



Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives in Europe



Proceedings of the Final Conference on 8 May in
Brussels

Compiled by Heidrun Moschitz

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INTRODUCTION

The final conference of the EU Project “Encouraging Collective Farmers’ Marketing Initiatives” was held on May 8 at the University Foundation in Brussels. The aim of the conference was to present key results of the COFAMI research, which has been carried out since September 2005. The conference represents the culminating point of a process of stakeholder involvement and dissemination, which has been carried out throughout the project in the form of two rounds of national stakeholder and European expert consultation. Altogether, 62 persons from 14 countries and the EU participated in the conference, representing farmers, LEADER groups, farmers’ initiatives, politics, and research.



Selected case studies from the 10 participating countries provided insights into the different strategies employed by the initiatives and the factors that limit and enable their establishment and development. Furthermore, the impact and contribution of these initiatives to sustainable



rural development, as well as possible support strategies have been presented. The conference provided a platform for stimulating discussion between researchers, policy makers and stakeholders on the potential of collective farmers’ actions in addressing the challenges facing European agriculture and rural areas as well as possible strategies and measures to support them.

These proceedings are a collection of papers presented in the plenary sessions. A list of participants is provided in the Annex.

THE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The conference started with a brief Welcome by the responsible scientific officer of the project, Danièle Tissot and an introductory speech from a representative from the European Parliament, Hannes Lorenzen. The project coordinator Henk Renting then gave an overview of the COFAMI project. To show the participants the wide range of COFAMIs that had been studied during the project, eleven cases were presented on posters¹, and during an extended coffee break the participants were given the opportunity to inform themselves of cases they were interested in. The richness of collective farmers' marketing initiatives was also shown with products from COFAMIs provided for tasting in the lunch break.



Another goal of the conference was to encourage focused discussions on three groups of strategies that COFAMIs follow – based on the analysis of the COFAMI cases: a) professionalizing short supply chains, b) developing markets for rural services, c) region



branding. To this end, parallel workshops were organized at the end of the morning. Each of them included a presentation of two or more specific cases by representatives of the initiatives, and stimulated discussion among practitioners, policy makers, and researchers on the strategies these initiatives are following.

Lunchtime was used by many participants to carry on the discussions started in the workshops, and to exchange the outcomes between the groups.

The afternoon started with a presentation of limiting and enabling factors of COFAMIs based on the project's results, and the discussion with the audience was enriched by a contribution from The EU project "Entrepreneurial skills of farmers (ESOF)". Finally, possible support strategies for COFAMIs were presented from three different perspectives: based on project results, from a politics view, and from the point of view of young farmers. These input speeches were then used to start the round table discussion with representatives from the Commission, agriculture, and research.



¹ The posters, as well as the presentations of the conference are available on the project's website www.cofami.org

The conference programme in detail

9.00 Welcome and opening

Bill Slee, Conference Chair,
Macaulay Institute, Scotland

Danièle Tissot, DG RTD

9.15 The role of COFAMIs within the European Model of Agriculture

Hannes Lorenzen, European Parliament

9.45 The diversity of COFAMIs across Europe and challenges they face

Henk Renting, COFAMI project

Open Discussion

10.30 Coffee break & Poster presentations of COFAMI cases

11.15 Parallel Workshops: COFAMI strategies and their contribution to sustainable rural development

A) Professionalizing short supply chains

B) Developing markets for rural services

C) Region branding: valorizing territorial networks

12.30 Lunch Buffet

Tasting of typical products from COFAMIs

13.30 Factors that limit and enable the development of COFAMIs

Markus Schermer, COFAMI project

Discussant: Christine Rudmann,
EU project Entrepreneurial Skills of Farmers

14.30 Policies and strategies to support COFAMIs

Karlheinz Knickel, COFAMI project

Jean Michel Courades, DG AGRI, LEADER+

Pieter Van Oost, CEJA

15.15 Coffee Break

15.45 Round table discussion on Support strategies for COFAMIs

Isabelle Peutz, DG AGRI, Mark Cropper, DG AGRI; Jean Michel Courades, LEADER+;
Timothy Hall, DG RTD; Gilles Maréchal, CIVAM; Pieter Van Oost, CEJA; Karlheinz
Knickel, COFAMI

16.45 Concluding remarks

Henk Renting, COFAMI project

INTRODUCTION:

THE DIVERSITY OF COFAMIS ACROSS EUROPE

Henk Renting, Project Co-ordinator, Wageningen University

Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives
Final Conference, 8 May 2008, Brussels

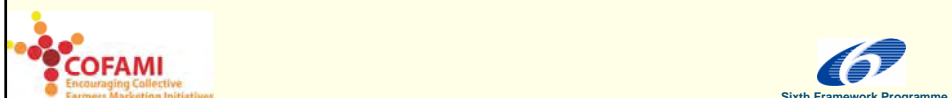
Collective Farmers' Marketing Initiatives across Europe – Driving Forces, Diversity & Challenges

Henk Renting, Wageningen University, Netherlands



Outline

- Past and present of collective action in European agriculture
- Main lines and objectives of COFAMI project
- Wider market & policy trends and driving forces of COFAMIs
- Different COFAMI strategies and examples across Europe
- Conclusions



Past and present of collective action

- Important role of collective action by farmers in history of European agriculture
 - Marketing and buying co-operatives → improved market access, farm incomes, regional employment
 - Farmer study groups → technological innovation, spread of sustainable production methods
- Traditional co-operative strategies run counter to changing market contexts, societal demands and internal management challenges



Past and present of collective action

- New collective farmers' marketing initiatives (COFAMIs) are emerging throughout Europe, including:
 - Producer groups of organic and regional / local foods
 - Supply chain co-operation to guarantee product quality
 - Direct producer-consumer associations
 - Groups providing public goods & services (tourism, landscape, care etc.)
- What can we learn from new COFAMIs? Do they provide answers to challenges of EU agriculture? If so, how can they be best supported?



Objectives of COFAMI project

- Funded by EU under 6th Framework Programme, Priority Scientific Support to Policies (SSP), September 2005 – May 2008
- To identify (social, economic, cultural & political) factors that limit / enable farmers to pool ideas, experiences and capital in the development of co-operative producer organisations and marketing initiatives
 - To obtain overview of diversity of COFAMIs across Europe and identify different strategies
 - To identify different limiting / enabling factors and their importance according to regions, COFAMI strategies and development stages
 - To formulate support strategies and policy measures for the development, performance and dissemination of COFAMIs

