

**THE AUSTRIAN AGRI-ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME ÖPUL
AN OVERVIEW ON THE CONCEPT, DEVELOPMENT AND
IMPELMENTATION**

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This paper is an excerpt of the OECD-Dokument CASE STUDY ON THE AUSTRIAN PROGRAMME ON AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, BASED ON EU REGULATION 2078/92 EXPERIENCES AND CONSEQUENCES ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY IN AUSTRIAN AGRICULTURE. It was written by Josef Hoppichler and Michael Groier, Federal Institute for Less-Favoured and Mountainous Areas, Vienna

1. General description

In the second half of the 1980s and in particular in the early 1990s, agricultural subsidy programmes were restructured and re-orientated in order to meet the requirements for joining the EU and in preparation for the anticipated outcome of the Uruguay round of the GATT talks. At the same time, particular emphasis was placed on agri-ecological aspects of funding and environment-related direct payments were integrated into the funding system (GROIER 1997). These political instruments focused on soil protection charges (taxation of nitrogen, phosphorous and potash), the Law on Water Rights (e.g. binding livestock to the region), maximum limits for livestock (e.g. a maximum of 400 fattening pigs per farm), the funding of organic farming and funding of crop rotation using alternative crops and set-aside areas. The changes in Austrian agriculture during this period (FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY [BMLF] 1996 b) were characterised by declining use of fertilisers, reduction in the use of pesticides, increased use of integrated management systems, the expansion of crop rotation to include alternative or special crops, funding for species-appropriate animal keeping and rearing and ultimately the internationally significant advantage in the number and growth of organic farms. Even in 1995 - the year of joining the EU - Austria had approximately 16,000 organically operated farms. This represented a proportion of 6.5% of all farms (in 1997 there were already 19,000 organic farms corresponding to 8% of all farms - GROIER 1998).

When Austria joined the EU, there was, however, a danger that these positive effects on the environment would be lost because of the anticipated further intensification and specialisation of national farming, and the anticipated abandonment of land utilisation in mountain areas and structurally less-favoured regions. Since Austrian agriculture is characterised by a wide diversity of small farms by comparison with most EU countries (the average size of farms is currently 13.7 ha. UAA, an average cattle farmer has approx. 20 head of cattle and an average dairy farmer has approximately 7.5 dairy cows) and also 49% of all farms are in mountain regions (DAX 1998), intensified competition within Europe threatened to bring about a radical structural change. This would have meant the loss of diversity in agricultural structure and forms of production, and all the associated positive effects on biodiversity in the differentiated agricultural ecosystems (especially in the sensitive alpine regions) would have been endangered.

As a result, within the framework of the implementation of EU Regulation 2078/92, an integral horizontal approach was selected for the ÖPUL agri-environmental programme. This was intended to secure former nation-wide environmental effects and to provide new incentives for reducing the use of resources, for landscape management, subsidising biodiversity, protecting ground and surface waters and preventing natural hazards. ÖPUL is a modular funding package which provides regional and federal measures as well as a broad range of individual measures relating to the whole farm, specific categories or breeds for different sectors and forms of production. It allows every farmer to compose the most suitable combination of measures for his own operational circumstances, regardless of whether his farm is in a favoured arable region or in a region with massive management problems (e.g. in mountain regions). The structural versatility of the programme is associated with stringent requirements for implementation, but at the same time a relatively broad incentive is provided encouraging farmers to embrace environmentally compatible production methods (BMLF 1996 b), which may be differentiated regionally with reference to agriculturally favoured and less-favoured locations and different types of farm.

2. General overview on the concept:

ÖPUL, which is to be implemented within the framework of EU Regulation 2078/92, pursues the following goals in accordance with the special directive of the Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry (BMLF) (ÖPUL 98):

- Subsidising agricultural production methods which help to reduce environmentally harmful effects of agriculture, which also contributes to an improved market equilibrium by lowering production levels.
- Subsidising environment-friendly extensification of plant production and keeping of sheep, goats, horses and cattle.
- Subsidising the management of agricultural areas in a manner compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment and the preservation of the natural habitat, the landscape, natural resources, the soil and genetic diversity.
- Creating an incentive to manage abandoned agricultural and forestry areas in regions in which such management is necessary for reasons of environmental protection, natural hazards or risk of fire, and therefore also the prevention of hazards associated with the depopulation of agricultural areas.
- Creating an incentive for the long-term setting aside of agricultural areas for reasons of environmental protection and nature conservation.
- Subsidising measures for raising the awareness and educating farmers in respect of agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of environmental protection and the preservation of the natural habitat.
- Securing an appropriate income for the managers of agricultural and forestry operations.
- Contributing to the ecological equilibrium and the realisation of the goals of the agricultural and environmental policy.

The focus of ÖPUL is therefore broad, horizontally operating environmental protection combined with measures for preserving a biologically diverse, natural habitat. Additionally, however, the package attempts to take into consideration socio-economic factors. The preservation of biodiversity is therefore only one, albeit a very substantial part of the programme. A summary of the individual measures is set out below by way of introduction to ÖPUL which represents the core of the subsequent deliberations.

ÖPUL comprises the following set of measures in which funding is generally granted on a regionally specific basis:

1. Extensive forms of management
 - Elementary funding (restriction of animal stocks to 2.0 gross cattle units/ha UAA)
 - Subsidising farms with organic management methods
 - Avoidance of certain yield-enhancing resources (arable land, grass land, total farm, integrated fruit and vine growing)
 - Extensive grass land management in traditional areas
 - Reducing cattle stock levels

- Stabilisation of crop rotation (intermediate fruit cultivation)
2. Extensive use of individual areas of arable farmland
 - Extensive cultivation of cereals for the food sector
 - Avoidance of certain yield-enhancing resources on selected arable areas
 3. Extensive use of individual areas of grass land
 - Avoidance of readily soluble commercial fertilisers and universal chemical plant protectives
 - Observance of conditions relating to harvesting time
 4. Special forms of management beneficial to the landscape and securing genetic diversity
 - Erosion protection: fruit growing, viticulture, arable farming
 - Keeping and rearing endangered domestic animal species
 - Regional projects with an extensification effect and individual ecological measures (project-specific)
 - Mowing of steep slopes and mountain meadows
 - Alpine farming bonus
 - Bonus for ecologically valuable areas
 - Growing rare agricultural crop plants
 - Managing abandoned forestry areas
 5. Re-establishment and preservation of landscape elements
 - Landscape elements and biotope development areas with 20-year set-aside (project-specific)
 - Provision of areas for ecological goals (project-specific)
 - Provision of areas for ecological goals on selected, economic set-aside areas (project-specific)
 6. Educational measures

3. Development of agrienvironmental policy in Austria

Austrian agriculture in the 1970s, 1980s and even at the beginning of the 1990s was characterised by a relatively high-price policy which above all was associated with a strong tendency towards intensification. The origins of this policy were to be found in the agricultural strategies following World War II, when the primary objective was to resolve failing supplies of food and to achieve a relatively economic supply to the markets in spite of the fragmented structure of agriculture. Alongside the goal of providing an income for farmers, the pricing policy was intended primarily to create competitiveness with the assistance of structural measures (cf. 1976 Agricultural Law).

