ESTONIAN AGRICULTURE
RURAL LIFE
FISHERIES

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Compiled by Heiki Raudla

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CONTENTS

DEAR READER

You are holding a publication characterizing Estonian agriculture, rural life and fisheries and reflecting the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture. Those who have so far thought that the Ministry of Agriculture is only engaged in organizing agricultural production might be surprised to find out how wide the field of activities of our ministry actually is.

As you can see, the name of the ministry has not reflected already for a long time and especially after Estonian accession to the European Union, the full range of the Ministry of Agriculture's activities.

Let's take rural development for example, which includes activities from the modernization of agriculture, diversification of rural entrepreneurship to environmental protection and preservation of our cultural heritage.

Large part of the ministry's work is connected to ensuring food safety, so that our people could consume safe and healthy food. This, in turn, is connected to animal health and protection, animal welfare and organic farming. The food industry is also a wide and important field.

Alongside plant production and animal husbandry, fishery is another direction, where our goal is to ensure the preservation and development of Estonian fisheries in the condition of limited fish resources.

When we also add here the promotion of agricultural research and education, preservation of agricultural museums as the upholder of civilization, it is easier to grasp the extent of activities of the Ministry of Agriculture and amount of responsibility in advancing life in Estonia.

Being a Member State of the European Union has brought about important changes in Estonian agriculture, fisheries, food industry and rural life in general. The same applies to the work of the Ministry of Agriculture. Negotiations on the future of the Common Agriculture Policy of the European Union are currently in action. Estonia has a possibility and an obligation to have an active say in its formation, ensuring a development of the field all over the European Union.

The future shape of the Common Agricultural Policy will influence both the future situation of Estonian agriculture and the whole country.

The Ministry of Agriculture of Estonia

FACTS ABOUT ESTONIA

Location: In Northern Europe, a common mainland border with the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation, a sea border with the Republic of Finland and Kingdom of Sweden. Estonia owns about thousand five hundred islands in the Baltic Sea, the territory of state has about 1150 lakes, the biggest of which is Lake Peipus – 3555 km^2. Marshes cover about a quarter and forest about half of the mainland.

Territory: 45 227 km^2

Population: 1,3 millions (*ca* 65% is urban population)

Population density (person/km^2): 31

Capital: Tallinn (398 600 inhabitants)

Climate: Estonia has a temperate climate, transitional of continental and maritime climate. With the influence of the sea, Estonian climate is significantly milder from areas with continental climate in the same latitude. The weather is milder mostly in coastal areas and the islands. The coldest month is usually February (average temperature is -5˚C), the warmest month is July (average temperature is +18˚C). Annual average temperature is around +5˚C. The amount of precipitation exceeds evaporation: annual average rainfall is 550–800 mm and average air humidity is around 80%. The thickness of winter snow cover and duration differs a lot from year to year.

Area of cultivation of field crops: 566 600 ha (2009)

Current GDP: 214,8 billion kroons (2009)

Rate of agriculture from GDP: 1,5% (2009)

Rate of agriculture in employment: 3,9%, rural areas 10,4% (2009)

Source: Statistics Estonia

ESTONIA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Being a member of the European Union has helped to modernize Estonian agriculture and fisheries and had a positive impact on the development of rural areas.

Estonia has been a member of the European Union since 2004 and the experience so far shows that EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the common market have had a beneficial influence on the Estonian agriculture, rural life, fisheries and the environment.

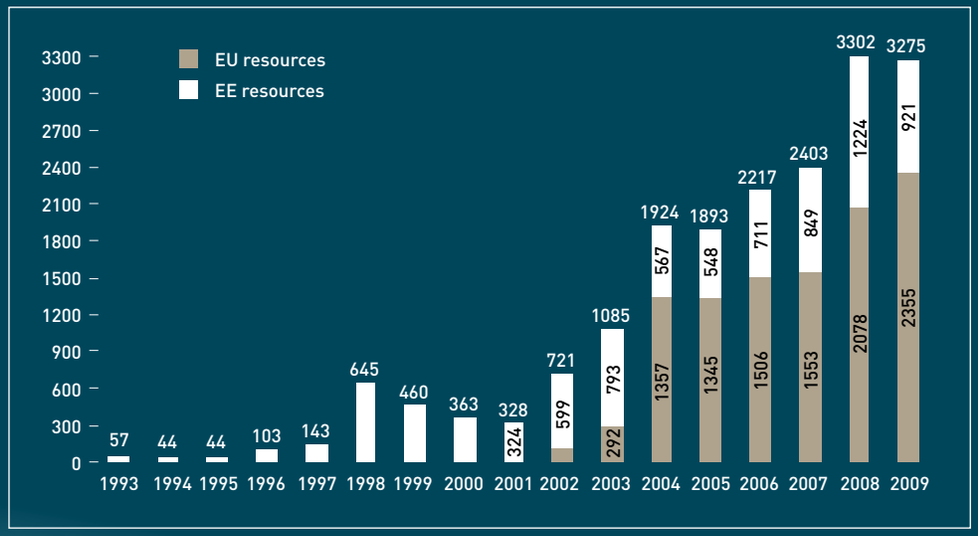
Estonia has had the possibility to use different EU agriculture, fisheries and rural life supports since 2001 and since then, around 20 billion kroons of Estonian and EU money has reached Estonian rural life and fisheries.

The situation of Estonian enterprises has improved in the European Union; possibilities for national, as well as international cooperation have been broadened. With the help of support from the EU, farmers have been able to start using new technologies, better production methods, machinery and everything else that has helped to increase productivity and the quality of products. Thanks to the CAP, Estonia has around a billion hectares of well maintained agricultural land and valuable semi-natural areas. This is a great asset for the country.

Despite different support and improved export opportunities, Estonian farmers are still in a worse condition, in comparison to the farmers of EU old Member States, because on the one hand, in the common economic space, requirements on production and environmental protection have increased and on the other hand, possibilities to use financial resources are still smaller for the Estonian farmers than the ones for their western and Northern colleagues. The situation was made more difficult by the economic recession, which started in 2008 that caused the market opportunities to decrease and purchase prices to drop.

According to the Estonian official position, Europe needs a Common Agricultural Policy, but the current direct aid system needs to be changed. In the future, EU Member States should not be divided into the so-called new and old Member States through aid distribution.

In conclusion, it can be said that accession to the EU economic space brought along a change from a narrow agriculture centered view on rural life to a rural policy that considers the broader interests of the society. CAP has promoted the continuation of Estonian rural life in its diversity, helping to preserve our traditions, folk culture, landscapes and nature and giving local people a chance to make a better living than before.



Support for agriculture, food industry and rural development 1993–2009 (billions of kroons)

COMMON PRESENT AND FUTURE

Future of the CAP is extremely important both for Estonian agriculture, as well as from the point of view of the whole country.

CAP is one of the oldest common policies of the European countries, dating back to the 1950s. In course of its half a century long history, its general goals have remained the same, but the content slightly changed according to time and circumstances – a narrow agricultural production oriented policy has become a broad agricultural and rural life policy.

Agriculture of the 21st century includes a lot more than just food production. Aside production, environmental protection, managing climate change, tourism, recreation and preservation of cultural heritage have become more important. Public services offered by agriculture have started to be valued more (e.g. maintained landscape), which agriculture offers to the society, as well as environment.

Since agriculture itself is highly dependant on environmental conditions, it can be considered as a non-typical field of economy. Today, world's agriculture is facing several important challenges: climate change, population growth, increasing demand on food, problems connected to urbanization, changes in rural entrepreneurship and employment in rural areas, deficit and price rises of fossil fuels, global food trade liberalization, decrease of biological diversity and lack of water resources.

Taking the current economic situation and the uneven development of regions into consideration, one of the first goals of the CAP has been brought into attention again – food security of the population. It has been publicly discussed, if and why the European Union should have a Common Agricultural Policy.

Discussions on the topics of the European Union next budget period (2014–2020) are currently taking place. Estonian position is that the CAP has to continue in the future, because it definitely would not have a positive influence on Estonian rural life and agriculture, if common goals would crumble into various policies of different Member States.

Considering Estonian natural conditions, it can be presumed that agriculture has a future here, especially in case of global warming and water scarcity. Estonia has more agricultural land per person than elsewhere in Europe. This gives the opportunity to grow agricultural crops both for food and bioenergy production. Moreover, Estonian strength lies in research and development, which supports innovation and promotes the usage of new technologies.

If the CAP is designed together and responsibly, Europe can ensure equal competition conditions for the Member States, preservation of valuable landscapes and environmental protection. A common policy enables to draw attention to supplying the population with safe food, animal welfare and environmental protection all over the European Union. Development of agriculture and rural areas is very important in Europe, not only from the point of view of food production and farmers´ income, but also the shaping and preservation of cultural landscapes and heritage.

