

From Sustainability Talk to Policy Walk

Biodiversity

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§ 6(2) of HD require that, within Natura 2000,
Member States avoid damaging activities that could significantly disturb these species or deteriorate the habitats of the protected species or habitat types.

- Austria still has **42% decrease in farmland birds** since 1998
- For species (Annex II and IV HD) and birds (Annex I BD) the main threats are: **67% agriculture, 24% ecological succession, 10% water engineering**
- **83% of protected extensive grasslands** in Natura 2000 sites are in unfavourable condition
- Austria spends per year **500 Mio € for Agri Environment Measures** (40% pillar 1, 60% pillar 2) – since 1995 **80% of all farmers take part on AEM**

Habitat status

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graph TD; A[Habitat status] --> B[Art 6(3) Appropriate assessments]; A --> C[Agriculture]; A --> D[Forestry]; A --> E[Tourism]; A --> F[Water management];
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Art 6(3) Appropriate assessments

- Time intensive procedures
- Unclear interpretation of several issues
- Need for Education and trainings to ecologic and legal experts

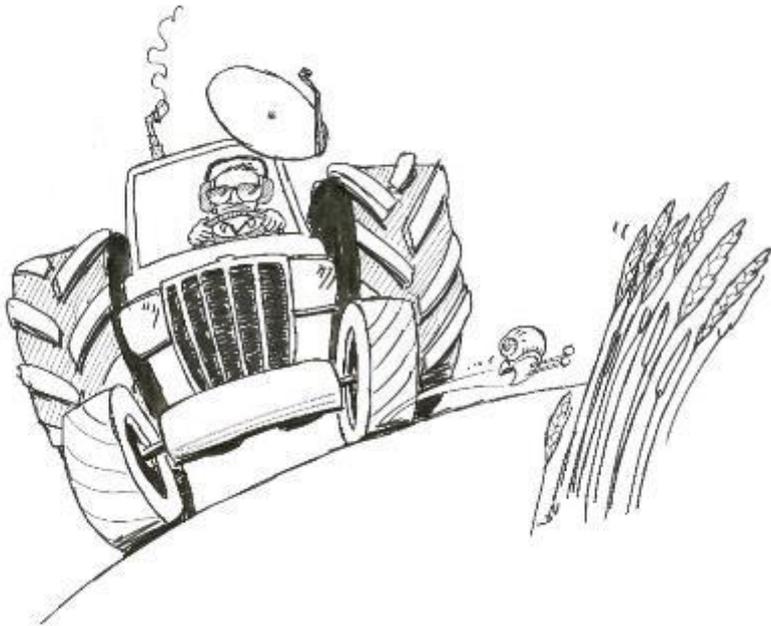
> **Improvements are necessary**

Agriculture

Forestry

Tourism

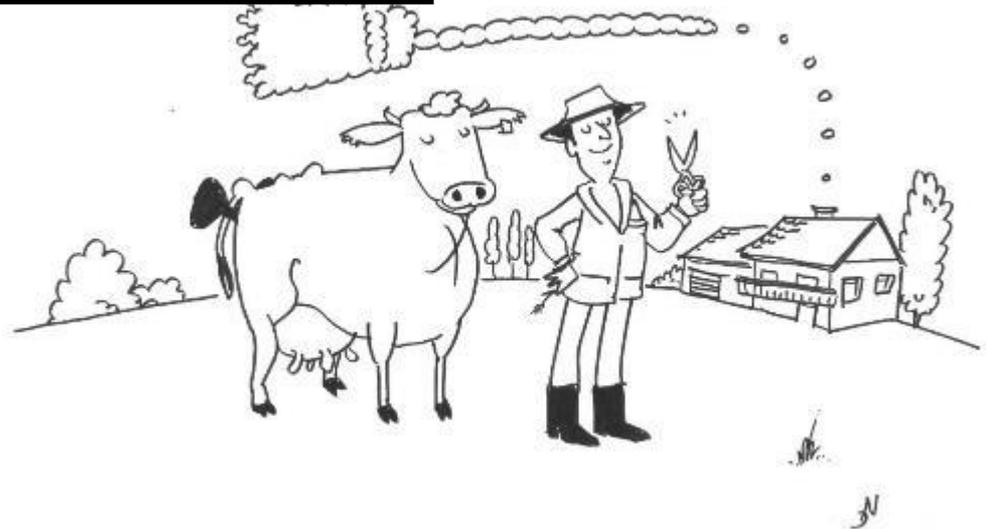
Water management



„Farmers destroy biodiversity“

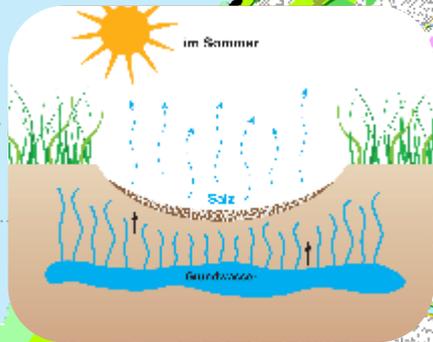
Farmers highly influence biodiversity

„Farmers protect biodiversity“





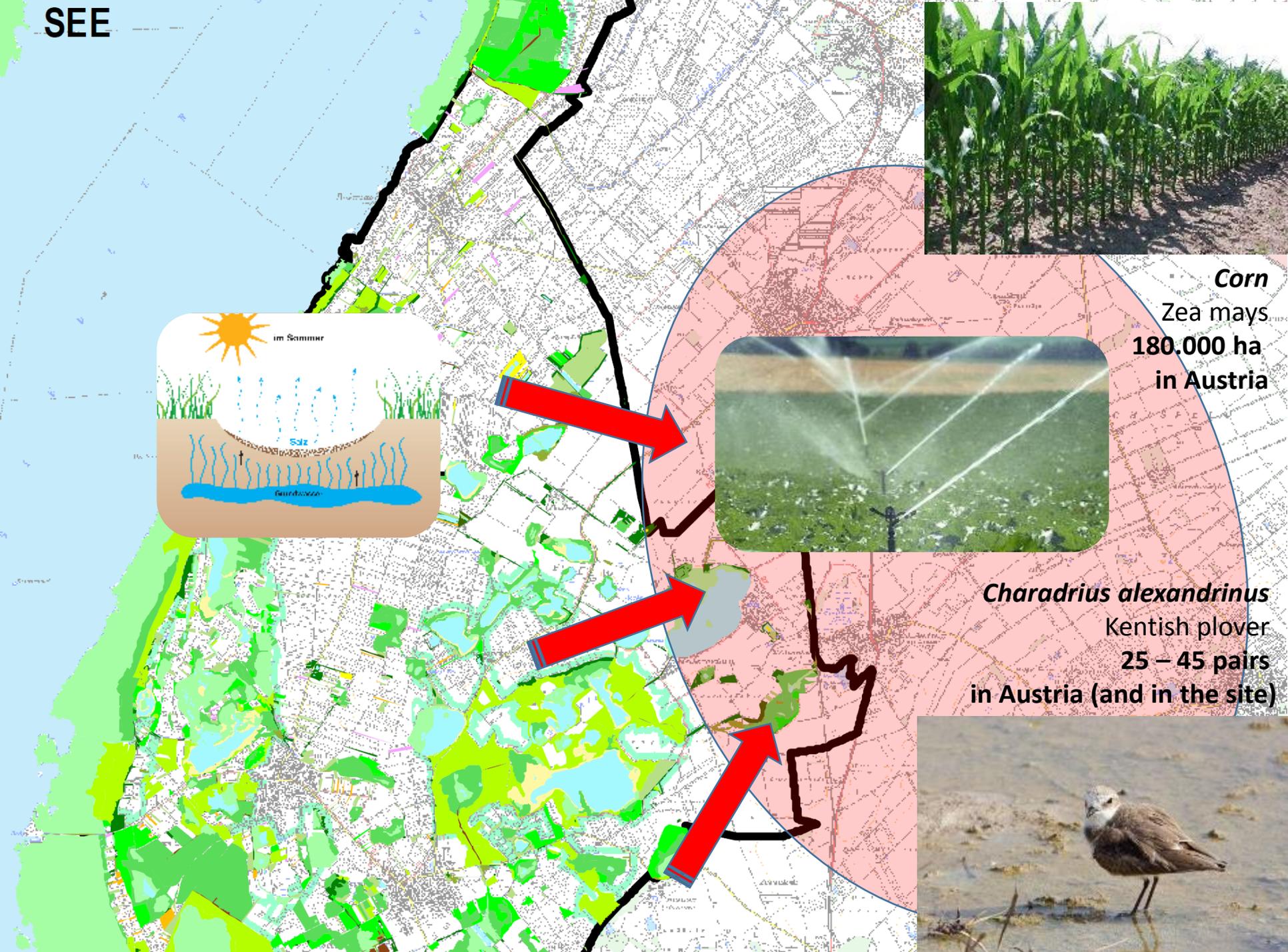
SEE



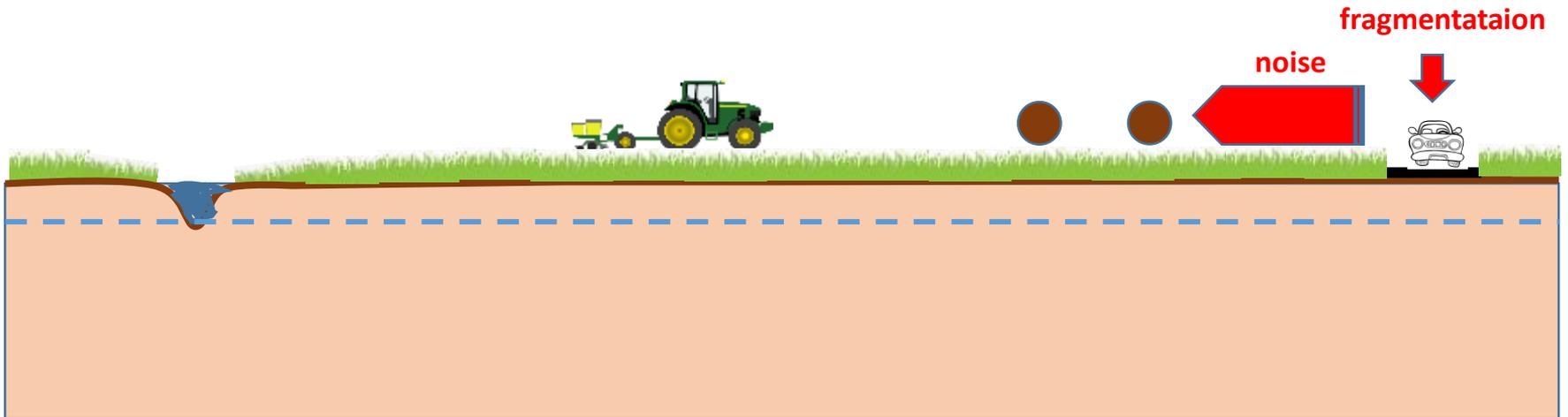
Corn
Zea mays
180.000 ha
in Austria



Charadrius alexandrinus
Kentish plover
25 – 45 pairs
in Austria (and in the site)



- **Curlew** *Numenius arquata*
 - Local Population: 15 breeding pairs
 - Impacted: 1- 2 breedings pairs

