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# THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE: SCENARIOS FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN DENMARK

Project period: September 2012 – August 2015  
Supported by the Velux Foundation

## OBJECTIVE AND BACKGROUND

The main objective of the project is to help create new visions and goals for the future of Danish agriculture in a European setting. We aim to inspire and assist citizens, researchers, students, organizations, and policy makers with various tools, such as scenarios, analyses, and policy advices.

The agricultural sector in Denmark is currently facing tremendous challenges – both economically and environmentally. The current financial crisis has severely impaired Danish farmers, and the total farm debt has increased to more than €50 billion. Besides economic hardships, Danish agriculture is further pressured by increasing demands to be greener and more active in society.

Global food security and the protection of farming in developing countries are other key issues. Danish agriculture is a producer on the global market and is much dependent on European agricultural policies. In 2010 Danish farmers received €1.1 billion in EU subsidies. A new comprehensive reform in EU's Common Agricultural Policy (the CAP) is under way and is scheduled to come into force in 2014.

Economic and environmental concerns combined with changing global food markets and European policies demonstrate the great challenges that Danish agriculture is facing today. How do we create a productive and sustainable agricultural sector in Denmark while at the same time fulfilling the many different needs?

Given this background, we will describe the challenges of the agricultural sector and provide suggestions that mitigate the impacts on climate, nature, and the environment – while taking into account sustainable food supply and renewable energy production.

## APPROACHES

The project sees to address the present and future challenges of Danish agriculture by a holistic framework that will be based on multi-criteria methodologies, facilitating a coherent description and weighting of a large number of (conflicting) objectives.

The long-term outcome should be to raise public awareness and political attention to the need for reforming Danish agriculture, in the short term by 2020 and in the longer term by 2050. We will conduct comprehensive analyses and develop scenarios for agriculture that outline the limitations of its existing state and constitute a toolbox to reform and develop Danish agriculture – in terms of legislation, economy, and farming practices.

Our hope is that new and improved legislations will be adopted by national and European authorities, and that farmers and agricultural industries will adopt some of our recommendations. We will prepare research publications, produce educational and discussion material, and hold public conferences on the future of agriculture. We expect the project to have a broad reach to many stakeholders in society, thereby contributing to the crucial public and political debate on the development opportunities for Danish (and European) agriculture.

[WWW.AGRIFUTURE.DK](http://WWW.AGRIFUTURE.DK)

## PROJECT PARTNERS

**THE ECOLOGICAL COUNCIL –**  
is a Danish non-profit organization that works to develop new and sustainable ways to improve the environment and climate. The Council works with a wide range of topics including agriculture, climate and energy, traffic and air pollution, energy savings in buildings, renewable energy, and chemicals.

[WWW.ECOCOUNCIL.DK](http://WWW.ECOCOUNCIL.DK)

**UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN – INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS (FOI)**  
conducts research on theoretical and applied economics, bioethics, and law. FOI has extensive expertise and

experience in socio-economic multi-criteria analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, and valuation analysis. The Institute's work aims to improve the knowledge base of administrative and political decision-making.

[WWW.FOI.LIFE.KU.DK](http://WWW.FOI.LIFE.KU.DK)

**AARHUS UNIVERSITY – DEPARTMENT OF AGRO-ECOLOGY (AU-AGRO)**

explores and disseminates methods for sustainable land management through integrated agro-ecological studies and multi-criterial decision-making. The department has broad competences in GEO database analyses and GIS modeling, especially in connecting agricultural land use with nature, climate, the environment, rural development, and policy making.

[WWW.AGRO.AU.DK](http://WWW.AGRO.AU.DK)

## PROJECT FRAMEWORK

