

*THE ARKLETON TRUST*

**APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN EUROPE**

by  
**Christopher Finch**

A D A S 

**ARKLETON TRUST  
ERNEST COOK FELLOWSHIP**

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INTEGRATING RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE**

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## PREFACE

Chris Finch was awarded an Ernest Cook Fellowship in Rural Development by the Trust in 1985. Then, as now, Chris was working with ADAS in Aberystwyth in Wales and therefore concerned with issues of agriculture and development in a 'less favoured area' in his day-to-day work.

The Fellowship gave him the opportunity to travel to different parts of Europe and study how agriculture and agricultural policies can be integrated with other social and economic aspects of rural development in less favoured areas.

The twin concerns which have occupied much recent work by the Trust and others working in the field of rural development have been—on the one hand—the need to encourage rural diversification—on farms, in villages and small towns—to provide employment and income and hence viable rural self-sustaining communities, and—on the other hand—to develop new policies and new instruments of policy to enable the different aspects of rural development—agriculture, industry, services, conservation, cultural and social life—to be considered and 'dealt with' in an integrated way. In this last context, we have also been much concerned with the role of local democratic processes in achieving the coordination and integration which is required at local levels if 'integration' is to become a reality.

These and other matters are well covered in Chris Finch's report, and we are encouraged to see a growing interest in such questions by those involved at a practical level. We hope that Chris's report will be a useful input to the debate.

The Trust is grateful to the Ernest Cook Trust for their support of this Fellowship and to colleagues in Europe for the time which they gave in discussing their work and ideas.

JOHN M. BRYDEN  
Programme Director  
The Arkleton Trust  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The final outcome of the study is largely a result of the most generous assistance and hospitality received by the author in the areas visited. The people concerned are far too numerous all to be mentioned individually, but particular thanks are due to the following: Miss Pru Judd of the British Embassy in Paris, together with the Chambers of Agriculture in Normandy and Corsica, for arranging the programme of visits in France; M. Pierre Coulmin, then with AFAR in Caen (Association pour la Formation des Adultes Ruraux de Basse-Normandie) for his companionship and generous hospitality during three days of visits in Normandy; Professor Pietro Berni of the Institute of Agricultural Economics of the University of Verona for arranging the programme of visits in Piedmont and Lombardy, Italy, for his most stimulating and interesting company during visits to the Alto Garda Bresciano area, and for arranging the company of the delightful Miss Alessandria as both guide and interpreter; Dr. Gianromolo Bignami of the CCIAA in Cuneo, Piedmont, for arranging a tour of the Valle di Stura area; Miss Dorothy Symes of the British Embassy in Vienna, for help in arranging contacts in Steiermark Province, Austria; Dr. Willi Senft of the Chamber of Agriculture in Graz, Austria, for arranging the programme of visits in Steiermark, and for his stimulating company and most generous hospitality during the visit to Austria; Ing. T.H. James of the Government Service for Land and Water Use in Utrecht, for arranging the programme of visits in Holland.

This study is concerned with the integration of policies for rural development. The author hopes however that in some small way he has contributed to the integration of people and cultures in Europe. Many of the people visited in these more

remote parts of Europe had little knowledge of Britain, and less still of Wales; there was however a general spirit of enquiry about the UK, its people, its farms and its way of life. If one moment stands out perhaps to epitomise this study then it is the memory of a working lunch in a small restaurant in a small village in Lombardy, Italy, in the company of a group of local farmers, local officials and professional advisers, over a bottle or two of excellent local wine. The conversation ranged from problems of rural development, through milk quotas to setaside policies and the LFA: discussions started in Italian, and continued in French, English and occasionally German. Such scenes must surely be at the very ethos of the European Community. The author hopes that something of this spirit of cooperation and concord is evident in the substance of this report, and wishes to thank all those who made it possible.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The rural areas of Britain have long inspired poets and writers as areas of beauty, peacefulness and harmony. This surface tranquility however has always belied an underlying poverty and underdevelopment of the rural community, more especially so in the upland areas. In the 1980's the uplands of Britain and Europe remain disadvantaged and their development remains a concern, particularly at a time when agriculture, traditionally the major industry in the countryside, and the main instrument for shaping the countryside, is changing rapidly. The rural areas perform an important role as places where people live, work and spend their leisure, as well as being the platform for both agricultural production and environmental concern: their development needs to take account of, and integrate, the many and often conflicting demands on their resources.

The objectives of this study are threefold:

(1) to examine how agricultural policies can be integrated with other social and economic aspects of rural development in upland areas

(2) to examine how agriculture departments can be actively involved in rural development and what the potential consequences are in manpower and financial resources of such involvement;

(3) to evaluate those elements within the framework of integrated rural development practiced in parts of Europe that could usefully and successfully be applied to upland rural areas in England and particularly Wales.

This study is based on two recent parallel and complementary developments relating to the integration of rural development. The first has been a growing concern for the problems of rural development in the less favoured areas of England and Wales. The Ministry of Agriculture has been strongly criticised for a number of years by many rural organisations for narrowly pursuing agricultural objectives in rural areas to the exclusion of other sectors of the economy. Other bodies have been similarly criticised for pursuing their own objectives in an isolated way. In Britain the agricultural departments have now become more sympathetic to the need to have regard to the rural environment in their agricultural advisory work. In Wales this has been manifested, inter alia, by a number of initiatives aimed at



investigating how integrated rural development can be more effectively directed to deal with problems in the uplands. ADAS has been closely involved with Welsh Office Agriculture Department in developing ideas for these initiatives. At departmental level Wales seems to be particularly well placed to take advantage of an integrated approach to development because of the responsibilities of Welsh Office encompassing the whole rural environment.

The second was the 'call for offers' by the EC Standing Committee on Agricultural Research for submissions on research into integrated rural development over a three year period. Twelve such projects were accepted in Europe of which three were in the UK<sup>1</sup>. The aim of these case studies was to look at the causes of under-development in less favoured rural areas in Europe and to explore how future development could better meet the needs and aspirations of the rural community.

The 12 case studies reported officially at a symposium at Wageningen in Holland in September 1985. Because of the different approaches adopted it is difficult to draw together the results of this work but certain general themes have emerged from all the case studies involved. There was general agreement that the objectives of integrated rural development, within any region, should be: (1) to raise the level of economic performance in all sectors of the economy, not just agriculture (2) to promote the maintenance of viable and distinct rural communities (3) to meet the needs and aspirations of the local people, and (4) to protect the natural environment and landscape. It was suggested that this can only be successfully achieved within an institutional framework that: (1) encourages local involvement and self-help in the development process (2) enables the different physical, economic, cultural and political conditions of individual regions to be taken into account, and (3) allows more devolved responsibility for the control and coordination of funding and financial support for rural areas.<sup>2</sup>

This then was the starting point for the study. Six areas were chosen to visit, comprising; Bocage Normand, Normandy, France; Corsica; Valle di Stura, Piemonte, Italy; Alto Garda Bresciano, Lombardy, Italy; Steiermark, Austria, and the Netherlands. Of these six areas, two (Bocage and Valle di Stura) had taken part in the EEC sponsored research. The areas visited provided a wide range of situations, physically, climati-

cally, culturally, administratively and politically. The one feature common to each area is a concern for rural development and an attempt to pursue a more integrated approach to such development. Visits were made in April and May 1986. The visits were organised by local agricultural departments, and the initial approach was from an agricultural point of view, as the objectives of this study are indeed formulated, but with the integration of agriculture with other sectors of the economy very much to the forefront of the study.

The next five chapters describe in detail those experiences of integrated approaches to rural development visited in Europe, and the role of the respective Ministries of Agriculture in such development. In writing up these experiences the report stresses the general principles of the administrative organisations, structures and procedures that enable such integrated approaches to work and be successful, and illustrates these with a number of examples of rural projects.

## 2 THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCE

France is a large and essentially rural country. Local administration is based on the region, department, canton and commune. There are 36000 communes in the whole of France; 32000 have fewer than 2000 inhabitants. The rural area covers 85% of the area of France and contains 27% of the population. There are nationally 1,200,000 farmers, five times the number in England and Wales. Rural development and local development are important and sensitive national issues in France; ever since the description of France as *Paris et le désert français* in 1947<sup>3</sup> there has been increasing pressure for more local control over rural development, culminating in the Law of Decentralisation in 1983. This aimed at speeding and improving local autonomy and local development by devolving both administrative and financial control from the state to the regions.

In each region the *Préfet* is the representative of the state. The *Conseil Régional* (Regional council) is the body elected to manage the affairs of the region. Following decentralisation in 1983 executive power in the region has been transferred from the *Préfet* to the *Conseil Régional*. The state provides a block investment grant to each region every year, replacing many previous national subsidies. The money is used according to a *contrat de plan*, or contractual agreement established between the state and the region.

Local development in France is based on two main principles: contractual policies and intercommunal cooperation. These principles derive from the ideas of local geographic identity and the involvement of locally elected representatives (*élus*) in the rural development process. Each commune has individual responsibility for development control and land-use planning. Communes are encouraged to associate together, however, in order to help solve development problems that are not purely communal in nature. Under previous local development procedures groups of communes (*syndicats*) received funding from regions for rural development projects on the basis of a *contrat de pays* or contractual agreement between the *syndicat* and the region, covering the whole spectrum of economic activity. The *contrat de pays* covers a 3 year period—essentially it is a short

term plan. It is a condition of funding that communes organise themselves into groups. This seems to be no problem to the French, who seem to have an inherent ability to cooperate at local level. The '*secteur associatif*' is very strong, and it has been estimated that there are nationally almost 1 million formal or informal groups and associations of both workers and communes, increasing at the rate of 40000 every year<sup>4</sup>. These procedures have been in operation for a number of years and the success of the approach is shown by the fact that between 1975 and 1983 415 *contrats de pays* were agreed, providing government block funding for locally planned projects. There are a number of types of intercommunal groups in France, including, inter alia, SIVU (*Syndicat Intercommunal à Vocation Unique*), SIVOM (*Syndicat Intercommunal à Vocations Multiples*), *Syndicat Mixte* and *Syndicat d'études*. In 1984 it was estimated that half of the communes in France were represented in a SIVOM. Examples of a SIVOM (Pre-Bocage) and of a *Syndicat Mixte* (the Parc Regional de Normandie-Maine) and their role in integrated rural development are described in detail below.

Following decentralisation the French government has introduced the concept of the *charte intercommunale*, "a new contractual legislative procedure for local development, which has been broadened to include where appropriate urban areas. The *charte intercommunale* sets out the medium term plan for development, establishing a programme of action over a 10 year period and defining the necessary financial requirements. The *charte intercommunale* for the Domfront area of Orne departement is described in detail below. In 1985, two years after decentralisation, 6000 communes (20% of the total) were engaged in the production of such intercommunal charters.

## THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

In France the Ministry of Agriculture is a large and powerful organisation. Prior to decentralisation it comprised 30000 *fonctionnaires* (civil servants). It has responsibility for all agricultural matters, together with forestry and rural development. Nature conservation and landscape are the responsibility of the much smaller Ministry of the Environment.

The Ministry of Agriculture has a large and complex regional

and departmental structure. It is represented in the regions by DRAF (*Direction Régional de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt*) and in the departments by DDAF (*Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt*). These offices exist to carry out government policy in agriculture, forestry and rural development, and to administer government financial support to farmers and landowners. Farm advisory services in France are provided by the *Chambres d'Agriculture* (Chambers of Agriculture), departmental based and semi-autonomous, albeit funded partly by the Ministry of Agriculture and partly by the regions. DRAF and DDAF each have eight constituent services, some complementary, some overlapping. The DDAF are unique in carrying out at departmental level a number of duties for other Ministries which do not have a regional or departmental structure<sup>5</sup>. This gives to the Ministry of Agriculture an even stronger presence in rural areas. The Chamber of Agriculture typically has 12 services the majority of which provide direct technical support for farmers. Each Chamber has a council elected by farmers and landowners, and is therefore a public body, by its constitution at the service of all farmers without distinction.

The Ministry of Agriculture has been described as the *partenaire omniprésent* in the rural environment<sup>6</sup>. It is the main organisation responsible for promoting and coordinating rural development in France, in partnership or in association with local intercommunal groups. This is achieved largely in three main ways:

(1) firstly through the *Service d'Aménagement Rurale* (rural development service) of the DDAF, which exists to provide advice and technical assistance to intercommunal groups and associations. The rural development service in Calvados department of Normandy has 10 specialists (largely trained in agricultural economics) each on permanent secondment to local SIVOM, SIVU or other similar groups.

(2) secondly through financial support for the posts of '*animateurs*' in the intercommunal groups. The animateur is the person who coordinates the programme of action and the funding of each contractual agreement, and who stimulates the involvement of local people in the development process. This role is vital to the success of the development programme. The personal contribution of the *animateur* to local development is considerable. In France as a whole over 240 *animateurs* are

financially supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, even where their primary interests are not agricultural.

(3) thirdly by direct support, both financial and in principle, for other sectors of the rural economy (ie. not agricultural). The Ministry of Agriculture already has responsibility for forestry and forestry policies. It supports the work of the Regional Parks and by agreement with the Federation of Regional Parks will provide staff and assistance to the Parks in promoting rural development in their areas. The DDAF's have undertaken to carry out many of the regional functions of the Ministry of the Environment and, from December 1985, of the Ministry of Commerce, Small Businesses and Tourism, neither of which have an effective regional organisation. The Ministry of Agriculture through the DDAF again provides both technical advice and financial support to the *Gites de France* organisation, responsible for the conversion of redundant buildings in the countryside into '*gites ruraux*', or self-catering tourist accommodation. This is a particularly successful organisation, with offices throughout France (often locally in the same buildings as the Chamber of Agriculture), but also abroad in London, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Dublin. Over 30,000 gites are available throughout France. All of these actions can perhaps be justified as additional support for agriculture in general and farmers in particular, but such actions go beyond agriculture to benefit the whole rural economy and indicate the importance with which the Ministry of Agriculture views its involvement in rural development.

## THE BOCAGE NORMAND

The visit to Normandy centred on the Bocage Normand (fig 1). This is a rural area of Lower Normandy, of perhaps 400 sq. km. with a population of 300,000 people. It is not an administrative area, covering parts of the departments of Calvados, Orne and Manche, but is an area with a very particular and distinctive landscape—a landscape of rolling hills, hedges, sunken lanes, small fields and apple trees—a landscape that is fairly common in parts of England and Wales, but which is unique in France.

The area is economically diversified. It is predominantly agricultural but with traditional small industries, now in

decline. The area is fairly densely populated with small scattered agricultural holdings. These vary in size from <10 ha in the west to between 20 ha and 50 ha in the east. The majority of holdings are family farms; in 1979 40% only were owner-occupied; the remainder tenanted. Predominantly a dairying area, the production of apples and pears has always been an important secondary enterprise. The area has traditions of high quality speciality food production exemplified especially by cheeses such as camembert, livarot and pont l'evêque, all of which are subject to strict quality control through the principle of '*appellation contrôlée*' (AOC). The museum of camembert cheese labels at the 'President' creamery at Domfront in Orne department (the collection of which is called, interestingly, tyrosemiophilia) has in excess of 200 different labels, each representing a different variety of cheese from the Normandy region. Another important local speciality product is cider and cider-based products, including *poiré* (pear cider), and the distilled spirits *calvados* and *pommeau*. *Calvados* is also subject to AOC quality control<sup>7</sup>. Much of this production is farm-based; the availability of farm cider and farm *calvados* providing an important attraction for tourists. A particular feature of agriculture in the area is the high proportion of local production that is subsequently consumed on the farm. Overall 10% of local production is for home consumption; as much as 25-30% on the smaller farms. This includes milk, meat, vegetables and cider products (although taking cider alone, nearly 70% of local production is for home consumption). There is, in general, a very strong link in this area between agricultural production and food consumption, a link that is only very tenuous in parts of Britain at the moment.

The distinctive landscape of hedges and small fields has arisen because of the traditional need to utilise wood for heating and construction in an otherwise intensively managed and densely settled agricultural area where woodland per se is not readily accessible. Field size varies from <1 ha in the west to between 1 and 3 ha in the east. Most are bounded by hedges. Hedges in the Bocage have always been managed for wood production (they are referred to as linear woods and included in official statistics on woodland), unlike in Britain where a hedge has traditionally been primarily a barrier to stock. Hedgrows have over a period assumed a very distinctive and particular shape in the

landscape, being tall and straight with few side branches. Traditionally in the Bocage tenant farmers have had the right to utilise branches for timber, where the landowners had the right to timber from the main trunk. There has normally been a balance between the regular cutting of side branches by tenant farmers and the occasional cutting of mature trees by landowners. Many hedges in the Bocage are not in fact stock-proof, and require additional fencing for this purpose.

