



Case study reports: Belgium CS₁



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1. Background

Programme

The demonstration was inserted in the programme of the EURAF-2018 conference in The Netherlands, as a field tour on Agroforestry. The ambition of the EURAF Conference 2018 is accelerating inspiring transitions towards agroforestry as sustainable land use, including the role that agroforestry has to play in order to fight against climate change. Agroforestry is the integration of woody vegetation, crops and/or livestock on the same area of land. Trees can be inside parcels or on the boundaries (hedges). Agroforestry can be applied to all agricultural systems, in all parts of Europe. As 'European Green Capital 2018' Nijmegen is the perfect international podium to promote agroforestry. The prestigious title 'European Green Capital' is an initiative of the European Commission.

On EURAF-2018, farmers are more than welcome to exchange their experiences and know-how, also regarding the barriers in their transition to agroforestry, which will be considered by the European Thematic Network Project 'Agroforestry Innovation Network' AFINET linked to the EIP-AGRI. The aim was to conclude the 2018 conference with a firm and clear public statement to inspire and to encourage both farmers and policymakers. During the conference every participant was invited to contribute to this statement.

Funding and Governance

The programme partners include: EURAF; The City of Nijmegen (NL); Van Akker Naar Bos and AGROFORESTRY Nederland. EURAF's Executive Committee is composed of the Executive Board (elected by EURAF's General Assembly) and the National Delegates (elected by the national associations that are members of EURAF).

The EURAF conference asks for fees to participate in the conference and be part of the excursions/field tours, as the one to the demonstration farm in Belgium.

EURAF accomplished that incentives for the promotion of agroforestry plots have been introduced to the Common Agricultural Policy: Agroforestry practices are listed as Ecological Focus Areas and farmers can receive greening payments for such plots in pillar I (Reg. (EU) 1307/2013). The establishment of agroforestry plots can be supported through national or regional Rural Development Programmes in pillar II (Reg. (EU) 1305/2013).

Actors and networks

From the 250 participants in the EURAF conference 2018, about 40 attended the field tour at the Belgian Agroforestry farm. The visit was arranged by a member of the EURAF staff who is also involved in '*Van Akker naar Bos*', a Belgian and Dutch organisation supporting transition to agriculture more in balance with nature. The Belgian farm is part of an informal network, because the farmer is very active in different networks related to the organic farming, so his name is known.

This was a one-off demonstration in the context of this conference. But the farmer has demonstrations at his farm for diverse groups on regular basis.

Event Farm and location

It is an organic mixed farm with livestock and sheep, cereal crops, orchards and hedgerows. The farm is situated in the eastern part of Flanders. Farming in balance with nature is a key objective for the farm. In recent years, the farmer has invested significantly in agroforestry around his farm. Trees have been planted both in the meadows for grazing, and in the arable plots (alley cropping). He planted a large number of sweet chestnuts and walnuts in his pasturelands. Cattle and sheep graze his orchards, use the straw and some of the cereals. He is member of a farmer's cooperative. He sells his beef and grinds his cereals into flour in an old mill. He teaches on agricultural schools, receives a lot of visitors to propagate biological farming and agroforestry principles, and is well versed. The farm is very active in demonstrations, hosting around 50 demonstrations each year, for a diverse audience (schools, citizens, farmers, researchers, etc.).

Event date: May 2018

2. Method

In line with the Methodological Guidelines, three main data sources are used: a background document and interviews at Programme and Farm level to analyse structural and functional characteristics, and event tools and surveys to analyse event level participation and learning, as follows:

1. A background document for every case study was completed by the AgriDemo-F2F partner who carried out the case study.
2. Interviews with representatives of Programme (Level 1) and Farm level interviews with demonstrators/hosts (Level 2) to reveal how the functional and structural characteristics enable learning. Analysis is reported in Sections 3 and 4. Data is sourced from interviews with 1 Programme member, who was interviewed in June 2018 (not on the same date as the event). This Programme member organised the field tours during the EURAF conference and is also involved in '*Van Akker naar Bos*'. For the event, we interviewed the host farmer, who was also the demonstrator and is very active in the organic farming community. He also teaches agriculture. The analysis followed 5 themes: (1) Coordinating effective recruitment of host farmers and participants, (2) Developing and coordinating appropriate interaction approaches, (3) Planning, designing and conducting appropriate demonstration processes, (4) Enabling learning appropriate to purpose, audience, context, (5) Follow-up activities.
3. Event tools and surveys (Level 3) to reveal peer to peer learning processes. Event details and analysis is reported in Section 5. This data is sourced from 4 pre and post demonstration surveys for participants, 1 pre and post demonstrator survey, a post demonstration host farmer interview and an event observation tool completed by an observing researcher. This data is mainly used for the analysis of learning processes and learning outcomes related to the specific event and overall comments on the effectiveness of the event.

