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NEWSLETTER FOR THE ENRD March 2009



## Fighting against climate change

Climate change is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world today, with average global surface temperatures having increased by 0.76°C since 1850. In the context of the recent United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference in Poznań (Poland) in December 2008 and the recent EU climate policy proposals, this issue of Rur@ News focuses on the link between climate change on the one hand, and rural development and agriculture on the other.

Agriculture faces the dual challenges of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, while at the same time adapting to the possible impacts of climate change. (See THE NEED TO KNOW on p.2.). On 28 January, the European Commission set out its proposals for a new global agreement to tackle climate change and how it could be financed. The new pact is due to be concluded at the Copenhagen UN climate conference in December 2009. According to these proposals, under the Copenhagen agreement, all developing countries, except least developed countries, should commit to adopting low-carbon development strategies by the end of 2011. In particular, the agricultural sector is named one of the sectors where countries should adopt mitigation actions.

Indeed, according to the background report, agriculture offers a substantial mitigation potential particularly in developing countries, often through improving the productivity of the agricultural production. Such practices will need to respect local ecosystem characteristics and

water, soils, and biodiversity. They could include marginal shifting from traditional grassland based livestock production systems to landless ones, as well as improving soil management practices in croplands and grazing lands areas, as soils are an important carbon pool on Earth. Agriculture can also contribute to mitigating climate change by providing biomass for the production of renewable energy and other industrial applications.

The EU agriculture sector is already responding to the challenge of climate change with a relatively limited and declining share emissions (about 9%) that is declining. There are various farm management practices that can further reduce emissions below current levels. Varying in cost-effectiveness and practicality, such measures include optimisation of fertiliser application rates and spreading; reduced use or restoration of organic soils; and, better control of manure management through for instance using solid covers for manure lagoons, and anaerobic digestion systems.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) also has a part to play, with measures already in place such as cross-compliance<sup>(1)</sup> and decoupled

(1) This is the creation of a link between the receipt of direct payments by farmers and their compliance with certain rules which are in the interests of society as a whole. The rules concern the protection of the environment, food safety, animal health, animal welfare, public health, plant health and environmental condition. This link is expressed in concrete terms in the possibility, if the rules are not respected, of a reduction or cancellation of direct payments. In other words, if farmers do not respect these rules then they may not receive some or all of their [direct payments](#). The specification of good agricultural and environmental condition is set at the level of the member state. Cross-compliance applies to farmers who receive [direct payments](#).



European Commission



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## Climate change and agriculture

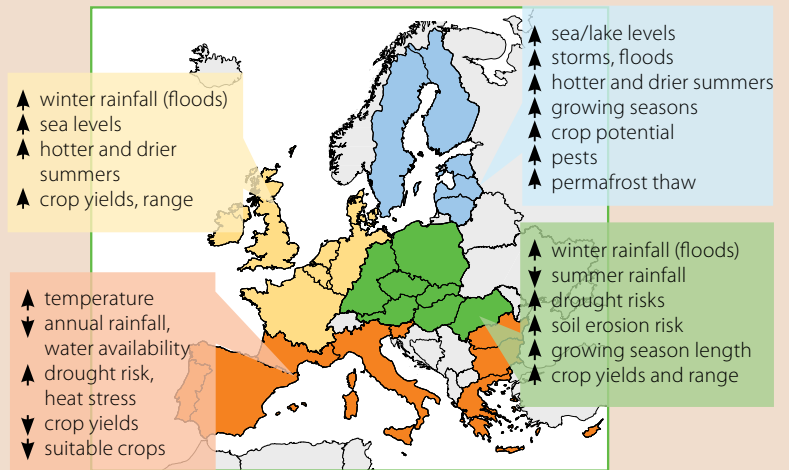
It is not necessary to be a farmer to know that agricultural activities are strongly influenced by the climate. A decrease in annual or seasonal rainfall, more heatwaves, more sudden storms and floods – all projected impacts of rising global temperatures – can significantly affect farming activities, with an increasing variability of production and food prices.

There are expected to be some 'winners' from climate change, for example from increasing yields in northern Europe. However, there will very likely be 'losers' too, in particular in low-latitude world regions, in which even small amounts of global warming will reduce crop yields and trigger higher yield variability. The expected droughts as a result of climate change would cause more difficulties for the southern European countries. Global warming is also likely to intensify the risk of forest fires and pests.

