



EUROPEAN FORUM ON
NATURE CONSERVATION
AND PASTORALISM



ANNUAL REPORT

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The European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism brings together ecologists, nature conservationists, farmers and policy makers. This non-profit network exists to increase understanding of the high nature conservation and cultural value of certain farming systems and to inform work on their maintenance.

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INTRODUCTION

Europe's natural and cultural heritage is enriched by the wide variety of regional farming systems which work in harmony with local environmental conditions. However, many of these farming systems are currently under threat. The aims of the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP) are therefore:

- To increase understanding that certain European farming systems are of high nature conservation and cultural value.
- To ensure the availability, dissemination and exchange of supporting information, combining research and practical expertise.
- To bring together ecologists, nature conservation managers, farmers and policy makers to consider problems faced by these systems and potential solutions.
- To develop and promote policy options which ensure the ecological maintenance and development of these farming systems and cultural landscapes.

The EFNCP is a pan-European non-profit organisation, bringing together non-governmental and governmental participants from several interest areas. It is a network to exchange information, identify conclusions, and inform policy development. To achieve its aims, the Forum organises conferences, workshops and seminars and produces a new newsletter (*La Cañada*) which is widely distributed within Europe. The EFNCP also conducts research into the ecological relationships on high-nature-conservation-value farmland and into the development of appropriate policies for such areas.

Between 1988 and 1996, the Forum developed a network of European scientists, conservationists, and policy makers which interacts with farmers, land managers and agricultural departments through biennial conferences (the Fora), a six monthly newsletter and a series of targeted seminars and workshops. The period 1996-2005 saw the further development of these activities, a crucial time for nature conservation on farmland with the second phase of CAP reforms and subsequent Mid-Term Review of the CAP, enlargement of the European Union and development of Natura 2000. Since 2005, much of the policy focus has been on High Nature Value farming and understanding and implementing this concept on the ground. This report of Forum activities in 2008 is structured around the five main headers which encompass the Forum's work.





ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

- The Forum was successful in obtaining a grant for 2008 from DG Environment under their new LIFE+ programme (following on from the Forum's success in obtaining funding in every year from 1997, with the exception of 2002 and 2004, from the DG Environment programme providing support for NGOs working in the field of environmental protection).
- The Forum budget was, however, still limited and subject to strict controls during 2008. In particular, a concentrated effort was made to reverse the reduced deficit carried forward from the 2007 financial year. The decision to continue only engaging in completely or nearly completely fully-funded projects during 2008 helped towards achieving this goal. This and foreign currency exchange rate variations mean that at the end of 2008 the Forum was able to record an operating surplus on the year and thereby not only cancel the deficit carried forward from 2007 but actually end the year with a small surplus overall.
- However, the range of projects engaged in is relatively limited and this puts pressure on cash flow at certain times of the year, especially January to April when awaiting approval (and hence payment) of the DG Environment financial support from the previous year. Although the Forum benefited from exchange rate fluctuations during 2008, this has also highlighted the dangers of any large movement in the exchange rates in the opposite direction.
- The Forum made some progress during 2008 with regard to making changes to its currently complex legal structure. As previously indicated, the Directors see that a simpler and more transparent structure is desirable and the intent is that the Board of Directors will become more independent of the Executive Committee. To this end, at the end of 2008 three new members were appointed to the Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting with the view to nominating them as Directors early in 2009.
- As indicated previously, the Forum has become increasingly dependent on income from project work, which by its nature only funds certain activities. As a result, all concerned also have to give some voluntary time to additional Forum work, especially the workings of the Executive Committee and administration. The Forum continues to be aware of the difficulties inherent in such an arrangement and of the need to find a mechanism to fund a degree of core tasks. An application submitted to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation towards the end of 2008 for support for such core tasks was, however, unsuccessful.

BIENNIAL CONFERENCES



- During 2008 the Forum continued discussions initiated in 2007 with regard to the possibility of holding the Forum Biennial conference in the Rhône-Alpes, France in 2009 with the provisional theme of *Quelle contribution des systèmes agricoles à HVN à l'intégration de la biodiversité dans le développement agricole ?* However, despite the Forum's best efforts it did not prove possible to gain sufficient local commitment/support for such a conference and so plans for this were shelved.
- Support was, however, obtained from both the French Ministry of Environment and the French Ministry of Agriculture with regard to organising a two-day conference in Paris (to be held in October 2009) with the theme *HNV farming: initiating the debate in France*. Hence during late 2008, the Forum began finalising arrangements for this conference, which will be held in French and which is aimed at national participants involved in the field of nature conservation and agriculture, civil servants, farmers, NGOs and researchers. The aim of the conference is to initiate a debate in France on how the concept of HNV farming could contribute to achieving landscape scale biodiversity objectives within the context of the Common Agricultural Policy beyond 2013.

