Expert Group Meeting for Direct Payments
Best implementation practices for greening

Greening – Equivalent practices in Portugal

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1. Introduction

- The DP Regulation lays down the possibility of establishing practices that provide an equivalent or higher level of benefit for the climate and the environment compared to crop diversification;

- Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 - Chapter 3 - Payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment;

- Article 43 – 3(b) - National or regional environmental certification schemes;

Why an environmental certification scheme under Greening?

• Compliance with the greening practice **crop diversification** is checked in the spring/summer months - May to July - and therefore it does not allow to take into account autumn-winter crops;

• 1\textsuperscript{st} of July 2015 – PT notification to the Commission on the ISAMM form “09. Equivalent practices to greening”;

• First year of application – **2016!**
Benefits of the winter soil cover:

• Erosion control;

• Avoid water losses by run-off;

• Maintenance of soil structure, and consequently of hydraulic conductivity, in winter;

• Increase of crop residues left on the ground

Strategy to increase soil organic matter content
2. National environmental certification scheme

- Crop Diversification
- Maintenance of Permanent Grassland
- Ecological Focus Areas

- Equivalent practices to crop diversification: “Soil cover in the Autumn - Winter Soil”
- Maintenance of Permanent Grassland
- Ecological Focus Areas

Applicable to farms specialized on maize or tomatoes with more than 10 hectares of arable land
• **Voluntary scheme** for farmers;

• Agricultural holdings specialised in growing maize or tomatoes - over **75% of arable land**;

• Scheme that goes beyond the relevant mandatory standards established under Cross-Compliance;

• **Covers 1 Equivalent practices and 2 standard greening practices** - Permanent Grassland and Ecological Focus Area;

• Participation of private control and certification bodies.
Equivalent practices: Soil cover in the Autumn - Winter Soil

• Soil cover applies to the **total arable land** of the farm;

• Sowing a crop (on its own or with others):
  
  - **Gramineae** (grasses) - oats, wheat, cocksfoot, fescue, timothy, barley, poa, ryegrass, rye, triticale, *X-festulolium*;
  
  - **Brassicaceae** – oilseed rape;
  
  - **Amaranthaceae** - beet;
  
  - **Fabaceae** – broad bean and field bean, fenugreek, chickling vetch, lentils, lupins (white, blue, yellow) and yellow lupins, medicks, ribbed melilot, pea, chickpea, bean, birdsfoot, clover, vetch and peanut.
Equivalent practices: Soil cover in the Autumn - Winter Soil

- Sowing of cover crop must be carried out by **31 October** of the year of the Single Application, or up to **15 days after the harvesting of maize or tomatoes**;
- Destroying, harvesting or incorporating the cover crop allowed only from **15 March of the following year**;
- Cutting cover crops for forage is permitted, provided that this does not jeopardise the maintenance of the soil cover;
Equivalent practices: Soil cover in the Autumn - Winter Soil

- Destroying or incorporating the cover crop must be done without deep soil ploughing;

- Soil cover applies to the total arable land of the farm:
  - Exception for land lying fallow and nitrogen fixing crops - areas declared for the purpose of fulfilling the ecological focus area, provided it is ensured that there is vegetation cover in all these areas.
General Procedures:

• Farmer *celebrates contract with certification body*;

• Farmer communicates *intention* to join the environmental certification scheme on *Single Application*;

• Certification body issues a *certificate* for the environmental certification scheme;

• Paying agency proceeds to payment following its own checks and after receiving information from the certification body.
Certification Bodies:

- Private status;

- Accredited in accordance with standards NP EN ISO/IEC 17065 by the Portuguese Institute of Accreditation (IPAC);

- Recognised by the Ministry of Agriculture based on technical competence, written procedures and resources to conduct control and certification activities in compliance with greening practices.
Certificate

- The certificate is valid for 3 years;
- The certificate covers Equivalent practices as well as the 2 standard greening practices - Permanent Grassland and Ecological Focus Area;
- Validity of the certificate is subject to compliance with all obligations.
3. Checks

Certification bodies:

• Administrative checks and on-the-spot checks;

• **Administrative checks** to 100% of holdings at certification scheme - Annual;

• **On-the-spot checks:**
  • First year of joining the environmental certification scheme: **100% farms**;
  • Performed in the number of visits necessary to verify the conditions;
  • Subsequent years – **at least 33% of the farms**.
Certification bodies:

• Control all obligations under Equivalent practices;

• Control maintenance of permanent grassland [R.639/2014 and R. 809/2014];

• Control ecological focus areas [R.639/2014 and R. 809/2014].
Paying agency - IFAP:

- **Control at least 5% of all farmers** participating in the environmental certification scheme [Article 31(1)c of R. 809/2014];

- Following these checks, it informs the certification bodies of **any non-compliances detected** with regard to the greening payment;

- Applies a system of reductions and sanctions proportional and equivalent to the standard practice of crop diversification [Article 29 of R. 640/2014].
4. Reductions

In the practice equivalent to Crop diversification:

- If the difference between the area of mandatory soil cover and the area of verified soil cover is below 20% of the mandatory soil cover

  Reduction is applied corresponding to the double of the difference between the area of mandatory soil cover and the area of verified soil cover multiplied by 50%
Equivalent practices in Portugal

In the practice equivalent to Crop diversification:

- If the difference between the area of mandatory soil cover and the area of verified soil cover is greater than 20% of the mandatory soil cover, reduction corresponds to the entire area of mandatory soil cover multiplied by 50%.

- If the total area of deductions from 3 greening practices is greater than 50% of the area under greening payment, No payment.
5. Challenges

Is this the way?

Establishment of equivalent practices is an important step towards allowing holdings:

- comply with the environmental effect from greening;
- without compromising the viability of farms and food security.

However, the implementation of an equivalent practice entails a significant increase of burdens for administration.
Equivalent practices in Portugal

Near Future?

Without compromising the environmental effect on greening

Real simplification of standard greening practices

For Farmers and Administrations
Thank you!

Any questions?