

Keynote speeches

Agroforestry – How farmer experiences shape tomorrow's practise and policy

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5.1 *Farmers Experiences and Adoption (II), Hall Q1, května 29, 2024, 15:45–17:15*

The Common Agricultural Policy has shaped how we farm and manage land for more than 50 years. Agriculture and the way in which we manage land is having to change due to climate change, resource and land degradation. These are some of the greatest challenges of our time. Regenerative practices such as agroforestry offer farming and forestry routes to resilience and net zero with the opportunity to become part of the solution rather than being part of the problem.

In many parts of Europe, agroforestry adoption is increasing. Yesterdays climate issues in southern Europe are todays problems in middle Europe and tomorrow's challenges for northern Europe. There is an ever increasing body of research evidence that shows agroforestry can address many of these problems and challenges.

Farmer experiences across a range of diverse climatic and farming systems are invaluable in understanding the barriers to adopting and adapting agroforestry. Understanding what farmers technical, economic and market access needs and support requirement are will be key. Agroforestry requires long term, stable agricultural policy and the needs to address land tenure challenges in many locations. Importantly, mechanisms and approaches to de-risk change at farm level are critical, as are facilitating peer to peer knowledge exchange and creating networks of real-life, farm scale commercial examples of agroforestry, to provide the confidence to farmers, foresters and land managers to adopt agroforestry.

A number of country based and of EU wide programmes are now addressing these needs and building agroforestry into the new CAP and domestic policies is happening. EURAF's influence across agriculture, forestry, science and policy is growing from a niche player to one of increasing importance. Agroforestry is now in the ascendance, but more than ever, sharing, adapting and planting is for today not tomorrow.

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now”

Chinese proverb