The Forum's conferences fulfil a major part of the role as a forum. These review progress on basic scientific work and identify further research needs in order to fulfil the requirements of informing policy development and awareness raising. An important role of these main Forum meetings is to ensure that the debate draws on the experience and expertise of a wide range of audience members.





RESEARCH

During 2008, the Forum led and/or provided input to the following projects:

- *High Nature Value farmland - recognising its importance in Bulgaria and Romania.* This work (funded by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries BBI-MATRA programme) started in 2006 and was brought to a successful completion in 2008 with the organisation of additional seminars in Bulgaria, Romania and Brussels. The overall aim of the project was to illustrate at a local level, for the benefit of both policy makers and farmers, what a rather complicated HNV farmland concept means on the ground in Bulgaria and Romania and how these might be reflected in policy instruments. The Forum worked in partnership with WWF Danube Carpathian Programme to organise these seminars. Further details are available on the Forum website at: <http://www.efncp.org/projects/hnv-bulgaria-romania/>
- *Support to the Elaboration of a National Agri-environment Programme for Turkey.* This project (funded by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries BBI-MATRA programme) started in 2006 and was brought to a successful completion in 2008. The project was led by Avalon (from the Netherlands), the Institute for European Environmental Policy and Bugday (a Turkish NGO), with the Forum in a subcontracted role. During 2008, the Forum supplied HNV expertise and contributed to the development of *The Agri-Environment Handbook for Turkey*. This handbook is intended as reference document to support the future programming of Turkish agri-environment measures, with particular reference to the opportunities and obligations associated with EU co-financing during the pre-accession period. Special attention is given to introducing the concept of High Nature Value (HNV) farming and the biodiversity benefits associated with using agri-environment (and other rural development) measures to maintain the low intensity farming systems typically found in Turkey. A brief overview of the handbook can be found at: http://www.organic-market.info/web/News_in_brief/Books-Magazines/Turkey/176/180/0/5242.html



- *Wildlife and Sustainable Farming Initiative within the context of the Birds and Habitats Directives (Natura 2000 network).* The Forum participated in this project as a subcontractor to ATECMA in Spain in an initiative for the European Commission (DG Environment) on Wildlife and Sustainable Farming which is running between 2006 and 2008. This project analysed the actual and potential role of CAP rural development measures for supporting the conservation of wildlife in a selection of farmland, forest and wetland habitats and produced a series of documents on specific habitats. Forum staff contributed to the a large number of these individual document, which can be downloaded from the Natura 2000 website at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/habitats/models_en.htm

- *HNV Guidance document for Member States.* The Forum were represented on the HNV Expert Working Group of the European Evaluation network for Rural Development and a Forum staff member was lead author on the new Guidance document on HNV indicators produced for this Help Desk. An article was also written for the 2nd edition of the Help Desk Newsletter introducing the launch of the Guidance document.

In 2008, the Forum continued to focus on how the High Nature Value farming concept could be implemented effectively across the EU. This is especially relevant to the Mediterranean areas, to peripheral and mountain regions and to the recently acceded countries and potential future accession countries in south-eastern Europe.

To this end, during 2008, the Forum was involved in a number of consortia developing applications for research projects. Separate proposals prepared in partnership with University of Galway and WWF Netherlands/WWF-DCP were unsuccessful but the work carried out in putting these applications together was still positive in terms of building networks and enhancing the likelihood of further co-operation.



DISSEMINATION



During 2008, the Forum:

- Conducted a major upgrade of the content of the Forum website (<http://www.efncp.org>) to reflect recent activities and which now includes a major HNV showcase section <http://www.efncp.org/hnv-showcases/> .
- Produced, published and disseminated issues 22 and 23 of the Forum newsletter *La Cañada*. This newsletter is made available in pdf format on the Forum's website. The content of these issues can be viewed and downloaded from the website at: <http://www.efncp.org/publications/la-canada/2008/>
- Drafted a comprehensive document (in French) on the characteristics of High-Nature-Value farming systems and associated policy issues (*L'agriculture à Haute Valeur Naturelle: mieux la (re)connaitre pour mieux l'accompagner*) and which was commissioned by the French Ministry for the Environment. The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.efncp.org/news/news20090122.php>
- Produced responses to consultations on a number of major policy issues in which the Forum highlighted the relevance of and potential impact on HNV farming systems, for example:
 - The Forum responded to the European Commission's consultation on *A review of the Less Favoured Area scheme*. An overview of the Forum's main points can be viewed at: <http://www.efncp.org/news/less-favoured-area.php> while the full text of the response can be downloaded from: <http://www.efncp.org/download/EFNCP-response-LFA-Consultation2008.pdf>
 - The Forum responded to the European Commission's *CAP health check consultation* The full text of the Forum's response can be downloaded from: http://www.efncp.org/download/efncp_CAP_Health_Check_Consultation.pdf
 - The Forum responded (with the Scottish Crofting Foundation) to the Scottish Government's *Consultation on the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme*. The full text of the Forum's response can be downloaded from: <http://www.efncp.org/download/LFASS2008.pdf>



