



## **F.2: Attendance at the international conference - "CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MULTIFUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF GRASSLANDS"**

**Date: 15.5.-17.5.2019**  
**Conference venue: Ptuj**

### **Report from the event**

**Prepared by:** Nina Erbida (ZRSVN OE CE) (summarized of Klemen Kamenik and Monika Podgorelec (ZRSVN OE MB))

**Attendance:** see attendance list (15. 5., 16. 5. and 17. 5.)

### **Report of the event:**

The international conference titled "Challenges and opportunities in multifunctional management of grasslands" was held between 15. and 17. of May, within the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS. The purpose of the conference was to encourage long term multifunctional grassland management, networking of experts and to exchange knowledge and experience about sustainable grassland management, including all the challenges of modern farm practises. **Over 130 people from 6 countries attended the conference.**



Photo 1: Group photo of participants from the second day of the conference "Challenges and opportunities in multifunctional management of grasslands".

**15th of May 2019:** On the first day a field trip was organized in the Haloze region, one of the project sub-areas, where the conference was held. The purpose was to introduce participants to coultural landscape, biodiversity and to present the field work being done in this project area. Despite the rainy weather 39 people attended the excursion and had an oportunity to get an impression about the biological and cultural riches of the Haloze region. Two key points were presented to our visitors in Velika Varnica: a) a model case of HT 6210 (\*), an area of dry grassland habitat with the most typical plant species structure and b) 17 ha area in Čerinovo, which was bought and rented in the



project, with the purpose of overgrowth removal and long term management. The presentations were held in cooperation with Ethnographic museum Velika Varnica, who presented traditional Haloze tools for grassland and traditional orchards management. Dr. Sonja Škornik from Department of biology, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Monika Podgorelec from Regional Unit Maribor, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation led an expert excursion on the grasslands where participants could also observe five species of native orchids.

After that a visit to Bradač farm was organized, which is one of a few in Haloze region which is registered to process milk from livestock fed with hay from dry grasslands. They can sell their high quality goat milk and products from it at a higher price, because of the added value. Because they are participating in the project they were able to expanded the area used to feed their goats. This was achieved with overgrowth removal and new grazing equipment. Their traditional orchard was also renewed in the project. The tour of the farm to review the results of actions taken during the project ended with the teasing of some of their delicious food.

The last stop of the day was a Tourist farm Pungračič in Drenovec, which is situated on the border between Slovenia and Croatia. They have 14 ha of vineyards which includes 45.000 vines and works as their basic activity. They also offer food and drink from their own and other local production. Our day ended here with excellent homemade Haloze feast.



Photo 2: Group photo of conference excursion in Haloze participants.

**16th of Maj 2019:** The second day of the conference took place in Grand hotel Primus in Ptuj. Welcome speeches were held by dr. Marko Maver, State Secretary from Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, mag. Hrvoje Teo Oršanič, director of Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, mag. Marjeta Bizjak, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and Marjan Kolarič, the mayor of Ptuj municipality. Dr. Brendan Dunford had the first lecture of the conference, about a program of sustainable farm management in the area of national park Burren in north-west of Ireland. He presented good practises of result based evaluating and payment system, which brought good results in suitable farming practises on grasslands in Burren area. In the second session of the conference Karel Fajmon from Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic presented efforts and approaches to restoring species rich grasslands at the area of White Carpathians.



Photo 3-5: Introduction speeches at the opening of the conference 16. 5. 2019: – dr. Marko Maver, State Secretary Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, mag. Marjeta Bizjak, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.





Răzvan Popa from Fundația ADEPT, located in Transylvania, Romania, lectured about his experience in working with farming communities. He focused on sustainable rural development and the influence of different farm practices on conservation of species diversity in farmland areas. The last lecture in the second session was held by Dubravka Kranjčević from Nature park Žumberak - Samoborsko gorje, Croatia. She had a presentation on their experiences with the challenges in grasslands biodiversity conservation in protected area of their park. The main problem is management abandonment which is the result of population aging.

