



Swiss Agency for  
the Environment,  
Forests and  
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## Good Farming Practice in Central and Eastern European Countries

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### Seminar Report



A Czech landscape © Jaroslav Prazan

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# Good Farming Practice in Central and Eastern European Countries

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## Introduction

The overall theme of the seminar was the development of and future application of Good Farming Practice (GFP) requirements at national and regional level in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs). The topics covered included monitoring compliance, evaluating impacts, setting out incentives for management beyond the baseline codes of GFP, calculating penalties for non-compliance and targeting measures to benefit high nature value areas.

The meeting was organised by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) in co-operation with UNEP. It was made possible by a generous contribution from the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape, Government of Switzerland.

This note provides a summary of the various presentations and discussions. For more information, please refer to the IEEP website ([www.ieep.org.uk](http://www.ieep.org.uk)) and the UNEP website ([www.unep.ch/roe](http://www.unep.ch/roe)).

### *Session One – The European Context*

During the opening session the background to the project was described and some information on the role of Good Farming Practice (GFP) in European Union (EU) policy and legislation was provided. The link to the Pan European Biodiversity and Landscape Strategy (PEBLDS) process was described and the importance of promoting biodiversity conservation in the farmed landscape was stressed. The role that GFP plays in setting a baseline for cross-compliance conditions and for agri-environment and less favoured area (LFA) measures was also outlined.

- Ivonne Higuero<sup>1</sup> opened the meeting by presenting ‘**An introduction to the aims and context of the project**’. Ms Higuero explained how the PEBLDS initiative had recently sought to become a central element in the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in Europe. The Final Declaration of the High-level Pan-European Conference on Agriculture and Biodiversity in Paris, June 2002, recognised the importance of incorporating biodiversity concerns in the agriculture sector. The need for promotion of Good Farming Practice (GFP) was identified as a priority activity. As a result, IEEP had been invited to organise this meeting to promote GFP in CEECs, and the results of the meeting will also be taken to the Interministerial ‘Environment for Europe’ Conference in Kyiv in May 2003 at which they will be presented to an audience from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). Ms Higuero also highlighted how UNEP was keen to provide assistance to implement Biodiversity Action Plans in European countries. Funding is available for small projects that aim to promote the integration of biodiversity into agriculture. Further information can be found on the Biodiversity Service Project website ([www.strategyguide.org/bioserve.index.html](http://www.strategyguide.org/bioserve.index.html)).
- David Baldock<sup>2</sup> then presented ‘**Good Farming Practice: its role in EU policy and legislation**’. He explained that GFP is a universal concept, covering both agronomic and broader public welfare concerns, including the environment. It applies to all environmental issues, not just to biodiversity and should not be considered static, good practice evolves over time. Farmers are expected to comply with GFP without any reward or inducement. Above this ‘red line’ farmers become eligible for incentives (voluntary measures) or compensation (obligatory measures) in return for meeting society’s preference for higher standards. GFP, therefore, has an important role in providing a baseline for agri-environment schemes, enabling definition of the public goods sought by a scheme and allowing agri-environment payments to be classified as ‘green box’ payments

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP European Programme.

<sup>2</sup> Director, Institute for European Environmental Policy.

under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. GFP also has a specific meaning under CAP legislation within the EU. It is required as a baseline standard of farming practice for farmers that receive either less favoured area or agri-environment support.

As GFP is an important strand in EU rural development policy the concept has become of great interest to current or future Candidate Countries. Article 23 of the Rural Development Regulation (the 'RDR', Regulation 1257/1999) states 'agri-environmental commitments shall involve more than the application of usual good farming practice'. The Implementing Regulation (445/2002) defines usual GFP as 'the standard of farming which a reasonable farmer would follow in the region concerned' and compliance with this rule needs to be demonstrated and is subject to checking. GFP consists of: mandatory environmental legislation at European, national and regional level; other binding or semi-obligatory measures; and further elements reflecting current standards eg those promoted by advisory bodies and extension services. Codes of GFP must include 'verifiable' standards, meaning they can be checked without excessive effort or cost. Examples might include: maintaining a minimum field margin width, avoidance of overgrazing, not trimming hedgerows, maintaining buffer strips with appropriate vegetation, having adequate storage facilities for slurry<sup>3</sup> or maintaining pesticide application equipment to an appropriate standard.