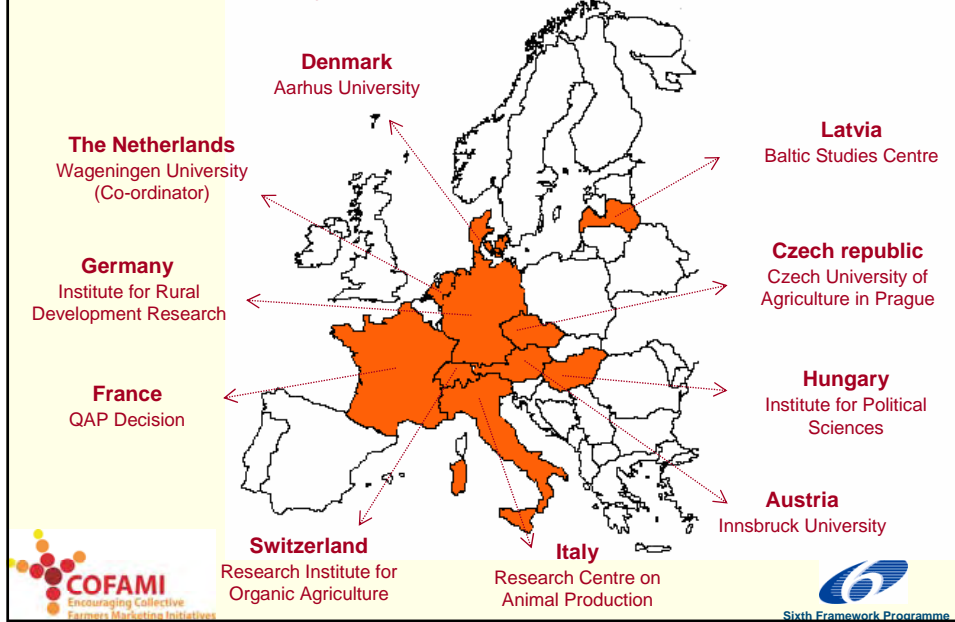


COFAMI research activities

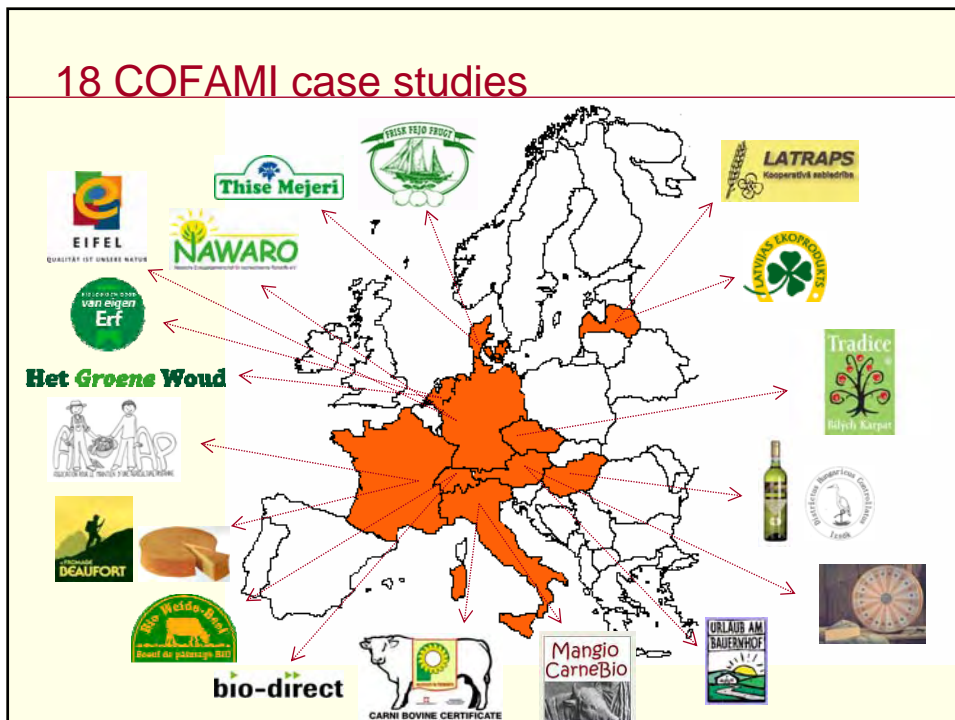
- Literature research, incl. 'quick-scan' of results from 8 previous research projects
- Status-quo review of collective marketing in 10 countries, resulting in typology of COFAMI strategies
- 18 in-depth case studies of representative set of COFAMIs, covering: strategy, relevant networks, sustainability impacts & support strategies
- Comparative analysis of case studies to identify (general and specific) limiting / enabling factors
- Stakeholder & expert consultation by European Expert Group and National Stakeholder Forums in all countries



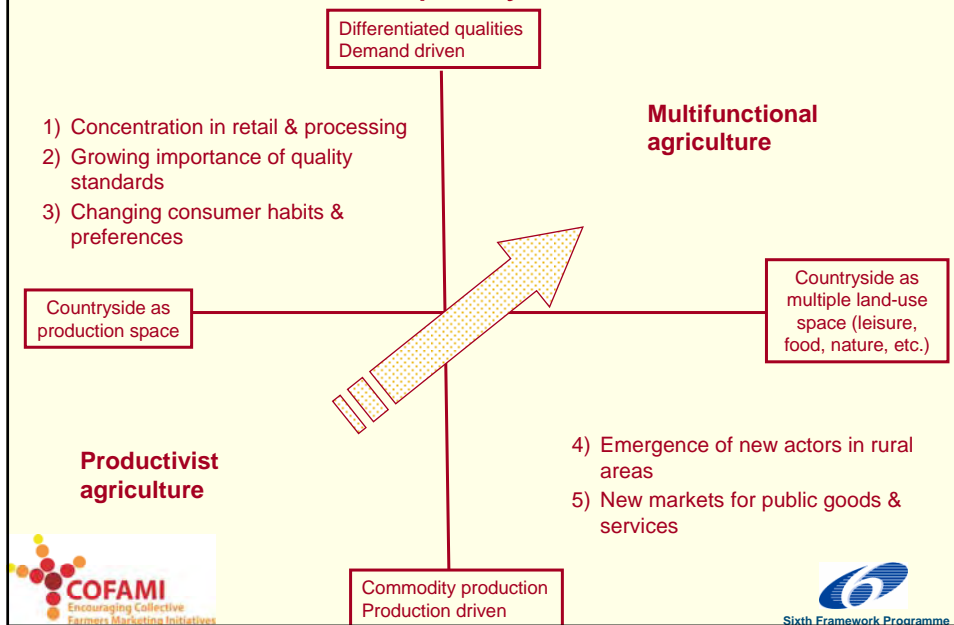
COFAMI study countries & research teams



18 COFAMI case studies



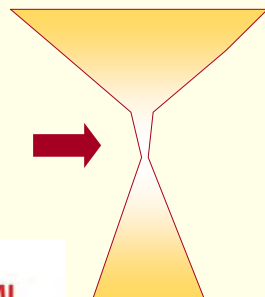
Relevant market & policy trends



Relevant market & policy trends

■ Concentration in retail & processing

- Transnational retailers have obtained central position as 'gate-keepers' between farmers and consumers
- 'Global sourcing' of retailing & processing → competition and substitution amongst primary producers world-wide
- Dominance of large retail surface → general lack of small and medium-sized retail / processing infrastructures



Consumers: 160,000,000
Customers: 89,000,000

Outlets: 170,000

Supermarket formats: 600

Buying desks: 110

Manufacturers: 8,600
Semi-manufacturers: 80,000

Suppliers: 160,000

Farmers/producers:
3,200,000

Relevant market & policy trends

- Growing importance of quality standards
 - Shift from 'bulk' markets to differentiated product qualities and brands
 - Increase of public requirements for environment, safety, hygiene, animal welfare etc.
 - Multiplicity of private quality standards on top of public ones
- Changing consumer habits & preferences
 - Changing consumer habits (convenience, grazing & snacking, outdoor consumption)
 - At same time appreciation for food quality, authenticity and mode of production (environment, animal welfare)
 - More active involvement of consumer NGOs in food and rural issues

