

## ELN-FAB NEWSLETTER

No. 2, June 2010

### ELN-FAB steering group meeting discusses future activities

4 May 2010, Copenhagen, Denmark

The project team and steering group of the European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB) held its first meeting in 2010 to discuss this year's progress and the future of the initiative. The meeting was hosted by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in Copenhagen.

The ELN-FAB project aims to provide a platform for exchange of knowledge and practical experiences between farmers, policymakers and scientists to enable fast and effective implementation of best practices in order to help to optimize agrobiodiversity benefits and promote sustainable agriculture. ELN-FAB focuses on the 27 Member States of the EU, plus Norway and Switzerland.

#### European Environment Agency



Fields of cooperation between ELN-FAB and the EEA were identified during the meeting. One of the key issues discussed during the meeting was the organization of the annual ELN-FAB European Seminar later this year.

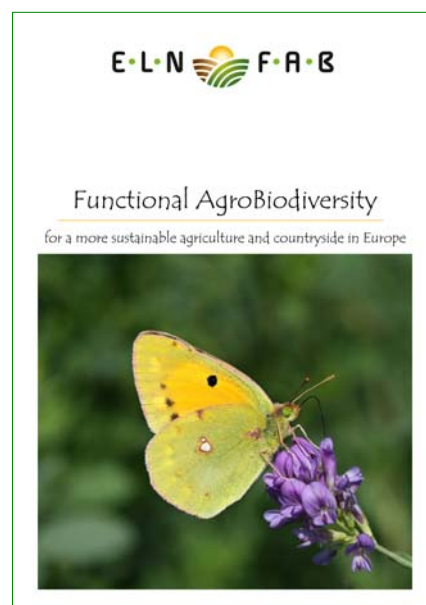
The participants exchanged information on processes, publications and meetings of relevance to ELN-FAB, and also discussed what kind of approach the Network should take to address the needs of different stakeholder groups. The development of a brochure (see item below) on the concept of functional agrobiodiversity was discussed in detail.

### Benefits of functional agrobiodiversity described in new brochure

Functional agrobiodiversity (FAB) is a concept that is gaining more and more ground. FAB focuses on the use of biodiversity in agriculture, with the objective to optimize ecosystem services that enhance the sustainability of agricultural production.

A brochure explaining the concept of FAB has been prepared by the ELN-FAB in order to inform the interested public about the benefits that FAB offers. Examples of FAB-based practices are given. The brochure was disseminated during the EU Green Week event (1–4 June 2010, Brussels), and is now also used for other purposes.

You can find the brochure here: [Functional AgroBiodiversity, for a more sustainable agriculture and countryside in Europe.](#)



## ELN-FAB related events this year

### Seminar on the ELN-FAB in the Baltic Sea Region

EU farmers and policy makers increasingly acknowledge that biodiversity and agricultural production need not necessarily be in conflict, but can potentially strengthen each other, as experience has already shown. In this context, the 'Seminar on the European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB) in the Baltic Sea Region' will be held **in Rakvere in northern Estonia on 25-26 August 2010**. The event is being jointly organized by the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Centre (Estonia) and ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation (host of the ELN-FAB Secretariat).

Understanding the relations between biodiversity and sustainable agricultural production and translating such knowledge into management practices that can be applied at the scale of farms and landscapes is of key importance for a robust and environmentally friendly agriculture in Europe. In this context, the concept of Functional AgroBiodiversity (FAB) has recently been introduced. This seminar introduces the concept of FAB and the benefits it can provide for a more sustainable agriculture.

Please find the [invitation](#), [programme](#) and [registration form](#) here. You are kindly asked to

### Green work(s)! International conference

During the second half of 2010, under the Belgian EU presidency, various events and conferences related to biodiversity are planned, and one of them will have a direct link with ELN-FAB. The conference called 'Green work(s)! Developing open space in peri-urban areas - The value of green investments in the heart of Europe', will take place **on 12-13 October 2010 in Bruges, Belgium**.