The area is not designated as less favoured under EEC Directive 75/268 because climatically and in terms of soil types it has considerable potential. It has suffered severely however, in common with many other areas that are designated less favoured, from depopulation and rural decline. The Bocage, together with most of Brittany, was until fairly recently a very underdeveloped area. In the rest of France the Bocage has always been viewed as backward. The description *en bocage profond* has always been used for any remote undeveloped area. It was not until the 1950's and 1960's that mains water and electricity reached the area and the well is still a common and characteristic feature of the farmstead, albeit now unused. As recently as 1982, 60% of the houses in parts of the area were not up to acceptable modern standards. And yet the area is only 100-150 miles from Paris. This 'backwardness' is, paradoxically, probably the main reason why in an area of fairly intensive agriculture, farmers have maintained their traditions of agricultural production much more strongly than in Britain. It is only now that with modern improved communications the area is beginning to change rapidly as fields are enlarged and orchards grubbed out<sup>8</sup>.

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOCAGE

The impetus for local rural development is strong in Normandy and particularly so in the Bocage. This is illustrated in the next three sections by looking in detail at three local experiences of rural development, and in the Ministry of Agriculture role in those experiences. These include:

- (1) The SIVOM de Pre-Bocage and the *contrat de pays*;
- (2) ADECO of Domfront and the *charte intercommunale*;
- (3) Parc Regional de Normandie-Maine.



These three organisations illustrate the spectrum of procedures available to local areas in France. The areas they cover are shown in fig 1 in the Appendix. They are especially important to this study because each adopts an essentially integrated approach to rural development at the local level, being concerned with the whole rural economy. In Britain of course, these procedures and these types of organisations are not in existence, and so the comparison is all the more interesting.

## THE SIVOM DE PRE-BOCAGE

In 1980 the three cantons of Aunay, Caumont and Villers-Bocage, together with the constituent 52 communes of Calvados department, came together to form the SIVOM de Pre-Bocage (*Syndicat Intercommunal à Vocations Multiples*). This area covers a small part of the whole Bocage area (fig 1). The SIVOM was established with a view to setting up a contractual agreement (*contrat de pays*) with the region to assist in the economic development of the area. The SIVOM has been described generally as the backbone of local development in France. It is an instrument of local cooperation existing to promote development in all the constituent communes concerned, not just the larger ones. Whilst an intercommunal association is a necessary prerequisite for regional support for rural development projects, a SIVOM is not always necessarily established for this reason. In France as a whole there are about 5000 SIVOM, but not all are concerned with rural development. In the case of Pre-Bocage, a SIVOM was judged to be the appropriate body by the cantons and communes concerned. Each canton and commune is represented on the main committee of the SIVOM. The SIVOM has a central office (in this case in Cahagnes, within the the canton of Aunay) with a small permanent staff (of *animateur* together with secretarial support).

The *contrat de pays* is a contractual 'countryside agreement' between the region (the public establishment) and the SIVOM, the one having defined a programme of development over a three year period, the other providing the financial means to contribute to the realisation of that programme. This countryside agreement builds on and strengthens the process of rural

development already established with the PAR (*plan d'aménagement rural*). It has nationally the following aims;

- (1) to prevent population decline by improving local employment prospects,

- (2) to search for original solutions to economic problems by taking into account the specific character of each local area concerned,

- (3) to improve the solidarity and involvement of local people in local development.

Within these overall aims the SIVOM de Pre-Bocage decided on a set of local objectives for their area. These include;

- (1) to support the development of agricultural activities (agriculture is the principal economic activity of the area),

- (2) to increase the number of craft and other small industries in the area,

- (3) to support the development of tourism and recreation activities,

- (4) to improve the quality of life for the local inhabitants, whilst both preserving the environment and improving the value of the local heritage.

The contract agreement itself has three stages; (1) Reflection. 5 working groups were established, consisting of a mixture of local councillors, professional advisers from the region and department, local businessmen and other interested parties. One group was set up for each of the subjects of agriculture, craft industry, environment, adult training and tourism, reflecting the local objectives already defined. Each working group considered local problems and local needs within its area of responsibility, and suggested a programme of necessary action, together with possible sources of funding for those actions, to help alleviate those problems over a three year period. (2) Examination. A final suggested programme of activity was put together by a small team, consisting of the chairmen of each working group, the *animateur* for the SIVOM, and three professional advisers from the departmental administration (including the DDAF). At this stage the relative importance of each sector of the economy is evaluated, and the likely prospects of other sources of funding explored. The least promising, or possibly the lowest priority projects may well be dropped. (3) Decision. The full committee of the SIVOM, in this case comprising 59 members, meets to agree the final

programme, before putting it up to the region for funding.

For the SIVOM de Pre-Bocage, the *contrat de pays* was agreed in 1983 for the three year period 1983 to 1986. 36 actions were identified (7 in the field of agriculture, 2 in adult training, 8 in the environment, 8 also in tourism, and 10 in recreation and leisure). One action concerned the development of the SIVOM centre at Cahagnes for use by school and recreational groups. An additional action was the employment of the *animateur* himself.

In the process of the *contrat de pays* two roles are particularly crucial; (1) the role of the *animateur*. He is involved in all stages of the procedure, from the identification of opportunities for development to the stimulation of local people to participate in the development process and the search for appropriate funds. Many possible sources of funding for actions are available. Most actions are in practise funded from a number of different sources, of which the agreement with the region is only one part. In Pre-Bocage, the contractual agreement itself covered only 12% of the funds necessary for the programme of action. The region itself provided another 8% in other forms of support. Many government departments provide funds for certain types of projects, as do FIDAR (the interministerial fund for rural development), the department and the Chamber of Agriculture. The individual beneficiaries themselves must contribute to others. The *animateur* (funded partly by the Ministry of Employment and partly by the communes themselves) is very closely involved with the ultimate success of the development process. Pre-Bocage, in addition to the SIVOM *animateur*, have arranged extra funding from FIDAR, Credit Agricole (the agricultural bank) and the Chamber of Agriculture to employ a specialist agricultural *animateur*. This reflects the importance which they attach to agricultural development. (2) the role of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry provides substantial technical support through the DDAF (rural development service) to the definition of the programme of projects, in all sectors of the economy, not solely agricultural. In many cases (albeit not in Pre-Bocage) it provides financial assistance to the employment of an *animateur*. It contributes also, as necessary, to the funding of individual projects, more especially where involving agricultural objectives, and where following national policies. The Chamber of Agriculture

complements the support of the Ministry of Agriculture by providing technical and financial support through the SUAD (Agriculture and Rural Development Service). The agricultural *animateur* is in practice a professional specialist from this service, on permanent secondment to the SIVOM for a 3 year period.

### **ADECO, DOMFRONT.**

The law of decentralisation of 1983 allowed a new type of local development procedure to be drawn up, the *charte intercommunale* (intercommunal charter). This differs from a *contrat de pays* both in being a medium term, rather than a short term plan (covering 10 years), and in covering urban as well as rural areas. It takes local development away from purely rural issues into the context of the whole local economy, but still in an integrated way. Of the previous procedures, the *plan d'aménagement rural* has been criticised for providing only a process of reflection without a means of subsequent realisation; the *contrat de pays* has been criticised in many cases for not fully integrating the preliminary phase of reflection with the subsequent realisation (although this does not seem a valid criticism of the more recent agreements such as in Pre-Bocage). The intercommunal charter seeks to redress these criticisms; it allows both detailed definition of problems and perspectives, and a detailed programme of action to be established and realised, to help alleviate those problems. The charter is not a contractual agreement in the same way as the *contrat de pays*, it is wholly arranged and approved by the cantons and communes concerned, the only agreement necessary with regions is for those individual projects where finance by the region is required. The intercommunal groups and their *animateurs* have more freedom to set up a wide-ranging programme of action, and to secure funding from whatever sources are available.

The two cantons of Domfront and Passais-La-Conception in Orne department had already in 1982 set in chain the necessary study and processes leading to a *plan d'aménagement rural*. Each canton had already in existence a SIVOM. The study had, inter alia, suggested the setting up of a new and larger intercommunal group, the *Association pour le développement des cantons de Domfront, Passais-La-Conception, Juvigny et Ferté-Macé* (ADECO). Following the 1983 law the development procedure was

changed by agreement of the cantons and communes concerned to that of a *charte intercommunale*, which was to be piloted and coordinated by ADECO, based in Domfront (fig 1).

The procedure for assembling an intercommunal development charter is similar in principle to that of other contractual agreements. In ADECO, 4 study groups were set up, to analyse and evaluate the present problems, and to put forward a programme of action to help alleviate those problems. The study groups concerned (1) agriculture and forestry, (2) non-agricultural employment (particularly small industry, commerce and craft), (3) environment and the quality of life, and (4) tourism. Each group had its own *animateur* to stimulate local interest and develop the programme of actions. The final programme was put together and agreed by the overall *commission plénière* of ADECO, comprising 29 people, representing all the cantons and communes involved, together with representatives of the region, the departmental administration (DDAF) and various professional bodies.

50 actions were defined in the programme, under 10 general objectives<sup>9</sup>. These were given a priority rating, the highest priority being those actions (especially training, communications and structural improvements in agriculture) which enable other projects to be achieved later in the programme. The actions range through the whole spectrum of the local economy, from the encouragement of diversity in agriculture through promoting cider production and small meat products, through to the construction of a swimming pool, health centre and music school. The process of *remembrement* or land consolidation is another action being piloted by ADECO, at the request of local farmers, coupled with the coordination of exchanges of land between families (in the initial phase of study it was found that 102 farmers in the area had no successors; many others had 2 or more children, only one of whom could inherit).

The role of the Ministry of Agriculture is again important and wide-ranging. It has overall responsibility for the procedures used in establishing intercommunal charters. It provides strong technical support through the rural development service of the DDAF. A DDAF specialist has been on permanent secondment to ADECO as *animateur* for the agricultural working group (Each group has a different *animateur* because of

the large amount of detailed technical work involved). More surprisingly, in addition, the DDAF are also represented on each other working group, even though they are only marginally, if at all, involved with agricultural issues. The DDAF is the only organisation to get an overview of the whole process of local development, and this is an indication of the strength of the Ministry of Agriculture's involvement.

Funding is more complex with an intercommunal charter. The 1983 law remains elusively silent on the precise methods of funding intended. In practise, each action is funded separately according to agreements reached by the *animateurs* with various bodies. They are free to seek funds from whatever sources are appropriate. This may include EEC, central government, regions and departments, FIDAR, Regional Parks, communes and the beneficiaries themselves. For example, the action to help diversify agricultural production by encouraging pig enterprises is funded partly from Ministry of Agriculture subsidies (already existing), partly from regional subsidies, and partly by the individual farmers themselves. This is an action that accords with national agricultural policy. The process of *remembrement* is funded primarily by the regions, but partly also by the communes through the agricultural land tax (*revenu cadastral*). The music school project is funded partly by the Ministry of Culture, partly by the region (for the purchase of instruments), and partly by the parents of interested pupils themselves. FIDAR has funded the development of a wood craft industry association, as this project meets its particular criteria of assisting associations of workers in certain rural industries. The role of the *animateur* is again crucial in piloting the whole exercise, in seeking and gaining agreement for funding, and in encouraging local participation.

The intercommunal charter for ADECO was finally published only in January 1986. It is one of the first in operation under the new procedures following decentralisation, and is being used by the Ministry of Agriculture as a pilot scheme, to test and evaluate those new procedures. As yet, it is much too early to assess the effectiveness of the process.

Some of the operations proposed and supported by ADECO are commercial operations in themselves. The *Chais du Verger Normand*, for example, is a marketing cooperative for cider-based products, maturing *calvados* in its cellars in large oak

casks, and marketing *calvados* AOC under its own trademark, *Comte Louis de Lauriston*. ADECO has secured funds from the region and from FIDAR, through the intercommunal charter, to expand this cooperative to include a larger storage space, and a more sophisticated sales area, with small restaurant. It has the potential to become very profitable. It is seen by many as an implicit, if not explicit objective of the state ultimately to reduce funding to local development, with the intention that it should become both self-financing and self-sustaining.

## PARC REGIONAL DE NORMANDIE-MAINE

Paradoxically, considering the strength of involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture in rural development in France, one of the first institutional procedures for rural development was in fact set in place by the Ministry of the Environment. This was the establishment in 1967 of procedures for setting up *Parcs Regionaux* (Regional Parks).

At present there are 24 Regional Parks in France. The Regional Park of Normandie-Maine is one of these. The Regional Park in France is a concept very much like the National Park in England and Wales; it is not solely a nature reserve (there are *Parcs Nationaux* in France which do function as nature reserves) but a rural area in which people live, work and spend their leisure time. Nationally the Parks are coordinated by a Federation based in Paris which has come together to represent their interests, supported again by the Ministry of the Environment. The overall objectives of the Parks are generally threefold: (1) to encourage the development of the local economy (especially in agriculture, crafts, commerce and small businesses), whilst respecting the quality of the environment (2) to provide for tourism and recreation, but integrated with, rather than intruding into, the life of the local people (3) to improve knowledge of, and respect for, the riches of rural life and the countryside.

These objectives are very similar to those of the SIVOM and of ADECO already described, albeit the Park has more emphasis on environmental issues and less on purely cultural ones. Indeed the Regional Park is similar in many ways to these other organisations. It is itself an intercommunal group, in this

case a *Syndicat Mixte*, the impetus for the establishment of which comes from the communes themselves, rather than being imposed from above. The Ministry of the Environment actually does no more than confer the name of Regional Park formally to the intercommunal group, and contribute to its funding. The constitutional charter (*charte constitutive*) for each Park is the agreement between the Park and the region which sets out the aims and objectives of the Park and the programme of action necessary to achieve those objectives. Each Park employs a small team of specialists, rather than a single *animateur*. In the case of Normandie-Maine, this team includes specialists in agriculture, ecology and architecture.

The Normandie-Maine Regional Park covers 234,000 ha and groups together 166 communities in 4 departments. It extends far beyond the limits of the Bocage (fig 1). It is run by a syndicat comprising the local communities concerned and the professional organisations at departmental level. 14 of the communes covered have actually refused to join the syndicat. 22 towns are also members of the syndicat, most of which are just outside the Park boundary, but are interested in helping the work of the Park.

Funding of the Park is by way of an annual working budget, to cover administrative and running costs, and an annual investment budget, used to finance the programme of action. This is slightly different to the contractual agreements of the SIVOM or ADECO. Sources of funding for the working budget are roughly in the proportions 30% Normandy region, 16% Loire region, 28% Ministry of the Environment, and 26% from the communities themselves. The investment budget is funded in roughly the same proportions, but supplemented with other funds where appropriate or possible. The Ministry of Agriculture provides no direct financial assistance to the running of the Park, although it does supplement the investment budget for certain projects. It provides technical support through the DDAF, as does the local Chamber of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture has signed a national agreement with the Federation of Parks, to support in principle the work of the Parks, and encourage liaison between the Parks and the local agricultural administration.

The area covered by the Normandie-Maine Park overlaps considerably with the area covered by ADECO (the Park is in



fact much more extensive); their objectives and actions are in many ways also similar. I suspect that this apparent duplication results primarily from the rivalry between the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture for influence in rural areas, rather than any inherent lack of cooperation locally.

One particular programme of action well illustrates the breadth of interest of the Park in rural development, and its integrated approach to such development. This is its support for the cider industry. In the initial phase of study and reflection the Park identified both the state of neglect of the cider industry and yet also a great interest locally, particularly from farmers, in its revival. It identified considerable potential for the use of this resource to help improve farm incomes, support the local economy and maintain the landscape. There was a need for action throughout the whole spectrum of cider production, and cider-based products, ranging from the agricultural production of apples and pears, through processing and transformation, both on farms and in small businesses, to marketing and promotion of the final products. There was a need for more awareness, advice, research, demonstrations and technical support. The Park was uniquely placed to become involved in all these areas. Only the large industrial processing concerns were beyond the scope of its involvement, and these are anyway least in need of support.

A major part of this initiative was the setting up of the *Maison de la Pomme et de la Poire* (Centre for Apples and Pears). This was established at Barenton, near Domfront, in 1983. It was set up originally at the request of the Barenton commune, a community with important, but rapidly degenerating orchards. Apples and pears have traditionally always been grown in roughly equal proportions in this area. Barenton commune approached the Park because the problem was one that could not be solved at the level of the commune, and moreover was a problem that affected many other areas of Normandy. The commune provided suitable premises, an old derelict farm, of some architectural importance, complete with a small orchard. The Park set up the centre with the following objectives: (1) to establish a museum of the traditions and techniques of cider making, together with a collection, in the grounds of the centre, of different varieties of apple and pear trees (250 local varieties are known; the maintenance of genetic diversity is important

for new varieties produced in the future) (2) to promote all the products of the cider industry, such as cider, *poiré*, *calvados*, *pommeau*, *eau de vie* and apple juice, (3) to provide technical advice and support to both farmers and students, through a programme of demonstrations, research and publications. In addition to the actual museum housed in the restored farm buildings, the centre comprises an office, a meeting room and a small laboratory. The grounds of the farm are devoted to the collection of fruit tree varieties. About 50 are represented on site, including the largest and oldest known pear tree in existence, estimated at over 250 years old, measuring 22 m in height, 4m in girth, and supplying annually over 20,000 pears.

