

Community Supported Agriculture: An overview of characteristics, diffusion and political interaction in France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland

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Abbreviations

ACP	Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité (Contract-based agriculture of proximity)
AMAP	Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne (Association to maintain small-scale family farming)
AP	Agriculture Paysanne
ASC	Agriculture Soutenu par une Communauté (Agriculture supported by a community)
BAH	(Bajo el Asfalto esta la Huerta – under the asphalt, there is the vegetable garden)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCA	Community Connected Agriculture
CFA	Community Financed Agriculture
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
DAGE	Domaine de l'agriculture (Agricultural domain)
DDH	NPO "Le Début des Haricots"
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (United Kingdom)
DGA	Direction Général de l'Agriculture (General directorate of agriculture)
DT	Département du Territoire (Department of the territory)
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EEA	European Environment Agency
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FRACP	Fédération Romande D'agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité (Romandian federation for a contract-based agriculture of proximity)
GAA	Groupement d'Achats Alimentaires (Food shopping group)
GAC	Groupe d'Achats Communs (Common purchasing group)
GAS	Gruppo d'Acquisto Solidale (Solidarity-based purchasing group)
GASAP	Groupes d'Achat Solidaires de l'Agriculture Paysanne (Solidarity-based purchasing groups for small-scale farming)
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicles
IBGE	Institut bruxellois pour la gestion de l'environnement, l'administration de l'environnement de la région Bruxelles-Capitale (Institute of Brussels for the management of the environment)
INPI	Institut Nationale de la Propriété Industrielle (National institute for industrial property)
LFSC	Local Food Supply Chains
LID	Landwirtschaftlicher Informationsdienst
LMCU	Communauté Urbaine de Lille (Urban community of Lille)
MIRAMAP	Mouvement inter-régional des AMAP (Inter-regional movement of the AMAPs)
NPO	Non-profit organisation
OPAGE	Office de Promotion des Produits Agricoles de Genève (Office for the promotion of agricultural products from Geneva)
PACA	Région Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur
URGENCI	An Urban–Rural Network: Generating New Forms of Exchange between Citizens
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Presentation of the Researching Bodies

ACTeon is a research and consultancy company specialised in the development and implementation of environmental policy. Its expertise lies with the “soft” elements of policy development, i.e. economic analyses, social assessments, integrated approaches, institutional assessments, participatory processes and mediation.

From a single person business in 2003, it is today developing into an active European network, working mostly in France and Central and Eastern Europe. Activities have also been initiated in the Mediterranean basin.

ACTeon has developed a unique expertise in the field of water policy and management at European, country and regional/river basin scales. In particular, it is playing a leading role in supporting the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive – providing support to the setting up of methodologies, the development of technical and socio-economic assessments, the animation of participatory stakeholder processes etc. as well as linking assessments and policy making in the context of the preparation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMP).

ACTeon is also very active in supporting the convergence between agriculture and the environment. It is developing tools for assessing the environmental and economic impact of different (agriculture and water) policy scenarios. And it provides support to the development of strategies and plans to enhance the integration of agriculture and the environment.

More recently, it has enlarged its expertise base and initiated activities into new environmental policy areas, in particular (i) energy and climate change, (ii) rural development (territorial diagnosis as support to sustainable development strategies), (iii) nature protection and biodiversity (including the protection of wetlands) and (iv) marine/coastal areas.

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DIE AGRONAUTEN are a non-profit research society for sustainable regional agriculture based in south-west Germany. The motivation for our work lies in: respect for the work of farmers as land stewards and food providers, the advancement of alternative economic paradigms, the potential of regional value-added cycles and the promotion of a new societal discourse on food and agriculture. Inspiration for founding DIE AGRONAUTEN was also the obvious lack of practical research investigating innovative forms of land-use and communicating results of the research outside of academic circles. The members of DIE AGRONAUTEN come from different backgrounds including farmers, project developers, sociologists, geographers and economists.

DIE AGRONAUTEN believe that agriculture has an importance beyond direct food production, that social and ecological aspects must be integrated into any meaningful (e)valuation and that the discourse on the future of agriculture should be more embedded in society. Therefore innovative methods of research are used and the results of the studies are presented to the wider public. The regional perspective is understood as the most suitable level of investigation and communication. DIE AGRONAUTEN use integrative, interdisciplinary and participatory approaches.

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1 Introduction

In the 21st century, societies face new and unprecedented challenges. The public discourse in the western world is no longer exclusively focused on economic growth but increasingly on life quality and sustainability. The case of agriculture exemplifies this very well: After the end of the Second World War Europe has seen an unparalleled “modernisation” in agricultural production with technological progress and a green revolution, supported by an EU framework known as Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This has increased productivity tremendously, provided food security and reduced food prices. However, the advancement of this new food regime, backed by policy, too often comes along with undesirable social and environmental consequences which have received more widespread attention recently (see e.g. EEA 2010, The European Environment - State and Outlook & European Commission 2011).

Main points of criticism of conventional large-scale industrial agriculture include the high environmental externalities and the reliance on high levels of external input such as fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides and fossil fuels (see chapter 1.1. for details). Another aspect is the expulsion of small scale multifunctional farms and thus the change of landscapes and employment structures (chapter 1.2.). Further criticism reaches beyond the production and also problematizes i) the logistics of food transport and distribution (chapter 1.3.), and ii) the increased speculation and commodification of land and food (chapter 1.4.).

Last but not least, the perceived increase of food industry scandals like the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD), salmonella and dioxin in eggs, BSE and the Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease have increased “societal concerns over the environmental and food safety/health dimensions of industrialized farming practices” (Winter 2003, In: Ilbery & Maye 2005).

As a reaction to this, new modes of agriculture have developed or re-developed in Europe since the 1970s, especially a recent shift to certified organic production, local food supply chains (LFSC) and new consumer-producer relationships. A promising approach addressing sustainable, local production and direct and partnership-based consumption has become known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). In contrast to intensive industrial farming and centralised food industries, CSA promotes a sustainable and diversified pattern of regional and local production with closer connections and solidarity between farmers and consumers, and with a high care for public health and environment as it is recommended by the Agricultural and Rural Convention (Agricultural and Rural Convention 2010).

The comparative overview presented here addresses the context and the characteristics of CSA-initiatives in France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium. CSA is a socio-economic concept of agricultural production and distribution that is marked by a direct and proximate producer-consumer relation. A CSA consists of a community of individuals who commit support (in different ways) to a farming operation, thereby getting involved in food production. Support can be physical, financial and consumption-related and is often a long-term commitment. There is a variety of collective and territorial schemes and organisational forms. One common trademark is that the initiatives promote sustainable and organic farming, fair prices, local solutions and a strong community connectivity with agriculture. Furthermore, the communities guarantee to share the benefits as well as the risks.

Alternatives to conventional agriculture, including the model of CSA are however not undisputed. Paarlberg for instance puts the criticism of conventional farming in the context of prosperous, well-fed modern societies, where the science and economics of agriculture tend to be misunderstood because few people know farming first hand (Paarlberg 2009). According to this view, a main advantage of conventional agriculture lies in its efficiency: less land is used and less environment and landscape is changed for the same agricultural output.

With the same reasoning, representatives of the agro-industries as well as some scientists and policy advisors have been defending intensive food production as necessary to fight hunger in a world that will soon accommodate 9 billion people (Foresight 2011). According to this line of argumentation, organic agriculture, multifunctional small and medium scale farms as well as CSA are no realistic options on a large scale but rather symptoms of a post-modern quench for life quality and a romanticised step backwards.

Often, such important discussions are not based on research but rather ideological and polemic. Regarding the state of knowledge of CSA, there is lack of evidence where and how CSA initiatives function and in what societal, political and institutional framework they are set. This study aims to contribute to the discussion by combining data from basic research with a comparative analysis. The research shows that the various CSA-projects differ a lot from each other and that there is a broad variety of approaches within the CSA-movement.

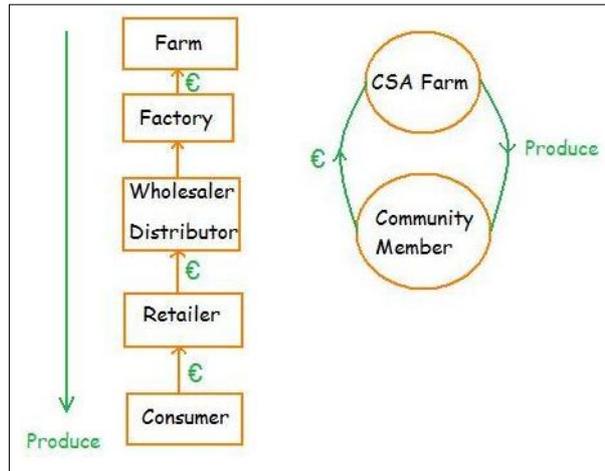


Figure 1 Money and produce flow conventional retail versus CSA

Source: Cahill 2009

This report starts with a description of the methodological approach. In chapter Two, a brief contextualisation of European Agriculture is given, referring to production, farms and farmers, logistical aspects, the global agricultural commodity market and the institutional setting. Chapter Three introduces CSA from a historical perspective and chapter Four outlines the definition, state and dynamic of CSA in France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium including the actual status of the network. The Fifth chapter informs about connexions between CSA and politics. The report finishes with a comparative analysis and recommendations in the last chapter.

2 Methodology of the Research

This research was conducted from February to August 2011 to investigate Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in four central European Countries. The comparative study analyses the context and the characteristics as well as the role of politics in the respective countries and derives first analytical insights from the results. In order to achieve such an overview and analysis, a four-step methodological approach was developed (see Figure 2) where structure, objective, organisation and target audience of the report are determined.

Phase Zero started with a literature research analysing the relevant literature from the countries as well as state of the art-research on CSA. This work also relied on the experiences of a previous study undertaken by ACTeon on local food systems in the Alsace region.

Furthermore, experts and activists were contacted to get basic information about the situation in the different countries. Amongst others, such stakeholders were contacted during a workshop organized by the URGENCI network where experts of CSA from all over Europe came together to exchange experiences and to discuss about the best ways of cooperation. The first exchanges helped to get in contact with different people involved thematically and suitable experts for the interviews were identified.

In **Phase One** the interview guidelines (see appendix 1) were prepared and potential interview partners were contacted by email and asked for an appointment. It was decided that the interviews should be qualitative and undertaken by telephone. The interview partners were scholars as well as activists from the national networks with a good overview of CSA in their respective country. In addition they were asked about policy implication of the subject and for further interview partners primarily from municipalities and from politics. The results of the interviews were summarized in an article about every country consisting in a chapter about the definition of CSA, the actual situation and the implication of politics. These were presented at a workshop in Freiburg/Germany about alternative economy in the summer of 2011.

Phase Two explicitly researched the political dimension of CSA initiatives. Interviews with politicians and administrators involved in these projects as well as CSA members were conducted. Their engagement and the general importance and feasibility of CSA were discussed on an economic, social and ecological level. Furthermore a transversal analysis

was undertaken to compare the different implementations of this innovative approach to agriculture.

Phase Three was used to finalize the report and to get supplementary information when needed.

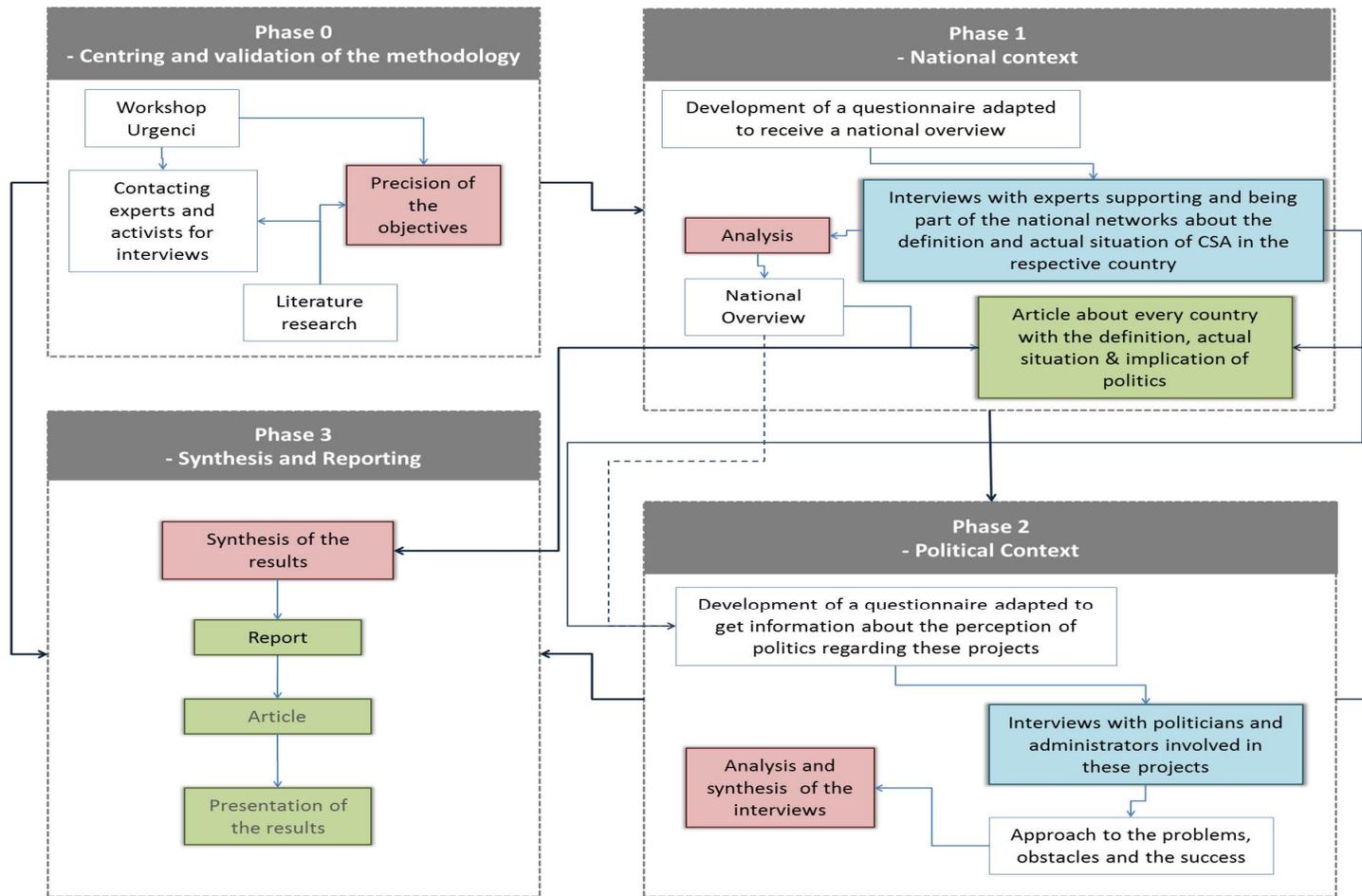


Figure 2 Concept of the study

Source: Own scheme

3 The Context of European Agriculture Today

In this chapter the context of European Agriculture is briefly outlined, with special focus on the environmental impacts of agricultural production, the developments and situation of farms and farmers, the logistics of food distribution, the global markets and the institutional policy frame (Common Agricultural Policy).

3.1 Impacts of Agricultural Production

Agricultural production in Europe has changed drastically since the end of the Second World War. Initially, based on the experiences of the Second World War and the geopolitical changes of the emerging Cold War, food security was the most pressing issue. Together with technical (e.g. machinery) and scientific (e.g. hybrid seeds) innovations and production modes that increasingly relied on the growing supply of fuel (for farming vehicles, fertiliser, transport etc.), an agricultural system emerged that led to surpluses of production. However, these enormous surpluses went along with serious environmental impacts – mainly on biodiversity, soil, landscape, water quality and quantity.

According to a study of the European Environment Agency (EEA) the dramatic loss of biodiversity in European agro-ecosystems can be attributed to the intensification and mechanisation of agriculture. The decline of farmland birds, butterflies and pollination insects is an alarming trend¹ that is caused amongst others by a loss of hedges and more and more monoculture fields. The relevance of this is illustrated by the fact that agricultural areas cover half of Europe's land area (EEA 2010).

The main impacts of conventional agriculture on soil are erosion, contamination, loss of soil structure, a decline in soil biodiversity and organic matter (EEA 2010).

The impacts of large specialised agriculture on landscapes are visible when visiting agricultural heartlands of Europe: The Po River plains, Southern Spain, the Benelux states, Bretagne and Basin Parisienne in France, Lower Saxony in Germany, South Western England. Huge units of monotonous crop fields, greenhouses or animal husbandry dominate the landscape.

¹ See numbers in EEA 2010 page 6 and 7.

In the Water Framework Directive (WFD), which is the most substantial piece of water legislation produced by the European Commission for achieving sustainable water management in Europe, the agricultural sector is defined as one of the key polluters. In a report by Ecologic (Dworak et al. 2010) assessing agricultural measures included in the draft River Basin Management Plans, the authors conclude that there is “evidence that the agricultural sector generates a significant pressure on both surface waters and ground waters in terms of quality and quantity. The structure and scope of all these problems vary widely among river basins, but they are insistently found.” (Dworak et al. 2010)

In the U.K., in 1996, the costs of the damages caused by agricultural practices “to water (pollution and eutrophication, a process whereby excessive plant growth depletes oxygen in the water), air (emissions of greenhouse gases), soil (off-site erosion damage, emissions of greenhouse gases), and biodiversity” was \$2.6 billion or 9% of average yearly gross farm receipts for the 1990s (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005, p. 6). Furthermore through intensive exploitation (intensive land use, livestock and the conversion into monocultures), agriculture contributes to the release of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. At the same time, agriculture is directly affected by the consequences of climate change: drought, water scarcity and heavy rain events increase the risks that farmers are facing.

3.2 Farmers and Farms

The decreasing number of farms is not a new phenomenon: In Germany, between the late 19th Century and the late 20th Century, the percentage of citizens employed in farming dropped from 47% to 3%, and in Denmark from 48% to 6%. The labour initially went from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector. The advantages of conventional agriculture and the change of production factors where technology and capital replace labour since the 1950s have however accelerated the reduction of farm numbers (see Figure 3) and the concentration into bigger farms, especially since the 1970s (see Figure 4). An EU Agricultural Economic Brief states that there is a prevailing trend “towards fewer, larger and more capital-intensive farms” and that there is “a declining farming population with an increasing average age” (European Commission 2011). The number of farms in Europe is still decreasing rapidly: in the EU-27, a reduction by 7.8% was observed from 2003 to 2007 (European Commission. Eurostat (a)). In the four countries of this study, the tendency is the same (see Figure 5), although the decline was much faster in France (-14%) than e.g. in Switzerland (-6%) (European Commission. Eurostat (b) & Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft). As the trend of absorbing agricultural workers in industry slowed down in Europe since the mid-Seventies, unemployment increased.

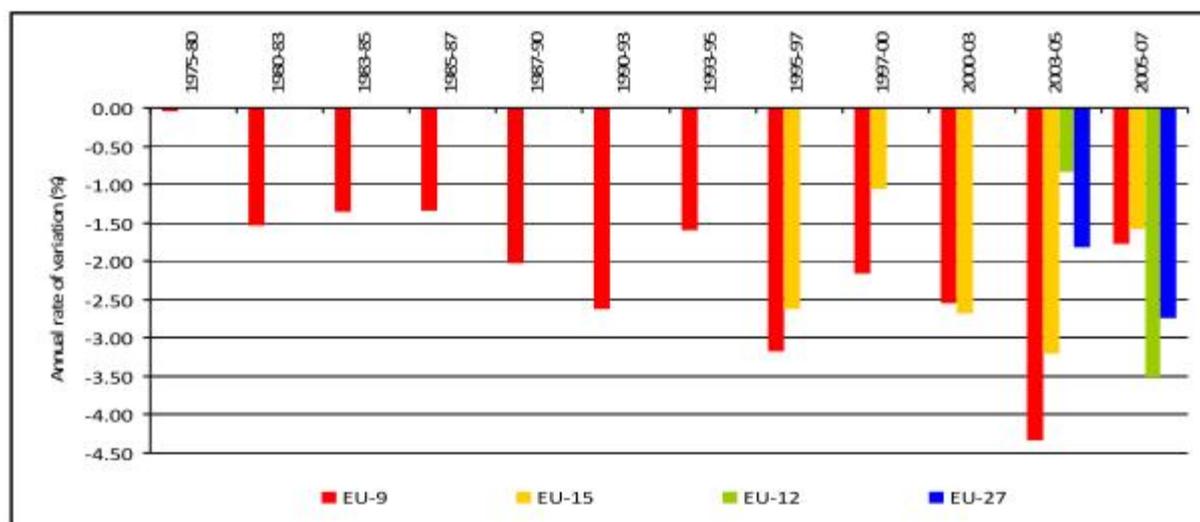


Figure 3 Annual rate of change in the number of farms in the EU, 1975-2007

Source: EUROSTAT, Farm Structure Survey, 1975-2007, In: European Commission 2011

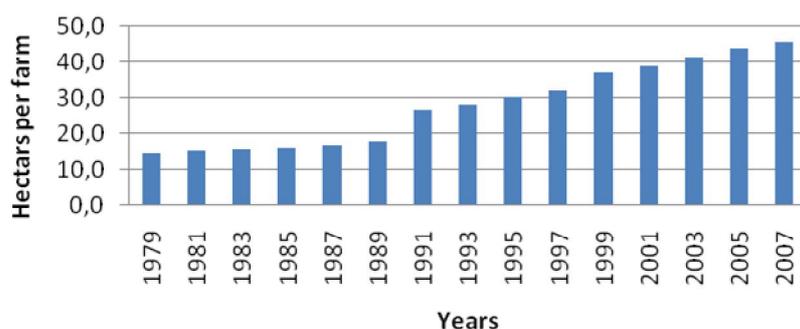


Figure 4 Hectares per farm in Germany 1979 – 2007

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland

	Total number of holdings (in 1.000)					Change 2003-2007	Change 2003-2010
	2000	2003	2005	2007	2010		
Belgium	61,7	54,9	51,5	48,0	42,9	-13%	-22%
Germany	472,0	412,3	389,9	370,5	299,1	-10%	-27%
France	663,8	614,0	567,1	527,4	514,8	-14%	-16%
Switzerland	70,5	65,9	63,6	61,8	59,1	-6%	-10%
EU-27⁽¹⁾	8 036,0	15 021,4	14 482,0	13 700,4	8 919,2	-9%	-41%

(1) For 2010 the total EU 27 includes only the countries with provisional results

Figure 5 Total number of holdings in Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland and the EU-27

Source: European Commission. Eurostat (c) & Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft

At present, more than half of the farmers are older than 55 years (European Commission 2011) and succession poses a problem as fewer and fewer young people are willing or able to continue farming. Rural areas become depopulated and agricultural land is lost to speculation as the competition between arable areas and building land is increasing, especially close to urban areas. Furthermore, young farmers who do not inherit a farm, have to face unaffordable costs. High pressure and financial burdens have thus been leading to personal problems for some farmers. A dual trend can be observed in European Agriculture: today, farming either implies very high technical standards, the intensification and specialisation of the production or the farms are abandoned. Finally it is also worth noticing that agricultural production has increasingly concentrated in certain regions of Europe, for instance those characterised by favourable transport conditions like harbours (Choplin et al. 2011).