The main ambition of the conference is to open the dialogue between scientists, policymakers, administrators and stakeholders on the major challenges of developing green investments and their value in peri-urban regions in the heart of Europe. The conference will also provide the perfect opportunity to learn from other participants, to exchange best practices, to

send the completed registration form by email to [fabseminar@pmk.agri.ee](mailto:fabseminar@pmk.agri.ee). **Registration closes on 15 July!** For organizational reasons, we ask you to register as early as possible. Your registration will be confirmed after the registration deadline. All relevant information (regularly updated) is also available at <http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/fabseminar>.



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Iiri Selge by email [fabseminar@pmk.agri.ee](mailto:fabseminar@pmk.agri.ee) or phone + 372 53 021 925.

stimulate contacts. Furthermore, the conference will also synthesize learning lessons that will be provided as an input for the European Environmental Advisory Council conference taking place later that week in Bruges.

The ELN-FAB will organize a lecture ('Landscape management to optimize ecosystem services for sustainable agriculture') and two workshops ('Functional agrobiodiversity. The future of our agriculture?' and 'Soil biodiversity: is a living soil the key to improve biodiversity on farmland?') during the second day of the conference.

For more information please visit <http://vlm.eventplus.be/> or contact Mr Frank Stubbe at [info@vlm.be](mailto:info@vlm.be) or +32 499 99 43 05.

## Annual ELN-FAB European Seminar

In the framework of the ELN-FAB initiative, annual seminars are organized in order to bring together representatives of various stakeholder groups and national and international organizations throughout Europe to collect and exchange experiences about functional agrobiodiversity.

The annual ELN-FAB European Seminar in 2010 will be organized in cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA). The meeting will be held **on 11-12 November 2010 in Ljubljana** and hosted by the [Agricultural Institute of Slovenia](#).

More information will follow soon and will be available at [www.eln-fab.eu](http://www.eln-fab.eu).

## Updates on the ELN-FAB website

Throughout Europe, farmers are applying various forms of functional agrobiodiversity in their farming practices. This practical experience is extremely fragmented and barely accessible. The ELN-FAB project aims to change this by bringing together experience, knowledge, views and case studies.

The ELN-FAB website ([www.eln-fab.eu](http://www.eln-fab.eu)) provides the main communication platform for the Network and contains a European project database on the subject of functional agrobiodiversity. The website is available in English, German, French and Spanish, and uses targeted messages to focus on the Network's stakeholder groups.



## New projects have been uploaded to the database

Over the last decade, knowledge on how to preserve and use ecosystem services in agricultural practices has increased. Pilot projects have yielded their first results. But is this information available to the right people and stakeholder groups, also to enable multiplication of good examples? Learn more about practical experiences on the website.

New projects have recently been uploaded to the agrobiodiversity project database. They focus on

biological control through selective biodiversity and targeted crop rotations (Sweden); perennial field margins with combined agronomical and ecological benefits for vegetable rotation schemes (United Kingdom); and the analysis of the relationship between agricultural practices and agrobiodiversity, and an overview of potentially new or supporting agri-environment measures (Belgium).

## New scientific publications are available on the website

Biodiversity is the basis for agricultural production. On the one hand, it is the origin of all crops and domestic livestock and the variety within them. On the other hand, components of wild biodiversity in agricultural and associated landscapes provide and maintain ecosystem services that are essential to agricultural production (e.g. pollination). Learn more about the results of research in the field of functional agrobiodiversity and find new articles, scientific

papers and studies on the ELN-FAB website [here](#).

New articles related to natural pest control have recently been uploaded:

[Functional agro biodiversity in Dutch arable farming: results of a three year pilot](#) - IOBC/WPRS Bulletin 34 (2008);

[Increasing corn for biofuel production reduces biocontrol services in agricultural landscapes](#) - The National Academy of Sciences of the USA;

[Limitation of olive pest populations through development of Conservation Biocontrol](#) - Cahiers Agricultures vol. 15, n° 5.