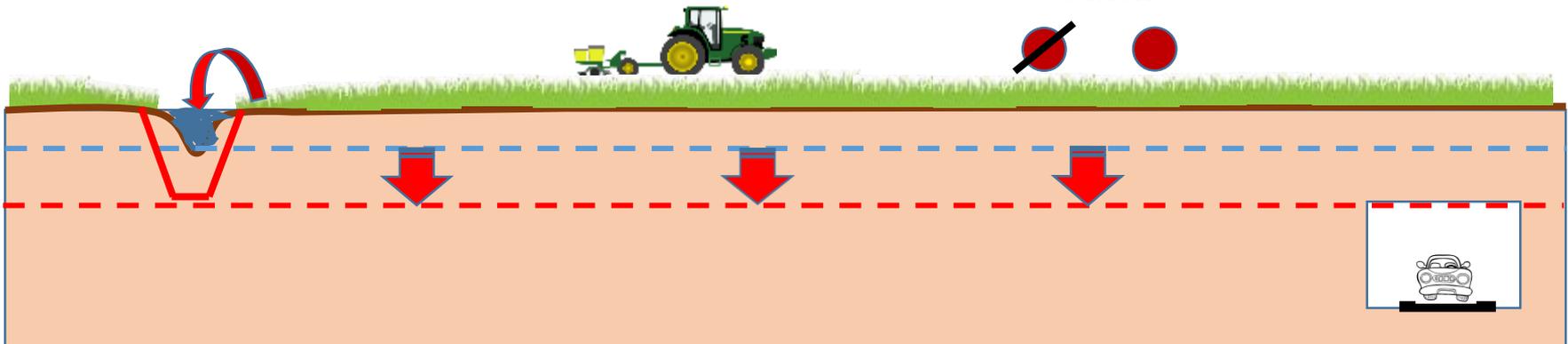


● **Curlew *Numenius arquata***

- Local Population: 15 breeding pairs
- Impacted: several breedings pairs

Greening?
Cross Compliance?
Agri Environment payments?

Additional costs for investor
10 – 15 Mio €



Some further questions:

- What is the current intensity of utilisation on extensive grassland habitats of Annex I HD?
(> Use INVEKOS data)
- What are well known specific threats on site level?
(> Ask site manager, experts, NGOs, farmers)
- There is no scientific reason why organic farmers are excluded from Greening (5% ecological focus areas). How is the habitat situation on organic farms?
(> Use INVEKOS data, evaluate grassland and arable land on organic farms)
- What are the main problems regarding species protection and agriculture in your country or in your region?
(> Ask experts, NGOs, farmers)
- **How does „Cross Compliance“ react to the answers of these questions?**

Cross Compliance

- Farming Activities which are **damaging Natura 2000 sites** or **have negative impacts to species** of Annex IV are not allowed.
- In Austria: Regulation is clear, information is well done (AMA)
- The detail: An offense depends on the specific regulation of Nature Protection Law (9 different laws in Austria). > The Nature Conservation Law is overruling CC.
- Example:
*A farmer removes in February a hedge which is an important corridor for bats.
In several provinces it is not forbidden, in some provinces it is only forbidden in breeding time for birds.*
- **Cross Compliance should avoid damaging sites and protected species by farming activities.** There is no lack on regulation but a **big lack on implementation.**
- **This is a relevant matter for tax payers.**



Rudi Schmid, Austria

- He is proud
- Intensive farm in Lower Austria.
- Flower Strips between all his fields.
- Takes part on the project „Result based Nature Protection Plan“