Agriculture is important for Europe, because:

- Rural areas comprise 90% of EU territory and about half of the EU population lives in the countryside
- 42% of EU mainland is directly used by agriculture
- Agriculture and food (including beverages) sector provides 14,7% of EU industry total production (in the value of ca 792 billion Euros) and 2,5% of EU GDP
- Agriculture and food sector is the third largest employer in Europe (over 15 million jobs)
- EU is the largest food exporter and the second largest importer in the world
- The CAP budget comprises 0,43% of total EU GDP

Estonian positions in the formation of the CAP:

- The CAP has to remain a common policy and this also in its financing
- Development of the CAP has to support the development of a competitive agricultural sector in the global market
- Levels of direct aid have to be harmonized in all EU Member States
- Rate of aid targeted for rural development has to be increased
- Rural development aid has to help agriculture to adapt to modern conditions, promote environmentally friendly activities and foster the diversification of economic activities
- Science and research activities have to be targeted for the better usage of agricultural potential
- In the further changing of the CAP, increase of administrative burden and making the control system more complex have to be avoided

MILK PRODUCTION IS AT ITS TOP LEVEL

During the last years, our milk producers have been very successful in improving their production indicators and increasing milk quality.

The flagship of Estonian agriculture continues to be milk production. Even though the number of cows and cow keepers in Estonia has decreased year after year, milk production per cow has increased and so have the quality indicators of milk. Average annual production per cow reaches up to 7000 kilograms and with the increase of cow productivity, also the total production of milk has increased.

According to the CAP Health Check decision, Estonian milk quota increased in 2009 up to 665 900 tons, but so far, our production volume has not come very close to fulfilling that quota and the producers have not seen the quota as a real restriction.

A growingly larger share of milk produced in Estonia reaches the dairy industry, because producers have changed a large share of direct marketing quota into industry supply quota. In 2009, 593 200 tons of milk were sold to the industry, which forms 88% of the total milk production. More than half of the milk was of elite variety by quality.

Big progress has been made in Estonia in improving milk production conditions and animal welfare. According to the Animal Breeders Association of Estonia, 144 dairy farms with more than 46 000 cow spaces were built or reconstructed during 2005–2009 in Estonia. By the end of 2009, almost half of the cows were living in new or reconstructed farms.

Since milk production is merging more and more into bigger farms and a large share of breeders have switched over to beef animal breeding, the percentage of dairy cows among beef animals has decreased during the last years. In the summer of 2010, according to the Agriculture Registers and Information Board (ARIB), there were 241 175 beef animals in Estonia, from which 97 162 were dairy cows. The number of dairy cows compared to the same time last year had decreased by 5%.

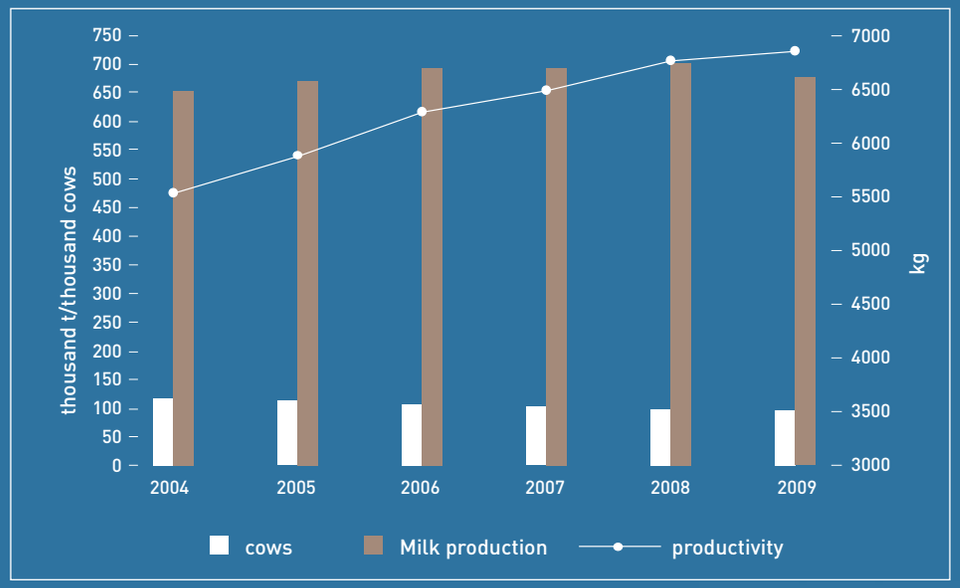
However, the number of sheep and goats has doubled compared to 2004. This has resulted thanks to support for ewe breeding and support for organic sheep breeding. Coastal pastures have started to be used more and more.

Almost two thirds of organic producers are engaged in animal breeding. During

Milk Production is at its Top Level

the last years, sheep and beef animal breeding has expanded the most. Organic sheep form almost half from all the sheep in Estonia. Valga and Saaremaa have the most organic sheep; the biggest sheep herd had more than 4000 animals. Organic farmers´ dairy herds are usually small, the biggest herd has 200 dairy cows and some herds have around a hundred animals.

The number of organic dairy farmers has decreased during the last years and some of the enterprises have switched over to beef animal farming. Other animal species are used rather little in organic farming: pigs and poultry mostly for self-consumption, only a few producers market organic eggs. Rabbit farming is gaining popularity and the number of organic hives has also constantly increased.



Main indicators of milk production 2004–2009

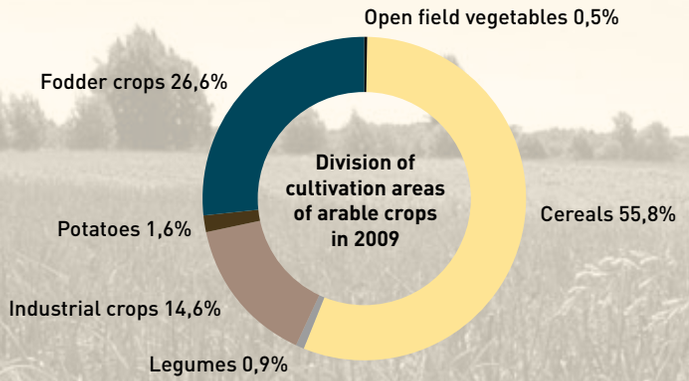
PLANT PRODUCTION HAS POTENTIAL

The goal of Estonian cereal and rape producers is to increase yield per hectare. This requires the usage of correct agri-technical means and skilful economic planning.

Agricultural crops are grown in Estonia on more than half a million hectares. Slightly more than half of this area is under cereals and the rest under fodder and industrial crops, but also potatoes, legumes, vegetables, berry and fruit orchards.

Total harvest of cereal has remained under a million tons and average yield under three tons per hectare. Barley and wheat are grown the most, rape growing and yield have significantly advanced.

When Estonian cereal yield has been one of the lowest in the European Union for years and growing some crops (for example rye) is fading away due to weak competitiveness, then results achieved at growers´ competitions organized by the agricultural magazine Maajamandus (Rural Economy) and several agrochemical enterprises have shown that by using right agri-tehcnical means, it is possible to have a harvest that exceed the Estonian average significantly. 8,7 tons of winter wheat and more than 4 tons of rape seed have been harvested from the better competition fields.



Organic producers have started to show more interest towards cereal production. The cultivation area of organic cereal, which in 2009 was 16 279 hectares, has increased more than three times with six years. Organic producers grow wheat the most (about half of area under cereals), which is mostly used for animal feed. Compared to 2004, the cultivation area of industrial crops (including culinary and medical herbs) has increased six times.

Organic farms have increased year to year, the area of their average organic agricultural land is 80 hectares (in four biggest organic enterprises, it exceeds 1000 hectares). However, the biggest share of organic parcels is formed by grasslands (77%).

Within six years, the area of organically grown berry and fruit orchards has almost doubled. The orchards are mostly dominated by apple trees, plum and cherry trees are represented to a lesser extent. From berry cultures, sea buckthorn is grown the most. Unfortunately, the current volume of organic vegetable and potatoe production cannot yet satisfy the demand of local population.

Considering the Estonian natural conditions, it can be presumed that plant production has a future here, especially in case of global warming and water scarcity. With the annual rise in average temperatures, the vegetation period of plants will become longer and if the precipitation level stays the same, it should be possible to significantly increase the harvest.

SAFE FOOD IS HEALTHY

Estonia has taken legislation regarding food safety and surveillance to such a level, which is reliable when viewing both inside, as well as outside the country.

In the market economy conditions, the table of Estonian people has become very bountiful. Compared to previous times, the percentage of ready-made food has especially increased, among trend conscious buyers, organic and natural products are gaining more and more popularity.

Even though our every day food is safer nowadays than ever before, we still hear about cases from the world about health problems regarding nutrition and connections between animal and human diseases. This has increased the interest of people towards food safety and methods of agricultural production (organic farming, regular farming, genetically modified organisms or GMOs). The public is mostly interested to see the food available, healthy, with affordable prices and of high quality.

The movement of food products between different markets in the world, it is inevitably accompanied by the risk to consumers' health. Therefore, European Union pays a lot of attention to food safety. Food safety is one of the most important fields of activity also for the Ministry of Agriculture of Estonia. In 2007, the reorganization of Estonian food supervision took place, which meant that the whole field of food supervision went into the area of supervision of the Veterinary and Food Board.

The topic does not affect a regular person much in their every day lives, however, food safety comes to the agenda when the consumers suffer from health problems due to food or something harmful for health is found from the food. Globalization of the food chain is constantly creating new challenges and threats to the interests of consumers. It is the state's obligation to follow that food consumed by the population, would be safe despite its origin. The state can only enforce regulations, establish institutions providing supervision and support functions, but the main responsibility in ensuring that food meets the requirements lies on the producers, processors and distributors of food.

