

RECLAIM THE FIELDS is a constellation of young peasants, landless and prospective peasants, as well as people who want to reassume the control over food production.

We aim at supporting and encouraging people to stay on the land and go back to the countryside. We want to promote food sovereignty (this expression being subject to debate and discussion within our network) and peasant agriculture, particularly amongst young people and urban dwellers, as well as alternative ways of life. We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real needs oriented small scale production and initiatives, putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

This bulletin, which you're having the first issue in your hands, aims at facilitating the information transmission between the stars of the constellation, sharing the latest news and the current state of the process amongst the people or collectives already involved and allowing new people to catch up and join us, having at disposition the necessary background texts and a history of the debates.



To get more information about the network, follow our latest news or join us in the struggle, you've got several possibilities :

Go and check what's going on on our website :

<http://www.reclaimthefields.org/>

Contact us by mail :

contact@reclaimthefields.org

Subscribe to our continental mailing list :

european.general.list@lists.reclaimthefields.org

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PRESENTATION

Three background documents to present Reclaim the Fields.

Who are we ?	4
History of Reclaim the Fields	6
Where we are and current questions	8

PROCESS

Notes taken in the last meeting in Barcelona and program of the next meeting in Germany.

Summary of the meeting in Barcelona	10
Decisions taken in Barcelona	12
Next gathering in May in Basta, Germany	14
What's Basta ?	16

VISIONS

Proposals for the functioning of the network.

The constellation explained to the stars	18
The farm network	20

STARS

Presentation of a few stars of the constellation.

Land occupation in Dijon	24
A collective garden in Ljubljana	26
Presentation of EarthRise	28

REFLECTION

Personnal texts to bring food for thought in our internal debates...

Food sovereignty	30
In defense of food sovereignty	33
Diversity, a struggle for Reclaim the Fields ?	36

WHO ARE WE ?

We are young peasants, landless and prospective peasants, as well as people who want to reassume the control over food production.

Under the word « peasant », we understand people who produce food on a small scale, using it for themselves or for the community, and possibly selling a part of it. This also includes agricultural workers.

We aim at supporting and encouraging people to stay on the land and go back to the countryside. We want to promote food sovereignty (this expression is subject to debate and discussion within our network) and peasant agriculture, particularly amongst young people and urban dwellers, as well as alternative ways of life. We are determined to create alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real needs oriented small scale production and initiatives, putting theory into practice and linking local practical action with global political struggles.

In order to achieve this, we want to build up local actions and activists group, as well as co-operating with the existing initiatives. This is the reason why we choose not to be a homogeneous group, but to open up to the diversity of the actors fighting the capitalist food production model.

We want to address the issues of access to land, collective farming and seeds rights and exchange and hope to strengthen the

impact of our work through the cooperation with activists, who focus on different tasks but share the same social vision.

Nevertheless, our openness has some limits. We are determined to take back the control over our lives and refuse any form of authoritarianism and hierarchialism. We engage to respect nature and living beings, but will neither accept nor tolerate any form of discrimination, be it based on race, religion, gender, nationality, sexual orientation or social status.

How many are we who want to set up tomorrow? What is the space for peasantry in a squat or a collective garden? Do we want to integrate more peasants producing food on a very small scale but who are living from their production? The anarchist trend existing in RtF is enriching, but is it accessible to a wider audience? Where are we in the attempts to coordinate with already existing alternatives?

The objective is surely not to create a mass movement, but to oppose and change the globalized capitalist system. It is interesting for us to include very diverse actors while staying a dynamic movement, using direct action as our mean of struggling.

The issue of private property will raise when we will decide to squat a piece of land to cultivate it in a responsible way. With this in mind, we will have to reflect collectively on how to organize successfully non-conformist actions. We will also have to resist the general tendency to give up the importance of dreams in our life. And its the disappearance of this part of dream in our societies that prevent us from escaping the chaotic path that we are being forced into.

We have to show that those dreams exist here and now and that we are making it a reality. Through our resistance and through our day-to-day lives, tomorrow this dream won't be marginal anymore.

Koudé

DIVERSITY, A STRUGGLE FOR RECLAIM THE FIELDS ?

In Malmö, Cravirola, Copenhagen, Barcelona, we gathered to talk about the struggles we want to fight together. Many people came, from very different countries, backgrounds and experiences. The debates between us never stopped, the last two being about the terms « food sovereignty » and « non-violence ».

The question of whether we can apply the notion of food sovereignty and its multiple aspects is a good question. The fact that transnational companies started to use this term is an unquestionable proof of its misuse, and that's not a isolated fact.

It's hard to all agree on complex concepts whose meaning can be perverted.

We will surely have hot debates again on the notion of non-violence. In February in Barcelona, the people that were there were mainly coming from Latin countries, what will the people from the North think about the deletion of the word « non-violence » in the common presentation text?

This was a afternoon-long debate with 30 people that lead to this decision. The opinions highly differed on the means to use and the answers to give while doing direct action. Non-violence is a theory that might be hard to apply integrally in all our struggles. It was thus decided by consensus not to use the term non-

violence in the common text anymore.

But do we have to divide ourselves according to concepts? Shouldn't we instead let the debates arise and accept at the same time not close them?

If we want to be a gathering force, we should rather agree the ideas we have in common (in the country or in the city) like access to land, the right to produce your own seeds or collective agriculture... You shouldn't forget that we chose a new type of dynamic organization. See the text *The Constellation Explained to the Stars*. The idea being to work on our points of agreements in a more efficient way that on our points of disagreements, without necessarily losing all those debates from sight.

The diversity of the so-called « stars » of the network is real nowadays. From the city to the countryside, from neo-rural people to urban squatters, from the gardeners to the eco-friendly people, from the anarchist to the unionist, the diversity of RtF is humanist.

We know who we are, young people willing, in one way or the other, carry on or recover the contact with Mother Earth. On the other hand, do we know where to go?

We refuse and will actively oppose every form of exploitation of other people. With the same force and energy, we will act in kindness and conviviality, making solidarity a concrete practice of our daily life.

We support the struggles and visions of La Vía Campesina, and work to strengthen them amongst the young European people. We wish to share the knowledge and the experience coming from years of militancy and peasant life and enrich it with the perspectives and the strength of the one of us who are not peasants, or not yet. We all suffer the consequences of the same policies, and are all part of the same fight.