Agriculture equally has an impact on climate change, being a notable source of two greenhouse gases – methane and nitrous oxide. The EU's contribution, though, is limited and falling, with 9% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions coming from agriculture (compared with 11% in 1990). Between 1990 and 2006, agricultural emissions from EU-27 in fact fell by 20% due to declines in livestock numbers, more efficient fertiliser use and better manure management. What is more, looking to the future, emissions are projected to further decrease.

The European Commission has been preparing a White Paper on adaptation to adverse impacts of Climate Change (finalised by the end of April 2009). You can read a follow-up on this topic in forthcoming issues.

Projected impacts from climate change in different EU regions



farm support<sup>(2)</sup>. Over the coming decades, climate change will also have many implications – positive and negative – for agricultural activities, to which farmers will need to adapt. The recent reforms of the CAP have contributed towards a framework for the sustainable development of EU agriculture, and a better management of environmental resources that will be an essential part of the adaptation strategy for agriculture. Future adjustments to the CAP should work towards a policy which will take into account adaptation needs and promote farming practices which are compatible with new climate conditions.

In a more concrete way, rural development policy provides opportunities to support actions to diminish agricultural emissions, help increasing biomass potential, as well as offset adverse effects that climate change may have for farmers and rural economies. Indeed, climate change, mitigation and adaptation, is already a priority for the Rural Development Strategy 2007–13. The recent Health Check of the CAP has increased the focus on climate change as a new challenge for agriculture and rural areas, as well as management of water and biodiversity and the contribution to re-

newable energies. Further funding can be directed to relevant measures, according to the modifications to the rural development programmes that Member States have to submit during this year. Rural development funds have already been used in several ways to help address water scarcity, such as providing support for water saving actions and investment in more efficient irrigation equipment. Providing information on climate risks and workable adaptation solutions to farmers, to help them plan their activities better, can be supported by advisory services and training. The vulnerability of farmers is linked to their socio-economic situation and encouraging a culture of change is essential in sustaining their adaptive capacity.

Rural development also has a role to play in the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources. Maintaining a broad genetic resource base is essential to developing varieties more tolerant to heat and water stress. Some forest measures can also be used to address climate effects, such as preventative actions against pest outbreaks and improving the resilience of forests by adapting tree species composition.

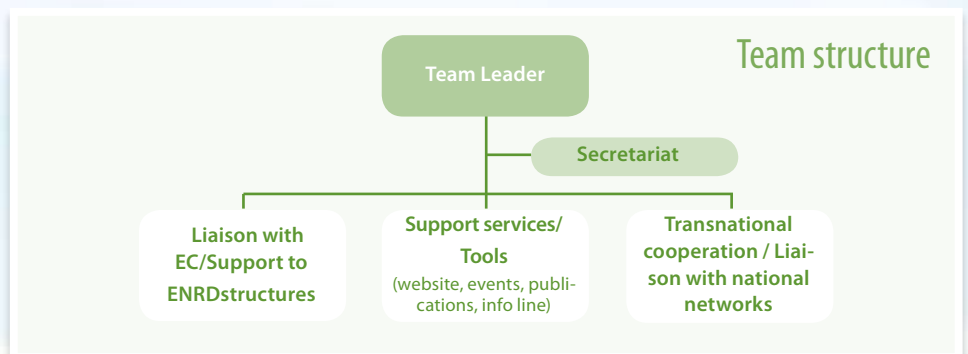
Read more about the European Commission's proposals at: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/climate\\_change/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/climate_change/index_en.htm).

## ENRD Contact Point: in detail

As discussed in Issue 1 of Rur@l News, the Contact Point team, based in Brussels (Belgium), is composed of specialists in agriculture and rural development, together with communication experts, event coordinators and administrative personnel who coordinate the ENRD. Added to this is a pool of experts on whom the Contact Point can call, for example, for the thematic groups, and for more specific tasks linked to services such as seminars or publications.