It was highlighted how compliance with GFP has proved difficult to verify in practice. EU countries vary in their approach; many rely solely on binding legislation. Regional differences in codes of GFP are desirable given the range of conditions in Europe and some regional differences in approach were described. Mr Baldock concluded by stating that GFP is a dynamic concept, stressing that it is important for governments to identify a manageable number of verifiable standards that allow effective monitoring of compliance with GFP.

- Issues raised during the **discussion** included the following.
- The European Commission does not consider it acceptable to pay farmers to meet GFP standards under agri-environment schemes. When agri-environment measures were in their first phase in the EU, France developed a grassland agri-environment scheme 'Prime à L'Herbe' but it was perceived that the scheme did not require management measures sufficiently beyond GFP and France was requested to amend the scheme. There are, however, some examples of the use of rural development measures to assist farmers with meeting standards in EU Member States. The CAP Mid Term Review proposals include a new measure under the RDR for 'meeting standards' although the details of precisely how this would work are not yet available.
- Relatively ambitious nature conservation laws exist in some CEECs (especially in relation to protected areas) although they are not necessarily enforced. If this legislation were to be strictly applied within a GFP framework it could be very burdensome for certain farms. Consolidating and describing nature conservation legislation at national level can be quite difficult in certain CEECs, as laws are mainly focused on protected areas.
- Flexibility and innovation in the design of agri-environment measures should be encouraged in order to urgently address the issue of land abandonment.
- There are some EU funds available under the Technical Assistance budget that could be used by EU Candidate Countries to develop codes of GFP.

## ***Session Two – The Development of Good Farming Practice in CEECs with Examples***

During this session examples of GFP codes from Bulgaria, Poland, Estonia, Sweden, France and Wales were presented with papers outlining national or regional codes and some of the problems encountered or lessons learned during development and implementation.

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<sup>3</sup> Liquid manure.

- Harriet Bennett<sup>4</sup> briefly outlined ‘**The timetable and state of play in CEECs**’. Ms Bennett described how CEECs had had environmental legislation applying to agriculture in place for many years, although gathering this together in a GFP code was a novel activity for many. GFP baselines had had to be considered prior to implementation of agri-environment measures, which are now operational in most CEECs (eg Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia). A form of environmental conditionality has been in operation for LFA payments for many years in some countries (eg Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia). A form of GFP was required for implementation of pilot agri-environment measures funded through SAPARD<sup>5</sup> and has to be further developed in time for implementation of the RDR after accession. Draft rural development plans (RDPs) for funding under the RDR are currently under development. They are due to be agreed by national governments by December 2003 and formally presented to the European Commission in January 2004. Several of the draft sections of to RDPs covering GFP were included in the delegates’ packs.
- Vyara Stefanova<sup>6</sup> outlined the **Bulgarian approach to setting codes of GFP**. Ms Stefanova explained how a working group of stakeholders had been set up to inform the development of GFP. The codes of GFP have been based on environmental legislation, verifiable standards and additional recommended but voluntary codes for the protection of water. The focus of Bulgarian GFP is mainly on water pollution, soil fertility and designated conservation sites. Some examples of verifiable standards include the prohibition of storing or disposing of pesticides within 20 metres of a river bank, stream, lake, water reservoir or seashore; and, the prohibition of any construction of cattle sheds or manure storage within 20 metres of a river bank, stream, lake, water reservoir or seashore. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for controlling most elements of GFP, although the Ministry of Health controls sanitary issues. Additional requests from the European Commission had resulted in the inclusion of recommended stocking densities and levels of application of fertilisers specified by types and crop in the GFP codes and a table setting out the responsible controlling institution and verification method for each GFP standard.
- Anna Liro<sup>7</sup> next presented the **development of GFP in Poland**. Ms Liro explained how the relevant Polish legislation had been gathered together and acted as a statutory baseline for GFP. Details of some elements of GFP were provided, for example referring to the agricultural use of municipal sewage sludge and natural fertilisers and soil protection. Polish GFP covers a total of 30 requirements and obligations. Manure management is expected to be the most difficult issue in terms of implementation. Ms Liro estimated that only five per cent of all Polish farmers currently comply with GFP. The need for suitable reference materials to be made available to Polish farmers was highlighted.

