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Federal Department of Economic Affairs DEA  
**Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG**

Cost Action 869

Ballater, April 2010

# **Overview of buffer strips in Switzerland**

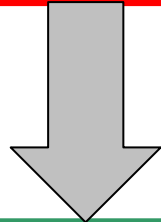
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# Reform of the agricultural policy

## From second war until 1993

- subsidies linked with production:
  - fixed prices and
  - sales guarantees

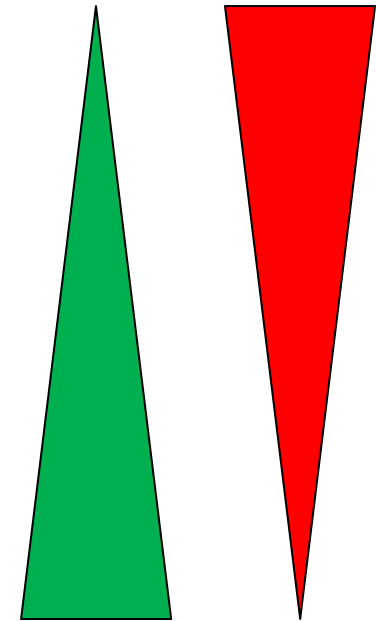


A fundamental change

## From 1993 – today

- subsidies (= direct payments) are linked to compliance with ecological standards = Ecological cross compliance

Product subsidies



Direct Payments



Policies and Instruments

# Ecological requirements

Proof of Ecological Performance (**PEP**)

Based on the approach of “Integrated Production Principles”

Rules translated into regulations:

- animal welfare standards
- balanced use of fertilisers
- appropriate share of ecological compensation areas (7%)
- crop rotation
- soil protection
- selected and targeted application of plant protection products

