

An Outsider's Tour of Conservation Grazing Across Europe

Stephen Bramwell
WSU Thurston County Extension
County Director & Regional Agriculture

6-7 Oct 2025

Ethnoecological Seminar
Nemetzi Botanikus Kert
Vácrátót, Hungary



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Day 2: Adoption Support

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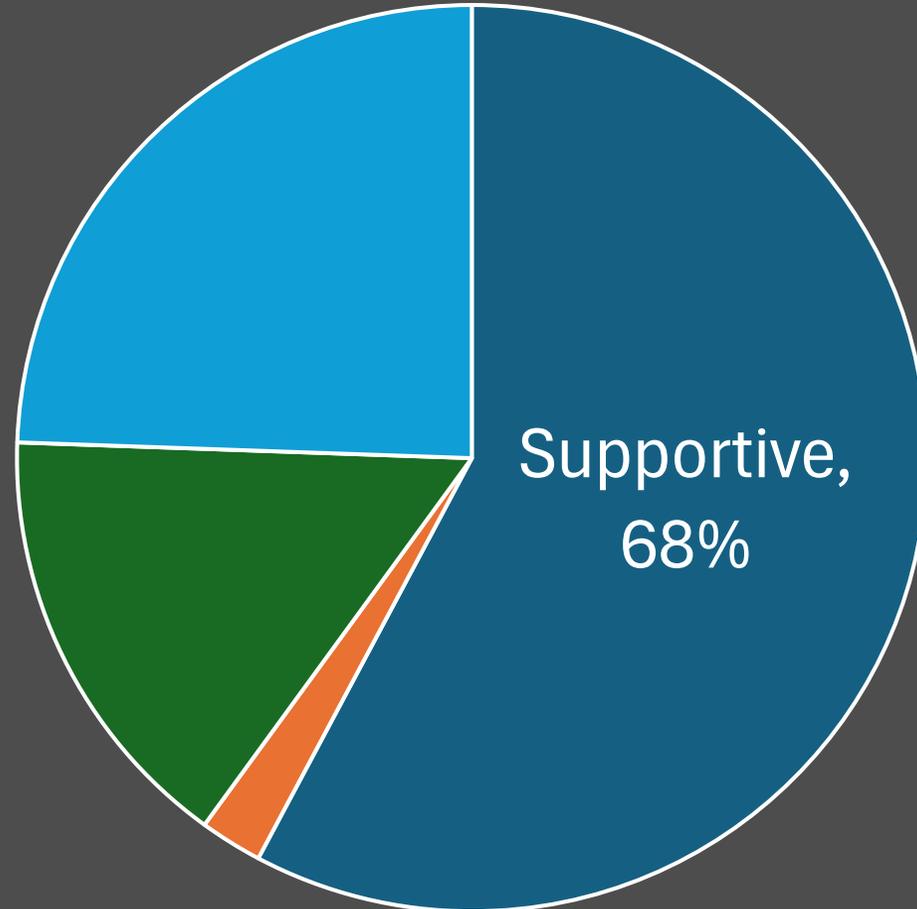


What Mechanisms Help or Hinder Grazing for Conservation?

*(Social – economic – policy – relationships)
knowledge, training/co-learning*



Agricultural policy



A range of strategies is used to harvest value from policy payment schemes

Paying farmers do things

Lack of collaboration limits buy-in, impact



Clever Farmers Harvest Payments for Strategic Goals



- “We make the programs fit the farm”
- “We couldn’t collaborate with arable farms [crop-livestock integration] if the infrastructure wasn’t [paid for]”
- “We’re not dependent on payments”

Clever Communities Take a Communal Approach

- “If we manage it well as a township, we invest it in shared infrastructure.”
-
- “We must cooperate to solve problems”
- “The collective owns the milking parlor and hires the cheesemaker, herders, milkers”



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Payments, Problematic Parts



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- “Policy pays for action, the farmer is not committed; ‘you pay ok I do it, but if no money I will not do it’”
- “Prescriptions are contrary to ecological variability”
- “Grazing wouldn’t be worth it without the payments.” (Mixed)
- “Farms have become institutionalized. ”
- “The conservation system is about payments. Animals are tools to get the money”