3.3 Food Logistics

The de-linking of farmers and consumers and thus the nebulosity of the “how” and “where” it was produced has been a growing concern for consumers, producers and politicians. The year-round availability of exotic fruit and vegetables and the fact that regional and seasonal food is often rather the exception in the supermarkets has raised questions about the environmental, social and indeed economic logic of the current food trade. Especially the issue of transportation of food has caused much discussion. Increasingly streamlined global transport and distribution logistics and the supply policy of huge retail chains like Tesco, Carrefour, Wal-Mart etc. as well as consumer demand are not only affecting regional production and eating habits but have also serious social and ecological impacts. These impacts can be seen for instance in the employment market, the energy balance, carbon dioxide emissions, air pollution, congestion, accidents and noise. The changes are furthermore leading to a relativity of regional identity, where the apples bought in the apple region are from the other side of the world or where the ingredients for the local speciality come from afar. A report produced for DEFRA (2005) sees the following points as most relevant for the dramatic changes that have occurred in the food production and supply chain in the UK (these facts are relevant in most countries in Europe):

- Concentration of the food supply base into fewer, larger suppliers, partly to meet demand for bulk year-round supply of uniform produce;
- Globalisation of the food industry, with an increase in food trade (imports and exports) and wider sourcing of food within the UK and overseas;

- Major changes in delivery patterns with most goods now routed through supermarket regional distribution centres, and a trend towards use of larger Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs);
- Centralisation and concentration of sales in supermarkets, with a switch from frequent food shopping (on foot) at small local shops to weekly shopping by car at large out of town supermarkets.

The debate about food miles has shown that the comparative measurement of the impacts (e.g. carbon footprint) are often complex and that there are also advocates of such global food trade that highlight the benefits for the consumers, developing nations and business. However, the direct environmental, social and economic costs of food transport are estimated to be over 10 billion € in the UK each year, mainly due to congestion (DEFRA 2005). These costs are not visible in the shop.

3.4 Global Markets and Speculation

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) states that the gains that have been achieved in agricultural production have not only come at growing costs in the form of the degradation of many environmental services and increased risks of non-linear changes in ecosystems, but also at the exacerbation of poverty for some people and growing inequalities and disparities across groups of people. This is linked to the increasing competition in global markets where – in the context of increasingly open markets and the shut-down of protectionist barriers - small and medium scale farmers are forced to compete with agro-industries and are increasingly dependent on world market prices. Mazoyer and Roudart (2006) link the low international food product prices, shaped by the high productivity of industrial agriculture, to poverty as peasant farmers cannot renew their means of production which is blocking their development. The problem of dependency on resource markets has been richly documented (see e.g. the cases of price drops for producers of cocoa, tea, bananas and coffee, see e.g. FAO, 2002). Furthermore, since the mid-1990s, regulations on commodity markets have been steadily abolished so that contracts to buy and sell foods were turned into "derivatives" that could be bought and sold among traders and a market in food speculation has been growing. Speculation with agricultural commodities has, amongst other reasons, been linked to the price hikes in 2008, which disproportionately affected poor people around the globe (see e.g. Foodwatch 2011). A study by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (2008) shows that speculation is a major contributor to extreme price volatility.

3.5 Institutional Setting

The politics of European agriculture are to a large extent determined by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The latter is the most integrated of all EU policies and absorbs a large proportion of the EU budget (48% in 2006). When started in 1962, the main objective of the CAP was to increase food production and productivity and make Europe self-sufficient. The instruments of the CAP were import taxes to protect the farmers from foreign imports, intervention prices guaranteeing farmers stable prices, export subsidies to sell the surpluses internationally at lower prices and structural modernisation. Technical transformation and support of the CAP made the European Economic Community's agriculture as competitive as the one of the United States. The productivity was so high that problems occurred because of overproduction, notably the dumping of subsidised products abroad in developing countries with drastic impacts on small and medium sized farms there. The intensification resulted in environmental externalities; directly in Europe but also in the Americas (e.g. Brazil) due to the import-tax-free supply of livestock fodder like soja, which is often produced in very unsustainable ways. However, cheap prices for consumers and food security were important achievements so that it took the milk lakes and butter mountains and very high costs of the CAP that some issues were half-heartedly addressed (through milk quotas and certain production limits) in the 1980s.

In 1992, in a time of an increasingly neoliberal agenda, reforms to the CAP were introduced. Import taxes were reduced and subsidies abolished, which paved the way for the creation of the World Trade Organisation in 1995. However, this has been criticised as a fake reform, due to the fact that direct payments to farmers were established whilst the official subsidies have been dismantled. Direct payments officially did not pose a distortion of competition.

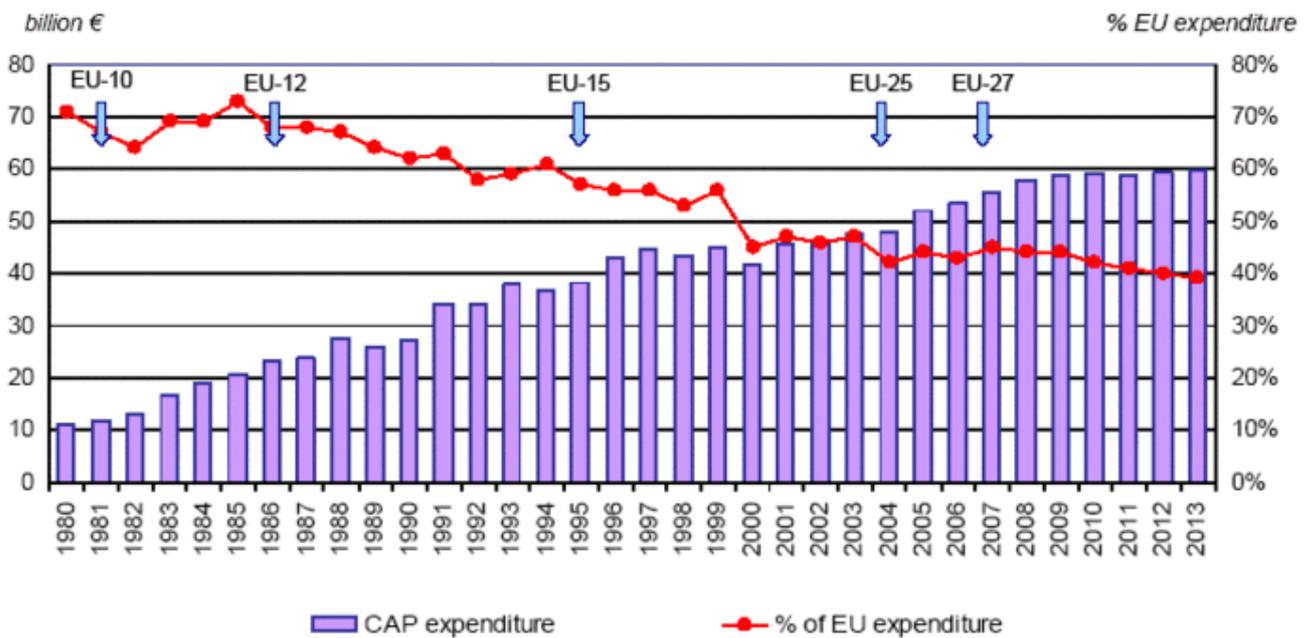


Figure 6 CAP expenditure and part of the EU budget

Source: IAASTD 2009

Since 1999 the CAP consists of two pillars with the second pillar (currently about 11% of the budget) supporting rural development.

The CAP implementation has been criticised by farmers and NGOs for favouring notably big farms. For example, about 30% of the direct payments over 100,000 EUR are given to 1.7% of the companies in Germany. In the EU, 6% of the farms receive 60% of the subsidies. Only 2% of the farms cultivate more than 100 hectare, but 47% of the farmland. These farms receive the highest part of the money. In Germany, 0.5% receive 300,000 EUR per year, but 70% less than 10,000 EUR (Meine-Landwirtschaft.de, 2010).

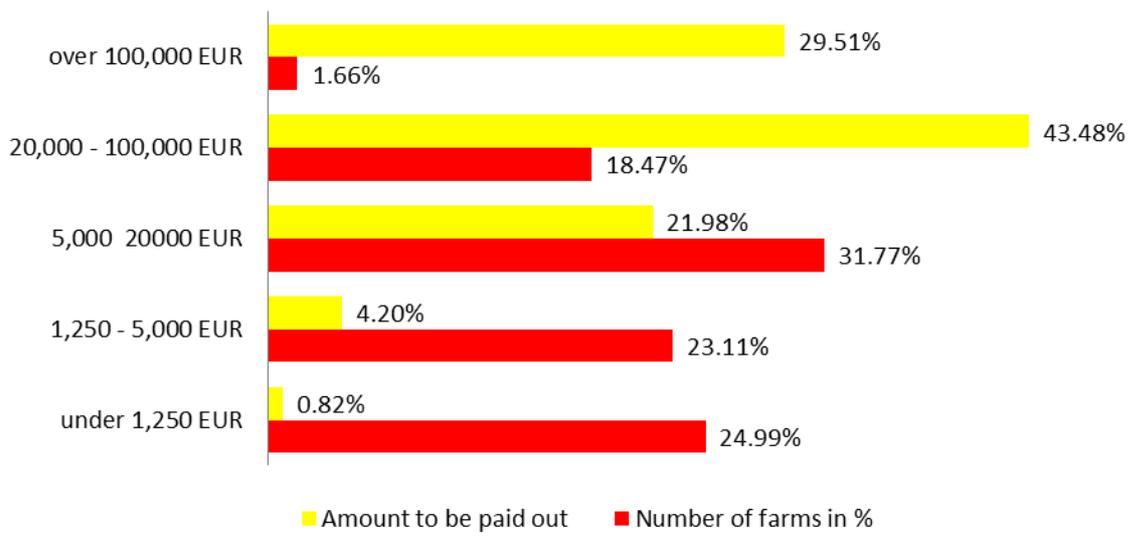


Figure 7 Repartition of the direct payments of the EU (2009) in Germany upon the size of the farms and the amount of the paying out

Source: Meine-Landwirtschaft.de, 2010

4 History of CSA

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) developed in Japan, Germany and Switzerland, independently of each other starting in the 1960s. In Japan, in particular, women founded *Teikeis*, (which is often translated with “to give a face to the farmer of the family” but which actually means “partnership” or “cooperation”) (David-Leroy & Girou 2009; Schwartz). The main motivation for these initiatives were environmental concerns, concerns about food quality and an interest in setting up a non-conventional distribution system based on direct links between producers and consumers.

In Geneva, Switzerland, a food-alliance of producers and consumers was launched in the 1970s, probably following a Chilean example. Jan Vander Tuin started the first project, a bio-dynamic farm near Zurich, named Topanimbur, having the same principles like CSAs nowadays.

In Germany, in 1968, Heiloh Loss and Carl-August Loss decided to donate their property to a land trust. Through this action, Traugher Groh and other people could start an experiment according to their own principles and ideas of sustainable agriculture and of a good way of living together in a community. They leased the farm and started to apply their concept on it:

“The new farm they created together, Buschberghof, has proved that free individuals can cooperate in a farm operation that works land held in trust, rather than as private property” (Groh & McFadden 1990: 1).

It was only in 1988 that the Buschberhof was officially named CSA. Groh started a community supported farm in 1986 in the USA, the Temple Wilton Community Farm, on the model of the Buschberghof, where he had worked for 20 years. At the same time, Jan Vander Tuin brought the CSA concept to the USA, too. Robyn Van En supported the idea of CSA at conferences of biodynamic and organic farmers. The great success of this model is illustrated by the fact that by 2005, the number of CSA initiatives in the United States had risen to 1144 (Stränz 2009; Henderson 2010; David-Leroy & Girou 2009).

Today, CSA exists all over the world. Very often, the main ideas are the same but the implementation is different. Furthermore, there are many different names and networks. Urgenci, an international network to link the different movements of CSA and projects which reinforce the local partnership between producers and consumers, brings “citizens, small farmers, consumers, activists and concerned political actors together” (Urgenci 2011). Some

movements of CSA are listed in the following (inter alia based on Urgenci; David-Leroy & Girou 2009):

- ACP (Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité – contract-based agriculture of proximity) in French-speaking Switzerland
- AMAP (Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne - Association to maintain small-scale farming) in France
- Andelslandbruk (andel = part, andelslandbruk = CSA in Norwegian) in Norway
- ASC (Agriculture Soutenue par une Communauté – Agriculture supported by a community) in Quebec, Canada
- BAH (Bajo el Asfalto esta la Huerta – under the asphalt, there is the vegetable garden) in Spain
- CSA (Community-Supported-Agriculture) in the Anglo-Saxon countries (US, UK) and in Flanders
- GAA (Groupement d'Achats Alimentaires (Food shopping group) in Wallonia
- GAC (Groupe d'Achats Communs (Common purchasing group) in Wallonia
- GAS (Gruppo d'Acquisto Solidale - Solidarity-based purchasing groups) in Italy
- GASAP (Groupes d'Achat Solidaires de l'Agriculture Paysanne - Solidarity-based purchasing groups for small-scale farming) in Brussels
- Gela (Gemeinsam Landwirtschaften – Farming together) in Austria
- Reciproco (Relações de Cidadania entre Produtores e Consumidores – Solidary relations between producers and consumers) in Portugal
- Regionale Vertragslandwirtschaft (Contract-based regional agriculture) in German-speaking Switzerland
- Solidarische Landwirtschaft (Agriculture in solidarity) in Germany
- Teikeis (Partnerships) in Japan
- The Vodeselteams (Foodteams) in Flanders
- Tieša Pirkšana (Direct sale or green baskets) in Latvia

Why did CSA Develop?

Ilbery & Maye (2005) observed different developments that resulted from the extreme changes in the agricultural sector and the increasing uncertainties of consumers and producers in western society, notably

- “the turn to more sustainable farming methods;
- the creation of ‘local’ and ‘shorter’ food supply chains; and
- new forms of discerning and reflexive consumerism”;

A common reaction was “the growth in food purchases from outlets such as farmers’ markets, box and food link schemes, farm shops, home deliveries and community supported agriculture” (Ilbery & Maye 2005).

Agriculture is seen as the fundament of our today’s population. Groh & McFadden (1990) write that “our relationship with nature and the ways that we use the land will determine the future of the earth.” Groh can be seen as one of the fathers of CSA. In the book “The farms of tomorrow” he describes why we need this kind of farm.

CSA aims to reestablish the link between consumers and producers to reinforce the relationship of people with nature. Although CSA projects differ, as we will see in this report, several characteristics are similar: a strong dedication to quality which is manifested in the fact that most of the farms are organic or biodynamic; cultivation of a great diversity of crops; integration of livestock in a multifunctional farm. Furthermore, in general, there are more people working on a CSA farm than on a conventional farm and also more people participating in the agricultural life (Groh & McFadden 1990).

Groh & McFadden (1990) criticize that the term Community Supported Agriculture could be misleading: “The primary need is not for the farm to be supported by the community, but rather for the community to support itself through farming.” A highly valued agriculture is in the interest of everybody to live healthy and in an agreeable environment. Also the work of the farmers has to be valued sufficiently and supported because “a small minority of farmers, laden with debt and overburdened with responsibility, cannot possibly meet the needs of all the people.”

For Groh, food supply, environmental care and educational responsibility are the three most essential elements of agriculture and of CSA:

Food – By many people involved in CSA food is seen as more than a nutrient supply for the physical elements of the body - it is valued as a gift of the earth that is linked to both mental

and physical health. The choice of seeds and food are perceived to be a political action (see Figure 8).

Environment – Farms have a great influence on landscapes. The concept of CSA emphasizes the role of the farmer as land steward. Many CSAs have the ideal to uphold a “balanced relationship between animal husbandry, field and pasture on one hand, and forest, hedgerow, water, and fallow land on the other” (Groh and McFadden 1990).

Education – Throughout most of agricultural history, food production was determined by environmental circumstances and nature educated the people. A lot of knowledge about plants and the soil kept by farmers is at risk of being forgotten and many links between farming and nature have been broken. Many CSA movements define themselves through re-linking farms and nature – farms become a place to re-learn forgotten skills and abilities (see e.g. Strout Community Agriculture principles, 2011).



Figure 8 CSA as R-Evolution, website of a CSA in Oregon, US

Source: Revolution Garden CSA 2011

Kraiß and van Elsen (2010) have outlined the potential of CSA in the following figure:

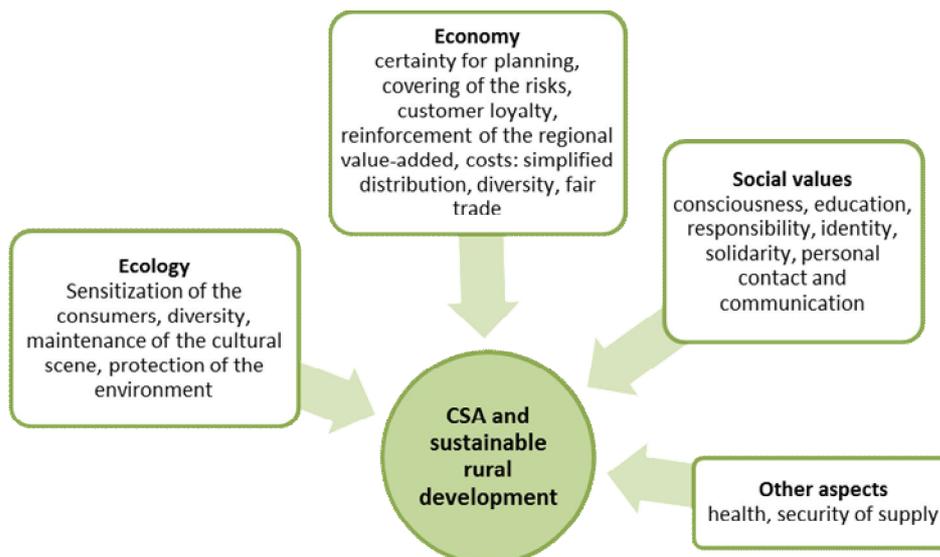


Figure 9 Potentials of CSAs

Source: Translated after Kraiß & van Elsen 2010

5 National Overviews

As shown in the previous chapter, CSA developed independently in many countries. The great diversity of CSA-projects is not only visible in international differences but can also be witnessed within the borders of a country. The national overviews presented in the following aim at outlining the main characteristics of CSA in the respective countries, thereby giving a general introduction to the situation of CSA in Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland.

5.1 France

5.1.1 The Definition of AMAP

In France, different ideas of CSA are represented in AMAPs. This acronym stands for “Association pour le maintien d’une agriculture paysanne”, an association for the preservation of peasant farming. The ten principles of the “Agriculture Paysanne” (AP) are the basis for this concept (see appendix 2).

The “Confédération Paysanne”, a French farmer’s union, describes the AP as “a form of agriculture that respects the farmer and answers to the demands of the society” (Confédération paysanne). Its ten principles which are based on social, ecological and economical aspects are also the basis of the AMAPs in France. The society occupies a central position in the concept of the AP. Not only the production of food, but also the reinforcement of rural areas, the protection of sites and the maintenance of the biodiversity are very important.

An AMAP describes the partnership between a community of consumers and one producer in a jointly founded association. The goal is to support the existence and the continuation of local and sustainable agriculture in a socially fair and ecologically sound manner (MIRAMAP (a)). Consumers become members of the association and partners of the farm. In general, their membership should last at least six month which equals a season of growing vegetables. While the consumers guarantee their support, the farmer promises regular deliveries of his products in high quality (Interview with Déhondt 2011).

The charter of the AMAPs (see appendix 3) defines the fundamental philosophy of the concept: the development of sustainable agriculture and an economic system based on solidarity bridging the divide between cities and rural areas. Primarily, the idea of an AMAP is to maintain small-sized farms, to increase their resilience and to support a transformation

towards sustainable farming in France. As such, the charter has to be respected. However, each partnership can determine its own structure and way of farming within these principles.

The AMAP charter was written in 2003 by the regional network Alliance Provence and is based on 18 principles. The first principle is the reference to the “Agriculture Paysanne” (peasant agriculture): respect for the environment, protection of biodiversity and fertile soils, and work without pesticides and chemical fertilizer is demanded. Other principles are e.g. that livestock breeding and the growing of vegetables have to be carried out respecting environmental standards. By signing the contract, which has to be signed directly by the group of consumers and the producer without a middleman, the charter of the AMAPs has to be accepted. Furthermore, all arrangements between the two parties have to be recorded in this agreement.

