

National farming policies must deliver for biodiversity

European hunters are aware of the importance of farming policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in supporting farmers and rural areas.

Yet unfortunately the status of small game and other farmland species has continued to decline in Europe's agricultural landscapes.

National hunting associations across Europe play an important role in calling on their national ministries to reward farmers for benefitting biodiversity.

Agri-environmental schemes (AES) encourage environmentally friendly practices that reward farmers for habitat creation, for example, by providing quality habitats for birds, pollinators, other insects and farmland species. Effective AES have considerable potential to benefit huntable species such as the Grey Partridge, European Hare, breeding waterbirds as well as pollinators, insects and wider biodiversity

It is increasingly clear however that more effective AES must be deployed to properly incentivise farmers to:

- a) prevent drainage,
- b) promote wetland creation,
- c) restore quality habitats for farmland biodiversity,
- d) promote results-based actions, e.g. rewarding farmers to deliver quality flowering meadows, species-rich grassland, conservation results for particular species, etc.

EU Member States should design eco-schemes that reward farmers that deliver sustainable land management practices that conserve landscape features comprising of fallow and scrubland, support for low to moderate grazing, implementation of flower/bird strips, high diversity grassland strips, etc.

With increased flexibility from Brussels, national farming policies can play a major role in enhancing how farming supports the provision of ecosystem services. This is critical to securing responsible, long-term management of farmland and related ecosystem health.

Considering international commitments to conserve and restore biodiversity, FACE and its Members call on national governments to make the necessary adjustments to effectively address biodiversity loss on Europe's farmland.

European governments must step up their efforts in ensuring that national farming plans deliver for biodiversity.

FACE Members commit to continue promoting the conservation of farmland biodiversity at national level and engaging in on the ground actions.

Almost half of all conservation actions by European hunters take place on farmland: See FACE's Biodiversity Manifesto for more information: <https://www.biodiversitymanifesto.com/>