

## CASE STUDY EE-2

### GRASS-FED BEEF

#### BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- This case study is taking a whole chain approach (production-processing-marketing) to market grass-fed organic beef in Estonia, an initiative by a farmer NGO *Liivimaa Lihaveis* (“beef of Livonia”– the only NGO of its kind). The NGO is closely related to a private company, Nordic Beef, whose main function is to market grass-fed beef and is responsible for the national grass-fed beef quality scheme (in which 30 farmers are involved).
- The main aim of this private initiative is to seek independence from conventional systems to give more added-value to farmers through controlling the whole supply chain. *Liivimaa Lihaveis* also promotes the consumption of grass-fed beef and the environmental benefits related to this, e.g. management of grasslands, including biodiversity-rich semi-natural grasslands.
- The total area of organically managed farmland of the 41 farms involved in the initiative across Estonia is about 13,900 ha, which corresponds to 7% of total area of managed semi-natural habitats in Estonia. The farms part of the quality scheme own in total about 8% of total number of Estonian beef cattle.
- The main environmental and social benefits studied are biodiversity, landscape character and cultural heritage, rural vitality and animal welfare.



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

- The main driver which motivated the initiative is the low price paid conventional meat industries to beef farmers.
- Marketing and promotion should be developed together as consumer awareness about and interest in grass-fed beef are closely related. The higher the knowledge and interest by consumers, the higher the success of this approach, and the provision of environmental and social benefits as a result.
- Consumer awareness on how the products are produced and what benefits are associated with this type of production – and thus demand for such products – is increasing in Estonia, certainly also thanks to this approach.

#### EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Grass-fed organic beef production relies on grasslands, and provides related environmental and social benefits such as biodiversity, preservation of landscapes, rural vitality as well as benefits related to organic farming (e.g. soil functionality, water quality, animal welfare). Without valorisation of the production (in this case beef) the system might not be sustainable in long-term.
- Farmers use a combination of the private marketing initiative (controlling the whole supply chain and the labelling of products) and with various public funds (e.g. CAP Pillar 2) which makes this approach economically viable.
- Initiatives of this type is highly dependent on the personal enthusiasm of some active people.

