

# XI World Congress of Rural Sociology

Trondheim, Norway  
July 25-30, 2004

Working group 25 :  
The "Ecologisation" of agricultures in the North and in the South : Aspects  
of a new international paradigm for rural development

## Farming and landscaping : how the French farmers face up to the ecologisation of their activities

Jacqueline CANDAU et Philippe DEUFFIC

*Cemagref*, UR Agriculture and rural areas dynamics,  
50 avenue de Verdun F 33612 Cestas, France

[jacqueline.candau@bordeaux.cemagref.fr](mailto:jacqueline.candau@bordeaux.cemagref.fr) ; [philippe.deuffic@bordeaux.cemagref.fr](mailto:philippe.deuffic@bordeaux.cemagref.fr)

### Abstract

In Europe, an increasingly great part of the public subsidies for the food production are transferred towards the production of goods and environmental services.

Today, farmers hesitate, on one hand, to search for the technical and economical performance which is the paradigm of their professional activities since 1960 or, on the other hand, to take into account environmental concerns that are imposed since the middle 80's.

Is it then possible for the farmers to still work according to the paradigm of the producer of agri-food goods and how do they react towards the ecologisation of their activities? In the paper, we will see which difficulties and sources of tension induces one aspect of the environmental concerns – the maintenance of the landscape – in the daily professional practices of the farmers. We will see that the professional identity of the farmers is deeply questioned by these changes (substitution of strictly "agricultural issues" by more general concerns as "rural issues", effacement of the farmer to the profit of the "ecologized" peasant...). The topic of the landscape reveals social strains between farmers. It also raises the question of the legitimacy of the farmers to define the sense of their activities by themselves. We will see finally that the environmental orientations systematically do not open new prospects for all the farmers ; they sometimes contribute to reinforce the inequalities between farmers (financial support proportional to the land property, marginalisation of the farmers that are less socially integrated...)

Since the beginning of the 90's, the European and French agricultural and rural policies encourage, by specific public supports, the agricultural productive systems to produce rural amenities and environmental services. Among these policies, the new agricultural Act, voted in France in 1999, encourages the farmers to maintain the landscapes in its first article. This environmental function is put on the same plan as the economic and social functions. The farmer is challenged to be not only a producer of food goods but also the guarantor of the French rural landscapes.

However, to maintain landscapes is a mission which hustles the former standards of the agricultural activity and hurts the pride of farmers who has sacrificed a lot to intensify their system of production (Rémy, 2000). In fact, the integration processes of the environmental stakes in the agricultural sector are unequally advanced and they are often carried by actors who don't belong with the agricultural world. These actors do not hesitate any more to call into question the monopoly of the rural areas management which was reserved for the farmers until now. Their criticisms about landscape management relate to the destruction of the hedgerows, the lack of integration of the agricultural buildings, the progression of the fallow lands... According to Halfacree (1995), the representations of the rural by residents is not a naïve acceptance of the "rural idyll" but involves a more engaged and often critical reflection on rural living. Henceforth the emergence of non agriculturalist discourses of rurality – often promoted by well educated newcomers – have a significant impact on the state policies (Svendsen, 2004). Their implementation can be seen as a struggle between management actors to ensure that their representations of the area prevail and to garner their legitimacy to speak for the area (Kitchen, 2000). It leads some environmental actors to require a radical ecologization of agricultural production ; they suggest farmers to accept a new idea of their profession in the sense of a modern service (Oberbeck and Oppermann, 1998).

As an answer, the farmers' unions try to portray farmers as a homogenous group with common problems and promoted the image of a group under attack from the rest of the society (McHenry, 1996). But new pressures are creating a bifurcation between the role of the farmer as specialized producer locked into distant markets and the role of the farmer as small rural businessman or local environmental manager (Fuller, 1990 cited by Marsden, 1999, p. 510). In fact, the agricultural professional organizations seem to be divided on the attitude to adopt with the ecologisation of their activities. According to Laurent (1994), their reserves are not based on the rejection of the notion of landscape but on the fear that this new aspect of their activities is not a real solution to earn their living.

In this paper, we wonder if the landscape is relevant for the farmers to present their professional activities, now that the new agricultural public policy is in its phase of implementation. We will particularly observe :

- Which practical and tangible difficulties they meet when they try to implement these landscape management measures;
- How these measures question them on the direction of their job, on the place and on the role of the agricultural activity in the rural areas and on their relations with the other actors of the rural world (in particular with tourists).

In this changing context where new finalities are explicitly requested from agriculture, the production of landscape will enable us to identify the sense that farmers give to their activity. Our remarks will be based on an qualitative survey carried out in the Dordogne in 2002, following the creation of the Territorial Contracts of Exploitation (CTE) which propose

contractual engagements in favour of the environmental protection to every farmers (Candau and Chabert, 2003; Deuffic, 2004).

Firstly, we will see which importance the farmers granted to the landscape and space management within the framework of their contract. Then we will see the sources of tensions that landscape practices involve and how this notion leads them to requalify their job according to very different ways.

## **I – Conceptual framework : methodology and characteristics of the case-study area**

### 11 – Theoretical frame and methodology

To study this question of landscape, we have adopted the theoretical frame of the common-sense knowledge sociology proposed by Berger and Luckmann (1966), which they developed from the phenomenological perspective of Alfred Schütz (1987). These authors argue that knowledge is socially constructed and oriented towards particular practical problems so that facts can never be considered as neutral but reflective of why they are required. The objective is to uncover the “typifications” by which actors, in intersubjective ways, organize their everyday actions and construct common-sense knowledge, to discover how they operate with “taken-for-granted assumptions” and stock knowledge” and achieve a “reciprocity of perspective”, a “natural attitude”. In the same way, we consider the landscape as an image resulting from a mental construction which is socially and culturally determined, what Berque (1995) calls a mediation.