The 16th principle lists the solidarity of the consumers with the producer in case of a lost harvest. In this situation, the risk should be shared within the community. This approach distinguishes AMAPs from other projects such as box schemes which also support sustainable agriculture but where in general, the risks of losses are carried by the farmer and are not shared voluntarily (Interview with Déhondt, 2011). However, farms which have shared all their annual costs between their members exist just on the verge. Bougherara, Grolleau & Mzoughi (2009) found that in France, despite of the agreement of risk sharing, some farmers of CSA-farms buy additional products in case of a diminished harvest in order to be able to deliver sufficient quantities of food. According to the charter, the delivery of products of other farms is only permitted when the members of the AMAP have agreed.

The product range differs from AMAP to AMAP. Very often farmers are part of several AMAPs but rarely sell 100% of their products within these partnerships; to diversify their clientele, they sell their harvest through diverse local distribution channels like on-farm-sale, markets and collective shops which are managed and shared with other farmers. Occasionally, products are sold to wholesalers such as Biocoop (Interview with Déhondt, 2011).

Also the consumers' groups can have contracts with several AMAPs with different producers. When they work within AMAPs, the farms remain specialized and do not offer an enormous diversity of products. In order to ensure a certain variety of products, consumers set up AMAPs that receive their supplies from different farmers. Very often there is just one partnership at the beginning - usually with a vegetable producer – which is then extended to contracts with livestock breeders, horticulturalists etc. Déhondt (Interview, 2011) estimates that on average, each group of consumers participates in two to three AMAPs.

This diversification of sales strategy ensures the spreading of risks. Farmers who sell their harvest in different ways do not become dependent on a single customer; in looking for different possibilities of financing and investing in various sales strategies, they are less vulnerable (Interview with Vallée, 2011).

In an AMAP, costs are paid in advance by everybody; normally with cheques, and rarely for an entire year, but in several stages (two to six) (Interview with Déhondt, 2011). Frequently, the producers offer several baskets with different contents and different sizes to respond to the demand of the consumers (Interview with Vallée, 2011). In many cases, the producers determine the price, on average 15 EUR per delivery; they suggest the fee to their partners and the amount will then be jointly discussed (Interview with Déhondt, 2011). Sometimes, the accounting is also done by a group of members of the association.

Although the concept of the AMAPs differs significantly from basket schemes, it is often perceived as just a “basket” by the consumers; AMAPs are well known in France, but their philosophy is less well known (Interviews with Vallée & Olivier-Salvagnac, 2011).

To distinguish the different possibilities of purchase within the LFSCs, it is important to emphasize the particularities of AMAPs regarding the social, ecologic and economic dimension. An AMAP is a manifestation of the solidarity of consumers with farmers - it supports a farm to be independent of market pressures and reliance on public financing and subsidies and furthermore enables the farmer to manage his farm in a way that incorporates high social and ecological standards. Although ecologically sound management is a crucial requirement of the charter, most AMAPs do not demand organic certification of the farm. For the consumers, the direct contact to “their own producer” reinforces the confidence in its farm and is very important (David-Leroz & Girou 2009). The cultivation should normally be carried out without chemical fertilizers and pesticides but in special cases, it could be permitted, e.g. if the harvest is at stake because of pests. The charter demands no official certification from the farms but expects a continuous effort of the project towards an agriculture that respects nature and has a positive environmental impact. Organic farming (even non-certified) should be the objective of every farm working on AMAP but it is accepted that a farmer cannot become an organic farmer from one day to another. Nonetheless, organic farming should be his objective (Interview with Thirion, 2011). The continuous development and long-term planning of farm management is very important within the concept of AMAPs as well as within the “Agriculture Paysanne” (Interview with Vallée, 2011).

5.1.2 The Actual Situation of CSA in France

At present, there are around 1,200 AMAPs in France, but Déhondt (Interview, 2011) thinks that there are around 300 additional AMAPs which are not officially integrated in a network. Around 50,000 families and 200,000 consumers are involved in these projects. The first AMAP started in 2001 with 40 families in Aubagne, Provence-Alpes-Cotes-d’Azur (PACA). First of all, this was a new concept to find a solution for economic difficulties and to maintain the farm (CREAMAP). Until today, economic difficulties are very often the reason why an AMAP is installed (Interveiw with Thirion, 2011). Small-scale farms are frequently in a desperate situation and face the choice to either abandon the farm or find a new concept. An AMAP can be a solution to keep the farm. The advance payments and the solidarity of the group of consumers offer security to peasant farmers and make it possible for the farm to survive.

The rapid increase of AMAPs as shown in the following figure for the region PACA underlines the high demand for the concept. Nation-wide, the AMAPs are today an integral part of the agricultural economy and France has become a pioneer for Europe.

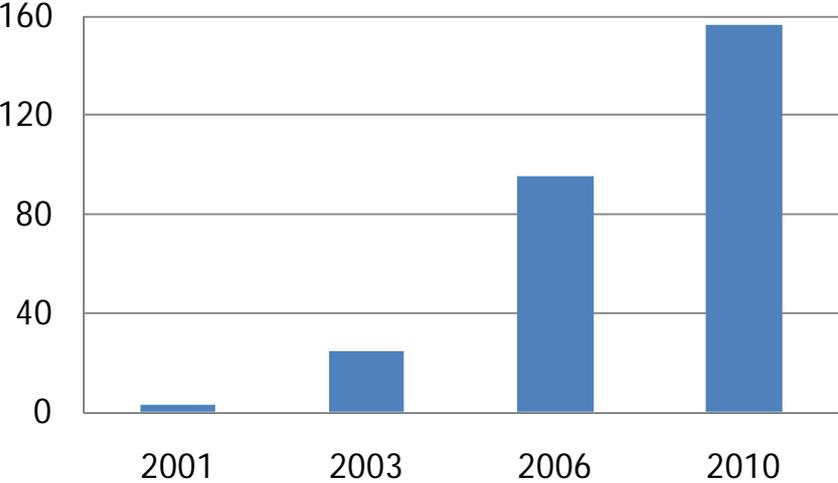


Figure 10 Evolution of AMAPs in the PACA region

Source: MIRAMAP (b)

Today, especially in the regions Rhône Alpes and Ile-de-France, many AMAPs exist. The region of PACA where the first AMAP was established is on third position.

Region in France	Number of AMAPs
Rhône Alpes	214
Ile-de-France	180
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA)	152
Aquitaine	132
Pays de la Loire	120
Midi Pyrénées (includes 23 groups from the Tarn region)	90
Basse-Normandie	44
Bourgogne	40
Picardie	36
Bretagne	34
Poitou-Charentes	31
Alsace	30
Haute-Normandie	28
Centre	23
Lorraine	20
Auvergne	19
Languedoc-Roussillon	19
Nord Pas-de-Calais	18
Franche Comté	14
Limousin	7
Champagne Ardenne	5
Corse	1
Outre mer – Guadeloupe	1

Figure 11 Number of AMAPs in different regions of France, January 2011

Source: MIRAMAP (a)

In 2001, the regional network Alliance Provence was founded to support the development of AMAPs. They wrote the official charter for AMAPs in 2003, which is still the basis of an AMAP contract between consumers and producers, and registered the term AMAP at the INPI (“Institut nationale de la propriété industrielle” – register of business names). The application of the name is permitted to other projects if the conditions of the charter are accepted. The requirement that every AMAP has to be member of Alliance Provence is,

regarding the installation of other regional networks, negligible. They accept the charter of Alliance Provence as the charter of all AMAPs.

All in all, there are seven regions with an official network (PACA, Rhône Alpes, Ile-de-France, Aquitaine, Midi Pyrénées, Picardie and Haute-Normandie). In six regions, the foundation of a network is planned (Basse-Normandie, Nord Pas-de-Calais, Limousin, Lorraine, Bretagne and Auvergne). In 2010, the national network MIRAMAP was founded with the following aims (MIRAMAP (c)) (see figure 12):

- to reinforce the cohesion of the AMAPs through a common ethic,
- to concentrate the experiences and
- to guarantee a united representation and valorization of the AMAPs on the national level.

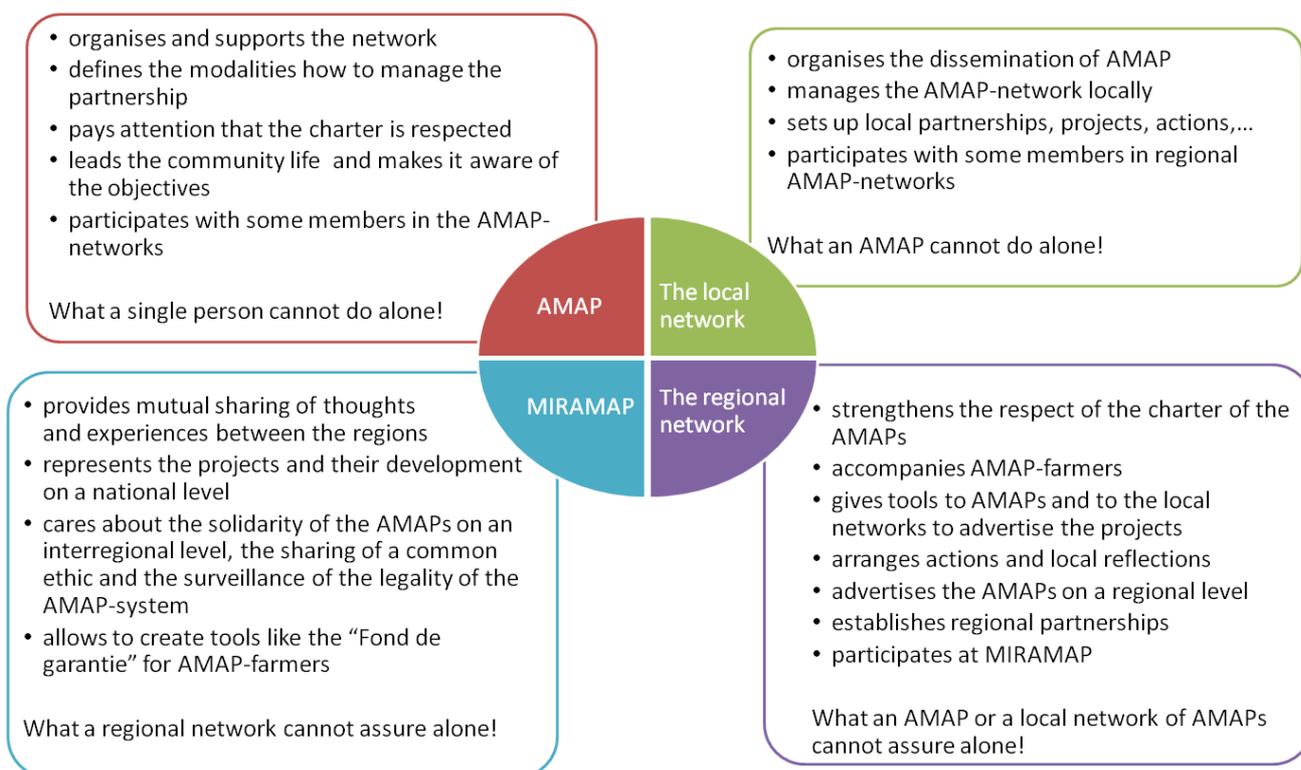


Figure 12 A movement sharing common values within the charter of the AMAP

Source: MIRAMAP (c)

Not every AMAP is also member of a network. In Ile-de-France, of 180 AMAPs only 150 are organised in the network (Interview with Déhondt, 2011). And there are other CSA initiatives than AMAPs in France. But CSAs with a great variety of products, several producers and one single community supporting the agriculture and participating in farming exist just very isolated. Examples for such projects based ideas of CSAs are e.g. “Les Paniers marseillais” (“The baskets of Marseille”) or “Les Paniers du Val de Loire” (The baskets of the Loire valley). The former was modeled on the design of the AMAPs but this network is just working with farmers having an official organic certification.

Not only the development of the regional and national networks has progressed much faster than in the other countries of this study. In France, also the association URGENCI (An Urban–Rural Network: Generating New Forms of Exchange between Citizens) has been founded. This organization aims to link regional partnerships of producers and consumers worldwide and to support actively the movement of food sovereignty.

The popularity of the AMAPs is very high and demand is rising (as shown in Figure 10). In general, interested farmers take the initiative by looking for a group of consumers to launch an AMAP. But that is not always the case. In particular, in the region Ile-de-France, many AMAPs cannot be founded because there are not enough farmers willing to be part of such a project - in contrast to an enormous demand of the consumers who live in the capital. Bougherara, Grolleau & Mzoughi (2009) found out that households being part of AMAPs, in general, “are younger, have higher incomes and are more active in associations than non-CSA households”.

Apart from the fact that sometimes consumers and producers are not very well situated geographically to start an AMAP, access to land poses an obstacle. There has been growing competition for arable land between agricultural use and real estate development, a fact that has led to a dramatic increase in the price of land. In order to enable access to land, the association “Terre de Liens” has been founded. They launched a fund and can buy land, which they lease to a farmer. This possibility is mainly directed at farms cultivating organically and respecting the environment.

The movement of the AMAPs is intended to contribute to overall change in the agricultural sector. Through its fast growth, the initiative has gained political influence and become a force to be reckoned with. It remains to be seen, how the implementation of principles and values will develop when the AMAPs become more mainstream.

5.2 Germany

5.2.1 The Definition of “Solidarische Landwirtschaft”

In Germany, the term „Solidarische Landwirtschaft“, which means agriculture in solidarity, has been selected for CSA-like projects. Other names that are being used for CSA-farms are e.g. “(Land-/)Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft“ (economic community/agricultural management community), “gemeinschaftsgetragene Landwirtschaft“ (community supported agriculture) and „(Selbst-/) Versorgergemeinschaft“ (community of self-supporters). Further names used for the farms are for example “Freihof” (free farm) and “Solidarhof” (solidarity farm) (Kraiß 2008). An official common definition for CSA is not yet formulated but this is on the agenda of the “Netzwerk für Solidarische Landwirtschaft” (network for agriculture in solidarity) which has been officially founded in July 2011².

The members of the community form the basis for the concept. The idea is principally based on active participation. Everybody can join as long as there are enough places available. The particularity of “Solidarische Landwirtschaft” is that the members are sharing the risks (for example crop failures because of bad weather) and the investment costs, and take responsibility for the farm (Interviews with Stränz & Künnemann, 2011). Also the autonomy of the farm of the world market is very important. Bahner (Interview, 2011) emphasises that there is a binding agreement and a direct relationship between consumers and producers. In exchange for their solidarity, the products of the farm will be shared among the members. This exactly makes the difference between the “Solidarische Landwirtschaft” and other sustainable forms of agriculture. In German initiatives, not the vegetables are paid but the farming process. “In the moment when there is no longer a price tag attached to the product but the work of the farmer is valued, it is a CSA” explains Bahner. And also Stränz (in Kraiß 2008) confirms that „the single product has no price“. The business is carried as a whole by all members of the community and not only by the farmer. The terms “consumers” and “producers” are not very popular and sometimes, they are replaced by the notions “active-farmer” and “non-active-farmer” (used at the Buschberghof) to underline the common concept of the community and to develop it (Kraiß 2008).

The ideal for Künnemann would be if 100% of the production stayed in the community without being capitalised. The objective is that more than 50% of the farm works as CSA. A closed circuit of the products of the farm could be developed inside the community. The

² See <http://solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/>

members of the community accept and pay the costs which are needed for the running of the farm in advance, in general for one year. The focus of the concept is cost coverage and not profit maximisation (Kraiß 2008). Not production is the most important aspect, but farming and the social contact. The amount of the financial contribution and the frequency of the payment in instalments are regulated in the agreement between the farmers and the other members. In every case the financial contribution has to be ensured so that the relationship between member and farm is guaranteed, underlines Künnemann. Two proceedings are common: either the members pay the same contribution or the contributions will be adapted to the respective income. By separating the financial contribution from the prices of the products, a social adjustment can be achieved (Kraiß, van Elsen 2008; Interview with Künnemann, 2011).

In general, there is an agreement between the two parties; an official charter in the name of the network does not yet exist in Germany. It is particularly the interaction between the farmers and the community which intensifies the relationship of trust.

“Basket schemes” are generally not considered to be a form of CSA because in these schemes just the products are paid whereas in a CSA the prices are completely uncoupled from the products (Conversation with Kraiß, 2011). Basket schemes are more easily terminable; a binding long-term agreement between consumers and producers does not exist. Furthermore, the products often originate from several farms and are sold by a middleman (Interview with Stränz, 2011). The CSA gives a regular income to the farmers and makes them more independent from subsidies, pressure of agricultural policies and the free market. The members can profit from ecological and regional products. The farmers are liberated from the constraints of market integration and can manage their farm sustainably (Kraiß, van Elsen 2008). An organic certification is not compulsory but nevertheless most CSA-farms are respecting ecological principles or are even certified. The farms are controlled in an indirect way: by their consumers who regularly visit the farm to collect their produce.

Closely connected to CSA is the concept of Community Connected Agriculture (CCA) and Community Financed Agriculture (CFA). Generally, CSA is seen as a special form of CCA. CCA is a wider concept in which the (educational) actions are more adapted to the local needs including services and nature conservation, according to Bahner. Guided tours are organized for local persons and school classes; a network to support social agriculture exists

already³. Initiatives of CCA include also indirect forms of support for sustainable agriculture, e.g. financing (CFA) and access to land. An example is the Regionalwert AG, a citizen shareholder corporation in which citizens' capital is used to enable access to land and financing for small and medium sized farms producing their products sustainably. CSA and CCA have in common that the farms are not focussed on the world market. They focus on and adapt to the needs of the local population (Interview with Bahner, 2011).

5.2.2 The Current Situation of CSA in Germany

To date, the concept of CSA is not very well known in Germany but interest is increasing. At the moment there are 19 farms operating as CSA. Recently, there have been new foundations. While the first CSA, the Buschberghof, was founded 1988, it took several years until the next ones were created. Since 2003, there have been several new starts. 2011 has been the most successful year in the history of CSA in Germany: Five farms started a CSA.

	CSA name	Nearest city	Max. distance to consumer	Area of farm	Number of Members ^a	CSA since	CSA percent age ^b	Products ^c
1	Buschberghof	Hamburg	40 km	101 ha	92 households	1988	100%	vegetables and animal products
2	Kattendorfer Hof	Hamburg	40 km	169 ha	~ 76 households	1998	50%	vegetables and animal products
3	Gärtnerhof Entrup	Münster	12 km	26 ha	70 members	1999	20%	vegetables and animal products
4	Schmitthof	Kaiserslautern	30 km	35 ha	70 households	2003	100%	vegetables and animal products
5	LandGut Lübnitz	Brandenburg	50 km	16 ha	35 persons	2004	~80%	No animal products
6	Löwengarten	Berlin	90 km	7,5 ha	45 persons	2006	100%	vegetables
7	Karlshof – in project	Berlin	90 km	6 ha	~ 80 persons, network: 200	2006	100%	Agricultural crops
8	Hof Hollergraben	Lübeck	45 km	12 ha	60 persons, 2010: +20 persons	2007	30%	vegetables, bread, herbs, fruits
9	Gastwerke	Kassel	15 km	20 ha	objective: until 200 households	2009	objective : 50%	vegetables and animal products
10	Hof Tangsehl	Lüneburg	38 km	92 ha	87 persons, objective: 200	2009	60% (objective: 100%)	vegetables and animal products
11	Mirandahof	Bremen	30 km	6 ha	23 persons	2009	objective	vegetables at

³ <http://www.soziale-landwirtschaft.de/>

							: 50%	the moment
12	Waldgärtner CSA	München	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2009?	100 % (?!)	vegetables
13	Hof Bexte	Kiel	70 km	35 ha	objective: ~120 persons	2010	objective : 100 %	vegetables, bread ...
14	VersorgerInnen ngemeinschaft Güstriz	Lycho	6 km	2 ha	~ 20; objective: ~70 persons	2010	objective : 100 %	vegetables, fruits
15	CSA Hof Pente	Osnabrück	12 km	46 ha	Objective at the beginning ~ 45, possible ~ 240 persons	2011	objective : 100 % ?!	bread, cereals, eggs, meat, potatos, vegetables, fruits, honey
16	CSA Freudental/ Witzenhausen	Witzenhausen	2 km	> 1 ha	20 persons	2011	100 %	vegetables / around 30 weeks / year
17	Gärtnerhof Staudenmüller	Templin	7 km	n.a.	n.a.	2011	n.a.	vegetables
18	Tempelhof	Crailsheim	10 km	n.a.	n.a.	2011	n.a.	n.a.
19	Gartencoop Freiburg	Freiburg	40 km	9 ha	260	2011	100 %	vegetables

^a Household: 3-4 persons

^b Percentage of the products for the CSA in relation to the whole commercialization

^c Animal products and vegetable products (without salt, oil and luxury products)

Figure 13 Overview of CSA- farms

Source: Katharina Kraiß

The first steps towards a national network were taken at the Summer Academy of ATTAC in 2010, where Rolf Künnemann and Matthias von Mirbach of the Kattendorfer Hof presented the project CSA. A group of interested people immediately proposed to start an initiative to develop a national network. Since June 2010, several newsletters named "Freihof-Brief" were spread to connect persons who are interested in the organisation of the CSA-movement in Germany. The members of the network include farmers as well as people who want to decide actively how their food is produced. The atmosphere is very optimistic at the moment, but Künnemann (Interview, 2011) warns that some farmers are sceptical about the new network because they are not sure if concrete steps will follow the good intentions. The network has the following objectives:

- to advance CSA in Germany and be part of a corresponding paradigm shift in agricultural policy;
- to support and encourage further foundations of CSA-farms; and
- to propose services and advice for the already existing farms and to accompany new farms.

It is envisaged to promote the concept more offensively and present it to a wider audience in order to increase its visibility. An exchange with other networks should also take place and advantages and disadvantages of CSA management strategies should be discussed. Künnemann emphasises that the work of the network must be addressed as a “team-work” (Interview, 2011).

