

Correspondence

Include agricultural sustainability in Chile's proposed new constitution

On 4 September, a referendum will be held for Chileans to vote on a draft text of their country's new constitution. This proposed constitution will offer a unique opportunity to protect ecosystems and transition towards sustainable agriculture (see go.nature.com/3dmzffc).

Chile's free-trade agreements currently shape the export of agricultural products. This model shows scant concern for sustainability; what little concern there is is driven mainly by international consumer demand. It has little respect for biodiversity conservation, local food and water security, cutting emissions or reducing pollution from pesticides and fertilizers. This must change.

Incorporating evidence-based agroecological principles, such as diversification, would help to maintain biodiversity, boost ecosystem services, decrease reliance on external inputs, foster climate resilience and mitigate climate change – without damaging yields (G. Tamburini *et al. Sci. Adv.* **6**, eaba1715 (2020); C. Kremen and A. M. Merenlender *Science* **362**, eaau6020; 2018).

A modern constitution that addresses sustainable agriculture and development, food sovereignty and security, small-scale and Indigenous people's agriculture, the climate crisis and the rights of nature would have benefits for Chile's people and environment. It would also help to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

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Make Europe's forests climate-smart and fire-smart

Extensive forest planting in Southern Europe during the twentieth century reconciled economic objectives with ecological restoration. But the resulting forests are also fuelling the intensity and magnitude of recent wildfires. As well as urgently addressing the hazard of accumulated fuel across the landscape, people should be designing future plantations to be both climate-smart and fire-smart (see also A. Regos *Nature* **607**, 449; 2022).

Some 50 years ago, it became apparent that substantial investment in fuel-reduction treatments would be necessary to safeguard Mediterranean forests. But fire prevention in the region became a low priority as a result of land abandonment, cutbacks to public forest services, prioritizing emergency responses, and a misguided policy of inaction to achieve conservation objectives (M. González-Hidalgo *et al. Environ. Planning A* **46**, 1014–1031; 2014).

Although the principles of fire-adapted silviculture are well known, they are yet to be widely adapted and implemented in Europe. This must be urgently rectified as climate change increases the size and impact of forest fires (see, for example, M. Turco *et al. Sci. Rep.* **9**, 13886; 2019).

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Rescue China's highland lakes and their ecosystem services

Highland lakes in southwestern China supply water to more than 1.4 billion people. Increasingly subject to eutrophication, biodiversity loss, drought and pollution, the lakes urgently need integrated management by government, community stakeholders and scientists to guide development of watershed policy and address these challenges.

The lakes' political boundaries do not necessarily align with those of natural watersheds, which has led to the current ineffective and fragmented management system. Integrated watershed management would facilitate data synthesis and improve accessibility and monitoring. Protecting green infrastructure – wetlands, healthy soils and forest ecosystems – would help to boost the supply of water for consumption, hydroelectric power and irrigation, and to control flooding and erosion.

Policies that extend across spatial scales and jurisdictions could markedly reduce ecosystem-service losses from the lakes and their watersheds. Ecology indicators such as 'emergy' accounting (the tracking of all energy needed to produce a product; Y. Geng *et al. Science* **339**, 1526–1527; 2013) could be used to quantify these ecosystem services and to monitor water quality.

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EU funding: UK researchers, take heart

I understand and share researchers' anxiety over the continued delay in formalizing the United Kingdom's association with Horizon Europe, the European Union's research-funding programme. However, there will be no need for UK recipients of European Research Council (ERC) grants, which are part of the programme, to move their labs to Europe as you indicate (*Nature* **608**, 833–835; 2022).

The government funding agency UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) guarantees funding at the UK host institution of everyone who has been successful in the first and second waves of Horizon Europe grant calls – including the researchers you profile. UKRI award recipients will receive full funding to continue their research and collaborations with their European networks (for details, see go.nature.com/3pfctgk or e-mail eugrantsfunding@ukri.org). We have already fulfilled grants under guarantee for hundreds of researchers, including winners of ERC grants.

UKRI is also working with the UK government to prepare for future scenarios in which either the UK association with Horizon Europe is confirmed or it becomes necessary to introduce a domestic alternative.

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