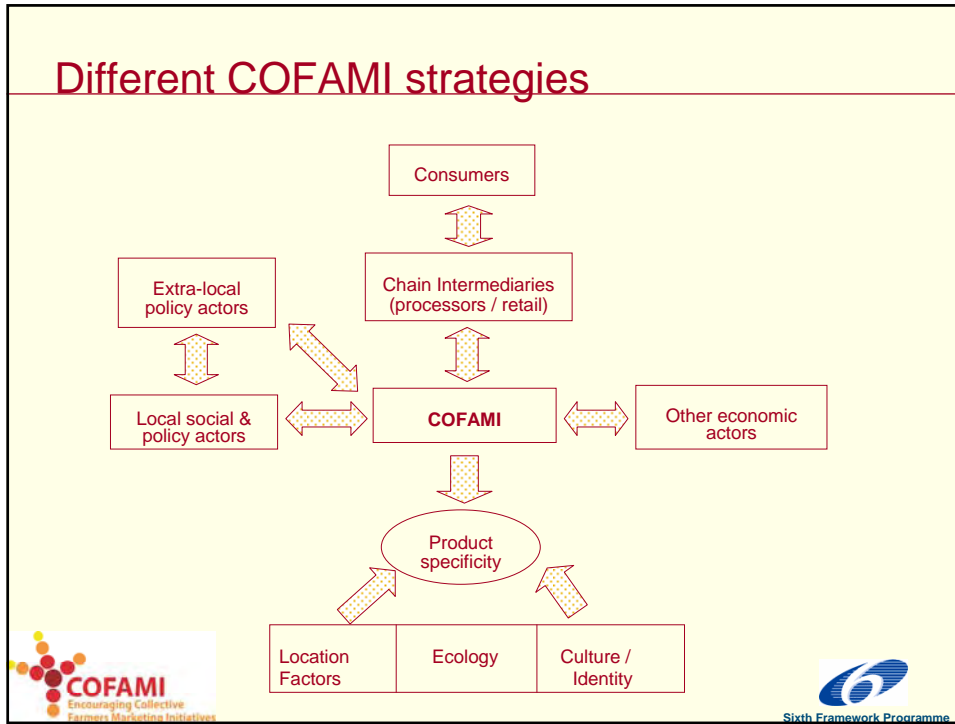


Relevant market & policy trends

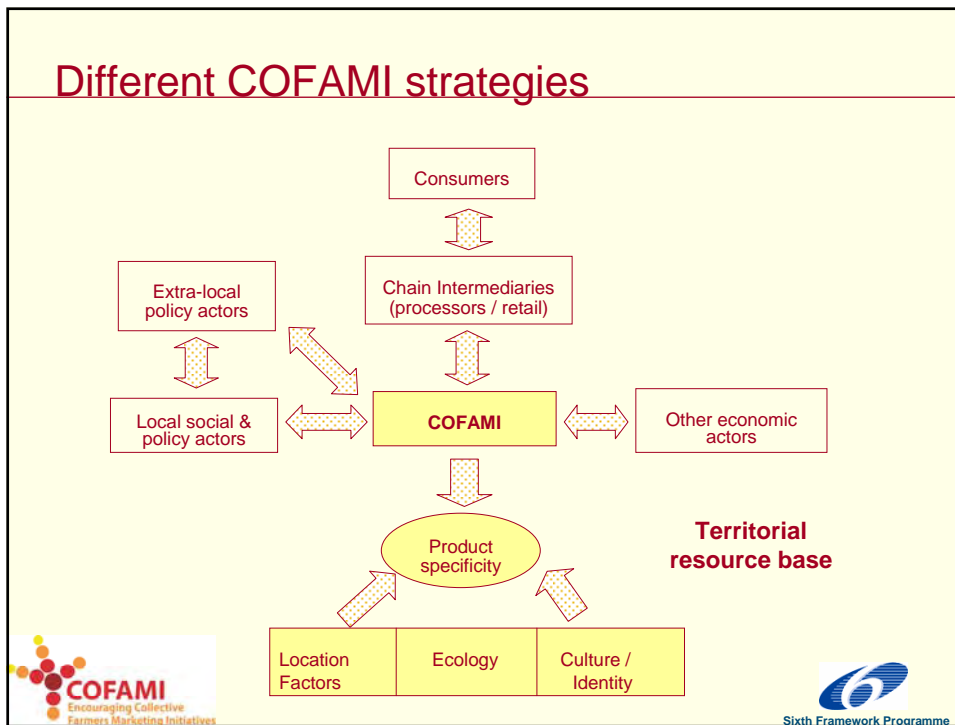
- Emergence of new actors in rural areas
 - Rural areas no longer strongholds of farming, but meeting place of variety of rural actors
 - From production space to 'consumption countryside'
 - Growing role of partnerships in rural development policy
- New markets for public goods & services
 - Recognition of contribution agriculture in preservation biodiversity, landscape, culture etc. (multifunctionality)
 - Emergence of new non-food markets in rural areas, e.g. energy production, tourism, care etc.
 - Importance of synergies between different functions / activities in successful regional development



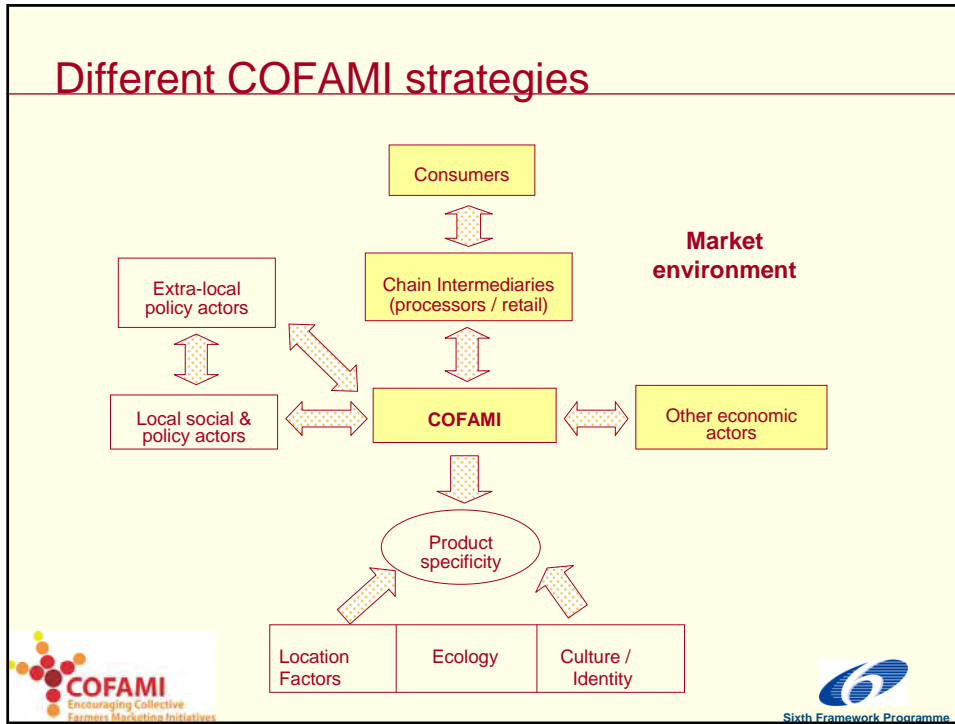
Different COFAMI strategies



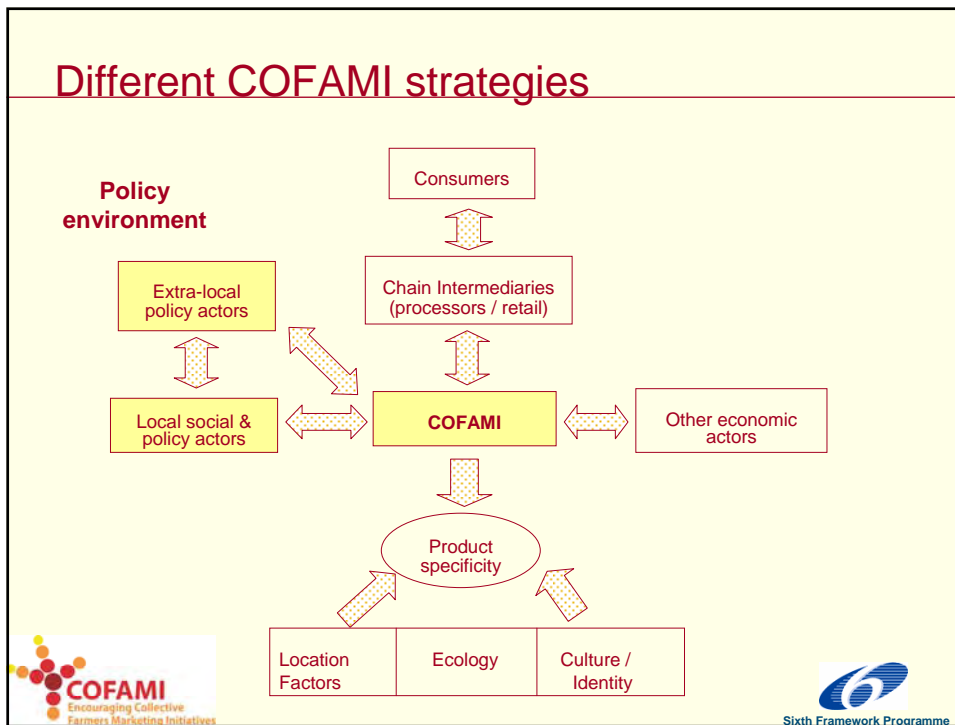
Different COFAMI strategies



Different COFAMI strategies



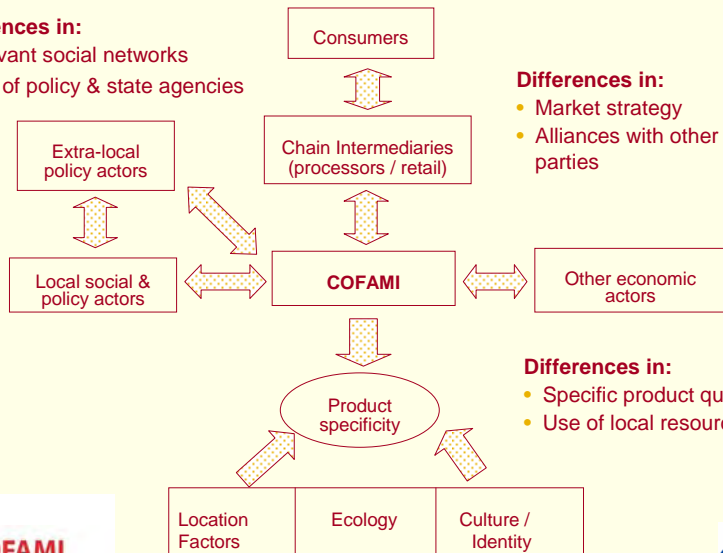
Different COFAMI strategies



Different COFAMI strategies

Differences in:

- Relevant social networks
- Role of policy & state agencies



Differences in:

- Market strategy
- Alliances with other market parties

Differences in:

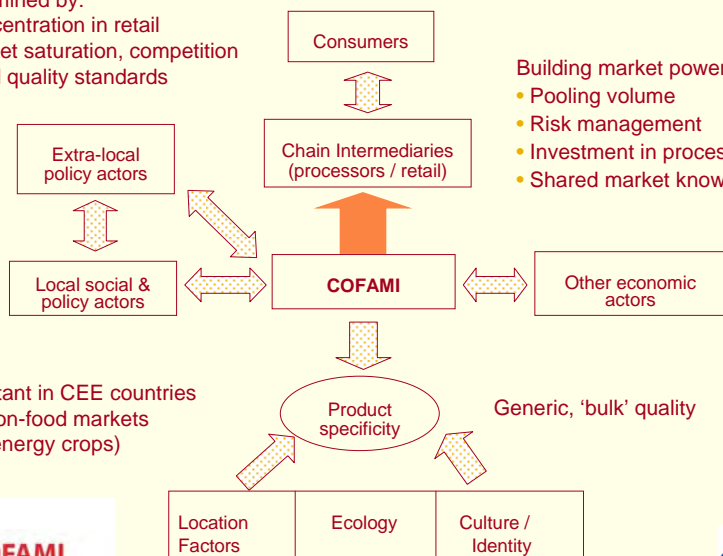
- Specific product quality
- Use of local resources



1. Countervailing power

Undermined by:

- Concentration in retail
- Market saturation, competition
- Food quality standards



Building market power by:

- Pooling volume
- Risk management
- Investment in processing
- Shared market knowledge

Important in CEE countries and non-food markets (e.g. energy crops)

