

## ELN-FAB NEWSLETTER

No. 7, December 2012

### Quantification of ecological services for sustainable agriculture

A new EU research project called QUESSA "Quantification of ecological services for sustainable agriculture" is due to start under the lead of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (UK) and with the involvement of partners from all over Europe.

The objectives of the project are:

- to determine which characteristics (traits) of semi-natural habitats determine the ecosystem services provided to agro-ecosystems;
- to determine how ecological services are affected by farm and landscape management;
- to quantify actual delivery of ecosystem services provided by semi-natural habitats and particular field management for the major European cropping systems across agro-climatic zones;
- to predict, upscale and synthesize the effect of semi-natural habitats on ecosystem service delivery in crop systems at farm, landscape and European level;
- to provide a web-based tool for farmers to calculate their own levels of ecosystem service provision;

Photo: Arnaud Bouissou/METL-MEDDE



- to provide recommendations for policymaking at national and European levels for the management of semi-natural habitats.

ELN-FAB is participating in the Stakeholders Advisory Board of the project. The project will start on 1 January 2013 and run until 2016.

More information:

Dr John Holland (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust) <http://www.gwct.org.uk/>

### Global Soil Week

Soils are fundamental pillars of sustainable development. They are essential for food security, support human well-being, and provide further ecosystem services, such as carbon storage. The first Global Soil Week gathered over 400 representatives of governments, scientists, international organizations, business and civil society in Berlin, Germany, from 18 to 22 November 2012, to consider the theme "Soils for Life". The event took place within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership and served as a platform to initiate follow-up on the land and soil-related decisions in the outcome from the June 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20). It was organized by the Global Soil Forum, which was established by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) Potsdam.



More information:

<http://eusoils.jrc.ec.europa.eu/InternationalCooperation/GSP/Documents/GSW.pdf>  
<http://www.globalsoilweek.org/>

## EcoFINDERS unravels the secrets of soil biodiversity

The EcoFINDERS project held its annual conference in Wageningen, the Netherlands, during the first Global Soil Week. This ambitious project, funded by the EU FP7, studies soil biodiversity and the functions and ecosystem services it delivers.

After two years of investigations, the conference presented progress on soil biodiversity measurements, including the discovery of dozens of micro-fauna that are new to science. The project develops indicators for soil biodiversity and soil functions, looks into ways to apply economic valuation, and tests the effects of agricultural practices on soils. For example, long-term observatories are studying the effects of conversion from conventional tillage practices to grassland on earthworms. It has been shown that earthworm numbers increase, which improves soil aeration, which in turn reduces water run-off from agricultural fields. The project is also developing assessment tools, such as innovative approaches using genetic barcoding as a means to identify soil biodiversity.

ECNC participated in the stakeholder forum of the conference and highlighted the many connections that can be made with other research projects that study ecosystem services. Also, there are excellent opportunities to link the EcoFINDERS outcome to EU policy priorities, such as those on restoration of habitats, resource efficiency and green infrastructure. The

outcomes are of direct relevance to functional agrobiodiversity and link up well with the activities of the ELN-FAB.



The conference included a dedicated postgraduate course on soil biodiversity, an inspiring keynote speech by Professor Diana Wall of Colorado State University (USA), and a number of round tables to discuss key challenges to be tackled by the project.

For more information: [www.ecofinders.eu](http://www.ecofinders.eu)

## Statement of the Baltic Sea Region Conference: "Quo Vadis, Farmland Biodiversity?"

Baltic Sea Regional Conference

**QUO VADIS, FARMLAND BIODIVERSITY?**

November 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Estonia, Tartu



ELN-FAB was represented at the Baltic Sea Region Conference: "Quo Vadis, Farmland Biodiversity?", organized by the Estonian Agricultural Research Centre and the Ministry of Agriculture of Estonia. The event was held in Tartu, Estonia on 14 and 15 November 2012.

The conference brought together a range of stakeholders with an active interest in the farmland biodiversity of the Baltic Sea Region in

order to discuss a) the current situation of farmland biodiversity in the region and b) what can be done together to improve it. The conference aimed in particular to begin the process of developing a common position and practical policy recommendations for all Baltic Sea countries regarding appropriate biodiversity measures to be applied in the framework of CAP 2013+.

Some 80 participants represented the scientific community, agricultural and environmental ministries, environmental NGOs, various agencies and other organizations (BirdLife Europe, EU LIFE programme, ELN-FAB). They came from Baltic countries, Finland, Sweden, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and Belgium.

The interactive conference resulted in statements which were sent to high-level European policymakers with the aim to 1. increase not decrease money going to Pillar 2 of the CAP by strengthening the modulation principle; 2. ensure all traditional societal and environmental aspects of the Baltic Sea Region are taken into account, with a specific focus on pastures, landscape heterogeneity and habitat mosaics, and the general sustainability of the agricultural system. The participants trust that these points will be taken into account during the negotiations on the regulations and the drafting process of the implementing regulations and guidelines.

For more information see:  
[http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/index.php?valik=23&keel=1&template=mak\\_sisu.html](http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/index.php?valik=23&keel=1&template=mak_sisu.html)



## Balanced approach to restoring farmland biodiversity shares and separates land

It is possible to balance agricultural production with improved biodiversity on farmland, according to researchers. A new study suggests using a combination of land-sharing techniques, which enhance biodiversity on existing farmland, with land separation techniques, which designate separate areas for conservation and farmland production.

