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Quality schemes and pastoralism in France

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

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- 1 Strengthening and securing economic activity in rural areas figure among the objectives of French policy on the quality and origin of agricultural products. These objectives make particular sense in “harsh” regions where farm competitiveness with regard to standard products is limited by difficult environmental conditions (Bazin, 1986). The principle is to obtain added value on the sale of products by highlighting the superior quality conferred on products by agricultural practices in harmony with challenging environments (Hirczak and Mollard, 2004; Bordessoule, 2006). In the mid-size mountains of the Mediterranean hinterlands, which are today highly specialized in livestock activities, and where dry summers and rigorous winters limit fodder production, numerous quality schemes involving animal products have been developed. The term, “quality scheme” refers to the production and marketing of a high quality product in conformance with detailed specifications voluntarily developed by a collective of farmers and processors. Obtaining an official label identifying quality and origin (red label, protected geographical indication, protected designation of origin, etc.) implies that the specifications are developed with the public sector, distinguishing them from private standards (Smith, 2010). The conformity of the product and award procedures are verified and validated by an independent certifying agency mandated by the State (Sylvander, 1996).

- 2 Quality schemes involving animal products of the Mediterranean hinterlands more or less explicitly rely on pastoralism. This is considered here, as in other studies, as a multi-disciplinary subject with interlocking material and social dimensions (Eychenne, 2008). First of all, pastoralism corresponds to a set of extensive livestock farming practices (Milleville, 1987; Landais and Balent, 1993) which are reflected in mainly feeding animals by having them graze natural forage resources known as rangeland (Meuret *et al.*, 1995; Jouven *et al.*, 2010). On a broader scale, pastoralism also designates the relationships knit between farms, various institutions (sector operators, local governments, etc.) and ecosystems. Lastly, the term refers to “values and characteristics, real or assumed”, which are associated with the pastoral character and held by non-pastoral actors for which the term “pastorality” recently was proposed (Turquin *et al.*, in preparation).
- 3 In this article, we analyse the relationships, generated by synergies as well as paradoxes, between quality schemes and pastoralism from these different angles. The underlying question regards the capacity of a quality scheme to be a solution – as is frequently suggested – for difficult regions with distinctly pastoral profiles such as the Mediterranean hinterlands. The originality of the work is derived from its focus on the fabric of agricultural holdings, involved or not in a quality scheme, when most research on this topic tends to concentrate on: (i) the relationships between practices, product quality and the environment (Morbidity *et al.*, 1999; Sheath *et al.*, 2001; Tichit *et al.*, 2005; Farrugia *et al.*, 2008); and (ii) the governance of quality schemes and their articulation with territorial development (Delfosse, 1996; Perrier-Cornet and Sylvander, 2000; Barjolle and Sylvander, 2002; Sylvander *et al.*, 2006; Hirzcak, 2007¹). A consideration of farms and their evolution from a technical and socio-economic perspective will help to complement knowledge produced through these studies, and will be useful when considering the evolution of existing quality schemes as well as the establishment of new ones.

Grazing livestock and quality schemes in five medium-size mountain regions of France

Methodology

- 4 The analysis presented in this article draws from several field studies which have been conducted since 2008 with Master-level students (Aubron *et al.*, submitted; Nozières *et al.*, 2010; Aubron *et al.*, 2011a; Aubron *et al.*, 2012) on the diversity of pastoral situations in the Mediterranean hinterland. In each of the five areas studied – Alpine foothills, Cévennes, Aubrac, Central Aveyron and Causses du Quercy (see Map 1 and Table 1) – research was based on an agrarian diagnosis (Cochet and Devienne, 2006; Cochet, 2012). The understanding of the biophysical environment generated by reading the landscape, coupled with the reconstitution of agrarian history through interviews with former farmers (between ten to fifteen per study area) threw light on the main changes in agriculture over the past few decades and provided a first picture of the current diversity of livestock farms in these areas. The technical and economic functioning of farms then was characterized in detail through interviews of a purposive sample of active farmers (about twenty per study area), looking at livestock farming practices, work organization, and developments underway. This work was complemented by

value chain analyses based on interviews with different operators (between two and six per study area) and the study of the specifications of the quality schemes.

