

LUXEMBURG

Biodiversity restoration, preservation & enhancement

Location

Remich

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P4 – Ecosystems
management

Measure

M10 – Agri-environment-
climate

Funding (EUR)

RDP support 6 662

Project duration

2017 – 2018

Project promoter

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www.domainekox.lu
<https://vins-cremants.lu/>

Granting a premium to support viticulture on steep slopes and terraced vineyards as a high-quality farming practice

Summary

In many areas of Luxembourg, especially along the Moselle river, winemaking is carried out on hills, steep slopes and terraces with slopes greater than 30%. A premium is provided by the RDP to maintain the vineyards in such areas as a high-quality farming practice.



The premium granted to the Domain Kox vineyards covers 9.6 ha and requires a basic level of commitment by the farmer exceeding the minimum of good agricultural practices. Additional options are on offer in order to further contribute to environmental objectives, such as anti-erosion measures, biodiversity, disuse of herbicides, etc. In this case, the winegrower is using the premium to test new ecological methods.

Results

- Increased accountability for environmental protection in relation to customers;
- A reduction in the use of synthetic products and non use of phosphates in the vines;
- Abandonment of herbicide and insecticide treatments in vineyards;
- Regeneration of soil through higher biodiversity in the vineyards.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ According to the beneficiary, the calculation of the premium in the future should be adjusted to take into account both the annual work units and the size of the farm/winery, and should be defined such as to favour small winemakers and farmers.
- ❑ The premium requires that national authorities have significant resources for programme monitoring however, according to the beneficiary, these resources would be better invested directly on the field.

Context

In numerous areas of Luxembourg, especially along the Moselle river, winemaking is carried out on hills, steep slopes or terraces with slopes greater than 30%.

This type of viticulture is very often carried out on small, family-run vineyards. For the winemakers in these areas, steep slope viticulture represents a major challenge since exploiting vines situated on hills, steep slopes or terraces demands more manual work and is therefore more costly than viticulture practised on the plains.

Located in the municipality of Remich on the left bank of the Moselle river, the Domain Kox vineyard is currently run by the son of the domain's founder. This family venture has always been renowned for its adoption of the latest technological solutions in order to bring about the highest quality vine varieties, such as Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Auxerrois or Gewürztraminer, while promoting traditional winemaking. This independent estate covers 9.6 hectares of vineyards and has a permanent team of five people. The farm produces still and sparkling wine, fruit juice and honey, and sells it through direct channels, including online sales. It also organises guided tours and wine tastings.

Objectives

The aim of the premium provided by the RDP is to maintain the agricultural practice of growing high-quality vineyards on steep slopes (more than 30%) and terraced areas.

Activities

The project would support a more environmental friendly practice for protecting the soil and the landscape.

The landscape maintenance premium in viticulture compensates for the additional work required or any loss of income. It is therefore an environmental measure encouraging winemakers to give voluntary commitments that go beyond the compulsory national basic requirements for plant protection, fertilisation and soil management. The support provides a basic level of environmental requirements that exceed the minimum of good agricultural practices and also provides additional options to further contribute to environmental objectives such as anti-erosion measures, biodiversity, disuse of herbicides, etc. The advantage of offering a measure with different options allows the winegrower to choose the

commitments according to his needs, in compliance with land requirements.

In this case, the premium covered a 9,6 ha vineyard and the winegrower, who had stopped using pesticides 25 years ago, is using the premium to test new organic production methods. The premium partly compensates for the increased workload in the steep slopes.

Main Results

There are no direct quantifiable outputs, but there are obvious results, such as:

- Increased accountability for environmental protection in relation to customers;
- A reduction in the use of synthetic products manufactured by the agro-industry;
- A complete stop of the use of phosphates in the vines;
- The abandonment of herbicide and insecticide treatments in vineyards;
- A better management of labour protection through safer and more responsible use of products (both for employers and employees in the case of this family household);
- The regeneration of soil through higher biodiversity in the vineyards.

Key lessons

According to the beneficiary, if the estate was mainly geared towards grape production, the amount of the premium would represent around 6% of the turnover. As the aid is paid per hectare and not per worker, it does not support employment but encourages the expansion of cultivated areas. By continuing to pay the premium only per hectare, this scenario will lead to a stabilisation of the price of the grapes geared by and for the benefit of grape buyers, instead of the grape producers.

During a revision phase, the calculation of the premium should be adjusted to take into account both the annual work units and the size of the farm/winery, and should be defined such as to favour small winemakers and farmers.

In addition, the premium requires national authorities to have significant resources for programme monitoring; financial resources would be better invested directly on the field.

Additional sources of information

<https://agriculture.public.lu/de/beihilfen/agrar-klima-umwelt/landschaftspflegeprämie/weinbau.html>