Equivalent practices for greening in The Netherlands

Netherlands Enterprise Agency
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Introduction

- Greening is an important issue for Dutch government
- NL has facilitated the initiatives of the agricultural sector for equivalent practices
- NL ministry of Economic Affairs has set a package of measures as equivalent to greening
- Equivalent practices deal with all greening measures and focus on ecological focus areas
## Figures Single application 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of applications</strong></td>
<td>50100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exempt from greening or only national obligation of permanent pasture</td>
<td>32.750</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Obligation crop diversification</td>
<td>14.100</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Obligation 5% EFA</td>
<td>10.720</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Obligation environmentally sensitive permanent grassland</td>
<td>3.400</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5% EFA equivalent practices for greening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Skylark</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>7.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Managed borders or in-field strips for arable land including bird fields</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Figures Single application 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5% EFA</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
<th>% of arable land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Catch crops</td>
<td>9.770</td>
<td>165.430</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Field margins</td>
<td>1.670</td>
<td>2.550</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- N-fixing crops</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>5.430</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| - short rotation coppice    | 7      | 17        | 0.02             | (willow)
Equivalent practices for greening notified by NL

For 2015:
- Managed borders or in-field strips package for arable land including Birds fields
- sustainability Certificate Skylark Foundation
- Biodiversity+label

Extra for 2016:
- sustainability Certificate Hemp
Managed borders or in-field strips package for arable land including Birds fields

Developed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs

Includes incentive conditions to promote managed strips

Special measures:
- a minimum of 30% managed borders or in-field strips of the obligatory EFA, with weighting factor 1.5, in general list of EFA 1.0
- landscape features allowed in general list (ditches excluded). In this package: Ditches in combination with riparian vegetation and bufferstrips

Goal: increase biodiversity by promoting managed strips
sustainability Certificate Skylark Foundation

Developed by Skylark Foundation, an existing sustainability certificate which is based on the principle ‘year by year one step further on the path of sustainability’
Typically for a skylark: it rises singing to great heights

Measures in the field inspired by the ‘Managed borders or in-field strips package for arable land including Birds fields’.

Special measures in the field:
• Managed borders or in-field strips with weighing factor 1.5
• Catch crops obligatory 8 weeks in stead of 10 weeks after sowing to be compensated by additional EFA
sustainability Certificate Skylark Foundation

Extra measures not to be controlled in the field and normal for Skylark participants:

• must have an annually updated externally verified sustainability plan for their farm
• must be present at 8 regional group meetings or equivalent every year
• must at least take 4 measures annually on the 10 indicators of the Skylark approach and must at least take for every indicator one measure every 4 years
• must verify for continuous improvement of their sustainability profile in an annual self assessment
sustainability Certificate hemp
Developed by the Association for flax and hemp

Vlas en Hennep.NL is the Dutch organization for the flax and hemp industry. The members are: seed producers, growers and processors of fibre flax and fibre hemp, traders.

Special measures:
- EFA only can be filled by hemp grown for sustainable uses
  With weighting factor 0.3
- contract with a processor is required
- no pesticides allowed
- no ground operations allowed between sowing and harvesting

goals: good for the soil and fauna shelter
Process to become an equivalent practice for greening

- Proposal worked out by farmers organization or Min Econ. Affairs
- Proposal assessed by Min Econ. Affairs
- Proposal potentially adapted by farmers organization
- Proposal sent to European Commission
- Proposal assessed by European Commission
- Proposal potentially adapted by farmers organization
- Equivalent practice for greening measures worked out in details
  By Farmers organization, Min Econ. Affairs, paying agency and certifying organization

- Proces of collecting sustainability opportunities and problems for developing a new package of measures that fits in the business of certain farmers
- Equivalent practice for greening implemented in Single Application
- Detailed plan ready for execution
- Detailed plan inshrined in legislation
- Equivalent practice for greening measures worked out in details
  By Farmers organization, Min Econ. Affairs, paying agency and certifying organization
Proces of control

Certifying organization (Vo. 639 art 38)

• assign certificates
• Rejects certificates

Skylark foundation

Farmer, participant Skylark

Procedure by certifying organization:
• Check on administration Skylark related to mandatory requirements;
• Check on sustainability plan: presence and application

Skylark
Schedule Manager, scheme owner

• Sets the standard: set of requirements
• Examines sustainability plan for farmers at different times
• Examines administration

Audit results mandatory requirements Skylark to RVO.nl (paying agency)

Reports the results of the field audits

Monitors compliance with the requirements of Skylark

Ministry of Economic affairs

RVO.nl
Paying agency

Control measures perform payment

Regulatory in terms of legislation
Reductions

• Proportionally
  Regular way (Vo. 640/2014 art 23-28)
  +
  • caused by extra measures
    − Managed borders or in-field strips package for arable land including Birds fields
      › 30% managed borders or in-field strips is basic. EFA is only taken into account as long as 30% is managed strips
    − Skylark
      › Specific Skylark measures (not in the field) can get at most 100 points. Less points cause a less hectares for the greening payment: 90 points = 0,9 * hectares for greening

• With lower limits
  Managed borders or in-field strips package for arable land including Birds fields
  • At least 20% managed strips
  Skylark
  • At least 3% EFA and at least 50 points for the specific Skylark measures

otherwise no certificate and no greening payment
Future expectations

Green by definition:
• having a certificate is equivalent to greening like organic farmers

Possibility to propose additions to list of equivalent practices (VO 1307/2013 art. 43.12 a)
• Experience until now: no addition is realized

From individual farmer tot regional approach.
• what can the region as a whole, contribute to sustainable farming?
• sustainability can be better achieved by working together: farmers, environmental organizations, municipalities, research
  – As a result: Sustainability can be more rewarding

Basics for Equivalent practices for greening:
• Only applicable measures that have proven effective in the practice
• Research on sustainability in agriculture produces more and more new insights:
  – how to increase the organic matter content in the soil
  – Soil life biodiversity seems to be more and more important
  – species of catch crops appears to be of great importance