Map 1. Location of the study areas

Table 1. Features of livestock farming in the study areas

Area		Alpine foothills	Cévennes	Central Aveyron		Causse du Quercy		Aubrac
Biophysical environment		Mountain area (400 m to 2500 m) Mediterranean climate with a mountain influence Rolling to hilly terrain	Mountain area (400 m to 1700 m) Mediterranean climate with very dry summers Hilly terrain, steep slopes	Hill area (200 m to 800 m) Continental climate with oceanic influence Rolling terrain and plateau		Hill area (100 m to 700 m) Continental climate Rolling terrain and plateau		Mountain area (300 m to 1500 m) Ocean influenced climate Rolling terrain and high altitude plateau
Livestock farms	Principal	Meat sheep Between 250 and 500 ewes/farm worker	Dairy goat Cheesemakers between 25 and 50 goats/farm worker or Delivering milk to a Dairy plant	Dairy sheep	Dairy cattle	Meat sheep Between 175 and 350 ewes/farm worker	Dairy goat 70 goats/farm worker	Suckler cattle Between 40 and 60 suckler cattle/farm worker
	Secondary	Goat cheese farmers	Meat sheep between 150 and 200 ewes/farm worker	Dairy goat		Suckler cattle, intensive (off-soil) pig breeding, (off-soil) force feeding ducks		Dairy cattle Between 35 and 40 dairy cows/farm worker
Feeding practices	Fodder resources	Hay + Grazing PM + TM + forested areas + summer mountain pastures	Hay + Grazing PM + TM + heathland + woody areas (+ summer mountain pastures for sheep)	Hay + Grazing PM + TM + heathland		Hay (+ grass silage) + Grazing PM + TM + heathland	Hay + Grass (indoor feeding)	Hay (+ wrapping) (+ maize silage) + Grazing TM + PM + summer mountain pastures
	Concentrates	Cereals Purchase feed for lambs	Purchase concentrates	Cereals Purchase feed for ewes		Cereals Purchase feed for lambs	Cereals Purchase cakes for goats	Cereals Purchase concentrates

- 5 In the five study areas, there are eight official labels identifying quality and origin, held by collectives of 80 to 2400 farmers, and covering small and large ruminant dairy and meat products (see Table 2).

Agrarian dynamics and emergence of quality schemes

- 6 Up through the 1960s, ruminant livestock farming was associated closely with mixed-crop food farming based on cereals and root crops, to which animals contributed manure and draught power (Aubron *et al.*, 2011b). Beyond hay required for winter, which varies in length depending on the region, animals mainly were fed in pasture on natural vegetation, with a summer or winter transhumance in certain cases. As elsewhere in France, with the mechanization that began in the 1960s, farms in these regions grew in size and reduced in number, a trend which continues today. As they are unprofitable compared to regions in the plains, crops which are not intended to feed herds are disappearing and farms are specializing in livestock activities. The different ingredients of the forage revolution – high yield varieties, mineral fertilizer,

increasingly efficient mechanized equipment – gradually are spreading to areas where conditions so allow.² Major forage stocks consequently are being constituted which, combined with the production or purchase of concentrates, is leading to changes in the way herds are fed.

- 7 Under the national and even international conditions of competition characterizing animal product markets over the past few decades, these changes nonetheless have not been enough to ensure the viability of farms in these regions. With the exception of the Roquefort label, which is older, many of the quality schemes studied here were developed to respond to this crisis. Their aim is to obtain added value compared to standard products through the production of products with a specific quality. The definition and revision of the specifications of these schemes, begun in the 1990s, also correspond to the emergence of a quality economy based on the differentiation of products and quality levels (Allaire, 2002). Intangible qualities, meaning cultural and societal values associated with products (Eymard-Duverney, 2006; Gumuchian and Pecqueur, 2007; Landel and Senil, 2009), play an important role in this process. For example, communication materials of the quality schemes studied nearly all feature photographs of grazing animals or of people leading animals to rangelands. The reference to pasture areas and territories conferred by the protected designations of origin, and the linking of red quality labels with a protected geographical indication, also is a vector of intangible qualities. Consumers are receptive to this promotion of values in a context where some are developing a growing ‘awareness of pastoralism’ (Turquin *et al.*, in preparation) and this contributes in turn to the construction of this pastorality.