Following this general framework, we intend to understand the farmers’ universe of reference and to grasp their categories of thoughts. Firstly, we search for the objects which make sense for them and which structure their everyday reality. It is the reason why we let farmers speak from their familiar and professional universe. Secondly, the word “landscape” is introduced (by the interviewees or the interviewer) and we observed if this notion is relevant for them and which senses and meanings they assign to this term. In addition, we consider that these relevance and meanings are built collectively and we make the assumption that farmers elaborate the sense of their activity in various places of social integration by discussing with selected peers or interlocutors. According to these places of social integration, the adhesion and the meanings conferred on the landscape actions can differ from a group of farmers to another. This diversity of sense, assigned to the production of landscape by farmers, would be explained by their implication in certain professional organizations whose institutional speeches elevate the maintenance of the landscape to the status of a new function of agriculture (Candau and Chabert 2003). Moreover, as the production of landscape is mainly requested by non-farmers, we suppose that the diversity of meanings also affects the symbolic system of the exchange between farmers and not-farmers who are particularly present in Dordogne (visitors, new residents).

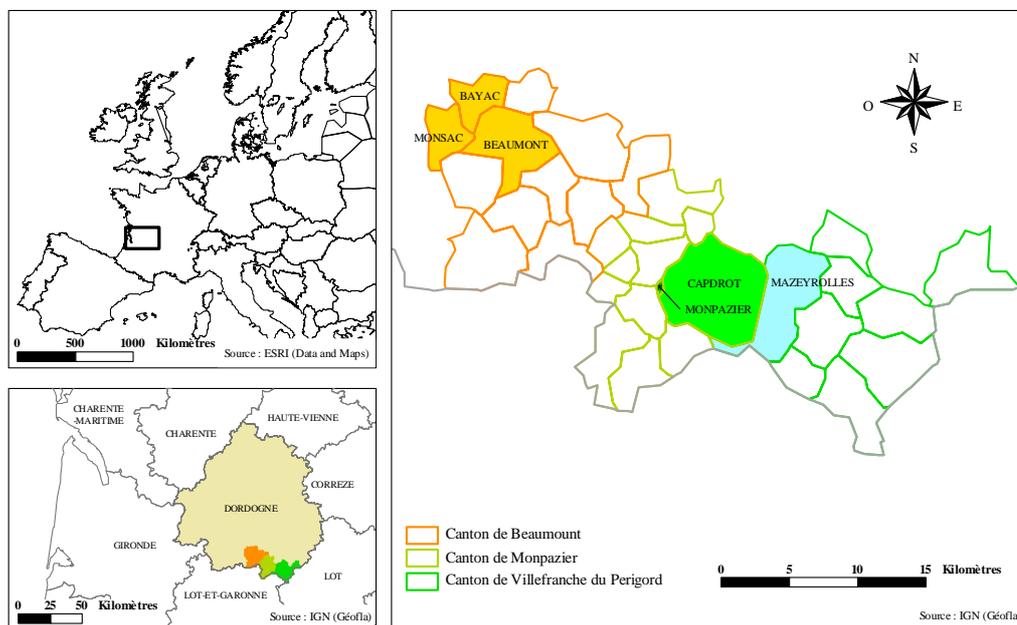
Our material of investigation consists of semi-structured face-to-face interviews conducted with fourteen farmers who have signed a contract (CTE). We invited them to speak about their professional experience and the difficulties they meet in their daily activity. That enables us to see whether they speak about landscape to expose their current concerns as to justify their choice with respect to the agri-environmental measurements contracted within the framework of their CTE. In order to determine the social base of these choices, we identify their various places of social integration. Then, a content analysis of their discourse has been realised according to two axes:

- Initially, we characterize the social and professional integration of the farmer on various territorial scales and his types of relations (professional, associative, elective...);
- Then, we extract from their discourse what deals with the concept of landscape (the maintenance of the rural areas, the specific agri-environmental measures concerning landscape, the diversity and the quality of the surroundings, place of interest for tourist...).

By this cross-analysis, we have segmented the interviewees in four groups. Each group is characterized by a specific socio-professional insertion and a different way to consider the notion of landscape.

## 12- The case-study area

The interviews were carried out in the south of the Dordogne in the Pays des Bastides. There are 17 inhabitants per km living in the area. Agricultural production are very diversified and often based on family farm. In the west, they mainly grows cereals and orchards (plums for prunes) ; the average surface of the farms is around 37 ha. In the centre, they are oriented towards mixed-farming (tobacco, strawberry, arboriculture) and dairy farming ; average farm surface is around 29 hectares. In the east, the exploitations are very small (19 ha) and mainly oriented towards arboriculture (walnut and chestnut) and sheep farming. The forest cover rate ranges from 30% in the west to 70% in the east.



This case-study area was selected because a special project of collective CTE was proposed to the farmers on the initiative of a local and very influent farmer (senator). The object of this CTE is "*to develop the environment and the local heritage by the improvement of the visual aspect of the territory by the maintenance of open spaces*". The main devices consist in the integration of farm buildings, the control of the forest edges dynamics and the improvement of wetlands management".

Now, the four groups will be presented and we will see how and why the contractors integrate the landscape dimension in their professional practices. Then we will see how the maintenance of rural areas redefines and questions strongly the sense of their activity.

