

Intensive farming in Flanders, Belgium

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Future farming systems: fostering transformation
processes in intensive farming systems

Brussels, 6 November 2019



What is the region I represent

- Flanders research institute for agriculture, fisheries and food – social sciences unit
- Flanders, northern region of Belgium
 - Densely populated
 - Loss of open area
 - Relatively fertile soil and low elevation
- More intensive farming systems compared to the south of Belgium

What is the importance of the agricultural sector

- Important in terms of land use (45 %) and hence associated environmental issues
- In terms of volume: self-sufficient for many products, yet lot of import and export
- Low importance in employment and GDP
- However
 - Agrifood complex (upstream and downstream) depends partly on this agricultural sector and is very important in terms of GDP, employment and export
- Main sectors: pork, cow's milk, arable crops, beef, poultry and eggs, vegetables and fruit
- Relative importance depends on which aspect you look at: employment, farms, land use, turnover

What are the five main challenges?

- Socio-economic-financial feasibility and viability
- Climate, both mitigation and adaptation
- Societal pressure and political restrictions to tackle environmental problems: nitrate, pesticides, particulate matter, destruction of habitats
- Low land availability and high land price
- Markets, both domestically (position and 'fair' distribution of value in the value chain) and globally (dependence on global markets for input and especially output)

What can local stakeholders reasonably do?

- Improve eco-efficiency with (better) implementation of new technologies
- Transform farming systems, including new ways of financing and marketing (to a lesser extent)
- Improve vertical and horizontal cooperation

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THANK YOU