PASTORAL (2003) ***Potential policy approaches to support European pastoralism***

PASTORAL Project Information Note 6

EU -Funded Concerted Action SAC, EFNCP, ALTERRA, IEEP, ARPA, UAM, ESA-IPCB, CPE

This series of eight Information Notes and accompanying video are intended to provide a brief introduction to some of the issues facing pastoralism in Europe today. They were produced as part of the output from the PASTORAL project, an EU-funded Concerted Action which considered the agricultural, socio-economic and ecological characteristics of high nature value pastoral systems in Europe.

The PASTORAL project was steered by a consortium consisting of the Scottish Agricultural College (UK), European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism, ALTERRA, (The Netherlands), Institute for European Environmental Policy (UK), Asociacion para el Analisis y Reforma de la Politica Agro-rural (Spain), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), Escola Superior Agraria de Castelo Branco (Portugal) and Coordination Paysanne Européenne (Belgium).

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Further detailed information on the PASTORAL project and European pastoralism can be found at: www.sac.ac.uk/envsci/external/Pastoral/default.htm

- The current adverse trends affecting high nature value European pastoralism make it likely that most of these systems will have died out in another ten years. Urgent action is needed now to determine appropriate and effective policy mechanisms to ensure that this does not happen.

- Pastoral systems can contribute to a number of different European policy goals, particularly the maintenance of biodiversity and the continuation of genuinely multifunctional agriculture. Pastoral farming can make a major contribution to the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan for Agriculture.

General policy recommendations

- High nature value pastoral systems are, in general, not commercially viable and are likely to need more support over time. They will increasingly depend on support through public policy as well as building up stronger markets for their products.

- These systems merit higher levels of support than more intensive systems because of their proportionately large contribution to biodiversity, cultural and landscape objectives.

- This support also needs to come from both the first and the second pillars of the CAP and from national sources.

- Methods of production and land management used by pastoralists need to receive a higher level of more targeted support under Pillar 1. Greater preference to these systems can be achieved through measures such as selective 'national envelopes' and sympathetic CMO rules (e.g. rules determining rates of payment should not penalise or exclude those who graze on common land or that have a low stocking density, or those who are part-time farmers).

- Support mechanisms for pastoral production should aim to maintain functioning systems, not only to retain their high nature value but also to avoid 'preserving living museums'.

- Agri-environment, Less Favoured Area payments and other second pillar measures also need to be tailored to maintain high nature value pastoral systems.

Broadening the policy toolkit

- Policy could be better targeted if it were based on stronger information about pastoral systems, especially high nature value pastoral systems, their characteristics and location. A European typology and map of the location of such systems should be developed with sufficient detail for individual Member States[1]. This would help to guide Pillar 1 measures, e.g. the targeting of national envelope support and also rural development measures to these priority areas. It would aid the marketing of pastoral products and could also be used to prevent inappropriate changes in land use, e.g. grants for afforestation and for intensification would not be available in designated high nature value pastoral areas.

- Both national and European policies for rural areas need to move towards a more territorial approach adapted to specific regions rather relying on sectoral or horizontal policies. This approach would facilitate greater integration and cohesion in the range of different policies that can impact on a region. Territorial policies potentially would be more effective in targeting the multiple land uses typical of many pastoral systems, e.g. cereal sheep systems in Castilla-la Mancha (Spain), sheep grazing of steppe, alpine grasslands and irrigated hay meadows in La Crau (south-east France), and grazed forests in many regions of Europe. Structural and cohesion policies would be included in this approach so that the necessary infrastructure could be maintained or created to support pastoral communities, e.g. schools and doctors in the Romanian Carpathians. Schematic diagrams of high nature value pastoral regions showing the layers of policy applicable to each area of the farm/land used could be developed as a tool for illustrating the different policy options in each area.

- Support through Pillar 1 is based largely on production levels and would be fixed in future on the basis of past claims if the Mid Term Review (MTR) proposals from the Commission are agreed. Agri-environment payments are made largely on the basis of profit forgone. Neither approach suits high nature value pastoral systems which are associated with low yields in most cases. Instead, new approaches for making payments should be developed that pay for the environmental and biodiversity benefits. These must be designed to maintain functioning pastoral systems that achieve nature conservation and other policy objectives.

Abandonment in pastoral areas

- An EU-wide strategy tackling the prevention of abandonment of high nature value farmland is urgently required. This needs to cover new as well as existing Member States - abandonment of high nature value grasslands is particularly serious in several central and eastern European countries. In 2002, the European Parliament highlighted the perceived lack of effectiveness of previous policies in reversing the trend of abandonment in mountain areas and has set out a series of recommendations for policies to support mountain areas[2]. Developing strategies to reverse the trend of

[1] PASTORAL(2003) *The need for a typology of European pastoral systems*. PASTORAL Information Note 2
[2] http//www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/agri/20010709/431666en.pdf

abandonment is particularly important for pastoral areas in Accession countries where livestock numbers have dramatically declined in the last ten years and are predicted to continue to decline in many high nature value areas.

Targeting rural development and related policies to pastoral farming

- The most successful agri-environment schemes have proven to be those where there is a high level of administrative support, particularly in the form of agricultural extension workers. More resources need to be dedicated towards scheme administration and monitoring.