He notes that most CSAs are located in the North or East of Germany. CSAs in southern Germany were founded only recently. But more interesting than the spatial distribution in the country could be the proximity of a farm to the city. There are nine farms in a radius of 15 km, seven in a radius of 30 to 50 km, one farm which is 70 km far away from the next city and two farms with a distance of 90 km. Actually, not many persons are needed to found a CSA, but the near-by existence of agglomerations seems to help. Bahner (Interview, 2011) also thinks that CSA farms are more attractive for middle-sized and bigger cities. The first reason is that in rural regions, the cultivation of vegetables is more common and there is less demand to buy vegetables, especially in summer. The other reason is that people live more separated in rural areas than in cities. Groups can be founded more easily in urban regions. But nevertheless, as Bahner confirms, the idea of organization and co-maintenance is very attractive also to people from rural areas as the example of the farm Tangsehl shows.

There are however several factors hindering the development and the foundation of a CSA like difficult access to land, financial difficulties and finding the right farm close by to the consumers. Another obstacle is that the distribution and sale of organic products is very well organised in Germany and often already saturates the demand for local and organic products. Furthermore, a legal contract between producers and consumers is often missing. The concept is based in particular on the mutual confidence of the participants. Currently, there are not many possibilities to gather information. In the future, it will be the task of the network to serve as a contact point where interested farmers can get an overview about the actual situation and more technical help in how to start a CSA. Moreover, a book how to found a CSA is in progress. Really serious problems hindering the foundation of a CSA do not exist according to Stränz (Interview, 2011). On the other hand, farms which are already well established, which have regular clients and no financial problems are usually not interested in a CSA.

The general trend is seen as very positive by the experts interviewed. The increase in the number of CSA farms and the rising demand for organic produce show that a lot of people are interested in a sustainable agriculture and that they prefer regional products. Many consumers are ready to enter a contractual middle-term relationship and to invest in

agriculture in order to receive healthy and fresh food. Also increasingly farmers understand that CSA can provide a strategy to make their farm operation feasible. According to Bahner, a lot of energy is necessary (Interview, 2011), but the situation seems favourable in Germany and there are “enough young and well-educated farmers, who would like to start such a farm”.

5.3 Switzerland

5.3.1 The Definition of “Regionale Vertragslandwirtschaft” or “Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité”

Two different notions for CSA exist in Switzerland. In German-speaking Switzerland, it is called „Regionale Vertragslandwirtschaft“ (contract-based regional agriculture). The notion CSA is not commonly used and not widely known. In French-speaking Switzerland, CSA-like farming is called “Agriculture contractuelle de proximité” (ACP) (contract-based agriculture of proximity). The contract between the farmers and the consumers is at the centre of attention. The agreements differ from case to case, but the kind of organisational setup is always considered and decided upon within the entire community (Interview with Cadotsch, 2011). Quality, quantity and methods of production, prices and the modalities of the delivery are discussed and recorded contractually. For the ACP, a charter is already formulated and accepted by the projects (Charter of the FRACP, see appendix 4). The charter of the “Regionale Vertragslandwirtschaft” is about to be formulated (see below).

The concept of food sovereignty is the basis of the philosophy of ACP. This movement, which is propagated by international organisations like Via Campesina, describes the right of a population of a region or of a country to fix the conditions of the agricultural policy. Farmers have the right to choose the way of production and consumers the right to decide which products they want to consume and by whom and under which conditions their food was produced without the overwhelming pressures of international structures and markets. The prices have to be adapted to the production costs. In the center of attention of the concept is the supply of the population with enough food and the support to peasant farms.

Other notes which served as a basis for the charter of the “Regionale Vertragslandwirtschaft” are the “Möschbergerklärung” (see appendix 5), ideas of the project “Neustart-Schweiz”⁴ and essays of Uniterre, a farmer’s union in French-speaking Switzerland (Interview with Bill, 2011).

5.3.2 The Current Situation of CSA in Switzerland

The concept of CSA does not differ much in German- and French-speaking Switzerland. But the development and the current situation are very different. Projects in French-speaking

⁴ <http://neustartschweiz.ch>

Switzerland are much more known and developed. The first project “Les Jardins de Cocagne” was founded in 1978 in Geneva (West-Switzerland). Today, there are around 27 projects in French-speaking Switzerland and nine in German-speaking Switzerland.

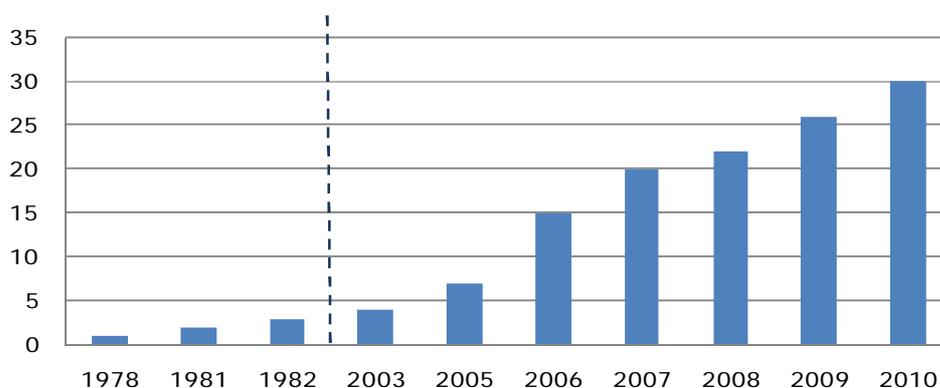


Figure 14 Number of ACPs in Switzerland

Source: Own summary after FRACP (a), Porcher (2008)

In French-speaking Switzerland, the number of projects has increased in particular since 2003, with eight new projects in 2006. The adoption of the concept in the German-speaking cantons is relatively young. Although the first project was founded in Basel in 1982, the other projects developed only in 2010 or are in the making. The foundation of several ACP-farms was initiated following an ATTAC-event where Rudi Berli used the opportunity and presented the ACP in Bern in summer 2009.

Already in April 2008, 20 ACP projects (from the French-speaking part) joined together to form the association “Fédération romande pour une agriculture contractuelle de proximité” (FRACP) (Roman federation for a contract-based agriculture of proximity). All these projects cultivate their farms within a community, based on a partnership of producers and consumers. The direct contact improves the exchange between both stakeholders. The charter was written by the FRACP to reinforce and deepen the philosophy of ACP and to fix the basis of the concept. The objectives and tasks of the association (according to FRACP (b)) are, in particular:

- to promote the concept of food sovereignty,
- to introduce the concept of contract-based regional agriculture,
- to represent the interests of the members,
- to serve as a platform for the exchange of results and knowledge and

- to continue to develop the projects of ACP and to publicise it.

Moreover, the FRACP is intended to defend small-structured areas confronted with the industrialised agricultural policy (Interview with Cadotsch, 2011).

Once a year the annual general meeting takes place in which a committee discusses the interests of the union. The head office of the association is based at the organisation Uniterre, who supported the foundation of the FRACP.

In German-speaking Switzerland, the foundation of a similar organisation is in progress and all present ACP-farms participate. The contacts between both regions are very intensive and they profit from the know-how of each other. The farms in the German-speaking part learn from the experiences in the French-speaking part, while projects in the US are examples, too. The charter of the FRACP will be worked out for the German-speaking part of Switzerland and the concept defined more profoundly (Interview with Tschurtschenthaler, 2011).

Very important in the current discussion about CSA in Switzerland are the different legal forms of CSA-farms which exist in French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland.

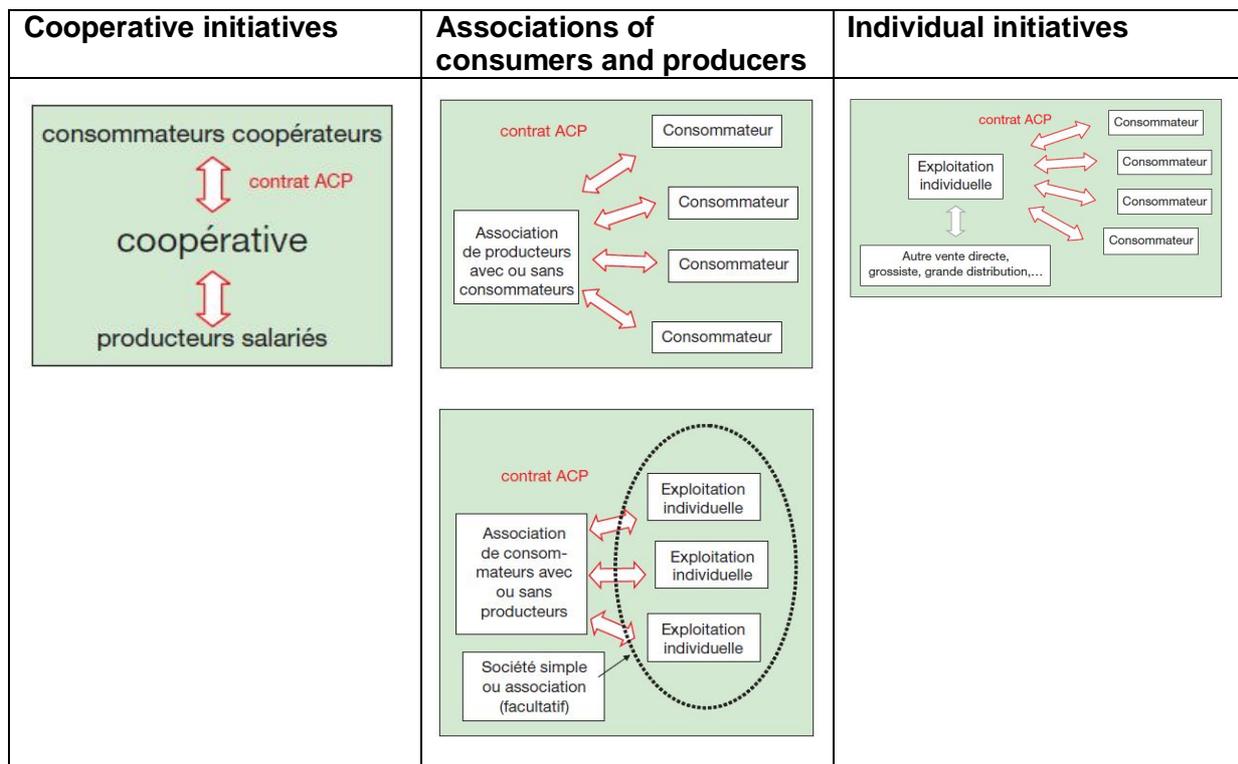


Figure 15 Legal forms of CSA farms in Switzerland

Source: Porcher 2009

An example for a *cooperative initiative* is the project “Les Jardins de Cocagne” near Geneva. In this ACP-project not only the agriculture is in the center of attention but also social projects which are supported by the community. The consumers are in this case both members of the cooperative and employers.

Associations deliver in general either weekly or just a few times a year. The association TourneRêve is an example for that. 1,500 participants and 14 farms form the biggest ACP in Western Switzerland. The deliveries take place twice a year and include oil, cereals, honey, fruit, etc. Several farmers form one association which gets in contact with a group of consumers.

Individual farms are the most recent development of ACP. Hereby, a single farmer signs an agreement which was prepared together with the consumers.

The main aspect of the agreement is the guarantee for a regular income for producers and the acceptance of the delivery. Through the decoupling of market and competition, an environmentally and socially friendly agriculture without constraints can be realized. Central demands of the projects are sustainability, the respect of basic ethical values and absolutely no use of GMOs. The income of the farmers has to be fair and proportionate to their work. The impact of mechanical working on the soils should be as low as possible.

Adherence to all criteria of organic farming is not obligatory, but it is clearly recommended in the charter. Most farms are about to convert to organic farming with an organic certification or are striving to do so. In the end, it is up to the client to demand a certification or not. In case that the clients work within the projects, the certifications are less demanded because the clients are directly involved into the farming process and can see the conditions of cultivation for themselves (Interview with Tschurtschenthaler, 2011). However, within a cooperative like Soliterre, the clients and farmers do not know each other and a certification thus serves as a confirmation and security for the clients. Also conventional farmers are interested in the foundation of cooperatives according to ACP-ideas. While an association of conventional farmers would be possible, a “mixed basket” of organic and non-organic products would be more difficult to realize (Frick 2010).

Risks, e.g. the loss of the harvest, are generally but not always borne by the community. Concerning this matter, Cadotsch (Interview, 2011) emphasizes the importance of regulations in the contract. Despite the basic principles, a lot of consumers prefer to receive regular deliveries of fresh vegetables without necessarily being interested in the project or being member of the cooperative. Some reject the idea to hold a share in the property.

The membership fee or the price for the subscription and the way of participating in the farming process are determined according to the contract. Either the farmers define the price or it is negotiated in a meeting together with the clients. There are projects where different basket formats can be chosen between, e.g. a big or a small basket or a basket with meat or with vegetables (e.g. at Soliterre). At other farms, like the StadtLandNetz, the prices are arranged according to the income of the consumer in order to be socially just. Some initiatives offer lower subscription prices for physical collaboration on the farm. Beside these CSA-typical calculations, other projects in Switzerland calculate the content of their basket regarding the market prices and according to the delivered quantity of products (Interview with Bill, 2011). The deliveries are done on a weekly, monthly or twice-yearly or yearly basis, depending on the types of product. The distribution is often organized by a team of the initiative who brings the filled baskets to fixed places (Interview with Cadotsch, 2011). In very few projects, the harvest is also collected at the farm by the members themselves.

The foundation of the first projects was arranged by the consumers. The project “Jardins de Cocagne” was founded by 30 persons who employed three horticulturists. Today, the farmers union Uniterre arranges contacts between consumers and producers who would like to start such a project (Interview with Berli, 2011). Recent projects were frequently initiated by farmers themselves; they looked for clients to take their products and a group of consumers to support their farm. The direct contact between producers and consumers reinforces the confidence as well as the security of financing and permits the farmers to concentrate on their main work, the farming. This model becomes more and more popular in Switzerland and receives many positive responses. Also the interest of journalists has been attracted many of whom have been visiting the projects and writing about it. Up to now, the projects did not invest into PR. However, some projects have become very popular and had to start waiting lists for interested consumers (Interview with Tschurtschenthaler, 2011).

Apart from the lack of awareness about CSA also structural problems obstruct the transformation of a farm into a CSA-farm (Interviews with Berli & Cadotsch, 2011). Many farms are specialised according to today’s agricultural policy, they cultivate large areas and depend on the processing and distribution channels of the existing agro-industries. The concept of CSA is based on respecting social and ecologic aspects of production. At the same time a wide range of fresh produce to supply the members all year round is expected. It is a challenge to design a farm in order to live up to this goal. Furthermore, lack of communication and disengagement between citizens and farmers can be an obstacle (Interview with Berli, 2011). The different ways of life and the little mutual knowledge often

lead to misunderstandings. Linking measures are perceived as necessary and are actually undertaken by Uniterre, FRACP and the network in German-speaking Switzerland. In particular, a farmer's union like Uniterre has important political contacts which can be useful for a better understanding of farmers and consumers. Furthermore, juridical reasons hinder these projects. For example within a transformation of a farm into a cooperative, the farmer transfers his property to the collective and loses his claim for subsidies. Moreover, the increasing offer of organic and regional products in every supermarket decreases the interest in a local and binding partnership with a producer. Nevertheless, the development of CSA in Switzerland progresses very well and seems to correspond with high demand.

Name	Year of foundation	Number of consumers	Number of farms	Products	Delivery A = annual; M = monthly; H = daily
Initiative associative					
L'Affaire TourneRêve (GE)	2003	1500	14	Vegetables, fruits, oil, cereals, honey, meat	A
Le Lopin bleu (NE)	2005	400	12	Fruits, cereals, honey, meat, cheese, nuts, oil, juice	A
L'Agrihotte (VD)	2005	150	7	Vegetables, fruits, cereals, honey, poultry, meat, juice, oil, vinegar	A
Saveurs et Saison (JU)	2006	58	8	Vegetables, fruits, cereals, meat, cheese, honey, jam, tea	A
Notre panier Bio - Unser Biokorb (FR)	2006	400	19	Vegetables, fruits, cereals, honey, eggs, cheese, meat	M
Femmes solidaires sans frontières (VD)	2006	46	1	Vegetables	M
Le Panier à 4 pattes (GE)	2006	130	5	Fruits, meat, vegetables, cereals, wine	A
Les cueillettes de Landecy (GE)	2006	65	1	Vegetables and fruits	Own harvest
Lumière des Champs (VD)	2007	100	6	Vegetables, bread, eggs, cheese, fruits	H
Les Jardins du Flon (VD)	2007	200	3	Fruits, little fruits, vegetables, juice, honey, oil, jam	H
Association Terre Ferme (VD)	2009	50; 100	8	Vegetables, products which can be stocked and which are transformed	H & M
Les Mangeurs (GE)	2009	50	2	Vegetables, apples	M
Rage de Vert	2010	n.a.	n.a.	n.a	n.a
Initiative cooperative					
Les Jardins de Cocagne (GE)	1978	420	1	Vegetables and fruits	H
La Clef des champs (JU)	1982	120	1	Vegetables	H
Le Jardin Potager (VD)	2006	400	1	products which can be stocked, fruits and vegetables	H
Le Jardin des Charrotons (GE)	2007	130	1	Vegetables and fruits	H

Les Vergers d'Epicure (GE)	2007	25	1	Fruits, jam, syrop, juice and alcohol	Own harvest
Initiative individuelle					
L'Abbaye de Fontaine-André (NE)	2005	42	1	Vegetables, breads, cheese	H
La Ferme du Taulard (VD)	2006	140	1	Vegetables and fruits	H
Les Ares et vous (GE)	2006	100	1	Vegetables, fruits, meat, cereals, honey	H
Terre de Lune (GE)	2007	40	1	Vegetables	H
Le Panier du Bisse (VS)	2008	150	1	Vegetables, some fruits	H
Les Potagers de Gaïa (GE)	2008	40	1	Vegetables, aromatic plants	H
Ferme du Chat noir (VD)	2009	60	1	Vegetables	H
Culture locale (GE)	2010	n.a.	n.a.	Vegetables	H
Les Jardins d'Ouchy (VD)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Figure 16 Overview of the CSA-farms in French-speaking Switzerland

Source: Own resumé after FRACP, interviews & homepages of the projects, Porcher 2009

City	Name	Year of foundation	Number of farms	Products	Delivery
Cooperative					
Basel	Agrico	1981	1	Vegetables	weekly deliveries from March until December, every two weeks from January until March
Winterthur	Stadt-Land-Netz	2010	1	Vegetables	Weekly
Dietikon/Zürich	ortoloco	2010	1	Vegetables	Weekly
Association					
Zürich	Pflanzplatz Dunkelhölzli	2006	1	Vegetables	Weekly
Bern	SoliTerre	2009	6	Vegetables	Weekly
Individual farm					
Dällikon	Brüederhof	1999	1	Vegetables	Weekly
Thalheim	Gmüesabo Thalheim - Holzlabor	2010	1	Vegetables	Weekly
Bern	Bioabi	2010	1	Vegetables	every two weeks
New Projects in					
Biel					
Bern (Radiesli)					
Zürich (Seeds City)					
St. Gallen					
Locarno					

Figure 17 Overview of the CSA-farms in German-speaking Switzerland

Source: Interviews & homepages of the projects

5.4 Belgium

Reflecting the cultural and political situation in Belgium, also the development and concepts of CSA are very diverse. In Brussels-Region, the non-profit organisation “Début des Haricots” supports a sophisticated and structured network for the GASAPs (“Groupes d’Achat Solidaires de l’Agriculture Paysanne” – Solidarity-based purchasing groups for small-scale farming). The “CSA-Netwerk” was founded in Flanders and gathers all the farms respecting the CSA principles. In Wallonia, the NPO (Non-profit-organisation) “Nature & Progrès” has published a brochure leaflet to encourage the development of the “Groupe d’Achats Communs” (GAC – Common purchasing group) or also the “Groupement d’Achats Alimentaires” (GAA - Food shopping group) and has encouraged an exchange of experiences⁵.

Despite the different developments, cooperation does exist. For instance, the GASAPs are supplied by Flemish and Walloon farms in Brussels-Region. The Flemish network orientated itself towards some examples of Dutch CSAs and the GACs/GAAs are very often seen as a first step before launching a GASAP.

5.4.1 The Definition of “Groupes d’Achat” and CSA

In Brussels-Region and in Flanders, the principles of CSA are recorded in a charter. Although all agreements between producers and “consum-acteurs” are based on the basic principles of CSA, the structure, the definitions, the agreements regarding risk sharing, the prefinancing and the kind of participation of the members vary.

5.4.1.1 Brussels-Region– The “Groupes d’Achat Solidaires de l’Agriculture Paysanne”

In Brussels-Region, the charter defining the values and principles of the GASAPs serves as cornerstone of the relationship between producer and consumer. It is signed by the farmers as well as the consumers. Four principles are set out (Charter of the GASAP – appendix 6):

1. Agriculture Paysanne (AP)
2. Local Food Supply Chains (LFSC)
3. Solidarity between producers and consumers

⁵ The utilisation of GAA is very recent and it is not sure if all the groups will call themselves GAA. Therefore, here the notions GAC and GAA will be used synonymously and according to the expression of the interview partner.

4. Self-management and conviviality

As in France, the ten principles of the AP are the basis of the concept. An organic certification is obligatory neither in the structures of the AP nor in the GASAPs. However, it is demanded that the principles of the charter are respected to assure a sustainable management of the farm. Like in the other countries, internal control of sustainable farming practices is undertaken on the basis of direct contact between producer and consumers. Also in the GASAP, members agree that the certification makes sense particularly for customers of supermarkets where the producers remain unknown. Furthermore, the official certification “does not guarantee management practices that respect the environment and does not satisfy all demands” according to the charter of the GASAP.

The models of the LFSCs promise direct commercialization of local products. LFSCs imply that there is at the most one middleman because the producer has to be “the principal beneficiary of the sale of his products. He sets up an alternative to the big marketing chains” (Le Troadec 2010) where the sale of local products is a priority and transport miles are limited.

