

High Nature Value Farming

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But there is an alternative understanding developing about the **biodiversity benefits** of certain types of agriculture

High Nature Value (HNV) Farming



A Definition?

HNV farming is found in those areas where:

a) productive agriculture supports or is associated with

- a **high diversity of wildlife species and habitats**, and/or
- the **presence of endangered wildlife species of European/global significance**


b) the conservation of these wildlife species and habitats is dependent upon the **continuation of specific agricultural systems and practices**



HNV FARMLAND

Likelihood of HNV farmland presence

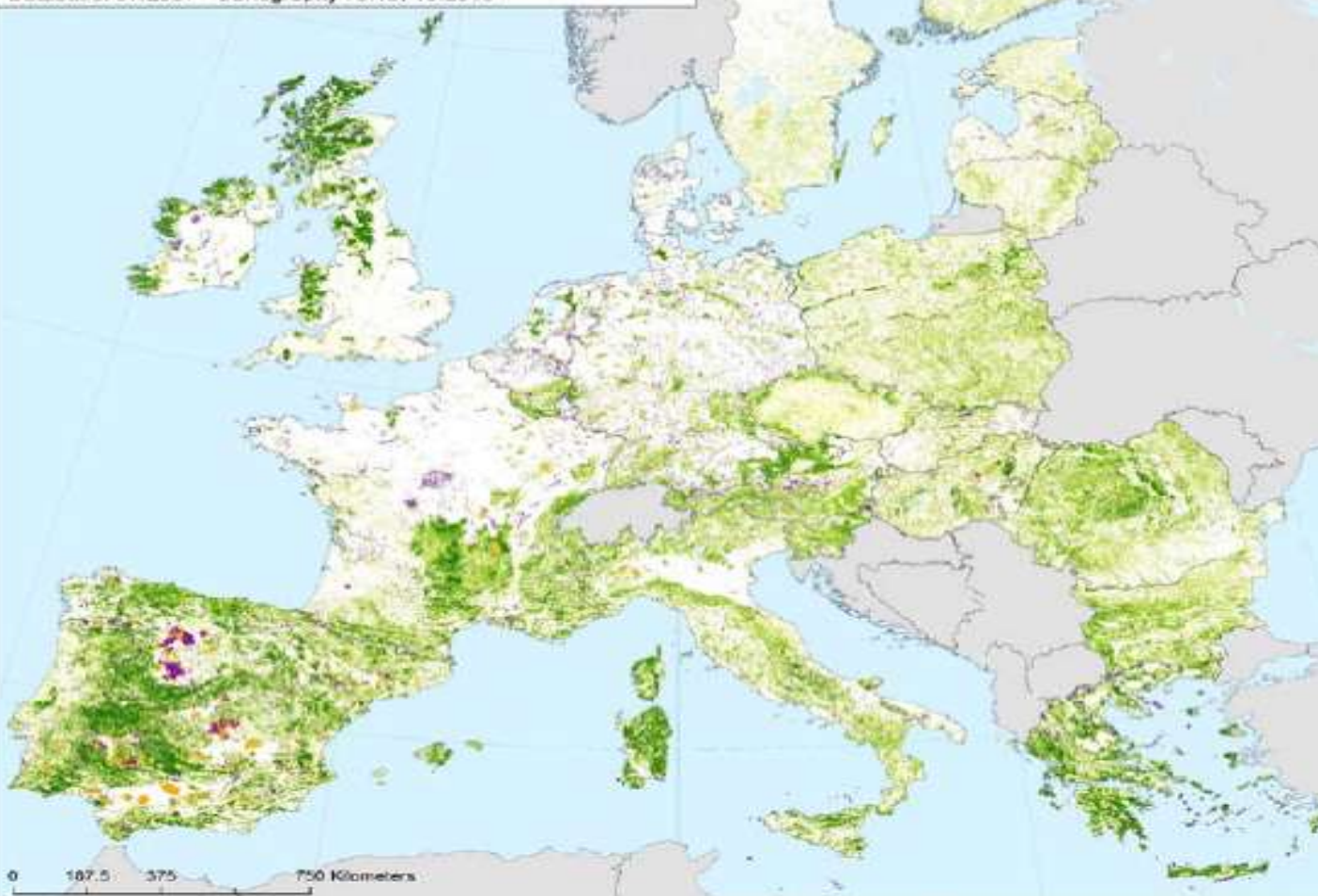
- None (0%)
- Low (1 - 25%)
- Medium (26 - 50%)
- High (51 - 75%)
- Very high (76 - 100%)
- HNV in PBAs
- HNV in Natura2000 sites
- HNV in IBAs

