



Yearbook 2021



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JOHN DEERE

NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE



Yearbook 2021

Friends of the Countryside asbl - Non profit Association

www.friendsofthecountryside.org

Young Friends of the Countryside aisbl - Non Profit International Association

www.yfcs.eu

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Trusted network by invitation only: <https://elo.trustedarea.net>

Cover photo : Welcoming Estate: Hoge Veluwe National Park in the Netherlands.

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Dear Friends,

I trust and hope that you are all enjoying this time of year when the countryside is in full life and hopes for a safer 'new normal' becomes more realistic. Our tie with nature has become ever more visible and the call for sustainable and regenerative farming practices all the more relevant.

This past year, the ELO staff has been busy organising many webinars on their numerous projects and of course this March saw the highly successful Forum for the Future of Agriculture with top level discussions. Together with the Solutions and Policy weeks, over 4000 participants took part from 91 countries. Please remember that all talks are still available on the FFA 2021 website.

We thank you all for your understanding and patience regarding the changes that had to be made for the General Assembly and I am so pleased to confirm that plans are on for a full meet up in Córdoba this October 7 to 10. You should all have received your invitations by post and I so look forward to meeting with you once again.

This year you will notice that there is no separate FCS Activity Report as we have decided to combine the two so that the first 24 pages of this Yearbook are dedicated to FCS events and activities. You will also find an updated layout for the contacts which remains legible and conserves on paper! Room has been left at the bottom of each page for any notes you may wish to add.

You will have received information about the newly re-structured Welcoming Estates Website. I encourage all Friends whose estate is open to the public in whatsoever capacity to now join as it is not only much easier to do so, the cost to join has also been considerably reduced. The new simplified website as well as a highly successful Instagram account will ensure increased visibility. I can affirm that the Welcoming Estates has certainly helped sell more of our wines!

The Wildlife Estates Label continues to grow and I am pleased to see that more members are joining and that it has included a new participating country - Hungary. With a considerable 2 million hectares covered with the label, biodiversity in the private domain is successfully being acted on!

In the UK plans are going ahead for the FCS Study Tour in Abergavenny, Wales this 24-26 September. Jack HANBURY-TENISON and Ross MURRAY have organised an in depth programme - there are a few places left!

Lastly but certainly not leastly, with the lead of our Scientific Director Jurgen TACK along with the Francois Somer Foundation, OFB and AGPB, a substantial study has been produced on the decline of small wildlife in Europe. To obtain your own hardback copy, please see the details on page 21.

I look forward to meeting you in person very soon in the sunny climes of Andalusia where our Friendship as members and stewards of the countryside will continue to bind us together.

In Friendship as always.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael Prinz zu Salm-Salm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Prinz zu Salm-Salm
FCS President

ABOUT



The Friends of the Countryside (FCS) are, along with the Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS), more than 700 landowners, rural managers and entrepreneurs from 27 countries stretching from the Rockies to the Urals. By means of innovative, regenerative and sustainable practices, this network promotes the long term interests of their land

FCS and its sister organization the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) have dedicated themselves to promote the holistic, economic, social and environmental management of the countryside. They also support private business and rural property throughout the European Union and its adherent members.

The fundamental beliefs of the FCS and ELO are that the future of Europe's countryside depends on a strong relationship between private landowners and the public authorities. In the past and still today, burdensome regulations and expropriation of land or business have pestered private

landowners. And yet it is certain that private enterprise and property are the best guarantee of economic, social and environmental protection and development of the countryside; it encourages good management practices.

The ELO promotes these interests on a European level towards EU institutions, NGOs and national representatives to lead the debate on the relationship between ownership, business and environment both in conceptual terms and in developing prosperous countryside businesses. The FCS convey this same message from the European to national or regional levels. The collaboration between the ELO and FCS, combining tradition and innovation, makes their work both stronger and more effective.

www.friendsofthecountryside.org
www.yfcs.eu

FCS BOARD MEMBERS

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Michael Prinz zu SALM-SALM

CEO & SECRETARY GENERAL



Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

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Honorary President

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Marie-Christine Gräfin
von Schönborn



Heinrich Prinz von Croÿ



Dear Friends,

What a year this has been! While the aftermath of the pandemic will loom over the world for years to come, we can rest assured that, now more than ever, people are thinking about our relationship with nature and how we can build a sustainable and resilient link with our planet. Among all the difficulties of the past months, one thing has kept us going, and that is the thought of our friends and families, and our knowledge that this pandemic too, will come to pass.

