FARMERS AND POLITICS IN FRANCE

papers by

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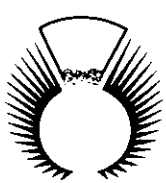

THE ARKLETON TRUST

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PREFACE

by Michael Tracy

The French political science association (AFSP)[1] has held three conferences, in 1956, 1970 and 1987, on the political behaviour of French farmers. At the 1987 event, numerous papers were presented: most of them (54) were published in a 600-page volume entitled *Les Agriculteurs et la Politique*.[2] This publication included a general introduction and six papers which, while reviewing the contributions on different topics, were important essays in their own right. These seven papers have been translated here. They mainly refer to the period since 1970. They have been slightly up-dated since presentation in 1987, and for this translation the authors have provided some additional comments in footnotes or epilogues.

The reasons for bringing this work to the attention of anglophone readers are at least twofold.

Firstly, in the agricultural policy field, it is well-known that France, with the biggest agricultural sector among the Member States of the European Community, has had a preponderant influence over the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This influence must be taken into account in any explanation of the CAP's formation and evolution: it is also highly relevant in the current (1991) context of "CAP reform" and of "Uruguay Round" negotiations on trade liberalisation.

Secondly, in the area of political science, increased attention has been given in recent years to the policy-making process in agriculture in developed countries.[3] This interest

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1 See Annex V for list of acronyms.

2 Coulomb, P. *et al.*, dir., Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques: Paris, 1990. The previous conferences were published (same publisher) under the following titles: Fauvet, J. et Mendras, H., dir., *Les paysans et la politique dans la France contemporaine*, 1958; and Tavernier, Y., Gervais, M. et Servolin, C., *L'univers politique des paysans dans la France contemporaine*, 1972.

3 E.g. Moyer, W. and Josling, T.E. *Agricultural Policy Reform: Politics and Process in the EC and USA*, Harvester-Wheatsheaf: New York and London, 1990; Pelkmans, J. (ed.) *Can the CAP be reformed?*, European Institute for Public Administration: Maastricht, 1985; Petit, M. *et al.*, *Agricultural Policy Formation in the European Community: the Birth of Milk Quotas and CAP Reform*. Elsevier: Amsterdam, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1987; Schmitt, G., "Warum die Agrarpolitik ist, wie sie ist, und nicht, wie sie sein sollte", *Agrarwirtschaft*, 33(5) (pp. 129-36), 1984; Senior Nello, S.M. "An application of public choice theory to the question of CAP reform", *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 11 (pp. 261-83), 1985; Winters, L.A., "The political economy of the agricultural policy of industrial countries", *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 14 (pp. 285-304), 1987.

reflects the continuing dependence of agriculture on public support and protection, and the realisation that farm pressure groups, despite the reduced number of farmers, remain powerful.

In this context, the French situation is particularly significant. French agriculture has undergone tremendous structural and social change: the active population in agriculture fell from 4.5 million in 1958 to under 1.4 million in 1989; the number of holdings from 1.7 million in 1966 to 0.9 million in 1987. As in other Western European countries, this has also been a period of great technological change in farming practices.

Inevitably, therefore, agricultural policy has been a major issue in France. There has been intense debate on the goals and the methods of policy. For example, to what extent should modernisation be pursued?—is it desirable to create larger and more viable farms, thus enabling agriculture to contribute to the nation's wealth and export capacity, but pushing out of production many small holdings and possibly causing whole regions to be abandoned? Are farms to be considered as businesses, or do they have a predominantly social role? Does the future lie with "farmers" or with "peasants"? Should price support be the main instrument of policy, or should structural reform get greater emphasis? Do the aims and methods of the CAP correspond to the needs of French agriculture? How should French agriculture relate to the world market?

Such debate has taken place, in the first instance, within the farming community. As interests are diverse, the issues have divided large farmers from small, arable farmers from livestock producers, the established generation against the young, prosperous regions against the less-favoured, and so on. There has never been much unity in the representation of farmers, but in this period the dominant role of the mainly conservative FNSEA has been tested, as rival groups have sprung up on its right and especially on its left, and have demanded governmental recognition.

The political parties and successive Governments have faced a dilemma. They ignore at their peril the demands of the farm organisations. French farmers quickly become militant, their demonstrations easily turn to violence; and the farming vote is not to be neglected in presidential, parliamentary or local elections. On the other hand, French consumers and taxpayers do not represent a significant political force. So the tendency of the authorities is, at the least, to avoid confrontation with the farmers: some politicians (Jacques Chirac is a notable example) may actively seek their electoral support.

Nevertheless, other considerations intervene. The CAP imposes constraints, particularly as regards levels of price support. Though farm leaders and politicians have occasionally flirted with the idea of withdrawing from the CAP, it has had to be recognised that, on balance, the preferential Community market and Community financial support for production and exports are indispensable to French agriculture. Not surprisingly, France has tended to resist attempts to "reform" the CAP by reducing price levels or curbing the volume of output. Nevertheless, as surpluses have built up and the disposal of the growing French production potential has proved more and more difficult,

the need for some action has had to be recognised. It was a French Minister of Agriculture, Michel Rocard, who presided over the decision by the Community's Council of Ministers in 1984 to introduce milk delivery quotas.

Continuity of policy has however been lacking. The first years of the Fifth Republic after 1958 were characterised, in agriculture as elsewhere, by "reforming Gaullism", reflected particularly in the introduction of structural reform measures. Under de Gaulle's successor as President of the Republic, Georges Pompidou, there was a return to more traditional policies, attempting to safeguard the existence of as many farms as possible. The next President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, emphasised the export role of French agriculture, and hence the need to make French agriculture more competitive. The election in 1981 of the first Socialist President, François Mitterrand, quickly followed by the establishment of a Socialist majority in Parliament, was a major upheaval, reflected particularly in an unsuccessful attempt to break the power of the mainstream (largely right-wing) farm organisations. Following the parliamentary elections of 1986 which led to the appointment as Prime Minister of the neo-Gaullist Jacques Chirac, several of the Socialist initiatives were reversed. In 1988 Mitterrand was re-elected and the Socialists again formed a Government, but this time appeared unwilling to take measures that would upset the majority of farmers.

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Two recent works in English contribute to our understanding of this turbulent period: John Keeler has analysed relations between farmers and the State under the Fifth Republic, up to 1983 (his work includes illuminating case-studies of three contrasting regions); Mark Cleary gives a broad picture of developments from 1914 to 1985.[1] The interest of the papers translated in the present volume is that here we have Frenchmen talking to Frenchmen (the AFSP conference was a purely national affair). Anglophone readers may discover quite unexpected preoccupations and ways of thought.

One such feature is the inward-looking tendency of most agricultural policy debate in France. The problems of adjustment in French agriculture are often treated as unique (they are indeed acute, but not different in nature from those in other developed countries). Moreover, although the objectivity of the five contributors to this volume is not at issue,[2] there is little questioning here, nor in the numerous conference papers,

1 Keeler, John T.S., *The Politics of Neocorporatism in France: Farmers, the State and agricultural policy-making in the Fifth Republic*, OUP: New York & Oxford, 1987; Cleary, M.C., *Peasants, Politicians and Producers: The organisation of agriculture in France since 1918*, CUP: Cambridge. See also the chapter on France in Petit *et al.*, *op. cit.*. Earlier works were: Weber, E., *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernisation of rural France 1870–1914*, Chatto & Windus: London, 1977; and Wright, G., *Rural Revolution in France: the peasantry in the twentieth century*, Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1964.

2 Like most French intellectuals, their tendencies are left-wing (two have had—or have—important advisory roles with Socialist Governments (see Annex I). In other countries, this could be a motive for a critical attitude to farm support...

of the agrarian interest in general: in so far as criticism is sometimes implied, it concerns the preponderant role of the main farm organisations in relation to minority unions. But the strength of the farm lobby, after all, reflects the weakness of other forces: yet the AFSP conference did not include any study of consumer representation, nor was there any analysis of the cost of support to agriculture. The *national* interest is barely invoked: there is an implicit assumption that what is good for French agriculture must be good for the country. Nor is there much recognition of the conflicts that may occur between French agricultural interests and those of other countries: "export vocation", for example, is discussed only in relation to French economic priorities.

On the other hand, readers will find here in-depth analysis of social, structural and political issues. Perhaps this is one beneficial outcome of Marxism (a significant influence on French political scientists and economists, though its formal aspects are now in disrepute). There is much concern here with relations between farmers, with the "concentration" of farms in the larger size groups, with the possibilities of "reproduction" of the smaller holdings, with relations between farming and agri-business, and so on. The complexities of farmer representation are thoroughly explored; "corporatism" and "pluralism" are often-recurring issues.

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What conclusions can be drawn as to the future course of French agricultural policy: in particular, as to the French attitude to "reform" of the CAP involving substantial price cuts and/or supply controls, and to trade liberalisation in the Uruguay Round context?

An over-riding impression concerns the strength of farmers' representation by the FNSEA (and its associated young farmers' body, the CNJA); the left-wing and recently-created *Confédération paysanne* may have gained some support but remains relatively unimportant. The mainstream lobby is on the whole resistant to change.

Hence the margin of manoeuvre for the political authorities is extremely limited, as was demonstrated by the very limited success of the Socialists, after their election in 1981, in their attempt to break down the FNSEA/CNJA near-monopoly of representation. That experience has clearly made the Socialists— from President Mitterrand downwards—very cautious in their attitude to agricultural policy. Mass demonstrations by farmers are to be avoided, and farmers' electoral support is still sought in spite of their reduced numbers. A right-wing regime would be even less likely to risk provoking farming opposition.

But, one may ask, are there not other forces to be reckoned with? What about consumers? and does the Ministry of Finance not have some say?

Whatever the country, consumer opinion rarely crystallises into a significant political force: this is particularly the case in France, where consumers have never had the experience (as have British consumers) of benefiting from cheap food imports. High price levels are a *hidden* subsidy to farmers. Partly perhaps for this reason, there is little

public opposition to support for the farm sector. Isabel Boussard, after an extensive review of public opinion surveys, concludes:

> *French people feel quite sorry for farmers: they want to keep them, because they like them and because they see this sector as important for the economy as a whole.*[1]

Such attitudes also explain the unwillingness of the Ministry of Finance to intervene (at least publicly—there is no means of knowing what is said in ministerial meetings...). In the past such passivity could also be justified on economic grounds, since France was a net beneficiary of the European Community budget which paid for price support, export subsidies, etc. In fact, this is no longer the case. In 1989, France contributed 2.9 billion ECU (3.4 billion US dollars) more to the EC budget than it received from it, making France the third biggest net contributor (after Germany and the UK);[2] and this situation will be accentuated as the southern Member States intensify their demands. But this fact does not seem to have been noticed by French public opinion, and though the Ministry of Finance must be aware of it, it has so far kept quiet...

It is also to be noted that the benefit to be gained from increased agricultural exports is treated as axiomatic. *Vocation exportatrice*, or *pétrole vert* ("green oil") are powerful items of rhetoric by farm leaders and politicians. Nor do French economists seriously challenge such assumptions: there is none of the detailed analysis of optimal resource use such as took place in Britain in the 1950s concerning import substitution by British agriculture.

The conclusion from the original papers—strongly reinforced by Hélène Delorme's Epilogue—must be that any French Government will hold to a conservative view of the farm interest and will thus remain very resistant to "CAP reform". In view of the major French influence in this field, this clearly limits the scope for major policy developments. Change—if any—will have to be imposed from outside, in particular by France's partners in the European Community (pressure from the US, and even from the UK, tends to be counter-productive). The role of Germany (so far even more attached to a high-price policy than France) is particularly significant; so too is the growing weight of the southern Member States, whose interest lies more in structural improvement and regional development than in support for "northern" commodities.

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It is to be hoped that this translation will be found useful by readers who are not particularly knowledgeable about French agriculture, or indeed about French politics in general. Help has been provided where this seemed necessary in editorial footnotes, while Annexes III and IV give some essential background information.

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1 In *Les Agriculteurs et la République*, Economica: Paris 1990 (p.136).

2 Cf. Court of Auditors, "Annual Report concerning the financial year 1989", *Official Journal of the European Communities* no. C313 of 12.12.90 (pp. 63 and 69).

References to works in French have been maintained. For those who can read French, this may open up useful channels for investigation.

A few words about translation difficulties. These authors tend to use complex sentence structures, involving far more subordinate clauses and parentheses than are customary in modern English. Where possible, simplification has been attempted: but this cannot go too far without impairing the subtlety of the thought process. I am indebted to Wayne Moyer, professor of political science at Grinnell College, Iowa, who has pointed out the more obscure passages and suggested clarifications. I am also grateful to the five French authors, who have co-operated most constructively.

Some French words and expressions cannot be translated without losing part of their meaning: they have been left in the original, where necessary with some explanation. The titles of organisations have usually not been translated either, except where their meaning cannot easily be guessed: lengthy titles have been left to Annex V, which gives a list of acronyms.

Michael Tracy
"La Bergerie" (Belgium), August 1991

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*N.B. References to articles in the French volume, and to other papers presented at the AFSP 1987 conference which though not published are available in libraries, are indicated by the symbols * and † respectively—see lists in Annex II.*

Introduction

AGRICULTURE: AN AFFAIR OF STATE[1]

Agriculture has always been an affair of State, and has even played a role at the birth of States. There are three main reasons. Ensuring that agriculture provides safe and stable supplies of food means, in the first instance, having one's own territory and defending it: protecting a sedentary peasantry is a basic reason for keeping an army. Secondly, the need to decide who can have land, who can have access to water, in other words who can be a peasant and on what terms, and to decide what levies shall be imposed on the producers of food—all this causes power to take shape and gives rise to the first administrative authorities. Finally, agricultural production is by nature irregular, while demand is by nature rigid: so stocks are necessary. The rice or wheat granaries of ancient China, of Egypt under the Pharaohs or of the Inca empire were the first manifestations of this affair of State.

These three main reasons are still relevant for modern States. There are now many other reasons for defending territory, if only because concepts of "the nation" have evolved. Still, is it not the case that States, even today, are defending their territory when they seek food security and self-sufficiency in the face of world market instability, and when they envisage using "food power" as a weapon? Choices as to who can be a farmer and with what social status are more than ever at the heart of agricultural policy, with changing models of production and consumption. Moreover, granaries nowadays have the backing of big funds, such as the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) or the Commodity Credit Corporation in the United States.

For these three reasons too, agricultural policy is a major public issue, which cannot be reduced by a technical or narrowly economic viewpoint to a sectoral matter, confined to and subject only to features specific to the agricultural sector. Its conception, development and implementation have implications—of varying significance, it is true—for all aspects of social balance, both internal (the cost and quality of food, the type of economic growth, the regulation of the labour market and the wage-level, land use, political representation and power-sharing from the village to the centres of government, etc.), and external (the nation's place in foreign trade, in international relations, in the building of Europe, etc.).

All this, however, is the hidden side of agricultural policy. The first impression it gives is that of being the archetype of petty politics. Its management, indeed, leaves

1 A joint contribution by the five co-editors of the French volume. [Ed.]

wide scope for local influence, hence for the impact of particular situations resulting from the variety, in each area, of production patterns, of paths of technical progress, of production structures and of marketing methods; varying cultural heritages and traditions, different political issues both agricultural and general in character, also play a role. Someone has to translate into political language the local demands (which are often presented as being non-political, as with land consolidation, water management, etc.), and to translate the language of politicians into one which is understood and accepted in the locality in question. Such mediation may be carried out by elected representatives, by the local administration or by the agricultural profession itself: these processes determine who wields power, and the State's decision to promote one or other of these channels of mediation is a major political option.

Similarly, one should not be misled by the technical, complicated and even finicky aspects of a policy where no problem can be tackled without looking at every little detail. This situation applies even in the EEC, where one might have thought that a general framework permitting competition to take place would have been enough. If so many bureaucrats have to deal with agricultural policy, it must be because burning issues and sharp conflicts are involved.

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But perhaps this analysis is now obsolete, or about to become so, in France as in the other industrialised countries? *"La fin des paysans"* or *"Une France sans paysans"*[1]—have these predictions, made more than twenty years ago, now been fulfilled? With fewer than a million farms and only just over 5% of the active population in agriculture, has France now caught up with the model set by its Anglo-Saxon neighbours? The past twenty years, which are the subject of this volume, would then appear as the final and decisive stage in the long-drawn-out transformation of its peasant economy into a modern and powerful agro-industrial economy, the biggest contributor to the balance of payments and in the top rank among the branches of the national economy.

In such a process of modernisation, agriculture would then have become a productive activity like any other, organised in real enterprises within the market economy, responding to its signals and therefore able to allocate in a rational and autonomous way the necessary factors of production. Except at the margin (such as social cases) or for reasons independent of the market economy (ecology, or the preservation of areas where production is unprofitable), it would no longer be the object of any specific action by the State. Agricultural policy would thus have been reduced to the status of one

1 "The end of the peasantry" and "France without peasants"—titles of well-known works by, respectively, H. Mendras in 1967 and Gervais, Servolin and Weil in 1966. [Ed.]

among other public policies, just a sectoral economic policy, more or less "liberal"[1] or dirigiste in character depending on the tendencies of the reigning power.

In that case, moreover, the political behaviour of farmers would lose its originality and variety. Having become few in number, a minority as compared with salaried workers in rural areas, a homogeneous group in the national context and increasingly in the European context as a result of technical progress and of their market involvement, integrated in urban ways of life and consumption habits, farmers would no longer adopt political behaviour patterns based on cultural diversity and local social structures.

The end of the peasantry, the end of rural society[2]: such farming entrepreneurs, owning substantial productive capital, which they could modernise and adapt by accumulating profits from their enterprise, would be the agricultural component of the category of small and medium-sized enterprises, and thus the agricultural component of the bourgeoisie.

The end of rural society would mean no more rural *notables*: this layer of the capital-owning bourgeoisie would then, like any other, be represented politically by an élite from within its ranks. No more *notables*, and no more peasant voters: the new entrepreneurs, as administrators of capital and managers of economic growth, would have to be considered by the State no longer just as citizens with votes but as agents of economic development. Public authority would have to judge the needs of their enterprises, if not in a wholly apolitical way (if only because of the political choices involved in keeping a balance within the economy, or in responding to international constraints), at least in a non-partisan way, with a view to the welfare of society as a whole. Moreover, the declining number of farmers and their dispersion throughout the country would mean that their votes, while not losing all their influence, would nevertheless cease to be so significant.

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So has agriculture become an industry like any other? Have farmers become producers and citizens just like anyone else? To answer these questions, we have to look at the general principles upon which French agricultural policy is based, and which since 1967 have become part of the Common Agricultural Policy. These principles are common to the agricultural policies of all industrialised countries. They have enabled all these countries, with farming sectors governed by the same forces, to become the main agricultural powers on the world scene. They are the reason why these farm sectors were similarly affected by the economic and monetary crisis of the 1970s and by the

1 The French usage is to associate "liberal" with laissez-faire, non-interventionist or free trade attitudes. [Ed.]

2 *"Fin des terroirs"*. A *terroir* is defined (*Robert*) as "a rural or provincial region, considered to be the cause of the particular characters of those who live there or have their origins there". There is no satisfactory English equivalent: the expression reflects a historic pattern of rural settlement and society specific to France. [Ed.]

crisis of world-wide overproduction in the 1980s. In this way, we can understand the simultaneity and similarity of the reforms of agricultural policy in the industrial countries.

These reforms also have their specific characters. After the oil crisis of 1974, the industrialised nations all tried to alleviate the fall in farm incomes, and since 1982 they have all been trying to protect themselves from world-wide overproduction: but each country has done so in its own ways, arising from its political traditions, its economic and commercial situation, the strength of its currency, its weight and influence in the world, and so on. In this sense, there is undoubtedly a specifically French policy for agriculture.

In the first place, the agricultural social system in the industrial countries has been transformed, under the authority of the State. All these countries have found ways to bring under control the two corporate forces in agriculture which, from the 19th century until the mid-20th century, saw themselves as the organisers of agricultural production: the big land-owners, mainly interested in the rents they can obtain, and the agricultural entrepreneurs, whose tendencies were protectionist or Malthusian[1], but whose interests were somewhat less clear-cut. This transformation involved a new "model" for the agricultural producer: the "family" farmer, freed from the ancient authority of the land-owner, whose rent—if he is a tenant—is now limited and regulated, who uses little or no hired labour, who operates in a controlled economic environment, and is organised by an apparatus covering technical, economic, commercial, financial and social matters as well as labour relations: an apparatus which both places him in a State-determined framework and represents the State to him.

State intervention, large-scale and permanent, is in fact the second characteristic of modern agricultural policies. This intervention is necessary because of the competitive nature of agricultural markets, and because of the instability of agricultural prices arising from fluctuations in supply in the face of inelastic demand (King's Law)[2]. These conditions make it difficult to accumulate sufficient profit to finance the investments required for technical progress. So all the industrial nations, since the crisis of the 1930s and the post-war period, have set up funds to regulate agricultural markets, and these, in various ways, stabilise prices and/or incomes. These policies do not aim to take the place of market mechanisms. On the contrary, their aim is to accompany market forces, but to correct sharp fluctuations and to regulate transfers arising from productivity gains so that investment can take place—this being promoted also by specific economic aids.

1 In France, the expression "Malthusian" tends to mean "restrictive" in a general sense (not just in relation to population). Paradoxically, it usually refers to restrictions on output. [Ed.]

2 More frequently referred to in French economic literature than in English, "King's Law" (Gregory King, 1648-1712), relates to the observation that changes in the supply of basic necessities (such as wheat) tend to produce more than proportionate changes in their price—in other words, demand is price-inelastic. Cf. p.90 of Marshall's *Principles of Economics*, 8th edition. [Ed.]

In this way, these policies are basically anti-corporatist in that they seek to preserve the advantages arising from competition and from the resulting price reductions. The "productivist" farmer whom they create is the proof of this: the relative price decreases, together with the improvement in overall productivity, oblige him, if he is to maintain or increase his income, either to raise his productivity constantly or to expand the volume of his output and sales; or, by modernising his techniques, to combine both strategies.

We can then understand the third characteristic of this social model: very rapid technical progress, mobilising substantial productive capital per hectare and per unit of labour. The application of this technical capital has made possible big increases in labour productivity (with a rate of growth generally exceeding that of industry) and of land (yields per hectare). One result has been to integrate agricultural production with market transactions both "upstream" and "downstream": in respect of intersectoral trade, agriculture has become a sector like any other. Another consequence has been to bring about a marked and rapid growth in output, thus requiring either a corresponding growth in outlets or a significant concentration in production—ideally, to the benefit of those who are the most competitive, i.e. whose costs are lowest—or, of course, both these developments together.

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Such analysis should justify the main preoccupation underlying this book: to understand the causes, the forms and the political consequences of the way agriculture is regulated. How is agricultural policy determined in France?—what interests are represented, what institutions act as mediators, what economic and international issues arise, who are the political actors, and what alliances are formed, and which conflicts—both internal and external—have to be settled?

In concentrating on these questions, we are pursuing and prolonging earlier work. It may be useful to explain how the present venture relates to the two earlier ones studying the political life of the farm population, likewise organised by the AFSP and FNSP (see Preface). Those two earlier works had the same concern, even though their conceptions of political science were different: they sought to explain the specific character of the farmer as a social and political being. They settled this issue. They explained that agriculture is not a world apart, neither distinct from nor lagging behind the industrial and urban world, but participating fully in that world to the point of being fully integrated in it at the present time, while keeping features which arise from the special characteristics of agricultural markets, from the land economy and from the occupation of rural space. By explaining the socio-economic and political basis of agricultural policy, they formed an introduction to its study.

If we recognise what has been achieved, we are better able, in the second place, to take account of the main phenomenon of the past twenty years: the development and the crisis of modern agricultural policy. It was in the period 1960–70 that the measures

and institutions were set up, in the national and European contexts, that were necessary to embody in policy the ideas of the planners of 1945, taken up and added to by the legislators of 1960–62. Already by 1969 this system, almost before it was complete, had to be adjusted in all respects in view of the new exigencies of world-wide restructuring. This disengagement of the State, together with its re-engagement in other activities and on behalf of other producers, underlines the fact that it is no longer possible nowadays to analyse the political life of farmers without concentrating on agricultural policy. In France, later than in other industrial countries but in the same way, it is agricultural policy which has come to regulate agricultural growth and its role in economic development, structural changes, and the relationships of farmers with the State and with policy in general.

So the third aim of this work is to provide political science with the unrivalled field of observation which agricultural policy offers, in the sense that here, more easily than in other sectors, it is possible to analyse all the dimensions and all the issues of political action. This may seem paradoxical in view of the complexity and technicity of the subject, but can be understood when one bears in mind that agricultural policy is the most *public* of all policies. The protagonists, the decisions, the processes and the effects of agricultural policy are more explicit and hence easier to analyse than those of other areas of State intervention. It deals with problems which affect all citizens in their daily lives, and it involves competing producers who cannot bring pressure to bear on the powers-that-be as discreetly and effectively as the oligopolies of the industrial world, and who therefore have greater recourse to action that makes an impact on public opinion.

Moreover, in the agricultural sector, the State regulates the relationships of farmers with the other social groups in a direct and permanent manner, whereas in the industrial world it intervenes as a more indirect and occasional mediator, and hence has less authority. The political game is also simpler in respect of agricultural policy: it is not organised around the triangle State–employers–workers, but takes the form of "concertation" between the State and farmers' representation, which is more fully incorporated in the political system in the strict sense of that expression.

Being more public, and being simpler, agricultural policy lends itself less than other policies to any illusions as to its "positivism"[1]. Here, it is possible to understand, with less effort and with more evidence to go on, that the progress of science and technology is inseparable from the conditions in which this progress is appropriated by the social actors who, making use of policy instruments, must form alliances in order to channel economic development in the direction which they want.

In these circumstances, it is not possible to deal adequately with developments in agricultural policy without going beyond the boundaries of traditional scientific dis-

1 In the philosophical sense originating with Auguste Comte (1798–1857), the implication here being that agricultural policy cannot be studied in a purely empirical way, without subjective and "normative" judgements. [Ed.]

ciplines. On the contrary, various approaches have to be combined so that, beyond the partial rationality provided by each discipline, the complexity of the social issues can be seen. For this reason, the 1987 conference and the resulting publication brought together not just academics who belong to various disciplines, whose role is to reflect on the issues in question, but also decision-makers from all the political movements, including the unions, who managed (or opposed) agricultural policy in the last twenty years, from both the public and the private domains.

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Since 1970, agricultural policy has been faced with a first set of alternatives: to expand outlets, which means exporting (but to which destinations?) or to control the growth of output (but how?). This issue was analysed in the first part of the French edition of this book, here reviewed by **Hélène Delorme** under the heading **"Agricultural policy in the internationalisation of trade".**

From the late 1960s onwards, the Common Agricultural Policy, which France had been seeking to establish since 1962, came into force. But the plan for an agricultural Europe along French lines soon came up against divisions within this Common Market. With monetary crisis, each Member State took back control of agricultural prices in its combat against inflation. As it learnt the business of being an exporter, France discovered that Europe is not just an extension of the national market. During the 1970s, France became the second largest world exporter of agricultural and food products, but this occurred much less than had been hoped on the high-price and stabilised market of the EEC, and too much on the relatively unreliable market in third countries. France discovered that the international market, where it had hoped to make a profit from its *"pétrole vert"* ("green oil"), was not just an easy outlet for cumbersome surpluses, but a market on which it was necessary to know how to do business and to have the means of doing so.

After the fall in world prices in 1982 and the sharp contraction of effective demand, there was even keener competition between the agricultural powers (which the rich countries had become). In the trade war which the United States launched against European agriculture, France was often isolated, as its partners stressed the growing budgetary cost of exports and showed themselves reluctant to take on the United States in the agricultural negotiations under the GATT Uruguay Round. So it had to be accepted that even while promoting exports it was still necessary to control supply. This was the conclusion reached by France: in 1984, within the EEC and in a way similar to other industrial nations, it undertook to limit the product guarantees (papers in the French edition of this book analyse the different forms of this limitation according to product). This reform subjected the Ministers of Agriculture to the authority of the Ministers of Finance, as the latter—on the basis of the "budgetary discipline" formula—decide the total sum available for agricultural support.

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During the period under consideration, another set of alternatives—not new to France—had to be reconsidered: should the State delegate or hold on to the power of decision as regards agricultural policy? It is true that modern agricultural policies demonstrate renewed State authority and a refusal to subject this authority to the interests of a particular social category within the farm population: but all the same, they give "economic rent"[1] to some producers by supporting some products more than others, in ways which do not necessarily correspond to the internal and external demand situation. Producers who benefit from such "economic rent" then become social groups who naturally tend to defend their vested interests, if only by claiming to be those who have best responded to State incentives and who have made the most of technical progress.