Here in Malmö, Sweden, in 2008. It's from this camp of young people from la Vía Campesina that Reclaim the Fields has been created.

HISTORY OF RECLAIM THE FIELDS

A quick look at the evolution since 2007 and the current questions.

June 2007,
anti-G8 mobilisation in Rostock, Germany.
1st youth assembly for the access to land and farming. About 80 people come for a two-hours discussion mainly on obstacles to start a farm in our different European contexts.

From there, a small group of young people member of peasant organisations (POs) decide to start a « youth » process inside the European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC).

November 2007,
meeting in the Basque Country hosted by the peasant organisation EHNE.

About 10 people sent by peasant organisations from different European countries join and decide to organize a youth camp the next summer. Two meetings take place early 2008, in St-Denis, France and Witzenhausen, Germany.

September 2008,
« Farming a cool future » camp in Sweden
at Holma farm co-organized by the youth of ECVC and Young Friends of the Earth Europe, in parallel to European Social Forum. About 150 people join. The camp is focused on practical alternatives, like creating a consumer-

producer cooperative, producing cheese, agro-forestry, etc. Strong enthusiasm to go further together. Part of the people who want to join are not member of POs. We decide that it should not be an obstacle.

October 2008,
5th La Vía Campesina international conference in Mozambique.

1/3 of delegates have to be young people. A good group of young Europeans join the Youth Assembly, including some who are not member of ECVC organizations. At the international level, it is decided to organize a youth gathering in 2009 in Spain.

November 2008,
meeting in Belgium with about 15 people.

Decision to take the name « Reclaim the Fields, Young Europeans walking with La Vía Campesina ». We define *Who we are, our values, our goal and our activities*. All those documents are on our website. We decide to organize a European camp in 2009 linked to the international Via Campesina gathering in Spain.



Food Sovereignty has the advantage that it is broad, it is a vision « where many worlds fit », as the Zapatistas say. I find its multi-dimensionality a strength: defending national agricultures from dumping can make a huge difference to farmers; but also local autonomy is important. At the same time, the idea of Food Sovereignty leaves quite open how we bring this about. Sure, it is an idea that risks being filled with many meanings and appropriated, as has happened with "sustainability", with "climate-friendly", with "organic", etc., and indeed, it has already been written to the constitutions of Ecuador or Nepal, where it might be used there to legitimate governments that have dubious goals. But not because of this would I stop defending it. Just the opposite, if it is in the constitution, it is because our struggle carries great moral weight.

For me, the most important criterion is how the term is being used and by whom. In Reclaim the Fields, I defend the idea of Food Sovereignty because, although I see Reclaim the Fields as forming something very new and exciting — namely, a lively peasant movement in Europe, a continent in which there are very few farmers left — I also see Reclaim the Fields as part of a very long history of peasant struggles, and even more, as part of what is still a reality for millions of others on this planet who have managed to remain peasants. So we are not alone. And although we will have many different strategies for moving forward locally, I am also looking further: towards changing the world in many places, in many different ways.

But to do that, I think that the last thing we need is to each go into our own niche, subdivide even more and "invent something else." Or course, as Reclaim the Fields will be inventing many things because we need to re-invent what it means to be peasants... and that is a huge task already. But so far, everything I can see that we are doing fits well with the idea of Food Sovereignty. It need not be our main slogan, but it gives us power, the power to struggle together with many other people.

Miriam

creating fertile soils and biodiversity or with energy-intensive fertilizers in monoculture ; whether with relations of exploitation or solidarity among producers ; whether destroying forests to feed industrial meat production or for the satisfaction of local needs, etc.

At the World Food Summit in 1996, the worldwide network of peasant movements, *Vía Campesina*, confronted this idea of Food Security with their vision of Food Sovereignty, defined as a right of « peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems ». Food Sovereignty was a proposal to reflect the central questions of how and by whom food should be produced.

Since then, Food Sovereignty has gained force and legitimacy, because it has reflected the strength of a common vision around a different agriculture. When recent food and climate crises are used to legitimate even more industrialization and centralization of food production or land grabbing, Food Sovereignty has still been able to express many other voices with other answers. On the one hand Food Sovereignty is demanding a fundamental right that governments and institutions have had no choice but to listen to — because there are strong movements that back it up and sustain it ; and on the other it is an ideal that gives us strength from within the movements, whether in gardening collectives in Europe, landless farmers in Brazil or fishers in the Philippines: this is what we are fighting for !

In 2007 in Mali, 500 representatives from peasants, fishers, indigenous peoples, migrants, pastoralists, forest communities, youth, discussed at the Peoples Food Sovereignty Forum. See part of the definition in the boxed text page 31.



March, June and August 2009,
three meetings to prepare the Cravirola camp, first in Wageningen (Netherlands), then Cravirola (France), then Geneva (Switzerland).

Between Holma camp and Cravirola camp, three local groups are created in Sweden, Switzerland and Belgium. They are all very different from each other.

October 2009,
Reclaim the Fields camp in Cravirola, France
where about 400 people join from a great diversity of European countries. A lot of workshops on starting a farm, access to land, alternative agricultural practices, collective dynamics, etc. On the last day, we have an assembly to decide what we can do together. A lot of people express the will to join further.

Following the camp in Cravirola, new dynamics are born in several places in France, Norway and Hungary. There is also a strong interest in Germany and Spain. Some networks also show an interest for RtF, for example the network of cooperative farms Longo Mai.

December 2009,
mobilisations in Copenhagen
La *Vía Campesina* offer to Reclaim the Fields to stay with them in a school and to take part jointly to the mobilizations. About 50 people join. The Swedish group Mykhoryzza organizes a soup kitchen with vegetables that they have grown all together during the whole year: great success. It's the first time that we take part to a big mobilization as a group Reclaim the Fields and also the first time that La *Vía Campesina* and Reclaim the Fields do something together. On the last day, everybody is very happy about how it went (we were happy to be there together, sharing a lot of ideas and way of doing things) and on the relation with others (*Vía Campesina*, CJA).

February 2010
Meeting in Barcelona to work on internal functioning of the Reclaim the Fields « constellation ».

