

Silvopasture and CAP in the European Atlantic Region

- Silvopasture is a type of agroforestry practice that combines woody perennials, either trees or shrubs, with livestock feeding based on grazing in situ.
- In the Atlantic region, silvopasture remains limited and unevenly distributed, despite the high relevance of permanent grasslands, livestock production, and the ecosystem services provided by trees, hedgerows, shrublands and woodlands.
- CAP support in the Atlantic region is mainly linked to agri-environmental measures, while future promotion should be strengthened through both agroforestry eco-schemes and CAP Pillar II interventions.

Defining silvopasture in the Atlantic region

Silvopasture combines trees or shrubs with grazing livestock and can occur in both agricultural and forest-related land. In the Atlantic region, it is linked to permanent grasslands, permanent crops, woodland and shrubland used for grazing. A clear north-south gradient appears across the region. Northern Atlantic areas are more associated with grasslands and hedgerow-based systems, while southern Atlantic areas are more associated with woodland and shrubland grazing systems. This reflects different environmental conditions and management traditions within the same biogeographic region.

The Atlantic region combines high grassland and livestock importance with a relatively low and uneven silvopasture presence. Silvopasture is more common in Southern Atlantic regions than in Northern Atlantic ones.

Silvopasture extent and CAP contribution in the Atlantic region

The Atlantic region has a strong grassland and livestock base, but silvopasture remains limited. Silvopasture is predominantly found in Southern Atlantic regions, especially in Spain and France, while it is weak or absent in some Northern regions, including parts of Germany. Within CAP-eligible agricultural land, silvopasture covers more than 10% of permanent grasslands and permanent crops, but silvopasture linked only to permanent crops represents just 1.28% of permanent crops in the Atlantic region. CAP support is mainly associated with agri-environmental measures in Rural Development Programmes. In some territories, support is also linked to fire prevention, damage prevention and other environmental functions.

Silvopasture promotion by the CAP in the Atlantic region

Silvopasture is promoted in the Atlantic region mainly because of the environmental services it provides, including biodiversity support, carbon sequestration, productivity benefits, hedgerow conservation and fire risk reduction depending on the territory.

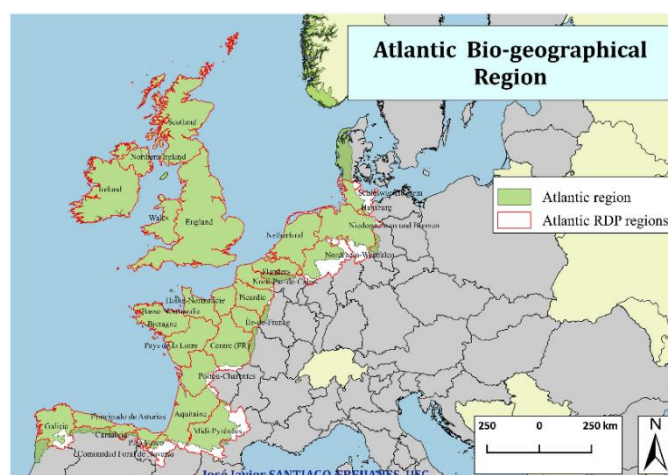


FIGURE 1. Atlantic RDP regions. Santiago-Freijanes J.J.

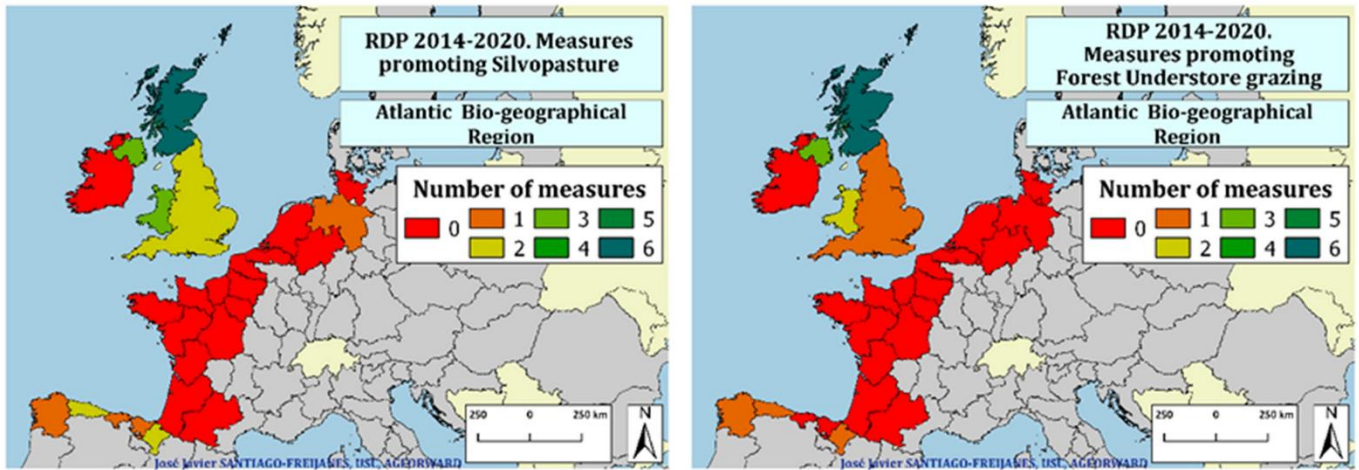


FIGURE 2. Measures promoting silvopasture. Santiago-Freijanes J.J.

Promotion should therefore be adapted to regional conditions. In northern areas, silvopasture is closely linked to hedgerows and grassland systems. In southern areas, it is more connected to woodland and shrubland grazing and to fire prevention functions. Policy action should prioritize the management, conservation and implementation of silvopasture, and that future support should be encouraged through both agroforestry eco-schemes and CAP Pillar II interventions.

CAP support is mainly channeled through agri-environmental measures. Future promotion should combine agroforestry eco-schemes with CAP Pillar II interventions.

MAIN CONCLUSION

- Silvopasture is highly relevant because of the weight of permanent grasslands and livestock, but its extent remains limited and regionally uneven.
- The strongest presence is found in Southern regions, while Northern regions show weaker implementation despite favourable livestock conditions.
- Current CAP support is mainly linked to agri-environmental measures and ecosystem-service delivery.
- Future policy should prioritize the management, conservation and implementation of silvopasture through agroforestry eco-schemes and CAP Pillar II interventions adapted to regional conditions.

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This brief highlights that the Atlantic region has strong potential for silvopasture because of its grassland and livestock base, but current uptake remains limited. Future CAP design could better support these systems through measures adapted to the different realities of northern and southern Atlantic regions.

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