



## How NGOs can help farmers to get a higher price for their products

PAN Europe position paper

January 2013

In the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability the idea is to “achieve more from less”. As already explained in PAN Europe’s position paper on “[Innovation and Resource efficiency](#)” this can be done in many ways, one of which is encouraging new ways of collaboration between farmers and NGOs. Below you may read experiences of NGOs who have helped farmers in getting a fairer price for their products.

### 2.2 NGOs as the logical innovative partners to encourage diversification in the food chain

The European agricultural sector is becoming more and more standardised; raw material is becoming a standard product. The importance on how the raw material is being produced, has been set aside by the industry with no benefit to neither farmers nor society. PAN Europe believes that a paradigm change in the agricultural sector must put back production methods and origins at the centre of the debate.

Special Eurobarometer 354, November 2010 on food risks includes a survey on **Public confidence in sources of information on food safety**. The survey shows that EU citizens are the most confident in “their physician/doctor”, “family and friends”, then “consumer organisations” (76%), “scientists” (73%) and “**environmental protection groups**” (71%), while fewer have it in “farmers” (58%), while only very few have confidence in information from “food manufacturers” (35%) and “retailers” (36%).

To optimise the EU’s intervention in the internal market, there is a need to seriously consider **involving NGOs as equal partners able to help ensuring the needed diversification** in the food chain. This would highly help increasing the chances that the farmers gets a fair price for their products; meaning a price linked to the environmental and public health impacts that they delivered in producing these products relying less on pesticides.

**Below, how NGOs have been helping farmers and citizens to obtain fair prices for their products:**

#### ***Labelling initiatives involving NGOs:***

**In Sweden**, to promote organic farming, 26 national organisations - representing farmers, food processors, trade as well as consumers, environmental and animal welfare NGOs, including the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation- are united in an organisation called KRAV certifying. Across the sector around 4 000 farmers and approximately 2 000 companies processing food as well as retailers are certified. Nowadays there are more than 6 200 KRAV-certified products. Five certification bodies carry out inspections according to

KRAV standards.

<http://www.krav.se/System/Spraklankar/In-English/KRAV-/>

**Global 2000 Austria** offers environmental performance assessment and measurement approach for agricultural products and their production. This is currently being used by the Austrian retailer group REWE International, and the REWE Pro Planet label <sup>1</sup> as part of the REWE International Sustainability Program<sup>2</sup> .

The methodology includes calculating five field-level based indicators - Nitrogen-balance, Phosphor-balance, humus-balance, pesticide use and energy intensity; -four indicators based on 'material input per service unit' (MIPS), biotic and a-biotic material input, water input and land area used as well as the product carbon-footprint.

Participation and active involvement of farmers, other members of the agro-food chain and experts are secured through yearly product specific stakeholder workshops.

The indicators are calculated using data that the farms have to record either as a requirement for good-agricultural-practices EU certificates<sup>34</sup> or national subsidy programs (e.g. cross compliance). Additionally the farmers, as well as other companies along the production chain, are asked to provide supplementary information on energy and material inputs (not covered by farm-record data) and infrastructures used for the production of the product. ITC tools for data collection have been developed in corporation with GlobalGAP and farm management software providers.

The program was launched in 2010, with Austrian Strawberries being the first labelled product. Now it includes about 550 farmers and their associated traders who are participating in the program. 30 Products have been accessed from which 25 could be labelled. The products are mainly vegetables and fruits produced in Austria. Italian grapes are currently the only foreign product labelled.

### ***Collaboration between commercial partners and NGOs have also started in Portugal***

Conventional vineyards use plenty of herbicides and pesticides, including copper and sulphur. Even organic farmers still use a range of non-sustainable alternatives.

In November 2012, Quercus organised a workshop *Enterprises and Biodiversity* on sustainable wine making, inviting, among others, 5 companies, including a major exporter of Port wine, in order to present their experience on pro-biodiversity practices - only one is organic certified-, including explanations (PT) on what they do to reduce pesticides use:

<https://speakerdeck.com/empresasebiodiversidade/reducao-no-uso-de-pesticidas-e-outras-praticas-para-a-sustentabilidade>

ADVID for example is an association of wine producers who is working on functional biodiversity and has good knowledge of integrated management practices.

On the other hand, Fladgate Partnership is a quite big and very old company of Port wine, not registered in ADVID, but is doing quite well, with good practices for reducing pesticides.

Here is a video (3 minutes) in English where the CEO explains some of the alternatives

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1 [www.pro-planet.at](http://www.pro-planet.at)

2 [http://www.rewe-group.at/Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/rg\\_Homepage.aspx](http://www.rewe-group.at/Nachhaltigkeit/Nachhaltigkeit/rg_Homepage.aspx)

3 <http://www.globalgap.org>

4 <http://www.ama-marketing.at/>

techniques used, for instance cover crops to replace use of herbicides:  
<http://www.taylor.pt/en/port-wine-vineyards/sustainable-viticulture>

***Local initiatives initiated by NGOs:***

In Sweden, to reduce “food miles”, several NGOs took the initiative to establish local farmers markets, “Bondens marknad”. Nowadays, slowly, the farmers markets are coming back into the towns again; after having been sent far away for a too long time. Presently this initiative is an organization by itself with criteria deciding which kind of products are allowed to be on these markets. NGOs – not farmers – also present themselves at the markets.

***Local projects promoted by and involving NGOs:***

In 2007, a countrywide network of farmers was set up, supported by environmental protection specialists including NGOs. They observe and count plants that are sensitive to over-cultivation and/or over-fertilisation and report them to a central registry. Farmers are paid for this work and learn the effects of these cultivation methods on the plants. In 2009, Agricultural Colleges and their students joined the observation process and in 2010 the monitoring was extended to some animals too.

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/en/view\\_projects\\_en.cfm?action=detail&backfuse=jsview&postcard\\_id=4280](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm?action=detail&backfuse=jsview&postcard_id=4280)

**Appeal: this paper is meant to be dynamic, meaning if you think you have a study that we should add send us an email**

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Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe) was founded in 1987 and brings together consumer, public health, and environmental organisations and women's groups from across 19 European countries. PAN Europe is part of the global network PAN working to minimise the negative effects and replace the use of harmful pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives.