

Solution approaches

With the "Green Deal" and the "Farm to fork" strategy, the EU Commission wants to meet the population's desire for more biodiversity, more nature conservation, less (synthetic) chemicals, less nutrients, more animal welfare, more regionality, low prices, security of supply and other wishes for agriculture.

These wishes are understandable. These tasks can also be fulfilled, but we must all be aware that the fulfilment of these wishes does not remain without consequences and that there are insoluble conflicts of objectives. In the following, solutions and approaches are formulated which we offer to farmers. These solutions may vary from one EU country to another and are certainly not complete. Further suggestions are always welcome.

- 10% of agricultural land is taken out of production throughout the EU - initially for 10 years. This applies not only to arable farming, but also to grassland, fruit and wine growing. For the removal and possible maintenance, a remuneration is paid in the amount of the lost usual contribution margin (varying according to region, use, natural conditions. The official authorities can provide information about this). The resulting reduction in food production must not be compensated by imports. After a period of 8 years it will be checked whether the desired targets (which have not yet been specified by the EU) have been reached.

- Imports of food or components of food from outside the EU into the EU are only allowed if they comply with the laws and social acceptance in the EU. This applies both to laws and regulations governing production and to social and wage standards.

- The protection of biodiversity in the cultural landscape must be given a measurable, comprehensible and fair value with which farmers are rewarded. This value must be recognised by the majority of stakeholders interested in biodiversity and be legally valid for a period of 10 years. Biodiversity thus becomes a branch of agriculture, which also helps to redefine its social role. In the public eye, farmers no longer stand for intensive agriculture alone, but also as guarantors of a diverse cultural landscape and the preservation of biodiversity.

(Source:
https://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/BfN/ina/Dokumente/Tagungsdoku/2018/2018-Vilm_11Punkte_final_clean.pdf)

- Contract nature conservation as a real source of income must take on greater significance. The awarding of contracts and invoicing is the same as for other services. If the service is attractively rewarded, it is conceivable that a complete operation can live from nature and species conservation.

- All measures for nature and species protection are networked in the landscape. Representatives of state nature conservation, but also national nature conservation organisations should contribute their expertise. For example, a wider flowering strip could be created along the roadside on the headland. Goal, support and success control are jointly developed and communicated.

- Following the example of the Netherlands, regional objectives are set jointly between nature conservation and farmers. These objectives vary according to the landscape, farm size or other factors. An external expert advisor coordinates a group of 30-50 farmers in a region who are jointly responsible for achieving the objectives. The consultant also takes on administrative tasks (applications,

controls) and monitoring. Here too, representatives of the nature conservation associations are always welcome as guests.

- In animal husbandry, the pressure from society to bring about changes in husbandry is particularly high. If a significantly larger space combined with an outdoor climate is to be realised, this is usually no longer feasible with a conversion of stables. However, new stables cannot be built from current income. Therefore, government subsidies are indispensable. Even more important, however, are fast and unbureaucratic approval procedures and the consent of the population. The time from application to approval should not significantly exceed 3 months. All countries of the EU will offer buy-out programmes in the future, following the example of the Netherlands.

- The number of shepherds is constantly decreasing. However, sheep are an important element in nature conservation and thus in the preservation of biodiversity. The EU must provide sufficient funds in the short term to preserve sheep farms, or better still, to promote new ones.

- The EU formulates a clear commitment to grazing. The conflict of objectives with possible predators (wolf, bear) must be resolved in such a way that there is no conflict of objectives.

- The long-term and sustainable realisation of social demands makes the involvement and participation of the large trading companies absolutely necessary. The trading companies undertake to include 30% regional products (measured by sales) in their range. Every year, the EU Commission awards a prize to those companies that deal fairly with producers and can demonstrate a fair pricing and purchasing policy

- Many measures fail because of the excessive bureaucracy that discourages farmers. When forms have to be filled out page by page for environmental measures, when even small deviations are sanctioned, when different authorities and organisations do not work in coordination, it often leads to the fact that despite the inner willingness, implementation does not take place. Proportionality and expediency must again be taken into account when drawing up and enforcing regulations and requirements. So far, there is no sign of bureaucracy reduction. We farmers can give examples of where this is possible.

- Regionality is mentioned by consumers as an important selling point. However, labelling is inadequate. National labels such as Agrarmarkt Austria, Made in Germany, etc. create confidence. Furthermore, the EU will actively promote products from its member states in the future.

- The sale of agricultural land to non-farmers for capital investment makes it almost impossible for practising farmers to acquire land. A sale of agricultural land without an offer to a practising farmer is not allowed.

The list of possible solutions is not exhaustive and is constantly being expanded. They may also vary from one EU country to another. Professional colleagues from other countries are asked to formulate the list of solutions specific to their country in the national language and send it to me. They can then be posted here as pdf files. You will find the mail address in the imprint.

