

Forms of territorial embeddedness in dairy value chains Case of the Chartreuse massif (French Alps): geographical and historical perspectives

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Abstract: *The ending of milk quotas marks a breach in the mode of milk supply management. Farmers and actors of territorial development are concerned about the future of dairy farming, since globally we can observe that local structures struggle to maintain themselves, and face a loss of autonomy and sovereignty in front of agro-industries. In this context a group of dairy farmers in the Chartreuse massif (French Northern Alps) wished to conduct a reflection on their future.*

It consisted in better understanding the territorial embeddedness of dairy value chains, compared with what could be done elsewhere (geographical perspective), and what has been done in the history of the area (historical perspective). We used a same reading grid based on six criteria relative to the geographic embeddedness of the value chains, the ability of the producers to specify their resources, and to organize themselves and be autonomous.

Of the 18 initiatives analyzed concerning dairy products, we identified four types of territorial embeddedness. Producers have the best control when they are at the origin of the initiative and have invested in processing equipment. But this requires a lot of time and funding research, with a return on the milk price which is not immediate, time to amortize. The history of Chartreuse shows different trajectories of loss and gain of autonomy for the dairy producers, and a loss of collective.

We discuss the cross-reading of these geographical and historical perspectives and their meanings for the Chartreuse producers.

Keywords: *dairy value chain, mountain area, territorial embeddedness, power distribution, geographical perspective, historical perspective*