Here in the ELO and FCS offices, the team demonstrated versatility and fortitude as we seamlessly and swiftly adapted our plans, delivering upon many objectives, launching and maintaining projects, planning events, hosting awards, working on new studies, creating new partnerships and expanding our network along the way. We have maintained our numerous subsidiaries, providing a voice for the countryside, farmers, foresters and landowners; promoting biodiversity and lobbying for legislation that respects not only the environment but those who maintain it. For our land to be well-maintained, we need to acknowledge that without economic stability and prosperity, landowners will not be able to afford to manage their lands in a sustainable manner.

None of this would be possible without your enduring support, not just financially but also through your assistance and friendship. The ELO would not be as strong, or as well-supported, without your help. Together, we can protect private property rights, deliver a sustainable and profitable countryside, and help shape global politics for the better.

Biodiversity must be protected at all costs, we must actively work on a ground level alongside landowners to improve ecosystems around Europe and beyond. We are committed to protecting all forms of biodiversity with a special commitment to our endangered pollinators. We are involved in a plethora of projects that involve maintaining and promoting biodiversity across Europe. One of our most significant projects, the Wildlife Estates Label, continued to grow as we made our way through the year and pushed on towards the next. Providing a platform to support private conservation management and creating a network that spans millions of hectares. Wildlife Estates demonstrates that private landowners have a vital role to play promoting biodiversity and the regeneration of our countryside and with the successful results achieved through our network.

With the EU Green Deal cementing a political narrative focusing on climate change, sustainability and biodiversity, we need policies to promote land-based activities that have the ability to contribute to a circular bioeconomy and combat against greenhouse gas emissions. We continue to support the ideal that private-public partnerships play a central role in the maintenance and development of our rural areas. We welcome the ambitious objectives of the Farm to Fork strategy and biodiversity strategy are prepared alongside European landowners to commit towards a more resilient and sustainable food system.

This year the CAP saw further progress, and while there are still issues of concern, we welcomed the transitional arrangements that were agreed upon at the end of 2020. We are striving for the CAP to be agreed during 2021, a CAP that respects and supports farmers, enabling them to maximise their business potential, boosting their capacity to innovate and adapt to operate sustainably. We must avoid the distortion of competition, enable and encourage landowners to enhance their practices and have a consistent and fair definition and scope for who a farmer is and what their duties and expectations are. Due to the level of restrictions around Europe, this year was about transformation and digitalisation of our events and projects to ensure the safety of those taking part. Unfortunately, that made it more difficult for friends to gather, and the FCS Cordoba congress had to be postponed to this October. That is not to say that the network has been idle either and while new Friends keep joining us from beyond Europe, local chapter initiatives were able to take place. This year, with vaccination well underway in Europe, I am very much looking forward to seeing all of you again in either Wales on September 24-26 or Spain on October 7-10 or both!

And, as always, our doors remain open to your concerns.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Th de l'Escaille'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Thierry de l'Escaille

CEO & Secretary General – ELO and FCS

PREVIOUS FCS GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

24 June 2020 - Online General Assembly
13-16 June 2019 - Angers (France)
10-13 May 2018 - Konstanz (Germany)
1-4 June 2017 - Hex (Belgium)
26-29 May 2016 - Wolfsburg (Germany)
21-23 May 2015 - Newmarket (United Kingdom)
5-7 June 2014 - Udine (Italy)
24-25 May 2013 - Toledo (Spain)
8-9 June 2012 - Vilnius (Lithuania)
27-28 May 2011 - Vienna (Austria)
28-29 May 2010 - Apeldoorn (The Netherlands)
28-29 June 2009 - Prague (Czech Republic)
16-17 May 2008 - Edinburgh (Scotland)
15-16 June 2007 - Evora (Portugal)
6-8 July 2006 - Helsinki (Finland)
15-18 September 2005 - Avignon (France)
20-23 May 2004 - Cork (Ireland)
April 2003 - Syracuse, Sicily (Italy)
3-6 April 2002 - Sevilla (Spain)
27-29 September 2001 - Dresden (Germany)
28-29 July 2000 - Blenheim (United Kingdom)
4-5 September 1999 - Skane (Sweden)
5-6 October 1998 - Firenze (Italy)