The principle of the European Union food safety policy is to apply the approach of "from stable to table," which includes all the fields of the food chain – feedingstuffs production, plant and animal health, animal welfare, activities connected to agricultural production, food processing, storaging, transport, retail, import and export. This kind of a all-inclusive approach, which clearly specifies the responsibility of food and feedingstuffs processors, represents a common, efficient and dynamic food policy.

Estonia conducts food safety monitoring programmes, collects data on pathogens, pollutants, residues of pesticides, mycotoxins and GMOs in foodstuffs of vegetable origin. Also Estonian animal herds and animal holdings are being inspected against diseases.

It is not possible for the supervisory agents to inspect all food lots that are sent to the market or catering enterprises. Inspection takes place through enterprise recognition, the approval of their own check plans and risk-based checks (inspections, audits, collecting test samples). Everyone who processes food not only for self-consumption, has to be registered and is subject to inspection.

A well functioning cooperation of supervisory institutions in the European Union enables to receive quick information about outbreaks of infectious animal diseases and food crises in other Member States. So far, Estonia has been safe from bigger food crises.

LOCAL FOOD IS VALUED

Industries have to adapt to new market conditions and cope with lower prices compared to the pre-recession time.

Food industry is an important industry in Estonia with its traditions that provides about one fifth from the total production of the processing industry. Around one third from this is formed by milk processing and one fifth by meat processing. The relevance of food and beverage industry from the Estonian GDP has stayed around 2%.

When during the time of accession to the European Union, food industry mainly paid attention to bringing the enterprises into compliance with the EU food safety requirements, introducing new technologies for that purpose, then further on, product and market development became the center point for attention.

During the last years, when the profit margins of enterprises have decreased, the time of cost cutting has begun.

Estonian consumer is rather price sensitive. The economic recession, accompanied with higher unemployment and decrease in income, turned the consumers more conservative – consumption declined and purchase preferences changed. This situation has also reduced the investment possibilities of the industry. Investments have decreased in every field, for example, investments to the meat industry were made 65% less in 2009 than the year before.

Compared to other EU Member States, the decline in production volumes of food and beverages industry has been one of the steepest in Estonia. This shows the vulnerability of our food industry and strong dependence on the market situation of the world.

Cooling down of the economy has also influenced product assortment, especially in case of meat products. During the economic peak times more expensive flavored prepared products, hard sausages and smoked meat products were produced more, but in new conditions, a wider share of the market has gone to minced meat, cooked sausages and frankfurters.

According to the Veterinary and Food Board, 113 meat and 40 milk processing enterprises were active in Estonia in 2009. About half of the meat processing enterprises had their own slaughter houses. Domestic raw materials were used in the Estonian meat industry up to 52 000 tons and 54% of meat used in the industry was of domestic origin. A growingly larger among of bought-in milk is used for cheese production.




Local Food is Valued

On the one hand, with the increase of production volume and on the other hand, with the decrease of consumption, domestic market meat self-supply level has risen to 84%. Through time, Estonian consumer has preferred domestic meat; therefore, it is understandable that meat and meat products in Estonian supermarkets are mostly the products of Estonian meat industry.

Traditionally, pork is consumed the most in Estonia, after the danger of avian influenza the production of poultry meat has become more intensive again. Mutton comprises one percent from the Estonian meat production. Even though Estonia has enough suitable area for sheep farming and the number of sheep is growing vigorously, mutton production bores on. The reason for this might be that mutton consumption is not traditional.

The intensity of agricultural products in the total export of Estonian goods forms around a tenth. With the accession to the European Union, Estonia gained access to the EU internal market and double customs in trade with Russia were abolished. In the new conditions, export of agricultural products and fish doubled within four years, the export of processed agricultural products increased most of all.

Estonian milk products are traditionally with a high export potential. Considering the volume of Estonian milk production and consumption of milk products, Estonia could export almost half of its production. Almost half from the cheese produced in Estonia is exported. Regarding meat products, pork has been exported the most over the years and its intensity has been around a third.

The number of people who knowingly follow the principles of healthy diet is constantly rising in Estonia. This trend has increased the demand for organic food. The public is mostly interested in the places, where organic food can be bought and the way how to recognize it in supermarkets.

Consumers demand for organic food is higher than the suppliers' readiness to market it. Even though organic plant production and animal farming has developed fast in Estonia, problems are

European Union organic farming logo

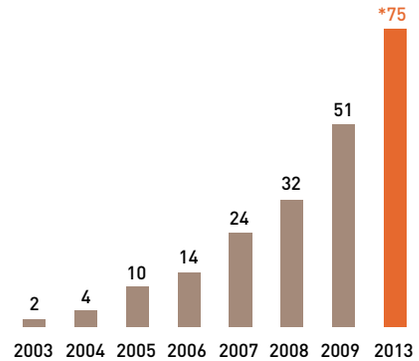
still created by the small production volumes of several product groups and a poor selection of processed organic products. This in turn causes a constantly broadening marketing of imported organic products.

The measures of Organic Farming Development Plan help to increase the number of enterprises engaged in the processing and marketing of organic products. The goal of the development plan is to increase the share of domestic organic products in the Estonian food market to 3 percent by 2013.

In the end of 2009, there were 51 enterprises from 13 counties dealing with the processing or marketing of organic products in the Organic Farming Register and this number is growing fast. Organic farming gives a good opportunity for small enterprises to distinguish themselves from the so-called mainstream food industry and therefore draw more attention to their products.

Number of enterprises engaged in organic production processing and marketing 2003–2009

*** number of enterprises in the Organic Farming Development Plan**



ENVIRONMENT ATTRACTS MORE AND MORE

Environmentally friendly thinking and production methods are spreading more and more in Estonia. The preservation of the environment and local areas and sustainable usage of resources are some of the Estonian priorities.

Food production is inevitably accompanied by the usage of natural resources, first and foremost, the usage of soil and water. It is important that farmers use natural resources rationally and preserve them also for future generations.

Therefore, preservation of the environment and local areas is one of the priorities of Estonian Rural Development Plan (RDP). Agri-environment support helps to implement environmentally friendly methods both in the traditional, as well as organic farming and facilitates the preservation of biological and landscape diversity, compensating for the farmers' costs related to environmentally friendly management.

Compared to other areas in the same latitude Estonian flora and fauna is very diverse. Nevertheless, it is not enough, when diverse biota is protected only in the areas outside agricultural land. Attention must also be focused on the biological diversity of agricultural lands. Therefore, mowing and grazing is necessary for the preservation of heritage and semi-natural biotic communities – wooded meadows, alvars, flooded and coastal meadows. Otherwise, these areas can grow wild and be coppiced.

Besides semi-natural biotic communities, Estonian landscape is made vivid by livestock who is grazed outside. A large share of grazed animals is of local breed. There are two recognized traditional breeds in Estonia – Estonian horse and Estonian landrace bovine animal. These breeds have adapted to local flora and climate over centuries and are a part on our cultural heritage. Since the numbers of these animals has constantly decreased over the last decades, Estonian, Tori and Estonian heavy draught horse, as well as Estonian landrace bovine animal have been declared endangered species.

Several landscape elements and cultural heritage objects are situated on agricultural lands, which make the landscape more vivid and provide a habitat for several plants and animals. For example, stone walls help to preserve the cultural heritage related to agriculture, offer habitat for several vascular plants, lichens and mosses and for small mammals, reptiles and insects. A special RDP support is targeted for the restoration of stonewalls, which has become very popular.

Regular environmental monitoring is carried out in Estonia in order to check environmental conditions. Besides national environmental monitoring, the continuous assessment of measures helps to evaluate the efficiency of different rural life supports. Specialists of Agricultural Research Centre, who assess the environmental measures, study most of all the fields connected to soil, aquatic environment, living nature and agricultural landscapes.

An Estonian proverb says that soil is a farmer's gold. Like in Europe, soil protection mostly describes fight against erosion, i.e. the loss of soil also in Estonia. Erosion happens when the amount of precipitation is higher than the permeability of soil and due to this process the loss of soil is much faster than its formation.

Environment Attracts More and More

Soil erosion is a more serious problem in South-Estonia. In erosion sensitive areas, land is mostly used as permanent grassland and this is correct from the point of view of soil protection.

Soil agrochemical monitoring and drafting of fertilizer rate charts had been on a high level for decades. During the 90s of the last century this tradition was broken and systematic collection of soil samples was started again in 2000. Agricultural field acidity can also be discovered by taking soil samples. Acid soils cover a bit less than one third of total agricultural land in Estonia.

Also excessive humidity and paludification have slowed down agricultural development. Even though drainage systems have been established to drain 643 000 hectares of agricultural land and 677 000 hectares of forest land, a large part of land still suffers from excessive humidity.

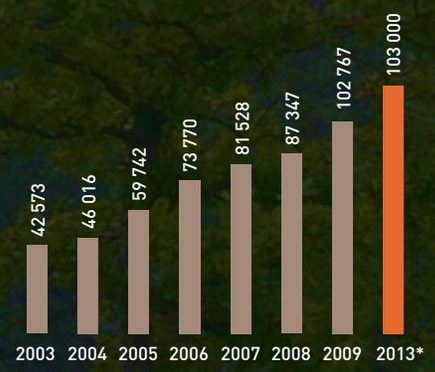
A lot of land improvement systems were established during the time of large agricultural holdings and are now located on the lands of different owners. Unfortunately, single land owners often cannot maintain the drainage. Land improvement cooperatives have been established, since it is wise to carry out together the renovation and maintenance works of systems located on the owners' lands. It has also been possible to apply for RDP support for the preservation and renovation of drainage systems.