In principle, the policies in question should be able to dissolve and redistribute such "economic rents" when they produce perverse effects of this kind. But how should one choose the producers who have the greatest "social utility", and on what criteria (competitiveness, income level, rational land use, respect for the harmony of the countryside and for natural balance ... or for their votes)? Indeed, how can such criteria be clearly defined when the support system in question has made the economic situation artificial?

Answers to these questions can only be sought in debate among farmers themselves, within their representative bodies and in society as a whole. They can only be resolved in the context of the socio-political relations between the State and those organisations considered to be the legitimate representatives of the agricultural interest. However, during the 1970s, the socio-political system in agriculture came to be renewed, to the advantage of "productivist" and intensive producers. Instead of the diversified pattern of representation arising from the more-or-less autonomous, often antagonistic organisations representing farmers, there arose a unified representation based on *syndicalisme*[2]. The evolution of the socio-political relations between the State and the farmers is the subject of papers in the second part of the French edition of this book, summarised here by **Pierre Coulomb** under the title **"Farmers and the State"**.

Here too, there is little in common between the two decades. During the 1970s, the FNSEA, now under the control of those who had been the leaders of the CNJA in the 1960s, contrived to unify—by gathering them around itself and subjecting them to its influence—the other professional bodies in agriculture (the Chambers of Agriculture, the co-operative and mutual insurance movement, the CNJA), imposing its concept of agricultural development based on modern livestock production. The FNSEA also used

1 I.e. that part of the payment to a factor of production which is in excess of the minimum amount necessary to keep it in its present occupation. Though the expression arose from Ricardo's demonstration relating to land rents, the concept is not necessarily limited to payment for land. [Ed.]

2 A *syndicat* is a trade union: see Annex IV on the various farm organisations. [Ed.]

its position to obtain from the Government, with support from the President of the Republic Georges Pompidou, and then from Jacques Chirac as Prime Minister, a *co-gestion* (joint management) of agricultural policy. The question then arose as to how far the State was prepared to share its authority with the farming profession—an issue which brings us back to the whole political system and to the matter of "corporatism". In 1982, this joint management foundered with the hostility of the FNSEA towards the leftist Government, and with the tendency for the dialogue between the State and the farmers' organisations to take place increasingly in the discreet, even secret framework of the commodity boards set up in 1983–84.

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The third set of alternatives, which has dominated agricultural policy-making since 1970, concerns the structure of farming. Is it best to promote concentration or to encourage diversification, bearing in mind the social consequences of these choices?

Quantitative measures (the number of farmers, the level of farm incomes, etc.) are the first weapon employed in conflicts between different classes of farmers seeking to have their interests recognised by the State. The third part of the French edition, reviewed by **Philippe Lacombe—"Farming, farms and families"**—demonstrates in the first instance the issues involved in defining statistical categories, in determining trends in farm incomes and the disparities between them, and last but not least, in deciding who is a "real" farmer and who is not.

These questions are all the more crucial because during these twenty years there has been significant concentration of production, a phenomenon that is still not clearly understood: it appears that 10% of farmers (less than 100,000) nowadays account for about 50% of the value of marketed output, while a third (350,000) account for three-quarters of this value ... This concentration of production, based on specialisation and intensification, can go further. Naturally, this has consequences for farm incomes: most farmers do not by any means depend exclusively on earnings from their farm, but on the composite income obtained by the various members of the family, including income from other jobs or other sources (pensions, inheritances). Indeed, while the household remains a "family", is that still the case for the farming activity? More and more farmers are working on their own, often part-time, with family help. Others set up non-farm activities on the farm. But is this a new development, not so far recognised and supported, or is it a waiting attitude on the part of people who are excluded from the mainstream of agricultural growth? More than 40% of farmers are about to retire, and most of these have no successors...

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For farmers' organisations, the dilemma which characterised the period was whether to unite or to act separately. After the "pluralism" which characterised farmers' repre-

sentation in the 1950s and 1960s, a "plurality"[1] of unions made their appearance in the early 1970s; but this did not offset the hegemony imposed by the FNSEA on the big farm organisations claiming a representative role. The fourth part of the French edition, discussed here by **Bertrand Hervieu** under the title **"The farm union movement: the problem of unity"**, shows on the one hand how conflicts over different concepts of agricultural development were responsible for the appearance of minority unions and explains the forms these took; on the other hand, it explains how the FNSEA, faced with conflicting sectoral or regional interests, sought to become a centre where these different interests could be managed in a diversified way, and thus built up its claim to be the one and only legitimate union to represent farmers' interests.

However, while the FNSEA's branch in each *département* can express local views and demands, it must have a common position at the national level if it is to unite the farming profession in its contacts with the State. This may explain why the FNSEA could tolerate internal opposition, up to the point where this opposition found ways of expressing its views at the national level, but was never prepared to enter into debate with the minority unions.

In the 1970s, there was lively discussion over the strategy adopted by the new leadership of the FNSEA. The positions adopted by the minority unions differed one from another, but the main influence on them all was the feeling on the part of their militant members that they were being excluded from the main body of the profession. Two unions criticised the FNSEA's giving-up on demands for price support, as it sought to involve itself in the policy-making process: the left-wing MODEF, close to the Communist Party; the right-wing FFA, nowadays on the extreme right. The two other movements criticised the development model imposed by modern livestock producers, but in two different ways: the *paysans-travailleurs* ("peasant-workers") opposed its basic principles, while the opposition within the FNSEA feared its consequences for "peasant solidarity".

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The studies in the fifth part of the French edition, presented by **Hélène Delorme** under the title **"Agricultural policy under three Presidencies"**, demonstrates how this policy evolved in the overall policy context, on the basis of what the Heads of State wanted to do and what they were actually able to do in an uncertain political and economic world, subject to change both internally and externally.

The three successive Presidents, Georges Pompidou, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterrand, held different views. However, the change in direction carried out by Pompidou in 1971 had a profound effect on the whole subsequent period. Under

1 "Pluralism" refers to a political option under which the authorities recognise a number of union-type organisations, held to be sufficiently representative to be invited to negotiate with the Government, and even to participate in administration. "Plurality" refers to a *de facto* situation in which several unions co-exist, without necessarily being recognised *de jure*. [Ed.]

Pompidou, agricultural policy ceased to be a primarily economic affair, as part of the plan for agro-industrial development set up in the 1960s by the modernising Gaullist tendency: instead, it became a political matter, as the right-wing parties sought a stable base among the peasantry to counter-balance the labour movement, which was undergoing social crisis. This new policy, more agricultural and rural in character than before, was entrusted to Chirac, and turned into an electoral alliance with the leaders of the FNSEA: so the two components of the right-wing coalition began to fight over farmers' support. With Chirac imposing political considerations on the management of the farm economy, Giscard d'Estaing had to moderate his anti-inflation policy, give up in 1975 his programme of redeployment on to the world market, and in 1977 (in a speech at Vassy) and above all in 1980 (with a new *Loi d'orientation*), return to policies close to those of Pompidou.

After the victory of the Left in 1981, obstruction by the FNSEA contributed to the abandonment of the Socialist Utopia of egalitarian development, and to the return, in 1983, to a more traditional approach under which French agriculture and agricultural policy were subjected to the broad goals of European integration which Mitterrand had made his priority.

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These various policy approaches have tried, by legislative means and with budgetary aids, to unify agricultural producers around certain farming models. In this way, they mould new identities. The sixth and last part of the French edition, here presented by **Marcel Jollivet** under the title **"The farmer: a citizen like any other?"**, raises questions as to the present-day diversity of farmers, taking into account the various approaches of political scientists, sociologists and ethnologists.

The social identity of farmers is indeed formed through interaction between their professional identity, moulded by agricultural policy, territorial identity, arising from local traditions and social struggles, and their political identity, which is the fruit of their ideological choices but also of the party loyalties through which they seek to achieve their goals. The continuing diversity of their attitudes and behaviour patterns—the farm vote is neither as uniform nor as stable as might be imagined—shows that there is still a peasant ecology based on localities and regions. But will this diversity resist the powerful market forces imposed today by agricultural policy? Is it made up of sufficiently strong local identities to be able to adapt and to produce social forms whereby agricultural development can be renewed?

In other words, a basic question underlies the whole of this book. As farmers have engaged in the market economy, have they become—or can they at last become—genuine entrepreneurs? Are they capable through their own efforts of taking on the world market, or are they still basically "peasants"? Their efficiency depends on the aid which they receive: they themselves, as entrepreneurs, are the product of policy. Free trade would ruin them, and they do not have the social power to set up on their own a

corporate system of protection. Moreover, as growing participation in world trade tends to internationalise the processes of production and consumption, agricultural growth necessarily implies negotiations at the regional and world-wide levels. In this context, agricultural policy is an unavoidable issue, and agriculture is more than ever an affair of State.

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AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF TRADE

by Hélène Delorme

Until not so long ago, the French farm and food economy could be thought of as a closed circuit. During the agricultural crisis of the late 19th century, France—in contrast to England but in common with most continental European countries—chose to protect its producers against the competition of produce from overseas, which the revolution in transport had made available at reduced prices and in increased quantities. Participation in international trade remained limited to imports of the food needed to complement national output (Algerian wine, cereals and meat in particular) and to products for industrial use (oilseeds, textiles, dyes), trade in which remained free. This moderate protectionism, the achievement of Jules Méline, remained in force up to the Second World War.

This development model has been criticised for retarding the modernisation of the productive system. However, during the depression of the 1930s, the advantages of having an agricultural sector with limited market involvement could be appreciated. Along with other aims, the Popular Front in 1936 put the Mélinist approach into practice by entrusting the *Office du Blé* (Wheat Board), the first direct case of State intervention in price management, with the monopoly of foreign trade.[1]

By 1945, all this had changed as a result of wartime destruction and of new perspectives: agriculture had to adapt to the requirements of an economic system now based on industrialisation. The conservative protectionism of Méline gave way to a modernising form of protectionism, linked in the internal context to the expansion of output and productivity, externally to the creation of a European agricultural market and the organisation of international trade. This programme, initiated by the Fourth Republic, was taken up and rationalised in 1961 by the Gaullist regime, which thus embarked on the building of Europe. The aim was to make France into the greatest agricultural power in Europe, able to organise in its orbit the agro-food sectors of its partners, and to

1 See Gervais (M.), Jollivet (M.), Tavernier (Y.), *Histoire de la France rurale, de 1914 à nos jours*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1976, tome 4 (1ère partie).

mobilise them at its side in order to negotiate on equal terms with the United States for the sharing-out of world markets.

To that end, French strategy combined the policy inherited from Méline with the contribution provided by the United States under the Marshall Plan. Like American policy, and following the first Modernisation Plans, the "Guidance Laws" of 1960–62 aimed to promote the expansion of production by enlarging outlets. They put order into the measures needed to manage rural exodus and the process of concentration and specialisation of holdings. While the big arable producers demanded price increases, the Government favoured a policy of relatively low prices, justified by the aim of conquering the European market, which the Government was seeking to organise together with its EEC partners.

France was able to keep its method of intervention based on direct stabilisation of market prices. Cereal producers, who at that time dominated the farmers' organisations, feared that support by means of deficiency payments would make their income too dependent on the national budget, hence on the industries which are big contributors to the budget, and on the multinational institutions of the EEC. This approach was consistent too with the State's "regionalist view of the world arena" (as analysed by L. Tubiana*), which saw the integration of the French and European markets as a stepping-stone and a means towards the stabilisation considered necessary at the international level.

By July 1967, the foundations of this programme had been laid. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was beginning to unify, support and finance agricultural prices. Under the GATT, the Kennedy Round offered hope that the CAP could be pursued in a context of multilateral co-ordination of agricultural policies. But in the 1970s and 1980s, this plan partly foundered, because the growth of trade took place to a large extent outside the European market. Indeed, during this period, the agro-food sector demonstrated its export capacity with remarkable vigour and rapidity. From 1971 to 1977 its trade surplus seemed fragile and very dependent on world prices (as in 1974 when record earnings were due to the explosion of primary product prices) or on climatic factors (as in 1977 when a deficit followed on the drought of 1976), but in just two years after 1978 it increased to reach some 25–30 billion frs. per annum.

However, this success in trade concealed a political failure. In spite of its advantages in grain production, France could not become the main European supplier of animal feedingstuffs. Moreover, France could not modernise its livestock sector and its specialised enterprises quickly enough for them to increase their market share, faced with competition within Europe. All in all, its agro-food economy had to find outlets for a large part of its export availabilities on the world market, where it had to confront, more or less alone, other world exporters and, in the first place, the United States.

Monetary crisis after 1970, followed by crisis on world markets, undoubtedly aggravated the difficulty of building Europe according to French ideas. This context made choices necessary in two respects. Learning the export trade, which in the European

context became necessary for the French agro-food sector after nearly a hundred years of conservative protectionism, meant in the first place creating new structures on the internal market, setting up the European market and conquering a place on the world market. This long-term process also had to be combined with the short-term adjustments (involving sudden changes) imposed by the fight against inflation on the one hand, and on the other the fluctuations of world commodity prices.[1] The contributors to Part I of the French edition of this work, whether they are discussing the agricultural crisis during the economic recession, or a particular sector, a theme or an organisation, all speak of the difficulties of managing agricultural prices in an inflationary context and of managing markets in an unstable world—in other words, of the market policy whose importance, under-estimated in the 1960s, came to be realised after 1970. We shall therefore distinguish these two aspects in reviewing their contributions as regards this area of agricultural policy.

AGRICULTURAL PRICES IN AN INFLATIONARY CONTEXT

In the monetary crisis which began in 1967 with devaluation of sterling, continued in 1969 with parity changes for the franc and the D-mark, and culminated in August 1971 with suspension of the dollar's convertibility into gold, the fight against inflation became the priority. In all the industrial countries, agricultural prices were in the forefront of this battle, as it was generally considered that by pushing up food prices and hence wage demands, they caused inflation to accelerate.

In the EEC, decision-making on agricultural prices became difficult, being at the interface between economic and monetary policies, which were relatively unco-ordinated and followed the movements of national economies and currencies,[2] and the CAP, which (at least in principle) was unifying the minimum prices guaranteed to producers.

Caught between these two forces and in this disturbed context, the EEC could not avoid the unity of prices being disrupted, but it tried to maintain free trade in agricultural commodities. To that end, it set up a system of multiple exchange rates together with corrective factors at the frontiers—the notorious "Monetary Compensatory Amounts" (MCAs)—to permit prices to vary in each country while bringing them together again in trade.

For a while, France conducted its price policy in a national and *dirigiste* way, giving priority to stabilising the domestic price index. In 1984, it adopted a more market-

1 On this turbulent period, see Fottorino (E.), *Le festin de la terre. L'histoire secrète des matières premières*, Paris, Lieu commun, 1988, 354 p.

2 The EEC and the other industrial nations attempted to resolve these monetary difficulties. In Washington on 18th December 1971, new parities were established with margins of fluctuation widened to ± 4.5%. Within this "tunnel" set up by the Western powers, the EEC decided in Basle, on 21st March 1972, to create its "snake", with margins reduced to ± 2.25%.

oriented and "European" course, concentrating on the development of its agro-food potential.

A European[1] and a French debate

In the 1960s, the economic justification for unifying agricultural prices in the EEC was not in question: this was seen as the condition for freeing trade and promoting specialisation. Technically, there was no great problem. So long as EEC currencies were tied together by fixed parities in terms of the gold-based dollar, this standard could be taken as the unit of account in fixing common prices, which could then be *ipso facto* expressed in national currencies. As parity changes were rare and limited in impact, immediate adjustments in national prices could be envisaged, upwards following a devaluation, downwards in case of revaluation.

The crisis of the 1970s caused EEC economies to diverge, opening-up different rates of inflation and undermining currency stability, while the dollar, which was floating too, could no longer serve as a European unit of account. In this unstable economic and monetary universe, maintaining a system of unified and stable prices became an aim that was technically difficult to achieve and whose economic validity was open to question.

The German Government in particular subordinated this aim to the anti-inflationary struggle and the co-ordination of monetary policies. Returning to its tradition of agricultural protectionism, Germany took the view that price unity had to be given up (provisionally at least) and that each Member State should be allowed to manage its farm prices according to its economic and monetary policy.

The group of countries with free-trade traditions, led by the Netherlands and supported by the Commission, did not dispute the need to adapt the system of unified agricultural prices to the new context, in order to avoid fuelling inflation in weak-currency countries and causing deflation in strong-currency countries. But their main aim was related to trade: they wanted to safeguard the European market, which by permitting comparative advantage to operate as between the agro-food economies of the EEC countries, seemed to them the best means of harmonising rates of growth and currency parities. So this group wanted to preserve the unity of European prices by regular and even automatic adjustments of national farm prices in line with currency changes.

All the elements in this debate provoked divisions in France. The desire to develop the export potential of the agro-food sector was an argument in favour of the free-trade approach. But the free-trade strategy was contrary to the traditional policy based on the

1 The author tends to use "European" when she means "European Community". [Ed]

consumer price index, according to which the fight against inflation was based on freezing prices, agricultural and food prices in the first place. The Government wondered whether and how it could reconcile the medium-term advantage to be gained from trade expansion with the rise in prices which it expected to occur in the short term[1]. Those engaged in the sector were similarly divided: if exports became the means of regulating the agro-food economy, would they not have to accept a degree of price "flexibility" which they feared because it would alter in an unforeseeable and uncontrollable way the existing hierarchy among them? These conflicting aims, to which moreover different weights were attached depending on the economic situation and the electoral prospects, explain why French policy hesitated between freezing and freeing agricultural prices.

The "MCA" imbroglio

The agri-monetary system, invented in 1969 when the franc was devalued and applied again with the revaluation of the mark, became an integral part of the CAP in February 1973. Strong-currency countries used under-valued exchange rates to keep their agricultural prices above the European levels, while in weak-currency countries, over-valued rates made it possible to have an artificially low price level. As the gaps between "green rates" and market rates could cause distortions of competition, they were (in theory) offset by monetary compensatory amounts (MCAs) applied to trade between the Member States and in trade with the rest of the world. In strong-currency countries, the MCAs are described as "positive" because they subsidise exports; in weak-currency countries they are "negative" because they subsidise imports.

Between 1969 and 1973, the French Government, like that of the Netherlands, treated the green rates as a way of extending over a limited period the adjustment of agricultural prices following parity changes. But in January 1974, speculation against the franc caused it to be taken out of the "snake", inflation recurred, and domestic prices were rising as a result of world-wide shortages: France then changed direction and accepted a renationalisation of agricultural prices, making "green rates" a key element in the general price freeze.[2] Until 1976, shortages on world markets and the resulting price rises enabled Jacques Chirac to moderate the rigour of this policy by obtaining increases in the European prices. But after September 1976, with inflation running in two figures and with world agricultural prices falling, Raymond Barre had to return to a policy of freezing farm prices. By 1978, the combined gap between the German and

1 Presumably, because devaluations of the franc, carried through to food prices, would be inflationary. "Free-trade" here seems to mean removal of the obstacles to intra-EC trade arising from the MCAs (see below), which would require *raising* French farm product prices. [Ed.]

2 I.e. delaying "green rate" adjustments following franc devaluations, thus delaying increases in farm and food prices. [Ed.]

French "green rates", and thus between the reference prices[1] of the two countries, exceeded 25% for almost the whole year—a gap equivalent to that which existed before the CAP.

After the entry into force of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979, "prudent" EEC price policy was again offset by price increases to French farmers resulting from devaluations of the French green rates. This change in attitude, initially cautious, speeded up with the approach of Presidential elections.

But France could not get the orthodox rule concerning common prices respected by the Germans—nor, in consequence, by the Dutch, always careful to ensure a favourable relationship between their prices and those of their neighbours. If Germany refused to cut prices, France would increase its own price levels. That was the significance of the Franco-German compromise, formalised in the agreement of March 1984.[2] For the future, two mechanisms were to harmonise European prices in line with the trend of German prices: a "green ECU" was created as a new agricultural unit of account, whose value was determined in relation to the mark, while a "switch-over" arrangement caused the positive German MCAs to be transformed into negative MCAs in other countries, these negative MCAs being automatically phased out through price increases. This agreement made possible a new development in French reference prices, which rose in nominal terms by 25% between 1983/84 and 1988/89, while German prices remained stable.

An ill-judged price policy

The lengthy price freeze for French agricultural products demonstrated, on the part of the State authorities and of the farmers' representatives, a lack of confidence which became particularly evident when the VIIth Plan came to be prepared (1976–80). Neither side believed that price policy, together with devaluation of the franc, would induce those involved in the agro-food sector to invest; nor that the gains in productivity resulting from such investment might give leeway for a better integration of agriculture and the food industries in the marketing and processing channels; nor that the fall in agricultural and food prices which would have resulted in the medium-term would have finally promoted the growth of exports.

This lack of trust was based on two errors of analysis, whose consequences to some extent offset each other, fortunately for the expansion of trade.

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1 The author uses the term "reference prices" to mean the prices resulting from the annual CAP price-fixing process, intervention prices in particular. [Ed.]

2 The reference is to the so-called "switch-over" decision by the EC Agriculture Council, subsequently incorporated as Article 6 of Council Regulation (EEC) no. 1677/85 of 11 June 1985 on monetary compensatory amounts (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, no. L164). [Ed.]

The first mistake was to underestimate the importance of relative prices in a modern agro-food economy, where each element is integrated in intersectoral and international trade.

Relative prices within the domestic economy in the first place: already since 1969–70, price support had no longer been ensuring a regular growth of farm incomes, which on the contrary was from 1974 on caught in "price scissors", with prices received by farmers being blocked while prices paid were rising with inflation. The index-based policy had even stronger repercussions on the agricultural supply industries (cf. J.-L. Rastoin†), as these suffered from the slowing-down of agricultural investment (see A. Neveu*), and on the "downstream" food industries which were subject to the conflicting pressures of the farmers on the one side and the general price squeeze on the other (cf. F. Caillet†). External relative prices, in the second place: from 1969, and even more between 1974 and 1981, French prices fell by comparison with France's European competitors; and those in strong-currency countries had the advantage of costs that were kept down by lower rates of inflation.

Nevertheless, during this period, the freezing of CAP reference prices did not prevent increases in market prices which, at different rates according to product sectors, caught up with inflation after varying time-lags. This gap underlines the second mistake in French policy, which was to confuse the process of fixing reference prices with that of market price formation. Such a confusion is inconsistent with the philosophy underlying the systems of market organisation. These do not aim to suppress market forces but to encompass them in the framework of guaranteed minimum prices to producers: even for those products that are most effectively supported (cereals and dairy products), the minimum prices rarely coincide with those actually realised at the various stages of marketing. The confusion reveals a tendency to overestimate the homogeneity of the European market, seen as similar to a national market, although the crisis was demonstrating the heterogeneity of the national systems of management.

Moreover, after 1974, European competition was no longer a driving-force for the French agro-food economy. In agriculture in particular, productivity was rising less fast than in the strong-currency countries of northern Europe, who were thus able to gain shares of the European market at the expense of their French competitors and, with France, to join the club of the ten biggest world exporters. After 1976, the CAP enabled France to sell on the European market between half and two-thirds of its agro-food exports. But the remainder was dependent on third country outlets, and these were both less stable and less profitable.[1] This geographical re-orientation was responsible for the irregularity and the relative weakness of the agro-food trade balance, whose value remained constantly below that of the Netherlands.

1 See Azouvi (A.), "Les soldes extérieurs de l'agro-alimentaire", *Economie et statistique*, mai 1982. See also the conference paper by M. Bourdon*.

MARKET MANAGEMENT IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD

Whatever differences of view may exist in France concerning market policy, there is broad consensus as regards "Community preference". All the farm organisations and unions and all political groups see the European market as the indispensable hinterland to be conquered before penetrating the international market.

As in the 1960s, debate and action since 1970 has focused on the question of price levels and relationships. The relationship between grain and livestock prices has been the main issue. Grain, a universal food and feed, is in the industrial countries mainly consumed in the form of meat. Its price level determines the cost of livestock production, and thus influences the scope for modernisation of this sector, and for reducing the prices of livestock products as well as those of other agricultural products as the intensification process is extended. The central role of the grain sector in the CAP is thus apparent.

Since 1970, French policy has vacillated, according to the domestic economic situation and domestic policies and to movements on international markets, between the two views which in the 1960s were held, on the one hand, by the modernising Gaullist tendency, and on the other, by representatives of the big arable farmers. Should grain prices be supported at a high level in order to maximise the profits enjoyed by grain producers? Or should the aim be to have relatively low prices, so as to expand, at one and the same time, consumption by European livestock producers, the market share for French grain and that for other product sectors thanks to faster modernisation? To understand the decisions taken in the 1970s, we must first recall the compromises negotiated between 1962 and 1968.

The European agricultural patchwork and its effects on French agriculture (1967–71)

The common market organisations (CMOs), which came into force from 1967 on, demonstrated how difficult it was for French policy to decide between the alternatives described above. The choice made by the CAP was based on a sharing-out of the various sectors between the EEC Member States and the United States, which, as leader of the Atlantic alliance and the biggest supplier of agricultural and food products, is very influential. In this intersectoral and international negotiation, "reforming Gaullism" proved unable to carry out its policy of market enlargement.

Indeed, as regards cereals, which were a French priority, the policy of high prices prevailed (except for maize): it was backed by the big arable farmers, able to mobilise to this end farmers in France who were mostly still not very specialised and in Europe the small German grain producers. The CMO took over the French system of market stabilisation in the form of permanent intervention at the wholesale stage, which corresponded to the network of co-operatives for collecting and storing the grain which

had been set up since 1936. External protection was high, thanks to adoption of the Dutch system of variable duties (import levies and export "refunds").[1]

For the other sectors, where it was accepted that France's partners were predominant, a policy of relatively low prices prevailed. This was the case, firstly, for oilseeds. The readjustment of former free-access policies to the benefit of soya was the price for getting the CAP accepted by the American Government, determined to maintain outlets on the European feedingstuffs market for the maize-soya complex, which was then expanding rapidly (see L. Tubiana*).

The CMOs for livestock products, inspired by the Dutch co-operatives, aimed at European specialisation, from which the intensive producers in the Benelux countries hoped to be the main beneficiaries. This was clear as regards pigmeat and poultrymeat, products seen as derived from grain and supported only on that basis. As regards dairy products, intervention at the point of sale from dairies was similar to the Flemish model, under which the co-operative dairies were entrusted with the task of adapting production structures. Beef was an exception (see A. Lachaux*): here, the CMO took over the French practice of stabilising the price of steak by recourse to imports and selective intervention.[2] But prices in this sector, as for other livestock products, were fixed at low levels in relation to grain, in line with the strategy of the Dutch co-operatives. External protection, on the other hand, was substantial, based here too on variable duties.

The big Italian producers and merchants saw in the CAP an opportunity to extend to the EEC their long-standing practice of speculation on the unstable markets for specialised produce. The CMO for fruit and vegetables (see F. Lauret*) gave them satisfaction by basing external external protection on fixed duties and by providing for limited intervention on the Community market. For wine, the same liberal approach prevailed, though with greater difficulty: it was not until the 1971 production year that France gave up its highly-regulated system, and then only until 1976 (see P. Bartoli*).

In the early 1970s, this composite market policy blocked the modernisation of production to the point of creating social crisis. It was inconsistent with the structures of French agriculture, and so sharpened the contradictions between cereal growers and livestock producers on the one hand, and between northern and southern regions on the other.

For the cereal growers, whose farms were already modernised and whose co-operatives had control of marketing, this was opulence. The greatest benefit went to those who had large sales of wheat, the price of which had been reduced before the CAP by the "quantum" system[3] to levels close to international prices (about 50% less than the European prices). To keep the FNSEA neutral, they accepted in 1971 a deduction from

1 The *degree* of protection owed more to Germany's traditional high-price policy. [Ed.]

2 French consumers have a strong preference for the best cuts of meat: the price of *bifteck* has been a key item in the cost-of-living index. [Ed.]

3 Progressively lower prices were paid for successive increments of sales. [Ed.]

their price to finance development, rural restructuring and livestock-raising. This effort of solidarity led the intensive livestock producers to demand increased prices for livestock produce rather than reduced prices for cereals.

Indeed, the CAP added to the difficulties facing livestock producers. For those who were modernising their farms and thus undertaking investments which cut into their income, it meant an increase in costs because of the increased price of feed grain. For all livestock producers, it caused pressure on prices, for the producers did not have the degree of organisation that would have been required, in the context of intensified competition with other European producers, to manage the expansionist strategies of the dairies nor the speculative behaviour of the meat traders. Their complaints took a radical turn in 1972 when they undertook milk delivery strikes and challenged the unity of the farm union movement: this worried the authorities all the more as there were growing complaints also by producers in the South of France.

In the fruit and vegetable sector, market crises (and demonstrations) remained sporadic, for demand was expanding. But trade agreements with Spain (1970) worried the producers, who made themselves independent of the FNSEA.