With a team of around 21, the work of the Contact Point is organised around three groups, each with allocated responsibility for the seven services and three core tools (ENRD website and thematic exchange facility, seminars and conferences, and publications). The overall team structure is shown in the figure.

(2) Decoupling, introduced by the 2003 reform of the [common agricultural policy](#), is the removal of the link between direct payments and production. In principle, when farmers now decide what to produce they do not take into account the level of direct payments that they receive, since these are no longer coupled to a particular crop or animal. The overall effect of decoupling is to move the agricultural sector more towards the free market and gives farmers greater freedom to produce according to market demand.



## Taking a deeper look at the Contact Point services

<b>Secretariat of ENRD structures + thematic groups</b>	Providing administrative support for the coordination committee, the Leader sub-committee, the thematic working groups and expert working groups. Tasks include: mobilisation of key personnel (including selection of relevant experts according to policy area), translation, invitations, expert papers and content, minutes and evaluation of meetings.
<b>Support for transnational cooperation</b>	An Integrated European Guide for Transnational Cooperation will be based on information that has been collected and classified from the Managing Authorities, the National Rural Networks and the Local Action Groups, of the EU-27. The Contact Point will also establish structured databases that facilitate transnational cooperation (TNC) such as: developing a partner search tool and a database of TNC projects approved by the Managing Authorities.
<b>Information exchange and coordination with national networks</b>	The Contact Point will contact and survey the National Rural Networks in order to assess their information needs. In addition a series of national rural meetings are planned which will provide an opportunity to discuss identified common issues and challenges and help in the networking and 'capacity' building process.
<b>Promotion and representation</b>	The Contact Point supports and provides resources in promoting rural development policy at Member State level through participating in events, preparing content support and working with the Evaluation Network.
<b>Information line</b>	This involves answering questions, the reception of visitors and compiling and updating frequently asked questions (FAQ). Specific tasks include: development of a logged service to ensure a competent level of reply, providing a reception facility to receive visitors and a web-based FAQ.
<b>Support for analysis of programmes and monitoring indicators</b>	Analysis of monitoring indicators, an exchange of data between the stakeholders, and the analysis/summary of programme data are all important components of this activity.
<b>Good practices database</b>	This will be established through the selection of a set of common selection criteria, the creation of database of good practice, and the publication of good practice datasheets.
<b>Seminars and conferences</b>	EN RD seminars and conferences are organised in close collaboration with the European Commission to address topics which are considered to have a strategic interest and importance for the working of the EN RD and rural stakeholders. Although attendance is restricted, the results are nevertheless normally made available to the public at large.
<b>Publications</b>	Publications are provided for by this newsletter Rur@l news and the ENRD periodical, the latter of which is produced three times a year and presents a series of informative articles dealing with the aspects of rural development designed to appeal to a wide range of rural stakeholders. Other publications concern 'best practices' and thematic publications which are linked to the outputs of the thematic working groups.

One key mission of the Contact Point is to develop the ENRD website, which is planned to be online during the first 2009 quarter. At first, users will be able to access basic information, in English.

In the near future, it will contain a wealth of information and interactive features for users. These features will include a 'Who's who' containing organisations' contact details, information about individual Member States (programmes, annual reports), documents from Managing Authorities, all the print and electronic publications from the ENRD, a resource centre and library, and information on the National Rural Networks, the Leader approach and the European Evaluation Network. The Calendar will contain a directory of events and meetings which users can search for events by date and topic.

One of the key goals of the ENRD – and indeed the EU's rural development strategy – is there-

fore to bring the EU and its citizens closer together. With these aims in mind, this website includes an array of interactive features. In particular, members of the restricted My ENRD sub-site shall, for example, be able to exchange ideas, knowledge and documents through the 'Exchange' platforms and the thematic e-network, post rural development projects for which they are searching for partners and edit information on Local Action Groups.

You can find out more about the Contact Point [here](#).

### Imagine. Create. Innovate.

2009 is the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. Its goal is to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for personal, social and economic development, to disseminate good practices, stimulate education and research, and promote policy

debate and development. Indeed, referring to the current economic crisis, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture and Youth Jan Figel' said in his launch address on 8 January: "We do not know how long this crisis will last and how deep it will become. But when it is over, those who will have invested in creativity and innovation will find themselves well ahead of the pack."