March 2010
People identifying themselves with reclaim the fields take part to two events, a seeds forum in Graz, Austria, and a land occupation in Dijon, France.



WHERE WE ARE AND CURRENT QUESTIONS

This process lead people from different European countries to meet and exchange on starting a farm, collective dynamics, taking back the control over food production, access to land, etc. Finding out that there are a lot of people all over Europe sharing the same dreams and anger gave us a lot of energy. This is the great strenght of camps like the one in Cravirola, yet if we repeat it won't we be bored? Isn't there the risk that it takes all our energy instead of working on more practical things?

We have wanted to break barriers between professional farmers and those who produce food for self-consumption, around the joint idea of collective re-appropriation of food production. We have tried to link urban gardens with peasant farming, consumers-producers initiatives with land squatters, etc.

One important step for doing so has been to discuss a new definition of « peasant » not according to an official status but according to an activity of food production and link with a territory. It is still a challenge to work together in our diversity, between the « children of farmers », environmentalists, autonomous people, those linked to peasant organisations and urbans from collective gardens, etc. It's not easy, but it's certainly what makes Reclaim the Fields an interesting space.

How can we preserve this diversity?

In the beginning, European Coordination Via Campesina did not quite understand this « youth group » which both want to be autonomous and to be linked with La Via Campesina. For us, Cravirola camp was a challenge to explain that the reason for having so few young people in peasant organisations, was not a lack of active young people interested in peasant issues, but a problem of organizational model. We wanted to show that if young people don't join POs, it is partly because these organisations are too vertical, too bureaucratic, too much lobby-oriented. It is an issue of different political culture. We were saying « We share all your ideas on food sovereignty, agrarian reform, peasant agriculture, biodiversity, etc. but we want to decide ourselves how we do things ».

The group started with a « youth » identity. It was not exclusive, but rather a will to take a space in debates mostly dominated by people over 50 years old, to speak about the issue of access to land among people directly affected. In November 2008, we described ourselves as « Young peasants, landless people, prospective peasants, people who want to take back control over food production ». It worked

IN DEFENSE OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The terms and slogans we use in our struggles are not trivial. They stand for our ideals, and allow us to communicate « what we are fighting for » — not only to others, but also in support of each other. As in the struggle for human rights, terms may be trivialized or even appropriated to legitimate criminal wars ; but they may also become re-appropriated, as happened in 1989 in East Germany, when « **WE** are the people! » was taken to the streets ; or they may become ambivalent, such as in the ideal of “socialism”.

In Reclaim the Fields, we are a diverse constellation of young people re-building our lives and society by first changing the way we satisfy our basic needs: producing food and the environment according to ways that will not continue to destroy the basis of life. We are peasants on farms, gardeners in cities, we are building, mobilizing, writing, squatting, protesting: to stop business with our climate, to re-claim our seeds, our land. We come from different political backgrounds and our dreams do not look exactly alike: some will be more active in building a network of peasant struggles all over Europe, while others will focus on organizing at the local scale, others will plan actions. But whatever we are doing, all of us are entering a political field where

other peasant-, land- and environmental struggles have left their mark already.

One of these is the legacy of « Food Sovereignty ». We have heard it often and it is perhaps so present that some may not feel like it is really ours. Yet, because many struggles all over the world who have goals very similar to ours have adopted it, it is necessary to look at it more closely, to know where it comes from, and how it is being used.

About 15 years ago, the idea of « Food Sovereignty » was born with the intent to counter the idea of « Food Security ». This idea of Food Security came from among the ranks of governments and developmental institutions, in particular the FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organization), later also the World Bank. Food Security represented these institutions' answer to the problem of agriculture and food production as they viewed it, in a context of famines, bad harvests and huge increases in the price of food worldwide in the mid 1970's. Food Security was to denote general standards such as having "adequate food supplies" or demands for "enough food for an active and healthy life", yet these were definitions that left untouched the reality of many and the fundamental questions of how food is produced and by whom: whether

The use of this word as a slogan does not address clearly any context and thus can be easily trivialised by the market sphere (supermarket, agro-industry, etc.) just as 'fair' trade and organic agriculture (destroyed by the last European norms).

If we really want a slogan farming autonomy or food-producing autonomy are still free from copyright...

It is important to defend a production that is :

- small-scaled, family based or collective,
- ecologically friendly, be it organic or not,
- locally produced,
- locally transformed and by the producers themselves,
- polyculture.

Peasants should :

- practice direct selling (nothing for supermarkets),
- control production intensity to produce small and high quality products rather than big wild amounts,
- they should not exploit people (underpaid, illegal migrants, slavery, etc.),
- they should favour the setting up of new farmers,
- they should preserve biodiversity (fields with genetic diversity),
- they should save old techniques and knowledge.

That's for my participation in the debate. I think the use of Food Sovereignty is difficult, because part of the vocabulary of the far right (and its left equivalent, for example the 'consume French' of the French communist party). It is urgent to invent something else and to select what we keep and what is to be re-examined by Vía Campesina. And to be clear about what we want...

Paul



distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations.

<http://www.nyeleni.org/>

pretty well as in majority « young people » came to Cravirola. Is it still necessary to keep being « young »?

Up to now, the only organizational tool we have been using is « youthcoord », a mailing list with about 20 people which mainly prepare and organize the camps and meetings. We had the ambition to create a « movement », yet under this perspective we did not really succeed in Cravirola, as many questions linked to structuring a movement have not been dealt with (lacking time on Sunday, or lacking collective will?). How can we be more open? How do we want to organize now that we are much more people? Which strategies do we want to take to change the balance of power for peasant settling and land sharing? Do we want to be a network, an organisation, a co-ordination between local groups, a movement, the organizer of a yearly camp?

From the beginning, we have linked the peasant issue with much more global issues. For us, peasant struggles are linked with struggles

to get out of capitalism. The camp in Cravirola showed that this perspective was shared by a lot of people. This is also the reason why we joined the « System change not climate change » block in Copenhagen. Yet, how can we effectively work for a change of system without losing focus on farming?



SUMMARY OF THE MEETING IN BARCELONA

This encounter from the 13th to the 15th of February, was organized in Barcelona. Our plan was to discover initiatives in Catalunya and meet at a european level within RtF people. On the menu: learning from each other, exchanging on our different way to practise on local level as for exemple Barcelona and trying to organise RtF at the european level.

