

## **AGROFORESTRY POLICY IN EUROPE**

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Agroforestry is a traditional land use in many parts of the European Union. In some places, for example the silvopastoral Dehesa or Montado systems of Iberia, it continues to thrive. In others, such as the poplar silvoarable systems in the Po Valley of Italy, it is no longer profitable. However profitability of farming and, to a lesser extent, forestry, in the European Union is dictated by levels of Government support. Both silvoarable and silvopastoral systems have significant potential to enhance rural landscapes and livelihoods in the EU, but new plantations are discouraged by the way in which agricultural and forestry regulations are interpreted by Member States.

This paper focuses on common impediments to agroforestry: a) separation of rural planning and support between agriculture and forestry departments; b) exaggerated reduction of agricultural area payments if trees are present in a field; c) non-payment of income-support grants for plantations when only part of the cropped area is tree-covered; d) large pro-rata reductions in tree planting grants when the cost per tree for agroforestry is, in fact, higher than for conventional plantations; e) ineligibility of agroforestry for most 'agri-environmental' payments; e) permanent classification of agroforests as 'forest' land for tax and planning purposes;

Despite these impediments, the EU regulations (e.g. 1257/99) are extremely flexible and allow great scope for 'subsidiarity' of interpretation in different countries and regions. This paper identifies different approaches to agroforestry in the four component parts of the United Kingdom, and in five other European countries, and contrasts these to the more constructive attitude now taken in France.