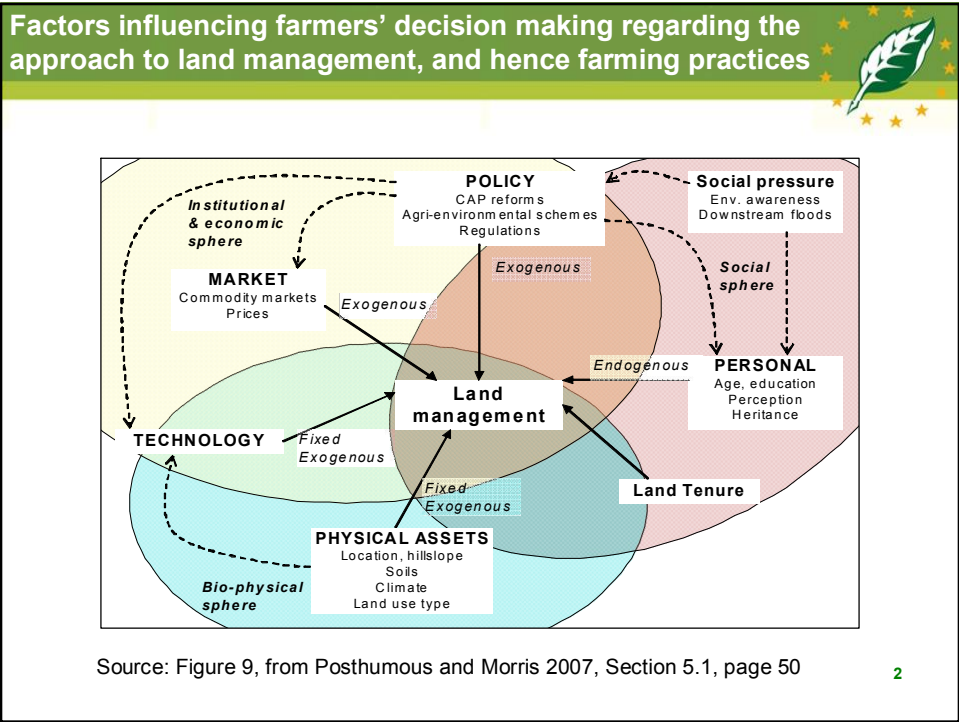


Success in Implementing Policies for Sustainable Agriculture and Soil Conservation
SoCo Seminar, Brussels
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Foundations for Successful Policies



- Clear scientific understanding of soil processes and implications of management;
- Clear agronomic and economic understanding of farm practice and dynamics;
- Willingness and capacity to focus on specific local conditions;
- Institutional capacity to prioritise soil management in public and private sectors.

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Developing appropriate policy approaches (1)



- Farm level information, advice and training;
- Research and development;
- Pilot and demonstration farms;
- Soil management plans;
- Appropriate rural and farm infrastructure planning and investment (including drainage and irrigation).

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Farm level advice and training



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Developing appropriate policy approaches (2)



- Regulation;
- Cross compliance - SMRs, GAEC and permanent pasture;
- Stimulation of private sector initiatives;
- Integration of measures.

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Information and Demonstration Projects (West Flanders)



- Aim of reducing soil phosphate saturation and nutrient leaching from manure;
- Focus on information as well as regulation;
- Involves farmers' unions, extension services, farming press, feed suppliers in providing information;
- Demonstration plots show alternative management options and their impacts, e.g. green manure/catch crops.

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Targeting advice through farm level data (Czech Republic)



- Challenge is to improve implementation of the Nitrates Directive and reduce erosion;
- Targeting advice at specific farms and parcels;
- Additional environmental data is added to the Land Parcel Information Service (LPIS) including soil data and digital terrain model;
- Registered users can get information on Nitrate Directive requirements and recommendations;
- Can be used to design anti-erosion measures such as ditches, balks and grass strips.

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Regulation (Denmark)



- Regulations on fertiliser use and plant cover updated in 2006 to improve effectiveness;
- Farms must be registered in order to buy inorganic fertiliser;
- Each farm has a yearly nitrogen quota which must be respected;
- Farms required each year to establish a crop to enhance normal Nitrogen uptake.

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Addressing soil management through cross compliance



- Focus on arable slopes above 10% (Greece);
- Aim to reduce loss of organic matter, e.g. through better crop residue management, prohibiting burning (Greece);
- Focus on erosion under permanent crops, e.g. no tillage under crops on slopes above 15%, unless conservation tillage, permanent cover or terraces retained (Spain);
- Improve soil management on arable land, through requiring an annual “Soil Protection Review” identifying remedial measures (England).

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Cross compliance seems most effective



- When rules are easy to monitor and observe during farm visits;
- Are reasonably well targeted on farms where there are substantive problems – not too broad brush;
- Where the rules correspond to good farming practice and can be readily understood by farmers;
- Where there is support in the wider rural community, e.g. for ban on straw burning in Greece.

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Grass margin in arable field



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Focus of agri-environment incentive measures on soil management priorities (Guadalentin Basin, Spain)



- Suite of measures focused on soil management and prevention of water erosion;
- Includes an infrastructure element to encourage building and maintenance of ponds, ditches, terraces;
- No tillage along slope permitted;
- Establish vegetation strips on erosion prone land;
- Special strips on parcels crossed by water flows;
- 8% of budget well targeted but not necessarily popular.

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Combining Incentives with Advice (England)



- Catchment Sensitive Farming Scheme focused on specific catchments with water pollution and/or soil management problems;
- Combines information provision, tailored advice and incentive payments organised on local scale;
- Special national funds available for financing advisory staff on the ground;
- Able to work in depth with farmers who are leaders in the community;
- Positive evaluation of effectiveness – scheme to be continued to 2011.

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Some Success Factors



- Information, advice, consciousness raising and sustained institutional effort essential;
- Measures should reflect the appropriate scale of intervention – some localised, others more generic (such as promoting appropriate organic farming and conservation agriculture);
- Clear role for regulation, cross compliance and incentives working together;
- Stakeholder involvement, particularly by farming organisations, is important;
- Several measures can address other priorities, e.g. reducing water pollution and improving carbon management;
- Helpful to involve stakeholders outside agriculture too.

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