Innovation is seen as key to the success of the EU Rural Development Strategy 2007–13: in particular, promoting innovation is crucial, for example, to improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector (Axis 1). Under this axis, a range of measures will target human and physical capital in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors (promoting knowledge transfer and innovation) and quality production. Axis 4, based on the Leader experience, also introduces possibilities for innovative governance through locally based, bottom-up approaches to rural development. The strategic guidelines

for the Strategy urge the agricultural and food sectors to seize the opportunities offered by new approaches, technologies and innovation to meet evolving market demand both in Europe and globally. Above all, investment in the key resource of human capital will allow rural areas and the agrifood sector to look to the future with confidence.

In addition, according to the strategic guidelines, rural development policy must help rural areas meet these objectives through such a more strategic approach to competitiveness, job creation and innovation in rural areas and improved governance in the delivery of programmes. There must be an increased focus on forward-looking investments in people, know-how and capital in the farm and forestry sectors, on new ways of delivering win-win environmental services and on creating more and better jobs through diversification, particularly for women and young people. By helping the EU's rural areas to fulfil their potential as attractive places in which to invest,

work and live, rural development policy can play its part in the sustainable development of Europe's territory.

The Year itself will be marked by a range of events, including a large conference on the contribution of the EU's funding programmes to creativity and innovation in March by Directorate-General for Education and Culture. In addition, a series of six public debates will be held on key topics relating to creativity and innovation from February, to provide a platform for reflection and exchange of ideas which can contribute to policy discussion on creativity and innovation. They will cover such issues as public sector, education, knowledge society and sustainable development. With the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development as one of the involved bodies, over the next year, Rur@l News will aim to report on any rural development events encouraging such a creative approach.

For more information on the Year of Creativity and Innovation, go to <http://create2009.europa.eu>.

If you want to inform us of your event, please send an email to [newsletter@enrd.eu](mailto:newsletter@enrd.eu).

The strategic guidelines can be found at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006D0144:EN:NOT>.



## CAP 'Health Check' is adopted

EN [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/agricult/105388.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/agricult/105388.pdf)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index_en.htm)

The CAP 'Health Check' package was adopted at the first Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 19–20 January, by qualified majority. As mentioned in Issue 1 of Rur@l News, this package makes a number of important adjustments to the CAP in order to make it more market-oriented and better able to respond to the new challenges facing agriculture. Among the measures included in the package are:

- €3 billion for new challenges facing agriculture, funded through modulation of direct payments
- further decoupling of direct payments allowing farmers to better respond to market signals
- a soft-landing for the dairy sector, where the milk quota regime will expire in 2015
- the possibility of better targeting support for farm sectors in difficulty.

Regulation: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:030:SOM:EN:HTML>

## International Green Week 2009

EN <http://www.forumgreenweek.com/>

On 15 January, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Mariann Fischer-Boel gave the opening speech at the Forum International Green Week 2009 in Berlin (Germany). In her speech, the Commissioner looked back at the achievements of 2008; in particular she referred to the CAP Health Check and reactions among German farmers. Indeed, she reiterated her confidence in the Health Check, saying that "farmers will have greater freedom to respond to signals coming from the market; we have created the right kind of safety net for farmers; and we have helped farmers to enable them to cope more easily with new challenges that may pose a threat." In addition, she cited the quality initiative, simplifying the CAP, energy and hill farming as the main action areas for DG Agriculture in 2009. Lasting 15–19 January, Green Week comprised a set of events, including the International Conference of Agriculture Ministers and the first Berlin Summit of Agriculture Ministers. This year's theme was food security.

Mrs Fischer-Boel's full speech can be found [here](#).

The ENRD was also represented by the Contact Point who made a presentation, along with the German National Rural Network, about networking activities on the national and European level. This meant referring to specific projects in order to highlight the benefits of networking to all rural stakeholders.

## Rural Development Day at the International Agricultural Show

EN [http://www.salon-agriculture.com/no\\_cache/en/home/](http://www.salon-agriculture.com/no_cache/en/home/)  
FR <http://www.salon-agriculture.com/accueil/>

The Commission was represented with its own stand at the Paris International Agricultural Show, which is organised by the French Agriculture and Fisheries Ministry every year.

