

EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

- Major EO policy, largest budget item (43%)

The three greening obligations are:

- Traditional compliance checks: VHR, on-the-spot

- 2018 regulation for Sentinel based monitoring

1 Crop diversification

Crop diversification is a measure to improve the resilience of agricultural systems to climate change and to reduce the risk of soil erosion and therefore also helps production capacity. In concrete terms, the rules stipulate that farms with more than 10 ha of arable land have to grow at least two crops, while at least three crops are required on farms with more than 30 ha of arable land. Furthermore, the main crop may not cover more than 75% of the arable land. Several exemptions to these rules take account of the individual situation of farmers.

2 Maintenance of permanent grassland

Permanent pasture is a very effective means of locking carbon away and thus helps to reduce global warming. Preserving environmentally sensitive grassland conserves soil carbon and protects grassland habitats. A ratio of permanent grassland to agricultural land is set by member states at national or regional level (with a 5% margin of flexibility). Moreover, farmers cannot plough or convert permanent grassland in designated sensitive areas. More than a third of EU farmland is permanent grassland subject to protection aimed in particular at carbon sequestration; a fifth of this grassland is classified as environmentally sensitive with a view to protecting biodiversity and carbon storage.

3 Ecological focus areas

Farmers with arable land exceeding 15 ha must ensure that at least 5% of their land is an ecological focus area with a view to safeguarding and improving biodiversity on farms. Ecological focus areas may include, for example, fallow land, landscape features, afforested areas, terraces, hedges/wooded strips or nitrogen fixing crops such as clover and alfalfa which help to improve soil organic matter. Hedges, trees, ponds, ditches, terraces, stone walls and other landscape features are important habitats for birds and other species and help protect biodiversity, including pollinators.



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