## **II – The relevance of landscape in the farm projects : a wide range of signification**

The farmers did not directly mention the concept of landscape but they used the term “the maintenance of the farmland” which is perceived like an inherent aspect of their work. On the other hand, according to their professional places of integration, they elevate the maintenance of rural areas to very different statuses within the framework of their own contract. The ones consider that land maintenance is not an agricultural product ; the others think that it can be assimilated to a “sub-product”, a “co-product” and even a “main product” of the agricultural activity.

### 21 – A source of income support

The three farmers belonging to this first group are little integrated in the local life and the agricultural professional structures with which they only maintain relations of customers with service provider. The main income of their activity comes from productions that are independent of public subsidies and of agronomic and climatic conditions (poultry, foie gras). They are seen like specialists in these productions and make a point of honor of the economic and technical performance of their various units of production. They thus draw their legitimacy in the commercial exchanges. Their great fear comes from the financial dependence of their activity with respect to the subsidies.

For them, the landscape is a means like another to collect the subsidies necessary to maintain their income<sup>1</sup>. They enter into environmental commitments which do not directly implicate their mode of production and only because they are obliged to contract at least one environmental measure. They are not particularly motivated by landscape management and they maintain the most productive zones. Their action is guided according to two principles: to take the least restricted environmental measures and to collect the biggest amount of subsidies.

### 22 – An inherent aspect in their professional activity

The members of this second group (5 farmers) are very implied in the local professional networks – exchange of material and mutual aid between farmers–. They also have responsibilities at the scale of the village (town councils, festivals committees, parent-teacher associations...). On the professional level, they take part in the technical networks of the agricultural organizations (farm machinery cooperatives, producer cooperatives...) but without assuming elective responsibilities. They introduced themselves as small producers who work on scattered and specialized farm systems (tobacco and asparagus, strawberry and plums). Those are not developed beyond the capacities which offer the family labour and

---

<sup>1</sup> « je me suis renseigné à Beaumont parce que tout le monde parlait d'aides, tout le monde se fait aidé et puis, moi, j'ai rien demandé. J'ai été voir (...) et puis ça a marché... donc tant que j'y étais, j'ai fait le local, j'ai acheté la machine et je profite du CTE (n°17) »

neighbors mutual aid. They fell different from the farmers who “grows tunnels” and engage permanent employees.

They never evoke directly the concept of landscape but, on the other hand, they happily talk about land and space management which seems them to go without saying for two reasons:

- Ethical arguments : farmland maintenance concerns a certain ethics of the farming practices: it is essential that farmers control Nature and scrub encroachment, that they keep the farm "clean" and maintain in good conditions the family heritage<sup>2</sup>;
- technico-economic reason : to contain forest edges and brambles is an operation necessary to maintain surfaces<sup>3</sup> in cultures and the output of the piece in this area where the forest is omnipresent and exiguous surfaces. However, they do not maintain the edges or the banks which border of the small islands not very productive or too far away from the seat of the exploitation.

These farmers feel that they naturally preserve the landscape and they misunderstand the justification of a collective project focused on landscape preservation<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, this collective contract proposes to remunerate them for the maintenance of rural areas what goes against their professional standard which theoretically excludes all financial compensation for this type of action<sup>5</sup>.

### 23 – A gainful service

The farmers of this third group (5 people) have farming systems close to the preceding group but their social profile is different. They often have professional responsibilities as board members of co-operatives, trade unions, technical organizations and banks. For this reason, they can be requested by town councillors to think of local projects like the collective CTE. They are also very present on the communal scene (town council, festival committee...) and seem more independent of the farmers networks of mutual aid.

Regarding the landscape issue, these farmers admit that, due to the effect of the modernization of agriculture, they have not always maintain the farmlands at their best and that they have contributed to change the traditional landscape pattern significantly. Today, they are conscious that the context have changed. They adhere to some aesthetic criteria which relate to the immediate surroundings of their farm (storage of the equipement, embellishment of the access to the farm, tree planting...) <sup>6</sup>. They also feel to maintain the arable lands correctly. But, with the difference of the preceding group, the type of contract they have signed enables them to maintain better than before and to do it on vaster areas and, sometimes, even on the integrality of their land. We thus attends a professionalisation and an

---

<sup>2</sup> « Les lisières on les a, il faut bien s'en occuper » (n°2, 38 ans)

<sup>3</sup> « Quand on dit « il faut tailler les abords des champs pour éviter que ça se ferme » ; on le fait déjà parce qu'on a des parcelles tellement petites (n°13, 37 ans) »

<sup>4</sup> « Le paysage est déjà relativement préservé quoi ! (...) Faire un CTE paysage, ça changera pas grand chose (n°1, 33 ans) ».

<sup>5</sup> « c'est un truc qu'on doit faire (...) c'est pas un truc que l'on fait pour gagner de l'argent » (n°2, 38 ans)

<sup>6</sup> « Les agriculteurs ont pris conscience que, même si ils étaient agriculteurs, [c'est mieux de ne] pas avoir le tas de fumier devant la porte (...). On nettoie sa cour de ferme pour qu'elle soit propre, qu'elle soit... qu'elle ait du look ! (n°13) ».

intensification of the practices of land maintenance: the banks, the paths, the hedgerows and the forest edges are cut more frequently, at a higher level and with better tools. The work task is so important that they sometimes need to call for companies specialised in land maintenance.

