

## Challenges facing the Common Agricultural Policy

The intensification of agriculture has been a major threat to the state of our natural environment worldwide for decades (Tilman et al. 2011). Agriculture is the main cause of biodiversity loss in Europe (Henle et al., 2008; Crenna et al., 2019), and it is also a major direct contributor to climate change (EEA, 2018) and the land use changes that accelerate its impacts. Meanwhile, European agriculture is becoming increasingly intensive, despite the integration of a variety of environmental and nature conservation instruments into the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) since the 1990s (Boulanger - Messerlin, 2010). This is due to the sharp discrepancy between the CAP's stated objectives and the support system established, with the largest share of the budget being spent on the least effective measures (Pe'er - Lakner, 2020).

In Hungary, too, the year 2022 has highlighted the existing problems. On the one hand, the resulting drought showed that farmers in the Great Plain are currently not at all prepared for the change in environmental conditions of production. On the other hand, the Russian-Ukrainian war not only makes access to raw materials and energy from the East more difficult, but also creates problems for the supply of many agricultural products and raw materials that both Hungary and the EU need.

In view of the challenges facing the CAP, Pe'er - Lakner (2020) outlined three scenarios for its future:

1. A shift towards a focus on greening and more efficient payments thanks to close cooperation between the EU and its Member States.
2. to develop a new food and agriculture policy that can complement or partially replace the CAP, but with the same objectives (e.g. fight against food waste, obesity).
3. Abolition of the CAP. With many Member States making efforts to maintain business as usual, and with fierce debates on agricultural subsidies, environmental interests, support for farmers, etc., this scenario is also a realistic possibility.

Many studies have looked not only at the future of the CAP, but also at the challenges facing agriculture itself, possible development paths and visions for the future. They also cover the potential for changes in farming practices, the reduction of fertilisers and pesticides, the impact on environmental pressures, the potential for reducing GHG emissions and increasing the efficiency of the use of subsidies (Fathizad et al., 2022; Imbrenda et al., 2014; Latocha et al., 2016; Prudhomme et al., 2020; Sportelli et al., 2022).

The latest reform of the CAP was adopted in December 2021 and came into force in January 2023. Importantly, the new CAP is part of the European Green Deal (EGD) and thus serves its objectives, and has a key role to play in the implementation of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies (Matthews, 2020). These documents focus on increased sustainability and the production of healthy and nutritious food, hopefully also pushing agri-food actors in this direction. This is also the purpose of the indicator-based overhaul of the monitoring system, whereby CAP-linked payments will not only provide additional sources of revenue, but also a greater pressure to meet targets. This is very important, as a cornerstone of the criticisms of the CAP is that greening-linked payments have not been effective in changing agricultural production at a level that could justify the costs of inclusion (Heinemann - Weiss, 2020), or

better still, the positive effects are only spatially dispersed, resulting in high costs (Lovec et al., 2020; Erjavec et al, For this reason, the objectives of the new CAP are quite ambitious and require farmers to deliver real results in terms of environmental and climate action. This is also necessary because, as Matthews (2017) has pointed out, the CAP 2014-2020 has a number of shortcomings that affect environmental and climate ambition.

[CAPTIVATE](#) project, funded under the Erasmus + program of the European Union, is dedicated to knowledge transfer and vocational training of farmers and agricultural advisors related to the current EU strategic lines, such as the Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy and Organic Action Plan. One of the CAPTIVATE's main objectives is that farmers better understand conditionality, eco-scheme and rural development regulations, they choose and participate in the certain schemes with more responsibility and awareness, carrying out the new CAP measures more effectively.

## References

Crenna, E. – Sinkko, T. – Sala, S. (2019): Biodiversity impacts due to food consumption in Europe. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 227 pp. 378–391. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.04.054>

Henle, K. – Alard, D. – Clitherow, J. – Cobb, P. – Firbank, L. – Kull, T. – McCracken, D. – Moritz, F.A.R. – Niemalä, J. – Rebane, M. (2008): Identifying and managing the conflicts between agriculture and biodiversity conservation in Europe—A review. *Agric. Ecosyst. Environ* 124 (1-2) pp. 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agee.2007.09.005> A letöltés dátuma: 2022. május 17.