Generic, 'bulk' quality



Examples



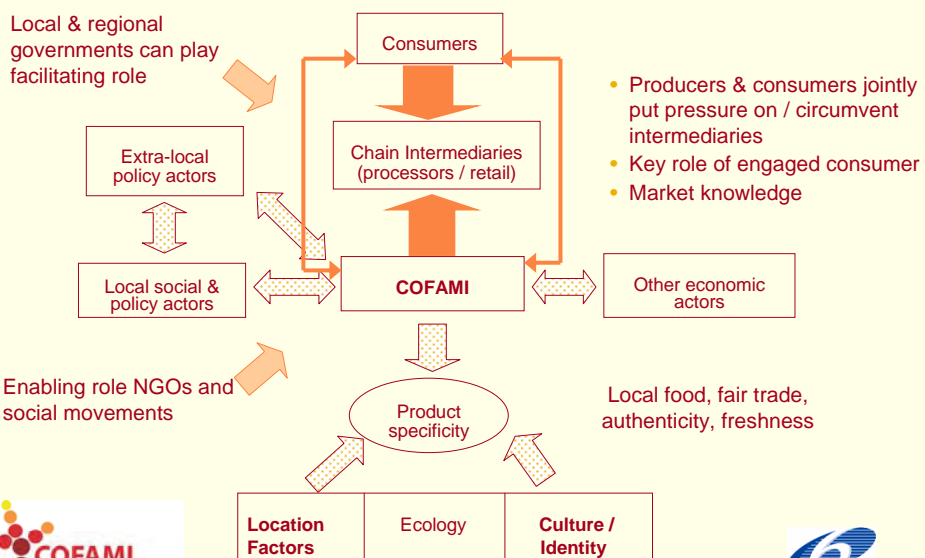
NAWARO - Germany



LATRAPS - Latvia



2. Producer-consumer co-operation



Examples



AMAP - France



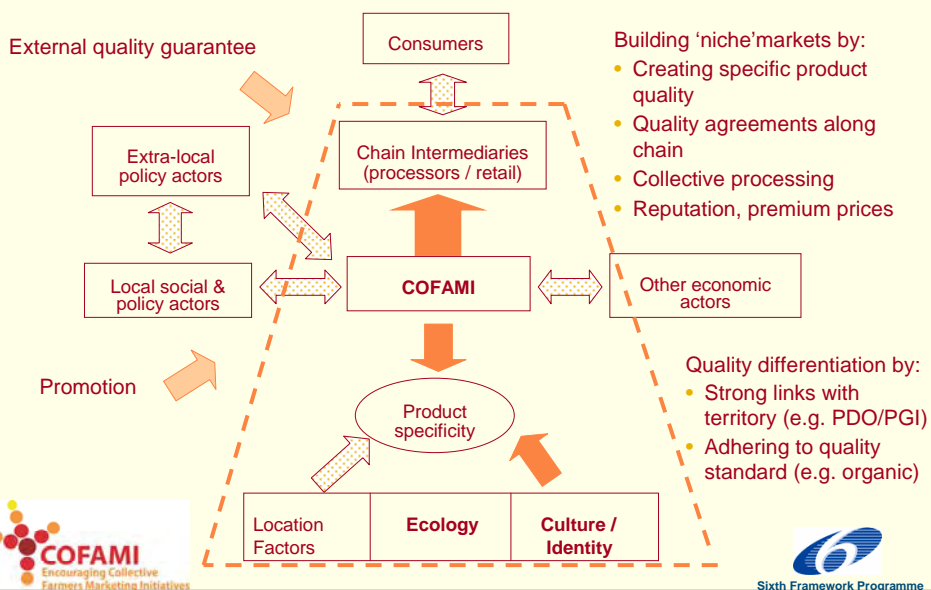
Organic webshops in Netherlands, Italy and Switzerland



bio-direct



3. Quality differentiation



Examples



Beaufort - France



Fejø- Denmark

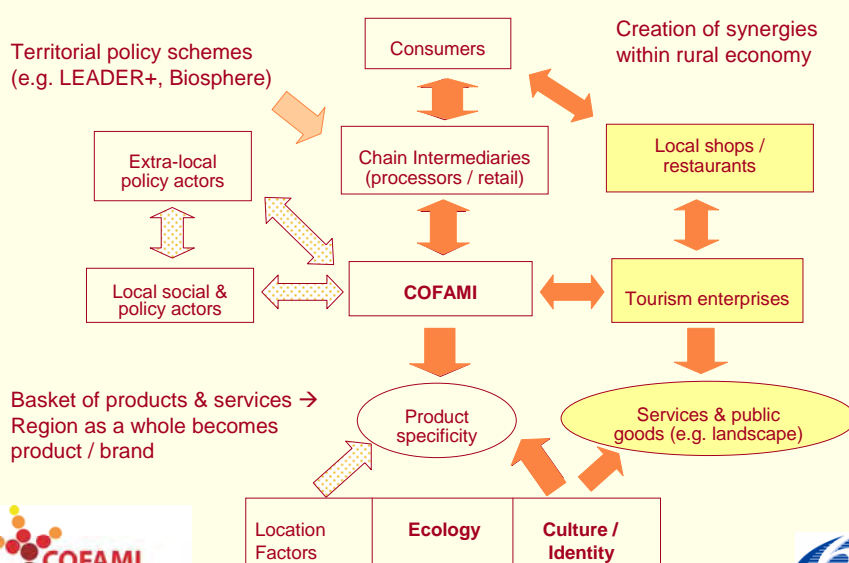


Arany Sárfehér - Hungary

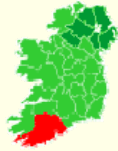


Sixth Framework Programme

4. Region marketing / branding



Examples



Fuchsia Brand - Ireland



Region branding in Netherland, Czech republic and Germany



QUALITÄT IST UNSERE NATUR



Conclusions

- New forms of collective farmers' marketing that go beyond traditional co-operative mechanisms ('countervailing power') can be observed across Europe
- These can be understood as responses to changing market, policy and societal contexts:
 - Loss of control over supply chains due to concentration in retailing & processing
 - Growing differentiation of rural areas, evolving urban-rural relations, and changes in EU rural policy frameworks
 - New markets for distinctive food qualities, services & public goods
- COFAMIs apply a diversity of strategies - sometimes in combination - that are crucial to understand their functioning and (potential) impacts



Conclusions

- COFAMIs are mainly driven by the collective entrepreneurship of farmers, but have in common that build and capitalize on new networks beyond the agricultural sector.
- The nature of new (supply chain, territorial, community, private-public) networks and relevant actors for these is different for COFAMI strategies



Thank you for your attention



FACTORS THAT LIMIT AND ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COFAMIS

Markus Schermer, Innsbruck University

Christine Rudmann, Project Co-ordinator EU-ESOF,
Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Switzerland

Encouraging Collective Farmers Marketing Initiatives

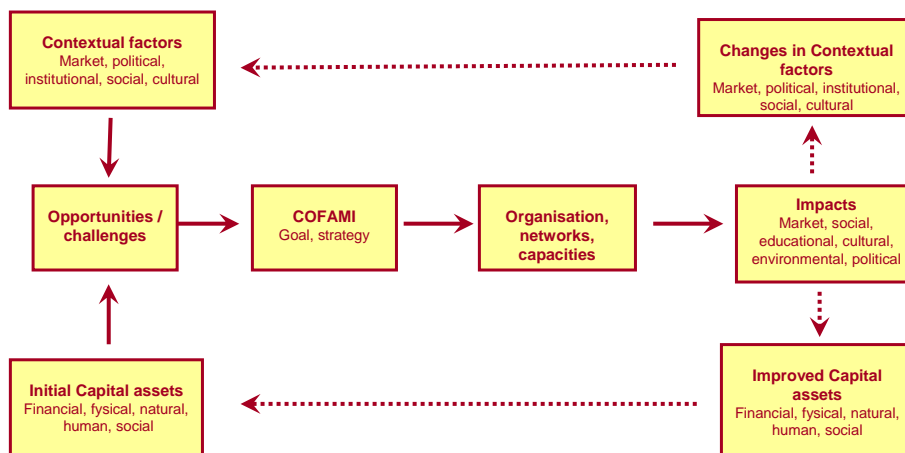
Final Conference, 8 May 2008, Brussels

Limiting and Enabling Factors for the Development and Success of COFAMIs

Markus Schermer, Innsbruck University, Austria



The Dynamics of COFAMIs



Contextual factors and opportunities / challenges

Place specific contextual factors

- Urban proximity / remoteness:
 - Proximity to cities may encourage P2C initiatives, dedicated markets and / or supply of services
 - Remoteness may foster territorial networks between rural / supply chain actors and serve as basis for quality differentiation
 - ICT initiatives make 'short chains at a distance' possible
- Rural attractiveness:
 - Starting point for regional quality differentiation, marketing of public goods & services and region branding initiatives
- Socio-cultural factors:
 - Regional differences in tradition of farmers' cooperation
 - Common political / ideological motivation
 - Strong regional cultural identity (or lack of this)



