

FOR THE DEFENCE OF COMMON GOODS

LAND

Democratic control
for access to land



Guide for municipalities



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Acknowledgements

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“The times of serfdom have passed”

Crit Remença. In June 2013, the International Committee of the Memory of the World Programme agreed to register the 1448 *Llibre del Sindicat Remença* (Peasant Syndicate Book) in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

Its registration is based on the fact that the claims of the peasant serfs (*remences*), as evidenced by the 1448 Peasant Syndicate Book, forced, for the first time in Europe, serfdom to be officially abolished in 1486 by the Guadalupe Arbitral Ruling.

Introduction

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to determine the agricultural and food policies that affect them: to have the right and access to land, natural resources, to be able to eat healthily with GMO-free foods, to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade with the aim of achieving sustainable development and ensuring food security.

One of the most significant challenges of territorial policy in the near future will be the return to the land after more than a century of rural exodus. On the one hand, there is the need for a more balanced distribution of the population throughout the territory, although this is not a question of destroying large urban agglomerations, which are largely an irreversible phenomenon (and will require changes in order to improve the common existence of humans and nature, in line with the old socialist motto of “overcoming the divorce between the countryside and the city”). On the other hand, all kinds of actions must be

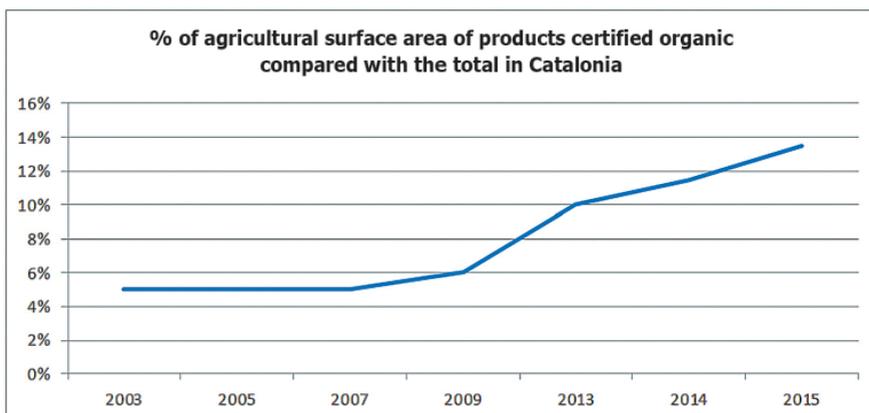


encouraged to improve life in rural areas and facilitate the agricultural and livestock economy. The economic crisis can be an opportunity when the city is no longer that centre of attraction where it was (or seemed) easy to find work and opportunities to thrive. Mass unemployment can push many people of all ages to look for opportunities in agriculture and livestock - and in industrial and service activities induced by more dynamic agricultural economies; but this will hardly acquire the volume that would be desirable if there are no public policies for the improvement of the rural environment and the promotion of medium-sized towns and cities. Progress in communications today makes it possible to break that rural isolation that did so much to push millions of people into emigrating to cities.

Peasant farming communities are essential for articulating healthy production systems that contribute to the promotion of a new culture of the territory. In this sense, food is a direct act of agricultural policy, since depending on what we put in our shopping basket, we will

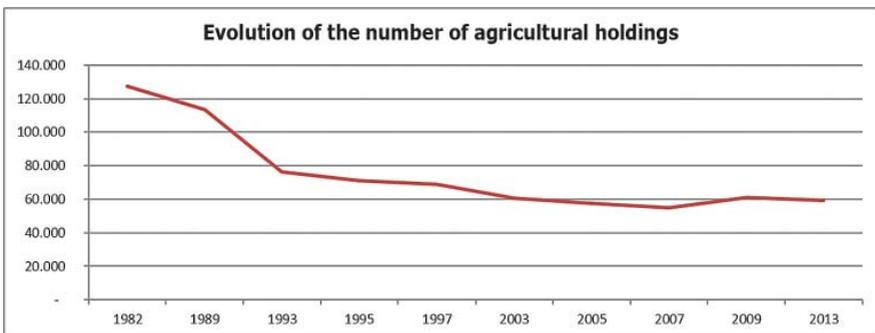
be collaborating and supporting a certain agri-food model. The concepts of modern farming and committed cuisine that are emerging on the Catalan playing field are aimed at a paradigm shift towards an agrosocial model, based on values such as proximity, cooperation or commitment, and local communities are the key players in being the first step of the change they desire for the rest of the world.

