

External Environmental Costs of West European Agriculture and Gross Farm Returns. (A05-vanderploeg025804-Oral)

Authors:

- P.Schweigert - *Institute of Soil Science, University of Hannover*
- R.R.van der Ploeg* - *Institute of Soil Science, University of Hannover*

Abstract:

West European agriculture has been intensified significantly since World War II. Today crop yields are more than twice as high as they were some 50 years ago. Agriculture has contributed substantially to raising the standard of living in Western Europe. Whereas a middle-class family spent about 50% of its income on food around 1950, it is less than 20% today. The raise in agricultural productivity was achieved, among others, by an increased use of energy, fertilizers, and pesticides. This has led not only to increased crop yields, but also to an increase of the external costs of West European agriculture. In a recent study these external costs of agriculture in the United Kingdom were estimated at yearly 208 Pound Sterling per hectare of farmland. In that study only those costs due to the damage to the natural resources of air, water, soil, and biodiversity/landscape as well as the acute damage to the human health were considered. This means that the actual external costs probably exceed the given estimates. In Germany, with a highly subsidized agricultural overproduction, the external costs are estimated in the range of 10-100 billion Deutschmark (DM) yearly.

Corresponding Author Information:

Rienk van der Ploeg	phone: ++495117624902
University of Hannover,	fax: ++495117625749
Germany	e-mail: volkmann@ifbk.uni-
Herrenhaeuser Str. 2	hannover.de
Hannover 30419	
Germany	

Presentation Information:

Presentation Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2002

Presentation Time: 4:30 pm

Keywords:

Intensive agriculture, Environmental quality, Externalities, Net farm income