 **JRC** Institute for Environment and Sustainability
Rural, Water and Ecosystem Resources Unit

European Environment Agency



Data : Corine2000, Natura2000
De Vlindersichting Wageningen (NL) Prime Butterfly Areas
BirdLife International Important Bird Areas
© EuroGeographics for the administrative boundaries
Database: 07/2007 - Cartography : JRC, 10/2008



Preliminary estimates from European Environment Agency (EEA) are that:

27 million hectares of farmland in EU-27 is potentially HNV

Approx. 25% of farmland

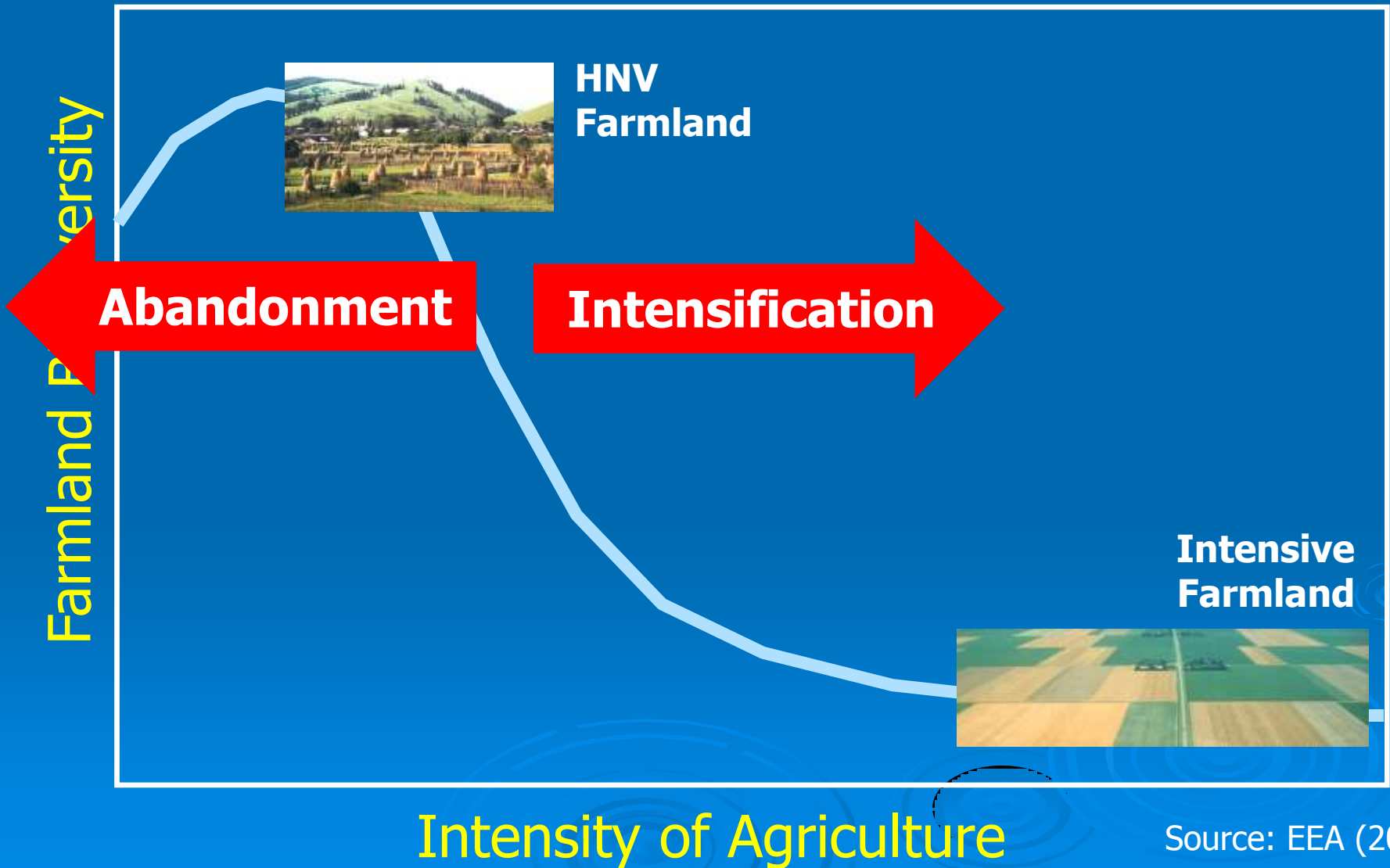
What are the KEY Characteristics of HNV Farmland?



