



Supporting Natural Climate Protection in Agricultural Landscapes with... ...farmed peatlands

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Farmed peatlands – what is it and why are we talking about it?

- Intact peatlands must not be converted to farming land.
- Farmed peatlands – organic soils where the water level was lowered to use them for agriculture.
- **Paludiculture** is the productive land use of wet and rewetted peatlands that preserves the peat soil and thereby minimizes CO₂ emissions and subsidence. It includes wetland-adapted crops, hay production and extensive grazing with adapted species.



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Problem and solution

Peatlands hold up to one-third of the world's soil carbon, while covering only 3-4% of its land surface, with 12% in Europe. Draining peatlands leads to soil subsidence and peat oxidation, resulting in high carbon and nitrous oxide emissions. Almost 50% of the European peatland area is degraded, and it is estimated to emit 600 Mt CO₂e per year. Drained peatlands account for only 3% of the EU's agricultural land, and rewetting them could reduce **up to 25% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture.**¹



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1. UNEP (2022). Global Peatlands Assessment – The State of the World's Peatlands: Evidence for action toward the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of peatlands. Summary for Policy Makers. Global Peatlands Initiative. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi.

Workshop:

Peatlands as natural carbon sinks. Practical implementation and requirements for CAP measures

- 9-10 September 2025, Vilnius, Lithuania.
- in cooperation with the EUKI project "Building a European Peatlands Alliance" and "Eurosite Annual Meeting".
- Messages:
 - Big scale restoration projects ongoing;
 - Need for long-term financial and political support;
 - Constant and sincere collaboration with farmers;
 - Question of land taxes and rent?
 - No support for special machinery as for conventional farming.
 - Make fair offers (to farmers) with prospects



Tips for farmers and best practice examples

- **Get support.** Changing from drained farming to undrained farming is a complex process that requires the development of a new farming and business concept.
- Aim for a **gradual, controlled rewetting** technique, as it maintains plant cover and thus reduces emissions compared to open water surfaces, which promote CH₄ production.
- Keep the **water level** consistently close to the surface (*ideally within 0–10 cm*) to prevent peat oxidation.
- Farm with **soil-protecting machinery** e.g., small and lightweight, wide tires/caterpillar tracks.
- **Extensive grazing** is possible with robust livestock, e.g., traditional cattle or water buffalo that can tolerate wet areas. Rotate frequently.



Baltoji Vokė peatland complex restoration: tip from the farmer



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VS.



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Difference of late mowing and grazing:

Mowing

Grazing



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How do Landcare(-like) associations support the transition?

- **Support farmers** with consultation, planning, help with administrative tasks, coordinating the rewetting process, and securing inclusion in decision-making to facilitate the transition.
- **Species protection, biotope network, and biotope management** (e.g., meadow birds, butterflies, vegetation, scrub clearance, meadow mowing, grazing).
- **(Bio)monitoring and hydrology** (e.g., birds, vegetation, insects, water level data, planning, supervision, waterlogging).
- **Securing land and supporting local authorities** (e.g., purchase, lease, and usage agreements, eco-accounts, compensation, recultivation).
- **Collaboration between science, industry, and practical implementation** (e.g., projects, discussions, testing in the field, product development).
- **Visitor guidance**, information, and public relations work (e.g., boardwalk, audio tour, adventure trails, TV films, books, press, radio).



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CAP recommendations

1. **Long-term support.** 7 year periods are not enough.
2. **Payments for ecosystem services.** Farmers produce not only food.
3. **Eligibility for direct payments.** Paludiculture must be formally recognized as “agricultural activity” under CAP and recognized by the agricultural administrations. This is currently only the case in Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands
4. **Support transition and investments.**
5. **Strong implementation of GAEC 2.** What is the future of it in the new period?



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FURTHER INFO



Landcare Europe workshop “**Peatlands as natural carbon sinks**” materials:

<https://www.landcare-europe.org/events>

Focus Paper on Peatlands with Paludiculture as Natural Carbon Sinks:

[https://www.landcare-europe.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Ressources/2025/Focus Paper peatlands with paludiculture FINAL.pdf](https://www.landcare-europe.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Ressources/2025/Focus_Paper_peatlands_with_paludiculture_FINAL.pdf)

Best Practice example on rewetted peatsoils:

[https://www.landcare-europe.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Pictures/Projects/EUKI/Best practice peatland LT Baisogala 241024.pdf](https://www.landcare-europe.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Pictures/Projects/EUKI/Best_practice_peatland_LT_Baisogala_241024.pdf)

Short film “Peatland climate farmer Sebastian Petri from Germany”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbG-TdGBIN0>



Thank you for your attention!

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