



ESRS Congress 2007

20-24 August Wageningen

Introduction to WG17: Collective Action of Farmers in the
Marketing of Food Products, Services and Public Goods

Henk Renting, Imre Kovach, Egon Noe, Markus Schermer

Outline

- General outline WG theme
- Link with EU research project COFAMI
- Wider societal and policy relevance
- Main topics to be discussed during WG session
- Practical issues



Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives

- New collective marketing initiatives emerging in response to changing societal, market and policy conditions
- Large diversity and heterogeneity: innovations in 'traditional' co-ops, producer groups in organics and quality foods, producer-consumer associations, non-food / public goods
- What are common characteristics and mechanisms?
- Focus and delimitation:
 - **Collectivity**: groups of farmers, possibly together with other supply chain / territorial actors
 - **Farmers involvement**: farmers are actively engaged, take part in decision-making, and by involvement increase autonomy / control over supply chains
 - **Marketing orientation**: involve sale / marketing of products, (public) goods & services, i.e. they primarily concern relations with supply chains
 - **Innovativeness**: new and innovative forms of collective action, distinct from long established co-operations

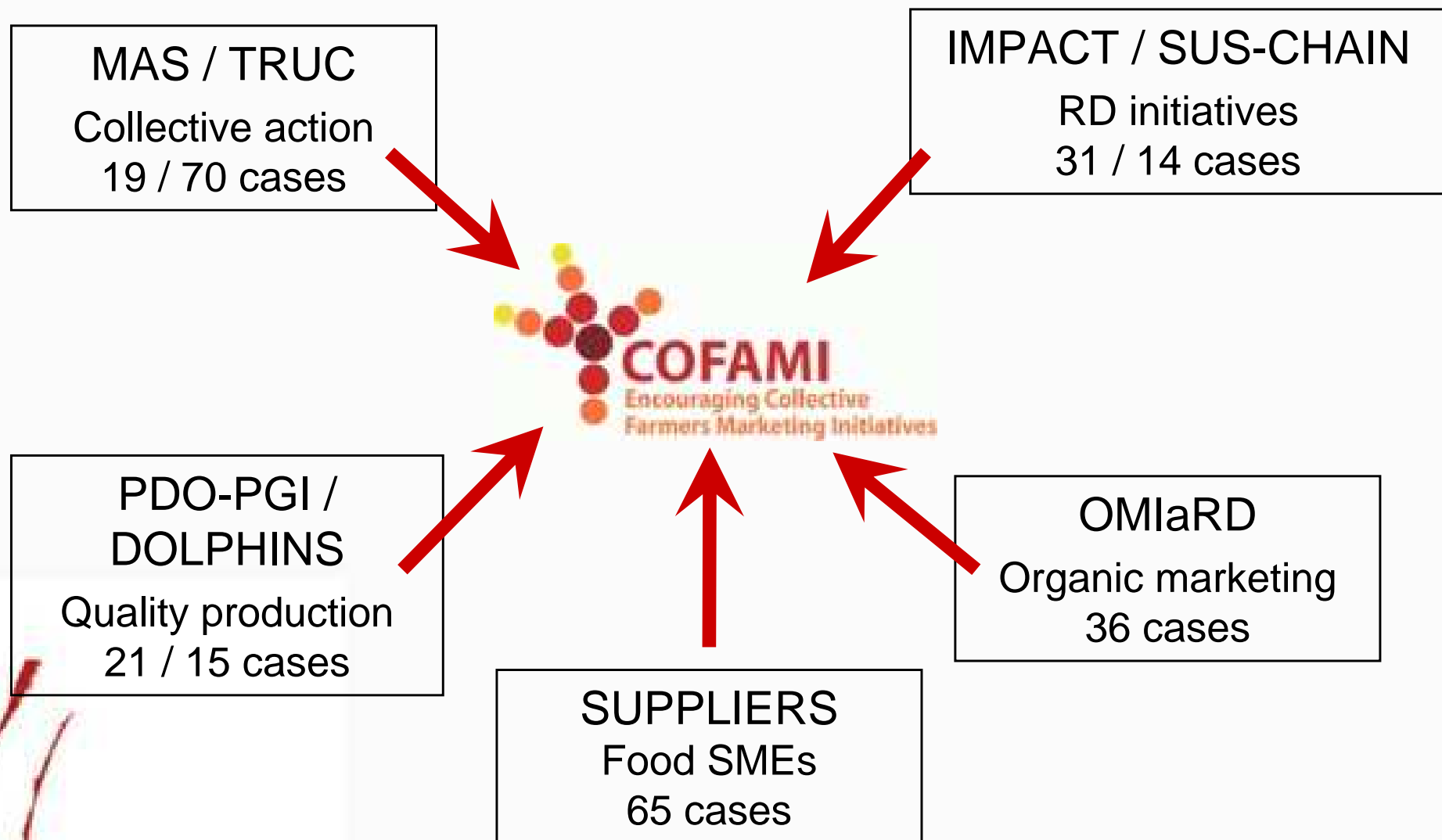


Link with COFAMI project

- ‘Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives’ (COFAMI) www.cofami.org
- Funded by European Union under 6th Framework Programme, Priority Policy oriented research (SSP)
- September 2005 – Spring 2008
- Partners from 10 EU countries
- Identify (social, economic, cultural & political) *factors that limit / enable the emergence, performance & dissemination* of COFAMIs.
- Identify *viable strategies and support measures*



Combining insights from 8 projects



Link with COFAMI project

Research phases:

- Development of analytical framework, incl. 'quick-scan' of results / approaches from 8 previous projects
- Status-quo report for 10 countries, resulting in typology of COFAMIs
- 18 in-depth case studies of COFAMIs
- Comparative analysis of case-studies to identify (general and specific) limiting / enabling factors
- Formulation of support strategies and policy recommendations
