

Mountain and hill areas

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1. Problems of the dairy economy in a disadvantaged area: Prosperity and crisis of agriculture in the Jura Mountains: P. Perrier-Cornet (*INRA, Dijon, France*) (Original in French)

Agriculture in the Jura should adapt in order to keep its prosperity. The local Gruyère cheese production shows a steady development. At the same time, this production becomes localised in comparison to the situation at the end of the 19th century. The number of producers is declining. Growth was hampered by industrial competition (Emmenthal cheese), obliging the Jura producers to fortify themselves by aiming at quality rather than quantity. The State came to their help by laying down rules that guaranteed them monopoly. In areas where cheese production was abandoned, producers turned to mixed farming (meat and cereals). However, the production structure of 'comté' cheese remains the same. The cooperative cheese dairies sell to local ripeners who concentrate on the making of small cheeses – as the production is heterogeneous – and selling them through traditional channels. The production technique has also remained unchanged: no silage, dairy breed of exclusive regional origin, milking at fixed hours, delivery at the cheese dairy twice a day.

Discussion: The discussion revolved round the following aspects:

1. The importance of the natural conditions in mountain areas.

The physical conditions of the Jura have led farmers to valorize the milk into quality cheese, by means of a strict organisation. The success of this production provoked its extension into the plains, but the organisation was less accepted there, and the produce suffered from competition by low quality cheese, produced at lower cost in Brittany. Dis-

illusionment induced farmers of the plains to adopt another system of production, so that the region of quality cheese production has regained its initial perimeters.

2. The importance of the distribution of agricultural produce.
The extension of the production area into the plains was accompanied by a vulgarisation of the product in order to meet the requirements of the distributors; a regular supply of standard products at low costs. Quality appears to be the only trump held by the Jura cheese producers.
3. The 'comté' benefits from a rent which is, without apparent changes, divided between producers and ripeners. Price differences continue to exist at the local level.
4. The difficulties do not lead to considering alternative productions, such as pork. The system as a whole seems to be stable.

2. Some regional aspects of agricultural development in Slovenia:

S. Gliha, M. Kovačič (*Agricultural Institute of Slovenia*) and
F. Sunčič, K. Vadnal, (*Biotechnical Faculty, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia*)

The article deals with:

- The general situation, both natural and human, of Slovenian agriculture; division between the private and social sectors; the development of the agricultural population and of labour productivity.
- the objectives of Slovenian agricultural policy, and in particular, to mechanisation on a larger scale.
- the characteristics of Slovenian mountain agriculture – two typical regions: Polhograjski Dolomiti and Suha Krajina. The 'Dolomiti' model is superior to the 'Suha' model, because of the existence of forestry resources in the former region. The Suha region suffers from agricultural overpopulation, because population growth was not accompanied by non-agricultural job creation, and overseas emigration resulted, which had negative consequences because of its selectiveness. The conclusion was drawn that there is an urgent need for non-agricultural resources for the mountain population of Slovenia.

Discussion: This centred on the following:

1. Division of labour between the private and social sector. Large-scale technology can be found in the social sector, but the private sector is predominant.

2. A parallel development of population and non-agricultural employment. The delayed off-farm job creation explains the inferiority of the one region compared with the other.
3. Non-agricultural resources in mountain regions. The availability of income from forestry makes the 'Dolomiti' type superior to the 'Suha' type.
4. The continuous aggravation of regional inequality. The two regions differed in their natural endowments. The naturally less-favoured region suffered subsequently from emigration, depriving agriculture of its most active members.
5. Possibilities for stopping this decline. By concerted efforts by the State and local collectives, investments have taken place in the retarded region, which may stop its relative decline.

3. Sudetes mountain region – a programme for economic development:

F. Majdański (*Institute of Rural Economics, Wrocław, Poland*)

The Polish mountain regions occupy only 6% of the total farm land, but they furnish the country with water and employment. Seeing their demographic and economic decline, the Government decided to sponsor their revival by collecting all the abandoned land into State farms.

Large amounts of money were spent on the modernisation of infrastructure, on the development of machinery and on the creation of agro-food complexes. But the results were disappointing: returns to capital were not sufficient, and there was a wastage of labour. The report ascribes this failure to the rigour of the centralised economy, and its indifference to the desires of those at the 'base' of the agricultural structure, whose mentality does not correspond to the planning models.

Discussion: In the discussion, the subordination of agricultural policy to the general economic policy was mentioned, as was the classification of the hill farms. Besides the altitude, other criteria were used, that took economic difficulties into consideration. Governmental aid is modulated according to production difficulties, and access to markets. The new criteria are more contestable than the old. The drudgery of agricultural work in the mountains is sometimes compensated for by facilities for tourism. The new criteria require a complete survey of agricultural holdings in the mountains; each holding

receives a 'coefficient of drudgery'; this has already been done in some regions, but many others have still to be covered.

