

PRESS RELEASE

CONFERENCE: CONFLICTING GOALS LARGE CARNIVORE REINTRODUCTION IN GRAZING LANDSCAPES

Kalmar, Sweden – October 7, 2025 –

Farmers, researchers, and policy experts from across Europe convened for the Conference on Conflicting Goals, organized within the European project Grazing4AgroEcology, to discuss practical solutions for balancing sustainable grazing systems with the growing presence of large carnivores in agricultural landscapes. The event brought together voices from across Europe to exchange knowledge, share field experiences, and explore evidence-based approaches for long-term coexistence.



Farm experience



Farmers from Sweden, Italy, and Romania shared firsthand accounts of the challenges posed by increasing wolf and bear populations. Swedish sheep farmer Einar de Wit recounted the severe impact of a 2023 wolf attack on lamb production and highlighted the high financial and labor costs of predator fencing, expressing doubts about the feasibility of long-term coexistence. From South Tyrol, agronomist Bertram Stecher described the vulnerability of small mountain dairy systems - particularly goats grazing remote pastures - to wolf predation, emphasizing the need for effective wolf population regulation. In Romania, dairy farmer Cristian Echim reported increasing conflicts with brown bears, which pose a greater threat to livestock and human safety than wolves.

Expert Perspectives

The expert presentations offered European-wide insights into coexistence strategies. Jens Frank (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) presented data showing stable but spatially shifting carnivore attacks in Sweden and highlighted zoning as an effective preventive measure. Friederike Riesch (University of Göttingen) discussed Bavarian farmers' adoption of protective measures, noting the major role of social norms and the effectiveness of subsidies for wolf-deterring fences. Katarzyna Bojarska (Polish Academy of Sciences) provided evidence on wolf population recovery, feeding ecology, and the limits of livestock protection measures in reducing depredation.

Key aspects

Across all contributions, a common message emerged: coexistence is possible, but only through integrated strategies that balance ecological, social, and economic needs. Protective measures (electric fencing, guardian animals, better herding systems) can reduce, but not eliminate, conflicts. Region-specific approaches, targeted culling where necessary, compensation schemes, and consistent legislative frameworks were identified as essential tools. Participants emphasized that sustainable coexistence requires a shared societal effort, long-term monitoring, and strong support for farmers who bear the highest burdens of predator presence.



About Grazing4AgroEcology

Grazing4AgroEcology is a European project dedicated to enhancing the sustainability of grazing-based livestock systems. By promoting biodiversity-friendly practices, supporting farmer innovation, and integrating multidisciplinary expertise, the project aims to strengthen the ecological and economic resilience of European grazing landscapes.