

LIFE+ project: AgriClimateChange (LIFE+09 ENV/ES/000441)

Combating climate change through farming

AgriClimateChange is a LIFE+ project cofinanced by the European Union whose objective is to identify and support farming practices that contribute to combating climate change.

Project partners from France, Germany, Italy and Spain are working with farmers to set up Action Plans that include changes and improvements in production practices to achieve lower energy consumption and a reduction of GHG-Emissions.



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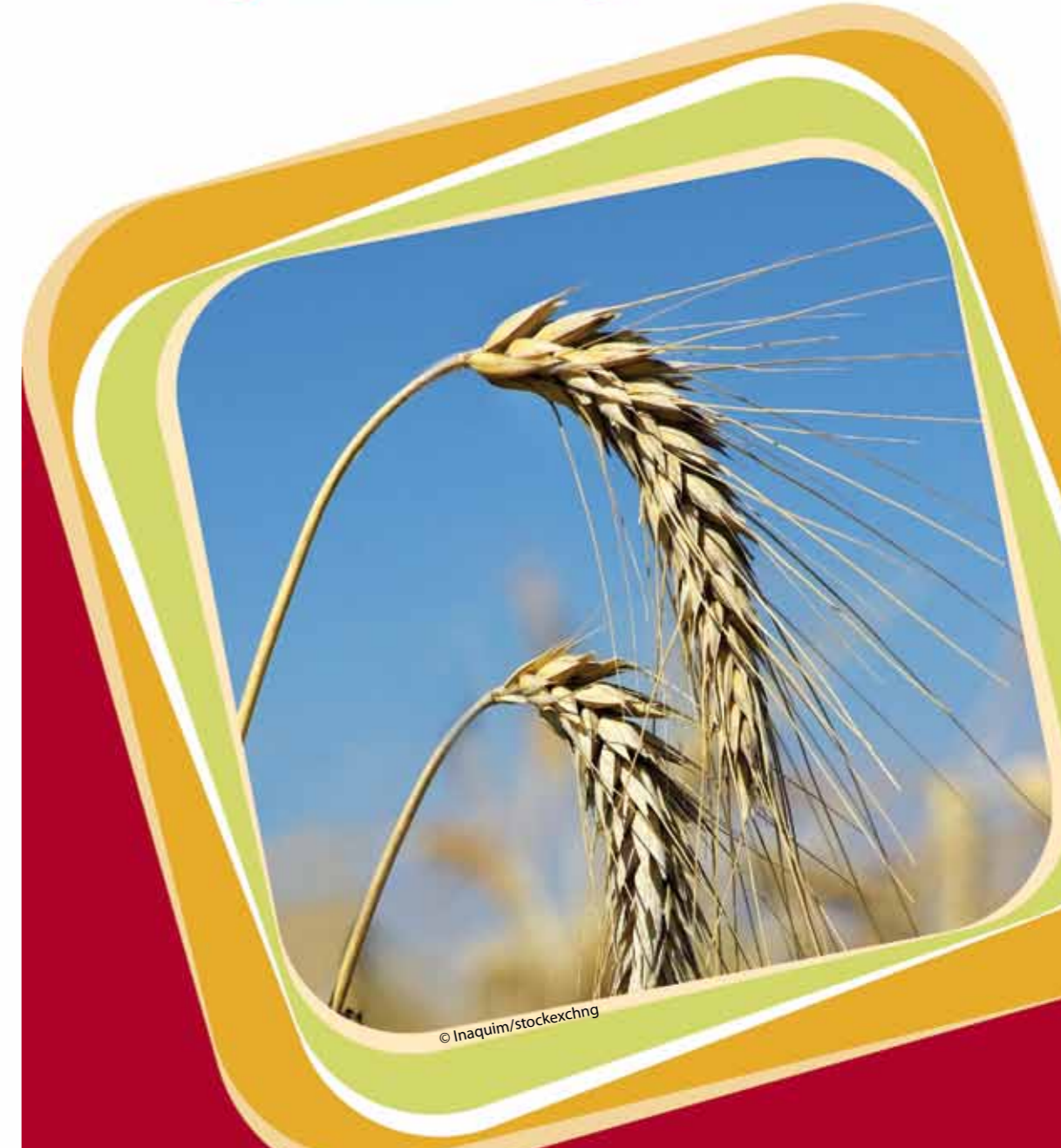
CO-FINANCIERS



Combating climate change through farming

With the contribution of the LIFE+ financial instrument of the European Community

WWW.AGRICLIMATECHANGE.EU



SUPPORT LOW-CARBON FARMING!

Currently there is no regulation to impose a reduction of energy consumptions or greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions on farms. Existing initiatives in this area are VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS.

Do you know how much energy and GHG emissions we need to produce food?