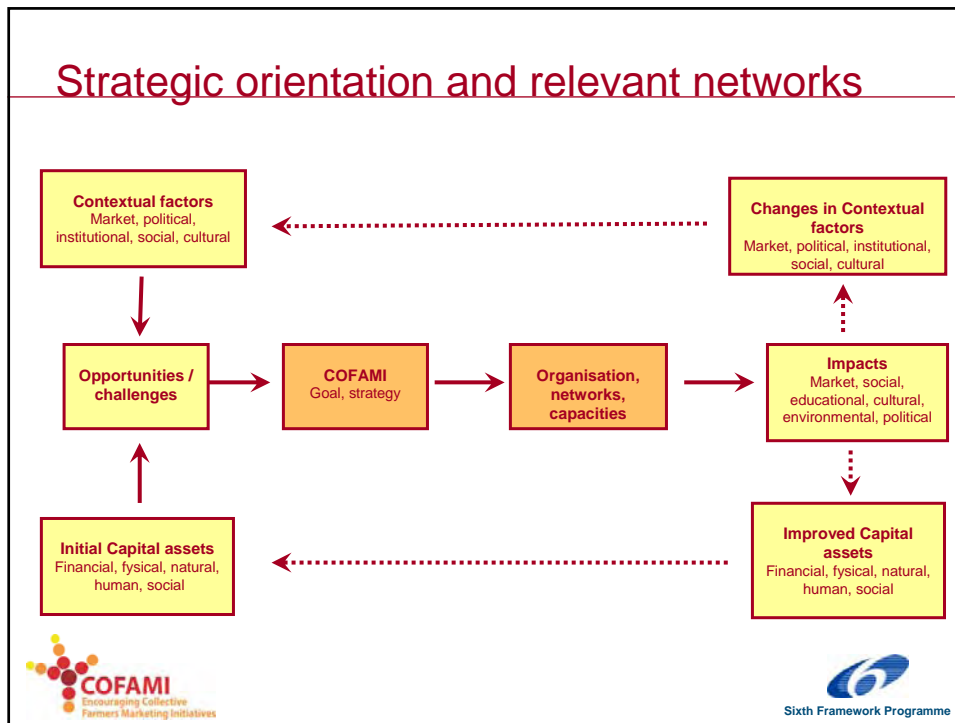
Contextual factors and opportunities / challenges

Non-place specific contextual factors

- Market context:
 - Globalization and 'price squeeze' stimulate search for added value and establishment of new chain relations / dedicated markets
 - Societal demands result in new markets (non-food, green care, agro-tourism, rural landscapes and biodiversity, etc.)
 - Wider societal trends offer new network opportunities (consumer lifestyle, environmental awareness, slow food, etc.)
- Policy context:
 - Regional policies may serve as enabling factor (Biosphere reserves, LEADER+, RDP measures)
 - National and EU policy frameworks both enabling and limiting (hygiene regulation, PDO/PGI, CMO Fruit & vegetables)
- Institutional context:
 - Existence of innovative milieus and institutional arrangements
 - Support for infrastructure and investments



Strategic orientation and relevant networks

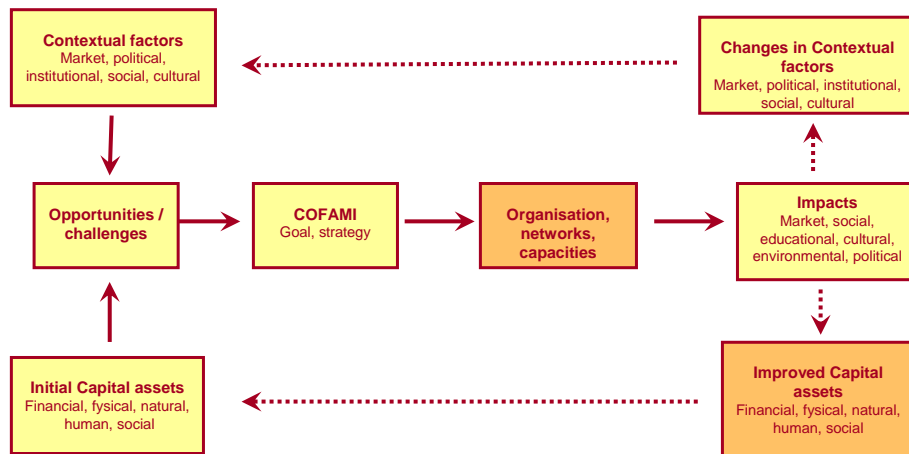


Strategic orientation and relevant networks

Limiting and enabling factors depend on COFAMI strategy

- **Quality differentiation in chain networks**
 - Focus on *product* quality (e.g. regional speciality, quality standards, labelling)
 - Farmer initiated, key role for new supply chain networks
- **Quality differentiation in territorial networks / dedicated markets**
 - Often build on *process* quality (e.g. organic, face-to-face)
 - Mostly farmer initiated, key role for new networks with consumers (direct marketing) and other rural actors
- **Developing markets for new rural goods & services**
 - Also initiating role of non-farmer partners and policy actors
 - Networks integrate diversity of actors (e.g. region branding)
- **Developing markets for non-food / energy products**
 - Role of policy actors, use of pre-existing networks
 - 'Traditional' co-operative mechanisms important (pooling volume)

Internal organization, capacities and life-cycle stages



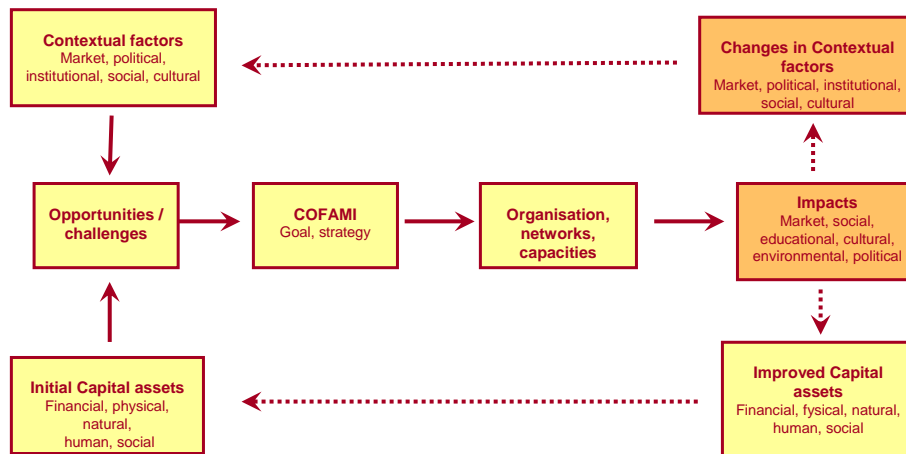
Internal organization, capacities and life-cycle stages

Limiting and enabling factors depend on life-cycle stage

- Founding phase
 - Role of key initiators & leadership
 - Different types of (bonding, bridging and linking) social capital
 - Initial financial support requires formalisation of organisation
 - Internal coherent view on strategy needed (common ideology, diversity of actors)
 - Role of pre-existing networks for resource mobilisation (positive) and path dependence (negative)
- Flexibility and capacity to adapt to changing contexts
 - Reaction to changing trends (reactive and proactive)
 - Learning from shocks to build up resilience
 - Creating a learning milieu (continuous professionalization)
 - Internal communication / democracy vs. efficiency



Translation into impacts and performances



Translation into impacts and performances

- COFAMIs result in improved impacts in terms of social, economic, and environmental rural development aims
- Positive impacts are observed in all fields, but positive social performances appear a prerequisite for delivering other (market, environmental) impacts
- COFAMIs develop activities and deliver impacts over longer periods of time
- Relevance of and scores on different impacts depend on: regional context, strategic orientation, size and life cycle stage

Translation into impacts and performances

- Social performance
 - Internal: sense of belonging (**size, strategy**)
 - External: trust in food, urban rural relations (**size, strategy**)
- Market performance
 - Premium prices, market shares, contribution to rural economy (**size, life-cycle stage**)
- Environmental performance
 - Reduced negative impacts (e.g. pollution, food miles) (**strategy**)
 - Positive effects through production practices (**strategy**)
- Educational performance
 - Innovation and learning capacity (**size, strategy**)
- Cultural performance
 - Traditional farming practices, gastronomic traditions, regional identity (**strategy**)
- Political performance
 - Lobbying capacity (**size, life cycle stage, strategy**)



Conclusions

- Limiting and enabling factors for development and success of COFAMIs depend on regional context, strategic orientation and life-cycle stage
- COFAMIs result in improved rural development aims, but deliverance of impacts requires time
- Successful COFAMIs manage to:
 - Tune their strategic orientation well to region-specific opportunities & challenges
 - Mobilize relevant actors and build strong and coherent networks that fit with their strategy
 - Adjust their internal organization to available capital assets and stay adaptive to changing conditions
 - Succeed in building social capital and translate this over time into other (market, environmental, etc) impacts



Entrepreneurial skills as strong stimuli for COFAMIs?

