

Agroforestry in Latvia

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In Latvia there is agroforestry, but it is not mentioned in local legislation. There are two main farming methods which could be also be classified as agroforestry, they are short rotation coppices and silvopastoral systems.

Short rotation coppice is counted as agroforestry in some countries because trees are grown on agriculture land and have been managed like an agriculture crop.

In 2018 in Latvia there were 220 ha of *Populus spp.*, 442 ha of *Salix spp.* and only 3 ha of *Alnus incana* with the status of short rotation coppice.

It is **becoming popular to cooperate between willow farmers and beekeepers** because there are plenty of meadow species below the canopies in SRC trees and willows are the first plant to bloom in spring

There is a huge potential for human made silvopastoral systems where fast growing coppice trees (common for SRC systems) are used for shelter of cattle.



The most suitable agroforestry system for Latvia farming traditions are **silvopastoral systems** because open arable land is too important for growing human food to be used for grazing. Instead the animals would graze in the transition zone between arable land and forest or water such as the sea, lakes or rivers or in forest belts and bush lands.

There are no available statistics on how many ha of forest and bush land are used for grazing. The official opinion and message to society are that silvopastoral systems in Latvia have disappeared, but it is because valuable habitat surveys are covering old forests where there is nothing to eat for cattle, cattle graze in middle age and young forests as well as on bush lands.

In Latvia there are around 45 farms dealing with cattle for meat.

Shelter trees becoming more popular and important in terms of climate change as well – extreme weather conditions and as capturers of CO₂.