

Managing fallow land to enhance biodiversity, soil protection, and farm resilience

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Fallow land is agricultural land temporarily taken out of production. Fallow land may be bare land with no crops at all, land with spontaneous natural growth which may be used as feed, ploughed in or land sown exclusively for the production of green manure (green fallow). These areas can benefit biodiversity and help to restore soil fertility and meet environmental farming requirements.



Photo credit: Theres Rutz

Active management of fallow land can create multifunctional farm elements that support both agronomic and environmental objectives. This low-input and cost-effective practice requires limited labour and can be easily integrated into farm planning. It aligns well with eco-schemes and contributes to non-productive area requirements. Well-managed fallow land improves soil structure, enhances biodiversity, and can help to increase the resilience of adjacent cropping systems to environmental stressors. Allowing natural regeneration of plants instead of sowing with seed mixtures may allow more native species to grow which will have a greater benefit for native biodiversity.

Practical Recommendations

Practice delayed or mosaic mowing (or grazing) once or twice per year to increase the number of different plant and pollinator species. Monitor sites to detect unwanted plants early to reduce risks from future weed pressure and possible associated control costs. Integrate fallow parcels into overall farm planning as functional ecological and non-productive areas. Apply for available agri-environmental support schemes.

Further Information on farmbionet.eu

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