



21st - 23rd September 2009,
Hawkwood College, Stroud GB

Community Connected Farms for Tomorrow:
New Ways of Land Access for Communities and Farmers

Conference Report

The overall objective of the day was:

- ◆ To initiate a Europe-wide research programme that grounds community connected farming and access to land within a robust evidence frame that is accessible to farmers, communities and politicians;
- ◆ To develop a suite of actions that will bring access to land for community connected farming to the top of the European political agenda; and
- ◆ To generate a pan-European community knowledge transfer and exchange programme to support the development of community connected farming and land access initiatives.

Contents

1.	Introduction & Summary.....	2
2.	Jan Douwe van der Ploeg.....	2
3.	Martin Large.....	4
4.	Hannes Lorenzen.....	5
5.	Mark Harrison.....	6
6.	Sjoerd Wartena.....	7
7.	Gavin Parker.....	7
8.	Luk van Krunkelsven.....	8
9.	Jane Lucy.....	9
10.	Neil Ravenscroft.....	9
11.	Work Groups.....	10
	a) towards 'Peasant Farming'	
	b) Politics & Spatial Planning	
	c) Land Access & Land Trusts	
12.	A Way Forwards - Strategy and Commitments.....	11
14.	Participants and Contacts.....	12

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Community Connected Farms for Tomorrow

With the food, credit, climate, carbon and peak oil crunches, communities across Europe are asking how they can feed themselves from local farms rather than continue to rely on the long and complex industrial food supply chains favoured by the supermarket system. New forms of consumer/producer relationships are emerging, characterised by localism, seasonality, short supply chains and the sharing of risk between producers and consumers. While these relationships vary across Europe, they are all sowing the seeds for a shift away from industrial agribusiness to “community connected farms” for tomorrow. Yet, despite their importance, community connected farms face two major hurdles:

Firstly, there is limited, insecure and expensive land access, either for rent or purchase, as many producer/consumer schemes are near towns and ‘hope’ development value is high.

Secondly, there is a limited supply of young farmers who have both sustainable farming skills, such as trained organic and biodynamic know how, and the co-operative business skills needed to run community connected enterprises. The more the need for post peak oil farming is recognised, the more the profession of sustainable organic farming needs reinventing.

These three days were dedicated to:

- ◆ exchanging information about national situations, practical approaches and “success stories” in order to understand them in a European context;
- ◆ strengthening personal links between European ‘access to land’ activists and researchers, and to establish contacts to ethical banking institutions that are supporting community connected farming initiatives;
- ◆ discussing the need for and agreeing on the next steps towards continuous practical exchanges on a national and international level; placing ‘community connected farms’ on the European political agenda; formulating supportive joint research proposals; and organising a larger public conference for all those involved in community connected farming.



Jan Douwe van der Ploeg
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Jan Douwe van der Ploeg is Chair of Rural Sociology at Wageningen University and author of many publications including the controversial book 'The Virtual Farmer'. He is chief editor of the Dutch series Studies van Landbouw en Samenleving and of the English language collection European Perspectives on Rural Development published by Van Gorcum in Assen, the Netherlands.

Jan Douwe began his presentation outlining the Dutch system of 'Rural Estates' - socialised forms of land ownership governed by specific social and cultural rules. There are thousands of Rural Estates in the Netherlands, over three quarters of which are larger than 600 hectares.

Rural Estates are essentially capital converted in conservation - Social Capital which cannot be bought or sold. The dedication of the land is decided and controlled by a specific group and follows specific objectives.