This meeting was a bit special because it was the first "European" meeting after Cravirola, with the objective to enlarged the group of 13, mainly responsible for the organisation of RtF. On top of that, the majority of people were Spanish or French, therefore, it was difficult to perceive the European dimension of RtF. In this conditions, we had problems to take decisions or orientations and to go further in the organisation of the network.

SATURDAY

Saturday morning was dedicated to people's presentation (about 40), presentation of RtF and the description of the objectives and organisation of the 3 days in Can Masdeu. In the afternoon, we read together the text *Who we are?*, that brought us into hectic debates. More specifically, the terms « non-violence » and « food sovereignty » were discussed and took a lot of our energy this afternoon.

We mainly agree to say that RtF have to promote food sovereignty through the notions of legal and sovereign right of the people. In order to emphasize those rights, countryside must be a priority for repopulation, particularly farming people, peasantry has to start on new bases and bring the population closer to it.

After a long time debating on food sovereignty, we discussed about the use of the term « non-violence » in the text *Who we are?* :

- There are different kind of violence: to break a window during a demonstration and multinationals violence: for instance evictions.
- The term « non-violence » in the text exclude a lot of people. Wouldn't be judicious to remove it?

Due to the intensity of the debate about food sovereignty, we decided to stop about violence, non-violence and close the text *Who we are?* It was important to discuss about it, but people didn't feel we could make a firm decision on that give the fact that people here were mainly from latin countries.

SUNDAY

On sunday, we visited Can Masdeu and had a woodcutting workshop, afterwards we made a public meeting with the visitors and some other people living in Barcelona.

During this meeting, we presented RtF to the people who didn't know about the network. Then, a bunch of local initiatives and dynamics in Andalousia, Turkey, Spain, Switzerland, France and Brittany were presented as well.

like the Tobin tax, very vague, under rated and without any clarity as to the use of this money.

Nationalistic commercial policies would be back through frontiers, controls and taxes. With the globalisation of the economy, another project is needed on a world wide basis.

RISKS

A state proclaiming its food sovereignty could well keep its existing agricultural system, with productions divided into different specialised zones. It could also keep the same old-fashioned industrialised ways of production, using illegal immigrants when needed. (see OMI contracts in Europe).

PROPOSAL

We could rather focus the debate on the waste of resources and the low-cost of transports, which I find more interesting than the debate on frontiers. Means of transport and this low cost of petroleum allow petro-agriculture (using chemicals, pesticides, big engines, etc.)

If we have to decide for a slogan, it has to question domination and colonialism.

The question of exportation of colonialism and how we can put and end to it together should be addressed because it is urgent to face history and to change our relations based on wealth wasting while keeping part of the population out of the satisfaction of basic needs.



DECLARATION OF NYELENI

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production,

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The two texts that follow are personal positions that reflect the state of the debates inside Reclaim the Fields around the use of the term « Food Sovereignty ».

CONTEXT

It is the will of the peoples to choose their agricultural and food systems, in its cultural dimension. Today, the Confédération Paysanne and La Vía Campesina often use these arguments as slogans, sometimes completing it with other notions (see the declaration of Nyeleni in the boxed text on page 31.)

This theme is very important for La Vía Campesina as well as for all the southern countries which have chosen it as a common slogan. It is a mix of strategies on taking power, with installing at the head of states people-friendly governments ready to launch a real agricultural reform.

We are not in this context in Europe where left wing parties have disappointed people and do not offer any alternative in governance.

The term food sovereignty implies the definition of the words « nation » and « people ».

Moreover, the word « people » differs in the North and in the South. In the South, this word is used in the sense of a government of individuals sharing the same culture and the

same language.

In the North, this word means a gathering of individuals with a common language organised in a state system. In France, Brittons, Basques, Corsicans can be seen as an exception to this rule.

Food Sovereignty implies a notional power and can be written into a constitution or a charter but with no implications in reality.

QUESTIONS

Some states may use this word as a tool in negotiations (e.g. WTO) but no government really believes in the concept, except maybe in Latin America.

The struggle for food sovereignty is led by small farmers. If this struggle was led by the state there would be a risk of a leadership of only the large farms. Such is the case regarding the energetic sovereignty for example, which promotes big scale projects on a centralised basis (big dams, large photovoltaic zones, etc.)

Acting at the national level would imply the return of national barriers like customs taxes, state controls. Such actions would collect money officially for farmers... But this would be

After that, the main discussion topic was to define RtF's dynamics and the reason to create such a network. Everybody agreed would be useful to exchange knowledge and experiences, seeds and know-hows. Most of people felt the need to create a network. There is a lack of such a network, based on local realities but creating link on an European level.

THE RTF NETWORK, WHY AND HOW ?

Several options were proposed:

- Exchange of knowledge and experiences between countries, regions and the local level.
- Gardening as a way of sharing. Sharing seeds for a better production, sharing on the breeding issue: how deal with vaccines, certifications, etc.
- To be a group of people big enough to allow us to be more active and to raise solidarity when needed.
- Which strategies can we apply to counter industrial agriculture? To exchange on urban attack on agriculture, and what kind of responses or breaks can we create?
- What kind of tools should we use for our struggles? (direct actions, etc.)
- Integrate more consumers in the production of food, that people can get through another system than supermarkets and moles.
- Promote experiences such as the « mad-tourism ». This small mutual support network (amongst farmers) could be implemented on different scales, like seed exchanges.

A debate came up : what would be the use of a network ? Why to create it ?

- The main objective of a network is to share ideas, informations, to feel united and to help each other. The tools could be a newsletter, a website, etc. the important point is to connect with each other in order to not feel isolate.
- The network must be based on practical

needs, we have to help each other and communicate physically (for instance when we need people on a construction site).

- We could create a commission with thematic subjects, which will create a space to exchange.

MONDAY

On monday, we discussed about the structure of RtF, the articulation and the links between local groups.

This part of the meeting enable us to come up with some "decisions" during the afternoon. These "decisions" or "intentions" (see next article) have to be discussed during the next meeting in Germany.