As regards table wine, the CAP aggravated the structural crisis arising from the fall in demand, and its shift from cheap red wine (*"gros rouge"*) towards quality wines (see P. Bartoli*). The restructuring of the vineyards which this entailed upset the whole balance of Languedoc society, which was mobilised in defence of the wine-growers. In this case, the foundations of sectoral corporatism were undermined. (The "wine wars" were discussed by C. Arnaud†).

Restoration of intersectoral balance (1972–83)

The question thus arose how to reduce the "economic rent" enjoyed by grain producers, how to reduce North-South disparities, how to eliminate the inequalities arising from uniform price support which gave most benefit to producers delivering the biggest quantities even though their unit costs might be relatively high. The debates of 1974–75, at the end of Georges Pompidou's presidency and the beginning of Giscard d'Estaing's, throw light on the three plans for renegotiating the CAP which were under discussion throughout the period in question.

The first plan was to go back to the model of the 1960s, giving priority to reducing cereal support. But this project was not supported by France's European partners, who considered that it did not fit in with the new situation on either the European or the world markets.[1] Along with the Commission, they wanted firstly to reduce support to the dairy sector. They asserted that Europe was collapsing under the cost of the glut of milk (the *"fleuve blanc"* or "white river" described by D. Hairy and D. Perraud*), but was short of cereals, for which world demand was rising more rapidly than that of all

1 It is not apparent that such a proposal was ever officially made by France to its EC partners. It was certainly never discussed in the Agriculture Council. [Ed..]

other foodstuffs, as was demonstrated by the extent to which prices rocketed upwards in 1972–74.

This style of management, adjusted to "market signals", attracted the new President of the Republic, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who—along with the experts of the Ministry of Finance—thought of replacing the preferential and stabilised European market by an open and liberalised system. The aim would be to encourage farmers to specialise in product areas that could be competitive on world markets (cereals, sugar, quality wine) and to discourage the others (fruit, vegetables, ordinary wine, intensive livestock production, beef, and dairy production to some extent). To achieve this, the respective areas of authority of the EEC and of the Member States should be better defined, so as to recover for France the autonomy needed to take advantage of its agro-food potential without being hampered by its partners, most of whom were food importers.

This strategy fitted in with the desire of French industry to develop a world-wide activity. It was hoped that exports of manufactures would be promoted as a result of increased purchases of agricultural products, especially from the Mediterranean area, which included countries with large populations, made richer by the increased price of oil and formerly linked to France. It was also hoped that this strategy would reinforce the food industries, which under the VIIth Plan were supposed to bring about a better integration of agriculture by organising the marketing channels.

This latter element (outlined in a speech by Giscard d'Estaing at Vassy in 1977) was all that finally survived from his venture into free trade. Previously, the President had asked the State Secretary for Agriculture, Jean-François Deniau, to prepare a re-orientation of agricultural policy, but in June 1975 his report had sunk under the combined opposition of the cereal growers, livestock producers and specialist producers. The cereal farmers, consulted in September 1974 on a proposed reform which even envisaged withdrawal from the CAP, refused to give up the advantages and the security offered by the European protectionist system. After 1975, the fall in world prices and then above all the competition from substitute products obliged them to accept price cuts, but also reinforced their attachment to the policy that guaranteed them an outlet for all their production at stable prices. Livestock and specialist producers found in Giscard's plan their favourite theme concerning preference for the production and export of "value added". But they refused the submission to industry and trade which this plan implied for them, directly as regards dairy producers, indirectly via the markets for the others.

So French policy shifted to the third plan: the more cautious one which Georges Pompidou had chosen at Saint-Flour in June 1971. This was based on a belief shared by many experts at the time, to the effect that the underlying situation was one of shortage, in a "Europe" including the United Kingdom and in a world market including as importers the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and—after the oil crisis of 1973—developing countries too. So this approach, in contrast to that of the "technocrats" who concentrated on the short-term imbalances of the market, advocated a policy to expand

output by reforming the European CMOs on the model of that for wheat (as was stated in the agricultural charter of June 1975 drawn up by the Gaullist members of the European Parliament).

This strategy, which corresponded to that of the farm organisations, aimed at a new world market organisation, no longer based on multilateral co-operation but on a pool of exporters. The idea was to organise a dual market, with high prices for the rich customers, but with preferential prices (through food aid) for developing countries whose development, moreover, needed help. (Cf. J. Coste† and P. Gonin†.) Pompidou's plan had the merit, in an unsettled market situation which was destabilising agriculture everywhere, of restoring unity: first of all in France, where it mobilised all producers for a negotiation in the Community from which they could all hope to benefit, and secondly in Europe, where it avoided a breakdown of negotiations by shifting the dissensions of the region on to an expanding world market. And that, no doubt, explained its continued popularity.

The main elements of the adjustment implied by Pompidou's plan were carried out between 1972 and 1976 by Jacques Chirac, first as Minister of Agriculture, then (after 1974) as Prime Minister. In Europe, the CMOs of the product sectors that had originally been disadvantaged were reinforced (meat, wine, fruit and vegetables). At the same time, the (gradual) reduction in grain prices (the "silo" system[1] introduced in 1975 brought down the price of feed wheat) was facilitated by the decision, after the shortages of soya in 1973, to promote output of protein crops.

Externally, France contrived to mobilise the Community budget in support of its sales of grain (still its biggest agricultural export item, dairy products (which became the third largest), meat, etc. However, it could not make the EEC's export policy into more than a means of piecemeal surplus disposal. Although export credits, in view of the growing indebtedness of the buyers (see J. Moulias*), were becoming crucial in obtaining contracts, the reluctance of the Ministry of Finance to make these into a Community responsibility was one of the reasons for blockage: France's European partners saw in this a further reason to reject a policy of long-term supply contracts.

Dynamism in Brussels contrasted with hesitations in Paris as to the national element in market policy. Was it best to retain the system of commodity boards (*offices*) which the State had set up (and which was chosen in 1972 for meat)—or to move to "inter-professional" arrangements under which the private sector would be responsible for implementing and financing the price agreements (the solution chosen in 1974 for the dairy sector, and which the law of 1975 sought to generalise)? The Government was indeed unable to resolve the conflict between farmers and agri-business. The intensive

1 A somewhat confusing term for the system under which a single flat-rate intervention price was applied for all feed grains, with a higher price only for wheat of bread-making quality: represented as a diagram, this has the appearance of a grain storage silo. [Ed.]

livestock producers in the FNSEA, just as "corporatist" as their predecessors, were determined to obtain the right not just to ensure proper implementation of price guarantees but actually to be involved in deciding them, at the national and even the European level. But the agri-business sector rejected such oligopolistic tendencies, which would have deprived it of the flexibility it needed to maintain its profit margins.

The appointment of Raymond Barre as Prime Minister in September 1976 initiated a waiting period which lasted until the end of Giscard's seven-year term. French policy can be described, paraphrasing the experts of the VIIIth Plan, as a "constant reduction in the support level, the aim being to reduce the gap between EEC and world prices, while avoiding too sharp a change in farm incomes".[1] Market management was torn between the desire to hold on to the farm vote in the successive elections from 1977 on and the aim of winning the battle against inflation; it was also paralysed by the crisis of confidence in European co-operation. It was unable, as a result, to resolve the dual contradiction to which Chirac's measures had led.

In the first place, it could not define a policy of supply management capable of controlling the growth in output, which was general throughout the EEC and particularly rapid in strong-currency countries where the effects of reinforced market support added to those arising from "green rates". The measures taken from 1977 on ("co-responsibility" in the milk sector, in particular) were inadequate to deal with this problem.

Further, French policy was unable to stop the decline of agro-food exports to the European market. The relatively weak protection for the livestock feed sector, which the Tokyo Round (1973–79) consolidated and extended to additional products, had far-reaching consequences. Following the sudden price increases of 1972–74, it prompted the Dutch, Belgian and German co-operatives, together with the international shippers (mainly German), to replace European grain with cheap substitutes, whose production was expanded in Asian countries (manioc from Thailand and Indonesia in particular), or which were available from the American maize processors (see J. Moulias*).[2] It is true that this competition provoked a fall in French grain prices, but this fall was too much restrained by the CMO for French grain to reconquer the Community market or to eliminate the competitive handicap for French livestock production arising from high feed costs. Without the support of enterprises sufficiently well versed in the intricacies of world trade, an increasing part of French produce (especially cereals, dairy products and beef) tended to go into public intervention, to be resold on third country markets.

1 "L'Europe des vingt prochaines années", report by a long-term outlook group organised by J. Pelletier and G. Tardy, Paris, *La Documentation française*, 1980, p.61.

2 The reference is to "corn gluten feed", a by-product in making "isoglucose" from maize. [Ed.]

This sort of expansion of output and trade aggravated the EEC's budgetary problems (the EAGGF "Guarantee" section could no longer finance export "refunds" by means of import levies[1]), as well as France's difficulties, being placed in direct confrontation with the United States. It is true that in 1977 the Carter (Democrat) administration sought to assuage US–European relations, troubled after the pressures exerted by previous Republican administrations. But the failure of the International Wheat Agreement in 1979 showed that France, having failed to mobilise its partners in Europe, America and in the developing world in support of its cartel plan, had no further choice but to adjust its policy (see L. Tubiana*). But it was not until 1983 that the need for such readjustment was admitted and that the Socialists began to implement it.

1983–88: adjustment of the European agricultural support system

From 1983 on, the CMO system which had made it possible to shift internal imbalances on to the world market came up against two constraints, which dominated the new European and world-wide outlook: budgetary rigour, and reduced world demand.

S. Bisarre† has pointed out that the United Kingdom was the strongest advocate of cuts in the farm budget. Producing and exporting relatively little, but importing a lot from third countries (especially the Commonwealth), this part of the budget cost the UK more than it received from it in return. The British Government tried to get acceptance for the rule of *juste retour*,[2] which usually applies in the financing of international organisations. But in 1978 it obtained only an *a posteriori* and conditional compensation, which Mrs. Thatcher found unsatisfactory. In 1982, her Government linked the financial issue to that of reforming the CAP.

Britain's partners, though they refused to go back to *juste retour*, could nevertheless see the point of Britain's criticism. François Mitterrand in particular wanted to relaunch European co-operation by re-centering it on the new industrial sectors which would in future form the basis for economic growth. He also wanted to ensure that the EEC had the means necessary to absorb Spain and Portugal, who had been kept waiting for accession since 1976 and 1977.

Criticism of the CAP became so intense in France that in 1981 there was even renewed talk of withdrawing from it. To summarise very briefly the public and scientific debate, this criticism essentially underlined the reduced efficiency of market support as a means of regulating investment in the agro-food economy. Expenditure by the European budget (the "Guarantee" section of EAGGF), which had been rising steadily since 1975, accelerated between 1981 and 1983, but this did not prevent a fall in average farm incomes, nor did it correct the very unequal distribution of income between

1 Strictly speaking, import levies are a receipt for the Community budget, not EAGGF: but the point that the costs on one side grew to exceed by far receipts on the other is correct. [Ed.]

2 Literally, "fair return": or getting back what one puts in—a principle totally in contradiction with that on which the Community budget (before UK accession) had been based. [Ed.]

producers (cf. Bisarre†—his paper sets out the rates of growth of the budget for market support). These income disparities, more marked in France than in the other EEC countries, contributed to the blockage of investment which, since 1980, was calling in question the role of agriculture as a big market for the supply industries. These disparities reflected growing inequality between farmers as regards access to technical progress, the diffusion of which was slowed down. They also caused investment to be concentrated in the sectors enjoying the most support.

OECD too has underlined these perverse effects of agricultural policies: in all =industrial countries, such policies encourage people in the agro-food economies to take advantage of the profits arising from public support rather than of those that could be obtained from innovation and modernising investment. As they tend in all countries to make the gap between supply and demand into a structural feature, they thereby aggravate the maladjustment of the world market—the second major constraint of the 1980s.

From 1982 onwards, a falling oil price, a rising dollar, and increased indebtedness among Third World countries, caused a contraction of world demand and ushered in a new phase of oversupply. The United States saw a worsening of their market share. The EEC's share improved, thanks mainly to reinforcement of France's export policy (see J. Moulias*). For these two competitors, the cost of subsidising exports grew to such an extent that in September 1985 the US embarked on a trade war, with the avowed aim of compelling the EEC to dismantle the CAP (see L. Tubiana*).

In June 1983, at the Stuttgart "Summit",[1] there was agreement to carry out, in parallel, reform of the financing of the EEC and of the CAP, and preparation for enlargement of the Community to Twelve.

In accepting to embark on a policy of supply control, the Socialists opened up a debate which the leadership of the FNSEA had been refusing for many years (see M. Marloie*). From this point on, the "charitable" but facile solution, justifying unlimited growth in European output by the combat against world hunger, could be questioned within the farmers' organisations and in the political arena.

But how should supply be controlled? The controversy of 1984 highlighted opposition between the partisans of a uniform reduction of support and those who wanted to diversify this reduction. For the first group, agriculture was "no different from the car industry", and like that industry should sell "at the price arising from productivity".[2] For the second, modernisation does not remove the constraints inherent in agricultural activity (the specificity of the land economy, the fragility of product markets) and does

1 I.e. the "European Council", consisting of Heads of State (the President, in the case of France) and Government (Prime Ministers or equivalent). [Ed.]

2 Statement by the Director-General for Agriculture in the Commission, Claude Villain, *Les Echos*, 18 December 1984.

not dispense the State from intervening. Michel Rocard, wanting to denounce the "hypocrisy" of budget-inspired management, emphasised this point:

> *If there are those who by means of budget pressure want to provoke an acceleration of the rural exodus, and virtually to exclude any possibility for young farmers to get started, then they should say so.*[1]

However, the protagonists in this debate stuck to the schema inherited from the 1960s: they all saw the restoration of the Community market for livestock feed as the means of giving back to French agriculture the place it had lost in European trade.

In European negotiations, the Socialists gradually moved towards the industry-type thesis. To start with, they gave up the idea of differentiated prices which they had advanced with a social aim (guaranteeing a minimum income to farmers) and an economic aim (to adjust the structure of French and European agriculture on the basis of "more economic and more autonomous" models[2]. The decision to abandon this plan, justified in view of its technical complexity, was taken during the negotiation on milk quotas in 1983–84 and has been maintained subsequently.

Then, in December 1984, they accepted "budget discipline". Since that time, the budget ceiling, imposed *a priori* on market support, has become constantly more restrictive, demonstrating the growing weight, in the economic management of agriculture, of concern with budgetary rigour on the part of the financial authorities.

But in this process, has France gained acceptance for its concept of European agriculture? The ways in which supply control is applied in Europe, and the EEC's positions in GATT, give grounds for doubt.

Organising supply control does not provide an opportunity for re-affirming, even in modified form, the principle of Community preference. For livestock feed (grain and protein feeds), price cuts and more limited intervention lead to a policy of productivity and specialisation, with the world market as the main point of reference. Moreover, maintaining free access for complementary and substitute products continues to close off for French producers and co-operatives the possibility of forming an oligopoly to control the European market. In the dairy sector, the nationally-determined and managed quotas reflect the pre-eminence of national preference, and in the long term entail the risk of reducing intra-Community trade (see D. Hairy and D. Perraud*).

The evolving European position in GATT demonstrates even more clearly the difficulties facing any attempt to go back to the initial agricultural compromises, even if supply control is incorporated (see L. Tubiana*). The other Member States do indeed follow France in defending the CAP. But by agreeing to include it in the negotiation, and then by accepting discussion of the system of variable import levies which is its corner-stone, do they not show that they share the American aim of reducing market intervention very substantially, if not of actually dismantling it? There are grounds to

1 *Le Monde*, 3 October 1984.

2 *...plus économes et plus autonomes*—the title of a report by the Director-General of INRA (the French agronomic research institute), Jacques Poly, published in 1978.

suspect this, if one looks at the importance in the EEC of the issue of compensation for market liberalisation (land "set-aside", direct aids, etc.). Is this not a European version of "decoupling", in which national income aids (see G. Bazin and B. Marescà*), co-ordinated through EEC co-financing, would allow the free play of market forces and would unify markets in Europe and in the world?

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* *

So the scheme for a wide European market, similar to a domestic one, which for nearly forty years has inspired French policy, can be seen as a "model", representing society's idea as to how the international dimension should be fitted into the agro-food economy. This model seemed effective in the past: it enabled the political apparatus to regulate the internal modernisation process and the growing export potential by reference to intra-Community and extra-Community markets. But as several conference papers noted, consensus on this model has been crumbling since 1970: it corresponds less and less to reality as to how the French agro-food economy fits into the international scene, so is less helpful in regulating that process.

As the biggest producer and exporter within the EEC, France could be the prime mover for an adjustment of the CAP, along lines that would permit France to become a full member of the "club" of agro-food exporters. But since 1974–75, France has hesitated. For the task is indeed a matter of high-level policy: reform is needed at the level of the State itself, and in particular the Ministry of Finance should understand that the international aspect of agricultural policy (which it controls) is an EEC responsibility, just as the Ministry of Agriculture has understood this as regards the regulation of the Community market.

EPILOGUE (July 1991)

An epilogue is needed to deal with the latest debates as to how French agriculture should relate to the external market, and to assess the changes that are under way, hidden though these are behind the apparent immobility of a policy that continues to defend European protectionism.

THE ISSUES

Underlying the renewed debate are questions as to the course which trade expansion should take. This expansion is continuing, despite the falling-off of demand: the agro-food trade surplus exceeded the 1981 peak of 25-30 billion francs to reach 41 billion in 1988, and in 1989 and 1990 it went beyond 50 billion (about 8 billion US dollars). The Community market, taking some 70% of exports, remains the principal outlet, but the fastest growth rates are observed on third country markets (including the United States and especially Japan).

But this growth of French exports (and that of the EEC as a whole) is considered illegitimate by other exporting countries, both industrialised and developing. In their view, it reflects an ability to compete that is based on the protection accorded by the variable import levies and export "refunds" granted under the CAP. All these countries, along with the United States, therefore insist that the EEC should give up this type of support, the very principle of which is contested as it isolates European producers from world market signals.

So, just as the EEC worked out its agricultural policy between 1962 and 1967 in liaison with the "Kennedy Round", so now it has to reform the CAP to make it compatible with the aim of trade liberalisation that has been accepted under the "Uruguay Round".

What products should be exported?

The debates to which this reform gives rise in France revolve around two themes. The first concerns the choice of products for export. Which should be promoted?—processed products, with a high value added, or primary commodities and those resulting from a single stage of processing?

The first category (quality wines, cognac, cheese, *foie gras*, poultry, etc.) account for some 40% of agro-food exports, and are already sold without subsidy on competitive markets, especially in industrialised countries where demand for such items continues to grow. For the producers and processors concerned, as for agro-food enterprises which are developing in similar channels, liberalisation of agricultural policies would mean wider outlets, especially in Japan and the United States where at present they encounter prohibitive duties or health restrictions which often constitute non-tariff barriers.

The second group of products (wheat, flour, milk powder, butter) get the greater part of Community support. Without it, cereal-growing could not survive the competition of substitute products, nor the trade war declared by the United States; the markets for basic dairy products would be invaded by competition from Eastern Europe and Oceania.

But is it possible to abandon such basic products, still considered essential for food security? They are moreover a means of combating the extension of hunger in the world, and can be used in the strategies aimed at the creation of value-added that have been applied since the early 1980s in developing countries and are now being prepared in Eastern Europe.

The question is all the more acute because the ranks of the protectionists are reinforced by the intensive meat producers (a net import sector) who are affected by the liberalisation of market organisation (the case of beef), who worry about the malfunctioning or undermining of their support (the case of sheepmeat), or who wonder about the consequences of German re-unification (the case of pigmeat)...

What sort of agriculture?

A trade strategy cannot be defined without taking into account its effects on the structural dimension. The debate on this second theme revolves around the question as to how many farmers are needed and what should be their status, in order to reduce income disparities, to maintain a homogeneous occupation of the land passed down by history, and to avoid a degradation of the natural environment.

With a "productivist"-type agriculture, production would continue to concentrate on the north-western quarter of the country, incomes would concentrate on less than 20% of farmers, and environmental costs would increase (in the form of pollution, already noticeable in Brittany and the Paris Basin, and desertification).

A peasant-type agriculture, with more farmers, distributed over the whole land, would make fuller and better use of natural resources. But would this not lead to reduced labour productivity and thus to increased food prices (or increased imports), and to reduced farm incomes.

THE POLICY CHOICES

The need to reconcile these various trade and structural interests places the authorities before complex choices. Since autumn 1990, in a debate which extends beyond the confines of the governing majority and those of the nation—since it is taking place between French nationals in Brussels and in Paris—three schools of thought can be distinguished. All three accept that a reduction in support to farming is inevitable: but they differ as to the model which should be the basis for adjusting French and European agriculture, for its place in society and for its role on world markets.

The liberal school

The first school of thought can be described as "liberal": it favours "enterprise farming", "an economic activity like any other, normally remunerated through the market".[1] For this school, agriculture in Europe is nowadays dependent on the world market, for its purchases of the means of production and for its sales, and European preference no longer has any sense other than that of guaranteeing high prices for cereals. In these conditions, the priority should be to "give international virginity to the CAP"[2], so as to free the way for the broad international negotiation that is essential to put order back into world trade, in agriculture as in other sectors.

This approach leads to the recommendation that for the cereals and the oilseeds sectors—which are at the heart of the conflict between Europe and America—there should be a move to compensatory payments on a per hectare basis (together with a

1 Interview with Michel Jacquot, Director of the EAGGF in the Commission, *Solagral*, June 1991. M. Jacquot is a particularly assiduous advocate of the liberal approach.

2 M. Jacquot, *op. cit.*

"set-aside" programme): this would be in conformity with GATT rules, since it would be "decoupled" from output. Like US policy, this reform would aim to shift Community support towards the largest holdings, installed on the most fertile land: such farms, their competitivity thus ensured, would be able to take advantage of the European and world markets.

More interventionist measures are envisaged for the livestock sector. The French liberals agree that "in view of the constraints characteristic of agriculture, complementary aids have to be given".[1] Since the cuts in cereal prices are likely to provoke increased surplus output, the incentive to produce would have to be limited by price reductions (and by quotas in the case of milk) together with compensatory aids in favour of extensive systems.

The "ruralist" school

The second school of thought, of which the current President of the Commission, Jacques Delors, is the most convinced advocate, prefers a "ruralist" approach, organised on the basis of peasant farming chosen for its contribution to the occupation and the improvement of the countryside.[2]

As appears from the reform proposals presented by the Commission in July 1991, the ruralist approach is compatible with the liberal school, but involves higher budgetary expenditure (which however should be offset by reduced consumer prices). This is because peasant farming generally looks to different marketing channels than those which apply for the major commodities whose support the liberals want to reduce; also because the "modulation" of compensatory aids and quota reductions according to size of farm makes it possible to limit the degree to which the peasant farms are penalised and to maintain their income, even when they produce cereals or milk; and because their traditional extensive farming methods make them eligible for the aids available for cattle-rearing.

The "productivist" school

But this compromise does not suit the third school, which regards it as dangerous for the productivist agriculture that has been formed by thirty years of the CAP, and which it continues to defend. Louis Mermaz, appointed Minister of Agriculture in November 1990, is to be found in this camp, along with the principal union movement,

1 M. Jacquot, *op. cit.*

2 See also the report to the Senate, no. 249—1990/91, by the *mission d'information chargée d'étudier les problèmes posés par l'avenir de l'espace rural français*. This group worked under the presidency of J. François-Poncet, a former Minister now in opposition.

the FNSEA/CNJA. This alliance was sealed during the demonstrations of livestock producers in summer 1990: the aims may be different, but they converge. For the Government, priority must be given to preserving social order: agitation by livestock producers who are being pushed out of business by "budgetary discipline" that gives them no hope for the future must not be allowed to combine with the discontent of urban workers, faced with unemployment rising to record levels. To this end, the FNSEA, which claims to represent the professional interests of all farmers, is a more appropriate interlocutor than the *Confédération paysanne*: although the latter has left-wing affiliations which might appeal to the Socialist Government, it places the action by "peasant-workers" in the overall context of the rural and urban working-class (cf. chapter 4 below by Bertrand Hervieu).

By changing the Minister of Agriculture, François Mitterrand has returned to the old strategy, adopted by Georges Pompidou back in May 1968 (cf. chapter 5), of balancing unrest in the cities against conservatism in the countryside. In a political system dominated by the next presidential election, it is legitimate to suppose that electoral considerations had something to do with this change: alliance with the FNSEA may take away some of the farming support for Jacques Chirac, who is a declared candidate for the Presidency of the Republic, in particular by reinforcing the Christian-Democrat tendency with which the president of the FNSEA, R. Lacombe, is associated.[1]

The FNSEA, for its part, probably hopes that the Government will support it in a reform of the CAP that preserves its productivist base. This is the essence of their joint positions, which may be summed up as follows.

In the first place, they refuse a support system based on compensatory payments. The argument put forward—respect for the "dignity" of farmers, who do not want to be "assisted" but to live from the sale of their produce[2]—may seem surprising when one thinks of the direct Community aids which compensate for the structural and natural handicaps affecting peasant holdings. In actual fact, the productivist farmers, supported in this by the big entrepreneurial arable farmers, fear that public opinion, taxpayers, farmers who earn less than the minimum wage, and France's European partners, will contest their economic utility and their social legitimacy and refuse to support them, especially as the cost of direct payments would be publicly transparent.

Secondly, they object to the "modulation" of aids. Those who are most opposed to this reform are the intensive livestock producers, for these—in contrast to the big arable

1 The next presidential elections are not due until 1995. But there is no doubt that manoeuvring began early. And while the Socialists differ as to who should be their candidate, they are certainly united in the aim of keeping Chirac out... [Ed.]

2 The same argument was used by the agricultural representative of the RPR (Chirac's party), J.C. Pasty, in *Le Figaro* of 10 July 1991.

farmers who can benefit from economies of scale or who can extensify their system—have production costs that exceed those of traditional livestock producers. Subject to milk quotas, and faced with price cuts, they can only increase their income by concentrating their production and by eliminating their "peasant" competitors.[1]

What they propose is hardly revolutionary: adjustment of the CAP should continue to be based on *quantities*, including cereals where the idea is to have annual "set-aside", compulsory and subject to compensation.

But in such a protected European market, with generalised supply control, what would happen to *export potential*, which nevertheless this third school claims to defend?

A "Franco-French" and a "Franco-European" debate

All in all, French agricultural policy is doubly paralysed. Firstly, because those responsible cannot reconcile the conflicting interests and policy alternatives. Secondly, because this "Franco-French" debate is also a "Franco-European" issue, in which Commission authorities confront those of a Member State.

Indeed, like Jacques Chirac in 1972–74, Louis Mermaz since 1990 has broken off the alliance with the Commission. In 1972–74, this rupture contributed to a renationalisation of the CAP, the effects of which were attenuated by world shortages until 1982 but which can still be felt. Today, this attitude risks a blockage of Community policy, in a context such that we may wonder if France does not risk losing out on all fronts: in the trade field, since the EEC can negotiate neither for protected nor for liberalised products; in the structural field, since, under present policies, territorial and social equilibrium is being stretched to breaking-point by the exodus from farming (3% in 1990) and by the concentration of production and incomes; and, finally, in the political field, since France, bending over backwards to defend its lobbies, risks losing its role as a great European agricultural power and its ability to bring Community negotiations to bear on the world-wide context.

1 The 1991 congress of young farmers (CNJA) was the occasion for a fierce clash between Breton delegates and those from other *départements*, on this issue of the modulation of aids (cf. *Ouest-France* of 13 and 14 June 1991). In Brittany, the debate continues between the *Confédération paysanne* and the majority union (cf. *Ouest-France* of 26 and 28 June 1991.

2

FARMERS AND THE STATE

by Pierre Coulomb

The *Lois d'orientation* (Guidance Laws) of 1960–62 are often credited with having instituted the joint arrangements whereby the State and the farm organisations work directly together to manage agricultural policy. Indeed, the 1960 Law declares that "agricultural policy shall be implemented in collaboration with the professional agricultural organisations". The same interpretation is supported by the way in which these Laws were worked out: the dialogue between Michel Debré, then Edgard Pisani, and representatives of the young farmers' movement can be regarded as a success for the Gaullist philosophy of "participation". Moreover, the constitution of the Fifth Republic, in giving pre-eminence to the executive branch over Parliament, made it possible for these new socio-political relations to be established between farmers and the State. Finally, during the 1960s, the State widened the autonomous powers of the union movement in implementing structural policy, and entrusted the Chambers of Agriculture with farmers' training and the dissemination of technical progress. But it should be noted that this decision was taken after de Gaulle's failure to win re-election in the first round of presidential elections in 1965 (when the FNSEA had called upon its members to oppose de Gaulle).