An important indicator when assessing the biological diversity of agricultural landscapes is the diversity and number of birds and bumblebees. Birds are important for agriculture as the exterminators of pests from plants and animals. Bumblebees are very important pollinators – for example, in case of rape, pollination facilitates a more balanced maturing of the harvest and quality improvement. In several European countries, the number of birds living on fields has been decreasing. The reason for that is regarded to be intensive agriculture and wide use of plant protection products.

There are about 120 species of field birds in Estonia, skylark is the most abundant and is found the most in the central part of Estonia. As a habitat, skylark prefers large treeless fields, which can be found in that region the most.

Aside intensive agricultural production, environmentally friendly ways of thinking and production are spreading more and more in Estonia. Environmental or green way of life is gaining popularity: more than one tenth of Estonian agricultural land is used for organic farming; in 2009, the Organic Farming Register had 1278 enterprises dealing with organic beekeeping, plant production or animal farming with a total of 102 767 hectares of land. The goal of the Organic Farming Development Plan 2007–2013 is to increase the area of organic agricultural land to 120 000 hectares by the end of 2013.

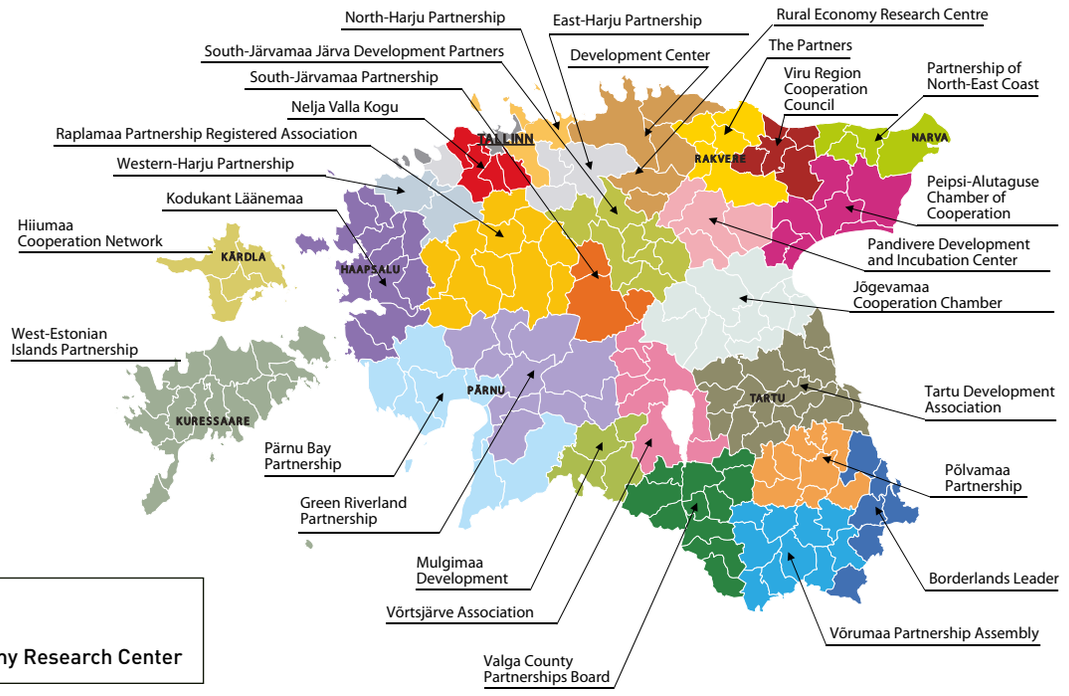
Organic plant production in the years 2003–2013 (hectares)
*** area in the Organic Farming Development Plan**



Environment and habitat preservation measures for the years 2007–2013:

- Support for less-favoured areas
- Natura 2000 support for agricultural land
- Agri-environment support
- Support for environmentally friendly management
- Support for organic production
- Support for keeping animals of local endangered breeds
- Support for the maintenance of semi-natural habitats
- Support for growing plants of local varieties
- Animal welfare: support for grazing animals
- Support for non-productive investments
- Support for the establishment and restoration of stonewalls
- Support for the establishment of mixed species hedgerows
- Support for the establishment of protection forest on agricultural land
- Natura 2000 support for private forest land

COOPERATION MAKES LIFE BETTER



As of: April 2010
Map: Estonian Land Board
Data and design: Rural Economy Research Center

Rural development presumes local initiative and cooperation between different sectors. In the areas, where the number of population is small and entrepreneurship not very profitable, local community viability plays an important role.

LEADER approach, which foresees good cooperation on the local level, plays a very important role in rural development. LEADER (*Liaison entre Actions de Developpement de l'Economie Rurale* – connections between different activities for economic development of rural areas) is an initiative programme of the European Union, which promotes local life through cooperation between local communities and local action groups.

In promoting local life and solving problems start had to be made with improving cooperation between the public, third and private sector, in order to determine the needs and possibilities of a specific area, develop a strategy for the region and then implement it.

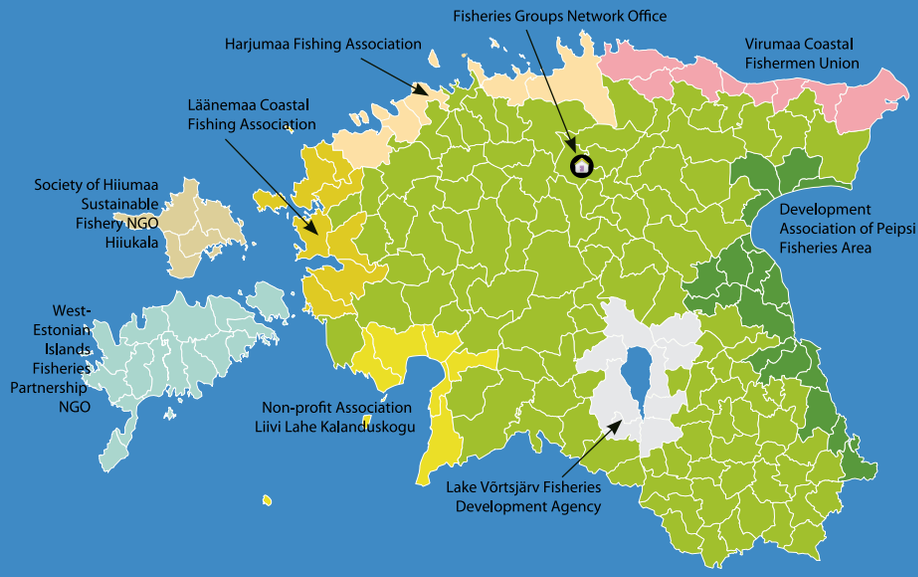
By 2008, local area development strategies were finished, which were the basis for 2007–2013 LEADER application submission. During the programming period 2007–2013 LEADER was added to the Rural Development Plan together with the other rural development measures. LEADER measure makes up one tenth from the current RDP measure. 26 local action groups formed cover 98% of the rural areas in Estonia.

LEADER action groups, which have created a development strategy and measures for their region coordinate the assessment of project applications in rural areas. After the local action group has made their choice on the projects and verified their compliance to the strategy, they will be sent to ARIB, where the eligibility of planned costs is being assessed and a decision to satisfy the project application is made.

The amount of project application sent to ARIB shows that local initiative is flourishing and people have a definite wish to develop their home regions.

This kind of approach, where decision making rights, starting from the drafting of strategies until project election, are given to the local level ensures that projects, which answer to the needs of a specific community, are being implemented. Therefore, great expectations are set for LEADER measure and its effect on community development.

THE RETURN OF COASTAL FISHING



Estonia has managed to bring its fishing fleet into compliance with fishing opportunities, local fisheries organizations have created development strategies for their area and started the implementation of these strategies.

Fisheries sector in Estonia is versatile, including different directions: deep sea and coastal fishing, inland fishing and fish farming. Estonian fishermen catch most of the fish from the Baltic Sea, but also inland catches and production of fish farms are represented in the industry and trade.

In the Baltic Sea, fish is caught both from the open sea, as well as near the coast. Most popular fish in case of deep sea fishing are sprat, Baltic herring and cod; in case of coastal fishing the choice are more diverse: Baltic herring, perch, smelt, bream, garfish, pike-perch, roach, goldfish, white fish and sea trout, pike, Baltic vimba and eel. Sprat and Baltic herring are more important in the economic sense. Those fish species are also the main raw material for Estonian fish industry.

Sprat and Baltic herring resources are still considered to be good in the Estonian economic zone, but a decrease in the resources is visible. Resources for cod and salmon are not that good.

Professional fishermen are also active on Estonian inland waters. Inland fishing mostly takes place on Lake Peipus and Võrtsjärv. Fishes that are caught the most are perch, flounder, pike-perch, roach, pike, eel and lamprey.

75 percent of Estonian fisheries production goes for export. Even, if Estonians started to consume more fish (at the moment, Estonians eat around one third less fish than the average European), a large part of production would still go for export.

Bad condition of fish resources and difficult economic situation of fishermen describes the situation of world fisheries at the moment. These keywords describe also the situation in Estonia.