The main focus of agricultural funding included improvement of farming business structures (opening up traffic access, regional funding) and subsidies for sales and utilisation measures, but, in particular, also included so-called productivity enhancements. During the period from 1960 to 1980 and even in the first half of the 1980s, considerable public funds were made available in the fields of

land adjustment, land combination and productivity enhancements for plant cultivation and livestock breeding.

Although not all of the resources used in this manner can be classified as clearly negative in their effect on the diversity of the ecosystem, it is possible with hindsight to identify an error in controlling with regard to the protection of biodiversity as a whole. This effect was not slowed or halted until the 1980s. It is also evident that politics failed to respond until the increasing problems of surplus supply as a result of the high-price policy came into conflict with the concurrent subsidisation of productivity enhancement.

From 1978 onwards, milk production relative to the individual farm was subjected to quotas; subsequently, upper limits for livestock per farm were specified within the framework of the Market Regulation (e.g. 400 fattening pigs) in order to apply a brake to the structural dynamics of regulated markets. To deal with the growing problems of financing agricultural surpluses, and also to respond to the causes of increasing environmental problems, a re-orientation of agricultural funding was introduced from 1986 onwards. The focus of this agricultural counteraction included subsidising alternative agricultural production methods, taxation of fertilisers and high-yield maize seed, support for extensive livestock production, green fertilising, setting aside arable land and increased funding of organic farming (see Table 5 based on (GROIER/LOIBL 1997).

Table 4: Development of agri-environmental policy in Austria

Agro-political context	Environmentally significant schemes
<p>1950s and 60s Shortages; mechanisation; chemicalisation, capitalisation of agriculture, increased productivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for investment and means of production
<p>1970s Surplus and utilisation problem - market regulation Structural change, rationalisation, specialisation, introduction of direct payments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of Market regulation (pricing policy, quotas, trade controls) • Special programme for mountain-farmers 1972 (Infrastructure support, mountain-farmer subsidy as a direct, production-neutral payment) • Agriculture law 1960/74 Conservation of landscape
<p>1980s New orientation in agricultural support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal husbandry Law 1976/80 (introduction of upper limits on livestock)
<p>Market Regulation reform and direct payments Increasing problems with financing of surplus utilisation; continuing concentration process; building in of quantity regulation instruments with agri-ecological significance; promotion of production alternatives, consideration of agri-ecological aspects of support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of Market regulation, support for special crops (e.g. legumes) • Fertiliser tax 1986 (taxing of nitrogen, phosphate and potassium fertilisers) • Decrees of the Ministry of Health and environment on organic farming (1983) • Support for extensive production alternatives in animal husbandry (suckling cows, sheep) • Maize seed tax (1987) • Agriculture law 1976/88 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lasting safeguards for the natural bases of life (soil, water, air) - conservation of landscape - protection against natural disasters • Support for ecological measures, green fallow land in arable areas (from 1988) • Support for energy from biomass from 1988) • Support for organic farming associations (from 1989)

Agro-political context	Environmentally significant schemes
<p>1990s</p> <p>Build-up of direct-payment system- ecologically oriented direct payments</p> <p>Build-up of (agri-ecological) direct payments (GATT Directives), extensification, EU preparations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Austria eco-point model, 1990 • Crop rotation support (from 1991) • Support for green fallow areas (from 1991) • Support for environmentally compatible fertiliser storage (from 1991) • Agricultural Law 1992 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -giving regard to social orientation, ecological compatibility, regional balance - Subsidies: quality improving, environmentally friendly and production-guiding measures • Support for organic farming (since 1991: genuine support for organic farming through area premiums) • Support for ecological schemes (regional schemes, landscape scheme)
<p>from 1995</p> <p>1995 EU membership, Agro-market liberalisation, transformation of the aid system, further build-up of direct payments, introduction of the Austrian environment scheme, abolition of agri-ecological instruments (competition argument): fertiliser tax, livestock holding upper limits, maize-seed tax.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture Law 1992/95: Adaptation to the CAP • Regulation (Agriculture Law) on minimum ecological criteria of exclusively nationally funded farm support schemes (rules on good agricultural practice - EU nitrate guideline, recommendations on fertiliser use) • Environment scheme (ÖPUL) 1995 (2078/92) • Adoption of Compensatory allowances scheme (upland areas and less-favoured regions) and combination with the previously mountain-farmers' subsidy • Agriculture Law 1992/96: Constitutional ruling on the Austrian Environment Scheme ÖPUL (alteration of guidelines, reporting obligation on the Aid Administration Office AMA)

Source: GROIER/LOIBL 1997

By comparison with other European countries, and especially the EU, Austria reacted very quickly to the problems of intensive agriculture. Even before 1990, within the framework of the anticipated results of the Uruguay round of the GATT talks, the funding system was re-orientated from product funding or productivity funding towards the funding of environmentally effective measures. Measures such as the strong promotion of organic farming, the limitation of numbers of livestock per farm and the taxation of fertilisers were indeed exemplary in their environmental impact and internationally unique. However, within the context of Austria's entering the EU, the latter two of these measures had to be withdrawn for reasons of competitiveness, whereas organic farming could continue to be subsidised within the framework of EU Regulation 2078/92 and therefore within the context of the ÖPUL programme. Overall, it is clear that the high-price policy alone was not the cause for the loss of species and the threat to biodiversity, but that these tendencies are a general phenomenon within a modern agricultural system which is under pressure to compete.

Intensification, specialisation, dependence on chemical and, in future, biotechnological inputs, rationalisation and dualism in the structure of agriculture are characteristics of agriculture in industrialised countries which also prevail under conditions of free world trade. However, it is evident

that with a generally low agricultural price level, the farmers' acceptance threshold for alternative forms of production will be lowered, especially in less-favoured locations. This means that subsidies for environmentally effective measures will be more effective and can be arranged to be more cost favourable.

4. Implementation of incentive measures and context

The "Austrian programme for the promotion of extensive farming methods compatible with the requirements of environmental protection and the maintenance of the countryside – ÖPUL" is a nation-wide programme offered by the Government according to "Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2078/92 of 30 June 1992 on agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of the protection of the environment and the maintenance of the countryside".

