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ALIMENTARI E FORESTALI



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## Technical Report



L'AGRICOLTURA A BENEFICIO DI TUTTI



**Document drawn up within the National Rural Network activities**

**Task force Environment and Cross-compliance**

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## Summary

1 <sup>st</sup> day - Implementation and control of GAEC standards in Member States.....	4
2 <sup>nd</sup> day (field visit) <i>GAEC standards at work</i> : training and discussions on case studies, analysing erosion areas and the management of a farm.....	12
3 <sup>rd</sup> day Good practices on cross compliance implementation and synergies with the rural development.....	18
The media profile.....	23

## 1<sup>st</sup> day

### Implementation and control of GAEC standards in Member States

DGAgri D3 presented an overview of the regulatory framework, of adequate definitions and an updating of the situation as for GAEC standards to be implemented in the EU27 Countries.

When defining how to implement the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions, Member States shall prevent any possible doubt of the farmers on implementation procedures, explaining the direct link with Annex III of the Council Reg. (EC) No 73/2009 and the generic and non-measurable expressions, e.g.: “during high precipitation periods”, “adequate maintenance”, “preventing overgrazing” or “unwanted vegetation”.

In addition, it is important to prevent that one GAEC standard could double a requirement already provided for by the Statutory Management Requirements, thus increasing penalties for farmers.

The analysis carried out on 2009 cross-compliance implementation measures in the Member States regarding “combating soil erosion” issue, pointed out different implementation procedures as for the minimum soil cover (GAEC 1), while at the same time a convergence as for maintaining fallow land for a period not exceeding 2 or 3 months or for a minimum cover at 5-10 m. distant from the waters. In general, permanent cover shall consist in crops with limited erosion vulnerability (all cereals but maize, grass, clover, etc.). Member States rarely consider such parameter an indicator to ensure soil cover, in favour of set-aside land.

With regard to minimum land management reflecting site-specific conditions (GAEC 2), minimum tillage practices (“conservation agriculture”) are preferred. Prohibition of cultivating/ploughing according to the slope or on field margins buffer strips is also preferred.

Terraces maintenance (GAEC 3) and stubble burning prohibition (GAEC 4) are characterised, instead, by a homogeneous implementation in Member States. For crop rotation (GAEC5), included in “retaining organic matter” issue, four different approaches have been used: continuous cropping, crop diversification, soil analysis and remedies, compulsory cover crops.

In order to maintain soil structure, appropriate machinery use (GAEC 6) includes two options: avoiding soil compaction by adequate use and avoiding soil cultivation on flooded or snow covered land.

As for the issue “avoiding the deterioration of habitats”, retention of landscape features (GAEC 7) reported in Annex III Reg. (EC) No. 73/2009 (hedges, ponds, ditches trees in line, in group or isolated and field margins) represents a level to which Member States can set the choosing criteria and be more detailed according to the territorial features. For this reason, in Member States it can be also prohibited to remove natural vegetal constraints, fences, tree lines as barriers, stone structures and natural architecture structures, riparian galleries on agricultural land. Hedges can be removed only in case of recultivation.

As for avoiding the encroachment of unwanted vegetation (GAEC 8), in some cases, a Member State can set the maximum allowed percentage for shrubs and weeds or the maximum height (e.g. maximum 1,5m) identifying the application field (e.g. set-aside land), the related exceptions (agri-environmental measure, “buffer zones” etc.) as well as the way and the time period for removing the species in question (e.g. Oats).

The protection of permanent pasture (GAEC 9) shall be developed by Member States in specific quality obligations for farmers as referred to in Art. 6 of Reg. (EC) No. 73/2009. At European level, there are four main approaches: frequency and minimum grazing time period, removing unwanted bushes, prohibition of ploughing and prohibition of removing specific high value pastures.

The minimum/adequate livestock stocking rates (GAEC 10) have been defined by Member States in order to prevent overgrazing or, alternatively, forcing farmers to ensure a definite grazing frequency or mowing, starting from a specific time: the decision on which of the two approaches is more suitable falls to the farmer.

The prohibition of the grubbing up of olive trees (GAEC 12) may depend on the age (e.g. > 100 year), on the area (e.g. areas at risk of land abandonment) or on the authorisation needed for such action. As for the maintenance of olive groves and vines in good vegetative condition (GAEC 13), the obligations shall differ from those related to unwanted vegetation or to the minimum soil cover. Olives pruning frequency shall also be defined (e.g. at least every 5 years), as well as bushes removal procedures in vines (e.g. mowing by July 30<sup>th</sup>).

The different implementation definitions show how important is to convey to each standard specific features, as different standards can also apply to the same issue.

The Italian experience showed the difficulties related to laying down the ministerial decree which regulates cross compliance as a consequence of the Health Check (MD No 30125/2009). In particular, the exchange of ideas with experts from the 21 Italian Regions allowed the modifications to the applicability and to the new prescriptions for farmers to be accepted, thus reshaping the GAEC framework on the basis of Annex III of the Reg. (EC) No 73/09 and ensuring a good harmonisation according to the 21 Regional implementation resolutions.

