

# Regenerative agriculture as a social phenomenon

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# Perception of farming/farmers by society

WAYS OF PERCEPTION	CHARACTERISTICS
INDUSTRIAL	Farming as regular, industrial business, profit-oriented, capitalistic rationality (maximum profit – low cost), business first. Productivity and intensification.
FARMER-TYPE	Farming is something different than regular business, but still is market oriented. Farmers as hard-workers, farms are „different“, farmers surrounded by grants and bureaucracy,
PEASANT	Farming as activity deeply submerged in the past. Ancient techniques, not modern, conservative, but society-friendly. Special rationality: profit is of second importance, keeping tradition is the first value.
IDYLLIC	Farming is nearly transcendental. Farmers as keepers of the faith, keepers of nature.
ECO	Farming as public goods delivery.

# The picture of ideal farmer – farmers' view

Ideal type	Characteristic
Businessman	Good manager, good employer, efficient, modern, productivist identity
Balanced	“actually we need to have a balanced agricultural world, where there’s some that’s really commercial and some that’s less commercial.” „Feet on business ground, but the head is still in peasant’s clouds”
Smart	Game change in response to new attitudes in society. Adoption of green schemes without adoption of green values. „The farmers adopting organic practices or participating in an AgriEnvironmental Schemes revealed themselves to be the ones creatively responding to the policy, economic and social landscape that is increasingly favouring the delivery of more diverse farming objectives”
Past keeper	Status quo is good. Farming with accordance to traditional rules. „Keep developing, but also remember and respect the way they did it in the past”
Future keeper	Farming as the mission of saving the environment / community / world.

# Changing view of agriculture in general

„Changed expectations that society is placing on agriculture—from something that **provides one good** (food) to something that **supplies many goods** (food, access to green spaces, healthy rural environment, flood resilience, reduced greenhouse gas emissions)

*George Cusworth, Jennifer Dodsworth*

# Regenerative agriculture – bottom-up shift in farming

- Regenerative agriculture (Reg.Ag.) is a paradigm shift in food production, which is led by farmers, and it is based on the fundamental assumption **to respect and work with the environment rather than downgrading it.**



# Reg.Ag. as a result of social adaptation proces

- Reg.Ag. is the product of social change in farming.
- This includes **changes of values and norms** of growing number of farmers into the system of **more sustainable farm practices**.
- It should be honestly admitted, that it is a form of „**contract**” **between humans and the nature**.

# REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE SHIFTS THE PARADIGM

Compete with Nature

Disturb Soil

Monoculture

Reductionist



Partner with Nature



Protect Soil

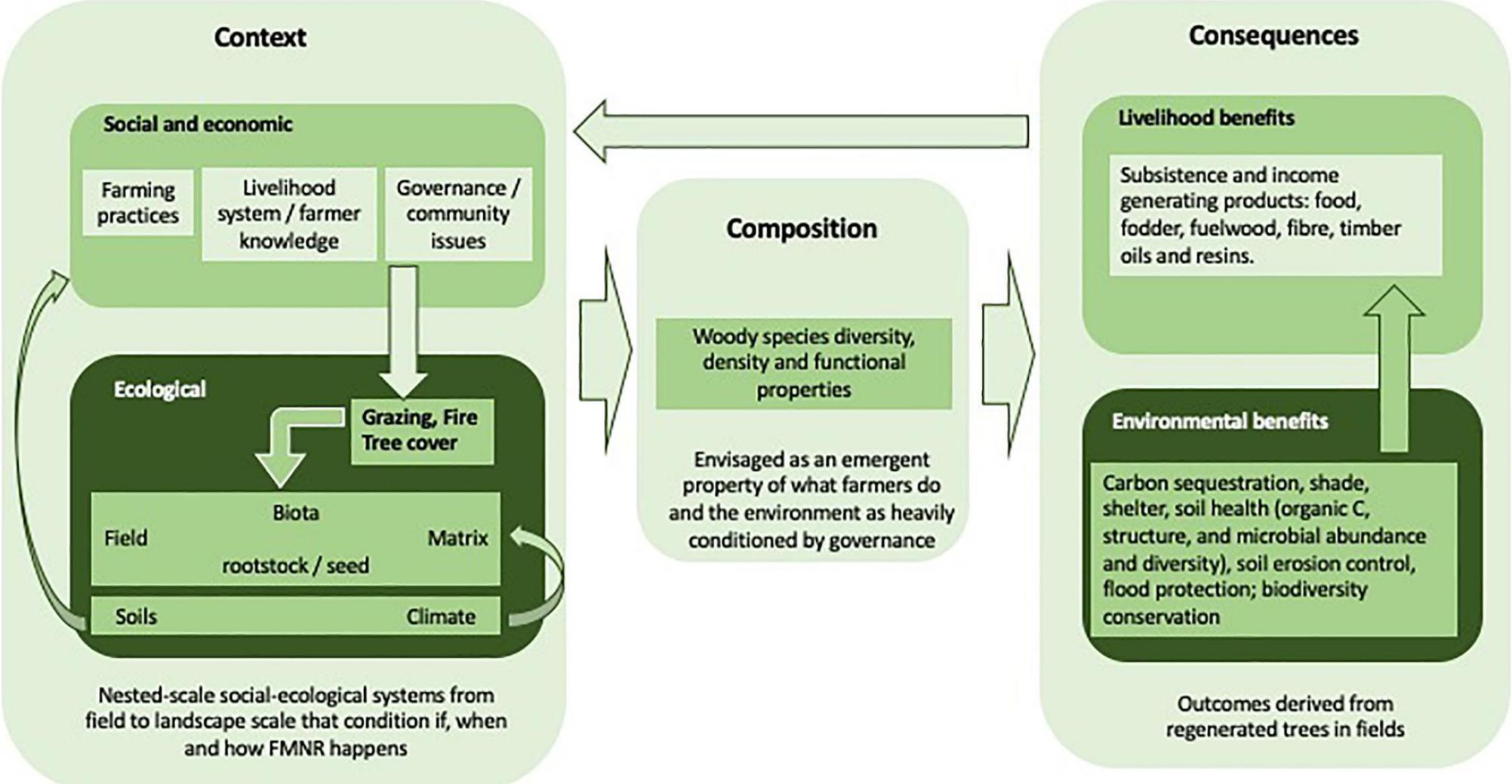


Diversity



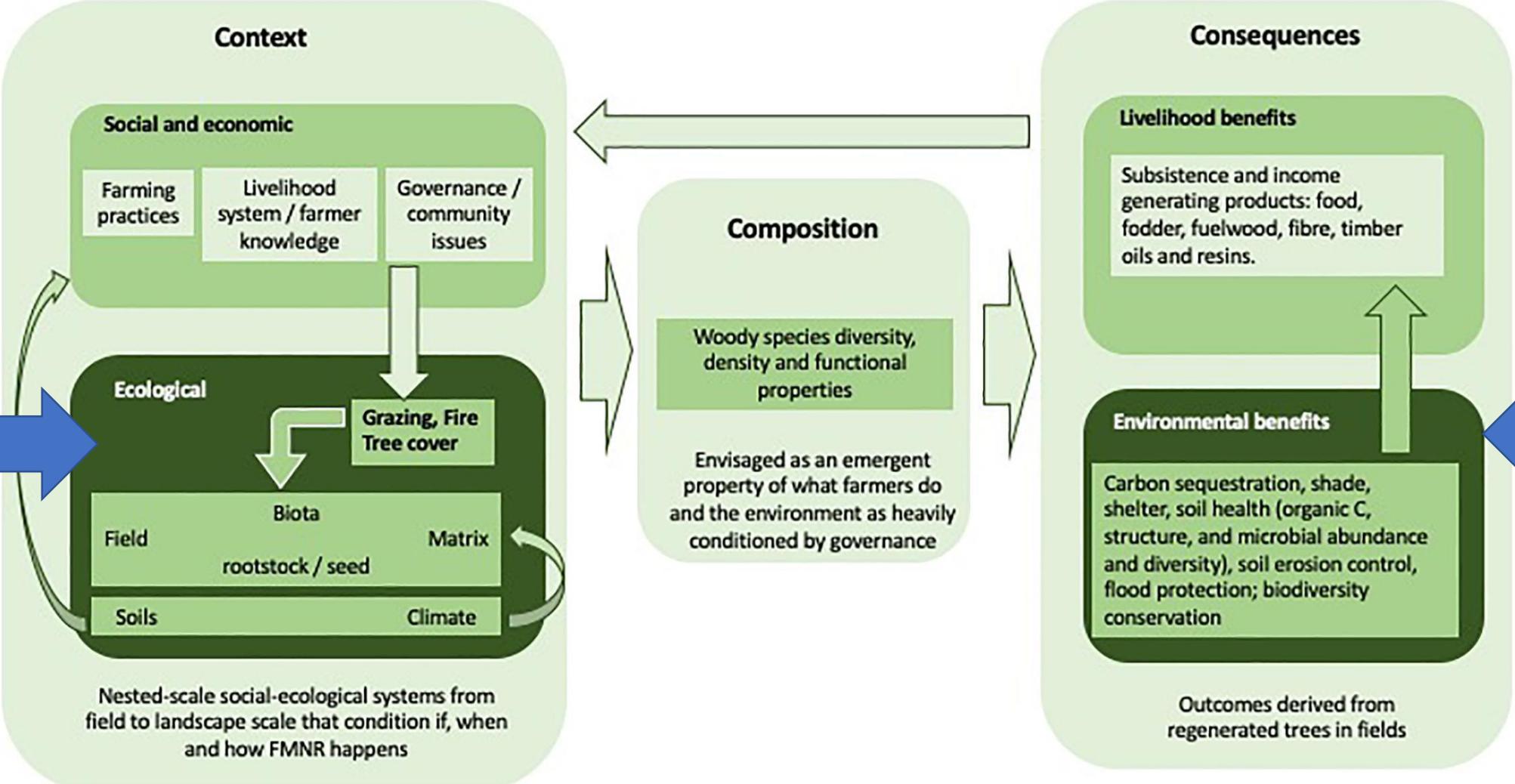