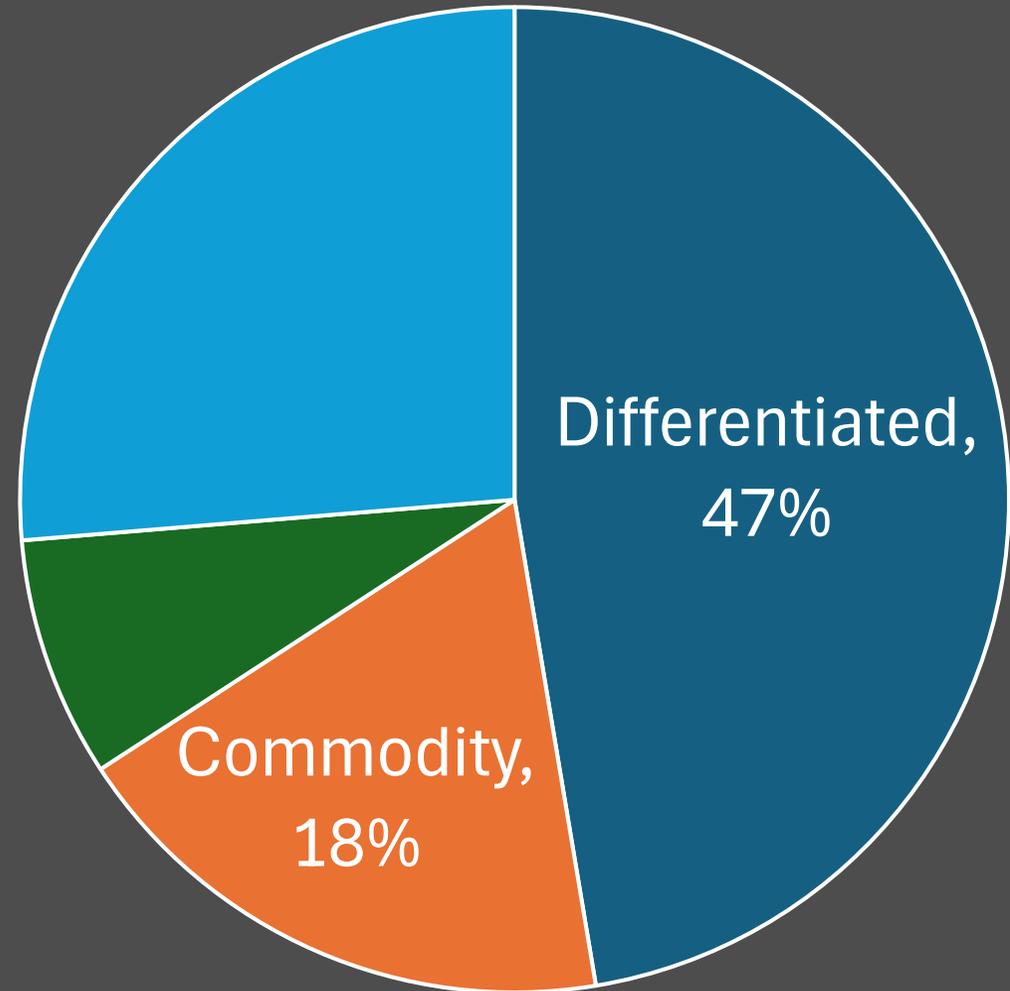


Lack of flexibility inhibits herders/farmers
Can impact animal welfare and then trust

"When it come droughty, you couldn't of left them there. You have to move them. Its out of your hands. If you are put in that position it's an animal welfare issue, so they can't say a lot to me. I'll just take it out of their hands, and do what I thought was right [for the animals]...rightly or wrongly"



Market Differentiation is Widely Used



- "80%-100% of sales are on-farm"
- "People [buyers] find me"
- "We need to look outside the box and diversify to make ends meet"
- "Cheese saved us"

Market Differentiation



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- “When you talk about landscape I talk about space. Everything is so competitive nowadays. We need to provide the same competitiveness as the other things that are trying to occupy our space” (solar, intensive olive, etc)
- Goal farmers are pursuing: value over price
- Pressure from industrial systems, one example: highly profitable intensive olives