The centre is an attempt by the Park both to encourage diversification in local agriculture, and to promote local products and local traditions.

Funding of the centre has been shared between the region, the Ministry of the Environment (as alma mater to the Park), the local tourist association and the Ministry of Culture (Museums Service). The Ministry of Agriculture provides an annual sum to support the post of *animateur* at the centre (a young horticulturalist, who also acts as the technical adviser). The region and FIDAR support separately the research work, which recently has concentrated on the fertilizer requirements of fruit trees.

In 1986, after 2 years of operation, the centre is becoming well established and successful. The museum is interesting and well laid out. In 1985 it received almost 5000 visitors. The *animateur* has a full programme of work and is unable to devote as much time as he would like to assisting individual farmers. The centre well illustrates the importance of local involvement, cooperative effort and cooperative funding. It also well illustrates the French penchant for association. On the management committee for the centre are represented 19 other cooperatives or associations active locally and with an interest in cider making!

An explicit aim of the Park's initiative in supporting the cider industry has been to encourage the on-farm production of cider products. Complementing the Centre for Apples and Pears the Park has also set up an association of local farm producers, called the *Comité de Développement des Production Cidricoles du Pays Bas-Normand*. The Park provided technical support and

financial aid to this association to help develop the *Route de la Poiré*, a tourist route along which members of the association are located. Most of the producers sell cider, *calvados* and *pommeau* directly from the farm, as well as sometimes providing tourist accommodation and meals. This association has subsequently become self-reliant and self-supporting; the role of the Park was largely that of stimulation and encouragement.

The Park has in addition published a number of leaflets, and some more substantial documents, on orchards and on cider production. These are all aimed at promoting and providing information on the cider industry.

This whole initiative is important because of the way in which the Park has taken an integrated approach to the development of the cider industry, supporting the agricultural production of apples and pears, the processing of the fruit and the marketing and promotion of the final products. Cider represents a small, but very important, local industry. The actions of the Park have benefited agriculture, some small businesses and tourism directly, but there are also many indirect benefits to other parts of the economy. These include local *pépinières* (tree nurseries) who supply new and replacement fruit trees, local restaurants, many of whom specialise in a cider-based cuisine, and even the small traditional industry of the travelling *bouillotte* or *calvados* still, a few of which still visit local farms after the apple harvest. The initiative of course also benefits the landscape, in helping to maintain the importance of the apple tree and the orchard in the countryside.

## CORSICA

Corsica is at once both part of France yet separate from it; it is an administrative region of France yet it is also an island in the Mediterranean situated 170 km from the French mainland. Corsica is a predominantly mountainous island of 8700 sq km, almost half the size of Wales (fig 2). Of a total population of 240000 people, 130000 live in the main urban centres, of which Ajaccio and Bastia are the largest. A large part of the remainder live on the fertile coastal strip on the east of the island (the *Plein Occidentale*). A small and declining number of people are scattered thinly over a harsh and rugged interior landscape. The

highest peak of Corsica is Mt Cinto, 2710m (9000 ft) and yet only 15 miles from the coast. 86% of the island is over 100m (300 ft) in altitude.

Corsica is a land of great contrasts: between the high mountains and the sea; between the high alpine forests and the maquis scrub and chestnut groves of the lower slopes; between the intensive fruit, wine and horticultural enterprises of the narrow coastal strip and the poor, extensive sheep, goat and wild pig pastures of the interior, and between the hot, dry, Mediterranean summers. and the harsh, cold winters of the interior.

Corsica has had a very chequered history, with originally Italian, more recently French, and for a very short period in the 18th century British domination of the island. It is an island of great nationalist feeling, having a national language similar in many ways to Italian (albeit French is the only official language), and a strong local italianate culture. Corsicans refer to mainland France with some disdain as *le continent*. The movement for Corsican independence FNLC is strong and vocal if of necessity on occasion clandestine.

The economy in Corsica is largely based on tourism, especially along the Mediterranean coast, and agriculture. Tourist developments are somewhat restricted by the political sensitivity of the islanders to overexploitation by the mainland French. The agricultural economy is based on vines and fruit along the coast, with dairy products (particularly the local speciality *brocciu* sheep cheese), *charcuterie* (dried meats, especially pork) and chestnuts in the interior. The vine is the main agricultural crop on the island forming 52% of the total agricultural production. 80% of total production comes from the coastal plain, albeit covering only 10% of the island. This area is intensively farmed, and copiously irrigated, and with its Mediterranean climate is very favourable for fruit production. Many farmers on the coast are expatriate north African French, who settled on Corsica after Algerian independence.

In great contrast to the coastal plain, the mountainous interior of the island is agriculturally impoverished. The majority of the interior is classified as mountainous under EEC directive 75/268, which defines agriculturally disadvantaged areas. The traditional livestock farms have declined rapidly and have been replaced by extensive rough grazings. Much former agricultural

land has been invaded by the maquis, a dense impenetrable scrub characteristic of Mediterranean areas. The structure of agriculture in the interior is very poor; holdings are small, scattered and fragmented. 40 farmers still operate the archaic system of 'metayage' or payment of rent in kind rather than cash. A serious and growing problem in the interior of Corsica is the prevalence of scrub and forest fires in the very dry and hot summers, both accidental and intentionally started by shepherds to try and control the maquis. The decline in the maintenance of the upland pastures has meant that fires can spread out of control much more easily. In 1983 72M Ffr (£7M) were spent in Corsica on fire fighting in the interior. This is a significant and unnecessary cost in the economy of a poor rural area. There were 578 recorded fires, covering 6900 ha. Occasionally lives are lost. Statistics on fires are published annually by the agricultural administration, along with other agricultural census data.

Administratively Corsica is divided into 2 departments and 360 communes, 331 of which are within the mountainous zone. The administration of both state and regional affairs is very different on Corsica to the mainland of France. It is headed by the Corsican Regional Assembly. The Ministry of Agriculture is again represented by the DRAF and DDAF. There are, however, because of its serious under development and special situation politically, a number of other bodies on Corsica, not found elsewhere in France, concerned with rural development. These are the ODA (*Office de Développement Agricole*), OEH (*Office d'Équipement Hydraulique*), OT (*Office de Transport*) and the *Agence du Tourisme et des Loisirs*. Prior to 1983 these were all combined as the rural development agency SOMIVAC (*Société pour la Mise en Valeur de La Corse*). They were split up following decentralisation. These organisations provide another dimension to Corsica's economic affairs. The OEH has responsibility for the provision of water supplies, especially for irrigation-vitally important to the agricultural economy of the island, but concentrated along the narrow, fertile coastal strip. The island has a network of water distribution pipelines, supplying both potable and non-potable water from a number of small reservoirs, all maintained by the OEH. The OT has responsibility for transport on the island and road maintenance. The nature of the terrain presents many problems to transport on the

island. The tourist agency has responsibility for promoting tourism on the island (This is a body set up by the Corsican Regional Assembly, not a statutory body like the other three). The ODA performs the role of the DDAF in other regions in administering state financial aid to farmers. It also administers aid under the EEC Integrated Mediterranean Programme (IMP), of which Corsica is the only part operational thus far. The DDAF is consequently a much smaller body on Corsica, than elsewhere in France, but retains responsibility for the administration of subsidies to farmers under EEC directive 75/268.

The activities of the ODA, together with the OEH and OT are overseen by the *Bureau de Développement* attached to the Corsican Regional Assembly. The DRAF and DDAF have direct links to the national government in Paris, as well as to the region. Of other elements of rural areas, forestry is the responsibility of yet another body, the National Forestry Office (a national organisation covering the whole of France). There is no individual body on Corsica with responsibility for the environment and nature conservation. The whole system is complex and adds to the overall bureaucracy on the island.

Whilst the same procedures and processes of rural development are in operation on Corsica as in the rest of France they are far less evident than, for example, in Normandy. On the island 8 SIVOM are in existence, 2 *contrats de pays* are agreed, and two *chartes intercommunale* are in process of preparation- all of these with the exception of two SIVOM (Alta Rocca and Venaco) are on the coastal plain. The main problem for rural development on Corsica is the problem of the interior, and the main economic problem of the interior is the survival of agriculture, and hence of the local population, in the harsh, unproductive natural environment. The problem is manifested by rural depopulation and subsequent invasion by the maquis scrub (This is interesting when compared to England and Wales where of course a major concern in the hills is the survival of areas of semi-natural vegetation, especially heather moorland, against agricultural improvements. Tree heather, a shrub of perhaps 2 m. height, is of course a common plant of the maquis).

There is a general feeling among people in the interior that, because of the overwhelming importance of the coastal plain for

agricultural production, the agricultural administration on Corsica gives only scant attention to the problems of the interior. This may well be true. Certainly a large part of the IMP aid to the island goes to irrigation provision for vineyards along the coast. Similarly the ODA, DDAF and DRAF, whilst formally covering all the island, devote most of their resources to the coastal plain.

## **PARC REGIONAL .DE LA CORSE**

The one organisation on Corsica whose objectives specifically cover rural development in the interior of the island is the Regional Park. This Park is similar in constitution to the other Regional Parks in France. It was created in 1971, covering 150,000 ha at that time, and comprising 48 communes. The Park has grown steadily since by including additional communes so that by 1985 it covered 250,000 ha and 83 communes, a third of the area of the whole island, and including specifically the high mountainous interior in the north and centre of the island (fig 2).

As with Normandie-Maine, the Park is managed by a *Syndicat mixte*, consisting of representatives of the communes, the region, the two departments, the National Forestry Office and the Chambers of Agriculture and Trade. In its *charte constitutive* the Park planned to concentrate its efforts in the interior of the island, as with other Parks in the fields of nature conservation, tourism and the rural economy. The particular objectives of fire prevention and the improvement of livestock rearing in the interior were specifically identified. The Park employs a team of 49 people, half of whom act as wardens or tourist guides, based in their own villages in the interior. It also has a small team of professional and scientific staff, including rural development specialists, land improvement specialists and an architect, based at the Park HQ in Ajaccio (outside the Park), or at its field centre, Casa Pastureccia, in Venaco. Again the Park has a working budget and an investment budget, funded by the Ministry of the Environment, the region, the departments and the communes. Funds are very limited; the total budget in 1985 (£1,300,000) is less than that given by the Ministry of Agriculture each year for the restoration of vineyards on the coastal plain.

The Park has a slightly different role on Corsica to that of the

Normandie-Maine Park, largely because of its relationships with the other bodies concerned with rural development on the island. By default the Park is carrying out much of the role of the Ministry of Agriculture in the interior of Corsica. It supports agriculture in a modest way financially and with technical assistance; it carries out research on methods of land improvement and it prepares dossiers for farmers to put to Paris or Brussels for financial support. It also carries out the prime role in environmental matters; it has established an important nature reserve at Scandola on the west coast of Corsica and many of its actions are aimed at environmental maintenance. Because of modest funds and resources, the Park sees itself very much as a catalyst in the field of rural development; stimulating the local economy by involvement in what it sees as key elements in the economy; stimulating the local administration into action, and stimulating local intercommunal groups. Two SIVOM have subsequently been set up within the Park boundaries, one at Alta Rocca in the south and one at Venaco in the north, the latter sharing the Park's offices at Casa Pastureccia, the Park's land improvement specialist heading the SIVOM team looking at agriculture and environmental problems. The SIVOM are now actively involved themselves with rural development problems.

A major problem for the Park is a lack of coordination of policies generally for the interior of the island. The Park has no responsibility for forestry, albeit a large part of its area is devoted to forestry. Whilst it has responsibility for environmental matters and rural development within its boundary, it has no responsibility outside. The Park covers only one third of the island, and there is no other body with direct responsibility for environmental matters over the remainder of the island. In this way some important issues receive little or no attention. The large cork oak forests in the south of Corsica are wholly outside the Park and so it has no influence over them—they are nevertheless very characteristic of southern Corsica and in general decline (all the cork for wine bottled on Corsica is now either imported from Sardinia or manufactured from artificial material). It is muted that the Region might seek to set up an Environmental Agency on Corsica (in the same way that it set up the Tourist Agency) which probably would in practice become the Regional Park having wider responsibility for the



whole island, but such a move would require a firm commitment of funds and resources from the Region. For the moment these problems remain.

The Park, however, is the one organisation on Corsica able to adopt an integrated approach to rural development. Despite the administrative and bureaucratic problems outlined above, the Park has made a number of significant contributions to the development of the interior since 1971. These have included:

(1) *Opération bergerie*—the restoration of shepherd's mountain huts. An associated problem in the interior of Corsica with the decline in livestock numbers, has been the abandonment of summer pastures. This has allowed the spread of the maquis scrub, with consequent increased fire risk. Since 1972 195 *bergerie* and *casgiles* (cheese caves) have been restored, the Park supplying materials, to which farmers add their own labour. The shepherd's huts were identified as a key element in traditional livestock farming, enabling the practice of transhumance to continue. The cheese caves are where the *brocciu* sheep cheeses are prepared and stored during the summer, their restoration enabling this tradition to continue. This operation was particularly spectacular, helicopter transport being used for materials (funded by the Park) because of the remoteness and inaccessibility of the sites—it has been judged a success however as 26 new sheep flocks now summer in the mountains, and only 8 huts of the 195 restored have subsequently been abandoned.

(2) In another action aimed at the same problem of declining livestock numbers, the Park has been carrying out research work on methods of pasture improvement, based at its field station at Venaco. The research is aimed both at improving agricultural productivity in the interior and at the control of maquis fires. The research involves the initial clearance of the maquis using mechanical means, followed by fertilising and seeding into the natural sward underneath the maquis. Natural grasses are encouraged alongside the seeded varieties. Subsequent restocking is then at a much higher rate, to maintain the improved areas, and thus prevent the spread of fires. The project also involves survey work to identify those areas which could be most successfully improved. The work is carried out on private land in the Venaco area, and whilst very small scale in comparison to the size of the problem, its success is spreading, as the Park has recently seconded a second specialist

to the Chamber of Agriculture for Corsica south to help introduce these improvement methods elsewhere on the island.

(3) Another major problem identified by the Park in Corsica, and indeed common to many other Mediterranean countries, is the decline of the *châtaigneraie* (chestnut groves). These areas are widespread on Corsica inland at moderate altitude, but have suffered heavily from lack of maintenance over many years, such that the majority of trees are now old and diseased. The problem is compounded by the fragmented nature of land ownership in the chestnut groves. One area of 3ha visited had 14 separate owners. France is now deficient in chestnuts and has to import from Spain and Italy, and yet they are a valuable speciality product within the French food trade. The problem was too large to be solved completely within the modest budget of the Park, and funds were not forthcoming from other sources (a little money was initially available from the EEC, but this has now been withdrawn). Renovation of the chestnut groves involves the felling or pruning of diseased trees, followed by replanting where necessary, together with the general improvement of access to the chestnut areas. The agreement of all owners within an individual area is of course necessary. The Park identified as the key element for support the old chestnut mills (*moulins*), of which a number still exist on Corsica, but largely derelict and abandoned. The production of chestnut flour and subsequent confectionery has traditionally been a speciality on Corsica, very popular on the island and with expatriate Corsicans. The Park funded the restoration of 5 or 6 small mills, again often in places lacking good access, and often undertaken by small groups of farmers keen to take advantage of good prices for chestnut flour (£3/kilo). The hope of the Park is that in recreating a processing facility for chestnut flour (and at the same time encouraging the marketing of that flour), the effect will be to stimulate the improvement and restoration of the *châtaigneraie*. Whilst it may be too early yet to evaluate this aim, the action of the Park has already stimulated the local Chambers of Agriculture to become involved in the problem, and to provide more technical assistance to local farmers. The Park is also financing the development of a chestnut harvesting machine (carried on a person's back), to try and replace the haphazard and inefficient way in which chestnuts have been harvested in the past.

### 3 THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

#### REGIONAL STRUCTURE IN ITALY

Italy is a country of great regional contrasts between the wealthy industrial areas, mostly in the north, and the poor southern and mountainous areas. It is a country of great political complexity, which has ramifications throughout the economy. Italy has a decentralised administrative and political structure. Local administration is based on the region, province and commune. The Italian constitution has defined 20 regions, the majority of which (15) are autonomous, with responsibility for internal government, including agricultural matters. 5 regions, because of particular geographical, historical or linguistic problems have special statutes, and a special constitutional assembly. These comprise Sardinia, Sicily, Valle d'Aosta, Friuli and Trentino.