The 5 issues related to soil erosion, organic matter, soil structure, habitat and water protection, have been translated into 13 specific GAEC requirements (plus the 14th issue on buffer strips which shall apply starting from 2012) that the farmers needs to comply with in order to ensure high standards of environment and territory protection, of public health and agricultural landscape protection.

Furthermore, the MD has introduced for the first time - besides detailed SMRs and GAEC standards that, in the past, were exclusively referred to the Circular letters of the Paying agencies - also reductions calculation criteria and non-compliance exclusions related to direct payments and Rural Development Programs beneficiaries.

Holland's speech stressed how the surveillance role in Member States played by the Commission can effectively contribute to the full implementation of cross compliance standards.

In particular, following the 2007 audit, which pointed out the gap related to the implementation of 6 GAEC standards - while the obligations related to stubble management and retention of landscape features are considered too strict -, an adjustment of the obligations framework has been made, thus preventing farmers from further administrative burdens. As referred to Art. 22 of Reg. (EC) No 73/09, control procedures have been simplified, bringing the 3 competent Authorities to a single farm visit.

The Czech Republic pointed out, in particular, how the specific implementation of GAEC 1 and 2 is contributing to reduce soil loss, increase water retention and reduce the risk of extreme events such as floods: USLE equation used for soil erosion allows quantifying the positive effects through

the Vegetation Protection Factor (Cp) identification. Soil use and type, erosion risk features, land sloping and annual precipitation patterns contribute to identify soil erosion risk maps which, if simplified and made available to farmers, can facilitate prevention activities, with reference to specific agricultural parcels concerned.

The implementation of GAEC 3 for almost 20% of the parcels down to arable crops produce effects both on soil structure and soil water management, as well as on soil organic matter: fertilising actions can be mixed, respectively, with 5% of stubble, compost, manure and leguminous crops; biogas digestate with a dry matter content of almost 13% can also be considered.

In particular, in Poland, a ministerial provision endorsed in March 2009, integrated the requirements laying down the vegetable cover obligation from December 1 to February 14 on areas with almost 40% of arable land and subject to water erosion. As for the checks, the erosion maps are characterised on the bases of 5 risk class, focusing particularly on the water protection issue; the findings from the last campaign showed the 3,78% of non-compliance to the obligation.

The Irish experience, as for the issue on maintaining soil organic matter, pointed out how continuous cropping represents a strong risk factor; three core activities to be carried out by farmers have been identified:

- soil sampling and analysis at least every 10 years; drafting a Soil Organic Matter Report including parcel, soil organic matter level and sampling date;
- if the level is under 3,4%, Farm Advisory Services shall be contacted in order to define specific adjustment actions;
- keeping a soil organic matter levels register for the GAEC, for an adequate monitoring action.

The Soil Service of Belgium speech was concerned on crop rotation and cover crops contribution to the implementation of good agricultural practices. Such vegetable covers help protecting soil against erosion due to water and wind action, inhibiting weed growth, facilitating nematodes management, fostering nitrates immobilization and release as well as improving soil structure.

As for nitrates, cover crops make more difficult the leaching of nutrients due to rainfall in autumn, releasing them in time for increasing the next crop; nitrogen removal depends directly on biomass crop which needs to be cultivated as soon as possible, ensuring a high humidity level as to improve soil mineralization.

Ensuring a good level of organic matter also produces positive effects on land management: it increases soil structure and water retention, reduces soil erosion and represents an important source of nutrients.

Choosing adequate crop rotation practices, together with cover crops, effectively contributes retaining organic matter in soil, thus meeting one of the fundamental cross compliance requirements of GAEC.

The National Rural Network, together with AGEA and the technical support of SIN and Telaer, presented the feasibility test findings, thus allowing the Cross compliance obligations monitoring thanks to the new technologies and the satellite/aerial remote sensing data. The experimental researches carried out under the JRC cooperation protocol and supervised by DG AGRI, were aimed at identifying high benefits/costs relationship instrument: soil erosion protection, retention

of organic matter level in soil, soil structure protection, retention of the traditional agri-environment and semi-natural habitats.

Italy presented new methodologies and the first results of the experimental research, providing answers for the following GAEC standards:

1. control of the minimum soil cover over winter, through radar data (GAEC standard 1.2);
2. retention of landscape features, through radar data and Surface Digital Models (GAEC standard 4.4) – identifying areas of competence, risk analysis;
3. identifying, on agri-territorial basis, the implementation of “buffer strips to improve the quality of water resources” (GAEC standard 5.2) at national level, through multi-source GIS and existing data.
4. applicability levels of the different very high resolution optical remote sensing, in particular for terraced areas, landscape features and good management of permanent crops.

All activities will be extended to significant administrative testing areas, in order to carry out all the cartographic and thematic accuracy analysis needed, thus comparing costs with benefits that would come in case activities were extended at national level.

### BOX 1

#### Ideas for a GAEC Best Practices exercise

12 Thematic Working Groups (nearly 15 participants) aimed at discussing on agricultural practices and identifying baseline requirements and shared positions for each GAEC.

#### Soil erosion

1) During winter the arable land shall be left un-worked after harvesting on at least 20% of the farm total arable land.