The third principle describes the solidarity between the peasant farmers and the consumers and, in particular, the mutual commitment that links them. “The consumers buy a part of the production which will be distributed to them periodically” and they will cover possible risks (Charter of the GASAP). The consumers participate actively in different ways. Sometimes, their participation can be physical, or in the assurance to buy the products. Moreover, it can be a participation regarding communication, marketing and in exercising political lobbying. The producers commit themselves to delivering their products to the clients regularly and that these “deliveries contain at least 80% of products which originally come from his farm” (Charter of the GASAP). The fourth principle is self-management and outlines the importance of a cooperative and harmonic atmosphere of all GASAPs in which “collectivity, equality, participation and self-management” are very important.

Generally speaking, there are no big differences between the different GASAPs, although every group is self-managed. They are very homogeneous because all groups accept the same charter when signing the agreement. In general, the amount and the installment of the subscription fees are the result of negotiations between the farmer and the consumer’s group. In reality, the farmer often works in several GASAPs and proposes the same price to everybody. The fees are paid either once or twice a year in advance or every month. Exceptions are rare, but in one example, it was accepted that the clients pay once a week. This has been possible because this group has a very high stability.

The GASAPs are presented as “an alternative to a system of production, of distribution and of consumption which is only based on profit”. They distinguish themselves from organic “basket schemes” because these concepts are just based on the binding agreement to buy products regularly but not on a solidarity between farmers and consumers.

5.4.1.2 Flanders – CSA-Farms

The CSAs in Flanders are much closer to the original concept of CSA than the GASAPs in Brussels-Region. They are a contractual partnership between one single farmer and a group of consumers based on an agreement of solidarity.

Iserbyt (Interview, 2011) describes the main principles:

- the number of members is fixed during one complete year
- the fee for the membership is paid in advance for the whole year
- the risks are shared in the community

The CSA-Netwerk, which gathers all the CSA-farms, has established a charter⁶. Organic certification is not required in Flanders, but it is demanded in the charter that the farms are managed sustainably. The charter is accepted by signing the agreement between producers and consumers, but it is not sure if the agreement has also a juridical legitimacy. There are even some verbal agreements. One farmer had a contract drawn up by a lawyer to be sure to have a legal partnership with his clients and that the members could be sure that this partnership was legitimate (Interview with Roels, 2011). De facto, there is always an agreement in a Flemish CSA, but the level of formalisation can be different.

The prices are set by the farmers because they are the initiators of the CSA. There are also communities where a group supports the farmer by doing administrative work for the farm. The fees are calculated considering the annual budget which is necessary to cultivate the farm and other expenses, like working hours of the employees. Some Flemish farms use a system originating from the Netherlands: the farmer sends data of the expenses of the farm, surface of the farm and number of participants etc. to the members and asks them how much they would pay. The consumers respond with their personal proposition and the farmer calculates if the proposed amount is sufficient. If that is not the case, a second proposition is

⁶ <http://www.csa-netwerk.be/charter>

sent to the community. The payment for one year is made in one or two deposits (Interview with Roels, 2011).

The “Voedselteams” (Food teams) offer another possibility which is quite different to the concepts mentioned above and where the contact between farmers and consumers is very limited. Until today, there are around 60 such groups in Flanders. The clients can order vegetables online which will be delivered to depositories by the farmers. Although there is no middleman, a direct relationship is not created between both parties because they never meet directly. For this reason, the “Voedselteams” are rather part of the CCA. It is imaginable that a CSA could work with a group of consumers of a “Voedselteams”, but until today, this is not the case. The farmers of CSAs prefer to arrange for their own consumers (Interviews with Roels & Iserbyt, 2011).

5.4.1.3 Wallonia - “Groupe d’Achats Communs” (GAC) or “Groupement d’Achats Alimentaires” (GAA)

An official definition for the GAAs is difficult to find because the groups are organised very heterogeneously. Their definition, which is potentially important regarding certain juridical questions, has been on the agenda of the meeting of the GAAs which took place in February 2011. Some preliminary definitions exist to explain this model:

According to Launoy (Interview, 2011), a GAA is a group of consumers that enters into a partnership with farmers by assuring them to buy their product regularly. The NPO Nature & Progrès describes a GAA as a group of persons “who meet regularly to buy quality products directly from the local producers and transformers” (Nature & Progrès Belgique). The aim is to encourage sustainable production enabling ecosystem services (e.g. regarding biodiversity) and to diminish externalities. The products are supplied directly to the consumers without a middleman.

The drawing up of a contract to establish a very stable partnership has been discussed recently. Until today, in most cases, there is just a verbal agreement which promises to the farmers to be supported if there are financial problems. Nevertheless, risks are still just in the responsibility of the farmer. To diminish risks, several farmers take part in a GAA to share the risks among them (Interview with Launoy, 2011).

During a meeting of the GAAs, types of engagement were discussed. Although the structural conception of the GAA is still not complete, there is consensus regarding the aim: that “the support for the local peasant farming” will be the priority in the future development of GAAs (De Gaultier, 2011).

The orders and deliveries are either stored in a garage of a member or in a room which is offered by a municipality. The participants are actively involved in these projects, in the organization of orders and their distribution, in taking care of the accountancy, etc. These tasks serve to save external costs. The producer has less work and saves money by delivering a GAC, he does not need to care about the distribution of his products and can sell them for a fair price. Furthermore, this form of sale “increases the autonomy of the farmer vis-à-vis the distribution channels of the agro-industries which imposes unfavorable conditions on the farmer’s sale and production”. The principal difference with GASAPs is that GACs order a larger variety of products (Le Troadec 2010).

Until today, there is no fixed agreement and the consumers order different products all the time. The payment is done weekly and according to the individual rules of the GAC. To get a more formal structure, the NPO “Réseau des Consommateurs Responsables” advises to name a treasurer who could be contacted if there is any problem or to ask questions.

5.4.2 The Current Situation of CSA in Belgium

5.4.2.1 The GASAPs in Brussels-Region

The first GASAPs were founded in 2006 through the initiative of the NPO “Le Début des Haricots” (DDH). Initially, it was a movement to support the LFSCs and a healthy, ecological and local alimentation. Out of this resulted the GASAPs. Some “Groupes d’Achats” existed already; the French AMAPs and ASC from Quebec served as examples (Le Troadec 2010). Subsequently to the first success of the GASAPs, workshops took place to gain new members, to set up a charter and to connect all the GASAPs to launch a network. The initiative came directly from the consumers. From the start, the active participation of the consumer’s groups has been a distinguishing feature of the Belgium GASAPs.

After the foundation of a “groupe d’achat solidaire” (which can include up to 20 families) by the consumers, one or several farmers have to be motivated for the projects. They have to be willing to be supported by the community, to accept the conditions of the charter and to supply the consumers with their harvest.

The management of the GASAP is very complex. Five bodies ensure the smooth functioning of the GASAPs. These are presented on the website of the GASAPs⁷ (GASAP (b)):

⁷ www.gasap.be

- An annual meeting of the network takes place once a year and is the place where the principal decisions of the network are made (charter,...).
- The “Noyau” – the nucleus – is the team which takes care of the daily management of the network. It is the organ which realizes and organises the projects of the network. This team, composed of volunteers, takes the daily decisions and ensures that the coordinator can do his or her work properly.
- The “Réseau Convivial” takes place four times a year and is a meeting between the different groups of the network. It is a place to follow consultative projects which were decided by the network and managed by the “Noyau”.
- The workgroups of the “Noyau” are set up around special topics.

Until today, there are three workgroups, the team “Help to create a GASAP”, the team for producers and the team “communication”.

- Since November 2009, a coordinator has supported the work of the network.

The financing of the job of the coordinator was applied from the IBGE (“Institut bruxellois pour la gestion de l’environnement, l’administration de l’environnement de la région Bruxelles-Capitale” – Institute of Brussels for the management of the environment of the Brussels-Region) with the help of the NPO DDH. A support of 30,000 EUR was granted and a 60% job created. The coordinator fills in several functions which serve to strengthen the network: amelioration of the internal communication, participation in all meetings to understand the decisions of the network and of the workgroups. Furthermore, she or he should reinforce the synergies between the partnerships that exist already and the collaboration with other partners of the producers and apprenticing companies (Le Troadec 2010).

Today, there are around 40 GASAPs in Brussels-Region which are supplied by ten farmers; this is a very positive development for a region with 1,048,000 inhabitants (Region de Brussels-Capital; Interview with Roels, 2011). Out of the structure and organization of the GASAPs, there are perhaps ten groups of consumers who work directly with a farm. The popularity of the GASAPs increases and to make the concept more known to the public, some promotion was published in the media recently. Some reports were aired on radio and television and articles were published in journals and magazines. Furthermore, some studies were conducted by students about the development of GASAPs.

5.4.2.2 The CSA-Farms of the Flemish Network

In Flanders, around ten CSA-farms are part of the CSA-Netwerk. Five or six CSA-like farms are not members of the network. The participating small-sized farms cultivate only vegetables. The movement started in 2007 in the areas of the cities Gand and Louvain. Since then, two or three CSA projects have been launched every year; today, some exist also in rural areas. The difference between the more urban and more rural CSA-farms lies in the kind of deliveries. While the members of urban CSA-farms come to the fields to harvest their vegetables themselves, the members of CSA-farms in rural areas receive their delivery.

Although the harvesting by the members is very welcome by the clients, it is one of the biggest challenges for CSA-projects. Inspections of work regarding illicit work are very strict in Flanders. Even when the work is voluntary, it can be perceived as illegal and in consequence, be punished. If the voluntary work could be indicated as educational activity which is not productive, the harvest of the own products would be legalized. For that, the foundation of an NPO is necessary and planned in the near future. This conversion is checked by the CSA Network. Furthermore, the network serves as a platform for the CSA-farms, to talk about the projects and to have a good overview about the actual situation. The network should be the negotiating partner not only for the CSA-farms, but also for their members and new persons interested in these projects. In general, the farms stay independent, which means that they continue to manage the sale and the community. However, the farms must respect the charter if they wish to use the label CSA (Interview with Iserbyt, 2011).

Apart from the typical contract of farmers and consumers, regulations between farmers and restaurants increase, too. This can be attributed to an increasing interest in supporting the local economy and marketing of gastronomy with local products. On average, there are around 250 participants per farm with a surface of 1,5 ha. Every member pays 355 EUR/year. The amount of the fee varies according to if the members harvest by themselves or not (Interview with Iserbyt, 2011).

Many farmers are not yet aware of the concept. But the projects have attracted the media's attention, particularly a farm in Louvain. The future prospects are seen as very positive (Interview with Roels, 2011). The CSA-farms in Flanders work well and show that a realization of this concept is possible and that change in the agricultural sector is feasible. Even farms with 1.3 to 1.5 ha can make a living. An income of around 1,500 to 1,600 EUR per month is acceptable, as indicated by Roels. Consumers who want to participate in this

concept are available; now, the challenge is to find enough land where young farmers can launch their farm.

5.4.2.3 Wallonia

In Wallonia, there is no organised network. The association “Nature & Progrès” tries to encourage the projects of the GAA. Together with the NPO “Le Début des Haricots” and the NPO “Réseau des consommateurs responsables”, they want to federate a platform which could help the exchange and development of GAAs.

In total, there are around 50 GAAs in Wallonia, which are supplied by 20 to 30 official producers plus some more peasant farmers who are predominantly transformers of agricultural products. They supply the groups with honey, bread, jam, etc. (Conversation with Buysse, 2011). The first GAC was founded ten years ago. Generally, one GAC is supplied by two to three farmers with vegetables, milk products and bread. Besides, one AMAP which will work regarding the French charter is about to start in Wallonia (Interview with Launoy, 2011).

In February 2011, a workshop took place in Namur, Belgium. 100 persons, among them ten farmers, participated representing more than 50 different groups. The following subjects were discussed:

- the legal frame
- the relationship between producers and consumers
- common mobilization

This platform intended to gather all the consumers and producers of GAAs. Very often, the two parties are interested to set up a partnership, but they do not know how to find each other. Especially, differences between city dwellers and farmers can be very strong. The lack of knowledge regarding the agricultural sector is very high and misunderstandings between clients and farmers reinforce prejudices. Therefore, also some educational training of the consumer should be part of the mission of the GAAs (De Gaultier 2011).

The meetings help to advance the development of GAAs. Already in 2003, the first meeting of GAAs took place. At this time, the questions were directed at issues like logistics of deliveries, the differences between urban and rural groups, the demanding attitudes of the consumers and potential partnerships with the producers. Today, the questions are rather legal issues linked to the activities of the GAAs (De Gaultier 2011).

The form of the GAAs has been discussed. Two possibilities exist: an NPO or a formal association or interest group (“association de fait”) can be founded. The advantage of an NPO is that the private property of the members is protected if the association was held accountable for an unpaid bill, damage to a third person or another infringement of the rules. But despite of the better legal security of a NPO, most GAAs are reluctant to deal with the administrative challenges and complexities that go along with such a legal status and remain formal associations (Dupont & Verdure 2011).

Objectives of a GAA are not only commercial. The projects are rather intended to serve as an “exchange platform”, a place of discussions, considerations/reflections and perceptions. Nevertheless, the more a GAA is organised and structured, and the more its activities, sales and exchanges take place regularly, “the higher is the risk of being perceived as a commercial business, resulting in demands regarding the application of rules of the law of the competitors” (Dupont & Verdure 2011).

Thus, when launching a GAA, the structure and objectives should be considered, as well as questions of responsibility and assurances of volunteers in case of financial uncertainties (Dupont & Verdure 2011).

5.4.2.4 Obstacles in the Creation of a CSA

Two obstacles hinder the creation of a CSA, in particular (Interviews with Roels & Iserbyt, 2011):

- the “uncertainty of finding enough consumers”
- access to land

The fear that a farm could not find enough members for a CSA is very often expressed at the beginning, but is usually not the problem (Interview with Roels, 2011). In general, already at the first meeting, enough people who are interested in the projects participate.

However, the second problem, access to land, is very severe. Belgium is a very small country with a very dense population so there is a high demand for land. The competition is very intense and the prices per hectare increase rapidly. Le Troadec (2010) writes that in some places in Belgium, up to 30,000 EUR per hectare can be paid compared with 3,000 EUR per hectare in some French regions. Iserbyt (Interview, 2011) speaks even of more than 75,000 EUR per hectare. These costs complicate the installation of young farmers who just finished their formation and did not grow up in a farmer’s family. The search for good and fertile soils can take a long time and the prices that young farmers have to pay when starting

a new farm are exorbitant (Interview with Roels, 2011). To react to this obstacle, the initiative “Terre de Liens” (see above) will also be created in Flanders and Wallonia to support the access to land. “Terre de Liens” already exists in France and could help AMAP-farmers to keep their land.

6 CSA and Politics

After an analysis of the present situation, in the following, the focus will be widened from consumer-producer relations to a wider political context including processes of governance.

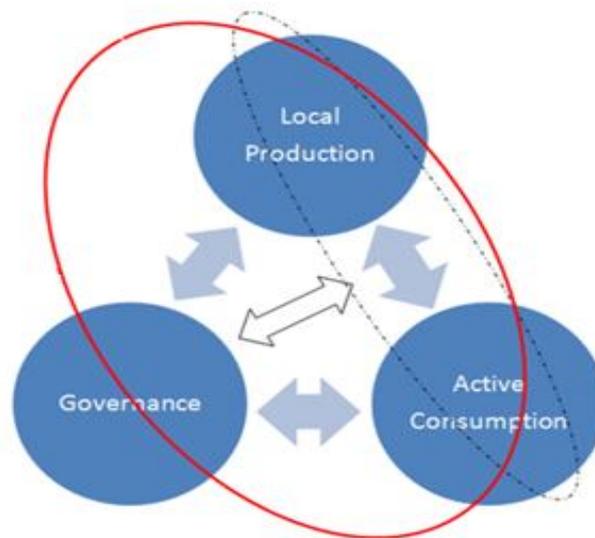


Figure 18 Wider research approach

Source: Volz, 2010

When looking at the growing CSA movement in our case studies one inevitably has to pose the question of interaction with politics. A movement which is explicitly directed towards societal welfare through sustainable production of food and responsible land use, through preserving small scale farms and the viability of rural areas, should evoke the interest of those responsible for public welfare – politicians, administrators, policy makers. And those active in CSA have every right to request support. However, the situation is in general different: There was seemingly little interest in CSA from politics and many CSA initiatives were actually keen to emphasize their independence from politics while some rejected any idea of contact with official bodies. CSA is in many ways a reaction to the current agricultural policy and therefore is not always intended to be incorporated in political schemes and structures.

At a closer look however, a more subtle picture emerges: The four countries of our study do not only have different understandings of CSA but also different attitudes regarding political intervention and support. Of course the differences in the occurrence of political interventions can be linked partly to political culture. On the one hand, CSA projects are intended to be financially self-supporting and independent. On the other hand, subsidies to finance e.g. the

job of a coordinator are welcome with certain initiatives. The opinions thus vary widely. It is obvious that CSA-farmers refuse to be reglemented intensely. Farmers and consumers set up these projects in the first place to be independent from political decisions and regulations and from the world market.

Another question is, if the advance of the CSA model does not require interaction with politics. The current discussion on the future of the CAP (common agricultural policy of the European Union) reminds us, that there are demands for sustainable change in the agricultural system; whether or not CSA can benefit from such policy changes depends on the communication and thus interaction with policy makers. Often, an interaction with politics can lead to a wider and faster spread of initiatives and of the model in general (see e.g. France).

This chapter addresses the following questions in the four countries:

- What is the connection between CSA and politics?
- What are the interests of politics?
- Which kind of support could CSA receive?
- What are the opinions regarding cooperation with politics within CSA projects?

6.1 Politics and CSA in France

6.1.1 What is the Role of AMAPs in French Agriculture?

In France, projects of local food supply chains (LCDFs, in French “circuits courts”) have grown in importance recently. The term LFSCs describes the commercialization of food with either no or just one middleman, therefore called direct or indirect sales in accordance to the definition of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fishery (“Ministère de l’Agriculture, de l’Alimentation et de la Pêche”). In other definitions, LFSCs express also sales with up to two middlemen or sales with a limit on the kilometres of transport. All definitions have in common that the proximity between consumers and producers is emphasised which can be either spatial or relational (INRA).

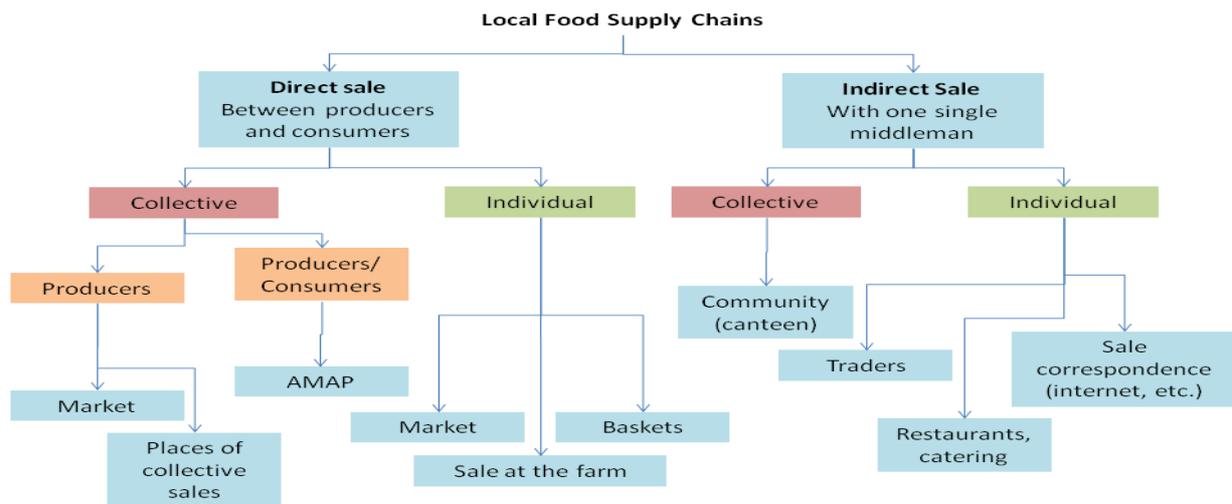


Figure 19 The subdivision of local food systems (“circuits courts”)

Source: Modified after Chaffotte & Chiffolleau, 2007 & Ministère de l’alimentation, de l’agriculture et de la pêche, 2009

In 2005, 16.3% of the French farms, 88.600 in total, undertook direct sales (Ministère de l’alimentation, de l’agriculture et de la peche 2009). Among them are farms which are part of one or several AMAPs. While collective associations between farmers have been a part of direct sales for a long time, collectives of farmers and consumers present a very specific and rather new type of direct marketing with growing importance.

In its plan of actions, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fishery of France describes short food supply chains as an additional offer of food-supply to what the Ministry sees as regular supply chains. These special forms of commercialisation support sustainable development in the regions where they are located: particularly on the edge of town, in touristic areas and in the mountains. Further, they connect several actors of different domains and reinforce their relationships: producers, consumers, artisans, retailers/traders, restaurant owners, local communities, etc.

The plan of action was written subsequent to the conferences regarding the needs and the development of the agricultural sector and the “Grenelle de l’environnement” in which solutions and possibilities to support seasonal production and to clarify the advantages of local products were discussed. The plan of action is integrated in the politics of the Ministry of Agriculture, Alimentation and Fishery regarding a reliable, diversified and sustainable offer of food.

The plan of action resulted in 14 measures based on 4 axes which are:

- the improvement of the knowledge about the short food supply chains and its distribution,
- the adaption of the farmer's formation to the demands of the "circuits courts",
- support for farmers to engage in short food supply chains, and
- a better organisation of the short food supply chains.

For the right implementation of the plan of action, a steering committee was established consisting of the members of the original team for the plan of action; among others the "Confédération Paysanne", the "Réseau des AMAP d'Ile-de-France" and "CREAMAP" participated.

Although AMAPs were not at the centre of the plan, the French Minister of Agriculture and Fishery, Michel Barnier, chose the meeting point of an AMAP in Vanves (Hautes-Seine) for the presentation of the plan of action which can be interpreted as a strong appreciation of these projects and the knowledge of its importance.

