

European permanent grasslands are threatened by abandonment, heat and drought, and conversion to temporary grassland

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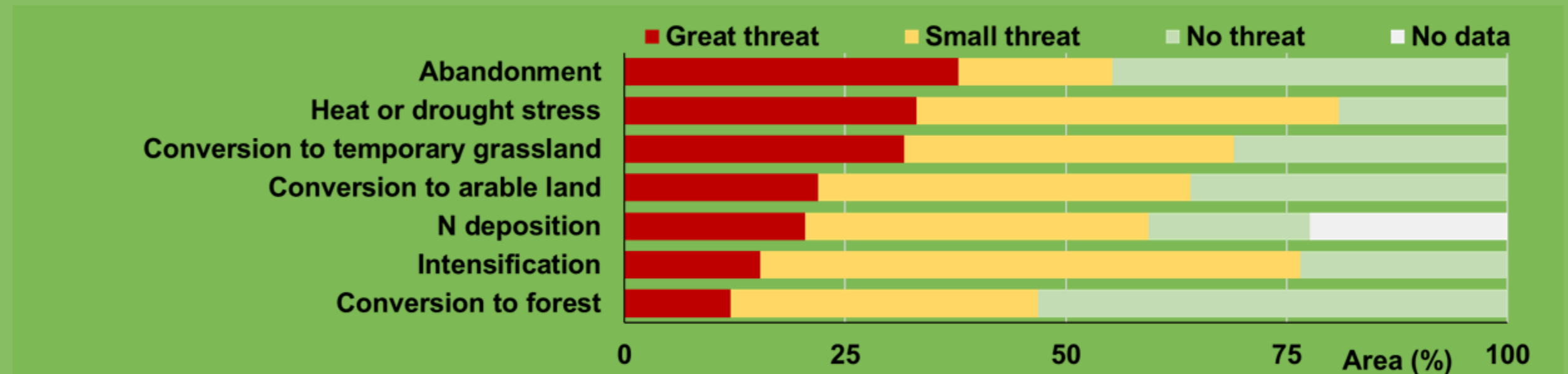
Introduction

Permanent grassland covers around 35% of the European agricultural area. It is mainly used to provide feed for ruminants, but also contributes to many other ecosystem services. However, several global and local drivers threaten the existence of permanent grasslands and the delivery of its ecosystem services. Here, we present an expert assessment of these threats.

Methods

We carried out an expert survey among 34 agronomists, ecologists, soil scientists, foresters and agri-environmental consultants. Threats were scored on a three-point scale: *no, small or great threat*. Replies were received from 11 countries or regions (CH, CZ, DE, ES-Andalusia, HU, IT, ME, NL, PL, SE, UK), representing 82 permanent grassland types.

Proportion of permanent grasslands area under threat



Conclusions

- All types of permanent grassland were considered to be under some kind of threat.
- Major threats were abandonment, heat and drought stress, as well as conversion to temporary grassland.
- The results stress the need to address these threats to ensure the delivery of ecosystem services from permanent grasslands.