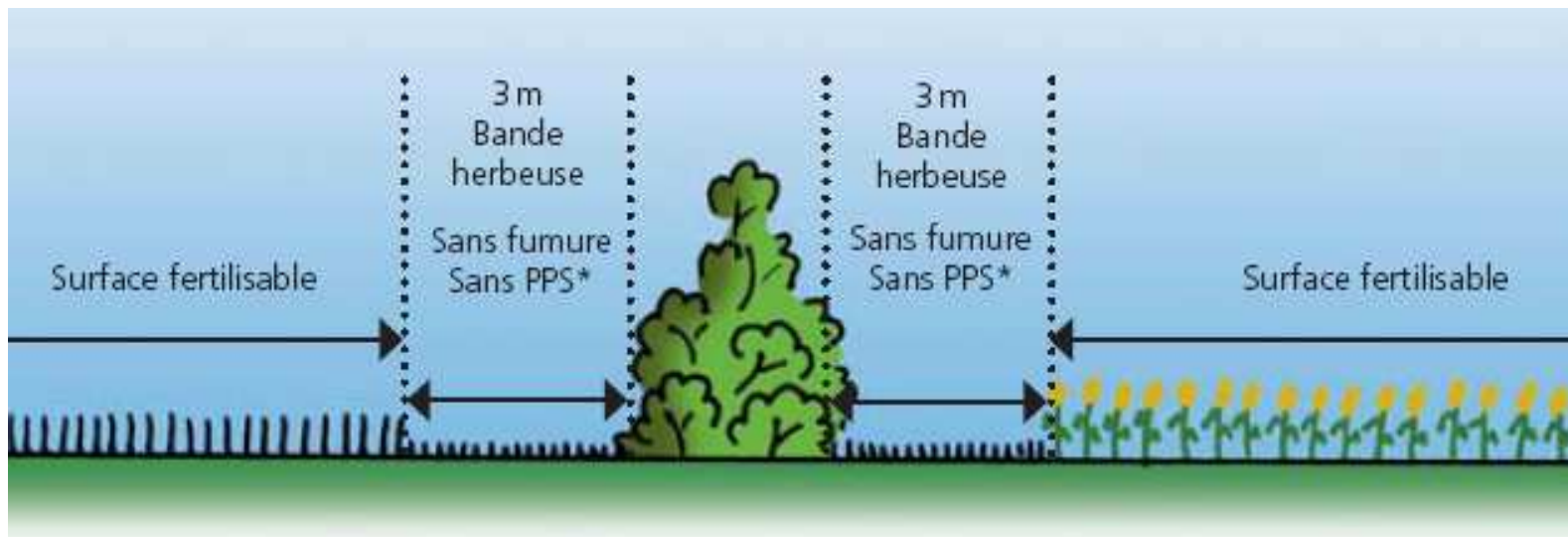


Policies and Instruments

# Ecological requirements

Buffer strips are part of the Proof of Ecological Performance **(PEP)**

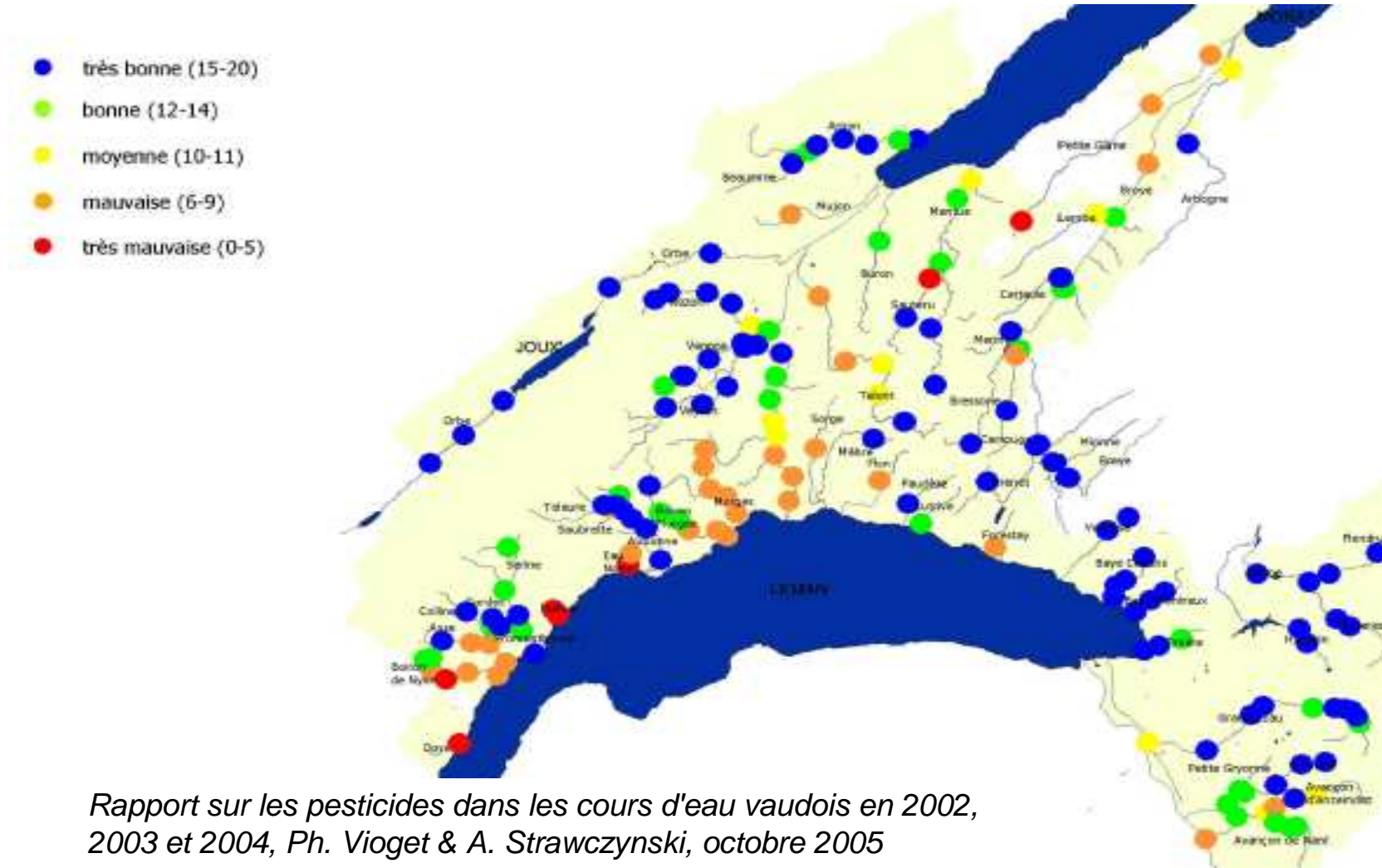
- 3 meters wide along forest, hedges and watercourses
- No fertilizer and no pesticides are allowed.