The main benefits of Rural Estates are:

- ◆ **easy access** for young farmers to enter into tenancy
- ◆ **low financial burden** through bypassing the costs related to the acquisition of land
- ◆ **providing services for the wider community.** For example, one of the oldest estates was

originally set up to support orphans during the war

- ◆ **co-ordinated management** - estates comprising many farms managed together, thereby relieving the burden of 'going solo'
- ◆ their **close vicinity of towns**, thus provided with a captive market and proximity of infrastructure

All of these benefits contribute directly to the creation of **Nested Markets** - a segment of the wider market which is governed by specific social and cultural rules and which is defined by an attractiveness that 'Big Market' can't provide. **Nested Markets** are a huge stimulus for local economy and offer escape from 'Food Empires' which control and drain without contributing to actual production - merely appropriating value and monopolising control. **Nested Markets become a line of defence!**

There are three main forms of farming in Jan Douwe's view: **Capitalist, Entrepreneurial and Peasant**. We are now witnessing the demise of the former - 'diesel farming' where all the work is done by labourers and machinery. The second is dependent on markets for its' survival. It is therefore the third - Peasant Farming - that Jan Douwe views to be the farming of the future. Here the farmer has total autonomy, relying only on his own work and his own resources. Land is the key to the success of peasant farming. Without ownership of land, it is impossible. Being built on ecological capital, peasant farming has an inbuilt need to be sustainable. It is characterised by being robust, self-generated, resistant, continuous, adapting, responding. It is an elegant form of farming.

The 'peasant condition' is not just a phenomenon of the past or a peripheral activity. 80% of farmers worldwide operate as peasants! Jan Douwe describes peasant farming as a 'response to 'hostile environment' - that through widespread dependency relationships and marginalisation, the peasant farmer is forced to become self reliant, to struggle for autonomy and progress because *no one else* will secure their survival! Through creating a direct relationship with markets, the peasant farmer can survive.

“Resistance is no longer a form of reaction but a form of production and action [...]. Resistance is no longer one of factory workers; it is a completely new resistance based on innovativeness [...] and on autonomous co-operation between producing [and consuming] subjects. It is the capacity to develop new, constitutive potentialities that go beyond reigning forms of domination” (Negri, 2006: 54).

So in summary, the survival of peasant farming depends on the development of multi-functionality, pluri-activity, flexibility - on creatively shaping multiple facets to the traditional notion of 'the farm' through diverse products and services. Much of this will often be counter-regulatory, but by virtue of their attractiveness and necessity, also beyond the enforcement of law.

The main aims of peasant farming must be to reduce monetary expense and reground agriculture upon nature and sustainability, enhancing bio-diversity and nurturing new forms of local co-operation.

So key questions for the future of peasant farming are:

- ◆ How can we use capital without a Trojan Horse?
- ◆ How can we overcome barriers to land?
- ◆ How can peasant farmers become 'pluri-active'?
- ◆ How can you defend a Nested Market?

Using the Netherlands as an example, agricultural land in the Netherlands is one third tenancy and two thirds directly owned through intra-generational agreements. 'Special arrangements' save nearly 1 billion Euros, which provides an institutional defence: entering into well-cared for land is attractive to insurance companies and investors because of the long term value increase and development of new services. Capital is thus converted into long-term security.

Emerging from this are some basic requirements for a successful way forward. The first is the importance of **networking**, and the emerging need to connect pension funds, banks, consumers,

regional authorities and young farmers together. We need to develop the capacity to tie these elements together, perhaps along the lines of the model that works for conservation - the Dutch system of Rural Estates, as previously discussed.

We now need to collate convincing examples of new models of land ownership, stewardship and management in order to develop solutions to which policy can respond. We need to identify global issues to offer assistance to policy makers. Change has to emerge from both grassroots and top-down.

In the past we offered global solutions to local problems.

Action: NOW we must address global problems with local solutions.



Martin Large
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Martin Large is a facilitator, community land trust enabler, publisher (Hawthorn Press) and Chair of Stroud Common Wealth Co Ltd. He works in organisational and individual development with government, civil society and business, and chairs the CLT National Demonstration Project.

Martin began his presentation by stating the fact that there are at least 800 Guerilla Gardens in New York, which is evidence of promising practice emerging to mitigate the other worrying fact that we are seven meals away from disaster!! In his view, the EU has been captured by the Corporations and is not interested in developing policies for land and communities.

So, what is 'The Global Land Grab'? This began with the Enclosures in Britain in the 18th Century and was a Silent Theft, prompting the well known saying - "Who stole the goose from the common? Who stole the common from the goose?"