**Figure 1 – A badly sited manure heap (next to a water course) in Poland**



<sup>4</sup> Research officer, IEEP.

<sup>5</sup> The EU Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development.

<sup>6</sup> Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Agrarian Reform.

<sup>7</sup> Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

- Eike Lepmets<sup>8</sup> next presented **GFP in Estonia**. Estonian GFP has been developed in co-operation with the working group on agri-environment support. Several GFP codes were outlined (for water protection, pesticides and manure management), many of which included record-keeping as a key theme. Animal welfare and landscape conservation is included in the Estonian codes of GFP. Compliance with GFP, except for the Water Code, is monitored by various supervisory authorities according to their competence, as specified in Estonian law. The Water Code is monitored by the Paying Agency. Ms Lepmets emphasised that, as there is relatively strict environmental legislation in Estonia, the opportunities for paying farmers agri-environment incentives for going beyond mandatory levels were restricted.
- During the **question and answer session** the following issues were raised.
  - It is a large task to set recommendations for appropriate fertiliser use for all combinations of soil types and fertilisers, as there are many of each. It is particularly difficult to recommend appropriate application rates for organic fertilisers as they are very variable in composition. Calculating the exact nutrient contents of organic fertilisers and nitrogen availability after application is delayed is hard and measures concerned with manure management, whilst important, were considered difficult to target and monitor by many.
  - It is useful and reasonable for the Paying Agency to be designated as institution responsible for first line enforcement of GFP.
  - Ironically, there may be advantages for some CEECs if they reduce the level of some demanding but unenforced environmental legislation to enable payments to be made to farmers for going beyond the statutory minimum. If the minimum is too high this limits the possibility for agri-environment schemes (as described in the Estonian presentation).
- Carl-Frederik Loof<sup>9</sup> next presented **GFP in Sweden**. Mr Loof explained how codes of GFP differed between the north and south parts of Sweden. All farmers are required to comply with GFP, not only those receiving aid. The Ministry of Agriculture has good co-operation with the farmers' union which had been valuable in consultations during development of GFP. The Ministry of Agriculture has responsibility for control in Sweden, although the Swedish Board of Agriculture has more staff capacity, so takes some responsibility. Some aspects of Swedish GFP have proved difficult to control, for instance the requirement for farmers to store manure for certain periods of time. On the spot checks for GFP take place alongside IACS<sup>10</sup> checks. If apparent non-compliance is found, a full check is then carried out. Of the 75,000 farmers in Sweden, 5-7 per cent are controlled and in all there have been only 13 violations that resulted in sanctions. Mr Loof highlighted the need to avoid confusing farmers with many different GFP standards.
- Jean-Yves Bechler<sup>11</sup> provided an overview of **GFP in France**. Mr Bechler stressed the importance and administrative demands of controlling compliance with GFP. France had also implemented cross-compliance in the First Pillar in relation to irrigation, so standards of GFP have been developed for the First and Second Pillars of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In the Second Pillar, GFP is set at regional and national level. Mr Bechler explained how GFP is called 'Good Father Practices' ('le bon père de famille') in French and that the concept had existed in law for over 100 years. The only verified GFP standard for LFA payments is to stock within a prescribed density level. GFP is checked on five per cent of farms and the controlled farms are mostly the ones that have been previously sanctioned or non-compliant or subject to sanctions. For agri-environment payments GFP covers fertiliser and pesticide use, animal welfare, food safety, irrigation, soil protection, nature and landscape conservation and mandatory training for farmers.

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<sup>8</sup> Estonian Ministry of Agriculture.

<sup>9</sup> Swedish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

<sup>10</sup> Integrated Administration and Control System, the application procedure for CAP payments.

