

New intervention will promote conservation tillage practices for sustainable soil management

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At a meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Strategic Plan it was decided to include a new intervention, “Promotion of conservation tillage practices for sustainable soil management”, with a budget amounting to 65 million euro. The intervention is envisaged to be part of the Strategic Plan for the development of agriculture after its third amendment. It will be applied at national level, but Natura 2000 protected sites, as well as areas under GAEC 2, will be excluded from its scope.

The conservation agriculture intervention aims at a 20% reduction in the use of nitrogen fertilisers and the introduction of specific practices that preserve soil potential.

Support will be granted for arable land on which an agricultural crop from the following groups is grown: cereal crops, grain legumes, oilseed crops, medicinal and aromatic crops, annual fodder crops, perennial fodder crops, fallow land on which the farmer carries out agricultural activity and operations (conservation tillage) using appropriate cultivation techniques, as set out in GAEC 5.

How will farmers be able to apply under the conservation agriculture intervention?

Applicants under the intervention may be active farmers, registered in the IACS, who have declared areas for participation under the intervention and comply with the following conditions:

1. Crop rotation on the holding. On the areas under the intervention at least 4 agricultural crops will be grown annually, and the three main ones may not exceed more than 90% of the declared areas. It will be permissible to include land left fallow, but this area may not be counted in the share occupied by the three main crops.

The specific rules provide that oilseed crops may be grown once every 3 years on agricultural land, and cereal crops *may not* be sown in 2 consecutive years.

2. Application of balanced fertilisation, based on soil samples, minimum soil tillage and provision of cover crops throughout the year as a basis for soil health.

3. Reduction by 20% of the quantity of mineral nitrogen used.

4. Application of farmyard manure, organic soil improvers, microbial fertilisers or biologically active substances.

5. Keeping a logbook of the activities carried out and a plant nutrition plan.

Applicants under the intervention are not entitled to receive support for the same area supported under the eco-schemes “I.B.3 – Eco-scheme for the preservation and restoration of soil potential – promotion of green manuring and organic fertilisation”, I.B.7 – “Eco-scheme for maintaining and improving biodiversity in forest ecosystems”, I.B.1 – “Eco-scheme for organic farming (farm animals)”, as well as under other interventions pursuant to Article 70 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115.