



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF REGIONAL AFFAIRS  
AND AGRICULTURE

# CAP 2023-2027 policy and trends affecting the grasslands of Estonia

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## Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture

Agricultural policy  
Maintaining grasslands



## Ministry of Climate

Environmental policy  
Restoring grasslands

## Centre of Rural Research and Knowledge

Analysis  
Research

## Environmental Board

Expert assessment  
Making exceptions

## Agricultural Registers and Information Board

Grants subsidies  
Maintains databases

Advisors

Projects

NGOs



**TAGADA** ÕIGLANE  
SISSETULEK



**SUURENDADA**  
KONKURENTSIVÕIMET



**TASAKAALUSTADA**  
SUUTLIKKUS  
TOIDUAINETE  
TARNEAHELAS



**KLIIMAMUUTUSTE**  
VASTASED  
**MEETMED**



**KESKKONNAKAITSE**



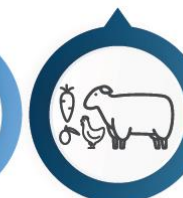
**SÄILITADA**  
MAASTIKUD JA  
BIOLOOGILINE  
MITMEKESISUS



**TOETADA**  
PÕLVKONDADE  
VAHETUST



**ELUJÕULISED**  
MAAPIIRKONNAD



**KAITSTA** TOIDU JA  
TERVISE KVALITEETI

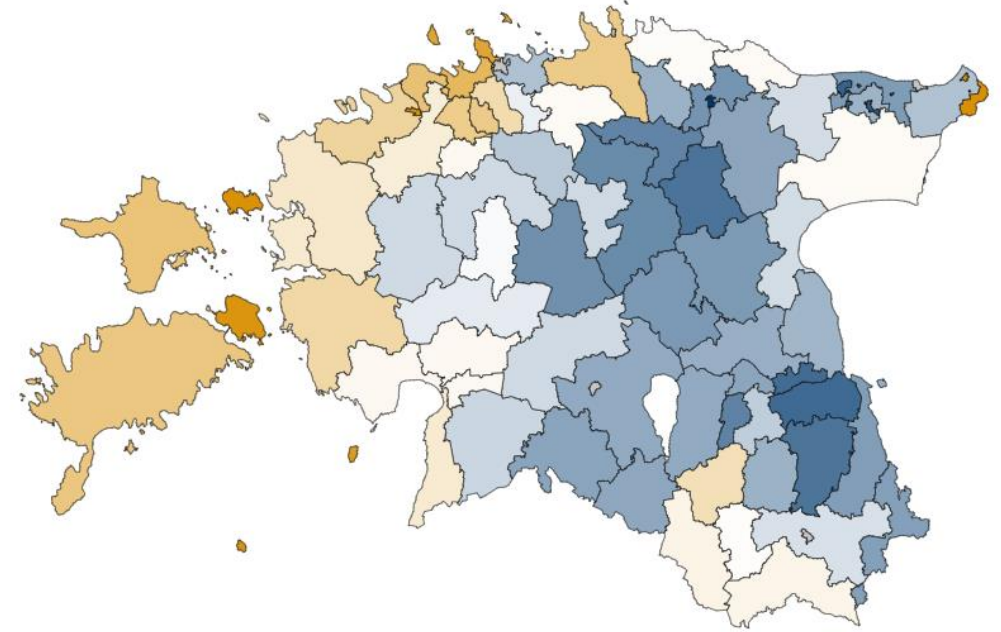


# Negative trends...

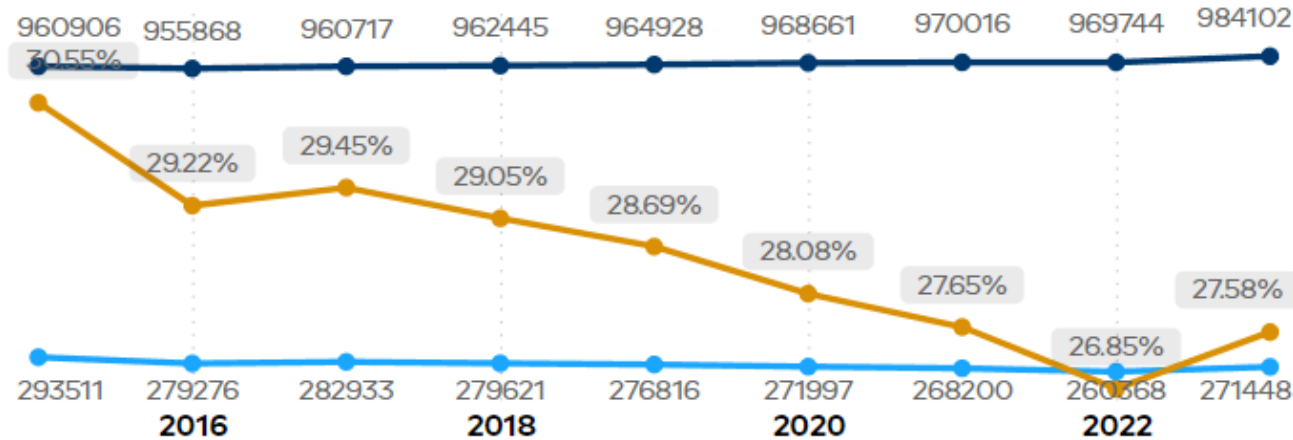
271 448 ha permanent grasslands in 2023 (of which 68 289 ha organic farming). Total arable land 984 102 ha.