Upcoming 24th GA:

7-10 October 2021 - Córdoba (Spain)

Information about the GA in Córdoba can be viewed at
<https://events3759.wixsite.com/fcsga2021>

YFCS BOARD MEMBERS



Marie Christine von Schönborn (DE)
President



Heinrich von Croÿ (DE)
Vice President,
Head of Operations



Anna Zahedi (UK)
Vice President, Head of Finance



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Secretary General, Famigro Award

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Joana Sotto Mayor (PT)
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Strategy Coordinator

Jean d'Aspremont (BE)
Events and Famigro Award

Stephanie Bruun de Neergaard (DK)
Events

Heinrich XXIX Reuss (AT)
Head of Ambassadors, new members

The YFCS is a non-profit organization which aims to:

- Promote interconnectivity between young people across Europe aged between 18 to 35 years who have a longstanding personal or professional interest in rural matters, entrepreneurship, land ownership and management of the countryside.
- Raise awareness amongst members of changes to European environmental policies.
- Prepare young landowners to manage the prosperity and future of the rural economy through responsible stewardship.
- Improve access to rural networks, educational and employment opportunities. First founded in 2006, the YFCS continues to be supported by its parent organization the Friends of the Countryside (FCS), as well as the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Historic Houses Associations (EHHA). Whilst at the European Union level it is represented by the European Landowners' Organization.



In the wake of 'Brexit' the YFCS continues to encourage the transmission of knowledge across Europe, thus UK members will be unaffected by these political changes.

Looking into 2020 and beyond, the new YFCS Board will be focussing on digitalisation of our vast resources to provide relevant and improved services to our members. Additionally, we will be organizing a series of events across Europe at both local and international level.

✉ **New email address:** info@yfcs.eu.

🌐 **Website:** www.yfcs.eu

🌐 **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/young-friends-of-the-countryside-yfcs/>

📘 **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/youngfriendsofthecountryside>

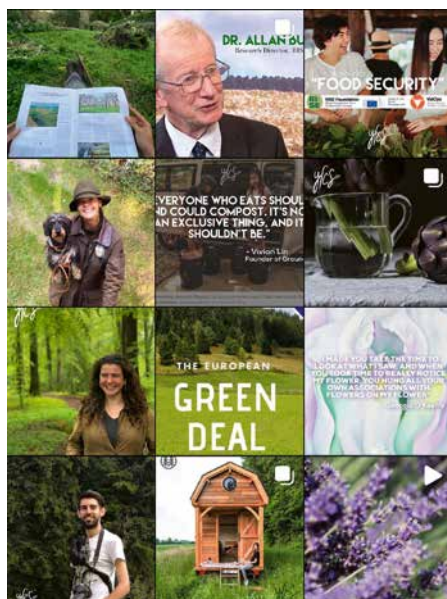
📷 **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/yfcs.official/>

NEWS FROM THE YOUNG FRIENDS

2020 was a very different and yet also a very interesting year for the Young Friends. With the outbreak of Covid-19, the Young Friends faced the challenge of rejuvenation in the midst of the pandemic. It proved to be a very valuable experience in which the Young Friends managed to target their members online and to provide new experiences in a new format whilst also attracting new members.

Firstly, thanks to Joana DE SOTTO MAYOR the Young Friends have a new logo, a new Instagram platform and a newly set-up newsletter! Secondly, in cooperation with LEARNING LIONS, a start-up based in rural Kenya, the Young Friends updated their website, on which all relevant information concerning the Young Friends can be found. Thirdly, and most interesting, the Young Friends started to host, under the leadership of Anna ZAHEDI LAMARCHE and Leonor CESAR DES NEVES, a new webinar series introducing inspiring new founders and experts in rural topics and rural entrepreneurship to our community of the Young Friends. The Young Friends would like to thank in particular Dr. Alan BUCKWELL, Dr. Leonard MIZZI, Richard ANDERSON and James JOICEY for speaking at the webinar series, sharing their experiences and inspiring the Young Friends across Europe.

