

Conservation of meadows in Estonia

Successes and failures under CAP

*The world was young
the grass was green*



Estonia is a small country and proud of its nature....



Area of Estonia: ~45 300 km²

>50% of territory is covered by forest

~30% are wetlands

~20% farmland

Having lots of “variety” of nature around us have “blinded” us to see the fragility and importance of farmland communities....

WHERE is our (valuable) farmland (1)?

No single definition and data source for FARMLAND:

- CORINE Land Cover: 1 696 820 ha
- Estonian Base Map: 1 321 358 ha
- Estonian Statistics (2009): 931 776 ha

• LPIS/IACS:

- agricultural land declared in LPIS by 2004 - 1 266 971 ha
- area under Single Area Payment Scheme in 2010 - 861 920 ha

Share of farmland ~18-38%
Quite some space for manipulation...

What are we talking about?

Official terms in Estonia:

Permanent grassland and permanent pasture – used as commonly in EU – not ploughed over 5 years (what does it say about us in general, if we call 5 years 'permanent'?) and should be mixture!

Seminatural habitats (and seminatural plant communities) – used to mark habitats/plant communities that have been formed by long-term grazing or mowing but not influenced by agricultural 'improvement'

How many hectares are there?

„Permanent grasslands“ - over 250 000 ha

Seminatural habitats – around 100 000 ha, manifold decrease during the previous century, significant part is not in use and overgrowing

Not all seminatural habitats included considered

„grassland“ - for example because of over 50 trees per ha (in four West-Estonian counties the limit is not 50 trees but 50% treecover)

These sites are not eligible for SAPS and most of the other area-based payments

Where goes the border for agricultural land?



By EU regulation EC Reg 796/2004, Art. 8 p1, *land with trees is to be considered agricultural for the purpose of eligibility for support if the agricultural production can be carried out in a similar way as on parcels without trees in the same area.*



The EC working document (AGRI/60363/2005) is more specific - *land which has more than 50 trees per hectare cannot be considered as eligible for support.*

2011 – application of ProRata

Semi-natural habitats – a trademark of Estonia



Wooded meadow (6530)



Wooded pasture (9070)



Alkaline fens (7230)



Coastal meadow (1630)



Wooded meadow (6530)



Nordic alvars (6280)



Wooded pasture (9070)



Boreal heaths (4030)

