5-1 ECO-EFFICIENCY OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

The eco-efficiency of agricultural activities can be evaluated by comparing the development of certain production indices (e.g. agricultural yields) with that of various parameters illustrating the environmental pressures and impacts generated by the sector (use of inputs, atmospheric emissions, etc.).

KEY MESSAGE

A comparison of the development of the use of fertilisers and plant protection products with that of the production of the arable crops reveals a decoupling since 1995 (reduction of the quantities of fertilisers and pesticides used per tonne harvested and per hectare cultivated). The agricultural sector is also registering a decrease in its atmospheric pollutants (-16% for greenhouse gases and -13% for acidifying substances between 1990 and 2012). This gain in eco-efficiency needs to be seen in relation to the decrease in the livestock population[1], the price development of fertilisers and other inputs, better fertiliser management, as well as the promotion of more environmentally-friendly practices. The majority of these factors stem from regulatory or voluntary programmes such as the Sustainable Management Programme for Nitrogen in Agriculture, the cross-compliance of CAP direct payments, agri-environmental programmes or organic farming[2].

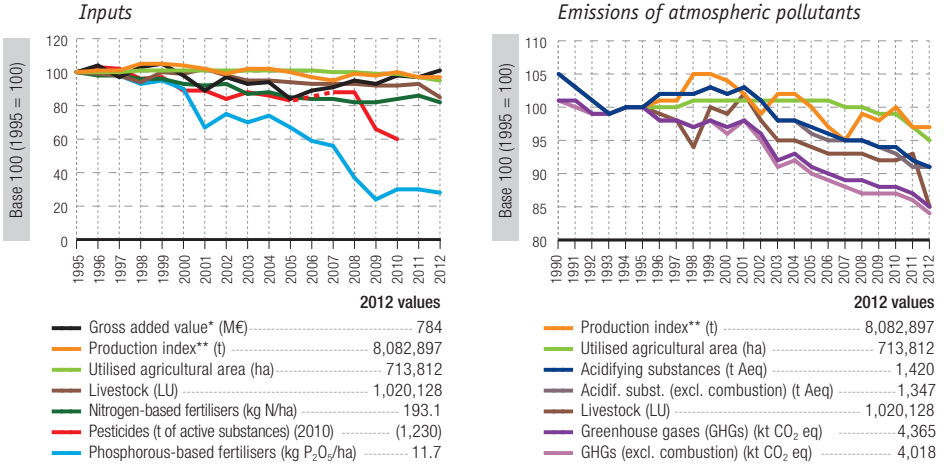
Evaluation +

Favourable and improving situation

[1] Significant reduction in the bovine population (-21% between 1990 and 2012), mainly in connection with the introduction of milk quotas, health crises (BSE, dioxin, etc.) and price developments (SPW - DAEA, 2014)

[2] Theme 2 of the 2007-2013 Walloon Rural Development Programme

Fig. 5-1 Eco-efficiency of the agricultural sector in Wallonia



* Primary sector, of which 90% = agriculture (excl. price variations) ** Total production of arable crops

EOW 2014 – Sources : SPF - DG Statistique; IWEPS; SPW - DGO3 - DEMNA; SPW - AwAC