




UNISECO



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# Improving accessibility to agroecological farming knowledge and practical skills of Lithuanian farmers to support the transition to agroecology

Credit: Audronė Alijošaitė-Paulauskienė

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

ISSUE BRIEF

The case study is concerned with preservation and extensive management of valuable grassland and wetland habitats that can be achieved through a transition of dairy farming to more agroecological/ sustainable practices, as currently, the sector is rapidly intensifying, valuable grassland habitats are being lost.

## PROBLEM

Knowledge on sustainable/ agroecological farming and improved farmer entrepreneurship are the key missing aspects. Insufficient adaptation to changing socioeconomic conditions by dairy farms resulted in farm numbers declining by 50% in the last 5 years mainly at the expense of smallholders. Whereas the overall intensification in Lithuania (e.g. area of permanent grasslands decreased by over 20% in 20 years) needs counterbalancing with agroecological practice.

## SOLUTION

In addition to more advanced farm advisory services to provide consultations on agroecology (AE), farmer to farmer exchange, education, practical training and field days are needed to be organised by farmer's associations or even farmers themselves independently. This should help realise the benefits of AE and envelop building entrepreneurship and higher added value produce creation on farms. The latter is crucial to improve the value chains so that AE goods could reach the public.

It is crucial that farmers associations or cooperatives concerned with AE farming are established or the existing ones revitalised. Their capacity building is needed and enhanced cooperation with government actors, other associations, researchers is desirable for advancing agroecology and providing high quality farmer support (knowledge, transfer of practice, political representation and an aid with transition). Policy alignment towards and support for agroecology is crucial. Government support schemes should be designed to facilitate the required changes.

### Authors:

Gražvydas Jegelevičius,  
Elvyra Mikšytė,  
Justas Gulbinas

### Country:

Lithuania

### Related to UNISECO case study:

Keeping it small and extensive: the way to a sustainable future in the Lithuanian dairy sector

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*If you have any questions concerning this Issue brief, please contact the author(s) by e-mail.*

### Contact email:

elvyra.miksyte@bef.lt

*Species-rich permanent grasslands. Credit: Lina Gulbinienė*



## POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

Knowledge on agroecology would become more available with presence of working examples (farms), ongoing field trials and overall improved transition to agroecological farming. Farmer entrepreneurship would improve with higher product added-value creation on farm. Agroecology would become more visible in public, value of sustainable goods better understood and their availability improved. Valuable wildlife habitats and biodiversity would become better protected and habitat status maintained and improved.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Link to case study page: <https://uniseco-project.eu/case-study/lithuania>

And Lithuanian case study story map:

<https://panda.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=0f6e7664f2b44b1a8ea411e859d22357>

### ABOUT UNISECO:

UNISECO is a European research project aiming to develop innovative approaches to enhance the understanding of socio-economic and policy drivers and barriers for further development and implementation of agro-ecological practices in EU farming systems.

Project coordinator: Dr Gerald Schwarz // Email: [gerald.schwarz@thuenen.de](mailto:gerald.schwarz@thuenen.de) // Phone: +49 531 596 5140 // Thünen Institute, Bundesallee 63 38116 Braunschweig, GERMANY

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<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/773901>

<https://zenodo.org/communities/uniseco-h2020/>

UNISECO in the EIP-Agri projects database:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/understanding-and-improving-sustainability-agro>

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