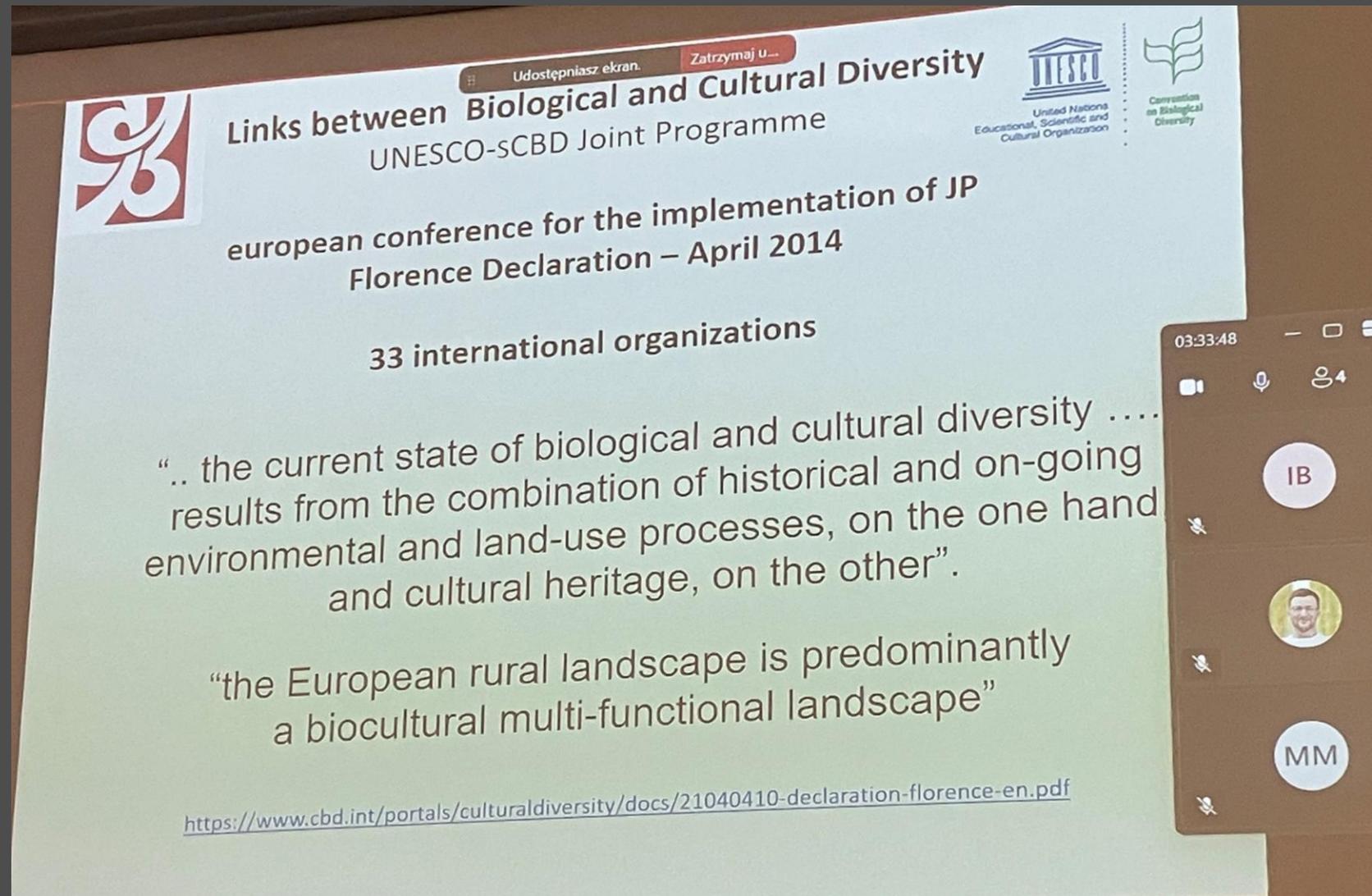


ABONDANCE
UNE VALLÉE UNE VACHE UN FROMAGE



Marketing Support

- Linked biological and cultural diversity
- Valorization. Italy example (Mauro Agnoletti)



The image shows a presentation slide with the following content:

Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity
UNESCO-SCBD Joint Programme

Logo of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and Commission on Biological Diversity.

Udostępniasz ekran. Zatrzymaj u...

Logo of the conference: a stylized 'B' and 'C' intertwined.

europaean conference for the implementation of JP
Florence Declaration – April 2014

33 international organizations

“.. the current state of biological and cultural diversity results from the combination of historical and on-going environmental and land-use processes, on the one hand and cultural heritage, on the other”.

