

# How Do Stakeholders Perceive Agroforestry in Europe? A Systematic Map



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## Background

- Agroforestry (AF) is growing in popularity and tree planting on farms is widely pushed as a path to net zero
- AF uptake in Europe remains relatively low
- Stakeholder perceptions are important to understand AF uptake
- No systematic review to date on the views of AF stakeholders

**This study creates a systematic map of the existing research on the perspectives of farmers and other stakeholders towards AF.**

## Aims

- Identify perceived benefits, challenges, drivers, barriers and opportunities to AF
- Characterise temporal, spatial, and other elements of the research landscape
- Consider how these perspectives may influence AF decision- and policy-makers

## Methods

SEARCH

Search string with relevant keywords to identify peer-reviewed studies in English since 2017 from Scopus, Web of Science and ProQuest

SCREENING

Criteria for inclusion:

- Population = farmers & relevant stakeholders
- Interventions = practice or transition to AF
- Outcomes = reported perceptions of AF

CODING

Data extracted and thematically coded based on preset and emerging primary, secondary, and tertiary themes

SYNTHESIS & ANALYSIS

Knowledge gaps and clusters identified and relevance to future research and AF practice and policy considered

## Results: Characteristics

- Research is increasing over time
- Studies are concentrated in Western Europe
- Agrosilviculture & agrosilvopasture systems dominate
- Research focuses on farmers (rather than other stakeholders) already practicing AF
- Most research is regional or national in scale
- Lack of demographic or farm-level data
- Methods are primarily surveys & interviews
- Analysis methods are mixed

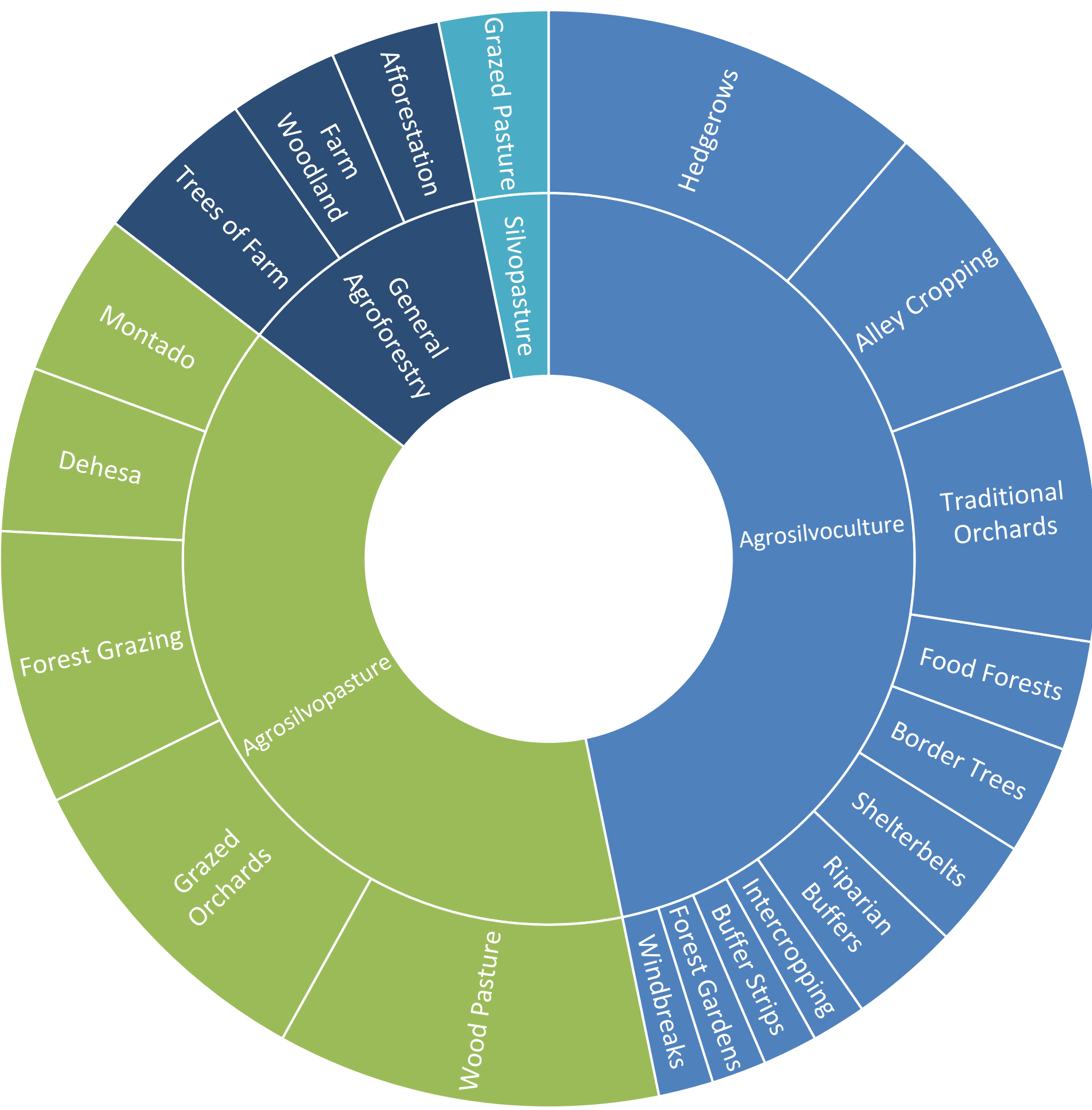


Chart 1. Types of AF systems & practices, based on Nair (1985)

## Results: Themes

### BENEFITS

Environmental (biodiversity, soil, climate)  
Economic (diversify income, quality products)  
Land (aesthetic value)