Holistic

# Evidence about farmer managed natural regeneration



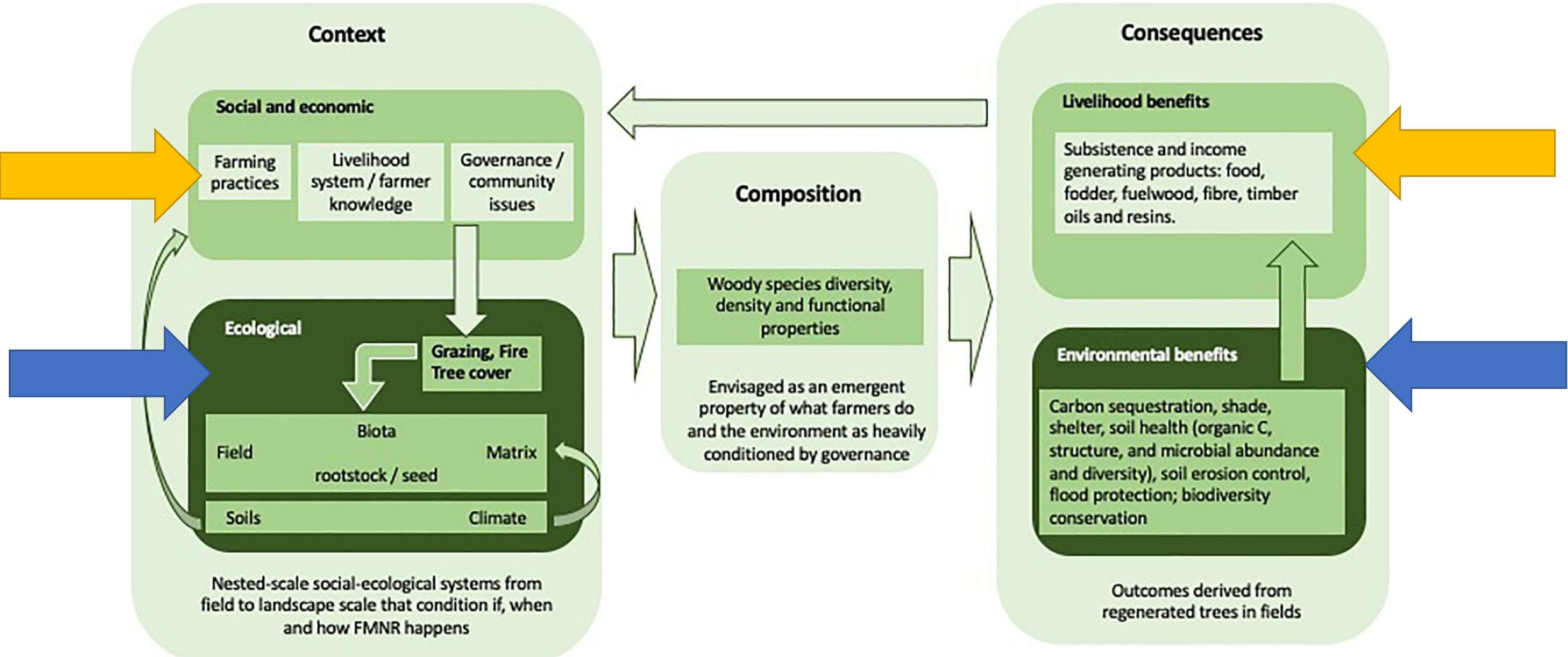
Source: Susan Chomba et al., Opportunities and Constraints for Using Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Land Restoration in Sub-Saharan Africa, Frontiers 2020

