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From local to global: mental models of local people about livestock sector

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► To cite this version:

Jean-François Tourrand, Cécile Barnaud, Pierre Valarie, Thierry Bonaudo, Alexandre Ickowicz, et al.. From local to global: mental models of local people about livestock sector. 64. Annual Meeting of the European Association for Animal Production (EAAP), Aug 2013, Nantes, France. 665 p. hal-01595374

HAL Id: hal-01595374

<https://hal.science/hal-01595374>

Submitted on 3 Jun 2020

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Session 22a

Poster 10

Prospects, objectives and opinions of livestock farmers in the area of a Pyrenean ski resort

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Tourism plays a major role in socio-economic development of some European mountain areas, where it may provide some synergies but also compete with farming activities for the use of resources such as land or labour. In order to determine the effect of a ski resort on livestock farming systems in its surroundings, a structured interview was conducted with all farmers whose cattle or horse herds grazed during the summer on pastures within a ski station in the Pyrenees (Northern Spain). Information was gathered on their production systems and prospective changes under the current socio-economic circumstances and different potential scenarios, namely total decoupling of EU subsidies, increased income from agri-environmental schemes, reduced income from off-farm work, and increased price of purchased feedstuffs. They were also asked about the relative importance for them of different technical, economic and social objectives, and also their opinions about the future, tourism and environmental issues. The continuity of the farms was ensured on a medium term, but might be low in the long run due to lack of succession. Farms were stable in terms of size and management, and few changes were envisaged in the future in the current conditions. However, if the socio-economic situation changed or different agricultural policies were implemented, farm structure and technical management may be considerably modified. Concerning the relative importance of various objectives, they considered that economic aspects and those related to their family's quality of life were crucial, while technical objectives were less important. They considered that the ski resort had been beneficial for the valley population, and also indirectly for them and their farming activity, mostly because it provided alternatives to diversify their income. In turn, they were aware that the ski resort profited from the ecosystem services provided by livestock grazing in its area.

Session 22b

Theatre 1

From local to global: mental models of local people about livestock sector

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MOUVE project and the LIFLOD network are developing a research focused on the better understanding of the mental models about livestock at local scale, with the goal to report the results at global scale. The authors present the results based on a set of 13 sites selected according to: (1) the interest of the local team; (2) significance of the local context, and its representation of the diversity at global scale. The sites are located in South America, Europe, North and West Africa, South-East Asia and China. Data collection used interviews with local people involve in livestock sector: farmers, traders, unions, agro-industries, development agencies, local governance or regional policymakers, NGO representatives. The collected information concerns: functions of livestock, points of view on past, current situation and future of livestock sector in the area, main factors of change, themes of debate at local scale, livestock farming systems in the future and position on environmental issues. Results relates to: (1) the diversity of the functions of livestock; (2) the diversity of the mental models between the sites linked to the local contexts and the contrasts between the sites; (3) the similarities between the sites, more particularly between the groups of local people (i.e agro-industries) but not within farmers; (4) common representations: environmental sector has a critical position about the livestock impacts, livestock subsector usually wants to improve the farming productivity, and local governance tries to find a consensual positions. The results give a great overview about the diversity of the mental models, especially the difference into and between the sites and the groups of local people.