

## Building farming system resilience in Canton de Vaud

### Farmer workshops to assess and discuss resilience, Vaud Canton

14 December 2017 - 16 January 2018 (1st series)

27 Februar 2018 - 13 March 2018 (2nd series)

### Workshop Report

#### Overview

As part of the Vaud case study “Innovations for building resilience in food systems”, we conducted two series of workshops in the Canton to assess, discuss and build resilience at a farm level with the farmers.

The first workshops, conducted between 14.12.2017 and 16.01.2018, had the following objectives:

- Introduce the study to farmers; and
- Collect data from farmers in diverse situations (products, localisation).

These first workshops (11 total) were conducted covering 10 different areas and gathering a total of 84 farmers, randomly selected (211 farmers called and 84 agreed and joined). Additional data (from 36 farmers) was collected later through individual interviews.

The resulting surveys were then processed to allow for resilience scores to be calculated before inviting farmers to a second workshop.

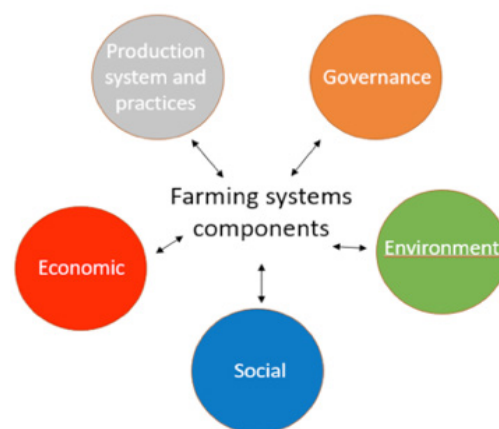


Figure 2: SHARP systemic framework in five sections

The second set of workshops occurred between 27.02.2018 and 13.03.2018 with the following objectives:

- Discuss and validate resilience scores;
- Identify causes for low resilience; and
- Identify potential solutions for higher resilience

Nine such workshops were conducted, covering all areas of the Canton. Only participants from first workshops and individually interviewed farmers were invited to these workshops. A total of 54 farmers participated.

#### First workshops: self-assessments of resilience

Self-assessments of resilience by farmers were carried out using an adapted version of the FAO-designed SHARP tool (Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of climate Resilience of farmers and Pastoralists) on tablets, using an app. This tool assesses resilience at a farm system level, with a holistic approach covering five main components and 52 aspects (e.g. water access). The information is gathered through a few questions. These answers are then translated into scores (between 0 and 10 each) and can be averaged by aspect or component.

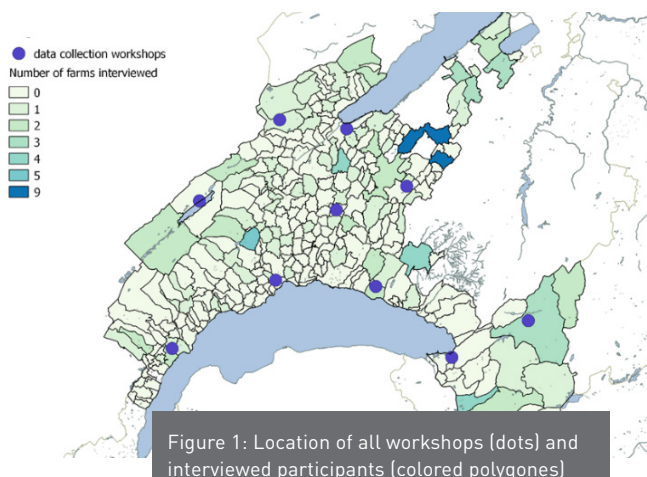


Figure 1: Location of all workshops (dots) and interviewed participants (colored polygons)

## Second workshops: results discussion

Each workshop in the second set was conducted with the same outline and objectives, including:

- A collective agreement on three relevant aspects to further discuss among the six least resilient ranking ones (15 min).
- Individual and collective discussions based on these individual ideas (1.5-2h).

These discussion workshops were carried out in quite different regions in agroecological terms; hence, they reflect issues considered important by farmers of the region. The diversity of participants for each workshop in terms of their farming system allowed for insightful discussions regarding multiple farm situations.

The discussed aspects covered all five sections of the SHARP tool, with recurring aspects being related to policy and norms, marketing, resource use and agroecological practices.

### Agroecological practices

Agroecological practices such as mixed cropping and agroforestry are not often implemented in the Canton and their absence was identified as a source of vulnerability.

This situation seems to be partially caused by a lack of information regarding these practices from a technical and economic perspective. Further practical research and science popularisation on this topic should thus strongly be encouraged.

Regarding agroforestry, another major issue was the need for a long term vision while being blinded by a fluctuating agricultural policy and blocked by land tenure constraints.

## Policy and norms

The agricultural policy was often criticised during workshops. One should note the particularly tense situation on this topic at the time of our study (vote on food security followed by controversial declarations by federal adviser J. Schneider-Ammann).

There is strong belief in the need for tax barriers to protect the Swiss food market from imports.

Fluctuations in the agricultural policy are one of the greatest uncertainties for Swiss farms because they have over the years become more and more dependent on them for their economic viability.

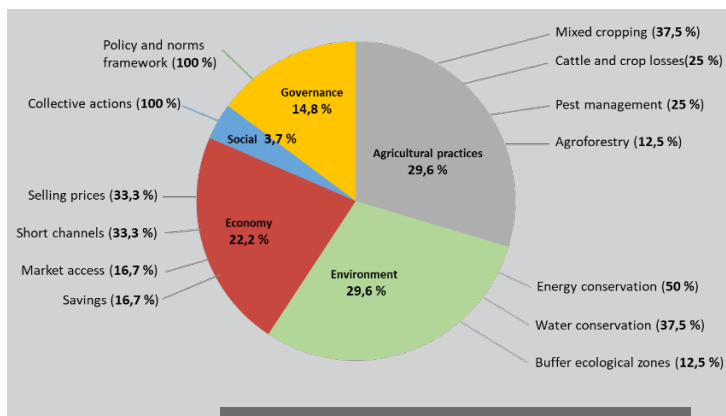
## Marketing

Many farmers discussed their dependence on unpredictable commodity markets and issues they faced trying to reach a higher added value from their production.

There is strong interest in short value chains and collective commercialisation but local situations and competition between farmers deters many to apply it with their production. Ever stricter norms regarding direct food selling is also considered a major obstacle.

## Resource use

Climate change and environmental pressure bring the focus on environmental aspects. However, resource efficiency at a farm level seems limited by strict norms and little economic incentive to introduce renewable energy sources and water saving infrastructures.



Picture 3: Aspects discussed during workshops

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