Several studies have been conducted about the "Circuits courts" concerning particularly local, organic and sustainable agriculture. AMAPs are in general considered to be one form of direct sales, but rarely in the main focus. Also local authorities support mainly local food systems and –as part of them - the AMAPs.

6.1.2 Political Intervention and Possibilities of Support and Financing

AMAPs in different regions can benefit in various ways from subsidies. Usually, regional authorities ("Conseils Généraux and Conseils Régionaux") support regional AMAP-networks.

For instance, in the Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur the network Alliance Provence receives support covering up to 70% of their costs from the local authorities: the "Conseil Régional PACA", the "Conseil Général Bouches-du-Rhône" and municipalities (Interview with Vallée, 2011).

The "Conseil Général Bouches-du-Rhône" supports Alliance Provence in two ways: Firstly, the network is supported through agricultural policies, secondly through policies aimed at enhancing the social economy and solidarity ("Economie sociale et solidaire"). Within agricultural policy, the "Conseil Général" supports the association "Les paniers marseillais" (which is also a CSA) as well as "Bienvenue à la Ferme" (Welcome to the farm) (a network which offers eco-friendly travel accommodations in France), farmers' markets and "collective

selling-points” (another form of local food marketing). Furthermore the “Conseil Général” finances the project “manger autrement au collège” (“Eat differently at the college”) and the fair “Terroir 13” which is organized by the “Conseil Général” and the “Chambre d’Agriculture”. The main objective of this policy is to promote regional agricultural products.

Since a meeting with the network in 2009, the “Conseil Général Bouches-du-Rhône” has supported Alliance Provence within its agricultural policy. The AMAPs are perceived as an important mode of commercialisation for local agricultural products. Besides, the “Conseil Général Bouches-du-Rhône” aims at accompanying producers in general: in their formation, in the diffusion of technical-economic references and in projects on access to land. One focus of the agricultural policies is the support of an economically viable, local agriculture with quality products, the adaption of the local food offer and demand, and a sensitisation of the population regarding local supply in a department where land pressure is enormous. The financial aids for the networks are not tied to organic certification of the farmers. Ughetto (Interview, 2011) states that there are not many organic farmers and that a collective cannot support some but not the others. In a context of different modes of commercialization and cultivation, different positions should be respected and supported by the collectives. Moreover, farmers of AMAPs respect the idea of “agriculture raisonnée” (- reasonable agriculture) which has set new standards regarding the sustainable management of agricultural production.

Besides support within the agricultural policy of the Conseil Général, Alliance Provence receives also subsidies within the Social Economy and Solidarity policies of the “Conseil Général”.

Furthermore, a regional public body (“Communauté d’agglomération du pays d’Aubagne et de l’Etoile”) offers financial support to the network. To encourage local agriculture, this organisation has offensively promoted the development of an agricultural charter for a more sustainable agriculture. This charter had already been signed in 1992 but was revised recently. Urgenci, Alliance Provence and AMAPs are among the participating organisations.

The “Conseil Régional PACA” supports the AMAP-network through its agricultural and social economy and solidarity policies⁸. In PACA, one programme deals with the reinforcement and

⁸ Multi-year contract between the state and each region to define directions of the regional policy and priorities for support. Programmes and their financing are listed under <http://www.regionpaca.fr/uploads/media/cper-paca-2007-2013.pdf>.

promotion of the attractiveness of the territory, innovation and the creation of jobs. Among other things, objectives are

- the accompaniment of collective projects of research and development of instruments for the valorisation of products, and the
- support for a better structuring of marketing and distribution channels.

In the region Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the association AVENIR receives subsidies for the installation of the AMAP network by the local authorities. So far, this association has received financial support of the Conseil Régional Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the Conseils Généraux Nord and Pas-de-Calais and the Communauté Urbaine de Lille (LMCU). As soon as the AMAP-network is independent, it will receive the support directly.

The Conseil Général Nord supports within its agricultural policy particularly the installation of farmers, short food supply chains and local approaches; all of these aspects are covered in an AMAP. Beside support for the network, farmers could benefit from support from the Conseil Général for their installation with a financed credit. Also here, there is no obligation to organic farming. However, organic farmers may benefit from additional financing (Interview with Brebion, 2011).

In Alsace, the Conseil Régional has also the objective to support local food systems, mainly because of their regional economic benefits. Strategies for development can be subdivided into three main categories:

1. Direct sales (all modes of commercialization);
2. Structuring of marketing and distribution channels for the commercialization of local products; possibly in bigger chains and beginning with vegetables;
3. Integration of regional products from Alsace in the local agro-food-industries.

A particular focus is on the promotion of high quality agricultural products and notably organic certifications. The support for AMAPs is restricted to this condition. However, the AMAPs refuse to be put in charge of special demands and claim to be “conversion in progress” but without the certification “agriculture bio” (AB). Therefore, AMAPs receive subsidies from the Conseil Regional d’Alsace only for certified farmers. On the local level, the Conseil Général Bas-Rhin supports the network of its area financially through the policy of local food systems and is promoting the AMAPs e.g. on his website (Interview with Peugnet & conversation with Steinmetz, 2011).

The national network MIRAMAP is supported by the European Social Fond in France; the position of the coordinator and some costs related to communication are financed.

6.1.3 Perception of Politics by Members of AMAPs

In general, the support by the local authorities is perceived positively. The subsidies facilitate the installation of the projects and the networks strengthen the establishment and the development of partnerships. The projects do not fear intense control because of financial support. The network has the legal form of an association and associations are principally not employers or economic institutions but a forum to develop and to defend social and ecological concepts against the domination of conventional agriculture, states Vallée (Interview, 2011). The projects are a part of the local economy and present an alternative for farmers. Their development should be in the interest of the local communities. Therefore, financial support to the network is seen as a precondition to develop the projects. Nevertheless, financing linked to heavy intervention by politics is rejected in order to remain independent.

Despite the positive interaction with politics, some members of AMAPs criticise that politics focus on commercialisation and regional economic efficiency and promote local food systems in general and not the AMAPs in particular. In this view, AMAPs are particularly well suited to present an economic solution for farms with economic difficulties by forstening partnerships between a producer and a community and thus solve the financial deficit and allow the farmer to start the cultivation without debts (Interview with Vallée, 2011).

Another criticism is that peasant farmers do not only need support in forms of credits and subsidies which are given within the programmes for local food systems. Young farmers rather need support to find and buy land for farming and therefore an easier access to credits. Furthermore, because of the strong support for industrial agriculture, peasant farmers cannot compete. If this support would be stopped, the conditions of the markets would be more equal and a competition between the producers more fair.

For the time being, big agro-businesses remain the greatest beneficiaries of public support. Organic agriculture and sustainable provision with agricultural products is less acknowledged and often not taken seriously. In the “Grandes Ecoles” (higher education establishments outside the university structure which offer a very specialised education), in general specialised in one the necessity of a healthy alimentation and the cultivation of healthy vegetables should become a very important part of education. Moreover, there should be more debate in the media about the situation of peasant farmers to sensitize people

(Interview with Thirion, 2011). AMAPs have a political message: they support peasant farmers and criticize the current agricultural policies because they are supporting unsustainable practices and structures. At the same time, AMAPs try to influence politics and offer an alternative for fairer, more sustainable and healthier agricultural policies.

Looking back on several years of experience, it can be observed that AMAPs are usually founded by some independent community members who draft the first contract and sign the charter. In this period, political support is not needed. To develop the movement locally, to build up a network and to integrate AMAPs as an alternative local food system and integrate the projects however, support by local authorities is very useful as long as the projects remain independent and the networks are managed by members of the partnerships.

6.2 Politics and CSA in Germany

6.2.1 Integration of CSA in Policies

CSA is not very well known in Germany and the projects appear to be very marginal. Thus, politics do not consider these projects in their agricultural financial support programmes.

In 2009, the Buschberghof received the “Förderpreis Ökologischer Landbau” (Award for ecological cultivation) for its diversified concept based on solidarity. Since 2001, this price is commissioned by the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food and honours ecological concepts based on organic farming to support organic cultivation, subsistence strategies and also prudent natural resource management (“Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz”).

CSA-projects can receive subsidies if they cultivate their products organically.

6.2.2 Acceptance of Political Influence in CSA-Projects

The attitude of CSA-farms regarding politics is generally very reserved. While on the one hand, there is hope to receive a support from politics, restrictions on the projects are feared.

Within the network, a possible political contribution will be part of the discussion about the future developments of CSA.

6.2.2.1 The Priority of Autonomy

A longing for autonomy is at the heart of every CSA. The payments in advance permit a more reliable planning - in contrast to subsidies which are just paid during a certain period of time. The commitment of the community itself is very important and a development without a real commitment of the members would be bound to fail. People in the projects are worried

that political influence could corrupt this new kind of agricultural system and that it could be abused for strategic aims and that the original sense of the project – sustainable structures in solidarity with farmers - would be forgotten. The majority of the members think that the network should not engage with public institutions, explains Künnemann (Interview, 2011). Currently, it is seen as more important to improve the realization of such a project than to discuss possible support from public institutions.

This wish for autonomy expresses a simple desire: politics should not have a strong influence on the farmers and consumers (Conversation with Kraiß, 2011). Bahner (Interview, 2011) emphasizes that 90 to 95 % of the contribution to develop a CSA farm have to come from the community. The initiative of the community ensures the stability of the group which is the basis for a CSA. Help of politics is less needed because the autonomy of the farm is so important.

6.2.2.2 Possibilities of Support

Although only a limited amount of money is needed, some possibilities of public support have been mentioned.

Apart from subsidies for organic farming, financial support through the EU LEADER programme or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) are a possibility and could have an influence on the creation of the network and the increase of the number of CSAs (Kraiß 2009; Kraiß & van Elsen 2010).

There are several possibilities for local governance support to CSA projects: publications in local newspapers, postings in the town halls or the renting of church halls for meetings to fair prices.

The financing of a coordinator for the network like in Belgium and France would be welcome, but it is perceived as very important that the idea of “the people carrying the farm” remains (Interview with Bahner, 2011). Thus, the network and the initiative should be supported but not the form of the network. The relation between farmers and consumers could be intensified by the network, but the learning process should remain as it is central to the development of a CSA farm, emphasizes Bahner.

6.2.2.3 CSA as a Political Project

A CSA-project is by definition a very political project. It appeals to work independently from the world market situation and to show how a sustainable agriculture can work and reinforce

the local economy. CSA is intended to support a paradigm shift in the agricultural sector, in the economic system and in the understanding of nature (Interview with Künnemann, 2011).

6.3 Politics and CSA in Switzerland

CSA projects are little known in Switzerland although it is the country where CSA originated. However, recently their popularity has increased, especially in the French-speaking part. On the federal level, there is no support for CSA-projects. On the local level, there is particularly support in Geneva, promoted within the territorial and agricultural policy and the administration of organic and regional agriculture.

The city of Geneva supports CSA through two departments. Support through the Department of Finances and Accommodation and through the Department for the Agenda 21 is offered for (Conversation with Salerno, 2011):

- Financial support,
- Promotion for the projects,
- Rooms for the distribution of products,
- Organisation of the “week of taste” to sensitize the citizens for local and organic products,
- Cooperation with restaurants to promote local products

The Department of Social Cohesion promotes CSAs on the one hand because it supplies canteens with regional products and on the other hand because they promote products with the Label “Genève Région Terre d’Avenir”.

In particular, the former mayor of Geneva (from June 2010 to Mai 2011), Sandrine Salerno, supports the Swiss CSAs e.g. on her internet blog. She uploaded a video with a message of Rudi Berli promoting local products. Subjects like ecology, health, economy and the local population are considered in the ACP⁹-projects. The city knows about these important interactions and wants to support the measures of these initiatives which provide a responsible production and consumption. That is why projects which *produce* like the “Cueillettes de Landecy”, which *transform* like the “Moulin des Verpillères” and which *distribute* like the “TourneRêve” have received financial aid by the city (Salerno 2011).

⁹ ACP = “Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité” (Contract-based agriculture of proximity).

The interest of public bodies like the city of Geneva to promote CSA-projects lies in promoting the benefits of sustainable cultivation and the proximity to the clients who are supplied with local quality products from organic farms. Further objectives of the city are to link consumers and producers and to sensitize the population but also the producers towards more careful modes of cultivation. S. Salerno speaks of “eco-citizens”. ACPs integrate economic, social and ecological demands and reduce barriers between cities and rural areas. Moreover, especially in Geneva, a very urban area, these projects create an important number of jobs and guarantee the proximity of producers and consumers. According to a survey realised by the OPAGE¹⁰ and the general direction of agriculture (“direction général de l’agriculture” (DGA)) the interest for basket box schemes and CSA is rising (Republique et Canton de Geneve 2009). However, it would currently not be feasible to cover the total food demand of Geneva through these projects. So far, the share of food-self-sufficiency in Geneva is about 20% and ACP-projects present just a very small part of it (Conversation with Marafico, 2011).

The appreciation of the movement was reflected in the award of the AgroPrix given to the local charter FRACP in 2009. Considered are innovations in the agricultural sector (AgroPrix 2009)¹¹.

Although the support for the projects is not enormous, politicians are at least interested in CSA. According to Tschurtschenthaler (Interview, 2011) many politicians take part in a CSA as a private person. Some even help at the farm and support the project but without an explicit political statement.

6.3.1 Forms of Local Support

The situation in Geneva is very special because the public administration is very committed about local and organic agriculture and even set up a label called “Genève Région – Terre Avenir” (Geneva Region – Land of the Future)¹². The holder of the label is the Republic and the Canton Geneva represented by the Département du Territoire (DT) as well as the Domaine de l’agriculture (DAGE). This certification is only for products originating from the

¹⁰ “Office de Promotion des Produits Agricoles de Genève” – Office for the Promotion of agricultural products from Geneva.

¹¹ See <http://agropreis.ch/partenaires>.

¹² See http://www.opage.ch/FR/home_geneveregion.html.

Genève region and with a certain standard of quality. According to the République et Canton de Genève, the label aims to support

- local agriculture which creates a relationship between consumers and producers;
- the cultivation of agricultural high-quality products from Geneva;
- the retraceability of the products through labelling;
- a fair cost effectiveness.

The labelled products are sold directly in markets or shops as well as within CSAs. In general, the CSAs respect all conditions and can therefore profit from the label and subsequently by a financial support which is supplied by the OPAGE. It is also the OPAGE who controls compliance with the directives (OPAGE).

Furthermore, the ACP-project “TourneRêve” was supported during its start-up. Until today, some “extra-costs” are paid with this grant but in general the project does not depend on subsidies (Landwirtschaftlicher Informationsdienst).

Independent from the support in West-Switzerland, ACP projects throughout the country could profit from assistances offered by the “Schweizerische Bauernverband” (Federation of Swiss farmers). CSA-projects are not supported directly but this association provides packaging, advertising materials and information in the sector of direct marketing (Conversation with Kessler, 2011).

In German-speaking Switzerland, AGRIDEA, the Swiss association for the development of the agriculture and the rural areas (“Schweizer Vereinigung für die Entwicklung der Landwirtschaft und des ländlichen Raums”) offered to provide rooms for ACP-association, financed by the department of agriculture. However, the majority of the CSA-members were against this kind of political intervention.

6.3.2 Perception of Political Influence

Opinions regarding political support are divided within the Swiss CSA community. Notably in German-speaking Switzerland, intervention of politics is often not wanted. Especially the newly-founded associations prefer to be independent. Nevertheless, Bill (Interview, 2011) wonders why the communities do not intervene to support the local projects. These concern social and environmental assets and therefore the general public. Furthermore they create workspaces and supply the local population with food so that actually local politics should become interested in these movements.

In French-speaking Switzerland, public financial support exists mainly in the area of Geneva. In some cases, instead of direct financial support, a necessary good was bought by local authorities to support the projects. The provision of a good offers a unique support for the project but does neither influence the structure of the farms nor does it make the farm dependant from the goodwill of politics. So, these subsidies are very welcome.

In some cases, political intervention is even wanted. Tschurtschenthaler (Interview, 2011) thinks that the basic principles of CSA should become a public task. Not private people but the public administration should guarantee for the risks of agriculture. The safeguard of enough healthy food, fair prices, good quality, sustainable cultivation and fair work-conditions should be the duty of the state. On the other hand, financing which makes the projects dependent should be refused; financial support should thus not be linked to certain criteria. The projects should be responsible for themselves and organize the project in accordance with their plans.

6.4 Politics and CSA in Belgium

CSA-projects are not very well known in Belgium and by its political deputies. However, support varies according to the region. The movement in Brussels-Region is very strong and the projects there have been promoted offensively to inform about their work and objectives. Also support by politics is very welcome. This stands in contrast to the projects in Flanders and Wallonia: in Flanders, political implementation seems to be less welcome. The situation is similar in Wallonia, where the discussion about the influence of politics is in progress.

6.4.1 Brussels-Region

In Brussels-Region, 800 households participate in a GASAP. The Government supports the network of the GASAPs through the “Institut Bruxellois pour la gestion de l’environnement” (IBGE; Brussels institute for the management of the environment). This institute is supported by the Ministry of the Environment. The IBGE has co-financed the job of the coordinator of the GASAPs within the structure of the NPO “Le début des haricots” for two years and will end the subsidy in December 2012. The job of the coordinator is completely financed in the first year, 75% of his salary is financed in the second year, 50% in the third year and 25% in the last year. This financing helps the movement to become autonomous (Interview with Roels, 2011). When an autonomous NPO “GASAP” is created, subsidies could be applied again from December 2012 onwards. Furthermore the IBGE financed the printing of information leaflets for the GASAPs. The motivations to support the GASAPs were first of all to promote short food supply chains and secondly to support the transition towards a more

sustainable agriculture. Nevertheless, for now, this is the only support for the local food systems by the IBGE. However, the IBGE envisages to support the creation of a platform for an organic basket scheme (conversation with Van Bambeke, 2011).

The dependence on this institution is seen with some scepticism. The subsidy makes the network dependent from the IBGE which implies several problems (Le Troadec 2010):

- the institution depends on the actual government; that means that if the IBGE receives less money from the government, the network could be directly concerned by the consequences.
- the IBGE could demand to favor certain projects or influence the position of the network regarding statements by the network;
- the IBGE could ask for a certain number of projects which should be started in a fixed period;
- a liaison with political institutions has an effect on the image of the network.

For the moment, the communities in the vicinity of Brussels are not involved in the partnership. However, they could become important because of their proximity to the stakeholders. Besides, even if they cannot help financially, they could be an aid e.g. regarding the offering of premises. Furthermore, the communities benefit directly by the projects which strengthen the social exchange of the population. Unfortunately, several administrative steps have to be taken. Therefore, the GASAP-network cooperates with the institute “Eco-Conseils” (Eco-advice) which instructs the future eco-advisors of the communities. This formation aims to sensitize the advisors for the GASAPs and the local food systems in general. They have to be informed about the value of these projects, in particular in the communities where GASAPs are numerous (Le Troadec 2010).

6.4.2 Flanders

In Flanders, a plan of action was drafted regarding direct sales, including direct sales at the farms or sales at markets. It aims to identify which laws and conventions hinder the development of the local food systems. According to Iserbyt (Interview, 2011), economic concepts which foster a partnership between producers and consumers have not been considered. Until today, there are no political interactions with the network.

6.4.3 Wallonia

The Wallonian Government does not support the projects either. But within its regional plan of agriculture which measures 7 million Euros, the ministry of Benoit Lutgen, Wallonian Minister of agriculture, lists the promotion of Wallonian products. The region supports, in particular, a small-sized agriculture which is far-sighted and creates jobs (Portail Wallonie 2008).

The ministry proposes to promote the quality of local products. It stated that local products are privileged and prepared promotional information about the products and the dates and places where local products are sold. Furthermore they have thought about possibilities to favor particularly the conversion to organic farming (Portail Wallonie 2007).

Within the workshop of Nature & Progres in Namur, a team thought about the political content of the movement: first of all, the groups stated the wish to be self-administrated and to be free in their way of acting; secondly, demands regarding agricultural policy should be formulated, e.g. that the installation and the reprise of organic peasant farmers within LFSCs should be supported financially (De Gaultier 2011).

Launoy (Interview, 2011) describes that political support is perceived differently by every GAC. Some prefer to do without any intervention of politics, while others think that it is a possibility to improve the development of concepts. Launoy personally thinks that the consumers' groups can organize and develop themselves very well without support by politics. The offer of premises is very welcome, but an additional support not necessary. On the other side, subsidies for peasant farmers supplying the local population are desirable.

6.4.4 Perception of Political Intervention

In general, the CSAs in Belgium want to organize themselves autonomously and independently. For this reason, a strong involvement of politics is not welcome. The implementation of the concept is possible without subsidies of politics and just with the fees of the members, according to Iserbyt (Interview, 2011). Public subsidies are perceived to imply controls and oblige the farms to accept certain regulations which limit the freedom of decision-making. As it is possible to organize on a local level, support by the state government is not necessary.

Roels (Interview, 2011) states that many members wish that the projects are not linked to public bodies and the state. However, there is also a point of view differentiating between support for the network (like it is the case in Brussels-Capital) and direct support measures for the farmers. In general, farmers do not wish to be directed by political measures. They

want to strengthen a sustainable evolution. However, when the financing of the coordinator is supported, this support would be acceptable. The coordinator helps to develop the network and the farmers are not interested in who finances this job, according to Roels. Within the farms, though, political influence is undesirable.

7 Comparative Analysis of CSA in France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland

In the following we would like to display the main analytical results of the study.

The underlying motivation in all the countries is to change the agricultural sector and to realise a sustainable peasant agriculture that is fair to farmers and environment and has a strong regional focus. The quality and freshness of food as well as short transport routes are considered to be very important. Ideas common to the concepts in all the countries researched is the sharing of risks between producers and consumers as well as the sharing of the harvest. At a closer look there are however slightly different emphases in the countries that are outlined in the following.