The role of private initiatives was also discussed. The recent accords between the social and the private sector assume a debate in which private interests may express an opinion in addition to the Governmental directives.

Were the difficulties occurring in the Sudetes a consequence of this region being a frontier area? The frontier is not an evident obstacle in that, though often a barrier, it is also a connecting link.

4. Problems and experiences of the mountainous areas of Switzerland:

Ch. Darbellay, Ph. Chauvie, M. Dumondel, K. Korner, D. Ryser and E. Stucki (*Institute of Agricultural Economics, EPF, Zurich, Switzerland*) (Original in French)

Since 1974, the law has given the Federal Authorities the freedom to encourage investments in mountain regions, so as to stop a relative demographical and economic decline. But each region is required to establish a programme for regional development before receiving aid. The application of this law has been hampered by the scepticism of the inhabitants; the rivalries between communities, that for the purposes of this law, form a region; and the inflexibility of the administrative directives. Rural animation work is therefore necessary in order to establish a regional conscience of the population and to make the people take initiatives to ameliorate their economic and social situation.

The paper mentions seven actions that were taken within small regions (in the case of Val d'Anniviers, 1600 inhabitants were concerned). Some results were: voluntary mutual help, medical equipment, revaluation of ancestral forest. There is now a need for an evaluation leading to a permanent readjustment of the programme on the basis of the new data.

Discussion: The following points were clarified:

1. The 1974 law is only one element within a large number of regulations in favour of interregional or intersectoral equilibrium. It is a supplementary programme in addition to cantonal or municipal measures.
2. The law aims at generating a regional conscience, obliging neighbouring communes to cooperate in a development programme of some kind. The psychological threshold, stemming from quarrels between neighbours, may disappear in the end.

3. The rigour of this administration is due to the novelty of directly linking the Confederacy to the aided region. The Federal officers confine themselves strictly to evaluating the programs which are submitted to them, in fear of being reproached by other public authorities.
4. Rural animation work is necessary to make the population aware of the possibility of directing its own future. The animator should, however, take care not to raise excessive expectations.
5. Some criticism was passed on the criteria used to divide the resources among the demanding regions.

5. **Problems of the mountains and hills in France:** M. Dorfman (*CUREI*)
F. Pernet (*INRA*) and L. Reboud (*CUREI*) (*University of Social
Sciences, Grenoble, France*) (Original in French)

Mountain farms do not participate enough in the development of French agriculture, a phenomenon which has led the public authorities to come to their aid in three ways:

1. giving a special allowance to encourage farmers to keep their cattle,
2. subsidising the modernisation of farms in order to improve production capacity,
3. putting forward measures aiming at improving the rural environment (ensuring that the better lands are put to agriculture etc.).

The results were that the age-distribution of the farmers improved and that income growth of mountain farmers is now equal to that of other farmers. The authors are afraid, however, that the present crisis, which leads to cuts in useful expenditures, will endanger these results, the more so, because the farmers are working out strategies to defend themselves against models that the authorities wish to impose on them.

Discussion: The following points were raised:

1. Though the predicament of the mountain farmers has been ameliorated in an absolute sense, their relative position is still unsatisfactory.
2. The article demonstrates that some measures that were originally very simple, have become more refined in order to make them better suited to the needs of the mountain farmers.
3. The national agricultural policy, the efficiency of which is evident after 30 years, is not the butt of the resistance mentioned in the paper. Certain

farmers fear that the application of this policy will change their way of living in an undesired manner. The authors are about to start an enquiry, which should reveal the importance of the resistance strategies.

4. Some factors are indicated which are in agreement with the new economic policy of France. Valorization of all disposable resources is in accordance with the present concern to reduce consumption of energy and raw materials.
5. The recent changes (new technologies and the stabilization of the farmer's age distribution, due to the 'neo-rurals') will no doubt oblige the public authorities to revise the norms of their agricultural policy in mountain areas.

6. Agricultural policies for problem areas in Austria: H. Alfons
(Institute of Agricultural Economics, Vienna, Austria)

There are two types of agricultural area in Austria: the mountain regions and the Eastern border areas. Difficulties in the first region are due to natural conditions, whereas political circumstances are responsible for the problems in the other area. In both regions, rural life is dominated by agriculture and forestry. Income per head is clearly lower than in other rural regions.

Agricultural policy is made by the Federal Republic and, to a lesser extent, by the 'Länder'. In 1972, an allowance for mountain farmers was introduced, independent of their production. The development of the mountain regions is hindered by the tense market for meat products. The difficulties of the border regions lie in their backwardness.

(As the author did not participate in this working group, this paper was not discussed).