They are also different from the previous group on an essential point: they estimate that the maintenance of rural areas is typically an environmental service and they totally accept the financial compensation : "*It is necessary to live with its time, before you were remunerated for what you sell, now you are remunerated for a service* (n°4, 46 years)". They even consider that they are the only ones with being able to set up these environmental measures: "If we don't do it, the Parisians who come here, won't do it either, without criticizing the Parisians. Yes, it's up to us to do it (n°15, 35 years)". For them, their job have changed: up today, they have concentrated all their efforts on the production to the detriment of landscape management<sup>7</sup>. Today, the society seems ready to pay for landscape actions<sup>8</sup>. For as much, they still consider these actions more as a service than a production in itself. The farmers remain in priority tobacco growers, stockbreeders, or fruit growers.

#### 24 – Landscape, the main product of agriculture

It is difficult to speak about a fourth group because this one contains only one farmer. Less integrated into the agricultural professional networks, she hardly takes part into the relations of exchange and mutual aid with her neighbours. She was informed of the CTE by the journal, following what she contacted the agricultural adviser of the chamber of agriculture. She elaborated its CTE only with agri-environmental measures and refused every subsidies allotted to the economic investments. This woman considers that one main role of the farmers is to welcome, under some minimum conditions and rules, any foreign person in the rural area. The farming activity can thus be directed in a voluntarist way towards landscape management, pushing the production aims into the background. She is the unique interviewee who lays stress on the idea of an agriculture whose main mission would be dedicated to the landscape management. Its point of view is probably influenced by the fact that a big part of its activities are directed towards agri-tourism.

\*\*\*\*\*

The contractors attach very different sense and priority to the production of landscape in their activities: "the landscape, formerly a sub-product, has acquired the status of a co-product, even in some situations, of a main product of the agricultural activities" (Deffontaines, 1998), It is sometimes also totally excluded. This diversity of attitudes is a source of tenseness. It also reveals the difficulties of a profession to create a new social identity and the movements of decomposition and recombination that presently occurs within the agricultural world (Lémery, 2003). This first analysis shows that the various conceptions of landscape management are closely correlated with the social integration places.

### **III – The sources of tenseness**

<sup>7</sup> « *tout le monde n'a pas suffisamment de temps pour faire ces travaux-là... ; si c'est rémunéré, bon...*(n°15) ».

<sup>8</sup> « *Disons, c'est la carotte pour entretenir. Voilà. On est payé pour le faire, alors on va le faire. Et puis bon, en plus, c'est un petit peu plus joli... Et puis bon, quand on a les parcelles juste à côté,*(n°15) ».

Several studies (Mitchell, 1998, Dupré, 2001, Candau et al., 2002;) denounced the risk of museification of agriculture and the will to restore, in the name of the landscape, the traditional activities and their emblematic material components (man-made objects as old dry stone walls, terraces, traditional fences, orchards...). We are not in a similar situation in the Pays des Bastides, where the question is focused on the maintenance of arable land, field patterns and forest edges and not on the restoration of obsolete material elements (barn, walls, terraces). The majority of the farmers agree to maintain and produce landscape, but, at the same time, they wonder about their role in the society today.

### 31 – Landscape management as a joint product not a main product

For the farmers, the maintenance of space is an everyday and ordinary practice and they refuse to make their main production of it. This is why they clearly distinguish the "maintenance of farmland" on the one hand (object of thought relevant with their activity and on which they feel legitimate to intervene) and the "landscape management and design" on the other hand (category of thought which farmers allot to tourists).

If the farmers of the group n°3 go very far in the decoupling between agricultural outputs and environmental services, they are also very clear on the limits that must not be exceeded. Of course, they do not blame the choices made by their neighbours as the farmer of the group n°4 - the landscape maintenance (generally in coherence with a agri-tourisme unit) can be an individual option – but they still refuse landscape management to become the whole reason and the collective sense of their profession. They learned to produce, it is above all what defines them as farmers. Landscape care or conservation is considered as providing 'a second leg to stand on' and an alternative income source (McHenry, 1996).

Consequently, the priority given to the landscape in the project of collective CTE leaves them circumspect. They fear they will have to answer requests that will be ill-considered and disconnected from their own conception of Nature<sup>9</sup>. Their practices aim to control the proliferation of weeds and shrubs, not to garden their farmlands. In other words, the choice of the landscape project seems to them to ratify the abandonment of the agrarian problems "to the profit of objects as "landscape, nature, environment" which have few links with the rural and even less with agriculture (de la Soudière, 1991).

These farmers are in the same state of tension described by Dupré (2001), hesitating between aesthetic reason and professional reason since the first wants to contain in it its own end. They fear that particular conceptions of their job stand out as "landscape as a scenery, a decoration, landscape without peasants, culture without farmers, structure without structuring work, finality without end, work of art" (Bourdieu, 1977: 4).

### 32 – A reformatting of their professional identity

The interviewers describe themselves by their main production (strawberry grower, dairy or poultry farmer, tobacco grower) and by their activity of farmland maintenance. To heighten their conviction, they evoke particular figures opposite from which they make a

---

<sup>9</sup> « il faut quelque part laisser un peu la nature...je dis pas qu'il faille pas entretenir mais, moi, l'entretien succinct me paraît aussi bien que ce soit nickel comme dans un jardin ou une pelouse, quoi ! (...). La berge, ce qui compte, c'est qu'elle soit entretenue et que la nature prolifère pas et envahisse tout... Vouloir en faire des jardins, je suis assez sceptique... (n°9) ».

point of being distinguished. Among those, three images are put forward : the roadman, the gardener, the landscape manager.

