



Between a rock and a hard place -

how the EU got caught between Green Deal ambition and the realities of war

SAA Congress 2022; Punta Del Este ; Uruguay ; 26.09.2022



Let's keep in mind...

Europe



- **500 million inhabitants**

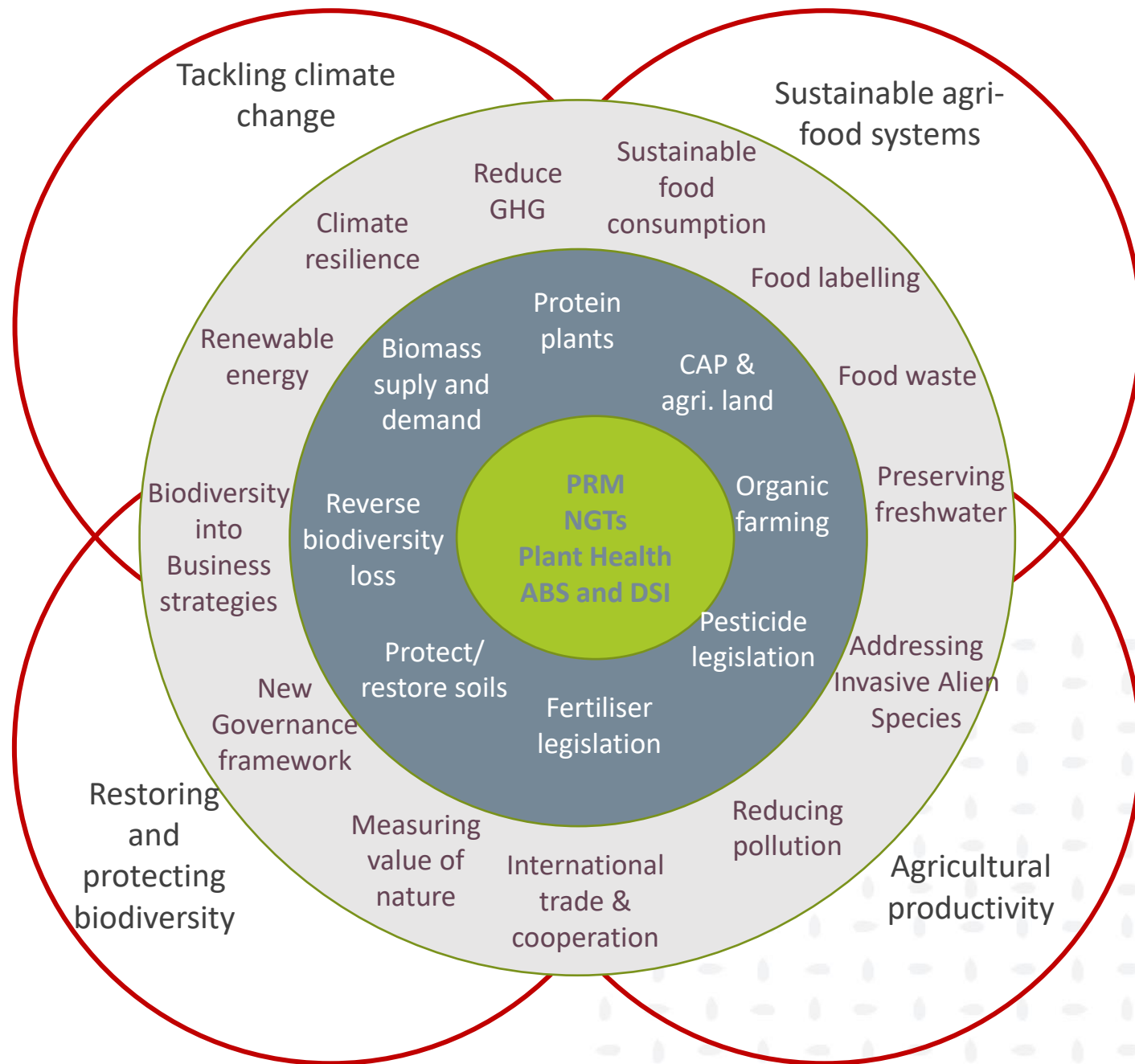


