

# Session Proposal

European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
Krakow, Poland  
19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2006

**Organizer:** Jon Humble and Steve Trow

**Theme:**

*Managing the Archaeological Record and the Cultural Heritage*

**Session Title:**

**The Common Agricultural Policy and cultural heritage:  
threat or opportunity?**

**Abstract:**

In some European countries the damaging impacts of agricultural operations on the archaeological record have been recognised for many years and it is acknowledged that these impacts were further increased by agricultural intensification associated with entry into the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Reform of the CAP, with its greater emphasis on environmental protection, now offers some opportunities to moderate these damaging processes but, at the same time, restructuring of European agriculture in the face of global pressures threatens the survival of important cultural landscapes.

Increasingly, European archaeologists are engaging effectively with the spatial planning and development agenda, but are they neglecting more significant impacts on the historic environment? As the European Environment Agency concludes in its 2005 survey of the state of the European environment, "*industrial activity, urban development and transport have an impact on the landscape, but these impacts are relatively localised compared with the wide role played by agriculture in shaping our surroundings*".

Intensive arable and cropped landscapes already cover a third of Europe's land area. Between 1990 and 2000, 92,500 Km<sup>2</sup> of pasture was converted to arable and permanent crops (an area the size of Portugal), while 1,200 Km<sup>2</sup> of wetland, 25,000 Km<sup>2</sup> of semi-natural and natural land and 18,000 Km<sup>2</sup> of forest were converted to agriculture, all with potential serious consequences for the archaeological record. In the same period the expansion of urban areas and developed infrastructure was a more modest 8,000 Km<sup>2</sup>.

How are archaeologists responding to this and how will entry into the CAP of EU accession countries impact on their cultural landscapes and archaeology?

This session, organised by the EAA's working party on agriculture, will:

- examine work being undertaken to assess and ameliorate the impact of agriculture in some EU member states;
- look at ways in which CAP reform might deliver benefits for the cultural heritage;
- invite debate on the implications for new members of the European Union; and
- consider what we might realistically achieve in the next 10 to 20 years.

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