

ELN-FAB NEWSLETTER

No. 3, October 2010

Agrobiodiversity in Baltic Sea Region brings together farmers, scientists and policymakers

25 & 26 August 2010, Rakvere, Estonia

The 'Seminar on the European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB) in the Baltic Sea Region' was held in Rakvere, Estonia on 25 and 26 August 2010. The seminar was co-organized by ECNC (host of the ELN-FAB Secretariat), the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Research Centre (Estonia).

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. The seminar gave insight into the concept of FAB and the benefits it can provide for a more sustainable agriculture.

The 59 participants, from 11 European countries, represented the three main stakeholder groups of the Network: farmers, policymakers and scientists. The facilitated workshop focused on the themes 'What are the main barriers to deliver FAB in the Baltic Sea region?' and 'What do we expect from, or what could be done by politicians / scientists / farmers?' The outcome of the productive

discussions will provide input to the planned handbook on FAB, which will help stakeholders to strengthen the role of FAB in their operations and identify what is needed.

Visits were made to two farms: Leedikõrve Plant Production (conventional farming) and Sae farm (breeding Estonian native sheep). The participants discussed the ecosystem services delivered by the farms and what kinds of ecosystem services could easily be developed.



Photo: Albert Koopal

For more information visit:

<http://pmk.agri.ee/pkt/fabseminar>

Green work(s)! International conference

12 & 13 October 2010, Bruges, Belgium

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 stimulate contacts. Furthermore, the conference will also synthesize learning lessons that will be

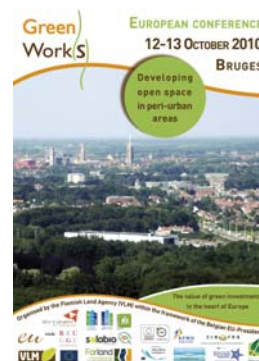
provided as an input for the European Environmental Advisory Council conference taking place later that week in Bruges.

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 or +32 499 99 43 05.



European Seminar on ELN-FAB in 2010

11 & 12 November 2010, Ljubljana, Slovenia

On 11-12 November 2010 the annual European Seminar on the European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB) will be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The aim of the meeting is to bring together representatives of various stakeholder groups and national and international organizations throughout Europe to collect and exchange experience about functional agrobiodiversity. It is being organized by ECNC in cooperation with DIVERSITAS and the European Environment Agency (EEA), and will be hosted by the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia (KIS).

Throughout Europe, farmers, researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders are testing and implementing various forms of agrobiodiversity. At present, this practical experience is extremely fragmented and barely accessible. The European Learning Network on Functional AgroBiodiversity (ELN-FAB) aims to change this by accumulating knowledge on how biodiversity can be mobilized to increase sustainable agricultural production, 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, and to promote sustainable agriculture in the 27 Member States of the EU, plus Norway and Switzerland.

For more information see the [invitation](#), [updated preliminary programme](#), [registration form](#), [travel](#)

and [hotel](#) information, and a [brochure about the concept of FAB](#). The preliminary programme will be revised further as other speakers confirm. Please visit www.eln-fab.eu for the updated programme.



If you would like to participate in the seminar, please **fill in the enclosed registration form** and mail it to the organizers **before 15 October**. If you require any further information, visit www.eln-fab.eu or contact Veronika Mikos by email at mikos@ecnc.org or phone +31 (0)13 5 944 944.

Please forward this information to your colleagues or interested persons.

We look forward to welcoming you to the European Seminar on ELN-FAB in Slovenia!

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.

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. One example focuses on the analysis of the relationship between agricultural practices/funding and selected species and habitats within the European Union; and another one focuses on the development of a Latvian-Estonian network for

The ELN-FAB website (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.

the demonstration of environmentally friendly farming practices.



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 publications related to functional agrobiodiversity have recently been uploaded:

- Analysis of spatial and temporal variations of High Nature Value farmland and links with changes in bird populations a study on France – EC, JRC (2010);
- Low Input Farming Systems – EC, JRC (2008);
- Proceedings of the Summer School 'Biodiversity Serving Agriculture' – EC, JRC (2006);
- 'Biodiversity Serving Agriculture' The example of Conservation Biological Control (CBC) – EC, JRC (2006).

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.