## Let your voice be heard

If your organization has relevant projects which you would like to promote via this Network and the database, the ELN-FAB Secretariat would be happy to receive them. In the register of agrobiodiversity projects we can put a short description (max. 2 pages) of your project, including information on overview, aims, partners, outputs, attached files (e.g. project leaflets) and contact person.

Additionally, if you have any relevant scientific publications, news items connected to the practical implementation of functional agrobiodiversity or the science-policy interface, you are kindly invited to submit them to the ELN-FAB Secretariat. The information can be disseminated and published in our quarterly newsletters and on the Network's website.

## EU Business and Biodiversity Platform website launched at Green Week

The global loss of biodiversity has become one of the major environmental challenges of the 21st century. Given that the concern for biodiversity is integral to sustainable development, the European Commission has taken the initiative to promote the continued development of the EU Business and Biodiversity Initiative by cooperating with businesses, from SMEs to larger companies, in setting up a technical platform on Business and Biodiversity (B@B).

The Platform works with the priority business sectors identified by the European Commission (Agriculture, Food supply, Forestry, Extractive industry, Financial sector and Tourism) to promote their awareness of and engagement in biodiversity protection. The ELN-FAB initiative is also promoted by this platform as it focuses on the integration of biodiversity in sustainable agriculture at the European level.

Becoming involved with the Platform provides an opportunity for businesses to:

- gain access to the sectoral best practices for biodiversity conservation;
- contribute to the development of guidance documents;
- recognize outstanding contributions to biodiversity conservation through the award system.



**Business @  
Biodiversity**

SMEs, larger companies and other interested parties, such as biodiversity conservation NGOs and governments, are invited to participate.

This year, Green Week, the largest annual conference on European environment policy, turned the spotlight on biodiversity. There were over 30 sessions at the conference, addressing the state of biodiversity and nature in Europe and the world. Green Week was held from 1 to 4 June in Brussels.

During the event the [website of the EU Business and Biodiversity Platform](#) was officially launched.

The Business and Biodiversity Platform is funded by the European Commission, Directorate-General Environment.

## Publications

### Scenario study on the future of European agriculture and the rural world updated

Earlier this year, an [update of the Scenar 2020 study](#) was officially published by the European Commission. The objective of this Scenar 2020-

II study was to refine and improve the identification of major future trends and driving factors – and the perspectives and challenges

resulting from them – provided by the [initial Scenar 2020 study](#) (December 2006) on the future of European agriculture and the rural world. In this respect the study does not aim at evaluating the impact of potential policy changes but to compare how the agricultural sector might evolve under different, and somewhat extreme, pathways which, to a large, although

not full extent, follow the assumptions of the first study.

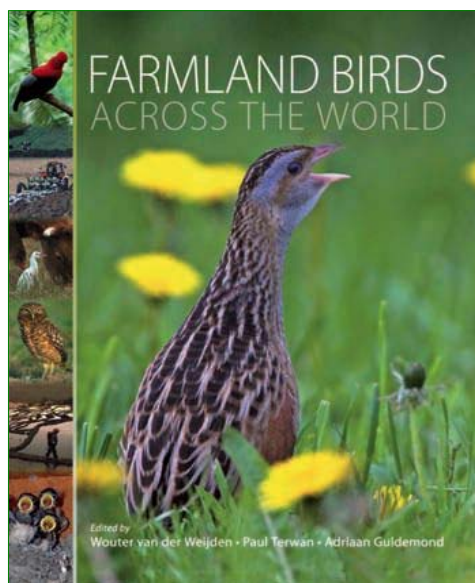
The study was carried out by [ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation](#), [Agricultural Economics Research Institute](#) (LEI; the Netherlands), [Center for Agricultural Landscape and Land Use Research](#) (ZALF; Germany).

### First global book on farmland birds

Farmlands, collectively, cover 5 billion hectares, thus forming the largest habitat on the globe. This very diverse habitat supports a huge variety of birds: 3,600 of the world's 10,000 bird species are listed as farmland species by BirdLife International. Until recently, a global overview of this bird life had never been published. The book [Farmland Birds across the World](#) now fills this gap.