Since the 1970's the 'Empire' has been trying to control land and the world's food. Capitalism has become a process of manipulated bubbles and bursts to facilitate the grabbing of land. The 'House of LandLords' acts to dispossess land and assist the accumulation and concentration of land and wealth.

ENCLOSURE is happening even more now than it was then, through privatisation, commodification, liberalisation, dispossession, and the volatile fragility of prices. There is no grand overview nor audit of these enclosures, and their very existence forces 'illegal' behaviour, such as seed-saving.

Land is a right like air, language & culture... it is NOT an economy. Neo-liberal economists don't like this fact, that the market is a fine place for chairs and tables to be bought and sold, but that land simply cannot be treated in this way.

STEWARDSHIP of land is the only way of protecting land for future generations, just as the intellectual COMMONS in the USA has become protected from the likes of Bill Gates wanting to own copyright on his technological developments. We can always improve the 'intellectual commons' but cannot take benefit from it. The general public licence of Linux, Community Supported Agriculture schemes, County Council owned land and Community Land Trusts are good examples of emerging protection of our commons.

There are self-regulating systems for managing the commons (If you graze too many sheep, they will come in the garden), just as there are self-regulating systems for managing the market (Fair Trade, Direct Trade, Equitable Exchange...)

So is there a positive Land Grab to enable small farmers to grow? What is 'The Good Thing'? What are the right reasons for accessing land?

One obvious area to begin is in conservation. Nature preservers need to take on sustainable farming, just as the National Trust have begun to do.

Another is research. Michael Merkle's research on land policies and practices elsewhere (particularly Africa) is already a useful resource and could inform and inspire research closer to home. We

need research in Europe. Such research could then emphasise existing good policy, such as the law in Denmark that one cannot be an absentee farmer. A good body of European research would also help us to articulate the case for Community Supported Agriculture, Nested Agriculture, small scale farming... THROUGH EXAMPLES. Action.

Follow Michelle Obama's lead - the first person to dig up the White House lawn since Mrs Roosevelt...



Hannes Lorenzen
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Hannes Lorenzen is adviser to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament. As such, he is an expert in European agriculture and rural development policies. He is the co-founder of Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN) and various European rural development networks (European Network of Experiences in Sustainable Development (ENESD); Forum Synergies; Partnership for Rural Europe (PREPARE), of which he is currently chairman.

Hannes began by offering us an overview of the political scene in order to see the possibilities and opportunities ahead:

First the CAP - Common Agricultural Policy. After World War Two, CAP became the basis for making Europe capable of producing enough food for everyone. It also created the possibility of a new, growing industry to create markets for machinery & chemicals and to exploit land and animals most effectively. Its' aim is to increase productivity with NO LIMITS, maintaining a permanent over-supply to keep prices down. At this stage there was no mention of 'environment' nor of 'biodiversity'.

The CAP Reform of 1992 recognised the 'environmental problem' in terms of soil and money use, yet represented no big shift towards real change. It continued to advocate subsidies linked to production.

Agenda 2000 was the point at which EU agriculture became competitive on the Global Market and resulted in Global Free Trade Agreements. Subsidies came into force as compensation for possible losses based on historical yields and surface which were direct payments de-coupled from production thus distorting markets and creating no incentive to produce or diversify. The focus was now on farms potentially EXPORT oriented.

The CAP has two 'pillars'. The funds for the 1st pillar (comprising 90% of the total budget) are for 'Set-aside' subsidies. The funds for the 2nd Pillar (10% of the total) are modulated towards Rural Development [to create infrastructure & support for multi-functional agriculture]. This severe imbalance of funding maintains the latter as the exception to rule of liberalisation.

Yet one fact remains: events like the 'milk crisis' drive everyone into ruin apart from peasant farmers in nested markets.

In the 2006 CAP proposal, 'Soil Protection' [urgent measures requiring member states to describe and publish erosion, pollution, loss of humus] was blocked by the major EU countries (GB, D, F) with only the small countries in favour. This highlighted a real fear of plummeting value as a result of transparent practice.