The Catalan primary sector accounts for 0.99% of GDP, according to 2014 data from the County Economic Yearbook of Catalunya Caixa, a significance that in economic terms could be considered ridiculous and negligible. As for the employed people, the data is of the same relevance. In 2015, only 1.51% of the employed population were engaged in farming, despite food being the main industry for the Catalan economy in terms of sales and jobs. Food accounts for 14.57% of Catalonia's exports and 16.62% of the manufacturing industries, with an employment rate of 17.40%. The data shows that Catalonia is devoted to services, an industry that represents 73.33% of GDP and 73.46% of employment in our country.



Beyond the data, farming plays a strategic role in a post-industrial, technological, and modern society, both to preserve the territorial, environmental, and social balance, and to provide healthy food to the nearby population.

One of the main challenges facing the agricultural industry in post-industrial societies is the lack of generational handover of family farms. The latest data from the 2009 agricultural census shows that the replacement rate is only 7.7 holders under the age of 35 for every 100 people aged 55 or over. This figure has fallen by 41% compared to 1999 (*Viure, 2015*). The study argues that the main cause of the decline in the rate is the lack of family relief on traditional farms. The reasons why people born into a farming family do not continue with agricultural activity are diverse, although the most common are usually related to the young person's motivations or due to the economic viability of the business.



This trend contrasts with a new phenomenon involving the emergence of a new generation of people who, without having direct agricultural origins, are joining the agricultural sector with innovative models linked to the values of quality, proximity, and respect.



This new phenomenon is emerging in Catalonia and many other countries in the world as a response, on the one hand, to the need for generational change, and on the other, to the demand for a change of model in the agricultural and food systems. This newcomer farming community has different profiles from the traditional one, both in terms of agricultural practices and attitudes towards the main challenges linked to land and food production. New entrants show paradigm shift indicators, which allows us to be optimistic in identifying new models that introduce novelties

into some traditional closed systems. This profile of new farmers often involves problems in terms of access to land and this needs to be made easier for them.

One of the instruments for defending access to land understood as the conservation of farming and agrodiversity is the **Food Charter**. This, among other principles, guarantees the balance between people, the territory, and the planet, as well as the re-connection between urban and rural areas and a comprehensive vision of the food system.

Chapter 1

Healthy municipalities with farmers

Focus area 1.1 Urbanism that preserves agricultural land.

Urban planning is vital for the conservation of agricultural soils or plains. We have too often seen how the best soils (from an edaphological point of view) are lost when they have been reclassified for urbanisation. For this reason, the municipalities must analyse and catalogue the natural value of the soils in their area, in order to discover how valuable their conservation is and then, if necessary, make sure they are preserved in urban planning. It is also necessary to introduce measures to prevent the abandonment of farming life while maintaining *farming community trades in farming community homes*.

Interventionist measures are needed to limit, at least partially, the transformation of farmhouses into second homes or rural tourism locations, and make access to farmland affordable for those who want to work as farmers.

Agricultural spaces and parks

There is the possibility of creating municipal or joint agricultural parks that aim to preserve the territory and ensure the continuity of agricultural and livestock activity.

Focus area 1.2 Land Bank

A land bank can be created and strengthened by the local communities. This land bank would be provided with abandoned farms or municipal ones in order to encourage young people with a viable agro-ecological project to settle there. This land bank would place special emphasis on mountain land, which is difficult to work on but of great interest for the landscape and fire prevention.

Land banks can be managed by the city council itself or by transferring rights to public cooperatives which in turn can articulate assignments of use to producers. Assignments of use must last at least 10 years in order to make the operation viable.

Focus area 1.3 Farmers' market

Promote farmers' markets in the town and neighbourhood as spac-

es for direct sales. It needs to be the farmers themselves who sell their seasonal products, that are fresh, local, more socially, and environmentally fair, and also healthier.



Focus area 1.4 Local cooperatives

From the local communities, cooperatives of small agroecological producers can be promoted in order to be able to share experiences, face challenges together, receive education, market the products, etc.

Also, this can provide premises to establish regular points of sale of local products, managed by the same producers.

