

« Ecologisation » of agriculture or « agronomisation » of nature conservation ?

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Over the past few decades, biodiversity has been threatened by the agriculture intensification. Species have disappeared because of the increasing use of pesticides and fertilizers. Conversely, a large part of the old agricultural land lays fallow causing the destruction of semi-natural habitats. This state of fact leads to the logical conclusion that alternatives to current practices must be found in order to prevent biodiversity impoverishment. Nature protection has to become a major concern of agriculture. The question is how to get farmers concerned about nature protection ?

Most of the farmers consider that nature conservation is not part of their job. The main object of agriculture has always been food production and it is still the only concern of many farmers (Lecomte, 1995). Furthermore, they often consider that practices favouring nature conservation entail loss of profit. This standpoint, which has been encouraged by the agricultural model developed during the past few decades, constitute one of the main obstacles of nature conservation programs (Allaire, 1998). Farmers will unlikely take charge of nature protection if they do not change the way they think their job and their practices. Thus, nature conservation actors generally consider that it is essential to come to an « ecologisation » of agriculture and they try to « educate » farmers in order to heighten their awareness of the ecological dimension of agriculture (Enf, 1996).

This contribution aims to point out that ecologisation can hardly occur without an « agronomisation » of nature conservation. Our research, which focuses on collaborations established between naturalists' association and farmers in France, points out indeed the limits of the strategy used by the naturalists to interest farmers to nature conservation. Based on contractual agreements, this strategy often tends to impose the naturalists vision to farmers and fails to meet the needs of the farmers. The latter turn away from nature conservation convinced that it is not compatible with their job. In order to avoid such failure, some naturalists try to develop a new kind of transaction by which they try to support the farmers own interests. They turned nature conservation into a resource farmers can use to develop their own project and to ensure their future. This new aim changes the very definition of the naturalist' job and the knowledges they have to deal with. They can not be anymore « just naturalists », they may also be rural development agents or « agricultural engineer ».

This contribution will first expose the limits of the contractual agreements. Then, it will present the new naturalists' practices and the new solidarity these practices develop between naturalists and farmers.

1. The limits of contractual agreements for nature conservation

Contract : a tool for controlling the land

The naturalists' associations we study¹, (called Conservatoires Régionaux d'Espaces Naturels – CREN) are non-profit-making associations acting for their own behalf. This statute constitutes a handicap for their nature conservation purposes. They have no legal authority to force anybody to adopt measures for nature conservation purposes. They are not allowed to create legal protection areas. The only way they have to protect natural habitats is to buy them in order to prevent their damage by human activities.

Considering their rights, naturalists are at a disadvantage compared to farmers. The French law, especially the law about the farming lease, gives prerogatives to farmers which could be obstacles to nature conservation. According to the law, farmers renting agricultural land by farming lease have a pre-emptive right if the land is sold. They also have the right to use the land as they want, without possibility for the owner to impose any restrictions. Finally, we must add that the farming lease does not come to an end when the land is sold. The new land owner has to honour his predecessor's commitments. Consequently, the farmers are able to foil the naturalists' plans. As long as they have a farming lease they can prevent the naturalists buying natural habitats and they can refuse to extensify their practices for conservation purposes.

As they wanted to control the land use, the naturalists' associations had to find a way to overcome the law about the farming lease. They decided then to use another kind of contract which is, from a legal point of view, very different from the farming lease. By this contract, the naturalists put the land at farmers' disposal for a limited time (usually for a year). The contract is free : the farmer doesn't pay a rent. But he has to respect the practices required by naturalist for the nature conservation. If he doesn't, the naturalists' associations are allowed to cancel the contract and to get the land back.

This contractual agreement constitutes an important loss of rights for the farmers. Thus, it is quiet evident that signing such contract is not very attractive for the farmers. In order to encourage farmers to sign the contract, the naturalists use the following strategy.

First, they try to buy the land. If it is rented by a farmer, the naturalists contact him and try to make him renounce to his pre-emptive right. Moreover, the naturalists propose him to cancel his farming lease in order to sign instead a contract giving him the free disposal of the land. As the lands interesting naturalists are often bad, farmers easily renounce to they pre-emptive right and their farming lease. They don't want to invest in low-yield lands (in general, the lands in question are meadows and can not be used for crop production). The free disposal of the land appears then like an opportunity to reduce their expenses. Also, they accept the naturalists' proposition. Some farmers who didn't rent the land before the naturalists bought it are attracted by this proposition too : even if they don't expect high yield or high quality forage, the free disposal of the land appears like an opportunity to get unexpensive forage. It is also an opportunity to extend their farm in order to get subsidies for extensification.