Until Estonia's accession to the European Union there was no considerable fisheries development policy. Supervision over the usage of fishing rights was weak and resources were used too intensely. In the European Union conditions, supervision over fishing has improved.

The Return of Coastal Fishing

The Ministry of Agriculture has started to focus more attention on increasing the sustainability of the fisheries sector as an economic sector in the conditions of limited fish resources. Estonian fisheries policy can be summarized in three pillars:

- Implementing this kind of catching organization, which improves the situation of fish resources
- Helping fisheries sector to adapt to lower fishing opportunities
- Making supervision efficient over the whole fish processing chain

Fishing opportunities have to be fixed according to the actual situation of fish resources and the resources cannot be sacrificed for short-term economic and social goals; the key of fisheries sector economic sustainability lies in restructuring and cooperation – there are the Estonian positions in forming fisheries policy.

Estonia has managed to bring its fishing fleet into compliance with fishing capacity and usable fish resources. This means that fish that have remained on fishing can be managed effectively. The renovation of fishing gear and vessel modernization has been supported to a significant extent.

Supporting the fishermen is a very important direction in the Estonian fisheries policy – so that they could get a price for their catch, which ensures their economic sustainability. Therefore, the establishment and functioning of trawl fishing producers´ organization and activities arising from the local initiative of coastal areas have been supported.

Regional fisheries organizations have created development strategies for their areas and started their implementation. Development of fish harbours is an important activity, biggest progress is expected to be seen in the field of marketing – fishermen will be closer to the final consumer with their catch and therefore, receive a higher pay for their work than so far.

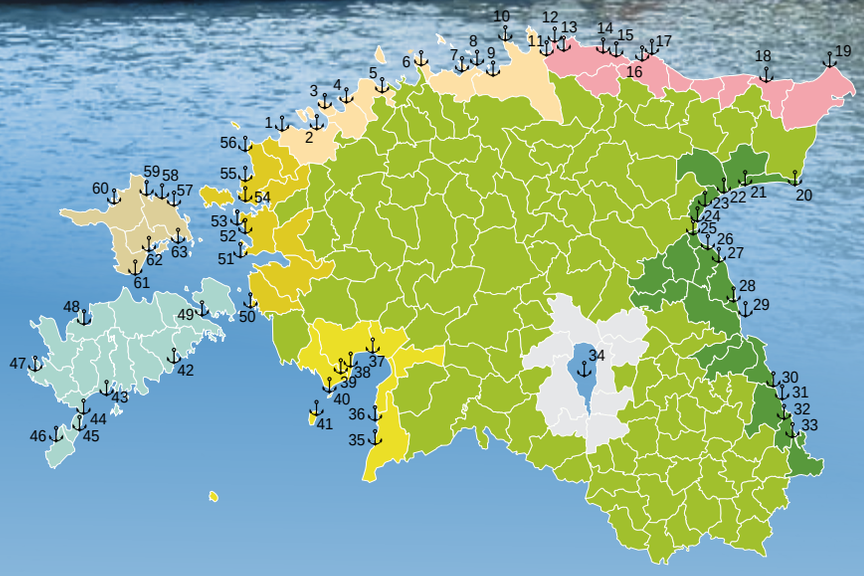
In 2010, research and development activities connected to fisheries were actively begun and the fisheries information and notification centre, which should become an important help for all entrepreneurs in the fisheries field, started its activities.

For years the country has contributed to the development of fishing industry, supporting the adaptation of new technologies in the fishing industry. This helps to improve the competitiveness of Estonian fish products both in the domestic, as well as foreign market.

The Return of Coastal Fishing

Fish farming is compensating more and more for decreasing fish resources, which main directions are commercial fish farming and fish farming for restocking of natural waters. Fish farmers offer the service for angling tourism. Also lobster farming is represented. Through time, mostly rainbow trout and carp have been farmed in Estonia, but thanks to new technologies, it is now possible to farm powans, pike-perch, perch, sturgeon, Arctic char, eel and tilapia. From the point of view of capacity, rainbow trout is most important, which is also farmed in fish tourism enterprises.

Aquaculture largely depends on the import of juvenile fish and roe, because Estonia does not have centres for the reproduction of breeding material. Estonian aquaculture production capacity fell, after the dissolution of collective farms, to 300 tons, but after the accession to the European Union, it has started to increase bit by bit again.



1 Ristna *
2 Kurkse *
3 Paldiski *
4 Lohusalu *
5 Lohusalu
6 Leppneeme *
7 Neeme
8 Kaberneeme
9 Salmistu *
10 Tapurila sadam
11 Eru
12 Käsmu
13 Võsu
14 Eisma
15 Karepa
16 Kunda *
17 Mahu
18 Toila *
19 Narva-Jõesuu
20 Vasknarva *
21 Alajõe *
22 Rannapungerja
23 Lohusuu *
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25 Raja *
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29 Varnja *
30 Mehikoorma
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40 Lao *
41 Kihnu *
42 Kungla
43 Nasva *
44 Salme
45 Läätsa *
46 Kaunispe *
47 Atla *
48 Vahuranna
49 Võrkaia
50 Virtsu Vanalinna *
51 Puise
52 Topu
53 Pusku
54 Österby *
55 Hara *
56 Dirhami *
57 Suursadama *
58 Hiiesaare *
59 Kärdla
60 Kõrgessaare *
61 Sõru *
62 Orjaku *
63 Salinõmme

* Registered in the port register
** Strategy does not specify the name of renewed port

Saaremaa – at least 6 ports or landing sites are planned to be renewed.
The map shows 8 strategically most important ports according to the fisheries area.

Virumaa – the map shows 9 ports mentioned in the strategy.
According to the strategy, altogether at least 10 ports and landing sites are planned to be renewed.

DIVERSE RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In 2010, rural development programming period reached its half term, the majority of development plan measures have been implemented and tangible results can be seen in different fields.

Through time, agriculture has been a main activity for the Estonian rural population, but the changes that took place in the second half of the previous century brought about a great turn in the Estonian rural life – more and more people moved to live in the cities, villages emptied, and a lot of land was left unused and landscape conditions deteriorated. Less and less people and land found employment in agriculture.

In the changed conditions, a large share of farmers has had to find new ways to make a living besides agriculture. Accession to the European Union has given an opportunity to engage more than before with different forms of entrepreneurship in rural areas. Rural tourism and other services have been developed as new fields, renewable energies have started to be produced and handicraft made.

Rural entrepreneurship diversification has been supported in different times from different funds. In 2010, RDP 2007–2013 programming period reached its half term and by the end of the year, a majority of the measures was started to be implemented. RDP budget for this period is 14,6 billion kroons. Out of this sum, 5,5 billion kroons are being targeted for the improvement of agriculture and forestry sector competitiveness, 5,2 billion for the improvement of the environment and local areas and 1,9 billion for the diversification of life quality in rural areas and rural economy.

Diverse Rural Entrepreneurship

A broader effect of support on rural areas is most important from the financial indicators: almost 1400 modernized agricultural holdings and 300 livestock buildings, more than 200 supported young farmers, 27 000 hectares of organized land improvement systems, more than 450 000 hectares of land managed in an environmentally friendly way, preservation of agriculture on 350 000 hectares of land in less favored areas, more than 20 000 hectares of maintained semi-natural biotic communities, keeping of 3000 endangered animal breeds, up to 100 000 animals grazed outside, compensation for Natura 2000 limitations on around 60 000 hectares of field and forest land, more than 40 km of restored stonewalls, more than 500 diversifications and 600 village renewal and development projects, 26 local action groups, around 1300 LEADER projects ...

This is only a small list of tangible results that have been achieved through the RDP. Next, the Ministry of Agriculture will contribute to innovation, joint activities and improving Internet connection in rural areas.

Rural entrepreneurs form about a fifth from Estonian entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, statistics show that entrepreneurs active in bigger centers and surrounding parishes are more viable. The problems of rural enterprises have been a small survival percentage and small capability to make investments from their own capital.

Domestic consumption, foreign markets and a possibility to get a loan influence the Estonian rural entrepreneurship a great deal. When a few years ago, fast economic growth and cheap loans often compensated for managerial mistakes, then a fast cooling down of the economy turned the situation insecure for many. The future is less secure for companies based on domestic capital, who fulfill small single orders, also for those who do not have the possibility to renew equipment and make a way to the foreign markets with their trademarks.

RENEWABLE ENERGY HAS A FUTURE

Big steps have been taken in the field of renewable energies over the last years: several combined heat and power plants have been established with investments also from agricultural enterprises.

Aside the decrease of fossil fuel resources and the increase in their prices, there are other reasons for the development of bioenergy: decrease of exhaust gas emissions, usage of idle agricultural land and wood residues and creating fuel production possibilities for farmers.

In 2008–2009, renewable energy sector developed quickly in Estonia. The majority of investments were made to the establishment of combined heat and power plants and wind farms – Väo and Tartu combined plants, which use biomass and several wind farms were completed.

A boiler plant in Lihula working on herbaceous biomass

Forest chips are used as biofuel to produce heat and power

Power generation of those two combined plants together is 50 megawatts and they cover a dominant share of the thermal energy need of Tallinn and Tartu.