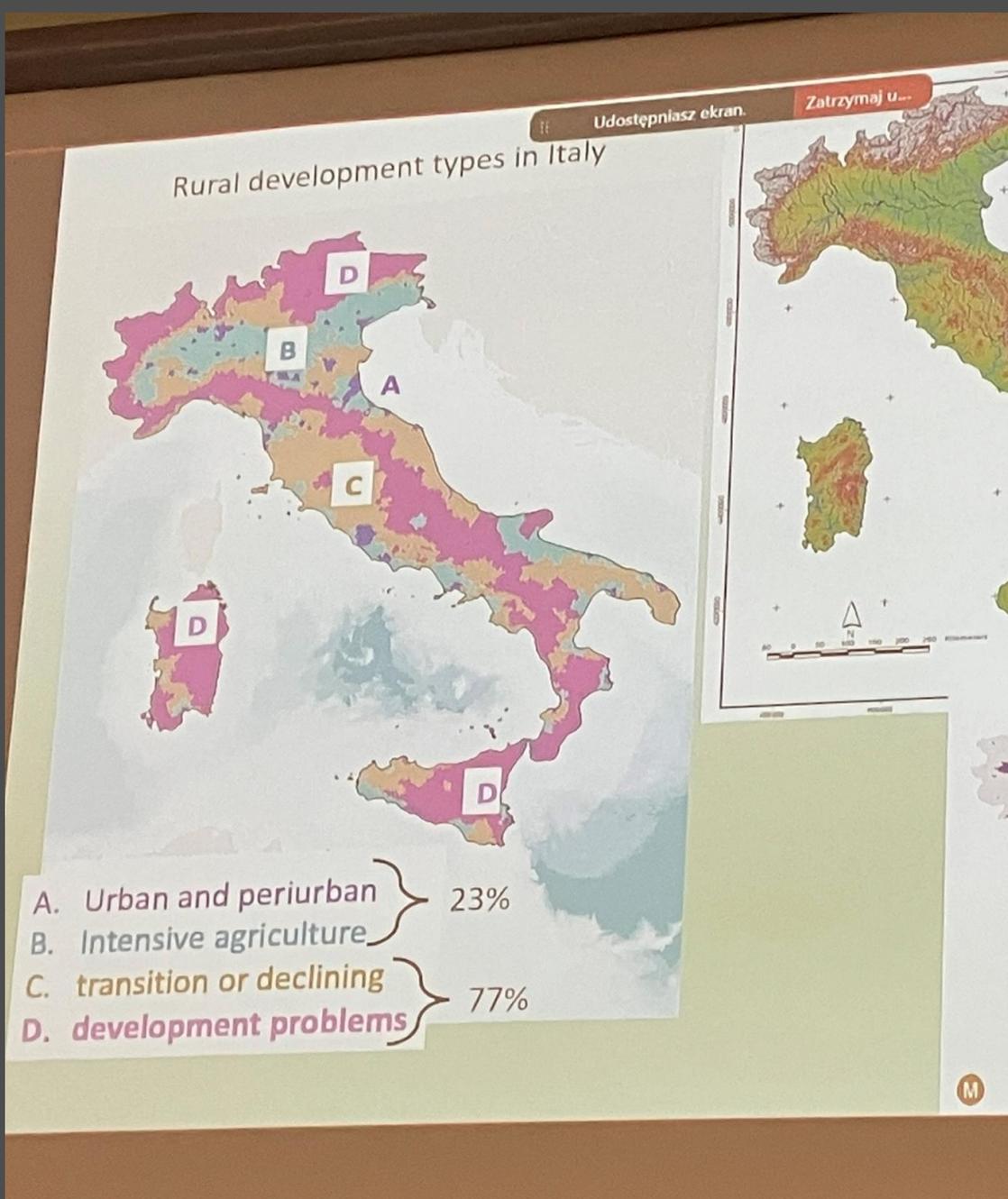
“the European rural landscape is predominantly a biocultural multi-functional landscape”

<https://www.cbd.int/portals/culturaldiversity/docs/21040410-declaration-florence-en.pdf>

03:33:48

IB

MM





Recipe for acorn biscuits

- Ingredients:**
- 1 kg acorn flour
 - 380 g sugar
 - 150 ml olive oil
 - 150 g lard or vegetable margarine
 - 20 ml honey
 - 3 eggs

Instructions

Break the eggs into a bowl and beat, then mix in the sugar and beat well. Then mix in the olive oil. In a separate pan, mix the lard and honey and let melt. Then mix it in well into the previous mixture. Gradually pour the acorn flour over the previous mixture and stir. At a certain point, it is necessary to





- “People come here to buy cheese”



Knowledge and Conservation

■
Co-learning is a vehicle :

- 1. Practices that work better*
- 2. Improved buy-in*
- 3. More is learned together*