Livestock farming practices recognized, as well as restricted, by quality schemes

The registration of extensive livestock farming practices in the specifications

- 8 A cross analysis of the specifications of the quality schemes studied permits the identification of four levers used to guarantee the implementation of pastoral livestock farming practices³ (see Annex 1):
- 9 (i) the stocking rate, generally expressed in the form of the maximum number of animals authorized per hectare of forage area or per hectare of area used for animal feed.
- 10 (ii) the source of all or part of animal feed, which is expressed in the form of the quantity – more or less precise and more or less large – of the animal ration that should be produced on the farm or in the geographic area defined by the Protected Designation of Origin (AOP, the French acronym) and Protected Geographical Indication (IGP, the French acronym). This requirement can be complemented by the prohibition of indoor, “off-soil” livestock farming.
- 11 (iii) the nature of feed given, through the definition of a minimum suckling period, the limit imposed on the quantity of concentrates given, the definition of a positive list of authorized feed or, in contrast, the prohibition of certain feed used in intensive

farming (silage, GMO etc.), as some affect product quality (silage and cheese quality in Laguiole, for example).

- 12 (iv) the grazing requirement, which is the subject of labels such as, “pasture-fed ewe”, “as soon as conditions permit”, “zero-grazing prohibited” or stipulating a certain number of days of grazing, sometimes associated with a season in which this should take place. The label also can specify the nature of the area grazed, as is the case of the label, *Bœuf Fermier d'Aubrac* (Aubrac Farm Beef), which requires the transhumance of animals to altitudes above 800 m.
- 13 The registration of local bovine and ovine breeds in the specifications of eight of the quality schemes studied, sometimes crossbred to improve their performance (see Table 2), is coherent with the pastoral character of the livestock farms (Lambert-Derkimba, 2007). These breeds adapted to environmental conditions effectively are able to make better use of local feed resources (Vallerand, 1983).

Table 2. Quality schemes identified in the five study areas

Area	Alpine foothills	Cévennes	Central Aveyron	Causse du Quercy	Causse du Quercy	Aubrac	Aubrac
Type of quality label and year obtained	Red Label (1995) + PGI (2007) Agneau de Sisteron	PDO Pélardon (2001)	PDO Roquefort (1st definition in 1925, complemented in 1979 and PDO since 2001)	Red Label (1990) + PGI (1996) Agneau fermier du Quercy	PDO Rocamadour (1996)	Red Label (1999) Bœuf Fermier d'Aubrac (BFA) PGI (2010) Génisse Fleur d'Aubrac (GFA)	PDO Laguiole (1961)
Product	Lamb meat	Goat cheese	Ewe cheese	Lamb meat	Goat cheese	Cattle meat (BFA) and heifer meat (GFA)	Cow cheese
Number of farmers registered in the quality scheme	278 livestock farmers in 2011	84 livestock farmers of which 64 cheese makers and 20 milk producers in 2013	1925 milk producers in 2012	304 livestock farmers in 2011	94 producers of which 37 cheese makers in 2010	GFA: 220 livestock farmers in 2011 BFA: 363 livestock farmers in 2010	82 livestock farmers (milk producers) in 2011
Volumes produced	34 397 heads in 2011	218 t in 2010	17 482 t in 2011	37 311 heads in 2010	1042 t in 2010	GFA: 1454 heads in 2011 BFA: 1477 heads in 2010	715 t in 2011

PDO: protected designation of origin PGI: protected geographical indication

- 14 Lastly, certain specifications codify product transformation and conservation processes, thereby guaranteeing the expression of specific qualities conferred by the pastoral character of livestock farming practices. The four dairy quality schemes studied involve cheese made with raw milk and thus exclude the pasteurization and standardization of milk. Likewise, with the exception of Rocamadour, for which freezing is authorized for a 50% curd volume, these quality schemes prohibit freezing.

