

## International Encounters « FAMILY FARMING & RESEARCH »

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<http://l.agropolis.fr/aiaf2014en>

### Brief report of the Closing Session

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During the closing session in the afternoon of 3rd June the chairs of the seven working groups presented a summary of points of agreement reached among participants, which include a number of proposals summarised below.

#### **Group 1: Family farming in the territories**

The existence of appropriate, well-adapted productive and technical models of various dimensions was indicated, as well as the ways to describe and implement them. Comprehensive information systems are needed relating to land tenure, investments in agriculture, market access and food security. These information systems should lead to territorialised policy propositions, taking into account the diversity of actors in the territories.

Addressing these topics requires increased research.

#### **Group 2: Family Farming and sustainable intensification**

Agro-ecology as a field of research was discussed.

Who takes decisions about putting into practice new (or rediscovered) ways of intensification? And who is in charge of programming research? More transparency is needed in this area.

Concretely, there are some notable initiatives but more information, publicity and capitalisation are needed.

In order to take into account the diversity and the complexity of national and local situations, local level research initiatives are needed. Results should also be analysed from the biological and organic, and not only from the economic, point of view.

Better knowledge is needed about the impacts of support and public policies on new strategies of intensification. Politicians should be better informed on the potential consequences of specific choices.

The multi-functionality, diversity and resilience of Family Farming should be assessed in a way equivalent to the economic benefits generated. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to use alternative methods that incorporate consideration of the sustainability of agronomic models promoted.

### **Group 3: In-house issues within Family Farming (social relations within households)**

Better analysis is needed of the power relations within families. In general the woman farmer suffers legal, social and cultural inequality. In no few cases, even when standards with a more gendered focus exist, social and cultural differences remain. All this requires further research and greater educational efforts within society.

This is also the case for young farmers, whose role in the family farm is usually conditioned by unequal power relations.

The situation relating to individual and collective land tenure and to the nature and the impacts of immigration must also be assessed.

Joint research must be promoted, in particular in relation to women and young farmers, taking into account strengths and weaknesses of familial organisation.

### **Group 4: Family farming facing the challenges of urbanisation and unemployment**

The phenomenon of “productivism” in food production was highlighted, underlining major inequalities in productivity levels between farms in the North and in the South, ranging from 1 to 150% or more. Therefore, competition is unfair, while it seems difficult in most developing countries for economic sectors outside agriculture to provide decent work to young generations arriving each year on the labour market.

The multi-functionality of Family Farming is insufficiently valued as well as its impact on employment, a topic of major importance in rural areas.

It is difficult to foresee a paradigm change.

A participatory approach to research is proposed since this offers broader possibilities. Consumers must also be taken into account. The participation of women and men farmers in research must be institutionalised so that it focuses on their problems, and in particular on their quality of life.

Dietary habits, in particular those in urban areas, must be taken into account.

Distribution and marketing circuits must be thoroughly analysed, as this is the basis for farmers to sell their produce.

Public and private supply channels must be analysed and assessed as well as labels of origin and specific geographical denomination.

As regards access of youth to agriculture, urban-rural and city-countryside links must be strengthened, so that urban youth can take up employment in agriculture.

### **Group 5: Family Farming Facing the Challenges of Climate Change**

The group proposed diversification, agro-ecology, landscape heterogeneity and biodiversity to arrive at great resilience and adaptation to shocks. The group recommended privileging collective use of resources and family farm systems.

Social organisation, infrastructure and collective action must be promoted to address these challenges. New information must be generated on indicators and carbon credits. Access to natural

resources must be improved, and solidarity and farmers' organisations strengthened. Social dynamism is needed to face the range of climate change threats.

A better selection of important information about the climate and climate change, on droughts, desertification, fires and disasters, must be collected and made available. This encompasses the range of phenomena from those best known to those areas least understood, such as community management of agro-biodiversity taking into account both indigenous and scientific knowledge.

Farm insurance must be developed through participatory processes, as well as crop diversification strategies and the development or networking of farmers to markets structured to favour climate adaptation (notably through diversity in crops, cropping systems and animal husbandry).

### **Group 6: Contribution of Family Farming to food systems**

Participatory approaches and methods must be given preference: that is through peoples' and consumer organisations. The basic principle is recognition of all people as the principle actors determining the direction of their own lives: "without you, against you!"

There was insistence on multi-level, pluralistic participatory research including at the stage of formulation of research themes.

Promotion of sustainable food and agriculture systems is favourable to Family Farming, while other options can, to the contrary, work against it.

As regards consumption, research should be aimed at:

- local production
- high quality
- respecting the environment

Decentralisation of national food policies could favour Family Farming.

The Committee on World Food Security should promote such policies.

### **Group 7: Family Farming as one of the players in the future of agriculture**

The group organised deliberations around two concepts: actors and methodologies. Three priority questions areas for research were raised on:

- public policies on trade
- international markets and their functioning: contracts, public-private partnerships, impacts on Family Farming
- the functions of various actors and their power relations

As regards methodologies for research the group recommends the participatory approach.

Researchers and Farmers should be considered at the same level in the conception of agendas and methods for research. Research should be based on holistic systems of knowledge and qualitative approaches. Family Farming is a way of life, not merely a method of agricultural production.

In this context there is the need for democratised governance, including in research, which implies going further than before giving greater voice to the women and men of farmers' organisations, and for them to have the resources necessary to make this possible.

The public sector should be the first source of funding for research.

More shared responsibility in the sector is needed, as well as more accountability and at the same better co-ordination.