1. Low intensity management



General Relationship between Agricultural Intensity and Farmland Biodiversity



Source: EEA (2004)

Commonly small-scale and subsistence

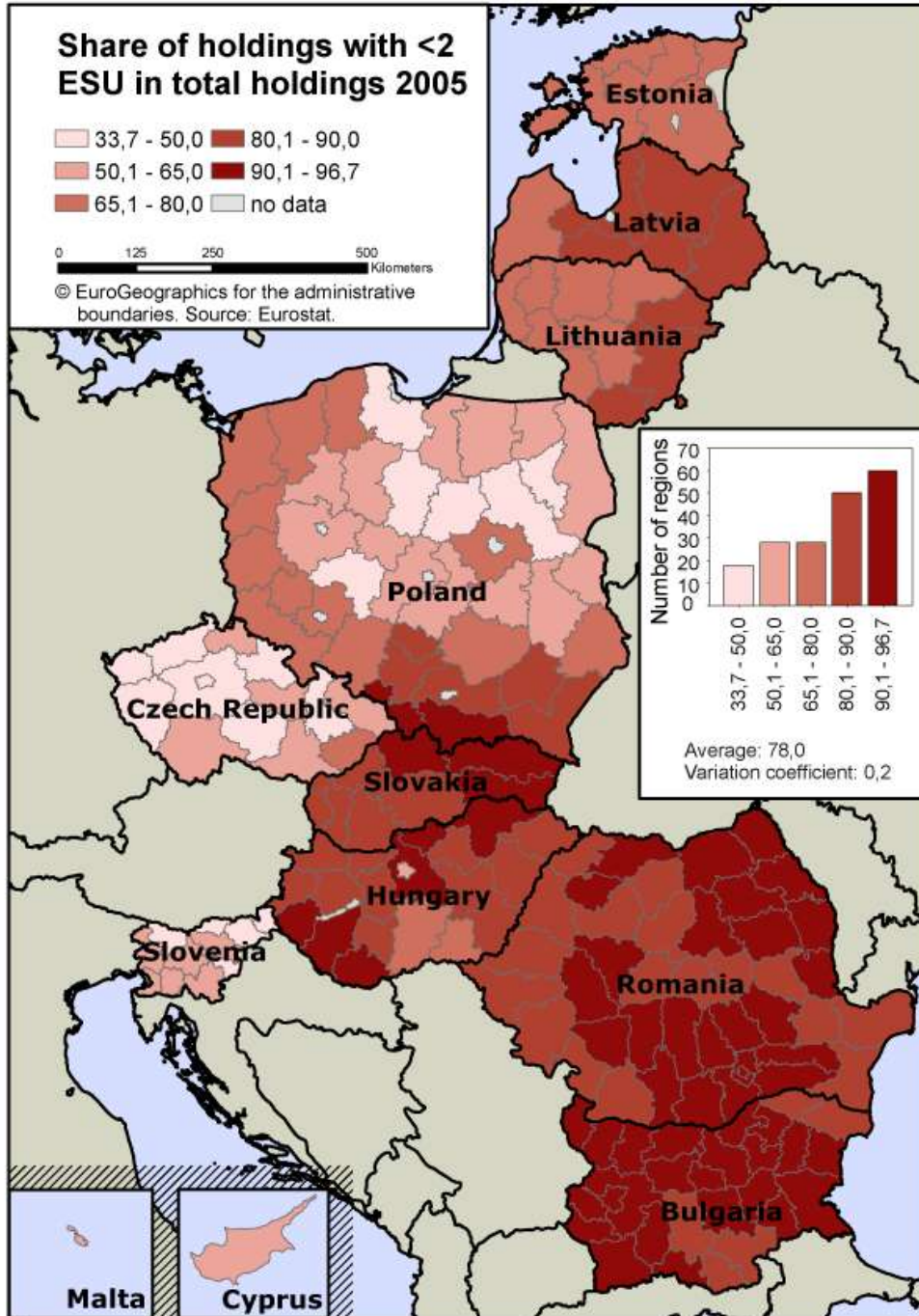


Share of holdings with <2 ESU in total holdings 2005



0 125 250 500 Kilometers

© EuroGeographics for the administrative boundaries. Source: Eurostat.



Huge numbers of small farms still persist in the new EU Member States

Very important for farmland biodiversity conservation!

Source: Baum (2008)