Additionally, the Young Friends are grateful to have received many very exciting and interesting applications for the FAMIGRO Award. This shows how much work behind the scenes and during the pandemic our members have put into their rural start-ups and enterprises. We would love to foster these entrepreneurial connections in order for our members to continue to be inspired by fellow Young Friends.



At this point, I also would like to thank the board for all of the work they have put in and for the many hours dedicated to the Young Friends during the pandemic.

Last, but not least, we, as the board, would like to thank our members for staying with us through last year – albeit online – and we look forward to welcoming you very soon, hopefully in person.

Marie-Christine Schönborn
YFCS President



BRUSSELS OFFICE

The team will be pleased to assist you with any on-going projects, awards or conferences as well as any information you may need on what is being discussed in Brussels and the European Institutions.



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Advisor, Wildlife Estates Label, Natura 2000

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Anders WALL Award

Ana ROCHA ana.rocha@elo.org

European Bee Award

Alberto HERMOSEL
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European Tree of the Year Award

Josef JARY josef.jary@elo.org

Soil and Land Management Award

Emmanuelle MIKOSZ
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Wildlife Estates Label, Natura 2000

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For a sustainable
and prosperous
countryside

European Landowners Organization

www.elo.org



EUlandownersOrg



Europeanlandowners

PROJECTS AND AWARDS

ELO proposes different Projects and Awards that all FCS and YFCS members can participate in or apply for.

ANDERS WALL AWARD

For Private entrepreneurs who have developed an important project at the local, national or European level, using quality instruments and management practices which contribute to the improvement in quality of the environment. The Award is presented during the FCS General Assembly that takes place in a different country each year.

SOIL AND LAND MANAGEMENT AWARD

This prize rewards private initiatives of professionals working in the area of land use and soil management pursuing the EU's soils protection goals, in particular those of the Soil Thematic Strategy. The aim of the prize is to encourage new concepts of protection and their implementation and to enhance awareness of the importance of land and soil in connection with good agriculture and environmental conditions. The prize is awarded during the Forum for the Future of Agriculture.

EUROPEAN BEE AWARD

For a European land manager who possibly together with a partner organization has developed and implemented a novel practice that helps to reduce the negative impact of farming operations on honeybees and other pollinators. The type of interventions that might be considered include managing part of the farm in ways that benefit pollinators, improving the availability of flowers and other resources that pollinators require and changes to agronomic practices or the use of farm equipment that are pollinator friendly.

EUROPEAN TREE OF THE YEAR

Nominations for the tree candidates can be submitted by individuals, families, communities, schools, companies and municipalities. The contest is not looking for the most beautiful tree, but for a tree with a story, a tree rooted in the lives and work of the people and the community that surround it and that involves the community in environmental and local heritage protection and to advertise old trees as an important part of European biodiversity.

FAMIGRO AWARD (YFCS)

For young rural entrepreneurs (between 18-40 years old), made possible thanks to the generous contribution of Karl GROTEFELT. The Award is presented annually to a young entrepreneur whose initiatives have brought about developments that support the future of an estate or the countryside in general.

WILDLIFE ESTATES LABEL

The Wildlife Estates Label is awarded to territories which show exemplary wildlife and land management, maintaining a close collaboration with local authorities, associations and volunteers to improve the rural landscape, enhance biodiversity and offer sustainable rural development to the benefit of society. Each year one Wildlife Estate that has achieved an important step in maintaining, protecting and improving land for the benefit of biodiversity, using agri-environmental measures and achieving significant results from an environmental point of view is honoured with the **BELLEUROPA AWARD**.

Details about all the applications: www.elo.org





WE act for biodiversity

www.wildlife-estates.eu



Photo credits: José M^a Finat



THE WELCOMING ESTATES WEBSITE

The Welcoming Estates Website is a unique hospitality platform that showcases private country estates throughout Europe that in one way or another open their doors to the nature loving public.

The WEW was created with thanks to FCS vice president Seger VAN VOORST TOT VOORST to give the opportunity to FCS members to boost the visibility of the estate or agricultural business they own or manage when it is open or sells to the public in any capacity big or small.

This spring, the Welcoming Estates Website (WEW) restructured with a newly updated, simplified website, easy joining process and reduced payment procedure. The new website has a clear message on the homepage explaining what the website is about and banners with photos of the various activities on offer. A list by country and a map of estates links to the individual estate pages where, on one page, photos and clear boxed texts describe the activities and experiences available. The link to contact the estate directly for more information is displayed both at the top and bottom of the page. Last year over 7000 visits were made to the website – we expect that to rise. To join, all that is required is a website!