The Hygiene Directive of the 2006 amendments [which was essentially the 'empire' wanting control] has destroyed small infrastructure. And yet there is the common misunderstanding that one is actually allowed NOT to employ this directive if one's products are purely for local consumption (ie: they have a short shelf life). Industry makes its own law, and there are many different interests diving off EU law. It is important to examine in detail what is actual law and what is mere interpretation of it.

There will be a 'health check' of the CAP reform, a mid-term review which will assess and evaluate the outlook. There will be lots of policy discussions and a new commissioner is about to be selected, which could put new perspective on policies. The main question will be Scrap or Reform CAP? Replace

it with Rural Sustainability?

The Commission has named a number of challenges - Climate Change, Biodiversity, Ground Water, Soil Fertility and Renewable Energy. These challenges are still 'extras' and to be tackled using 2nd Pillar monies with no structure for implementation, but it is crucial that the general public give more weight towards recognising these issues.

Some other real challenges ahead lie with the competition for land between regional [urban] and rural development - COHESION [togetherness] versus CONCENTRATION [Urban Society]. Also 'Spatial Development' [e.g. 'Green Belt'] has no clue of agriculture. The tension between functioning sustainable markets and access to outside Industries will continue.

Action: We must now develop a clear proposal with detailed research to present in 1½ year's time at the EU CAP reform.



Mark Harrison
www.stroudcommunityagriculture.org



Stroud Community Agriculture (SCA) is a new type of sustainable farming. Built on cooperation and mutual support the risks and rewards of farming are shared between the farmers and consumers. The consumers commit themselves to supporting the farm and providing a fair income for the farmers. The farmers can then develop the health and fertility of the farm, its wildlife and environment. All the produce from the farm is shared between the supporting consumers or sold locally if there is a surplus.

Mark Harrison grows and manages the vegetable shares for members of SCA. A second farmer, Sam Hardiman, is employed to manage the livestock and assist in the management of the land at the two sites of SCA. Their wages are secured by the monthly subscriptions of SCA's member group (approximately 190 people) who in turn receive a bag of seasonal vegetables every week of the year.

The farm endeavours to supply the majority of the shares from its' land, but will buy in from local farms (where possible) to plug the 'hungry gap'.

Mark gave us a tour of the packing shed which works on an honesty basis: each member is given the combination of the door lock and can let themselves in at any time during their given collection days (Tues-Fri for one group and Fri-Tues for the other, with some shares being delivered to a central pick up point in town). They are then instructed by notes on the board how much of each item to take, which they then weigh accordingly. There is also the possibility to purchase meat, eggs and extra veg via a 'shop' system that requires you to note your purchases into a book and periodically leave a cheque for the total.

We were then taken around the polytunnels and field crops where the four year rotation system was explained. This is to ensure that maximum soil fertility is retained and that no part of the growing land is over worked. In effect this amounts to three of the four rotation areas being productive each year, with the fourth being laid, for example, to clover.

SCA has been running successfully for nearly eight years and is repeatedly approached for tours, advice and support for growing initiatives.

One of the challenges for SCA is a small annual fallout in membership. Although the balance is mostly redressed by new membership, the problem lies primarily in a lack of understanding of how to work with seasonal vegetables all year round. Many members are actively engaged, attending the monthly farm days and utilising at least one full share a week; others are members in order to support a good idea; and then there are those who are willing to give it a go, but can easily be put off by unfamiliar

or 'boring' produce.

This is an educational gap that is evident across the food sector in the UK, and is a result of the great deskilling that has occurred over the last decades.

Action: Skills exchange; educational food programmes for schools; community kitchens; seasonal cookery books;



Sjoerd Wartena
www.terredeliens.org

Sjoerd Wartena lives in southern France and is 'président de l'association Terre de liens' - a French innovative fund raising organisation that buys land and property to support local and sustainable farming initiatives.

Sjoerd began with a reality check: Peasantry is weak, diversified, and has low political impact.

Who will, at this present time, consider peasants as a REAL ALTERNATIVE?