The individual measures of the agri-environmental programme operate on different levels. These can be differentiated as farm, production, crop type, individual area, animal, and personnel-related measures. Corresponding to the philosophy that policy should not only help to reduce damage, but also serve to avoid damage according to the principle of prevention, the programme is broken down into six sub-groups:

- Extensive forms of cultivation (total holding or category-related)
- Specific area related extensive use of arable land
- Specific area related extensive use of grassland
- Special landscape conservation and cultivation methods, and conservation of biodiversity
- New structures and maintenance of landscape elements
- Educational measures

Objectives of ÖPUL I

Corresponding to the objectives defined in Article 1 of the agri-environmental regulation 2078/92 of the Council, the following objectives are listed in the ÖPUL I:

- To promote agricultural methods that help to minimise environmentally damaging effects of agriculture, at the same time contributing to a better market balance through reduced production.
- To promote increased use of environmentally friendly extensive methods in crop production as well as in the husbandry of sheep, goats, equine and cattle.
- To promote methods of cultivation of agricultural areas compatible with protection and improvement of the environment and the maintenance of the countryside, landscape, natural resources, soil and genetic diversity.
- To offer an incentive for the maintenance of set-aside agricultural and forestry areas in regions where such maintenance is necessary owing to natural dangers, fire hazard or for environmental protection, and thus to forestall risks related to the depopulation of rural areas.
- To offer an incentive for long-term set-aside of agricultural areas on environmental protection grounds.
- To promote increased awareness and education of landholders in the areas of agricultural production methods compatible with the pursuit of environmental protection and maintenance of the countryside.
- To ensure an appropriate income for farmers.

- To contribute to the ecological balance and to the realisation of the objectives of agri-environmental policy.

The Austrian agri-environmental programme includes measures (25) for all agricultural areas, for grassland as well as arable land and special crops, and is structured into two parts:

- Part A: Measures offered throughout Austria
- Part B: Measures only offered in certain Provinces

The measures in the first part of the programme are offered in the whole federal area, on the same terms and premiums. Among these are those of group 1. (excluding 1.4: extensive grassland cultivation in traditional areas) and group 2. and 3.1. The second part of the programme includes measures geared to specific regional circumstances, available principally in the whole federal area, but which within the given framework are adapted for a particular Province. Each Province can select the measures relevant to its agriculture from those offered, and adapt them to its specific requirements. Further, the Provinces can also define specific measures in the form of regional projects (group 4.5).

In the ecological evaluation process mainly the following measures were identified as positively effecting biodiversity (BLÜMEL et al. 1996) – The description of the measures mainly effecting biodiversity and the description of the objectives and reasons of the incentive measures are provided in ANNEX 1. In principle, all of the measures have an impact on biodiversity in different forms and levels of intensity. However, if only those measures are mentioned which were specially designed for this purpose or which contain corresponding aims and restrictions in their directives, it is possible to list only a selection of the 25 ÖPUL measures.

Table 5: Overview - Structure of ÖPUL I

1. Extensive forms of cultivation (total farm)	2. Extensive arable land use (specific to individual areas)	3. Extensive grassland use (specific to individual areas)	4. Special landscape-conservation forms of cultivation and securing of genetic diversity	5. New structures and conservation of landscape elements	6. Education measures
1.1 Basic subsidy 1.2 Organic farming 1.3 Non application of specific yield-enhancing agents 1.3.1 grassland and arable land 1.3.2 Fruit, vine and ornamental plant growing 1.3.2.1 Integrated controlled fruit-growing 1.3.2.2 Integrated controlled viticulture 1.3.2.3 Integrated production in ornamental plant growing 1.4. Extensive grassland cultivation in traditional areas	2.1. Extensive cereal cultivation for the foodstuff sector 2.2 Non application of specific yield-enhancing agents 2.2.1 Growth regulators 2.2.2 Easily soluble commercial fertilisers and growth regulators 2.2.3 Easily soluble commercial fertilisers and synthetic chemical crop-protection agents 2.2.4 Fungicides 2.2.5 Synthetic chemical crop-protection agents 2.2.6 Integrated production in	3.1 Non application of easily soluble commercial fertilisers and extensive use of chemical crop protection in grassland 3.2 Adherence to mowing restrictions	4.1 Erosion prevention in fruit growing 4.2 Erosion prevention in viticulture 4.3 Erosion prevention in arable farming 4.4 Keeping and rearing endangered breeds 4.5 Regional Projects 4.6 Mowing of slopes and mountain meadows 4.7 Alpine pasturing and herding supplement	5.1 Landscape elements and biotope-development areas with 20-year set-aside 5.2 Provision of areas for ecological objectives (5-year set-aside) 5.3 Provision of areas for ecological objectives on selected cyclical set-aside	

1.5 Reduction of livestock density	vegetable cultivation		4.8 Upkeep of ecologically valuable areas		
1.6 Crop rotation stabilisation			4.9 Growing of rare agricultural crops		

Source: BMLF, BABF

5. Process of implementation:

Chronological presentation of the development of the ÖPUL

- From mid 1992 - Discussion phase

Establishment of non-binding working groups for discussion and development of the possibilities for the adaptation of existing agro-ecological instruments.

Involved: Chamber of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (BMLF), Ministry of Environment (BMU), National Environment Agency (UBA), WWF Austria.

- Summer 1993 - drawing up of the draft program

Drawing up of the Austrian environmental program on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture.

- compilation of all previous agro-environmental subsidies (BMLF)
- economic analyses of the effects of environmental schemes on farm through federal agronomic research-institutes
- development of a first draft program in co-operation between the BMLF, Chamber of Agriculture and the Austrian Farmers' Union

Submission of the first draft program to the GD VI

- February- April 1994 - development of the program-details

Development of a detailed environment program on the basis of the draft scheme in the framework of special working groups in the BMLF with participation of experts from the BMLF, the Provinces, the Chamber of Agriculture and the Austrian Farmers' Union.

- October 1994 - First application of the environment scheme (advance registration for certain constituent schemes)

In the framework of the so-called "autumn schemes", registration of participants for 1995.