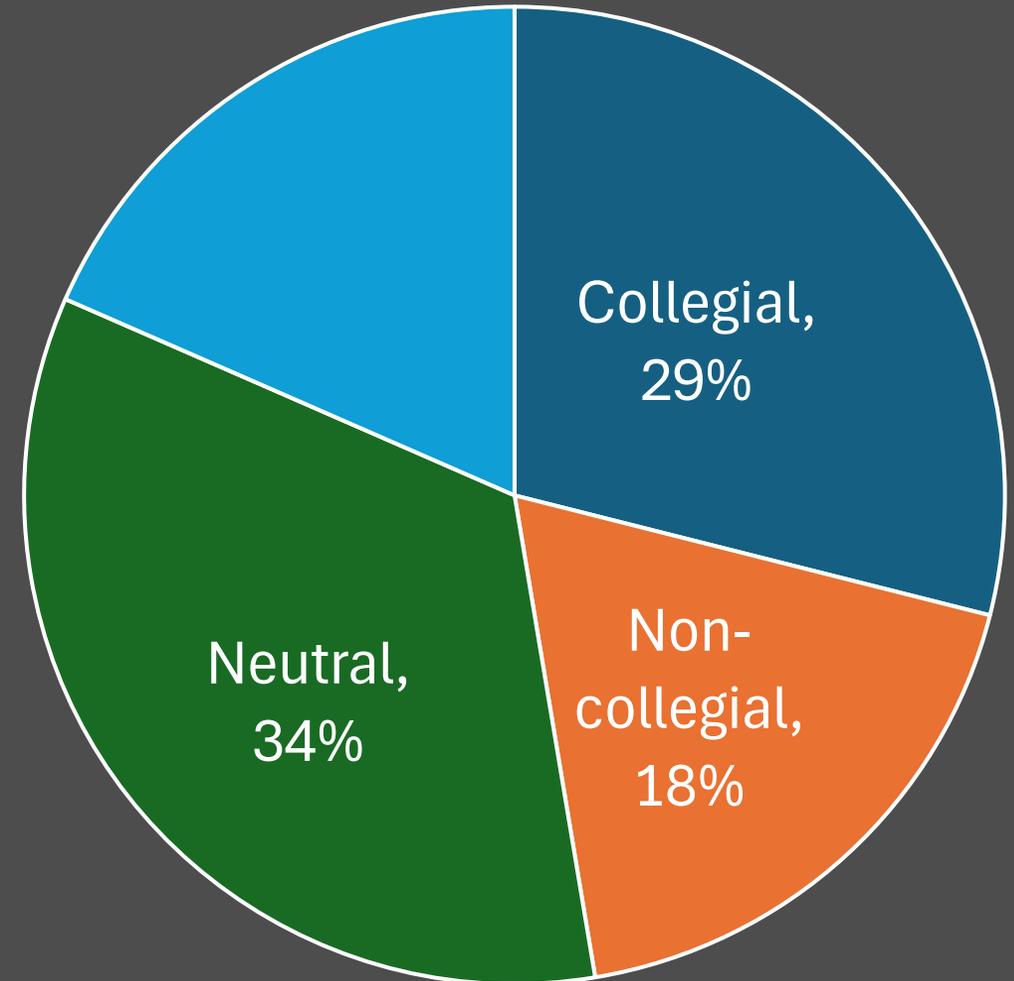
...the process is the goal



Relationship Problems



- “I would have more respect for [government agencies] if people would engage”
- “They (conservation agency) keep saying the same thing, and if they don’t hear what they want, it’s the end of the conversation.”
- “It gets messy when farmers are involved”
- “Farmers are greedy”



Relationship Opportunities



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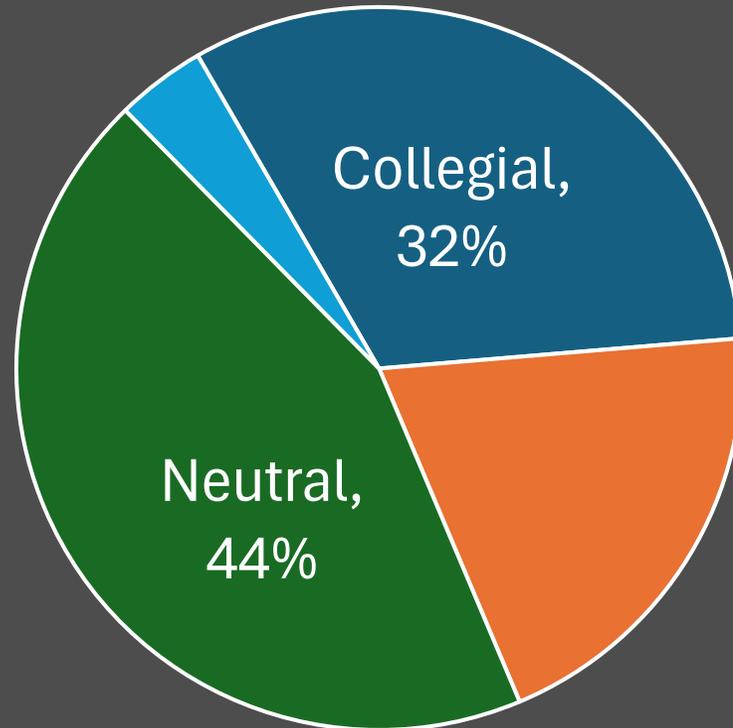