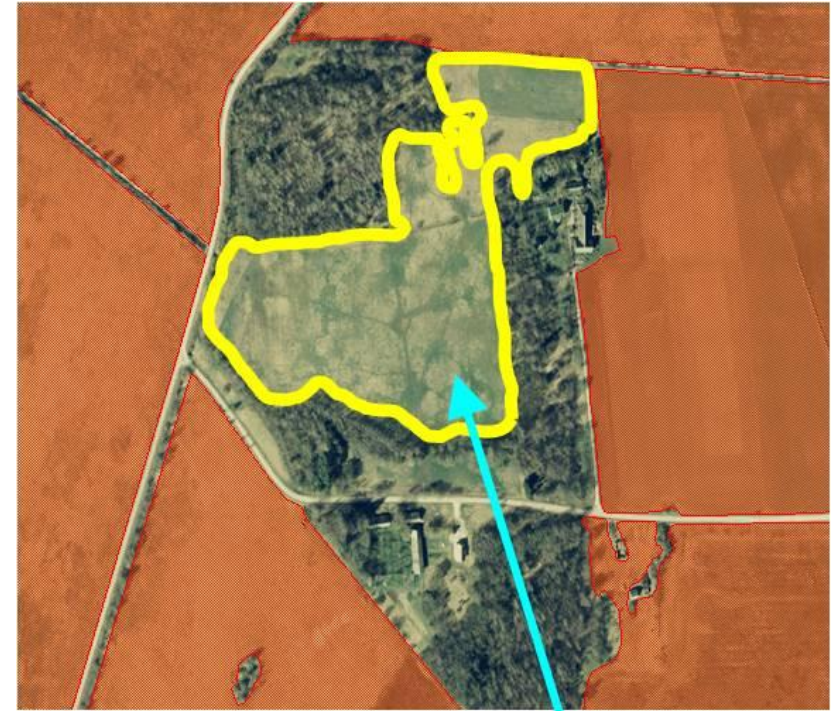
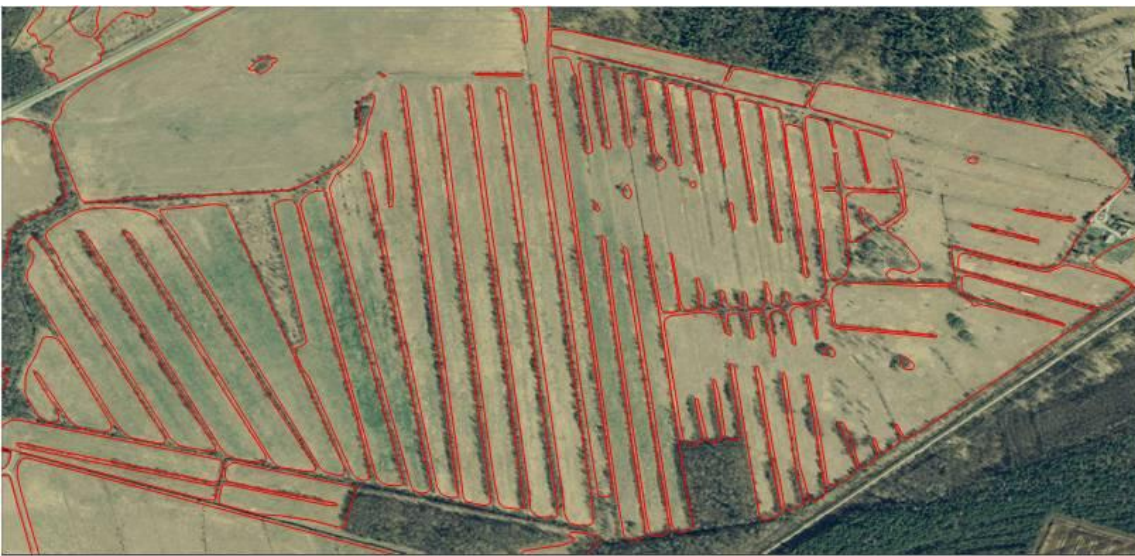
- ~ **100 000 ha** of potential semi-natural habitats (SNH)
- ~ **73 000 ha** covered by Natura 2000
- ~ **23 000 ha** (~30%) of that N2000 SNH covered by special RDP AE support for management of SNH
- ~ **750 ha** are managed in addition by the finances of the MoE

WHERE is our (valuable) farmland (2)?

Potentially valuable areas might still be “lost” for LPIS/IACS:

- ∞ areas not declared by 2004 in LPIS but still managed
- ∞ landscape elements of the farmland

“LOST” farmland elements



“LOST” managed farmland

- areas declared but excluded later because of non-conformity with SAPS rules (e.g. more than 50 trees/ha)...

What payments are available for seminatural habitats?

- ✘ In the current RDP there is a separate payment under AE for seminatural habitats
- ✘ This payment is available only in Natura 2000 sites
- ✘ This payment excludes eligibility for any other area-based CAP support
- ✘ Currently about three quarters of seminatural habitats is within Natura 2000
- ✘ Of these about 1/3 is covered by the seminatural habitat scheme
- ✘ Actual figure is a bit better, as some of the farmers prefer other payments (if possible)





What of the future?

- ✂ Make CAP fair – same public good must get same public money
- ✂ Stop discriminating HNV agriculture – all seminatural habitats in real use either grazed or mowed must become eligible for Pillar I payments regardless of the trees and historical references
- ✂ Mulching was introduced as a temporary solution, time has come to abolish it
- ✂ In case of very extensive grazing consider going back to animal-based payments
- ✂ Secure that basic support to seminatural habitats would come from Pillar I and develop targeted measures under Pillar II