Each autonomous region has an elected president and regional parliament (*giunta*) comprising various regional ministries (*assessore*), including agriculture. The regional ministries represent the state within the region. The regional parliament has power to produce its own laws which can modify national legislation. Decentralisation in Italy has progressed much further than in France. Within this decentralised structure the Ministry of Agriculture remains a small organisation, based in Rome. It has responsibility for national policies in agriculture and forestry, and a coordinating role over regional agricultural *assessore*. It provides block funds to regions to support agriculture. It has an interest in, albeit not formal responsibility for, rural development in Italy. Forestry remains of wholly national concern. Regions have no responsibility for forestry. This is because of the enormous fire risk and need for national coordination through the *Corpo Forestale* (Forestry Corps). The Ministry of Agriculture encourages, at national level, both tourism and nature conservation. It provides financial support to the Agritourist organisation, to promote the growth of tourism on farms. Through the Forestry Corps it owns and administers 3 of the 5 national parks in Italy, whilst providing financial support to the remaining 2<sup>10</sup>.

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN UPLAND AREAS IN ITALY : THE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES

The commune is the basic administrative area in Italy, as in France responsible for land use planning. Local development in the mountains of Italy is based, again as in France on the principle of intercommunal cooperation, but in a much more formal and legally defined way. Economic development in Italy has always been very uneven. The industrial areas have continually prospered where the mountainous areas (and the southern Mezzogiorno) have stagnated. A number of Acts over the years have attempted to improve economic conditions in the mountains. The 1971 Mountain Areas Act (no.1102) represents the most important in a series of such legislation. This legislation recognised the problems inherent in the development of mountainous areas and attempted to give some authority to communes in the mountains to assist in their own development. It created public bodies called Mountain Communities (*Comunità Montana*), being groupings of communes, not voluntary groupings as in France, but the boundaries of which were to be defined rigidly by statute, to include together communes with homogeneous geographical and structural areas. In Piemonte region for example, with 4 provinces and 500 communes, 44 mountain communities were defined. In the whole of Italy, 328 mountain communities were originally defined, covering about half of the national area.

The 1971 Act introduced to Italy the concept of the integrated mountain economy. It linked local development in mountain areas to political and administrative structures in those areas. It highlighted the fact that agriculture alone was not capable of ensuring the survival and progress of mountain areas, and that development had to include other sectors of the economy. It established mountain communities as new public bodies representative of, and responsible to, the local population. Their overall objectives were to promote and encourage the development of the local economy in their areas, throughout all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, within the framework of regional and national economic plans, and whilst supporting the protection of the environment and preventing soil erosion (a particular problem in mountain areas in Italy).

The mountain communities were conceived, at a local level, as economically integrated public bodies. On the political side

the structure of each mountain community was to be a microcosm of that of the region. Each was to have an elected president together with a council (*consiglio*) made up of representatives of each commune, and a team of *assessore*, including, inter alia, agriculture, environment and tourism. On the professional side, each mountain community was to have a small team of professional advisers, to provide technical assistance and support within the communes. Most mountain communities provide a specialist agricultural adviser. This is similar to the agricultural '*animateur*' in intercommunal groups in France.

Mountain communities were not given formal control of land-use planning; this remained with the communes, although the communes, in agreement, could delegate this power to the mountain community. The objectives of the mountain communities were to be achieved by the formulation of a socio-economic development plan, to be agreed between the communities and the regions concerned. This plan, prepared by the mountain community with technical assistance from professional staff in the provinces, regions, and in some cases considerable university support. The procedure is similar to that for a contractual agreement in France, and involves two stages; (1) an analysis of the problems and of the resources of the area, and (2) the production of a planned programme of action, together with an assessment of the funding required, for all sectors of the economy. In a practical sense, most socio-economic plans concentrate on 4 main areas of activity; (1) protection of the environment (2) support for local projects, especially in agriculture, forestry and tourism (3) improvements to the road network, and road maintenance (a statutory function of the communities) (4) education, health care and cultural facilities.

Many mountain communities have close links with the provincial economic development office (*Camera di commercio, industria, agricoltura e artigianato*- CCIAA). This is an integrated body that represents the interests of commerce, industry, agriculture and crafts at the provincial level. Its role, however, is one of coordination and promotion, rather than technical advice or financial support.

The mountain community and the socio-economic development plan seems on the face of it a sensible and practical means

of promoting integrated development in upland rural areas in Italy. In practice however many problems have arisen with the implementation of such socio-economic development plans. It is an unfortunate consequence of decentralisation in Italy, linked to the complexity of Italian political life, that individual regions are able to unduly influence the operation of the mountain communities. Some regions have delegated to mountain communities many functions previously carried out at region; Lombardy, for example, has delegated the functions of mountain land improvement, management of parks and nature reserves and the administration relating to the implementation of EC directives. Other regions have delegated far less power. Funding has been equally variable and at times very difficult. The socio-economic development plan is not a contractual agreement in the same way as the *contrat de pays* in France. There is no formal commitment for the region or state to provide suitable funds, although of course it is implicit in the success of the whole system of decentralisation. Nationally, it is for the Interministerial Committee for Economic Policy (CIPE) to ensure that the mountain communities have sufficient funds, and this is achieved by sharing between regions money that is voted by Parliament. These funds are for regions to disseminate to the mountain communities to help achieve their socio-economic plan. Regions normally provide additional funds from their own resources to support the running costs of the communities. Again, regions disseminate funds differently. It is a consequence of the ephemerality of Italian politics that long-term planning is extremely difficult. Funds voted by one political party in power can be rapidly withdrawn by a party of different complexion, both in the national parliament and at regional level. Regions are, sadly, less keen to support mountain communities controlled by different political parties to their own. The consequence of this is that funding for mountain communities has been a continuing problem, and this has been compounded where other local bodies (such as for example the mountain land improvement syndicates, set up prior to 1971 for land improvement and the protection and control of water supplies, and allowed by some regions to coexist with mountain communities) compete both for scarce funds and political power. Lack of funds has also meant that mountain communities have generally been unable to carry out

some of their duties, for example, to acquire or rent waste and un-used land in the mountains, in order to reallocate such land for agriculture or nature conservation<sup>11</sup>.

Nevertheless, despite these problems, many mountain communities have been successful in promoting integrated development in their areas. Two such communities were visited; the Valle di Stura in Piemonte region, and the Alto Garda Bresciano in Lombardy. These communities and their activities are described in detail below. The communities illustrate the different ways in which funds can be used to support integrated local development in upland areas in Italy.

### **VALLE DI STURA, PIEMONTE**

The Valle di Stura mountain community comprises 7 communes located together in the valley of the river Stura (fig 3). Whilst on the French border and traversed by important links between Italy and France the area is only poorly developed. It is essentially an area of dairying in the lower valley with forestry, mountain grazing and tourism in the upper valley. The climate is cold in winter, with much snow (although the Maddalena pass to France at 2000m is maintained open throughout the year), but warm, and very dry in summer. The dairy pastures are extensively irrigated, even at high altitudes.

The mountain community employs two agricultural advisers and one forestry specialist. It has very close links with the CCIAA in Cuneo, the provincial centre. The specialist on the mountain economy at the CCIAA has been associated with the mountain community (and its predecessor the mountain land improvement syndicat) for over 30 years and is himself an elected councillor for one of the communes involved. The mountain community has in this case taken over a system of self-help and local development that has been in operation for a number of years. Its success has been in stimulating local involvement and in securing available funds to support local development, particularly of the agricultural economy and tourism<sup>12</sup>.

Its activities have included;

- (1) Irrigation. An elaborate underground system of irrigation pipes exists throughout the lower, and parts of the middle

and upper Stura valley. The pipes are fed by a number of small reservoirs located high in the surrounding mountains. Irrigation water is freely available to all farmers (who must provide their own sprinkler equipment). The network of irrigation pipes has been installed in the ground (at a depth of at least 1 m. to prevent freezing-up in winter) at the expense of the mountain community and its predecessor. Most of the permanent pasture is irrigated over the summer months, up to a height of 1200m. Such support maintains the productivity of pastures throughout the summer, and reduces the need for expensive imported feedstuffs, an obvious benefit to local farmers.

(2) The development of a local creamery at Demonte. This is the largest settlement in the area. The creamery takes all the milk from local dairy farmers (together with that from farmers in the neighbouring Valle Maire) and makes a variety of products for local consumption, including yoghurts, cream, and various cheeses. Initially part-funded and initiated by the mountain land improvement syndicat, it is now a commercial operation, and provides substantial support for local dairy producers, as well as providing employment for a number of local people.

(3) Alternative production and diversification. The mountain community is encouraging new agricultural products in the area. This includes soft fruit for the local market in Cuneo; hazel nuts as replacements for some of the aging and diseased chestnut groves, to supply the important confectionery industry in Cuneo (the mountain community has funded some experimental plots of hazel trees on private land within its area); lavender growing to supply a small new factory in Demonte producing lavender essence (the construction of which was part financed by the community), and artemisia (a naturally wild herb in the area cultivated for the production of the liqueur 'genepy' a popular, but rather strong and bitter, local aperitif). The mountain community itself provides some financial support, directs available EEC, national or regional funds, and provides technical advice and support. This action benefits both local farmers, small businesses and tourism in the area.

(4) Tourism. The mountain community supports local tourist enterprises by the production of publicity and promotional material, in association with the CCIAA in Cuneo. It has supported the development of a health spa at Vinadio at



1300m in the upper Stura valley. It indirectly supports tourism by helping to maintain and enhance the environment.

### **ALTO GARDA BRESCIANO, LOMBARDY.**

The Alto Garda Bresciano mountain community comprises 9 communes grouped on the western side of Lake Garda (fig 4). It covers a range of landscapes from the lakeside riviera to the high mountain pastures and forests. Tourism is an important part of the local economy particularly along the lakeside; dairying and forestry are important inland. It is an area of small family businesses, both agricultural and in commerce and industry. Unemployment is low. Over recent years the lakeside area has been growing at the expense of the hinterland and it is an aim of the mountain community to stimulate development throughout its area.

The mountain community is very progressive in many ways. It is fortunately blessed by many important and distinctive physical and cultural features that help create a tourist attraction. The area has a strong historical and cultural identity, dating from Roman times. It has produced a detailed and thorough socio-economic plan covering the whole spectrum of the local economy, both those activities that it is statutorily obliged to deal with such as erosion control and road maintenance, and other activities that it sees as important to the local economy. It has particularly close links with universities at Verona and elsewhere, both in terms of technical advice and support and in terms of contract research. The university of Verona has carried out a number of studies for the socio-economic plan on the population dynamics and agricultural economics of the area.

In some ways Alto Garda Bresciano acts in a similar way to the Valle di Stura in directing EEC, national and regional funds to support economic activities particularly in agriculture, forestry and tourism. It has also, however, supported many cultural activities such as the formation of a public library system. In addition to this direct economic support for rural development, it supports the local economy in many indirect ways that are particularly interesting and indicative of an innovative and integrated approach to rural development. These include the following actions;

- (1) The mountain community was instrumental in setting

up an agricultural cooperative (*Alto Garda Verde*), under the auspices of the Agricultural Technical Centre (CATA), based at its own offices in an abandoned Austrian military barracks at Gargnano. These were both initiatives of the mountain community, supported by the Bresciano provincial government, and were established together in 1983. CATA, the parent body, employs 24 people, including agricultural specialists. It has the following objectives; (a) to act as the agricultural technical organisation of the community, and to help it expedite the agricultural parts of the socio-economic plan (b) to provide a technical advisory service to farmers in the mountain community (c) to develop agricultural training, particularly of young farmers. The cooperative was made into an independent body, and it is also run commercially, with the mountain community as a priority customer. The mountain community uses CATA as an instrument to achieve its own agricultural aims, without the necessity of employing its own agricultural specialists. Being independent CATA is free to accept work where it can. The mountain community contracts work to CATA, including work on pasture improvement and road maintenance and repair. Brescia province contracts work on park and garden maintenance in the whole province. The cooperative itself has purchased a small market garden as a commercial venture. Turnover in 1985 was £1 million. Being both independent and commercial CATA requires less direct funding from the mountain community, which releases limited funds for use elsewhere in the area.

(2) The mountain community as in Valle di Stura is keen to encourage diversification in agriculture. Many farmers are already part-time and have other sources of income. To promote new ideas the mountain community has set up a number of experimental plots for many different kinds of fruit and vegetables in order to assess the problems with their cultivation locally. This work is carried out by CATA, utilising private land (obviously with the support of the landowners), and with funds provided by Brescia province. Alternative crops under examination include apple and other fruit trees (with irrigation control), soft fruit (with suitable protection from hail—a not uncommon climatic problem), and even truffles. A marketing organisation is being set up to help market the produce with tourists along the lakeside. The experimental

plots are used for both research and demonstration purposes. This is not direct support for agriculture, but aims to stimulate diversification amongst local small farmers, thereby encouraging their maintenance in the rural community.

(3) Restoration of the *Limonaiae*. A particularly characteristic historical and cultural feature on the western shore of lake Garda is the presence of old lemon hot-houses, (*Limonaiae*) most of which are now abandoned. The area is on the northern extremity of commercial lemon growing, and during the period of Austrian control of N. Italy in the 18th and 19th centuries lemon growing was introduced to supply the Austrian empire. Lemon trees cannot survive the winter outside at this latitude. Lemon cultivation was only successful in large stone-pillared hot-houses which could be totally enclosed with glass over the winter, but opened up to the sun in summer. Such production was always expensive, and with the advent of cheap Mediterranean supplies (and the demise of the Austrian empire) production ceased locally, although the hot houses remained a strong feature in the landscape. They are of national importance in historical and cultural terms. The mountain community has now instigated a programme of restoring the hot houses, partly as a tourist attraction but also as an economic activity. Lemon production itself is not economic, but the cultivation of lemon trees, especially as house plants, seems more lucrative. Restoration of the hot houses and cultivation of the lemon trees has been contracted to CATA. Funds have been supplied by the province, together with the Ministry of Scientific Research in Rome (an indication of the national importance of the project). Research work on the restoration of the stone pillars (the mortar of which is in many cases in an advanced state of decay) has been contracted to the University of Bologna. It is very much of a cooperative effort, coordinated by the mountain community. There is again little direct financial benefit from this work, but a general maintenance of the environment and indirect support for tourism.

(4) The mountain community has been trying for some time now to establish itself as a Regional Park. There are very few Regional Parks in existence in Italy. This initiative was set in motion by the mountain community, not with the expectation that it would be a negative and restrictive concept in preventing unwanted change, but with the hope that it would

provide a positive opportunity to promote environmental issues in all the activities of the community, thereby benefitting tourism, the quality of life of the local people, and the general overall economy. The concept has been 10 years in preparation. A number of working groups have been in operation, consisting of local people, professional advisers (including university academics), and chaired by *assessore* from the mountain community. Local support for the concept is strong. Having prepared and submitted a detailed and comprehensive case to the region for approval (Regional Parks are regional responsibilities) problems have arisen. The regional government is of a different political complexion (socialist) to that of the mountain community (christian democrat). The region is not minded to support the Regional Park concept at present, which locally is attributed to these political differences. This again illustrates the darker side of Italian politics and its effects on rural development. Again this initiative, when it comes about, will provide no direct financial benefit to the community, only indirectly in promoting tourism and the environment. The fact that the area has not formally been declared a regional park does not prevent it already using the designation in promotional material.

## 4 THE AUSTRIAN EXPERIENCE

### RURAL SUPPORT IN AUSTRIA.

The state of Austria is a federal republic consisting of 9 provinces, sandwiched between Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc. This strategic location has a profound effect on the country's outlook. It is pledged by its constitution to a policy of neutrality which, inter alia, prevents it from joining the EEC. Austria is very much a rural country, with little heavy industry. The rural areas are vitally important to the national economy both from agriculture and from tourism, the latter providing 30% of all foreign currency earnings. Each province in Austria has its own elected assembly and government. A province is divided into several districts (*bezirke*) and numerous communities (*gemeinde*). The *gemeinde* is equivalent to the commune in France and Italy, and has control over land-use planning.

The Ministry of Agriculture, as part of the federal government in Austria, is a small organisation based in Vienna. It is concerned with federal policies in agriculture, forestry and the water industry. At the federal level nature conservation and environmental matters are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Environment. Collective responsibilities sometimes differ at the provincial level; in Steiermark, for example, the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture has responsibility for nature conservation and environment, and indeed has been instrumental in establishing recently a new fund for nature conservation and landscape purposes within the province (*Landschaftspflege*).