2) Ban of growing wide row plants (e.g. maize, potatoes, sunflower, sugar beet ) on more than 7 degree sloping land (suggestion: dividing (big) large parcels to smaller with regard to the slope).

3) In absence of vegetable cover during winter, the soil needs to be ploughed and roughly cultivated. Fine soil cultivation shall not be carried out.

4) From December to the end of February, all the arable land (independently on the slope) should not stay without vegetable cover.

Derogation: when the farmer prepares the land for the next crop the ploughing is admitted.

5) Permanent soil cover all the year for land which is not cultivated.

6) Deep furrows (every 80 m. transversal of maximum slope).

#### Terraces

1) Terraces must not to be removed.

#### Prohibition of grubbing up of olive trees

1) The authority shall verify that the grubbing up does not refer to the "ancient" trees.

Identification and geo-reference of every single "ancient" olive tree and identification of the areas (> 100 m<sup>2</sup>).

Definition of "ancient" olive trees:

- declaration by the farmer with the aid application;
- taken from olive cadastre
- trunk diameter (but sometimes a large diameter does not mean older age)
- trunk sample analysis

Definition of "ancient": diameter taken at a certain height from the basis of the tree (matrix shall be elaborated), depending also on variety and cultivar.

#### Landscape features

1) Define landscape features on the basis of biological/ecological functions; historical/physical issues.

(Passive) retain features shall be under cross compliance, (active) management shall be under rural development.

2) Landscape features identified and maintained;

- stones (little walls), rocks (protected by the national law and mapped);
- isolated trees (species) (protected by the national law and mapped);
- hedges;
- trees in line or in group
- landscape relief
- ditches
- large bushes.



### Maintenance of olive groves and vines in good vegetative conditions

- 1) Pruning every three years both for olive trees and vines.
- 2) Cut of vegetation between lines every year (in spring and summer) (*proposal not agreed by the whole group*)

### Protection of permanent pasture

- 1) Semi-natural pasture shall be distinguished from the permanent pasture; natural pasture is seeded at least every 15 years with local native seeds. This pasture needs an intervention to increase the density in order to come back to a "natural" condition.
- 2) Applying farming practices with the aim of maintaining the productive capacity of the pasture and the level of organic matter, in coherence with minimum stocking density (e.g. ploughed fallow land, irrigation with low energy consumption, use of farm manure according to the organic matter level).

### Avoiding encroachment

- 1) Mowing requirement is under RDP so it shall not fall within CC as it would stop RD funding.
- 2) Need to define what "unwanted vegetation" means, specifically for each MS.
- 3) Where vegetation is unwanted in some places, it may be wanted somewhere else, for example to prevent erosion.
- 4) Need to differentiate between weeds and unwanted vegetation.
- 5) Not a question of habitat protection as that is covered by other standard.
- 6) Maintain a suitable cover defined by MS.
- 7) Controlling unwanted vegetation should help choosing methods of control appropriate to land/MS (e.g. machinery or herbicides).

### Protection of permanent pasture, Minimum livestock density

- 1) Fix a limit for livestock density adequate to local conditions (value difficult to be set up at EU level)

Value varies with:

- regions, alpine areas, vegetation characteristics, rainfall level, risk of land abandonment (too low density = risk of invasion of weeds)

- 2) Establish a turnover of livestock on parcels (even if aware of the farmer daily difficulties to manage it)

### Stubble management

1) Ss already defined: no burning of stubble

### Crop rotation

1) Farmers must have the possibility to decide the kind of crop rotation (with options provided to help him)

### Machinery use

Difficult to find a rule, too many factors influence the conditions of the field

### Soil organic matter

- Since SOM varies markedly from region to region in Europe, it needs to be defined the adequate % of organic matter for a considered area.

Then, adapting practices to local conditions:

Extensive farming: permanent pastures are supposed to have at least the adequate level of OM.

Intensive farming: practices should be fixed depending on specific conditions of the region.

Examples:

- crop stubble + minimum tillage imposed in a lap of time depending on the region
- impose drainage systems
- choices regarding crop rotation economic factors must be considered if taking any decision
- provide rules more linked to crop diversification than to crop rotation

### Protection of water

1) Width in non vulnerable zones should be 50% of the one in vulnerable zones

2) Give the opportunity to buffer strips wider than minimum to be financed by RD support

3) Water bodies definition proposal: water that remains present for more than 9 months/year (no matter what size)

- 5) No ploughing within buffer zones
- 6) Keep buffer zone under GAEC
- 7) Width should depend on the shape of the agricultural parcel (elongated, squared)
- 8) Arable land and grassland with different width and/or management

## 2<sup>nd</sup> day (field visit)

### GAEC standards at work: training and discussions on case studies, analysing erosion areas and the management of a farm.

#### Standard 1.1 – erosion on sloping arable land

On the basis of the findings showed in the risk map “agricultural areas affected by erosion” created by AGEA and, of the analysis of the existing satellite/aerial remote sensing data at very high resolution – VHR, some areas have been selected for a field test, considering:

- events and agro-morphological conditions (type of crops, lito-pedology, morphometry) compared to the initial requirements
- logistic aspects and the proximity to the selected farm for the field trip to Vetralla
- to be easy accessible by the needed means of transport for 120 people

The area that meets the above mentioned requirements has been located between the highway Aurelia, the Aurelia bis towards Monteromano and the river Migone, in the city of Tarquinia – VT (please see the enclosed maps).