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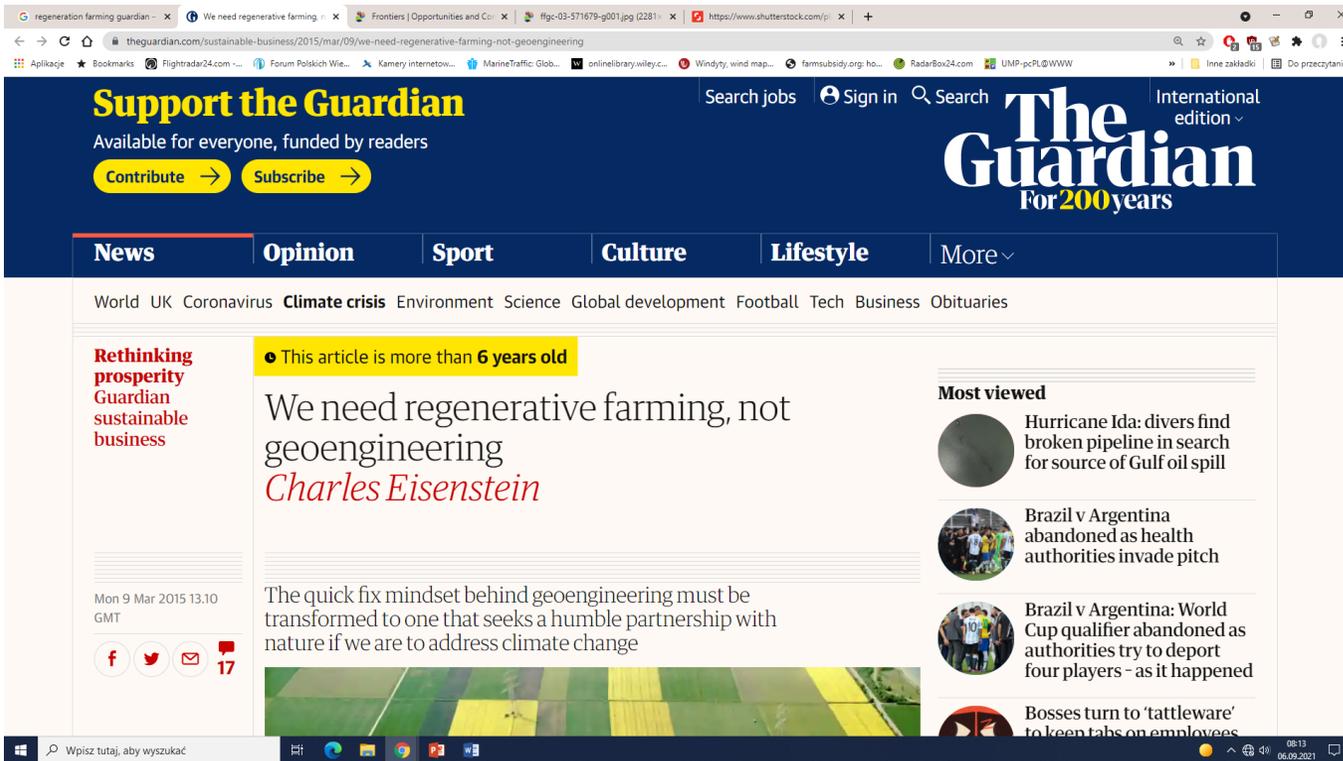
# Reg.Ag. as rational choice in food production

- When we realise, that food security could not be ensured on a long term basis by more and more **intensive agriculture**, then the only way is to promote rational use of natural resources in order to achieve regeneration effect.
- As such TO FARMERS Reg.Ag. IS **rational strategy to achieve farm's durability through long-term accessibility of natural resources**, such as fertile soil, water, biodiversity and so on.
- THIS IS ESPECIALLY VALID FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM FARMS

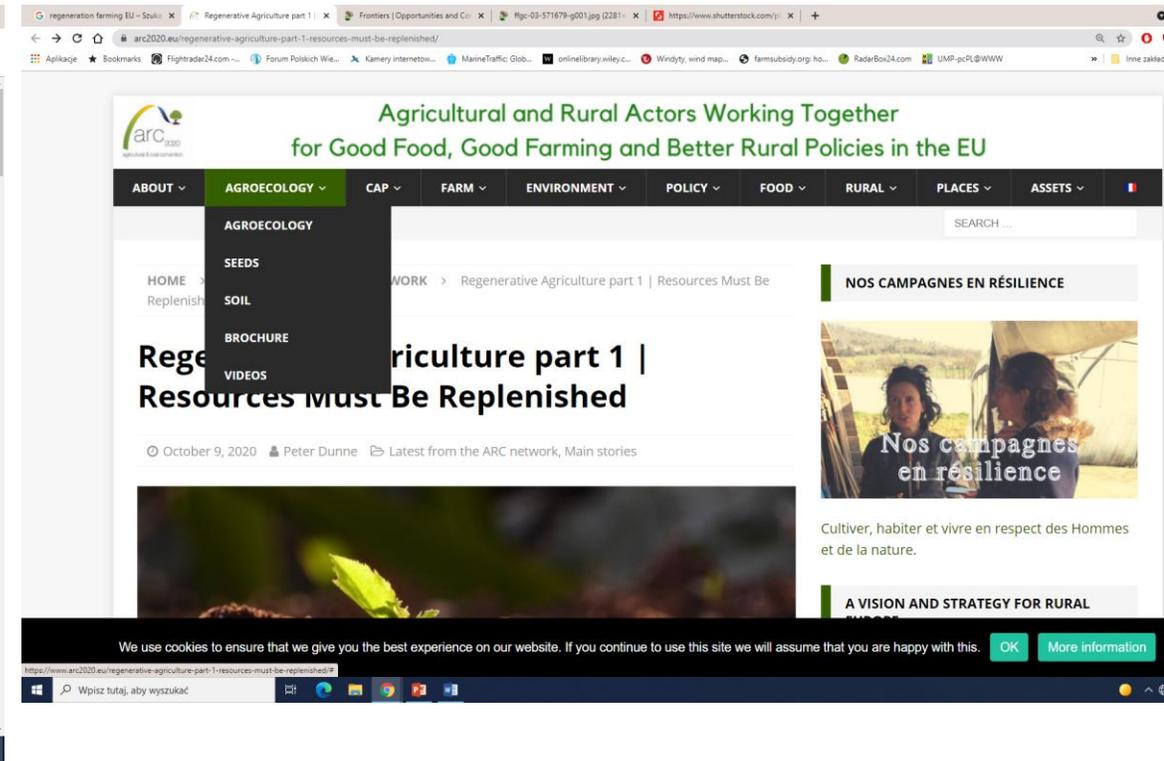
- Regenerative agriculture has received significant attention from producers, retailers, researchers, and consumers, as well as **politicians and the mainstream media**. As such it is a part of the debate on the future of farming in general.