The image of the "roadman" is conveyed by the professional agricultural organizations and taken again by the farmers themselves since the implementation of the first agri-environmental measures (AEM) concerning "landscape conservation and management". This vernacular expression betrays the feelings of contempt and desire which the peasants traditionally carried to the roadmenders (Rémy, 1998). This is why the farmers always refuse this image. In addition, they give it a political dimension : they refuse to become "the roadman of Europe". Hence they denounce the arbitrary dimension of the orientations of the CAP on which they have few influences but which call into question their professional identity by the concrete devices of the AEM.

The image of the "gardener" conveyed by the farmers of group 2 and 3, is more positive than the preceding one in terms of know-how and technical skills. The farmers assert to be the first manufacturers of the agricultural landscape and often the only guarantors<sup>10</sup>. However, to their mind, this identification with the profession of gardener reflects neither the reality of farming nor the scope and the difficulties of the this activity. To garden the whole rural space appears unrealistic to them and impossible to realise. They would prefer a differential management of spaces to be "landscaped". Some contractors wish not to maintain the hedges beyond "*the 200 meters visible since the road* (n°15, 35 y.o.)"; others estimate that the gardening of rural areas will denature the countryside. Lastly, this reference to the gardening raises the question of the aesthetic standards applied in the rural areas: don't we try to set up the countryside and his actors as a scene, "a pleasant perspective" (Williams, 1977 : 31).

The image of "the landscape manager" is not evoked as such but it emerges from the self- presentation made by some farmers of the third group. The most convincing example is a dairy farmer who integrates the agri-environmental measures dedicated to "farmland maintenance", with the same preoccupation of profitability and quality that its agricultural products. The implementation of the landscape measures requires a meticulous organization ; he had to invest in specific material (verge cutter) in order to carry out a more effective pruning, of better quality and more aesthetic in his eyes. This investment is also a means for him of proposing its services to the local communities and signing conventions to clean the country lanes. In a way, he becomes an environmental service provider<sup>11</sup>... but he is still a producer of agricultural outputs.

No farmer substitutes one of these images for his profession of producer of agricultural foods because, in spite of the redefinition of their activities induced by the agri-environmental policies, the competences and skills related to these activities don't correspond and nor enhance their farming activities.

They perceive the AEM like a form of dequalification of professional skills. A farmer of the second group notices that, at the beginning of the 1960's, the traditional practices and knowledge were abandoned and even turned in derision to make way for a "modern" agriculture. However these traditional practices had a sense for the farmers and an effect on the landscape<sup>12</sup>. Today, everyone miss them<sup>13</sup>. There is however no question of returning to

---

<sup>10</sup> « Si nous, on ne le fait pas, ça n'est pas les parisiens qui vont venir le faire, sans critiquer les Parisiens. Oui, c'est à nous de le faire (n°15, 35 ans) ».

<sup>11</sup> « du moment que vous avez le matériel et que c'est des chemins qui desservent votre exploitation. En plus, l'entretien, c'est pas l'empiercer, c'est nettoyer les côtés...c'est pas un problème ça ! (n°4, 46 ans) ».

<sup>12</sup> « autrefois, les bois c'était nickel. Ils [les vieux] allaient couper la fougère (...) le paysage, c'était autre chose (n°3, 47 ans) ».

old methods of maintenance because the context has radically changed: there is not enough familial labour and time to devote to this activity generally uncoupled from the production process. Moreover, their competence in terms of farmland maintenance are not really enhanced. The modes of actions and the spatial structures concerned with the landscaping action are defined apart from them; they just have to apply to the letter the specifications established by other actors (technicians, experts, decision-makers,...). However they doubt the relevance and the impact of AEM on the landscape patterns, in particular when these actions are carried out on dispersed and discontinuous hedges and surfaces; they laugh at the measure concerning the concentric mowing of meadows for the bird protection. Concerning the “high-tech” material for pruning as verge cutter, a fruit grower (and also a specialist of tree pruning) considers that it goes against the code of good practices<sup>14</sup>. Even if all of them have contracted AEM, these practices are perceived like the antithesis of a certain progression in the profession of farmer, incompatible with the desire for improving its technical performances and skills (Droz and Miéville-Ott, 2001: 20).

They are also afraid of not being able to face additional technical investments besides which these are unconnected with the production process. Even if the farmers of the third group consider landscape maintenance as a co-product of farming, they have sometimes difficulties in carry out themselves this work<sup>15</sup>. That is worth in particular for the AEM "maintenance of the forest edges and of the hedgerows" which is more remunerated if it is carried out at a higher level, with a specific pruning material. But the farmers have only rotary tiller, gyratory crusher, chainsaw, even sometimes a second-hand verge cutter but not very specialized tools like the “lamier”<sup>16</sup>. Thus they completely delegate this type of work to external contractors and prefer to devote their time to the production. However these contractors work only if several kilometers of hedgerows have to be pruned and, in the event of an interruption due to bad weather, the farmer often have to finish himself pruning with the chainsaw.

### 33 – To tidy the countryside to welcome the tourist?

The contractors wonder about the respective place that the project of collective landscape CTE will allow to agriculture on the one hand and to tourism on the other hand: can landscape maintenance simultaneously aim at agricultural and tourist stakes? Is landscape management the most relevant agri-environmental problem in the Pays des Bastides?