In order to make this phenomenon easy to be identified and understood, the most recent multispectral 4-band orthophotos of such area, produced by AGEA, have been extracted and processed ad hoc. In order to allow a better approach to the in field training, all participants to the workshop have been provided with A3 printed images of the IRFC areas (false colour).

The training activity has been carried out by the “Rural Network” technical advisers that divided the participants in two groups with nearly 50-60 people each.

After a first landscape inspection, all the steps to identify the phenomena through infrared VHR data (colour, shade, wave, pixels pattern) have been explained and shared. Such data, properly analysed by the technical advisers, allow the identification and localisation on agricultural land, through remote sensing, of the following phenomena:

- linear erosion;
- creeping erosion;
- loss of organic matter;
- avalanches and landslides.

To the visit and training, it followed a joint, benchmarking and guided analysis on:

- a comparison of sloping arable lands and the different attitudes of the territory;
- fields with drainage ditches for soil protection and their performing procedures;

- areas characterised by erosion phenomena at the end of the cycle (extreme erosion phenomena) and, consequently, the need for soil to be protected upstream, in order to prevent further and full soil losses;
- particularly sloping areas cultivated in the past but now abandoned and covered by natural vegetation; such areas become natural buffer strips, thus allowing safe cultivation in parcels located under less sloping areas.

While moving from Trarquinia to the farm La Branda in Vetralla, EU participants had also the opportunity to see a clear agro-morphological changing of landscape, moving from arable land to tree-lined pasture and ending to wide olive groves, close to the *Via Cassia*, first cultivated jointly with other trees, then in rows at regular intervals. These landscape changing (lithosols, morphology, pluviometry) observed in a range of nearly 40 km have been adequately explained to the participants.



1- AGEA orthophoto IRFC 50cm, 2008

Mignone river

via Aurelia

## Visit to the Biological agritouristic farm “Podere La Branda” – Vetralla (Viterbo)

Here follows a summary of the main features identified during the guided visit to the farm and the technical steps developed in 5 different points.

**Point 1- well** near to the farm and upstream irrigated areas: participants have been provided with a detailed description of the type of that volcanic table (almost always fractured and, for this reason, deep and with a low capacity level), of water availability and annual precipitation periods, starting from coastal area to the volcanic hill preventing Atlantic disturbances; description of the provincial legislation and the need (as no legislation has been provided yet) for a periodic checking on water extractions and the related levels of cones of depression in water tables; the importance of drip irrigation to protect water resources.

**Point 2-** visit and description of the downstream olive grove cultivated in rows at regular intervals, green covered, pot-shaped pruned and drip-irrigated, compared to the olive grove after the hedge cultivated instead in rows at irregular intervals, older and weed-covered. Thanks to the natural colour orthophoto produced by AGEA, it has been also pointed out how it can be identified the regularity, green cover and pruning (clear centre) conditions of the species of trees, directly through video photo interpretation; joint assessment of the little slope left with natural vegetation for biodiversity protection (plants and animal life) and soil protection.

**Point 3-** photo interpretative description and analysis of natural areas, hedges, trees in group and wooded areas; discussion on opportunities and success of the afforestation regional legislation n. 2080/78; maintenance of rare and typical trees: the “sorbo”; description of the soil and the surface volcanic lithotype (leucite with “bird’s eye” pattern oxidation phenomenon)

**Point 4-** joint observation of a parcel, that only recently become part of the farm, where it stands a mixed cultivar and mixed cover olive grove with grassland or possible arable land that still has to meet the farm standards; joint observation for identifying and positioning, through photo interpretation, also on natural colour VHR, olive groves and all the other fruit trees characterised by distinct phytomorphological features.

