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[Event](#) | 09.11.2012

# The potential of agroecology

## Reclaiming the food crisis

### DOCUMENTATION OF THE EVENT

- [Video about of the conference](#)
- [Follow the recorded stream of the conference](#)
- [Speeches and presentations from the speakers](#)

### PRESENTATION

The aim of the conference is to explain the concept of agroecology to an audience of academics, students, farmers, policy makers, NGOs and other stakeholders, who have an interest in environmental studies, agriculture, and food production. The intention is to be challenged as a community and to reflect interactively about potential paths towards transition. As we know, our current food and agricultural system isn't sustainable. Increasingly we get locked in a global production model with high social and environmental costs, mainly in the form of a rapid degradation of biodiversity. There is an urgent need to rethink the global food system. This is why Bart Staes, member of the European Parliament for the Greens, takes the initiative, together with a group of Belgian academics, to organise an international conference on transition towards a more sustainable agricultural and food model: agroecology. Although we do know that agroecology isn't the silver bullet that will solve all problems, we also know that the potential of agroecology as a science, agricultural practice and social movement, is underestimated and is not seriously considered as an answer to the current food crisis. The 'Take Home Message' of this conference has three main points:

1. The worldwide challenge of producing enough food in a sustainable way, is not in the first place a problem of increasing productivity. The search for solutions for the food crisis should go beyond this. They should focus on a redefinition of the relationship between food production, access to land (More than 90 % of the fertile land is being used for non-food produce), employment and environment (the majority of those who suffer hunger are farmers) and also deal with the question on who will feed the big cities (85% of the population in 2050).
2. The need to explore agroecology seriously (politically, scientifically and socially). It contains also a necessity of rebalance of the funds on the level of budgets and scientific programs.

3. The challenge is to create a dynamic platform of transition, that considers:

- The issue of employment in the rural areas (revenues/production). We need a transformation and decentralisation of food production (50 % of hunger is in rural zones, which leads to the rural exodus) that also considers the role in and impact of all actors in the food chain on consumption and distribution. What is the role and effect of land grabbing, and the role of official authorities on the control of land. Which power balance is needed between different actors?
- The environmental issues, more particularly the loss of biodiversity and how this affects food production and livelihoods?

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

8.30 - 9.30

Arrival of participants 9.30 - 9.45

### **Keynote Speech:**

*'The social and ecological challenges: the current crisis of the global agricultural and food production systems'*

Speaker: **Marie-Monique Robin**, Journalist and author of 'The world according Monsanto ' and 'Notre poison quotidien' 9.45- 10.15

*European dilemmas of agricultural research : current imbalances and future perspectives*

Speaker: **Dr. Les Levidow** (Open University) 10.15-10.45

*The European landscape of agroecology.*

Speaker: **Prof. Pierre Stassart** (University Liège)

About: An overview about the current situation for agroecology in the European Union: best practices, examples from the ground, grassroots experiences. 10.45-11.15

*The Brazilian case: experiences and evolution*

Speaker: **Dr. Francisco Roberto Caporal** (Professor at the Federal Rural University of Pernambuco - Brasil , Staff member of Agroecology and Farmer, Ex President of the Brazilian Agroecology Association (ABA))

About: The mission and vision behind agricultural policies in Brasil and how social change is enhanced 11.15-12.15

**Three video testimonies** followed by debate:

- *La era del Buen Vivir* by **Jeroen Verhoeven** and **Aline Dehasse**
- *Je mange donc je suis*
- *Réseaux semences paysannes*

12.30 - 14.00

Lunch (sandwiches) 14.00-14.30

*A socio-economic context for Agroecology*

Speaker: **Bavo Verwimp** (organic farmer on 'De Kijfelaar' and agricultural economist)

About: What are the socio-economical impacts of agroecology on a micro level? How can agroecology

benefit rural employment? 14.30-15.00

***Agroecology and biodiversity***

Speaker: **Dr. Muriel Tichit** (Director of research at INRA, Paris)

About: the debate of land share versus land spare. 15.00 - 16.00

**Interactive session**

People with a big interest in agroecology and a (professional) potential to help us move to another agricultural and foodsystem were brought together for this conference. During this interactive session we want to collect paths and possibilities that each of us has or sees to ease the way towards a more agro-ecological system. 16.00-16.15

**Final reflections**

by **Dirk Holemans** 16.15-16.30

**Closure of the conference**

by **Bart Staes** \_\_\_\_\_ Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in French  
- English - Dutch - Spanish

**Recommended**

Press release

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Bart Staes

Member

**Contact person**



Bart Staes

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