Focus area 1.5 Mountain agriculture and livestock

Promoting and enhancing livestock and agriculture in mountain areas to curb forest mass is a benefit as an ecosystem service. Areas that have been lost due to being unprofitable generate less biodiversity, more risks, and lose the mosaic landscape that is so characteristic of most Catalan municipalities.

It is necessary to reverse the loss of agro-livestock biodiversity in the mountain counties. Currently, cattle farms hegemonically take advantage of the Pyrenean pastures. Measures should be promoted to facilitate the access of shepherds and their flocks of sheep and goats to pastures; some of which allow the mixed use of sheep, goats, cattle, horses.



Focus area 1.6 Network of local facilities

From the municipalities, it is necessary to promote a network of local facilities that are necessary for the producers. The equipment shouldn't be far from them, and it would be even better if it was in the same county. (Slaughterhouses, workshops, points of sale, or other forms of distribution of the local products, workshops, etc.).

Focus area 1.7 Training and schooling of farmers

The training and retraining of the farming community should make it possible to move towards recovering farming and favouring a new agroecological model. It should involve allowing new generations who do not come from a farming family to make it a life project.

Focus area 1.8 Feminisation of the farming community

The masculinisation of the farming community acerbates the burden on women, who, by socio-cultural imperative, are the ones who bear the responsibility for reproductive tasks. In this context of greater family pressure, due to the importance of dependency and the scarcity of quality jobs, gender inequalities generate a more hostile environment for the vital development of women than in urban areas. For this reason, it is necessary to pay special attention to the projects promoted by the municipalities and to incorporate this indicator when selecting them to access the land bank, cooperatives, etc.

Focus area 1.9 Environmental control

Taxes can be established by the town councils to promote agroecological products and farmers working in mountain areas. Discounts on property taxes, purchase of farms if the agricultural activity is maintained, waste activities, etc.

Chapter 2

Citizen participation and transparency

Focus area 2.1 Local farming community observatory. Transparency and communication of data from agricultural areas

The basis of citizen participation is to provide the data obtained transparently and understandably. In the farming community and from the local or county councils, the processing and dissemination to all citizens of data regarding available land, agroecological projects, farmhouses, or how the aid of the Common Agricultural Policy is distributed locally, etc. can be encouraged. This data will be used to discuss in participation boards which is the best agricultural and livestock policy in terms of preserving the farming community and the territory.

This observatory can be built by unions, entities, and people from the same local area dedicated to promoting transparency and citizen participation regarding the farming community. The aim is for the public to be able to debate on the state of the farming community and the access to land in the local area itself and how the government is accountable for the actions taken. It must also be a space where any citizen can ask about the subject and obtain information from it.



Focus area 2.2 Participation boards

The participation boards in agriculture have a fundamental purpose: to address challenges and socio-ecological problems that exist in the field of agriculture and livestock in the local area and that are of interest for both the citizenship and the public administrations

involved. But, they are also born with the desire to explore participatory methodologies in which technical experts, farming communities, and citizens can dialogue.

As is well known, socioecological issues (and the planning and management challenges associated with them) are complex in nature and have a scope that often transcends analytical and understanding pretensions. At the same time, they are disputed issues and therefore have a high potential for conflict.

Given this scenario, it is acknowledged that sectoral or purely technical approaches are not enough and that we need to include more disciplines, sources of information, awareness campaigns, and experiences. This is a practical need that is seen in the politi-



cal field, but also on the epistemological level. In this sense, bringing together people with different backgrounds, education, and realities allows us to gather more knowledge and increase the link with the social and political context and, therefore, the rooting of the knowledge generated.

Focus area 2.3 Neighbourhood and school participation in local product campaigns

Air pollution can be measured relatively easily through a mobile application or receivers attached to street windows. For this reason, it is easy to mobilise schoolchildren and neighbours to participate



in citizen science programmes to use data and be able to subsequently participate in pollution mitigation policies.

There is currently a programme called the “Air Watchers” (*els vigilants de l’aire*) promoted by Barcelona Metropolitan Area that leverages this idea.

Focus area 2.4 Environmental education programmes

Education is important in order to generate critical thinking about the importance of the necessary transformations to enable food sovereignty.

These programmes can be promoted in different work centres and the neighbourhood councils or neighbourhood associations.

