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BUSINESS & MARKETS

Potential market opportunities for mixed farming and agroforestry

Applying innovative social science research methods

AUTHOR

Rowan Dumper-Pollard

CONTACT

Rowan Dumper-Pollard

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To accompany ORC's contribution to the EU project AGROMIX (2020-2024), the ORC Business and Markets Team are leading an investigation into future market opportunities for mixed farming and agroforestry (MiFAS). Potential opportunities will first be finalised by convening a literature review and expert interviews. ORC will then incorporate different stakeholder groups (e.g., farmers, customers etc.) into the assessment of opportunities for MiFAS using Q-Methodology, an innovative social scientific research method applied to the study of subjective patterns in complex subject areas (Watts and Stenner, 2008). Previous EU-wide studies have demonstrated that MiFAS systems can be more sustainable than conventional monoculture farming, resilient to climate change and economic uncertainty, and provide many social benefits (Mosquera-Losada *et al.*, 2016; Leterme, 2016).



Wakelyns Agroforestry is involved in both field trials and monitoring as well in our socioeconomic assessment

The preliminary findings from an evidence review and interviews with established agroforestry farmers conducted by the ORC team, highlighted three main contributing factors towards opportunities for MiFAS at farm level and within the wider supply chain:

- Appropriate tree selection and management allows additional profit to be made by the farmer from bioenergy in agroforestry systems.
- MiFAS practice and management affords numerous opportunities to extend growing seasons and periods in which the farm is profitable.
- Opportunities for MiFAS are not only associated with production systems and there is scope to incorporate public and private financing for the provision of ecosystem services.

Our findings from this task provide the basis for further investigations in 6 other European countries and will inform policy recommendations coming out of AGROMIX, targeted at increasing the uptake of MiFAS in Europe.

FURTHER READING

1. Watts and Stenner (2012) tinyurl.com/j2drwbu
2. Mosquera-Losada *et al.* (2016) tinyurl.com/44y2etp7
3. Leterme (2016) tinyurl.com/953vcvhe