

How to define, monitor and deal with land abandonment

The Galician experience

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Outline

- 1 Definition
- 2 Significance & Location
- 3 Driving forces
- 4 Impacts
- 5 Policy & Instruments

Definition

Regional Law 7/2007

- ① Uncultivated land
- ② Abandoned land
- ③ Neglected land



Uncultivated land

- “Land used for agricultural purposes until recent times but not currently cultivated, with a noticeable cover of shrubs”
- Area covered by shrubs $> 50\%$

Abandoned land

- “Land not subject to any cultivation practice (including conservation agriculture), nor intended for grazing”
- Area covered by shrubs $> 75\%$

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Neglected land

Any of the previous cases, when they pose a threat to neighbour owners:

- Risk of wildfires
- Risk of erosion
- Propagation of pests

- 1 Definitions established for regulation of fines
- 2 Time frame is left undefined (but fallow land explicitly excluded)

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Significance

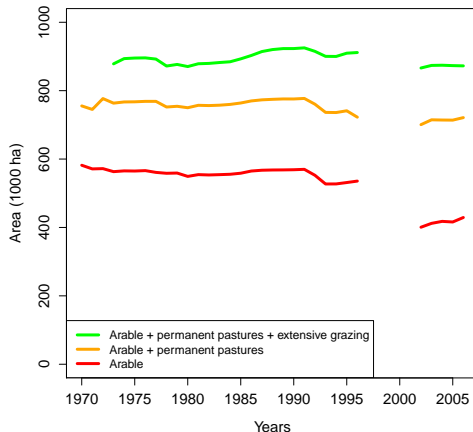
How much abandoned land?

Difficult to assess:

- Several cartographic / statistical sources available
- Disagreeing legends, scales, scope

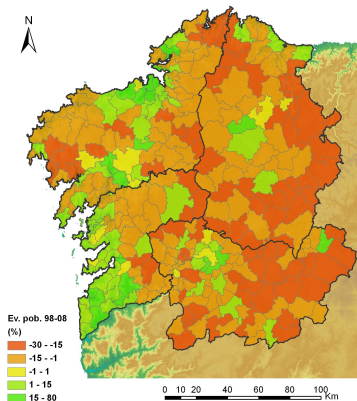
Significance

How much land taken out of agricultural use?

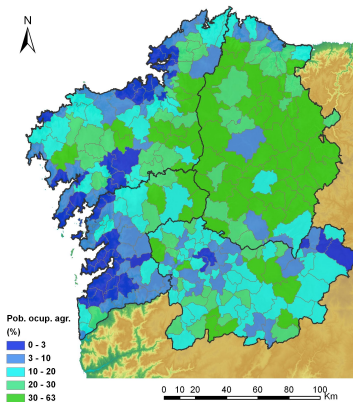


Source: Agric. Statistical Yearbooks, Spanish Min. of Agric.

Southern provinces



Population at municipal level
(1998–2008)



Work in agriculture in 2001
(% of active pop.)

Driving forces

- 1 Farm closing
- 2 High fragmentation of property
- 3 Low mobility of land market



Driving forces

1. Farm closing

Small-scale, family farms

- 433,000 farms in 1962
- 270,000 farms in 1999

Lack of viability

- Economic
- Demographic



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Driving forces

2. Fragmentation of property

Basic figures

- 13 M parcels
(in 2.9 M ha)
- 1.6 M owners
(2.7 M inhabitants)

Two kinds of fragmentation

- Many owners
- Many parcels / owner



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Driving forces

3. Low mobility of land market

Paradigm of agricultural economics in Galicia

- Based in data from Agricultural Census
- Relative stagnation of farm average area

(Some) Proposed reasons

- Land as asset
- (Expected) Demand for urban use
- Competition of forest use
- Low taxes on land

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3. Low mobility of land market

What does exactly “**low mobility**” refer to?

- Sale
- Rental (formal **written** agreement)

Non-written (**precarious ?**) agreements are common

- Case study: 80% of parcels receiving CAP subsidies

Farmers do not necessarily perceive them as “precarious”

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Driving forces

3. Low mobility of land market: Types of agreement

- 1 Written agreements
- 2 Oral agreements (also legally binding)
- 3 **Precarious** agreements (no time-frame defined, no guarantees)

Perceived as

- “Loss of a richness of social interest that a country can not afford” (Law 7/2007)
- Obstacle for enlargement of remaining farms
- Loss of cultural landscapes and HNV farming areas
- Environmental / social / economic problem: wildfires



Vigo, August 2006 (Photo: A. Rodríguez Seijo)

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 - Protected agricultural areas (municipal planning)
- Land Bank
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- Improve information flow
 - Provide guarantees (to owners & tenants)
 - Establish reference prizes
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 - Middleman in rental agreements (Contracting party)
 - Symbolic fee
 - Possibility of covering extraordinary expenses
 - Does not change property but only tenure



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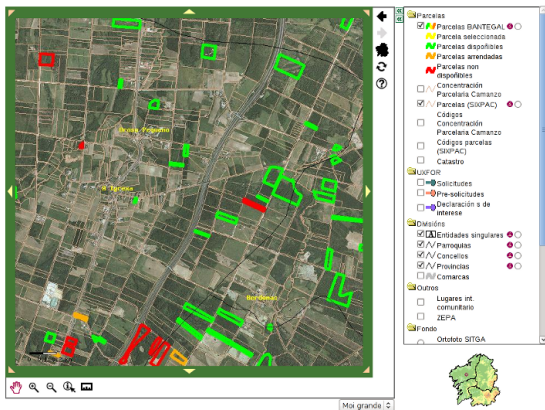


Policy & Instruments

SITEGAL: web-gis for the Land Bank (<http://www.bantegal.com/sitegal/>)

Developed by USC & UdC

- Information flow
- Transparency
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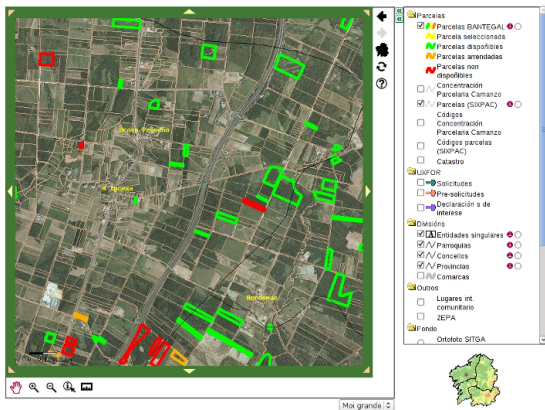


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