As we see here, this contractual agreement organizes an exchange between partners. Each partner gives something to the other. In return, he gains something for himself. In theory, all

¹ This contribution presents results of a research program which focuses on collaborations between farmers and naturalists associations in eight counties in France. This research has been carried out in partnership with INRA (iNRA-SAD Mirecourt, France) and ENF (Espaces Naturels de France – French federation of the conservatories of natural habitats).

partners are winning and in equal position. But the strategy used by the naturalists also organizes a power transfer from the farmers to the naturalists. As all contractual agreements, those contracts aim to depart from the general prescriptions of the law, protecting farmers' rights, to promote local arrangements, giving to the naturalists the power of controlling farmers' practices (Supiot, 2001). This allows the naturalists to impose the practices favouring nature conservation. But, at the same time, it restricts discussions between partners preventing knowledges hybridation.

An agreement closing all discussions

Once the naturalists control the land, they tend to impose the practices they consider the more favourable for the nature conservation purposes. During the interviews, many naturalists told us that the contractual agreements were « *à prendre ou à laisser* » : either farmers accept practices specified by the contract and they can use the land for free or they refuse the contract and the land is given to someone else.

This attitude gives little opportunity for the farmers to discuss the restrictions imposed by the contract. It may be noted that farmers, by the time of the contract signature, do not pay much attention to these restrictions. As we said before, they want, above all, to get the opportunity of reducing their expenses. Moreover, farmers who rented the land before the naturalists bought it, are very worried about keeping it : even if the land is bad, it has a function in the farm and farmers need it to carry on their activity. Therefore, farmers often neglect to question themselves about the consequences of the practices imposed by the naturalists on the quality forage quality or on the yield. They don't ask themselves whether these practices will reduce the forage quality or not. They don't ask themselves whether this forage product will be good enough for their cattle's needs. Their behaviour is very much an opportunistic attitude.

As we see here, by the time of the contract signature, the attitude of both partners leave out some questions which are essential to assess the interest in signing the contract for the farmers. Each partner focuses on short terms interests. The naturalists only think of taking control of the land. The farmers only think to the economical advantage these free lands constitute. Both forget to think about the functional dimension of the land for farmers. In some case, this leads the collaboration to failure.

Quite often, the practices imposed by naturalists do have negative effects, from an agronomic point of view, on the forage quality and on the yield. Farmers realize then that the benefits of the contract will be lower than what they expected. As they do not want to lose the « advantages » of the contract (free land is considered as an advantage by farmers), they try at first to adapt their farm to this new quality of forage. They give it to cattle having low needs. They use it for « appetizing » the cattle. In short, they try to innovate, to find new practices, in order to adapt their farming system to the constraints of nature conservation. If they achieve it, they do not cancel their contract and the collaboration can last. But, if they do not achieve to use this « bad » forage, they usually try to find land somewhere else and cancel their commitments.

It is important to note that usually farmers do not try to renegotiate their contract with the naturalists' associations. This results from the agreement itself. When the farmers decided to sign the contract, they have accepted constraints. Respect of these constraints is the *sine qua non* condition to have the land for free. This condition is well accepted by the farmers : they understand that, as owners of the land, the naturalists intend to manage it as they want. If the naturalists buy land for nature conservation purposes, it is normal that they ask farmers to respect some constraints. Farmers do not discuss this point because they are very attached to the prerogatives given by the owner's rights. During the interviews, several farmers have

drawn a parallel between the naturalists and themselves. They told us that, if they were owner of their land, they would do everything to be « *master in their own home* » and to conserve the control of their land. Thus, they think it is quiet normal that naturalists think the same way.

Because they are so respectful of the owner's rights, farmers do not try to renegotiate contracts. Once they have decided to renounce to their farming lease to sign instead a contractual agreement, they consider that they do not have the right to discuss anymore. They have made a deal, they have to honour their commitments. In most cases, farmers don't even think that the naturalists could accept to renegotiate the contract. The attitude of the latter, trying to gain the control of the land and reduce the farmers' rights, lets them understand that the practices imposed can not be discussed. Several farmers that we have interviewed told us that they will probably cancel their commitments if they find some other land. Others had already put an end to their collaboration with the naturalists.