Some thoughts from the research project
Developing entrepreneurial skills of farmers (ESoF)

Dr. Christine Rudmann, project co-ordinator
Research Institute for Organic Agriculture, Switzerland

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Content of the presentation

- **Connecting entrepreneurship with entrepreneurial skills and COFAMIs**
- **Comparing results of the two projects**
 - Influencing factors
 - Interrelation of the two projects
- **Conclusions**

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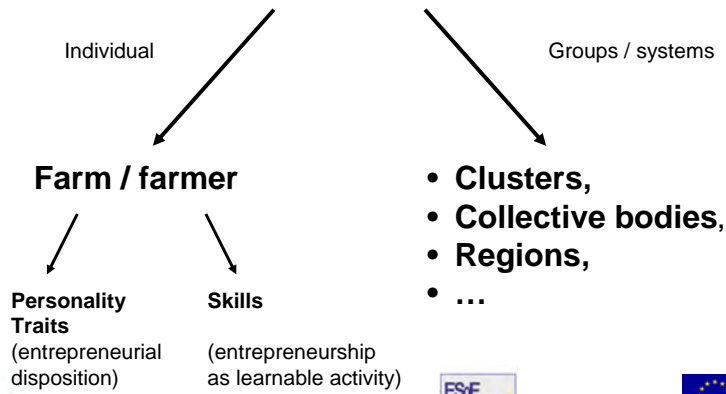
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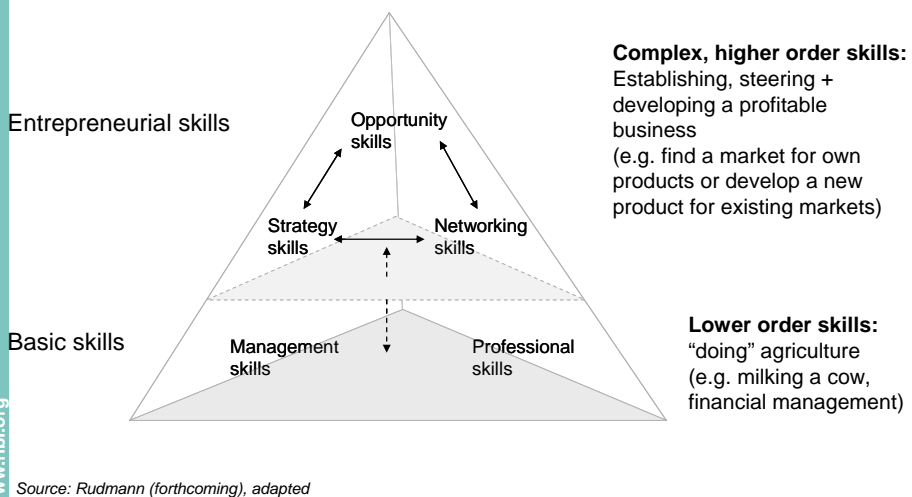
Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, COFAMIs

Entrepreneurship in farming:

► Finding (new) ways of doing business in a changing environment



Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, COFAMIs



Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, COFAMIs

- **Entrepreneurship in farming:**
 - Finding (new) ways of doing business in a changing environment
- **Entrepreneurial skills in farming:**
 - **Know how to do tasks** of establishing, steering and developing a profitable business in a changing environment
- **COFAMIs :**
 - Entrepreneurial strategies of marketing (“collective” entrepreneurship)

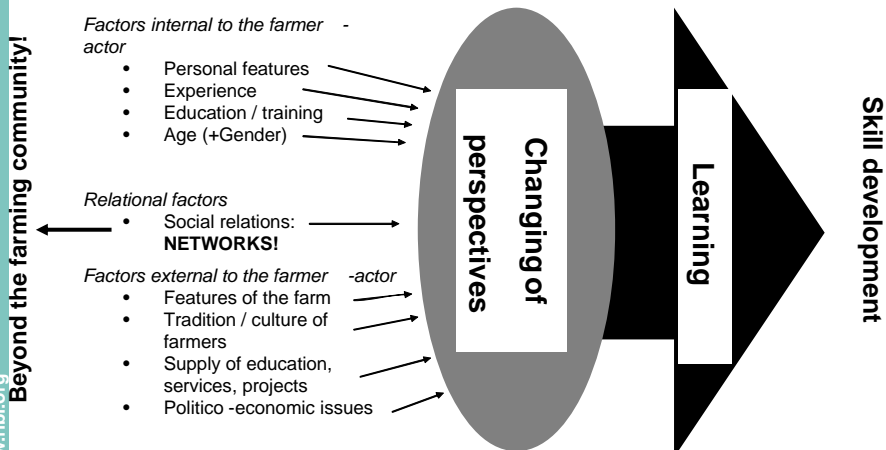
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Influencing factors for entrepreneurial skills



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Source: Vesala & Pyysiäinen (2008), adapted



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Influencing factors in comparison

Contextual factors:

- Influencing factors more or less the same
- ESoF factors are experienced as enabling and limiting, depending on the (social, cultural) context

Internal factors

- Personal ↔ organisational

Personal skills
+
development



- Key initiators
- Pre-existing networks
- Reaction to changing environment
- Learning / Creating learning environment
- Internal communication

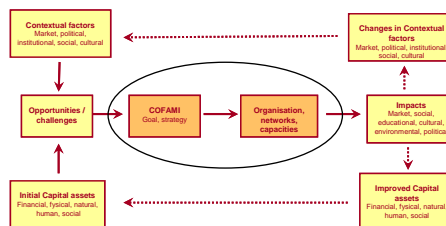
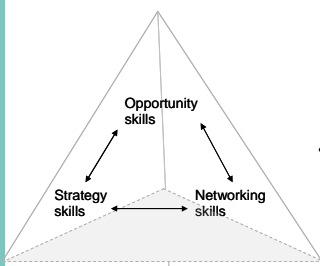
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Entrepreneurial skills ↔ COFAMs



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Conclusions

- **Entrepreneurial skills as stimuli for**
 - Farmers' generating ideas for initiating COFAMIs
 - Farmers' recognition of a COFAMI as an entrepreneurial opportunity
 - Engaging in this opportunity
 - Adding to the success by bringing in personal
 - Communication skills, management skills, innovation skills, ...
 - Networks
 - Ideas

- **COFAMIs as an opportunity for learning / experiencing of**
 - Change of perspectives
 - Entrepreneurial skills (networking, communication skills, realising opportunities, ...)
 - Social/cultural aspects (sense of belonging, trust, regional identity, ...)

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**Further information on specific aspects
of the presentation**

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Skill categories for farmers

Entrepreneurial skill categories:

- › **Recognising and realising business opportunities:**
 - › Recognising business opportunities
 - › Market and customer orientation
 - › Awareness of threats
 - › Innovation skills
 - › Risk management skills
- › **Developing and evaluating a business strategy:**
 - › Skills in receiving and making use of feedback
 - › Reflection skills
 - › Monitoring and evaluation skills
 - › Conceptual skills
 - › Strategic planning skills
 - › Strategic decision-making skills
 - › Goal setting skills
- › **Networking and utilising contacts:**
 - › Skills in cooperating with other farmers and companies
 - › Networking skills
 - › Team-working skills
 - › Leadership skills

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Source: de Wolf & Schoorlemmer (2007)



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Skill categories for farmers

Basic skill categories:

- › **Professional skills:**
 - › Plant or animal production skills
 - › Technical skills
- › **Management skills:**
 - › Financial management and administration skills
 - › Human resource management skills
 - › Customer management skills
 - › General planning skills

Source: de Wolf & Schoorlemmer (2007)

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Support strategies for entrepreneurial skills

- **Education/extension/research:**
 - Experience exchange
 - Change of perspectives
 - Complex skill training (fictitious farms)
 - research programmes which include farmers more as partners
- **Politics/economics:**
 - Foster rural development rather than “agriculture”
 - Regions rather than nations
 - Cross-sectoral strategies
 - Clusters (e.g. in the knowledge system)

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References

- **De Wolf & Schoorlemmer (Eds.)(2007):** *Exploring the significance of entrepreneurship in agriculture*. Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Frick, Switzerland, and www.esofarmers.org/publications
- **Vesala & Pyysiäinen (Eds.)(2008):** *Understanding Entrepreneurial Skills in the Farm Context*. Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Frick, Switzerland, and www.esofarmers.org/publications
- **Rudmann (Ed) (forthcoming):** *Entrepreneurial Skills and their Role in Enhancing the Relative Independence of Farmers*. Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Frick, Switzerland, and www.esofarmers.org/publications

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POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COFAMIS

Karlheinz Knickel, Institute for Rural Development at the J.W. Goethe University, Germany

Jean-Michel Courades, DG AGRI, LEADER+

Pieter Van Oost, CEJA

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Policies & strategies to support COFAMIs

Karlheinz Knickel, IfLS Frankfurt



COFAMI
 Encouraging Collective
 Farmers Marketing Initiatives


 Sixth Framework Programme

supporting collective action

- "... – a ten point summary" ⇒ conference folder
- analysis based on
 - insights derived from the **18 in-depth case studies**
 - in 10 countries of the enlarged EU covering all relevant regions
 - interviews with key actors in initiatives & stakeholders
 - national level **consultations** (NSFs) / feedback rounds
- 29 pages report

COFAMI
 Encouraging Collective
 Farmers Marketing Initiatives


 Sixth Framework Programme

why support initiatives?

