ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE In Crop Production

FRENCH CASE STUDY



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PERCEPTION OF BIODIVERSITY

Definition of BIODIVERSITY:

- soil fertility
- microorganism and insects
- pests and auxiliaries,
- crop diversity,
- all the flora and fauna composing their ecosystem

"The aim is to try to do our best to maximize this biodiversity"

Some respondents mention biodiversity as **useful** and **harmful** at the same time. They aim to improve useful biodiversity (positive) in order to fight against pests and diseases (harmful biodiversity).

"One part of biodiversity is useful for crops, and the other part is kind of harmful diversity, such as pests. Then we have to try to put things in place to increase this positive biodiversity as much as possible, which can be a bulwark against harmful biodiversity"

They aim to increase biodiversity but **not** to the extent of economic loss.

"After all, these experiments in our system must remain profitable and financially viable"

DRIVERS OF Change

MOTIVATIONS

- Personal values
- Reducing costs: yields have reached a plateau and inputs are becoming more expensive.
- Climatic event & soil erosion have led to yield losses, which triggered farmers to question conventional agriculture.
- Learning & curiosity
- Generational change

"You have to realize that there is a large generational element which plays a role in the change. My father did it like that, I continue to do it like that"

LIMITATIONS

- **Time consuming**: practices in favor of biodiversity require more time in the field, mainly for observation and maintenance (e.g., hedges).
- Costs: investment into new machinery as investment

BIODIVERSITY IN PRACTICE

What do farmers implement on-farm?



PUBLIC POLICIES & PROGRAMS

EUROPEAN SUBSIDIES

All farmers receive **CAP subsidies**, but they feel under surveillance (satellites etc) and fear losing a part of these subsidies.

"Because at the end of the day, we are still very closely surveilled, especially in relation to CAP subsidies"

NATIONAL SUBSIDIES

"We don't expect anything from them"

A majority of farmers have lost trust in the government and its policies. They feel that policies are **not-well designed** and not **to scale** (44%) (restrictive zoning, restrictive category of access, windfall effects). Government systematically imposes new constraints, new regulations, a lot of **bureaucracy and controls** (39%).

Yet, **33%** of our respondents have applied and received **subisides for new machinery**.

SOLUTIONS

Respondents call for more freedom, autonomy and independence in their work. They would like to see **objective-oriented policies** instead of being told what to do at each step of their work.

OIEE

into plants (hedges) and seeds (for crop diversification and for cover crop)

- Additional administration and controls: respondents perceive new CAP and public policies as supplementary controls over their work. Controls could lead to suppression or reduction of their subsidies.
- Industrial crops
- Losing performance: some participants were afraid not to be able to maintain their yield while reducing their inputs
- Lack of labor

ASPIRATIONS

GIEE



All of our respondent take part in **working groups** so called **GIEE** (Economic and Environmental Interest Groups)

Its advantages: farmers receive advice, they can define their own objectives, can work in groups, share trials and experience. It also reduces the feeling of loneliness front of risk-taking.

SOIL	SOIL CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE	89%	It is a technical challenge. They like that it does not come with a strict dogma, that they can define their own objective without being restricted.
₫	HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE (HVE)	50%	This certification seems to emerge as an alternative option , between conventional and organic agriculture. They work in groups towards technical objectives, receive advice and some subsidies. Disadvantages: French certification, no financial bonuses
	CARBON CREDITS & PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	27%	Some respondents have started to develop partnership with the private sector to bring further income and value to their farm.
SE	AGROFORESTRY	17%	Two respondents mention agroforestry as a long- term project.
	ORGANIC AGRICULTURE	6%	Most respondents do not believe in a 100% organic farming. They believe that market outlets are saturated, specifications are too restrictive , and it requires work they wouldn't like to do themselves, e.g. manual weeding.

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