Review of European experience in common grazing

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Best practices for sustainable use of common grasslands in the Western Balkans and Europe

SEE Round Table
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Common priorities

Historically *(local policies and practices)*:

• The main goal is to restrict access and use of the pasture resource

Nowadays *(national policies and local practices)*:

• Avoiding rural depopulation, implementing new technologies & new hygiene requirements
• In most areas, the key goal becomes ensuring a minimum level of maintenance
• Recognition of positive values – landscape, biodiversity, fire prevention, etc.
The principles of robust commons institutions (Elinor Ostrom)

• **Clearly defined boundaries** of both the pasture resource and the users

• **The rules** restricting time, place, technology and quantity of resource use are *adapted to local conditions*

• **Collective choice arrangements** – participation of affected individuals

• **Monitoring and graduated sanctions** for non-compliance

• **Conflict resolution mechanisms** – local, rapid, low-cost

• **Recognition of the local rights** to organize by governments

• **Multiple layers** of nested enterprises in larger systems
Key threats to sustainable governance systems

- Blueprint thinking – uniform solutions to problems
- Over-reliance on simple voting rules when good understanding and agreement is needed
- Rapid external changes – in technology, in the population
- Transmission failures between generations
- Turning to external sources for help too frequently
- International aid ignoring local knowledge and institutions
- Corruption and other forms of opportunistic behavior
- Lack of large-scale supportive institutions
Changes in the rules for use of common pastures in Switzerland

• Swiss law has since 1996 aimed to protect summer pastures and manage them sustainably
• Pasture payments linked to sustainability criteria since 2000
• Grazing density can vary between 75% - 110% of the sustainability levels defined at local level
• At local level, one of the key problems is related to ensuring the collective maintenance work – repair work of alp infrastructure, manure distribution, clearing of pastures from weed and stones

→ indicator for collective action and sustainability of resource use
Common grazing in Bavarian Alps

• Collective pastures are predominantly located at higher altitude (> 700-800 m)
• Around 1400 alps of which 150 have the status of collective alps
• The joint organisations of collective alps are based on a consensus between one or several land owners and several land users
• Stocking density on collective alps varies between 0.09 LU/ha and 0.7 LU/ha

Types of formal and informal rules on Bavarian collective alps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of rules</th>
<th>„Formal“ rules</th>
<th>„Informal“ rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational rules</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>date and extent of pasture maintenance</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>date of fencing/dismantling</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizer application</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of animals allowed to graze</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive up and bring down the animals to/from the pastures</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of managing the herd</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of managing the pasture</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collective-choice rules</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation of labour performed on the collective alps</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of collective assignment</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent and object of investments</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of labour to provide on the collective alps</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grazing fees</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of wage compensation</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utilisation of money from subsidies</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation of possible surpluses</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level of utilisation of the Bavarian collective alps
Types of revenues on the Bavarian collective alps

![Bar chart showing different sources of revenues: Grazing fees, Sensitive habitats, KULAP invest, KULAP, and Compensatory payment. The minimum is 48, maximum is 515, average is 296, and median is 281.]
Relationship between distribution of profits and intensity of use

![Graph showing the relationship between distribution of profits and intensity of use.](image-url)
Final words

• In our region, there is a tendency of de facto privatisation due to introduction of EU subsidies.
• However, one of the key problems is (common) maintenance work (current situation increases pressure on individual user to maintain what was previously done by many).

• Collective forms are a way forward which have many benefits but
• only when carefully planned and actively supported.
There is no easy way to do it properly

Whether done by **individual** or **collective**, it requires

- Time
- Effort
- Money
- Motivation
- Collaboration

The difference is just in the proportion of each.