



Forum Origin, Diversity and Territories

Territories and mountains products Design sustainable food systems in mountains

Agriculture and the marketing of agri-food products are at the heart of the problems of sustainable development in mountainous areas. Beyond the many positive externalities associated with these regions, many constraints have to be overcome to maintain and support mountain territories. Many alternatives exist: labeling, collective organizations for marketing, for processing, for transport, diversification of activity through tourism and gastronomy, and so on.

The ODT Forum proposes to study and discuss them during a 4-day itinerant learning in Switzerland just before the Salon du Goût and Terroir of Bulle (Canton of Fribourg).

Mountains are associated with many positive externalities:

- Environmental: biodiversity reservoirs, water source, provision of landscapes
- Attractiveness: opportunities for leisure activities, artisanal and agri-food know-how
- Health: benefits in terms of well-being, health and quality of life.

Such externalities are not mountain specific, but topographic and climatic constraints limit the possibilities for intensification, driving agriculture towards extensive systems of pastoral and permanent crops. In addition, mountain farming is characterized by a greater number of activities inside or outside the farm, with more diversification and pluri-activity. Tourism and recreational activities represent key factors for development, stability and sustainable diversification, as well as an important source of employment for mountain communities.

The link between quality products and identity offers opportunities both for the growth of markets for these products and for regional development, thanks to the simultaneous awareness of products and regions. Agricultural and food production are finally powerful cultural elements that link the mountain environment to its human population through secular practices such as traditional cheese making or transhumance, often associated with landscapes and cultural heritage, songs, Festivals and cultural itineraries.

Yet a number of challenges for mountain farmers are identified, including:

- Problems of isolation / accessibility; Lack of services; lack of knowledge, skills and infrastructures that are still to be developed;
- Problems of competition between the maintenance of economic activities and the preservation of the environment;
- Networks between producers, or between producers and other actors in the marketing channels are complicated, adding difficulty for economies of scale and cooperative development of processing, marketing and transport infrastructure;
- Strong seasonality of agricultural and tourism activities.

Main organisers



Co-organisers



Sponsors



Innovative approaches based on cooperation, resource sharing, flexibility of political mechanisms and the development of quality marketing channels that capitalize on the strengths of mountain agriculture in order to support the sustainable development of agricultural systems in mountainous areas are necessary.

Certifications linked to mountain and their regions offer significant potential to support the development of marketing channels for mountain food products. The specific characteristics of these products linked to the qualities of the mountain environment and / or their production methods give them a special value as high-value niche products. Controlled and Protected Appellations of Origin (AOC / PDO) protect the identity of certain mountain products (eg. Abondance or Beaufort cheeses); however, the denominations are not specific to mountains. At the European level, a charter (non-regulation) of mountain food products of quality to label mountain products was concluded in 2005.

Beyond the product certification tools, strategies of producer organizations are essential. It is these organizations that will carry out and administer certification projects, facilitate the diversification of activities, participate in the development of a coherent and sustainable tourism, put in place adapted strategies for the marketing of mountain products guaranteeing the valorisation of products, labor, know-how, and other positive externalities for the environment, image and development of the territory.

Itinerant Learning – 27th of November to 1st of December

An itinerant learning for the meeting of organizations and the study of collective actions to support the territories and mountain products. ONLY FRENCH SPEAKING.

The Forum ODT 2017 proposes itinerant training in Switzerland, which aims to take a look at several forms of collective organizations existing in Switzerland and to question them in the following way:

- What are the organizational strategies for valuing and marketing products, strengthening the link with the consumer, diversification through tourism?
- What strategies of market access for which objectives (on-farm sales, certifications, mass distribution networks, catering links, etc.)?
- How to mobilize producers? How to involve and interest them?
- What roles do public actors play?
- What are the determinants so that collective organization will last in time (forms of governance, etc.)?

The program of visits is still under consolidation (so far are envisaged: inter-branched of an AOC product, presidium slow food, territory mark, marketing network of catering, etc.).

The group of participant to the itinerant learning will be made up of elected representatives as well as moderators and developers of collective organizations active in the valorization and marketing of mountain products, development of Mountain areas, agrotourism, etc.

Participants will visit concrete experiences and exchange with the hosts on aspects of their previous activities. The aim is to offer learning through a constructed and peer-to-peer exchange. The dynamics of the group will also be important in the exchanges, because each participant will share his own experience with the others. Finally, the periods of reflexivity and retreat will be important to identify useful learning to be conveyed to the members of their own organization.



Origin
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Concept note

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A one-day seminar at the Salon des Gouts et Terroirs in Bulle will be held on 1st of December, with representatives from FAO, Slow Food, the Swiss Ministry of Agriculture (Slow Alps Initiative, Carried by Slow Food International, the Mountain Product Labeling Initiative of FAO - Mountain Partnership). Participants will present their organization, project and feedback on this day.

References :

Rob McMorran, Fabien Santini, Fatmir Guri, Sergio Gomez-y-Paloma, Martin Price, Olivier Beucherie, Christine Monticelli, Alexia Rouby, Delphine Vitrolles et Guillaume Cloye, « Un label européen pour les produits alimentaires de montagne ? », *Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine* [En ligne], 103-4 | 2015, mis en ligne le 14 mai 2015, consulté le 22 mars 2017. URL : <http://rga.revues.org/2699> ; DOI : 10.4000/rga.2699

Euromontana, <http://www.euromontana.org>

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Sponsors