Wind farms achieved a current record of power – 111 megawatts, covering at that moment, one tenth from the Estonian electric power consumption. In addition to Väo and Tartu combined plants, a similar plant was completed at the end of 2010 in Pärnu, which also uses waste besides biomass. Big combined plants are also planned to be built to Kuressaare and Ahtme. Biomass was started to be used in Narva power plants, where its share is planned to be increased up to a tenth from the used fuel.

An application round started in 2009 and funded by the European Regional Development Fund gave a push to the establishment of smaller, up to two-megawatt combined plants. In the first year, 150 million kroons of support was given for the reconstruction of boiler plants and district heating networks and establishment of combined heat and power plants.

A fast growth in using biomass has increased the demand for wood and started to increase the price of wood. This creates new opportunities for the forestry and agriculture sector to produce biomass and also increases their income.

Among other things, applications to build four biogas plants were submitted to the application round of the European Regional Development Fund. Since in 2009, the biogas laboratory of Estonian University of Life Sciences was finished, a fast development can be expected in the field of biogas over the next years and most probably many new plants will be built, in addition to the only biogas plant using agricultural residues, which is located in Valjala.

Renewable Energy has a Future

In October 2009, the first boiler plant working with green biomass was opened in Lihula. It was completed in the framework of a project co-financed by the European Economic Area financial mechanism. As green biomass, Lihula Soojus boiler plant is using hay gathered from Kasari river bottom land, which has to be mown in order to preserve the landscape of Matsalu wetland. Also, Matsalu bay reed and green biomass of local agricultural enterprises can be burned in the boiler plant.

When in the production of power and heat energy from renewable resources went through a quick development in 2008-2009, then consumption of biofuels in transport has not increased, remaining at a half percent level from the total consumption of transport fuels. Practice of most European countries shows that it is not possible to achieve significant development in the field without the obligation of adding biofuels to sold transport fuels and public sector investments to public transport using renewable energies.

The biggest and most modern biofuel producer in Estonia is Paldiski biodiesel plant, which started production at its full-capacity in July 2008. Unfortunately, the plant got into financial difficulties at the end of 2008, due to importing the cheap subsidized USA origin biodiesel to the EU and the outbreak of the economic recession. In the middle of 2009, import customs were enforced on USA biodiesel and restructuring procedures were started in the enterprise.

In 2009, Kadarbiku farm, a vegetable grower in Harju County started the production of spirit from sugar beet with new equipment bought with the help of RDP investment support. The preliminary plan was to produce bioethanol and sell it to gas stations, but due to oil price decrease and a drop in bioethanol sales, this plan was not realized and the produced spirit is sold to wholesale buyers.

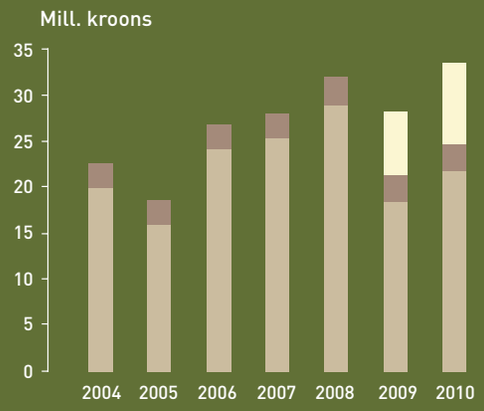
As a supplement to the single area payment scheme, it was possible to apply for support for growing energy crops during 2007–2009. In 2009, this support was applied for about 24 600 hectares. Starting 2010, the EU no longer pays support for energy crops.

RDP entails several measures, which can be used to support investments to the production of renewable energy. In 2008, the measure “Investments to bioenergy production” was implemented for the first time. 20 applications were received and the sum of applied support was 25,3 million kroons, whereby the total volume of investments together with the applicants´ own share was more than half increased. Due to the complicated situation of agriculture in 2009, investment capacity decreased.

For example, the buying and installation of Aravete Agro Plc container type combined plant was supported in 2008 with 3,1 million kroons and in 2009, the buying of wood chipping machine, boiler plant equipment and wheel loader and the design work of biofuel storage facility of Habemiku farm was supported with 2,8 million kroons.

THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH – JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Programme based financing of agricultural research



With limited resources, it is important that researchers and research institutions would cooperate more than so far and that research programmes of different European countries would be better harmonized.

Agricultural research is being engaged with at the Estonian University of Life Sciences, Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute and the Estonian Research Institute of Agriculture.

Agricultural applied research is being funded by national programmes Agricultural Applied Research and Development Activities 2009–2014, Plant Breeding Programme 2009–2019 and the development plan Collection and Preservation of Genetic Resources of Agricultural Crops for the Years 2007–2013.

The goal of the applied research programme is to help to increase the competitiveness of agricultural production and processing, also to ensure sustainability, analyze risks to the consumer and the environment accompanied by agricultural production and products and develop solutions to diminish those risks throughout the whole production and processing chain.

Research is being carried out in the fields of food safety and health, plant production and plant health, animal husbandry, activities supporting agricultural production, rural economy and social studies.

In 2009, a Plant Breeding Programme was started, which specifies the goals of plant breeding and lists necessary activities for the achievement of those goals. Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute, Estonian Research Institute of Agriculture, Estonian University of Life Sciences and Tallinn Technical University participate in the programme.

In order to fulfill the development plan Collection and Preservation of Genetic Resources of Agricultural Crops for the Years 2007–2013, genetic resources of agricultural crops are being preserved by Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute, Plant Biotechnology department EVIKA of the Estonian Research Institute of Agriculture, Polli Horticultural Research Centre of the Estonian University of Life Sciences, The Botanical Garden of the University of Tartu and Department of Gene Technology of Tallinn Technical University.

Estonian research institutes have been outstanding in the abundance of publications and good cooperation with farmers, but unfortunately, due to limited resources, it is impossible to be successful in all the fields of agricultural research. Therefore, finding cooperation possibilities with other European research institutions is inevitable.

In order to integrate national research programmes and for joint development pan-European research networks have been established (ERA-NETs). The Ministry of Agriculture has joined two networks – ERA-NET Core Organic II (organic farming) and ERA-NET Euphresco II (plant health). In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture is participating in the development of ERA-NET SUSFOOD (sustainable food production).

One remarkable process in the European research field is planning European Union common research programmes. Its main goal is to react to social problems and new challenges. The Ministry of Agriculture participates in the programme Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change.

VOCATIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION STAY UP TO DATE

Education connected to rural economy follows the general directions of agriculture and rural life – the relevance of agricultural education decreases and other rural professions increase.

Estonia has altogether nice vocational schools connected to rural economy. In three of them, agricultural workers with broad knowledge are being educated: it is possible to specialize in plant production at Olustvere School of Service and Rural Economics; animal breeding at Järvamaa Vocational Education Centre and horticulture at Räpina Gardening School.

Olustvere school has become a competence centre for the food industry, where producers, especially small producers, receive advice on growing agricultural crops, also the production and marketing of foodstuffs and food.

Luua Forestry School has specialized in the preparation of mid-level forestry specialists, forest management can also be studied at Pärnumaa Vocational Education Centre. Põltsamaa Occupational School teaches besides household economics also agriculture, Hiiumaa Occupational School teaches landscape construction and agriculture is also represented in the curriculum of Vana-Antsla Vocational High School. Kehtna Economy and Technology School teaches land improvement and hydraulic engineering, also it is possible to become a non-road mobile machinery technician.

All vocational schools have created continuing education and retraining possibilities for adult learners.

Prerequisite for the development of vocational education institutions are practical study bases equipped with modern appliances, which form the basis for the students´ good practical training. The Estonian Rural Development Foundation pays a scholarship to students of agricultural study programmes.

CHANGING ADVICE

In the development of an advisory system, the services offered by the advisory service have to be made more client centered and the new generation of agricultural advisers has to be actively trained.

All farmers use advice coming from different sources, but in Estonia and also in all of Europe, there is a growing need by the farmers for professional and up–to-date advice. On the one hand, this is caused by the diversification of agricultural production, on the other hand, the enlargement of farms that brings about the need for well organized management, marketing, logistics and waste management.

Therefore, the task of the advisory system is to promote, in addition to the distribution of know-how and information, also a suitable way of thinking among agricultural entrepreneurs that fits with market trends. Agricultural producers mostly need advice in preparing support applications and business plans connected to them.

The development of Estonian agriculture and rural advisory system has made a long and complicated journey after the Estonian re-independence. The advisory and information system of a small country like Estonia has been dependant on political directions, as well as personal viewpoints of different decision-makers. During the last years, advisory system development has been made possible thanks to a purposeful development of a communication network. Involving agricultural advisors with the advisory centers improves the availability of advice. Advisory centers have been established and specific advisory activities have been started.

Every county has an approved advisory centre; every centre has professionally certified agricultural advisers at least in the fields of plant production, animal husbandry and financial management. In 2009, there were 164 certified agricultural advisers in Estonia. In their activities, the centers consider the needs and peculiarities of the county. Agricultural advisers give advice to single clients, as well as groups, organizations and interest groups. The clientele varies by regions.