Assessment

# Lake Geneva: Biological quality of rivers



*Rapport sur les pesticides dans les cours d'eau vaudois en 2002, 2003 et 2004, Ph. Vioget & A. Strawczynski, octobre 2005*



Assessment

# Ecological requirements and benefits?

Outcome of a multidisciplinary study 2005:

- good direction,
- moderately positive effect,
- but additional efforts required to fully reach the objectives

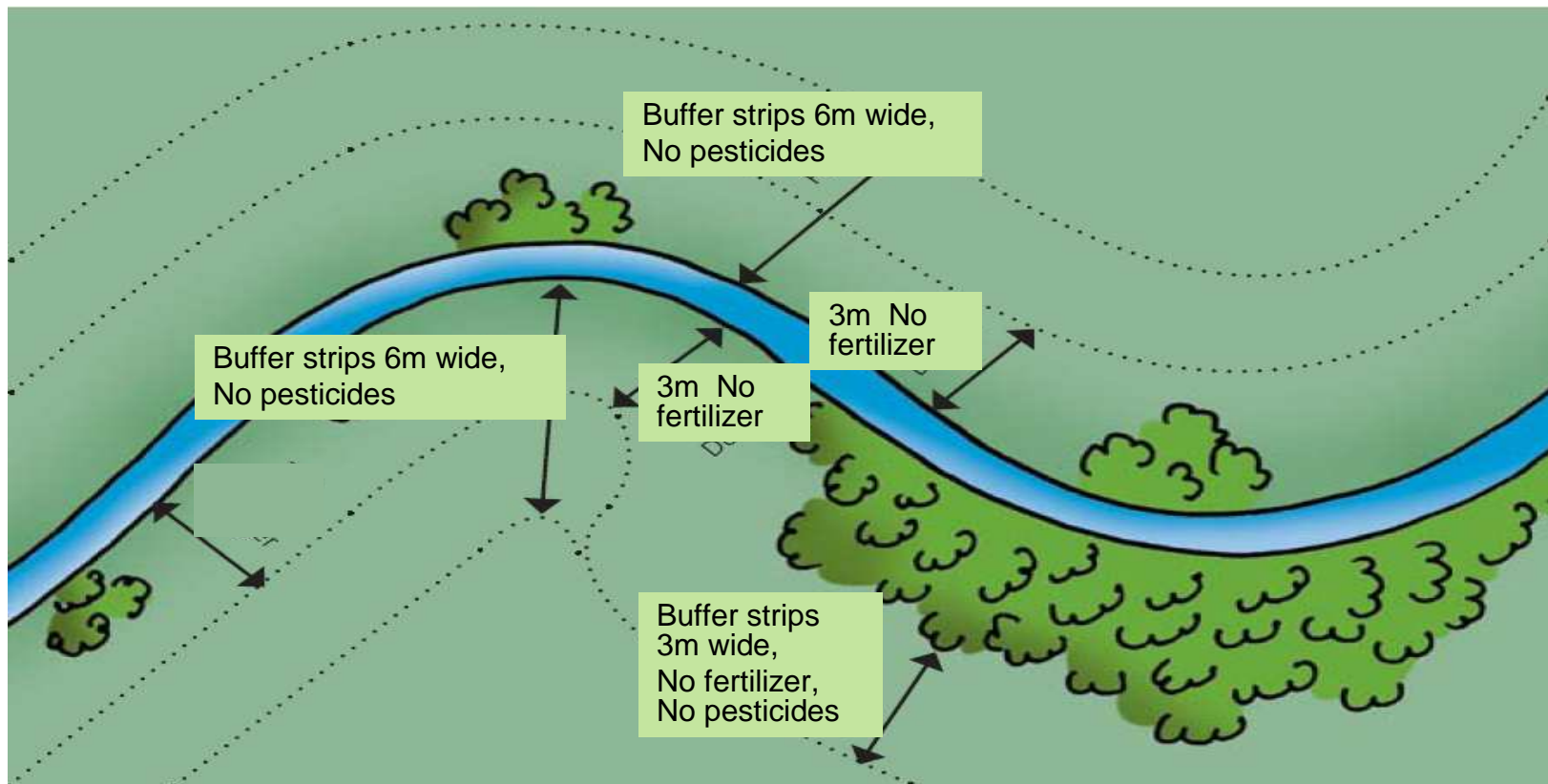




Policies and Instruments

# New Ecological requirements from 2008

Extension for Buffer strips in Cross compliance from 3 m to 6 m from 2008





Policies and Instruments

## Determination of the measure

If the slope of the bank is less than 50%, measured from the edge of the watercourse, and if used as extensive meadows: No fertilizer and no pesticides; grass is mown at specific times allowing flowers to turn into seeds (plain: mid-June). This acreage is eligible for fees.







Policies and Instruments

## Determination of the measure

If the slope of the bank is more than 50%, measured from the top of the bank, the bank is excluded from the agricultural acreage and not eligible for fees.