This statement shows the limits of contractual agreements as « instruments of ecologisation ». Of course, using these contracts facilitates the enrolment of farmers in nature conservation programs. By these contracts, the naturalists associations achieve to maintain the practices required to protect natural habitats. Thus, from a practical point of view, these contracts are efficient. But, from an « educational » point of view, contracts miss their goal. The naturalists thought that these contracts would heighten farmers' awareness of nature conservation problems and would convince them to widespread practices favouring biodiversity on a large part of their farms. But if contractual agreements force farmers to change their practices and to depart (locally) from the productivist model, they do not achieve to make commonplace environmental practices. None of the farmers we have met intends to widespread use of these practices on his whole farm. None of them considers these practices as « normal » practices. They think instead that nature conservation is something different from agriculture and rather incompatible with their main objective : food production. Most of them considered that they wouldn't be able to take in charge more « natural land » that they do for the moment. At last, many farmers are likely to cancel their contract if they find some other land. Nature conservation stays rather extraneous to agriculture.

By giving priority to ecological purposes, naturalists themselves have isolated nature conservation from agriculture. They have created a nature conservation disconnected from agriculture realities, preventing knowledges hybridation. Farmers are confronted with ideas and reasoning that they do not understand and that they cannot link with their own practices and reasoning. Therefore, they tend to reject to take in charge nature conservation. The controlling strategy contributes then to reinforce split between nature conservation and agriculture. This state of fact leads some naturalists to change their strategy. Considering that their failure was due to a misunderstanding of the farmers' needs, they try to develop a new strategy aiming to turn nature conservation into a resource for the farmers. This leads them to « agronomise » their practices and the knowledges they deal with.

2. « Agronomisation » of nature conservation

A strategy strengthening links between naturalists and farmers

We called « agronomisation » the process by which naturalists come to integrate some elements of the farmers' way of thinking into their own way of thinking. This process is triggered off by the will of the naturalists to overcome the limits of the controlling strategy. As we saw, this strategy, based on the supremacy of naturalists over farmers, puts the partners

in a kind of rivalry : favouring naturalists' purposes, it neglects farmers' purposes. Therefore, the agreements signed with farmers are necessarily fragile and temporary ones. Agreement can not last if it doesn't meet farmers' needs and purposes.

Thus, naturalists try to develop agreements which aim, not only to compensate the farmers' loss of profit, but to answer the essential purposes and needs of farmers : having enough land to be able to feed their cattle, producing good quality forage... The base idea of this new strategy is to replace former agreements, which do not commit strongly farmers, by a new kind of agreement which would necessarily commit farmers for a long time because the viability of their farms or the success of their projects will depend on their collaboration with the naturalists associations. For instance, some naturalists try to help young farmers to set up on their own by « giving » them lands : as they did before, naturalists put the land at farmers' disposal by the way of a contract. Formally, this contract is not different from the former one. It is drawn up in the same terms. But it creates a stronger link between partners because, for several years at least, those young farmers need the naturalists' land to earn their living. Therefore, they are unlikely to cancel their contract.

Also, this new strategy does not bank on the legal authority of the contract to bind farmers for a long time. It banks on the persistence of farmers' needs and on the ability of naturalists' associations to answer these needs on the long term. Thus, the commitment is not limited to the contract length. It exceeds it and last as long as farmers need what the collaboration gives to them.

The setting up of long-lasting links with farmers compels the naturalists to change a lot of things in the way they practice nature conservation because it requires that naturalists build a trust relation with farmers. Then it is no longer possible for the naturalists to act authoritarily or to focus on their own purposes only. On the contrary, they have to restore equality between them and farmers in order to renew dialogue. They have to integrate farmers' way of thinking in their own reasoning and thus, they have to change the knowledges they deal with to establish the management plans of natural habitats. They also have to change their position into the public arena : they cannot no longer stand apart from local stakes. They have to take position and to become allied with some of the local actors. This constitutes great changes into the way the naturalists think their job and their collaborations with farmers and, in fact, it compels naturalists to give up some part of their identity. We are now going to see how and why these changes occur.

Restoring equality between farmers and scientists

The naturalists' associations we have studied have built up their legitimacy on their scientific approach : their actions are decided on scientific criteria and they determine the constraints they have to impose for the protection of a particular site on general recommendations issued of ecological researches. Because they wanted to maintain this legitimacy, naturalists in the former strategy paid very little attention to farmers' practices and know-how when they conceived their management plans : taking into account farmers' knowledges was considered as incompatible with scientific approach. Also, the difference between partners was not only a difference of power : it was also a difference into the consideration given to the knowledges of each partner.

