



Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Department for Direct Payments

**Examples of sustainable agriculture in
wetlands
(POLAND)**



Agri-environment-climate measure (AEC)

Source of financing: RDP 2014-2020 – CAP Pillar II

Polish agriculture is characterised by its **duality**. Traditional extensive farming, which is particularly important for the preservation of environmentally valuable areas is accompanied by a tendency to intensify the production.

Therefore, under AEC, there are 7 different packages (including **environmental packages**), divided into variants.



Agri-environment-climate measure

The essence of the measure is to **promote practices contributing to sustainable land management** (in order to protect the soil, **water**, climate), conservation of valuable natural habitats and endangered bird species, landscape diversity and conservation of endangered genetic resources of crops and farm animals, as well as conservation of landscape diversity.

The commitments last for **5 years**.

Beneficiaries undertake it **voluntarily**.



Agri-environment-climate measure for wetlands

There are no measures directly dedicated to wetlands, but many packages affect wetlands indirectly. As a part of **environmental packages, semi-natural wetland ecosystems are protected.** There are also variants dedicated to **peatlands.**

The „horizontal” requirement, i.e. applicable in all packages of the AEC measure, supporting the preservation of natural values of agricultural areas, is **to maintain** the area of permanent grasslands and landscape elements not used in agriculture, being **wildlife refuges.**



Environmental packages of AEC

There are two environmental packages:

- ❖ Valuable habitats and endangered birds species in the Natura 2000 areas
- ❖ Valuable habitats outside the Natura 2000 areas

Purpose: to restore or maintain traditional and extensive use of meadows and pastures.

The support is provided, among others, to:

- o Wet Molinion litter meadows
- o Alluvial Cnidion meadows and salt marshes
- o Semi-natural wet meadows
- o Peat bogs
- o Bird breeding habitats (corncrake; black-tailed godwit - common snipe, common redshank, lapwing; aquatic warbler; great snipe)



Practical examples



Example 1

Package: Valuable habitats and endangered birds species in the N2000

Variant: Variably wet Molinion litter meadows

Requirements:

- a) The obligation to have an **agri-environmental plan**;
- b) The obligation to have **nature documentation prepared by the expert** (botanist/ornithologist);
- c) The obligation to **maintain** all the permanent grasslands and landscape elements not used for agricultural purposes, being wildlife refuges.



Prohibited activities:

- a) ploughing, rolling, using sewage sludge, under-sowing and mechanical destruction of the soil structure;
- b) smoothing in the period:
 - from 1 April to 1 September on the lowland areas (up to 300 m above sea level),
 - from 15 April to 1 September on the upland and mountain areas (above 300 m above sea level);
- c) application of plant protection products except for the selective and local destruction of onerous invasive species with the use of appropriate equipment (e.g. weed wipers);



d) creation of new, expansion and renewal of existing **melioration systems**, except for construction of devices designed to adjust the level of waters using the existing melioration systems, according to the requirements of species/habitats which are the object of protection in the package, if such activities are described in detail by the expert in nature documentation;

e) storing of biomass **among clumps of trees and bushes, in ditches, ravines and other land lows** (located on the agricultural parcels declared in the payment claim).



Mandatory requirements for the mowing usage:

- a) ban on: fertilisation, liming, harrowing;
- b) the frequency of mowing: **one mowing every year or every two years** (determined by an expert in nature documentation);
- c) the mowing period - from **1 September to 31 October** (in justified cases, from 15 to 30 June, e.g. in situations the invasive plant species occur in the associations, specified by an expert in nature documentation);
- d) the obligation to harvest and **remove the cut biomass** (including ban on leaving crushed biomass); hay should be removed from the agricultural parcel or arranged in heaps, haystacks or hayricks **within 2 weeks** from mowing;



e) **leaving fragments unmown: 15-20%** of the area of the agricultural parcel. In two subsequent mowings (performed in at an interval of year or two year), **other parts should remain unmown;**

f) for the agricultural parcels **not exceeding 0.5 ha** it is acceptable to resign from leaving unmown areas and to mow the entire agricultural parcel every year, if an expert accepts such a possibility in nature documentation;

g) it is acceptable to **graze after mowing**, but no earlier than in the period from 1 September to 15 October at the stock density of **up to 0.5 LU/ha** of permanent grasslands covered by the support, if an expert accepts such a possibility in nature documentation.



Example 2

Package: *Valuable habitats and endangered birds species in the N2000*

Variant: *Protection of hatching habitats of aquatic warbler**

Requirements and prohibited activities – see *Example 1* (the same)

Mandatory requirements for the mowing and mowing-grazing usage:

- a) ban on fertilisation, ban on liming and ban on harrowing;
- b) ban on using any agri-technical treatments from 1 April to the term of the first mowing;

**aquatic warbler - protected species of wetland bird*



c) Mowing:

- **one mowing a year or**
- **mowing of the whole area of the agricultural parcel every 2 years** (only if an expert accepts such a possibility in nature documentation)

in the period from **15 August to 15 February** of the following year;

d) in the case of annual mowing, **leaving fragments unmown: from 15 to 85%** of the agricultural parcel area (percentage of the unmown area determined by an expert in nature documentation). **Different fragments should be left unmown for two following years;**



e) obligation to harvest and **remove cut biomass** (including ban on leaving crushed biomass); hay should be removed from the agricultural parcel or arranged in heaps, haystacks or hayricks **within 2 weeks** from mowing;

f) **pasturing is acceptable** before or after mowing, within the period from 15 May to 31 July at the stock density of **up to 0.5 LU/ha** of permanent grasslands covered by the support, and from 1 August to 31 October at the stock density of animals **up to 1LU/ha** of permanent grasslands covered by the support, if an expert accepts and substantiates such a possibility in nature documentation.



The future...





Wetlands and the CAP after 2020

The European Commission has proposed increased environmental and climate ambition.

In relation to wetlands and peatlands EC propose its **protection** as a mandatory element of new **enhanced conditionality**, which combines the current greening and cross-compliance requirements (enhanced, because the level of requirements will be more ambitious).

Conditionality will apply to beneficiaries of direct (I CAP Pillar) and RDP area payments (II CAP Pillar). In case of non-compliance the reduction of payments is predicted.

Conditionality will be a **baseline** for additional, voluntary RDP measures.



Wetlands and the CAP after 2020

Extract from ANNEX III of the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council *establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (...)*:

Areas	Main Issue	Requirements and standards		Main objective of the standard
Climate and environment	Climate change (mitigation of and adaptation to)	GAEC* 2	<u>Appropriate protection of wetland and peatland</u>	Protection of carbon-rich soils

*GAEC: Standards for good agricultural and environmental condition of land.

Member States are to define **wetlands** and **peatlands**, designate its boundaries, and define the "appropriate protection".



Wetlands and the CAP after 2020

The increased ambition of environmental and climate action will also apply to II Pillar interventions:

- ❖ Environmental, climate and other management commitments (Article 65 of the above mentioned proposal for a Regulation)
- ❖ Area-specific disadvantages resulting from certain mandatory requirements (i.a.: agricultural areas included in river basin management plans pursuant to Directive 2000/60/EC) (Article 67 of the above mentioned proposal for a Regulation)



Wetlands and the CAP after 2020

At present, Member States are discussing general principles that will apply to the first and second Pillar, so the final shape of the above concept has not yet been specified.

Ideas from International Training Course „Sustainable Agriculture in Wetlands” are welcome!



Thank You For Your Attention!

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