For the most motivated contractors, the fact that the maintenance of the landscape profits with the tourist activity is not a problem in itself because they set themselves in a relation of exchange with the visitors. The tourist looks of approval on the clean and ordered landscape enhance landscape maintenance practices. They reinforce the idea of a positive

---

<sup>13</sup> « *Je pense quand même que, par rapport au tourisme, c'est obligatoire [d'entretenir les sous-bois], c'est dégueulasse les trucs, les ronces qui poussent partout et tout, ça change vraiment –ça, c'est sûr- question paysage (n°3, 47 ans) »*

<sup>14</sup> « *Quand vous élaguez un arbre au lamier, il ne coupe jamais au ras du tronc. L'intérêt quand on élague, c'est de couper au ras du tronc pour faire une coupe nette, y'a pas de rejet, rien. Quand vous coupez au lamier, ça fait un mètre de bois qui est mort (...). Mais, c'est très rapide, ça fait – dans un premier temps – du bon boulot mais quand ils me disent que c'est plus écologique et tout, non ! (...) ça me choque..., c'est tout... (n°2, 38 ans) »*

<sup>15</sup> « *là où la machine n'a pas pu passer, je serais obligé de le faire parce que ils nous empêche de le faire à l'épaveuse donc... ça c'est de la connerie, enfin... (...). Ils nous empêchent, moi j'ai pris la mesure avec le lamier parce qu'ils donnent plus, ils donnent 5 F je crois (...) au lieu de 3...pff...ça c'est moi qui ai voulu quoi (...) [donc je finirai] à la tronçonneuse sur le godet du tracteur quoi...on travaille plus mais, enfin bon, à partir du moment où on est mieux rémunéré (n°3, 47 ans) »*

<sup>16</sup> Verge cutter without longitudinal blade but circular saws, used to prune the hedges in a vertical position and to limit the splitting-up of the branches

social contract between farmers and visitors<sup>17</sup>. Consequently the standard of "the good maintenance" is not simply any more internal with the agricultural profession. At the country level, this action simultaneously benefits the farmers who earn their livings from agritourism, the tourists who benefit from paths maintenance and the other actors of the local development (shopkeeper, restaurant owner...). By this way, the landscape is retained like the base of a "common good" to produce by agriculture. It is the legitimacy of the collective CTE in the area such as it is defended by the local councillors. However this cohabitation between agriculture and tourism does not go from oneself. The farmers fear in particular that the stakes related to tourism and consequently landscape management prevail over farming priority<sup>18</sup>. Even if the institutional norms of landscape management and tourist development don't correspond systematically to those of the farmers, they will prevail. Then, landscape project could consist in setting the rural space and its actors as a pleasant scenery. To advance the topic of the landscape appears to them as putting agriculture at the service of tourism whereas these two activities are increasingly interdependent and should coexist in a balanced battle of wills. However, according to Droz and Miéville (2001: 141), this representation of qualities of the countryside and the submission of farming and rural projects to the control of their peers and the demands of the urban dwellers constitute a prison for the farmer who is constrained to personify the peasant myth. It would only remain to him to conform at what that the others think that his activity must be.

This collusion of interests between tourist activities and social demand for environmental issue gives the impression to the farmers to be excluded from the definition of the local development stakes and policies in the area<sup>19</sup>. This feeling is reinforced by the fact that, during the examination of their contract, the agricultural authorities appear very concerned to these questions of landscape. Those seem to be privileged to the detriment of aspects dependent on the production and other environmental and economic problems<sup>20</sup>. The farmers fear that, for strategic reasons, it is requested from the agricultural profession to line up under only one banner that of a collective "landscape" project supposed to support and improve local development. McHenry (1996: 382) observed a similar phenomenon in the trade-union agricultural press : the agricultural policy makers prefer to promote an ideal image of the agricultural activity materialized by beautiful landscapes than to discuss acute environmental problems.

Lastly, from them, the landscape appears as a project by default, a very consensual environmental topic, but not very relevant: the farmers of the second and the third group would have preferred a collective CTE orientated towards the production of other goods and services like water quality or towards the support for the small-scale farmings. Whereas the absence of a definite landscape project reinforces their feeling of an action per default, other priorities seem more urgent to be solved. They wished that the implementation of the CTE would have been the opportunity to discuss about the future and the perennality of farms and farming and some others important topics as the maintenance of the income, the reduction of worktime, the labour shortage, the system of assistance and reorganisation of the mutual aid....).

---

<sup>17</sup> « On en voit des vacanciers qui se promènent qui disent que c'est bien entretenu, que c'est joli. » (n°6, 52 ans)

<sup>18</sup> « Il y a des sentiers de randonnée qui se sont créés. Il ne faut pas qu'il y ait que les touristes qui puissent y passer, non plus, après. Il faut que les engins agricoles puissent y passer pour exploiter les bois. C'est pour ça qu'il faut un juste milieu ; il faut que tout le monde se respecte (n°15) ».

<sup>19</sup> « on est là pour entretenir plus que pour produire (...) et à la base je n'ai pas choisi l'agriculture pour ça (...)  
c'est un peu gênant, c'est un peu frustrant même (n°16) ».

<sup>20</sup> « [sa femme] : ils [les instances agricoles] s'orientent plus sur l'environnement. On a l'impression que c'est plus, pour en fait, entretenir le paysage pour les gens de la ville quand ils viennent, qu'ils ne se salissent pas les pieds... [lui] : Oui, mais on ne peut pas non plus devenir jardiniers d'un terrain de golf (n°15) ».