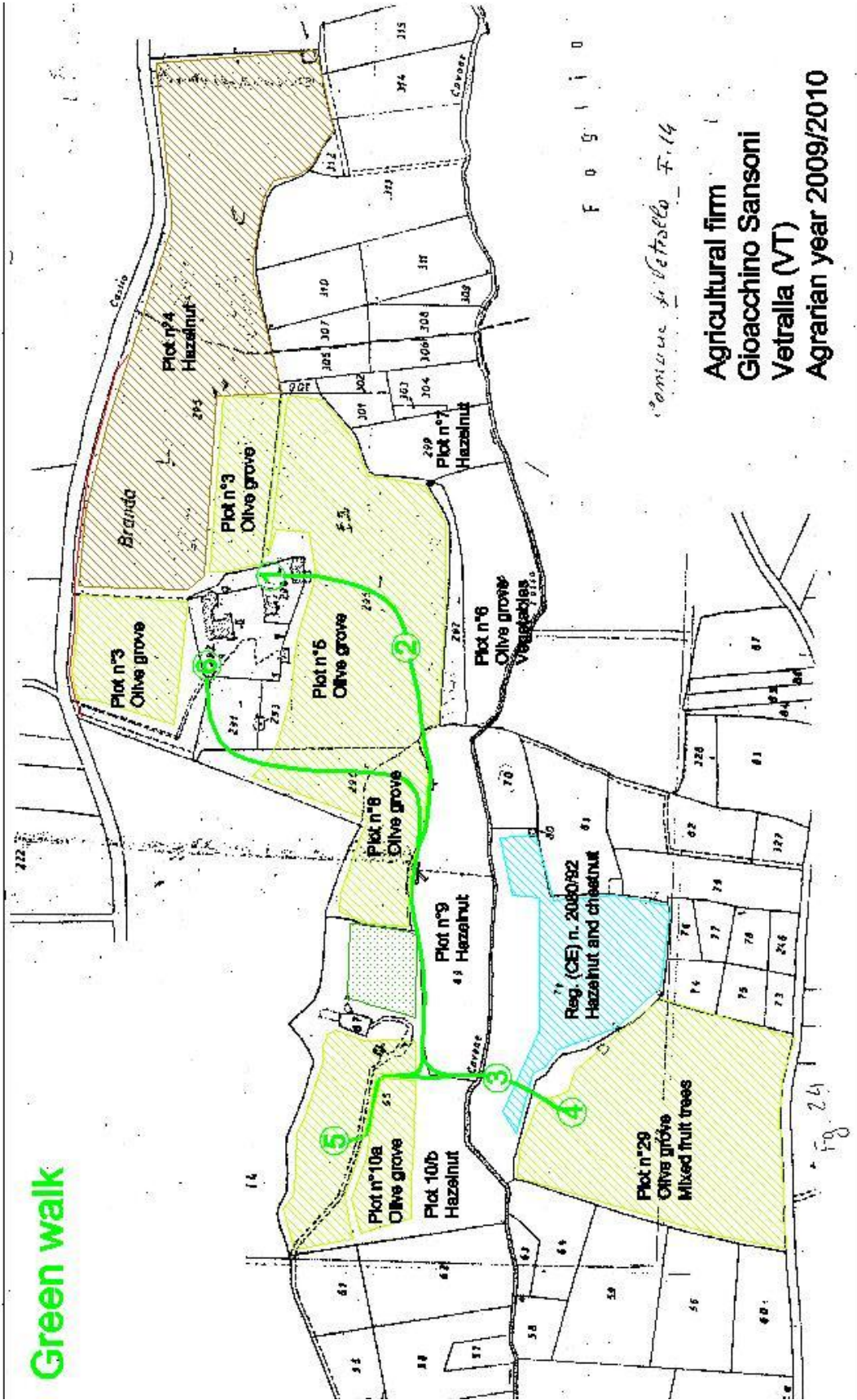
**Point 5-** observation of some monumental trees (holm-oak and downey oak) of probably around 400 years of age; such trees, characterised by a large trunk but often by a reduced crown, can not be seen by photo interpretation; need for a geo-referenced census and related GPS relieves.



Podere la Branda  
AGEA orthophoto 50cm  
Visible, 2008



Green walk



Agricultural firm  
Gioacchino Sansoni  
Vetralla (VT)  
Agrarian year 2009/2010

### 3<sup>rd</sup> day

#### Good practices on cross compliance implementation and synergies with the rural development

DGAgri D3 speech on post-Health Check cross compliance baselines impact on rural development, identified, first of all, what's new on the legislative framework: in particular, starting from 2010, the introduction of the optional standard on the retention of habitats and the compulsory standard on the respect of authorisation procedures for collecting water for irrigation. However, as for the new standard on the introduction of buffer strips along rivers (starting at the latest in 2012), the Member State shall define what a buffer strip is and to which river it shall be applied, in relation to the specific territorial features and subject to fertilisers requirements under the "nitrates directive".

In that sense, it is important to underline both the role played by Member States for identifying landscape features standards and the need to implement the synergy between SMRs and GAEC standards.

Another important point refers to the optional standards that become compulsory when Member States had already defined the related minimum requirements before 2009 or they applied, in any case and with national provisions, the related obligations before that period. A complete update of the GAEC national legislation is also required in case the related requirements would no longer be applied, in particular set-aside land.

Cross compliance impact on rural development reflects particularly on agri-environmental measures: when the standard changes, it is necessary to always control such measures and update the baselines, adapting them to the to the new cross compliance obligations. This core aspect strongly influences farmers to comply with RDPs measures under axis 2.

The National Rural Network introduced the "Report on cross compliance implementation in Italy", an in-depth examination of cross compliance requirements implementation in the period 2005-2009; the report stressed the effectiveness of the single agronomic obligations, thanks to the experimental researches carried out by the CRA, as well as the impact on farms.

As to the "economic weight" of cross compliance, in the I pillar, the total amount of payment entitlements in Italy is equal to nearly 3,8 billion € while, in rural development, several RDPs axis II surface measures are involved in cc implementation for a total amount equal to more than 6,2 billion € of the total public expenditure for the whole programming period.

As to controls, the data analysis related to the period 2005-2008 showed, in the last two years, an increasing non-respect of the obligations that turns out to be proportional to the progressive entry into force of the new cross compliance requirements and to the increasing total number of farmers eligible for CAP direct payments.

The EFFICOND project scientific experimental researches findings allow to express an opinion on the standard effectiveness compared to the agronomic and environmental objective to which the standards were addressed (please see BOX 2).