However, it was between 1969 and 1972 that relations between the State and the professional bodies changed in character and in meaning. In place of the consultations and opinions which the State could request from one or other of the four big organisations (the APCA, the CNMCCA, the FNSEA and the CNJA[1]) in the decision-making or management processes, there was instituted a system of permanent "concertation" with the organisations as a group, which were henceforth referred to as "the profession". Although it never had a formal basis, this permanent consultation had a very official character. So from 1969 until the Left gained power in 1981, the Minister of Agriculture, every first Tuesday in the month, received the four farm leaders in a monthly conference, and the Prime Minister held an Annual Conference with the four organisations; from 1974 until 1977, decisions concerning direct aids were taken in conferences on the income situation. These direct relations with the executive reinforced the authority

1 See Annex IV on farm organisations. [Ed.]

of the farm organisations over the central and regional administrations: it was at this time that the instruments of "joint policy management" foreseen in the 1960–62 Laws really entered into effect or were created.

There has been little direct study of this evolution of relations between the State and the profession, because—as J.-P. Billaud* points out—economics and political scientists looking at the rural sector did not at that time concentrate on the issue of formal relations between the executive and the farm leaders.[1]

To understand these relations, we should avoid an unduly simplified view of the State as a homogeneous body, the expression of some universal rationality, or of a united farming community acting as an egoistic lobby to defend its interests; we should also avoid too naive a view of social classes in agriculture operating as the purveyors of technical and social progress in successive phases of agricultural development. Since 1880, relations between the State and the farmers have always been based on alliances between a political movement or party and a social class among the farmers. Such agreements go well beyond a simple electoral *clientélisme* or the need for efficient economic organisation. Basically, they are the expression of public choices, which on several occasions in the past have had implications for the whole political regime. In this way, these relationships tend to shape the development of society.

Moreover, relationships between the State and farmers' representatives in agriculture are the outcome of a long historical process, for they have developed and continue to evolve along with capitalism. But over time, there are changes both in the economic and political conditions for the accumulation of capital and in ideas as to what constitutes a "good farmer",in "modern" agriculture, as appears from developments in agricultural policy.

Such relationships also arise from conflicts between the social groups making up the farm sector: these may be antagonistic, differing not only in their interests but also in their views as to how agricultural production should be organised, what should be its place in the social system and its relations with the State. In these circumstances, the farm organisations, whatever their statutes and purposes, cannot be considered as an assemblage of complementary and coherent elements, with tasks shared out on a clearly-defined basis and providing the State with a basis for its current agricultural policy.

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1 The Annual Conference is not mentioned in *Histoire de la France rurale* (M. Gervais, M. Jollivet, Y. Tavernier, vol.IV, Paris, Le Seuil 1976) nor in *L'élaboration de la politique agricole* (P. Coulomb, H. Nallet, C. Servolin, INRA-Cordes, 1977), nor in *Le syndicalisme moderne et la création du paysan modèle* (P. Coulomb, H. Nallet, INRA-Cordes, 1980), nor in writings by P. Muller. C. Servolin gives the subject a brief mention in his *Traité de science politique* (M. Grawitz, J. Leca, Paris, PUF 1985, vol. 4), but the only available study is that by three National Assembly officials: "Le Parlement et les soutiens publics à l'agriculture" (J.-Y. Gréhal, M. Laurent, H. Message, *Economie rurale*, 144, 1981).

The system of management involving the State and farmers' representatives in the agricultural sector has come about in a process of stratification, each stratum representing a particular moment in the history of agricultural policy and in the political power balance. Each stratum is characterised by the social class or layer which declares itself to be "modern", by the organisations which it creates to bring about the type of development it wants, and by its hegemony over other social layers, and finally by the political forces that are ready to form alliances with the dominant social class in order to provide the indispensable support of the State.

Each stratum, however, also has its territory: depending on the local social structure in agriculture and on historical development and political culture, the social organisation of agriculture may differ; so too do the the conflicts and antagonisms within each region, and the local concepts of relations with the State. So a geography of social relations is needed to understand that "joint management" does not have the same meaning from one *département* to another (as shown by J.-P. Prodhomme*) or from one region to another (compare the conference contributions by J.-P. Peyon†, S. Martin and G. Novarina†, B. Kayser and D. Roméas† and the papers by S. Cordellier* and F. Manderscheid*).

THREE IMPORTANT SOCIO-POLITICAL MODELS

Three significant socio-political models have played a role in French agricultural development, and it is important to make a distinction between them if one is to understand the tangled debates about "concertation" between the State and the profession. Two of these models are "corporatist" in the full sense of the word, in that they aim at a subordinate role for State authority so that agriculture may organise its growth and development autonomously. On the other hand, the third model, that of "corporate democracy", submits to the State so that markets can be organised and farm incomes stabilised under the latter's authority.[1]

1 A dictionary definition (*Robert*) is: "Corporative organisation is...a type of social organisation under which professionally-based groups have within the State a recognised role, and enjoy certain prerogatives in carrying out their tasks". Since being initially promoted by the Marquis de La Tour du Pin (1834–1924), the concept has played a greater theoretical and practical role in France than in most English-speaking countries. Under the Vichy regime, a corporate structure was imposed from above; in the period here considered, relations between the State and the mainstream farm unions may also be described as "corporatist". The meanings which Coulomb attaches to the word will appear from the text which follows. See also John T.S. Keeler, *The Politics of Neocorporatism in France: Farmers, the State and Agricultural Policy-making in the Fifth Republic*, OUP, New York and Oxford, 1987. [Ed.]

Each model corresponds to a particular view of society and of State, hence to different political alliances. During the 1950s, the *co-operative* movement leant on the Socialist Party, while its *corporatist* opponents in the Chambers of Agriculture and the FNSEA sought support from the anti-Gaullist conservative right. During the 1960s, the CNJA formed an alliance with the modernising Gaullist tendency and— in the person of Michel Debatisse—gained control of the FNSEA.

The "organic corporatism" of the big landowners[1]

This form of corporatism sought to preserve land rents through a separate development of rural society and by keeping an hierarchical order of distinct social classes. The parish was seen as the basis of social life: that is where the farm union movement of the late 19th century took shape (in tiny "shop-front" co-operatives).

This tendency had a marked influence on the land of France (setting the West apart as a rural area from which industrialisation would be banned); it has also promoted capitalist financing based on peasant savings, while causing country–versus–town antagonism to persist in the form of industrial anti-capitalism and anti-State feeling.[2] In the 1970s, this tendency virtually lost its final bastions, as the "young farmers" chased the last *notables* out of the presidencies of the Chambers of Agriculture, but its ideology continues to influence that of the right-wing and extreme right-wing movements, and above all, at the present time, the anti-Gaullist tendency.

The "economic corporatism" of the "entrepreneurs"

The theme of this corporatism, promoted by big farmers, was "parity for agriculture with industry": the farmer as entrepreneur had to be a capitalist, and like any other capitalist, independent of the State since his profits gave him the means of growth. Its proponents dreamt of liberating themselves from State control, yet demanded State help in imposing a "fair price" on their suppliers and their customers, in the context of an "inter-professional" management of commercial channels. To that end, they set up organisations (of wheat producers, sugar-beet producers, etc.) whose purpose in each case was to exert "economic power" over the market. In the 1970s, although they lost

1 "Organic" in the sense that society was held to be a coherent body, with the Sovereign at its head, the parts of which cannot act separately. A doctrine associated in the late 19th century with the monarchist and aristocratic right-wing tendencies, including the big landowners of the *Société des agriculteurs de France*. [Ed.]

2 To a large extent, the Social Christian movement which came into being after Leo XIII's Papal encyclical *Rerum novarum* of 1891, under A. de Mun and P. de la Tour du Pin, carried on the ideology of organic solidarity, while giving it a more "social" character, and participated in Vichy's project for a "peasant corporation". Cf. Boussard (I.), *La corporation paysanne*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1980.

control of the FNSEA to the young farmers, they remained powerful through their commodity-based organisations and within the Chambers of Agriculture.

Thinking of themselves as capitalist entrepreneurs, these big farmers saw themselves as part of the overall economic system. No doubt that explains their political opportunism: as their influence was no longer based on rural society, they often acted as a pressure group, seeking alliances that could promote their interests. Under the Fourth Republic and at the beginning of the Fifth, their power in Parliament was considerable: they were largely responsible, after the fall of Mendès-France, for General de Gaulle's failure to win re-election in the first round of presidential elections in 1965, and hence for putting an end to modernising Gaullism. In the same way, their influence in the National Assembly and in the Senate had much to do with the anti-parliamentary reactions of the young farmers in the 1960s.

Still, this group of people failed in its attempt to impose its economic ideas on the State. Thus in 1958, they could not prevent abolition by de Gaulle's new Government of the "indexation" of agricultural prices introduced only the previous year. They were also unable to get indexation restored in the "Guidance Law" of 1960. However, it is important to recall Articles 2 and 6 of that Law, as these, in the view of the APCA, were the constitutional basis for the Annual Conference. These two Articles laid down that *"fair prices ... ensuring for the farmers' work, for management responsibilities, for the remuneration of working capital and of real estate, a level of income equivalent to that which these factors could obtain in other sectors of activity"* should be guaranteed on the basis of an agreed annual report. Here we have the perfect definition of a farming enterprise granted at last the status of "parity" with an industrial enterprise.

"Co-operative organicism"[1]

The co-operative and mutual insurance movement is mainly concerned with farmers' incomes. It has been opposed to "organic corporatism" (because its power-base lies in the farm holding and not in village society) and also to "economic corporatism": as a kind of extension of the holding, co-operation aims to improve income by means of a collective organisation of supply and marketing channels, rather than through reliance on price policy. Moreover, it has a different social model: co-operative democracy brings together agricultural producers on equal terms, whatever their economic standing ("one man, one vote").

1 Like the preceding title, this is Coulomb's expression. The text makes the meaning clear. [Ed.]

So described, this model seems compatible with the conditions of capitalist growth and may suit the Republican political groups (Radicals, Socialists, and even Christian Democrats).[1] The co-operative movement has enjoyed State support even though, as P. Nicolas* points out, it has been put to the test since the laws of 1960–62, and has changed shape since the *Caisse nationale de crédit agricole* became "mutualist", as A. Gueslin* describes.[2]

In fact, unity within the co-operative and mutualist movement is recent and basically institutional in character: it dates from the immediate post-war period, when the Socialists set up the *Confédération générale de l'agriculture* and issued a statute of co-operation. Part only of the co-operative movement is firmly Republican. Another part derives from "organic corporatism" (so-called "Dukes' co-operatives": federations bringing together at the level of the provinces the "shop-front" parish co-operatives). Moreover, co-operation in the cereal sector is partly controlled by big commercial farmers whose interest lies in economic corporatism.

In these circumstances, the movement's unity has been based on the desire not to break up the legal framework provided by the statute of co-operation. This statute, in the first place, gives protection against competition from private enterprises. It also provides a basis for the legitimacy of the co-operative movement as a pivot of farmers' economic and social organisation: thus, during the period under consideration, the co-operative movement, vis-à-vis the FNSEA, claimed its rightful place in agricultural development (cf. P. Nicolas*, F. Colson* and J. Rémy*). Up to 1970, a Republican hegemony over the movement was accepted in so far as, under the Fourth Republic, this was based on the parties in power (the Socialists and the *Mouvement républicain populaire*), while under the Fifth Republic the Republicans, the Chambers of Agriculture and the conservative right wing formed an anti-Gaullist alliance. Gradually, however, the FNSEA and the CNJA managed to take over the presidencies of the co-operatives and of the regional branches of the *Crédit agricole*.

1 The author uses the term "Republican" by opposition to the parties of the Right, perhaps even the Centre-Right. Such usage could be disputed by other Frenchmen, who would probably stress that today, no significant political movement—with the possible exception of the *Front national*—can be considered *anti*-republican. But in 19th-century France, "Republican" clearly meant the opposite of "Monarchist"; and until Pope Leo XIII authorised Catholics to be Republicans, it also tended to oppose secular to religious authority. Such connotations have not entirely disappeared. See also Annex III on political parties. [Ed.]

2 Until 1987, the *Crédit agricole*—the main bank in rural areas, and indeed the biggest French bank—had a hybrid structure, its regional and local branches being co-operatives while its central office was a public institution, the reason being that government credit subsidies were handled by the *Crédit agricole*. In 1987–88 (under a right-wing Government, and with François Guillaume as Minister of Agriculture) the central office was denationalised, being bought by the regional branches. [Ed.]

A NEW SOCIO-POLITICAL MODEL: JOINT POLICY MANAGEMENT (*"CO-GESTION"*)

It can now be seen that two distinct levels must be taken into account in studying the complex phenomenon of relations between the profession and the State. One relates to the conflicts between the four main professional bodies (referred to on page 33), united in their claim to be the true representatives of the farmers (unlike the opposing unions, whether left-wing or right-wing) but opposed to each other in their views of agricultural development. The other relates to the struggles between political forces as regards agricultural policy and political action in general. Let us consider this latter aspect first.

The political conflict

Since the beginning of the Fifth Republic, farmers have been a bone of contention among the right-wing parties: besides a power struggle for parliamentary control, there have also been issues of economic policy. In the 1960s and 1970s, and then after 1981, changes in the nature of these issues have altered the relationship between farming and the State. "Joint management" seems an appropriate term to describe those periods when State and profession were closely associated in working out agricultural policy, but the timing of these periods seems to have been determined by the Government's political needs rather than by technical or economic considerations related to management of agricultural production and of the agro-food sector.

"Joint management" (the expression *co-gestion* was not used at the time) was very nearly born in an institutional way in 1963. At the very beginning of the 1960s, the Gaullist regime saw the young farmers' movement as interlocutors who fitted in with its plan of economic modernisation, also with its aim of implanting the Gaullist party in the rural world and pushing back the right-wing *notables*, who were often actively anti-Gaullist. In 1960 and 1962, the young farmers led by Michel Debatisse took part in shaping the Guidance Laws. In 1963, Edgard Pisani thought of giving institutional form to this "concertation" over the modernisation of agriculture, but he gave up this plan when faced with disagreement over the reciprocal undertakings that would be required—a matter as to which different views were held by the State and by each of the farmers' organisations. This attempt thus failed, and the only result was the creation of a national accounting board for agriculture (the CCAN—see paper by Lacombe).

General de Gaulle, having failed to win re-election in the first round of Presidential elections in 1965, took the advice of his Prime Minister Georges Pompidou and appointed as Minister of Agriculture Edgar Faure: a politician experienced in steering a middle course between opposing factions. He sought support from the Chambers of Agriculture, to which in 1966 he entrusted the agricultural advisory service (now regarded as a "development" task), much to the annoyance of the members of the young farmers' union who in 1972 fought to regain control of this activity.

After Georges Pompidou had been elected President of the Republic in 1969, he initially continued the same course. Michel Debatisse, who had become Secretary-General of the FNSEA, was encouraged to take up again the 1963 plan of "concertation" in the context of the programme for a "new society" launched by the Prime Minister, Jacques Chaban-Delmas. But the Chambers of Agriculture and the CNMCCA stepped up their pressure, in the course of the debate on the VIth Plan, for application of Articles 2 and 6 of the Guidance Law of 1960 (see above).

The year 1971 became a turning-point between the modernising Gaullist tendency and the conservative neo-Gaullist movement. Pompidou insisted that Chaban-Delmas should re-institute the Annual Conference procedure along with "joint management". His aim was primarily political: to ensure that the farming and rural electorate would provide firm right-wing support to counter-balance the growing left-wing vote arising from the social crisis whose seriousness had been demonstrated by the events of May 1968. By putting together the four bodies which had been rivals since the 1950s, he was taking care not to overlook any component of the farming vote. At the same time, he set the agricultural policy debate on a new tack by suggesting (in a speech at St. Flour in June 1971) that the aim should no longer be to "industrialise" the production system by making a distinction between two (or three) farming types, but to modernise an entire sector incorporating all the different kinds of family farm (cf. Hélène Delorme*).

From 1972 to 1976, this new alliance with the four organisations, initiated by Georges Pompidou, enabled Jacques Chirac to build up an electoral bastion for the future RPR party by leaning on the national leadership of the FNSEA. But when he ceased to be Prime Minister in 1976, his success in this respect had the result—as could be foreseen—of undoing the "joint management" approach: the FNSEA would now accept no other governmental interlocutor. As a result, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in 1975 had to abandon his scheme of modernisation, and although he won over Michel Debatisse from Jacques Chirac, this did not give him the support of the FNSEA, in spite of his speech at Vassy in December 1977 in which he returned to Pompidou's themes, and in spite of the Guidance Law of 1980 which gave more power than ever before to the farmers' representatives.

The conflict between farm organisations

In 1971, the young leaders of the FNSEA, under the guidance of Michel Debatisse, had to place themselves clearly on the right wing of the Gaullist movement, accepting a policy different from the selective approach which they had advocated within the CNJA in the 1960s. But perhaps this was a change in tactics rather than in their basic aim?

The socio-political model which the young farmers set up in the 1950s and 1960s was almost identical in principle to the "corporatism" of the big arable farmers, being also based on developing the farm as a business. Moreover, their solutions to problems

of agricultural policy were the same: a marked reduction in land rents, a "normal" remuneration for labour and capital, hence the need to build up monopolistic marketing methods (the concept of "economic organisation" involving several professional groups). Seeing themselves as individual and responsible "entrepreneurs", like the big farmers, they too promoted a union movement bringing farmers together on a voluntary basis in order to manage the whole technical-economic apparatus surrounding the agricultural sector. In this way they did not subscribe to the principle of economic solidarity upheld by the co-operative movement: rather, they stressed the efficiency and discipline necessary for industrial and commercial-type farming groups. Conflicts which arose concerning the method of payment for milk by the co-operatives in the West, discussed by J.-P. Peyon†, illustrate the intensity of their disagreement with the "other" peasants. Similarly, already in 1960–62 (cf. P. Nicolas*) they argued in favour of competition between co-operatives and producer groups. For the same reasons, they opposed from an early date the way in which advisory work was being carried out by government agronomists,[1] just as in the 1970s they distrusted the "development" work by governmental agencies (the SUAD).

This new form of corporatism, however, operates in a quite different context from that of the big arable farmers. In the first place, the production systems are different. To raise their productivity, young livestock producers seeking to intensify have to invest heavily, and their capital is then committed for a considerable period of time; their produce is perishable, and mostly sold in processed form. For economic and political reasons, the cost of their inputs is raised by the high price of feed grain, so they have sought to limit the ambitions of the big cereal growers. "Downstream", they have to confront enterprises in the food industry which have been expanding too, and which in many cases are the channel for price support. Last but not least, they have had to take account of rural exodus, which is no longer a problem for the big arable farms: and if they want to use this process to help in developing their type of enterprise, they have had to do so in a very political way, since they have been operating in a farming world still very diversified and in which their power is still not assured.

Hence the importance for their action of the doctrine originating with the centralised educational community of the *Jeunesse agricole chrétienne* (Christian Young Farmers).[2] This, in the first place, provided a unifying factor, virtually a clan, as between regions. But above all, their Christian humanist approach[3] that enabled them to assimi-

1 Cf. analysis by Muller (P.), *Le technocrate et le paysan*, Paris, Editions ouvrières, 1982.

2 See work by Barrès (D.) and Nallet (H.), *La JAC et la JAC-JP de 1945 à 1950*, INRA, 1977; and Barrès (D.), Bourquelot (F.), Colson (F.), Nallet (H.), *La JAC et la modernisation de l'agriculture*, Nantes, Paris, INRA, 1980. On the ideology of the modern farm union movement summarised here, see Coulomb (P.) and Nallet (H.), *Le syndicalisme moderne et la création du paysan-modèle*, *op. cit.*

3 *"Personnalisme chrétien"*: a philosophical basis for the social involvement of many French Catholics. [Ed.]

late their personal ethic and social theory, and thus to appear to themselves and to others as models consistent with society's needs: to be, quite legitimately, a good example for others to follow. In this way, these "model peasants" could reconcile their proclaimed theory of modernisation with economic rationality, and indeed with State rationality—and could believe themselves justified in tackling the State on equal terms.

This ideology, both ethical and political in nature, causing them to believe that right was on their side, explains their intransigence towards any social obstacles in their path. The joint management of policy which was their aim, and which they thought they had fully achieved in their *de facto* political pact in 1971 with Pompidou and Chirac, thus had two aspects defining their relationship with the State.

In the first place, it had a legislative function. The young farmers were in a hurry, wanting rapid development, which in their view had to be planned; but they were in a minority, since the farm sector was still dominated by ideologies arising from former socio-political systems; and the example set by their own social movement was not enough to modify local agricultural social structures. For the same reasons, they were bound to distrust compromise solutions in a Parliament still under the influence of the landed interest and the big arable farmers. The constitution of the Fifth Republic gave them their opportunity by opening up the possibility of a direct alliance with a strong executive: it enabled them, through numerous laws, decrees and regulations, which were deliberately made very detailed[1] and which from 1972 onwards were generally decided in the Annual Conference, to base their local authority on the law. Each of these legal texts gave this group of farmers authority over other social groups. Thus laws on farm structures curbed the power of both small and large farmers (cf. R. Didier† and C. de Crisenoy†); a law on animal genetics was aimed at breeders (cf. J. Pluvinage† and J. Bonnemaire and B. Vissac†); a law on the organisation of producer groups aimed to counter the traditional co-operative leaders; laws on intersectoral relations sought to impose their prices on merchants and agro-business; and so on.

In the second place, joint management involved political supervision of the law's application.[2] The FNSEA and the CNJA (or their branches in the *départements*) obtained the right to sit on numerous committees, advisory boards, etc., sometimes on a par with the administration, at both national and departmental levels, and could thus take part in the choices that had to be made within the legislative framework which they had helped to establish. They even tried to supervise the executive branch: in the 1970s they asked to be present in the Ministry of Agriculture, next to the Minister, so as to

1 Cf. Nallet (H.), Servolin (C.), *Le paysan et le droit: Des libertés républicaines aux règlements bureaucratiques*, Paris, INRA, 1978.

2 See also Keeler, *op.cit.* (especially Ch. 4), on the content of "comanagement". [Ed.]

"guide" agricultural policy; and to have similar status next to the *préfets* in the *départements*. This omnipresence of the unions, extending to the posts of chairmen of co-operatives, credit banks, mutual insurance societies, SAFER[1], ADASEA[2], etc., became a system whereby an oligarchy could exercise control over agricultural development. These former militant members of the young farmers' union, few in number in each *département* but each of them holding several posts, have now become fully integrated into the agricultural component of the ruling classes: as a result (as studies at the departmental level show) they appear increasingly distant and even "Parisian" to "ordinary" farmers.

Joint policy management, however, did not achieve all the aims of corporatism. A study of the Annual Conferences shows that even during the golden age of joint management under Jacques Chirac, increases in prices and/or in direct aids did not take precedence over broad macro-economic policy (in particular, defending the franc), nor did they prevent a fall in farm incomes. More generally, the corporatist-type reforms granted by the State turned out to be inapplicable in the face of economic and social realities (failure as regards company-type land ownership and as regards intersectoral relations, but success of the commodity boards). However, the debates on direct aids and on supporting incomes through prices showed that the State was prepared to let the leading faction within the FNSEA adjust the "peasant" policy advocated by Pompidou in favour of the intensive livestock producers whom they represented. In so doing, they promoted the concentration of production and remained indifferent to the increased disparities of income. This was precisely the accusation levelled at them by the left-wing peasant movement.

Joint policy management by the Left?

The "two modern left-wing peasant movements" analysed by S. Cordellier* came from the same school of thought as the unionists of the FNSEA, but throughout the 1970s they fought against joint policy management, though in different ways. While they both objected to FNSEA policy in respect of concentration of production and income, this objection was not based on the same analysis of the situation, and thus led to very different attitudes towards the State: this explains why they found it difficult to merge into a single union in order to negotiate with the Socialist Government after 1981, as well as their ambiguous relations with the Socialist Party.

The first of these movements, that of the "peasant-workers", was formed before the institution of joint policy management and of the Annual Conference procedure. Its analysis was based on a radical critique of the "productivist-intensivist" model:

1 Official agencies set up under the 1960–62 "Guidance Laws" with powers to buy and sell farmland, to improve farm structures. [Ed.]

2 Associations in which farming representatives could participate in the implementation of structural reform measures. [Ed.]

increased productivity would *not* lead to higher farm incomes but would involve farmers in an endless race to profit from improvements in productivity, which inevitably would be appropriated by the "downstream" industries. They should therefore defend the value of their labour rather than that of their produce: these farmers embarked on worker-type strikes aimed at enterprises in the agro-food sector, including co-operatives. This idea of defending their labour caused them logically to renounce the ambition of every entrepreneur, that of accumulating capital. On the contrary, what they wanted from the State was a policy to set up "work-station" holdings: with this in mind, they supported the Socialist project for land boards (cf. chapter 5 below by Hélène Delorme). In these circumstances, there could be no question of joint policy management; these "peasants in the class struggle" sought ways of changing society through alliance with other exploited worker groups.

On the other hand, joint policy management had political and economic consequences which caused some FNSEA leaders, some of which were at the head of specialist associations, to set up an internal opposition within the FNSEA and to move closer to the Socialist Party after the Presidential elections of 1974, to the point of making the Party's national agricultural committee into the forum for developing a counter-programme to the policies of the FNSEA and the right-wing parties—a development described by Cordellier* as an exchange of roles between the union and the policy-makers. The joint policy management proposed in this context was pluralist in character, being based on a democratic representation of farmers (the system of election to the Chambers of Agriculture would be reformed, the representativeness of the minority farm unions would be recognised), and advocated a more egalitarian incomes policy through the "quantum" system[1] and in relation to the concentration of holdings (through the land boards). However, when a Socialist Government, with Edith Cresson as Minister of Agriculture, tried to implement this policy, this opposition within the union, though it had numerous supporters, was too weakly organised to give adequate support, even though the new policy resulted from a joint effort by the Party and union members (cf. Servolin*).

When in 1982–83 Edith Cresson created commodity boards (see chapter 5 below), joint policy management became sectoral and changed its nature. These boards brought together, under State authority, not only producer representatives but also representatives of industrial firms and traders, both co-operative and private; only in the case of cereals, with the ONIC, were producers and government representatives still face-to-face. This new situation had two consequences: it diminished the power of the FNSEA while increasing that of the "vertical" interest groups (product-based unions,

1 Before common market organisation under the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Economic Community came into effect, French grain producers received a relatively high price up to a certain amount of deliveries, additional quantities getting progressively lower prices. This system, known as the "quantum", has remained in favour among defenders of small farmers in France (and its influence can be discerned in recent developments of the CAP). [Ed.]

producer groups, co-operatives, etc.); and it reinforced the authority of the State as arbiter in conflicts which now tended to be economic rather than political in character. However, it is questionable whether this shift of joint policy management towards a commodity-by-commodity approach, in becoming less public and more secret, led to a more rational and more equitable distribution of public support, or rather reinforced the corporative-type group involved.

3

FARMING, FARMS AND FAMILIES

by Philippe Lacombe

Trying to explain the role of farmers in French political life, we naturally want to look into their situation and into developments in the economic and social conditions in which they are producing. By analysing their economic situation we may be better able to understand their professional or political behaviour, even through the relationship may not be strict or exclusive; at least, we should be able to identify questions or advance hypotheses that will help to analyse that behaviour. This methodological approach can be linked to the frequent discussions among agricultural economists as to the status of farmers and the forms of production. In this respect, it had been widely agreed by the end of the 1960s that family farming was proving durable, and was compatible with the changes occurring in agriculture, big though these were. But during the period covered here, the debate began again.

Production conditions altered, often becoming more difficult; diversified forms of production upset the usual assumptions of an agricultural policy favouring modernised family farms. Employment in agriculture continued to decline. Production was seen to be very unequally distributed between the regions, while relations between farms and their environment became more numerous and more diverse. Diversity is indeed the theme which attracts attention today, becoming not just an subject for scientific study but also sometimes the object of demands by the farmers.

So the distinctions that used to be made between simple categories are now in doubt: depending on the sources used and their purposes, the results can be quite different. The basic question—who is a farmer?—is indeed very important nowadays for managing agricultural affairs: information on the number of farmers, their income levels and their living conditions influences the distribution of public aid, the membership of farm organisations, the activities of the public services, etc.

In these circumstances, the statistical apparatus is bound to come into question, and likewise research in the social sciences: this explains the current interest in ways whereby farmers' characteristics and situations can be measured. Besides such statistical concerns, there are two main approaches, which moreover can often be usefully linked: on the one hand, study of the impact on farmers' role of overall economic factors, customarily summed up in the word "crisis"; on the other, analysis of changes in the organisation of farms and of farm families.

So there is a wide field of investigation, which can be arranged under three themes: analysis of the basic forces which determine farmers' relationship with the economy as a whole; study of production units; and to prepare for the latter, consideration of the necessary statistical tools.

FARMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERAL ECONOMIC CHANGE

Agriculture's traditional involvement in trade makes it dependent on the functioning of the general economy. The persistent crisis affecting the latter alters the conditions for agricultural production.[1]

To identify the place occupied by farmers in this changing context, we shall look first at their economic situation, trying to explain it by analysing how their production conditions have evolved. We should then have a better understanding of the questions that have arisen during the period covered as to the place of farmers in the present-day economy.

