

UUDISTAJA – a farm development tool



Uudistaja – a farm development tool developed by the Baltic Sea Action Group allows the principles of regenerative farming to be taken into account in all decision-making and activities on the farm.

Regenerative farming is a situational and holistic farming practice that applies proven, science-based methods with a positive impact on profitability, yield security and the environment. At the heart of it all is the continuous improvement of soil health. As soil health improves, field productivity increases and input efficiency improves. At the same time, the farm's yield security and ability to adapt to changing weather conditions is strengthened.

In regenerative farming, the starting point is results that can be defined, measured and verified, not pre-defined methods. A farming system is regenerative if economic and environmental performance improves over time, also taking into account exceptional circumstances.

Uudistaja – a farm development tool is based on the principle of continuous improvement. First you plan, then you implement. Implementation is monitored and evaluated, and efforts are made to measure the results. Based on the results achieved, the plan will be developed again for the following season.

The tool is based on the general principles of regenerative agriculture developed by BSAG. The starting point is that the pursuit of regeneration is a learning path. Once the change is further advanced, the farmer can achieve the same yield with lower inputs, thus improving the profitability of the crop (EARA study). The benefits may be seen quickly, but initially they are more modest. Five to ten years of determined effort already yields tangible benefits for the farmer, security of supply, and the environment.

The aim of a regenerative farmer is to continuously improve his or her operations. By systematically using *Uudistaja*, a farm can demonstrate that it takes the principles of regenerative farming into account in its operations.

USER MANUAL FOR UUDISTAJA

1. At the heart of Uudistaja is a worksheet where the farmer records the farm's development plan towards regenerative farming. The worksheet is printed on two pages (2 x A4) to make it easy to print on standard printers.
2. The worksheet contains eight (8) questions and a space to record your answers. Five (5) of the questions are completed before the growing season and the remaining three (3) during the growing season. If you run out of space, you can compile the answers in a word file or on a new sheet of paper.

3. Uudistaja can be used to develop 1 to 8 areas within regenerative farming. The areas are the same as BSAG's criteria for regenerative farming. Initially, you should choose 1–3 criteria to develop systematically. If you are new to regenerative farming, you should initially focus only on area 1 – skills development. If you are already well advanced in regenerative farming, you can systematically improve the regenerative practices of your farm in up to eight areas at the same time.
4. Once you have chosen which areas you are going to develop, fill in a separate worksheet for each area you want to develop for questions 1 to 5.

You should first set aside a short period of time to read the questions and the area-specific supporting materials for questions 1 to 5.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR REGENERATIVE FARMING

1. Continuous development of competencies and operations
2. Purposefully improving and maintaining soil health
3. Biodiversity above and below ground is systematically reinforced
4. A diverse crop rotation
5. All-year-round, living vegetation cover is maximised
6. Minimised tillage
7. Nutrient use is based on plant needs and relies on organic fertilisers and biological nitrogen fixation
8. The use of plant protection products is minimised

With the help of the tool's instructions, record the information about your farm and think about what you can do to get from the current situation to the objective. Finally, estimate how much money, time or other limited resources you think you will need to achieve the objective.

5. Start the steps you planned in the previous section. As implementation can be a lengthy process, it is good to keep the completed worksheets available. The key is to stick to the plan, and to adjust it along the way if necessary.
6. Follow the progress of the plan as soon as you start taking action. Use the indicators you have defined and record your progress in section 6 of the worksheet.
7. At the end of the growing season, compare the results achieved, the monitoring data accumulated along the way and the plan. Be brutally honest and compassionate about your actions. Find ways to learn and develop. Whatever the outcome, there are many lessons to be learned when you stop to reflect on what has happened.
8. Set next steps and make plans for the next growing season. Think about whether it would be possible to introduce new areas and how to do better at what you have already practiced. Is there any area where it is sufficient to maintain the achieved status?

What area does the plan cover?

Date

1. What is the current situation in this area?

2. What do you want to achieve?

3. By when should the objective be reached?

4. What actions will you take?

5. What resources will you allocate to this activity?

6. How is the work progressing,
are you getting results?
(implementation monitoring)

7. What results did you achieve,
did anything change?

8. What will be done next?