<sup>11</sup> French Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition, Fishing and Rural Affairs.

The use of compliance indicators (ie focusing on verifiable standards for monitoring compliance) and restrictions on this approach were described. The benefits of combining or harmonising codes of GFP and penalties for non-compliance for the First and Second Pillars were highlighted.

- Clunie Keenleyside<sup>12</sup> gave details of **GFP in Wales**. Ms Keenleyside explained how LFAs play an important part in Welsh agriculture as they cover 80 per cent of the land area. Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for water, air and soil existed in Wales before 2000, relating to the use of pesticides, sewage sludge, good upland management and livestock welfare. Current GFP is based on EU and UK legislation and was informed by the use of cross-compliance on sheep, beef, suckler cow and LFA payments during the period 1994-2000<sup>13</sup>. GFP includes the requirement for farmers to refrain from straw and stubble burning, ensure no dark smoke is emitted from burning waste and only to burn heathland vegetation during winter. Verifiable standards include the avoidance of over-grazing of semi-natural habitats and damage from supplementary feeding.

**Figure 2 - Summary of Welsh GFP**

	<i>Water</i>	<i>Air</i>	<i>Fertilisers/ pesticides</i>	<i>Habitats, species and historic features</i>	<i>Hedges, walls and trees</i>	<i>Grazing</i>
<i>Legislation</i>						
<i>Verifiable standards</i>						

- During the **questions and discussion** session the following points were raised:
  - Uncertainty exists on the acceptability of using EC co-financing for the conservation of archaeological features. Clarification should be sought from the European Commission on this matter.
  - GFP has an important role to play in making legislation transparent and clear for farmers and providing a structure for monitoring compliance with environmental law.

### ***Session Three - Priority Issues for Preparation and Implementation of RDPs***

In this session technical issues over selecting verifiable standards of GFP and monitoring compliance with these standards were discussed. Lessons learned from calculating payments for LFA and agri-environment measures and penalties for non-compliance with GFP were presented and examples of good practice highlighted. Methods of targeting agri-environment and LFA measures to benefit High Nature Value or Natura 2000 areas were outlined, in particular considering how to ensure that pastoralist farmers were not excluded from CAP support.

- Heike Nitsch<sup>14</sup> presented the German approach to mandatory federal environment legislation **‘Selecting verifiable standards of GFP’**. GFP is mainly based on special agricultural laws in Germany. Germany did not opt to implement cross-compliance under Pillar One of the CAP as it considered that its relatively explicit and extensive legislation was sufficient (non-compliance can result in a fine of up to €15,000). Farmers in Germany have a duty to carry out soil analyses,

<sup>12</sup> Research Associate, IEEP.

<sup>13</sup> The GFP code is available from section 9.1 of the Welsh Rural Development plan, available from the National Assembly for Wales website [http://www.wales.gov.uk/subiagriculture/content/ruraldevplan/part\\_23.pdf](http://www.wales.gov.uk/subiagriculture/content/ruraldevplan/part_23.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Bundesforschungsanstalt für Landwirtschaft (FAL).

although only farms over ten hectares are obliged to prepare nutrient balances. National controls are mostly carried out as a result of suspicion or complaint. They are carried out according to a detailed catalogue of criteria by various institutions of the Federal States, often by staff from specialised departments. Only a selected number of indicators are subject to controls. Controls on small farms not participating in LFA or agri-environment schemes might be less frequent. Ms Nitsch concluded by stressing that Germany was trying to keep control measures as simple as possible, therefore only six indicators that are verifiable and easy to control had been selected for monitoring purposes.

