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The public policies in favor of livestock sectors in Corsica: Why to build an innovative technical system on pastoralism and how!

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Abstract – *The public policies in favour of the livestock sectors in Corsica are analyzed and discussed to identify how pastoralism is considered. Corsica, a Mediterranean island has a high cultural pastoral background. Nevertheless the representations of pastoralism by most of the actors are rather idealistic and nostalgic and it is not seen as a viable technical option. The public payments to support livestock are important but either they promote a productive model, either they are not connected to a clear strategy of pastoral development for rural areas. We suggest that a smart specialization strategy should be promoted and based on pastoralism. To be viable, this option should internalize its ecosystemic services. To achieve these objectives, it would be necessary also to rebuild an innovation system based on pastoralism, developing specific capacities and enhancing the local know – how and skills.*

INTRODUCTION

Pastoralism has a high historical and cultural background in Corsica as in many other Mediterranean countries. But, it is generally seen by most of the actors as an idealistic and nostalgic activity of the past (Seyni Salay A., 2011).

The vision of this paper is different. We have considered that it is pertinent and important to focus on pastoralism today seen as an innovative option. It has to face present challenges such as climate changing and preservation of bio-diversity. We remind that pastoralism is here defined as a livestock activity based on the use of rangelands and natural resources with few external inputs, enhancing local know – how and shepherds capacities (INRA, 2011). With this vision, renewed pastoral activities must not be seen as extensive systems but intensive ones in qualified labour including technical, economical, and commercial dimensions.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the public policies on livestock in Corsica and to characterize the representations of the actors and institutions regarding pastoralism. Through this double entrance, we have tried to know if these public policies in Corsica include pastoralist issues, how and with what impacts.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the main programming documents and planning edited by the public regional

and state institutions (C.T.C., 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012). Most of them are the regional translation of the main CAP programs developed in the first and second pillar (Dubeuf, 2013).

The first pillar of the CAP is mobilized at two levels; by the National Agency for Services and Payments for Single Farm Payments (DPU, in French); by the regional Agricultural Office (ODARC) for the suckling –cows producers (PMTVA), or the sheep (PO) and goats (PC) payments.

The second pillar is mobilized in the Regional Project for Rural Development in Corsica (PDRC) and the main analyzed subsidies are the compensatory allowance payments for areas with natural handicaps (ICHN) and Agri-Environmental Measures (MAE).

Specifically, to support specifically pastoralism, the Corsican region has proposed an accompanying pastoral scheme that was analyzed specifically as well as the pastoral action scheme developed by the Chamber of Agriculture.

The specific subsidies to organize the sectors and financed by the National Agency in charge of the Common market Organization are also analyzed.

Besides, several interviews with public regional or state officials and representatives of professional institutions aimed to identify what are their representations of pastoralism and specify the conditions to mobilize these subsidies.

THE RESULTS

The analysis has shown that there is a public policy for the livestock sector in Corsica in the sense of Muller (1990) and Gabas, (2003). The apparent dominant discourse and objectives of public action in Corsica are said to be in favor of pastoralism. The awareness of the stakeholders on its challenges is rather high and the people interviewed have a good reflexivity on the situation. But the operational impact of this policy on pastoralism is very low and it keeps a marginal and not really supported production model. Pastoralism today is not really posed as an economically viable option where we should invest. Operationally the main objectives of most of the actors are still to improve productivity and pastoralism is quoted as an image to send local products without necessarily pastoral roots. The high financial support dedicated to the livestock sector



and agriculture through the 1st and 2nd CAP pillar is mainly used to keep rural areas under financial perfusion not to support innovative projects. Regarding the 1st Pillar, the PMTVA¹ and sheep and goat payments were 922000 € for 124 cow keepers, 2074000 € for 198 breeders respectively (2011). For the second Pillar, the compensatory allowance payments for areas with natural handicaps (ICHN) were 10837389 € of which 52% were allocated to cattle keepers mainly with few outputs (2011). These data show that these payments which represent a large part of the income of the livestock sector are not connected to real economy and the administrative conditions do not ease the emergence of really innovative projects or to settle new young breeders. At the contrary, the Agri-Environmental Measures have mobilized 1 900 000 €/year between 2008 and 2013 for 419 beneficiaries and have improved 12335 ha.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Corsica is now facing an important agricultural and rural abandonment (Abso Conseil, 2010) and promoting these environmental services would be socially and economically more efficient than the present subsidies.

Although more professional and institutional actors are aware of these challenges than in the past, the pastoral option is not clearly defined and identified among other types of livestock production in the island. There is no identified and efficient, technical models associated to pastoralism in Corsica. The actors have said there is not mobilizing projects, but meanwhile the hard conditions to settle young farmers, to get an access to land is not in favour of a dynamic. Besides, due to the overvaluation of the milk price, one of the highest in the world (more than 1,2 €/l for sheep milk), the main objectives of the actors are still to improve productivity but they have no real strategy for pastoralism (ABSO CONSEIL, 2012). The strong pastoral image of animal production in Corsica is mainly dissociated from clear chosen technical choices. Twenty years ago, Le Carignon and al. (1994) had already shown the adverse effects of the public payments in favour of the suckling cattle but their proposals were not considered. In spite of a real lack of confidence between the actors and between the civil society and Institutions in an island plagued by clientelism and poor governance, the awareness on the limitations of the present system has increased significantly as the conditions for a better dialogue.

We suggest that the "smart specialization strategy", as enhanced by European Union and followed by the regional institutions could be the basis of a more efficient and innovative development strategy. Presently pastoralism cannot compete with the other types of animal production systems. To be competitive, it is necessary that pastoralism could internalize all the environmental risks and costs through development of eco systemic services like fire pre-

vention (Paoli *et al.*, 2010). These services are presently taken in charge by the public authorities. This orientation would meet the need for paying labour and create more jobs in rural areas without any economical perspectives.

It would mean that pastoral options (to use natural rangelands in mountains) could be developed simultaneously with non pastoral ones in low lands with some complementarities between the two systems. The challenge proposed here is to reconfigure completely the innovation system of animal production by a rebuilt and updated pastoralism according to the trans disciplinary design proposed by Klerk and al. (2012).

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¹ "Prime pour le maintien des troupeaux de Vaches allaitantes », Payment for the suckling cow herds