Financial support for agriculture and rural areas in Austria is largely through the 'Green Plan' (*Grüne Plan*). This is a policy of, and is administered by, the Ministry of Agriculture and the provincial agriculture departments. The Green Plan is a very complex and wide-ranging system of support, wide-ranging both because of the variety of situations in rural areas in Austria needing support (from alpine pastures to tobacco plantations), but also because of the innovative and progressive nature of much of that support. Of particular importance to upland farmers is the special support for mountain areas (*Bergbauernförderung*) and for border areas (*Grenzlandförderung*). The former is

similar in some ways to the LFA designation in the EEC. Austria has 4 categories of mountain farmers, based on criteria of physical conditions, particularly slope. Farms within these categories are eligible for direct income support, and higher levels of financial assistance for many agricultural and forestry operations. The support for the border areas provides grants and low-interest loans for investments in buildings, machinery and roads in the border areas in the East. Both these schemes aim to support agriculture and forestry in less-favoured parts of the country. The Green Plan amounted to 2710 M. schillings in 1985 (£120M). The total agricultural budget in 1985, including the Green Plan, low interest loans (AIK), forestry support, erosion control and certain price support measures amounted to 14000M schillings (£600M)<sup>13</sup>. In addition to the Green Plan, the Federal Chancellory provides a small sum of money through the Ministry of Nationalised Industry to support rural development projects in certain areas. This is called the *Sonderaktionsfond* (Special Action Fund). From 1977 to 1985 this has amounted to 46M. schillings (£2M), and has supported 70 projects- a small sum relative to the annual agricultural budget, but highly important, especially for those projects of an innovative nature.

The provincial agricultural administration consists of the Provincial government department of agriculture, and the provincial chamber of agriculture. The existence of two separate organisations is traditional and historic, without being unduly logical. The roles of the two are largely complementary but can overlap. The chamber is the larger and stronger body. Austria is in fact a chamber state, each sector of the economy being represented by a national and local chamber, membership of which is mandatory. The chambers exist to represent the views of their members in government. Each farmer, for example, is required by law to join the local chamber of agriculture. The chamber provides the agricultural advisory service in Austria. It is funded partly through farmers contributions (c. 30%), but mostly from the provincial government. A provincial government receives about 60% of its overall budget from federal sources, the remaining 40% is collected locally. All policy in Austria is federal, the provinces are obliged to spend their budgets according to federal policies; the execution of those policies, however, is a provincial function. The provincial

government can decide on the size and type of agricultural advisory service provided, and hence on the size of the chamber. The provincial department of agriculture has specific responsibility only for farmhouses and road construction, and employs very few technical staff.

Austria was chosen for study as an example of a much more centralised economy at both state and provincial level, than either France or Italy, with the Ministry of Agriculture, a sectoral and centrally organised body providing the major means of support in rural areas. Also being outside the EEC it has not been constrained in the past by adherence to the CAP. There are no integrated bodies at local level in Austria or groups of communities actively involved in integrated rural development. However the Ministry of Agriculture, despite the fact that it has no specific responsibility for rural development, adopts a very progressive and flexible attitude to agriculture and rural development, that tends towards a more integrated approach to rural areas. For example it introduced milk quotas in Austria in 1977, at least 6 years before the EEC; it has always had, through its chamber economy, a system whereby farmers contribute to the cost of the farm advisory services, which is only now being introduced in Britain; it has introduced rating of farmland in Austria, which contributes to the funding of local rural communities, and it has, *inter alia*, a policy objective to support the local economy in rural areas, and many of its actions reflect this concern.

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN STEIERMARK PROVINCE**

Steiermark is a province of SE Austria, 18000 sq.km in size, on the border with Yugoslavia. Its principle city is Graz, the second largest city in Austria (fig 5). The province is a little smaller than the area of Wales. It is a province of 60,000 farmers, of average size 10 ha. It covers a very wide range of both climatic and physical conditions, ranging from alpine peaks to areas of almost Mediterranean warmth. In Steiermark 20000 farmers are classified as mountain farmers (30% of the total in the province). In the Steiermark area of Austria visited, actions to support the rural economy include:

(1) Support for all farmers, regardless of size. There is a formal system of farm classification in Austria based on the % of total income earned from agriculture. Nationally, 55% of all farmers are classified as part-time (ie. < 50% of their income is earned from agriculture- and income from forestry is included as agricultural for this purpose). In Steiermark 30000 farmers are part-time. Part-time farmers in Austria have for some time been eligible to receive all available financial supports—in Britain it is only recently with the introduction of the new Agriculture Improvement Scheme (AIS) that part-time farmers receive financial support for the full range of farm improvements. Indeed there is an upper limit to financial support in Austria (based on rateable value) such that larger farmers receive no financial support. The chamber of agriculture in Graz employs one specialist in part-time farming to advise farmers on issues like pensions, unemployment and social security (albeit one specialist between 30,000 part-time farmers suggests that detailed advice for individual farmers is unlikely). The aim of this support is to maintain small farmers in the countryside.

(2) Support for the traditional infrastructure of agriculture. There is an implicit, if not always explicit, objective in the Green Plan to maintain the status quo in Austrian agriculture in terms of landscape and farm structure (rural infrastructure). This reflects the importance of tourism to the national economy (contributing 30% of foreign earnings) coupled with the realisation that tourists come to Austria to see both the landscape and the traditional farming and farm buildings that are so characteristic of that landscape, and which form the image of rural Austria promoted by the tourist organisations. Such tourism is an important source of income for farmers, and other people in rural areas. This is 'soft' tourism, rather than the 'hard' tourism of holiday camps and caravan sites. A number of specific policies support this overall approach; (a) high levels of grant for the restoration of old farmhouses (coupled with lower levels of grant to build new farmhouses, and architectural advice on construction in traditional styles). (b) support for the use of alpine pastures (a subsidy is available for each cow over-summered on the alpine pastures, together with a relaxation of the milk quota) (c) free road construction and maintenance to all farmhouses (this is an important benefit as some private farm roads are many kilometres long—they are



remade free of charge every 5 years).

(3) Direct support for tourism. This recognises again the importance of tourism in the economy both of the farm and of the local area. This support takes two main forms; (a) a specialist tourist adviser is employed by the chamber of agriculture in Graz to provide advice on tourism to farmers. There are special tax incentives to farmers who take up certain types of tourism enterprises—an example is a *Buschenshank*, or small farm guest-house, which is licenced to serve home produced food and drinks, but only cold food (to serve hot food requires a different type of licence). This type of establishment appeals particularly to small vineyards, who are able to sell all their own production of wine through their own catering outlets. Much of the wine production in Steiermark is of the 'schiller' type, a characteristic wine from grapes grown at some of the highest altitudes in Europe (upto 600m). (b) a number of specialist female advisers are employed by the chamber to advise farmer's wives. These ladies are known as *Haushaltsrber-atterinnen* (household advisers). They advise farmer's wives on such things as book keeping, craft work enterprises, and coping with tourists. This is done on the assumption that it is normally the farmer's wife who runs the farm tourist enterprise. Many farm wives provide, in addition to basic accomodation and meals, courses in traditional Austrian cookery and handicrafts. In Steiermark there are 35 special household advisers. The chamber awards annually *Die Bauerinnennadel* (Farmer's Wife Sewing Needle Award), for services to agriculture and home economics.

(4) Support for rural diversification. Partly from a desire to maintain rural farm incomes at a time of surpluses in the main agricultural commodities (Austria is now self-sufficient in many foodstuffs), and partly because of the very diverse climate in Steiermark, the provincial chamber of agriculture is strongly encouraging a wide range of alternative crops. It provides financial support and special advisers in novel production methods. Many of these alternative crops are very labour intensive. The guiding principle is to encourage small areas of intensive production, so that, on each farm, the production can be handled by the farm family itself. This is not a policy to increase employment, but to maintain farm incomes—albeit new employment possibilities have arisen from the introduction

of new crops. For example, the cultivation of pumpkins (the oil from the seeds of which is a local delicacy as a salad dressing) has given rise to a small local industry in extracting the oil, and a demand from local restaurants for the oil to serve to tourists. Similarly the cultivation of elderberries as a commercial crop has both followed and stimulated the small local industry extracting natural dyes from the berries. Diversification is not always successful however; it requires a watchful eye on the vagaries of the market place. At one time the cultivation of blackcurrants was encouraged in parts of Steiermark, but then the availability of cheap supplies from Eastern Europe, and a decline in the popularity of blackcurrant health drinks, led to the grubbing out of most blackcurrant beds in the area.

(5) Support for forestry. 50% of the area of Steiermark is forestry, and the local farmers have a strong tradition of managing woodland, using timber products and earning income from their forests. 30% of farmers in Steiermark earn the majority of their income from forestry. There is consequently a strong local forestry industry, each village having a small local saw-mill. The chamber of agriculture in Graz employs 16 general advisers for forestry, together with 15 specialists. Support for forestry includes forestry as an alternative crop, with the planting of quick-growing energy forest (especially willow and alder) on agricultural land being encouraged. All the major energy sources have to be imported to Austria, with the exception of timber. Much forestry support at the moment is directed towards research and action to combat tree deaths from pollution and acid rain, a serious and growing problem in Austria. An additional shorter term problem at the moment is the very depressed state of the timber market, with consequent low prices. The traditional market for much Austrian timber is the Middle East, but due to low oil prices and cheap timber from Russia, these countries are no longer buying from Austria, with a consequent effect on farm incomes.

(6) Support for the farmer as a rural entrepreneur. A number of the policies of the Ministry of Agriculture provide support for the farmer in entrepreneurial activities, especially where in association or cooperation with other farmers. Support from the *Grenzlandförderung* is specifically aimed at cooperative groups. There is implicit support for entrepreneurial activity in the Green Plan. There is more explicit support

for entrepreneurial activity in rural development through the Special Action Fund for Rural Areas of the Ministry of Nationalised Industries and Transport. The Special Action Fund was set up in 1979 by the Federal Chancellor's Office, initially for a limited period of 2 years and for limited parts of the country. Its objectives were;

(1) to support entrepreneurship and innovation in local people

(2) to support experimental projects to improve the local economy. It provides support only for cooperatives, and only 50% of project costs (to a maximum of 1M schillings, £45000). The fund was extended for a further 3 years in 1981 to include all poorly developed regions in mountain areas. Since 1985 all poorly developed regions in Austria are included. These are defined by name. The Special Action Fund is now administered by the *Österreichischer Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Eigenständige Regionalentwicklung* (OAR), an organisation set up in 1983 for this very purpose, and to provide advice and coordination for rural development projects, with a network of local animators. This source of funding is viewed with a little suspicion by the chamber of agriculture in Graz, because of the left-wing sympathies of the OAR, but its funds are utilised by the chamber on behalf of farmers where its criteria are met—it is particularly important with projects of an innovative nature, that would not receive appropriate funding through conventional channels. It provides a useful and successful complement to the Green Plan. The majority of projects funded through the Special Action Fund are either agricultural (including forestry), or initiated by farmers. Nationally 70 projects have been supported by the Fund to the end of 1984. Of these 28 are in agriculture, 22 are in tourism, 13 are in small businesses, 4 are in energy and 3 in craft industries. 863 permanent jobs have been created<sup>14</sup>. Two projects were visited, both initiated by farmers, illustrating the support for entrepreneurial activity available;

(a) Hackschnitzel, Leutschach.

This is a system for district heating based on waste wood. Designed and initiated by a local farmer who, together with 3 other farmers set up a cooperative to obtain funding. The project established a heating plant in the village of Leutschach, south of Graz, using finely chopped and dried wood (from bark, thinnings or branches, those parts of the tree normally

waste in commercial timber operations) in a hopper fed semi-automatic system. Initially justified as heating for the local school's swimming pool, the plant now produces hot water for central heating in many village houses, and the aim is eventually to supply the whole village. The farmers involved use their own timber for the plant and are paid for that timber, each having a tractor-mounted wood chopping machine, and delivering finely chopped wood as necessary by trailer load. Recipients of heating supplies are metered and charged for their use of hot water. In this way it provides a useful additional source of income for the farmers involved (who make up to 30% of their total income from the plant). Funded from four sources, the Federal Chancellor's Special Action Fund, the *Grenzlandförderung* (Ministry of Agriculture), a low interest rate loan (AIK, again administered by the Ministry of Agriculture), and partly from the 4 farmers themselves, The project has 4 main benefits; (1) it provides cheap heating to local buildings (the price charged is 20% less than that for oil- this is largely because using essentially waste wood, the raw material is very cheap, and yet the farmers concerned still make a good profit) (2) it cuts down the reliance on imported fuel oils (3) it provides a useful additional source of income to local farmers (4) it encourages the efficient use and maintenance of local woodland. It does not provide employment—this was not an objective of the project—indeed the plant was specifically designed as semi-automatic to running reduce costs. All labour in its construction was provided by the farmers concerned; periodic checks on its operation are carried out by local schoolchildren, the plant being located adjacent to the school swimming pool.

The provincial chamber of agriculture provided technical assistance to the project, as the initiator was a farmer, although the project was coordinated by the local animator of the OAR. The project sought support from the Special Action Fund because sufficient funding was not available from normal sources—the role of this Fund in enabling the project to proceed was crucial. At the time this type of heating plant was particularly innovative; in 1986 five such plants are in operation and many more are at the planning stage.

(b) Naturpark, Grebenzen.

In Austria until recently there were no national parks; the first has just been set up in the High Tauern, a remote wilderness

area in which few people live or work. The concept of the Naturpark is altogether different, and is aimed at promoting and channeling tourism in rural agricultural areas of the country. The naturpark at Grebenzen, 80 km north-west of Graz, was again an initiative of a local farmer. It covers an area of 75 sq km, and is aimed at maintaining and enhancing tourism in this area, by maintaining and enhancing the landscape, traditions and culture of the area. Tourism is especially important to the whole Austrian economy and has recently been declining. It is an important source of income for many local people and local businesses in the Grebenzen area.

The park was 4 years in planning and opened in 1983. It was the initiative of a single local farmer who personally motivated local people and local communities into supporting and encouraging his efforts. He personally coordinated and piloted the whole project. It operates without any formal administrative controls, and survives entirely by voluntary agreements and local goodwill. It exists solely to promote the area (by means of publicity leaflets and booklets describing the natural and cultural resources of the area), and to encourage actions that help maintain the traditional landscape, culture and architecture. Initial funding was provided partly by the Special Action Fund and partly from local sources (communities and farmers themselves). Annual running costs (mostly publicity, maintenance of signposts and notice boards, and some small project funds) are now provided partly by the province (nature conservation fund) and partly from a tax on farms in the area catering for tourists. The cost to date (1986) has been 2 M. schillings (£90,000). Again employment creation was not an objective, and there are no permanent staff attached to the naturpark, local people having so far given their time freely.

The benefits of the project have been to all local people, more especially those involved with tourism, both financially and in terms of encouraging interest in, and respect for the countryside. The initiator himself benefits directly as a farmer because his wife runs a tourist accommodation enterprise on their small farm. He also runs a fish farm from which he sells to local tourist and restaurants. It is difficult to measure the success of such schemes. One measure is the amount of local support for the project (which here seems considerable). Another is the growth of similar projects (two more have recently been

established in Steiermark at Pöllau and Sölktaler). The project again sought support from the Special Action Fund because, being very innovative, no other sources of funding were available. The local chamber of agriculture have been involved in providing technical advice to the tourist enterprises, but little direct financial support. With the recent introduction of the provincial fund for nature and the environment, an additional means of support is now available in Steiermark for this and other similar projects in the future.

## 5 THE DUTCH EXPERIENCE

### RURAL SUPPORT IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is a small densely populated country. There are no really remote rural areas, nor any real upland areas: the highest point in the country is only 90m, and much of the country lies at or below sea-level (fig 6). Local administration is based on the province (of which there are 7) and the municipality. In terms of support for rural areas the Netherlands lies at the opposite extreme to France and Italy. It has always had a centrally organised and planned economy. It has a reputation for tidiness and orderliness both in the landscape and in the economy. These both reflect the importance attached to land use planning and rural development, and to the particular procedures used to carry these out. The allocation of land between urban and rural uses is the responsibility of the Ministry of Physical Planning. Each municipality has prepared a land use plan which defines the housing and industrial zones. These are then quite rigidly adhered to in planning cases—the many instances of dramatic change from urban to rural environments on the edge of the larger towns and cities contrasts with the suburban sprawl so often seen in Britain. Land use plans are prepared by rural municipalities as well as those in urban areas. The Netherlands is one of the few countries which has significantly increased its land area this century through land reclamation schemes from the sea. Such schemes provide both the impetus and the training ground for land use planning in the Dutch countryside.

Agriculture in the Netherlands is very intensive, because of the dense population, and is based largely on dairying, but with many large and intensive beef and pig units and horticultural production locally important. Because of the land use planning policies agriculture is efficient and secure right to the edge of urban areas. Agriculture is a very important national industry. It contributes the major share of exports to the national economy (25% of total export earnings). The Ministry of Agriculture in the Netherlands is a large and complex organisation providing substantial support, both technical and financial, for Dutch agriculture. It has, in addition to agricultural policies and the administration of financial aid to agriculture, responsi-

bility for all agricultural advice, agricultural training and research. At national level it is one of the most integrated agriculture departments in Europe, having a broad area of responsibility for agriculture, forestry, nature conservation, recreation and land consolidation. It provides an interesting comparison with the essentially locally based approaches to rural development in France and Italy.