7.1 Present State and Dynamics of the Development of CSA

In the study of the situation in four countries, we could distinguish three different cases of development:

- In France, the number of CSA is very high (> 1,000) and the dynamic of the development very positive. The regional disparities are relatively large although the movement certainly has distinctive national characteristics;
- In Germany, the number of CSA is still low (~ 20), but the recent dynamic is particularly positive;
- In Switzerland and Belgium, CSA-projects have high regional differences: in some regions the situation reflects the development level of France (Brussels-Capital, Canton of Genève) but in other regions, the spread of CSA is still very limited.

Beside the differences between the countries, in particular between France and the others, we generally observe a favorable dynamic for CSA movements in the countries surveyed.

7.2 The Role of Networks

Networks seem to play an important role within the development of CSA-initiatives. In France, for instance, the national and regional networks are very well organized and active, correspondingly the initiatives are developing very positively; the same holds for Brussels-Capital in Belgium. In a self-organised movement, networks allow to support the creation of structures, to be in contact with the decision-makers, to represent the movement, to structure

the development of CSA, etc. These structures contribute to a diffusion of the concept based on their principles. Also the development of a charter is very important. It underlines the common values and describes the principles. Charters already exist in France, Brussels-Capital, Flanders and in French-speaking Switzerland.

7.3 Questions of Values and Motivation

The motivations to participate in a project vary from one CSA to another and every initiative is different. Nevertheless, the study shows that values differ between countries:

- The financial support for the local agriculture and regional economic aspects are particularly important in France, notably for the public sector that supports the development.
- In Germany, the concept displays the wish of the communities to be autonomous; solidarity and partnership between the producers and consumers is emphasized.
- In the Canton of Geneva, food sovereignty is even promoted by the public sector - through the support for the ACP-initiatives. The network accentuates that the relationship between consumers and farmers is regulated in a contract.
- In France and in Brussels-Capital, Belgium, the initiatives show that an alternative to the agro-industries already exists. AMAPs and GASAPs support peasant agriculture and small-sized farms with fair conditions.
- In Germany, the initiatives want to contribute to a paradigm shift in the agricultural sector as well: they intend to get out of a system exclusively based on market mechanisms. By involving a system where products do not have prices, they try to avoid the rule of market forces.
- In France and Brussels-Capital, Belgium, the concept of peasant agriculture or "Agriculture Paysanne", outlined by the "Confédération Paysanne", is of central importance.
- In Switzerland, the emphasis is more on "Food Sovereignty" which was established by "Via Campesina" and which has recently become a more prominent and worldwide reference point for the right of peoples to define their own food, agriculture, livestock

and fisheries systems since the declaration of Nyeleni 2007 and recently at the European Nyeleni Forum 2011¹³.

- In Germany “Food Autonomy”, “Food Sovereignty” and the ideas of Rudolf Steiner have been referred to as theoretical frame of most initiatives.

7.4 The Role of Politics

The CSA movement is very political yet has not been cooperating with political institutions of the state on a grand scale. This is principally due to the association of state actors with policies that have been detrimental to small-scale, organic peasant agriculture. With the rise of Green parties and green and regional issues in the other parties and administration, the scope for CSA support has increased in some instances. However, a high priority for CSAs everywhere is the desire to be independent and free.

- Political institutions are currently not supporting CSAs in Germany.
- In France we have an engagement of politics with CSA on various levels, from local and regional support to acknowledgement at Government level.
- In Belgium political support is visible in Brussels while there is not much interaction in the rest of the country.
- In Switzerland political support is strong in the municipality of Geneva but hardly visible elsewhere. There are however some signs of interaction.
- In all places there are sceptical voices against political intervention.

¹³ http://nyelenieurope.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=145%3Adeclarartion&lang=de

8 Recommendations

The results of the study have led to the following recommendations:

For the CSA movements:

Increasing public interest in the CSA topics of short supply chains, fresh and healthy food, regional connectivity and sustainable agriculture will offer the CSA movement the chance to broaden and expand the concept. It will prove beneficial to increase networking activities and improve communication strategies towards consumers who then convert into consum-actors or pro-sumers. It will appeal to many consumers if the service is simple, professional and convenient, especially as there seems to be an interest in CSA among many less idealistic citizens. In addition to classic exchange through newsletters, events and meetings, new direct communication strategies (e.g. tracking back the product) can establish and maintain close identification with the farm.

For politics on EU, national and regional levels:

CSA movements have proven that the concept can work and that they can pose a viable and innovative alternative to prevailing anonymous and unsustainable consumption patterns. As these initiatives have a great potential for public welfare they should be eligible to further research and political (and possibly financial) support, e.g. with regard to their ecosystem services. It seems clear that support on local level can be advanced easily, e.g. by providing locations for exchange and presentation of CSA projects.

For research:

The present study has given a first overview of the situation regarding CSA in four European countries. It is obvious however, that there are many research questions that remain open. Thus, further research should accompany the expected rise of CSA in Europe, particularly regarding legal questions, political interaction, national and European networking and marketing.

9 Conclusion

In contrast to conventional farming, CSA promotes a sustainable and diversified pattern of regional and local production with closer connections between farmers and consumers, and with a high care for health and environment. CSA does not only demand food-security but also food sovereignty. Putting these high aspirations into practice takes endurance and dedication especially if the initiatives work without external support. As CSA has an inherently local approach, it is not surprising that many initiatives have only limited capacities for structural advancement of the concept but rather focus on consolidating their economic organism in their locality.

Depending on the country and region we have seen a diversity of approaches to CSA, some more mature than others. It is hard to generalise CSA because big differences between and within countries still exist and the priorities of the various CSA project activists have a high influence on the form of the different CSA initiatives.

The following points are important to understand the different prevalence of CSA in their respective regions

- Interest in fresh regional food and food quality (food culture in the various countries)
- Publicity and communication of the initiatives (advocating CSA rather undogmatically as a political project and economic alternative or simply promoting fresh regional food; dealing in certified organic food only, etc)
- Spread of organic shops and box schemes
- Networking
- Connectedness with local, regional or national politics
- Political culture

Looking at the four country cases we can see France having by far the most CSA initiatives and being the most advanced both in organisational network structures as well as interference with politics. These two aspects can be seen as crucial for the further advancement of the idea. The three other countries and their regions are still developing their structures and umbrella organisations and seem to rely on more idealistic consum-actors whereas in France CSA seems to be an option for a large number of less idealistic people as well.

It is probable that CSA in Belgium, Germany and Switzerland will expand given the tendency, that European citizens increasingly prioritise regional sustainable forms of consumption and transparency in their nutrition sources.

The main question seems to be if CSA in Europe can become a comprehensive concept with decentral coverage in almost any region. Scope for making the idea more convenient certainly exists, e.g. through the use of modern communication technologies. The question is in how far this is wanted and in how far CSA can be seen as a “mainstream” concept. An upscaling of CSA would most likely also imply more contact with regional authorities and possibly with national and European politics.

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11 Appendix

1. Interview Guideline – definition of CSA and actual situation
2. Principles of the “Agriculture Paysanne”
3. Charter France
4. Charter Switzerland FRACP
5. Möschbergerklärung
6. Charter of the GASAP, Brussels-Capital

1. Interview Guideline – definition of CSA and actual situation

1. How would you define Community Supported Agriculture?

1.1 Which kinds of CSA exist?

1.2 Is there a difference between CCA and CSA?

1.3 Which organisation forms are you aware of? If yes, when were they founded? Is it a consumers' or producers' driven association?

1.4 What is the role of the network-organizations among consumers? Among producers?

Is there a written contract? Is the Organic certification required?

Which agreement regarding the price? Is the price paid in advance? If yes, in which intervals?

1.5 How do (the various forms of) CSA finance themselves?

2. How do you see the actual situation of CSA in your country?

2.1 Is the concept known and popular?

Has its prominence increased recently?

2.2 What would be necessary to publicize the projects of CSA?

2.3 Where do you see the main obstacles?

2.4 Which perspectives do you see for CSA?

2.5 Are there regional variations in the prevalence of CSA? What are the main regional tendencies?

2.6 Are the network-organizations sufficiently known by the consumers and producers? Are most of the CSAs part of that network? If not, why?

3. What is the role of local governance? Is there any interaction/communication with political/official bodies?

3.1 If yes, how is politics involved in the projects? Is there support and/or hindering?

3.2 Does politics give any financial support? At which level (national or regional?)

3.3 Is the intervention of politics welcome?

3.4 We intend to investigate case studies at a local level. What is according to you the relevant scale? Regional? Even more local?

3.5 Accordingly, which case studies would you suggest?

4. What would be your expectations about the results of such study?

4.1 Which issues should absolutely be addressed?

4.2 Are you interested in being informed about the progress of the study and are you willing to potentially participate in an international workshop during the summer?

2. The ten principles of the “Agriculture Paysanne”

Principe n° 1	Répartir les volumes de production afin de permettre au plus grand nombre d'agriculteurs d'accéder au métier et d'en vivre.
Principe n° 2	Etre solidaire des paysans des autres régions d'Europe et du monde.
Principe n° 3	Respecter la nature.
Principe n° 4	Valoriser les ressources abondantes et économiser les ressources rares.
Principe n° 5	Rechercher la transparence dans les actes d'achat, de production, de transformation, et de vente des produits agricoles.
Principe n° 6	Assurer la bonne qualité gustative et sanitaire des produits.
Principe n° 7	Viser le maximum d'autonomie dans le fonctionnement des exploitations.
Principe n° 8	Rechercher les partenariats avec d'autres acteurs du monde rural.
Principe n° 9	Maintenir la diversité des populations animales élevées et des variétés végétales cultivées.
Principe n° 10	Raisonner toujours à long terme et de manière globale.

Source: David-Leroy & Girou (2009)

3. Charter of the AMAPs in France

CHARTE des AMAP

Mai 2003

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1 Philosophie générale

La charte d'Alliance Provence sur les AMAP est un document de référence définissant les valeurs, les principes et les engagements auxquels doivent souscrire les associations désirant être reconnues comme AMAP auprès d'Alliance Provence.

L'association Alliance Provence a pour objectif principal de développer et animer le réseau des associations de Maintien de l'Agriculture Paysanne (AMAP). Elle souhaite contribuer au développement d'une agriculture durable et à la mise en place d'une économie solidaire entre villes et campagnes. Elle souhaite permettre aux consommateurs de manger sainement à un prix juste et accessible et qu'ils puissent définir et contrôler ce qu'ils ont dans leur assiette. Elle souhaite que ces consommateurs deviennent des **consom'acteurs**.

Cette charte n'a pas pour objet de servir de Règlement Intérieur aux AMAP. Il incombe à chaque structure de définir de façon autonome son mode de fonctionnement dans le respect de la présente charte.

2 Définition générale des AMAP

Une AMAP est une Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne ayant pour objectif de préserver l'existence et la continuité des fermes de proximité dans une logique d'agriculture durable, c'est-à-dire une agriculture paysanne, socialement équitable et écologiquement saine, de permettre à des consommateurs d'acheter à un prix juste des produits d'alimentation de qualité de leur choix, en étant informés de leur origine, et de la façon dont ils ont été produits, et de participer activement à la sauvegarde et au développement de l'activité agricole locale dans le respect d'un développement durable.

Elle réunit un groupe de consommateurs et un agriculteur de proximité autour d'un contrat dans lequel chaque consommateur achète en début de saison une part de la production qui lui est livrée périodiquement à un coût constant. Le producteur s'engage à fournir des produits de qualité dans le respect de la charte de l'agriculture paysanne (voir définition au paragraphe suivant et en annexe).

3 Les principes généraux à respecter

Les AMAP doivent respecter 18 principes fondateurs :

1. La référence à la charte de l'agriculture paysanne (cf annexe) pour chaque producteur
2. Une production de dimension humaine adaptée aux types de culture et d'élevage
3. Une production respectueuse de la nature, de l'environnement et de l'animal : développement d'une biodiversité, fertilité des sols, production sans engrais ni pesticides chimiques de synthèse, gestion économique de l'eau ...
4. Une bonne qualité des produits : gustative, sanitaire, environnementale
5. L'appui à l'agriculture paysanne locale
6. La solidarité et des liens actifs avec tous les acteurs locaux oeuvrant pour le maintien de l'agriculture durable et d'un commerce solidaire
7. Le respect des normes sociales par rapport aux employés de l'exploitation, y compris le personnel temporaire
8. La recherche de la transparence dans les actes d'achat, de production, de transformation et de vente des produits agricoles
9. L'accompagnement des producteurs à l'autonomie, c'est-à-dire la capacité à être maître de ses choix
10. La proximité du producteur et des consommateurs : elle est indispensable pour assurer le lien direct entre eux et pour favoriser le circuit le plus court entre producteur et consommateurs
11. Une AMAP par producteur et par groupe local de consommateurs
12. La formalisation et le respect des contrats à chaque saison entre consommateurs et producteurs
13. Aucun intermédiaire entre producteur et consommateurs, pas de produits achetés et revendus par le producteur sans accord des consommateurs.
14. La définition à chaque saison d'un prix équitable entre producteur et consommateurs
15. Une information fréquente du consommateur sur les produits
16. La solidarité des consommateurs avec le producteur dans les aléas de la production
17. Une participation active des consommateurs à l'AMAP favorisée notamment par la responsabilisation du maximum d'adhérents
18. Une sensibilisation des adhérents de l'AMAP aux particularités de l'agriculture paysanne

4 La création d'une AMAP

La création d'une AMAP doit être réalisée à l'initiative d'un groupe de consommateurs motivé désirant soutenir l'agriculture paysanne de proximité.

Ce groupe doit rechercher un producteur local qui s'engage à respecter les principes définis au paragraphe 3.

Pour ce faire, les consommateurs favoriseront les contacts avec les producteurs locaux.

Une fois trouvé, ils soumettront leur choix à la commission d'évaluation d'Alliance Provence qui organisera une visite de l'exploitation avec des consommateurs.

Enfin, consommateurs et producteur définiront ensemble le mode de fonctionnement selon des principes décrits au paragraphe suivant. Ils définiront ensemble un contrat.

Le respect de la charte des AMAP et l'adhésion à Alliance Provence constituent les deux conditions initiales pour que cette association entre consommateurs et producteur se constitue en tant qu'AMAP.

5 Principes de fonctionnement d'une AMAP

5.1 Structuration des consommateurs

Les consommateurs peuvent choisir de se structurer en association de fait ou en association déclarée.

La création d'une association loi 1901 déclarée en Préfecture peut être justifiée par le maniement de sommes importantes dans le cadre du contrat établi avec le producteur, la gestion des cotisations, la reconnaissance auprès des acteurs locaux. Elle permettra notamment l'ouverture d'un compte bancaire et la formalisation des décisions prises par les adhérents.

Les instances et le mode de fonctionnement de l'AMAP devront permettre dans tous les cas de favoriser la participation d'un maximum de consommateurs à la gestion de l'association.

Les responsabilités couramment reconnues dans les AMAP sont : le secrétariat, la comptabilité, la distribution, la communication interne, la communication externe, le recrutement, les animations, l'évaluation, la coordination avec Alliance Provence et avec les autres AMAP.

5.2 Le contrat

Il est établi entre le groupe de consommateurs ou l'association les représentant et l'agriculteur,

Sa durée est liée aux cycles de production de l'exploitation

Ce contrat comprend la distribution périodique de produits par l'agriculteur aux consommateurs en un lieu, un jour et un créneau horaire réguliers à un coût constant déterminé en accord entre les consommateurs et le producteur.

Ce contrat doit préciser la liste des produits programmés que l'agriculteur fournira périodiquement aux consommateurs.

De leur côté, les consommateurs s'engagent à régler par avance les produits selon des modalités à préciser. Ils s'engagent à trouver un remplaçant si, pour des raisons exceptionnelles, ils devaient se désister de leur engagement.

De son côté, le producteur s'engage à mettre en œuvre tous les moyens nécessaires pour répondre à ses engagements de fournir des produits de qualité aux consommateurs dans les quantités et les échéances fixées...

Les paragraphes suivants précisent le contenu du contrat.

5.3 L'achat de produits complémentaires

Les amapiens souhaitant disposer de produits complémentaires (viande, fromage, pain ...) devront créer obligatoirement une nouvelle AMAP. Ils trouveront sur leur territoire d'autres consommateurs susceptibles de porter ou adhérer à ce projet.

La distribution de produits complémentaires ne peut en aucun cas être réalisée par le producteur de l'AMAP qui joue le rôle d'intermédiaire ; en effet les consommateurs n'ont alors aucun contrôle sur la qualité des produits fournis et leur coût. De plus, on entre bien dans le cadre d'une vente dans laquelle il n'y a aucun lien entre producteur et consommateurs.

Nous rappelons que les consommateurs peuvent également s'adresser aux coopératives biocoop qui jouent un rôle important dans la distribution de produits biologiques et dans le soutien à l'agriculture durable.

5.4 Le coût des produits fournis

Producteur et consommateurs définissent ensemble le coût des produits fournis (légumes, fruits, œufs, laitages, viandes et volailles, huile d'olive).

Le producteur s'engage à fournir périodiquement une quantité de produits correspondant à ce prix.

Il doit définir précisément le mode d'évaluation de ses produits dans le cadre à l'AMAP par rapport aux prix qu'il est susceptible de pratiquer ailleurs.

Si le producteur travaille exclusivement en AMAP, un mode de calcul devra prendre en compte les charges de l'exploitation et définir les recettes qui doivent être dégagées annuellement.

Dans le cas contraire, le producteur pourra appliquer une réduction par rapport aux prix pratiqués sur les marchés, ou avec les distributeurs.

Dans tous les cas, le mode de calcul devra être totalement **transparent**.

Le producteur devra fournir régulièrement des informations aux consommateurs pour leur permettre de vérifier si les termes du contrat sont respectés.

Si le producteur est ponctuellement en incapacité de fournir les produits dans des quantités suffisantes et cela pour des raisons indépendantes de sa volonté (gel, grêle, parasites ...), il devra en informer immédiatement les consommateurs.

5.5 La production

La production de l'agriculteur doit être réalisée dans le respect de la charte de l'agriculture paysanne (voir annexe).

Alliance Provence et les consommateurs peuvent aider un agriculteur à faire évoluer son exploitation vers un mode de production respectueux de la nature et de l'environnement. Un contrat d'objectifs clair est alors établi avec l'agriculteur.

Tous les produits (légumes, fruits, fromages, œufs ...) doivent provenir de l'exploitation. Aucun produit ne doit être acheté à l'extérieur sans accord des consommateurs.

Tout autre produit complémentaire dont ne disposent pas les consommateurs devra faire l'objet d'un contrat spécifique avec un autre producteur.

Les programmations des produits à fournir aux consommateurs doivent être définies avec eux bien avant la saison. Une liste des produits est établie et devra être dans la mesure du possible respectée.

5.6 Livraison et distribution

La livraison devra être effectuée directement par le producteur, si le lieu de distribution est distinct de sa ferme. C'est indispensable pour préserver les liens entre consommateurs et producteur.

La distribution sera assurée par les consommateurs en sa présence.

Pendant les périodes de vacances, il incombe à chaque adhérent absent de trouver un remplaçant.

5.7 Règlement

Les consommateurs s'engagent financièrement sur une saison complète.

Ils effectuent un prépaiement des paniers qui leurs seront livrés. L'objectif est de permettre au producteur de disposer d'un fonds de roulement ou une trésorerie suffisante pour réaliser ses investissements ou acquitter certaines dépenses.

Les paiements sont réalisés en une, deux ou trois fois à des échéances fixées par les adhérents avec le producteur.

Toutefois, des modalités de règlement spécifiques peuvent être définies pour des personnes connaissant des difficultés de paiement.

5.8 Communication interne

Consommateurs et producteur mettront en œuvre tous les moyens de communication de leur choix pour assurer la diffusion des informations, développer la convivialité et favoriser la transparence.

5.9 Evaluation

Un travail d'évaluation de l'AMAP doit être réalisé régulièrement avec tous les adhérents. Il permet d'évaluer si les objectifs ont été atteints et si la charte a été respectée. Il permet également d'améliorer avec le producteur le fonctionnement de l'association, de mieux répondre aux besoins des consommateurs ...

5.10 Et pour aller plus loin

Chaque AMAP doit réfléchir à sa pérennisation. Elle peut également définir des actions permettant de renforcer l'engagement et l'implication des consommateurs : investissement solidaire, achat collectif de foncier, essaimage sur le territoire.

Enfin, la participation active de chaque AMAP à ALLIANCE PROVENCE est indispensable pour dynamiser le réseau et permettre son fonctionnement démocratique.

Annexe : les dix principes de l'agriculture paysanne

Principe n° 1	Répartir les volumes de production afin de permettre au plus grand nombre d'agriculteurs d'accéder au métier et d'en vivre
Principe n° 2	Etre solidaire des paysans des autres régions d'Europe et du monde
Principe n° 3	Respecter la nature
Principe n° 4	Valoriser les ressources abondantes et économiser les ressources rares
Principe n° 5	Rechercher la transparence dans les actes d'achat, de production, de transformation et de vente des produits agricoles
Principe n° 6	Assurer la bonne qualité gustative et sanitaire des produits
Principe n° 7	Viser le maximum d'autonomie dans le fonctionnement des exploitations
Principe n° 8	Rechercher les partenariats avec d'autres acteurs du monde rurale
Principe n° 9	Maintenir la diversité des populations animales élevées et des variétés végétales cultivées
Principe n° 10	Raisonner toujours à long terme et de manière globale

4. Charter Switzerland FRACP

Charte de l'Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité (ACP)

Elaborée le 29 novembre 2007 par la Fédération romande de l'agriculture contractuelle de proximité (FRACP)

Philosophie générale

La charte de l'agriculture contractuelle de proximité vise à définir les principes de base régissant toutes les initiatives d'agriculture contractuelle de proximité (ACP) actuelles et futures. Elle constitue un socle commun aux différentes initiatives, permettant de rendre leur fonctionnement lisible et vérifiable.