DECISIONS TAKEN IN BARCELONA

1. We are not an organisation but a « constellation ».
2. People can set up thematic commissions if they want (for example: collective farms, urban gardens, genetic engineering, etc.).
3. The name « Reclaim the Fields » can be used for European Camps & Assemblies, website, bulletin and groups and actions decided on at European Assemblies. Local groups and initiatives can also use it, but bear in mind that local dynamics have not been discussed at an international level, so it could be sensitive.
4. Use of the name « Reclaim the Fields » implies agreement with the *Who we are* text and forming part of the RtF constellation in some way.
5. We propose 2 modifications to the text *Who we are*.
 - remove the phrase « We will practice non-violence »
 - after « food sovereignty » add: « (this expression is subject to debate and discussion within our network) »We propose that the next assembly approves a final version of the text.
6. We decided to create a bulletin for internal use, in order to share information and ideas, and as a tool for preparing for the assemblies. The editorial collective for the bulletin will change at each assembly.
7. We need to find solutions to the problem of translation of all this info.
8. Assemblies. We would like there to be two assemblies per year (for example one in Winter, one in Summer).
9. We would like there to be a European camp every 2 years as well as decentralised camps in between.
10. There will be a process group, that should change at each assembly, but with some of the old groups staying to ensure continuity.
11. Action day. We don't feel ready yet to decide on an action day. It should be an organic process coming out of groups wanting to do actions and not a central decision.
12. Reclaim the Fields supports the following upcoming events (they're gonna be cool!):
 - 28th March Land Rights Demo in Dijon, France



PRESENTATION OF EARTHRISE

EarthRise is small informal group, established within the framework of Reclaim The Fields, during its international camp in 2009 in Cravirola, in southern France. Our members gathered there and decided to create the Hungarian group of the movement.

We are about 10 to 15 young people participating actively in the group, living in Hungary, having various backgrounds: a few of us studied agriculture or economy, and some of us already bought a land and started to manage their own farm while most of us still live in an urban environment and participate in different ecological and green activities. But our common dream is to change our current urban way of life and move to the countryside, close to nature to become farmers, if possible creating this within a community. We are all interested in ecological or biodynamic farming methods, and alternatives such as CSA. Furthermore, our goal is also to show people how to lead a healthy, natural lifestyle to provide solutions to the current social, ecological and economic crisis. We hope to be able to encourage young people who are disappointed with the present social norms and values to find their way back to the land and the nature so that we can create less harmful and more joyful lifestyles together.

We have the following objectives:

1. We received a small piece of land near Budapest where we establish a community garden. The garden will be open to everyone who would like to join us and work with us, learn or teach us how to cultivate vegetables and fruits. Further on the garden will also be a place for workshops, assemblies and cultural events.
2. We will organize a national summer camp in Hungary for those who would like to start a community farm, a collective garden or are already active in organic farming. This will be part of the decentralized Reclaim the Fields camps-gatherings for the year 2010. The camp is going to be from the 14th to the 18th of July. We would be happy to invite all of you to this event, but this is not going to be possible. However, we would be happy if at least 3 people could come from RtF so that we feel the spirit of the movement !!! :)

If you're interested, drop us a line and join in.

foldkelte@yahoo.com

– 28th March Seed Exchange event in Gratz, Austria

We also remind people that 17th April is the Global Day of Peasant Struggle and there will be things happening all over the world.

13. There is a group in Germany that said they wanted to organise a next meeting, but no-one from that process could come to Barcelona, so this needs to be confirmed. Finally, it will take place from Wednesday, May the 19th to Sunday, May the 22th near Berlin, Germany.

14. Suggestions for the next assembly include:

- Time to exchange practical local experiences.

- Time for political discussion of issues.

- Time to discuss the actions of the network.

- A space for taking decisions.

15. The agenda for the next assembly should be sent at least one month before to give local groups time to discuss the issues and prepare for the assembly.

16. There are now four people in the group receiving the e-mail sent to the address contact@reclaimthefields.org.

There was also discussion about some things that I don't have a record of any clear decisions taken:

i. A proposal to have a first day of assemblies that is for new people to get basic information about what Reclaim the Fields is and the political process up to date, so that when the assembly really starts people do not feel lost, and we don't have to have the same discussions over and over again as new people join.

ii. Website. Proposals for a *How to get involved in RtF* page and a *How RtF works* page, to make the « constellation » more accessible to new people and groups.

NEXT GATHERING IN MAY IN BASTA, GERMANY

The European assembly of Reclaim the Fields will take place from Wednesday May the 19th to Sunday May the 23th at Basta, a farm about 70 km east from Berlin. Having one day more than at previous meetings will give us enough time to discuss the important topics, and also to get to know each other better.

THURSDAY

morning

- Presentation of each other, our projects.
- What are the different groups and local dynamics doing.
- A tour of Basta.

afternoon

- Political discussion
- Situation in the different countries, strategies for peasants without access to land, exchange of experiences on land occupations in Europe. How can Reclaim the Fields support and and strengthen struggles for access to land?

FRIDAY

morning

- Structure of the constellation Reclaim the Fields (finalize what was discussed and decided in Barcelona).
- Finalize the text describing *Who we are* (focusing on the topics of food sovereignty and non-violence). How do each of the working groups work? (carrots, internet, bulletin). What are the tasks for each of the rotating groups (communication among groups, how do we use lists and/or the website for internal communication).
- General discussion about finances: do we need to look for financing? and why? How do

we take care of money issues.

- Using the name « Reclaim the Fields »
- Future assemblies
- Future European camps

afternoon

Work on the farm and in the garden (there is lots to do !). We see working together as a way of continuing to discuss informally and this allows us (from Basta) to take part in the meeting without neglecting all the things we need to do...

SATURDAY

On this day we want to discuss what concrete activities we want to do together as Reclaim the Fields.

proposed workshops

- Seeds campaign
- Farm network
- Access to land

One or two people should sign up to be in charge of coordinating each group. The others will participate in one group in the morning and other one in the afternoon.

at night

There is a party at a project nearby. We can go there or organize something ourselves.

is being prepared and we will shortly be sowing.

For the future of our movement, we plan to make guerilla gardening actions in city parks (planting vegetables in flower beds to promote diversity in parks) and have already started with small scale by planting sunflowers. We also plan to reclaim/collectivise more locations in the city center, and organize public meeting to promote autonomy in food production. We plan to create a food, vegetable and seed market and also social kitchen with our products.

