

# History and management of grasslands in Latvia – general overview



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# Evolution of grasslands

- Forest – climax type of vegetation
- Role of grazers in development of mosaic landscape
- Development of agriculture
- Slash-and-burn agriculture
- Changing proportion of cattle breeding and field-crop cultivation

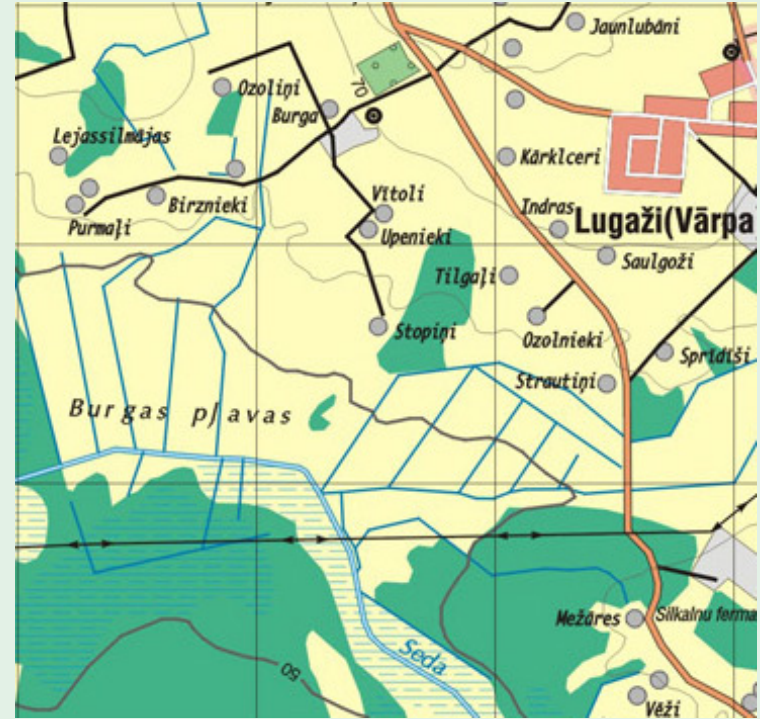
# Grassland management

- Frequent changes of political and economical system cause changes in land ownership
- Changes in land ownership cause frequent shift in land use pattern

# Changes



1907



2007

# Grassland management

- 3 big scale landreforms in last 100 years:



**Manors-private**



**Private-Collective farms**



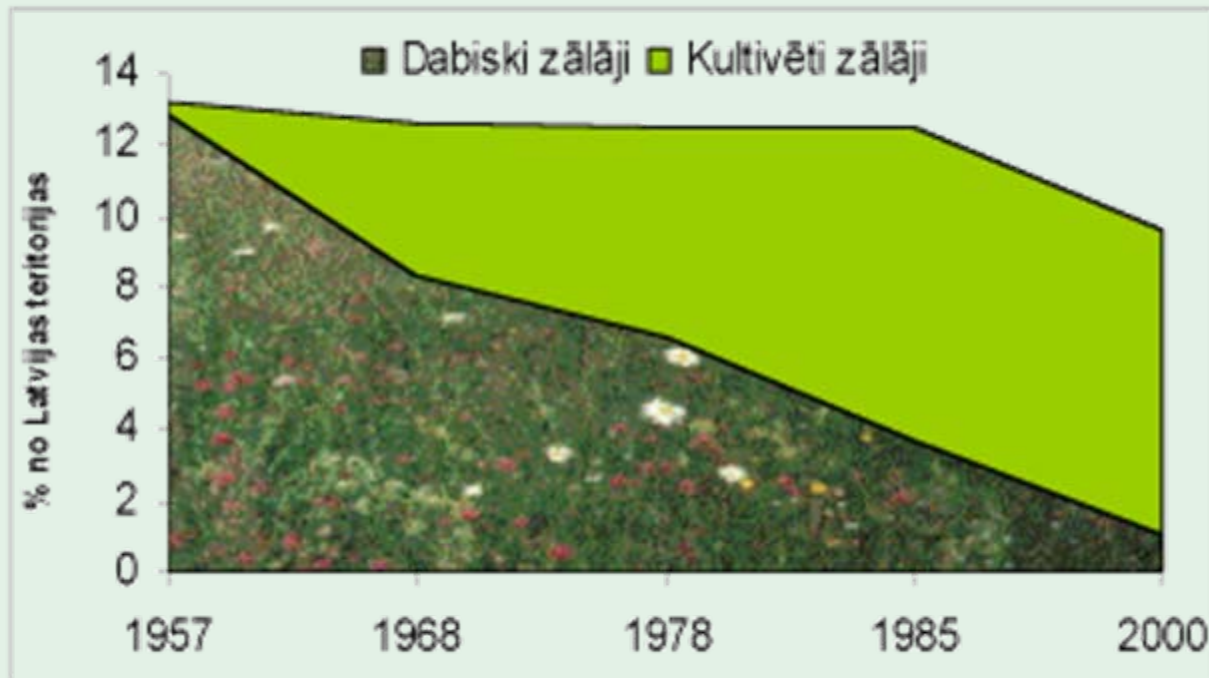
**Collective farms - Private**

# Grassland management

- Lack of long lasting permanently managed grasslands
- Simplified structure of grassland communities and poor specific diversity



# Dynamics of seminatural grasslands in Latvia



# Current status of grasslands

**Total coverage of seminatural grasslands ~ 67 000 ha**  
~ 1 % of the area of country

According to grassland type

pastures **37 %**

meadows **63 %**

**40 %** of all biologically valuable grasslands are  
currently managed

grazed **1/4**

mowed **3/4**



# Protection of grasslands

- Protection of grasslands – one of the goals in the National Biodiversity Strategy
- 26 actions in the National Biodiversity Action Plan
- Selected 16 permanent grassland monitoring stations for the National Biodiversity Monitoring Programme

# Protection of grasslands (2.)

- 14 actions in the National Monitoring Action Plan
- 38 % of grasslands are included in the nationally protected areas and *Natura 2000* sites
- grassland habitats are included in the list of nationally protected habitats

# Role of grasslands for protection of biodiversity

- 65 % of area covered by seminatural grasslands are included in the ECONET (23 % national level; 42 % regional level)
- Grasslands along the rivers – integrated part of internationally, nationally and regionally important linear corridors in the agricultural areas

# Role of grasslands for protection of biodiversity (2)

- Coastal grasslands – integrated part of internationally important linear corridors
- On highlands – grasslands form stepping-stone corridors in the agricultural areas



# Challenges for the future...

