AFINET
AGROFORESTRY INNOVATIONS NETWORKS

Agroforestry and agricultural policy: definitions

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silvopasture and forest farming in forest land cover and homegardens (vegetables and fruit trees) in periurban and urban areas.

Agroforestry is one of the most useful tools to increase sustainability of farming systems while increasing their resilience and adapt them to climate change. One of the main challenges to overcome to spread agroforestry across Europe is the need to have a clear definition. Agroforestry is defined by the deliberately integration and combination of a woody perennial (tree and/or shrub) with an agricultural product produced in the below level of the system. Woody perennials could be fruit trees, timber trees or shrubs. The agricultural product produced in the lower story could be herbaceous (annual or perennial crops) and woody (i.e. biomass production from short rotation coppices). Woody component design could be homogeneously distributed but also in frames on which trees are surrounding the plots. Agroforestry can be useful at plot level increasing biodiversity, carbon sequestration but also at landscape level reducing the contamination of waters. From a farm point of view, agroforestry is known to provide an extension of the period of grass growth which reduces the need of concentrates. Using fruit from different types of trees such as oaks (i.e. acorns) allows farmers to feed their animals during the autumn time, but some farmers also feed their animals with fruits (i.e. apple) when the prices of the concentrates are too high and the income they receive from the fruits too low allowing them to get a benefit from the difference. Agroforestry is a type of land use that can be used in any type of land cover in the five practices (silvoarable, silvopasture, riparian buffer strips, in agricultural land cover,

Figure 1. Visit by political authorities to an agroforestry farm.

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