- Attended and gave invited presentations at major international meetings organised by a number of partners, for example:

- in Pärnu, Estonia at an international conference on *Using evaluation to enhance the rural development value of agri-environmental measures*. The conference included a presentation from the Forum on *Does the CAP need new and specific measures to support HNV farming?* together with two workshops concerned with *The challenge of HNV farming systems* and *Establishment of HNV farming systems*. The conference proceedings can be viewed online at <http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/CD/index.php?page=1> while the conference powerpoint presentations and associated other documents can be viewed at: <http://pmk.agri.ee>
- in Ennistymon, Co. Clare, Ireland at a three day international conference entitled *Farming for conservation: supporting the future*. Forum staff gave presentations on *A new model for farming for conservation in Europe: The High Nature Value Farming approach* and *An example of "farming for conservation" and the relative impacts of pillar I and pillar II measures* The report of this conference summarises the main outcomes and conclusions of the meeting and can be downloaded from: www.burrenlife.com
- Attended and contributed to discussions at a number of meetings, such as:
 - A conference in Paris, France on *Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy: What future for a sustainable agriculture?*
 - BirdLife Poland conference on *Rural Development and birds*, Puławy
 - Scottish Crofting Foundation conference, Barra, Scotland
 - Hill farming conference, Penrith, England
 - Scottish Natural Heritage internal workshop on sheep and nature, Perth, Scotland
- Produced an overview document explaining the HNV concept and interpreting EU and national policy commitments. The text of this can be downloaded at: <http://www.efncp.org/download/EFNCP-HNV-farming-concept.pdf>





ORGANISATION OF SEMINARS & REPRESENTATION ON EC COMMITTEES

During 2008, the Forum:

- Continued discussions investigating the potential of holding an international workshop on the island of Vilm, Germany in September 2009, with a working title of *European pastoral systems: ecological uniqueness and importance, threats and political opportunities*.
- Helped organise seminars in Bulgaria, Romania and Brussels under the BBI Matra project (see above and <http://www.efncp.org/projects/hnv-bulgaria-romania/>)
- The Forum has continued to have representatives nominated to attend meetings of the Consultative Committees on 'Rural Development', 'Agriculture and Environment' and 'Animal Products' established by DG Agriculture. Four networks (World Wide Fund for Nature, BirdLife International, European Environment Bureau and the Forum) are working together to provide the environmental NGO input to meetings of these and other associated Consultative Committees. During 2008, Forum representatives attended meetings associated with the 'Agriculture and Environment', 'Beef', 'Fruit & Vegetables', 'Olives', 'Quality Products' 'Rural Development' and 'Sheepmeat and Goatmeat' committees as well as an ad-hoc committee on CAP simplification.
- Forum staff also made two presentations to the LFA Inter-Service Working Group and also held informal meetings with DG Agriculture staff with regard to Less-Favoured Area reform issues
- Forum staff also participated in an ad hoc workshop in Brussels on HNV indicators with EEA, BirdLife, JRC and IEEP
- The Forum continued to maintain contact with the Biodiversity Expert Group charged with reviewing the EC Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans



PUBLICATIONS



In addition to the copies of the newsletter, other publications arising from the work of the Forum during 2008 include:

Beaufoy, G. (in press) New guidance on the application of the HNV indicator. *Rural Evaluation News: the Newsletter of the European Evaluation network for Rural Development*

Beaufoy, G. 2008 Reflections from an external evaluator on the future of olive production systems on sloping land. *Journal of Environmental Management* 89 140-142

Beaufoy, G. 2008 HNV farming: explaining the concept and interpreting EU and national policy commitments. European Forum on Nature Conservation & Pastoralism, Stratford-upon-Avon. The text of this can be downloaded at: <http://www.efncp.org/download/EFNCP-HNV-farming-concept.pdf>

Beaufoy, G. 2008. Does the CAP need new and specific measures to support HNV farming? In: *Using evaluation to enhance the rural development value of agri-environment measures: proceedings of an international conference held in Pärnu, Estonia, 17-19 June 2008*, weblink Under Presentations Papers to 3 page paper. Estonian Agricultural Research Centre, Estonian Ministry of Agriculture, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finnish Ministry of Environment and University of Helsinki. <http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/CD/index.php?page=1>

