

EN

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Answer given by Mr Hansen

on behalf of the European Commission

(22.12.2025)

1. Across the EU-27, the permanent grassland area slightly increased between 2015 and 2023, resulting in a net increase of 2 million hectares (+4.1%) – see enclosed table. This trend reflects both land abandonment and re-pastoralisation in extensive zones, and conversion to annual crops or temporary pastures elsewhere.

2. In 2025, the Commission proposed to simplify the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), among others by enabling Member States to extend the period for classification of agricultural area as permanent grassland from five to seven years and by introducing more flexibility through the monitoring of the share of permanent grassland. This should prevent unnecessary ploughing, and give farmers more freedom in the management of production of feed on their farms, therefore benefiting biodiversity.

3. In areas facing a decline in the livestock herd, concerns emerge in relation to the permanent grassland maintenance. Therefore, the Commission has proposed an incentive-based approach for the CAP post 2027. Rather than a national requirement to maintain a certain share of permanent grassland, Member States may provide incentives, for example in the form of ‘coupled income support’ for grass and forage under environmental safeguards. Member States are also encouraged to design environmental and climate actions supporting extensive systems or supporting farmers in their transition to resilient production systems, including through transition lump-sum payments. This shift towards more targeted territorial grassland management aims to maintain grasslands’ role in EU climate and biodiversity goals.