- February 1995 - Official submission of the scheme

Revised ÖPUL draft is officially submitted to the EU

- June 1995 - approval of the scheme by the EU Commission
- June 1995 - approval of the programme by the EU Commission

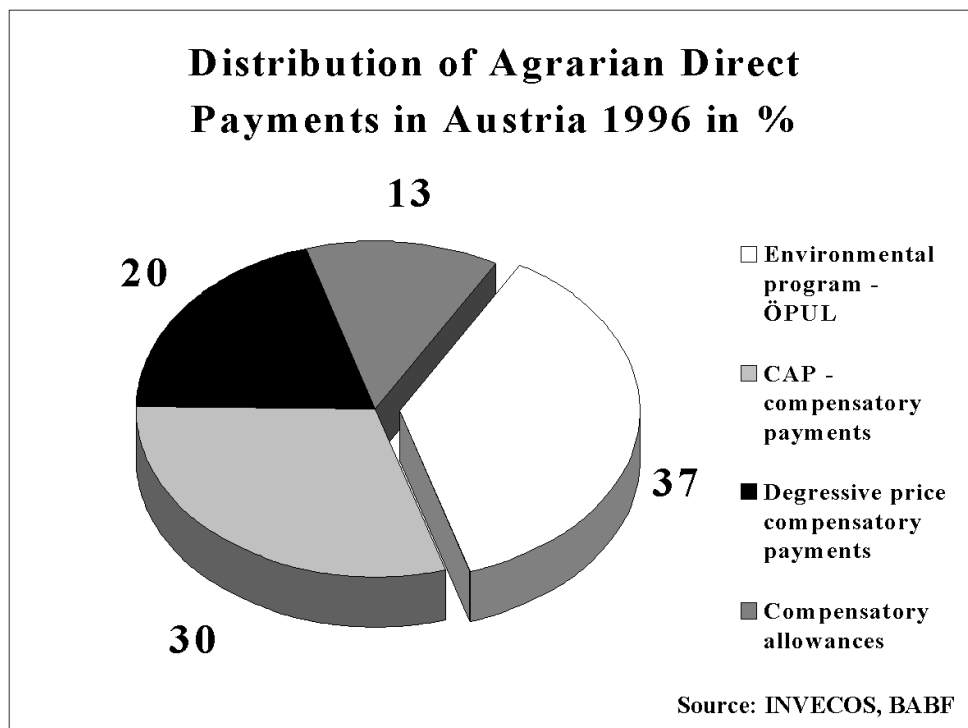
- < 1.1.1996 - Halt for new applications (except organic farming and some part-B measures) because of exhausted budget
- < 1996 - Amendment to the Agricultural act 1992/96: Modification of the two measures basic premium and crop rotation stabilisation (reduction of premiums)
- < Summer 1997 - Submission of the ÖPUL '98 (modified version of ÖPUL I) to EU
- < October 1997 - Approval of ÖPUL '98 by the EU Commission
- < End 1997/Beginning 1998 – Discussions and development of a first draft of ÖPUL 2000

Conditions and aspects of Implementation

In principle the implementation of EU Reg. 2078/92 in Austria was characterised by the following general conditions and aspects:

The environmental scheme is broadly and regionally conceived to meet the agro-political aims of promoting a nation wide environmentally friendly agriculture as well as the maintaining of family farming system.

- Before joining the EU, Austria already possessed relatively well-developed agro-ecological instruments, which, together with existing quality-improving subsidies and new schemes within the framework of EU 2078/92, were further developed into the Austrian environmental program, ÖPUL;
- The drawing up of the environmental program coincided with the EU membership negotiations and thus took place under great pressure of time, the most diverse changes and limitations having to be carried out in the first year of its coming into effect (changes of guidelines and premiums, halt new applications since 1996 other than those in organic farming and other ecological important schemes);
- As a result of EU membership and its agro-political consequences, the ÖPUL displays a relatively strong income-support policy oriented conception (one of the main intentions of the supporting schemes of CAP reform);
- Alongside the ideas of administrative and scientific experts, political interventions (EU negotiations) were also influential in the development of the environmental program;



Referring to the total budget for direct payments, the agri-environmental programme comprises the biggest share. This illustrates that ÖPUL-payments have become one of the most important components of agrarian direct payments in Austria.

The area covered by the ÖPUL in 1996 amount to approx. 2.633 mha or 76% of Austria's total agricultural area (area reduction alpine pastures). The total number of aid applicants amounted to 168,804 approx. 64% of all Austrian agricultural and forestry holdings, on the basis of the last farm census (1995). In total, 1996 approx. 8.1 bnATS (in 1997 approx. 7.2 bnATS) was paid out for the ÖPUL. The average premium per farm came to 49,000 ATS (3,700 ECU).

The take up of individual measures varied, farms laying claim on average to 3.3 measures. The number of areas, aid applicants and the figure for premiums paid may be gathered from the following table (further additional payments or repayments not considered).

Table 7: Data of the Austrian environmental programme ÖPUL 1995/96

	UAA under contract ha	Farms under contract number/%	Premiums in mATS
1995	2,633,081 ¹⁾	179,478 (68%)	7,308.7 (549m ECU)
1996	about 2,600,000 ¹⁾	168,804 (64%)	8,142.7 (613m ECU)
1997	about 2,600,000 ¹⁾	166,429 (63%)	7,166.4 (538m ECU)

¹⁾ estimated total subsidised area according to INVECOS statistics 1995; area reduction concerning alpine pastures (measure 4.7): within INVECOS- statistics the "contracted area" of alpine pastures is estimated according to the assumption: 1ha alpine pasture=1 LU; the actual area is much bigger

When comparing the evaluation data between 1995 and 1996, the growth of the total costs of ÖPUL I (particularly because of the expansion of measure 1.6 "crop rotation stabilisation") and the decrease of the number of contractors (consolidation of farms, statistical reasons) are obvious. According to the amendment to the agricultural act 1992/96, the premiums of the two measures basic subsidy (No. 1.1) and crop rotation stabilisation (No. 1.6) were reduced. In consequence, the budget for 1997 is estimated at the level of 1995.

In the course of the national evaluation process, first analyses on ÖPUL I show the following findings.