WE MUST BE MORE ORGANISED!! We must prove that we have young people willing to engage in peasant farming. [Incidentally, it is not easy to find folk capable of doing it]. We must also be part of a wider movement for change. Community Supported Agriculture and similar ventures are only worth it in a wider context as tools in the larger debate.

Ideas without actions are worthless, as are actions without ideas & strategies.

In asking the question - what are the purposes of us seeking commonalities in Land Access issues and in studying examples of good practice? - the resounding answer is: to create counter-balance by connecting together across Europe. This could be assisted by getting the likes of Via Campesina & KOPA on our side. Through this networking we can develop arguments for COHESION and develop good relationships with allies in the system

We must also take up opportunities like the 'LEADER Programme' to assist in the creation of spaces for alternatives which often function in less favoured, marginalised areas.

Action: We must develop strategies for local alternatives now, so that we are ready for the 'Crisis Opportunity'.



Gavin Parker
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Gavin Parker is Professor of Planning Studies at Henley University of Reading. He is also a chartered planner and fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Gavin has specialised in countryside policy issues and has a strong interest in wider changes and policy instruments around the topics of citizenship and governance that spans the urban and rural divide.

Gavin focused his presentation today on the Japanese system of Teikei.

The average Japanese farm size is 1.5 hectares. There is therefore a natural tendency for co-operation and networking. Teikei has emerged from this context, and is the originating model for Community Supported Agriculture.

The main features of Teikei are:

- ◆ Human relationships between producers & consumers;
- ◆ Direct sourcing of foods (this idea is now growing in interest as a reaction to food scares)
- ◆ Enduring link between farmers through collaboration and cooperation
- ◆ Shareholders receive crop share
- ◆ Farmers ARE the committee, maintaining a soft relationship with consumers
- ◆ An annual meeting decides policy, practice, crops; etc.
- ◆ An intermediary institution as host (for example a nursery school) which immediately provides a committed group of consumers and a regular through-put of new blood.

This last point is a useful model where producers and consumers are connected by a Social Capital Institution. Drawing from his research, Gavin's advice would be to use pre-existing institutions and networks (rather than attempting to create a new one) such as work places, factories, local companies, schools, public services... These institutions draw people in with ready-made connections.

Gavin's Bright Idea is to link agriculture to the parish system - piggy-back Parish Council to enable Community Led Planning.

Action: Link your ideas to existing forms of governance.



Luk van Krunkelsven
www.wervel.be

Luk van Krunkelsven is a member of the Wervel Group which was founded in 1993 by farmers, consumers, 3rd world initiatives and environmentalists as a think tank and consulting agency. Working only in the Flemish part of Belgium, the group is concerned about sustainable land use and 3rd world development issues, with strong connections to Brazil.

Luk introduced a Film Documentary DVD that Wervel have produced entitled 'Agroforesterie - produire autrement' [AGROOF production, www.agroof.net] - A portrait of four agroforestry pioneers covering traditional practices and new experiences, and examining the questions of production, cost-efficiency & the environment.

Agroforestry is an integrated approach of using the interactive benefits from combining trees and shrubs with crops and/or livestock. It combines agricultural and forestry technologies to create more diverse, productive, profitable, healthy and sustainable land-use systems. [Wikipedia]

The benefits of Agroforestry are:

- ◆ three dimensional plant relationships
- ◆ hedges; trees in fields; crops around trees; [diversity & multi-functionality]
- ◆ trees shade & protect crops
- ◆ trees pump up soil nutrients to the crops
- ◆ growth of trees in Agroforestry is proven to be healthier & more vital than in conventional forestry

An example of the beneficial results of agroforestry comes from Restinclières, an agroforestry farm in Southern France of 200 hectares: In a walnut-wheat agroforestry system, natural enemies of wheat

aphids (ladybirds, hover flies, parasitoid wasps) may be favoured by the habitats secured by the trees and the grassed row.

