

France Unveils New Agroforestry Plans

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As part of the 2nd National Day of Agroforestry, France unveiled new plans for developing ecologically sustainable forestry practices throughout the country. The plan aims to reduce the environmental impact of forestry and to integrate forest management practices into the transition to agroecology.

Agroforestry consists primarily of mixing the planting of trees with crops and/or farm animals. This allows for resources to be better used, helps to increase biodiversity and can increase yields. A study by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research, INRA, for example, showed that a 100 hectare parcel of land managed under agroforestry practices yields the equivalent of 136 hectares of land managed under standard principals, providing a potential economic boon for producers who adopt the practice.

The concept has a large number of benefits for crop production and environmental issues. In principal, trees, through their root systems, create conditions in the ground that encourage better provision of water and minerals to crops on the surface. Agroforestry techniques encourage strategically positioning trees to allow for a maximization of crop yields. Additionally, the trees help to diversify production and limit the loss of nitrates in soil and pollution of the water table.

Soil fertility is also improved when leaves fall and decompose on the ground, providing an important source of natural compost and fertilizer for the surrounding crops. Trees and hedges in fields also increase biodiversity, which is favorable for pollinating insects.

Finally, trees play an important role in absorbing CO₂ and storing carbon during their growth phase, allowing them to help limit the effects of climate change. Agroforestry is thus a key player in the agroecology plan of France, and it also helps to contribute to the French [4 per 1000 Initiative](#) to increase soil carbon sequestration.

Because of all of these benefits, promoting and expanding the use of agroforestry is a major goal of the French government plan to fight climate change. The plan unveils the government's

specific proposals for promoting it in five broad categories with numerous specific actions under each category.

The first category puts in place a system for researching and monitoring the various diverse forms of agroforestry that are practiced throughout the country and establishes networks for sharing information among various actors in agroforestry. Increased information on what's being done in agroforestry now will allow the spread of innovative ideas that work well.

Another major area the plan addresses is improving the regulatory, legal and financial framework surrounding agroforestry. Some of the specific actions include reinforcing financial support for agroforestry, improving the availability of tools for different actors at regional levels and favoring agroforestry development through financial tools.

Education is another important component of the plan, both in agricultural schools and in providing training to already-established farmers on the benefits of agroforestry and how to transition to it.

Additionally, the plan puts in place a system for helping to increase the value of products produced using agroforestry and a strategy for promoting agroforestry at the international level.

Broad use of agroforestry could play a huge role in the transition to more sustainable environmental practices in the long term and would also help producers economically by increasing yields and serving as a natural fertilizer for crops. The plan unveiled by the government puts specific actions in play to encourage the broad adoption of agroforestry at the national and international levels.