Table 8: Take-up of the different measures of ÖPUL and premium 1997¹⁾

number of measure	measure	contracted area ¹⁾	Contractors ²⁾	premiums ¹⁾	
		ha UAA	number	m ATS	%
1.1	Basic subsidy	2,212,080	159,549	1,250.8	17,4
1.2	Organic farming (incl. controls)	256,980	18,362	869.9	12.1
1.3.1	Non application. GL, AL (total farm)	291.335	33,363	559.3	7.8
1.3.2.1	Integrated fruit growing	8,462	2,568	59.4	0.8
1.3.2.2	Integrated viticulture	36,906	12,736	295.0	4.1
1.3.2.3	Integrated orn.plant growing	357	42	1.8	0.0
1.4	Extensive grassland cult. in trad. areas	114,206	10,588	280,5	3.9
1.6	Crop rotation stabilisation	1,080,345	67,680	1,309.6	18.2
2.1	Extensive cereal cultivation	250,290	27,594	600.7	8.3
2.2	Non application. AL (individual areas)	325,167	n.a.	288.7	4.0
3.1	Non application. GL (individual areas)	232,045	45,375	408.7	5.7
3.2	Adherence to mowing restrictions	4,905	2,600	9.9	0.1
4.1	Erosion. fruit growing	5,884	2,386	10.1	0.2
4.2	Erosion. Viticulture	3,030	2,967	7.1	0.1
4.3	Erosion. Arable land	317	240	0.2	0.0
4.4	Keeping rare endangered breeds	-	3,476	21.9	0.3
4.5	Regional projects	17.700	965	86.7	1.2
4.6	Mowing mountain meadows	232,713	61,276	615.0	8.5
4.7	Alpine pasturing	264,999 ³⁾	7,028	277.4	3.9
4.8	Upkeep of ecologically valuable areas	37,075	43,124	156.0	2.2
4.9	Growing of rare agricultural crops	3	30	0.01	0.0
4.10	Upkeep abandoned woodland areas	528	327	2.1	0.0
5.1	Landscape elements (20y. set aside)	624	708	5.6	0.1
5.2	Ecological objectives (5 y. set aside)	1,985	1,527	11.5	0.2
5.3	Ecological objectives (5 y. cyclical set side)	3,194	1,744	3.8	0.1
TOTAL		about 2,600,000	166,429 ²⁾	7,166.4	99

¹⁾ Source: BMLF-Grüner Bericht 1997

²⁾ Source: AWI 1998

³⁾ area reduction concerning alpine pastures (measure 4.7) – without reduction the alpine pasture would include more than 800.000 ha grassland

The reason for the high acceptance of the Austrian environmental programme is that ÖPUL I is largely offered on a nation-wide basis (horizontal programme). Furthermore, some of the most expensive measures provide only modest ecological restrictions (e.g. basic subsidy), making it possible for farms with very varied - and also relatively intensive - forms of production in all agricultural production areas to take part. Additionally, the farmers experience with agri-environmental measures before the implementation of Reg. 2078/92 in 1995, particularly organic farming, was an important precondition of the success of ÖPUL I, too.

Environmentally effective ("dark green measures"), farm-related measures like organic farming (measure No. 1.2) or non application of special yield enhancing agents on the whole farm area (No 1.3) were mostly accepted in grassland and mountainous areas, whereas in regions with intensive cultivation of arable land extensification measures are dominantly related to individual areas of the farm (e.g. No. 2). Medium sized farms cultivating permanent grassland in mountainous regions receive relatively high premiums by taking up well paid, ecologically valuable measures and others especially designed for them (alpine pasturing premium No. 4.7, mowing mountain meadows No. 4.6). Referring to the farm type and corresponding to the larger average farm size, farms in favourable agrarian regions cultivating field crops obtain in average higher premiums per farm unit. Farms with intensive pig and poultry rearing got the comparatively lowest payments, because they are relatively small and mostly contracted only low paid measures with modest ecological restrictions.

In evaluating the impacts on biodiversity BLÜMEL et al. (1996) mainly see strong effects on the insurance and enhancement of species diversity through measures like 'support of farms using organic cultivation methods', 'non application of specific yield-raising agents on arable and grassland (total farm)' and in 'upkeeping of ecologically valuable areas'. At the same time some of these biodiversity effecting valuable measures are not those which got a high acceptance – with the exception of the relatively high proportion of organic farming (1997: 19.000 farms or 8 % of total farms). Summarising it can be stated that most discussed measures had induced positive impacts on the biodiversity (BLÜMEL et al. 1996). Overall the relatively high acceptance of organic cultivation methods points out that the maintenance of biodiversity could be promoted to some extent. Those measures mainly effecting biodiversity about 1.1 million ha or 32 % of Austria's total agricultural area were included in these payments.

6. Legal bases:

- Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2078/92 of 30 June 1992, ABI. L215;
- Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 of 24 June 1991, ABI. L 198;
- Agriculture Law 1992, BGBl. 1992/375;
- General Framework Guidelines for the Granting of State Aid, Official Bulletin of the Austrian Finance Authority 1977/136.
- Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3508/92 of 27 November, ABI. L 355
- Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3887/92 of 23 December 1992, ABI. L 391
- Council Regulation (EEC) No. 746/96 of 24 April 1996, ABI. L 102
- Special Guidelines for the "Austrian programme for the promotion of extensive farming methods compatible with the requirements of environmental protection and the maintenance of the countryside – ÖPUL", BMLF Zl. 25.022/39-IIB8/95 (or. ÖPUL 98: BMLF Zl. 25.014/260-IIB8/97

7. Social acceptance:

The Austrian agri-environmental programme ÖPUL as a whole is a very broad programme with more than ATS 7 billion (1997) funding volume. Since ÖPUL is not only the most important section of the direct payment system but also represents almost a quarter of the agricultural budget, it requires a positive basic attitude among the population in favour of such payments and also a far-reaching political consensus mechanism in which all of the essential political forces in the country are involved. Consequently, design and other relevant discussions concerning ÖPUL and its future development involve the political parties, employer and employee organisations, agricultural organisations as well as the environmental and conservation authorities and environmental protection associations (such as the WWF).

In this way, ÖPUL and its concrete realisation also reflects the different objectives of this political discussion. The following three objectives which are frequently in creative conflict with each other, represent only the broadest fields for discussion:

In general, the ÖPUL programme is an important element of the policy for preserving biodiversity and the varied cultivated landscape in Austria. However, in conjunction with other conservation measures (laws, regulations), it is also important to preserve a diverse agricultural structure and an agricultural industry directed towards sustainability even in less-favoured areas. In accordance with OECD 1998 amongst other factors, the Austrian experience with policy on mountainous regions is regarded as a major contribution towards the securing of environmental and cultural services through agriculture. That is to say, rural development and regional development strategies are also closely associated with the topic of biodiversity.

8. Institutional structures of implementation:

- Conception

Experts from various technical departments of the BMLF, Chamber of Agriculture, Provinces' representatives and the Austrian Farmers' Union.

- Administration

- Responsibility for guidelines: BMLF
- Aid Administration Office:

In the name of and on the account of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry the AMA (Agrarmarkt Austria legal entity of public law, acting in law on behalf of the government) is entrusted with:

- < Receiving aid applications
- < Administration of aid
- < Deciding the granting of premiums
- < Monitoring adherence to the terms of this special guideline
- < Reclaiming of aid.

- Regional Data collection by Chambers of Agriculture since 1996

- In the province Lower Austria, province-level foundations have been established, primarily to co-ordinate the realisation of project-specific nature-protection related schemes (creation of biotope-combine systems). The concrete planning and realisation work (mapping, developing of landscape concepts, bundling of the individual ÖPUL schemes) are placed with external planning offices in the course of obligatory projects for the farmers.