Box 2 Implementation of Regulation before the Health Check					
GAEC Standards		Effectiveness of Standards vs. Issues			
		Issue 1 Soil erosion	Issue 2 Soil organic matter	Issue 3 Soil structure	Issue 4 Minimum level of habitat maintenance
standard 1.1	Temporary runoff control measures in sloping land ( temporary drainage ditches across the slope or alternate grass strips)	High			
standard 3.1a	Protection of soil structure through efficient drainage of surface water. (Shaping the surface of fields convex to avoid waterlogging. Maintenance in good efficiency of the farm network of permanent channels) letter a			High	
standard 4.4b	Retention of characteristic landscape features (Retain stonewall terraces and earth terraces. Prohibition of unauthorized land levelling), letter b	Low			Low
standard 4.2a	Rational management of Set-aside (Ensure the presence of grass cover throughout the year on set aside) letter a	High			High
standard 4.4a	Retention of characteristic landscape features ( Retain stonewall terraces and earth terraces) letter a	High			High
standard 2.1	Management of stubble and crop residues ( Prohibition of burning of stubble and crop residues)		Low		
standard 2.2	Crop rotation		Low		
standard 3.1b	Soil structure protection through appropriate machinery use (Ploughing in good soil moisture conditions.) letter b			High	
standard 4.1a, b	Protection of permanent pasture (Prohibition to reduce the area of pasture) letter a Prohibition to convert pasture to other land use) letter b				High
standard 4.1c	Protection of permanent pasture (Optimal livestock Units per ha. Min. and Max. values allowed) letter c				High
standard 4.2b	Rational management of Set-aside (weed control through mowing) letter b				Low
standard 4.3b	Maintenance of olive groves in good vegetative condition (Frequency of pruning. Frequency of cleaning the soil from brambles and shrubs ), letter b				High
standard 4.4c d	Retention of characteristic landscape features (landscape protection) letter c - d				High

In terms of farm impact, within the GAECs standards, the most complex requirements farmers must comply with appear to be those related to prevent soil erosion through temporary drainage ditches, mowing set-aside land, and through maintaining olive groves in good vegetative condition. It turns out to be less complex, instead, to comply with the following standards: the retention (not the removing) of landscape features included the retention of terraces and the prohibition of continuous cropping.

With regard to sharing knowledge and spreading information aimed at supporting farmers to comply with cross compliance obligations and, in particular, with the more complex SMRs standards, the survey reveals how important is the role played by advisory services (public/private) compared to the less important role played by “passive” information acquisition channels (e.g. the press).

The Institute for European Environmental Policies stressed how the use of GAEC standards is particularly different depending on the Member State; this aspect underlines the need for a more precise definition of public good features according to the different national contexts (e.g. buffer strips in Austria: 10 m from standing water, 5 m from rivers), thus leading to potential remarkable environmental benefits on a wide area of the European agricultural landscape.

It is also important to keep a percentage of “structural elements”, i.e. minimum areas to be taken up by arable land or pasture, in each type of farm (e.g. France: 1% of the farm land in 2010, 3% in 2011, 5% in 2012).

Communication campaigns as the “Campaign for the Farmed Environment” (UK) helps farmers understand the good practices positive effects; such campaign aims at spreading information on biodiversity increase due to the uncontrolled land management and at encouraging farmers to comply with voluntary agro-environmental schemes.

As for the effectiveness and measurability, it is necessary to fill the gap regarding the obligation of monitoring and assessing the implementation of such activities in the wider context of the environmental role that agriculture is now playing.

Veneto Region stressed the relation existing<sup>1</sup> between soil cultivation and climate changes (also mentioning the findings from the European project “*Sustainable Agriculture and Soil Conservation - SoCo*), in particular, the direct link between conservation agriculture practices and captured carbon percentages: these actions allow enhancing soil protection and fertility and mitigating climate changes effects through a more efficient stocking of CO<sub>2</sub> in soil.

A full GAEC implementation has negative effects on water erosion capacity, particularly due to minimum tillage practices, cover crops, grass buffer strips retention and crop rotation; crop rotation has positive impacts on both the organic matter level and soil compaction.

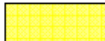
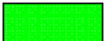
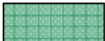
The introduction of conservation agriculture practices in the framework of Veneto RDP agri-environmental measures (sub-measure 214i – action 1) is justified by further positive effects on the land features, as showed in the studies carried out by the European Commission (JRC-IPTS).

Here follows a summary of the above mentioned studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Commission Staff Working document “*The role of European agriculture in climate change mitigation*” (23 July 2009).

	Environmental						Eco- nomic
	Water erosion	Organic matter decline	Com-paction	Water quality	GHG emis-sions	Bio-diversity	
No- or reduced tillage	-/+	+	+	-/+	-/+	[+]	-/+
Cover crops	+	+	+	+	+	[+]	+
Crop rotation	+	+	+	+	(+)	+	+
Buffers	+	+	+	+		+	-/+
Agro-forestry	+	(+)		+	+	+	-/+

 GAEC; 
  RDP – AEM; 
  RDP - Agroforestry

By S.H. Gay and G. Louwagie (EC - JRC)

In addition, such practices help strengthening the effectiveness of SMRs A3 (use of sewage sludge), A4 (nitrates from agricultural sources) and B9 (use of plant protection product), imposing requirements stricter than those related to cross compliance.