Although we don't have experience with gardening, our group wants to bring people together to learn and promote the ideas without any prejudices. Everyone is welcome to participate in our gardens, to relearn the skills of producing our own food in harmony with nature. We aim to use natural seeds and to fertilize our crop naturally.

To be continued..

on ljugarden@googlegroups.com and in the field work among the spare land in Ljubljana.



A COLLECTIVE GARDEN IN LJUBLJANA

There is a beginning of collective garden in Ljubljana, called Ljugarden. We are a group who were thinking about the necessity of a movement as Reclaim The Fields in Slovenia after attending the meetings in Cravirola and Can Masdeu.

We got to action very quickly and 18th of March we organized a presentation of RtF movement, took place in A-Infoshop in Ljubljana. Adam, from a Budapest collective, gave us a big support in this organization. The presentation was one short history of RtF, several initiatives with similar intentions of RtF (Cravirola, Can Masdeu, Manu's farm in center Brittany, the Budapest collective). The meeting was attended by a large group of people who were interested in making similar projects in the city. It finished with the discussion of new initiatives in Ljubljana such as beginning a collective garden with young people.

The group from different backgrounds and countries (Australia, Basque County, France, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey) gathered and started to think about how to begin for urban gardening.

There are several of gardens in Ljubljana but they are generally disreputable, cared by elder. This is the occasion to meet them who are already doing the kind of food production and ask advices.

As soon as possible the mailing list (ljugarden@googlegroups.com) was created to inform about news around 50 persons and arrange meetings to take place regularly one or

two times per week. The meeting and mailing list would to a place to discuss current issues and problems concerning gardening.

During these meetings we built a map of possible locations for gardening in the city. They are known green spaces that are empty and available to collectivise. This map contained 12 possible locations for our projects. We formed a research action group who visit the different locations to collect information, meet locals and talk about the spaces for possibility of starting gardens.

We have two garden for now. The first garden was donated by sympathisers who accept to let us experiment on one piece of their garden, nearby Metelkova in the city center. It is available for use 1 or 2 years. We have sown our crops and awaiting for our first harvest.

Our second garden was squatted on 17 April on Global Peasants Struggle Day and also Cleaning Action Day in Slovenia. The garden is located on a strip of land close to the city center between the Ljubljanica river and Golovec hill. This strip of land has been used by locals in the area for the last 20 years. They welcome the enthusiasm of young people for city gardening and have been helpful with information about water and soil. The garden soil

SUNDAY

morning

- Assembly where we bring together what was discussed in the workshops and take decisions if necessary
- Who organizes the next RtF assembly?
- Evaluation of the week-end, feelings, etc.

WHAT DO WE NEED

We need one or two people who take care of coordinating the workshops on Friday (to structure them and even to send out material prior to the meeting that people should read beforehand).

On Basta we have quite enough space for tents, much fewer space indoors. But in the case of really bad/cold weather, we will manage to sleep all together in the kitchen or in our wagons. Still, we need to know **well in advance** how many people are coming, and how many tents we need to organize, since we have to ask among our friends for these, etc.

WHAT TO BRING, WHAT TO LEAVE HOME

Don't bring heavy food. We will provide regional, vegetarian food (if you are vegan, bring your own tofu or seitan or margarine if you need it – we do have soy milk)

Please try to leave your dog home if it is possible. There is not so much place for running free here for them and there is also some legal stories with a neighbour about free running dogs. If it is impossible, then bring the dog and really take care of him.

We will need some people taking notes from the workshops, what does not mean that everyone has to take his/her laptop. We ourselves already have 3 or 4 and that should be enough. You can bring a USB stick if you want to bring documents with you.

If you need to print material, do it **before** — we do not have any printer nor an easy possibility to get one.

We just have one access to Internet here, very very slow and very very expensive. So please try to check all what you need from the web before arriving here.

Kids are no problem. If you have babies, just tell it before so we can organise water and bath possibilities extra for them.

A warm sleeping bag. Tell us if you need a tent, we will organise some, so people who are coming by train do not need to bring their.

Something from your farm or your region.

- Informations about your farm, your project, whatever information material you would like to share with the people here.
- Musical instruments
- Seeds to exchange if you have some
- Good mood

Please tell us if you have special food or hygiene needs. We still do not have drinkable running water nor warm water in the barn — we hope to have it till May but we cannot promise it... We have 2 dry toilets, one solar rainwater shower and cans and bottles to bring the drinkable water from the building where Peter and Annett live (200 mt from the barn). Still, we can warm up water and organise a warm shower possibility for very special cases — but we have to know it before so we can coordinate it with Peter and Annett.

If you have time and feel like coming some days before and help us organising the place — or staying here longer, feel welcome !

WHAT'S BASTA ?

Basta is a small farm east of Berlin, something quite exotic in a region that is dominated by industrial agriculture. During the GDR, it was part of the large Agricultural Production Syndicate Wollup and its rooms were dedicated to the intensive elavage of calves.

Since the opening of the wall, the farm was separated from the rest, and abandoned. In 1992 a group of young east-German people started a collective together with some people from the Longo Maï movement. Due to the impossibility to buy the farm and the land around it, the community left Basta in 1995.

Peter, one of the people of the group, decided to stay in Basta in order to buy the farm, to save the buildings from the state-decided demolition, and to rent some 20 hectares of the surface around. He accomplished his goal in 1996. Since then different people passed through the farm, most of them for a couple of years only, who used it as a starting point for farming. Peter still lives there with his companion Annett and their daughter Magda, running the farm as a small family business. The production is concentrated on wheat, sunflower seeds, pigs, ducks and sheep. Together with people of the area he founded Klik association (Centre for rural information and communication), a network through which some

small producers directly sell their vegetables, meat, marmelade, honey and eggs to people in Berlin.

I moved to Basta one year ago. During the summer Marie joined me and with other three friends we want to start a peasant collective here. We renovate some rooms and waggon to live in and are already using one room in the old barn as a kitchen. We are turning the piece of land around the barn into a garden as it used to be. This year, we will grow vegetables and herbs on a neighbours field of a neighbour and take care of 7 bee colonies. Together with some people from Berlin we are building up a community supported agriculture.