- Similarly, the most successful agri-environment schemes combine a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approach by actively seeking the participation of farmers, and the incorporation of their knowledge, into the design of schemes.

- Additional measures are needed to encourage new and younger pastoralists.

- Assistance with meeting hygiene and safety regulations in processing should be provided, especially in central and eastern European countries.

- Accessibility of production support and agri-environment schemes for part-time pastoralists, land-less pastoralists, small-scale pastoralists and those grazing communal land etc. must be improved. Payments need to be targeted at the pastoralists implementing agri-environment schemes as well as landowners.

- Box 1 provides some examples of measures that could be promoted at a local level, both nationally and within rural development plans, to help emphasise the link between agricultural, social and environmental issues and sustainable pastoralism.

Support for cultural events (traditional and new) to raise the profile and value of pastoralists amongst the different sectors of society, e.g. decision makers, people living in pastoral areas, tourists and consumers.

Funding of interpretative material aimed at a range of audiences (e.g. locals, tourists and schools). This could involve funding of tourist guides, information centres, pastoral interpretation centres and the promotion local produce.

Funding for social events aimed at pastoralists. For example, conservationists in the La Crau, south east France organise regular and well attended social events such as bingo. This adds to the cohesion of the local pastoralists association and encourages the development of strong links between the shepherds and the conservationists.

Funding for dedicated shepherd schools that focus on training pastoralists in high nature value areas. Aside from the practical pastoral training, these course could contain policy and nature conservation elements. This would help build the capacity of the shepherds to input into the development and implementation of both effective production and nature conservation objectives.

Funding for pastoralism-specific higher education courses (e.g. an Master of Science in Pastoralism) designed to train administrative staff to deliver the objectives of agri-environment and rural development measures within high nature value pastoral areas. Such funding could also be used to encourage networking of administrative staff and pastoralists between different regions.

Transhumance Systems

- Transhumance systems are particularly complex in that they utilise summer and winter pastures in different regions, often separated by hundreds of kilometres. Given the particular biodiversity value and vulnerability of transhumance systems they need specific help and support, particularly through rural development measures. Examples might include:

    - Abandonment or afforestation of farmland is most likely to occur in more marginal farmland including sizeable areas of high nature value pastoral land. This results in a loss of biodiversity values in most cases, as well as social costs - although not all abandonment is environmentally damaging. Both transhumant shepherds and flocks need to be eligible for support from agri-environment and Less Favoured Area policies, even if they are not resident in one region for the entire year.

    - Where transhumance is still undertaken by foot, grazing rights should be secured along the route. This will require resources being channelled into the development of effective participative frameworks for undertaking conflict resolution. There is a long history of conflict between transhumance pastoralists and settled framers along the drovers' routes. Many of these routes used to be legally protected and the feasibility of re-establishing legal rights over transhumance corridors should be assessed.

    - Infrastructure needs to be put in place at both the summer and winter pastures, e.g. decent accommodation for shepherds, small dairies for sheep milk systems that meet EU requirements for hygiene.

    - Special marketing measures could be envisaged to increase the sales of products from transhumance.

The Mid-Term Review of the CAP

- The European Commission proposals for the Mid-Term Review of the CAP need to be better tuned to the needs of high nature value pastoral agriculture, for example by:

    - Promoting a more targeted approach within the CAP and national measures, prioritising these systems and recognising their importance in the EU and Accession countries.

    - Ensuring that any steps towards decoupling are accompanied by appropriate safeguards, especially for cattle production.

    - Maintaining an appropriate link between support measures and livestock production, sensitive to the economic frailty of these systems.

    - 'Good Agricultural Condition' on farmland should equate to 'Good Environmental Condition'. In other words, there must be an obligation to maintain the high nature value in pastoral areas.

    - More support under Pillar 2 needs to be channelled towards supporting high nature value pastoralism.

    - There needs to be higher co-financing from the EC for agri-environment measures (especially within Objective 1 regions).

A total of eight Information Notes have been produced from the PASTORAL project:

- 1: *An introduction to European pastoralism*
- 2: *The need for a typology of European pastoral systems*
- 3: *The nature of European pastoralism*
- 4: *Examples of European pastoral systems*
- 5: *Trends and threats to the viability of European pastoral systems*
- 6: *Potential policy approaches to support European pastoralism*
- 7: *Gaps in the understanding of European pastoralism*
- 8: *European pastoralism: farming with nature*

Many of the points in these Information Notes are illustrated by examples taken from the location of the four main workshops held during the course of the project, Sierra de Guadarrama Mountains (Spain), Transylvania (Romanian Carpathians), Isle of Islay (Scotland) and the plain of La Crau (south-east France).

These Information Notes were compiled by Sally Huband (the dedicated officer employed by SAC on the PASTORAL project) with additional input from the other members of the project steering group: Davy McCracken and Gwyn Jones (SAC), Eric Bignal (EFNCP), Berien Elbersen (ALTERRA), David Baldock and Harriet Bennett (IEEP), Guy Beaufoy (Spain), Begoña Peco (UAM), Luis Pinto de Andrade (ESA-IPCB) and Gerard Choplin, Isabel Bermejo and Jesús Garzón (CPE). The project meetings enabled us to consider and discuss the future of pastoral systems with many colleagues drawn from our own institutes and elsewhere throughout Europe, and we offer our thanks to them for their useful contributions towards the development of many of the views presented here.