Some naturalists realized that this approach was in fact prejudicial to the collaboration with farmers. These constraints are sometimes very restrictive from an agricultural point of view and they give the impression that the usual farmers' practices are « bad » ones, which will necessarily damage species and natural habitats. But, in many cases, there is no proof that farmers' practices will damage to natural habitats. Ecological science is still young and is not

able to answer all questions. The link between some agricultural practices and the development of many species is not proven.

Farmers are often aware of this lack of justification. During the interviews, many of them noticed that if their practices were as bad as naturalists said, the biodiversity would have been much lower on their parcels. Naturalists would have had nothing to protect. Thus, they tend to consider that these restrictions are unjustified and this confirms their opinion that nature conservation is not compatible with agriculture.

In order to prevent such a reaction, some naturalists, in the new strategy, recognize the farmers' know-how in nature conservation. When they sign a contract with a farmer, they do not necessarily impose restrictions to him. They just ask the farmer to use the land as he always did, with the same practices. At the same time, they follow up the biodiversity evolution on the site. If it appears that the farmer's practices cause damages, they try to adapt them in agreement with the farmer.

This changes a lot the relationship between farmers and naturalists because it changes the way the naturalists perceive farmers. Agricultural practices are no longer considered as damaging factors of biodiversity but as factor favouring biodiversity. Farmers' know-how in nature conservation is no longer denied but it is recognized. This restores the balance of power between naturalists and farmers : there are no more scientists who know how to manage natural habitats and farmers who are supposed not to know how to do such management. There are only two partners aiming to solve a problem in common using every partners' knowledges. It creates a negotiation space.

But the changes in the naturalists' approach are not limited to giving up the scientist figure and to taking into account farmers' know-how. They have also to change their way of thinking the management of natural habitats itself. That means to modify procedures and knowledges they used to set up the management plans of natural habitats in order to improve the compatibility of these plans with constraints of farmers' job.

Naturalists becoming agronomists

When the naturalists were using the former agreement, they didn't have to wonder if it was really profitable for farmers. The naturalists just had to propose the agreement and its main advantage : having land for free. They supposed that this advantage gives satisfaction to every farmer who signed a contract (if it doesn't, they thought that farmers wouldn't have signed a contract). So, the naturalists didn't have to know much about their partners and their farms. They didn't have to know which constraints result of their farming system or which kind of crop farmers cultivate. They didn't have to pay much attention about these constraints, needs and purposes. They could manage nature conservation by focusing only on ecological purposes and they did so. As we said before, most of the time, the management plans of natural sites were conceived with the only purpose of increasing biodiversity and without taking into consideration the farmers' needs and constraints. The only data taken into account by the naturalists were the knowledges that ecological sciences produce about the management of natural habitats.

With the new kind of agreement, naturalists are unlikely to keep such an attitude. They can not conceive anymore the management plans on general recommendations based on scientific studies. First, because they have to adapt their recommendations to each case, to each farmer : some recommendation, which doesn't pose a problem for some farmers, can be inapplicable for others. Secondly, and this is the main point, naturalists have to make sure that the agreement comes to farmers' expectations. If it doesn't, the collaboration won't last. This

compels naturalists to widen their knowledge about agriculture and to improve their understanding of farmers' job. Specially, they must have a good understanding of the farming system of their partners : what are the main productions of the farm ? How much land does the farmer need and for which purpose ? Does he need good pasture to feed his dairy cows (which are the cattle having the greater needs) or does he need land where the cattle could rest (which could be lower quality land) ?

By asking these questions, the naturalists get closer to the farmers' way of thinking their job. They integrate into their own way of thinking some of the criteria used by farmers to evaluate land quality and to determine how they are going to use the parcels of their farm. By knowing these criteria, the naturalists are able to better assess if the management of natural habitat they intend to do is compatible with the farmer's needs. Every management plan aims at favouring certain plants which give forage of more or less good quality from an agronomical point of view. If the naturalists are able to evaluate the quality of the forage resulting from a management plan, they are able to know if it is possible to propose the land to the farmer or not. Land with management plans producing very low quality forage won't be proposed to farmers because the naturalists consider that farmers would not be able to take in charge this kind of land on the long term.

Also, the insertion of agronomical knowledges in naturalists' reasoning allows to better evaluating the possibility of collaboration between farmers and naturalists. It allows naturalists to prevent to set up collaborations which couldn't last in any manner because of the little interest it represents for farmers. In some cases, this insertion of agronomical knowledges allows also the naturalist to adapt their management plan to the farming system of their partner in order to find a lasting arrangement.