In the COPA COGECA report it has been pointed out how important is to comply with cross compliance requirements in order to ensure safe food production through eco-sustainable agricultural practices.

The different implementation of cross compliance standards in Member States, together with the difficulty to combine non-remunerative land management with environmental protection principles (e.g. intensive/extensive land use), makes cross compliance an instrument that needs “sustainable” implementation procedures for European farms.

A significant example is that of the implementation of buffer strips along rivers: buffer strip width and the starting point from the river differ according to the Member State where the standard is applied; a requirements control system is also important to ensure a full implementation and, as a consequence, equal treatments for farmers.

With a view to the post-2013, it is important to ensure the balance between the costs incurred to meet cross compliance requirements and the European farmers’ production capacity as well as to increase the standards flexibility level and provide a mechanism that can ensure incentives for farmers providing goods and services.

In the end, the National Council of Doctors of Agronomy and Doctors of Forestry (CONAF) outlined the outlooks for advisory services supporting farms, thus ensuring the respect of cross compliance obligations and improving farm global performances.

In this respect, the Advisory bodies provided with resources, technical facilities and experience, in compliance with Reg. (EC) No 1974/06, shall be able to integrate the complex regulatory framework with the territorial features through management capacity and farm organization.

The general delay, in terms of costs incurred, as for the implementation of RDP measure 114 (“Use of advisory services”) shall boost the spreading of information on such support instrument as well

as the advisory system harmonisation, including also professional figures that can establish a relationship of trust with the farmer.

In addition, as this service is considered particularly useful, it is important for the advisory system to participate in the working tables with the Public administration, in order to identify the critical issues related to the implementation procedures and the most effective way to ensure a concrete support both in terms of cross compliance obligations and with a view to an integrated sustainable development of the whole farm system.

## The media profile

The GAEC workshop has developed into two different phases: on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2010, 121 cross compliance experts took part in the working sessions; there were participants from the European Commission, from Italy and from the other Member States.

The participation in the working session of October 8<sup>th</sup> has been extended to all the people interested in the subjects covered, particularly in rural development and in the future outlooks with a view to the post-2013: 101 more participants joined the international audience, thus raising to 222 the total number of participants.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> day working session could be accessed live streaming on the National Rural Network website – under Cross compliance section (<http://www.reterurale.it/condizionalita>), for a total number of 353 connections to the webpage.

Moreover, to support the Workshop organization and the related spreading of information, a successful press campaign was carried out: 9 press releases and 10 in-depth articles were published on newspapers at regional and national level.



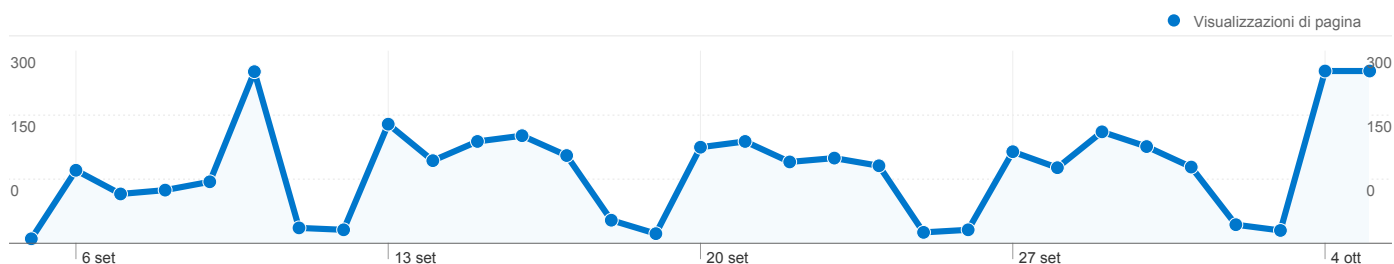
Here follow some pictures of the GAEC Workshop 2010 working sessions.











## 80 Titoli pagine sono stati visualizzati 3.540 volte in totale

Filtrato per Titoli pagine contenente "condizionalità"

### Rendimento contenuti

Visualizzazioni di pagina	Visualizzazioni di pagina uniche	Tempo medio sulla pagina	Frequenza di rimbalzo	% uscita	Indice \$	
<b>3.540</b> % del totale del sito: 3,37%	<b>2.462</b> % del totale del sito: 3,52%	<b>00:01:20</b> Media sito: 00:01:13 (8,65%)	<b>61,43%</b> Media sito: 42,88% (43,26%)	<b>26,81%</b> Media sito: 20,06% (33,61%)	<b>US\$ 0,00</b> Media sito: US\$ 0,00 (0,00%)	
Titolo pagina	Visualizzazioni di pagina	Visualizzazioni di pagina uniche	Tempo medio sulla pagina	Frequenza di rimbalzo	% uscita	Indice \$
Rete Rurale - Workshop sulla Condizionalità 2010	<b>1.325</b>	958	00:01:13	51,61%	21,96%	US\$ 0,00
Rete Rurale - Ambiente - Workshop condizionalità 2010	<b>604</b>	361	00:01:39	46,67%	32,78%	US\$ 0,00
Rete Rurale - Ambiente - Condizionalità	<b>342</b>	223	00:00:47	28,57%	19,01%	US\$ 0,00
Rete Rurale - Normativa - Condizionalità	<b>265</b>	181	00:02:04	67,20%	44,91%	US\$ 0,00
Rete Rurale - Piano di comunicazione condizionalità	<b>208</b>	107	00:01:12	40,00%	13,46%	US\$ 0,00
Rete Rurale - CD Condizionalità	<b>134</b>	118	00:01:57	97,47%	65,67%	US\$ 0,00

