



## RISE in brief

Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation RISE is a computer-based tool that allows assessing the sustainability<sup>1</sup> of agricultural production and trends hereof at farm level. The holistic sustainability assessment follows a systems approach and covers ecological, economic and social dimensions. The tool identifies strengths (potentials) and weaknesses with regard to sustainability, hereby providing the farmer with a testimonial on one side and the identification of intervention points for improvement on the other. RISE thus not only aims at diagnosis, but rather at the initiation of measures to improve sustainability of agricultural production.

Besides inducing improvements at farm level, RISE – being based on a database – can be used to assess groups of farms (e.g. different farm types, in defined areas, sectors or catchment areas, etc.) and thus provide valuable information at higher scale. In this way, RISE not only allows for benchmarking and comparisons (spatially and temporally), but also for the identification of framework conditions particularly conducive or unfavourable for sustainable production. RISE may also represent a holistic tool for strategic planning in that it can depict the effects of specific measures *ex-ante* and thus visualize different scenarios (such as policy or legislative changes, interventions by projects, etc.). This may be particularly attractive for political entities, producers, trade or label organisations, the processing industry and retailers, as well as for development organizations.

RISE uses a standardized and simple methodology of data entry and output, which allows for sustainability assessments of different farm types and production systems at international level. Although calculations within the model are quite sophisticated, the interpretation of analysis results is comprehensible for farmers as well as for a wider public. The RISE-tool has been developed at the SCA Swiss College of Agriculture in Zollikofen (Switzerland) and has so far been successfully applied on more than 150 farms in very diverse environments (Canada, China, Brazil, India, Russia, Switzerland and Ukraine).

## RISE in FP6-2005-SSP-5A, 1.1, Task 9

- β RISE allows assessing the present situation with regard to ecological, economic and social aspects of sustainability and identifying possible trends hereof for different farming/production systems.
- β Different scenarios, e.g. related to changing framework conditions, can be calculated and effects on sustainability of production be simulated.
- β RISE allows for farm assessments and data aggregation at any spatial or temporal scale (regional, national and EU-wide) at different levels of detail.
- β RISE may add value to other sustainability evaluation tools and approaches by complementing them and offering the possibility for validation.
- β The RISE-team is currently planning a project with Polish partners to evaluate the effects of Poland joining the EU on sustainability of agricultural production.

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<sup>1</sup> **Sustainable development** allows a life in dignity for the present without compromising a life in dignity for future generations or to threaten the natural environment and endangering the global ecosystem (Häni et al., 2002) This definition is based on the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), but has been augmented by two more dimensions: 'human dignity' and 'the environment'.

**Sustainable Agriculture** adopts productive, competitive and efficient production practices, while protecting and improving the environment and the global ecosystem, as well as the socio-economic conditions of local communities (SAI, 2002;