The priority given to the landscape management project raises to the farmers the question of the balance between tourism and agricultural activities and the respective role of these two sectors in the local development. Seeing that the CAP reform supports less and less the production of food goods, many farmers try to diversify their income by setting up agri-tourist activities. However present orientations of rural tourism induced an adaptation and a selection of the farmers who are ready and able to collect the top-of-the-range customers (Perret, 2002). We thus joined here a fear expressed by Laurent (1994) who analyzes the remuneration of agricultural services "as a social program aiming at transitorily mitigating the most brutal effects of the reform of the CAP". It would act of a kind of social treatment of unemployment where the farmers would profit from welfare transfers if he accepts to conform to a certain number of obligation as landscape maintenance and without being integrated into the discussion about the norms retained for this activity and without making it possible to have a similar income with that of other social and economic categories having the same level of qualification (Laurent, 1994: 238) "

### 34 – Free or remunerated service ?

In spite of these reserves, all the farmers we met subscribed to measures aiming at improving the maintenance of rural space. For them, the subscription of a contract implies to adhere to an "environmentalist" state of mind. For this reason, they criticise the members of the first group who would have signed contracts only by financial interest and they denounce them as "subsidies hunters".

If this adhesion to an environmentalist ethics federates the last three groups, different opinions are expressed concerning the remuneration of this service. For the farmers of the second group, the maintenance of space is an inherent activity in their professional identity, it is an aspect of their work. The farmers thus build their professional project in the freedom to undertake their job and manage the landscape as they want; they develop their own esthetics of their work in this framework (Luginbühl, 2001). This professional standard is impressed of a moral valorization, and excludes in theory all financial compensation<sup>21</sup>.

On the other hand, the farmers of the third group consider the maintenance of space as a service for which it is conceivable to be remunerated. The landscape is not any more an inherent consequence of their work but a "common good" produces by the agriculture and for which there is a social demand

With the question of the remuneration, the social contract which bases the professional identity of the farmers is thus deeply questioned. The producers of the groups 2 and 3 totally agree with the idea to welcome the visitors in their territory. But the financial compensation instituted by the CTE radically changes the terms of this exchange. We can say that the conception of the group n°2 is based on a logic of the gift which is in keeping with a noncommercial field and which is based on an ethical obligation that they set themselves (Mauss, 1985). On the other hand, the remunerated service, conceived by the farmers of the group n°3, concerns an economy of the environmental services (Aznar and Perrier-Cornet, 2003): the farmer binds to contractual obligations which can be evaluated and sanctioned if they are not observed (by administrative controls). From an ethical reason, we would pass to a commercial reason in prey to a moral requirement which consequently can be imposed to them.

---

<sup>21</sup> « *c'est un truc qu'on doit faire (...)* *c'est pas un truc que l'on fait pour gagner de l'argent* » (n°2)

## **Conclusion** : towards a new social contract

If the farmers integrate the new agri-environmental functions allotted to the agricultural activity, they do it at the cost of an important work of sense construction about these new activities. This work is done, not individually, but collectively within different social integration places which gives them varied contents. For some of them, farmland maintenance does not have any relevance as an intentional purpose, while, for the majority of the interviewed farmers, it is a sub-product; for others a by-product, for other rare ones, it can finally become the main product of their activity. The majority of the contracting farmers thus integrated the environmental orientations but they hope not to change the hard core of their system of value which remains articulated around the production of food goods. These ecologisation of the agriculture leads also farmers to reconsider the terms of the exchange with other actors. Set up and legitimated as the base of a common good to produce, farmland and landscape management does not seem to be the main activities which define them as farmers. It only constitutes a secondary aspect of their productive activities among the other multiple functions of agriculture.

However the contractual layout of the CTE generates the dispersal and the disconnection of these multiple functions. Whereas the multifunctionality of agriculture is based on the narrow hybridisation of commercial and not-commercial functions, the public policy device separate them and try to merchandize all of them. As Sabourin *et al.*(2003 : 131) show it for the Brazilian and Kanak agriculture, this multidimensional quality of agriculture is both meaningful "*for the social relations of production and also for the circulation of the agricultural goods*".

Moreover, these devices officialize the remuneration of some non-commercial functions that farmers have done for nothing until now and in which they found the nobility of their activity. The remuneration reverses this system of value and constitutes a kind of insult to the ideal that any peasant keeps with the maintenance of his farmlands (Droz and Miéville-Ott, 2001: 18).

In fact the terms of the exchange with the rest of the society are called into question. On the one hand, the farmer is not considered only as a producer of agricultural food products. Even if the policy makers get used with this idea, it is still far from the values and references framework of the farmers. Those pain to give up this feeder function, because the other functions – landscape management or biodiversity - remain very theoretical in their eyes (Droz and Miéville, 2001: 187). In addition, the farmland maintenance cannot be offered any more by the farmers, since it becomes a remunerated service. It is not any more a gift, a deliberated choice to offer, but a commercial service. In the past, the aesthetic standards were defined within the local professional group (the farmers) and in a logic of gift based on an ethical obligation. Today, the production of this service should logically obey to technical and aesthetic standards discussed and defined jointly by the farmers but also by the visitors, the environmentalists, local economic agents etc., without knowing to which concrete collectives landscape representations each group refers.

Farmers need an internal debate in order to build a common position on the mode of recognition of this function, and more basically on the payment exemption or the commodification of this service. By this exploratory study, we wonder about the present capacity of the agricultural profession to put into debate these points of tenseness which would enable it to control the restructuring of its professional identity.

In fact, the farmers who are strongly integrated into the professional networks are those who let a place to the landscape in their activity. As it is seen as a sub-product or a by-

product, the conditions of the remuneration will probably be discussed among themselves. On the other hand, the farmers who defend a professional identity exclusively based on the production of food goods and with the opposite, those who are ready to be totally involved into the landscape management are not represented in these networks. And the results of our study tends to confirm that the non-contractors (who represent the majority of the French farmers) rather belong to these two groups.