Support for rural areas in the Netherlands is based on the concept of land development (previously called land consolidation) programmes. These were originally instigated in the 1920's for a number of reasons but the primary reason was the need to improve the efficiency of Dutch agriculture. The present agricultural structure over much of the Netherlands is a result of both poor physical conditions and inefficient social structure (or means of inheritance). Physical conditions, particularly the poor drainage and waterlogging, historically have produced a distinctive landscape characteristic over much of the Netherlands where farmhouses could only be built on certain flood-free areas, often at great distance from associated fields. The system of inheritance resulted in land being divided and fragmented continuously over many generations. The present structure is one of small, very fragmented holdings (at the most extreme a 50ha holding in 35 different parcels). Consequently some parcels are very intensively farmed (the most accessible), others are left to degenerate (the least accessible). Much unnecessary time is wasted in travelling to and from fields—indeed milking in the fields in mobile milking parlours is still commonplace in many parts of the Netherlands. This inefficient farm structure is slowly changing as land development programmes are set in place.

## **LAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

Since the 1920's land development programmes have been executed in the Netherlands on an extensive scale. It is by no means a new procedure. Since 1935 they have been the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture's Service for Land and Water Use. There have been a series of Land Development Acts in Holland, of which the 1985 Act is the most recent. Land development programmes provide the opportunity for integrating land use in the countryside. Measures taken vary with



particular circumstances but generally a land development plan allocates land to a number of different rural uses (including agriculture, forestry, nature conservation and recreation), whilst at the same time regrouping and improving the structure of agricultural holdings. Other measures can include improved accessibility through road building and improved water control, which in the Netherlands usually means a lowering of the water table through pumping. The opportunity for integration throughout the whole economy is less apparent because of the physical land use plans which have already allocated land for housing and industrial use, a constraint within which the land development plan must operate. The average size of each land development plan has been about 5000ha (each comprising a number of rural municipalities). The total area covered annually in the past has been about 40000ha (reduced since 1984 to 36000ha), at a cost to the Ministry of Agriculture of £60 million per year. About a third of all agricultural land in the Netherlands has now been subject to land development. Some of the older schemes are now being put forward for development a second time.

The procedures involved are long and very formalised, in order to provide full and proper consultations and opportunities for local participation. One land development plan can take up to 30 years from initial request to final implementation. There are six stages;

- (1) Initial request—this emanates from a local body, usually a group of farmers keen to improve the structure of their holdings, but more recently requests have been received from nature conservation organisations seeking to improve environmental conditions in particular areas. The request is to the Central Land Development Committee (CLDC), the body established by the Ministry of Agriculture to oversee the programmes nationally.

- (2) Priority allocation—the CLDC considers all requests for land development plans, and allocates priorities according to the budget available. For those plans that are to proceed, a local land development committee is set up, consisting of local people (usually a number of local farmers) and chaired perhaps by a local dignitary or mayor. This body oversees the progress of the individual plan. A local officer of the Service for Land and Water Use is appointed to coordinate the plan.

(3) Resource inventory—a survey of the area concerned is carried out by specialist staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, to provide a resource base, covering agriculture, forestry, nature conservation and landscape.

(4) Integration—a draft plan is put together by the specialist staff, outlining the preferred use for land within the plan area. Where possible the most suitable land is allocated to forestry, nature conservation or recreational use. The reallocation of farmland is carried out by Land Registry staff of the Ministry of Housing (the ownership of all land in the Netherlands is registered). To assist this process all farmland in the plan area is assigned a financial value (based on soil types— the best and the poorest land in the area is identified and the remainder is valued relative to these extremes. This work is carried out by local farmers under specialist supervision). Reallocation of land works on the principle that each farmer receives in exchange land of equal value to that which he had previously (although it may be larger or smaller in size). The aim is to give each farmer no more than 1-3 individual parcels, where he had on average from 6-10 previously.

(5) Consultation—after the draft plan has been produced there is an extensive period of consultation with the local people. Objections are dealt with if possible by the local land development committee; changes to the plan can be made at this stage. The final arbiter in cases of objection is the law court—there is no special procedure for this. In the case of Midden Maasland for example, of 4000 owners involved, 500 initially raised objections to the local committee; of these 50 could not be resolved locally and had to go to court for a judicial decision. Both parties must abide by this decision. Following consultation a vote is taken amongst all the landowners concerned (only landowners are involved, those local people not owning land, and therefore not directly involved in reallocation, albeit perhaps still very interested in the outcome, are not allowed to vote). A 51% vote in favour is sufficient to gain approval for the plan. Voting is on the basis of area owned (1 vote per ha. owned)—therefore acceptance by a small number of large landowners could be sufficient for a majority decision. Once formally approved, all landowners in the area must comply with the plan by law.

(6) Implementation—the final agreed and approved plan is

then implemented. This may be typically 20-30 years after the initial request. Implementation itself takes a number of years, involving new road building, new farm building, and extensive drainage works. The Dutch government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, normally contributes 65% of the costs; the farmers concerned must pay the remainder, typically £25-30/ha, repayed over 25-30 years. The Land Management Service (LMS) of the Ministry of Agriculture exists to help the implementation of land development plans by purchasing land, both for forestry or nature conservation end uses, and agricultural land to assist in subsequent regrouping and amalgamation.

As a means of justifying such enormous expenditure, a detailed cost-benefit appraisal of each scheme is now completed at the final plan stage. The cost of the work needed to complete the scheme is estimated. The benefits to farmers of increased efficiency and reduced travelling time are costed in detail. Intangible benefits to nature conservation or landscape are described in detail. Only those schemes where the estimated benefits amount to 10% of the estimated costs are accepted for final implementation. Those schemes where the estimated benefits are <5% of costs are rejected. For those schemes inbetween, then the plan is implemented if the intangible benefits are substantial and important<sup>15</sup>.

## **THE EFFECT OF LAND DEVELOPMENT ON RURAL AREAS**

Land development plans originated as schemes to improve agricultural productivity. Because of the length of the process, plans now being implemented are those that were initiated in the 1950's and 1960's. Over this sort of time scale circumstances change—increasing agricultural production is now, with food surpluses in Europe, not an objective in current agricultural policy, and the emphasis has shifted in land development plans to increasing agricultural efficiency and improved quality of life for farmers, factors sometimes difficult to quantify. Increased emphasis is also now put following the 1985 Land Development Act on the opportunity to allocate land to other non-agricultural uses (such as forestry or nature-conservation), and

to encourage non-food agricultural crops (for example the cultivation of willow crops is increasing following the introduction of new uses for such crops as, inter alia, noise baffles on motorways). The objectives of the 1985 Act specify the need to develop rural areas in an integrated way, taking account of nature conservation, forestry, landscape and recreational interests. It is the policy of the Ministry of Agriculture to increase forestry in the Netherlands by 30000-35000 ha. by the year 2000. The land development plan now provides the opportunity to formally and systematically take land out of agricultural use. As recently as 1982 the overall loss of agricultural land was viewed as a cost of a scheme<sup>16</sup>, but in 1986 it is a benefit, and to this extent land development plans enable the Dutch government to practise a 'setaside' policy.

In the spectrum of European agriculture the Netherlands is at one extreme—in the dairy sector, for example, agriculture is intensive, stocking levels are high and fertilizer use is high as is the production of slurry. The same is true for intensive livestock production. Land development plans are now completely reorganising the traditional structure of agriculture. Intensive production methods rely on increasing productivity to maintain farm incomes. This in turn leads to yet higher stocking levels, inputs of fertilisers and subsequently yet higher inputs of slurry to the soil, which is now creating unforeseen problems. High levels of ammonia in the soil can lead both to a build up of nitrates in groundwater, affecting potable water abstractions, and to a build up of fungi in the soil in certain areas, which can attack and destroy trees (especially those already weakened by acid rain pollution). Many forest areas are at risk. A law is in preparation in the Netherlands which will limit the amount of slurry that can be spread on a given area of land. This will increase farm costs both in storage and in transportation of slurry to other areas. Quotas limit the increased production that can now take place in the dairy industry. Options for alternative crops or alternative incomes for farmers are limited and at the moment do not seem to be encouraged nationally. Farm tourism has never been popular in the Netherlands and land development plans in changing the traditional structure of agriculture are also decreasing the tourist potential. It does rather seem that having adopted the road of intensification and land development, there is now less flexibil-

ity for agriculture in the Netherlands to change to meet new economic circumstances.

Use is now made of LFA (less favoured area) payments to support agriculture in areas designated, in Land Development Plans, as nature conservation management areas. The best ecological areas in each land development plan are purchased, where possible, by the LMS and handed over to the State Forestry Service (another constituent part of the Ministry of Agriculture's Service for Land and Water Use), or occasionally a local nature conservation organisation, to manage. These are called reserve areas. No commercial agriculture is allowed. In these areas the objective is to increase the potential wildlife value by active management. Other areas of ecological interest of lesser importance are kept in agricultural use, but accorded LFA status under article 3 of EEC Directive 75/268. These are called management areas. LFA subsidy payments (upto £45/ha/year) are available to farmers in these areas as part of a management agreement. The objective here is to maintain the status quo in terms of ecological interest by means of appropriate agricultural management. All the management areas comprise permanent pasture, mostly of interest as nesting areas for waders, less often for rare or unusual plants. The main agricultural restrictions applied in management agreements normally concern the timing of cutting and fertilising operations in spring (when wading birds are nesting), and less commonly the amount of fertiliser use. On one management area visited at Waterland, north of Amsterdam, one farmer had three different management agreements for each of three different fields within the management area—each involving a different date of earliest silage cutting (1st June; 8th June and 15th June respectively). This diversity in management was encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture specialists, mirroring the diversity in conditions judged necessary for the breeding birds. Management agreements are entirely voluntary, no compulsion is involved. The uptake of such agreements in the Netherlands is variable. In Waterland for example, 60% of the management area was covered by management agreements in 1986 (involving 50–60% of the farmers concerned). This appeared fairly successful. In the Meuse valley in Brabant however, in a small area of hedgerow landscape, noted for its badger population (both of which features are very unusual in

the Netherlands), where agreements sought to maintain and actively manage the hedgerows, only 3 out of 100 farmers had taken up such agreements by 1986. It does seem that to some extent the take up of management agreements is linked to the economic health of farming—it was suggested by local Ministry advisers that as farm incomes fall with the present depressed state of agriculture, so farmers will look more to management agreements, where possible, to help maintain their incomes.

The programme of land development plans requires a continuing long-term commitment of funds by the government, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture. The annual budget for land development is in the order of £50 million/year. Whilst this represents only a moderate part of the whole agricultural budget, it is considerably enhanced by the numbers of staff necessary to operate the system. The Service for Land and Water Use has, nationally, 550 specialists involved with such plans, The Land Management Service has 150. The State Forestry Service is building up an enormous landbank of areas (both nature conservation and forestry) all requiring continuous and detailed management. It employs 1500 people to do this, at considerable expense. Many land development plans themselves are very expensive to implement. The scheme for Wanneperveen, for example, in Overijssel province, involving 5000ha of land, cost a total of £3500/ha to implement. It involved extensive drainage and pumping works and the creation of buffer zones around the nature reserve areas where water levels are kept artificially high, to prevent them drying out. Farmers contribute to those costs which benefit them, in this case an average of £50/ha over 25 years. Whilst in the 1960's when this scheme was initiated, increases in productivity were welcomed, and such long-term costs were acceptable, today, with falling farm incomes, such sums are more difficult to find both for the average farmer, and for the Ministry of Agriculture.

At national level the Ministry of Agriculture in the Netherlands is a far more integrated organisation than elsewhere in Europe, having much more wide-ranging responsibilities than most other agricultural departments. This enables it to evaluate the best use of land and adopt an integrated approach to land use and through that rural development. However it does seem that such an integrated approach nationally is achieved by effective

separation at local level. In a development control sense there is already strict separation in rural areas between housing and industry, and the open countryside. Within the rural environment areas of agriculture, nature conservation and forestry are also managed separately at the local level rather than integrated. The State Forestry Service owns and manages most forests and nature reserves in Holland, but there is little integration locally between these and other sectors of the local economy. Other than in management areas, by way of management agreements, farmers are not involved in forestry or nature conservation. This approach has its disadvantages, in not encouraging local involvement. The Weerribbosch nature reserve, for example, in Overijssel, is actually owned by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, but administered by the Forestry Service. It is an area of former peat diggings, now flooded, forming a vast wetland area of 6000ha, including water, reedbed and wet meadow environments. It is home to many rare water birds, as well as the otter. Traditional employment in the area, besides agriculture, was in fishing, peat digging and reed cutting. There are no roads in the area; all transport, including the transport of machinery and animals, is by boat. The area is now managed by the Forestry Service as a nature reserve (employing 60 people on the reserve). It was originally proposed as a national landscape area (a similar concept to a National Park in Britain), but this was abandoned due to a massive objection by local farming organisations. It now has a national park designation, which means that no commercial agriculture is allowed within the reserve. Cutting and grazing of the wet meadows is practised, but only by reserve staff (utilising Swedish fjell cattle for grazing), and not in any commercial way. The hay produced is used either on bulb fields elsewhere in winter as a mulch or converted into fuel pellets to run a small boiler in the reserve's Visitor Centre. Little is done to exploit these possibilities to generate income and improve the local economy. Reed cutting is still practised (in fact a number of local farmers have contracts to cut reeds on the reserve, for a state subsidy of £50/ha/year) because of the local market for thatching material, but there seems to be little active encouragement of this aspect of the reserve. Peat digging has long since finished, but to maintain open water environments the Forestry Service has now instigated a policy of excavation, using a drag-line, dumping

excavated peat on other parts of the reserve. No attempt is made to make commercial use of the peat excavated—the implicit assumption has been made that there is no market for peat. The local economy could well benefit from a more innovative and entrepreneurial approach to running the reserve.



## 6 SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

The problems of declining rural and upland areas are well known: they are essentially similar throughout the upland areas of Europe<sup>17</sup>. Agricultural attempts to alleviate some of these problems have revolved in the past largely around increasing productivity, or direct financial support for farmers. The present urgent need to control agricultural surpluses, and the escalating costs of the Common Agricultural Policy, can only exacerbate these problems over the next few years.

New approaches are needed to the development of rural and upland areas, approaches that take an integrated view of the whole rural economy. This study has examined and described a variety of experiences of rural development in Europe that, whilst differing considerably from each other, have in common the attempt to pursue an integrated approach to such development. The areas themselves differ considerably in their physical, historical and cultural characteristics. The intention of this study was not to critically compare agriculture or rural development in each area, but to try and define those key elements in that rural development, particularly from the viewpoint of the Ministry of Agriculture, that contribute to the success of the approaches studied. Whilst all of these approaches were able to fulfil some or all of the objectives of integrated rural development outlined in the introduction to this report, the varying institutional and political frameworks within which different countries operate provide different constraints on their success in stimulating rural development and rural enterprise. Such constraints operate at the European, national and local level.

At the European level, three of the four countries visited are member states of the EEC. Only Austria is not constrained by adherence to the Common Agricultural Policy, or other EC policies affecting rural areas. Austria is itself politically constrained however by its strategic location between Western and Eastern Europe.

At the national level, in all the areas visited, most support for rural areas is provided through policies under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture. In the Netherlands and Austria support for rural areas is administered directly and centrally by the respective Ministries of Agriculture. At one extreme the

Ministry of Agriculture in the Netherlands is a large, centrally organised body, with wide-ranging responsibilities over the rural economy. It is an integrated organisation at national level. Its support for rural areas is manifested in land development plans, which are centrally administered and coordinated, but aimed at identifying the best and most efficient use of land in rural areas. Some local people are involved in the process, more especially local farmers and landowners, albeit more recently other rural groups (for example conservationists) have been making more use of the procedures involved to further their own interests.

In Austria the Ministry of Agriculture is also centrally organised, with a strong national and provincial structure. It adopts a wide-ranging set of policies to support rural areas through the 'Green Plan', which, whilst of itself not a wholly integrated approach does achieve many of the same objectives of maintaining and supporting the whole rural economy, and encouraging rural enterprise. The only procedure in Austria that does formally seek to fully integrate all sectors of the economy is the Federal Chancellor's Special Action Fund. This, however, is very small in comparison to funds available through the 'Green Plan'.