**Productivity severely limited
by altitude and slope...**



...plus climate and other factors





**2. High proportion of semi-natural
vegetation**

...which is **grazed by livestock and/or mown for hay...**

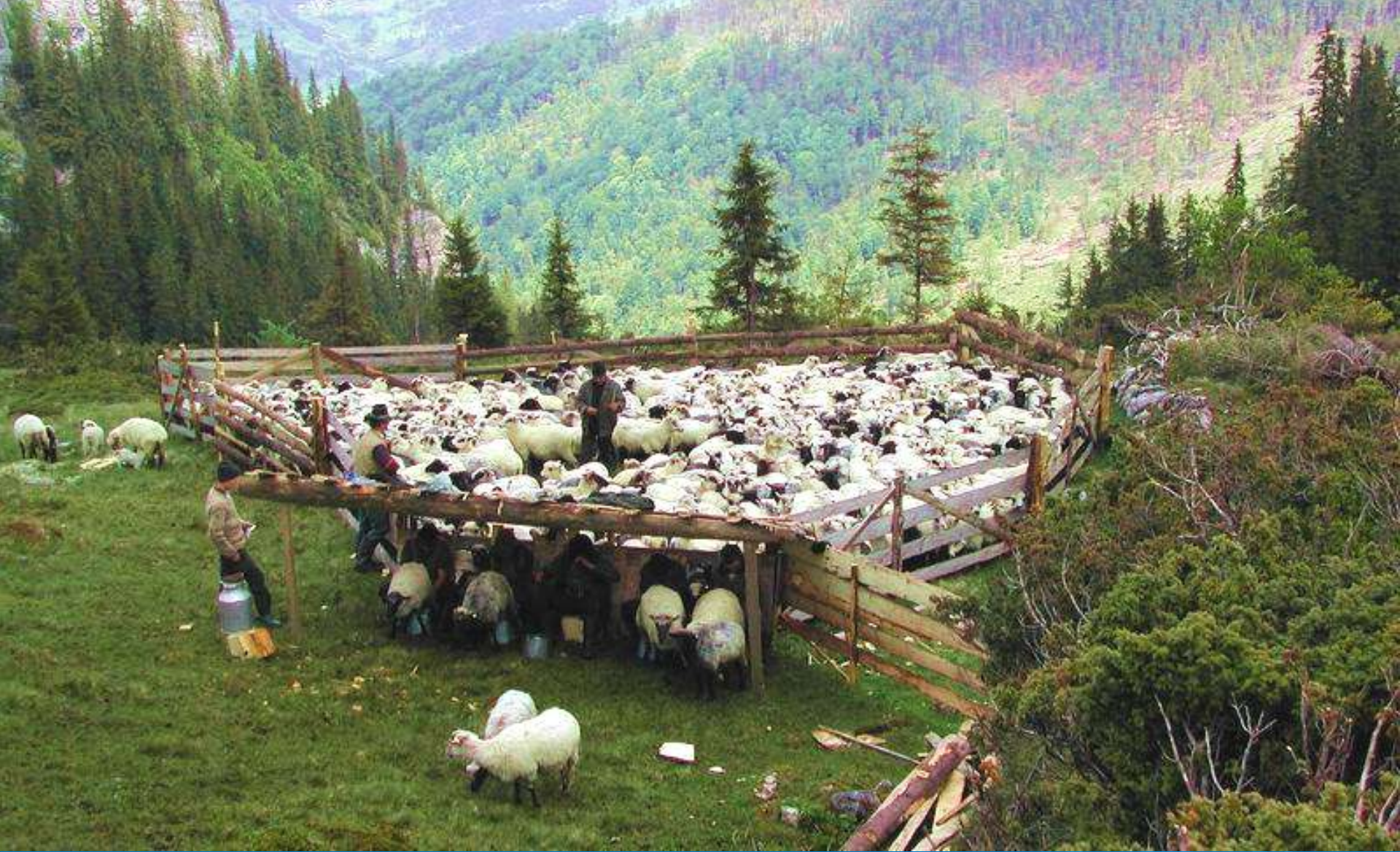


a) at **very low stocking densities**



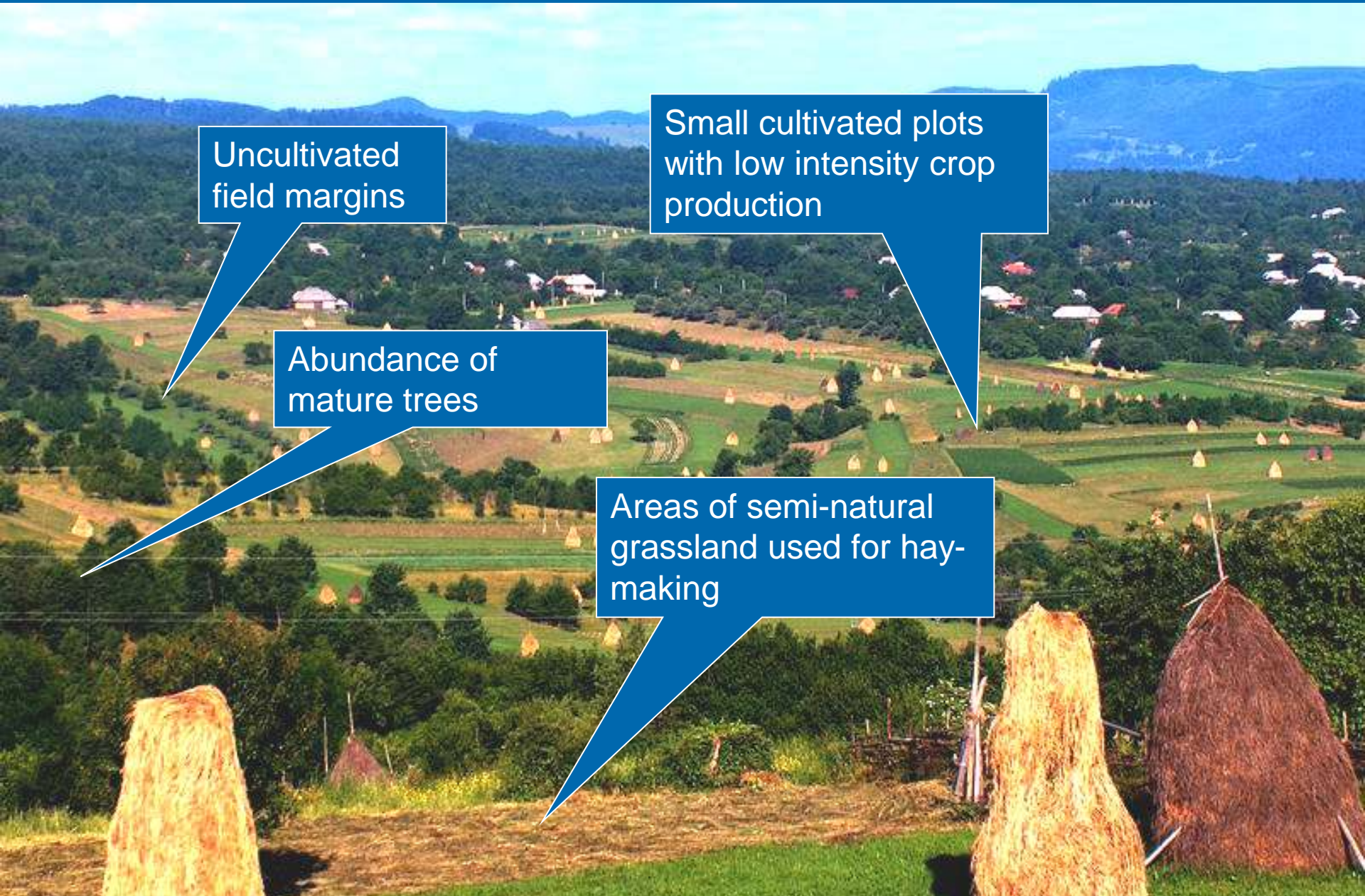
b) often using **indigenous/endangered breeds**