La charte se reconnaît dans la définition de la souveraineté alimentaire qui précise notamment que:

- La souveraineté alimentaire est le DROIT d'une population, d'une région, d'un pays ou groupe de pays à définir une politique agricole et alimentaire, sans dumping de prix vis-à-vis de pays tiers. La priorité est donnée à la production agricole locale pour nourrir la population. Les paysan(ne)s ont le droit de produire des aliments et les consommateurs ont le droit à pouvoir décider ce qu'ils veulent consommer et par qui et comment l'aliment est produit. Les prix agricoles doivent être liés aux coûts de production.

Définition

L'agriculture contractuelle de proximité lie par contrat des consommateur-trice-s et un/des producteur-trice-s d'une région définie pour un approvisionnement de produits alimentaires. Ce contrat définit

La qualité, la quantité, le mode de production, les prix et les modalités de livraison des produits.

Les fondements de l'ACP

1. Chaque agriculteur-trice membre travaille son domaine dans l'optique d'une agriculture durable. Il/elle intègre donc dans le processus de production et de transformation les principes de la durabilité, à savoir le respect de normes économiques, sociales et environnementales.
2. L'agriculture contractuelle de proximité doit favoriser un développement agricole qui permette au plus grand nombre d'agriculteur-trice-s d'accéder au métier et d'en dégager un revenu rémunérateur. Les normes légales et

professionnelles en vigueur concernant l'emploi des salarié-e-s agricoles et de tout employé-e stagiaire ou bénévole doivent être respectées.

3. Chaque membre est encouragé à minimiser l'impact de ses activités sur l'environnement. Les consommateurs et les producteur-trice-s revendiquent une agriculture exempte d'OGM. Le/la producteur-trice est encouragé-e à adapter ses techniques de production afin de minimiser l'impact sur l'environnement. Chaque producteur-trice produit selon un cahier des charges transparent et contrôlé ou selon les règles d'un label existant. L'agriculture biologique est fortement encouragée. Le/la producteur-trice s'engage également à favoriser la biodiversité animale et végétale et à respecter le bien-être animal.
4. La dimension humaine et la relation de proximité sont une priorité: la relation directe entre consommateurs et producteur-trice-s est essentielle.
5. La relation de proximité vise notamment à assurer une transparence maximum des actes de production, de transformation et de commercialisation. Une information fréquente destinée aux consommateurs est assurée.
6. La participation des consommateurs au sein de l'initiative est souhaitée. Celle-ci peut se décliner sous différentes actions, comme par exemple une participation aux travaux :
 - a. de production (à la ferme et aux champs),
 - b. de transformation et de distribution des produits,
 - c. liés à la promotion et à la gestion
 - d. ou à toutes autres actions participant au développement de la structure ACP.

Les consommateurs ont la possibilité de connaître la ou les exploitation(s) par le biais de diverses démarches (manifestation, travaux pratiques...)

7. Un contrat lie producteur-trice-s et consommateurs. Celui-ci est valable pour un engagement pour la saison, (généralement d'un an), renouvelé en principe tacitement. Le contrat définit la qualité, la quantité, le mode de production, les prix et les modalités de livraison des produits. Le contrat est négocié entre le ou les agriculteur-trice-s et les consommateurs ou un/une représentant-e de ceux-ci.
8. Le prix contractualisé doit assurer une juste rémunération des personnes qui travaillent sur le domaine agricole. La juste rémunération tient compte des coûts de production du domaine, des aléas de production (par ex. météo) et actions spécifiques mises en œuvre à la demande des consommateurs.
9. Le préfinancement de la récolte et de la production est souhaité. Le consommateur devrait payer à l'avance tout ou partie de ce qu'il va recevoir.
10. La maîtrise complète de la filière (production, transformation, livraison) est réalisée ou en tout cas gérée autant que possible par les producteurs. Des partenariats avec d'autres acteurs (artisans) du monde rural (boucherie, moulin, pressoir, boulangerie,...) sont recherchés et souhaités, pour autant

que la transparence du mode de transformation et de la filière soit assurée pour les produits redistribués aux consommateurs.

11. Un processus évolutif visant l'amélioration permanente du mode de production, de transformation et de distribution, dans le sens de la qualité du produit et du respect de l'environnement est souhaité.
12. Pour les nouvelles initiatives d'agriculture contractuelle de proximité, la participation à la FRACP est souhaitable. Le but de cette fédération est l'information mutuelle, la promotion commune, les échanges d'expériences tant entre producteurs qu'entre consommateurs.
13. La FRACP est aussi chargée du respect et de l'application de cette charte.

Source: FRACP (c)

5. Möschbergerklärung

Möschberg Erklärung

Zur Landwirtschaft von morgen

1. **Hinter diesem Aufruf stehen verantwortungsbewusste Bauern und Bäuerinnen, Fachleute aus dem landwirtschaftlichen Umfeld sowie besorgte Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten. In Achtsamkeit gegenüber dem Boden und der darauf gedeihenden Vielfalt wollen wir neue und zukunftsweisende Bewirtschaftungsformen verwirklichen, die das natürliche Prinzip des Werdens und Vergehens respektieren.**
2. **Wir gehen davon aus, dass die Ernährung mit weitgehend eigenproduzierten Lebensmitteln ein Grundbedürfnis und das sinnvolle landwirtschaftliche Ziel jeder lokalen Gemeinschaft, Region oder Nation ist.**
3. **Bauern und Bäuerinnen, aber auch viele andere Mitglieder der Gesellschaft tragen zu dieser verantwortungsvollen Aufgabe bei. Überschaubare und persönlich gestaltbare Verhältnisse sind die Grundlage für eine lebendige Landwirtschaft.**
4. **Weltweit ist die kleinräumige bäuerliche Landwirtschaft ein unverzichtbares Landschaftselement. Sie beherbergt eine ökologische Vielfalt an Pflanzen und Tieren und trägt ein biologisches, soziales und kulturelles Erbe. Dieser sorgsam bearbeitete Boden ist und bleibt die Lebensgrundlage für alle Menschen.**
5. **Der Weltagrarbericht hält in eindrücklicher Weise fest, dass die heute dominierende Landwirtschaft in Strukturen gefangen ist, die der Biodiversität schaden und soziale Ungerechtigkeit verursachen. Die Hungerproblematik verschärft sich anstatt gemildert zu werden. Um Böden, Luft, Gewässer und Menschen wieder gesunden zu lassen, müssen radikal andere Wege beschritten werden.**
6. **Vieles dreht sich um den Schlüsselfaktor Erdöl. Die Industrialisierung der Nahrungsproduktion bewirkte, dass unsere Landwirtschaft die nachhaltige Nutzungsweise der natürlichen Grundlagen aus den Händen gegeben hat und von nicht erneuerbarer Energie abhängig geworden ist. Die Begrenztheit der fossilen Energiereserven und die mit ihrem Verbrauch einhergehende**

Klimaveränderung zwingen die Landwirtschaft der Industrieländer, rasch aus der Energie verschleissenden Produktionsweise herauszufinden.

7. Die Schweiz ist durch Import- und Exportverbindungen in die weltweite Agrarproblematik eingeflochten. Wir haben einen statistischen Selbstversorgungsgrad von etwa 50%. Energetisch betrachtet ist unser Selbstversorgungsgrad mit Lebensmitteln jedoch Null. Jede Kalorie, die uns ernährt, wird erst durch den „Einkauf“ von nicht erneuerbaren Kalorien verfügbar. Diese verdrängte Tatsache steht in auffallendem Widerspruch zum Verfassungsauftrag über die Ernährung der Schweizer Bevölkerung.

8. Aufgrund des Gesagten ergeben sich vier offensichtliche Forderungen zur Sicherung der landwirtschaftlichen Flächen als nachhaltige Lebensgrundlage:

- Eher kleinere Betriebseinheiten und nicht grössere,
- Mehr Arbeitskräfte in der Landwirtschaft und nicht weniger,
- Grössere natürliche Vielfalt auf den Betrieben,
- Neue Formen der nachbarschaftlichen und sozialen Zusammenarbeit.

9. Diese Zielvorstellungen verlangen nach völlig neuen Handlungsgrundsätzen für Bauern und Bäuerinnen. Dass der bisherige Fortschrittsfad der industriellen Landwirtschaft in eine Sackgasse führt, muss auch von der übrigen Bevölkerung erkannt und in den Konsequenzen mitgetragen werden. Selbst der biologische Landbau erweist sich unter der herrschenden wachstumsorientierten Denkweise als nicht nachhaltig. Politik, landwirtschaftliche Ausbildungsstätten, die Agrarwissenschaft und wir alle sind aufgefordert, umzudenken und anders zu handeln.

„Rückseite“

Das **Bioforum Schweiz** als Verfasser der Möschi- Erklärung repräsentiert eine weit gefächerte Gruppe landwirtschaftlich engagierter Menschen. Rund um den Kern der Biobauern und Biobäuerinnen bringt es Männer und Frauen aus verschiedensten Berufen zusammen. Der Möschi war die Wiege des organisch- biologischen Landbaus im deutschsprachigen Raum. Der Verein Bioforum Schweiz pflegt dieses Erbe und ist sich zugleich bewusst, dass „Bio“ allein nicht mehr genügt. Wir haben bisher den fruchtbaren Boden ins Zentrum gestellt, jetzt müssen wir **die Erde in die Mitte unseres Denkens und Handelns nehmen.**

Der unter grossem Aufwand verfasste **Weltagrarbericht** bestätigt eindrücklich – und beängstigend, was wir aus eigener Erfahrung schon länger spüren: So geht es nicht weiter. Auch in der Schweiz gilt: Wir überschauen zwar unser Land, aber nicht mehr die Rahmenbedingungen, die uns unsere Wirtschaftsweise aufzwingen. Bauern und Bäuerinnen müssen die Selbstbestimmung über den Boden zurückerlangen und **natürlichen Prozessen ihren Raum und ihre Zeit geben** können.

Das grosse politische Stichwort heisst heute **Ernährungssouveränität**: Selbstbestimmung über die Versorgung mit Lebensmitteln. Doch der Landwirt in den Industrieländern kauft seine Kartoffeln, seinen Weizen, seine Rüben dem Acker mit Erdöl ab. Danach gehen 4 von 5 Ernährungskalorien vom Feld auf den Teller verloren. Trotzdem geschieht auf diesem Verarbeitungsweg eine finanzielle Wertschöpfung, kostet doch der Kartoffelchip weit über das 100-fache des Ausgangsprodukts Kartoffel. Ernährungsmässig findet aber ein krasser Wertverminderungsprozess statt. Genau betrachtet ist **der schweizerische Selbstversorgungsgrad mit Lebensmitteln tiefer als Null**.

Viele Konsumenten und Direktabnehmerinnen landwirtschaftlicher Produkte haben erkannt, dass die **Landwirtschaft kein Industriezweig** ist, welcher zwingend nicht erneuerbare Ressourcen verbraucht. Bodenbebauung bringt „Ressourcen“ hervor, gehorcht dabei aber natürlichen Gesetzen und nicht den Mechanismen des Weltmarktes oder der Industrie, die dem Gewinn und der Wachstumsquote verpflichtet sind. Die Gier des Geldes darf im Sog aktueller Ereignisse nicht weiter die Grundlage der Lebensmittelerzeugung zerstören. Vielmehr muss jetzt die **Landwirtschaft wieder ein integraler Bestandteil der Gesellschaft** werden und aus der Rolle des Patienten und Sonderfalls herausfinden. „Mehr Leute aufs Land, mehr Gärten in die Stadt“, lautet das Motto.

Bäuerliches Wissen und die Eigenart jeder Hofeinheit werden von Wissenschaft und Politik oft an den Rand gespielt, Freude und Selbstbewusstsein bei den Bauern und Bäuerinnen weichen einer Angst gegenüber stets wechselnden Entwicklungen. Sie möchten ihre Wertschätzung zurück und sind im Gegenzug bereit, ihre Betriebe zu öffnen und in den Dialog mit den Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten zu treten. Es ist dringend nötig, dass die grosse nicht bäuerliche Mehrheit der Gesellschaft die buchstäblich **vitale Bedeutung der Landwirtschaft wieder erkennen** und schätzen lernt. Nur gemeinsam können wir es schaffen, aus der Falle der Energie verschleissenden Nahrungsproduktion und gleichzeitigen Naturzerstörung herauszufinden.

Mit Ihrer Unterschrift **setzen Sie ein Zeichen** der Solidarität mit der Landbevölkerung überall auf der Welt, zeigen Ihre Verantwortung gegenüber dem

Klimawandel und Ihre Wertschätzung für natürlich und lokal erzeugte Lebensmittel. Tun Sie Ihr Möglichstes, um mit bewussten Entscheiden beim Einkauf und konkreten Taten im Alltag die Landwirtschaft aus kurzfristigem Profitdenken zu befreien und in eine nachhaltige und weltweit faire Bewirtschaftungsweise hineinzuführen. Auf den Genuss verantwortungsvoll produzierter Lebensmittel!

Bioforum Schweiz, Wellberg, CH-6130 Willisau

Source: BioForum Schweiz

6. Charter of the GASAP, Brussels-Capital

CHARTRE DES GROUPES D'ACHAT SOLIDAIRES DE L'AGRICULTURE PAYSANNE [Réseau bruxellois des GASAP — Novembre 2009]

DÉFINITIONS.....

1. LE GASAP

Un groupe d'achat solidaire de l'agriculture paysanne (GASAP) c'est :

- ♣ Une alternative à un système de production, de distribution et de consommation uniquement basé sur le profit.
- ♣ Un groupe de personnes qui se rassemble pour s'approvisionner directement chez des producteurs paysans locaux.
- ♣ Un partenariat, entre les membres de ce groupe et le(s) producteur(s) paysans, qui se formalise par un contrat de solidarité, via lequel chaque consommateur achète en début de saison une part de la production qui lui sera distribuée périodiquement. Les risques liés à la production sont ainsi partagés entre producteurs et consommateurs.
- ♣ Une relation directe, de confiance, humaine entre producteurs et consommateurs (circuit court).
- ♣ Une action concrète visant à soutenir et à développer l'agriculture paysanne.
- ♣ Un fonctionnement autogéré par les membres, en articulation avec le Réseau, qui regroupe les membres des différents GASAPs.
- ♣ Un lieu de réflexion, de responsabilisation et d'éducation permanente.

2. LE RÉSEAU

Le Réseau rassemble et relie les GASAPs de Bruxelles et ses environs. Les paysans partenaires

des GASAPs sont également membres du Réseau. Les membres du Réseau adhèrent à la charte des GASAPs et œuvrent pour sa mise en application.

PRINCIPES.....

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Les Groupes d'achat solidaires de l'agriculture paysanne ainsi que les producteurs paysans qui en sont partenaires soutiennent les principes suivants, les appliquent ou tendent à les mettre en pratique dans leur fonctionnement.

1. AGRICULTURE PAYSANNE

L'agriculture paysanne¹⁴ est une agriculture durable, qui répond à des critères d'ordre social, économique et environnemental et qui vise le maintien de la qualité gustative et sanitaire des produits. L'agriculture paysanne est également attachée au principe de souveraineté alimentaire tel que soutenu par Via Campesina¹⁵.

La certification « agriculture biologique » n'est pas une condition indispensable pour établir un partenariat avec un GASAP. Elle ne garantit pas le respect de l'environnement et ne satisfait pas à toutes nos exigences.

Aspects sociaux

- ♣ Valorisation du patrimoine humain (savoir-faire) ;
- ♣ Respect des conditions de travail décentes (horaires, sécurité...) ;
- ♣ Juste et équitable rémunération de la main-d'œuvre ;
- ♣ Développement de partenariats avec d'autres acteurs du monde rural (fromagers, acteurs culturels, gîtes ruraux...) ;
- ♣ Solidarité avec les paysans d'Europe et

du monde. Aspects environnementaux

- ♣ Respect de la nature, préservation de la vie du sol et des écosystèmes ;

¹⁴ Voir la Charte de l'agriculture paysanne diffusée par les syndicats paysans en France (www.confederationpaysanne.fr) et en Belgique (www.fugea.be et www.mapaysanne.be).

¹⁵ Via Campesina est un mouvement international qui coordonne des organisations de petits et moyens paysans, de travailleurs agricoles, de femmes rurales, de communautés indigènes d'Asie, des Amériques, d'Europe et d'Afrique. Infos sur www.viacampesina.org

- ♣ Valorisation des ressources abondantes et économie des ressources rares ;
- ♣ Renforcement de la diversité des variétés animales et végétales, de préférence indigènes ;
- ♣ Limitation de la consommation d'énergie (mécanisation, transport, chauffage, conservation, emballage...) ;
- ♣ Interdiction de l'emploi d'intrants agricoles chimiques (pesticides et engrais).

Aspects économiques

-
- ♣ Offrir des produits à des prix démocratique ;
 - ♣ Limiter la dépendance vis-à-vis des institutions financières et des subsides publics ;
 - ♣ Répartition de la production pour permettre au plus grand nombre d'accéder au métier et d'en vivre, en favorisant les fermes à taille humaine ;
 - ♣ Recherche de transparence dans les actes d'achat, de production, de transformation et de vente des produits agricoles ;
 - ♣ Maximisation de l'autonomie dans le fonctionnement des fermes (production agricole en autonomie :
recours à des engrais verts pour fertiliser les cultures, production locale de l'alimentation du bétail, etc.) ;
 - ♣ Raisonner toujours à long terme et de manière globale.

2. CIRCUIT COURT

Les GASAPs utilisent un modèle de distribution appelé « circuit court ». Il s'agit d'un mode de commercialisation directe se basant sur l'économie locale. L'objectif est que le producteur soit le principal bénéficiaire de la vente de ses produits. Il constitue une alternative à la grande distribution.

Travailler en « circuit court » implique le respect des principes suivants :

Suppression des intermédiaires de commercialisation entre le producteur et le consommateur ; Priorité à l'achat, la vente et la consommation de produits locaux. Les contrats, expression de la solidarité producteur-consommateur (voir point 3), ne sont conclus qu'avec des

producteurs locaux ; Limitation et rationalisation du transport.

3. SOLIDARITÉ ENTRE PRODUCTEURS PAYSANS ET CONSOMMATEURS

Les GASAPs n'ont pas seulement pour objectif de fournir à leurs membres des produits de qualité. Il s'agit d'un engagement réciproque entre producteurs et consommateurs. Ils attachent une grande importance à soigner une relation constructive, afin de favoriser la ré-appropriation des modes de production et une compréhension réciproque. Cette solidarité implique le respect des principes suivants :

Engagement dans la durée des membres du GASAP à être solidaires du travail du producteur et des aléas de sa production.

Cet engagement prend la forme d'un contrat de solidarité dans le cadre duquel le consommateur achète à l'avance une part de la production qui lui sera distribuée périodiquement.

Cette solidarité peut prendre des formes supplémentaires : soutien au démarrage d'un nouveau producteur, participation à une coopérative foncière, travail à la ferme, etc.

Engagement du producteur à fournir des produits dans le respect de la charte et à transmettre l'information sur sa production afin que les membres des GASAPs puissent suivre et comprendre son travail.

Cette information implique une transparence sur l'origine des produits. Le producteur s'engage à tendre sur l'ensemble de l'année vers des livraisons comprenant un minimum de 80% des produits venant directement de chez lui ou du groupe de producteurs associé au GASAP. Les 20% restants doivent provenir d'autres producteurs locaux respectueux des valeurs de la charte. Le réseau des GASAPs peut jouer un rôle de facilitateur entre les différents producteurs.

Le producteur engage en outre une réflexion avec les GASAPs, visant à développer des moyens d'information à propos du travail agricole et de ses contraintes. Ce dialogue et cette transparence peuvent permettre d'accompagner le producteur vers des méthodes de productions toujours plus respectueuses de l'environnement et de la biodiversité. Une évaluation participative, dont sont parties prenantes les membres des GASAPs et les différents producteurs, pourra les aider dans ce sens.

4. AUTOGESTION ET CONVIVIALITÉ

En nous rassemblant dans un groupe d'achat solidaire, nous pouvons développer notre autonomie et celle des producteurs avec lesquels nous collaborons. Par là, nous entendons la possibilité de (re)créer nos propres lois, logiques et modes de fonctionnement.

Le GASAP s'inscrit dans une dynamique collective, égalitaire, participative et d'autogestion. Le

GASAP existe par et pour tous, autogéré par les membres qui participent librement, selon leurs disponibilités. L'existence du GASAP repose sur l'engagement libre et spontané de ses membres. Dans cette perspective, les principes suivants semblent fondamentaux :

Groupes restreints. L'expérience démontre que les GASAPs ne dépassant pas le nombre de 20 ménages maintiennent un niveau idéal de convivialité ;

Dynamique égalitaire et participative. Le fonctionnement des GASAPs tend à favoriser l'implication de chacun et une prise de décision la plus transparente possible ;

Partage de responsabilités. Les responsabilités, tant au niveau de la gestion (et éventuellement de l'hébergement) des permanences, des contacts avec les producteurs, que de la gestion financière, tournent entre les membres des GASAPs ;

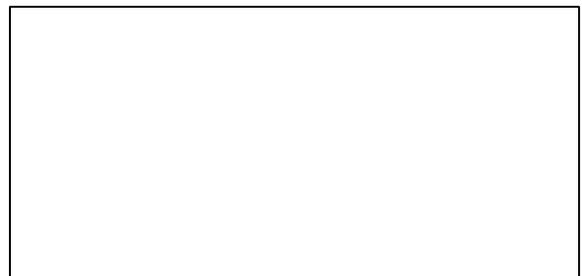
Accessibilité financière et solidarité interne. Les GASAPs ont pour vocation d'être accessibles à tous. L'organisation souple et une solidarité interne permettent de s'adapter aux réalités financières, sociales, familiales, culturelles de chacun ;

Cultiver les savoirs. Les GASAPs sont aussi un lieu d'échange, de rencontre et de réflexion autour de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation, les modes de distribution et l'écologie, ainsi qu'un renforcement de la vie de quartier.

Le GASAP



Le producteur paysan



Source: GASAP (a)