

WADDEN SEA FORUM
THEMATIC GROUP AGRICULTURE
Meeting TG-A-5

Büsum, March 11-12, 2004

FINAL MINUTES

1. Opening

Frans Keurentjes welcomed the participants and announced the members absent with apologies (A list of participants is in Annex 1).
The agenda was adopted and is in Annex 2.

2. Minutes TG-4

The final draft minutes of TG-4 were adopted without further comments.

3. Announcements

The chairman mentioned an application from Kreis Dithmarschen (received by fax just before the meeting) regarding the problems with geese grazing in the area. Kreis Dithmarschen was asking the meeting to discuss the problem and give guidance for further actions in the field. The chairman considered however that the time schedule of this meeting did not allow a thorough discussion and he proposed that the issue to be included into the recommendations.

Hans Peter Stamp explained that the application was also to be seen in the light of the Dutch experiences (part of the TG-4 in Lauwersoog) and the ongoing negotiations between the ministry in Kiel and the farmers associations in the district.

The meeting agreed to the proposal of the chairman and to pass on the Dutch experiences to Kreis Dithmarschen.

4. External Studies

Folkert de Jong gave brief information on the state of the art. Regarding the Prognos "draft report" on Agriculture, which was send out a couple of days before the meeting, he invited the members of TG-Agri to give their comments not later than **Wednesday, March 24th**.

5. Strategy Development

5.1 Introduction and presentation of outline to WSF-4

5.2 Testing of Strategy elements

5.3 Discussion Strategies + identification of obstacles, recommendations and projects

Folkert de Jong introduced the item by explaining the structure and the further process to formulate a vision, aims and strategies, etc. He invited each of the participants to start this process by a short statement of a vision (20 years) for agriculture in the Wadden Sea Region. Based upon these statements a draft vision containing the elements: profitable development, landscape and nature activities, cultural identity and living communities was discussed as the basis for the finalisation of a draft paper on "Sustainable Agriculture in the Wadden Sea Region". Among others the following expectations for the future were suggested:

- Food production will increase and will still be the most essential activity and the basis for a sustainable development;
- The number of farms will decrease by 40-50%;
- The region will profit from the presence of abundant fresh water;

- Enlargement of farms will increase and the remaining farm houses will be taken over by other “inhabitants”; The number of farms will have decreased by 50%;
- There will be more variety i.e. farming, tourism, nature;
- Farming has adapted to the specific qualities of the region, i.e. additional money from services (nature, landscape, tourism) and there will be no more conflicts with nature protection;
- Farming will have less impact on the landscape/nature than expected;
- The green house effect will cause comprehensive investments for agriculture in the region;
- The use of zoning in the management will increase;
- Local products (labelling) will be promoted and be profitable in certain areas (islands) also in combination with tourism.

The meeting decided to present the following vision (included in Annex 3):

Agriculture in the Wadden Sea region should be given the possibilities to develop in a profitable way taking due account of:

- The full variety of the typical cultural Wadden Sea landscapes (dykes, rivers, mounds, etc.)
- The characteristic flora and fauna of the Wadden Sea region (geese, lapwing, etc.)
- And contributing to viable and dynamic rural communities

5.2 Presentation results of testing strategy elements

Folkert de Jong introduced the item and proposed to go through the table item by item. The results of the process are presented in Annex 4. The discussion included the following remarks:

- *Scale Enlargement*: the overall questions were: is there a limit for this development, where is it and who decides? Some participants were of the opinion that from an economic point of view there are no limits. -Others argued that, from the perspective of co-ordination and management, there is an optimum size.; It was also stated that enlargement is not necessarily equivalent with intensification (compare the co-operation of Mr. Witt’s farm). Scale enlargement has social aspects (acceptance) and should also be in balance with the landscape.
- *Spatial Adaptation*: the geographic scope was discussed: are we talking about a regional or an individual perspective? It was decided to change “optimal soils” into “areas suitable for agriculture”.
- *Local Co-operation*: the issue was broadened to include local co-operation in production as well;
- *High tech apparatus*. This issue, including for example investments in milk robots, was not considered very relevant for the strategy: if they are on the market, farmers will consider using them anyway.
- *High-Tech products*: was regarded as relevant for some farmers, depending on the wish of the consumers. It was not considered very important for the strategy.
- *Bio-materials (non-food)*: in general low added value, but increasing relevance for some producers as niche production (medicine sector).
- “Quality products”, i.e. products produced without or with little medicine and pesticides and in a animal friendly way, might be financially attractive under the CAP reform (cross compliance). Due to consumers sensitivities there certainly would be a future market for these products.
- *Wadden Sea Label*: the added value was assessed very differently by the group members. Some thought it would not be successful, others were more optimistic. It was agreed that more information was needed on the successes and failures of existing labels in the region and that a project with this aim should be proposed
- *Nature and Landscape Management*: This was considered an important potential added value for farmers, but it should be based upon certain preconditions. The most important were improved co-operation between farmers (associations) and bottom-up processes within the EU framework. Also the compensation should be sufficient.

- *Tourism*: high added value in some areas if developed on adjusted conditions, e.g. on the islands. The sector needs to be professionalized on a regional level.

After the testing the participants discussed the importance of the different Strategy Elements. The following were regarded as highly relevant:

- Scale enlargement under certain conditions
- Spatial adaptation: farming in suitable areas
- Nature and landscape management under certain conditions
- Local co-operation

The meeting considered to have medium relevance the issues:

- Tourism, recreation and direct selling
- Medicine-low, Pesticide-low, animal friendly products
- Organic products
- Added value
- Energy

These elements were filled into the submission to WSF-4 (Annex 3)

Finally, obstacles, recommendations and follow up projects were briefly discussed.

In this respect Kristen Fromsejer emphasised the need for unified delimitation in the three countries regarding the Wadden Sea Area (on the mainland). He proposed to recommend this to the Wadden Sea Forum.

Several participants were not in favour of making this a political issue. It was a Danish problem and should be handled as such.

It was decided to include the item as "obstacle": differences in rules and regulations for the same issues.

The obstacles, recommendations and project proposals were filled in to the WSF-4 submission. The secretariat was given the task to complete the submission by adding explanatory information. The result is in Annex 3.

It was agreed to submit Annex 3 to the WSF-4 meeting.

6. Sustainability Test

The meeting briefly discussed the testing of the selected strategy elements for sustainability. The testing itself was not done because during the discussion of the strategy elements most conditions related to sustainability (social, ecological) had already been addressed.

7. Information about the further process

Folkert de Jong explained the further procedure of the work:

1. Written comments to the draft minutes, in particular Annex 3 and 4
2. Presentation and discussion at the WSF-4 in Esbjerg, April 15-16;

After discussion, in which some participants indicated that they considered the process not finalised, the chairman emphasised that an extra meeting could be an option. Also further work on an integration group was an option. The matter will be discussed at the next Team Meeting (meeting among TG-chairmen) in connection with the WSF-4 meeting.

8. Any other business

None

9. Closing

The meeting was closed at 14.00 hrs.

The chairman used the opportunity to thank all members of the group for a very constructive approach throughout the process. This approach has been the basis for a good product. On behalf of the group the chairman especially thanked Mr. Stamp for a very well organised meeting and Mr. Witt for hosting us so well.

TG-Agriculture-5. Minutes. Annex 2

**WADDEN SEA FORUM
THEMATIC GROUP AGRICULTURE
Meeting TG-A-5
Büsum, March 11-12, 2004**

AGENDA

- 1. Opening.**
- 2. Minutes TG-4**
- 3. Announcements**
- 4. External studies**
- 5. Strategy development**
- 6. Sustainability Test**
- 7. Information about the further process**
- 8. Any other business**
- 9. Closing**

TG-A-5. Minutes. Annex 3**Sustainable agriculture in the Wadden Sea Region
(SUBMISSION TO WSF-4)****March 2004****The VISION**

Agriculture in the Wadden Sea region should be given the possibilities to develop in a profitable way taking due account of