2015

2020, ARC 2020



The screenshot shows the Guardian website's front page from March 9, 2015. The main headline is "We need regenerative farming, not geoengineering" by Charles Eisenstein, with a yellow banner indicating "This article is more than 6 years old". A sub-headline reads: "The quick fix mindset behind geoengineering must be transformed to one that seeks a humble partnership with nature if we are to address climate change". The page features a navigation bar with categories like News, Opinion, Sport, Culture, and Lifestyle. A sidebar on the left includes a "Rethinking prosperity" article and social media sharing options. A "Most viewed" section lists articles about Hurricane Ida, Brazil v Argentina, and Bosses turning to 'tattleware'.



The screenshot shows the ARC 2020 website, titled "Agricultural and Rural Actors Working Together for Good Food, Good Farming and Better Rural Policies in the EU". The main article is "Regenerative Agriculture part 1 | Resources Must Be Replenished" by Peter Dunne, dated October 9, 2020. The website has a dark navigation bar with categories like AGROECOLOGY, FARM, ENVIRONMENT, POLICY, FOOD, RURAL, PLACES, and ASSETS. A sidebar on the right features "NOS CAMPAGNES EN RÉSILIENCE" with a photo of people in a field and the text "Cultiver, habiter et vivre en respect des Hommes et de la nature." and "A VISION AND STRATEGY FOR RURAL". A cookie consent banner is visible at the bottom.

# Consumers enter the game

- Consumers became active and powerful influencers in food production.
- Community Supported Agriculture, food cooperatives etc.
- Widespread of sustainable lifestyles among food consumers **generates different forms of pressure on farmers** to dismiss industrial ideology of farming and introduce more holistic, long-term strategies that promise e.g. rapid carbon sequestration at global scale – for good of society.

# Farmers – from „bad guys” to „good guys”

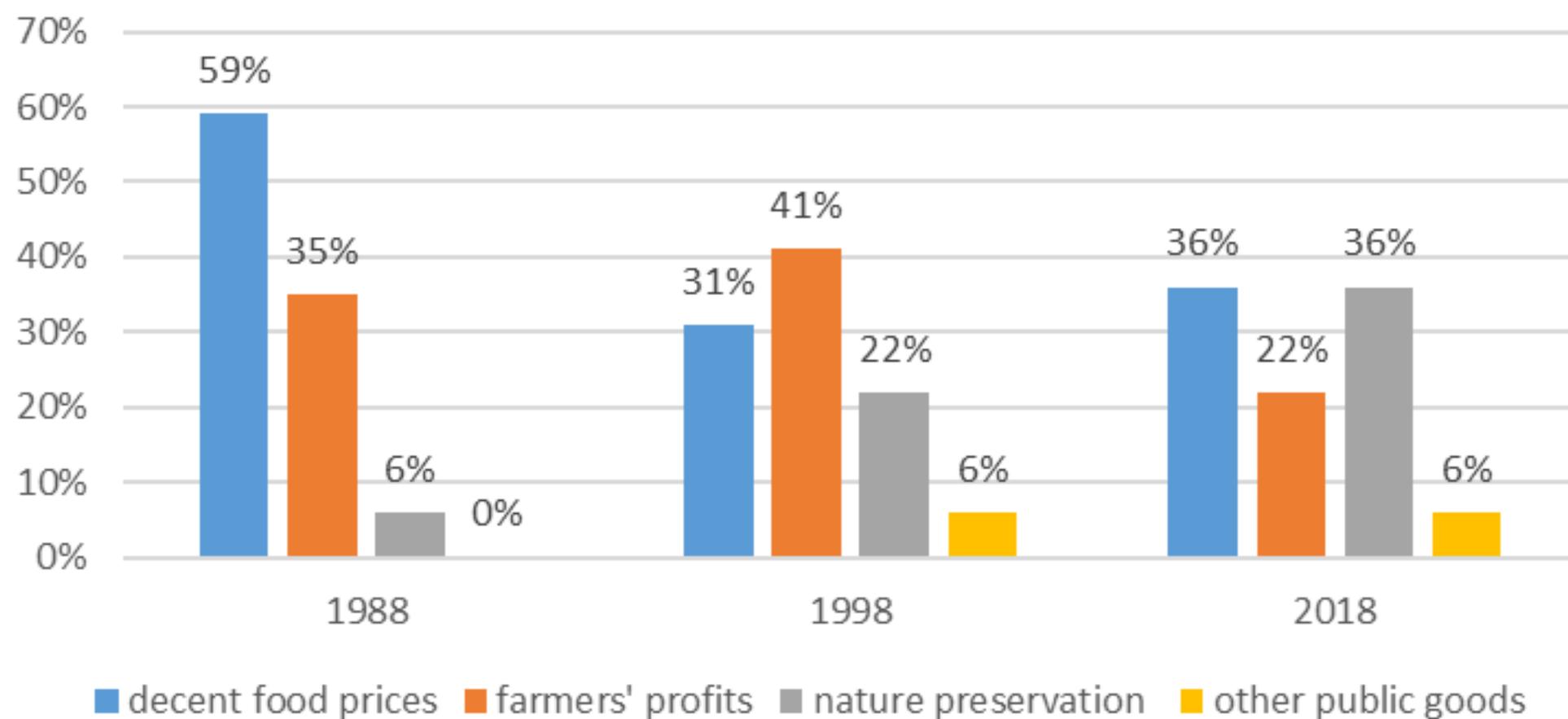
- Reg.Ag. should also be analysed as normative shift in perceiving farmers as ‘bad guys’: those responsible for reducing biodiversity, degrading soil by erosion and excess fertilisers, over-using water catchments and lowering water quality, destroying traditional rural landscape etc.



