

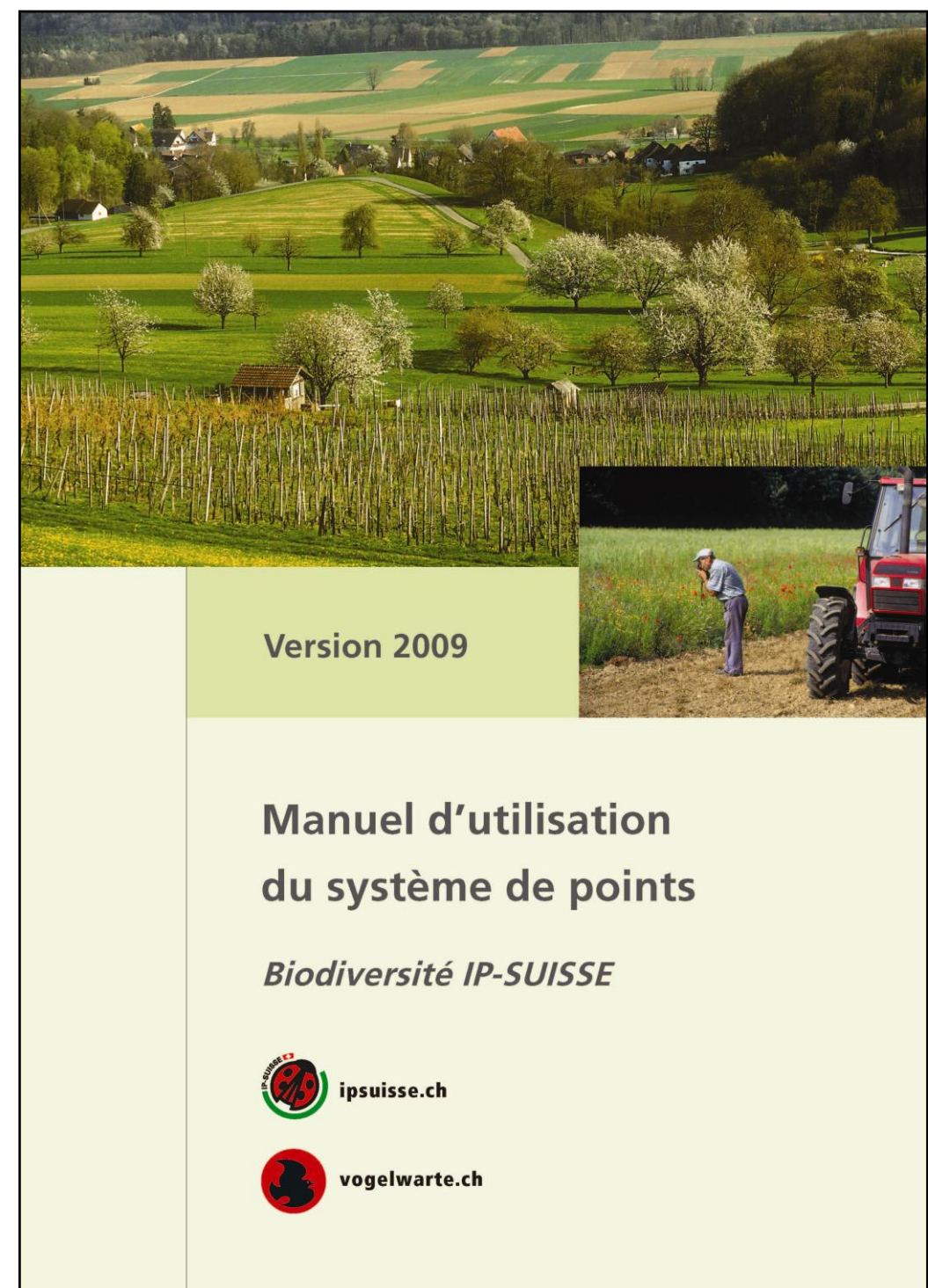
The credit point system

a market approach to enhance biodiversity on farmland

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The Swiss Ornithological Institute proposed a credit point system to measure the degree of “wildlife-friendliness” on whole farms. In 2008, IP-SUISSE, an organisation for integrated farming and representing a quarter of Swiss farmers, accepted the system as part of their guidelines. Switzerland’s largest super market chain sells most of the IP-SUISSE products. Farmers benefit from bonus payments and a better public image.

Measures



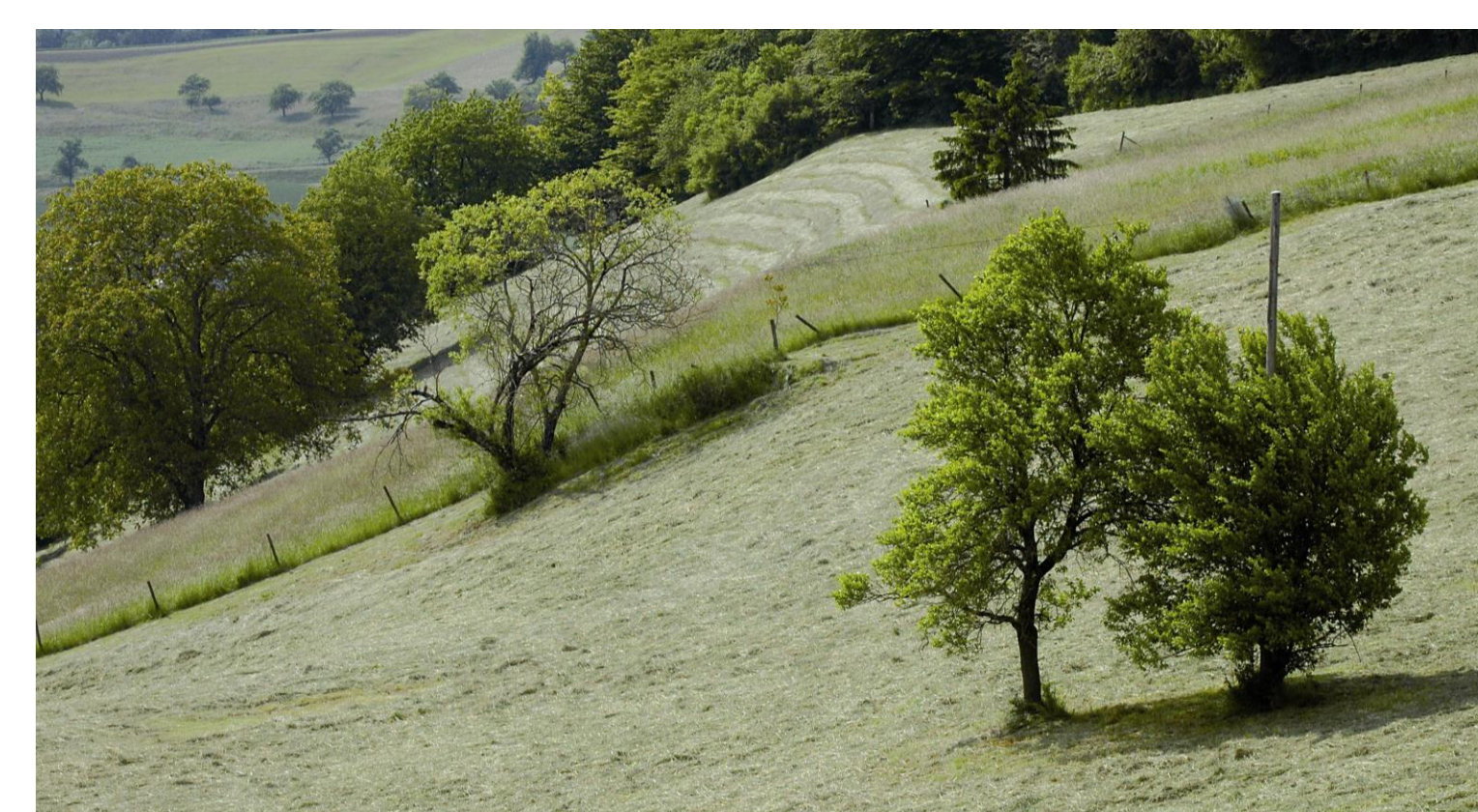
Farmer's manual

Farmers can gain points from 32 different measures, most of which are designated options of the Swiss agri-environmental scheme, but go further than minimal conditions. Farmers are free to choose which measures they implement on their farms. From 2010 onwards, the credit point system will be mandatory and checked on farm inspections.



Ecological compensation areas: points for quantity, quality and spatial distribution.