The production of food entails a cost in terms of energy that is higher than we imagine. To produce food, farmers use fuel, electricity, fertilizers, plant protection products, pesticides, concentrated feedstuffs, heat or cold, machinery, equipment... and all these items involve direct energy consumption. Processing also requires energy.

Energy production, as well as certain natural processes which take place on a farm, result in GHG emissions, which are responsible for climate change. The GHGs emitted by farming activities are carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), methane (CH₄) and some gases related to industrial refrigeration. At the European level, farming is responsible for 11% of all GHG emissions. However, the sector also has a high mitigation potential, that is, the farming sector can significantly reduce its emissions. In addition, it is an activity that can sequester carbon, unlike transport or industries.

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A problem to be solved by all of us

Most of the energy consumed in agriculture comes from fossil fuels, a limited and non-renewable energy source. The increase in energy prices impacts everyone: producers, intermediaries and finally consumers. Climate change will have widespread impacts, not only on farmers... Everyone needs to be part of the solution!

When a farmer commits voluntarily to reducing its energy consumption and GHG emissions, his / her efforts need to be acknowledged by intermediaries and / or consumers: a farming sector that does not reduce its energy consumptions will be more expensive for everyone and will have effects on our climate in the long term. In this effort, the first step in the process is for the farm to undergo an "energy and GHG assessment".

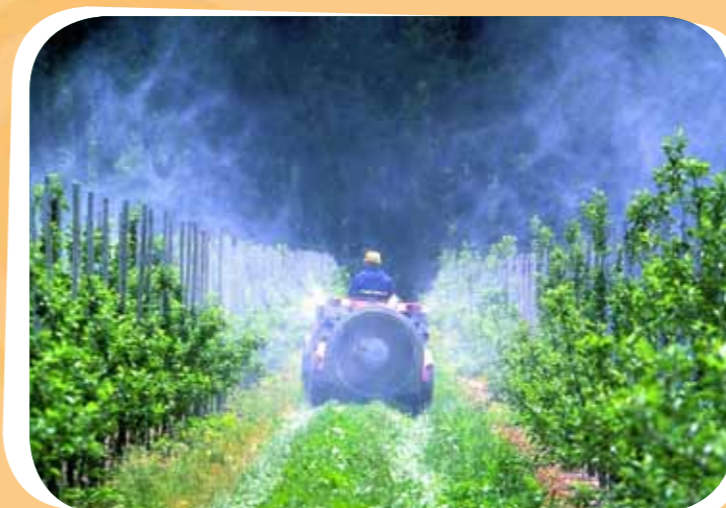


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What is an energy and GHG assessment?

Farmers who voluntarily have their farms assessed to evaluate energy consumptions and GHG emissions work together with technicians in order to:

1. Assess the direct and indirect consumption of energy on their farm (fuel, electricity, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, etc). More than 20 parameters are assessed to obtain a preliminary diagnosis. Carbon sinks are also taken into account, that is, the places in the farm where carbon is sequestered (hedges, trees, pastures, etc).
2. Determine, after the preliminary diagnosis, the type of actions they could implement. Each proposed action comes with an estimation of the consequent reduction of energy consumption and GHG emissions, as well as the economic costs. In some cases, the farmer also receives advice about possible subsidies to carry out the proposed measures.
3. Implement these measures, verify and improve the calculated reductions.



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What are the advantages of combating climate change...?

For consumers:

- Access quality products and contribute to environmental protection and climate change mitigation.
- Support committed farmers by buying their products.

For producers:

- Reduce energy consumption and, therefore, economic costs.
- Get better understanding of the farming system and, consequently, implement positive changes more rigorously.
- Improve farming conditions on the farm.
- Prepare for future constraining regulation.

For intermediaries:

- Use quality products and contribute to environmental protection and climate change mitigation.
- Access niche markets.
- Publicize the environmental commitment of the product.



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How can consumers contribute ?

Our food consuming habits have direct effects on the climate.

Consumers can contribute to climate protection and support climate friendly farmers.

- **Vegetarian food:** Meat production generates about 18 % of the global green house gas emissions. To produce 1 kg of beef in conventional fattening production up to 10 kg cereals are needed. Eat less meat and other animal products!
- **Fresh, regional and seasonal food:** It's much better to prefer fresh products than convenience food with a high rate of processing energy. Regional food has only short transport distances. Avoid products that have been transported by plane.
- **Organic food:** Organic farms usually use less energy and fix more carbon in the soil. Even though the productivity of organic agriculture is lower, the GHG balance is usually still better.
- **Avoid food waste:** Buy and prepare food responsibly. Don't cook too much and try to reduce your food waste.
- **Use bus and bike for shopping:** Let your car relax for a while and use public transport or your bike for shopping.



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