Finally, partners reviewed the case study reports to prepare their workshops with different stakeholders related to the case studies. These workshops aimed at validating the data presented in the case study reports. For the Belgian and Dutch cases, a workshop was held on the 9th of November.

3. Structural characteristics

T1: Programme/network level

1. The main organisations involved in the demonstration activities and their roles

The organisations involved in this case study include: EURAF, Van Akker Naar Bos and Agroforestry Nederland.

Van akker naar bos (VANB)

'Van Akker Naar Bos' (VANB) is a Belgian and Dutch organisation which aims to accelerate the transition to agroforestry or nature inclusive agriculture, by giving farmers a platform to facilitate that transition. Farmers are participating in the board of VANB, and it seems that in general, they hold a substantial role in the processes of the organisation.

VANB organises field excursions to nature inclusive and/or agroforestry farms, making use of the associated networks. As an organisation it also provides advises to any interested parties, concerning agroforestry.

Yes with 'Van Akker Naar Bos' we've done it more actually. We've done it now 3 or 4 times, that we just organised as VANB foundation, excursions to a nature inclusive farm or an agroforestry farm. VANB has already organised twice a conference about agroforestry, so we have created a network around that. From that network people join to these excursions. (Programme interviewee)

People also come quite often to us for advice, because they notice we are quite active in that acceleration. (Programme interviewee)

EURAF (in collaboration with VANB)

The European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF) aims at promoting the adoption of agroforestry practices throughout the different environmental regions of Europe. It has about 280 members from 20 different European countries. Its Executive Committee is composed of the Executive Board (elected by EURAF's General Assembly) and the National Delegates (elected by the national associations that are members of EURAF).

VANB also organised demonstrations in collaboration with EURAF. The EURAF committee was responsible for the conference/scientific programme and VANB for the demonstration content, the supervision of the daily-demo programme and for recording useful observations from the field.

We were responsible for the content, and the EURAF committee was responsible for the whole scientific programme and the assessment of the contributions and for the posters, etcetera, that was not the responsibility of the programme committee, we were as 'Van Akker Naar Bos' responsible for the daily programme and that the speakers were there and especially the second day when the excursions were organised and how we took the content from the excursions with us to the end statement, that was also our responsibility, to guide the process to the end statement of the conference. (Programme interviewee)

2. The main actors involved in the demonstration activities and their roles

Host farmer and demonstrator

The host farmer's responsibilities and roles vary, depending on each demo-organiser. Apart from being the demonstrator, it seems that sometimes they are engaged quite a lot in the demo-topic and content selection. Sometimes, the host farmer takes care is also involved in organising catering and tasting etc.

Well, that varies. Sometimes it is an organisation asking if they can come by. Sometimes they do the catering themselves, sometimes they don't. Sometimes I do everything myself. For example if I organise a tasting, I organise it myself. Often *BioForum* (an organic farmers' association) is also involved. If they organise some actions, I attach my business on to theirs... A lot of times it is only me, but I also work closely together with another organic farmer, K, and he is also often involved, yes. (Farmer)

We leave it also to the farmers whom we visit, because very often, farmers, they start telling what for them is the most important thing, which they tell first. We don't have a guideline for them how they should do it. In consultation with the farmers or teachers or with the practitioners, it's an organic way how it is structured. I can't say what is the most effective way. (Programme interviewee)

Most demonstration events organised in the specific farm include an introduction to farmer's own backstory, a field walk and sometimes a short presentation with some pictures (Post host farmer interview). However, it seems that the host farmer is not charged with responsibilities at the program/network level, and the overall demo development. His main role is hosting attendees and telling his story.

No. When I'm talking as part of *BioForum*, then the people who work there professionally, they have to be able to say what I want them to say. And these people also want to know what is going on in the world of the organic farmers... We only want to know what is going on at the farms of the organic farmers ...That's how it should work. That role is one I try to play very consciously, yes....The whole system of the farm and how I got here. (Farmer)

Target Audience/type of participants

Both Farm and Programme interviewees, stated that the demo-audience age and background varies (toddlers, pensioners, students etc). Farmers willing to transform their farm, are very motivated to attend too.

Very diverse groups, from toddlers to pensioners. 20 percent are other farmers (...). I also get schools here. Also high school students, because in some cases, they have to for the official learning goals. (Farmer)

...that is in the first place farmers, in the second place all other stakeholders that are relevant to speed up that acceleration, so also government people and researchers and teachers and let's say policy makers they are the main groups I think on which we focus our activities. And maybe also especially the young farmers, young people, they are more open to start a kind of nature inclusive farm, to support them yeah. (Programme interviewee)

I think the majority is also in the process of starting a nature inclusive farm or in transforming their own farm into a nature inclusive farm and they want to see a workable and feasible example of this practice. They are all in the process of starting up such a farm, so they want to see the examples. (Programme interviewee)

Network members as an actor

Network members are engaged also in the topic selection of the demo activities organised by VANB, as long as these topics are in accordance with VANB goals. Moreover, VANB network members join demos and excursions initiatives.

