

## CASE STUDY DE-2

### MEADOW ORCHARDS, GERMANY

#### BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

This case study is about a **surcharge initiative for traditional orchards**, the Support Association for Regional Traditional Orchard Cultivation (Fördergemeinschaft regionaler Streuobstbau, FÖG). Traditional orchards provide numerous environmental and social benefits. They **provide a habitat** for up to 5000 species, **form characteristic and distinct elements of cultural landscapes** and are **beneficial for public recreation and education**. Besides a **sustainable and sufficient production of food** they contribute to a **higher water quality, climate adaptation and mitigation** as well as **healthy functioning soils**.

Traditional orchards show a decline in quality and quantity since the 1950s, which led in the 1980s to a number of initiatives, like the FÖG, intending to maintain the remaining traditional orchards. The FÖG operates in parts of the three natural areas Bergstraße, Odenwald and Kraichgau, covering parts of Hessen and Baden-Wuerttemberg stretching over 5 NUTS3 areas. It has 45 producers and 36 supporting members who are not producers themselves.



FÖG logo



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#### KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

Two **policy frameworks** apply, with a history of funding of orchards inside and outside the EAFRD in Baden-Wuerttemberg, while Hessen only started in this EAFRD funding period. Most of the producers are non-farmers, however, and thus not eligible to funding. **The surcharge model** foresees an annual sales related and therefore variable top-up. Though this model is appreciated by producers the price might not be high enough to serve as an incentive for maintaining the orchards. A **quality label issued by a nature conservation organisation** as well as **organic certification** are two mechanisms currently used by the FÖG to highlight additional benefits of their orchards. Still, **societal appreciation of orchards** is only starting to revive and consumers and producers need to regain knowledge on orchards (varieties, maintenance etc.). While there is future potential in working with other initiatives, the FÖG struggles internally with a decreasing number of members and lack of volunteers for executive work.



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#### EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

There is a broad, defined set of environmental and social benefits which interrelate with traditional orchards. The main challenge is to maintain current environmental and social benefits provision: **while awareness and demand for environmental and social benefits provision from traditional orchards increases, the full set of provided environmental and social benefits is hardly known by people outside nature conservation groups and specialised initiatives**. The FÖG as association needs to explore other set-ups (e.g. a cooperative model) and start **interchanging and working with other initiatives**. **New networks with new governance arrangements** are needed in order to bring together all of the different initiatives in the field and start activities together (e.g. common direct marketing under one regional label).