- Advice and Information

Communication takes place through various technical departments of the BMLF, PRÄKO, Chambers of Agriculture, BB, associations of organic farming, by means of the most diverse print media and information events. The direct points of contact with the farmers are represented primarily by the advisors of the regional district chambers of farmers.

9. Internal evaluation:

The first steps in evaluation were already taken during the introductory phase of the ÖPUL programme. An accompanying evaluation was also necessary within the context of the legal framework conditions (EU Reg. 746/96). In 1997, an economic evaluation (BMLF 1996a) which

concentrated primarily on acceptance in accordance with forms of farming and earning efficiency, and a comprehensive ecological evaluation (BMLF 1996b) were presented. In addition to a detailed analysis of the effect on the environmental media, the latter also included an analysis of biodiversity and of the changes in the cultivated landscape. It was only possible to establish direct ecological effects objectively in a few areas because of the two year period of the analysis. Effects on biodiversity in particular can be demonstrated using accurate methods with reference to individual measures only over long to very long periods. By contrast, indirect methods of evaluation with reference to general causes of danger to species can readily produce results. Consequently, the majority of ÖPUL measures have a positive influence on biodiversity. In particular, "biological farming methods", "avoidance of certain yield-enhancing resources" and "management of ecologically valuable areas" have been classified as effective measures. At the same time, evaluation methodology is being continuously improved. In future (according to BMLF 1997), there will be a closed evaluation concept, a regionalised evaluation, a target-specific evaluation and integration of results from relevant research projects. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has created special structures for evaluation. Evaluation measures are implemented by working groups consisting primarily of agricultural and environmental scientists.

ANNEX 1:

DESCRIPTION OF SOME ÖPUL-MEASURES:

1. Extensive forms of cultivation (total farm, category-related)

Measure 1.1: Support for farms using organic cultivation methods

Grounds of measure

Organic farming is the form of cultivation in the environmental scheme that is most compatible with the demands of nature. The numerous exacting schemes and the particularly positive environmental effects of organic farming methods justify the highest area premiums of the environmental scheme.

Subject of aid

Organic cultivation methods on agricultural main or subsidiary holdings, if representing a farm unit according to EU Reg. 2092/91

Aid conditions

- Organically farmed holdings within the meaning of this guideline are those farms registered as organically cultivated holdings with the competent foodstuff authorities in the year previous to the aid year .
- EEC Regulation 2092/91 of the 24 June 1991 Council, concerning ecological farming and the appropriate identification of agricultural products and foodstuffs op.cit. is to be adhered to in relation to the production and processing of vegetable products according to organic methods; for animal products the terms of the Austrian foodstuff code (chapter A8, in particular section B: agricultural products of animal origin, appendix 3.3) apply.
- Adherence to all aid conditions on the total farm area (if a farm consists of main and subsidiary holdings, on the total area of main or subsidiary area(s)), that is, in all grassland, arable, vineyard, commercial fruit, market garden, tree nursery and hop field areas.
- Refraining from use of freely soluble commercial fertilisers and synthetic chemical plant protection methods (according to Reg. 2092/91).
- Refraining from use of freely soluble commercial chloride fertilisers (e.g., potassium chloride).
- Prohibited farming substances may neither be bought, stored nor applied within the holding.
- Erosion protection in viticulture and fruit growing: terracing or a minimum of 10 months' (in any case in winter) mulching (grass mulch, green manuring, covering with straw, bark mulch or other appropriate organic substances) in combination appropriate to climatic conditions.
- Maintenance of landscape elements
- Prohibition on spreading sewage sludge and sewage sludge composts.
- Adherence to a maximum stock level of 2.0 LU/ha UAA

- farm units with more than 90% grassland (excluding alpine areas) must have at least 0.2 roughage LU/ha feeding areas, but at least 1.5 fodder LU/farm. If the animals (e.g. poultry) are kept free-range, then 0.2 LU/ha and 1.5 LU/farm are sufficient.
- Semi-perforated surfaces are prohibited for calves, piglets, lambs, kids and fattening poultry.
- Hay must be offered as roughage consumption when silage feeding
- The aid applicant first registered as an organically cultivated holding must, by 30 April of the year following the year in which the application is made, provide proof of the appropriate knowledge of organic cultivation methods through documentary confirmation of attendance at a relevant training course. The minimum length of the course is 15 hours, which may include up to 5 hours field-study trips.
- Confirmation of recognition as an organically cultivated farm by the provincial governor or his recognised supervisory office is to be submitted with the application.
- If changes to farm buildings are necessary for the fulfilment of the aid conditions, and if the aid applicant is not able to carry these out immediately, a conversion plan must be submitted to the Aid Administration Office setting out what will be built, in which construction and by which date. The construction must be carried out professionally, in adherence to official guidelines and in compliance with approved standards. The building project must demonstrably be initiated within the aid year; the construction work must be completed by the end of the second -- for major construction projects, the fourth -- year following the aid year.

Premium

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 4,500- ATS/ha | arable land |
| 3,000- ATS/ha | subsidizable grassland |
| 6,000- ATS/ha | vegetable-growing areas |
| 10,000- ATS/ha | vineyard, commercial fruit, market garden, tree nursery and hop-field areas. |
- On proof of EU-recognised inspection, the premium rises by 500- ATS/ha UAA for the first 10 ha UAA.
 - No premiums are granted for set-aside areas after crop compensation.
 - Should a premium be granted under measure 1.5 (reduction of livestock density) be granted, no premium can be granted for arable areas declared as main forage areas according to marketing order.

Measure: 1.2 Refraining from the use of specified yield-raising farming substances on arable and grassland (total farm)

Grounds of measure

Refraining from the extensive use of easily soluble commercial fertilisers and synthetic chemical crop-protection substances on all areas of the holding demands a form of cultivation that approaches that of organic farming and gives rise to decisive cuts in income. The level of the premium is set at two thirds the premium level for organic farming methods. Transfer to organic farming is possible at any time.

Measure 1.2.1 Category 1 - arable land, grassland

Object of aid

The cultivation of the total arable and grassland area of a holding on which the employment of specified yield-raising farming materials will be dispensed with.

Aid conditions

- Max. 2.5 LU/ha UAA (until 31.12.1997)

- Max. 2.0 LU/ha UAA (from 01.01.1998).
- Refraining from use of easily soluble commercial fertilisers (Reg. 2092/91); excepting composts from biogenic waste from segregated collections) and refraining from use of synthetic chemical plant protection substances (according to Appendix II of Reg. 2092/91) in all arable (excepting vegetable-growing areas) and grassland areas of the main or subsidiary holding. Treatment of individual plants with synthetic chemical plant protection substances is allowed on grassland areas. Dressing of seeds is permitted.
- Refraining from use of easily soluble chloride-type commercial fertilisers (e.g. potassium chloride).
- Farm units with more than 90% permanent grassland (excluding alpine pasture areas) must have at least 0.2 RGVE forage area, but a minimum of 1.5 RGVE/farm (RGVE = roughage-consuming livestock units). If the animals (e.g. poultry) are being kept free-range, 0.2 stock unit/ha and 1.5 stock unit/farm are sufficient.
- Maintenance of landscape elements.
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge and sewage sludge compost.

