

Identifying pathways to visions of future land use in Europe

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Land use provides multiple goods and services to society. Meeting the future needs of a rising population while at the same time conserving natural areas, halting biodiversity loss, and switching to larger shares of renewable energy, will exacerbate the competition for land in the future. To deal with such potential conflicts, strategies for future land use are needed.

A set of three alternative visions of future land use has recently been defined in a participatory process with stakeholders to describe how land use should look like in Europe in the year 2040. These visions depict a desired future and not necessarily a future that is likely to happen. To investigate how these visions could be reached, a group of researchers led by Dr Hans Verkerk (EFI) explored what actions could be taken to change land use so that it will get closer to what is actually wanted by stakeholders. The researchers used the results of 24 scenario projections obtained from seven linked simulation models to project future land-use developments. They connected these projections of land use development with the three visions on desired land use development. The results are published in a recent article published in *Regional Environmental Change*.

"Our results suggest that policy options posing restrictions on the expansion of agricultural land in favour of more space for nature [HV1] have the ability to change the development of land use such that it is more in line with desired land-use for two of the three visions. However, it is unlikely that land could be managed to achieve all three

visions and there are trade-offs that society should be willing to accept" says Dr Verkerk.

More information: Pieter J. Verkerk et al. Identifying pathways to visions of future land use in Europe, *Regional Environmental Change* (2016). [DOI: 10.1007/s10113-016-1055-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-016-1055-7)

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