On the social media front, the WEW has its own successful Instagram account with over 1600

followers and growing, and now also has a Facebook page for those who prefer. A new post is added every day on both platforms featuring news and images from one of the estates.

This is an excellent opportunity to increase the visibility of your estate and advertise the wide ranging activities that are on offer thus keeping the countryside and the estate very much alive! Do take a look at the new website, follow the Instagram and/or Facebook accounts, and then come and join like minded owners to share your experiences and develop new ideas. It goes without saying that the more of you who join, the bigger the success the Welcoming Estates will be.

All FCS members should have received information about the restructured Welcoming Estates. If this is not the case, or if you would like more information about joining, please contact Sophy Smits van Oyen - Maltzoff by email at events@elo.org

New Updated Website!

www.welcomingestateswebsite.com

 https://www.instagram.com/welcoming_estates_website


 <https://www.facebook.com/welcomingestateswebsite>

Facebook



Welcoming Estates Website

@welcomingestateswebsite · Hospitality service

 **Edit Follow**

2020 was of course not an easy year for the Welcoming Estates as most estates had to close to the public during the 1st Confinement and then cancel many activities during the 2nd confinement period.

Important revenue sources from weddings and receptions, estate shops, hotels and restaurants were lost. Fortunately, many Welcoming Estates remained open to visitors to the gardens and parks for an all-important nature break from the confines of towns and cities. Other Estates looked for new opportunities:

Weingut Prinz Salm organised successful online wine tastings in both German and English which continue still now.

Chateau de Bousval offered outdoor guided visits to witness the wine making process.

The restaurant on the **Schulenburg Estate** offered drive-in meals to eat in your car in the beautiful surroundings of the estate.

Marienwaerdt, Blarney and Tregothnan organised online competitions.

Other Estate shops promoted their sales online for olive oils, wines, jams, honey, tea, bouquets and more!

Courses were presented online and calls for grape pickers during the harvest were made!

As we go to press, some easing of restrictions allow visitors to once more eat, sleep and organise private events and so much more at the Welcoming Estates :

- **Castello di Bagnolo** opened its pool for guests in May
- **Tenuta di Camugliano** is back serving Tuscan meals
- **Torre a Cona** opened its new rustic and authentic restaurant
- **Jordberga, Castello di Roncade, Lütetsburg, Palacio de Meres, Kinsky dal Borgo, Marienwaerdt, San Calogero** are taking wedding reservations
- Sleep in a tree house at **Lütetsburg**
- **Castello di Brazzà's** private villa can be rented for the holidays



- **Blarney's** spectacular gardens and Stone can be visited
- Wines can be tasted from **Botevo, Bousval, Roncade, Weingut Prinz Salm & Bagnolo**
- White bikes can be ridden to discover the **Hoge Veluwe National Park**
- Learn about the major sustainable developments at **Barnston Estate**
- History is to be explored at **Ford & Etal, Weleveld Estate and Twickel Estate**
- Stay at the restored farmhouses at **Marsovy Chody** or the manors at the **Schulenburg Estates**
- A luxury break at **Rumene Manor**
- Fly beyond Europe to WEW's **Las Trillas** Lodge in Argentina
- Drink some Great British Tea from **Tregothnan**
- Immerse in art at the **Wanås Estate** as well as the Kroller Muller museum at **Hoge Veluwe**
- Discover Sweden's African lodge at **Eriksberg Nature Reserve and hotel and Ciguinuelas's** Wildlife reserve

We welcome the following new estates at the time of going to press:

- **Vina Santa Marina** in Spain
- **Malmgård Estate** in Finland
- **Schloss Altenhof** in Austria

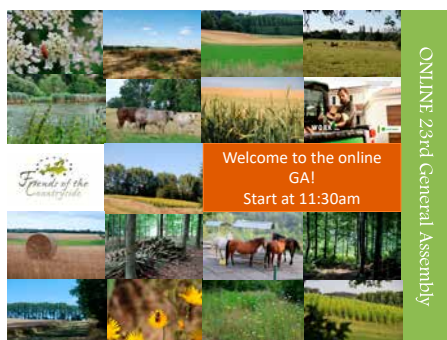


FCS EVENTS

23rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY ONLINE - JUNE 24

Amateurs though we were a year ago to the likes of Zoom, Teams or Go To Meetings, many members still managed to get to grips with the latest technologies and join the FCS General Assembly on June 24 as an online event.