EFNCP 2008. *Consultation on the review of the Less Favoured Area Scheme 2008 – a response from EFNCP*. European Forum on Nature Conservation & Pastoralism, Skye

EFNCP 2008. *CAP Health Check Consultation 2007/8 - a response from the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism*. European Forum on Nature Conservation & Pastoralism, Skye

Continued overleaf:



PUBLICATIONS

continued



Huband, S. & McCracken, D.I. 2008. High Nature Value pastoralism in the Romanian Carpathians: implications for the grassland conservation agri-environment measure. In: *Using evaluation to enhance the rural development value of agri-environment measures: proceedings of an international conference held in Pärnu, Estonia, 17-19 June 2008*, weblink on page 49 to 4 page paper. Estonian Agricultural Research Centre, Estonian Ministry of Agriculture, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finnish Ministry of Environment and University of Helsinki. <http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/CD/index.php?page=1>

Poux, X. 2008 *Low input farming systems in Europe: what is at stake?* In: *Low input farming systems: an opportunity to develop sustainable agriculture*, eds. Biala, K., Terres, J-M, Pointereau, P. & Paracchini, M.L. Joint Research Centre, Ispra http://agrienv.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pdfs/LIFS_final.pdf

Poux, X. & Romain B. (in press) *L'agriculture à Haute Valeur Naturelle: mieux la (re)connaître pour mieux l'accompagner*. European Forum on Nature Conservation & Pastoralism, Paris.

SCF & EFNCP 2008. *A joint response by the Scottish Crofting Foundation and the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism to the Scottish Government consultation on the Less favoured Area Support Scheme*. Scottish Crofting Foundation, Kyle of Lochalsh and European Forum on Nature Conservation & Pastoralism, Skye



CUMULATIVE BREAKDOWN OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

In 2003, the Forum's financial year changed to a 1 January - 31 December period. The following Table shows a summary of the relevant information from the Financial Statements for the 2003- 2008 financial years (for detail see the individual end of year accounts). Financial figures are in £ sterling.

	Year ended	Year ended	Year ended	Year ended	Year ended	Year ended
	31 Dec 2003	31 Dec 2004	31 Dec 2005**	31 Dec 2006****	31 Dec 2007****	31 Dec 2008
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,055	34,594	(15,092)	(18,280)	(8,675)	(7,268)
Income during year	132,126	56,273	110,800	135,300	187,332	179,504
Expenditure during year	143,784	98,730	114,302	125,851	185,925	161,380
Retained Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(11,461)	(42,219)	(3,188)	9,604	1,407	18,480
Prior year adjustment***		(7,467)				
Balance carried forward	34,594	(15,092)	(18,280)	(8,675)	(7,268)	11,212

** Note 1 extracted from financial statement for Year ended 31 December 2005: *Going Concern - The company experienced a deficiency this year after the grant applied for in respect of the 31st December 2003 accounts was not fully received. This was due to a lower level of eligible expenditure actually undertaken compared to the grant accrued for in the 31st December 2003 accounts. Since this event, the company have undertaken a number of fully funded projects. However, in some cases this has not been possible. In the period since 31 December 2005, the company are working on a number of fully funded projects and together with the support of the directors it is believed that the company will return to a positive net asset position. The board therefore feel confident that the company can continue in existence for the foreseeable future.*

*** Note 4 extracted from financial statement for Year ended 31 December 2005: *Prior year adjustment – During the year ended 31st December 2005, it was discovered that grant income has been received in advance but has been recognised incorrectly. Grant income to the value of £7,467 was registered in the period ended 31st December 2003 when it should have been deferred and registered as £3,637 in 2004 and £3830 in 2005. Although it was apparent that the grant income should have been deferred, this was missed in error and therefore a prior year adjustment has been required this year to recognise the income in the correct periods. There is no tax effect resulting from this adjustment.*

**** Note 1 extracted from financial statement for Year ended 31 December 2006: *Going Concern – During the current year, the company has returned to generating an annual surplus. The company has generated this surplus by securing a number of fully funded projects, together with grant funding from other sources. The annual deficiency experienced in previous years was due to lower levels of eligible expenditure, resulting in lower grant income. As the company now work predominantly on fully funded projects such shortfalls are believed to be isolated. The company expects to continue their work on fully funded projects and together with the support of the directors it is believed that the company will return to a positive net asset position. The board therefore feels confident that the company can continue in existence for the foreseeable future.*

***** Note 8 extracted from financial statement for Year ended 31 December 2007: *Going Concern – The annual deficiency which has existed in previous years has again been reduced during the year. The company continues to work on fully funded projects and the board feels confident that the company will return to a net asset position and can continue in existence for the foreseeable future.*

ENDS