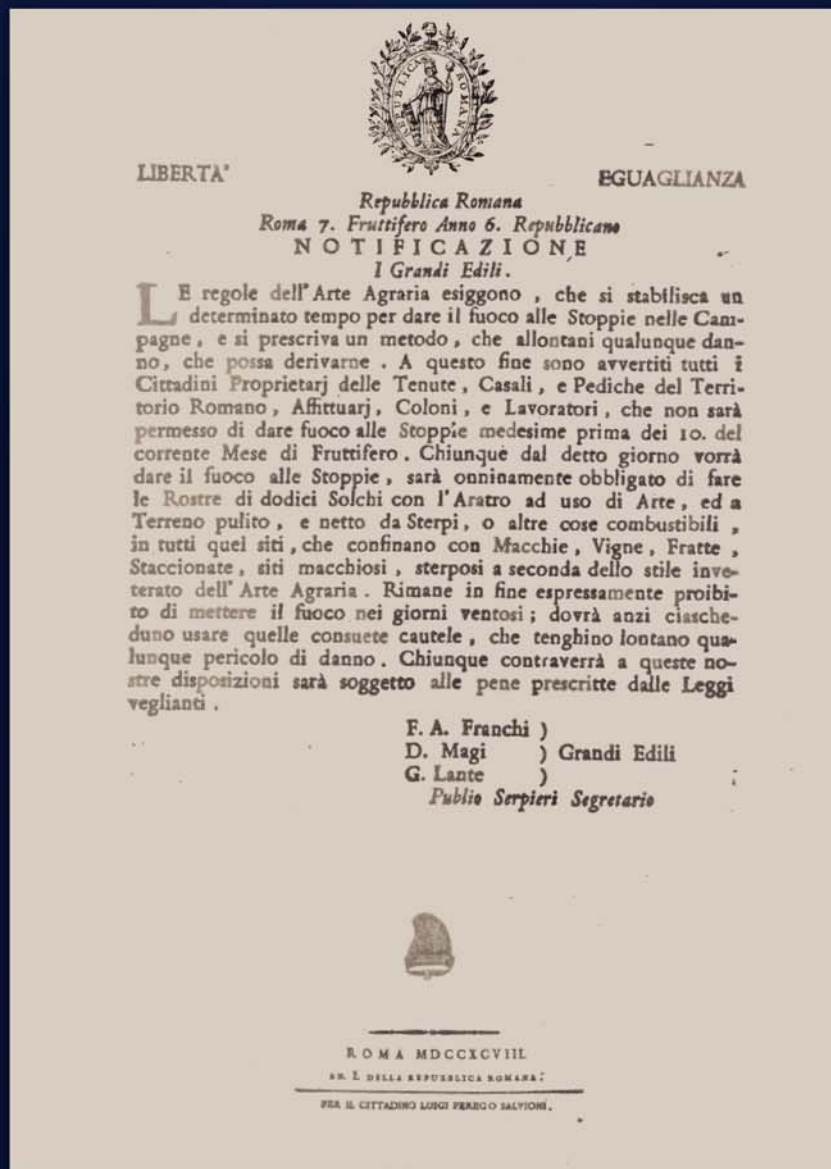
1 - 6 di 80



# Workshop GAEC 2010

## 6-8 October 2010

### Rome



FREEDOM

EQUALITY

### Roman Republic Stubble burning law

The rules of the Agrarian Art require a specific period of time to be set up for stubble burning in the rural areas, establishing a method aimed at preventing any possible damage due to stubble burning.

For this purpose, Roman territory landowners and farmhouses owners, tenants, settlers and workers are warned that stubble burning will not be allowed before the 10th of this Fruit-bearing month (August 28th).

From that day, anyone who intends to burn the stubble will be expressly obliged to plough twelve furrows appropriately where lands are not covered with shrubs or similar burning things, on all those sites bordering on shrublands, vineyards, thickets, according to the consolidated Agrarian Art style. In the end, it shall continue to be prohibited to burn the stubble on windy days; everyone shall indeed exercise caution in order to prevent any danger of serious damage.

Anyone who will not comply with our provisions will be subject to punishment pursuant to the law in force.



PIANO STRATEGICO DELLO SVILUPPO RURALE  
**L'AGRICOLTURA A BENEFICIO DI TUTTI**

**RETE RURALE NAZIONALE 2007-2013**  
Ministero delle politiche agricole alimentari e forestali

Dipartimento delle politiche competitive del mondo rurale e della qualità  
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