c) and commonly managed with **traditional**
“shepherd” systems

3. Diversity of **land cover** (mosaic landscape)....



Uncultivated
field margins

Small cultivated plots
with low intensity crop
production

Abundance of
mature trees

Areas of semi-natural
grassland used for hay-
making

...including **many subtle variations** (time and space) in day-to-day land management

- **1 village**
- **230 small-holdings**
- **700 ha of hay meadow divided into approx. 1,000 parcels**



Low Intensity Land Use



Presence of Semi-natural Vegetation



Diversity of Land Cover

HNV Farming in Southern Transylvania (Romania)







**Very small
farms – and
lots of them!**

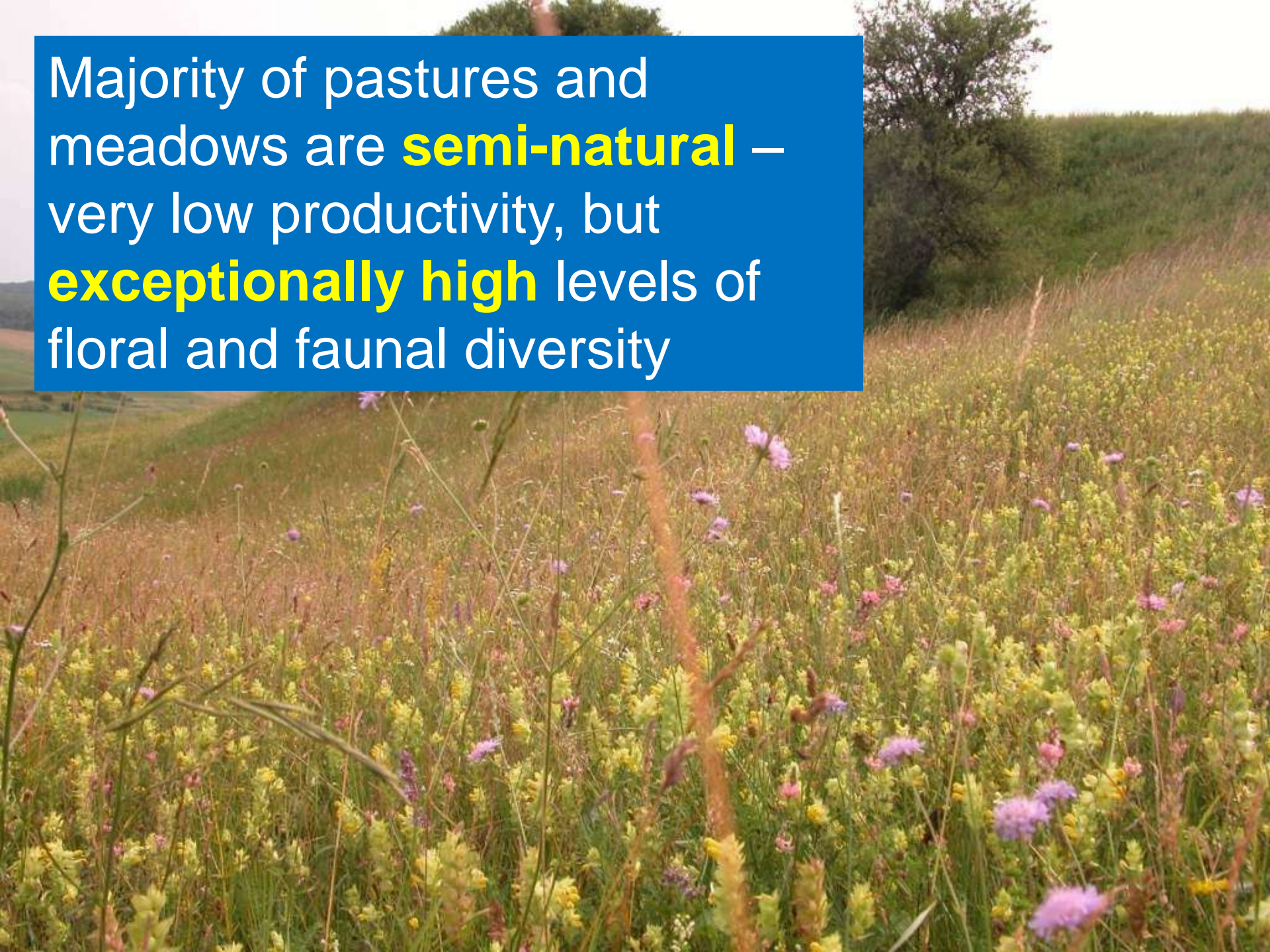
- Average farm size = **4.1 ha**
- 85% of farms are less than 5 hectares
- 42% of farms are less than 1 hectare