FCS president Michael zu SALM-SALM gave everyone his customary hearty and warm welcome, wishing everyone safe and well during these tremendously strenuous times. He went on to regret the postponement of the meeting in Córdoba and looks all the more forward to meeting there in 2021.



After legal formalities were completed thanks to Jurgen TACK, director of scientific and research programmes, 29 new members were approved as well as 2 new board members, Ginevra VISCONTI from Italy and Fabian WENDENBURG from Germany. The latter replaces Wolfgang DALLWITZ who, after more than 20 years with FCS, is retiring. The FCS wish him well.

FCS General Secretary Thierry de l'ESCAILLE presented his annual summary of ELO activities

mentioning in particular FCS's new South American members and how the Green Deal may influence CAP reforms. Other concerns included biodiversity strategies and the topic of land access. He then went on to commend the Wildlife Estates label which is expected to cover 2 million hectares and then present the 30 projects in which the ELO is involved.

Marketing Manager Natalya ZINYCH, from FCS new sponsor John Deere, with its 180 year old history, joined to introduce a very positive video presentation and state that John Deere sees digitalisation and technology as the way to the future to become a smart, ecological, agricultural and industrial company.

After a series of questions from some members via the chat line, vice president of Young Friends, Anna ZAHEDI, gave a refreshing account of how the new and dynamic board have promoted digitalisation to stay in contact with members, update the website and give young enterprising members the opportunity to fuel their interest in rural landscape.

FCS board member Emilio NAVARRO-MARTINEZ and his daughter, YF member, Claudia NAVARRO then presented the General Assembly for 2021 which will take place from October 7 to October 10, presenting the 5 agricultural business tours to choose from. The Pre-tour will take place from October 4 to October 7.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE then announced the postponement of the FCS Study Tour in Wales to September 2021 when members will be welcomed to an in-depth study of local practices and industries. He also introduced the forthcoming re-structuring of the Welcoming Estates Website and invited members to follow its successful Instagram account.

A special address from Daniel CALLEJA CRESPO, Director General for Environment at the EC noted that our dependence on agriculture has become all the more obvious with the crisis and that our relationship with nature must be urgently fixed.

For those who missed the online GA, a recording is available in your Trusted Area.

If you require additional information about the General Assembly next year, please contact Jehanne de DORLODOT at coordination@elo.org. For information about Wales or the WEW, please contact Sophy SMITS VAN OYEN at events@elo.org

LONDON AND HERTFORD

FCS President Michael ZU SALM-SALM, CEO Thierry DE L'ESCAILLE, Vice Presidents Ross MURRAY and Seger VAN VOORST TOT VOORST along with many UK FCS members joined in London on February 13, 2020 at the CLA offices to assure the continuation of Friendship across the Channel.

"Our political journey in the UK has strengthened my own feelings about the importance of maintaining the hand of friendship across the water. So much of our lives as countrymen and women is shared in some way with the continent



and also Ireland- whether culturally, economically, climatically or politically. And it seems careless to end friendships when they will remain such important aspects of our lives in this small world we live in. I hope you will share this view and may wish to continue in membership of the Friends of the Countryside with all its associations to the ELO, and to enjoy what they both have to offer."

Ross MURRAY, FCS Vice President.

The following day, Ralph ABEL-SMITH welcomed members to his Woodhall Estate in Hertford.

NETHERLANDS

On July 16, 2020 FCS vice-president Seger VAN VOORST TOT VOORST hosted Dutch FCS members at the Hoge Veluwe National Park for a presentation of the Wildlife Estates Label, with CEO Thierry DE L'ESCAILLE. It was the perfect opportunity for Friends to assemble and discuss after the initial confinement.