## Direct Payment / Fees for Buffer strips

If the buffer strip may be cultivated - in case of less than 50 % gradient - the acreage is eligible for the following fees:

• general fee for acreage:	725 €/ha
• fee for extensively cultivated meadows:	1046 €/ha
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• Total	1771 €/ha
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Within the framework of acreages of ecological compensation exist other feasible incentives whether the acreages either feature a particular ecological quality or / and are networked with other such acreages:

- quality of extensively managed meadows: 697 €/ha
- networking of extensively managed acreage: 697 €/ha



Policies and Instruments

# Difficulties... in vineyards and orchards

Fees for buffer strips cannot compensate production losses for vineyards and orchards along watercourses.





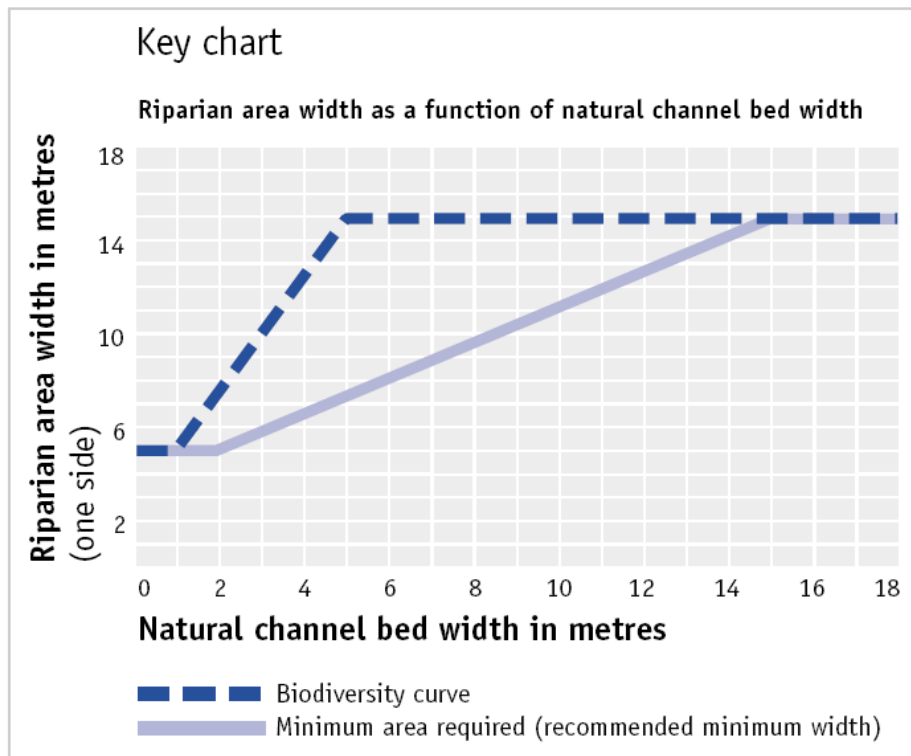
Policies and Instruments

# River revitalization

Guiding Principles for Swiss watercourses

Goal: Adequate space for watercourses

Introduction of Key Chart in the Swiss Water protection Act in discussion.





**Thanks for your attention!**