

Pastoralists and Grasslands of Europe



Stephen Bramwell
Kunpeszér, Hungary

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Grasslands of Europe are not All the Same

*Many Problems and Opportunities are
Similar*

Portugal



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“Barrosã”







“Black Iberian Pig”



A photograph of a brown cow with long, curved horns standing in a green field. The cow is the central focus, facing right. In the background, there are several other cows, including a black one, and a line of trees under a bright sky. The cow has a green ear tag with the number 77086.

“Alentejana”









túzok







Challenges

- “The policy is not holistic. You can be disconnected from the objective and still get the reward.”
- “The consumer goes more to price than quality here. The market for quality is growing slowly, too slowly.”
- “Policy pays for action, the farmer is not committed; ‘you pay ok I do it, but if no money I will not do it’” (JM)
- There is not enough infrastructure and too many rules: “the last wool washing facility is about to close ‘for environmental reason.’ It is a consequence of the cotton lobby, you can’t pilot [research] another product with [wool].”
- “You can be funded to adopt no-till, and you have an obligation to not have shrub vegetation. In the same policy they conflict, we need to integrate more.”



Opportunities

- “I want to find ways to have an occupation of this space with more natural solutions. We are trying to use the 600 ha of this farm to make different economies.”
- Campaniça is an endangered breed. We are committed to this extinction-endangered breed. It is our main tool for getting things done.”
- “The small quantity of rural people that still live here, are completely pressed by the urban values, and they want to be more urban than the urbans. They are rejecting any kind of rural culture. And it’s a problem. We should put our culture in a proud way. When you are a shepherd and you know how to work with the dog ,and suddenly comes a lot of people from the city, and they say ‘wow’!”
- We need to provide the same competitiveness as the other things that are trying to occupy our space” (solar, industrial olive groves, etc)

Hungary



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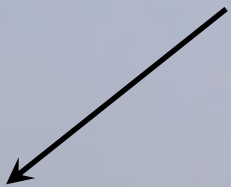








következő
generáció













Youth livestock
club, Nádudvar







Challenges

- “There is inadequate land management flexibility in Hungary. We need dynamic ownership [and movement].”
- “Prescriptions are contrary to ecological variability”
- “The conservation system is about payments. Animals are tools to get the money” (TF)
- “They don’t ask the question: what did farmers do to get habitat to this point”
- “There were for centuries the herders, working with the animals. Then conservation came and say do this way, and not aware/knowledgeable of the area.”
- “I am new, this is my first year managing the family grazing business. It is hard to know how to behave to be accepted.”



Opportunities

- “Walks with farmers are important. Legal issues are not enough, we need communication, cooperation, and respect.”
- Our aim is to live and serve this place in Hortobagy National Park. Hungary has such beauty. Others in the city never know this kind of beauty in the grasslands is possible. All summer we put the animals out. It is hard to imagine we live with such beauty.
- “Now adaptability is important. If we are not skilled, we won’t adapt.
- “Everything we do or don’t do will shape the landscape. Climate change may be out of our control, but we can mitigate the impacts with our actions. I am enthusiastic because I can have an impact. Our decisions matter.”
- “The electric fence doesn’t see the pasture or if the sheep are sick, but I do. Whether the pasture plants are big, little, their color. I am there next to the pasture, and I can see which will be good for the next morning.”

Romania



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“Komodor”





Unseen herders





“Romanian Spotted Cattle”





Challenges



- “The people, the farmers are leaving the land. What can we do? If the commons are not used, the village authority can give them out to big companies. Now the Mayor thinks he is the boss of the commons.”
- “After the revolution in the 90s, the borders opened and people left. They went west for jobs, or went to the city and became ‘overstudied’..”
- “The policy-making people in Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest are failing miserably. They don’t know what the problem is.”
- “Shepherd employees are too hard to find. Managing the land better is impossible. The same tour is used every day, so it is overgrazed or undergrazed.”
- “The systems were sustainable for centuries and they are breaking down now. There are very few people involved making decisions, and they are pursuing narrow self-interest. If there were more farmers, more people would be involved to make decisions. Every time decisions are better as a group”



Opportunities

- “The local priest organized the village to produce milk and make cheese when the previous system broke down. Says the priest, “if we want to keep people here, we needed a school and orphanage. To sustain that we need a farm. And to employ people we need a bakery.”
- “People [buyers] find me”
- “The problem with agriculture is everybody always goes for the cheapest food. Farmers grow this beautiful food and then sell it for peanuts. We need to make something high quality with it.”
- “80% of sales are on-farm”
- “I am the only young one, in my 20s. The other youngest are in their 40s. I decided whether to go to veterinary school or keep herding. I had a small flock during school, and I chose to keep herding.”