Jane Lucy
www.landshare.net

Jane Lucy is the producer of Landshare (www.channel4.com/landshare), a new initiative from Channel 4, River Cottage and Keo Digital that connects people who want to grow their own fruit and vegetables to space where they can grow it. It has attracted registrations in every postcode area across the UK, totalling almost 40,000. Jane's background includes having produced Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's award winning 'Chicken Out' campaign. The campaign currently has more than a third of UK Ministers of Parliament signed up to an Early Day Motion in support of clearer labelling (www.chickenout.tv). In addition to her television and digital media experience, Jane is a qualified lawyer.

Landshare is all about sharing land, resources and ideas. Landshare connects land owners with growers, and already has over 40,000 diverse registered users, demonstrating the huge demand for land in this country. Many users of Landshare form a common agreement of land in exchange for a percentage of produce, or agreements based on nominal tenancy fees. Landshare is in the process of developing standard agreements and guidelines to assist good practice and smooth running of the venture.

Jane's biggest interest with this project is the use of the internet to build communities whilst tackling social issues. Landshare has become a practical way of exploring ethical and sustainable food issues.



Neil Ravenscroft
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Neil Ravenscroft is professor of Land Economy at the University of Brighton Chelsea School. He specialises in contract research into sport, recreation and the environment. Neil has spoken and published widely on aspects of leisure and culture, and is an editorial board member Leisure Studies, a leading international journal in his field of study. In addition to his research, he is a member of the management group of Tablehurst Farm, a community-owned biodynamic farm in East Sussex, and a governor of Plumpton College.

Neil's question for us is: how do we move towards Community Centred Farming from where we are now? The answers are many, namely that we need to:

- ◆ involve schools and institutions
- ◆ support and encourage the letting of land
- ◆ support and encourage farmers to take on land
- ◆ negotiate with the community
- ◆ develop questions and suggestions for an EU approach on sustainable production and community [Sustainability WILL be on EU agenda in 2013]
- ◆ assemble people with knowledge to engage in participatory research

- ◆ unearth local knowledge and new examples
- ◆ promote integration into a new kind of land management.
- ◆ bring ALL parallel interest groups TOGETHER (those with a common base of research and lifestyle)
- ◆ SIMPLIFY the MESSAGE
- ◆ Read: In Defence of Food Michael Pollen: Eat Food; Eat Not Too Much; Eat Mostly Plants;

We don't yet have the support or understanding of multi-functionality (which is the essence of sustainability). The mainstream research agenda is focused on bio-technology aiming for higher production, quicker outputs, bigger scale and more of everything. The 'Other side' is getting ready to occupy the 'Sustainability' agenda with low-tillage and biotechnology to make sure alternatives don't get in.

The IAASTD report (see short version) gives a clear recommendation that women must be on the top level of development. It also emphasises sustainable agriculture, but Monsanto and others dropped out last minute.

Action: How do we make our ideas more visible?

WORKGROUPS

A
[Transition Towards]
'Peasant Farming'

B
Politics &
Spatial Planning

C
Land Access &
Land Trusts

Following these presentations, our next task was to divide into workgroups to discuss three key themes that contribute towards building *Community Connected Farms for Tomorrow*: the notion of 'peasant farming'; the challenge of politics and spatial planning; and the issue of land access with land trusts as a guiding example of what can really work.

Group A identified that the biggest challenge that family farming faces is access to finance. The action to be undertaken is to research into solutions that can build and strengthen family farming today. More notes to be added here by a member of the group.

Group B emerged with a draft letter to all Green Banks, trusts and Foundations to request support, potential collaboration and funding. This letter needs to begin with a framework that captures the goals along with a very clear budget. It must outline objectives, evaluate outcomes and explain why this work is so necessary. It must present an overview of the finances of the group.

The executive summary must set the global context for this project, namely our increasingly urban society. It must call for us all to reconsider and repair the system and to revive and nurture hidden treasures of EU traditions.

In outlining the notion of *Community Connected Farming for Tomorrow*, it must be explained that family farms survive because they engage with diverse markets, have low input costs and are therefore the perfect partners for ensuring food security through the development of e.g. green belts around cities.

The practical benefits to banks and foundations must also be spelled out, highlighting the long term security for investment.

