



# RUR@L

EN RD Newsletter

October **EN** 2010

# NEWS

## EN RD REPORT

### Rural Development Days at the Ploughing Championships in Ireland

Around 182,000 people made their way to County Kildare, Ireland for the National and European Ploughing Championships, from 21– 23 September. The event included a series of workshops hosted by the European Commission with the assistance of the EN RD Contact Point. Rural Development projects were presented on the themes of bioenergy, business creation and development and transnational cooperation regarding energy projects. Organic farming took centre stage on September 23rd, when an entire day was devoted to the subject. [Click here](#) for further information.

(Photo above courtesy of NPA, Ireland.)

### Ceremony for the Award of Village Renewal Prizes

The European Village Renewal Awards Ceremony was held in Sand in Taufers, South Tyrol, Italy, from 23-25 September. The awards ceremony, held every two years, is organised by the European Association for Rural Development, an Austrian-led NGO, which works to promote village renewal initiatives in Europe. This year's award was based on the theme 'New Energy for Strong Togetherness' and was won by the community of Langenegg/Vorarlberg, Austria, who impressed the international judging panel with a comprehensive range of integrated village development projects. The European Commission was represented at the event by Mr. Antonis Constantinou, director of Rural Development Programmes II – Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

### New Brochure on EAFRD Funded Projects

A new brochure entitled, 'The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Examples of Projects' has been published on the EN RD website. The first issue of the brochure highlights examples from the RDP Projects Database (previously known as PIKSE) with a focus on interesting and innovative projects which are as informational as they are inspiring. The development of the RDP Projects Database itself is proceeding step-by-step. As the NRNs collect project examples for inclusion in the database, development work is also well underway on the final database, which will be hosted on the EN RD website. [Click here](#) to download the brochure.

## POLICY BRIEF

### Semi Subsistence Farming Seminar Highlights Key Issues

The small farm debate has taken on special significance with the last two enlargements of 2004 and 2007, more than tripling the number of subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers to 11 million in the EU-27. As testimony to mounting interest in this area, some 140 people attended a recent seminar entitled 'Semi-subsistence farming in the EU: current situation and future prospects', in Sibiu, Romania, on October 13-15.

A principal aim of the seminar was to assess the current situation and policies directed towards semi-subsistence farms across the EU. "These farmers face particular challenges, as a considerable amount of their production is for self-consumption and so they are often not integrated into agricultural and/or product markets," said Sophia Davidova, Reader in European Agricultural Policy, University of Kent, who wrote the main background paper for the event. The seminar focused on the on-going debate about the role of small and semi-subsistence farms as providers of food to poor households, suppliers of environmental services, contributors to the diversification of the rural economy and guardians of cultural traditions in rural areas.

Closing the seminar, Mr. Dacian Cioloş, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, praised the value of these farms and stressed that the Common

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**Dacian Cioloş**, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development



Agricultural Policy after 2013 will support both the diversity and the performance of European agriculture. Referring to the second Pillar of the CAP, he noted that rural development programmes will give more importance to the transfer of know-how, training programmes and the mobilisation of local initiatives. Mr Cioloş also said he envisaged the creation of packages of measures that respond to the specific needs of small farmers or farmers in mountain areas. "I am convinced that as long as small farms are in a position to market their production and contribute to maintaining landscapes and the vitality of rural areas, they must be supported," he said. [Click here](#) for more information.



- **LAG Cooperation Offers:** The searchable database of Leader Cooperation offers has been recently revamped. [Click here](#)
- **Factsheet:** The fact sheet 'Overview of the CAP Health Check and the Economic Recovery Plan – Modification of the RDPs' is **now available**.
- **Climate Change Fiches:** An analysis of ways in which **climate change** is being addressed by RDPs at Member State level has been published.
- **Leader Focus Groups:** Detailed information on the three **Focus Groups** examining the implementation of Leader 2007-2013 is now available.
- **European Evaluation Network for RD:** Three new Working Papers to facilitate the implementation of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework have been published. [Click here](#)

## Transnational Cooperation Takes Centre Stage in Edinburgh

Some 270 delegates from 23 Member States took part in the EU Rural Cooperation Fair held at Murrayfield stadium, in Edinburgh, on 23rd and 24th September, 2010. The event gave participants the opportunity to explore cooperation projects with other countries and to discover what has worked well in other parts of Europe.