England



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“Mixed Aberdeen Angus”



“Dalesbred”





“Dale ponies”





“Dairy shorthorn”











“Swaledale”





“Spotted Dutch”



“Aberdeen Angus”



Challenges

- “They (conservation agency) keep saying the same thing, and if they don’t hear what they want, it’s the end of the conversation.”
- “Why not ask farmers, because we should carry on doing what helped it get this way [species rich grasslands]”
- “Some failure or transition is needed. You would need to be incompetent to fail”
- In a remote area: “We tried to tried sales of frozen beef from the farm. It was too expensive with high electricity and labor costs, and you hope for customers.”
- “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”
- “The people making the rules don’t understand. They have no idea of the reality of farming.”
- “I have had zero input on how to reach grouse and landscape restoration. The landlord and park rangers decreased stocking rate by 75% (250 ewes/1,200 ha), there is increased tick load on grouse, they spend month to mow and burn heather, and lower support for farmers.”



Opportunities

- “We make the programs fit the farm. Schemes have allowed us to put in [grazing] infrastructure”
- “We couldn’t collaborate with arable farms [crop-livestock integration] if the infrastructure wasn’t paid for”
- “We’re not dependent on payments, but it helps achieve the farms core aims”
- “Direct payments [for practices] don’t make sense. There has to be an outcome for it [result]”
- “100% of sales are on farm”

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Scotland



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“Aberdeen Angus”







Challenges

- “Cattle numbers are too low. The land is going rank, think with litter and thatch. It is closing the wetland water surface.”
- “We are getting backed into a corner. We need to look outside the box and diversify to make ends meet”
- “I would have more respect for [government agencies] if people would engage”
- “Crofting now is like a boat sailing off without a captain. Crofters do what they want, policy is not attuned to current needs and opportunity.”
- “They write rules that never existed. It is so farcical. It is a cut-and-paste job with each new program”





Opportunities

- “We qualify as a township for [scheme] funding. If we manage it well, we invest it in shared infrastructure.”
- “We work together to sustain local sales. If a lot of [calves] go to the auction then buyers compete against each other, we leverage control”
- “We qualify as a township for [scheme] funding. If we manage it well, we invest it in shared infrastructure.”
- “It is one thing to say why are you not farming your croft. It is another to offer some value to help.”
- “We take care of the land and it takes care of us”

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France



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marha









“Abondance”











Challenges

- “They enforce rules in arbitrary ways to keep farmers under their thumb and justify their own jobs.”
- “I have 40 years of speaking with people in institutions. They speak about things they don’t know. You arrive at the situation of making no sense.”
- “Now 90% of farmers have confidence in institutions. They don’t have confidence in themselves. Autonomy is a key priority to increase our level of confidence. We need to read and travel. We need to discern bullshit.
- “The intermediary has treated us badly. Their role is to keep the price down and the added-value to themselves. [In agriculture as a whole] we have never solved this problem.”
- “The monks kept pastures clean, but then it was neglected and became harder to manage.”
- “Farmers are not autonomous, they are farming for the subsidy and doing the minimum.”
(pastures get “dirty” [weedy])



Opportunities

- “This is the situation: In the past the industry buyer says, ‘[your price] is too expensive. It is not true. The customer can pay. We sell all of our cheese at the store on the farm.”
- “A real relationship is not a job. To work together you have to understand each other.”
- “You can’t be a functionary”
- “The natural pasture [unimproved/ not seeded plant communities] don’t have to fight [invasives as much]. The natural plant community is stable, adapted to conditions.”
- “Cheese saved us”
- “We need to discuss the herders/farmers job, the constraints, his fears. We need to come to an understanding together, a common solution within constraints. In this way we have a real relationship. Then you understand each other’s choices.

Switzerland



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“Brown Swiss”





Challenges and Opportunities

- “The collective owns the milking parlor and hires the cheesemaker, herders, milkers”
- “We must cooperate to solve problems”
- “In the 60s, everyone farmed. Now there are only 40, many a hobby. There are two or three full time larger farms”

Kosovo



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Challenges and Opportunities

- “A clever conservationist would protect these farmers”
- Donkey was common here, now they are only in Parliament
- “People come here to buy cheese. If I go to town I get a lower price, because people from elsewhere sell lower quality cheese for the a low price.”
- “The problem now is everything is business these days”

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Albania



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“Sharr” Guardian Dog, I think







Challenges

- “There are only 10-20 herders left in the Shebenik Park now. Only 1,000 sheep, there used to be 5,000. There is no grazing planning [there is no need with so few people].”
- “It’s a hard life”
- “There is too many juniper, it is a problem to get away. We can’t burn or all the grassland would catch fire. In communist time it was dug and cut.”
- “There is no opportunity for future herding here. The payments per animals is too low. We have bear kill. Seven years ago the product was very cheap, the situations has improved now some. You can make more money doing something else, that’s why my children are not doing this. With agritourism it is better if you combine them.”



Opportunities

- “If you come here in May you would be amazed. It is very productive, and 150 types of flowers you can find”
- Conservation perspective: “Grazing is a cultural use and there is decreasing cultural traditional use. It is not doing any harm, and is a traditional use. People of the area need a way to live, so we should let grazing continue.”
- “My dad (the primary shepherd) is committed no matter what, whether we win or lose.”

WSU

Thank you



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Conservation
Grazing Toolkit

