop the decline of Europe's High Nature Value farming?



## Europe's hay meadows in decline What are we losing and what can we do? A test case for EU agriculture and biodiversity policy

09.30 - 11.00 Thursday 8 November 2012  
European Parliament, 10A Wertz EG, 9-1047 Brussels  
Hosted by SCIN/COIS/INRA/INFP

Starting with a video message from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

Traditional hay meadows, flower-rich meadows and other areas of high biodiversity are among the most biodiverse places in Europe and a source of joy, inspiration and beauty to everybody. They are a large part of our shared culture and heritage. They provide many environmental, social and economic benefits. They are protected by EU policies and subsidies, yet they continue to disappear, through abandonment, intensification or conversion to other uses.

This policy seminar will discuss how European institutions can protect these meadows and support the farmers who are using them most effectively.

Find out if you are eligible for funding your nature and heritage in the UK via the <http://www.nature.gov.uk/uk> by 31 November. The award will allow you to fund a range of activities for the public, and improve the way that you manage your land. For more information, contact the EU team at [eu@nature.gov.uk](mailto:eu@nature.gov.uk).

Part funded by the European Commission (DG AGRI) as part of the CAP 2013 work programme.



Partnership for nature and people

for a new  
EU Common  
Agricultural Policy





# What it meant for wooded pastures

- More openness to woody pastures in the rules
- But:
  - Trees are still not seen as fundamental part of the productive system
  - rules are poorly conceived, not based on good science or on farming realities, complex, not fully clear, contradictory...
  - problems with the way some Member States and auditors interpret the rules.
- System could lead to failure of policy objectives for large areas of farmland, many farmers, and EU environmental priorities.

# Can the policy still do it?

**YES, WE CAN**



memegenerator.net

# How can we improve the system?

1. Evaluation of the CAP eligibility rules for permanent pastures
  - ❖ Effects of the CAP rules on the ground
  - ❖ Coherence between CAP and other (environmental) policies
  - ❖ Study options for improvement: e.g. harmonize rules between different policies (CAP, B&HD) in Natura 2000 farmed areas
2. All wooded pastures in active use should be eligible for direct payments
  - ❖ Trees and shrubs are not a priori “non-productive”
  - ❖ Recognise forage value of fallen fruits and leaves, and other agronomic functions of trees and shrubs
  - ❖ Activity to be a determining criterion for eligibility. MS should define acceptable levels of activity (maintenance, production)
  - ❖ Grazing should be recognized as an option for “maintenance of the agricultural area” as it can be important from an environmental perspective

# Improving the system – part 2

## 2. Eligibility (continuation)

- ❖ Removal of concepts that cannot be practically defined/checked, such as a “grazable tree for its full area”
- ❖ No arbitrary tree/shrub limit should be set if there is an acceptable level of farming taking place
- ❖ No requirement for pro-rata reductions except for features that clearly are not part of the forage system
- ❖ Auditors change their thinking: a lot of trees and shrubs does not mean less/not eligible per definition
- ❖ Do not favour afforestation of pasture above continuation of grazing on wooded pasture land



# Improving the system – part 3

3. Rural Development Programmes as extra support system
  - ❖ Agri-Environment Climate measures should be used much more actively in these areas – especially in Southern Member States
  - ❖ RDP support for afforestation on grassland should not be more attractive than incentives to continue farming wood pastures
4. Consider a fundamental revision of the 2 pillar system as per our original NGO proposal

**Thank you!**



**[trees.robijns@birdlife.org](mailto:trees.robijns@birdlife.org)**

**<http://europe.birdlife.org> - @BirdLifeEurope**