In France and Italy policies for rural areas are still, in the main, national, and administered sectorally. Strong central organisation is replaced, however, by a more devolved and decentralised economy. Effective control over the development process has been placed at the local level, in the intercommunal groups in France, and in the mountain communities in Italy. These organisations provide a framework to enable national policies to be translated into effective local programmes of action. There are many similarities between these two types of organisations in their approaches to rural development. Both are able to take an integrated approach to development at the local level. Where, however, French intercommunal groups are voluntary associations of communes, which can, and do, change from time to time, the mountain communities in Italy are statutory bodies, legally defined by the 1971 Mountain Areas Act. In France the intercommunal groups are strongly supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, which has the main coordinating role in rural development, linked to agricultural support. Other central government departments provide addi-

tional funds. In upland areas of Italy, however, such support is most clearly devolved away from the agricultural administration and direct support for agriculture, and wholly in the hands of the mountain communities. Consequently the role of the Ministry of Agriculture, and of the regional agricultural administration, in the mountain communities is very much more limited. There is no formal coordinating role of the Ministry of Agriculture in rural development in Italy, as in France.

The framework of intercommunal groups in France and mountain communities in Italy provide fewer constraints to integrated rural development at the local level. They provide one of the most successful ways of meeting the needs and aspirations of rural communities. The key features of these organisations are their concern for the whole local economy and their strong local involvement. Within the EEC it does seem that integration at the local level is becoming more important. Looking to the future, with the setting up in Brussels of a new Directorate General in the EC (Service for the Coordination of Structural Instruments, DG XXII) specifically to coordinate the use of the three sources of EEC funds (agriculture fund, social fund and economic development fund), it does seem that those organisations most integrated locally will perhaps be better placed to take advantage of such coordinated funding.

The economy in Britain remains centrally organised, although of course Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own departmental administration. We have, of course, no organisations that are integrated, or with any control over the whole economy, at the local level. Translating the results of this study into a series of recommendations for the UK is a difficult exercise, because of the different institutional and administrative framework present in the UK. However in identifying the key elements of the integrated approaches to rural development studied, it is hoped that this will put into perspective what might be achieved in Britain. These key elements are:

- (1) The provision of a framework for producing programmes of action in local areas that can take into account the local context, the local need and the local resources. In the Netherlands this is carried out through the formal and centrally organised system of land development plans. In France and Italy intercommunal groups are able to evaluate the specific prob-

lems of their own areas, and to coordinate and integrate the resources available to help alleviate those problems. Such local programmes of action derive from, and are supported by, national policies throughout all sectors of the economy. Whilst the majority of the financial support available is ultimately national, and administered sectorally, the execution of those national policies and the allocation of funds can be decided at a local level. In most cases funds available are extremely limited. In situations where national policies do not entirely match local problems, intercommunal groups are encouraged to seek funds from diverse sources. It is the role of the animator and elected officials to coordinate the provision of suitable funding; they, therefore, need to be familiar with sources of, and methods of obtaining funds. The success of these processes requires local cooperation and local involvement, but also a strong commitment for central government support, both financially and in terms of technical advice and assistance.

(2) The encouragement of self-help and facilitation of local involvement in the development process. Local people are involved either as animators, project initiators, or as elected officials. The role of the elected official in the development process is paramount, supported by professional and technical advice where necessary. It is estimated that in France one adult in five in rural areas is an elected official in some form<sup>18</sup>. The role of animators is also particularly crucial in piloting and coordinating the whole development process. In France and Italy animators are attached to the intercommunal groups. In Austria the Federal Chancellor's Special Action Fund has provided a network of local animators to coordinate local development projects. In some ways an important role of the professional advisers, especially those provided by the agricultural departments, is in identifying and encouraging individuals in the local community to act as initiators and leaders of development projects. Much professional advice is actually provided at local level by specialists either permanently attached to, or on secondment to, communes or intercommunal groups. In this way the specialists become a part of the local community.

(3) Development is aimed at all sectors of the economy. The intercommunal groups have specific objectives to support agriculture, small industries, tourism, the environment, and the

quality of life of local people. Limited funding has encouraged intercommunal groups to act in many ways as catalysts in the local economy, in identifying key sectors of the local economy to support and stimulate. This shows the success which can be achieved in bringing together activities previously the responsibilities and concerns of many different national and local organisations. This is the case, for example, in support for the cider industry in Normandy, which fulfills all the objectives listed above. In other ways the large number of intercommunal groups, particularly in France, and their overlapping geographical areas, means that each can support a different part of the same sector of the economy. In Normandy, each intercommunal group visited supported in some way woodland and the derivative local timber industry. The SIVOM was carrying out a study of wood for heating (using especially hedgrow cuttings which would otherwise have little economic value), ADECO was encouraging the use of local timber in buildings and the construction industry, while the Regional Park was encouraging the maintenance and replanting of hedges in the countryside. The overall effect is an integrated, and wide-ranging system of support for the local economy. In Austria, where support for rural areas is largely restricted to the agricultural administration, the overall effect is, however, still to stimulate most sectors of the local economy because of the flexible and wide-ranging nature of that support. Land development plans in the Netherlands also have wide-ranging objectives across the rural economy, but they have far less concern for business enterprise, and for the social and cultural aspects of rural areas.

Whilst an integrated approach to rural development indeed covers the whole rural economy, many of the most successful actions seen in the areas visited were based on agriculture in some way, either concerning agricultural production and processing (including forestry), concerning agricultural land (for alternative crops, or its appearance in the landscape) or concerning the farmer as an entrepreneur in rural areas. The importance of agriculture as a major land use and employer in rural development remains paramount.

(4) An important part of integrated development is a concern for the environment. This is particularly strongly shown in the Netherlands, where areas of environmental interest are identified at an early stage in the land development

process. The objectives of the Regional Parks in France relate closely to the need to maintain the rural environment and heritage, and improve knowledge of that heritage amongst local people. The Alto Garda Bresciano mountain community in Italy, in seeking to achieve Regional Park status in the Lombardy region, is especially conscious of trying to promote environmental issues in all the activities of the community.

(5) A close and strong relationship exists in those parts of France and Italy visited between the local communities and the universities. Whilst not fundamental to the success of integrated development, this is an important and mutually beneficial relationship, the universities providing expert advice and assistance, the local communities providing access to research grants and research contracts, related of course to practical problems of local development.

Whilst most support for rural areas derives ultimately from the agricultural administration in each of the areas visited, what seems to be important at the end of the day is not the particular sector for, or source of financial and technical support for rural areas, but that such support should reflect the needs and aspirations of those areas. A major feature of support deriving from agricultural departments in the areas visited was that it benefitted not just agriculture, but the whole rural economy. Examples of such support have been described in detail within the report. In summary however, some of the key elements of the role of the agricultural departments can be identified as;

(1) the devolution of more financial and personnel control to regional or provincial level, with appropriate powers to decide on local priorities for the use of funds and technical assistance

(2) the placing of special advisers on rural development into the rural community, attached to local organisations

(3) financial and technical support for other organisations involved in rural development (eg Gites de France, Regional Parks, Agriturismo)

(4) financial and technical support for part-time farmers

(5) support for the traditional infrastructure of agriculture

(6) financial and technical support throughout the whole spectrum of agriculture (including production, marketing and food processing)

(7) support for alternative crops and small-scale production

- (8) support for local speciality food production
- (9) support for high quality food production (with the marque of quality such as *appellation contrôlée*)
- (10) support for the on-farm transformation and processing of food
- (11) support for alternative uses for agricultural crops (especially those that can be used in small local businesses)
- (12) support for forestry on farms and the local timber industry
- (13) support for craft industries on farms
- (14) support for tourism
- (15) support for entrepreneurship in farmers (encouraging and stimulating small business ideas in local people)
- (16) support for experimental projects and businesses where farmers are involved.

All such support includes promotion, technical assistance and financial aid either individually to farmers or collectively to co-operatives and groups of farmers, and to intercommunal groups.

The view of rural development in Europe presented in this report is essentially an optimistic one. The organisations and projects visited were obviously the successful ones. There are inevitably failures, conflicts of interest and problems of funding. But this study does show that where there is a spirit of local involvement and cooperation, adequately funded and supported by the state, albeit through a variety of different administrative and institutional frameworks, then integrated approaches to rural development can be made to work, and to the overall benefit of the local economy.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

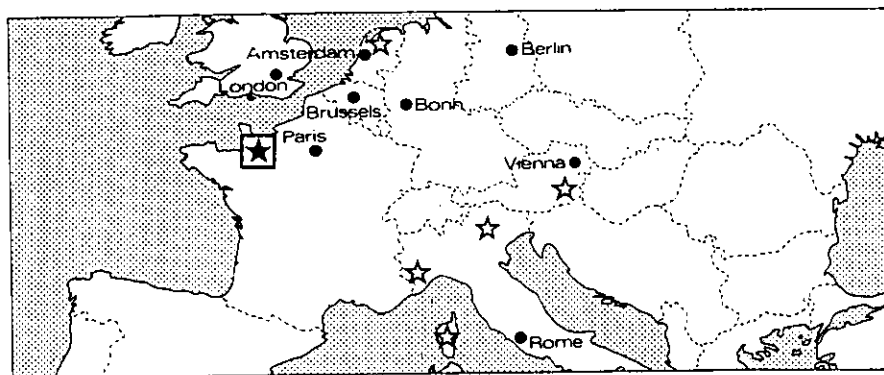
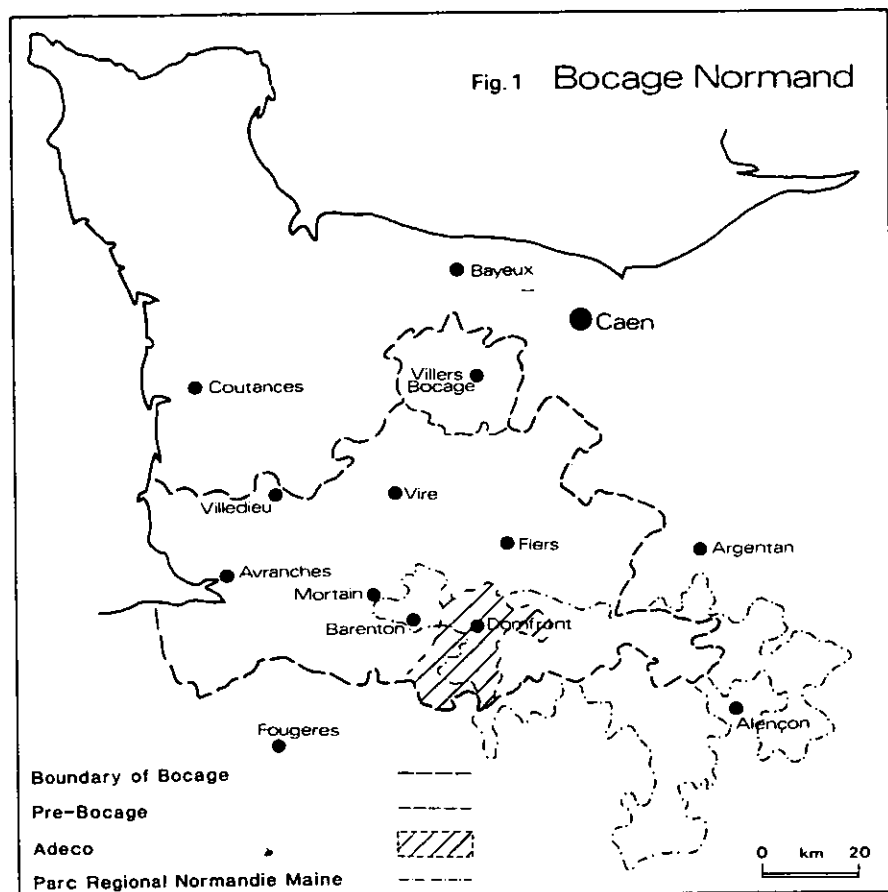
- (1) The 12 case studies were:  
 UK  
     Peak Park  
     Radnor and Eden Districts  
     Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor  
 France  
     Bocage Normand  
     Jura  
     French Alps (Savoie)  
 Belgium  
     Namur Province  
 Ireland  
     Galway and Mayo  
 W Germany  
     Cuxhaven  
     Aurich  
     Erftkreis and Vogelsbergkreis  
 Italy  
     Piemont (Valle di Stura)
- (2) Ulbricht, T 1986 Integrated Rural Development. Proceedings of Symposium, Wageningen, September 1985. Nationale Raad voor Landbouwkundig Onderzoek, S'Gravenhage. 251pp
- (3) Gravier, J F 1947 Paris et le désert français. Flammarion, Paris (reprinted 1972)
- (4) Coulmin, P 1986 La Décentralisation—la dynamique du développement local. Syros et Adels, Paris.
- (5) Under Ministerial Decree no. 84-1193 of 28.12.1984 the DDAF are empowered to carry out certain duties on behalf of the Ministry of the Environment. These can include nature protection, water management, pollution control, the licensing of polluting discharges and the control and licensing of fishing and shooting. The structure of the DDAF reflects the need to cater for these enlarged duties. From 4.12.1985 the DDAF are similarly empowered to undertake certain duties of the Ministry of Commerce, Craft and Tourism (communication of M. Rene Souchon to the French Council of Ministers, reported in *l'Actualité*, no 1127, December 1985).
- (6) Coulmin, 1986 op cit
- (7) Appellation contrôlée and appellation réglementée are marks of quality applied to wines, spirits and cheeses in France. They are administered by the Institute National Appellation d'Origine (INAO). With regard to calvados, new regulations from INAO of September 1984 have defined the conditions of production of 'eau-de-vie' appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC). Eau-de-vie is the general term for spirit distilled from apples and pears. Only 3 categories of quality now exist: 1. AOC calvados du Pays d'Auge, limited geographically to a small area of north Normandy and only when subject to a double repass distillation. 2. AOC calvados groups the 18 former appellation réglementées. It covers a much larger area including the whole of Normandy and parts of Mayenne and Perche departments. There is no obligation for double repass distillation and the specific region of origin can be included at the discretion of the producer. 3. All distilled liquor from outside areas 1 and 2 must be called 'eau-de-vie'. It is not subject to AOC.

To help preserve the quality of the products the following measures have been taken by INAO: a. a list of apple varieties not suitable for cider and calvados making has been compiled b. authority has been given to produce new



- fermented apple and pear drinks (for example pommeau, which is not yet old enough to register for AOC) c. the prefix 'farm-produced' must be reserved for production manufactured on the farm, using produce harvested from the farm.
- (8) The problems and the resources of the Bocage are described in the report of the EEC sponsored IRID project—'Vivre en Bocage', Dossier on Integrated Rural Development 1982 (in French).
  - (9) These objectives are:
    1. Creation of small businesses
    2. Improvements to agricultural conditions and methods of production
    3. Improvements to adult training
    4. Improved local infrastructure
    5. Development of tourism
    6. Home Improvements
    7. Improvements to local main services
    8. Improvements to local social and recreational facilities
    9. Cultural development and training
    10. Protection of the natural heritage
  - (10) The Italian Ministry of Agriculture owns, and administers through the Forestry Corps the National Parks of Circeo, Stelvio and Calabria. It provides financial support to Gran Paradiso and Abruzzo, which have their own, independent Park Authorities. Eight new National Parks are proposed.
  - (11) A good review of the statutory duties and limitations of the Mountain Communities is contained in:
 

Berni, P 1978 The Mountain Communities and the new Law for the mountain areas. Agricoltura delle Venezia, 32, no. 1-2 pp 3-36 (in Italian)
  - (12) Berni, P and Lechi, F 1984 IRD project Piedmont Italy. Final Report. EEC Land Use contract No. 0531 (in Italian)
  - (13) The Agriculture, Forestry and Water Industry 1985. Official publication of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Vienna, December 1985 (in German)
  - (14) Held, A, Schablitzki, G and Scheer, G 1985 Analysis of the Objectives and Effectiveness of the Special Action for Rural Areas. Final Report May 1985\* Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna (in German)
  - (15) Bosma, H (undated) Evaluation in advance of the effects of land development projects in the Netherlands. Government Service for Land and Water Use, Information Paper No. 6, Utrecht (in English)
  - (16) Van Lier, H N and Taylor, P D 1982 The New Dutch Landscape. Landscape Architecture, March 1982, pp66-71.
  - (17) There have been a number of recent studies on the problems and needs of upland rural areas in the UK, culminating in the Countryside Commission report 'A Better Future for the Uplands', CCP 162, 1984, 48pp.
  - (18) Coulmin, 1986 op cit.