During one day at the stand, the European Network for Rural Development organised the 'rural development day' presenting the activities of the EN RD and best practice examples. Rural actors from France and other EU Member States presented their transnational cooperation projects and took part in public discussions. The Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission contributed to the debate on networking in rural development together with national and regional authorities and rural actors. There was also a presentation on rural development in France together with the French Ministry of Agriculture. This occasion provided an opportunity to talk about the advantages, and hence give visitors a better understanding, of cooperation at European level.



### Climate change: global risks, challenges and decisions

EN <http://climatecongress.ku.dk/programme/>

10-12 March 2009

Copenhagen, Denmark

This congress aims to provide an overview of the existing and emerging scientific knowledge which is necessary in making the right decision about which strategies to adapt in response to climate change. This will help to ensure the sustainability of global communities both now and in the future. Two parallel sessions on 11 March will focus on the role of agriculture and of forests in mitigating climate change.

### Integrated Assessment of Agriculture and Sustainable Development (AgSAP)

EN [www.conference-agsap.org/Programme.htm](http://www.conference-agsap.org/Programme.htm)

10-12 March 2009

Egmond aan Zee, The Netherlands

This conference will have a mix of plenary and parallel sessions, with time for discussion and interaction to stimulate a lively conference and opportunity for synthesis. There will also be poster presentations and (software) demos – these will be integrated in sessions and discussions with brief introductions. Plenary sessions will, for example, look at agriculture and sustainable development, and the assessment of agricultural policy and innovation.

### Future of rural land and water in the North of England

EN [www.relu.ac.uk/events/](http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/)

12 March 2009

York, the UK

Relu will be holding this one-day seminar in partnership with the Northern Rural Network. The seminar will be of particular interest to local development agencies, rural businesses, local authorities and other public bodies and the voluntary sector, as well as academic researchers. Research and its application to rural land use policy, rural land use planning and two local case studies will be among the topics on the agenda.

### Quality policy

EN [www.mze.cz/en/Outside.aspx?ch=1&cal=40](http://www.mze.cz/en/Outside.aspx?ch=1&cal=40)

12-13 March 2009

Prague, Czech Republic

The conference is due to take place under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture Petr Gandalovic and the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Mariann Fischer Boel. The topic of the main panel and the three parallel workshops (requirements on agricultural produce and market introduction standards, EU quality and certification programmes and ecological agriculture) are based on the European Commission's Green Paper launched in October 2008. The conference will be attended by agriculture ministers of EU Member States and representatives of their departments, representatives of the EU and the Chamber of Food Industry of the Czech Republic and specialists in the field of quality of agricultural produce.

### International Leader conference in Finland

EN <http://www.maaseutu.fi/lapland>

17-19 March 2009

Lapland, Finland

The Rural Network Unit of Finland and Finnish Leader groups are organising this Leader conference, with the main target groups of the seminar being the Leader action groups and national rural networks. The aim of the meeting is to build European Leader networks, find project partners and develop transnational projects. Sessions will look at Leader's role for European countryside, remote rural areas and transnational Leader projects, and how to proceed in building transnational projects.

### ROOTS 2009

EN [http://www.rics.org/Knowledgezone/Researchandreports/roots2009\\_f\\_151008.htm](http://www.rics.org/Knowledgezone/Researchandreports/roots2009_f_151008.htm)

23-24 March 2009

Cambridge, UK

ROOTS – the RICS rural research conference organised by the British Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – will comprise a set of papers presented by representatives from industry, academia and government from around Europe and further afield. The keynote speech on 23 March will focus on scenarios for rural land management, while the rest of the day will be devoted to Institutional and agency support for the rural economy, patterns of change and the legal framework of rural land management. A global view of the social and cultural basis of rural land management and finance and investment in the rural economy will be discussed on the second day.



## WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

EU Rural Development policy 2007-13 :

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm)

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development :

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm)

The European Evaluation Network:

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/network/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/network/index_en.htm)

## RUR@L NEWS Contributions/Events

Don't forget to keep us informed by telling us about what you are doing in rural development in your area. Please send the comments to:

[newsletter@enrd.eu](mailto:newsletter@enrd.eu)

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