Publications

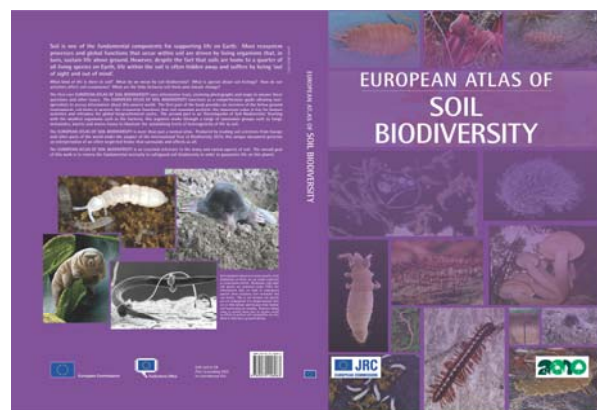
New atlas highlights the value of Europe's soil biodiversity and reveals how it is under threat

The European Commission's own research body, the Joint Research Centre, published for the first time, an indicator-based map of potential threats to soil biodiversity, in order to guide decision-makers in protecting this crucial resource. The biodiversity within our soils plays a vital role in agriculture and in the water and carbon cycle. The atlas highlights areas within Europe where soil biodiversity is most at risk of decline relative to the current situation – notably parts of the UK, the Benelux countries and Northern France, although there are areas of high risk also in several other Member States. It provides a comprehensive source of information for researchers, policy makers and teachers. It was launched at the conference 'Soil, Climate Change and Biodiversity – Where do we stand?' (Brussels, 23 & 24 September 2010).

The European Atlas of Soil Biodiversity includes the first ever threat map for soil biodiversity covering most EU Member States¹. Potential threats to soil biodiversity were selected and ranked in an expert evaluation organised by the Soil Biodiversity Working Group, established by the JRC. Multiple pressure factors were included in the calculation of the new indicator map of potential threats, including land use change, habitat disruption, intensive human exploitation, invasive species, soil compaction, erosion and pollution.

The map indicates an evaluation of the potential risk of soil biodiversity decline - with respect to the current situation - and is not a representation of the actual level of soil biodiversity. The results show that the risk of decline in soil biodiversity due to human induced pressures tends to be highest in areas of high population density and/or intense agricultural activity. The regions most affected are particularly concentrated in the UK (several parts except the most northern), the Benelux countries and Northern France. However, specific areas in several other Member States, often with the same characteristics are also identified as high risk – for example the Po

valley in Italy, the only region in that country to fall into the high risk categories.



The JRC's atlas also introduces the reader to "life below ground". It brings to the public view the whole range of life in the soil and the crucial role it plays in maintaining other ecosystems. It includes new research results on current threats to soil biodiversity.

This 128-page atlas is the result of collaboration between departments of the European Commission and partners from academia, industry and organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Each section is written by leading world experts and presented in a way accessible to non-specialists.

The first section of the atlas examines the soil environment, its multiple uses, the ecosystem "goods and services" that it provides, and the role that the soil biota play in these. The second is a kind of encyclopaedia of soil biodiversity, with high resolution images bringing the reader face to face with many of the main groups of organisms found in soils.

For more information visit:

http://eusoils.jrc.ec.europa.eu/library/maps/biodiversity_atlas/index.html

Upcoming events

Conference "How can we green the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)? (12-14 November 2010, Bled, Slovenia)

On 12-14 November 2010 Avalon will organise the Conference "How can we green the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)? - A contribution to the dialogue based on the views from the New Member States and countries aspiring to EU membership". The conference will be organised in the framework of Avalon's Networking Programme 2010, supported by EC DG Environment (Life+ Programme).

For various administrative, technical, environmental/ecological, historical and other reasons – the existing CAP measures and procedures aimed at greening European agriculture do not necessarily benefit the New Member States and their environment. This problem has been recognised at various occasions, but it doesn't seem to have been sufficiently addressed and discussed. The conference will therefore focus on the question: how to improve the existing efforts to green the CAP, and adjust it to the real needs of the New Member States and non-EU countries aspiring to

EU membership. The issue will be discussed and analysed with the relevant GO, NGO, academia, business and other representatives from the Old and New Member States, as well as countries aspiring to EU membership.



For more information and registration, please visit www.avalon.nl

Conference on historical agricultural landscape Slovakia (14-16 March 2011, Vinicne, Slovak Republic)

You are kindly invited to attend the international conference "Research and Management of the Historical Agricultural Landscape" organised by the Institute of Landscape Ecology, Slovak Academy of Sciences. The conference will take place on March 14 -16, 2011 in Vinicne, Slovak Republic.

The conference will focus on the following topics:

- History of agricultural landscape - natural, cultural, social, and economic determinants of origin and past development, land-use changes;

- Historical agricultural landscape as a source of landscape diversity and biodiversity;
- Historical agricultural landscape in globalisation period - development trends and opportunities, perception, legislative, economic and political tools of preservation and sustainable utilisation.

For more information see the [first announcement](#), [instructions to authors](#) and [registration form](#).

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, or contact the ELN-FAB Secretariat:

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