

The European Group of the International Farming Systems Association (IFSA, ex AFSRE) carries out European Symposia every two years. After five successful symposia in Edinburgh, Granada, Hohenheim, Volos and Florence, the Group decided to carry out the next symposium in Vila Real, Portugal. This European Symposium addresses all Europeans, irrespective of their area of research and work, as well as Non-Europeans working in Europe. Participants and authors will hopefully represent a wide range of European States (EU member States, Central and Eastern Europe).

The Committees

Steering Committee: Artur Cristóvão (UTAD, Portugal), Clive Lightfoot (Agropolis, France), Jacques Brossier (INRA, France), Hans Langeveld (Wageningen UR, Holland), Kirsten v. d. Heiden (ZALF, Germany), Loes Heuff (Ornskoldsviks Kommun, Sweden), Luigi Omodei Zorini (U. of Florence, Italy), Milan Slavik (Czech U. of Agriculture, The Czech Rep.), Rebecka Milestad (Swedish U. of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden), Sri Sriskandarajah (Royal Vet. And Agriculture U., Denmark)

Organising Committee: The local organising committee is composed of Artur Cristóvão, Alberto Baptista, Livia Madureira, Manuela Ribeiro, Manuel Teixeira, Mário Sérgio Teixeira, Patrícia António, Pedro Ferrão, Timothy Koehnen and Vasco Rebelo.

Theme Background

The countryside is no longer seen as a space of food and fibre production. It is understood as multifunctional. Policies have changed considerably over the last decade, and new changes are being discussed at the moment under the EU framework. The global context, markets and trade are part of the debate, as are equity, sustainability, and social inclusion and participation concerns. Urban representation about the rural areas and "nature" has changed, and such changes have influenced the emergence of the so-called new social demands. Economic diversification of rural areas, particularly through tourism promotion and valorisation of quality agricultural and agri-food products, have become a focus of attention. But many questions and concerns remain, for instance about the benefits and risks of these diversification strategies. In the academic, professional, and policy-making communities, it has become clear that European farming and society in general (policy-makers, consumers, environmental groups, citizens) are searching for a new social contract. Farming systems researchers are active participants in this effort, through research activities and multiple events that they organise or in which they participate. The 6th IFSA Symposium will be a major opportunity to contribute to this on-going and crucial discussion. The five topics proposed for reflection in the Workshops emerged from these general concerns: food quality and safety; sustainability of small farming; natural resources management and landscape construction; knowing and learning to manage change; and developing new tools to support sustainable agriculture and rural development. As before, the 6th IFSA Symposium will be an occasion to present and share research results and to advance ideas on future research projects and initiatives. In addition, we also want it to be a special time to meet extensionists, farmers and other actors involved in the construction of new approaches, methods and projects leading to a renewed social contract between European agriculture and society. Please join us and be part of this collaborative learning endeavour!

Symposium Programme

The programme features two plenary sessions, five workshops with presentation and discussion of the accepted papers, poster displays, training and tool bazaar, field trips and special parallel sessions.

Time	Saturday 3.4.2004	Sunday 4.4.2004	Monday 5.4.2004	Tuesday 6.4.2004	Wednesday 7.4.2004
8.00 - 9.00		Registration			
9.00 - 11.00		time: 9.45 Welcome and Plenary Session 1		Parallel Workshops (presentations & discussions)	Two Special Parallel Sessions
				Coffee break	
11.30 - 13.00				Parallel Workshops (reports - general discussion)	Parallel Workshops (summary - results)
				Lunch	
15.00 - 17.00		Parallel Workshops (presentations & discussions)	Field Trips	Poster Session & tools bazaar	Plenary Session 2
		Coffee break		Coffee break	
17.30 - 19.00	Registration	Parallel Workshops (presentations & discussions)		Poster Session & tools bazaar time: 18.00 Meeting European Group of IFSA	End
21.00				Social Dinner	

Plenary sessions will include the welcome addresses, introduction to the general topic and presentation of the localities where the field trips will take place, plus reports from the workshops, plenary discussion, summary and conclusions. **Two special parallel sessions** will focus on topics to be defined in accordance with the Symposium theme. Five parallel **Workshops** will deal with five different major topics and will be the major component of the Symposium.

