The Evaluation of the Austrian Agri-environmental Programme

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OECD-Workshop
20-22 June 2011, Braunschweig, Germany
1. Situation of agriculture in Austria
2. The Austrian Agri-Environmental Programme
3. Evaluation
4. Conclusions / Outlook 2014+
Austria

Source: http://europa.eu/abc/european_countries/index_de.htm
Agriculture in Austria

- **Small** structured, **farm-based** agriculture
- 60 % **part-time** farmers
- Production of **high-quality food** / regional food important for consumers
- **High awareness** of the importance farmers have for **society**
- High proportion of **organic farming:**
  -> 20% of the area; 16% of the farms
- High proportion of **less-favoured areas**
Less favoured areas: Example
Share of LFA in Austria
Despite all these preconditions we have found a solution:
The Agri-Environmental Programme (ÖPUL)

Austrian programme to promote agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of environmental protection, extensive production and the maintenance of the countryside.

**Five Subjects of Protection**
(Soil, Water, Climate, Biodiversity, Landscape)

**Setting of 29 Measures**
(Contracts under Private Law, Farmer chose Measures)

**Obligation Period**
(7 years, with possibility to quit after 5 years)

**Integral/horizontal Approach**
(Targeting the majority of the farmers)

**Five Subjects of Protection**
(Soil, Water, Climate, Biodiversity, Landscape)
The effect ÖPUL has (two levels):

1. Keeping low or reducing risks deriving from agriculture - extensification measures, not aiming at a specific target

   **Example:** Environmental friendly management of arable areas and grassland, Organic farming

2. Specific measures aiming at a specific target but with effects only in small areas

   **Example:** Nature protection

   ► *High efficiency on larger areas only when both levels are combined!*
Facts & Figures

**Annual Payments:**
- appr. 550 Mio. EUR

**Holdings:**
- appr. 118,000

**Measures:**
- appr. 409,000

**Acceptance:**
- appr. 73% of all Agricultural Holdings
- appr. 2,20 Mio. ha (excl. mountain pastures)
- appr. 89% of the Austrian agricultural area
# Measures in AEP (29)

## Extensive and environmental friendly management on the whole farm or referred to a whole crop group or animal protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organic farming</th>
<th>Environmental friendly management of arable areas and grassland</th>
<th>Protection of land-scape and nature protection</th>
<th>Protection of soil, climate and water</th>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated production (IP) of vegetables</td>
<td>Renunciation of silage ®</td>
<td>Renunciation of silage ®</td>
<td>cover cropping of arable land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erosion protection for fruit and hops</td>
<td>Maintenance of meadow orchards</td>
<td>Maintenance of meadow orchards</td>
<td>Direct seeding and seeding on mulch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated production (IP) for fruit and hops</td>
<td>Mowing of steep areas</td>
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<td>Regional project for groundwater protection and for the maintenance of grassland ®</td>
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<td>Erosion protection in vineyards</td>
<td>Management of mountain meadows</td>
<td>Management of mountain meadows</td>
<td>Preventive soil and water protection ®</td>
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<td>Integrated production (IP) in vineyards</td>
<td>Mountain grazing and herding</td>
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<td>Management of arable areas particularly threatened by erosion and leaching ®</td>
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<td>Integrated production (IP) in greenhouses</td>
<td>Ecopoints ®</td>
<td>Ecopoints ®</td>
<td>Underseed under maize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal protection measure</td>
<td>Rare productive livestock breeds</td>
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<td>Spreading of liquid farm manure and biogas semi liquid manure with a low level of nitrogen loss</td>
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<td>Rare agricultural cultivated plants</td>
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<td>Maintenance and development of valuable areas important from the point of view of nature or water protection (“Conservation Measure”)</td>
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® only in special regions defined in the program
What farmers are doing for the environment

The Austrian Agri-environmental Programme ÖPUL
Evaluation – some comments

- Evaluation process of the AUP in Austria works regarding to the protection goods soil, water, climate and biodiversity
- In general, evaluation will become more and more important
- These are also the signs regarding to the future of the CAP
- Actually many examinations: Austrian Court of Audit, European Court of Audit, European Commission, ...
- High responsibility to use the results of evaluation for the new programme period
Evaluation II: Soil & Water

- **Soil erosion** has been reduced up to >85% in vineyards and orchards (48,000ha)

- On average soil erosion in Austria has been reduced by **800,000 to annually**

- **Humus content** increased over the past years and is – due to AEP - now appr. **0.4% higher than in 1993**

- Better fertilizer-management:
  
  **Reduction of N-pollutions by 16%,**
  
  **Reduction of P-content in soils**
Evaluation III: Climate

- Significant reduction of climate-damaging gases
  (app. 380,000 to of GHG-Emissions due to AEP measures)

- No **specific measures for climate protection** in AEP
  but special impact of **several measures**
  (organic farming, renunciation/reduction of agrochemicals, cover cropping on arable land, no tillage and mulch-tillage, low-emission application of liquid farm manure)
Evaluation IV: Biodiversity

- The positive impact of organic farming was shown in various studies:
  -> Increase in biodiversity of „field weeds“ from 35 to 80 over the last years; 18 out of 26 red-list species found on organic fields

- 15% of the farmers cultivate 3% of the farmland following restrictions concerning nature protection:
  -> Number of „Great Bustard“ (Otis tarda) increased from 60 individuals in 1995 to 175 individuals (> 5.000 ha Great Bustard protection area)
Compare ´a´ ...
... with ´b´
Outlook – 2014+

- Climate protection and biodiversity become more and more important
- Smart combination of horizontal and vertical measures also in the future
- Keyword `Greening` would change some ÖPUL measures
- 2011 / 2012: Budget (Quantity, …)
- Participation process has started
- Many open questions…
You can see here ...
Thanks!