**Figure 3 – Control of fertiliser application GFP in Germany**

	<i>Control according to the RDR</i>	<i>Control according to national law</i>	<i>Frequency of control</i>
<i>Fertilising</i>	Availability of current soil analyses results for P and K. Availability of current soil analyses results or recommendations for fertilisation requirement of N. Availability of yearly nutrient balance. Immediate incorporation after application of slurry. Application of pesticides only by trained persons and with regularly inspected equipment.	Avoidance of leaching and direct spillage of fertilisers into open water courses or adjacent sites. Prohibition of spreading of manure and slurry during winter (15 November – 15 January). Limitation of manure application on soils with very high content of P and K. Limitation of manure application after harvesting to 80 kg N/ha Max. N-input with livestock manure: 170 kg N/ha (arable land); 210 kg N/ha (grassland). Application of N-fertiliser only on absorptive soil. Immediate incorporation of liquid organic fertiliser. Regular soil analyses. Determination of nutrient content of farmyard manure. Yearly nutrient account at farm-level. Keeping of records for 9 years.	<i>Eastern states:</i> (large farms) 5% of all farms. <i>North-western states:</i> 0.4 - 5% of all farms. <i>Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hesse and Rhineland-Palatine</i> (small farms): – number of few regular controls according to Fertilising Ordinance ('national' control); – control of beneficiaries of RDR measures (high participation).

- Ian Condliffe<sup>15</sup> presented the English approach to **'Monitoring compliance and calculating penalties'** in relation to agri-environment and LFA payments. Mr Condliffe described how five to six per cent of holdings (43,000 holdings amounting to 2.5 million hectares) receiving agri-environment or LFA payments were checked for compliance by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), which has 300 inspectors. It was found that regional inspection units could not satisfy EC requirements for monitoring and the UK had risked disallowance of FEOGA funds in the past, so compliance checking had recently been reorganised at a national level. Compliance checking is presently separate for agri-environment and LFA schemes in England. By 2004/5 checking under the IACS and the Rural Development Regulation will be combined and inspectors will be equipped with laptops with GIS capability for farm visits. It is estimated that 6,000 staff days (amounting to approx €2.6 million) is spent annually on inspections for England alone. Checks take approximately 12 hours for agri-environment participants (5.5 hours administration plus travel time) and 25 hours for LFA recipients (12 hours administration plus travel). It was stressed that inspectors had a highly seasonal workload, as checks had to be carried out when the stock were gathered in paddocks before being let loose on the hill areas. Farmers receive a warning a minimum of 24 hours prior to a visit from an inspector, as many of them are part-time. Non-compliance is reported by the RPA and the national Environment Agency is requested to investigate further to establish whether breaches of national environmental legislation have taken

<sup>15</sup> Rural Development Service, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK.



place. If legal action is pursued it usually takes one or two years for the process to be completed, before which the farmer cannot be penalised. In England the penalty for non-compliance with GFP is higher than the rewards of entering into an agri-environment scheme. Penalties are presently discretionary, but a set penalty system is currently being devised. The penalties are currently set according to whether non-compliance was intentional, its severity (ie nature and size of features affected), its permanence and the number of occasions it had occurred. It was stressed how penalty calculations should be transparent and logical.

Figure 4 - An example of a penalty scale: damage to stone walls

GFP condition	Severity of case	Permanence of damage	Percentage of payments to be repaid by farmer according to the number of times the breach has occurred		
			1 <sup>st</sup> occasion	2 <sup>nd</sup> occasion	Subsequent occasions
Prohibition of removal of stone wall	Low	Rectifiable	Warning	10%	100%
		Permanent	10%	20%	100%
	Medium	Rectifiable	10%	20%	100%
		Permanent	20%	100%	100%
	High	Rectifiable	20%	100%	100%
		Permanent	100%	100%	100%