Organisation of workshops and discussions

A small team will co-ordinate, review and organise the papers that will be submitted for each workshop theme. The organisation of the workshops during the Symposium is left to the responsible team. Time spent in workshop activities will be maximised and the participation of all members of the group ensured. In general, the format of each workshop will be as follows: (1) *Presentation*: A presenter will introduce the papers to be dealt with in each session; (2) *Discussion*: Workshop participants may break up into small discussion groups if wished. Each discussion group will have a reporter; and (3) *Reporting from workshops - General discussion*: The reporter of each group will present the results of the group discussion to be examined and discussed by all the workshop participants. A summary will be presented in the final plenary session on Wednesday by a reporter for each workshop.

Posters and tool bazaar

Posters will be displayed during the Symposium. Two sessions are allocated for discussions of the posters. Authors will be available at the poster area. Two sessions will be made available (parallel to the discussion of posters) for

participants to present examples of tools and techniques that have been used in the field or in training courses.

Field trips

Field trips will be organised during the second day of the Symposium. They will be planned in order to give the participants the possibility to speak with farmers and extensionists working in the area. At each field trip, participants will have the opportunity to split into small groups and discuss with the local stakeholders. English speaking people will be available to facilitate the discussions.

Topics and Content of Workshops

Workshop 1

Food System: Food Quality and Safety for Sustainable Rural Development

Coordinators: Donato Romano and Geir Lieblein

Events of recent years have heightened the awareness and concerns that consumers have about food quality and safety. Food quality taken in its widest meaning will include the organoleptic quality of food for the individual consumer to food security at household and to national levels. Food safety touches on the psychological and physical health of people, consumers' welfare, their cultural appreciation of food, the right to food and indeed all the questions of food ethics. These may all be primarily the reactions of the non-farming population.

Equally important are issues and concerns of the farming population on how to keep the money circulating in the region for its development. Linking the typical agri-food productions with their consumption, and accounting for the environmental, recreational and cultural services provided by farmers, can represent an important drive for sustainable rural development in many European rural areas. In this regard, 'food systems' is a way of embracing the whole, linking the farming and the non-farming sectors of society and the social contract between them.

Some of the questions to be considered in this workshop will be: Is it possible for the characteristics of excellence linked to productive processes set by local traditions to be maintained, even in the presence of a significantly growing demand, and therefore of increased production? In which way can aspects of the traditional Farming Systems (productive structures, production techniques, institutional relationships, legislation, personal capacity, and relationships between producers and consumers) cope with the expansion of the market, without a degeneration of the specific characteristics of the local systems? What innovative models do we need to fill the gap between the large players dominating the food systems and the small-scale alternatives that have emerged to date?

Workshop 2

The sustainability of small scale farming

Chairpersons: David Gibbon, Jacques Brossier and Luigi Omodei Zorini

This theme will continue with some of the debates and ideas which were illuminated by the Volos (2000) and Florence (2002) meetings. We would like to explore the continuing roles of small-scale farming, both as a component within broadening rural livelihood systems and in providing ecological and environmental services that society at large demands. We will also examine the linkages between farming systems research and the rural livelihood framework, which includes the analysis of the importance of institutional, social, physical, natural, financial and human capital, in the evolution of more sustainable systems. This theme will welcome contributions from small-scale organic farmers who are building new alliances in production systems, research and marketing methods.

We would appreciate contributions of both theoretical studies and case studies from widely differing contexts, which will contribute to our ongoing debates. We would particularly like to encourage joint contributions from natural and social scientists, advisers and farmers that demonstrate synergy, systemic thinking and evidence of learning in the approach to these complex issues.

Workshop 3

Natural resources management and farm functions in landscape construction

Coordinators: Herman van Keulen and Jacques Baudry

The societal demand on agriculture is shifting from production of commodities, with special attention to avoid pollution or depletion of natural resources, to integrated natural resources management, including rural landscape management and development. Increasing public concern for sustainable development is leading to increased attention for multi-functionality as a boundary condition for farming activities. This theme will be discussed in the Workshop, considering the following objectives:

- To identify options for improved natural resources and landscape management;
- To identify ways to evaluate potential impacts of improved natural resources and landscape management;
- To review methodologies for assessing the efficiency of various incentives in terms of environment; and
- To analyse possible conflicts among environmental objectives in specific natural resources management and landscape management in a farming system setting.

Workshop 4

Knowing and Learning: Labour and skills at stake for a multidimensional agriculture

Coordinator: Bernard Hubert

The Learning network will meet again in Vila Real, with new issues: the impacts on labour and skills of the overall societal evolution (individual values, common sense, relation to work and quality of life) and the new market requirements in terms of quality of products, food and health security, environmental management, and social conditions. This year we suggest focusing our discussions and interactions on some radical transformations tackling individual identities and social structures such as professional bodies, farms, agri-food enterprises, local communities, in the sense that new skills as well as new labour management are required, and relevant networking between existing skills (in complementary social positions) is also needed to enhance their efficiency.