*From left to right
Count Henri de La Croix Castries - Countess Gustava zu Ortenburg - Baron Frans van Verschuer (Mariënwaerd)
- Countess Anne de La Croix de Castries - Count Franz zu Ortenburg (Middachten) - Baron Seger van Voorst tot Voorst*



*Vines de Jong Schouwenburg – Anthony van Es -
Barones Fleur van Voorst tot Voorst - Henric de Jong
Schouwenburg (De Noetselenberg) - Barones Nathalie
van Verschuer – Bob van den Brink*



WILDLIFE ESTATES LABEL



Plenary Wolfsburg, Germany

For some years now, the loss of biodiversity in Europe has been a major concern for the whole rural world. Many private landowners are responsible through their actions not only for this loss of biodiversity, but more and more farms are succeeding in increasing

biodiversity through wildlife-friendly practices. Managing complex and resilient ecosystems that involve a high biodiversity of fauna and flora is a complicated task, as it involves keeping a perfectly balanced equation involving water, soil protection, carbon sequestration, air improvement, and the yields that the use of the countryside gives us.



Plenary Wolfsburg, Germany

In 2004 the European Commission, aware of the role played by private landowners, wanted this effort to be recognised. That is why the European Landowners' Organisation took action by creating the Wildlife Estates Label (WEL). Today WEL is the only programme in Europe that promotes the need for private landowners, with or without public support, to do this work because of the implication it has for the local community and biodiversity.

The WEL is a network of exemplary estates that manage with the utmost rigorous and scientific

criteria, all focused on wildlife, which is the best indicator of the state of most ecosystems. In the decision to award the WEL to new territories - always on a voluntary basis - three pillars of sustainability are taken into account in the relationship between the involvement of the owners and the rest of nature: the environment, economy and socio-cultural fabric.



Plenary Wolfsburg, Germany

The integration of these three aspects requires the implementation of a wide variety of activities (farming, forest management, tourism, fishing, etc.) always with a clear respect for nature.

2021 sees the WEL present in 20 countries with more than 450 farms involved in the project, representing more than 2,000,000 hectares. The methodology of this project is constantly evolving, adapting to changes in European legislation. It is a strong and rigorous pillar in all aspects.

WEL Objectives

One objective of the WEL project is public recognition by the authorities of WEL members for good environmental management is a way to avoid poten-



The Netherlands

tially harmful regulation. Such regulation can be an unnecessary burden for both landowners and public administration, with the label being a scientifically proven proof of good ecosystem management. Or at least WEL tries to help ensure that landowners are not penalised for their work.

A public recognition for complying with all regulations.

This work is carried out by acquiring key contacts and a social reputation. This is done through events that take place at national and European level through a communication platform. The 20 national delegations organise and promote the label through campaigns, conferences, and meetings where WEL members share their experiences and knowledge, with the support of the LIFE project, Land is Forever, also under the umbrella of ELO.

This whole network is a loudspeaker for WEL members to be heard at the European Commission, thanks to the work of the WEL secretariat in Brussels.



Belgium

In addition to this, a plenary session is organised every year in one of the member countries, where local problems faced by landowners can be observed, analysed and solved. This year the plenary session will take place in Scotland from 8 to 10 September, where FCS members - whether WEL members or not - are cordially invited.

In September 2020 the Plenary Session took place in Wolfsburg (Germany), under the theme "Rewarding ecological system performance as an exceptional chance for the Wildlife Estates". The participation of members of the European Commission and local authorities highlighted the role of landowners in the management and enhancement of biodiversity.

FCS INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION



CountrySide MAGAZINE

The CountrySide Magazine provides a voice to policy makers and academics among others with an interest in the European and global countryside. It builds bridges, promotes events, and helps its broad readership understand agriculture and the environment at the global, national and local level. It further provides a platform to present policy developments, Friends of the Countryside events, and to give space to new ideas. Edited every two months in English and French, with a Spanish 4 page extract, the paper version is composed of 16 pages. More than 15,000 readers in the EU and beyond receive the CountrySide Magazine. All issues published in 2021 and before are available on the ELO website in an electronic format.

FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE ONLINE

The FCS website allows members and visitors to obtain a clear idea of who we are and what we stand for, as well as gain access to a wide range of events available to FCS members. The exclusive Trusted Area intranet is a secure communication tool, specially created for the network to share messages and news: elo.trustedarea.com. We encourage all members to join and complete your profile.