Permanent grassland/arable land ratio in 2023. Total overall **27,58%**

Permanent grassland/arable land ratio trend **-5,06%** of 2018 reference value (29,05%).

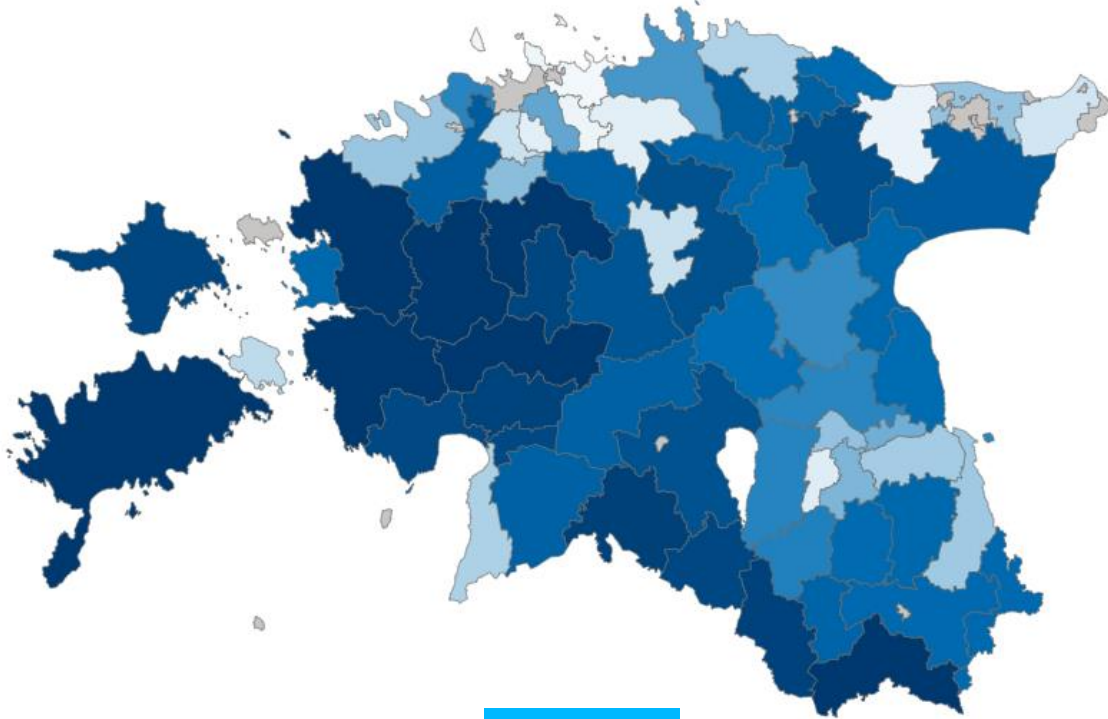


Orange – greater arable land ratio. Source: PRIA



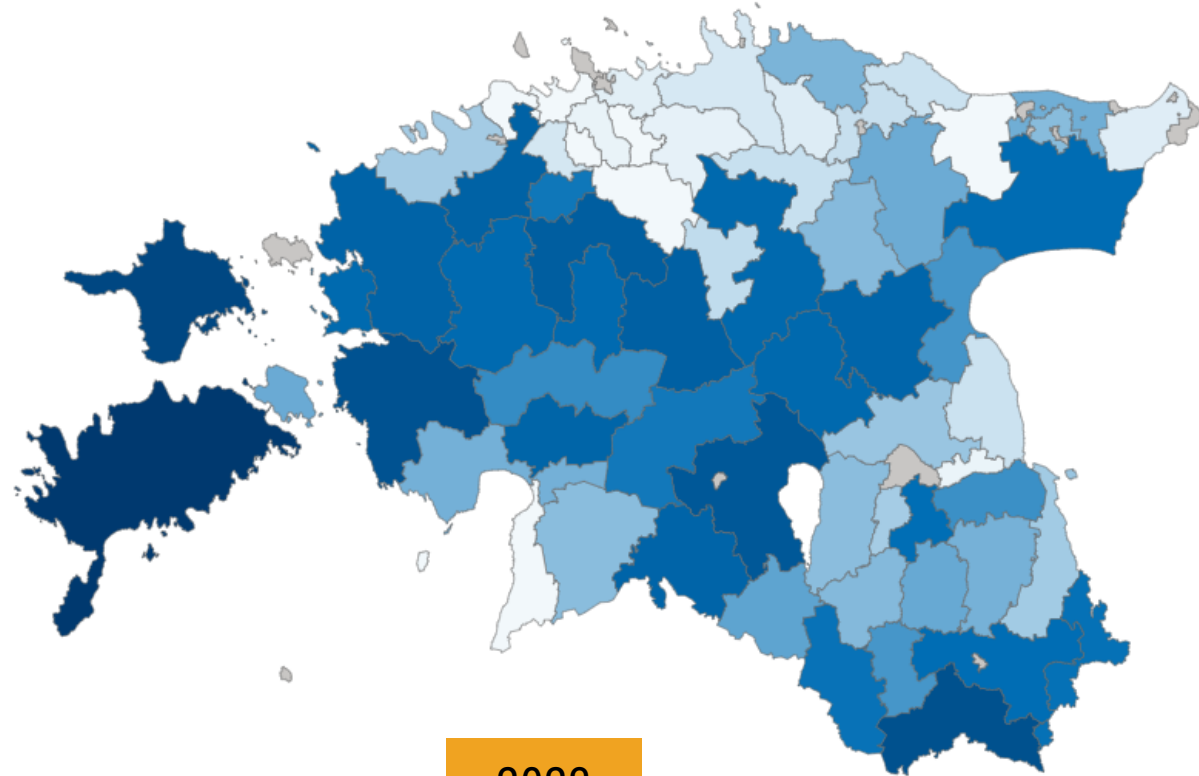


# Negative trends... are not permanent



2022

Permanent grasslands converted to arable land:  
11 701,74 ha



2023

Permanent grasslands converted to arable land:  
5 562,80 ha

Darker blue – more grassland converted. Source: PRIA

## Conditionality

### Comprised of:

- 1) Requirements for maintaining land in good condition (GAEC)
- 2) Statutory management requirements (SMR)

Inspection by the Environmental Board, and Agricultural Registers and Information Board.

## Maintaining land in good condition (GAEC)

### Requirements for grasslands:

- 1) Must maintain permanent grasslands (including in Natura 2000 areas) to prevent greater than 5% decrease in grassland/arable land ratio.
- 2) ...if grassland converted, must replace or re-establish permanent grassland
- 3) No longer exceptions for organic and small farmers (starting from 2023)

## Basic income support

**Level of payment:** determined by Agricultural Registers and Information Board.

**107,77** EUR/ha in 2023

Minimum total area 1 ha.  
Semi-natural grasslands of at least 0,3 ha also eligible.

Grasslands should be maintained by grazing or mowing them at least once every other year.

13 145 applicants;  
Budget 104 523 894 EUR.

## Ecosystem Services

### Requirements:

- 1) Minimum area 1 ha, parcel area at least 0,3 ha
- 2) 60% or 90% of arable land covered by ecosystem services via certain landscape features.

Semi-natural and high nature value grassland function like landscape features – **300 m buffer effect!**

20 EUR/ha for 60% cover

30 EUR/ha for 90% cover

83 342 ha in applications;

Budget 1 870 000 EUR.

## Environmentally Friendly Management

### Requirements:

Aimed mainly at arable land – reducing glyphosate, crop rotation, water protection through reduced fertiliser use, nitrogen uptake via legumes, attending courses...

**Grasslands eligible.** Semi-natural and high nature value grassland subsidies mutually exclusive with this subsidy!

40-50 EUR/ha base payment for grasslands.

622 100 ha in applications (18% less than expected);

Budget 28 295 560 EUR.

