



UNISECO



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Adding value to agro-ecological practices in market-oriented arable farming

Photo: J. Carolus

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

ISSUE BRIEF

Stimulating the creation of markets that recognise the additional value of agro-ecological practices to society is central for the transition towards sustainable farming

The Nienburg County comprises an intensive agricultural area with sustainability issues regarding biodiversity loss and water quality. High land prices as a result of the proximity to regions with the highest livestock densities in Germany expose farmers to a great degree of economic pressures, ultimately hampering the implementation of agro-ecological practices on arable land.

LACK OF ADDED VALUE

The lack of added value from production systems with agro-ecological practices pose an economic transition barrier. While agro-ecological practices enhance the environmental performance of farms, their implementation leads to lower farm income. But current channels of processing and trading do not differentiate between arable crops that were produced on farms that follow agro-ecological principles (other than organic farming certification). As a consequence, market incentives and remuneration of specific agro-ecological benefits, for instance through certification, do not exist.

CREATING MARKETS FOR AGRO-ECOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The members of the Multi-Actor Platform identified a series of actions that can be pursued by local actors to stimulate the creation of markets that recognise the value that agro-ecological practices provide to society as well as the additional efforts of farmers.

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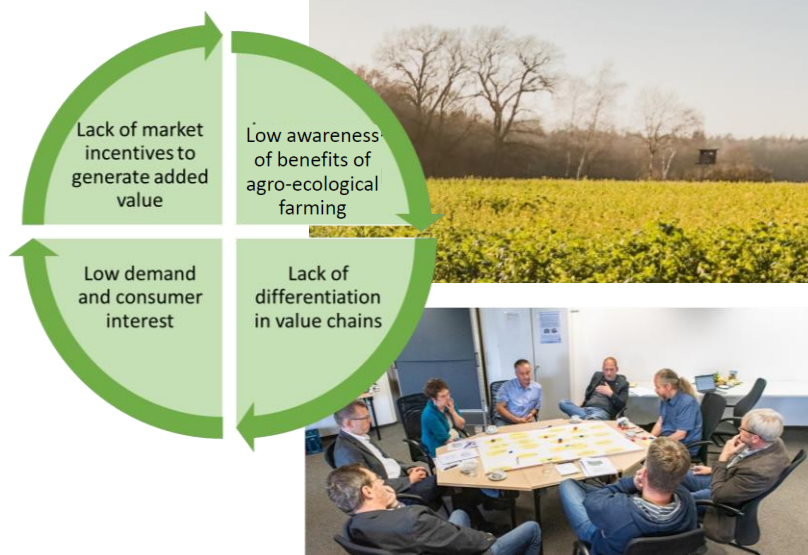
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Addressing key barriers of agro-ecological transitions:

Co-constructing key actions through a participatory process that engaged a multi-actor platform in a series of workshops and interviews.

Key actions to stimulate agro-ecological markets and to enhance the creation of added value were identified as follows:

- Building on an increased interest in organic and locally produced food.
- Initiating regional food association and engaging in food policy councils.
- Consumer education, including cooperation with schools through existing school and public procurement programmes.
- Developing value chain structures for processing alternative products.
- Integrate biodiversity standards into the supply chain.
- Result-based payments for environmental benefits of agro-ecological practices

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

Creating markets and enhancing the societal demand and recognition for agro-ecologically produced goods have the potential to address the lack in added value. Regional food associations and food policy councils may enhance producers-consumers linkages, and education and awareness raising measures can increase society's willingness-to-pay for locally and sustainably produced goods. The creation of markets is thereby underpinned by value chain structures, integrated market standards and agri-environmental payments, which enable an adequate remuneration of benefits agro-ecological approaches provide to society.

FURTHER INFORMATION

UNISECO project website - <https://uniseco-project.eu/case-study/germany>

The school programme in Lower Saxony - <https://www.schulprogramm.niedersachsen.de>

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.

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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>

VISIT THE UNISECO AGRO-ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE HUB: <https://uniseco-project.eu>



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