In some cases, naturalists have indeed changed the procedure they follow to set up the management plans in order to better answer to farmers' needs. In the former strategy, this procedure essentially consisted on an ecological inventory of the natural sites. Once the inventory was made, the naturalists drew up the management plans on the base of scientific researches in ecology. Their only preoccupation was to find the more suitable practices in regard of species and habitats present on the site. In the present strategy, some naturalists do not anymore jump from the ecological inventory to management plan. They make a second inventory evaluating farmer's needs (pasture, land for forage production...). Then, they try to find the better way to restore natural habitats and, at the same time, to create the pastures and the forage production areas needed. In order to do this, they evaluate the agronomical potentiality of each natural habitats present on the site and they identify habitats which are the more propitious. That means to identify the natural habitats for which the restoration will have the best effects from an agronomical point of view (improvement of the forage quality) and from an ecological point of view (increase of biodiversity). Once it is done, naturalists conceive the management plans so as developing the agronomical potentiality of natural habitats.

As we see here, taking into account the farmers' needs leads the naturalists to change their identity itself. Not only they have to give up the scientist's figure they adopted in the past towards farmers – figure which gave them a certain authority and a legitimacy to protect natural area – but they also have to change their reasoning and their methodology. They cannot anymore behave as « pure » ecologists, but they have to hybridize themselves and become half-ecologists, half-agronomists. The transformation of naturalists' identity does not come to an end there because, in their concern of strengthening the link with farmers, they have to engage themselves more in the public area and to be aware of the local stakes. This will of giving a social depth to the collaboration also compels naturalists to change their position towards farmers.

Giving a social depth to the collaboration

As we saw before, the main preoccupation of the naturalists in the new strategy is to find a way to strengthen links with farmers in order to set up lasting collaborations. For this purpose, the naturalists try to adapt contracts to each farmer in order to take into account the particularities of his situation. But sometimes this is not sufficient to assure long term collaborations for, whatever the naturalists could do, the land has no (or a very low) interest from an agricultural point of view. Therefore the naturalists' associations have to find another way to interest farmers to nature conservation. That means to find other interests to link with nature conservation. The naturalists create those links by two different manners.

The first one is to bring out what could nature conservation provide to the local development. For instance, nature conservation could be an asset for a project promoting green tourism. It contributes to create a « *nice landscape for the tourists* ». Rare species and a rich fauna and flora could also constitute a new attraction in a little area, enhancing the local patrimony and giving to tourists new occupations : walk, discovery of local species... This facet of nature conservation has been greatly appreciated by local actors in a little area in the South of France in which farmers, forced to find ways of diversification, have imagined to develop green tourism with the support of the municipality and of the wine-producing cooperative. The base idea of the project was to attract tourists with local products – wines, essentially – but local actors fear that this would not be enough to make tourists stay : there isn't much to do or to see in the area. Moreover, farmers had not the skills needed to conceive leaflets presenting the richness of the area or to create way-marked footpath. But the naturalists' associations do have such skills because they often try to set off the natural sites they protect with such instruments. Therefore, they have been considered by local actors as a great help : the skills brought by naturalists making much easier and realistic the diversification project. Farmers of the area considered then naturalist' association as an ally which help to maintain economic activity on the area and they accepted to sign contracts with the naturalists' associations despite lands were very bad lands, having no interest from an agricultural point of view.

We see here how the naturalists' involvement in local development projects could help them to create links with farmers. Another way to create these links is to adopt a « political attitude », aiming to defend farmers' interests of an area against other actors.

For instance, in a little area in the West of France, the naturalists' association support local actors (farmers and ostreiculturists) against different actors wanting to buy land into the area. In this area, local farmers are, as they say, « *doomed to cattle breeding* » meaning that it is not possible for them to cultivate the soil. In the past, the area was a salt marsh. When salt production has decreased, the area has been dedicated to cattle-breeding and oyster-production. Because lands are still very wet and salty, farmers are obliged to have a very extensive system : grass production is very low on these lands and farmers need large surfaces to be able to feed their cattle. In this context, the coming of outside actors in the area has been considered as a serious threat by local farmers. Outside actors were generally wealthier than local farmers, so they were able to pay a high price for land but local farmers could not. Thus, large surfaces of land were bought by outside actors and local farmers lost their lands they rented. This situation was very difficult for local farmers but the naturalists' association interceded on farmers' behalf. They considered indeed that the very rich biodiversity of the area has been produced by extensive practices of local farmers. On the contrary, outside actors (i.e. farmers coming from the surrounding areas or hunters coming from towns located outside the little area) do not maintain natural habitats because they do not use it as it was used by local farmers. Outside farmers don't put any cattle on these lands : they own it just to get primes for extensification but in fact they don't use the lands. Hunters don't keep up the land either. Large part of the old salt marsh is lying fallow and biodiversity decreases.