...time to demand a just, sustainable food system that protect nature and people's health.



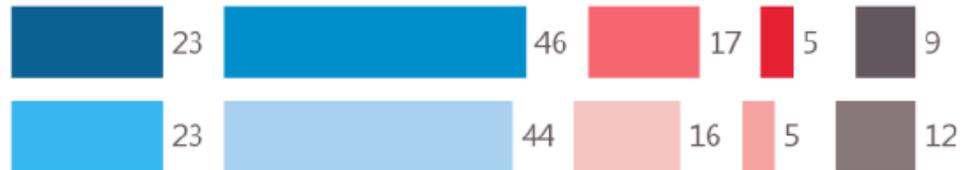
## Desired priorities of agricultural policy - polls results



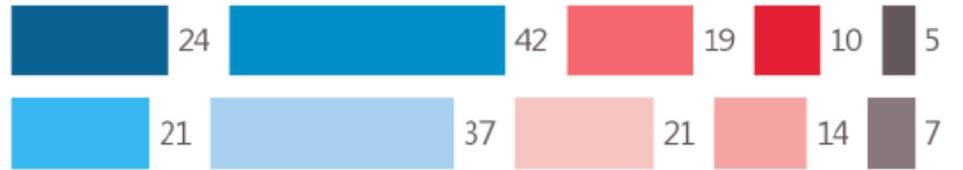
**QA22** Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about agriculture and climate change?

(% - EU27)

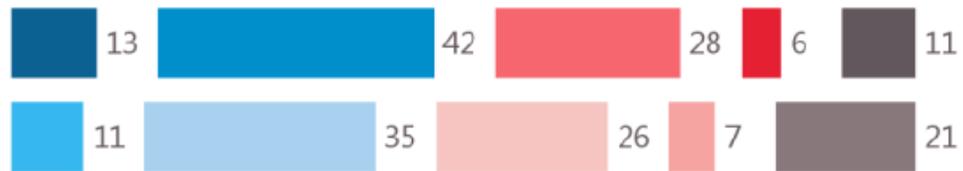
EU FARMERS NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY THEY WORK IN ORDER TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE EVEN IF THAT MEANS THAT EU AGRICULTURE WILL BE LESS COMPETITIVE



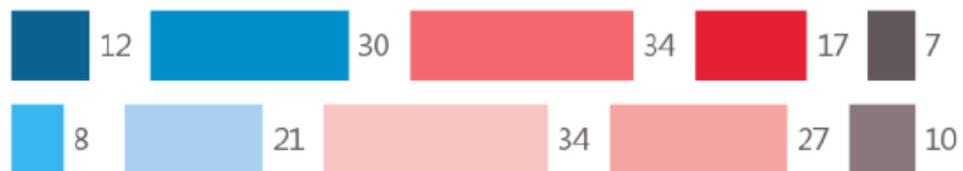
YOU ARE PREPARED TO PAY 10% MORE FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS THAT ARE PRODUCED IN A WAY THAT LIMITS THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT



AGRICULTURE HAS ALREADY MADE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION IN FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE



AGRICULTURE IS ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE



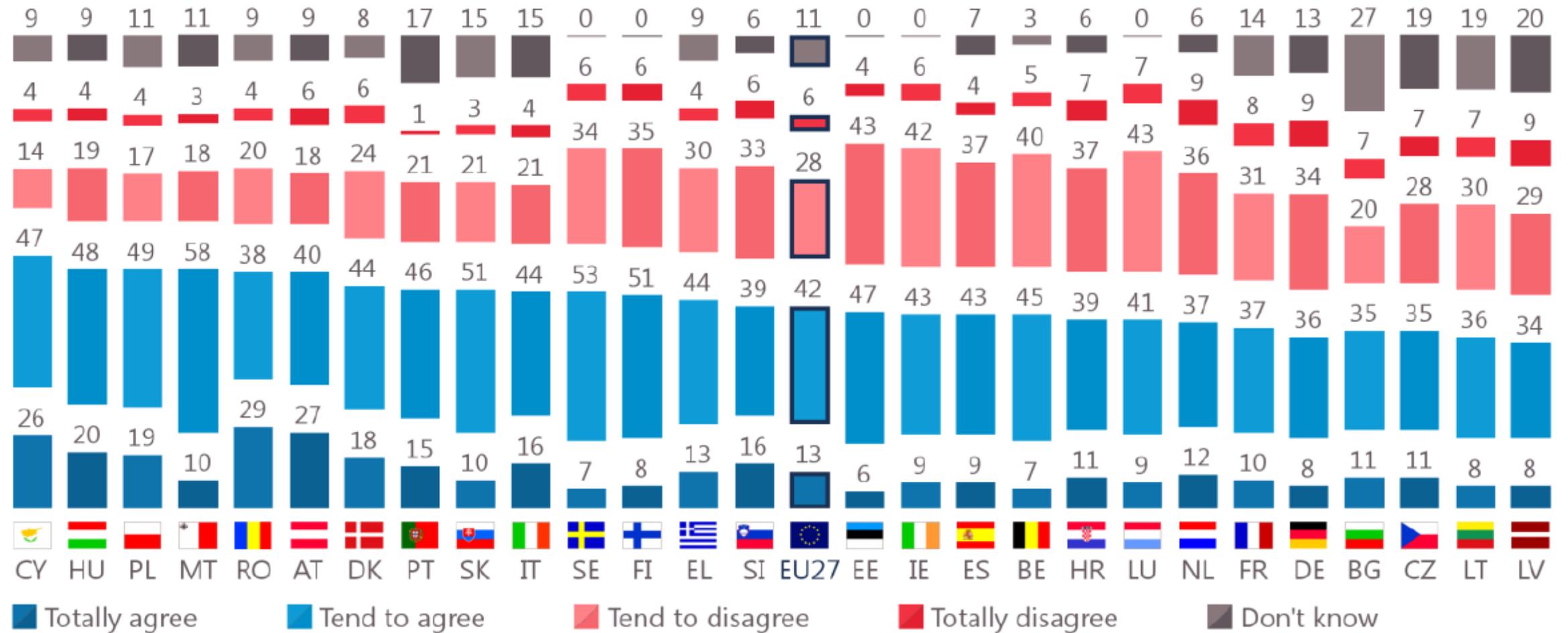
Aug.-Sep. 2020

Nov.-Dec. 2009



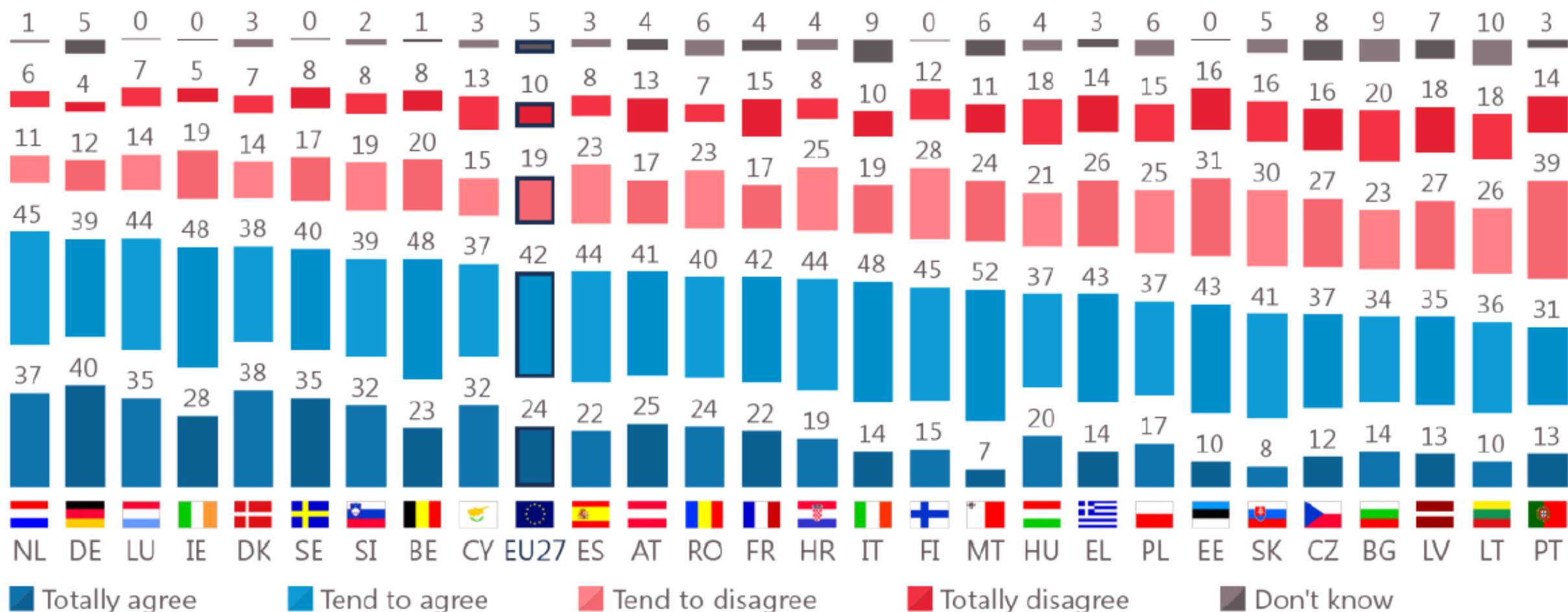
**QA22.3** Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about agriculture and climate change?

