UNISECO

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Soil conservation farming in Hungary:

How policies could be improved to assist agro-ecological transition?

Photo: M. Mata Lara

Understanding and Improving the Sustainability of Agro-ecological Farming Systems in the EU

POLICY BRIEF

Soil is the basis for the production of both private and public goods. Adopting soil conservation practices is the first step for market oriented arable farming towards transition to agro-ecology.

Agri-environmental measures are not proved to be effective enough in maintaining the environmental quality of agricultural areas. New solutions are needed to induce real impacts in handling ecological challenges.
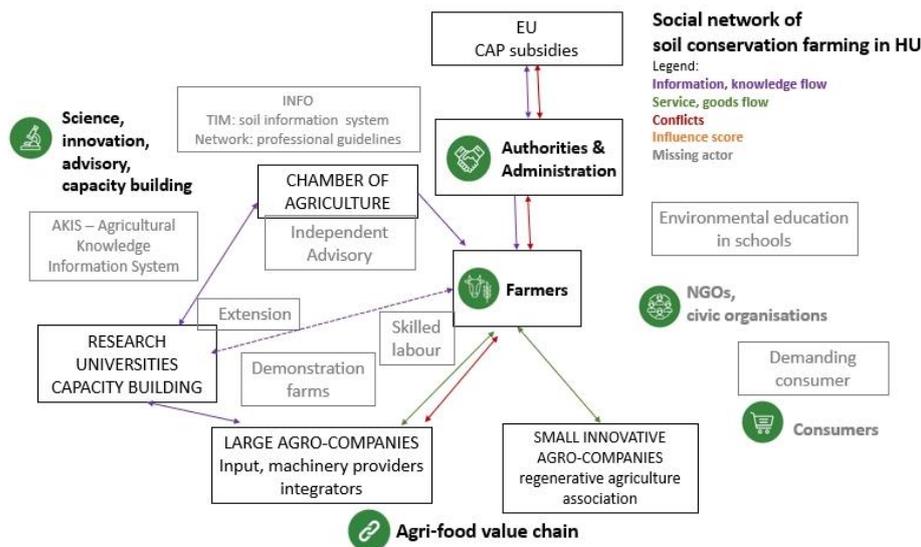
RESEARCH FINDINGS

The key barriers for the generic uptake of soil conservation practices among farmers include lack of specific support and focus on soil conservation and lack of specific strategy from decision makers.

Many actors in the agri-food system are relevant to assist farmers to bring the widespread adoption of soil conservation farming practices to a success. Innovative design changes to existing rural development measures have the potential to successfully promote transitions to soil conservation farming if accompanied by measures of research and advisory development, raising public awareness and demand for crops produced this way.

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Innovative farmers organise field days for sharing experiences

Photo: Katalin Balázs

POLICY BRIEF

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In the light of the Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy of the EU soil conservation farming is justified to be a priority and requires the development of appropriate interventions in the national CAP Strategic Plan.

Eco-schemes may support

1) crop diversification and rotation with the inclusion of species that are particularly beneficial,
2) shift to less water demanding crops in water stressed areas,
3) maintenance of zero-tillage.

Adjusting current greening measures is needed to disable the misuse of cover crops (e.g. crushing and tillage before the cover crop developed enough). Improving the Farm modernization measure to support purchasing of specific soil conservation agricultural machinery like direct seeding machine. New types of land-lease contracts that enable farmers to implement multi-year site-specific farming practices.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Case study page and link to story map, downloadable materials:

https://uniseco-project.eu/case-study/hungary