

Baltoji Vokė wetlands farm

farmer Valdas Balčiūnas, 2025



10 years of transformation (2015 - 2025)



150 hectares of woody vegetation removed



Dozens of tons waste collected and removed



200 hectares of reeds are mown every winter



It is a very stressful exercise...



Cattle collapse into
beaver's tunnels
and sometimes
may even drown



Machines drown in wetlands..



Broken, then flooded the next day..



EU Life project: dozens kilometers ditches cleaned



4 ponds excavated for amphibians



7 water level regulating sluices installed



54 highlander cattle and 4 semi-wild horses purchased





Over 70 hectares fenced with permanent steel fences



Difference of late mowing and grazing:

Mowing



Grazing



Farming in wetlands overview, Lithuania

- Farmed wetlands area has not changed since year 2010 stays approximately 9.000 hectares
- State support for farming in wetlands has been decreasing over last 10 years. Although per hectare payment stays the same: 300 -400 EUR/ ha. Summative support has decreased dramatically.
- Increased land rent.
- Discontinued farming diesel allowances (since 2023).
- Increased labor costs, etc.
- No support for machines purchases, like in conventional farming.
- Discontinued pedigree cattle purchase support programme, (discontinued in 2023).
- Increased tractor, machinery prices.
- Increased bureaucracy to qualify for the CAP payments.

All these factors are making wetland farming less and less attractive every year. Projects like Baltoji Voke wetlands restoration would not work without LIFE project support.

For example Latvia has increased payments to most valued habitats farming to 600 EUR/ha since 2024. Finland's Natura 2000 grasslands support starts from 1000 EUR/ ha.

REMARKS 1

Out of all reed and biomass utilization methods beef cattle grazing remains the most nature friendly, most viable and cost effective practice. (may be not applicable in all areas)

To upscale restoration of Lithuania's 15.000 hectares of excavated and abandoned peatbogs the state needs to :

- increase support for farming in wetlands
- remove vegetation and prepare it for farming, grazing or mowing
- install water regulating sluices
- remove land rent for those farms that work for nature projects
- set farming rules for one financial period and to not change them every year

REMARKS 2

Cattle farming in wetlands and peatlands ensures:

- Effective biomass utilization and reed growth suppression
- Pouching and illegal hunting prevention
- Ellegal waste dumping prevention
- Ellegal turf digging prevention
- Prevention of illegal motorbike activities that are becoming very popular in abandoned protected areas
- Recently growing airbaloon cigarettes smuggling from Belarus prevention

Thank you! Ačiū!

