



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **Small farmers in an uncertain global context**

International conference, Université Paris Ouest, Nanterre, november 19-21st 2014

The “Small Farmers” research network ([www.paysanneries.hypotheses.org](http://www.paysanneries.hypotheses.org)) wishes to organize in 2014 an international conference on the issue of “Small farmers in an uncertain global context”.

The many economic and political upheavals that have punctuated the history of human societies for over two centuries, did not bring about the inescapable disappearance of farms, and particularly small ones, eventhough their eradication was announced by physiocratic, marxist and liberal approaches. It is true that their quantitative importance has fluctuated, and sometimes diminished, in an unequal way according to their location in the world. But we are bound to observe that this socioeconomic group has survived and adapted in most unfavourable contexts. Small farming has survived devastating economic crises, States' policies, but also wars which decimated its labour force. It has also survived systems (colonization, communism, capitalism, etc.) which disorganized its production methods. In many cases, small farmers have even built on these situations in order to insure the reproduction of their farmholds, or even the development thereof.

Considering this state of things, agronomists and Human and Social Sciences researchers have highlighted various typical aspects of this adaptability. It would rest on principles that are at once age-old (the anchoring in a territory, the maintenance of property, the defense of labour, contestation, a relative autonomy at financial, social and technical levels), as well as evolutive (reactive familial strategies, and variable integration into dominant economic systems).

During the last four decades, two major recompositions have taken place that lead us to question the future of small farming: on the one hand, the rise of ultraliberalism, further developing the commodification of common goods (land, water, forests, seeds), and on the other hand the build up of environmental problems which threatens the very survival of many farmers, particularly those that most lack capital.

These major changes in our societies, in the North as well as in the South, contribute to the construction of an uncertain world and seem to jeopardize the future of dominated social groups, among which, in the agricultural sector, small farmers occupy the first place. However, today as of yesterday, the multiple forms of resistance and social reproduction strategy testify to the acknowledgment of acute social misery as well as of the numerous cases of abandoned farming activity. These acknowledgements temper any unilateral, unifying and stereotyped vision of small farmers as accepting their fate or as being utterly marginalized. These dynamics of dispossession, reappropriation or integration into the political and economic activities are the major themes at the heart of this conference proposal. To this end, we will focus on four themes:

#### **Models of production**

- Production alternatives
- Struggles for autonomy
- Bio-resource management
- Resilience, adaptability

#### **Resources**

- Land grabbing, land speculation
- Overexploitation of resources, struggles over water, soil quality and soil exhaustion
- Climate change
- Accessibility of inputs

## **Mobilities**

- Urbanization
- Rural-urban migrations, international migrations
- Globalization

## **Politics of small farming**

- Struggles towards self-organization
- Types of cooperation
- Public policies

Paper proposals can fit in either of these four themes but can also aim at offering a trans-theme approach.

Our conference centers explicitly on small farming. It is a deliberate scientific choice, conceived in a multidisciplinary, multi-dimensional, comparative and critical perspective which does not neglect the necessary and unavoidable debate on the definition of « small farmers » according to time and space. It is also a political choice aiming at understanding this social group from the inside and through its situation in the social world. Lastly, it is choice addressing the ecological choice, in that the issue of the environment cannot be separated from the issues of the farmers nor from the issues of inequality of access and the use of resources. We would therefore like to insist that proposed contributions must be grounded in empirical field research. Moreover, the relevance of the methodological tools and criteria used to qualify small farming will be taken into account in the selection of proposals.

The conference will be held in French. However, contributions in English will be accepted.

### **Deadline for the submissions of proposals: march 15th 2014**

The title of the proposal, together with a summary and detailed sources, will be sent to the following addresses (michel.streith@yahoo.fr; saidi.raouf@free.fr; billaud@u-paris10.fr) and presented as follows:

- Title of the contribution, author's name and professional affiliation.
- A summary (max. 2000 signs) in Times New Roman 12 points, with keywords.
- The proposal's file will be named after the first author's surname (i.e. SMITH.doc).
- The email's subject must be "colloque GPP 2014".
- Any proposal that does not comply with the above requirements will be rejected.
- Each proposal will be assessed by two members of the scientific committee.

This conference will lead to publications, particularly in the *Small Farmers* collection (Éditions Publisud).

## **Schedule**

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| – Deadline for the reception of proposals                    | March 15th 2014 |
| – Return of acceptance decisions by the scientific committee | April 30th 2014 |

## **Organization committee**

Michel Streith, Mohamed Raouf Saïdi, Jean-Paul Billaud, Béatrice Moëllic, Faïza Mohamed-Saïd, Florence Daniel, Mathilde Fautras.

## **Conference Scientific committee**

Laurent Auclair (IRD), Jean-Paul Billaud (CNRS), Patrick Caron (CIRAD), Benoit Dedieu (INRA), Hocine Doufène (Université de Tizi Ouzou, Algérie), Mostafa Errahj (École nationale d'agriculture de Meknès, Maroc), Abdelhafid Hammouche (Université Lille 1), Marouane Lajili (Université de La Manouba, Tunisie), Frédéric Landy (Université Paris Ouest), Nicole Mathieu (CNRS), Pablo Fernando Luna (Université Paris Sorbonne), Agnès Roche (Université d'Auvergne), Jacques Rémy (INRA), Bruno Romagny (IRD), Bernard Roux (INRA), Mohamed Raouf Saïdi (LADYSS), Michel Streith (CNRS), Denise Van Dam (Université de Namur, Belgique).