The project is in continuous evolution. It is difficult to say how and how fast it will change until your arrival. Keep ready for surprises :)

Anna

enthusiasm and promised to come back and give a hand or just spread the word around.

The next day already, the regional TV and the local rag were talking about the land occupation. The news spread quite fast in the city and some of the landowners, together with the official in charge of town planning of the city and a bunch of cops, came the next morning to see all that by themselves. Despite an intent of dialogue with those dear fellows, they were really not incline to talk with us and were just promising to bring an action against the occupants. Passing by the cadastral register later on during the day clarified the legal situation of the fields: apart from the land that's already the property of the city council, all the 4 other plots are in cases of jointly-owned succession processes which could rather complicate the task of the owners willing to protect their precious wasteland from dangerous gardeners like us.

But this little trouble didn't worn out the enthusiasm of the gardeners at all! Only the weather, which was rainy all week long, forced us to postpone planting the 2000 seedlings we prepared in advance, a couple of weeks before the demonstration. Thankfully, the weather has gone better since then and we could throw ourselves, body and spade, into our vegetable utopia! We're now in the process of planting on the field as well as sowing tomatoes, aubergines, courgettes, etc. in the greenhouse-garage of la Villa, a nearby squatted house that we use as our stronghold.



The spring is now showing up, plants are budding and nasty lawyers larvae are hatching. Those are good reasons for us to keep on fighting and gardening... And until a possible legal counterattack, the vegetables are back on the former land of the farmers...

He's called 'jardin collectif des lentillères', he's born on the 28th of March 2010 at 3:15 pm, he is (will be) 3 ha big and its gardeners are very happy! Thank you to all the people that came from far away to participate on its birthday!!!

Clément
tierraylibertad@potager.org

LAND OCCUPATION IN DIJON

Sunday, March the 28th, answering to the call of various collectives and associations, a group of urban people, gardeners and farmers occupied land in Dijon.

Despite the rain, the wind, the daylight saving time, the lunar node that is famous for being bad for working the land, etc. around two hundred people gathered at 1 pm under the bandstand of the Wilson square in Dijon, France.

After a few introductory speeches from members of an AMAP producer-consumer cooperative, from farmers from la Confédération Paysanne as well as from members of the Reclaim the Fields network, everybody headed straight to the objective, in the direction of what is left of the former area around the city where they used to be vegetable farming, more that 10 years ago. Walking to the sound of an internationalist batucada, the crowd, armed with barrows full of seedlings, a few dozen of spades, pickaxes, scythes and forks made the demonstration look like an old-time peasants' uprising.

Getting closer to the 3 hectares of abandoned land, the crowd entered directly in the first plot of fallow land in the street, progressing meter by meter, clearing enthusiastically this piece of land invaded by brambles. After a couple of hours of collective craze, thanks to the food supplied by Food not Bombs and the passionate sound of the batucada, a good share of the field had already been turned over and ready to be cultivated. The few policemen that came could just contemplate all that in stupefaction.

Later on, during a first assembly we made a few dates to continue gardening, organize to go and meet the neighbors, plan the work on the land and the future of the occupation. Quite a few neighbors who had seen the houses and the fields of the neighborhood slowing turning into a wasteland during the last years came, shared with us their



HOW CAN YOU ARRIVE HERE?

By train (from Berlin Hbf or Ostbahnhof), you have to arrive at SEELOW – GUSOW.

When you arrive in Berlin, take the S-Bahn (this is one of the city transports, like a metro but above ground. The direction will be either Ahrensfelde or Erkner or Strausberg nord) to **LICHTENBERG** — it is around 4–5 stations. In Lichtenberg you go to the platform nr.15 and at every hour and 34 minutes you can get a train to **KOSTRYN**. You can get the ticket on the train if you do not have an interrail. If you have a 20 or 50 euro bill you will not be able to buy the ticket on the train and you can ask the person who checks the ticket to change the bills and hope that s-he does not come at all. Most of the time there are groups of very stressed women speaking polish on the platform or down the stairs to the platform. They always have some special group tickets and you can ask them for one ticket to **SEELOW** (I do not know if they speak English, have a try), — so you will pay them 3 or 4 euros (not more !) instead of 7,70 in the train. You will arrive in Seelow in around 50 minutes and there we'll pick you up.

By any other means of transportation, you have to arrive to the Bastaerstrasse 10 in Letschin (15324).

It is really better if you look in internet for the plan, but if you do not want to, I will give it a try. You get out of the highway in Berlin and take the B1 direction **MUENCHEBERG – FRANKFURT ODER**. You stay on the B1 (never turn right to Frankfurt Oder !!!) till **SEELOW**. You go right in Seelow, pass a big shopping area on the left, stay on the main street till you come to a traffic light. There you go **left** and after some 100 meters (right after the last houses and a car reparer on your right) you turn **right** direction **WERBIG**. You pass Werbig, Neulangsow, Altlangsow, reach **BUSCHDORF** and after the Buschdorf entrance you pass

some houses, then the street goes through some fields and you think the village is finished but it is not true !!! There is still a street with houses after 100 meters on you **left** (Baierberg) and **there you go in !** You exit Buschdorf and continue 1 km on a field street. There you should already see a building in red stones with a yellow and a red wagon. This is us ! So you turn left in Basta and there you just ask someone where is better to park your car.

THE CONSTELLATION EXPLAINED TO THE STARS

During the Reclaim the Fields European camp that took place in a cooperative farm in the South of France in October 2009, it was suggested to start getting organised in local autonomous groups. The original RtF team started up this gathering without really knowing what would come out of it and feared that people would start doing their own thingies everywhere without much cohesion.

I think that what we were trying to do was make give visibility to the fact that we are really spread around, give visibility to the wide range of our struggles, and show that each piece of land we manage to take back, each seed that we produce prove our persistence and stubbornness to start experiencing here and now the changes we propose for the whole society.

Since we've been looking at the sky, we see stars that organise and form constellations. But even if we all know which one is Ursa Major, it is clear for us that it is just a mental construction, that in space every star that we see as a part of this constellation doesn't know about the others, or at least shines for itself, according to its own position and maybe interact with other stars that might not be visible, from this point of view, as part of Ursa Major.

