

Future Land Use in the Sava Floodplains

One of the key problems with respect to future land use in the floodplains is the decrease of agriculture and particularly the decrease of cattle grazing which will impact greatly on the landscape and biodiversity of the open floodplains. This counts in particular for the floodplains areas with a large percentage of grasslands such as Gaina, Lonsjko Polje, Zasavica and others.

The challenge to meet here is to optimize the conditions for farmers to continue farming and husbandry in order to keep the floodplains open, maintain the biodiversity and contribute to the livelihoods in the rural communities. Although the use of traditional autochthonous breeds is not required from the perspective of the management of the in-situ biodiversity it contributes to the protection of agro-biodiversity. Another important aspect of using traditional autochthonous breeds is that it opens opportunities for product branding.

The working group came up with the following recommendations:

- Focus on product branding instead of regional branding (e.g meat of Manguliza pig or Podolje cattle)
- Link with existing branding programmes (e.g the branding of products in Istria)
- Some floodplains are still inaccessible due to mine fields.
- Harmonization with EU standards and legislation in the field of food safety and hygiene is needed and requires big investments.
- Need for a national control body.
- Assess possibilities to link with eco-labeling. Croatia has a national system.
- BiH has no big open floodplain areas; the floodplains are either forested or inaccessible because of mine fields
- BiH does not have a support scheme for traditional autochthonous breeds nor has a registration system for these breeds.

Grazing in forests.

In the past the forests were common property; this is not the case anymore and the new owners and forest managers do not allow cattle grazing. This has led

to the loss of some specific biodiversity. Zutica is a positive exception but also here misunderstandings between the foresters and the farmers exist.

- Improved cooperation between the foresters and nature managers is required.
- Health regulations are also hampering forest grazing.(interference between wild boar and domesticated pigs)

How to increase the number of cattle:

Main problems are:

- Aging of the population in rural areas
- Floodplain areas used for storing floods are managed by Croatian waters.
- Property rights are still unclear in the sava countries and this hampers investments.
- The land restitution process is not finished and the process is also not clear. (concession rights)

Main threats to floodplain management

- Neglecting the role of agriculture and farming in supporting floodplain biodiversity
- Lack of sound policies to support farming
- No tradition of on the farm processing of farm products
- Depopulation of the country side
- Lack of sources to generate income for rural livelihoods