For more information:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/306na1.pdf>

Source: Science for Environment Policy, European Commission DG Environment News Alert Service



## Towards effective nature conservation on farmland: Making farmers matter

Until now the main instrument to counteract the loss of biodiversity and landscape quality in the European countryside has been the Agri-Environment Schemes (AES), which offer short-term payments for performing prescribed environmental management behaviours. In its current set-up, this approach is not a sustainable way of enhancing biodiversity and landscape quality. The authors of this recently published article argue that conservation in agricultural areas is also a social challenge. To

change farmers' behavior towards more sustainable conservation of farmland biodiversity, instruments should aim to influence individual farmers' motivation and behaviour. We should aim to place farmland biodiversity 'in the hands and minds of farmers'.

For more information see:  
<http://euroconbio.blogspot.hu/2012/10/towards-effective-nature-conservation.html>



## European debate on biodiversity - What European policy for biodiversity conservation in the coming years?



The 14 European partners of the [REVERSE project](#) organized a high-level debate on the development of the EU biodiversity policy. The event was held in Brussels on 25 September 2012 and marked the closing of this three-year project.

The round table included representatives of the European Commission (DG Environment), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the European Environment Agency (EEA), and the European Parliament (Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development). It was emphasized that economics is the currency of the policy, so success in biodiversity conservation can only be reached with economic arguments. The private sector has a crucial role

in biodiversity conservation. The [EU B@B platform](#), led by IUCN with the involvement of ECNC and other partners, was the first step of the EC to intensify activities with the private sector.

At the end of the debate the REVERSE partnership presented recommendations to better take biodiversity into account in European sectoral policies (agriculture, land planning, and tourism). In relation to agriculture and biodiversity, one of the key recommendations was to support European networks of stakeholders working on the conservation, enhancement and management of agrobiodiversity, in order to encourage regional and national initiatives and create new entities, also encouraging knowledge transfer in situ and ex situ conservation. This provides a direct link with the ELN-FAB project.

For more information see:  
<http://reverse.aquitaine.eu/>

## Upcoming events

### NATURAL PEST CONTROL: Evidence of efficiency? (17-18 January 2013, Paris, France)

A dynamic mix of short talks, round-tables and interactive workshops to discuss preliminary results of a synthesis of scientific knowledge on natural pest control. With IPBES in mind, we will examine how practical, technical and « indigenous » knowledge could be integrated in such an assessment (what scale, for which users?).

Technical advisers, knowledge hubs, managers, decision-makers, scientists, students are all welcome to join. Several key speakers will tell us about various methodologies of knowledge synthesis, adaptive management, risk-assessment... and we will use the case study on natural pest control as a basis for our discussions and workshops.

Some of the key speakers are:

Andrew Pullin, Centre for Evidence-based conservation, Bangor University, UK  
William Sutherland, Cambridge University, UK  
Pierre Ibish, Adaptive Management Group, Eberswalde, Germany  
Marie Vanderwalle, Biodiversity Knowledge, Helmholtz Centre, Germany

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*This seminar-workshop is part of the FP7 Biodiversity Knowledge project*  
([www.biodiversityknowledge.eu](http://www.biodiversityknowledge.eu)).

### International Green Week 2013 (18-27 January 2013, Berlin, Germany)

Established in 1926, International Green Week (IGW) is taking place for the 78th time in 2013. The IGW is the world's biggest fair for food, agriculture and horticulture. At the same time, the IGW is the point of origin for the Global

Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) with more than 60 departmental ministers.

Web: [www.gruenewoche.de/en/](http://www.gruenewoche.de/en/)



## 6th Forum for the Future of Agriculture (5 March 2013, Brussels, Belgium)



The annual Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA 2013) returns to Brussels on Tuesday 5 March 2013. Following last year's successful

event which saw over 1200 participants join distinguished speakers and interesting debates and discussions, the sixth edition turns the spotlight on Meeting the Food & Environmental Challenge. This Conference has now established itself as the premier meeting place for those who have a stake in the future of agriculture and has been addressed by European Commissioners, MEPs, national government ministers, industry leaders, NGOs, international organizations, including OECD and FAO, and academics.

For more information visit:

<http://www.forumforagriculture.com>

## 12th International UFZ-Deltares Conference on Groundwater-Soil-Systems and Water Resource Management (16-19 April 2013, Barcelona, Spain)

With the "AquaConSoil" conference in Barcelona in April 2013, organizers UFZ and Deltares will continue the tradition of Europe's largest conference on applied-knowledge of the management of soil-water systems.

AquaConSoil is expecting 1,000 delegates from research institutes and universities, governmental and consultant organizations and industry. AquaConSoil 2013 provides great opportunities for scientists, companies and policymakers:

- To be informed of and inspired by the latest developments in the fields of:

- sustainable use of soil-water systems;
- resource management with a special focus on arid and semi-arid regions;
- monitoring and assessment;
- remediation of contaminated water, soil and sediment;
- concepts and policies for sustainable management of soil-water systems and resource efficiency.

- To extend and enforce their network and start new cooperation activities.

For more information visit:

<http://www.aquaconsoil.org/AquaConSoil2013/Start.html>

## ICSAEF 2013: International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture, Environment and Forestry (8-9 July 2013, London, UK)

The conference aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results about all aspects of sustainable agriculture, environment and forestry, and discuss the practical challenges encountered and

the solutions adopted.

For more information visit:

<http://www.waset.org/conferences/2013/london/icsaef/index.php>

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The ELN-FAB project is currently financially supported by the European Commission LIFE programme; Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, the Netherlands and Flemish Land Agency (VLM), Belgium. Fundraising continues in order to expand the Network in the long term.

This newsletter aims to inform the partners, intermediaries and interested stakeholders of the ELN-FAB initiative. For more information visit: [www.eln-fab.eu](http://www.eln-fab.eu), or contact the ELN-FAB Secretariat:

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