- the possibilities for individual farmers to challenge powerful **supply chain** partners are limited!
- changing **policy** frameworks
 - territorial strategies, networking & cross sectoral collective action
 - rural amenities .. public goods ... 'new' rural services
- COFAMIs have the **potential** to ..
 - ... strengthen the position of farmers
 - ... increase rural incomes and employment
 - ... collectively develop viable future strategies
 - ... 'deliver' more cost-efficiently



creating a supportive environment

- **different kinds of support**
 - financial (investment / start-up finance; risk capital; ..)
 - information & public relations
 - advocacy ... public legitimisation
 - brokering
 - training & consulting
 - technical & legal support for innovative & experimental approaches



Country/ case study	Product	Life cycle stage	Type and importance of support received					
			Financial (general)	PR	Advocacy	Training/ knowledge	Technical/ legal	
North-western Europe								
DE / Eifel	Mix of food/non-food/services	New, but established	++	+	++	+	+	
DE / NAWARO	Biomass energy	Established			+		+	
DK / Thise	Food products (dairy)	Mature	+++					
DK / Fejø	Food products (fruit)	New, but established	+++					
NL / Groene Woud	Mix of food and non-food/public services (region branding)	Take-off	++			++		
NL / VEE	Mix of food/non-food/services	New, but established	+++	+		+++	+++	
Central & Eastern Europe								
CZ / TBK	Mix of food/non-food/services (region branding)	New, but established	+++		++	++		
HUN / ASF Coop	Food products (wine)	Take-off	+++					
LV / Latraps	Biomass energy	New, but established	++				+++	
LV / Preiļi	Food products	New, but established	++			++	+++	
Southern Europe & Alpine Region								
AT / UaB	Tourism services	Mature	+++			+		
AT / Walsertolz	Food products (cheese)	New, but established	+++		++		++	
CH / Bio Weide-Beef	Food products (beef)	Mature	+				+++	
CH / bio-direct	Mix of food/non-food/services/public goods	Take-off	Bio-direct has not received any public or private support yet.					
F / AOC Beaufort	Food products (cheese)	Mature	+	+	+	+	++	
F / AMAP	Food products	New, but established			+		++	
IT / AsproCarne	Food products (beef)	Mature	+++		+++	+++		
IT / MangioCarneBio	Food products (beef)	Take-off	+++					



creating a supportive environment

■ different providers

- public sector / bodies RDPs, **LEADER+**
- social organizations: foundations, NGOs, ...
- communities
- individuals
- private (actual or potential) trading partners

■ increasing importance of **public-private-partnerships**



Country/ case study	Scale types of support-providing bodies			
	EU/international	National	Regional	Local
North-western Europe				
DE / Eifel		X	X	
DE / NAWARO		X	X	X
DK / Thise	X	X		
DK / Fejø	X			X
NL / Groene Woud	X	X	X	X
NL / VEE		X	X	
Central & Eastern Europe				
CZ / TBK	X	X		X
HUN / ASF Coop		X		
LV / Latraps		X		
LV / Preiji		X	X	
Southern Europe & Alpine Region				
AT / UaB			X	
AT / Walserstolz	X		X	X
CH / Bio Weide-Beef		X		
CH / bio-direct	Bio-direct has not received any public or private support yet			
F / AOC Beaufort		X	X	X
F / AMAP		X	X	X
IT / AsproCarne	X	X	X	
IT / MangioCarneBio		X	X	



access to support & removal of constraints

- support policies specifically **designed for groups** of farmers
- support for **alternative / 'new'** farm development models
 - value-added chains, distinctive food qualities, provision of public goods & services
- reduce bureaucracy: high TA costs can hinder realisation of new ideas!
- create regulatory **flexibility**
- need for more room for manoeuvre & **experimentation** in both legal & procedural terms



support related to knowledge & learning / advisory services

- strengthen the **social capital** of initiatives
 - skill-building and learning
 - .. beyond merely technical issues
 - training for leaders in professional management, 'soft' & entrepreneurial skills
 - **strategic coaching**
- advisory services
 - *„... have to adopt new ways of thinking & development, ... develop a broader range of professional competences“*



need to better target support

- policy is about making **choices**
 - who & what to support
 - how to provide this support in the most effective way
- relevance & importance varies with **life-cycle** stage
- **longer-term perspective** on initiatives' development, commitment & strategy crucial
- profitability within a given time frame
- not all initiatives depend on public support!



two concrete proposals for European action

1. European support **information** system
 - existing information on support available for initiatives is fragmented
2. European exchange platform focused on the **professionalisation** of joint farmer initiatives
 - organisation of (inter)national exchange programmes for key actors
 - effectively support knowledge and experience transfer

COM, farmers unions, CEJA, advisory services, LEADER+, ...



Thank you for your attention

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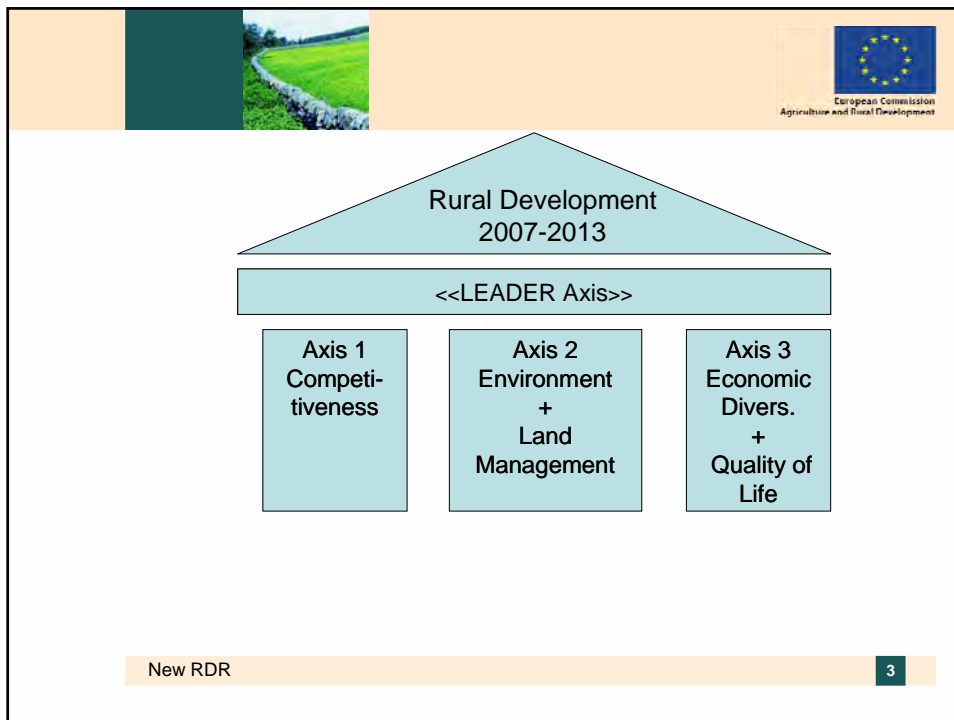


Collective Farmer's Marketing initiatives : support by the EU Rural Development Policy

Jean-Michel Courades (DG AGRI F3)

Four axes to implement the rural development objectives:

1. Improving the competitiveness of the farm and forestry sector
2. Improving the environment and the countryside
3. Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy
4. LEADER



Axis 1 : Improving Competitiveness

- Measures aiming at promoting **knowledge** and improving **human potential**: vocational training/information; setting up of young farmers; early retirement; management, relief and advisory services, ...
- Measures aiming at restructuring **physical potential** and promoting **innovation**: investments to improve production, processing and marketing structures (and infrastructures),...
- Measures aiming to improve the **quality of agricultural production and products**: adaptation to new EU standards; participation in food quality schemes; promotion for quality products.

New RDR 4



Collective marketing



AXIS 1 : relevant measures

- 114 : use by farmers of farm advisory services
- 111 : vocational training and information
- 121 : farm modernisation
- 123 : adding value to agricultural and forestry products
- 133 : supporting producer groups for promotion for quality products

New RDR

5



Collective marketing



AXIS 3 : relevant measures

- 311 : diversification into non-agricultural activities
- 321 : basic services for the economy

New RDR

6



Collective marketing



AXIS 4 : relevant measures

- 41 : LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
 - theme of the strategy : local products, territorial marketing
- 42 : TERRITORIAL COOPERATION
 - Inter-regional
 - transnational

New RDR

7



Leader + project : Brugse Ommeland Farm products network



- Network of nine Farm shops
- funded under the Strategy for farm-fresh products by LAG Brugse Ommeland
- Actions : Common label (image of the LAG region), joint advertising, marketing campaigns, mail order, map of the area with all information
- link with other projects ('stimulating a broader farm development')
- In summer connection with cycle and hiking trails (issue: convince authorities to accept signposts;
- Project total cost : 362 536 euros

New RDR

8



Leader + project :

Matön Gotland, the 'food island'

- Support to the creation of a company to sell on behalf of seven island's food producers by the LAG Gotland
- Supported actions : salary for a salesman, food fairs in Visby, joint summer farmer shop
- Products : farm meat, bread, fish, farm cheese.
- markets : Stockholm market (30 shops) and Gotland's tourists
- Total budget : 297 826 euros