An analysis of the soil situation must also be included, along with case studies of success stories (models that work). These must refer to a database with an inventory of experiences to exemplify the mass movement (clearly NOT deviations).

Action: Forum Synergies has the success story form and database. We need ambassadors for each country and financial support.

There could already be associative and financial support from Universities [Reading; Wageningen;].

Group C defined Land Trusts as a form of LAND OWNERSHIP where a legal body (with a variety of legal entities) secures COMMONS for public ownership. Land Trusts are about Trusteeship [Different to family trusts] and are a safe public ownership mechanism. Public land trusteeship is like a long term lease, as opposed to a sale, and preserves the integrity of the Land.

In the USA there are conservation easements - deed restrictions placed on land held by Land Trusts, to protect conservation values of the property.

The Land Trust Research Agenda is to evaluate how well land designation, 'easements' and excluded uses work to secure common benefits and to examine ways of bringing pieces of land together through long lease, purchase, easements, planning gain, legacies, 'arondissement' - land consolidation with many owners. A variety of lease models need to be made available to increase access.

Our challenge is how to decommodify Land? To encourage the public perception of land as a bundle of rights as opposed to a commodity. Could we conceive of a body to protect land and nature as common good - something to act UNESCO does for Landscape? Above all, we must highlight wherever possible the social, cultural and economic benefits of CSA's, Trusteeship, Leasing, CLT's, Commons... Civil Society MUST put pressure on Statutory Sector.

We create the road as we travel...

Lithuania as a Case Study:

Lithuania has a fragmented situation which needs sorting from top down. Therefore, a first action would be to create a network group or Think Tank of financiers, lawyers and government officials to develop a strategy. There must be a clear idea of the experiments and research needed.

Look at France [via Terre de Liens] for examples of collective ownership of series of plots.

Be wary of "collective" associations - develop a new language of association.

Connect to Moldova via Chris Mann. Also Molly Scott Cato (Stroud's very own Green Economist and published author, economics advisor to the Green Party and also a director of Stroud Common Wealth) has a colleague, Rebecca, who lectures in economics in Bratislava (write to molly@gaianeconomics.org for more info). Jan Douwe also has a Fresian contact.

A WAY FORWARDS

Develop US-EU vision of Community Connected Farming through:

- 1) Research Proposal to be led by Nick & Gavin, and to be circulated for feedback. This needs to identify the barriers to community connected farming and to unearth examples of good practice. It must lead to propositions to take us forward with a clear vision.
- 2) We need a coordinator with a clear mandate to take leadership and action in drawing together Europe-wide success stories.
- 3) We need to identify an advisory and sponsoring group. We will invite funders to develop the shape of the proposal and Forum Synergies can act as fund receiver.
- 4) Policy paper to be led by Hannes Lorenzen. This must include a link to the soil directive and signal a direct relationship between the loss of biodiversity and the decline of peasant farming. It must also engage with the established topics of Climate Change, Biodiversity, Ground Water, Soil Fertility and Renewable Energy. This policy paper must focus on regions and countries, rather than too much emphasis on Brussels.
- 5) Practical Exchange - Stroud Communiversity 2010. Likely to be in the summer of 2010, Stroud Communiversity offers the opportunity to learn from a range of innovative land, food,

farming, sustainability, social enterprise and housing projects in the Stroud area. See www.stroudcommonwealth.org.uk for more information.

- 6) A Large Conference - an event to create a VISION of economically viable & profitable sustainability, and to include a cross section of countries from the EU.

Timeline:

2009: inventory; compile existing studies (min. 6 countries - 3 east, 3 west)

2010: contact allies; gain support for deeper study. (€60,000-100,000); practical exchange;

2011: Evaluation; MANIFESTO; Public Visibility; [Large Conference];

Database sources - www.D-P-H.info; [fondation pour le progres de l'homme \(www.fph.ch\)](http://fondation.pour.le.progres.de.lhomme.fr); www.Kauri.be, "The Nature Conservancy" (www.nature.org),

Involvement MUST lead to Result. So keep informed...

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