In-field arable options:
e.g. skylark plots

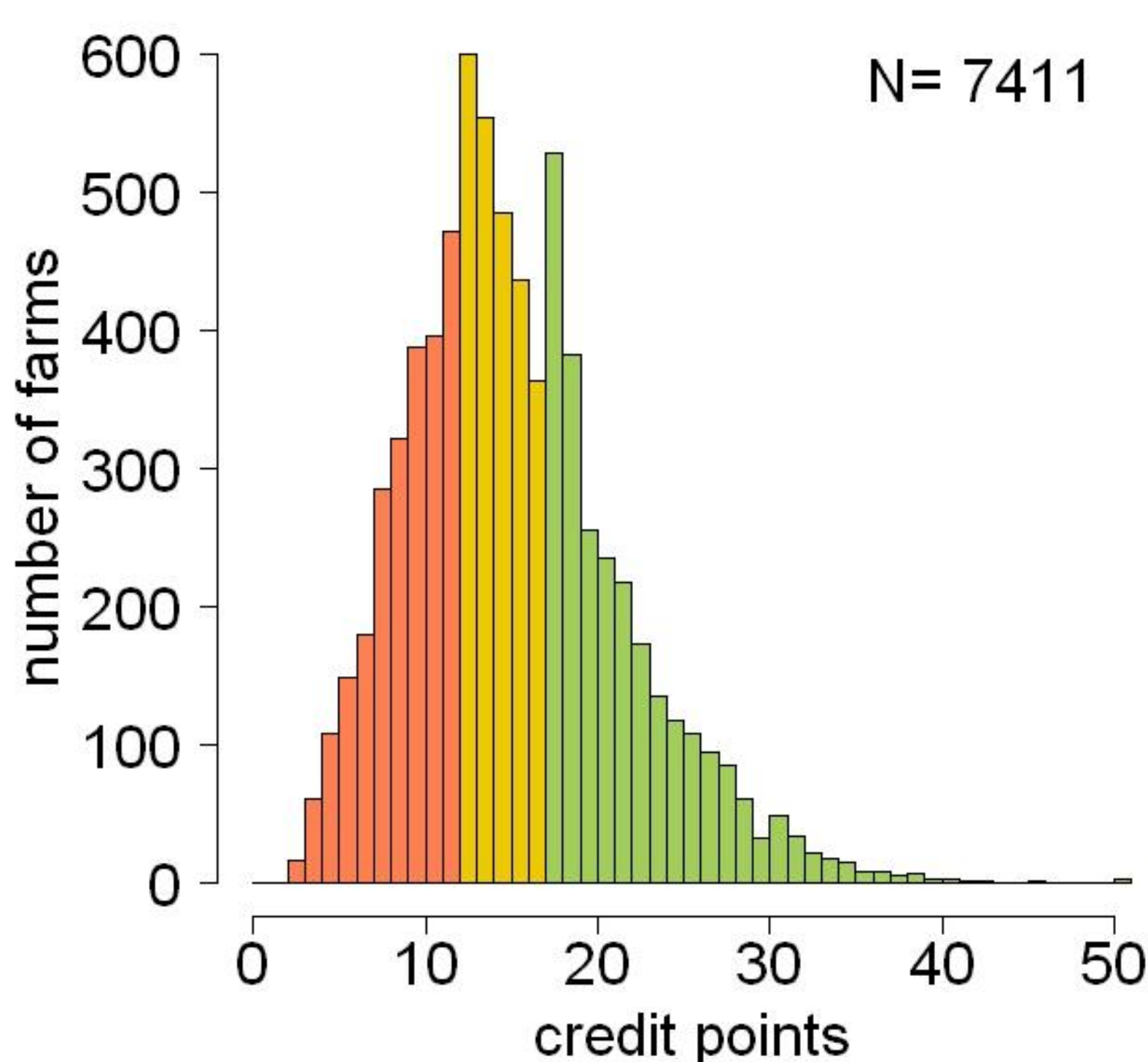


Grassland options:
e.g. rotational mowing



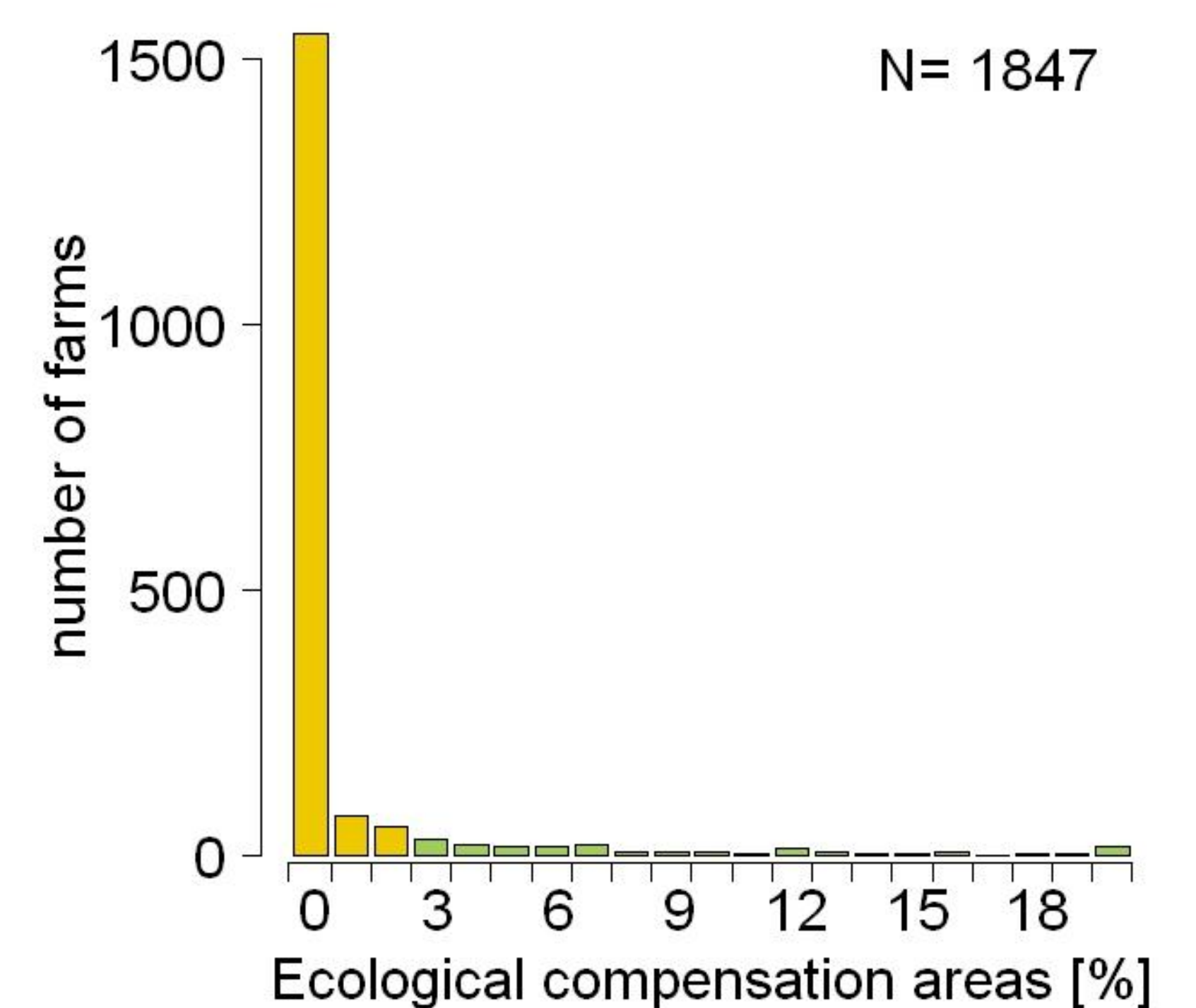
all photos: M. Jenny

Evaluation



Credit points of 7411 IP-SUISSE farms in 2009

One condition for farmers to join the IP-SUISSE programme is to reach a minimal score of 13 points by 2013 and 17 points by 2015. In 2009, only 35.0 % of IP-SUISSE farmers reached more than 17 points. The rest will have to improve their ecological performance. 32.1 % of farmers reached less than 13 points and have to improve substantially. First surveys suggest that most farmers are willing to make this effort.