- Yanka Kazakova<sup>16</sup> presented ‘**Payment calculations for agri-environment and LFA measures**’ from the Bulgarian perspective. Ms Kazakova described two payment calculations for specific measures: one that had been rejected by the European Commission and another that had been approved. Payments under a scheme for the maintenance of local breeds were authorised by the European Commission. However, payments to help farmers prepare a whole-farm agri-environment management plan had proved not acceptable as the payments were deemed to be too generous, the benefits of this as a pilot measure had not been sufficiently justified and no other Candidate Country had proposed this type of activity. Difficulties with payment calculations in Bulgaria had included defining the reference level for a calculation (ie taking into account national legislation and usual GFP, determining the reference year etc).
- During the **questions and discussion session** the following issues were raised.
  - Book-keeping requirements in some countries are more lenient for small farmers. For instance, in the Netherlands farmers with less than two hectares do not have to keep records of nutrient use.
  - Great variation in GFP and monitoring activities exists in current Member States, mainly due to policy cultures.
  - There is concern in France that farmers which have a more diverse enterprise mix and so benefit from several different agriculture and rural development funds, run a higher risk of being penalised since they are subject to more checks. Partly for this reason controls for First and Second Pillar fund recipients are being integrated in the near future. France is hoping that it will be possible to ensure that farmers are not penalised for more than two or three incidences of non-compliance.
  - Penalty collection could be difficult in some CEECs as some farmers do not have bank accounts (in Romania, for instance, only five per cent of farmers have bank accounts).
  - Data used for payment calculations must be accurate and defensible. Expert opinion is difficult to justify.
  - It is important that payments are not set too high in the early years of a new scheme as it is very difficult to reduce payments later.
  - Experience in Sweden has shown that it is easier to receive authorisation for payment calculations from the European Commission if the full 20 per cent incentive payment is not included.

<sup>16</sup> WWF Danube Carpathian Programme, Bulgaria.

- The English approach to payment calculations for LFA and agri-environment schemes has been to seek to set the payment at a rate that it is accurate for around 50 per cent of farmers. The remainder either find the payments too generous or too small, depending on factors as diverse as how far farms are from a road. Generally this approach is expected to result in a 75 per cent uptake rate.
  - Land abandonment has been addressed in Sweden by using Article 33 as an investment measure to pay for any necessary re-cultivation of areas, after which they become eligible for agri-environment measures. However, this approach could be difficult in CEECs as Article 33 will be managed through regional single programming documents that tend to be less well funded and regionally fragmented. This approach is also not possible until after EU accession, yet the problem of land abandonment needs urgent attention.
  - In Estonia the Ministry of Environment is taking responsibility for land restoration using State Aids to fund management incentives to allow these areas to become eligible for agri-environment measures within one or two years.
  - Authoritative research on the extent of land abandonment in CEECs and the precise scale and severity of environmental problems arising from this is lacking. CEECs should try to encourage national science academies to undertake research on this topic.
- Sally Huband<sup>17</sup> next presented '**How to ensure pastoralists are not excluded from LFA or agri-environment measures**'. Ms Huband explained how HNV pastoralists (farmers that graze domestic livestock at low densities in large, unenclosed areas, overwhelmingly dominated by semi-natural vegetation) contribute to the conservation of many high nature value farming areas, including protected areas and Natura 2000 sites (designated or potential) throughout Europe. Many pastoralists have been ineligible for CAP support measures in the past due to factors such as the fact that a proportion are 'landless' (ie use common land, rent land or graze crops grown by other farmers), sometimes they are seasonally migrant and often they are part time. It is also a problem that they tend to use labour intensive management practices that are often not sufficiently compensated by agri-environment or LFA measures. The fact that pastoralists are frequently small scale farmers also makes it difficult for them to afford sufficient investments to meet hygiene and welfare standards designed for intensive agricultural systems. Authorities in the CEECs need to be aware of these factors when designing agri-environment and LFA schemes.

**Figure 5 - A pastoralist farmer in the Romanian Carpathians**




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<sup>17</sup> Project Officer of the Pastoral Concerted Action (see <http://www.sac.ac.uk/envsci/External/Pastoral/default.htm>) at the Scottish Agricultural College.