Premium:

- 3,000.- ATS/ha arable land
- 2,000.- ATS/ha subsidizable grassland
- Hop fields are counted as arable land
- No premiums are granted for set-aside areas after crop compensation.
- Should a premium be granted under measure 2.1.5 (reduction of livestock density) be granted, no premium can be granted for arable areas declared as main forage areas according to marketing order.

Measure 1.2.2 Category 2 - fruit, vine and ornamental plant growing

Measure 1.2.2.1 Integrated, controlled fruit growing

Object of aid

The cultivation of the total fruit area of a holding (strawberry crops do not come under fruit growing for the purposes of this guideline), according to the guideline for integrated, controlled fruit growing.

Aid conditions

- Adherence to the guidelines for integrated, controlled fruit growing
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge or sewage sludge composts

Premium

7,000.- ATS/ha

1,000.- ATS/ha supplement for refraining from use of herbicides

Measure 1.2.2.2 Integrated, controlled viticulture

Object of aid:

The cultivation of the total vine growing area of a holding according to the guideline for integrated, controlled production in viticulture.

Aid conditions:

- Adherence to the guidelines for integrated, controlled production in viticulture
- Prohibition on spreading sewage sludge and sewage sludge composts.

Premium:

8,000.- ATS/ha.

Measure 1.2.2.3 Integrated production in ornamental plant growing

Object of aid:

The cultivation of the total ornamental plant growing area of a holding

Aid conditions:

- Adherence to the guidelines for integrated production in ornamental plant growing
- Prohibition on spreading sewage sludge and sewage sludge composts

Premium:

5,000.- ATS/ha

Measure 1.3: Extensive grassland cultivation in traditional areas

Grounds of measure

In some parts of Austria, the non-use of silage extracts is traditional. Silage extracts would, however, allow higher productivity and higher livestock density. In these traditional regions, the extensive form of fodder production should be maintained and any build-up of livestock restrained through corresponding premium incentives.

Object of aid:

The cultivation of the total forage crop area of a farm refraining from intensification in grassland

Aid conditions:

- The farm must already have been cultivated in the 1994 financial year within the meaning of the aid conditions.
- The farm area must be in a specified area
- Litter meadows, rough grazing, alpine pasture and mountain meadows are not

- considered in the context of this support.
- Max. 2.5 livestock unit/ha UAA (until 31.12.1997)
 - Max. 2.0 livestock unit/ha UAA (from 01.01.1998).
 - At least 0.5 RGVE (roughage consuming livestock unit)/ha forage crop area.
 - Refraining from silage preparation and feeding.
 - No area-wide use of synthetic chemical crop-protection substances
 - Retention of extensive forms of cultivation.
 - Prohibition on spreading sewage sludge and sewage sludge composts.
 - For administrative reasons, a minimum forage area or a minimum stock level per farm can be prescribed, or the premium can be granted solely according to grassland area.

Premium:

2,500.- ATS/ha subsidizable fodder crop area.

Extensive grassland use specific to individual areas

Measure 2.1: Adherence to mowing restrictions

Object of aid:

The cultivation of grassland areas

Aid conditions:

- Only in the scope of projects approved by Provincial law
- Refraining from use of easily soluble commercial fertiliser (composts from biogenic waste from segregated collections excepted) and from use of crop-protection agents according to Reg. 2092/91; treatment of individual plants is permitted.
- Refraining from use of chloride-type easily soluble commercial fertilisers (e.g. potassium chloride).
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge and sewage sludge compost.
- Mowing times are to be set with the agreement of the nature protection authorities.

Premiums:

Stage 1:	up to 2,500.- ATS/ha subsidizable grassland area.
Stage 2:	up to 3,500.- ATS/ha subsidizable grassland area.

Special landscape-conservation forms of cultivation and assurance of genetic diversity

Measure 3.1: Keeping and rearing endangered breeds

Object of aid:

Keeping of pure-bred cattle, sheep, goats and horses according to breed list

Aid conditions:

- Keeping of pure-bred animals of species listed in the EU-approved breed list. A regionally specific qualification of the breed list is possible.
- Keeping a herd book or pedigree record by an organisation recognised by the Chamber of Agriculture.
- Confirmation of the breed and numbers by the responsible breeders' association or, if none exists, by the responsible Chamber of Agriculture.
- Mating only with a pure-bred sire of the same breed.

Premium:

2,000.- ATS per animal and year for cows, serviced mares, breeding bulls, and stud-horses from the age of 3 years.

300.- ATS per animal and year for ewes, she-goats, rams and he-goats from the age of 1 year respectively.

Measure 3.2: Regional projects promoting extensive methods and individual ecological measures

Object of aid:

Aid conditions:

- Withdrawal of yield-enhancing farming agents and maintenance of an extensive form of cultivation.
- Creation and conservation of valuable natural biotopes.
- Protection and conservation of bodies of water.
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge and sewage sludge compost.

Premium:

- To be stated in the respective projects.

Regional projects:

- "Ecopoints - Lower Austria"
- "Soil-improvement schemes"

Measure 3.3: Mowing of slopes and mountain meadows

This scheme is intended to ensure the existing extensive use of grassland and the continuing existence of a traditional cultural landscape. The mowing of slopes and mountain meadows makes an important contribution to the maintenance of the landscape and thus the discontinuance of the use of these areas

would impact on tourism as well as protection against natural dangers such as landslips, avalanches and rock falls. This support is also intended to provide compensation for the great difficulty of cultivation.

Object of aid:

The cultivation of mountain meadows and sloping meadows

Aid conditions:

- At least one mowing and harvesting of slopes per year.
- At least one mowing of mountain meadows every 2 years.
- The area must be mapped

Premium: (according to gradient)

Slopes

- 2,000.- ATS/ha mowed area for 25% - 35% gradient
- 3,000.- ATS/ha mowed area for 35% - 50% gradient
- 4,000.- ATS/ha mowed area for over 50% gradient
- The allocation of areas to the gradient stages according to their actual gradient is binding from the completion of the Austria-wide mapping (hill-farm land register).

Measure 3.4: Alpine pasturing premium and herding supplement

Object of aid:

The cultivation alpine pasture areas usable by grazing animals (identified in the provincial legal regulations) and the tending of grazing animals by herding personnel.