New RDR

9



Leader+ project :

Savours and flavours week

- Different events (on agriculture, heritage, industry, handicrafts, gastronomy, health)
- Products covered : aromatic plants, medicinal plant, cheese, olive
- LAG Luberon (Haute Provence)
- Target : professionals (producers, restaurant, sellers, distributors), general public (children, tourist, local people, connaisseurs)
- Additional projects : educational programme « I live in a region of savours and flavours », network of tourist offices
- Qualitative impact : mobilisation of partners
- Difficulties: mobilisation of all partners, to avoid to dilute the message by wanting to cover all sectors of the public
- Total budget : 130 000 euros (for the first event)

New RDR

10



Leader+ project :

Portugal Rural

- Interterritorial cooperation project initiated under Leader II in 1998 and extended under Leader+ in an association called Proregios with more territories
- Commercial store in Lisbon for all Leader regions
- Products : food, hand-crafted goods
- Actions : action weeks in Lisbon, launching of new products, organisation of a fresh-food market
- Associated projects : pre-prepared baskets of fresh products ('Reciproco')
- Total budget: 519 000 euros



CONSEIL EUROPEEN DES JEUNES AGRICULTEURS

European Council of Young Farmers - Europäischer Rat der Junglandwirte

Ref: CEJA-S-003-2008-EN

**Encouraging Collective Farmers' Marketing Initiatives
Final Conference, 8 May 2008, Brussels**

Pieter van Oost
Young Farmers and collective marketing initiatives

Good afternoon to all of you,

I am Pieter van Oost, President of the Flemish young farmers' organisation Groene Kring and vice-President of the European Council of Young Farmers. I am producing flowers together with my father. We are cultivating more than 700 species of azaleas and rhododendrons that we export across Europe or sell directly to the consumers.

Firstly I would like to thank you for inviting CEJA to this conference.

We, at CEJA, have a strong desire to work closer with researchers. We believe that collaboration between the 2 sectors should be intensified to make EU agriculture more attractive and competitive, and this conference is a good opportunity to give you the feedback you need from the farming sector.

To be honest, I did not know the existence of the COFAMI project, while I am operating within several COFAMIs and benefiting from their strengths in my everyday life!

Actually young farmers are among the most relevant persons who can talk about collective initiatives, as most of them experience it through their collective activities with their father, uncle or a third person. They rarely start their business alone ...

Although you talk about different forms of COFAMIs in your research, this form of collaboration can probably also be taken as a sort of COFAMI.

COFAMIs, an answer to new agricultural challenges

Before speaking more precisely about my own experience of COFAMIs, let me start with a more general approach on how COFAMIs enter into our model of agriculture and can help farmers to face the new challenges of agriculture.

In times of globalisation where international competition becomes fiercer than ever before, the pressure on all economic actors is constantly growing. Easier means for transportation and communication, reduced trade barriers and the spread of technology have combined to sharpen international competition. Farmers are among the first to face this competition and the great challenges of these days are putting more and more pressure on them. Climate change is one of these challenges, as well as ever higher expectations from society. While food demand is currently on top of the agenda at international level, European citizens additionally ask for ever safer and healthier food of high quality, as well as an attractive countryside.

Farmers are asked to produce more quality food in a sustainable way and to provide environmental and social services in rural areas.

It even becomes more and more difficult for farmers to justify the fair price of their products and therefore the right value of their work.

It sounds quite tricky, but young farmers are ready to tackle these challenges, and COFAMIS could be part of the solution, if recognized as such and supported!

COFAMIs, a tool for our model of agriculture

CEJA represents more than 1 million young farmers across Europe that all agreed on a sustainable model of agriculture as an answer to current and future issues. Competitiveness, multifunctionality and innovation are the cornerstones of our model, all based on sustainability and usually directly linked to the territory where our products are coming from. I will give you a few ideas on our approach that supports and can be supported by COFAMIs.

Transparency

At CEJA, we regularly ask for more transparency in the market to better inform the consumers. One possibility of such information could be the mandatory indication of

origin on the products. The diversity and quality of European products are the assets of European agriculture and have to be promoted. A real marketing and promotion policy for European agricultural products has to be put into place, at European level but also at regional and local levels. Linking the product to the territory it was produced on is also a way of recognizing the right added value of the product deriving from European farming in terms of food safety, quality, protection of the environment, traditions and culture.

In that context, COFAMIs can play an important role in developing a marketing strategy on a specific product or group of products, linked to a specific territory. COFAMIs will reinforce the communication visibility of the strategy, but also its economic efficiency, by financing a common advertisement for example.

Cooperation

If we wish to keep this European farming structure which is linked to its territory and keeps rural areas alive, we need to assure collaboration between farmers in order to create a more efficient way of cooperation, as well as greater contractual power that increases the share of the added value for the farmer.

Cooperatives and other forms of COFAMIs between the actors of the food chain are a good way of improving their situation by allowing them to control the processing and sale of their products. Transnational entities could provide one way of adapting to market globalisation and producer organisations could assist small farms to gain a better position on the market.

Even more than that: producer organisations, if they are well managed, can be real partners for the food industry.

Innovation

To remain competitive, young farmers also believe in the necessity to continuously invest in innovation. A stronger link to the research sector and a harmonisation of the acceptance and implementation of the results could facilitate a better access to innovation. This would then help the farmer to faster adapt to the market as well as to new challenges connected to environmental protection and climate change.

The organisation of farmers in COFAMIs can serve as a good tool to work closer and more efficiently with research.

I will give you my personal experience on that particular point: a small part of my professional activity is to create new species of Azaleas. To facilitate the continuous research that is needed for this innovative approach, my father and I belong to a cooperation group gathering 21 members across Belgium who finance a researcher all over the year.

Agro-energies

At CEJA, we also promote production and consumption of agro-energies at local level, to support economic growth, social and territorial cohesion. Production of agro-energies also helps reducing Europe's energy dependency as well as its greenhouse gas emissions, thanks to less imports and therefore less long-distance transports.. CEJA's vision aims at an integrated approach of all available sources of renewable energy at farm level, such as water, wind or solar energy, or the use of micro-generators using local biomass etc ...

To facilitate such optimized use of different sources, small COFAMIs can be implemented. I know for example farmers recuperating energy from a neighbour industry to heat their greenhouses.

Farmers can also gather in COFAMIs for an optimal use of biogas production: biogas enables, for example, electricity production for an engine, which is then used for heating greenhouses while CO2 emissions can be disseminated for some specific inside production such as salads, for example.

Lifelong Learning

Access to innovation and best practices goes also through an easier accessibility of training and counselling for farmers, all along their life. To prepare themselves to the new challenges and be updated on technology innovations, farmers should work closer together to share their experiences and exchange with advisory services.

At CEJA, we try to achieve this objective at European level, but training-oriented COFAMIs can also be a useful tool at national, regional or local level and should be supported by the corresponding authorities.

COFAMIs, what I can bring from my own experience

Because COFAMIs are part of the solution to face new challenges and because COFAMIs are a possible instrument for the implementation of our model of agriculture, I would like to see more collective initiatives around me!

I have the feeling that farmers are afraid to work together, while it is beyond any doubt a wonderful way to go forward on a global point of view, but also on an individual point of view!

Another concrete example: in my region we practice “co-working”, which means that we are a group of farmers that are financing and sharing replacement staff that helps farmers in difficulties, on holidays etc ... this is a way of expressing solidarity between us!

I also see some good emerging initiatives that would deserve more attention:

- For example the idea to create small intermediate enterprises gathering different complementary producers to facilitate a more transparent and direct selling should be encouraged! It would answer to quality and safety demands and ensure transparent prices for consumers, as well as avoid long distance transports.

- Furthermore, we regularly buy, together with other farmers, products such as fertilizers, materials ... etc. This is a kind of non-official collaboration that could be formalized through the creation of a COFAMI, which will help us all to become better organized and work more efficiently!

- In terms of logistics, some farmers in Holland, for example, are organizing themselves in geographic zones according to their production. The idea is to avoid transports and to maximise efficiency for providers, retailers ... etc

These are few examples that could be more supported and encouraged!

Let me conclude now with a few personal remarks, about what should, in my mind, be the frame of a good COFAMI.

I gathered 12 principles that should ensure the success and the durability of a COFAMI:

1. a first essential principle of equality
2. a principle of progressive collaboration: the common work has to go step by step!
3. a win-win principle for all collaborators

4. a principle of complementing each other
5. a principle of a common vision and common objectives
6. a principle of a clear legal agreement between the collaborators (I know a lot of informal collaboration that fails)
7. a principle of open and clear communication between partners
8. very important: a principle of confidence between them
9. a principle of availability
10. a principle of flexibility
11. a principle of open-mindedness on what is happening elsewhere (not only look at your own business)
12. a principle of reliable business

These principles of common work are not very hard to implement and should be supported and supervised by legal authorities to give more weight and maybe more insurance to farmers that hesitate to take part in the adventure!

I think we should, in the first place, encourage farmers to work together, communicate on the different possibilities they have and show them the benefits they could profit from.

Thank you for your attention.

ANNEX

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