In order to protect biodiversity, naturalists decided to protect local farmers and help them to keep their lands. Therefore, they built a network gathering different actors : ostreiculturists who also contribute to preserve the natural habitat, the local farmers' union and the public agency which regulates lands purchase. Agreements have been signed with all these actors. The public agency promises to give lands (when there is some to sale) in priority to the naturalists. Naturalists promise to give the land back to local farmers or ostreiculturists. The latter promise to keep traditional practices in order to protect biodiversity. Moreover, the naturalists made an agreement with the Ministry of Environment about the local LIFE program : granting conditions will favour local actors versus outside actors because the practices required by naturalists for the nature conservation will be the traditional practices of local actors. By this way, the network ensured the lasting of local agricultural system.

It is quiet evident here that naturalists have adopted a political attitude insofar as they took sides for a particular agricultural system and for a particular development project of the area. Thus they defend a certain vision of society favouring farmers who are usually penalized by the agricultural subsidies system. By adopting such an attitude, naturalists give up their identity of scientists only preoccupied by the preservation of natural habitats they have to manage. They cannot anymore focus only on the nature reserves they preserve but they have to look at the whole space around them. They cannot anymore act as « neutral scientists », unconcerned by conflicts between local actors and unaware of local stakes. On the contrary, they have to be actively involved in the definition of local development project in order to promote those which would more likely favour nature conservation. This turns the naturalists in some kind of rural developments agents and compels them to widen once more knowledges they have to deal with and to integrate new criteria into their reasoning. Once more, naturalists have to change but this last change allows them to create links between nature conservation and other activity. Those links allow local actors to integrate nature conservation into their reasoning : nature conservation becomes a data with which local actors deal and build their strategy to make future plans. Nature conservation is no longer extraneous to the economical world ; it is part of it.

Conclusion

As we see here, ecologisation of agriculture is neither a question of increasing farmers' knowledges in ecology nor a question of reducing the part of agronomic knowledges in the way they think the management of their farms. It is more a question of linking up farmers' preoccupations and naturalists' preoccupations in order to create equivalences between objects managed by each partner. For instance, equivalence can be created between natural habitats protected by naturalists and the « *nice landscape* » wanted by farmers for their green tourism project or between the biodiversity of an area and an agricultural system (as it has been done in our last example). By talking about nature conservation with these equivalences, naturalists give means to farmers to integrate it into their activities because they translate conservation purposes into local actors' purposes.

Creating these links (or equivalences) between nature conservation and agriculture seems to be a preliminary condition for ecologisation of agriculture. These links allow both partners to find common purposes on which they can reorganize their activities and exchange their knowledges. But the links have to be adapted to each local situation, in order to answer local actors' needs and take advantage of local resources, and this questions the very principle of contractual agreements in nature conservation program because in those programs contracts don't create any links between agriculture and nature conservation. Aiming to make farmers adopt practices favouring nature conservation, they just try to « sale » these practices to

farmers. Naturalists give farmers advantages for making them adopt particular practices. By adopting this approach, naturalists act as if getting bounty was the only criteria determining farmers' choices. But the reasons why farmers decide to sign a contract are very diverse. Farmers decide to sign a contract sometimes for economical reasons (getting a bounty or free lands), sometimes to defend local interests and projects. They can also sign a contract to get certain legitimacy : in some cases, farmers on the fringe of agricultural world (i.e. little farmers unable to follow the evolution of agriculture) used the collaboration with naturalists to legitimize the benefits of their practices for society. Many other reasons could lead farmers to sign contracts and to ingrate nature conservation into their practices on a long-term basis. By reducing farmers to « *bounty hunter* », contracts ignore those aspects of farmers' decision and close then opportunities of collaboration. The question is then to know how nature conservation programs could widen their perception of farmers and agriculture in order to take profit of all opportunities they give. This is the paradox of agriculture ecologisation : it doesn't require farmers to draw closer to naturalists' position but it requires naturalists, and decision-makers, to draw closer to farmers' position.

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