If the production of landscape concerns the production of common goods, it then needs "a definition which bases its truth in reason and nature " (Douglas, 1999). The "landscape" will have a place and a sense in farmers' minds if the social tenseness between the rural and urban world are symbolically resolved. This symbolic construction requires to explicit the terms of the exchange for which the financial commodification does not seem to be systematically applied and not to be still the most relevant tools.

## References

Aznar O. and Perrier-Cornet P. (2003). Les services environnementaux dans les espaces ruraux: une approche par l'économie des services, *Economie Rurale*, n° 273-274, p. 142-157.

Berger P. and Luckman T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* , Penguin, London.

Boujout C. (1995). Les marais de Dol-Châteauneuf ou la nature d'un quiproquo. In: *Paysage au pluriel. Pour une approche ethnologique du paysage*, (eds Voisenat C. ; Notteghem P.), vol. 9, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, p. 168-181.

Bourdieu P. (1977). Une classe d'objets, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences sociales*, n°17-18, p. 2-5.

Candau J. and Le Floch S. (2002). Le paysage comme catégorie d'action publique ? *Natures, sciences et sociétés*, vol. 10, n° 2, p. 59-65.

Candau J. and Chabert M. (2003). La multifonctionnalité, un sens en discussion. La place accordée au paysage dans le projet agricole de la Dordogne, in CARON P. et PIVOT J.-M. (coord), *Les Cahiers de la multifonctionnalité « Coordinations locales et action collective pour une agriculture multifonctionnelle »*, Editions Cemagref-Inra-Cirad, pp. 71-87.

Deffontaines J.P. (1998). *Les sentiers d'un géoagronome*, Editions Arguments, Paris, 360 p.

De la Soudière M. (1991). Paysages et altérité. En quête de "cultures paysagères": réflexion méthodologique. *Etudes rurales*, vol. 121-124, p. 141-150.

Deuffic P. (2004). Le paysage au goût des autres. Appropriation de la notion de paysage par les agriculteurs contractants au projet de CTE collectif du Pays des Bastides (Dordogne). Cemagref, Cestas, 30 p.

Douglas M. (1999) *Comment pensent les institutions*, Paris, La Découverte, 180 p. (How institutions think, 1986).

Droz Y. and Miéville-Ott V. (2001) *On achève bien les paysans*. Georg éditeur, Genève, 202 p.

Dupré L. (2001). Relancer une activité agricole traditionnelle en (re)qualifiant son paysage? Quand une châtaigneraie ardéchoise devient "paysage de reconquête". In: *Dynamique rurale. Environnement et stratégies spatiales.*, (ed Berger A.), CNRS, Université Paul Valéry, 13 et 14 septembre 2001, Montpellier, p. 451-458.

- Halfacree K.H. (1995) Talking About Rurality: Social Representations of the Rural as Expressed by Residents of Six English Parishes. *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 11, n° 1, p. 1-20.
- Kitchen L. (2000) Environmental policy and the differentiation of rural space : an actor-network perspective. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, vol. 2, p. 135-147.
- Laurent C. (1994) L'agriculture paysagiste : du discours aux réalités. *Natures Sciences Sociétés*, vol. 2, n° 3, p. 231-242.
- Lémery B. (2003). Les agriculteurs dans la fabrique d'une nouvelle agriculture, *Sociologie du travail*, 45, p. 9-25.
- Luginbühl Y. (2001). La demande sociale de paysage. In: *Conseil National du Paysage, rapport de la séance inaugurale du 28 mai 2001*, Ministère de l'écologie et du développement durable, Paris, p. 11-30.
- Mauss M. (1985). Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques, in *Sociologie et Anthropologie*, Paris, PUF, p. 143-279.
- McHenry H. (1996) Farming and environmental discourses: a study of the depiction of environmental issues in a German farming newspaper. *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 12, n° 4, p. 375-386.
- Mitchell C.J.A. (1998) Entrepreneurialism, commodification and creative destruction: a model of post-modern community development. *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 14, n° 3, p. 273-286.
- Mitchell D. (2002). Cultural landscapes: The dialectical landscape. Recent landscape research in human geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 26, n° 3, p. 381-390.
- Mendras H. (1984). La fin des paysans. 20 ans après. Actes Sud, Paris, 370 p.
- Morris C. ; Potter C. (1995) Recruiting the New Conservationists: Farmers' Adoption of Agri-environmental Schemes in the U.K. *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 11, n° 1, p. 51-63.
- Oberbeck H. ; Oppermann R. (1998) The 'greening' of agriculture as a new social challenge: from farming to services. *European urban and regional studies*, vol. 5, n° 4, p. 375-378.
- Perret J. (2002) La mise en valeur d'aménités touristiques rurales pour une élite. *Ingénieries EAT*, vol. spécial Aménités rurales, p. 35-42.
- Rémy J. (2000) Multifonctionnalité agricole et pluralité sociale: Les contrats territoriaux d'exploitation. *Aménagement et Nature*, vol. 136, p. 25-36.
- Sabournin E. and Djama M. (2003) Pratiques paysannes de la multifonctionnalité. Nordeste brésilien et Nouvelle-Cadélonie, *Economie rurale*, n° 273-274, p. 120-133.
- Schütz A. (1987) Le chercheur et le quotidien, Klincksieck, Paris, 286 p. (first edition, collected papers, 1962)
- Svendsen G.L.H. (2004) The right to development: construction of a non-agriculturalist discourse of rurality in Denmark. *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 20, n° 1, p. 79-94.
- Williams R. (1977) Plaisantes perspectives. Invention du paysage et abolition du paysan. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences sociales*, vol. 17-18, p. 29-36.