Tilman, D. – Balzer, C. – Hill, J. – Befort, B.L. (2011): Global food demand and the sustainable intensification of agriculture. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 108 (50) pp. 20260-20264. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1116437108>

European Environmental Agency (EEA): Annual European Union Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990–2016 and Inventory Report. 2018. [https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-union-greenhouse-gas-inventory-2018/at\\_download/file](https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-union-greenhouse-gas-inventory-2018/at_download/file) A letöltés dátuma: 2022. május 17.

Boulanger, P.H. – Messerlin, P.A. (2020): *European Agriculture: Challenges and Policies*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington DC. 93 p.

Pe'er, G. – Lakner, S. (2020): The EU's Common Agricultural Policy Could Be Spent Much More Efficiently to Address Challenges for Farmers, Climate, and Biodiversity. *One Earth*. 3 (2) pp. 173-175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.08.004>

Fathizad, H. – Taghizadeh-Mehrjardi, R. – Hakimzadeh Ardakani, M.A. – Zeraatpisheh, M. – Heung, B. – Scholten, T. (2022): Spatiotemporal Assessment of Soil Organic Carbon Change Using Machine-Learning in Arid Regions. *Agronomy* 12 (3) 628. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agronomy12030628>

Imbrenda, V. – D'Emilio, M. – Lanfredi, M. – Macchiato, M. – Ragosta, M. – Simoniello, T. (2014): Indicators for the estimation of vulnerability to land degradation derived from soil compaction and vegetation cover. *Eur. J. Soil Sci*, 65 (6) pp. 907–923. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejss.12184>

Latocha, A. – Szymanowski, M. – Jeziorska, J. – Stec, M. – Roszczewska, M. (2016): Effects of land abandonment and climate change on soil erosion – An example from depopulated agricultural lands in the Sudetes Mts., SW Poland. *CATENA*, 145, pp. 128–141. DOI: 10.1016/j.catena.2016.05.027

Sportelli, M. – Frascioni, C. – Fontanelli, M. – Pirchio, M. – Gagliardi, L. – Raffaelli, M. – Peruzzi, A. – Antichi, D. (2022): Innovative Living Mulch: Management Strategies for Organic Conservation Field Vegetables: Evaluation of Continuous Mowing, Flaming, and Tillage Performances. *Agronomy* 12 (3) 622. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agronomy12030622>

Prudhomme, R. – Brunelle, T. – Dumas, P. – Le Moing, A. – Zhang, X. (2020): Assessing the impact of increased legume production in Europe on global agricultural emissions. *Regional Environmental Change* 20, 91. DOI: 10.1007/s10113-020-01651-4

Matthews, A. (2020): The new CAP must be linked more closely to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. *Agric Econ* 8, (19). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40100-020-00163-3>

Matthews, A. (2017): Decoding the CAP Communication. <http://capreform.eu/decoding-the-cap-communication/> A letöltés dátuma: 2022. május 17.

Heinemann, F. – Weiss, S. (2018): The EU Budget and Common Agricultural Policy Beyond 2020: Seven More Years of Money for Nothing?, *EconPol Working Paper*, 17 (2) <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/219479>

Lovec, M. – Šumrada, T. – Erjavec, E. (2020): New CAP Delivery Model, Old Issues. *Intereconomics* 55, pp. 112–119. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-020-0880-6>

Committee—The CAP Strategic Plans beyond 2020: Assessing the Architecture and Governance Issues in Order to Achieve the EU-Wide Objectives, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/617501/IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)617501\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/617501/IPOL_STU(2018)617501_EN.pdf). A letöltés dátuma: 2022. május 28.



**Funded by  
the European Union**