Agricultural land use is mainly **grasslands**:

- **pastures** (communal) for grazing
- **meadows** (private) for hay-making

Majority of pastures and meadows are **semi-natural** – very low productivity, but **exceptionally high** levels of floral and faunal diversity

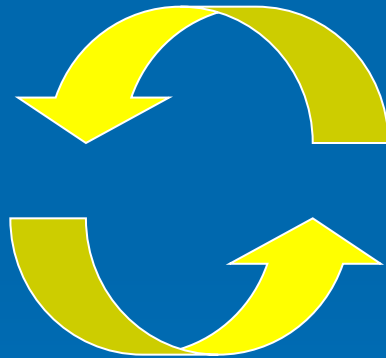




The dominant farming system is a form of
”traditional pastoralism”



Traditional pastoralism
involves **TWO connected**
land use systems





Communal grazing (May to October) with shepherds – including short-distance “transhumance” to mountain pastures





Hay-making (July to September)





Livestock housed all winter (November to April)



In addition to high levels of
biodiversity.....



Cultural Landscapes



Local food products





Range of **agro- and eco-tourism initiatives**



Other “hidden values”?

- Buffer against social and economic hardship
- Household food security
- Low energy use
- Low greenhouse gas emissions
- **Self-sustaining, multi-functional, high nature value, carbon neutral and culturally significant farming systems...wow!!**

The Way Forward?



The HNV Farming concept was developed as a tool for emphasising the **crucial importance of low intensity farming systems for biodiversity conservation** in Europe....



....with a particular focus upon promoting biodiversity conservation on the **large areas of low intensity farmland that remain OUTSIDE of protected areas**





In order to help fulfil its commitments on halting biodiversity decline, the EU has **embraced the HNV Farming concept** and within the framework of EU rural development policy requires all Member States to:


① Identify what is “HNV farming” in the specific context of the Member State

② SUPPORT and MAINTAIN HNV farming systems

③ Monitor the EXTENT and QUALITY of the HNV farmland resource

**Key rural development
measures for supporting HNV
farming are:**



- **Agri-environment payments** (+ non-productive investments)
 - Payments for areas with natural handicaps (LFAs)
 - Natura 2000 payments
 - Advice and training
 - Processing and Marketing for Quality Products
 - Farm modernisation and infrastructure development
- 

But is it enough?



What's the real challenge?



Ageing farming community





Poor infrastructure

Limited access to rural services





**Impact of EU food
hygiene standards**

**....including
problems of
misinterpretation**



Abandonment of farmland and dwellings




TERENDE VNIJARE
TF. 01LOS 26 722

Fragmentation of HNV farmland due to sale for "development"



Huge challenge of socio-economic viability!

Protection of biodiversity through HNV farming must go hand-in-hand with the maintenance and enhancement of:

- **Rural livelihoods**
 - **Quality of life**
 - **Cultural heritage**
 - **Traditional beliefs**
- 

GROUP WORK:

**HNV Farming in the Western
Balkans**



1. Work in country groups
2. Sketch a map of your country and indicate where you are most likely to find HNV farming
3. For each area of HNV farming - what are the main pressures on farmland biodiversity?
4. What can you do as CSOs to promote and support HNV farming?