Pastoral practices restricted by choices regarding the quality and seasonality of production

- 15 To preserve or secure market share, certain quality schemes have made choices regarding the quality and seasonality of production that are incompatible with pastoral practices. For example, with the maximum age set at 150 days, only lambs fattened in sheepfolds can obtain the weight and conformation sought by the Sisteron Lamb and the Quercy Farm Lamb labels.⁴ The pastoral character of the product is then conferred only by the management of the mother ewes.
- 16 Staggered production responds to the needs of downstream operators, particularly supermarket chains which are the main outlets of the quality schemes studied and which seek regular supplies over the year. This is easier to achieve for cheeses with long maturing periods (Laguiole and Roquefort as opposed to Rocamadour or Pélardon) and for meat from long-cycle animals slaughtered as adults (Aubrac Farm Beef and Fleur d'Aubrac Heifer as opposed to Sisteron Lamb and Quercy Farm Lamb). In the two

quality schemes involving lamb, this demand led to setting up incentives to stagger production: prices are higher in periods when it is difficult to produce lambs, generally due to a limited availability of forage in pastures. Lambing and suckling ewes in these periods consequently are fed mainly distributed feed, sometimes indoors. Most farms producing Quercy Farm Lamb thus practice three lambing seasons per year, of which one is in winter and takes place indoors. The price scale of Sisteron Lamb encourages farmers to produce lambs off-season, in other words, at the beginning of autumn. Lambing must take place in summer to produce these lambs, which means that transhumance practices must be abandoned for at least part of the flock. For cheeses with short maturing periods, freezing curds allows production to be deferred from one period to another, and therefore reduces the seasonality of the marketing of the end product. This practice facilitates the maintenance of coherence between dairy production and fodder availability, but affects the organoleptic quality of the product and can change its image. In the Pélardon quality scheme, which prohibits freezing for these very reasons, the collective management of milk supply from the Moissac cooperative was explored, yet with a limited scope: staggered cheese production is ensured by milk deliveries from a combination of farms producing early, at the height of, and late in the season thanks to access to different resources and feed management practices (Napoleone and Boutonnet, 2004).

Figure 1: Schematic diagram of safeguards given by the eight quality schemes in terms of feed self-sufficiency and grazing based on a reading of the specifications.

PDO: protected designation of origin; RL: "Red Label"; PGI: protected geographical indication.
Grey shading: the specifications state some grazing must take place on rangeland

- 17 Figure 1 proposes a classification of the quality schemes studied according to the safeguards given by the specifications for two main criteria: feed self-sufficiency⁵ and grazing.⁶ This classification also could be interpreted as a result of choices regarding the quality and seasonality of production. None of the quality schemes studied strictly require both feed self-sufficiency and rangeland grazing, yet these are what guarantee the true pastoral character of the livestock farming practices implemented.

Furthermore, only two quality schemes guarantee rangeland grazing (Aubrac Farm Beed and Pélardon), although all of the territories studied nonetheless have such rangelands, historically grazed by animals. One may find here a differential endowment of territorial resources – the high Aubrac plateau and Cevenol valleys have few feed resources other than rangeland. However, this also highlights the fact that grazing rangeland renders it more difficult to produce homogenous amounts of a product with the same quality throughout the year compared to grazing meadows or trough feeding. This observation parallels those of other studies regarding the ambiguous relationship between quality labels and the environment, although there is an increasing trend towards including environmentally friendly practices in wine and dairy AOC specifications (Hirzcak, 2011).

Farm dynamics in the territories: quality schemes supporting development with a nonetheless limited pastoral character

Quality schemes as a contribution to territorial development

- 18 The maintenance of farm density and farm jobs is an essential component of the development of these rural areas. The data that could be gathered suggest that in the territories studied, the rate of reduction in farm numbers is comparable or indeed below French averages, even if in none of the cases studied has the presence of quality labels managed to stem the erosion in farm numbers (see Table 3).

