Reviewer 2

	Yes	Can be improved	Must be improved	Not applicable
Is the content succinctly described and contextualized with respect to previous and present theoretical background and empirical research (if applicable) on the topic?	( )	( )	(x)	( )
Are all the cited references relevant to the research?	( )	(x)	( )	( )
Are the research design, questions, hypotheses and methods clearly stated?	( )	( )	(x)	( )
Are the arguments and discussion of findings coherent, balanced and compelling?	( )	(x)	( )	( )
For empirical research, are the results clearly presented?	( )	( )	( )	(x)
Is the article adequately referenced?	(x)	( )	( )	( )
Are the conclusions thoroughly supported by the results presented in the article or referenced in secondary literature?	( )	( )	(x)	( )

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR AUTHORS

Dear Reviewer,

Thank you for taking your time to review our manuscript. Below, please find point by point answers to your suggestions.

Kind regards.

The paper is potentially interesting, but it needs substantial revision before publication. The motivation of the paper should be improved, it is not clear what is the contribution to the existing literature. I do not really understand what a "broader perspective" (p. 2. line 54) means. Honestly, I do not see the story of what you like to sell to your potential reader. I do not see the value added to the qualitative governance analysis to any impact evaluation methodology. There is a vast literature on the effectiveness on impacts of the Common Agricultural Policy, including various environmental schemes, however, the paper fully ignores the knowledge of this literature, especially in the context of research question 4.

We have rewritten the second last paragraph of the introduction to better highlight how this article adds to the existing literature. You argue that we have ignored the literature on the impacts of the Common Agricultural Policy and in particular the agri-environment-climate commitments of the second pillar. Section 3.1.3 of the article extensively discusses the effects of these schemes on biodiversity. Having said that, we have added recent literature to this discussion to highlight the current state of research. As regards the comparison with impact evaluation: Qualitative governance analysis can be seen as a kind of impact evaluation but e.g., we would not use the term 'evaluation' because governance analysis is about facts, not about norms (and evaluation implies some kind of normative statement). Apart from that, we

do not come across any scientific article that provides the same perspective or the same conclusions on the topic as we did – thus, we believe we presented something new.

The presentation of the paper is extremely boring, it was very difficult to maintain my interest to reach the end of the paper. I do not think that I am alone in this respect. After reading the paper I asked myself what can I learn from this paper, but I had not a clear answer. The paper includes an extremely lot of information without a readable and understandable way. For example on page 8, in the last paragraph you list the lot percentage number (5), I guess nobody will remember the first percentage when one reaches the end of the paragraph.

We have not received any other feedback that our manuscript is 'boring' and that there is unclarity about the outcome of this paper. In fact, the discussion is very clear about the policy implications for subsidies in the agricultural sector as we have structured the subsections around the arguments of the discussion. At the same time, we agree that the article does contain a lot of results and is quite dense, but these results are required to build a strong argument and arrive in a robust discussion. To improve readability, we have removed some phrases in brackets and included them into the sentences. We have also revised some of the referencing to also enhance readability.

The conclusions simply reinforce what we know from agricultural economics literature for a long time. These criticisms are well known at least 30 years.

The aim of our article is to provide a comprehensive review of agricultural subsidies and to discuss the role of subsidies in transitioning the agricultural sector towards sustainability. The article reviews literature on subsidies in general and agricultural subsidies in particular, and combines it with an assessment of the legal framework (international environmental law and EU law). As we have highlighted in the introduction, there is literature on agricultural subsidies but none of these studies takes a comprehensive view on agricultural subsidies. While the argument to only provide subsidies for the provision of public goods has repeatedly been done before, our article assesses subsidies alongside other policy instruments such as an emissions trading scheme and command-and-control instruments and in doing so argues that subsidies will only have a complementary role in transitioning towards sustainability. This is a novel finding. Likewise, the analysis on subsidies within the Paris Agreement, to our knowledge, has not been done before. Besides that, the article takes a closer look at e.g., state aid provisions of the EU and highlights substantial issues with the data availability which is a novel finding as well. As such, the article builds on the existing (agricultural) economics literature and adds new insights into agricultural policy making.