VANB has already organised twice a conference about agroforestry, so we have created a network around that. From that network people join to these excursions. (Programme interviewee)

It is not always set by us. We are also part of a big network. So sometimes you get nice ideas from your network and then we can decide yes that is a nice idea for VANB and then we jump on it. As long as it fits in our own aim of accelerating the transition we are open for everything. O yeah yeah, we

hope that they join our network....that they see our website and that they come also with ideas on what we as VANB should do, or that they also participate in our next event. (Programme interviewee)

Practitioners and teachers

Teachers and practitioners are usually consulted on the content and other processes of demonstration activities before the events, in collaboration with VANB and host farmers.

We leave it also to the farmers whom we visit, because very often, farmers, they start telling what for them is the most important thing, which they tell first. We don't have a guideline for them how they should do it. In consultation with the farmers or teachers or with the practitioners, it's an organic way how it is structured. I can't say what is the most effective way. (Programme interviewee)

3. Networks

Networks connected to VANB

VANB is well-connected with other agricultural networks and/or organisations, with its members being part of networks or collaborating with them. VANB networks (whether some or all of them, is not clarified) demand some kind of paid contribution in order to be a member. Sometimes, due to the events organised by VANB, new networks are occasionally formed.

...that is mainly also through our personal networks. We are with 5-6 in the board of VANB and we all have a different network, because of previous experiences. We are a part of a big network. (Programme interviewee)

For example, that course which we gave, that was also nice that the participants also formed some kind of network, and now one year later, there is still email contact between participants, who want to inform others that they started or want to ask each other a question. There is still interaction between participants who followed the course. So they use this network, and we use their network. (Programme interviewee)

Yes now we have plenty connections to other networks. That's amazing, well, for example through this conference, we (VANB) have a quite strong connection now to EURAF. We also have a strong connection with Nijmegen, the city of Nijmegen, where the conference was. We have a nice kind of structural connection with Park Lingezegen, committee, in the area between Nijmegen and Arnhem and we help that committee also to develop agroforestry in that region of 1500 hectares... (Programme interviewee)

O yeah yeah, we hope that they join our network. And that doesn't mean that they have to become a member and pay contribution. (Programme interviewee)

Networks connected to demo farm

The specific demo farm is connected with other knowledge exchange organisations beyond VANB and EufraS, which organised the specific event. However, the demo farm is neither part of a bigger agricultural network, nor of a demo programme. The events, although frequent, are occasional and one-off.

Yes indeed. Inagro, ILVO. If it's about Agroforestry they have been here. BioForum also (held) demonstrations. (Farmer)

Q: So your farm is part of a bigger agricultural network? No, the visits are always one-off. It's not really organised or fixed. You're not obligated within BioForum, you do it because of the feeling of solidarity and connectedness. (Farmer)

Nevertheless, the farmer indicated that he belongs to BioForum, through which he also attracts participants for the demos organised at his farm. He did not clarify though his specific role in that network (pre survey demonstrator).

If participants are targeted in demo recruitment? Sometimes. Depending on who is the external organiser. If I do something myself I talk to my network, and that is very broad...What is the most effective way of attracting participants and advertising events? Talking to my network. (Farmer)

4. Resources, finances and incentives

The host farmer is not funded for his demo services by an external programme. However depending on the type of participants, a fee for attending the demo may be paid.

Very often it is free of charges. When toddlers come have a look, I obviously won't ask money for that, but if rich service clubs come over, they will have to pay. Also if I do the catering, I tend to keep prices very low. Because then it is also promoting my products... (Farmer)

As the specific demonstration event occurred in the framework of VANB and EUFRAS collaboration, some kind of compensation was given to the demo farmer (it was not clarified in which form). While VANB doesn't seem to have available funding for the organisation of demonstrations, sometimes they offer some kind of compensation to host farmers, a practice that seems to depend on each collaborative farmer. Again, a way indicated to compensate demo farmers were participant's fees.

That's also quite ad hoc. With the EURAF conference, it was quite okay, but we don't have a structural funding or something like that. It's activity per activity. So sometimes farmers don't ask for it (kind of compensation), but sometimes they send an invoice, sometimes they don't, it depends a lot....Yes of course, we also ask money from participants for the excursions to organise it. So a part of that can go to the farmers. But sometimes farmers refuse this, and then this goes to the bank account of VANB and we organise other things with that. (Programme interviewee)

We also ask money from participants for the excursions to organise it. (Programme interviewee)

Finally, according to available data, the host farmer didn't took any special training for the event. However, he has had some sporadic training days as a farmer (Pre demonstrator survey).

5. Decision-making process in organising demonstrations and its objectives

The decision-making process VANB follows in selecting demo topic is quite collaborative. Some topics are set by the VANB and others following farmers' feedback, on topics they are interested in.

