

An Introduction to Behavioural Ecology, 4th Edition

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POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Mainstreaming ecosystem services through reformed European agricultural policies

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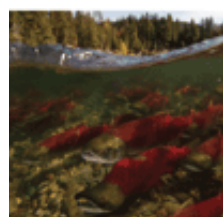
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- Abstract
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Bundles; common agricultural policy; cross-sectoral policies; human well-being; nonmarket valuation

Abstract

Agroecosystems are vital for supplying ecosystem services to human society, but most modern farming practices impact detrimentally on the environment. Public agricultural support policies have been critically important in influencing the transformation of the farm sectors; however, few of them have been dedicated to enhancing ecosystem services beyond agricultural commodities. The largest agricultural support system worldwide, the European common agricultural policy (CAP), has now come to a critical point, as major decisions concerning its design and implementation after 2013 are about to be taken. The

debate on this reform process presents a unique opportunity to trigger a transition from commodity-based subsidy policies to policies centered on efficient provision of ecosystem services from agricultural land. To prompt such discussion, we formulate key recommendations informed by a review of ecosystem services literature and address verifiable links to human well-being, nonmarket valuation for balanced services provision, treatment of ecosystem services bundles, site-specific and regionalized approaches, matching spatial scales for different ecosystem services, funding permanence for payment schemes, strong monitoring and adaptive approaches to tackling uncertainties, and coherent cross-sectoral policy design. If these issues were to be considered in formulating and implementing future CAP, it might become an exemplar for redirecting agricultural policies elsewhere in the world toward sustainability.

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