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Livestock dynamics and sustainable development of a French wet mountain territory: local stakeholders' points of view



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Background

The Livradois-Forez is a rural medium mountain territory in the center of France where livestock is a major activity, based on the breeding of ruminants and valorization of grassland and pastoral areas. As in many French mountain regions, considering globalization and local changes, the future of livestock is often questioned, in particular to assess how it contributes and could encourage the sustainable development of the territory.

Questions

How local stakeholders perceive the current and future role of livestock?
Do their perceptions similarly include the different dimensions of sustainable development?
Which models of agriculture are acknowledged ?



Method

In 2012, individual interviews were carried out with 28 persons involved at different stages of the livestock chain (production, up- and down-stream, territorial, agricultural and environmental).



Results

→ Various but complementary regards on the roles of livestock between economic, social and environmental aspects, even if each actor doesn't give the same importance to each of these dimensions of sustainability.

The economic role roughly shared by all	
Breeders	X
Other actors of production	X
Agricultural institutional actors	X
Environmental institutional actors	x
Territory institutional actors	X

⇒ **Economic role of livestock**
- Direct for breeders
- Indirect for local communities, other agricultural sectors and tourism.

The environmental role shared by all	
Breeders	X
Other actors of production	X
Agricultural institutional actors	X
Environmental institutional actors	X
Territory institutional actors	X

⇒ **Environnemental role**
- Maintaining open landscapes
- Maintaining biodiversity.

The social role less shared	
Breeders	X
Other actors of production	x
Agricultural institutional actors	X
Environmental institutional actors	
Territory institutional actors	X

⇒ **Social aspects**
- Maintaining active population, households, tourists
- Open landscapes participates to population's well-being.

→ Forms of livestock farming that could fulfill these roles are also very different according to the interviewees.

- **Scale of farm and production: divergences** of views between
 - a vision staking on high volumes of product with a little added-value;
 - a vision staking on little volumes with a high added-value.
- **Scale of sector and commercialization:** all agree on a need for more valorization of milk and meat products but opposition between advocates of 2 different ways:
 - through **industrialized sector**;
 - through **local sector**, especially short food supply chains.
- **Territory scale:** vision much **more shared**, in favor of
 - diversified livestock farming (large and small productions) and commercialization (outside and inside territory);
 - maintaining transformation tools (dairies, slaughterhouses);
 - restructuring land tenure.

Conclusions/Next steps

More than showing the ways livestock may participate to sustainable development of a territory, the results highlight the diversity of scales (farm, sector, food chain, territory) and the coexistence of models for local-actors involved in this development. These results point out the importance of stakeholders' coordination to promote sustainable development.

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