

The concept of landscape multifunctionality

Land use as interface between multifunctional agriculture and multifunctional landscapes

Vejre, Henrik ; Andersen, Erling; Brandt, Jesper; Busck, Anne; Dalgaard, Tommy; Frederiksen, Pia; Hasler, Berit; Huusum, Henrik; Høyring, Katrine; Kristensen, Lone; Kristensen, Søren; Noe, Erling; Præstholt, Søren; Schou, Jørgen; Tybirk, Knud

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The concept of landscape multifunctionality: Land use as interface between multifunctional agriculture and multifunctional landscapes

Henrik Vejre & Danish Scientific Network on Multifunctional Landscapes and Agriculture:
J. Abildtrup, E. Andersen, J. Brandt, A. Busck, T. Dalgaard, P. Frederiksen, B. Hassler,
H. Huusom, K. Højring, L. Kristensen, S. Kristensen, E. Noe, S. Præstholm, J. Schou, K. Tybirk
E-mail: hv@kvl.dk*

In contemporary sciences dealing with cultural landscapes, multifunctionality is used to characterize both the primary production sector (agriculture and forestry) and the landscape *per se*. Though the two share many characteristics, there are notable differences between the two entries to the concept of multifunctionality. There is a need for clarification of the divergence and convergence of the concepts in relation to agriculture and landscapes respectively.

Multifunctionality in relation to agriculture has been an issue in the negotiations on international trade agreements, and has been treated in detail by the OECD (Anon 2001). There is a general consensus that multifunctionality is both a neutral characteristic of agriculture (joint production), but also that multifunctionality as a normative concept is useful in valuing outputs other than agricultural goods (landscapes, jobs, rural population, wildlife). On the other hand, multifunctionality is regarded as a bad excuse for the subsistence of agriculture in the “old world”.

Multifunctionality in relation to landscapes follows a more ambiguous path. In essence, all landscapes are by definition multifunctional (e.g. Forman and Godron 1985). In the 1990s, increased focus was placed on the multifunctional character of landscape, not least because many environmental problems of the countryside were related to the segregation of functions and the eradication of other functions than production from the land areas (Brandt & Vejre 2004). There is no general consensus as to the terms function and multifunction of landscapes. In contrast to the agricultural entry, however, functions are normally rated equal in landscapes.

Agriculture and landscapes obviously have much in common, and multifunctionality in relation to the two are often used arbitrarily. One of the prime joint products of agriculture is open landscapes, and among the several functions of landscapes, agricultural production is often a major function. The two systems share a common denominator – land use. Land use is the spatial-related activity of farming, and land use is one of several categories of landscape functions.

The significance of both multifunctional agriculture and landscapes is strongly related to the management of both. In the post-modern world, there is much focus on the externalities produced by agriculture, and in densely populated countries or regions, there is an urgent need to combine different functions in the same territorial units – landscapes. That is, management for multifunctional land use in multifunctional landscapes. In order to target the management specifically, the concepts of territorial and spatial competences may be useful (Hägerstrand 1995). The territorial competence exerted by the single land owner is significant in addressing management that may be dealt with most efficient by the individual. However, in scales encompassing more than one land owner, the authorities must exert spatial competence through legislation, plans or subvention.