The trials of economic growth

In the general context of economic crisis which characterises the period studied, the development of agricultural production is surprising: value added by the agricultural sector grew between 1974 and 1985 at an average annual rate that was significantly higher than in 1960–73, coming close to the growth rate of GDP (the rate of growth has slackened since 1985). Labour productivity in agriculture continued to rise faster than the average for the economy as a whole. Paradoxically, these achievements were associated with difficulties for farmers.

The relative importance of the active agricultural population in the total active population continued to fall—from 15% in 1970 to 7% in 1985 (6% in 1989). After being for many years already a minority in the total population, farmers are now becoming a minority in rural areas too, where they were used to playing the leading role. Is this demographic regression associated with a decline in their political power? That is a question for political scientists, and is discussed by Marcel Jollivet in the last contribution to this volume.

The fall in the farm population also raises issues concerning the organisation of farms, which will be studied below: it implies a contraction of the labour force around the farmer himself. What then becomes of the family farm, which is supposed to mobilise the various members of the family?

1 Elements of the "crisis" in the period studied are: ending of the previous period of rapid economic growth, increased unemployment, changing prices of primary commodities, monetary disturbances—and the need to revise the economic policies previously in force...

In terms of income or of living conditions, the overall results obtained by this more productive agriculture are not very encouraging. Since 1973, the situation of farmers, as indicated by average incomes per farm or per active person, has worsened and then stagnated, and has deteriorated as compared with other social categories.

J.-P. Girard and Y. Lemel†, studying INSEE data on living conditions, confirm that farmers are at the bottom of the ladder among self-employed persons and are close to the position of workers among hired employees. However, depending on the criterion used, different results are obtained, sometimes reflecting inconsistencies in farmers' economic nd social conditions. In terms of real estate, or life expectancy, farmers come out quite well. They also seem to do quite well in terms of social involvement, and this is important for the inquiry we shall make later into the relations of production units with their environment, or into their political action.

But as regards income and living conditions, disparities are always evident. Average results are pulled down by the size of the less-favoured farm population, whose characteristics cannot be offset by the existence of other, more favourable situations, which are real but infrequent.

Finally, we should note that, on the whole, farmers are poorly remunerated for their efforts: they do not retain their productivity gains. Without going into detail here, it appears from the accounts that such productivity gains are appropriated by others: hired farm workers and, above all, the "downstream" sectors, distributors and consumers.

This uncomfortable situation for farmers (considered globally) results from factors that have been known for a long time: the inelasticity of demand, the increase in supply consequent on productivity growth, the dispersion of farmers, the effect of being dominated by others. But to these usual factors—some of which have become particularly acute in the period studied— others have been added, thus contributing to a change in the conditions of production.

Changing conditions of agricultural production

The 1980s saw the introduction of physical and economic limits—often announced but also often postponed—on the output of several agricultural products benefiting from strong guarantees. One phase in the history of market organisation came to an end: that of price guarantees that could be raised regularly though in moderation. This new situation naturally had implications for farmers' situation: downwards pressure on prices and incomes, individual quotas creating new heterogeneities.

These changes put in question the model of development proposed for French agriculture. It is no doubt possible to see how this development could be brought about by increased mobility of the factors of production, labour in particular, cuts in which would enable output to be adapted to effective demand. This mechanism is indeed one of the basic elements of the development model in question, but in a surplus situation it appears inadequate: on the one hand, productivity gains are faster than the reduction in the labour

input, and on the other, as we know, unemployment during the period in question further restricted the mobility of labour.

Changes in the financing system also modified the conditions of French agricultural development and altered traditional assumptions. A. Neveu* explains the effects of reductions in interest rate subsidies and of positive real interest rates on a heterogeneous farm population. The big forward leaps in modernisation, bringing about a radical transformation of traditional farms, such as occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, are virtually impossible today. Entire regions face a future that is so uncertain that bankers are bound to counsel caution; while for relatively prosperous farmers, there is growing competition between the banks. In other words, a financing system that used to be relatively unified is now becoming more diversified.

All these changes in the conditions of production disrupt the mechanisms of development. In part, they reflect repercussions on agriculture of the overall economic crisis: the effects of unemployment, limitations on public support, financing difficulties, etc. But these disruptions also result from agriculture's tendency to lose the benefit of its productivity gains and to produce in excess of effective demand.

So, although the agricultural economy is certainly not set apart in the crisis, it does have its own rhythm, and this explains why difficulties appeared during the 1980s, later than in other sectors, and why they will probably continue. At any rate, there is no doubt that some of the essential motors of agricultural development have slowed down or have even ceased to function, causing new questions to be raised as to the place of farmers in the economy.

Farmers in the economy

Confronted with these difficulties, the public purse has been solicited in an attempt to remedy or attenuate the consequences. Whatever the methodological problems of evaluation, an increase in public aid to agriculture has been regularly recorded. No doubt, agriculture is not the only sector to benefit, but as M. Bourdon* has shown, public support per active person is higher for the agricultural sector than for the rest of the economy. The ways in which this support has been administered, and the justification for it, are open to discussion: but here we shall only note that it alters the nature of farmers and of farming. While agriculture tends to acquire the characteristics of a public sector, farmers become more like public employees or workers in nationalised or semi-public industries, at least as regards those who benefit significantly from public assistance (since we know that this support is very unevenly distributed).

This outcome is often disliked even by those who are the main beneficiaries. Evidently, it accentuates the heterogeneity of the farm population, and the more so the greater the aid in question. It was linked to a debate, characteristic of the period although it got less and less attention until by the mid-1980s it disappeared from the intellectual scene, as to the economic status of farmers and the nature of the farming enterprise.

The "Guidance Laws" of 1960–62 reflected a fairly wide consensus according to which farms could be considered as enterprises and farmers as family entrepreneurs, who had to accumulate capital in order to beat the competition: but in the early 1970s, several different interpretations emerged,[1] some of which tried to give new life to traditional concepts while others sought new approaches. In the contributions to the 1970 AFSP conference (cf. Preface), the enduring character of family-based organisation of agricultural production was often referred to as a special case. Marxist analysis of the various modes of production, capitalist or small-scale, underlined the role of family entrepreneurs. Other approaches, on the contrary, stressed the continuous reorganisation of agricultural production structures, leading to quite complex stratification. Others again, emphasising the growing dependence of farmers on their agro-industrial environment, tried to show that farmers were becoming steadily more like hired workers.

With farmers' economic situation often proving difficult, there was growing frustration with a modernisation process that seemed perpetually selective and expensive: as a result, the intellectual debate which to some extent had begun in the late 1960s became a matter for the farm unions and spilled over on to the political scene.[2] So the 1970s came to be marked by new currents of farmers' representation and of political activity, which are studied in detail in other papers but whose economic origins can be seen here.

These currents, though they were heterogeneous and reflected only minority positions, being often associated with the worker-peasant movement, did substantially alter the customary pattern of demands. They asserted that priority should be given to labour: working conditions, returns and the distribution of means of production should be supervised and guaranteed by society, and an accumulation of capital that would become a source of inequalities should be prevented. Naturally, entrepreneurial status, which had traditionally been offered to farmers and often demanded by them, was rejected by these minority movements.

The outcome of such demands in terms of economic policy were very modest, partly no doubt for political reasons—which will be studied later—related to the weakness of these movements and their difficulties in forming an alliance with the newly-installed left-wing Government, but also for economic reasons: oversupply, a growing surplus of land, inevitable acceptance of more intense competition, difficulty in achieving control by society over the allocation of factors of production, and the evolution of overall economic policy after 1983—all these factors explain why the approach in question had to be abandoned.

1 Cf. Lacombe (P.), "Quelques tendances de l'économie rurale contemporaine", *Cahiers de la nouvelle économie rurale*, Faculté des sciences économiques, Université de Clermont-Ferrand I, 1976.

2 Coulomb (P.) and Delorme (H.), "Les mutations de l'agriculture dans les pays industriels", *Problèmes politiques et sociales*, 548, nov. 1986.

This lack of success is all the more striking as the economic mechanisms of the 1980s revived themes that had often been contested in the 1970s: improved performance, productivity, involvement in international markets, enterprise. The most convincing illustration of this pervasiveness of economic forces can be found in the development of a limited-liability formula (EARL—*Exploitation agricole à responsabilité limitée*) adapted to farm businesses: thus an old demand put forward by the modernising farmers of the 1960s was at last satisfied by a left-wing Government and subsequently confirmed by a right-wing one.

In fact, the concept of the farm as a business, now widely accepted, is one of the results of this long and lively debate on the economic status of farmers in contemporary society. Echoes of this can be found in several articles, and there is confirmation in numerous statements by leading unionists, farmers and politicians.

Such a concept turned out to be compatible with the "diversity" of farmers and farms, which nowadays is often underlined. The neutrality of this expression may seem banal compared with studies that show the extent to which some groups have been marginalised or excluded, and the extent of class conflict. More fundamentally, this idea represents the "discovery" and subsequent recognition of multiple forms of organisation and of the economic forces which produce them. It reflects a more willing acceptance of the complexities liable to ensure the appearance and then the reproduction of unexpected social forms, that are original yet consistent with trends in production conditions, and may even be innovatory.

Thus analysis of farmers' involvement in the economic crisis leads us to study production systems, providing another path towards understanding farmers' situation. However, this type of study, which has been developed during the period covered, raises problems of measurement which we must first clarify.

PROBLEMS OF MEASUREMENT

At a time when economic, social and political conditions are undergoing change, questions as to the basic reasoning and the methods by which the farm population is counted, identified and described take on new significance.[1] Intensified competition on markets, problems in distributing public aid and even in allocating production rights, the interrelationship of agricultural and non-agricultural activity, all these underline the significance acquired by such questions. As we look at them afresh, we shall naturally

1 See Barthez (A.), "Du labeur paysan au métier d'agriculteur: l'élaboration statistique en agriculture", *Cahiers d'économie et sociologie rurales*, 3, décembre 1986; and Girard (J.-P.), Gombert (M.), Prost (M.), *Les agriculteurs*, Tome 1, *Clefs pour une comparaison sociale*, coll. INSEE, 1977, E 46–47, tome 2, *Introduction à l'étude statistique des disparités*, coll. INSEE, 1983, E 82.

discover inadequacies in the answers given in the past. We shall consider three areas of measurement: the number of farmers, their incomes and their working hours.

The number of farmers

Even if we just consider official statistical sources—the general population censuses and the agricultural censuses[1]—we find quite different results for the farm population: the number of farmers in 1982 varies from 820,000 to 1,220,000. Moreover, within these statistics, it is possible on the basis of well-founded criteria to make selections that limit the number of "real" farmers. If we take into account other sources, from the administration or from farm organisations, we can reach yet other conclusions.

These simple observations show that the definitions of the objects of study, which should be established before they are measured, are not obvious, spontaneous nor natural. Statistical measurements are the product of choices and procedures, the origins of which are understandable if we relate them to the preoccupations, the conflicts and the conditions in which they arose. This indeed is the question that arises today in acute form. Jacques Rémy* thus explains how the agricultural statistics came to adopt a definition of the farm which is now being questioned.

Agricultural statistics originated in a context where the overriding preoccupation lay with feeding the population; in present-day terminology, we would call this a sector-based approach. But when interest is taken in the *conditions* in which food is produced, the problem of defining farms arises, so a choice has to be made as to the threshold above which a farm is held to exist. The desire (in view of the concern with food supply) to measure everything that is produced prompts the fixing of very low thresholds. Obviously, such low thresholds will in due course be questioned: they lead to the inclusion of units whose contribution to output is very small, which are managed by individuals for whom farming may be a marginal activity: who moreover—and this is perhaps the nub of the argument—are far removed from the farm model being promoted under agricultural policy and supported by the farm organisations.

At present, a new statistical notion is appearing: that of "professional farming", incorporating holdings with at least one annual work-unit. Papers by J. Rémy* and by A. Lacroix and A. Mollard* analyse, discuss and criticise the concepts of professional farming and the annual work-unit, and make suggestions with a view to ensuring sufficient representation of reality.

While definitions and data analysis reflect current preoccupations, it is probably true that in a reverse process the statistical apparatus maintains, supports and confirms assumptions as to the models for reference, and does so all the more effectively as it can give an objective appearance to whatever is "socially agreed or politically

1 *Recensements généraux de la population* (RGP, INSEE); *Recensements généraux de l'agriculture* (RGA, SCEES).

suggested", to use the expression by Rémy*, who gives additional examples from studies of different groups of farmers. Thus he notes that the population covered by the Farm Accountancy Data Network[1] corresponds precisely to the aims of agricultural policy. But statisticians will probably observe with justification that the coverage of the FADN is being extended (thanks in particular to the development of taxation on the basis of real results[2]) so as to cover all professional farming, and that there are national accounts data for the sector as a whole.

This issue as to what constitutes a farmer underlines the importance of having a broad definition giving full coverage of the population, together with arrangements permitting distinctions to be made in accordance with the aims pursued.

Incomes

The measurement of farm incomes is even more difficult: besides the choice and definition of the populations studied, there is the question of access to the information needed, and that of the social and political use to be made of the results. These matters are analysed by J. Allain*. Following his example, we shall give particular attention to the indicators of income drawn up by the *Commission des comptes de l'agriculture de la nation* (CCAN), as this seems justified by their social and political importance.

The CCAN uses a macro-economic approach to agricultural income based on the linked accounts provided by the French national accounting system, but subject to certain adjustments. As it considers agriculture only as a "branch" and not as a sector or as a population of households,[3] the results obtained relate to the production of items considered to be agricultural ("the farm of France"); they cannot be used, as is sometimes wrongly done, to evaluate the incomes of farm households. For the latter, recourse must be made to other sources, fiscal in particular: thus, during the 1970s, a system of surveys of farm taxable incomes was set up, which is useful, but does not provide household accounts. Finally, let us recall that the gross agricultural income, derived from the income of agriculture as a branch, is a hybrid used to remunerate the work and capital of farm families and to finance future growth: it is therefore not equivalent to earnings.

1 The FADN is a network covering the European Community, collecting data from samples of agricultural holdings in each Member State. It relates to "commercial" farms, defined as those which "market the bulk of their production and which exceed a minimum level of economic activity". [Ed.]

2 In France (and some other EC Member States), farmers may be taxed on the basis of assumed returns, related to area etc. [Ed.]

3 In the national accounts, agriculture may be treated as a *branch*, i.e. a collection of units producing goods designated as "agricultural"; as a *sector*, i.e. a collection of economic entities whose main activity is agricultural production; or as a *population of households* whose heads have their main activity in agriculture. [Ed.]

This statistical operation is carried out through co-operation between the authorities and the farm organisations, with help from INSEE statisticians: it is an example of the type of relations which these bodies have tried to establish in several fields. The original character of this co-operation lies in the fact that it produces agreement on the outcome while ensuring transparency as regards the information gathered and the methods. The very success of this procedure can lead to over-emphasis on a particular figure that typifies the prevailing consensus, although a more complex and more diversified presentation would often be a better representation of reality. It is also likely that the efforts to reach a result do not give much incentive to innovate or to investigate new issues, but rather put a premium on stability.

Working hours

The early 1980s at last saw substantial progress in the measurement of farmers' working hours, especially on an annual basis. Until then, apart from some specific surveys, the only information came from the broad structural surveys in which it was assumed that a full-time occupation meant 2000–2200 hours of work per year. This information gap, particularly unfortunate if we are to obtain a clear idea of farmers' economic situation, has now been filled by research by A. Lacroix and A. Mollard*, based on an INSEE survey of employment and on direct surveys.

Broadly speaking, the number of hours actually worked by farmers in the year—an average of 3000—is much higher than that of employees, and the gap is increasing over time; however, it is close to the time spent by independent workers. On the other hand, as regards working hours, farm workers nowadays are in a position close to that of other hired workers. In other words, work *status* is more important in closing gaps than the sector of activity. Variations according to production systems are quite marked, which results in substantial disparities within the agricultural sector in earnings per hour actually worked.

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Having reviewed some of the questions which the statistical system has to tackle in analysing the evolution of farms and farmers, we can identify progress made over the period, while remaining aware of the limits and conditions inevitable in any such quantification.[1]

There has been progress, in the first place, in the knowledge of income levels. Macro-economic evaluation of farm incomes is nowadays well established, and there are regular revisions and improvements that may continue as gaps are filled in accounts of the agricultural "branch" and in the household accounts. At the micro-economic

1 See Lemel (Y.), "Le sociologue des pratiques du quotidien entre l'approche ethnographique et l'enquête statistique", dans *Economie et statistique*, 168 (numéro consacré à "Sociologie et statistique"), juillet-août 1984.

level, this period saw the establishment, with all the difficulties that can be imagined, of the Farm Accountancy Data Network. In this respect, in so far as "professional farming" is not yet fully represented, this situation should improve as taxation on the basis of actual results is extended. Moreover, new sources of information based on tax data for farm households have become available during the period and should continue to be used in future; they make it possible to investigate the off-farm earnings of farm households, which as we know are gaining in importance in France as elsewhere.

Further, we can note the establishment of statistical tools that make it possible to follow a particular unit, such as a farm, over time: this is the case with land surveys or with studies of farm amalgamation. Such data make it possible to move from a study and comparison of "stocks" to an analysis of "flux", from comparative statics to a dynamic approach.

FARMS

Many researchers, mobilising this statistical apparatus, are interested in how holdings come to be transformed in their internal organisation and in their relationship with the outside world. In spite of differences between them, such studies call in question the idea that there is a basic model consisting of a modernised family farm giving work to all the members of a family that is wholly and exclusively occupied in agricultural production, and providing an income that finances all that is needed for consumption and investment.

On the contrary, there is much more evidence of diversity, of multiple forms of organisation. This outcome is in sharp contrast to the widespread view in the 1970s as to the lasting nature of family farms, among which the most modern (often providing the active membership of the farm organisations) could be shown off as models.

During the 1970s, there was some criticism of the modernisation process, on the grounds that for the farmers concerned the results sometimes seemed uncertain, mediocre or even negative. Less is heard of such criticism today, no doubt because the modernisation of holdings, including more intensive land use, is still a way to improve the situation and to prepare for the future. Moreover, although some kinds of intensification have seemed risky and sometimes have failed, nowadays they are seen more as a matter of management decisions by the farm head than as a collective problem.

On the other hand, it is apparent that this modernisation process is not open to all, that other types of evolution are occurring, and that these are not just preliminaries to the disappearance of the holdings concerned nor are they just forms of "resistance" (as F. Pernet* explains). Current studies are more concerned with the economic organisation of farms than with their production systems or with issues of intensification or extensification of the various factors of production. For this reason, we shall consider first the organisation of holdings and then their relations with their environment.

The organisation of holdings

a) Concentration of production

This phenomenon, observed for some time past, is now confirmed. It results from a dissymmetry in the distribution of manpower and of output as between economic size groups. L. Bourgeois* gives a number of convincing illustrations. The greater part of output comes from a relatively small number of holdings (the largest ones), while a large number of holdings (the smallest) contribute only a limited share. This heterogeneity, contrary to previous impressions, seems to renew itself over time, so that there is no convergence on a type of production that might thereby become progressively dominant.

Production is not just concentrated on certain farms: it also has a geographical aspect. Twenty-six of the 96 French *départements* account for half of French agricultural output. This degree of concentration has been maintained over time, but with some regional redistribution in favour of the West of France. Questions then arise as to the agricultural future of some whole regions and as to the use of the nation's land (see L. Bourgeois* and A. Neveu*).

Data on the distribution of output not only underline the diversity of holdings: they also demonstrate the heterogeneity of the production process. This could be an argument in favour of a genuinely productive farm sector, along the lines of the "professional farming" concept, but to the detriment of the rest whose contribution to output is negligible. We then have to ask what is the use of the latter group, and even whether its existence is justified. Although none of the conference papers went thus far, it may be that the attention currently being given to the farm as a business, to its performance and competitivity will reinforce such doubts, bringing us back to the roots of a "productivist"-type analysis that was familiar in the 1960s but unexpected after the interlude of the 1970s.

b) "Polyactivity"

Following quite a different line of argument, several conference papers dealt with the combination of activities within farm households. This results from choices made by the individuals concerned and not from support provided under any development policy. It contributes to the diversity of types of holding.

F. Pernet* explains the reasons which motivate rural "polyactivity", treating it as a integral feature of contemporary farming. Farmers' activity is diversified, making fuller use of the labour element (often under-utilised), the local environment, possibilities for product processing or for receiving paying guests. Such diversification, taking into account the complementary nature of different activities, can often enable the holding to participate in rural development (so that Pernet asks whether we are dealing in such cases with an "agricultural" or with a "rural" holding...). Contrary to what used to be thought, this type of polyactivity is not a preliminary to the disappearance of the holding.

We may also note that this kind of organisation is well adapted to the present constraints on agricultural development: it contributes to employment and to preserving the rural milieu without adding too much to problems of overproduction.

However, managing a polyactive system requires an ability to take decisions and to participate in market mechanisms that we would normally associate with "entrepreneurs". Surprisingly, such entrepreneurial functions are more in evidence in this context than among modernised farmers, who are carrying out well-defined production functions and who often have the benefit of guaranteed prices.

Such observations lead straight into questions as to the identity of farmers, discussed by Marcel Jollivet in chapter 6.

These polyactive forms of organisation are often associated with new relations between the family, the holding and their environment, noticeable in other situations too: this suggests a reflection on the ways in which family holdings are being transformed.

c) The family farm

This topic, always a favourite among agricultural economists, is reconsidered in a joint paper by M. Blanc, A. Brun, B. Delord and P. Lacombe*. This explains how, with changes in the conditions of agricultural production and in family organisation, the physiognomy of holdings and the family–holding relationship is evolving.

Family holdings, defined as involving all the family members in the work on the farm, as well as farmer-plus-wife holdings, are tending to regress as compared with holdings on which only the farmer himself is active. Persons who would normally play a role on a family farm, aged parents and younger family members, tend to disappear.

Moreover, the family and the holding tend to become differentiated, if not actually distinct. Thus family activities are no longer all agricultural, sources of income are diversified, relations with non-farming milieux are more frequent (through marriages with partners from non-farming backgrounds, patterns of education, youth training, etc.). All these factors demonstrate the growing non-farm involvement of farm households and their alignment on types of family organisation existing in the rest of society.

However, this growing independence as between families and holdings is not complete. On the one hand, it is likely that the non-farm activities and incomes have repercussions on the farming activities. On the other hand, and even more important, holdings are still handed down from one generation to the next, usually within the family. Finally, a network of family relations often makes possible mutual assistance that contributes to working the farms.

It must then be asked whether the family is a relevant unit of analysis. On this, there does not seem to be agreement. If we think of the family as the link that co-ordinates the various activities and incomes of its members, and if we deduce that farming is to be seen in relation to the family organisation, then there is indeed justification for

analysing the family economy in order to understand the farming activity. But it may be objected, as in the paper by Alice Barthez†,[1] that the farm no longer constitutes a base for family life and activity: each member pursues his or her own course and there is no longer any common professional universe. Then the point of departure for analysis can no longer be the family as a unit in itself but rather the individuals living together, their occupations and their family ties (which may be precarious).

This debate, which we shall not try to settle here, brings up again an old issue: if the farm and the family are becoming distinct, even independent one of another, are we not witnessing the birth of a farming enterprise that is independent of the family and is managed according to the usual practices of economic life?

d) The farm as a business

Such a transformation of farms into businesses has often been predicted, sometimes even called for. Looking into the evolution of land tenure, the paper by D. Barthélémy†[2] brings up new arguments in favour of this thesis. The extension of the practice of "key-money" in the farm sector is a sign of the value attached to a holding as a commercial unit—a value that is different from the sum of the factors of production that it contains and reflects the holding's function as a productive unit.

Movements in land prices and rents, and the ways in which buildings are managed, also demonstrate the emergence of farming as an enterprise, to the detriment of the traditional pre-eminence of the land factor. This argument is original in that, up to now, land ownership was considered as an obstacle to developing business-type farming because of the cost of land, the low return to it and its non-renewable character.

Naturally, this thesis will upset all those—not so numerous nowadays—who still think that tenancy perpetuates unequal relationships from which landlords derive the benefit. It also revises the customary thesis according to which key-money represents capitalisation of the "economic rent" accruing to the sitting tenant from the advantages associated with this status; and by suggesting a broader interpretation, it incorporates this thesis in the overall issue of present-day agrarian evolution.

Although agricultural holdings are progressively acquiring more of the characteristics of a business, labour and capital are still provided predominantly by the family: the production unit has not (yet?) become distinct from the people who manage it. Debate on the subject throws up interesting questions as to future developments. Will the sources of capital become diversified, no longer limited to the family framework? Similarly, how will the status of the farmer evolve?—will he be paid a wage out of the return on capital, or will he be the holder of an individual right to property or to a tenancy?

1 See also by Alice Barthez, *Famille, travail et agriculture*, Paris, Economica, 1982, 192 p.

2 See also by Denis Barthélémy, *La naissance de l'entreprise agricole*, Paris, Economica, 1988, 181 p.

So the conference papers dealing with evolution in farming patterns show that the basic model representing a full-time family farm that provides the income of the family members is more and more questionable. Transformations in the family farm—one might say its break-up—do not result from the mechanisms generally expected: farms have not become large capitalist enterprises as a result of concentration in the means of production, nor have they become workshops dependent on the food industry. The transformations in question arise from evolution in the organisation of families who find ways, depending on their available capital, their activities, incomes, alliances and strategies, to promote quite diverse types of holding. So we can understand the widespread diversity that is found, which is further reinforced by the relations of farms with their environment.

Farms and their environment

We can look both at relations with the "up-stream" and "down-stream" industries in the agro-food sector, and at relations with the local environment.

a) "Vertical" integration

The development and the importance of vertical relationships arise from the well-known involvement of farms in trade. E. Valceschini*, renewing a traditional type of research, considers a form of organisation of such relationships that is often referred to as the "contractual economy". Having studied and criticised analyses made during the 1960s, he investigates how the economic crisis may open up new prospects for regular, organised and even contractual links between farms and the agro-business sector. Evolution in forms of competition that often make product characteristics and differentiation more important than price, as well as market segmentation, economies of scale, adjustments in the CAP and even evolution in the farm organisations, all these are factors that favour a contractual economy.

Formerly, vertical integration was seen as a more-or-less disguised way of transforming farmers into wage-earners, sometimes representing a traditional class struggle; today, such integration is often analysed in terms of *partnership*. Instead of the expected systematic standardisation of production methods, vertical relations seem to bring diversity. It was feared that the contractual economy would make farmers increasingly dependent: it is now presented as an opportunity for initiative, even for advancement. If this change in outlook seems surprising, it can be explained both by changing production conditions and by a more willing acceptance of economic mechanisms often thought unavoidable.

Perhaps it is optimistic to suggest possibilities for agreement between farming and industry, to their mutual benefit, when oversupply and unequal relations between the partners may on the contrary cause those who are in the strongest positions to give free play to competitive forces, at least for standard products for which supply is abundant. The fact remains that here we have a new situation, which is attracting attention in

various circles, particularly among farmers. For producers find themselves having to trade more frequently with distant partners, and this further underlines the interest of the topic.

b) The local environment

Farmers' involvement in their local environment has two aspects: their relations with neighbouring farmers, and with rural society.

During the 1970s, research in this field often emphasised conflicts and contradictions within agriculture or between agriculture and its environment. Only class solidarity directly related to economic situations could then be a basis for "genuine" alliances. Recently, however, there has been more emphasis on the scope for agreement, at least provisional and localised, and on possible co-operation between farmers who according to an class-based analysis would probably have been opposed to each other.

Thus studies reported by J.-P. Darré†[1] show that links between farmers are based on several principles: family ties, geographical proximity, shared problems, homogeneity in respect of age or size of business. The consequence is obviously to contest customary views as to how the heterogeneity of economic situations creates definitive rifts.

The homogeneous groups of farmers obtained from statistical methods of classification may be logical, but it is not certain that they exist in reality and in all circumstances. In short, the fact that there are conflicts should not blind us to the existence and scope of co-operation between farmers, which often goes beyond the frontiers of supposedly homogeneous groups. Such work on co-operation between farmers is of course liable to provoke conflict between social scientists...

From studying relations between farmers, we move easily to their relations with local society, especially as our analysis of the evolution in farming patterns has shown that, for some farms at least, relations with society are in process of renewal. The development of rural "polyactivity", the non-farm activities of farm households, bring about further integration in the local economy, adding to the economic integration in the agro-food channels that has been more frequently studied. The result is participation in local life through the maintenance, creation and development of activities or the management of affairs at the level of the *commune*.

Several papers underline the scope for initiative or invention arising from such local involvement, and the contribution it can make to resolving the macro-economic constraints discussed above. These studies emphasise the diverse character of this involvement, which had been underestimated in analysis of farming trends that was over-simplified and sometimes mechanistic.

