



University of Kentucky
UKnowledge

International Grassland Congress Proceedings

XXI International Grassland Congress / VIII
International Rangeland Congress

From Margin Lands to Local Meat: Innovation Networks and Functional Integrity in Languedoc, South of France

Fabrice Dreyfus
Institut des régions chaudes, France

Yuna Chiffolleau
INRA, France

Jean-Marie Welch

Follow this and additional works at: <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/igc>



Part of the [Plant Sciences Commons](#), and the [Soil Science Commons](#)

This document is available at <https://uknowledge.uky.edu/igc/21/22-1/3>

The XXI International Grassland Congress / VIII International Rangeland Congress took place in Hohhot, China from June 29 through July 5, 2008.

Proceedings edited by Organizing Committee of 2008 IGC/IRC Conference

Published by Guangdong People's Publishing House

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Plant and Soil Sciences at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Grassland Congress Proceedings by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.

From margin lands to local meat : innovation networks and functional integrity in Languedoc , south of France

Dreyfus Fabrice , IRC , Montpellier Supagro , 1101 avenue Agropolis , BP 5098 34093 Montpellier cedex 05 , dreyfus@supagro.inra.fr
Chiffolleau Yuna , UMR "Innovation" , INRA , 2 place P.Viala , 34060 Montpellier cedex 1
Welch Jean-Marie , Les Sagnes , 34330 Fraisse sur A gout

Key words : innovation networks , interdisciplinarity , short food supply chain , marginal areas , extensive livestock farming

Introduction Agriculture is confronted today with new challenges . On one hand , natural resources are shrinking . On the other hand , pressures , often contradictory ones , are exerted by different social groups or agencies upon farmers . What is , in most cases , resented as a multiplication of constraints can be construed as a set of new opportunities in the context of an "economy of quality" (Karpik , 1989) .

Material and methods The present communication displays on a farmer's professional trajectory in Languedoc (South of France) which led the farmer to progressively build an integrated system , from farm to fork , involving in an interactive process the end users as well as the objects of his activities . The interdisciplinary combination of network analysis with agronomical models helps to understand what functions are integrated and what is the resilience of the system . The steps are modelised as networks of actors and objects . This modelisation is based on data extracted out of a set of interviews , a reflexive analysis by the farmer about his own technical and social practices , a set of technical assessments by agronomists and animal husbandry experts and through the regular meetings with the group of producers in which the farmer is involved and that is part of a research-action project in which his two co-authors are engaged .

Results and discussion Rather than a linear process , what is described is a swirling process bridging spaces and times that highlights the cognitive and informative nature of functional integrity . It highlights complex relationships that show how are woven the different dimensions of sustainable development . The social construction of markets and the technical design of the production system are construed as the co-evolution of a techno-marketing system (Callon , 1991) . Following the actor-network theory , it can be seen as the development of innovative networks , shaped by contingencies such as availability of resources or regulatory frameworks . It appears like a learning process , connecting former experiences , technical reading , learning interactions through associative , scientific and professional networks and local opportunities to design and test practices , under permanent revision . The farmer builds different forms of social capital that aim to be relevant to the situation and to the building of knowledge echoing his experiences and values (Favereau , Lazega , 2002) . It appears also that a legitimating process is ongoing within these networks , aiming at the recognition of the farmer's identity and the strengthening of his status (Podolny , 1993) .

Conclusion The communication will conclude with the possible ways of facilitating the functional integrity of such type of system , notably through renewed kinds of collective action .

References

- Callon , M . 1991 . Techno-economic networks and irreversibility . In : Law , J . *A Sociology of Monsters : Essays on Power , Technology and Domination* . London : Routledge , 132-165 .
- Favereau , O . , Lazega , E . (eds) 2002 . *Conventions and structures in economic organization . Markets , networks and hierarchies* . Cheltenham : Edward Elgar .
- Karpik , L . 1989 . L'économie de la qualité . *Revue Française de Sociologie* XXX , 187-210 .
- Podolny J . , 1993 . A status-based model of market competition . *American journal of sociology* 98(4) , 829-872 .