It is not always set by us... So sometimes you get nice ideas from your network and then we can decide yes that is a nice idea for VANB and then we jump on it. (Programme interviewee)

We asked the participants: what do you like to learn? And we developed the course on the input of these participants on their own issues. SO everyone could say I would like to learn about this or that. So let's say half of the program of that course was in fact topics of participant, which were used to fill the whole course. (Programme interviewee)

Demonstrations are usually managed in a less structured way, with no strict guidelines to the host farmer. Moreover, VANB builds on participant farmers' and stakeholders' feedback to plan its further actions. Thus the overall governance can be characterised as mainly bottom up. However depending on each specific situation, the organisation may follow all approaches (from top-down to bottom up).

We leave it also to the farmers whom we visit, because very often, farmers, they start telling what for them is the most important thing, which they tell first. We don't have a guideline for them how they should do it. In consultation with the farmers or teachers or with the practitioners, it's an organic way how it is structured. I can't say what is the most effective way. (Programme interviewee)

Host farmers always involved in the development of the individual demonstration activities...we give them the platform and they can tell everything that they want. No strict guidelines. (Programme interviewee)

Yes! Of course! (for feedback request) Because, of course we like to hear if it was a nice conference or course, of course that is the fuel for next activities. (Programme interviewee)

Mostly bottom up. Three years ago we thought, farmers have to do it, so let's focus mostly on farmers. But now, we are Three years in existence, we see that it is everywhere... all stakeholders in Holland, on provincial level, municipality level, there is no shortage on interest in this. We are pragmatic in that sense, if it is needed, if there is interest... It is not as structuralised as we would like. It is not a straight line of development. It goes with a lot of curves. The most important thing is your own network. We would actually use all strategies, from entirely top down to entirely bottom-up. (Programme interviewee)

The demo farmer, sometimes adjust the topic and the content of each demo event to the specific needs of its audience.

How are demonstration topics selected? By the interest of the audience together with what I want to say... Participants are involved in the overall development of the demonstrations. Some people have specific questions and then we talk about that beforehand over the telephone. So indeed, I work specifically towards my audience. Maybe even questions they don't know they have yet, because they don't know enough yet. (Farmer)

T2: Farm (event) level

The demonstration farm in Belgium was inserted in the programme of the EURAF-2018 conference in the Netherlands, as a field tour on Agroforestry. From the 250 participants in the EURAF conference 2018, about 40 attended the field tour at the Belgian Agroforestry farm. The visit was arranged by a member of the EURAF staff who is also involved in 'Van Akker naar Bos'.

The host farmer is member of a farmer's cooperative and teacher in agricultural schools. He is very active in different networks related to organic farming and he receives a lot of visitors to publicise biological farming and agroforestry principles.

The host farmer holds, generally, one-off events at his farm (Farmer), as was the one organised in the frame/for participants of the EURAF conference.

6. Practice/technology demonstrated

The topic of the demonstration was agroforestry.

7. Event Farm location and layout

The farm is situated in the eastern part of Flanders. It is an average size (50 hectares) commercial organic mixed farm with livestock and sheep, cereal crops, orchards and hedgerows. Farming in balance with nature is a key objective and, in recent years, the farmer has invested significantly in agroforestry around his farm. Trees have been planted both in the meadows for grazing, and in the arable plots (alley cropping). He also planted a large number of sweet chestnuts and walnuts in his pasturelands. Cattle and sheep graze his orchards, use the straw and some of the cereals.

Travel time of farmers to reach the demo were 150 minutes for all participants, as all of them were attended the same conference at the same place. Most participants have rated their travel effort to participate as of

average difficult. A participant focused on the quite a long drive; another participant, a farmer himself, mentioned how hard is for farmers to find financial support for conferences and field trips (Pre participants survey).

The demo-farm is characterised by the host farmer as a mixture of experimental and exemplary approaches, which is also what he really prefers to demonstrate at his farm. However, the farm does not follow typical experimental designs and/ or protocols. It seems that the farmer is 'freely' experimenting in different options concerning agroforestry and nature inclusive farming. (Farmer).

The specific demonstration event was structured around a proof of a concept¹ approach, with no comparative layouts, following a whole farm approach and showcasing combinations of agroforestry practices all around the land of the farmer. Thus, there were different examples around the farm but, as typical comparisons were missing, not comparable. (Observation tool).

At the specific event, the host farmer was also the demonstrator who shared his personal stories and experiences and showed everybody around the farm. (Observation tool)

8. Frequency, duration and timing.

The farm is very active in demonstrations, hosting from 5 to 50 demonstrations each year, for a diverse audience (schools, citizens, farmers, researchers, etc.).

9. Farm's infrastructure and further arrangements

In general, the farmer offers some arrangements when holding an event, like catering and tastings, organised by the collaborating organisation or by himself.