- “Walks with farmers are important. Legal issues are not enough, we need communication, cooperation, and respect.”
- “I want to help other farmers who are scared of going into a scheme.
- “A real relationship is not a job. To work together you have to understand each other.”
- “You can’t be a functionary”

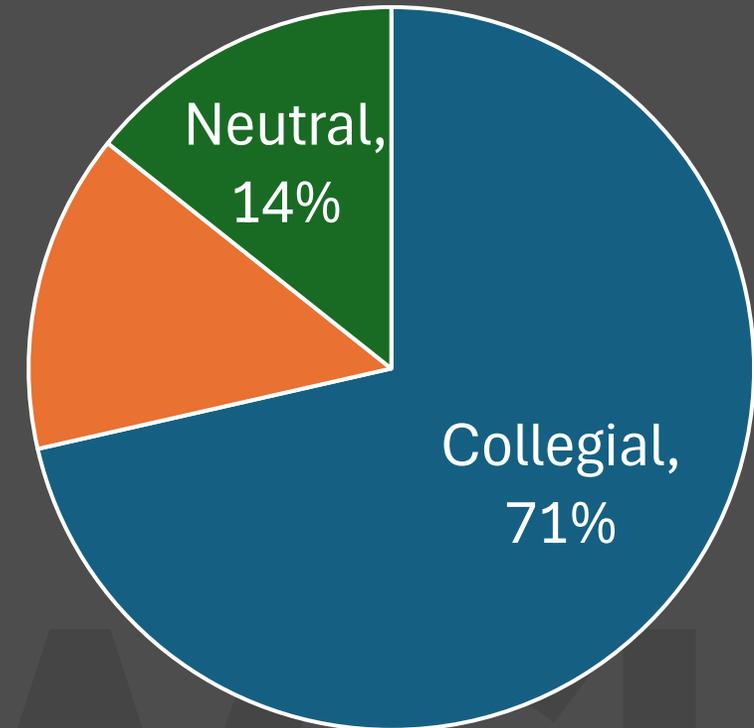


Relationships Matter

All farms



Best conservation value



Conservation Grazing *(multifunctional farming)*



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Multifunctional Farming

Better integrate
support mechanisms

To Express
“Multiple” Functions



Policy
Education
Markets
Relationships
Co-learning
Creativity

Economic
Environment
Social
Cultural
Etc.

Complex outcomes require greater organization

Thank you



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Conservation
Grazing Toolkit





How Can Drivers of Adoption be Strengthened?

- Policy
 - Market opportunity (differentiation or other)
 - Relationships between pastoralists/farmers and conservation workers (or others)
 - Sense of motivation, enthusiasm
 - Other?
-
- *3-person groups, discuss 20-30 minutes*

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Some Reflections



- Economic opportunity, policy, education, relationship-building, co-learning should be coordinated
- Macroeconomic forces work against conservation-grazing integration
- Agricultural practices (technology) and ecology used to be aligned, but are no longer
- Emphasis on start-end dates and spatial boundaries, and grazing prescriptions hampers flexibility, both for production and conservation
- Until recently, policy supported production, which created dependency
- Now environmental schemes have created unpredictability, tension between conservation and production, and a mindset to 'game the system'
- Emphasizing practices over results fails to mobilize farmer creativity and knowledge
- Education/knowledge is not well developed
- It's hard to explicitly incentivize; need buy-in; can't legislate integrity
- Farmers get enthusiastic about innovation and new practices
- Practices are traditional and modern (not preserving a time capsule)
- There are fewer and more deskilled farmers
- Farmers are a conservation value; youth do exist who want to farm (but need opportunity)
- Relationships are very important to building the basis for collaboration and motivation