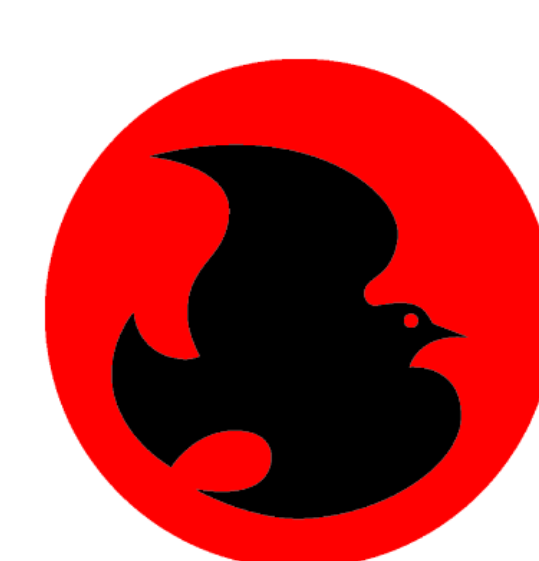
Ecological compensation areas per farm on arable fields in 2009 (N=1847 farms with at least 10 % arable fields)

The guidelines declare that 3 % of arable fields should be managed as ecological compensation area. In 2009, only 9.3 % of 1847 farms reached this goal. Therefore additional information will be spread and workshops for farmers will be organised.

The effects of the credit point system on biodiversity are evaluated on 108 farms (2009–2010), see poster “Scoring with biodiversity”.

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