SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES OF HIGH NATURE VALUE FARMING IN BULGARIA: **THE WAY FORWARD**

CURRENT STATE OF HNV FARMING IN BULGARIA

HNVF PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Dominated by:

- Mixed farms (crops + livestock);
- Mixed breeding systems (grazing+ in-door);
- Family work force;
- Increasing livestock, grasslands and meadows per farm in the last 5 years;
- No change in the arable land per farm in the last 5 years;
- Long term contracts for using municipal HNV grasslands.

HNVF SOURCES OF INCOME AND MARKETING

Depending on:

- Sales of raw materials to processors and middlemen;
- Little or no diversification of farm products;
- Increasing importance of final products with value added and direct sales;
- Almost equal share of farm income from farm sales and CAP support/subsidies.

ADVICES AND INFORMATION

- No specific advisory support for HNV farms;
- Additional information is needed on how to preserve the grasslands nature value; how to increase the grassland valuable species and to maintain the balance between the nature and forage value of the grassland;
- Knowledge on the new CAP support schemes in also needed.

POLICY SUPPORT FOR HNVF

- Policies still not tailored to the needs of HNV farmers (grassland and landscape features eligibility rules and support measures);
- The most important CAP measures are: SAPS, Livestock coupled support and LFA (mountain and others);
- Payments for Natura 2000 areas measure is preferred by HNV farmers, but without monitoring on biodiversity results.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

	INFLATION INCREASE	CLIMATE CHANGE	DEPOPULATION OF RURAL AREAS
CHALLENGE	Inflation and fuel prices increase leads to significant increase of farm costs making some of the HNV farmers considering the possibility of giving up farming activities	Climate change leads to changing of the composition of HNV grasslands thus reducing their nature but also forage value	Depopulation of rural areas leads to lack of labour force and generation continuation of HNV farmland activities
OPPORTUNITY	Targeted integrated CAP support measures tailored to the needs of HNV farmers and the regional characteristics with ringfenced budget	Introduction of result based AE support for climate change mitigation and adaptation and preventing biodiversity loss of HNV grasslands	Migration wave and attractive schemes for new HNVF entrants

	CONTINUOUS CHANGES OF THE EU AND NATIONAL LEGAL BASE	LACK OF CLARITY ON THE PLANNED STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT
CHALLENGE	Continuously changing EU and national legal base brings uncertainties for future farm development	Unclarity of the future CAP support measures limits on-farm investments and development
OPPORTUNITY	Understandable and constant legal framework (no back-dating) and simplified requirements for on-farm development and investments	AKIS, Mobile advisory services for HNV farmers, Local development strategies and EIP operational groups



HNVF VISION 2030:

AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION OF HNV FARMING TAKING INTO ACCOUNT REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Farming activities and production methods reflect the specificities of the HNV farming systems: pastoralism, maintenance of the landscape and nature values, protection of natural sites and protected areas, but also HNV farmland outside the protected areas;
- Farmers (medium-size, family farms) are well informed, open to novelties providing better biodiversity conservation, using appropriate equipment, applying new technologies;
- Diversified farm products with value added, direct sales and direct contacts with final consumers;
- Stable and understandable EU and national legal framework and flexible administration at local, regional and national level.

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