1 See also by Jean-Pierre Darré, *La parole et la technique. L'univers de pensée des éleveurs du Ternois*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1985, 196 p.

*
* *

So the model to which reference has customarily been made in agricultural policy (the modernised family farm) seems today to be crumbling in the face of a much more complex and diversified reality. The uncoupling of the farm-family link together with diversification of activities and incomes, as well as the general evolution of conditions of agricultural production, give scope for multiple combinations, which explain this diversity in the types of organisation. In these circumstances, such diversity can no longer be considered an anomaly, a passing or marginal deviation.

Such transformations have the result of bringing farmers closer to society in general, on the one hand as independent producers, on the other as households with diversified activities and incomes. It follows, of course, that data on agriculture as a "branch" of the economy are becoming less and less valid as indicators of the situation of farm households.

This diversity raises questions as to the identity of farmers, which are considered by Jollivet below. It may complicate the economic and social organisation of producers, as well as the development of agricultural policy; the period studied demonstrates these difficulties, and also the ways in which this diversity may be interpreted.

Finally, these studies of the organisation of production units show that the approach taken by researchers in this field is evolving. It seems less determinist, less inclined to concentrate on the effects of a particular element held responsible for all changes (as regards factors of production, technical progress, capital from the agro-food sector...), and increasingly directed towards identifying and interpreting a multifold evolution, taking account of the complexity of diverse situations. We can then appreciate why so much attention is currently being given to problems of measurement.

4

THE FARM UNION MOVEMENT: THE PROBLEM OF UNITY[1]

by Bertrand Hervieu

The question to be dealt with here is how the unions, the professional bodies and the associations dealt with the problem of unity during the period 1970–87. In other words, what rifts with the past or simply what new developments appeared?

Already in 1956 this theme had been debated. As Henri Mendras wrote:

> *It is obviously misleading to speak in the name of French agriculture as if it was a homogeneous block with common interests. The failure of the CNAA, of the Parti agraire, of the Corporation paysanne and of the CGA demonstrate that, in present circumstances, peasant unity is a myth.*[2]

At the1970 AFSP conference (see Preface), Pierre Coulomb and Henri Nallet contributed a paper on *Organisations syndicales à l'épreuve de l'unité* ("Unions faced with the test of unity"). They noted the shift from unity of rural society to unity of the farming profession; they showed how this unity, based on the farm enterprise and on the farmer as producer, was historically doomed, yet encouraged many small producers to hope that they too might come to have such an enterprise of their own.

What transformations has the union movement undergone since that time? What rifts or what continuing features can we observe in the way the question of unity has been formulated in the period 1970–88? For these years 1970 and 1988 do seem to represent the beginning and the end of a period in the history of the farmers' unions.

As Rose-Marie Lagrave* has emphasised, 1970 was a year of intense debate. In elections to the Chambers of Agriculture, the MODEF made substantial progress. Rose-Marie Lagrave sees this as a sign that farmers' attitudes to the unions were changing, and as a protest vote against the *Lois d'orientation* (Guidance Laws) of 1960–62. Two main factions emerged from this election, although these actually obscure the variety of shifts which were taking place in the opposition to the FNSEA, as well as the intensity of the debates and the extent of the breaches which had appeared already some years back in several *départements*.

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1 The author assumes knowledge of the various farm organisations. Readers who are not so well-informed can consult Annex IV; acronyms are listed in Annex V. [Ed.]

2 Fauvet (J.), Mendras (H.) dir., *Les paysans et la politiques dans la France contemporaine*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1958, p.280.

From 1966 on, there was agitation among some departmental branches of the CNJA and the FNSEA, which formed a *Comité de liaison interrégions* ("interregional liaison committee"), while remaining within the regular frameworks. The opposing groups came into open conflict at the famous 12th congress of the CNJA at Blois on 5–6 July 1970. Two reports were presented there: one by Louis Lauga, a member of the central committee of the CNJA, called *L'agriculteur et la société industrielle: le rôle du CNJA* ("The farmer in an industrial society: the role of the CNJA"), and the other by Antoine Richard, President of the Rhône-Alpes branch, called *Pour un syndicalisme de travailleurs* ("Towards a union of workers"). This two-day conference confirmed the existence of two divergent poles within the CNJA, amounting to irremediable opposition between those who wanted a union of *chefs d'entreprise* and the others who sought a union of *travailleurs.*[1]

1970 was also the year when Bernard Lambert published *Les paysans dans la lutte des classes* ("Peasants in the class struggle")[2]; this publication demonstrated the extent to which the Left had penetrated the farm union movement, and the important role played by peasants from the west of France in the evolving debate.

In 1988, eighteen years later, François Guillaume left the *rue de Varenne* (the Ministry of Agriculture). His appointment to Chirac's Government two years previously might be seen as the culmination of efforts to build a single union movement: not only had François Guillaume been President of the FNSEA at the time of his nomination, but as Minister he went out of his way to ignore the "minority" unions and to suppress their subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture and from the national association for agricultural development (ANDA).

In fact, his term of office in the *rue de Varenne* caused the changes in the union movement to be speeded up; this was demonstrated by the creation of the *Confédération paysanne* in 1987, bringing together the FNSP ("peasant unions") and the CNSTP ("worker-peasants"). Elections to the Chambers of Agriculture on 31 January 1989 showed that in the various *départements* the struggle between rival unions had become much more straightforward: results (see table) confirmed the predominance of the FNSEA, the existence of the *Confédération paysanne*, the weakening of the MODEF and the maintenance of the right-wing FFA.

So this period 1970–88 began with conflicts over the direction unionism should be taking, continued with controversies over issues of representation, of union democracy and of "pluralism", and ended with confirmation of the preponderance of the FNSEA and CNJA, while a new left-wing union movement was taking shape, having been obliged to patch up its differences.

1 Literally, "heads of enterprise" and "workers", but the distinction implied is rather that between relatively large, commercial farmers and small peasants with little involvement in the market. [Ed.]

2 Paris, Le Seuil, 1970, with a preface by Michel Rocard, 191p.

Results of elections to the Chambers of Agriculture (percentages)

	1983	1989
FNSEA/CNJA	64.91	64.89
Confédération paysanne	10.65 [a]	18.30
MODEF	9.57	7.71
Union MODEF/Confédération paysanne	2.23 [b]	0.49
FFA	5.89	5.72
Others	6.73	2.88

a CNSTP + FNSP
b CNSTP and/or FNSP + MODEF
Source: F. Clerc, "Géographie du vote syndical", *Journal des élections*, no. 15, nov.-déc. 1990, p.74.
[These data relate to *votes*, not seats obtained: the electoral systems in 1983 and in1989 were not the same as regards the method of attributing seats (mainly proportional in 1983, only partly proportional in 1989—see Annex IV) but this does not affect the distribution of votes. Note however that affiliations were not always clear, lists varied between the two years (the *Confédération paysanne* did not exist in 1983) so that different estimates can be made. Ed.]

Conflicts in the farm union movement

The fissures in the farm union movement during this period were numerous and lasting.

As Isabel Boussard* reminds us, it was on 8 October 1969 that the board of the Indre-et-Loire branch of the FNSEA decided—by an unanimous vote of its thirty members—to break away from the parent movement. And on 2nd December 1969, the FFA was founded in Paris by some forty farm leaders, including two Presidents of departmental unions which had dissociated themselves from the FNSEA (Puy-de-Dôme and Indre-et-Loire) and representatives of the federations of Morbihan, Loire-Atlantique, Cher, Deux-Sevres, Vienne, Pas-de-Calais and Loire.

In 1983, in elections to the Chambers of Agriculture, the FFA had candidates in thirty-three *départements*, and got 14.5% of the votes. Its strongholds were all north of a line Bordeaux–Annecy. It got more than 20% of votes in four *départements* (Indre-et-Loire, Creuse, Haute-Savoie, Loire-Atlantique), and in eight others it was above 15%. And for the first time, the FFA obtained audience at the Ministry of Agriculture when Edith Cresson was the Minister.

The success of the FFA in 1983 was undoubtedly the cause of the loss of votes by the MODEF (in 1970, it had got the votes of a third of the farmers in three-quarters of the *départements*). As the number of candidates increased, it was hardly surprising that farmers who wanted to show that they disagreed with the FNSEA and the CNJA—and

who formerly had done so by voting for the MODEF—shifted their votes once other alternatives appeared. Rose-Marie Lagrave* investigates this development confronting the MODEF over the period studied, while following step-by-step how other dissident tendencies within the Left were born and took shape.

The MODEF diversified its structures: after the creation of a youth movement in 1972, an association of former members was founded in 1973; at its 4th national congress in 1975 a women's committee was set up; and on 3 September 1976, in Vierzon, the *Confédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants familiaux* was founded, whereby the MODEF (keeping this abbreviation in spite of the change of name) became a union instead of just an association.

Side-by-side with the MODEF, another leftist peasant movement arose under the banner of *paysans-travailleurs* ("peasant-workers"). Rose-Marie Lagrave* wonders whether its founders knew that a Communist confederation with a similar title had been founded in 1929. In fact, this was not a Communist movement, but formed part of the "revolutionary", libertarian and leftist tendency of the post-1968 era. Both MODEF and the "paysans-travailleurs" criticised the "capitalist system", but used different arguments.

Between the CNJA congress in Blois in July 1970 and the gathering of the "peasant-worker" movement in January 1972 in Orleans, up to the peasants' assembly at Bondy on 17–18 March 1987 when the *Confédération paysanne* was formed, there were seventeen years of institutional effervescence, of conflict and of regrouping within the peasant left-wing movement. Throughout there was recurring argument about the legal status of farmers and of farm holdings, about joint management arrangements, about solidarity between farmers and about union democracy.

A new left-wing union movement took shape. A remarkable fact, noted by Rose-Marie Lagrave*, was that its vitality never weakened in spite of its ups-and-downs, although its base—the peasants on the smaller holdings—was steadily contracting.

On top of these rifts, there were tensions within the FNSEA and the CNJA. François Clerc* inquires how the FNSEA and the CNJA managed to remain the leading farm unions. Indeed, there were many internal conflicts: between big arable farmers and livestock producers, between landlords and tenants, between lowland farmers and those from the mountains... He notes five different ways in which these disputes were resolved: free expression of views by the associations of specialised producers; mutual support as between the various sectors; changing the nature of the problem; making "Europe" into a scapegoat; and recourse to the unions' constitutions.[1]

Nevertheless, the FNSEA continued to be agitated by strong internal disputes, coming in particular from the western regions, the Rhône-Alpes and some isolated departmental federations. Disciplinary measures proved the most effective way of deal-

1 I.e. in particular, respect for the FNSEA's voting procedures whereby the number of votes held by each departmental branch depends on its membership, giving an advantage to regions with many small farmers. [Ed.]

ing with this crisis; another was the organisation of candidates in elections to the Chambers of Agriculture in 1983. It is true that a unified list could not be presented (there were 311 different lists) but alliances could be arranged and re-arranged, as shown by Pierre Duboscq* and Patrick Quantin*.

Finally, *rhetoric* remained a tool that could also be employed to recreate unity. Daniel Campagne and Geneviève Petiot†, studying the FNSEA's annual reports to its members, demonstrated as linguists how unity is assumed rather than proven: "it operates as a matter of course and as a natural process". Rhetoric about unity appeals to the emotions, underpinning each individual's sense of belonging to a homogeneous and loyal community, "whose intrinsic unity is all the stronger for being apparently surrounded and threatened by outside forces".[1]

Two special groups: farm wives, and hired workers

Meanwhile, two groups of people further upset union harmony: women, and hired workers. Juliette Caniou† has tried to sort out the various issues relating the women's role in farming: she considers that the breach occurred around 1975. Until then, there had been more or less a consensus as regards "farm wives", although some nuances can be observed. Questions concerning the status of women began to be raised by the CNJA in 1970 and by the FNSEA in 1973: the matter was first formally tackled in a CNJA booklet in 1975, and then a debate between the FNSEA and the CNJA was launched.

There were two main approaches to this question. One, based on the concept of the *couple's* activity—an attitude regarded as "family-oriented"—was common to the FNSEA, the MODEF and the FFA. Another, professional and individual in character, was itself divided between two irreconcilable tendencies: that of the "worker-peasants" (the CNSTP and then the FNSP), and that of the CNJA defining the farmer's wife as a "co-entrepreneur". In this way, there has been opposition since 1975 between a family-oriented tendency and one advocating professional autonomy, between a matrimonial approach and a more modern one emphasising the role of the individual.

Underlying the demands by farm workers is the question as to the specific character of the agricultural sector. The attempt by the hired workers to obtain "legal equality", as Françoise Bourquelot has pointed out,[2] had the contradictory effect of undermining the unity of the sector by weakening its claim to be a special case, while reinforcing it by creating a solid front of employers confronting the workers.

1 To complete this panorama of farm organisations, mention should also be made of the creation within the extreme right-wing *Front national* of a *Cercle national des agriculteurs de France*: this was officially announced on 28 November 1990 by Jean-Marie Le Pen (the leader of the *Front national*), together with A. Arette, a former President of the FFA (1982–85).

2 "Les syndicats de salariés de la production agricole: la conquête de l'égalité sociale". *Economie Rurale*, 201, janv.-févr. 1991, pp.12–16.

The West of France

If any continuity is to be found between the 1960s and the period studied here, it is to be found in the very special place occupied by the *départements* of the West in the union movement.

The dynamism of the regional federation of unions in the West was analysed at the AFSP's 1970 conference (see Preface) by Jean-François Nallet.

René Bourrigaud* demonstrates the contradictory influence of the *Jeunesse agricole catholique* (Catholic agricultural youth movement). Loire-Atlantique was one of the few *départements* where peasants took a fully active part in the social agitation, in the ideological debate and—in some cases—in the violent street demonstrations of May 1968. In Nantes, as René Bourrigaud points out, no one can forget the transformation of the *place Royale* into a *place du peuple* during the demonstration called by the FNSEA and the departmental branch of the CNJA on 24 May; and there is no doubt that on that day there were peasants carrying banners denouncing capitalism and demanding social revolution. After that, the existence of a revolutionary minority in the farm population had to be reckoned with.

It was mainly to the West that students were sent to live on the farms, to have the experience of manual work and to talk revolution with the farmers ...

It was also in the West that conflicts over land tenure occurred most frequently—there were 110 such cases between 1968 and 1978 in Loire-Atlantique—and were the most acute, the longest (one took ten years to resolve), and the most explicit, as the right to work was set against the right of property.

Finally, it was in the West that milk producers, though union members, decided to address their demands to the dairies—as the economic power—instead of just to the public authorities.

During this period, there is a contrast between the political weight and the union strength of the West. While on the one hand no leader of the FNSEA or the CNJA and no important member of the central committees of these main unions came from Brittany or Loire-Atlantique, on the other hand four out of ten Ministers were Bretons, and they occupied the *rue de Varenne* for more than ten years.

The Chambers of Agriculture

In this panorama of farm organisations, something must be said about the Chambers of Agriculture. Reference has been made here and there to elections to the Chambers, but the recent evolution of the departmental Chambers and of their national assembly has not been studied. What influence did the Chambers exert over farmers' representation, in particular during President Mitterrand's first seven-year tenure?

The development issue together with that of representation enabled the authorities to set up links with the Chambers and thus to soft-pedal potential conflicts. As public bodies, the Chambers worked strictly within the law during the period considered, but

we need to understand what institutional and political forces were behind them and what sort of professional unity they were aiming at.

One feels the lack of research into these matters all the more because the subject is relevant to two big issues that have confronted the unions.

On the one hand, there has been debate of an ideological and economic nature as to the statute of the farm worker: this initially took the form of opposition between the worker and the farmer. This debate moved on a long way over the period, and there is no doubt that the Chambers played a big role in emphasising the theme of the farm business and in promoting the image of the farmer as entrepreneur. The farming world became reconciled to this idea of the farm as a business, with profound effects on union positions, from the CNJA to the *Confédération paysanne*.

On the other hand, there was a political debate over issues of representativeness and "pluralism" (cf. paper by Pierre Coulomb above): the Chambers were directly involved, both when elections were in the offing and through the management of finance for agricultural development.

Joint policy management

The importance and complexity of the mechanisms for "joint management" of agricultural policy have been discussed above (cf. Coulomb). The institution of joint management at the various levels and in all sectors transformed the question of union solidarity: instead of being just a matter of principle, this issue was intensified by discussions as to its implications for working out agricultural policy and for its day-to-day administration. The Blois farmers who contested the union leadership were opposed to the whole principle of joint management, while the *Confédération paysanne* wanted to take part. But the FNSEA and the CNJA consistently refused to recognise the legitimacy of the *Confédération*, as of the FFA and the MODEF. As will be seen below (chapter 5 by Hélène Delorme), each successive Government had to take up position on this issue of "pluralism", i.e. on the question of whether unions other than the FNSEA and the CNJA should be admitted as partners of the State.

This management of agricultural policy by the State in close collaboration with a chosen farmers' union has been analysed by political scientists in North America in terms of "neo-corporatism". One of them, John T.S. Keeler[1] uses the term "de-corporatisation" to describe the period 1981–83, when Edith Cresson tried to institute union "pluralism", both by recognising several unions and inviting them to negotiate with the authorities, and by reinforcing the role of the State in guiding and managing agricultural policy (cf. Servolin*).

This approach usefully underlines the point that changes in the pattern of the union movement can be understood just as much in the context of changes in agricultural

1 *The Politics of Neocorporatism in France. Farmers, the State, and Agricultural Policy-Making in the Fifth Republic.* New York–Oxford, OUP, 1987.

production structures (as was shown in the papers reviewed here by Philippe Lacombe which analyse the great variety of farming types now existing), as in relation to the evolution of agricultural policy and to the role of the State in its management.

A problem of identity

Finally, the question of unity in farmers' representation also reflects some perplexity as to the identity of the farming world. This appears from the development of associations such as the *Fédération nationale des foyers ruraux* (federation of rural households) and the *Mouvement rural de la jeunesse chrétienne* (rural movement for Christian youth), described by Jean-François Chosson*.[1] The shift from "agricultural" to "rural" in the definition of youth movements or cultural societies has not been sufficient to patch over the fissures arising in country areas, in particular because of unemployment. No doubt, there is plenty of talk about local development and rural development, but this barely conceals the prevailing uncertainty as to what is aimed at; and this is true both of the non-religious as of the Catholic tendencies.

Perhaps this extraordinary vitality of institutional and ideological debate in the 1970–87 period can be seen as a dramatic expression of the *fin des paysans* ("the end of the peasantry"), and as an anxious quest for a new identity for the farming population.

EPILOGUE

On 1 March 1990, after a favourable opinion by the *Conseil d'Etat*, the Government published in the *Journal officiel* a decree recognising the "pluralism" of the farm unions. This step had been facilitated by the regrouping of the left-wing organisations (other than the MODEF) in the *Confédération paysanne*, and resulted from pressures on the ruling Socialist Party.

According to the decree, participation in various bodies involved in administering agricultural policy should be shared out between the various unions proportionately to votes for the Chambers of Agriculture (provided at least 15% of the votes have been obtained). In the legal sphere at least, this represents a new stage. But in practice, the FNSEA has blocked its application by refusing to sit at the same table as representatives of the *Confédération paysanne*...

1 Chosson (J.-F.), *Les générations de développement rural*, préface de B. Kayser. Paris, LGDJ, 1990.

5

AGRICULTURAL POLICY UNDER THREE PRESIDENCIES[1]

by Hélène Delorme

Papers in this part of the French edition look at the ways in which agricultural policy was managed under each of the three Presidents of the Republic who followed General de Gaulle. There is also a specific study of agricultural budgets, and another on the "rhetoric" employed in speeches by the political leaders.

These various studies can be brought together under a single theme: that of the place of agricultural policy in the evolution of French politics in general. Looked at from the summit of State power, which is the viewpoint adopted here, agricultural policy must seem like a multi-purpose instrument that can be integrated in various ways in the scheme of national development. Thus, emphasis can be placed on its role in regulating domestic prices, so as to make it one of the weapons used in the fight against inflation. Or the structural aspects of agricultural policy (managing rural exodus, and aid for the specialisation and intensification of holdings) can be used to contribute to a programme of regional development, so as to guide the spatial distribution of the various sectors of activity. Agriculture's export role—a recent one in France—can be strengthened, so that an improved trade balance can bring practical reinforcement to foreign policy in building Europe and in current world-wide adjustments. Priority can be given to agricultural policy's social function, in order to gain the electoral support or at least the neutrality of farmers. Or, finally, emphasis can be placed on agriculture's role in the share-out of national income, agricultural policy being used to reduce the income disparities within the farm sector and as between farmers and other social categories.

Such an analytical framework may explain why agricultural policy has developed along its own lines, seeking a balance at each point in time between the various functions just mentioned; it also explains why this development has not been autonomous, since these successive balancing-acts have to be compatible with the long-term social programme of which they form part. All the Presidents of the Republic since 1969, like General de Gaulle before them, intervened directly in the basic choices required by agricultural policy. Each of them seems to have reflected for two or three years before making up his mind about agricultural policy. But although each acted in two phases

1 Under the Fifth Republic, the presidential term of office is seven years. Hence the French title of this chapter: *Trois Septennats*. See Annex III on political developments. [Ed.]

(or more), each modified previous policy according to his own values and alliances and in the light of the current situation. Let us consider how and why the evolution of agricultural policy since 1969 reflects both the choices made by each of the three successive governmental coalitions and the constraints and priorities of an economic situation destabilised by world-wide crisis.

Agricultural policy in the political arena

To begin with, Georges Pompidou (President from 1969 till his death in 1974) allowed the process of modernisation and concentration of production to continue along the lines laid down by the 1960–62 Guidance Laws (see chapter 2). In fact, as René Groussard* reveals, he was opposed to that policy, which he considered too interventionist and dangerous for the cohesion of the Gaullist-led alliance. After the municipal elections in March 1971 and before the parliamentary elections of March 1973, in a speech at St. Flour, Pompidou put an end to the quarrel that had been simmering between him and Michel Debré since December 1965 by opting for a more conservative policy. The economic justification for this change of tack was said to lie in the reappearance of shortages, but his main concern was to counter electoral dissatisfaction. It appeared necessary to calm down the radical opposition that was developing among livestock producers, so as to hold on to the farming vote as a counterweight to the emergence of a "new working class" that was feared after the events of May 1968; and also to calm down the fears arising from the disappearance of peasants at a time when the first signs of a structural "mutation" were appearing (cf. Pierre Le Roy*).

To this end, Pompidou, while invoking the 1960–62 Laws, watered down their selective character to such an extent as to change their nature. In his view, agricultural policy should be based on just one concept of agriculture: that of "family farmers", whose modernisation should be in tune with the natural rhythm of exodus arising from demographic trends. To this effect, agricultural policy should again be based on price support in the first place, and then on rural development, so as to preserve the incomes of all farmers, including those who were being made marginal by measures adopted at the European level. Moreover, such a peasant-based farm sector would safeguard the cultivated and inhabited natural space inherited from former centuries.

Jacques Chirac (as Minister of Agriculture, 1972–74) made this programme into a policy compatible with the political interests of neo-Gaullism and with the President's priorities for industry. He managed first of all to form a close alliance with Michel Debatisse[1] and also with representatives of the modernised livestock producers, partly by throwing all his political authority into promoting their aim of conquering power in the farm organisations, partly by involving them in the management of agricultural policy to an extent that could be regarded as installing a form of corporatism.

1 Formerly leader of the young farmers' organisation (CNJA), Debatisse was at this time leader of the FNSEA. See Annex IV. [Ed.]

Secure in this alliance and in the President's unflinching support, Chirac could then carry out a realignment of agricultural policy so as to guarantee the maintenance of a maximum number of farmers in all sectors and all regions (through aids to installation, to mountain farmers, modernisation of vineyards, etc.). In Brussels, playing on fears of continuing shortage and on the tendency towards renationalisation of agricultural policies that arose from monetary crisis, he contrived to renegotiate, to the benefit of livestock producers and farmers in the Mediterranean regions, the measures that had been adopted in the 1960s (by raising prices and reinforcing market organisation). These achievements confirmed his popularity with the farmers all the more since his Gaullist style enabled them to think that they had once again become a spearhead in a European context where the defence of French interests involved the defence of European agriculture.

This protective attitude, moreover, was consistent with the priorities for industry (as was the case under Méline[1]).In budgetary terms, the decision of 21 April 1970 on the EEC's "own resources" consolidated the pact with Germany over the financing of agricultural policy. As the VIth Plan had laid down, the national effort could then concentrate on industry, all the more so since the enlargement of the EEC in 1973 to include Britain, Ireland and Denmark had opened up new preferential markets. Politically, the shift in the farm budget towards supporting individual incomes, noted in the paper by Pierre Alphandéry, Pierre Bitoun and Yves Dupont*, could be expected to contribute to social harmony by reassuring the farming electorate that had been regained from the centrists and from the non-Gaullist right.

Georges Pompidou did not complete his seven-year term, but Jacques Chirac, following his successful period at the Ministry of Agriculture, had the opportunity to pursue his policies as the first Prime Minister in the next presidential period.

Agricultural policy in the economic crisis and the political battlefield

The seven years of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's Presidency (1974–81) moved at a faster tempo, for the equation which had to be solved was then more complicated. The political and economic issues that were latent under the previous Presidency now came to the fore, but in a form that made it difficult to comprehend their real nature. Giscard d'Estaing saw the political risk represented by the progress of the Left, confirmed at each round of elections, and this was one of the motives for his programme to "modernise" French society. But the extent and character of world economic change were misunderstood. As we are reminded by Pierre Le Roy*, who was one of Giscard's agricultural experts, the successive jolts which, starting with the oil crisis of October 1973, provoked a new bout of inflation and endangered the franc, were interpreted as "accidents" that did not call for basic changes in economic policy. As regards agri-

1 Jules Méline, who as Minister of Agriculture in the late nineteenth century was mainly responsible for instituting protectionism for French agriculture. [Ed.].

culture, a series of climatic catastrophes reinforced the illusion: the dramatic reductions in farm incomes that followed the record increases of 1972 and 1973 were seen only as short-term disturbances, although these too were symptoms of a structural crisis affecting intensive farming.

To these uncertainties as to the issues were added doubts as to the proper responses. Questions as to export potential arose during Giscard's Presidency. What volume of exports could be attained? (there was a quarrel during the preparation of the VIIth Plan (1976–80) over a targeted net export of 20 billion francs for the agro-food sector). How far was the growth of exports compatible with stabilisation of the domestic economy?—for this was the path chosen to promote European monetary co-operation, a major aim of foreign policy under this Presidency. How should such export growth be managed: by rehabilitating the Common Agricultural Policy, or by reforming it so as to promote specialisation in sectors that could be competitive on a world-wide basis? (as was recommended in an unpublished report by Jean-François Deniau). On each of these points, Giscard d'Estaing, who was taking the time needed to explore medium and long-term solutions, found himself at cross-purposes with Jacques Chirac, who (following Pompidou) considered that existing Community regulations (the *acquis communautaire*) should be used on a day-to-day basis in support of French farm incomes.

Here we come to the second tactical problem which Giscard d'Estaing faced in agricultural policy: his relations with Jacques Chirac. How could the alliance which Chirac had formed with Michel Debatisse's FNSEA between 1972 and 1974 be made to serve the presidential majority, giving support to the President's aims and destiny and to those of his partisans, rather than to those of the new Prime Minister and his companions? This question dominated the presidential term, as the rivalry between the two political families prevented the coalition they had formed from working out appropriate responses to the economic and agricultural crisis, and thereby from holding on to the farming electorate in the face of pressures from the Left.

To begin with, Giscard d'Estaing may have thought that he could manage Jacques Chirac. The two men seemed in agreement over the problem which was to be so troublesome for the President: how to insert agricultural policy into monetary policy. Public order was at stake, for farmers had again taken to barricading prefectures, and their demonstrations culminated in the riots of 1976. The compromise that had been worked out during the crisis of the franc in January 1974 was maintained: "Monetary Compensatory Amounts" were instituted to preserve the official parity and to contribute to monetary stabilisation in a more-or-less agreed European framework; European and French prices were raised to reduce the impact on farm incomes of the inflation engendered by the franc's weakness on the exchanges. Additionally, in the autumn of 1974, "exceptional" direct aids were granted—which in view of the severity of the agricultural crisis became regular subsidies.