- **With very high average purchasing power**



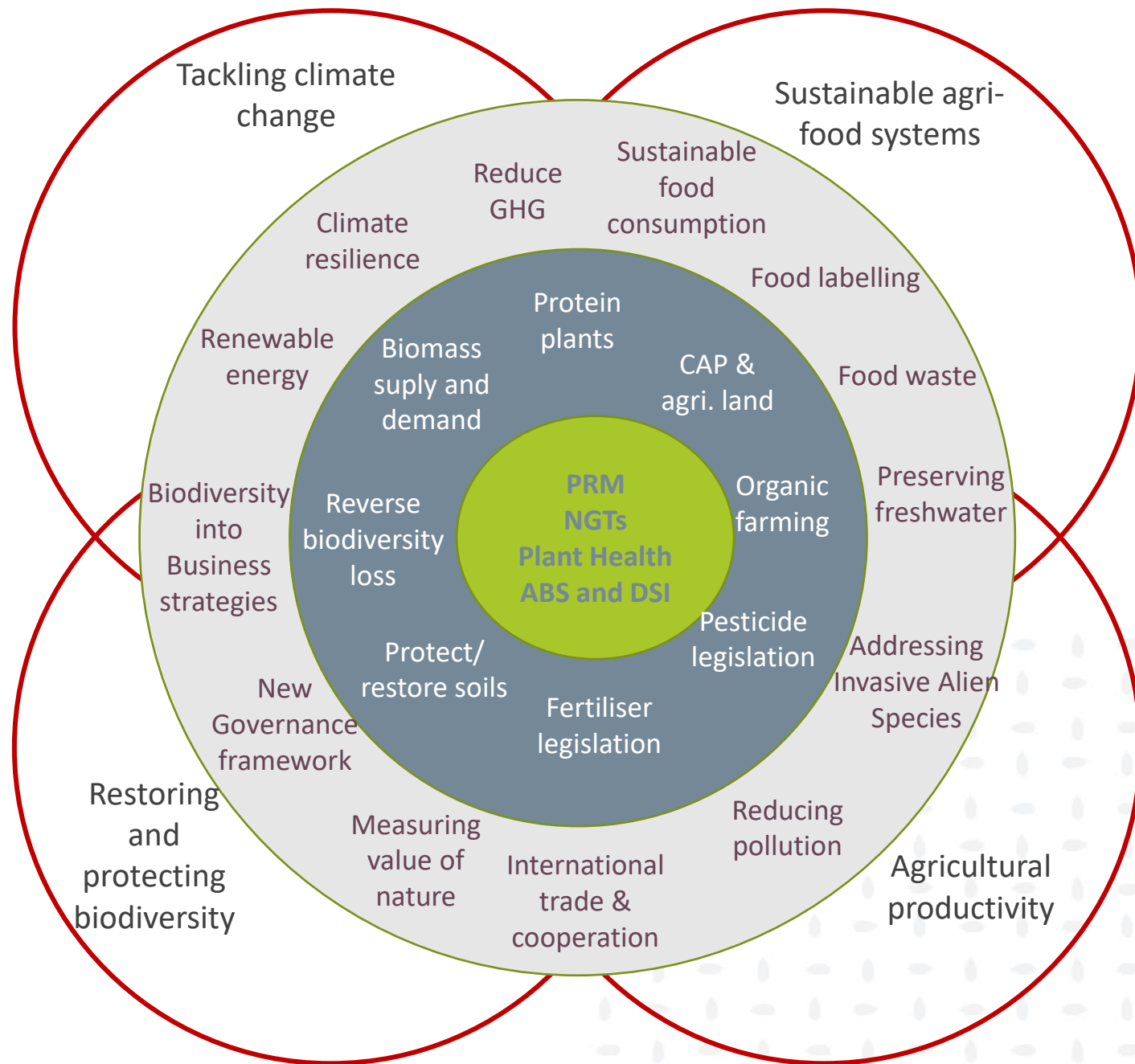
- **Largest food exporter and largest food importer globally**

**Since 1990s:
ever new
demands on EU
agriculture and
food production...**



Be „green“! Be organic !!

But be CHEAP!!!