Sometimes it is an organisation asking if they can come by. Sometimes they do the catering themselves, sometimes they don't. Sometimes I do everything myself. For example if I organise a tasting, it is completely in my own hands. (Farmer)

However, no specific arrangements (accommodation, catering, etc.) were made for the specific event. (Post host farmer interview).

¹ Showcasing alternative management practice not experimentally designed, which is discussed during field days or meetings to provide an understanding of how it was done and its outcome

4. Functional characteristics

T1: Coordinating effective recruitment of host farmers and participants

10. Incentives

In the case of BE1, the farmer noted how he did not receive any significant payment by way of incentives, but sometimes – depending on the group – charged a fee when he had to put on catering. He also noted how providing catering at demonstration events provided him with an opportunity for to promote organic agricultural products.

Very often it is free of charge. When children come to have a look, I obviously won't ask money for that, but if rich service clubs come over, they will have to pay. Also, if I do the catering, I tend to keep prices very low. Because then it is also promoting my products. (Farmer)

The Programme Interviewee reiterated that the funding for demonstration activities across the network was 'quite ad hoc' and was dependent on the group and the context. He recalled how sometimes they send an invoice, sometimes they don't, and it depends a lot. So whilst, there was no significant opportunity for monetary gain, farmers were not typically left out of pocket.

The network does not currently receive structural funding, and any money accrued is done so through event charges. Although it is important to note that – according to the Programme Interviewee – some farmers refuse to accept payment for demonstration activities:

Sometimes farmers refuse this [money], and then this goes to the bank account of VANB and we organise other things with that. (Programme Interviewee)

11. Motivations for host farmers

As suggested above, money does not appear to be a key motivation for host farmers. The Farmer in BE1 claimed to be motivated by sharing good practice and 'telling his story'. In addition to this, he had some broader ambitions about changing agriculture and benefiting the farming community as a whole.

I like to tell about what I'm doing. That's the main thing. That is very clear. I have to be able to tell my story, for sure. And secondly well, a very idealistic goal about me wanting to change agriculture. Somewhere underneath that is also my goal yes. And I want to tell this to other farmers. Like 'look, there are the mistakes, that's what you have to tackle. And these are possible solutions'. (Farmer)

The Programme Interviewee concurred, putting an emphasis on the opportunity being a demonstrator gives farmers to tell their story. The Programme Interviewee also highlighted the benefits to farmers too – such as growing their networks, which in turn makes them better placed to receive funding.

So very often [...] they like to tell their story. They also have that aim for accelerating to transition. That's also a motivation for them. And I think also, their own networks will also grow when visitors come on their farm. That can have its advantages in the long run, for funding, or contacts or more visitors. (Programme Interviewee)

12. Motivations for participants

The BE1 farmer felt motivations for attending demonstrations were very varied – ranging from a simple 'afternoon trip' to people wanting 'very specific technical details'.

The Programme Interviewee felt farmers were more specific and relating specifically to improving their own farms or approach to farming.

I think the majority are in the process of starting a nature inclusive farm or in transforming their own farm into a nature inclusive farm and they want to see a workable/feasible example of this.
(Programme Interviewee)

The idea that farmers are motivated by a demonstration solving or addressing a particular problem they are experiencing did not come across strongly in the interviews. The motivations seemed much more varied. The Programme Interviewee claimed that “as long as it fits with our own aim of accelerating the [agricultural] transition, we are open for everything.”

Participants themselves stated as main motivators to attend the demonstration: seeing experiences with examples of agroforestry; learning about agroforestry systems in Central Europe and discussion with farmers and other researchers.

13. Target audience

The target audience for demonstrations was very broad and encompassed audiences for more general farm open days, to more technical-oriented sessions. The farmer claimed the intended audience included ‘everybody, from toddlers to pensioners’. Whilst the farmer estimated only 20 percent of those attending demonstration events were farmers, he noted how ‘they tend to take up more of the time, because the information needs to go a lot deeper’.

The Programme Interviewee noted this diversity amongst target audience, but noted how it was *primarily* aimed at farmers.

In the first place [it is] farmers, in the second place all other stakeholders [...], so also government people and researchers and teachers and [...] policy makers. And [...] also especially the young farmers, young people, they are more open to start a kind of nature inclusive farm, to support them. (Programme Interviewee)

The Farmer claimed participants were sometimes ‘informally targeted’, i.e. through his own network, but the Programme Interviewee noted there was no formal targeting/recruitment of demonstration attendees.

T2: Appropriate demonstration and interaction approaches

14. The nature of interaction

There was some disagreement around the approach to designing demonstration activities within the programme between the Farmer and Programme Interviewee. The Farmer felt the nature of interaction in BE1 was more aligned with a top-down approach, whereas the Programme Interviewee felt it was more a bottom-up approach.