- the full variety of the typical cultural Wadden Sea landscapes (dykes, rivers, mounds, etc.)
- the characteristic flora and fauna of the Wadden Sea region (geese, lapwing, etc.)
- and contributing to viable and dynamic rural communities

THE STRATEGY

In order to work towards the Vision, the following Strategy will be pursued, related to the Structure of the sector and the possibilities for broadening the income basis by Service and Product Diversification:

STRUCTURE OF AGRICULTURE**Scale enlargement**

Scale enlargement is an important condition for the survival of most agricultural holdings. It generally leads to higher efficiency and may also reduce environmental impact.

Scale enlargement should be done in balance with the typical Wadden Sea landscape, be socially acceptable, avoid conflicts with tourism and respect biodiversity and environmental quality.

Spatial adaptation: farming in suitable areas

In order to increase the efficiency of agriculture and thus, to improve profits and decrease the environmental impact, agriculture should, as much as possible, be concentrated in areas best suited for this purpose, amongst others taking account of soil quality and water management.

Local Cooperation

Local cooperation between farmers in production, service and added value will increase efficiency, spread risks and enhance the number of possibilities for broadening the income spectrum

SERVICE DIVERSIFICATION**Nature and landscape management**

Nature management and landscape management by farmers or cooperations of farmers are considered potentially good options for generating additional income, provided there is sufficient local cooperation of farmers and there are good contracts with competent authorities (sufficient compensation, long-term perspectives)

Tourism, recreation and direct selling

Tourism, recreation and direct selling may generate additional income for farmers, provided these activities are professionalized and coordinated at the regional level.

The actual contribution to the income of farmers will strongly depend upon the location of the farm, but active creation of attractions and events is less site-dependent.

PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION

Medicine-low, Pesticide-low, animal friendly products

High-quality products from “regular” agriculture, i.e. products grown with low or no medicines and pesticides and which are animal friendly, will be eligible for cross-compliance support, i.e. will be financially supported by regulations of the Common Agricultural Policy

Organic products

It is expected that there will be a market segment for organic products in future. The size of this segment will strongly depend upon consumers’ attitude, welfare development, government support and promotion

Added value

Adding value to bulk products, i.e. the own production of cheese, eggs, bread etc., may generate additional income, especially in combination with tourism and recreation and in local cooperation settings (higher product diversity, shared selling point). Promotion and labelling of regional products are also very relevant.

Energy

The generation of energy (mainly own supply through bio-gas, wind and solar energy) will contribute to lowering production costs of farmers

Wadden Sea label

A Wadden Sea label for all Wadden Sea products might be a relevant element for the sector strategy, but is still connected with many uncertainties. For that reason the feasibility and added value of a Wadden Sea label should be investigated in a project (see below).

Obstacles

The implementation of a sustainable agriculture strategy is currently hampered by

- Insufficient room for bottom-up processes
- Redundant/unnecessary Wadden Sea protection rules and regulations
- No level playing field: differences in rules and regulations for same issues
- Insufficient reliability and feasibility of nature management contracts and regulations (financing, time perspective)
- Insufficient evaluation of nature protection programs
- Insufficient insight/awareness of costs and benefits for society of nature protection programs
- No agreed common definition of Wadden Sea region specific flora and fauna
- Insufficient maintenance of gullies and river outlets in the Wadden Sea creating water problems for farming in the hinterland

Recommendations

In order to remove the above obstacles and to clear the way for a sustainable agriculture strategy the following is recommended:

- Provide sustained financial support for nature and landscape management

- Use results and proposals of local and regional projects (Leader +, model regions Uthlande, Bremen, Ostfriesland) in national and trilateral policies
- Provide administrative support and compensation measures improving the conditions for island farmers (diversification on islands)
- Improve conditions for agriculture in the hinterlands in relation to the increasing ground water levels and temporary floodings of fresh water.