At the end of last year, the Friends launched their updated website with the help of a Fair Trade start-up in Kenya. The home page is made up of 12 clear information blocks which are updated regularly and includes a new idea titled "News from our Friends". Many members have sent in news to share - do please keep them coming in!

www.friendsofthecountryside.com

EUROPEAN LANDOWNERS' ORGANISATION - ELO

Find more detailed information on its European Projects, initiatives, conferences please refer to the site: www.elo.org and the 2019 ELO Activity Report.

The Friends of the Countryside are invited to join all events and to ask the support of the ELO team.

The ELO website, Twitter and Facebook page are always interesting to follow to find pictures of latest events, calendars, agendas and working documents.

Europeanlandowners

@EUlandownersOrg (Twitter icon)

coordination@elo.org, events@elo.org



IN MEMORIAM

Johan Nordenfalk passed away on December 14, 2020. On behalf of the Friends of the Countryside, Young Friends of the Countryside and European Landowners' Organization we would like to convey our deepest words of appreciation and gratitude for the lifetime achievements of Johan NORDENFALK. The legacy of his work and support will live on and inspire us always.

Maximilien Dietzsch-Doertenbach passed away in early January 2021. He was an active member since 2002. His wife Nicola will continue as a member.

STUDY ON SMALL WILDLIFE

For several decades, the agricultural plains have seen a dramatic decline in the number of small wildlife in fields and meadows.

This in-depth report describes the declining biodiversity of fields and meadows in Europe and how the European Union has acted on this by adopting nature legislation and developing biodiversity strategies. They have not, however, always been a success...

Hardback copies are available in English or French for 25€ (+p&p). Please send an email to events@elo.org for details.



CÓRDOBA 2021

The Friends of the Countryside 24th General Assembly and Conference

Pre Tour: October 4 - 7

General Assembly and Tours: October 7 -10

Please contact Jehanne de Dorlodot at
coordination@elo.org for more details

We would like to thank the Spanish contingency for having poured heart and soul into creating this event and we look forward all the more to uniting once again and celebrating the heritage and culture of Córdoba in 2021!



Please consult (or subscribe to) the Trusted Area, FCS & YFCS websites
for information on the GA and lots more!





When John Deere invented his famous steel plough in his blacksmith shop in 1837, he also forged the beginnings of Deere & Company. Throughout its history, the company has extended its heritage of integrity, quality, commitment, and innovation around the globe.

Today Deere & Company is a world leader in providing advanced products and services. The company's innovative technology is key to serve the growing worldwide population. Higher standards are necessary to meet the world dramatically increasing need for food, fuel, shelter and infrastructure.

Nearly 70,000 employees worldwide generate a turnover of 35,540 billion USD with agricultural equipment, as well as lawn and grounds care equipment and construction and forestry equipment. In 2017, the company acquired the Wirtgen Group, the leading manufacturer of road construction equipment.

John Deere runs more than 70 manufacturing facilities in 19 countries and the products are sold in 160 countries worldwide. The company has strong presence in Europe, CIS, Africa and Near & Middle East. John Deere has nearly 18,100 employees in the Agricultural machinery business in Europe.

In 2010, the company opened the new European Technology Innovation Centre (ETIC) in Kaiserslautern, Germany. The facility accommodates around 200 engineers, computer experts, technicians and administrative personnel. Their main focus is the development of intelligent solutions and advanced technologies, which enable farmers to automate machine operation, reduce operator fatigue and increase machine productivity in the field.

In a world that is rapidly changing, John Deere is continuing to transform how it operates to build a more customer-driven and streamlined organization. This new development is one of the biggest organizational restructurings in its 183-year history. As a Smart Industrial Company, John Deere wants to create smarter products and services, which can help farmers to run their businesses more efficiently and sustainably.



All Friends are invited to join the

Welcoming Estates Website

to showcase any activity on any scale that is open to the public be it online sales, annual open house/garden, concert, private events or other.

Joining is easy and inexpensive!

The visibility of the **Welcoming Estates Website** is increasing daily!

The Instagram account has over 1600 followers!
Daily posts on Instagram and Facebook!

The **Welcoming Estates Website** has a new simplified look! Check it out on

www.welcomingestateswebsite.com

Contact Sophy Smits van Oyen - Maltzoff for more information
events@elo.org



With the support of



JOHN DEERE