Table 3. Reduction in farm numbers between 2000 and 2010 in some of the study regions

Suckler ewe farms in the Agneau de Sisteron area	Suckler ewe farms in the Agneau fermier du Quercy area	Suckler ewe farms national level	Dairy sheep farms in the Roquefort area	Dairy farms all species national level	Dairy sheep farms national level	Goat farms in the Rocamadour area	Goat farms national level
-18%	-31%	-43%	-12,5%	-26%	-10,1%	-47%	-44%

Crédits : Agreste, 2010

- 19 The presence of livestock sector operators and collection and transformation tools on the territory is another factor of development. In the five study areas, their maintained presence is linked closely to the quality schemes. The slaughterhouse of Sisteron, today the second largest sheep slaughterhouse in Europe after that of Saragosse, and the reputation of the region's meat wholesalers, are inseparable from Sisteron Lamb. The cheese cooperatives of Moissac and Jeune Montagne were created respectively in 1959 and 1960, and today still operate around Pélardon and Laguiole. They contribute greatly to the insertion strategy of these products on the national market (for Pélardon, see Boutonnet *et al.* 2005). The professional organizations ensuring the collection of animals in the Alpine foothills, Aubrac, and Lot played a key role in quality schemes by federating livestock farmers and thereby grouping the supply of a product produced under the framework of the specifications that they helped to develop. In the Cevennes, a pastoral territory without a meat product quality scheme, there are no lamb producer groups headquartered in the area (Nozières *et al.*, in preparation). Lastly, the company Lactalis was established on the plateaus of Lot in 2011, and even

longer ago in Aveyron, due to Rocamadour and Roquefort. While quality schemes contribute to the continuing presence of operators in the territories, they generally appear unable to counteract their concentration (Petit, 2012). When an operator is strong, it generates an evolution in power relations in the sector that often is unfavourable to farmers.⁷

- 20 As shown in the literature, the collective character of quality schemes also is what contributes to territorial development. Collective actions render possible, without necessarily guaranteeing, debates and negotiations over technical and organization choices and the diffusion of innovation for the actors involved (Torre and Chia, 2000; Dervillé, 2012) Depending on the case (see Table 2), collective action concerns a varying number of farmers, involves to a greater or lesser degree certain downstream operators (*Confédération générale de Roquefort* with farmers and industry, *Génisse Fleur d'Aubrac* with farmers, slaughterhouses and butchers) and focuses on a varying range of technical and commercial operations (transport, transformation, distribution of products or simply communication).
- 21 Lastly, quality schemes and certain activities associated with them mutually benefit from their shared presence in the territory. In the study areas, this is in particular the case of tourism, with the systematic promotion of quality schemes in tourism offices, tourist oriented events involving the products concerned and the organization of visits to farms and cheese making sites for tourists. Local restaurants and shops, some highly reputed, often work with the products proposed by quality schemes. In return, quality schemes frequently mention in their communications the touristic and gastronomic features of the territory. In Aubrac, quality schemes involving meat and dairy products, which historically have been produced by the same cattle livestock system (Valogne *et al.*, 1974), echo each other and refer to another product, the Laguiole knife, which rounds out this “basket of goods” (Pecqueur, 2001). These synergies between activities on a territory involve the construction of a heritage, which in the cases studied often has a distinct pastoral character and thus contributes to the definition of pastorality. The reinforcement of these synergies is interpreted by several authors as being an important vector of development (Boucher and Requier Desjardins, 2002; Hirczak *et al.*, 2008; Frayssignes, 2009; Muchnik and de Sainte-Marie, 2010).