Training for the practical implementation of advisory product “Shovel Test” method in Saaremaa, Tölli farm. Photo: Ülar Loolaid

Training to introduce and try the advisory product “Shovel Test” method in Eerika, Tartu county. Photo: Ülar Loolaid

Training on advisory methods for foresters, meeting with a forest owner in Varbola, Rapla county. In the picture: Valdu Reinaas, Ants Varblane, Taavi Ehrpais (forest owner). Photo: Ülar Loolaid

Training for the practical implementation of advisory product “Shovel Test” method in Saaremaa, Tölli farm. Photo: Ülar Loolaid

Changing Advice

In order to ensure quality advice and the functioning of agricultural advisory system, the Ministry of Agriculture has appointed a coordinating centre, which prepares action and training plans and analyses the work of agricultural advisers, also engages in the development of advisory products and advertising and searches for opportunities for cooperation with other organizations.

The transfer of advisory system from the supervision of the Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce to the Estonian Rural Development Foundation in 2010 was a big talking point in agriculture and rural life circles.

Training to introduce and try the advisory product "Shovel Test" method in Eerika, Tartu county. In the centre Endla Reintam. Photo: Ülar Loolaid

Training for the practical implementation of advisory product "Shovel Test" method in Saaremaa, Tölli farm. Photo: Ülar Loolaid

Preparations for the discussion of the future of the advisory system – are we able to cooperate? Seminar in Käo, Tartu County (Waide motel). Photo: Ülar Loolaid

Training on advisory methods for foresters. Meeting with a forest owner (Taavi Ehrpais) in Varbola, Rapla County

Opinions were different, but all of those descended from the concern, if and how the advisory system can be made more client-friendly and proper.

With the transfer of advisory service to the Estonian Rural Development Foundation, the further development of the system was mainly kept in mind. The network of agricultural advisers had been totally developed by the time of the transfer; people were specialists in their own field who were trusted by the farmers and other rural entrepreneurs.

The Ministry of Agriculture proposed the Estonian Rural Development Foundation to coordinate the advisory system at the end of 2008. In February 2009, a working group was formed to organize the work of the advisory system, which included both officials, as well as representatives of all interest groups. The task of the working group was to analyze the situation and possibilities of the advisory system and make suggestions to the Minister of Agriculture on the wording of the Estonian agriculture and rural advisory system development plan and changes in legal acts and financial schemes.

The working group also formulated national targets of the advisory system, which definitely include improving the competitiveness and sustainability of agriculture and rural economy sector, improving the quality of advisory service, diversification of advisory products, fulfillment of obligations taken by the state, strengthening the advisory system and increasing the relevance of market based research. In order to get an so-called outside look, the Estonian Rural Development Foundation ordered a study on the development possibilities of the Estonian advisory system.

The goal of the Estonian Rural Development Foundation is to make the advisory service self-sufficient and organized in the longer perspective, in a way that the state orders a service for the fulfillment of its obligations and goals from an independent advisory organization.

Coordinating Centre for the Estonian Agriculture and Rural Advisory Service
Address: Kreutzwaldi 64, Tartu 51014
Telephone: +372 731 3652;
+372 731 3651; +372 731 3650;
+372 5346 7465
Fax: +372 731 3652
E-mail: info@nouandeteenistus.ee
Webpage: http://www.pikk.ee
http://www.nouandeteenistus.ee/

APPROVED ADVISORY CENTRES

IN HARJU COUNTY
NGO Harju Farm Union Advisory Centre
Address: Aasa 1, Saku 75501
Telephone: +372 6042 499;
+372 604 1104;
E-mail: htlnk@hot.ee
Webpage: www.hot.ee/htlnk

IN HIIUMAA
NGO Hiiumaa Advisory Centre
Address: Mäe st. 2, Käina 92101
Telephone: +372 463 1191;
+372 5647 3322;
E-mail: info@hiiuteave.ee
Webpage: http://www.hiiuteave.ee/

IN IDA-VIRU COUNTY
NGO Ida-Virumaa Farmers Union, Viru Advisory Centre
Address: Rakvere 14, Jõhvi 41533
Telephone: +372 337 0527;
Fax: +372 337 1185
E-mail: ivtl@estpak.ee
Webpage: http://www.ivtl.ee/

IN JÕGEVA COUNTY
NGO Jõgeva Producers Union
Address: Aia st 2, Jõgeva 48306
Telephone: +372 772 1107;
Fax: +372 772 1107
E-mail: jtl@hot.ee
Webpage: http://www.jogevatl.ee/

IN JÄRVA COUNTY
NGO Help for the Farmer
Address: 1) Jäneda 73602;
2) Pärnu rd 56, II floor, Paide 72712
Telephone (in Jäneda): +372 384 9725;
Fax: +372 384 9720
Telephone (in Paide): +372 385 0569;
Fax: +372 385 0569
E-mail: apm@janeda.ee
Webpage: www.janeda.ee/apm

IN LÄÄNE COUNTY
NGO Läänemaa Advisory Centre
Address: Tehnika 2, Uuemõisa small town, Ridala parish, Läänemaa 90401
Telephone: +372 472 9007,
+372 5650 6109
E-mail: info@nouandla.ee
Webpage: http://www.hot.ee/hplnouanne

LÄÄNE-VIRU COUNTY
NGO Viru County Farmers Union, Lääne-Viru County Agriculture Advisory Centre
Address: Vahtra 8, Roodevälja village, Sõmeru parish 44207
Telephone: +372 325 5099;
+372 551 7871
Fax: +372 325 5099
E-mail: lvpmnouanne@hot.ee
Webpage: http://www.virumaapml.ee/

IN PÕLVA COUNTY
NGO Põlva County Farmers Union
Address: Jaama 83, Põlva 63308
Telephone: +372 799 2930;
+372 7992 928; +372 5647 4215
Fax: +372 799 2930
E-mail: pltl@estpak.ee
Webpage: www.hot.ee/polvapl

IN PÄRNU COUNTY
Pärnu County Farmers Advisory Centre Plc
Address: P. Kerese 4, Pärnu 80010
Telephone: +372 443 0923;
+372 444 1961
Fax: +372 443 0923
E-mail: info@nouanne.ee
Webpage: http://www.nouanne.ee/

IN RAPLA COUNTY
NGO Rapla Advisors Union
Address: Kuusiku rd 6, Rapla 79511
Telephone: +372 489 4342; +372 485 5696
Fax: +372 489 4342
E-mail: info@rny.ee
Webpage: http://www.rny.ee/

IN SAAREMAA
NGO Islands Advisory Centre
Address: Tallinna rd 27, Kuressaare 93811
Telephone: +372 455 6145
E-mail: saartenk@gmail.com
Webpage: http://www.saartenk.weebly.com/

IN TARTU COUNTY
NGO Tartu County Farmers Union, Tartu Rural Advisory Centre
Address: Jalaka 48, Tartu 50109
Telephone: +372 736 6955;
Fax: +372 736 7510
E-mail: ttl@kodu.ee
Webpage: http://www.tartufarmer.ee/

IN VALGA COUNTY
NGO Valga County Farmers Union, Valga County Advisory Centre
Address: Aia 17, Valga 68203
Telephone: +372 766 1754; +372 504 2260
Tel/fax: +372 764 1754
E-mail: valga.nk@gmail.com
Webpage: http://www.valgapl.ee/

IN VILJANDI COUNTY
NGO Viljandi Agriculture Advisory Association
Address: Vabaduse square 4, Viljandi 71020
Telephone: +372 433 3608
Fax: +372 433 3608
E-mail: nouandeyhing@vpnu.ee
Webpage: http://www.vpnu.ee/

IN VÕRU COUNTY NGO Võru County Farmers Union, Võru County Farmers Union Advisory Centre
Address: Liiva 11, Võru 65609
Telephone: +372 782 1669; +372 782 4077;
+372 5663 1990
Fax: +372 782 1758
E-mail: vtlinfo@hot.ee
Webpage: http://www.taluliit.info/

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL BOARD

The establishment of the Agricultural Board simplifies and makes it more effecient to serve the citizens and entrepreneurs, also improving the availability and quality of services.

The Agricultural Board (AB) started its activities on 1 January 2010 and was formed by merging the Plant Production Inspectorate, local land improvement bureaus and Land Improvement Bureau of Supervision and Expertise.

AB continues everything that the different institutions used to do separately: fulfillment of tasks set by legal acts regulating the fields of land improvement, plant health, plant protection, seed and plant propagating material, plant variety rights, fertilizer, organic farming, control of wild oats and horticultural products and exercising state supervision. One new function was added – extrajudicial proceeding of misdemeanors arising from the Land Improvement Act.

There were several reasons for the creation of AB. One of them was that only governmental institutions have the right to exercise state supervision. Until 2010, in addition to the inspectorate, supervision was exercised also by land improvement bureaus and Land Improvement Bureau of Supervision and Expertise, in addition to the inspectorate, but the latter two are not governmental institutions. The Ministry of Agriculture did not find it expedient to establish a new exclusive governmental institution.

Competence centers were established in different counties after the creation of the board, which comprise of officials engaging in plant production, as well as land improvement. The compartmentalization of institutions has been decreased with the establishment of AB, because every county now has one local centre, which provides corresponding activities. State supervision of the whole field belongs to one institution and therefore the quality of supervision is improved.

Uniting different knowledge and experience creates a good prerequisite for a faster development of all united fields. Therefore, experience of the former Plant Production Inspectorate in exercising state supervision and proceeding of misdemeanors also help to start the same activities in the field of land improvement. The experience of people engaged in land improvement with the development of GIS systems on other other hand, create prerequisites for a corresponding development of the rest of AB fields.