If the proposal of the assembly during

the camp was to consider the local groups as stars, the proposal of the original RtF team would be to create a constellation. If we consider just a single point of view, for example if we just consider a map of Europe, roughly drawn, we would see points that would represent the local groups, connected by segments that would represent the distance between those groups. Each point could be linked to its closest neighbours as well as more distant points, but this would just be a single point of view, a point of view that ignores its inherent depth.

And if we try to look at it in 3D, we would see all the diversity of our actions, from a collective project based on self-sufficiency and strictly non-commercial, to the setting up of a small organic farmer selling directly to its consumers, from an abandoned piece of land in a city that's cultivated again by a bunch of people to the creation of a new cooperative distributing local products, from a skill-sharing workshop on cheesemaking to a global alliance spreading organic seeds everywhere.



Two pictures from Can Masdeu taken during the meeting in February.
Top, the house, bottom the garden.

FARMS

The farms should be:

- Organic, but don't need to be certified.
- There could be very small farms doing farming for self-sufficiency or larger one producing something. It may also include processing (cheese, bread etc.) eco-construction, forest (but where to put the limit? handicrafts, smithery?)
- Small scale and towards sustainability.
- The farmers should have the ideology and understanding of a peasant and can also have a role in political training, presenting the reality of today's farming, laws, biodiversity, subsidies, seed rights etc.

The educations will be different from farm to farm, but our aim is to recommend internships for several months. The student is helping on a farm in exchange for food, accommodation and teaching. But exceptions are possible. The money issue can be left up to the farmer and the student.

The duration will depend of what the farmer wants to teach: if its bread baking it might be a week-end, but vegetable growing would take a whole season.

In some areas several farms might work hand in hand and would teach the student different things on different farms. For example, one might do draft horses and cereal, another permaculture and vegetables, a third goat cheese, maybe another neighbor is building a strawball house.

It should be on the conditions of the farmer, forming their own way of teaching and setting up the terms of the stay. It's important that both farmer and student benefit from each other. The farmers are contacted directly by one of us, and it's better if they can also be visited before being recruited.

The places doesn't necessarily have to be farms and they could also be communities doing farming, eco-villages, associations

working on farming (community supported agriculture for example) and other associations or groups working with food sovereignty, access to land etc. The important thing is that they should be willing to welcome visitors.

EXCHANGE

It would be great if we could also develop exchanges within RtF. Some of us already have a place, a farm or a collective. There are urban gardening projects, associations that fit in the framework of RtF. We could list those and use them to visiting each other and learn one another and thereby spread ideas, lifestyles, knowledge.

Another idea would be to use European voluntary service, or youth in action to start exchange programs financed by the EU. Its quite a bit of paperwork, but it's really an interesting tool that we can discussed more.

Olle



In outer space, the zapatist movement took the position to be intergalactic and cosmical and oceanic references are used a lot since then: the French anarco-autonomes have their "nebula", the humanist movement close to Pierre Rabbi organise itself through "oasis", others are taking about "archipelagos", etc.

So, since the peasantries belong to the territories and we claim to be anchored in the local level, this proposal of structuring ourselves in constellation is actually an invitation to go touch the ground, go back to the land, get organise to form the Peasant Block that will contribute to tomorrow's social changes.

Reclaim the Fields !!!

Stephen Hawking

THE FARM NETWORK

GOALS

The farm network is meant to become a platform of informal small scale education for farming and self-sufficiency in Europe. There is a great need for creating spaces to educate people in the know-hows of a sustainable life on the countryside. The universities often have a very industrial and academic approach, and the alternative schools for small-scale and organic agriculture are too few for all the new farmers we need. We also want the network to be political and to empower the RtF movement.

We want to create a diverse network which allows farmers to pass their knowledge and for new farmers to learn those ways of life and techniques.

We want all this to be about learning what you need to be able to set up yourself, but also about spreading the ways of life, the ideology and the politics of small-scale organic agriculture.

WHAT THE NETWORK WILL PROVIDE

- Practical farm training: vegetable growing, permaculture, animals, cheese, but also eco-construction, forest, etc.

- Political training: presenting the reality of today's peasantry, the hinderances as well as the ways to overcome them, with direct experience from realities of peasants.

- Social tools: spreading experiences of social economy, collective life, etc.

- Exchanges within our network.

THE DIFFERENCE FROM WWOOF

WWOOF is a big network of organic farms that exists worldwide. For those of you who don't know it, I recommend taking a look at their homepage <http://www.woof.org/>.

However, Wwoof is for volunteer work, and any farm can join, any person can join. We have a different vision.

The RtF farm network is for education and is based on direct contact between us and the farmers. This to ensure that the farmers are "protected" against too many people contacting them and to make sure that farmers join in for the right reason and are good people to learn with.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Should the training be only for young people or open to anyone? I think it should be open to anyone!

ORGANIZATION

To begin with, we have a working group setting up the global idea of the network: Olle, Eric and Nils. This text represents this global idea as of now. Whoever could be interested is welcome to join this group. Those people will coordinate the farm network on the European level. At least one person in each country should be in contact with or a part of the coordination. However, for now on, it's good if the focus is on local level in each country or region.

On a local level, one person alone could do the coordination, but it would be better if it was done by one or more local group from each country. Those will adapt the idea of the farm network to the local conditions, considering the local culture, the already existing farm networks, the national Via Campesina organizations, etc. Each local group would find its ways of functioning and forms of organizing as well as its network of participating farms and projects. It could be a good idea to write a common letter within the national groups that can be used to inform the possibly interested farmers.

The local groups collect the information about the farms of its country, and provide those contacts to the people interested in being trained in that country. For each country, one person's or group's email will serve as a first contact to the interested people. Those email addresses will appear on the RtF website. Note that there is still much to discuss on the ways of functioning of the website and mailing lists before we can go further.

Note first that the participating farms won't be listed on the website. ; there are already tools for that allow to do that on reclaimthefields.org, but we won't use them yet. Not all the farms will want to be listed on the Internet, therefore the local group is responsible for contacting the farms whenever a person is looking for training. On the website, there should also be spaces for the local groups.

As of now, the farm network will be quite informal and small. We want the network to grow organically, from the roots, not as a top down structure. Local groups can start getting together and listing farms in their country.