Chirac's resignation in the summer of 1976 marked the end of the truce. The new RPR party, pursuing a right–versus–left strategy, was afraid of being pushed out by the

President's overtures to the left-of-centre parties, and leant to the point of demagogy on the FNSEA, where Michel Debatisse was now seconded by François Guillaume, a strong supporter of Chirac. These two organisations then set out, in what seems to have been a concerted manner, to combat agri-monetary policy. The defects of this policy are all the more obvious with hindsight, but their action tended to perpetuate it, as they opposed any reform of French or European agricultural policy: in particular, they refused any measures to control supply although the urgency of this was apparent (especially in the beef, milk and wine sectors.[1]

Giscard d'Estaing, in a speech at Vassy (in Normandy) just after the climatic problems of 1976 and 1977 and just before the parliamentary elections of 1978 (cf. Pierre Le Roy*), tried to regain the initiative. His agricultural programme followed the lines of Pompidou's: hardly surprising, as the outlook of these two men owed much to their direct acquaintance with the world of industry and finance, the one through his career, the other by birth. Giscard did shift the priorities, putting emphasis on developing France's export potential. But, like Pompidou, he saw this development as being based on regional union in Europe and on bilateral agreements with foreign customers. Just as he gave up the project of world-wide free trade put forward in the Deniau plan, so he abandoned any distinction between farmers, all of whom were encouraged to produce France's "green oil".

All the same, Giscard's management of agricultural policy was still too much subject to strategic and tactical hesitations for him to prevail over his rival. It is true that after 1977 the same measures continued to be used to safeguard production potential, and that the growth of exports went unhindered once the damage due to drought in 1976 had been overcome. In 1979, success in negotiations on the European Monetary System gave reassurance as regards the working of the Common Agricultural Policy, which in 1974 had nearly collapsed in a crisis of confidence as regards Europe.[2] Still, the "food policy" envisaged in 1974 and confirmed at Vassy, with the aim of an integrated development of agriculture and industry so that they could both participate in the opening-up of France's economy to the world market, proved a failure, as is pointed out by Pierre Le Roy* and was confirmed by the "Guidance Law" of 1980.[3]

1 From the French viewpoint, the agri-monetary system of "green rates" and "monetary compensatory amounts" had the particularly undesirable consequence of enabling Germany to keep relatively high prices for agricultural products. French policy constantly attacked this feature, rather than seek any general lowering of "common" agricultural prices or, as the author says, supply controls. See also Hélène Delorme's discussion of these points in chapter 1. [Ed.]

2 In September 1974, Giscard d'Estaing had thought of withdrawing from the common agricultural market and asked the Chambers of Agriculture to make a report.

3 The contribution by Le Roy observes that by 1980, when the VIIIth Plan (for 1981–85) and the *Loi d'orientation* in question were being prepared, the limits of market outlets and the need for measures of restraint were beginning to be recognised. But with Giscard's defeat in the 1981 presidential elections, neither of these texts had any immediate effect. [Ed.]

As the monetary crisis grew worse, the austerity plan of Raymond Barre (who had replaced Chirac as Prime Minister in 1976) became all the more essential, especially as the accumulation of surpluses after 1976 raised doubts as regards the assumption of permanent shortage (as appeared from the draft for the VIIIth Plan). A sum of 4.5 billion francs handed out in 1980 to compensate for the collapse of farm incomes due to the second oil crisis did not suffice to restore farmers' confidence in the President. In 1981, the farmers' vote—which Chirac and his friends were no longer mobilising in his favour, as in 1974—turned against Giscard d'Estaing.

Agricultural policy in the building of an industrial Europe

François Mitterrand, after his election as President in 1981, also took his time over agricultural policy, though with a different order of priorities since, during his first seven-year term, agricultural policy moved from the political and social arena to the technical and economic one, from applied Utopia to pragmatic management (cf. Claude Servolin*).

This evolution reveals the growing doubts about agricultural policy. When the Left returned to power after twenty-three years in opposition, there were differences within each of the political groups over this policy. This situation probably contributed to the impression of continuity or even of homogeneity given by public statements on agriculture, as Bertrand Hervieu* shows. In fact, while there was consensus as regards the framework for agricultural growth—a sector that should consist of holdings under the "personal responsibility"[1] of each farmer, with the State regulating competition between them in a dialogue with the agricultural organisations and in agreement with France's European partners—there was increasing debate as to how this growth should be managed.

In the neo-Gaullist RPR party and in Giscard's movement, there was a growing tendency to advocate commercial holdings able to compete in the European and world contexts, rather than the peasant farming that had been supported by Pompidou and Chirac. The Socialist Party now took up the debate and once again, as during the 1960s with the projects of the livestock producers seeking modernisation, found itself confronted with the dilemmas (and polemics) that have dogged the Socialist movement over the agricultural issue. As Serge Cordellier* has shown, the national agricultural committee of the Socialist Party became a centre for working out plans for the sector, as it came to include militant members of the reformist left-wing union movement and intellectuals, employees from the agro-food sector and officials, who set about analysing or administering agricultural policy.

The programme of 28 February 1981 brought out two points of agreement between the different factions in the committee (cf. J. Huot†). In the traditional manner of French

1 An expression used by Jacques Chirac and later by Pierre Méhaignerie (Minister of Agriculture 1977–81)—cf. Hervieu*.

Socialism, it analysed the social structure of agriculture in terms of polarisation as between entrepreneurs on the one hand, and on the other, not peasants any longer but workers, held to be exploited by the possessors of capital, in ways which though specific to the sector were considered analogous to those applying to workers and employees. The Socialist programme, moreover, remained consistent with social-democratic concepts as to the active role of the State (*volontarisme étatique*—cf. Servolin*) and with the idea of State which may be expected from unionists accustomed to participation in the bodies responsible for managing agricultural policy. In contrast to the hesitations of the right, and in a context where anti-State views predominated, it reaffirmed the need for public intervention, State authority being seen as the means of compelling capitalists to share economic power and thus of bringing about a change in the process of capital accumulation.

Indeed, the Socialist attitude to agricultural policy constituted a break with the Right's practice of channelling the accumulation of capital. On this point, there was lively debate between the "productivist" and the "critical" tendencies (see also G. Le Puill†). The former, like the "modernists" of the Right, wanted to accelerate the concentration of production around the 200,000 or so holdings which seemed to have a future, while the farmers and regions who would be excluded or marginalised should receive social aids along the lines of the European social-democratic model (as in the Mansholt Plan). The latter group, like the right-wing "agrarians", wanted to keep a large number of farmers, but in line with the tradition of French Socialism[1], they advocated a policy of sharing-out work and guaranteeing a minimum income for all holdings and in all regions. The Socialist programme adopted this latter approach, and to implement it, provided for the creation of an extensive system of boards (for land management and for commodities).[2]

In the subsequent shifts of Socialist policy between these two models, one can see what Servolin* has described as "apprenticeship to the needs of day-to-day management". François Mitterrand began with a brave attempt to "change the conditions of life" in rural areas as well as in the towns, thus recognising the increased number of farmers who had voted for him along with the traditional left-wing electorate. The aim of improving the incomes of the least-favoured farmers was consistent with Pierre Mauroy's programme of economic recovery by stimulating consumption. The President created a surprise by his choice as Minister of Agriculture of Edith Cresson, the first woman in the post: she had been, together with Bernard Thareau, responsible for the Socialist Party's national agricultural committee, and she followed agricultural matters in the European Parliament. The hand-out of direct aids in 1981 (the most substantial

1 Also that of Belgian and Italian Socialism. See Coulomb (P.), Nallet (H.), Servolin (C.), *L'élaboration de la politique agricole*, Paris, INRA-CORDES, 1977.

2 On this programme and its evolution, from its inception by the opposition within the FNSEA and its adoption by the Socialist Party, see Claude Servolin, *L'agriculture moderne*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1989, p.217–225.

under the Fifth Republic), followed in 1982 by increases in prices and in the farm budget, bore witness to the President's support for a diversified farm sector, in which the intensive model would no longer be imposed but would be just one type of development among others.

But from 1982 onwards, the President and his entourage had to think again about the course of agricultural policy. Apart from violent obstruction on the part of the FNSEA leadership (fearing loss of their dominant representative role), the anxiety which brought together many ordinary farmers under the FNSEA banner (100,000 demonstrated in Paris) alarmed Mitterrand sufficiently—he had, after all, been member of Parliament for the Nièvre, a rural *département*—for him to decide in November 1982 to cancel the plan for land boards.[1]

However, the President's change of policy did not arise from a reflection on the Socialist programme's validity. From 1981 till 1983, polemics were more in evidence than serious analysis, as discussion among Socialists was caught up in the confrontation with the FNSEA and with the right-wing opposition. The decisive factor for change was the conviction that agricultural policy, as conceived by the programme, was hampering the President's grand design for an industrial Europe, capable of dealing on equal terms with the United States and Japan. For François Mitterrand, indeed, only by concentrating European co-operation on leading sectors could the economy be reshaped and growth restored, making it possible to equalise incomes and living conditions in the "European social space". But with the contraction in world food demand after 1982, support for agriculture was becoming both more onerous and less effective in guaranteeing income and the level of investment. The growing tension between Europe and the United States which this evolution provoked tended to isolate the French Socialists: being alone in wanting to reform the Common Agricultural Policy on the basis of differentiated prices and aids (the "quantum" approach), they appeared to have little concern for budgetary equilibrium, as compared both with those who wanted limits on quantities produced (quotas) and with liberals who advocated a return to market forces.

In 1983–84, while refusing to take France out of the European Monetary System and opting for return to a policy of austerity in order to control the inflation which the economic recovery had provoked, Mitterrand—this time without making any speech but in concert with his European partners—adopted a view of agricultural policy consistent with the general aim of budgetary stringency that had prevailed since 1974, as shown by Pierre Alphandéry, Pierre Bitoun and Yves Dupont*. His acceptance of the principle of supply control, and then that of "budgetary discipline", made it possible

1 The Socialists' plan for land boards (*offices fonciers*) went through several stages, but had been intended to provide much greater control over the land market than the existing SAFER; it would have absorbed these and other bodies such as the ADASEA, the aim (frustrated) being to reduce the influence of the FNSEA/CNJA. As regards the commodity boards (*offices par produits*), the law passed in 1982 was much less ambitious than the initial plan: it enabled the State to play a somewhat increased role in marketing. [Ed.]

for the Minister of Agriculture, Michel Rocard, and the Secretary of State, René Souchon, to succeed in a negotiation whose priority was to reshape the map of Europe through the accession in 1986 of Spain and Portugal, thus enabling France to benefit from its technical prowess and the natural advantages of its agriculture without being handicapped by the comparative weakness of its agro-food system, which thereby gained a respite enabling it to catch up.

The 1984 decisions signalled a decisive turning-point; and the right-wing majority that resulted from the parliamentary elections in 1986 did not take a different course.[1] There were two main reasons. In the first place, the new price policy (keeping in line with German prices) and market policy (favourable to an integration of French cereals and European livestock production) corresponded to a priority which the Right supported: that of reconquering the EEC market, the protection of which was all the more sought after as the fall in world demand depressed prices and reinforced the pressure of the United States. Secondly, the reduction in support, with little or no differentiation (as in the case of milk quotas in particular), was being organised in line with the ideas of the Right: it let concentration continue to the benefit of the few hundred thousand specialised and intensive holdings which accounted for most of marketed output and received the bulk of public aid.

Why should the aim of solidarity be neglected, when it is one of the pillars of social-democratic doctrine—the validity of which the Socialists continue to proclaim and which they seek to implement in their current doctrinal revision? Why should they forget that agricultural policy—including the support of prices and incomes—contributes to organising land use, the preservation of the environment, the country's autonomy and security in its food supply?

The wish to calm down the conflict with the FNSEA, together with the desire for economic rationality on the part of the "technocracy", have played an important part in the change of course by Mitterrand and his experts, as Servolin* points out. These two traditional elements in agricultural policy are nowadays reinforced by a new social structure in agriculture which, following modernisation during and because of the crisis, appears comparatively homogeneous: "professional" farms on the one hand and "marginal" farms on the other—the latter likely to be reduced in number, if not to disappear, as their occupants retire.

There are two more basic reasons. The first is specific to the Socialists. Coming mostly from the class of urban employees, their leaders do not have practical knowledge of farming (unlike, for example, Sicco Mansholt[2]). Consequently, their inclination is

1 This was the first case under the Fifth Republic of "co-habitation" between a President and a parliamentary majority from opposing parties. Mitterrand had no choice but to appoint Jacques Chirac as Prime Minister. Cf. Annex III. [Ed.]

2 The first (Dutch) Commissioner for Agriculture, and a Socialist. But since the Plan of 1968 associated with his name envisaged a highly selective process of modernisation and structural reform, even though accompanied by social aids, this allusion seems questionable. [Ed.]

to apply an industrialist schema to a sector which they see as backward and in need of modernisation.

The second main reason is not specific to the agro-food sector, but is more acute in this field. France lacks the co-operative tradition developed in Northern Europe, which enables agriculture to be integrated in intersectoral and international trade at least cost for society and for farmers. There is reason to think, along with René Groussard*, that if France wants to succeed in its ambition to create a mixed economy, it must improve its knowledge and practice of the social economy.

The variety of European policies (compare the high degree of liberalisation of the markets for cereals and oilseeds with the stabilisation of the dairy sector), their proliferation (as regards socio-structural aids), and their national differentiation, suggest that the mutation of the agro-food sector is not over, nor is the adjustment of agricultural policies. And the debate continues...

6

THE FARMER: A CITIZEN LIKE ANY OTHER?

by Marcel Jollivet

From time to time, the role of farmers in French society comes up for discussion. The preceding papers in this volume have shown that, after 1970, production structures in agriculture changed substantially—an evolution which altered the economic and social status of many farmers. Moreover, State intervention and the processes of consultation between the State and the farm organisations had greater impact and became more complex than ever before.

Did these developments affect the political behaviour of farmers, and if so, how? What actually determines this behaviour? Indeed, the question arises: what sort of *citizens* are farmers nowadays? How do they reconcile their basic political positions with the choices arising from alternative agricultural policies?

Such key questions underlie all the papers presented in Part Six of the French edition of the present volume. To answer them, it is necessary to identify those features of political behaviour that are quite clearly related to *occupation*. It is then necessary to inquire how structural changes in agriculture, by altering farmers' place in society, affect their attitude and their votes, both within their occupation and on general political matters, and to analyse how one may affect the other.

Here we again confronted, this time in the political context, with the question of "unity" already discussed by Pierre Coulomb and Bertrand Hervieu. Is there a unified vote on agricultural matters? And correspondingly, in the general political field, is there an "agricultural vote" demonstrating corporative or even "corporatist"[1] solidarity on the part of all farmers? Or, on the contrary, do we find that voting patterns on both agricultural and general political matters reflect the internal divisions of the farming community? If so, what is the nature of these divisions?

Such queries bring us back to what has already been said about the farmer of today. They cause us to take up again the question of professional identity, showing up the existence of both unifying factors and factors of dissension, and thus perhaps to explain

1 "Corporative" refers to the defence of its interests by a professional body. "Corporatist"—more far-reaching (see also paper by Coulomb above)—implies a situation where representative bodies are granted recognition and privileges by the State. [Ed.]

different professional and political behaviour according to the group of farmers concerned.

Farmers' occupation, however, is not the only factor determining their role as citizens, nor can one even assume that it is the main factor. They also act as citizens by belonging to territorial-based communities—or at any rate, collectivities, and these, moreover, are the context for political expression all the way from the *commune* up to the national level. This has provided the basis for one of the oldest and for a long time the most highly-regarded forms of analysis of political behaviour: "electoral geography". The same consideration lies behind what has been called "ecological analysis" of votes.[1]

Territorial ties are formed from all the legacies, all the influences, all the bonds and all the antagonisms that arise from living in proximity. They encompass family relations, at least in so far as these are not disturbed by geographical mobility. It is particularly useful to investigate this dimension of political awareness, since we are dealing with farmers who are the least mobile of all social groups. During the period studied, moreover, there was a significant growth in the powers and political role of the regions, hence a profound change in the political balance between the "local" element and the State. Up to a point, inquiring into the political behaviour of farmers amounts to asking whether this behaviour remains, one way or another, linked to these territorial ties.

So in the first place we shall look into such collective identities, seen in their dual dimension, before embarking on a more precise analysis of professional and electoral behaviour.

The period in question provides ample material for analysing professional and political behaviour. There were indeed many significant events (see Annex III). Apart from the usual election timetable, there were two which took place ahead of schedule: the presidential election of 1974, following the death of Georges Pompidou, and the parliamentary elections of 1981 following François Mitterrand's victory in the presidential election of that year. Moreover, two new types of election occurred: the European elections (in 1979 and 1984) and the regional elections (1986). Last but not least, there were two distinct breaks in French political life: that of 1981, when the election of François Mitterrand brought the Socialists to power, and that of 1986, when the Right regained control of Parliament. It should also be noted that between 1971 and 1988 there were no less than nine Ministers of Agriculture, and that two of these (Jacques Chirac and Michel Rocard) are potential candidates for the Presidency.[2]

In spite of this wealth of material, there has not been much research into the electoral behaviour of farmers during this period. This may be because they are regarded as a

1 Nothing to do with the ecological movement: this refers (as the following paragraph indicates) to the idea that individual votes are determined by the local socio-political environment. [Ed.]

2 Since the original version of this paper was written, further elections to the European Parliament took place in 1989. There have also been two more Ministers of Agriculture— see Annex III. [Ed.]

negligible quantity in electoral terms in view of their declining numbers, or simply because it is becoming much more difficult to distinguish geographically the farmers' vote from that of other social groups. At least, survey results have been used to get some idea of the political attitudes and voting tendencies of farmers.

Besides the political elections, it is important to consider elections within the farming community to the Chambers of Agriculture (in 1974 and 1983). And finally, there were a number of farmers' demonstrations: wine-growers and milk producers figured prominently, but every branch of agricultural production took part at one time or another.

This chapter will not go back over Bertrand Hervieu's analysis of the farm union movement, but will try to sort out the political behaviour of farmers during the period considered. So as regards elections to the Chambers of Agriculture, we shall only look at those of January 1983, as these were of particular political significance because of the change in the voting system (proportional representation—see Annex IV) and because of the political context. This was the time when the Socialist Government was directly challenging the FNSEA: by introducing proportional representation, it tried to enable the minority farm unions to enter the political arena via their representation within the profession—which, of course, could only be to the detriment of the FNSEA. As regards the demonstrations, we shall discuss them only in so far as they reveal how farmers see and express their place in society, and as they contribute to defining that place.

The various facets of farmers' identity

How do Frenchmen view their farmers, and how do farmers see themselves and their place in French society?—these are old questions. After seemingly being forgotten, they have re-appeared, apparently with new dimensions and new meaning, as will be seen when we tackle the question of demonstrations.

Isabel Boussard* looks at the image that French people have of farmers, on the basis of their view of farming. Survey results, reflecting broad public opinion, sometimes contradict the statements of experts or of particular interest groups (such as consumers or ecologists (cf. J. Mengin†). These images transmitted through different channels by society as a whole are doubly interesting: both in themselves (they enable us to follow the evolution since the 1950s), and for the discrepancies which they may introduce into the image which farmers have of their professional role.

The adjustments, however, have been marginal: ecological considerations, for example, have not made much impact on farmers (cf. D. Boy and E. Dupoirier*). A degree of "cultural conservatism" may explain why this transplant has not taken root. But another factor has been genuine support for the technical model of modern farming that was disseminated during the 1960s.

As regards farmers' *professional* identity, what was an objective during the previous decade—to become a modern farmer—has become a reality, into which a whole stratum

of farmers has thrown itself: those, indeed, who dominate the farming milieu. P. Rambaud* and G. Allaire*, each in their own way, have illustrated this, complemented by M. Berlan-Darqué* as regards farmers' wives.

At the same time, there are important differences, which are the cause of quite distinct social segmentation within the farming community: P. Rambaud* makes this clear. Such segmentation also existed in the 1960s. Perhaps the distinctions have become more marked; and perhaps they have become more numerous, with a widening gap between the extremes. Finally, there is no doubt that the relative weight of each sub-group has evolved substantially, thereby causing the character of the whole to evolve too, becoming more and more subject to the modern farming model.

The need to confront the market has been the main factor responsible. The task is tougher and more competitive than ever before, leading to ruptures the signs of which are already apparent (cf. J. Mengin†). In another conference paper, P. Maclouf† reached the same conclusions from a different angle: that of social policy and nationality solidarity. Showing how the specificity and unicity of social policy in favour of farmers is tending to disappear, he demonstrated clearly the decline of one of the main foundations of their collective corporate-based identity.

So the overall picture presented by the various papers is that of an professional identity that is more and more precisely defined and exclusive, referring more and more strictly to an archetype (the "modern farmer", or the "farmer as an entrepreneur"). As a result, this identity is more and more difficult for the majority to achieve, and so becomes self-contradictory, since it can no longer provide a unique point of reference.

Territorial identity seems in the first instance much more stable. In their conference papers, P. Pharo† and M. Abélès† drew a picture of a "parish-pump mentality"[1] in rural France. Bringing out the factors which make local political life work, they show how important it still is in politics to have a local base. The joint paper by M. Jollivet and A. Percheron†, studying farmers' attitudes towards the regions[2] in which they live, shows that farmers remain attached in the first instance to their *commune* and their particular part of the country (they are not alone in this).

As we shall see, however, things are not so simple. Rural areas have evolved considerably during the period considered, and farmers are no longer in the majority. They have had to adapt.

However this may be, let us note the continuing importance of the territorial links between farmers and politics.

1 The corresponding French expression refers to the village steeples (*clochers*), and the author here refers to a work by Lüthy (Herbert), *A l'heure de son clocher: Essai sur la France*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1955, 340 p. [Ed.]

2 Many of the functions formerly exercised by *départements* have been progressively transferred to *régions*, each encompassing several *départements*, and corresponding in many cases to pre-Revolution denominations (e.g. Aquitaine, Franche-Comté, Picardie.... [Ed.]

Territorial identity and professional identity overlap: the latter has a territorial dimension. P. Rambaud* emphasises how professional strategies which give rise to certain collective identities have a foundation in a specific part of the country or in local solidarity. J. Mengin† set out the same point of view in relation to the alternative of "pluri-activity", which is a way of becoming involved in development of the rural area in question (but through "rural" and no longer necessarily or primarily "agricultural" development). G. Allaire* describes the ways in which "modernist" farmers combine local professional duties with municipal political responsibilities. All this shows that professional strategies emerge from territorial ones: this for the simple reason that they are not individual but group strategies, hence aiming to gain power; they take different forms and operate at different levels, reflecting the local sociological and political context in which they have developed—though this does not mean that they remain confined to a local dimension.

The farmer and the State: or From the professional to the political role

To analyse the relationship between the professional and the political behaviour of farmers, a good method may be to study these two facets one after the other, inquiring in each case whether and how the other facet can be discerned in the background of that which is being considered. So let us start with the professional side, looking at two of its manifestations: farmers' demonstrations, and elections to the Chambers of Agriculture.

With the "milk war" of 1972 (initiated by Breton farmers who stopped milk deliveries), the period studied here opens on a conflict that represented, by comparison with the previous decade, the most far-reaching form of social struggle along labour union lines on the part of the peasantry; it was also a bid to establish a "worker-peasant" unionism. This long and acute conflict, while it did enable the most active minority to realise their project for a new kind of unionism, was also a brutal demonstration of the limits of the ideological schemas that lay behind it. As a result, it was not to be repeated.

Instead, more traditional forms of action were again resorted to. In the milk war, the farmers' target was the milk processing industry. Subsequently, and even when demonstrators attacked merchants or carriers of agricultural produce, they were in fact—as before 1972—aiming at the State, either directly or as the guarantor of public order. The failure of the 1972 worker-style combat indicates clearly both how firmly-entrenched is the view which farmers have of their place in the productive system, and the continuing role of the State in regulating agricultural markets.

Hence the great diversity of methods of action (cf. P. Mann†. The flexibility of the union movement made it possible to adapt the mode of action to varying technical, economic, social and geographic situations. There was also a territorial dimension to these strategies: the convergence of a territorial base and occupational identity could culminate in crises such as that of wine-growing in the South, as described by A. Guillemin*.

So demonstrations meant confrontation with the State just as much as ever during our period. P. Champagne* even sees reasons to suggest that such confrontation became more acute, in view of the growing role of mass communication and opinion surveys in the political management of a society where public opinion held increasing sway. The character of demonstrations changed accordingly: they had to be aimed at the media so as to pressurise the State via the information channels. Recourse to violence then became a two-edged weapon. From this point of view, the variety of modes of action and the flexibility of the farm unions were very useful: they enabled the FNSEA to appear as not directly involved in actions supposedly undertaken by "grassroots" elements and thus to distance itself when necessary to preserve the image of farmers in the public eye, but at the same time taking advantage of these demonstrations in its negotiations with the State.

It can be argued that when the Socialists arrived in power in 1981, farmers' campaigns were even more focussed on the State; that they became more able to mobilise their forces, and that their methods became more aggressive. Detailed enumeration and analysis is difficult, as there were so many types of action, often very diffuse. It does appear, however, that politicians were more than before the target of demonstrations. At any rate, there is no doubt that the confrontation between the FNSEA and the Socialist Government caused a closing of the ranks, as was shown by the display of union power in the demonstration on 23 March 1982 in Paris. The political character of this demonstration was obvious. Does the declaration on this occasion of farmers' unity in the face of the "Socialist State" not take us back half-a-century to the heyday of corporatism? Were the 1960s just an interlude? At least, we seem to come back to the early 1950s, when the Socialists and the Right challenged each other through the intermediaries of the CGA and the FNSEA.

The same question arises in relation to the elections to the Chambers of Agriculture in 1983. With political divisions acute, and with an electoral system that gave an outlet for different views, the contradiction between the desire to present a united front on a strictly occupational basis and the existence of very marked antagonisms within the farming community came into the open. This contradiction appears from the great heterogeneity of local situations. The analysis by P. Duboscq* at the national level and that by P. Quantin* for Aquitaine show up very clearly how this happened and what were its effects. The limitations of the supposed "unity" of the farming "profession" were then evident.

It is particularly interesting to note that there these limitations were of two kinds. The first were professional in character: there was opposition to the "dominant model" of farming, upheld by the main union movement, and to the agricultural policy that accompanied it—or at least, to some of its aspects; there was opposition too to a certain type of power-holding within the union movement. But there were political limitations

too: it is possible to discern, region by region, very clear convergence between the professional vote and the strictly political vote. Here again, territorial ties emerge, whether in the form of strong opposition to central union control or of sensitivity as regards regional political traditions.

In this case, the citizen appears behind the farmer. It may be that his interests as a farmer modify his political outlook, and this appears in his professional vote. But it should also be particularly noted that, on the other hand, his purely political preferences—in other words, his choices as a citizen—guide his professional choices.

The citizen-farmer: or From the political to the occupational role

Farmers' civic role is displayed above all at the village level, and it is not exclusively or directly related to their occupation. For a long time, farmers have had an important place, often underestimated, in municipal functions, particularly as mayors of their *communes*, but this was primarily as rural inhabitants, or indeed as the people who controlled the land. Here, territorial ties intervene once again. J.-Y. Nevers* reminds us of this very traditional pre-eminence of farmers in the highest municipal functions, and explains it in the same way as M. Abélès†.

That does not mean that it is not in their interest as farmers to hold municipal power. This *is* in their interest, on the one hand, as landowners: this may explain the collective reactions of farmers towards other social groups in the village, new arrivals in particular. On the other hand, for some categories of farmers, it is a way of imposing locally their concept of farming. Thus, like G. Allaire*, J.Y. Nevers*, writing of Aquitaine, notes that the professional commitment of the generation arising from the JAC and which founded the CNJA did not—contrary to the prevailing notions—prevent them from becoming involved in local politics, on the contrary. For a farmer, to hold municipal authority is to confirm and reinforce local social power that has already been gained in other spheres, and to acquire a springboard for transforming this into political power. This power may be that of an individual, of a family, or of a clan; it may also be that of an entire social layer (like that of the "modernist" farmers in the period we are discussing), or of a social class (as was the case as regards the big landowners up to the inter-war period and still is the case in certain regions).

This local power, which farmers have held for so long in the rural *communes*, is now slipping away from them, at least in the urbanised rural areas. Other social groups are coming to the fore.

The period in question, like the previous decade, is also characterised by a big upheaval in village social structures and in rural municipal authority, whether farmers remain in control or whether they have to contend with new arrivals, whether farmers manage to hold on or are carried away by the tide.

The political significance of these questions is open to debate. Independence of political parties is widely held to be a cardinal virtue of candidates for a rural municipal election. On the basis of work by Isabel Boussard[1], D. Aventur* measures this phenomenon in the 1983 municipal elections: it appears, in the end, modest though real. Its importance should not be overestimated: it does not exclude a distinct convergence between political leanings at municipal and national elections. Let us say simply that the candidate keeps his party card in his pocket for a while, but everyone knows quite well what is involved, and on that basis, everything can be arranged.

D. Aventur* demonstrates the well-known constancy of political choices by rural people (among whom farmers were in a substantial majority during the period considered). In fact, this behaviour originates from factors related to national political life of a century or more ago, such as the struggle of small peasants against big landlords, the conflict between Church and State, or the influence of seasonal migrant workers... The irruption of new partners—middle-class people in particular—into local politics, bringing political awareness from outside into village municipal life which had become bland, is part of this continuing interaction between the local and national levels. The same can be said of the accession of "modernist" family farmers to municipal responsibilities, in particular to the highest posts in question.