- Stakeholder / expert consultation by National Stakeholder Forums in all countries and European Expert Group

Policy relevance

- Decreasing Pillar 1 CAP support (price and income support) → new challenges for farms and rural areas
- Can collective action of farmers in marketing provide answers for new pressures and challenges?
- Can collective self-regulation play a greater role in policy deliverance (Good Agricultural Practices, conditionality of support etc.)?
- Proposals for support measures under Pillar 2 (rural development)?



Wider societal relevance

- Concentration in downstream FSC links (esp. retailers) → Can collective action counter these trends?
- How to enlarge market access of RD initiatives - is there more than short chains?
- Potentials for alliances with consumer groups, SMEs, environmental NGOs etc (slow food, local food UK)
- Contribution to alignment of agriculture with wider societal concerns and demands
- Synergies of food initiatives with other RD objectives (employment, landscape, culture, social capital etc.)

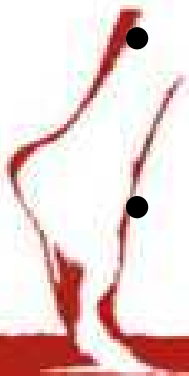


Main topics for WG17 discussions

- Concepts to understand COFAMIs in relation to debates on food networks, rural development and multifunctionality.
- Insight in the emergence & dynamics of COFAMIs by using sociological approaches to collective action?
- Limiting / enabling factors for the emergence, success and continuity of COFAMIs, incl. differences for life cycle stages or geographical contexts.
- Role of farmers and other categories of (rural, supply chain) actors and network processes amongst these.
- Contribution to sustainable (economic, social, ecological) rural development, food quality, safety and consumer trust.
- Support measures for COFAMIs.

Practical issues

- 20 Presentations, 13 papers distributed in advance
- 6 WG sessions:
 - Monday 20/8 14.00 – 15-30
 - Monday 20/8 16.00 – 17.30
 - Tuesday 21/8 11.00 – 12.30
 - Tuesday 21/8 14.00 – 15.30
 - Tuesday 21/8 16.00 – 17-30
 - Thursday 23/8 11.00 – 12.30
- 4 papers per WG session, 20 min. each (10-15 min. presentation, 5-10 min. discussion)
- Last session for open discussion on Conclusions and implications for research
- Problems with time of presentation? Look at latest (revised) programme!
- Give presentations to convenors before WG session



Questions? Remarks?