

Impacts of voluntary agri-environmental measures on Austria's agriculture

Ika Darnhofer* and Walter Schneeberger

Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Economics,
University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences,
Feistmantelstrasse 4, 1180 Vienna, Austria
E-mail: ika.darnhofer@boku.ac.at
E-mail: walter.schneeberger@boku.ac.at
*Corresponding author

Abstract: With about 78% of farms in the Agri-Environmental Programme (AEP), Austria has one of the highest participation rates in the European Union. The programme reflects a key concern in Austrian agricultural policy, which is to reconcile agricultural production, environmental protection, social cohesion and rural development. This paper reviews the changes in agricultural policy leading up to the implementation of the AEP. Spatial, policy and institutional patterns favouring such a high participation rate are identified, highlighting the importance of understanding an AEP in its historical and socio-political context. The orientation of farming towards the provision of environmental amenities may be indicative of future farm strategies, which are increasingly focused on broader rural development activities.

Keywords: Agri-Environmental Programme; ÖPUL; Austria; participation rate; rural development.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Darnhofer, I. and Schneeberger, W. (2007) 'Impacts of voluntary agri-environmental measures on Austria's agriculture', *Int. J. Agricultural Resources, Governance and Ecology*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp.360–377.

Biographical notes: Ika Darnhofer is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Agricultural Economics of the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna since 2002. She received both her MSc and PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna, working on issues of agricultural development in Africa. Her current research interest focuses on economic and sociological analyses of factors that shape farmers' land use decision-making behaviour.

Walter Schneeberger is a Full Professor of Farm Business Management at the Institute of Agricultural Economics of the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna since 1988. His current research interests include the economics of producing and processing agricultural products with particular focus on energy crops.