Scottish Minister for the Environment, Roseanna Cunningham, welcomed delegates to the event. Jean-Michel Courades from the European Commission – Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development and Ave Bremse from the Estonian National Rural Network presented on the state of play as regards Leader and the analyses made by the Leader Focus Groups, established by the EN RD. Pascale Van Doren from the EN RD Contact Point also presented an overview of the support available to LAGs from the Contact Point.

Six thematic workshops took place at the fair, aimed at exploring opportunities for transnational cooperation. The workshops centred on the following themes: Community Development, Social Issues, Culture, Tourism, the Environment and Economic Development. And there was no shortage of ideas at all workshops.

The 'Community Development' workshop explored issues around the involvement of youth,

community development, renewables and local business. The 'Social Issues' workshop identified possible future projects on language classes; an 'active seniors' programme; and social farming. The workshop on 'Culture' addressed issues including improving cultural services for young people; access to cultural activities in remote areas; and local heritage awareness actions for newcomers. The 'Tourism' workshop focused on themes including the use of water resources and mountain tourism; agri-tourism and local food; and local identity and promotion. The subject of renewable energy was discussed at the 'Environment' workshop, as well as landscape regeneration and farm woodlands. Renewable energy was also a hot topic at the 'Economic Development' workshop, where participants heard about the European Leader Renewable Energy Network.

In general, all workshops highlighted the significant benefits of transnational cooperation, as an opportunity to learn and share ideas, thereby complementing the domestic efforts of the LAGs. So what is the secret to transnational cooperation success? According to the participants at the EU Rural Cooperation Fair: take the time to find the right partner, keep it simple and above all don't give up! [Click here](#) for more information.

## NRN FOCUS

### 10th NRN Meeting in Edinburgh

The 10th NRN meeting was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, on Friday 24th September, in conjunction with the EU Rural Cooperation Fair. The meeting provided attending NRNs with a summary of recent EN RD activity, including an update on the CAP debate, a state of play on Thematic Working Group activities, progress on the NRN self-assessment tool-kit and EN RD communication tools. A detailed overview was also presented on the RDP projects database and NRN Thematic Initiatives on Social Farming, Forestry and Rural Entrepreneurship. [Click here](#).

### Germany hosts conferences on Green Care and Social Farming

The EN RD Contact Point provided information on the NRN social farming initiative, at the final COST Action 866 conference in green care in agriculture, in Witzenhausen, Germany on 24-26 August. Also, linked to this event, the German NRN organised the pre-conference on 'Social farming in Germany and Europe: status quo and future perspectives'. [Click here](#)

### European Rural Days

The Dutch and Walloon Rural Networks will jointly host European Rural Days on the 18th and 19th of November. The event will focus on Environmental Public Goods and Rural Entrepreneurship. To register or to find out more please [click here](#).

## COUNTRY FOCUS

 **Poland** Size: 312,679km<sup>2</sup>  
38.1 million inhabitants

Poland joined the European Union in 2004 and is the 9th largest country in Europe. Rural areas represent 93.4% of the country area, with 60% dedicated to agriculture. There are over 1.81 million farms in Poland with an average size of around 10 ha. Agriculture employs 15.2% of the workforce but contributes less than 4% to the GDP, as almost half of those farms produce mainly for their own consumption. The most important crops are grains, potatoes, rye and sugar beet. Poland has pursued a policy of economic liberalisation since 1990 and today stands out as a success story among transition economies. Since 2004, EU membership and access to EU structural funds have provided a major boost to the economy. Poland's GDP growth was the highest in Europe in 2009 and according to recently revised figures from the European Commission, Poland's economy will also be the fastest growing in the EU, in 2010.



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