How those skills are built in an intertwined questioning that tackles the role of numerous agencies and actors, with a specific emphasis on the local level since a strong hypothesis may be that territorial assets are core components of the evolution of agriculture towards multidimensionality. These questions are addressed by a wide scope of disciplines, in human sciences (ergonomics, psycho-sociology, sociology, anthropology, political sciences and economy) as well as bio-technical disciplines (agronomy, animal husbandry, forestry, and food technology). Hence, this Workshop is open to this diversity and has an ambition to cast an interdisciplinary light on these questions.

Skills can be considered as products as well as conditions of professional history. We look for papers describing and analysing individual learning processes through personal trajectory, the role of training agencies, educational systems and local or professional communities or any interactive systems of skill building. How are generic and specific skills identified, translated into training products and implemented through the co-operation between different actors, including workers/workplace providers relationships or innovative territorial projects? Beyond individual skills, this co-operation highlights the need of collective or organisational skills, product as well as condition of actions and interactions between stakeholders.

Workshop 5

Combined micro-economic and ecological assessment tools for sustainable rural development

Coordinators: Peter Zander and Tommy Dalgaard

Sustainable development of farming systems requires profound knowledge of complex inter disciplinary processes. These comprise scientific as well as agricultural, social, economic and political processes. Changes in farming

systems management depend on the decisions of a number of decision-makers in agricultural enterprises and public authorities from the local level up to European agricultural and environmental politics. Farmers generally follow the economic rationality in their decision making, which is implicated by the economic conditions. These conditions currently undergo considerable modifications through the actual practice of subsidising agriculture in Europe. In the future, the EU funded agricultural subsidies will increasingly be linked to the environmental performance of agricultural practices (EU-Commission 2000).

To develop an effective agro-environmental policy, tools are needed that allow detailed ex-ante economic and environmental analysis of different policy options at a regional level. The sustainability of a certain land use combination can only be defined in a participative societal discourse, which requires adequate information. At the same time, much of the correlations between different aspects of sustainability are not known, because of knowledge gaps on processes, data or lack of models which can generate adequate information at the regional level. The provision of tools that are able to analyse the interdependencies between the relevant indicators of sustainability at a regional or national level will contribute substantially to sustainable development. These issues will be debated in this Workshop, with the contribution of all participants.

Submission of Papers

Papers and posters submission:

The papers (with a maximum of 10 pages A4 single spaced, including tables, figures and bibliography) should be submitted by email. The title page must indicate the specific Workshop to which the paper is submitted and include a half page abstract. The papers will be selected on the basis of their quality and relevance to the issues raised in each of the Workshop statements, through a process of international peer review. Papers with a dominant descriptive nature will not be accepted. The poster texts should have a maximum of 2 pages and include the objectives, background, methodology and results of the study.

Deadlines:

September 30th, 2003

Deadline paper submission (max. 10 pp.) to Secretariat
Author notification (paper acceptance or rejection)

December 15th, 2003

January 31st, 2004

Submission of final versions
Submission of poster texts

February 15th, 2004

Other Information

Language: The working language of the Symposium will be English; only papers in English will be accepted.

Travel grants: No travel grants will be available for participants, including those who present accepted papers.

Documents and publication of proceedings: All accepted papers will be distributed at the Symposium in a document provided to all participants upon registration. It is intended to publish proceedings after the Symposium including accepted papers as well as the presenters' papers and reporters' presentations in the final discussion.

Symposium Secretariat

Artur Cristóvão, Alberto Baptista and Timothy Koehnen
Departamento de Economia e Sociologia, UTAD
Av. Almeida Lucena 1, 5000-660 Vila Real, PORTUGAL
acristov@utad.pt

<http://www.utad.pt/~des/ifs/>

Sixth IFSA European Symposium



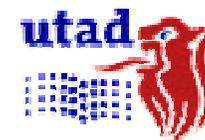
IFSA European Group
International Farming Systems Association

Farming and Rural Systems Research and Extension

European Farming and Society in Search of a New Social Contract – Learning to Manage Change

First Announcement and Call for Papers

Vila Real, Portugal
April 4 - 7, 2004



Universidade de Trás-os-
Montes e Alto Douro



Departamento de
Economia e Sociologia