Projects

The following project are considered relevant for specifying the strategy

- Inventory and assessment of redundant/unnecessary Wadden Sea protection rules and regulations, including national differences
- Inventory and assessment of product labels in the Wadden Sea region (which have been successful, which not and for what reasons)
- Elaboration of the Strategy for a pilot region
- Inventory and definition of Wadden Sea rural area specific flora and fauna, including an inventory and assessment of existing nature management plans

Annex

[Documentation of the main results of the TG Agriculture work, including the testing procedure]

TG-A-F-5. Minutes. Annex 4: Results Testing Strategy elements

Strategy Elements	Cautious World	Future Unlimited	Satisfied Citizens	Challenging World	Remarks/ Questions
	<i>Strong bureaucratic EU; Global market Low innovation Low growth</i>	<i>Strong, liberal EU; Global market; High innovation High growth</i>	<i>Strong and cooperating NW European nations; Regional market; Low innovation: High growth</i>	<i>Loosely organised nations; Regional market; High innovation; Low growth</i>	
Structure					
Scale enlargement	++	++	0/+	0/+	Different types of scale enlargement
Spatial adaptation: farming in suitable areas	+ Probably also forced by WFD implementation	+ Will not be used as much as in Satisfied Citizens because there is also much technological innovation	+ Little technological but much structural innovation	+ Is it feasible from an organisational point of view?	Not everything possible everywhere
Local Cooperation	+ Production, Nature/landscape management	+ Production, Recreational facilities; Farm shops	++ Production, Recreation, nature, farm shops, organic products	+ Production, Recreation, nature, farm shops, organic products	Cooperation between farmers (2-100) in production, service and added value
High tech equipment	0/+ High risk in low-growth situation	++	0 Low innovation. No real need	0/+ High risk in low-growth situation Sufficient capital available ?	
Products					
"High-tech" products (GMO, hormone)	-/+ Depends upon EU rules/regulations: Which conditions will be set to grow these products?	+ How much will it bring in a really global market?	- Probably not accepted by population	0/+ Will be used whenever feasible	
Bio-Energy	0/+ Only in case of strong CO2 policies	+ High energy prices	+ Contribution to self-support of nations	+ In local and regional settings	
Biomaterials Non-food + Renewables	0/+ Not much innovation	++ Innovation and market	+ Little innovation.	+ Will there be a market?	Generally Bulk. Niche markets for medicine?
Medicine-low, Pesticide-low, animal friendly etc.	+ Eligible for cross-compliance?	+/ With good promotion (WS label)	++ Traditional food supported by large public	0 Most people won't care	
Organic	+ Also eligible for cross-compliance?	+/ With good promotion (WS label)	++	0	
Added value (cheese, eggs, bread,...)	0/+ In combination with tourism	+/ In combination with WS label	++	+ Mainly direct selling	Better possibilities with local cooperation
Wadden Sea label	0/+	++	++	0	Seek cooperation with health industry

Strategy Elements	Cautious World	Future Unlimited	Satisfied Citizens	Challenging World	Remarks/ Questions
	<i>Strong bureaucratic EU; Global market Low innovation Low growth</i>	<i>Strong, liberal EU; Global market; High innovation High growth</i>	<i>Strong and cooperating NW European nations; Regional market; Low innovation: High growth</i>	<i>Loosely organised nations; Regional market; High innovation; Low growth</i>	
Service					
Nature management	+ How much support from cross-compliance and modulation?	0/+ Only on commercial basis (tourism)	++ Official support to be expected	0/+ Maybe in some areas (in combination with tourism)	Better possibilities with local cooperation
Landscape management	+ How much support from cross-compliance and modulation?	0/+ Only on commercial basis (tourism)	++ Official support to be expected	0 Probably not much interest	Better possibilities with local cooperation
Tourism	0/+	+	++	+	Better possibilities with local cooperation
Direct selling	0/+	+	++	+	Better possibilities with local cooperation

++ = improvement position sector very feasible

+ = improvement position sector is feasible

0/+ = no or slight improvement position sector expected

0 = no change

-/+ = situation may become worse or better, depending upon conditions not under direct control of sector

- = situation sector estimated to become weaker