Management and administration functions, state procurement organization and budget and financial control, bookkeeping and personnel services of the former institutions were centralized in the new board. Support services and state assets in the ownership of the board were started to be jointly maintained. The board creates a consistent and central system for in-service and retraining.

Address of the Agricultural Board:
Teaduse 2, 75501 Saku, Harjumaa;
Email: pma@pma.agri.ee

MUSEUMS ADVOCATE RURAL LIVE

Museums are no longer just places to collect antiquities, but active history tellers and centers for social life.

There are three museums active in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture: the Estonian Museum of Agriculture in Ülenurme, Tartu County; C. R. Jakobson Farm Museum in Kurgja, Pärnu County and Estonian Dairy Museum in Imavere, Järva County.

The role of agricultural museums is to help remember our roots, preserve the good reputation of agriculture and highlight the important role of agriculture in society. Great emphasis is laid on the public exhibition of stored items, introduction of rural culture and way of life and popularization of rural professions.

The activities of the museums are targeted to different interest groups: old and young, men and women, representatives of different professions. An important share is formed from work with youngsters – aside the introduction of expositions, also different workshops are regarded important, where children and youngsters can try various farm works.

Agricultural museums help us to remember our roots. View of the Estonian Agricultural Museum in Ülenurme.

The expositions of all the named museums are cultural in their essence, giving the visitor an overview of traditions and customs connected to the country, as well as people who have been the opinion leaders in different times and therefore influenced the well-being of the Estonian people and country.

The Estonian Museum of Agriculture has, for example a rye and rye bread programme, with the goal to design and value the share of bread in the Estonian cultural traditions and introduce the grounds for a healthy diet to the visitor and also rye bread and bread products as one of the most important national food of Estonia. A permanent exposition gives an overview of the development of agriculture and rural life, which peculiarity lies in using modern technologies in introducing the development of agriculture and rural life from ancient times until today.

Estonian Dairy Museum organizes, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Estonian Dairy Association and milk producers and processors, a Milk Day with the goal to introduce domestic milk products and advocate the importance of domestic milk production and processing, in order to stay an original cultural nation.

C. R. Jakobson Farm Museum has developed educational programmes introducing different farm works, for example “Autumn in Farm”. They also have programmes connected to Christmas and Shrove Tuesday. There is a farm culture school at the museum in Kurgja, which is targeted for families – different workshops take place and necessary skills for farm life are being taught.

VISION AND MISSION OF THE AREA OF GOVERNANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Main fields of activity of the area of governance of the Ministry of Agriculture:
Food safety, plant health, animal welfare and health; rural life, agriculture and food industry; fishery, research and development.

Vision of the area of governance of the Ministry of Agriculture:
Estonia has a viable rural area with competitive agriculture and fishing industry that ensures food safety and consumer satisfaction.

Mission of the area of governance of the Ministry of Agriculture:
We ensure a competitive agriculture and fisheries sector and facilitate the development of rural areas!

INSPECTORATES, BOARDS, CENTRES AND OFFICES WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE MINISTRY

Ministry of Agriculture
Address: Lai st 39// Lai st 41,
15056 Tallinn
Phone: +372 625 6101
Fax: +372 625 6200
Email: pm@agri.ee
www.agri.ee

Agricultural Registers and Information Board
Address: Narva rd 3, 51009 Tartu
Phone: +372 737 1200
Fax: +372 737 1291
Email: pria@pria.ee
www.pria.ee

Veterinary and Food Board
Address: Väike-Paala 3, 11415 Tallinn
Phone: +372 605 1710
Fax: +372 621 1441
Email: vet@vet.agri.ee
www.vet.agri.ee

Agricultural Board
Address: Teaduse 2, Saku,
75501 Harju County
Phone: +372 671 2602
Fax: +372 671 2604
Email: pma@pma.agri.ee
www.pma.agri.ee

Rural Economy Research Centre
Address: Jäneda, Tapa parish,
73602 Lääne-Viru County
Phone: +372 384 9700
Fax: +372 384 9701
Email: info@maainfo.ee
www.maainfo.ee

Estonian Animal Recording Centre
Address: Kreutzwaldi 48A, 50094 Tartu
Phone: +372 738 7700
Fax: +372 738 7702
Email keskus@jkkeskus.ee
www.jkkeskus.ee

Veterinary and Food Laboratory
Address: Kreutzwaldi 30, 51006 Tartu
Phone: +372 738 6100
Fax: +372 738 6102
Email: info@vetlab.ee
www.vetlab.ee

Estonian Research Institute of Agriculture
Address: Teaduse 13, Saku,
75501 Harju County
Phone: +372 671 1542
Email: Info@eria.ee
www.eria.ee

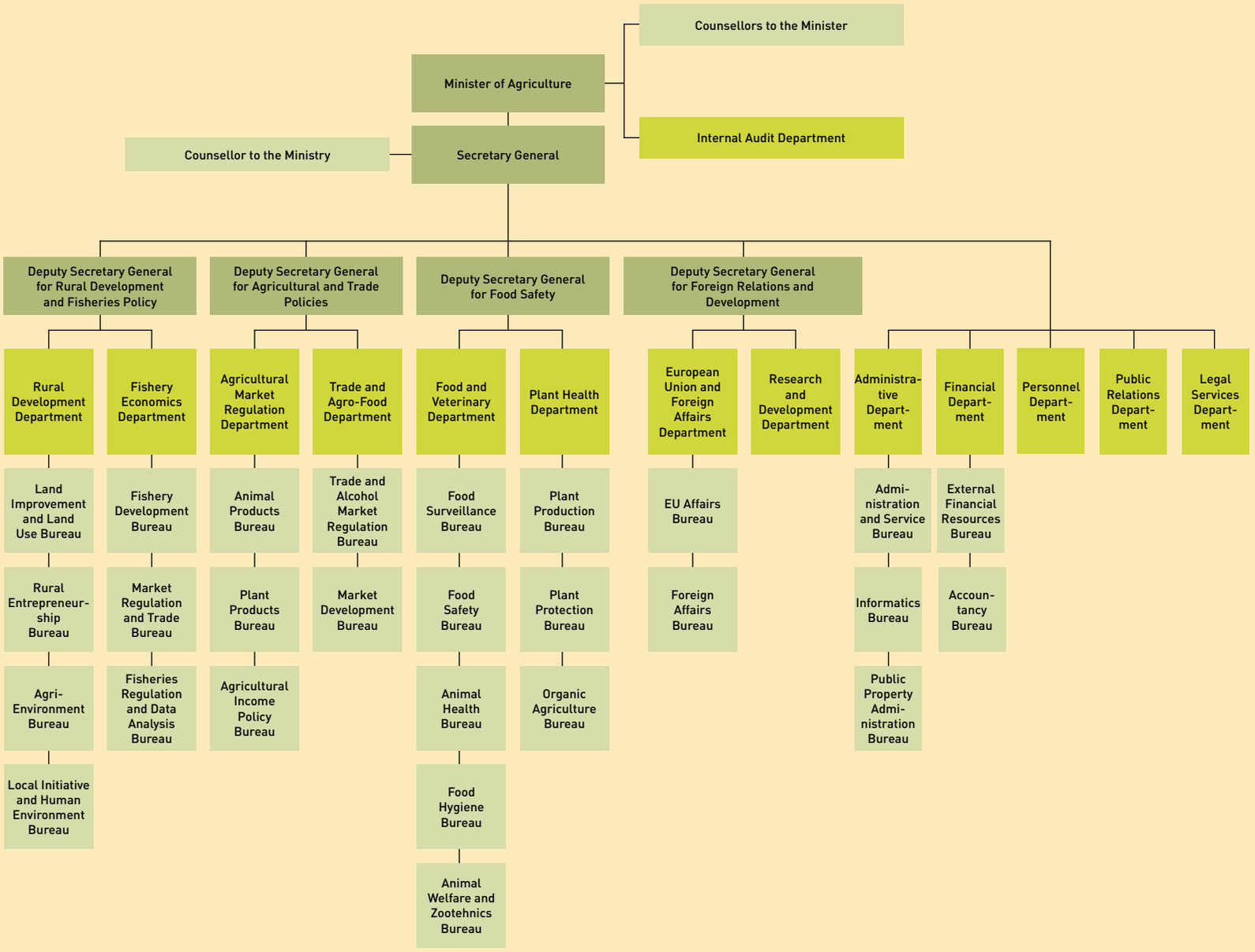
Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute
Address: J. Aamisepa 1,
Jõgeva small town,
48309 Jõgeva County
Phone: +372 776 6901
Fax: +372 776 6902
Email: jogeva@jpbi.ee
www.sordiaretus.ee

Estonian Agricultural Museum
Address: Pargi 4, Ülenurme parish, 61714
Tartu County
Phone: +372 738 3810
Fax: +372 738 3811
Email: epm@epm.ee
www.epm.ee

Estonian Dairy Museum
Address: H. Rebase 1, Imavere,
72401, Järva County
Phone/Fax: +372 389 7533
Email: info@piimandusmuuseum.ee
www.piimandusmuuseum.ee

Farm Museum Of Carl Robert Jakobson
Address: Kurgja, Vändra vald,
87612, Pärnu County
Phone/Fax: +372 445 8171
Email: info@kurgja.ee
www.kurgja.ee

STRUCTURE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE



Ministry of Agriculture