Europe's way: the "Green Deal" and sustainable food systems and agri-food trade

- minus 55% CO2 emissions
 - "Green taxonomy"
 - boost renewable energies
 - sustainable food systems
 - Sustainable trade agreements ("mirror clause")
 - boost organic production to >25%
- = remain the high-priced "speciality product market" of the world**
- = use EU purchasing power and trade to drive transitions in 3rd countries**



Making the “Green Deal” work: the theory

- - 50% pesticide use
- - 30% fertiliser use (N)
- - 10% productive area
- + organic to >25%

= + sustainability

+ biodiversity

+ higher product prices for farmers

= **EVERYBODY WINS!**





Significant production and productivity loss in EU (min. 10 to 20%*) with severe global impact!

***USDA, Kiel University, Hffa Research, Wageningen University... et.al.**

There is trouble ahead...



„The war is not only a dramatic catastrophe for Ukrainians, but it also marks a change of times for Germany and Europe. For politics, this means that new priorities need to be set.“

German Federal Minister for Justice Dr. Marco Buschmann, 15.03.2022

- EU Crisis Response Mechanism
- **Food security back on the agenda – with a vengeance!**

Food (and energy) security back on the agenda – with a vengeance!

- Energy prices soaring (gas plus 300%) and energy supply (from Russia) uncertain
- Food and feed supply from Ukraine (and Russia) to world markets drastically reduced
- Long(er) term effects unpredictable
- EU countries taking short-term national measures (covid revisited)
- radical groups trying to capitalise and drive public protest and unrest

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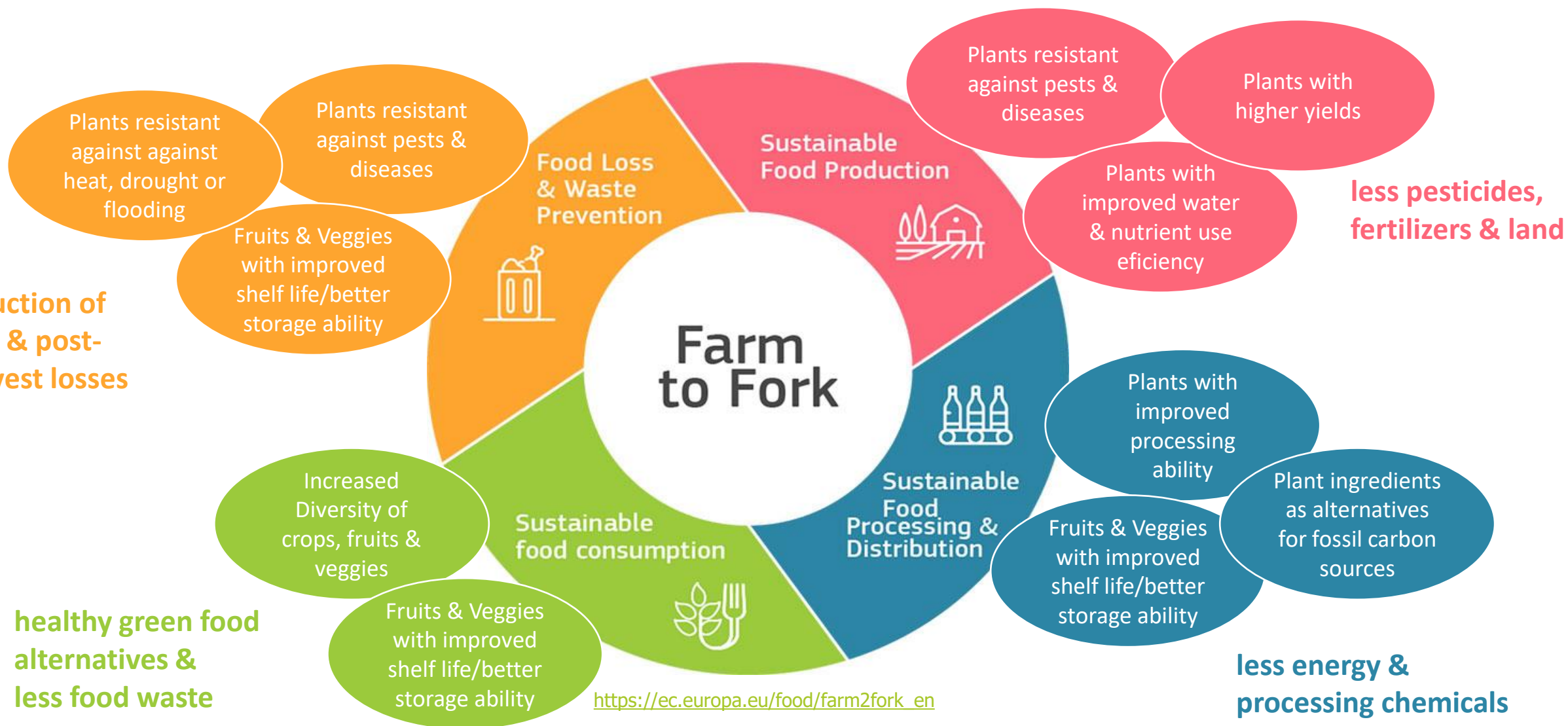
Europe's practical short-term policy options do not match its proclaimed Green Deal and Farm-to-Fork objectives and often are linked to "dealing with the devil"