The Farmer noted how bottom-up approaches were time consuming and more difficult to achieve which was why he tended to deploy a more top-down approach:

Bottom-up asks a lot of time. That process, to get [them thinking] their ‘radars’ spinning, is not very easy, that needs time. (Farmer)

The Programme Interviewee notes the transition the demonstration network has been through; only three years ago he recalls how the demonstrations were farmer-oriented and bottom-up, whereas now there is a lot more input from stakeholders and official sources, such as provincial and municipal levels. Whilst there was still a strong emphasis on what the farming community want and need, he recognised that it was not the only source of input – ‘we would actually use all strategies, 1-4 [top down to bottom up]’.

15. Involving farmers in the learning process and the demonstration programme

There was no formal platform for farmer involvement in designing/shaping the learning process at the individual demonstration level. However, the Farmer noted how he often spoke to prospective attendees prior to the event to help them get the most out of the event.

Some people have specific questions and then we talk about that beforehand over the telephone. So indeed, I work specifically towards my audience. (Farmer)

According to the Programme Interviewee there are currently three farmers on the VANB board who get to shape the overall design of the demonstration programme/network. Whilst the Programme Interviewee suggested there was some discussion amongst the board members, which included farmers, about the programme design, he also noted this was often overshadowed by other things. Fitting the programme/network objectives with the research or contractual commitments of its members is an important thing to consider when trying to understand BE1 and its demonstrations. It also raises questions about the effectiveness of this approach; whilst it confers advantages, i.e. the use of members' networks and synergies with other activities they may be involved in, it could also mean the network is not responding to industry need because their members do not have the capacity to do so alongside their other commitments.

Interviewer: How are demo topics selected? I don't know if there is a plan for this? I believe it depends on what is going on at that moment?

Yes, exactly [...] because for all of us in VANB, the network is a side activity. We all have our main jobs and you bring the networks from these jobs in VANB. I'm for example also a teacher at university and a staff member at an institute. And so I have my contacts and projects there. (Programme interviewee)

16. Focus

Both the Farmer and Programme Interviewee describe the network as 'Whole farm' focussed, deploying an approach that falls 'in between' experimental and exemplary approaches to demonstration. The Farmer told us how he emphasised the whole system because of the importance of the bigger picture to sustainable farming operations.

I try as less as possible to single out stuff. It's the whole system that... well I can imagine that people who see something interesting here say 'let's try this too' and then it doesn't work, because you need the whole system. (Farmer)

The Programme Interviewee reiterated the importance of a broad approach, particularly to those interested in improving the environmental credentials of their farms.

People who want to start a nature inclusive farm, they have a big list of questions, not only about the trees, crops or agricultural things, but very often more about the financing or how to get approval from the municipality, or how do you get the land to start your farm? So very broad, always very broad. (Programme Interviewee)

17. Ideal group size

The Farmer and Programme Interviewee generally agreed that a number under 30-40 is a good number to work with. The Farmer raised some interesting points regarding this number, specifically relating to the ability to be heard by this size group without straining his voice, but also that when the session is anything more than a 'one on one', economically it needs to bring in more people to be worth it.

More than 30 doesn't work. 30 people is economically interesting, because you are telling it at 30 people at once. When you have a group of 40 or 50, it's not personal anymore like one on one, so it wouldn't matter if you add some more people. (Farmer)

Well the maximum is around 40 I think, that's also what we did at the EURAF conference, because if the groups is bigger, then it becomes more difficult. (Programme Interviewee)

T3: Enabling learning appropriate to purpose, audience, context

18. Facilitating interaction and learning: structure, content and techniques

Both the Farmer and the Programme Interviewee talked about the importance of balancing elements of the day in order to best facilitate interaction and learning, i.e. not spending too long on particular aspects of the day.

First I tell them about the wider part, then we go and watch. So when the attention starts to drop, you have to stop talking and show them things. A bit of walking is then also involved. (Farmer)

The Programme Interviewee also noted how they typically left the design of the structure of the day to the host farmers.

That should be a balance between a talk and practical activities, yeah. We leave it also to the farmers whom we visit. (Programme Interviewee)

The Farmer recalled how he might use a range of different materials and content – 'for example showing a PowerPoint with a couple of pictures because you cannot show every season in reality'. He also claimed that the materials he used differed according to the groups he is catering for. He noted the importance of getting attendees to search for/source the information themselves, because they are then actively engaging in it. On other occasions he will give attendees a short report.

When we give it all to them on a silver platter, sometimes that is also not beneficial [...] so they can look it up if they want more information. But for some groups I gave them a short report. The group who arrives now, that are students and they have to take notes, so they don't need a report from me, they have to make that themselves. (Farmer)

[Q34a(F) & Q32a(P)] The Farmer felt the most important aspect of a demonstration day, was the inclusion of 'good quality expert advice and technical presentations', whereas the Programme Interviewee felt it was the freedom for 'participants to talk openly'.