**Agriculture has already made a major contribution in fighting climate change (%)**

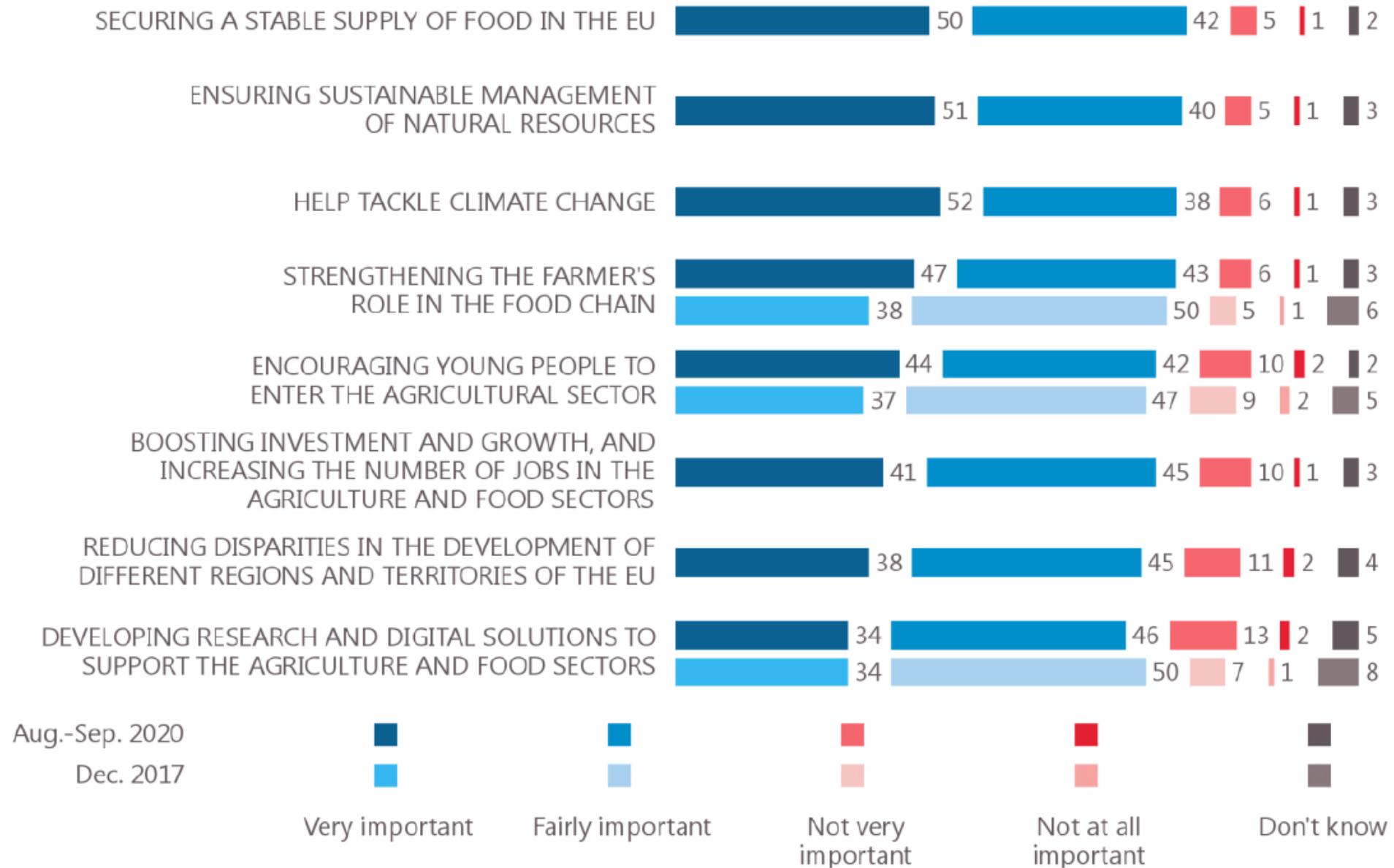


**QA22.4** Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about agriculture and climate change?

**You are prepared to pay 10% more for agricultural products that are produced in a way that limits their carbon footprint (%)**



**QA7** How important do you think the following priorities of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are?  
 (% - EU27)



# Ecologists and farmers – turning point

- Ecologists used to be inclined to point an accusing finger at farmers when biodiversity came under threat
- Criticism of agri-environmental financial schemes

*A lot of money and bureaucracy delivered little or no additional biodiversity (...) because the money went everywhere, even to places where there was no chance of success.*

*For most farmers, these were rules **imposed from above**. If they just obeyed them, they would get paid. But people had lost sight of what those rules were for and what good it all did. Whereas **it is commitment you need the most: you have to work at it.***

- Growing number of eco-organisations recognizing sustainable agriculture and the role of regeneration practices among farmers

# Regeneration calculated

- *'The recovery of biodiversity affects us all. We want to do more to address it and to offer solutions,' – Dutch Farmers' Union - Biodiversity **comes with a price tag**. That needs to be prominently visible in our food supply chain.'*

# Discussion

- How to make the society to perceive agriculture in non-industrial way?
- „Biodiversity comes with a price tag” - do we need it in regeneration agriculture?