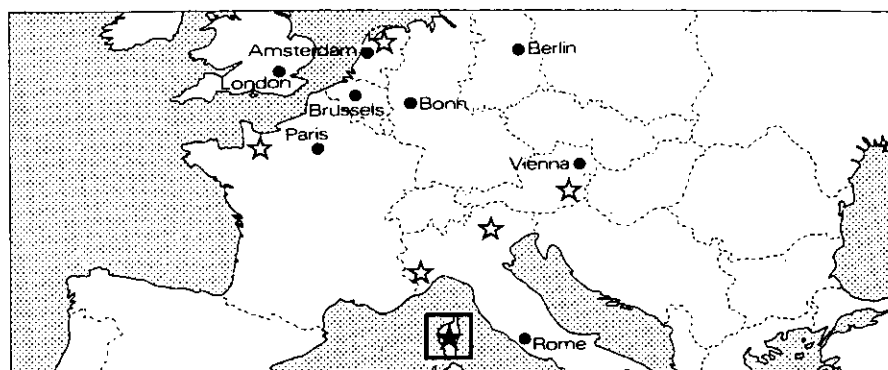
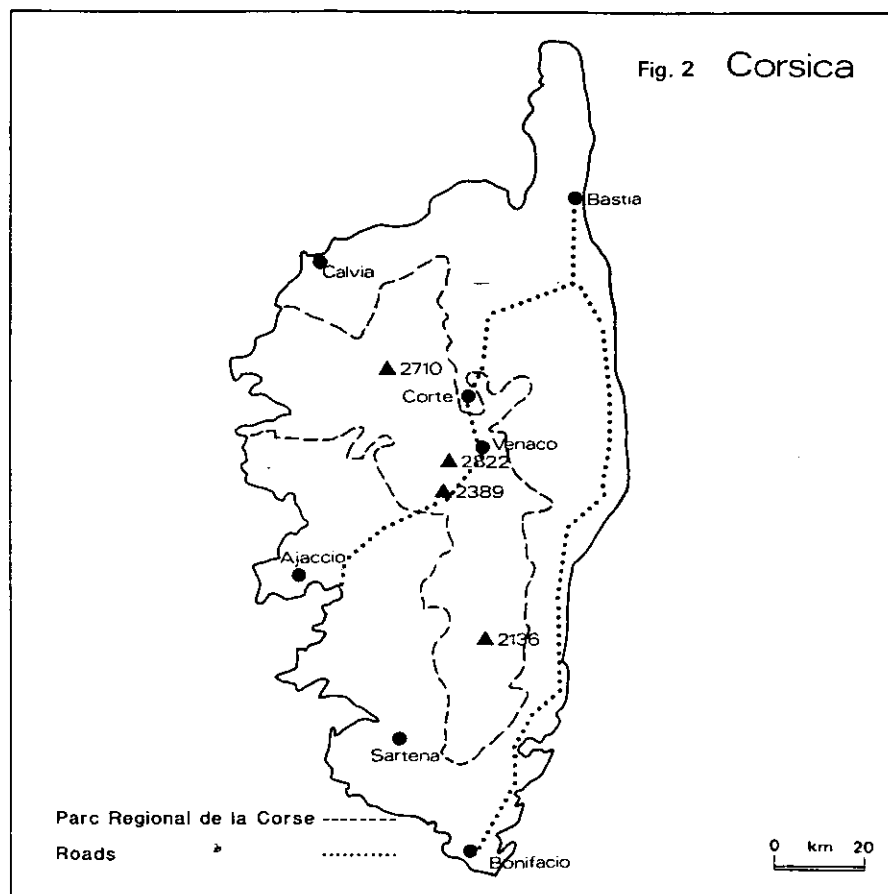


Fig. 3 Communita Montana  
Valle Stura Di Demonte

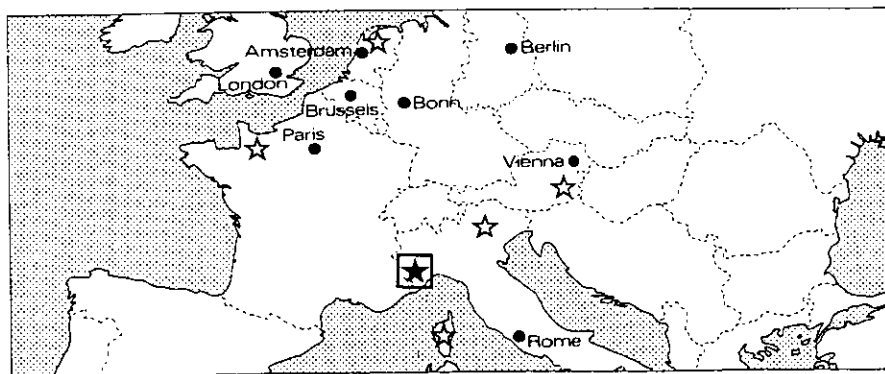
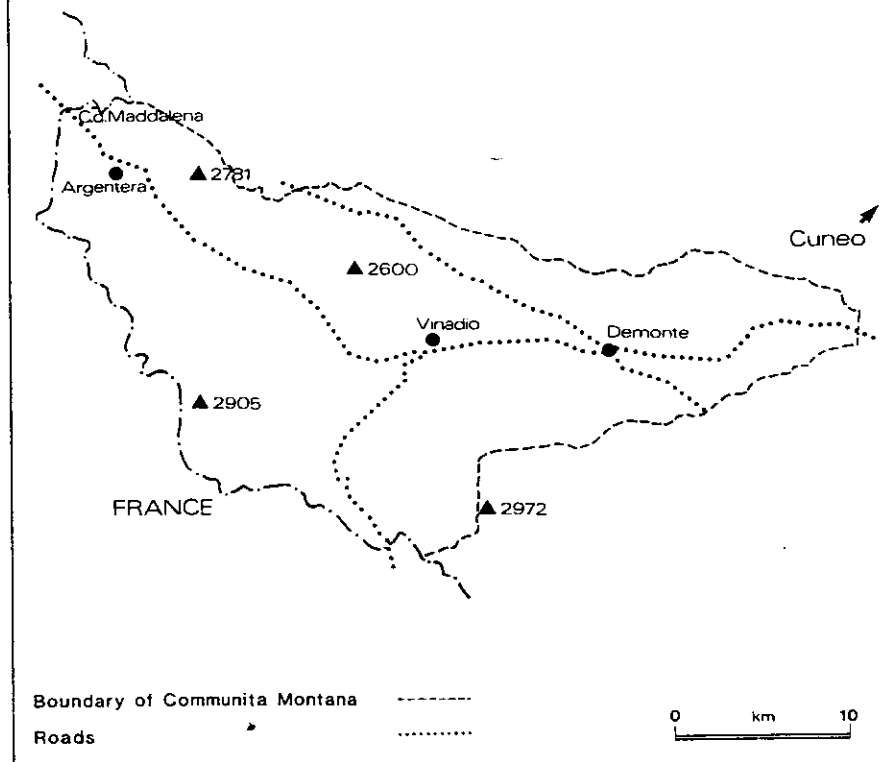


Fig. 4 Communita Montana Alto Garda Bresciano

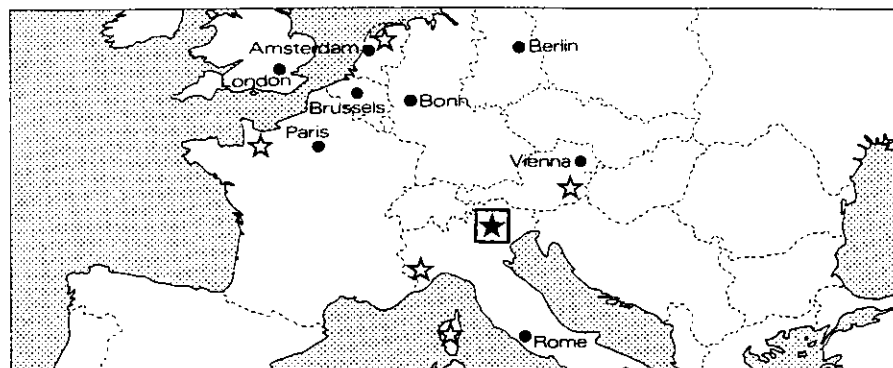
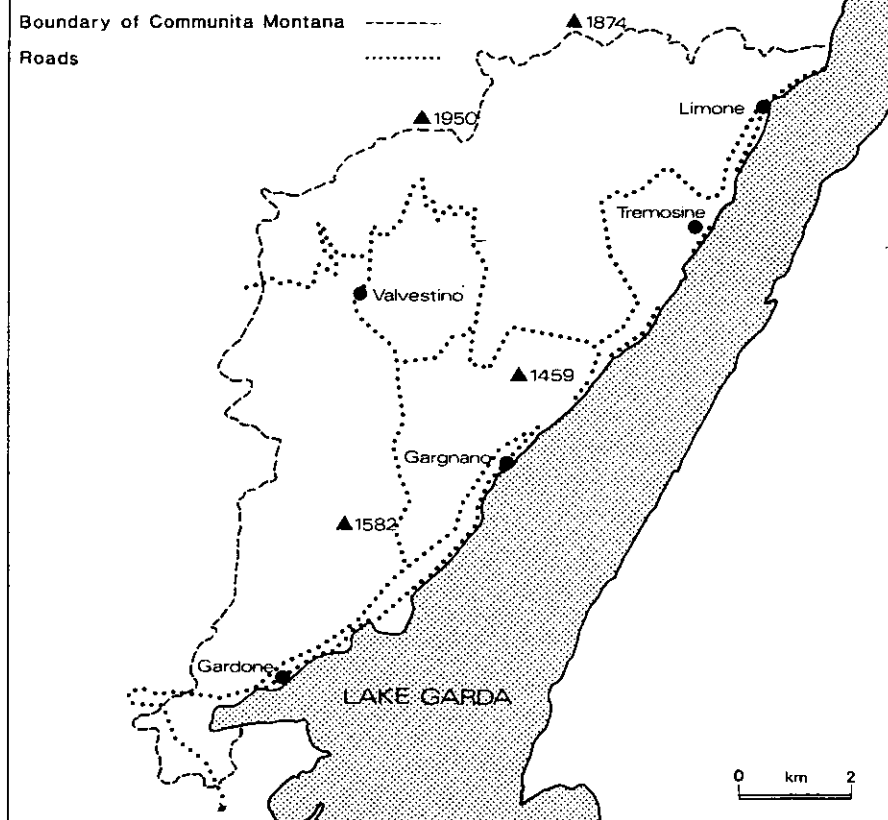


Fig. 5 Steiermark Austria

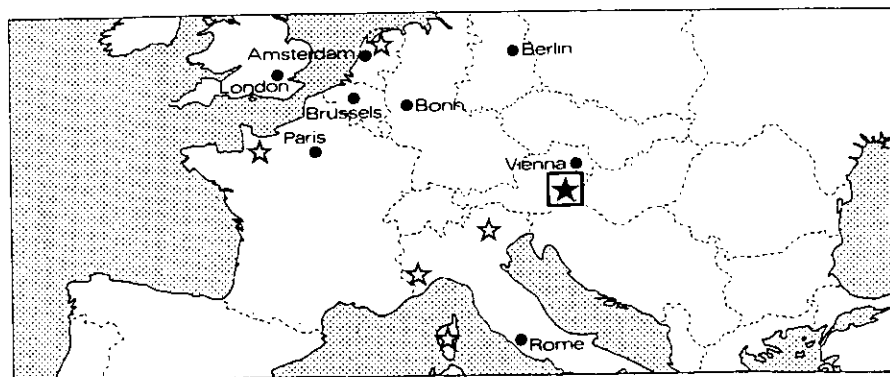
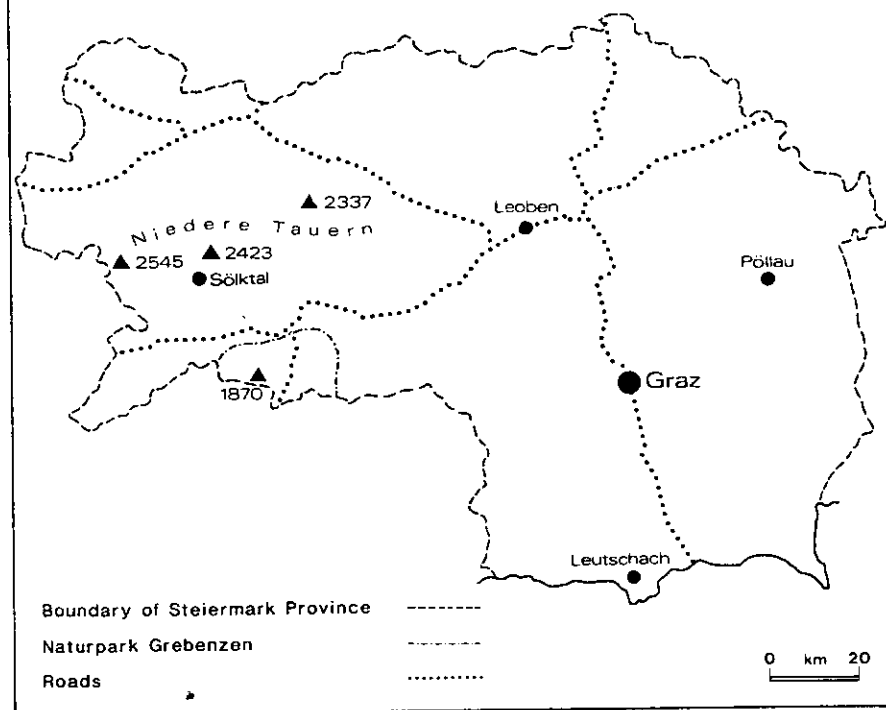
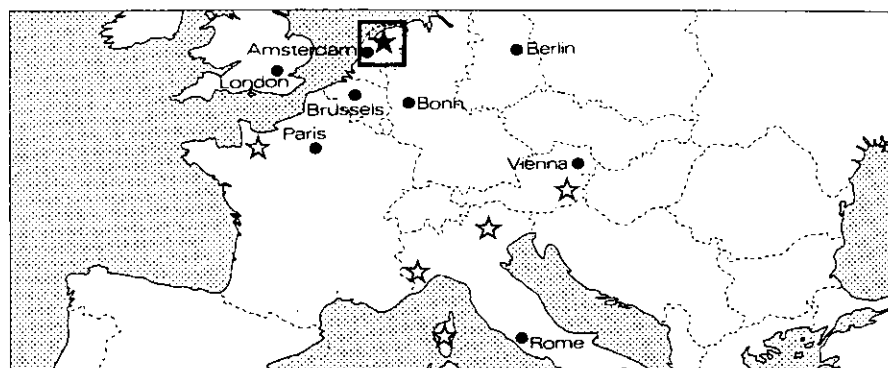
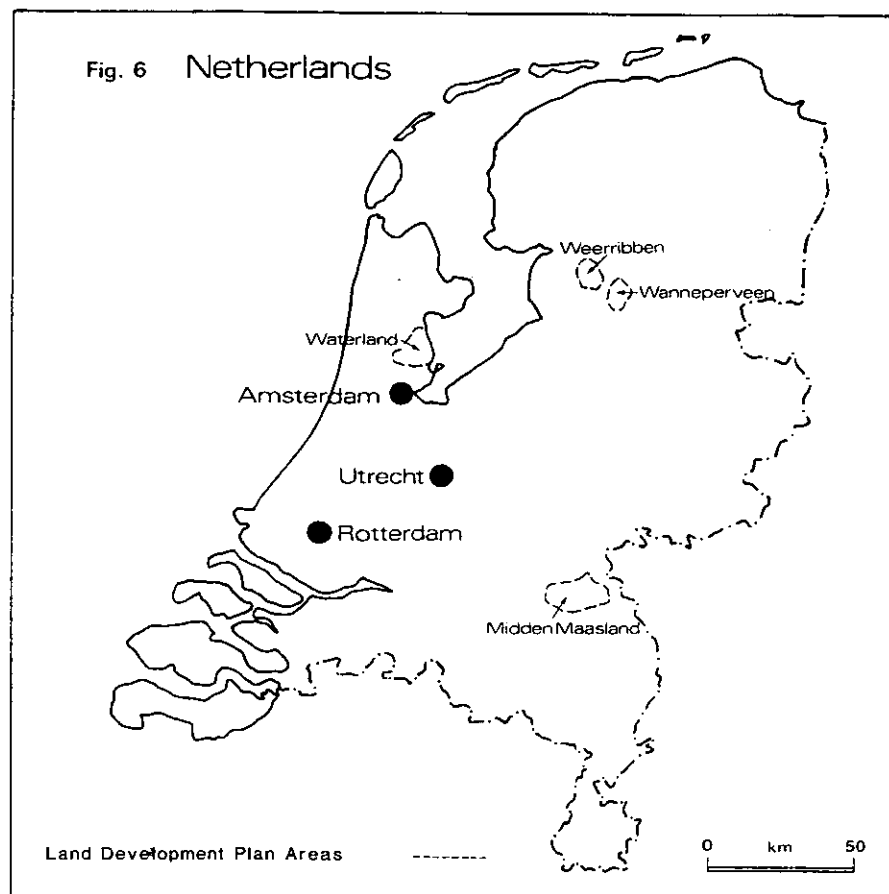


Fig. 6 Netherlands



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