It is also not that much about techniques I think, it is far more on how the person can radiate something. (Programme Interviewee)

19. Taking into account variation in learning

Both the Farmer and Programme Interviewee claimed to plan for the variation in learning styles and capacities of attendees. However, this seemed to be aimed at content rather than how attendees might prefer to learn or the ways they might learn.

We gave a course, it was 6 full days, and each day it was 2 hours of input from our side: like how to design a nature inclusive farm; and after that we asked the participants: what would you like to learn? And we developed the course on the input of these participants on their own issues. So everyone could say I would like to learn about this or that. So let's say half of the program of that course was in fact topics chosen by the participant. (Programme Interviewee)

T4: Effective follow-up activities

1. Follow-up activities and materials

At the farm level, the Farmer noted how they did not continue to engage with participants after the event – “that is something I still want, but is not possible at the moment”. However, this was a role assumed at the Programme level. Although the Farmer did not follow up with participants after the event, as above, he did sometimes provide materials such as reports or website links for participants to engage with after the event. There were also further materials and follow-up events on the programme website.

2. Assessing impact

The Farmer had no formal way of assessing the impact of his events, however – via his informal network – he is able to identify any impact.

Yes, sometimes I visit farms of colleagues. Or people who tell me that when I’m in the neighbourhood, I should come by. And then if you see that, or when you’re like me, occupied with cycles, and you see other farms adopting that, yes then they don’t even need to tell me. Then I just know this idea came from me. And I even had it before that I go to a demonstration myself, and the one who is talking is talking about stuff that originally came from me. (Farmer)

There was no formal measurement of impact from the programme/network.

5. Event analysis: effective peer learning characteristics

Event details

4 participants filled in the surveys. All of them were male and didn't work in the local area.

age	ecologist	farmer	PhD student	total
20-30			2	2
30-40		1		1
50+	1			1
total	1	1	2	4

T1: Learning processes

3. Communication initiation by participants

In the whole group, between 10% and 50% of the participants had no problem sharing their knowledge and/or experiences related to the topic. Participants actually had no problem sharing knowledge, but the time wasn't sufficient. They were never put in small groups on purpose. During the walk, they did talk to each other about the topic. A little time was made for questions, but less than about 10 percent at the end of the demo. Some (5-10) questions were asked and there were a few participants trying to formulate their own points of view regarding the topic, but mostly time didn't allow for more. This was led by mostly the organiser of EURAF as a facilitator, but also by the host farmer.

	participant answers				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
I had the feeling that I could share my own knowledge as relevant information.	0	2/4	2/4	0	0
I asked at least one question during the demonstration .	3/4 yes				
I shared my own point of view at least once during the demonstration.	4/4 yes				
I felt encouraged to ask questions during the demonstration.	0	2/4	1/4	1/4	0
When there were any discussions, I felt comfortable sharing my opinion.	0	0	3/4	1/4	0

	demonstrator answers				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
I asked participants to share some of their own background knowledge during the demo.	0	1	0	0	0
I encouraged the participants to formulate their own point of view during the demonstration.	0	0	1	0	0
I encouraged the participants to formulate questions during the demonstration.	0	0	1	0	0

4. Interactive knowledge creation

Hands-on opportunities and other multisensorial experiences

The participant could use sight and hearing to see and hear about 'working' agroforestry examples, no real hands-on activity was demonstrated or possible to carry out by participants.

The demonstration included being outside in the field while the farmer was showing them agroforestry examples and explained the implementation.

Discussion opportunities and negotiating conflicting points of view

There was not really a discussion facilitator, although at the end, the person responsible for the group (organiser of the conference), guided some discussion on triggers for change for traditional farmers to agroforestry.

Open discussions between a few participants were stimulated but not more than 10 percent of the time was available for that. They wanted to discuss and were very interested, but time didn't allow for it. Shared critical points of view were clarified/rephrased so more people could understand. This was the demo with the most sharing and discussion on critical points of view in Flanders that we observed, unfortunately time was the biggest issue.

	participant answers				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
In my opinion, there were interesting discussions during the demonstration.	0	1/4	2/4	1/4	0
If participants didn't agree with each other during discussions, somebody (demonstrator/other participant) tried to reach a consensus between them.	0	1/4	2/4	0	1/4

	demonstrator answers				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
In my opinion, there were interesting discussions during the demonstration.	0	0	1	0	0
If participants didn't agree with each other during discussions , somebody (me or somebody else) tried to reach consensus between them.	0	0	0	0	1

5. Engagement during the event

The demonstrator and the participants act more distant than open. They came from a congress in the Netherlands, so the farmer and the participants didn't know each other beforehand. They were very interested though. The language and time barriers didn't give him the option to be very engaging on personal level with the participants.