### CHALLENGES

Practical (cultivation, competition, design)  
Economic (labour, costs, inputs, profitability)

### DRIVERS

Land (multifunctionality, restoration, utilisation)  
Personal (characteristics, attitudes, beliefs)

### BARRIERS

Personal (attitude, mindset)  
Policy (bureaucracy, rigidity)  
Practical (cultivation, competition)  
Economic (productivity, costs, labour)  
Education (lack of knowledge, skills & training)  
Land (ownership, characteristics)

### OPPORTUNITIES

Economic (marketing, branding)  
Practice (site-specific design)  
Education (knowledge exchange/transfer)

## Discussion

- Knowledge is clustered in specific regions and AF systems
- Farmers strongly recognize AF's environmental benefits (particularly for biodiversity & soil)
- Perceived economic and practical challenges are associated with AF
- Less focus on barriers, drivers, and opportunities or social-cultural factors
- Predominant research methods are surveys and interviews, with minimal demographic data collection
- Future studies should expand to regions beyond Western Europe and underrepresented AF systems
- More targeted research on stakeholder perspectives on the drivers, barriers, and opportunities of AF is necessary
- **Participatory, local-level research is needed, involving both farmers and other stakeholders, including those not yet engaged with AF**

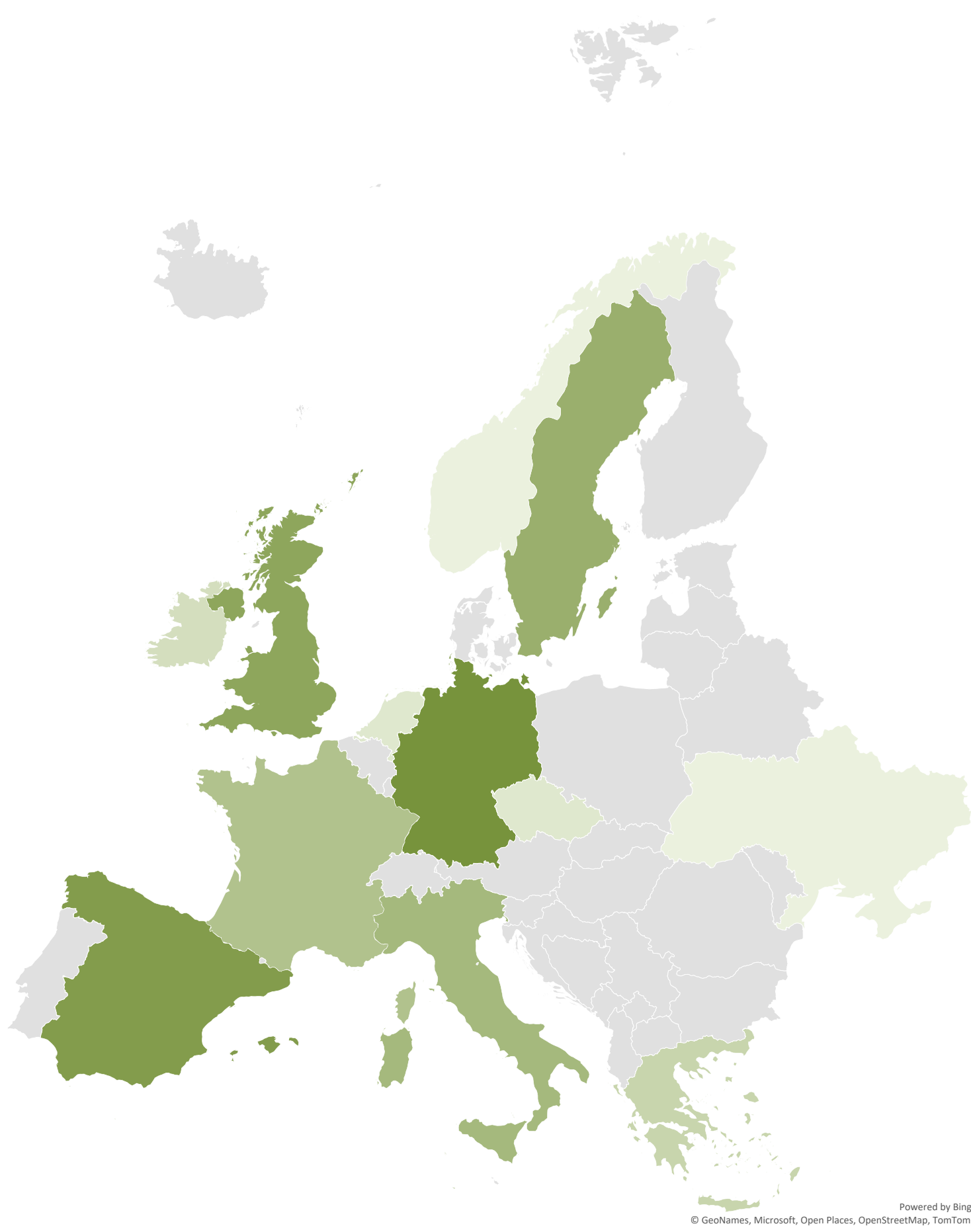
## Limitations

Methodical & project-related limitations include:

- Limited to English-language
- Limited to selected databases
- No results prior to 2017
- No grey literature
- Single author

To provide a robust picture of stakeholder perceptions, the study would benefit from expansion and collaboration. This would allow for a methodically-rigorous screening and data extraction process, a review of the qualitative coding method, and a stronger systematic map overall.

**INVITATION TO COLLABORATE** If you are interested in joining or collaborating on this research, please be in touch.



Map 1. Distribution of studies in Europe (range 1-11)



Figure 1. AF research site in Devon, photo by the author

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