- Simone Lughofer<sup>18</sup> next presented **How to identify farmers of high nature value habitats**, providing examples from a research project 'Rural Life' that has recently been carried out in Austria. In Austria 66 per cent of the agriculture budget was spent on rural development, which is a relatively high proportion for Europe. Austria has targeted rural development funds at farmers in some high nature value areas by offering Article 16 LFA payments to farmers in areas with environmental restrictions and more generally offering a wide and shallow agri-environment scheme across the whole country. Ms Lughofer outlined how research has shown that Austrian farmers can be placed into categories such as traditionalists, support optimisers or innovators and described their characteristic attitudes, perceptions and economic situation. Policy targeting can be informed by this approach as well as by more conventional analysis.
- Harriet Bennett<sup>19</sup> next presented **Examples of how EU Member States have targeted LFA funds**. A brief account of the aims and history of LFA payments in the EU was followed by a description of various interesting features of implementation of LFA payments in selected Member States. It was highlighted how Spain has opted to prioritise applications for LFA payments from young farmers, holdings in Natura 2000 sites and farmers that opt to follow a more demanding level of GFP. Countries such as Spain and Austria have also opted to taper payments to favour small farms (eg in Spain farms over five hectares are eligible for only 75 per cent of the national LFA payment rate, and the percentage decreases as the farm size increases, until it reaches zero for farms of over 100 hectares). The use of Article 16 (support for areas with environmental restrictions) has been less used but was described in the case of Austria. The Länder determine the amount of support for a farm under this Article according to management plans, but as these have not yet been drawn up for many holdings in Natura 2000 sites application of the measure has been delayed. In England a supplement of 10-20 per cent is provided to farmers that agree to comply with one or more management option (such as reducing the stocking rate, removing stock for three months during sensitive periods, maintaining some of the holding as woodland or being registered as organic). The potential of LFA measures for supporting high nature value areas in CEECs was highlighted, in particular the relative simplicity of the measure and its potential for combating land abandonment in remote areas.

#### ***Session Four – Planning Ahead for Sustainable Rural Development and the Relevance of GFP in EECCA***

During the final session priorities for related future initiatives were discussed and it was concluded that the network of experts in the field of agri-environment in CEECs should be maintained in the future. It could have a valuable role to play in influencing the next generation of RDPs beyond 2006. The relevance of GFP to EECCA was also presented, including an outline of the potential benefits of applying good farming practice to the region.

- Jaroslav Prazan<sup>20</sup> presented **Planning ahead for rural development in CEE**. Mr Prazan described the situation in CEECs in relation to their capacity for and commitment to agri-environment schemes and the difference between the perceptions of officials from the ministries of environment and agriculture. Potential impacts of the CAP Mid Term Review proposals were discussed. The benefits of mutual learning and maintaining the network of agri-environment experts from CEE were highlighted. Mr Prazan concluded by stressing that there was an excellent opportunity to develop joint proposals from the CEE perspective for the next generation of RDPs, but activities should not be delayed.

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<sup>18</sup> Independent Consultant, Austria.

<sup>19</sup> Research Officer, IEEP.

<sup>20</sup> VUZE, Czech Republic.

- Nina Ladonina<sup>21</sup> presented ‘**The relevance of Good Farming Practice to Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia**’. There is not yet an official term for GFP in the EECCA region. The concept has not been widely developed, partly because there are little or no appropriate agricultural payments that GFP could be attached to as a form of cross-compliance. There is, however, a code for water use in some regions and organic agriculture is highly developed in countries such as Armenia, Moldova and Georgia. Ms Ladonina stressed that the concept of GFP had huge potential for contributing to solving environmental problems in the region, especially in the steppes of Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova. Intensive monoculture of cotton and wheat is a widespread environmental problem. At present no incentives are offered for environmentally friendly agriculture. Ms Ladonina concluded by stressing that GFP was a very important issue for the EECCA region and that further co-operation with countries that have experience in the issue would be very useful and welcome in the future.
- David Baldock<sup>22</sup> **concluded** the meeting by reviewing the proceedings of the previous two days. It was stressed that although development of GFP in CEECs had been greatly influenced by discussions with the European Commission during accession negotiations it was also important to see ‘the bigger picture’ and work towards establishing codes of GFP that contribute to environmental benefits in the agriculture sector and to meeting targets under regional and international biodiversity and environmental agreements. Further activities included in the UNEP project were described. A side event at the Kyiv Inter-Ministerial ‘Environment for Europe’ meeting in May 2003 is planned on ‘The potential benefits of developing codes of GFP in EECCA’. At this event a leaflet on the subject, written in Russian, will also be launched.

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<sup>21</sup> IUCN CIS.

<sup>22</sup> Director, IEEP.