	participant answers				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
I felt actively involved during the whole demonstration process.	0	4/4	0	0	0
I felt like the demonstration increased my ability to rely on myself as a farmer.	0	3/4	0	0	1/4
I could relate well to other participants (because they have an agricultural background similar to mine).	1/4	0	2/4	1/4	0
A lot of the other participants are part of the same farmer network as me.	0	2/4	1/4	1/4	0
I felt like I could trust the knowledge of (most of) the other participants.	0	1/4	2/4	1/4	0
The demonstration felt like an informal activity to me.	0	1/4	1/4	2/4	0
I thought the host farm was comparable enough to my own farm.	0	3/4	1/4	0	0
I had the feeling the demonstrator was like one of us.	0	1/4	3/4	0	0
I had the feeling I could trust the demonstrators knowledge.	0	0	3/4	1/4	0
I got along very well with the demonstrator.	0	2/4	2/4	0	0

	demonstrator answers				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
Were participants (farmers, advisers, researchers etc.) involved in the overall development of this demonstration? If yes, how?	yes, we discussed about how we can speed up agroforestry				
Most of the participants were well known to me.	1	0	0	0	0
A lot of the participants are part of the same network as me.	1	0	0	0	0
The demonstration felt like an informal activity to me.	0	0	1	0	0
I think the host farm was well suited for this demo.	0	0	1	0	0
I got along well with the participants.	0	0	1	0	0

T2: Learning outcomes

The explained knowledge was sufficiently understandable but since it was not his first language, the farmer used very easy English, and sometimes translation help was needed, but he tried really hard to be clear. There was no focus on trying out practical skills. Common methods or ways of thinking on farming were questioned and alternatives were shortly elaborated on in group. This was mostly about why and how to implement whole farm/agroforestry instead of traditional farming. This was shortly discussed among different participants and the host.

	participant answers				
What would you ideally like to learn today?	Use of fruit and nut trees in combination with other crops, livestock and practices; New solutions in agroforestry; issues about agroforestry practice; farmers skills and knowledge				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
The demonstration met my expectations regarding what I wanted to learn.	0	4/4	0	0	0
The demonstration exceeded my expectations.	2/4	2/4	0	0	0
I felt surprised at some point(s) during the demonstration.	0	2/4	2/4	0	0
I obtained a clearer understanding of the topic(s) demonstrated.	0	2/4	2/4	0	0
I have the feeling I learned something new (knowledge, skill, practice, etc.).	0	1/4	3/4	0	0
I thought about how I could implement some of the ideas and practices on my own farm.	0	0	2/4	2/4	0
I reflected on my own point of view at some point during the demonstration.	0	0	3/4	1/4	0
I learnt about the principles underlying a practice.	0	1/4	1/4	2/4	0
I thought about how we learn something new on demonstrations (e.g.: teaching methods).	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	0
I thought about why I want to learn about the topic(s) of this demonstration.	0	1/4	2/4	1/4	0

	demonstrator answers				
what do you intend for the participants to learn today?	How they can change to agroforestry and what agroforestry is				
	strongly disagreed	disagreed	agreed	strongly agreed	not applicable
I think participants have learnt what I intended them to learn.	0	0	0	1	0
I tried to surprise participants with uncommon/new knowledge/new skill.	0	0	0	1	0
I felt surprised at some point(s) myself during the demonstration (e.g. by a question or discussion).	0	1	0	0	0
I obtained a clearer understanding of the topic(s) myself.	1	0	0	0	0
I have the feeling I learned something new during this demo (from participants, discussion...).	0	1	0	0	0
I reflected on my own point of view myself at some point during the demo.	1	0	0	0	0
I encouraged participants to reflect on their own point of view during this demo.	0	0	1	0	0
I encouraged participants to reflect on their own situation sometime during this demo.	0	0	0	1	0
I encouraged participants to reflect on how we learn something new on demonstrations.	1	0	0	0	0
I encouraged participants to reflect on why we are trying to learn about the topic of this demonstration	0	1	0	0	0

T3: Overall comments on the effectiveness of the event

Participants:

With an average of 2,5 on 5, participants rated the event overall as not really effective. Only 2/4 would recommend the demonstration. They stated as most effective characteristics of the event: a lot of knowledge available; Interaction with other participants and to see a different farmer approach from abroad.

Suggestions for improvement included: smaller and shorter demo's for more farmers; smaller groups or multiple guides (to show the farm); offer a short PowerPoint presentation and after that go to the field.

Demonstrator:

The demonstrator reported that he has no idea on what made it effective and said: 'I'm left behind with questions. The audience was very divers.' He said it could have been more effective if he had been part of the congress prior to the demo.

Observed main strong points of the event:

Very interesting farm and farmer. The farmer was a motivated speaker although he didn't knew English that well. You could notice his teacher skills very well. Interesting but unfortunately short discussions due to time restrictions.

Observed main improvements:

The group was too big for everyone to hear properly or take part in the short discussion time. The farmer had to speak English but he wasn't a very strong English speaker. A hands-on activity could have been integrated.