Increases in size and equipment of farms undermining pastoralism

- 22 While the economic activity generated by quality schemes is undeniable, it nevertheless remains, as mentioned previously, not enough to stem the erosion in farm numbers on the territories involved. The structural evolution of farms continuing livestock activities shape the form that pastoralism will take in these areas in the future. The cross analysis that we have conducted shows a particularly distinct trend on the part of farms involved in quality schemes to increase their size and equipment level. This is linked, as for most French farms, regardless of whether they are involved in a quality scheme, to the increase in production volumes required if a farm is to maintain its income in a context where the cost of inputs is rising and the actual price of products is falling.⁸ However, the trend also is the result of choices made by quality schemes regarding the quality and seasonality of production evoked previously. The production of large volumes with uniform quality over much of the year requires raising large numbers of animals, having access to large areas, and maintaining a sure

supply of forage stocks. To achieve these objectives, farmers are investing in increasingly large buildings and acquiring increasingly efficient equipment, in particular to harvest fodder and for milking on dairy farms. In the Roquefort and Laguiole quality schemes, some farmers are equipping themselves with an in-barn drying system, which allows hay to be produced no matter what the outdoor climate conditions may be. Farm capital, whether land or constituted by this equipment, is growing and becoming in certain cases so large that it is beyond the reach of a single family. Forms of company organization⁹ are one response to this problem. Their development in some of the study areas also is due to the advantages that they offer in terms of labour.

- 23 These changes are raising questions about the pastoral character of farming on these territories in several ways. First, the difficulty of taking over these large farms due to the amount of capital needed to be assembled calls into question the very existence of these forms of livestock farming and the quality schemes related to them. Furthermore, the question of the capacity of large herds to follow pastoral practices is posed. The answer depends on the products produced, the characteristics of the biophysical environment, and rules regulating access to land. In two of the study areas, there are very large suckler livestock farms -- 200 to 300 cows in Aubrac and 1000 to 3000 ewes in the Alpine foothills -- which are very pastoral in the sense that grazing, on rangelands on the high Aubrac plateau for the first case, and on the mountain pasture and *garrigues* (shrubland typical of the region) of the Var in winter for the second, contributes greatly to feeding the animals. Due to the seasonality of production and the animals' speed of growth, these very pastoral farms generally cannot supply products expected by quality schemes and thus are not involved in them. This generally does not stop them from being economically viable due to the subsidies they receive, mainly for what is deemed to be their positive impact on the environment¹⁰. As these subsidies often are attributed per head or per hectare, the amounts involved can be quite substantial.
- 24 However, in landscapes that are more rugged, closed or fragmented than the mountain pasture and *garrigues* of the Var, the grazing of rangeland by large herds is difficult for labour-related reasons (Noël, 2013). In such areas, large farms, even more than small ones, abandon distant and small rangelands, which then fall idle. The Alpine foothills, Cevennes and the Causses plateaus of Lot are thus all three characterized by landscape closure dynamics, and this even when the number of animals at the level of the territory generally has remained stable over the last few decades (Agreste, 2010).
- 25 Lastly, the dynamics of increasing in size and equipment of farms in quality schemes contribute to the exclusion of smaller farms that cannot keep up with this capitalization or supply products of the required quality. Operating on the margins of quality schemes, such small farms sometimes implement pastoral practices because there is an elderly person present on the farm who can watch over the animals in rangelands. Some farms setting up outside the farming family structure have no other option due to a lack of access to non-pastoral resources. Due to the high seasonality of the production linked to the priority use of pastoral resources and the conformation of animals resulting from slower growth, the products produced often are poorly valorized through conventional circuits. This exclusion mechanism is certainly inherent in quality schemes but it could be modulated by coordination between actors around a product and tradeoffs that they make together between valorization and protection (Filippi and Triboulet, 2006). In production areas close to large urban

centres (Alpine foothills, Cevennes), these excluded farms are exploring the possibility of direct sales to add value to their products by promoting their pastoral character. The assurance of “pastorality” is then pinned on interpersonal relationships of confidence between farmers and consumers. This solution is, however, risky and less used in areas far from large cities (Aubrac, Aveyron).