The book has been written by seven experts in biology and agriculture and compiled by the Dutch Centre for Agriculture and Environment (CLM). It is published by Lynx Edicions in Barcelona, publisher of the famous *Handbook of the Birds of the World*.

For more information see the [Flyer – Farmland Birds across the World](#).



### Upcoming events

#### IOBC/WPRS Working Group “Landscape Management for Functional Biodiversity” conference (29 June - 01 July 2010, Cambridge, UK)

The dynamics and impacts of pests, diseases and weeds in agricultural crops depend on the landscape matrix, both due to effects of the matrix on dispersal abilities for these pest organisms, and due to the effects of landscape matrix on natural enemies. Functional biodiversity – catering to the natural control function in agricultural landscapes – provides the *raison d’être* for the IOBC working group on Landscape Management for Functional Biodiversity. The challenges of climate change and food security have forced food security up the EU political agenda. This may pose a threat to (functional) biodiversity as land once again may become more intensively managed and the area of uncropped land diminishes. The loss of set-aside is the start of

this process. Farmland biodiversity is under threat with some taxa continuing to decline despite the widespread implementation of agri-environment schemes. In the future uncropped land may have to become more multifunctional and provide a greater range of resources.

Dr Felix Wäckers from the University of Lancaster, UK, chair of the ELN-FAB initiative, will hold a presentation on ELN-FAB with the title ‘The European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity: a platform for exchange between scientists, policy makers and farmers organisations’.

For more information visit [the IOBC website](#).

#### 4th European Seminar on AgroBiodiversity and SAVE Meeting 2010 (3-5 September 2010, Criewen, Germany)

The Annual Meeting of the SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network will take place at Castle Criewen, northeast of Berlin, from 3-5 September 2010. It is being combined with the 4th European Seminar on AgroBiodiversity (topic: 'AgroBiodiversity – a crucial part of Biodiversity') and is being organized in collaboration with SAVE partner VERN e.V. and the German-Polish Academy Castle Criewen at National Park Lower Oder Valley, Brandenburg.

For more information contact: [office@save-foundation.net](mailto:office@save-foundation.net).



Photo: Andrew Schrauwen

#### Conference 'High Nature Value grasslands: securing the ecosystem services of European farming' (7-9 September 2010, Sibiu, Romania)

[EFNCP](#), in partnership with Fundația ADEPT and Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, are proud to announce a major 2½ day international conference to address the importance of High Nature Value Farmland for the delivery of ecosystem services in Europe.

This conference will assess the role of HNV farming systems in providing a wide range of

ecosystem services: not only biodiversity conservation, but other services vital to our long-term future such as resistance to climate change, carbon sequestration, fire and flood resistance, quality and security of water and food.

For more information contact: [info@efnccp.org](mailto:info@efnccp.org) and see [summary of the conference](#) and [booking form](#).

#### European Congress on Conservation Agriculture (4-7 October 2010, Madrid, Spain)

The Spanish Conservation Agriculture Association / Living Soils (AEAC/SV), jointly with the European Conservation Agriculture Federation (ECAAF) and the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), are organizing the 'European Congress on Conservation Agriculture: Towards agro-environmental, climate and energetic sustainability', to be held in Madrid from 4-7 October 2010.

Development agencies and donors, policymakers

and administrators, environmentalists, farmers, agricultural scientists and advisors, and the agricultural industry are welcome to attend this event. The Congress has attracted among its keynote speakers and delegates, authorities and leading scientists on conservation agriculture, soil management, agronomy, crop protection and global environmental issues.

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

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The ELN-FAB project is currently financially supported by the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), the Netherlands; Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Switzerland; Flemish Land Agency (VLM), Belgium; Ministry of Agriculture, Estonia; and the European Environment Agency (EEA). The further support of funders is being sought 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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