After lunch there was the third session which included four lecturers presenting their experience with grasslands in Slovenia. Dr. Nika Debeljak from Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, the conference organizer and project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS leader, presented details of the project, its content and the work that has already been done. At the beginning of the project, in the end of 2015, 163 farms committed themselves to sustainably manage 570 ha of species rich grasslands on four project sub-areas (Haloze, Pohorje, Gorjanci, Kum). There was a lot of interest among listeners about the result based payment system (KOP), which was first proposed in Slovenia within the project. Presentations about maintenance, conservation and efficient management of species rich grasslands in two Slovenian natural parks, Kozjansko Regional Park (director Mojca Kunst) and Goričko Nature Park Public Institute (Gregor Domanjko) followed. In both parks funds for concrete actions for grassland conservation come from projects. The formal part of the day was held by dr. Janko Verbič, Agricultural Institute of Slovenia. He had an interesting lecture about long term effects from fertilization of karst grasslands on diversity of plant species and the amount and quality of hay production for livestock food. An important discovery during their research between 2000 and 2018 was that the number of species on grasslands declines with nitrogen input. On the other hand the number of species did not statistically differ between grasslands that were not fertilized and those that were fertilized with phosphorus and potassium. Considering farming and nature conservation interests, which generally oppose each other, fertilizing with phosphorus and potassium is the most appropriate approach.



Photo 6-7: The lecture of the conference organizer and project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS leader dr. Nika Debeljak, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation (left) and dr. Janko Verbič, Agricultural Institute of Slovenia (right).



**17th of Maj 2019:** On the third and last day of the conference, the lectures were focused on experiences in working with farmers and their key role in conservation of diverse grasslands and orchards. Either through result based payments and monitoring indicators for conservation purposes or with personal view and experiences of ecological farmer Boštjan Kosec, leader of the project »Seneno meso in seneno mleko« from Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia. Wolfgang Suske from the company Suske consulting and Daniel Bogner, an independent consultant for biodiversity, presented experiences, lessons and conclusions about result based payments from Austria. The first one pointed out that at the beginning there is a lot of work and time needed to establish result based payments. Farmers need to be taught how to recognize indicators of good management and they need to be trusted to make the right decisions about management of their land. Than success is guaranteed. On examples from a few Austria projects Bogner showed that training farmers on recognizing the meaning of biodiversity is the key step in conserving extensive grasslands in the future, despite modern trends in farming. Dr. Sonja Škornik presented an example of establishing indicators for dry grasslands from the project LIFE TO GRASSLANDS. Janez Gačnik of »Zavod Jabolko« described the meaning of biodiversity for traditional orchards.

In the last session there was a lot of talk also about the meaning of grasslands as a developmental opportunity to produce and market products as a way to support farming in areas where it is difficult to farm. In accordance with that a visit to a traditional event „Specialities of slovene farms“ (<http://www.dobroteslovenskihmetij.si/>) was organized. The event has a long tradition of evaluation exhibitions of Slovenian farm specialties.

The following organizations networked at the conference:

LIFE projects:

- o BURREN LIFE: Farming for Conservation in the Burren (LIFE04NAT/IE/000125)
- o LIFE Butterflies CZ-SK: Integrated protection of rare butterfly species of non-forest habitats in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (LIFE09 NAT/CZ/000364)
- o STIPA: Tarnava Mare SCI: Saving Transylvania's Important Pastoral Ecosystems (LIFE09 NAT/RO/000618)
- o Vzdrževanje in ohranjanje visokih suhih travnikov na Vetrniku in Oslici (LIFE00 NAT/SLO/007223)

other projects:

- o Grassland restoration in the White carpathian mountains
- o Gorički travniki: Učinkovito upravljanje z ekstenzivnimi travniki na območju Natura 2000 Goričko (Programa Finančnega mehanizma EGP 2009-2014)
- o Gorička krajina: Vzdrževanje kmetijske krajine za ptice in metulje na Goričkem (Operativni programa za izvajanje Evropske kohezijske politike za obdobje izvajanja 2014-2020)
- o Designing a results-based agri-environment payment scheme for Southern Transylvania – EC; DG Env
- o Result based Payments in Agri-Environment program of Austria (The Austrian results-based nature conservation plan, Austrian Agri-Environmental Programme - Ergebnisorientierter Naturschutzplan, ENP; ÖPUL).



- o MERIT - Result-oriented Measures for Biodiversity in Mountain Farming (proejct »Merit based income from sustainable land management in mountain farming« MERIT, RURAGRI programme; 7th EU Framework Research Programme (FP 7, CA 235175)
- o Austrian Biodiversity Monitoring,



Photo 8-11: Highlights from the conference in Ptuj.