Between the local and the national levels, there may well be discontinuities. Urbanisation of the countryside and conquest of the leading role in agriculture by the middle stratum of farmers—the two main phenomena of this period, continuing the trends of the previous decade—made their impact on local structures of power and politics. A new rural political elite established itself.

The political implications of these changes are not negligible and have long-term effects, in so far as this new political elite has become able to organise the local political debate around its own preferences. In this way a *commune*, even a rural one, may become the cradle of electoral behaviour on the national level. While it is clear that in the course of the battle, some of the power to influence rural voters (not just agricultural ones) has passed from farmers to the new rural residents coming from the towns, how should we interpret in political terms the enhanced position of the "modernist" farmers?

Does this active social stratum, born of the agricultural policy pursued since the 1960s and closely identified with that policy as G. Allaire* has shown, transfer to the political arena choices rising from its professional evolution? This could imply a leaning towards the Right, in the case of those who have done best from the process, or towards the Left, for those who feel excluded. Or, as they come under pressure from the mechanisms of social regulation existing in village society, and as they grow older, have these farmers "settled down", as Y. Nevers* suggests? Have they gone back to their places, adopting again the local political traditions? The answer, depending on the

1 "Le comportement des ruraux lors des élections municipales de mars 1983", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 1989.

place and context, may be one or the other. Allaire shows clearly the diversity of situations, and even suggests a third possibility, to the effect that these young farmers, however dynamic and "modernist" they may be, have never in fact taken up special political attitudes, but have just fitted their occupational choices into the political choices acquired from their family and regional traditions.

All these considerations illuminate and clarify the electoral significance of what has already been said about territorial ties and identities. But they also suggest a reflection of a more anthropological character on the relationship of farmers (though here too they are certainly not a special case) with French political life. P. Pharo† emphasised the discontinuity between the local and the national levels. M. Abélès†, on the other hand, saw French political institutions and even the attitude of French society to politics as being impregnated by a generalised "political ruralism". This might suggest that the French-style Republican regime, born of rural origins, is well adapted to the political customs of its inhabitants. But if it is true that in a rural area every candidate to a political function has to pledge allegiance and submit himself to a ritual of consecration, is this not precisely because there exists within the electorate an acute sense of becoming dependent on an external power? The ritual then appears like a magical act whose purpose is to exorcise this risk, perhaps a piece of play-acting, or even an ultimate and pathetic vengeance against inevitable domination...

The results of such analysis as is available of the "peasant vote" are much too summary to be compared with all that has just been said. D. Boy and E. Dupoirier* suggest that farmers, in contrast to the marked shift to the Left on the part of the electorate as a whole between 1967 and 1987, have shown remarkable stability in favour of the Right; the distinct move to the Left in 1981 did not appear again in 1986. Did the Socialists miss an opportunity? In fact, Boy and Dupoirier explain the stability of the farming electorate by specific sociological characteristics. No reference is made to agricultural policy and its effects, nor even to the economic situation (yet Chirac's record vote among the farming population can undoubtedly be explained by their recollection of his period as Minister of Agriculture). Moreover, three of the four sociological parameters used to explain the relative stability of the farming electorate (the proportion of hired workers, the influence of women and the age distribution) are more or less related to specific structural features of the farm sector: so behind the voter, we find the farmer and his role as an independent producer.

The fourth parameter adopted by Boy and Dupoirier* is familiar to experts in electoral analysis: religious practice. On this point, J. Sutter* is cautious, but he does come to the conclusion that farmers are both more religiously observant and more traditionalist than French people in general, even though they too follow the trend. Here again, the explanation can be sought in the special character of their occupation and in the maintenance of the family farm. In general, farmers today display attitudes and social values of which their parents would not disapprove: this at any rate is what

appears from I. Boussard's* scrupulous analysis of opinion surveys. All in all, we can say that while peasants have become farmers, farmers have remained peasants.

Numerous previous observations had already produced the same conclusion in a form that is perhaps even more significant, suggesting that the farmer basically remains what the peasant is etymologically: a man of the country.[1] This fits in with what has already been said above by Philippe Lacombe about renewed diversity.

Such a conclusion may seem surprising in the light of the drastic changes that French agriculture has undergone during the past two decades (as described by Hélène Delorme above under the title "Internationalisation of trade"). However, it is not inconsistent with such changes, as has been seen. It needs further observation and analysis. Perhaps its surprising character will help to re-awaken interest in farmers' political behaviour...

1 The French word *paysan* derives from *pays*, i.e. country (from the Latin *pagensis* or *pagus* = district). English has kept the derivative "peasant" but not the root. [Ed.]

Annex I

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

COULOMB, Pierre. Born 1937. Since 1961, researcher at INRA *Institut national de la recherche agronomique*); Research Director 1976. Professor in several institutes: the University of Paris X at Nanterre, the *Ecole du génie rurale*, *Institut agronomique méditerranéen*, etc. Research priorities include (a) land ownership and policy (b) farmers' organisations (c) agricultural crises in industrialised countries (with Hélène Delorme). Adviser in the private office of the Minister of Agriculture (Edith Cresson),- 1981–83. *Chargé de mission* in DATAR (land development agency) 1983–85. Recent publications in English include: *French agricultural land policy*, ADEF: Paris, 1988; "French agriculture and the failures of its European strategy (with H. Delorme), in Goodman and Redclift (eds.), *The International Farm Crisis*, Macmillan: 1989.

DELORME, Hélène Born 1940. Researcher, then Research Director in CERI (*Centre de recherches internationales*) of the FNSP. Research priorities include agricultural integration in the EC, agricultural crises in industrialised countries (with Pierre Coulomb); liberalisation of agricultural policies in southern countries; regulation of international agricultural markets. Recent publications include "Y a-t-il un marché international des produits laitiers?", in Franquen (H.), dir., *Agriculture et politiques agricoles en France et au Quebec*, Paris, Quebec, L'Harmattan—Presses de l'Université de Quebec, 1990; "French agriculture and the failures of its European strategy" (see under Coulomb above); "Les agriculteurs et le marché", *Raison présente*, 98, avril 1991; "L'Uruguay Round: le coût de la compétitivité", *Perspectives agricoles*, déc. 1990.

HERVIEU, Bertrand. Born 1948. Worked initially in the rural sociology group of the CNRS (*Centre national de la recherche scientifique*): thesis on *Les ouvriers de l'industrie en milieu rural*, and studies on other rural issues. Following an appointment to the Ministry of Labour in 1981, became responsible in the Ministry of Agriculture for the management of research, subsequently education. In 1987-91, as Research Director in CEVIPOF (*Centre d'étude de la vie politique française*), co-ordinated work on farmers' political behaviour and promoted a European research network into farm union movements (cf. CEVIPOF, *Les organisations syndicales et professionnelles agricoles en Europe*, Cahier No. 5, nov. 1989). President of the *Association des ruralistes français*, 1988–1990. In July 1991, appointed to the Prime Minister's office.

JOLLIVET, Marcel. Born 1934. Research Director in CNRS (*Centre national de la recherche scientifique*); directs group for sociological research in the University of Paris X at Nanterre. Research priorities include social change in agriculture and—more recently—problems of the environment in rural areas and interdisciplinary approaches as between social sciences and ecology. Publications include *La fin de la France paysanne* (with M. Gervais and Y. Tavernier: Vol. IV of *Histoire de la France rurale*, Seuil, 1976) and *Du rural à l'environnement*, L'Harmattan, 1989.

LACOMBE, Philippe. Born 1939. Researcher in INRA, then Professor of Political Economy at ENSA (*Ecole nationale supérieure agronomique*), Montpellier. A major interest has been "pluri-activity" by farm households (cf. his thesis contribution to *La pluriactivité dans les familles agricoles*, ARF, 1984): continuing to study the functioning of family-based farming, he is concerned with the role of farmers in society and with the evolution of agricultural policy. He has also contributed to a publication on the French wine economy (*L'économie viticole française*, INRA, 1987. He is interested too in the development of rural and agro-food economics, and has participated in *Rural Studies in Britain and France*, by Philip Lowe and Maryvonne Bodiguel, Belhaven Press, London 1990.

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* *

TRACY, Michael. Born 1932, of Irish-Scottish parentage. At Cambridge took degree in Modern Languages followed by Economics. Worked on agricultural policy issues in the UN Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (Paris), and in the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of the European Community (Brussels), where he was a Director from 1973 to 1983. Has also pursued an active academic career, lecturing and writing on agricultural policies. Main work: *Government and Agriculture in Western Europe, 1880-1988*, Harvester-Wheatsheaf: London and New York University Press, 1989 (3rd edition). President of the British Agricultural Economics Society 1984–85. Visiting Professor at Wye College (London University) 1983-88; at the European Institute of Public Administration, 1985-89; at the Budapest University of Economics since 1988; etc.

Annex II

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND OTHER REFERENCES

The numbers indicate the pages of this English edition where the references occur.

A. CONTENTS OF THE FRENCH EDITION

(Indicated with * in the texts. The general papers that have been translated are shown here in square brackets.)

[**Coulomb *et al.***: L'agriculture: une affaire d'Etat]

I. ENTRE L'EUROPE ET LE GRAND LARGE

[**Delorme, Hélène:** La politique agricole dans l'internationalisation des échanges]
Bourdon, Michel: L'agriculture française dans la récession économique (19, 52)
Neveu, André: Le Crédit agricole (19)
Lachaux, André: Heurs et malheurs de la politique bovine(21)
Hairy, Denis et **Perraud, Daniel:** Crises et transformations de la politique laitière (22, 28)
Bartoli, Pierre: Le cas du vin (21, 22)
Lauret, Frédéric: L'internationalisation du marché des fruits et légumes (21)
Bazin, Gilles et **Maresca, Bruno:** Politique socio-culturelle et aides directes (29)
Marloie, Marcel: Débat Nord-Sud et régulation de l'offre (27)
Moulias, Jean: L'exportation de céréales (24, 25, 27)
Tubiana, Laurence: La France et l'organisation des marchés internationaux (14, 21, 26, 27, 28)

II. LA PROFESSION ET L'ETAT

[**Coulomb, Pierre:** La cogestion: une nouvelle tentative corporatiste?]
Coulomb, Pierre: Les conférences annuelles: entre corporatisme et populisme
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IV. LE MOUVEMENT SYNDICAL: LE PUZZLE DE L'UNITÉ

[**Hervieu, Bernard:** Pluralité reconnue, pluralisme contesté]
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Le Roy, Pierre: Giscard, septennat de toutes les crises (77)
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VI. LES AGRICULTEURS, DES CITOYENS COMME LES AUTRES?

[**Jollivet, Marcel:** Que reste-il des paysans?]
Boussard, Isabel: Une bonne image de marque (85, 92)
Rambaud, Placide: Langage chiffré et identités sociales (86, 87)
Berlan-Darqué, Martine: La difficile genèse de l'identité d'agricultrice
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Nevers, Jean-Yves: Montée et déclin du pouvoir paysan (89, 90)
Boussard, Isabel: Des idées bien arrêtées (92)
Sutter, Jacques: Les perplexités d'un catholicisme de tradition (92)
Boy, Daniel et **Dupoirier, Elisabeth:** La stabilité du vote de droite des agriculteurs (85, 92)
Boussard, Isabel: Les attitudes face à la droite (92)

B. UNPUBLISHED CONFERENCE PAPERS

(Indicated with † in the texts. This is not a complete list: only the papers referred to are included. All the conference papers are available in various libraries in France—these are listed in the French edition—and can be supplied on microfilm by the library of the Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 10 rue de la Chaise, 75007 Paris. Those marked [ER] below were published (possibly in somewhat modified form) in *Economie Rurale* no. 201, janv. févr. 1991.)

Abélès, M.:Territoire et politique (86, 89, 91)
Arnaud, C.: Le vin et l'organisation commune de marché (22)
Barthelémy, D.: Propriété foncière et formation de l'entreprise (61)
Barthez, A.: Familles, activité et pluriactivité (54, 61)
Bisarre, S.: L France et le financement de la PAC (26, 27)
Bonnemaire, J. et **Vissac, B.**: L'élevage dans le développement (44)
Caillet, F.: Les groupes industriels français et l'internationalisation (19)
Campagne, D. et **Petiot, G.**: Le discours de l'unité (69)
Caniou, J.: La question des agricultrices (69)
Coste, J.: Politique agricole et aide alimentaire (24)
Crisenoy, C. de: La politique foncière de 1970 à nos jours (44)
Darré, J.P.: Coopération entre agriculteurs [ER] (63)
Didier, R.: Commission des structures: le cas de la Côte-d'Or (44)
Girard, J.P. et **Lemel, Y.**: Conditions de vie des agriculteurs (51, 54, 57)
Gonin, P.: Montée ou déclin des ONG? (24)
Huot, J.: Le projet socialiste pour l'agriculture (78)
Jollivet, M. et **Percheron, A.**: Les agriculteurs et leurs régions (86)
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Mann, P.: Modes d'action paysans [ER] (87)
Martin, S. et **Novarina, G.**: De la cogestion agricole à la cogestion rurale [ER] (37)
Mengin, J.: L'image du paysan [ER] (85, 86, 87)
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Annex III

MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS, POLITICAL PARTIES AND PERSONALITIES

The following accounts would probably seem grossly over-simplified to most Frenchmen. Their only purpose is to provide convenient reference for readers of the papers in this volume. [Ed.]

A. MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS

1958: Crisis in Algeria leads to recall of General de Gaulle, who forms a new Government, and obtains adoption of a new Constitution, ushering in the Fifth Republic. In this presidential regime, de Gaulle becomes the first President.
1960: An important "Guidance Law" for agriculture (*Loi d' Orientation Agricole*) is adopted, aiming at achieving "parity" between agriculture and other sectors, mainly through structural improvement: this is largely the work of the Prime Minister, Michel Debré. It is reinforced in 1962 by a *Loi complémentaire*, due mainly to the Minister of Agriculture, Edgard Pisani, which meets demands by the young farmers' organisation (CNJA).
1965: De Gaulle fails to win re-election in first round of presidential elections, succeeds only in second round. Decline in farmers' support held partly responsible: Edgar Faure, appointed Minister of Agriculture in 1966, makes concessions in attempt to regain farm vote.
1968: Student demonstrations in May, following by widespread strike action, severely weaken de Gaulle's authority.
Also in 1968, the "Mansholt Plan" and, in France, the "Vedel report", both stressing need for drastic structural change, provoke violent farmer reactions.
1969: Having failed in a referendum to get popular support for regional reform and other matters, de Gaulle resigns. He is followed by Georges Pompidou.
Devaluation of the franc, in general context of monetary instability, leads to imposition of Monetary Compensatory Amounts in agricultural trade.
1971: Speaking at St. Flour in the *Massif Central*, Pompidou says that all kinds of farm should be supported.
1972: Jacques Chirac is appointed Minister of Agriculture, and sets about regaining farmers' support.
1974: Pompidou dies before having completed the seven-year presidential term, and is succeeded by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. He appoints Chirac as Prime Minister, thus securing a parliamentary majority. After successive disagreements, Chirac resigns in 1976. He is followed by Raymond Barre.
1977: Speaking at Vassy in Normandy, Giscard d'Estaing stresses the export role of French agriculture. But farmer discontent increases as farm incomes, already hurt by rising costs following oil crisis, are squeezed by Barre's anti-inflationary austerity programme.
1981: Giscard d'Estaing loses the presidential election to the Socialist, François Mitterrand. Following parliamentary elections, a Socialist-dominated Government is formed. Prime Ministers are Pierre Mauroy till 1984, then Laurent Fabius. As Minister of Agriculture, Mitterrand makes the first appointment of a woman, Edith Cresson.
Cresson's attempt to extend recognition to left-wing farm unions provokes demonstrations by supporters of the mainstream farm organisations. She is replaced in 1983 by Michel Rocard, who seeks to restore relations. He is followed in 1985 by Henri Nallet.
1984: Under Rocard's presidency, the EC Agriculture Council decides to introduce milk delivery quotas.

1986: In parliamentary elections, the Socialists lose their majority. Mitterrand is compelled to ask Jacques Chirac to form a Government (the first case of "co-habitation" under the Fifth Republic). As Minister of Agriculture, Chirac appoints a former farm leader, François Guillaume.
1988: Mitterrand beats Chirac (and others) in presidential elections, and the Left regains a parliamentary majority. Michel Rocard forms a Government. Nallet returns as Minister of Agriculture. In 1990 Nallet is replaced by Louis Mermaz. In May 1991, Mitterrand dismisses Rocard and appoints Edith Cresson as France's first woman Prime Minister.
In all, under the Fifth Republic from 1958 to mid-1991, there have been four Presidents (not counting interims by the President of the Senate), twelve Prime Ministers and seventeen Ministers of Agriculture. Three Ministers of Agriculture—Jacques Chirac, Michel Rocard and Edith Cresson—subsequently became Prime Ministers.

B. MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties group and re-group, and their names change, but the political spectrum of recent years has included:
Le Front National **(FN)**—President: Jean-Marie Le Pen. Characterised mainly by anti-immigrant attitudes: generally nationalistic and anti-European. No significant following in rural areas, though some links with the FFA, and in 1990 set up its own *Cercle national des agriculteurs de France*. Parliamentary representation much reduced by present electoral system.
Le Rassemblement pour la République **(RPR)**—President: Jacques Chirac. Neo-Gaullist, has nationalistic tendencies, but is prepared to operate within the European Community so long as this suits French interests. Chirac, since his period as Minister of Agriculture defending farm interests (see below), has a strong rural following.
L'Union pour la démocratie française **(UDF)**, grouping the *Parti républicain*, the *Parti radical*, the *Parti social-démocrate* and the *Centre des démocrates sociaux* (CDS)—President: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Supported Raymond Barre in the 1988 presidential elections. Its component parties may differ on specific issues, but on the whole, relatively flexible and pro-European. The CDS, led by Pierre Méhaignerie, is influential in the farm union movement: favours a reasonable degree of modernisation.
Le Parti socialiste **(PS)**—includes several tendencies, among which Michel Rocard represents probably the least doctrinaire and most pragmatic. Under Mitterrand's Presidency, has come to accept a policy of economic rigour, and to follow his strongly pro-European line. Rural support fairly significant in the West, South and South-West. Rocard, as Minister of Agriculture or as Prime Minister, and Nallet as Minister of Agriculture seemed disposed to accept some degree of reform of the CAP: the attitude under Prime Minister Edith Cresson and Minister of Agriculture Louis Mermaz is probably more hard-line.
Le Parti communiste français **(PCF).** Stuck with Marxist ideology even after the demise of Marxism in Eastern Europe; policy concerning agriculture hampered by doctrinal difficulties. Some rural support in the South and South-West. Communists are active in the MODEF (see Annex IV).
Elections to the National Assembly in 1988 gave one seat to the FN, 16 to various other right-wing candidates, 126 to the RPR, 129 to the UDF, 260 to the PS, 16 to other left-of-centre candidates, and 27 to the PCF.
In the 1988 presidential elections, Chirac obtained 47% of votes among farmers, Mitterrand 24%, Barre 14%, Le Pen 7%, an ecologist candidate 5%, the Communist candidate 2% and others 1%.

C. MAJOR PERSONALITIES

BARRE, Raymond. Prime Minister 1976-81. UDF.
CHIRAC, Jacques. Minister of Agriculture under Pompidou 1972-74, Prime Minister under Giscard d'Estaing 1974-76, then resigned; Prime Minister under Mitterrand 1986-88, unsuccessful candidate for President of the Republic 1988. RPR.

CRESSON, Edith. Minister of Agriculture under Mitterrand, 1981-83; Prime Minister under Mitterrand 1991-... PS.
DEBATISSE, Michel. Secretary-General of the JAC 1954-57 and of the CNJA 1958-64; Secretary-General of the FNSEA 1968-71, then President 1971-79. State Secretary for the Food Industries in Barre's Government, 1979-81. UDF.
GISCARD D'ESTAING, Valéry. Minister of Finance 1969–74. President of the Republic 1974-81. UDF.
GUILLAUME, François. President of the CNJA 1964-68; Secretary-General of the FNSEA 1975; President of the FNSEA 1976-86; Minister of Agriculture in Chirac's Government, 1986-88. RPR.
MÉHAIGNERIE, Pierre. Minister of Agriculture in Barre's Government, 1977–81. CDS.
MERMAZ, Louis. President of the Socialist parliamentary group, then Minister of Agriculture in Rocard's Government 1990, retained in Cresson's Government May 1991. PS.
MITTERRAND, François. Unsuccessful candidate for President of the Republic against Giscard d'Estaing in 1974; successful against Giscard d'Estaing in 1981; re-elected against Chirac (and others) in 1988. PS.
NALLET, Henri. Director of research in the national agronomic institute 1970-81; Minister of Agriculture in Fabius' Government 1985-86 and in Rocard's Government 1988-90.
PISANI, Edgard. Minister of Agriculture 1962–65; EC Commissioner 1982–86. Gaullist, later Socialist.
POMPIDOU, Georges. Prime Minister under de Gaulle from 1962; President of the Republic 1969-74.
ROCARD, Michel. Minister of Agriculture under Mitterrand 1983-85, Prime Minister under Mitterrand 1988-91. PS.

Sources: *QUID 1991*; *Who's Who in France 1991-1991*; *Le Journal des Elections*, special issue no. 15, nov.-déc. 1990, "Agriculteurs: un électorat de poids".

Annex IV

MAIN FRENCH FARM ORGANISATIONS

The first significant farm organisation on the national scale was the *Société des Agriculteurs de France*, founded in 1867. This right-wing, conservative body was dominated by the big landowners or rural *notables*. It espoused the protectionist cause, particularly for grain. Under its patronage, numerous local syndicates were set up, having as a central body the *Union centrale des syndicats des agriculteurs de France* (1886).

On the Republican side, the *Société nationale d'encouragement à l'agriculture* was founded in 1880: this too had its network of local syndicates, mutual credit societies, etc. In 1910 these were grouped in the *Fédération nationale de la mutualité et de la coopération agricoles*.

The opposing groups joined forces in 1919 in the *Confédération nationale des associations agricoles*), which lasted, with diminishing success, until 1940.

The economic crisis of the 1930s led to the formation of rival groups reflecting various political tendencies. On the right wing in particular, a *Parti agraire* was set up in 1927, and later combined with a fascist movement to form the *Front paysan*: this collapsed in 1936 because of conflict between its fascist and democratic elements. At the other end of the spectrum, the Communists set up the *Confédération des paysans travailleurs*.

During the Second World War, the *Corporation paysanne* was Vichy's attempt to organise French agriculture on corporatist lines.

After the war, the *Confédération générale de l'agriculture*) briefly united the various tendencies.

The *Fédération nationale des syndicats des exploitants agricoles* (FNSEA) progressively emerged as the most powerful body. It was initially conservative, emphasising defence of the farm interest through price support. The *Fédération nationale de la mutualité, de la coopération et du crédit agricole* (subsequently the *Confédération nationale de la mutualité, de la coopération et du Crédit agricole*—CNMCCA) inherited the more radical element, but was not so active in policy matters.

The growth of a young farmer movement, represented in the *Centre national des jeunes agriculteurs* (CNJA), brought new emphasis on basic structural reform and the creation of viable holdings, which found favour with the "reformist" Gaullist tendency. CNJA leaders, particularly Michel Debatisse, gradually gained control of the FNSEA. The Government entered into a period of *cogestion* with the FNSEA and the CNJA. But discontent among farmers, particularly small peasants, led to the formation of various break-away movements. In 1959 the *Mouvement de défense des exploitants familiaux* (MODEF) was formed, close to the Communist Party but aiming to defend small family farms.

A "worker-peasant" movement, originally local in character, took shape at the national level with the creation in 1974 of the *Association nationale des paysans-travailleurs*, which in 1981 combined with other movements as the *Confédération nationale des syndicats de travailleurs paysans* (CNSTP). The "worker-peasants" saw farmers' problems in terms of class struggle. After the creation, in 1982, of the *Fédération nationale des syndicats paysans*, with Socialist Party support, the two bodies merged in 1987 in the *Confédération paysanne*, forming a somewhat stronger left-wing opposition to the mainstream FNSEA.

On the right wing, the *Fédération française de l'agriculture* (FFA) was created in 1969: it too defends the family farm, but opposes State-controlled structural reform, and has emphasised price increases as the solution to farming problems. In 1981, Edith Cresson recognised the MODEF, the CNSTP and the FFA and in 1982 admitted them to the Annual Conference along with the four "traditional" organisations (FNSEA, CNJA, CNMCCA, APCA) but this attempt at "pluralism" encountered opposition by the FNSEA/CNJA, and was largely reversed under Chirac. In 1990 "pluralism" was officially re-instated, but still with limited practical effect.

Thus in 1991, farmers are represented at the national level by the mainstream FNSEA and CNJA, with the FFA on its right, the MODEF and the *Confédération paysanne* on the left. The FNSEA/CNJA continue to dominate the various agricultural committees: elections to the *Chambres d'Agriculture* (see below) tend to confirm their strength, with some progress by the *Confédération paysanne*.

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The *Chambres d'Agriculture* fall into a different category, but are also significant in the defence of farming interests. Formally, these are public bodies, their income coming from land tax. In each *département*, they play an important role in implementing aspects of State legislation, particularly in respect of land use and technical services, and are regularly consulted by the administration. The *Assemblée permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture* (APCA) is influential at the national level.
Their members in each *département* are elected by the farm population (not just farmers). Before the 1983 elections, seats were allotted on the basis of simple majorities, giving a substantial advantage to the FNSEA/CNJA. Edith Cresson introduced proportional representation for the *collège* of active farmers in 1983 elections. During the *"cohabitation"* (see Annex III), François Guillaume attempted a return to the previous system, but before the 1989 elections Henri Nallet introduced a "mixed" system under which the list getting most votes received half the seats, the others being allocated on a proportional basis. Though official data are not available, it is well known that FNSEA/CNJA candidates continue to dominate. The tendency of the *Chambres* is thus conservative.

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Producers of the main commodities—wheat, sugarbeet, wine, etc.—have their commodity-based organisations. These too sometimes constitute effective pressure-groups.

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The *Crédit Agricole*, in principle a bank with an extensive rural network, has played an important role as the channel for subsidised credit. The numerous co-operatives for marketing and processing, etc., also have important economic functions: these do not have a representative role, though they may become emmeshed in the implementation of policy (as with milk quotas).

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Annex V

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADASEA: Association départementale pour l'amélioration des structures des exploitations agricoles
AFSP: Association française de science politique
ANDA: Association nationale pour le développement agricole
APCA: Assemblée permanente des chambres d'agriculture
CAP: Common Agricultural Policy
CCAN: Commission des comptes de la nation
CGA: Confédération générale de l'agriculture
CMO: Common Market Organisation
CNAA: Confédération nationale des associations agricoles
CNJA: Centre national des jeunes agriculteurs
CNMCCA: Confédération nationale de la mutualité, de la coopération et du Crédit agricole
CNSTP: Confédération nationale des syndicats des travailleurs- paysans
EAGGF: European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
EARL: Exploitation agricole à responsabilité limitée
EC: European Community
ECU: European Currency Unit
EEC: European Economic Community
EMS: European Monetary System
FADN: Farm Accountancy Data Network
FFA: Fédération française de l'agriculture
FNSEA: Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles
FNSP: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques
FNSP: Fédération nationale des syndicats paysans
GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
INRA: Institut national de la recherche agronomique
INSEE: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques
JAC: Jeunesse agricole catholique
MCA: Monetary Compensatory Amount
MODEF: Mouvement de défense des exploitants familiaux
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONIC: Office national interprofessionnel des céréales
RPR: Rassemblement pour la République
SAFER: Société d'aménagement foncier et d'établissement rural
SCEES: Service central des enquêtes et études statistiques
SUAD: Service d'utilité agricole de développement

INDEX

As the biggest agricultural producer in the European Community, France has been the dominant influence on the Common Agricultural Policy. "Reform" of the CAP, or liberalisation of agricultural trade in the Uruguay Round context, will not take place without French assent. But can the French Government retreat from policies pursued over recent decades?

To answer this question, it is necessary to understand the social and political forces which shape French agricultural policy. This publication provides, for the first time in English, an insight into how French experts view the issues. It includes papers on the relationship between agricultural policy and trade, on the changing structure of French agriculture, on the ways in which farm organisations influence government policy, and on the attitudes of successive governments.

The translation has been undertaken by Michael Tracy, who besides being an expert linguist is an author in his own right: his main work *Government and Agriculture in Western Europe, 1880-1988* is now in its third edition. His preface, footnotes and annexes will help those who are less familiar with French affairs.

This publication will be of interest to economists and administrators concerned with agricultural policy and trade issues, and also to political scientists, sociologists and historians, especially those concerned with French politics or with pressure-group politics.

Prices: £11; 18 US dollars; 21 Canadian dollars.

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