Energy: coal replacing gas ; atomic energy pro-longed or increased ; possibly fracking ; supply assurance by (other) non-democratic countries

Farming: set-aside obligations are set aside ; high product prices not sufficient to compensate soaring input prices ; drought of 2022 makes situation worse

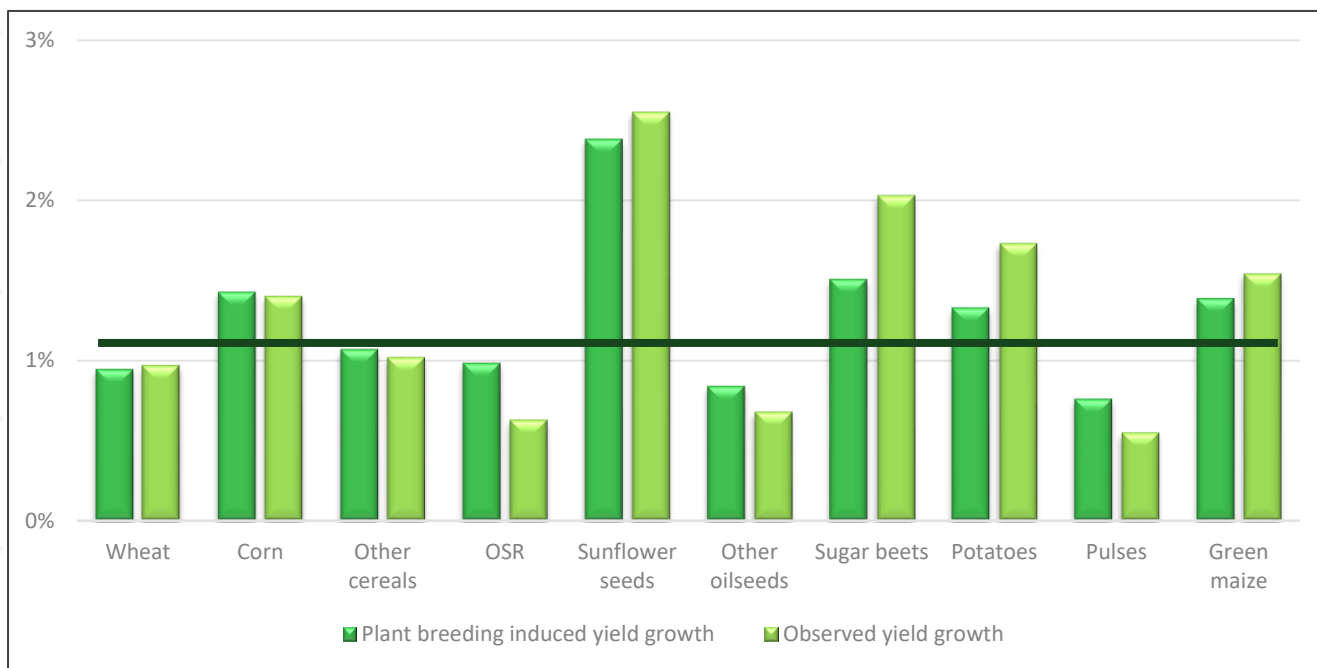
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A look at seed: it can make a difference!



Plant breeding is responsible for approximately 66% of annual productivity growth

Plant breeding induced vs. real yield growth



- Shares of plant breeding in innovation-induced yield growth are between 59 and 75 percent.
- On average, weighted by hectare:
→ **1.16 percent per annum** productivity growth through plant breeding.
- Plant breeding has a tremendous impact on EU arable farming.

→ Without 20 years of plant breeding in the EU yields would be **more than 20 percent lower**

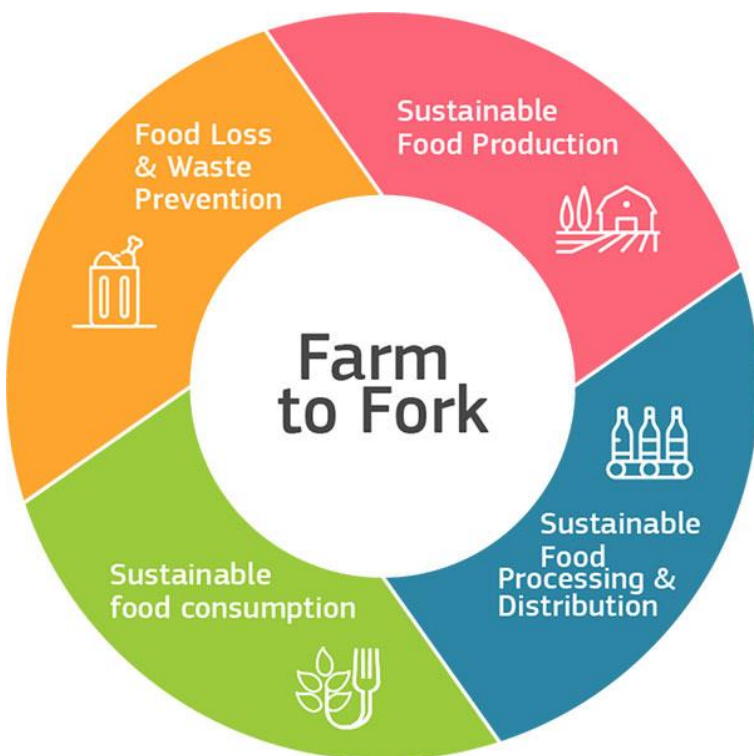
The multiple sustainability effects of 20 years of Plant Breeding in the EU

- Without 20 years of EU plant breeding progress...
 - arable farmers would have a considerably lower income (about minus 1/3)
 - the EU would become a net importer in all arable crops including wheat and other cereals
 - 22 million hectares of additional land would be needed (territory of Romania)
 - almost 4 billion tons of additional GHG would have been emitted (~ yearly GHG emissions of The Netherlands)
- 20 years of EU plant breeding progress helped to avoid significant biodiversity losses (~ compensation of 11 years of deforestation and savannah loss in Brazil)



Source: HFFA Research <https://hffa-research.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HFFA-Research-The-socio-economic-and-environmental-values-of-plant-breeding-in-the-EU.pdf>

Case study: Plant Breeding Innovation



https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en

The EU and seed innovation: THE THEORY

Plant Breeding Innovation (PBI) and Quality Seed:

New innovative techniques, including biotechnology..., **may play a role in**

increasing sustainability, provided they are safe for consumers & the environment while bringing benefits for society as a whole.

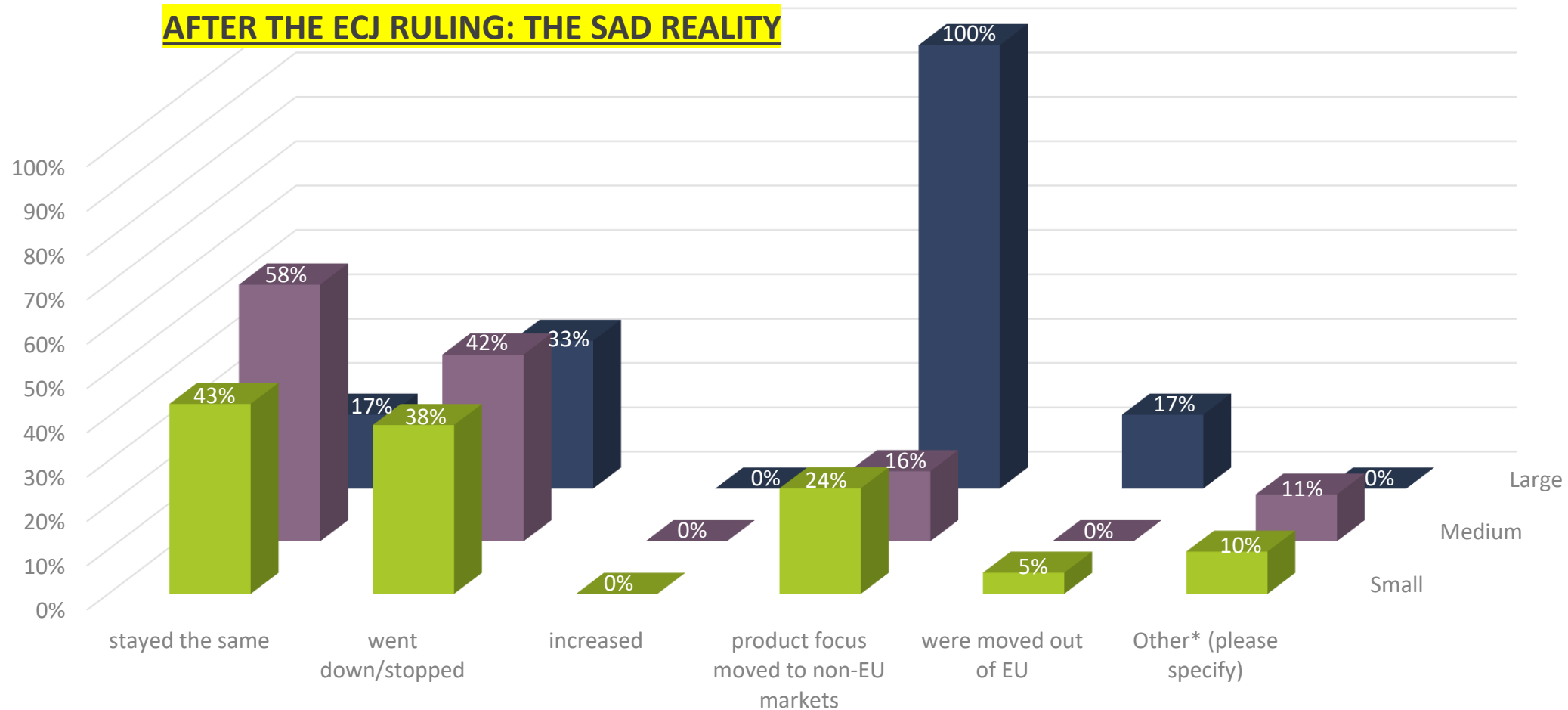
They **can also accelerate the process of reducing dependency on pesticides.**

Sustainable food systems also **rely on seed security and diversity.**

Farmers need to have access to a range of **quality seeds for plant varieties adapted to the pressures of climate change.**

But: a potential put on a leash instead of being unleashed

AFTER THE ECJ RULING: THE SAD REALITY



*some projects were put on hold and activities were modified: this includes discontinuation, reduction of scope, change in market focus and re-evaluation of timelines; some programs did not start; use of the technology only for gene discovery and validation only, no product development any more

Seed security: a globalised sector

> 25% of commercial seed used worldwide is traded internationally



On the move

Typical Seed Movement - Vegetables

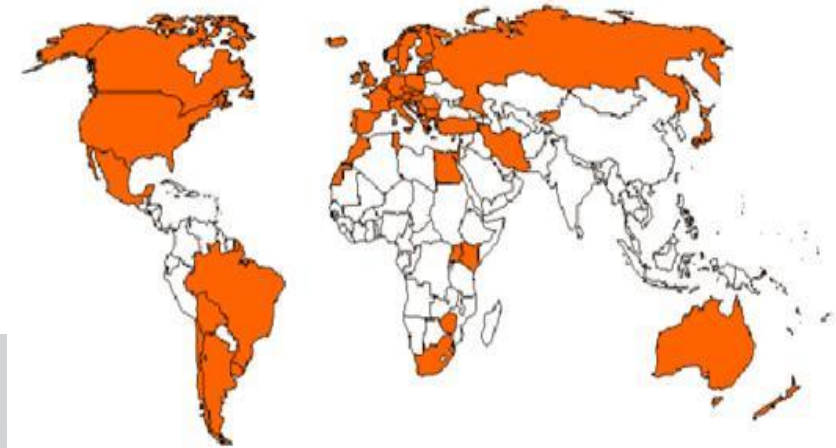


1. Breeding parental lines
2. Production of parental seed
3. Seed processing
4. Production of hybrid seed
5. Seed processing
6. Commercial packaging
7. Final market

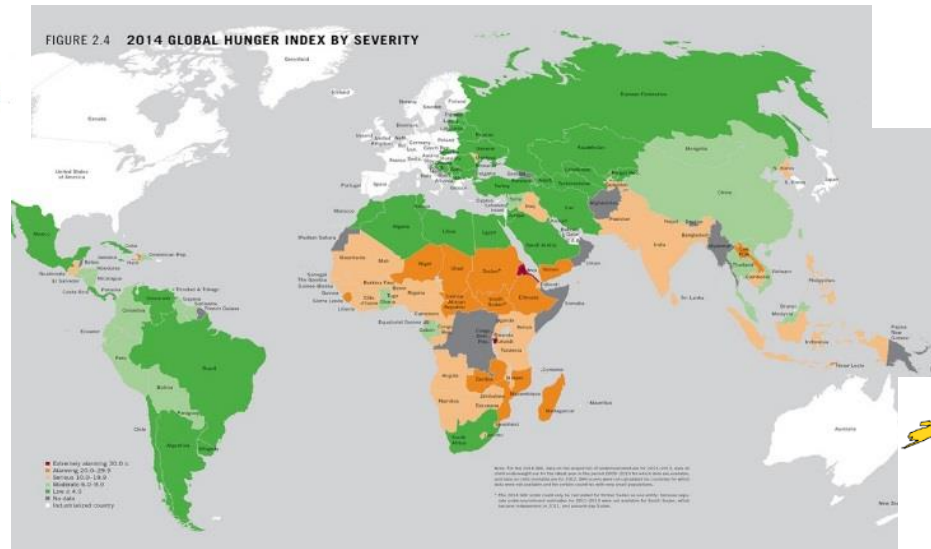
ISTA



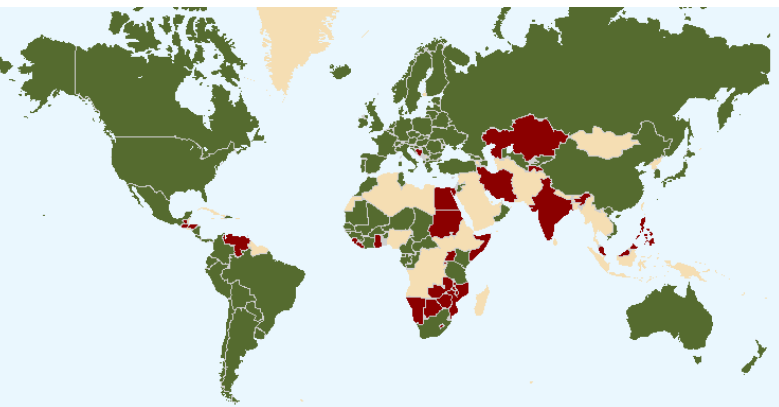
OECD Seed Schemes



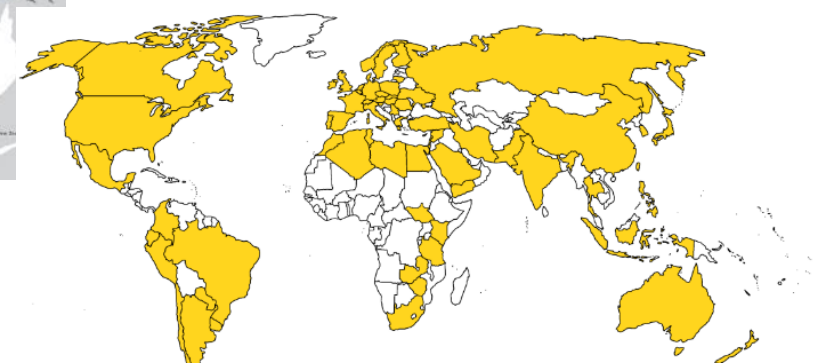
Global Hunger Index by severity



UPOV



ISF



adapted from ISF

General conclusions

- “Sovereignty” has historically proven to misallocate resources to the detriment of economies and citizens without achieving its primary objective
- International bodies, rules and procedures that foster market access and trade inherently enable efficiency gains, create wealth, and provide more, not less resilience and stability

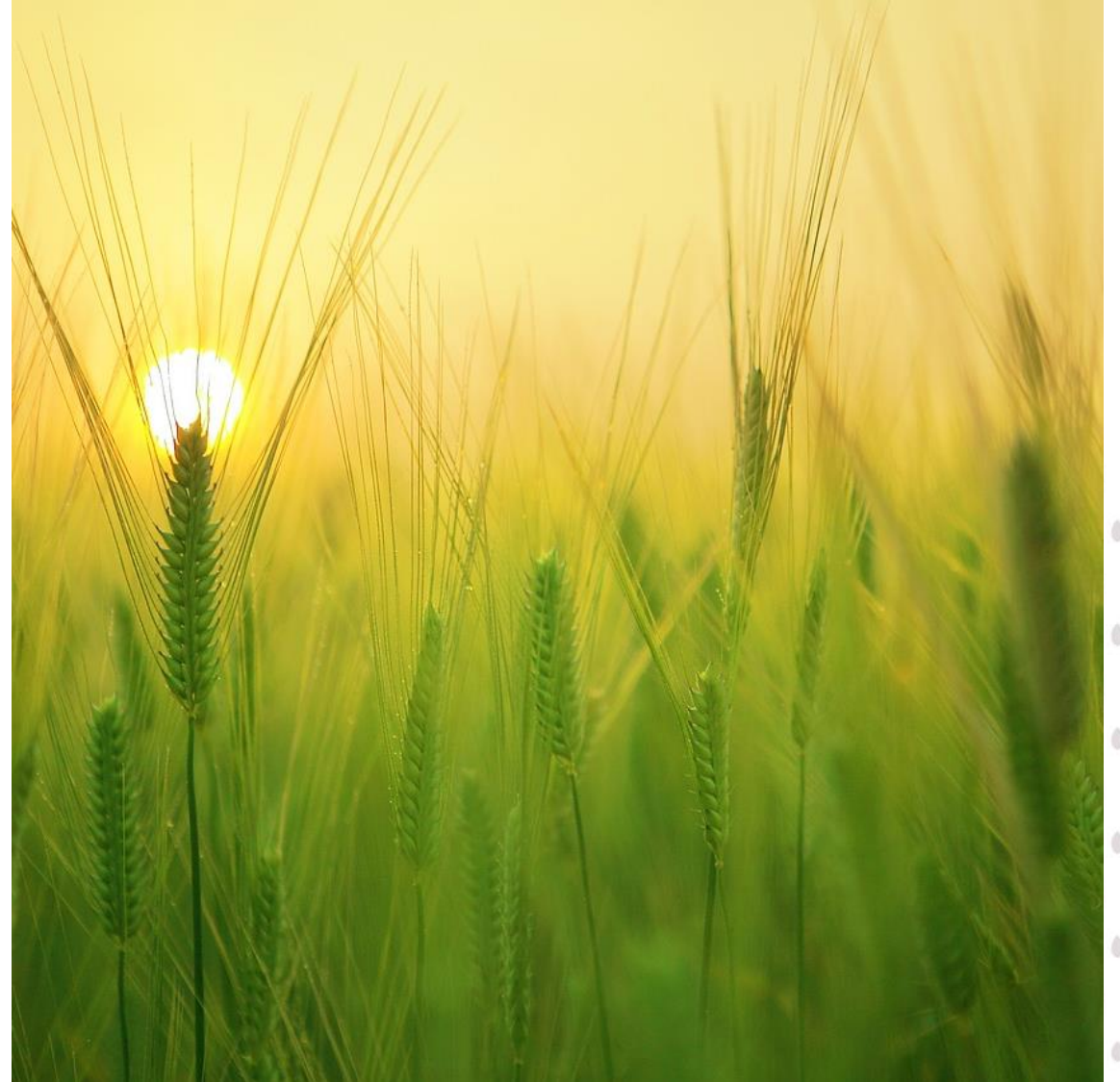


Seed-specific conclusions

- Avoid restrictions to free movement of seeds and related services
 - Green lane procedures and definition of essential services and procedures as back-up
- Assure and support continual alignment of EU with international developments in the area of seed quality, seed health and market access requirements



And some personal ones...





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#EmbracingNature