Conclusion

- 26 The quality schemes studied clearly contribute to the development of the territories in which they are present, territories that all historically had, and continue today to have, distinctly pastoral characters. The schemes furthermore contribute to awakening and stimulating an “appreciation of pastoralism” in consumers who sometimes live outside these territories but are linked to them through this awareness. The often limited place given to grazing, in particular on rangeland, in the feeding of animals, and the increasing size and equipment levels of farms engaged in quality schemes, nonetheless is compromising the truly pastoral character of these farms. This refers back to the governance of these quality schemes, to innovations that the schemes have managed to develop and the reputation of the products produced, which in turns conditions their market power and capacity to make truly pastoral choices which pay less heed to downstream demands for homogeneity and regularity. However, other sector operators and “pastoralism sympathizers”, namely consumers, also have a role to play as they contribute to the construction of these downstream demands by showing their attachment to the pastoral values conveyed by a product. The maintenance of a strong articulation between pastoralism and pastorality, or, in other words, between actual pastoral practices and values associated with pastoralism, appears essential if these territories are to conserve more than a simply pastoral image. Ensuring that all actors have access to knowledge about pastoralism as it actually is practiced today is a good means of reinforcing this articulation. Communication tools employed by quality schemes and regional tourism services often only meet these objectives in an imperfect manner, and this is where other actors could play a role. The development of the direct sale of meat and dairy products in the majority of the study areas promises new relationships between farmers and consumers which potentially will be able to strengthen this articulation.

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NOTES

1. This last study examines the relationships between quality, territory and the environment and thus also pertains to the first point.
2. The Cévennes (too hilly), the high Aubrac plateau (too cold) and some parts of the Causse du Quercy (thin soil), are not, for example, affected by this forage revolution.
3. Some of them rejoin the inventory of relationships between quality schemes and the environment proposed by Hirzack for AOC cheese making in the Rhône-Alpes region (2007), with nonetheless a focus on the particular environmental question of pastoralism.
4. The other requirements in the specifications regarding carcass characteristics are as follows:
Sisteron Lamb, carcass weight: 13-19 kg, conformation: U, R or O, fat cover: 2 or 3, light rose colored meat;
Quercy Farm Lamb, carcass weight: 12-22 kg, conformation : U, R or O, fat cover: 2 or 3, light rose colored meat
5. The notion of feed self-sufficiency refers to the portion of animal feed produced by the entity in question. It can be defined at the scale of a farm (portion of feed produced by the farm and not purchased) or of a region. It generally is measured in energy (feed units).
6. The stocking rate is another criteria that could be considered, but comparisons between quality schemes are impossible because the hectares considered rarely are the same type (forage area, total farm area, etc.)
7. For example, Lactalis today collect 72% of sheep milk around Roquefort and makes about 60% of Roquefort cheese (website of the company, Société, 2013).
8. The sale price of sheep meat and cow milk have been relatively good over the past five years, but in real terms, they have dropped since the 1980s.
9. Example of jointly run farms (French acronym: GAEC).
10. As Eycheenne observes in the Ariège Pyrenees, the payment of these agro-environmental subsidies regulates livestock production to the backburner, modifying the perception of the livestock farmer's craft (Eycheenne, 2003).

ABSTRACTS

Strengthening and securing economic activity in rural areas figure among the objectives of French policy on the quality and origin of agricultural products. This is particular true for

territories known for their harsh terrain. In mountainous Mediterranean hinterland regions, numerous quality schemes have been developed which rely in a more or less explicit manner on pastoralism. This article focuses on the relationship, made of synergies and paradoxes, between quality schemes and pastoralism in France. To do so, we build on an understanding of the dynamics and diversity of farms in 5 areas of the Mediterranean hinterland where 8 official quality labels are subject to certification. An analysis of the specifications of these quality schemes suggests that while they contribute to the recognition of pastoral livestock farming practices, they also tend to constrain them. To better respond to downstream demands, the schemes make choices regarding volumes and the seasonality of production that sometimes are inconsistent with pastoralism. Furthermore, while they undeniably contribute to territorial development, increases in the size and level of equipment of farms engaged in quality schemes are jeopardizing their genuinely pastoral character.

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Mots-clés: quality scheme, pastoralism, livestock farming practices, farm

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