Chapter 3

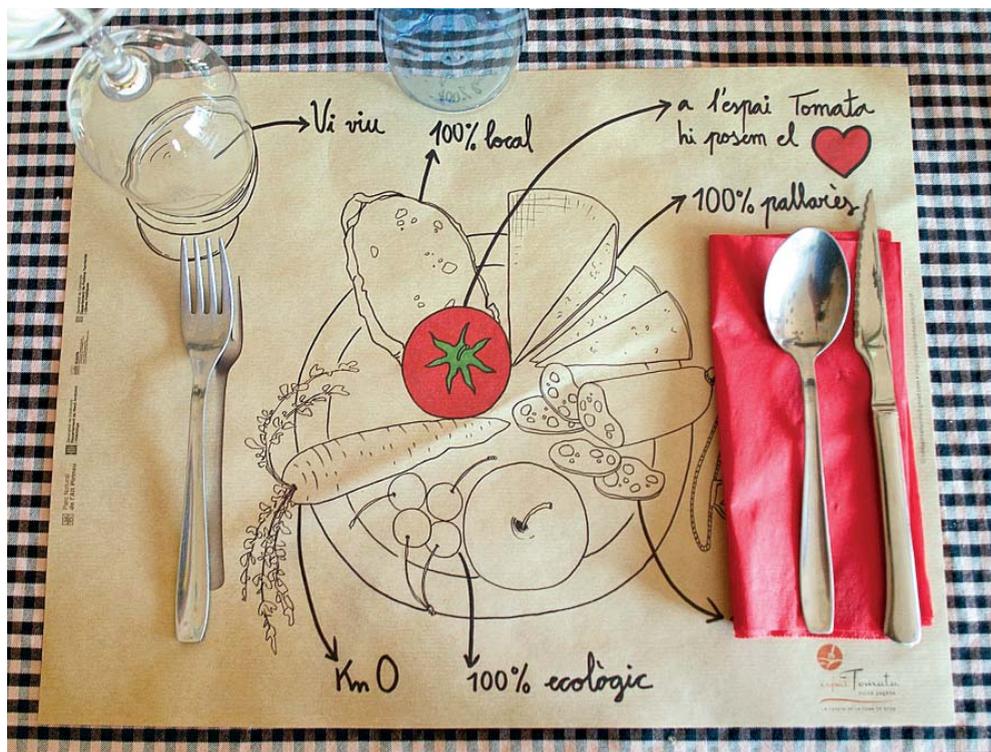
Human right to healthy food

Food is a human right and not a privilege. And it is the responsibility of all administrations to ensure that the food is healthy for both people and the planet.

Focus area 3.1 Committed cuisine

The new farming community and what is known as committed cuisine are an essential tandem for revitalising the territory. Committed cuisine is based on five basic principles: local purchasing, organic production, seasonal food, direct contact, and fair prices. This definition makes possible a food model based on ethical and solidarity

principles, both towards the environment and towards the people who produce the food. Town councils can promote and train restaurants and families to adopt this model.



Focus area 3.2 Sustainable Food Week

Local districts, county councils, or local associations can organise once a year a promotion week to foster different activities in favour of local and agro-ecological products as well as their use in gastronomy.



Focus area 3.3 Avoid food waste

Actions to deal with waste must begin in order to reduce the amount of food discarded. In those cases where it cannot be avoided, the aim should be to achieve the greatest possible use of food. Local districts can encourage markets, restaurants, etc. to take measures to reduce the amount of food discarded.

Focus area 3.4 Public procurement of local and agro-ecological foods

Many town halls and county councils have the capacity to introduce within the contracts and services they offer the purchase of local and agroecological food. Public procurement laws don't make it easy, but it can always be justified in the context of the climate emergency, as proximity and agro-ecological purchasing generate less CO₂ emissions.

Websites of interest

Metropolitan food charter, https://pemb.cat/ca/projectes-estrategics-carm/que_es_la_carm/1/

Land Bank, <http://www.terrafranca.cat/>

Food sovereignty indicators, <http://indicadors.arrandeterra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ArranDeTerrall.pdf>

Yearbook for the New Culture of the Territory, <https://www.centresostenibilitat.cat/index.php/anuari/>

Via Campesina, <https://viacampesina.org/es/>

Mercat arrels, <https://mercatarrels.cat/producte/arrels/>



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