## Organic Farming

### Requirements:

Aimed at grasslands grazed with organically farmed livestock. Mandatory courses. Requirements that of organic certification. Compatible with other eco-scheme subsidies.

25-35 EUR/ha with at least 0,2 livestock units per ha.

Expected uptake 75 500 ha

Total budget 22 200 000 EUR

## Soil and water protection

**Requirements:** 0,3+ ha size

**Surface water:** aimed at grasslands near water bodies: no fertiliser, no overgrazing, buffer zones mandatory, no tillage or converting grassland. 110-220 EUR/ha, 4 applicants.

**Ground water:** allowed renewing grassland via direct sowing; allowed harrowing.

Soil samples mandatory.

85-180 EUR/ha, 130 applicants.

**Soil:** aimed at eroded, peat rich soils. No drainage. Minimal tillage. Extra caution on slopes. Harrowing allowed. 70 EUR/ha, 361 applicants.

## Maintaining high nature value grasslands

**Requirements:**

- 1) Minimum 0,3 ha permanent grassland
- 2) Mowing or grazing at least every other year
- 3) No disturbing the soil (tilling etc)
- 4) No fertiliser or plant protection agents

50 EUR/ha

Planned inventory: 27 600 ha  
Of which Natura 2000: 8000 ha

Notified as of November 2023:  
1200 ha



KUIDAS TUNDA ÄRA VÄÄRTUSLIK PÜSIROHUMAA?

Juhend



Püsirohuma on põllumajandusmaa, kus heintaimed on kasvanud vähemalt viis aastat järjest. Uuendamine (kündmine, rohumaasegu külvamine, väetamine) ei katkesta rohuma vanuse arvestamist, kuid vähendab oluliselt ala väärtust ja elurikkust. Püsirohumaal, kus pole pikka aega küntud, väetatud ega rohumaasegu külvatud, kuid mida on pidevalt hooldatud, võib hakata kujunema uuesti looduslik elustik. Sellised kõrge loodusväärtusega püsirohumaad on väga mitmekesised ja moodustavad põllumajandusmaastiku nn tuumalad, mis pakuvad toitumis-, paljunemis-, pesitsus-, elu-, talvitumis- ja varjupaiku väga paljudele looduslikele niiduliikidele. Nendelt aladelt levivad kasulikud organismid edasi agroökosüsteemidesse, kus nad pakuvad põllumajandusele vajalikke loodushüvesid nagu tolmeldamine, looduslik kahjuritõrje ja mulla orgaanilise süsiniku sidumisvõime.

Väärtuslike püsirohumaade tuvastamise eesmärk on säilitada Eesti põllumajandusmaastikes esinevad liigirikkamad ja potentsiaalselt pärandniiduks taastuvad püsirohumaad. See aitab kaasa kogu Eestit hõlmava pool-looduslike koosluste võrgustiku säilimisele ning leevendab intensiivselt majandatavate põllumajanduspiirkondade elurikkuse kadu ja ebasoodsaid keskkonnamõjusid.

# Maintaining semi-natural grasslands

## Base requirements:

Minimum size 0,1 ha. Some landscape elements may be included

Mutually exclusive with aforementioned eco-schemes and agri-environmental measures.

Compatible with basic income support and organic farming. Skipping maintenance 1 year reimbursed.

**1)** Leave 5-30% unmowed, mowing dates depend on bird population (before or after 15th July).

**2)** Start grazing by 31st May, by 1st October 50% should be grazed sufficiently.

**3)** Special approach for results-based pilot scheme in ForEst & FarmLand LIFE-IP (500 ha).

100-150 EUR/ha mowing; 185 EUR/ha grazing.

600 EUR/ha mowing wooded meadow.

## Additional requirements:

Voluntary, for 1 year at a time.

**Coastal grassland:** 75% sufficiently grazed and small water bodies maintained by 1st October. 80 EUR/ha.

**Assessing the grassland:** follow a questionnaire developed by ForEst & FarmLand LIFE-IP. 10 EUR/ha, up to 3 grasslands.

**Mowing by hand or horse:** must notify Environmental Board before beginning work, must use scythe, trimmer etc. 200 EUR/ha.

**Small islands accessible by boat:** 10 EUR/ha, up to 100 ha.

**Improving the habitat:** cleaning small water bodies, improving conditions for herbaceous plants as guided by Environmental Board. 100 EUR/ha.



# Future plans and conclusions

- High nature value grasslands inventory 2024-2027
- Plans to implement results-based approach
- Expert analysis of measures and CAP period; statistics
- Continuing projects and cooperation











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