Aid conditions:

- Conservation of alpine pasture areas.
- No easily soluble commercial fertiliser and no area-wide synthetic crop protection (according to EU Reg. 2092/91); individual plant control excepted.
- The alpine pasturing must last a minimum of 60 days.
- A continuously present labour force on the alpine pasture is necessary in order to qualify for the herding supplement.
- On administrative grounds, a minimum stock level per alpine pasture is envisaged.
- The supplement is granted for max. 26 LU dairy cows or for max. 70 LU other animals per herdsman

Premium:

- Alpine pasturing premium:
 - 1,200.- ATS/ha subsidizable dairy cow pasture area,
 - 700.- ATS/ha alpine pasture area grazed with other animals.
- Herding supplement:
 - 800.- ATS/ha subsidizable dairy cow pasture area
 - 300.- ATS/ha alpine pasture area grazed with other animals.

Measure 3.5: Upkeep of ecologically valuable areas (e.g. dry grassland, water meadows, scattered orchards)

Object of aid:

The cultivation of agricultural areas of special ecological value (e.g. dry grassland, water meadows, scattered orchards, rare plant communities, larch meadows).

Aid conditions:

- Only within the framework of projects approved by Provincial law.
- With the agreement of the nature protection authorities.
- Refraining from use of easily soluble commercial fertilisers (composts from biogenic wastes from segregated collections excepted) and refraining from use of synthetic chemical plant protection agents (according to Reg. 2092/91); the spreading of farmyard manure is geared to protection purposes.

- Scattered orchards:
 - * Min. trunk height 160 cm
 - * Clumps of trees: countable area to the furthest extent of the crown end; minimum number of trees - 5.
 - * Scattered orchards: at least 30 trees/ha.
 - * Rows of trees: distance between trees in the row, max. 30m; minimum number of trees: 5; countable area: length of row of trees x 5.
- The minimum size of individual areas (0.1 ha) and the minimum participating area of 0.3 per measure, formulated in the general aid conditions, do not apply.

Premium:

- up to 7,500.- ATS/ha.
- Owing to the varying natural circumstances, the actual premium level will be determined by the authorised office within the project in agreement with the nature protection authorities.

Measure 3.6: Growing of rare agricultural crops

Object of aid:

The growing of regionally valuable crops threatened with extinction

Aid conditions:

- Growing of strains
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge and sewage sludge compost.
- Strains and required quantities according to a Government catalogue of requirements, from which the Provincial governments for their part produce a catalogue of requirements with the relevant strains and areas they require.

Premium:

4,000.- ATS/ha.

New structures and conservation of landscape elements

Measure 5.1: Landscape elements and biotope-development areas with 20-year set-aside

Object of aid:

To use areas suited for long-term ecological objectives (creation and maintenance of biotope reserves; schemes for protection of bodies of water), for the creation of landscape elements (hedges, copses, protected planted areas, biotopes, etc.)

Aid applicant

Project leaders may also be considered, additional to the natural persons, legal entities and associations in agriculture and forestry, when they guarantee the certified execution of the project.

Aid conditions:

- Only within the framework of agri-environmental projects approved in Provincial law.
- The areas must be maintained for at least 20 years according to the conditions.
- Agreement with the water management authorities and nature protection authorities.
- Not more than 30% of the area of each farm may be supported; areas over this proportion may be subsidised from Provincial Government funds.
- Use of the growth is prohibited.
- Plans of the areas are to be registered.
- No synthetic chemical plant protection (according to EU Reg. 2092/91), no use of fertiliser, no burning off.
- Existing landscape elements to be left in place throughout the holding.
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge and sewage sludge compost.
- The minimum size of individual areas (0.1 ha) and the minimum participating area of 0.3 per measure, formulated in the general aid conditions, do not apply.

Premium:

Arable land	10,000.- ATS/ha.
Grassland	9,000.- ATS/ha subsidizable grassland

Measure 4.1: Provision of areas for ecological objectives

Object of aid:

Areas suited to ecological improvement of the land to be maintained and utilised for the creation of ecologically valuable areas such as wild-plant borders and ruderal plant areas.

Aid applicant

Project leaders may also be considered, additional to the natural persons, legal entities and associations in agriculture and forestry, when they guarantee the certified execution of the project.

Aid conditions

- Only within the framework of agri-environmental projects approved in Provincial law.
The ratio of areas in this measure must amount to at least 3.0% of the project area; the project area is sum of the agricultural area of all holdings participating in the project.
- Planting takes place according to ecological criteria.
- Minimum width of areas, 5 metres.
- A maximum of 30% of the area for each holding may be subsidised; areas beyond this proportion may be subsidised by the Provinces out of their own funds.
- Plans of the areas are to be registered.
- Adherence to the maintenance conditions laid down by the Aid Administration Office.
- No synthetic chemical plant protection (according to EU Reg. 2092/91) no use of fertiliser, no burning off.
- Use of the growth is prohibited
- Existing landscape elements to be left in place throughout the holding.
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge and sewage sludge compost.
- The minimum size of individual areas (0.1 ha) and the minimum participating area of 0.3 per measure, formulated in the general aid conditions, do not apply.

Premium:

5,800.- ATS/ha arable land
4,800.- ATS/ha subsidizable grassland

Measure 4.2: Provision of areas for ecological objectives on selected cyclical set-aside areas

Object of aid:

Areas suited to ecological improvement of the land in cyclical set-aside areas to be maintained and utilised for the creation of ecologically valuable areas such as wild-plant borders and ruderal plant areas.

Aid applicant

Project leaders may also be considered, additional to the natural persons, legal entities and associations in agriculture and forestry, when they guarantee the certified execution of the project.

Aid conditions

- Only within the framework of agri-environmental projects approved in Provincial law.
- Only on selected cyclical set-aside areas. The ratio of areas in this measure must amount to at least 3.0% of the project area; the project area is sum of the agricultural area of all holdings participating in the project.
- Planting takes place according to ecological criteria.
- Minimum width of areas, 5 metres.
- A maximum of 30% of the area for each holding may be subsidised; areas beyond this proportion may be subsidised by the Provinces out of their own funds.
- Use of the growth is prohibited
- Plans of the areas are to be registered.
- Adherence to the maintenance conditions laid down by the Aid Administration

Office.

- No synthetic chemical plant protection (according to EU Reg. 2092/91), no use of fertiliser, no burning off.
- Existing landscape elements to be left in place throughout the holding.
- Prohibition on spreading of sewage sludge and sewage sludge compost.
- The minimum size of individual areas (0.1 ha) and the minimum participating area of 0.3 per measure, formulated in the general aid conditions, do not apply.

Premium:

1,200.- ATS/ha additional to CAP set-aside premiums.