Helga Brentner, Austria

„I like to go in the stable, cause I have to talk with my cows“



Božo Vukušić, Croatia
„I cry and I laugh with my horses.“





**„I want to understand nature
and the ecosystem behind“**



„My work depends on nature“



„I respect Nature“



„I want to protect nature“

„I am proud of the diverse life
on my properties“

Uncertainty and fear

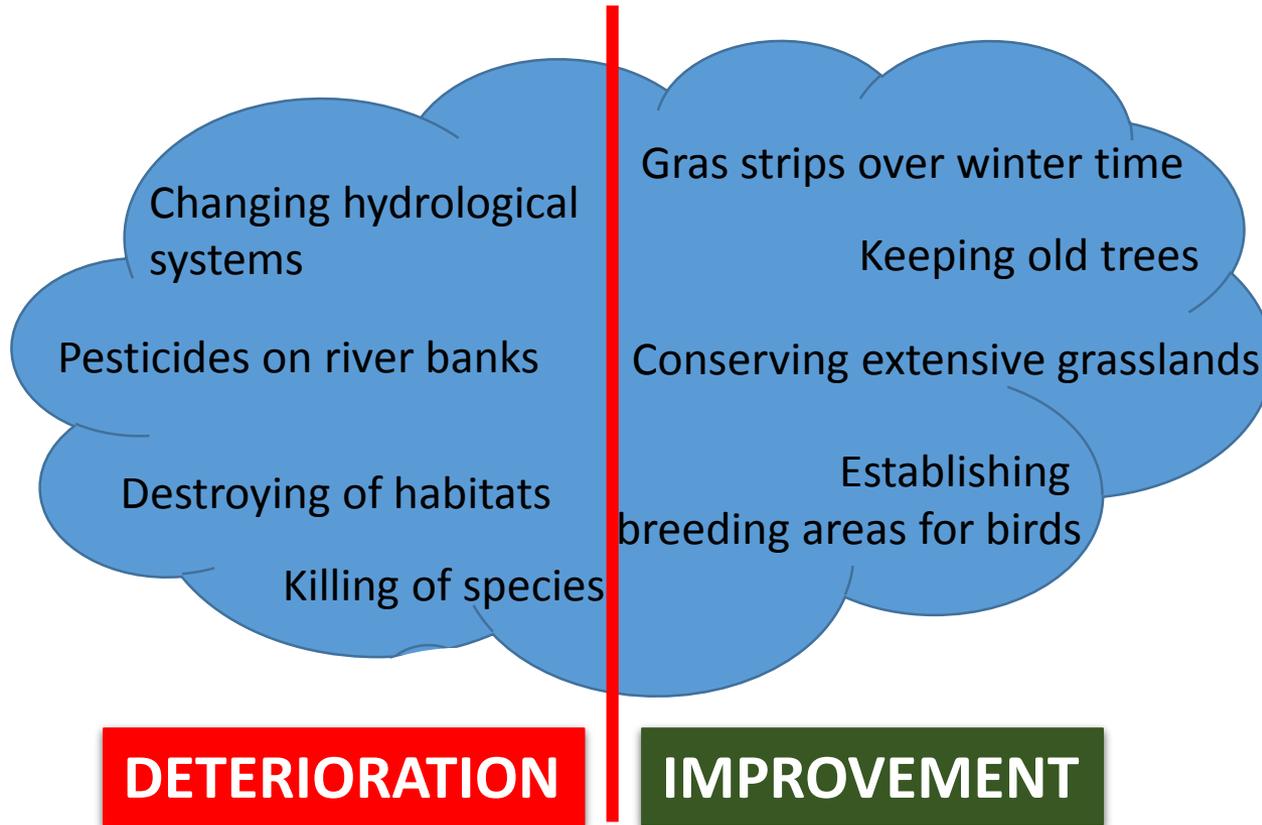
„When a bird starts nesting on my
property, i lose my property rights.



- There are crucial open questions of farmers who want to support biodiversity

What happens tomorrow if I have an eco-success on my grassland and birds start nesting there? Can I still get fundings in the next period? Will that area be designated as a protected area in some years? Am I allowed to use this grassland anymore?

- We need a strong sign for all farmers who improve biodiversity.
Improvement means also: working against a regional or national trend.
more flexibilities for the farms, long term-contracts (10 years), higher budgets, more education.
- **If we do nothing we are coming into a lose – lose situation:**
we lose habitats and species because of inefficient regulations and
we lose people who want to work for nature protection



1. Much stricter implementation of existent rules for all activities which destroy and damage biodiversity

Art. 6(3) is working, „same“ rules for all players (e.g. farming – investors); „Natura Fitness Check“ for Cross Compliance in each Memberstate

2. Much stronger support for all farmers who (want to) improve biodiversity

Higher budgets, more flexibilities for the farms, long term-contracts (10 years), more education, clear answers to open questions of the farmers.

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