

## Panel: How to Support Small Scale Farmers – Friday 31/05/2019

### *Food Autonomy Festival #3 Amsterdam*

#### Hanne – [Brigades d'Actions Paysannes](#)

Concrete helping of farmers: making network that could take action and voice those struggles. Website to register and become a member of the brigades. Farmers can post to ask for help – not to substitute seasonal workers. Opportunity to meet farmers and each other and understand struggles. Members can then be people to mobilize.

#### Elske – [De Ommuurde Tuin CSA](#) (Community Supported Agriculture)

Five years on a CSA – 0.96 Hectare – 400 varieties of crops – CSA – 85 veg bags, sell directly on the farm too. Works full time March – October, part time in the winter. Course “agroecology in practice”, for people wanting to garden. Keeping the knowledge alive. Biggest challenge = how to make a basic income. Wants to connect to consumers directly – delink food from a price – want to make a box and it takes one hour labour costs, then customer decides what its worth. CSA= direct link between producer and consumer, no money lost through a middle person.

#### Karin – [Toekomstboeren](#) and small scale farmer

Small scale farmer since 2009 – studied in Warmonderhof 2013. Engaged in agriculture for a long time. Before talking about what we need, let's state what we need! I need: 1) appreciation – euros is tricky, 2) long term access to land. First CSA was on clay soil – self harvest. Then worked on sandy soil in Brazil for 2 years. Starting is not easy – now in Ede.

#### Suzanne – [Vokomokum](#)

Organic food cooperative – dry foods and small farmers for fresh stuff. Non-hierarchical work structure. Small farmers aren't visible, maybe bigger farmers have more time to make themselves seen. To create community of people have more strength and power to influence. Community around small scale farmers. Workers co-op = short chain between producers and consumers – supporting small scale farmers abroad too.

#### Louisa and Pablo – [Boerengroep](#)

Student organisation around Wageningen. Collects students who are learning theoretically and connect them to practical farming, so they know the struggles. Farm Experience Internship of 4 weeks, students go to the farm for 2 weeks. Platform – small farmers to voice – BG acts as bridge to keep discussions alive. To hear both sides, to form opinions and critique points.

## QUESTIONS

*Q: CSA is it supported or is it not supported? You still don't make a living.*

E – bases prices on what organic shops sell for, but we also have the autonomy to make our own prices.

K – went to a workshop on how to not get overworked. As a farmer you are supporting the community. CSA in Wageningen – AGM – members notices farmer was not saving up for retirement, encouraged him to do so – transparent finances. Freiburg CSA of 8 people – calculate the cost of running the farm, show to members, ask if members can pay for this, if they cannot, the CSA does not run.

BG – want students from different subjects – plant breeding student for eg. That connection that sparks in people's heads of being with the soil. "Circle of farming" -FEI. Ask farmers what kind of research they need.

VM: visibility – workaway – people can do website / online work that as a farmer you don't have the time for or find appealing.

K: lettuce will bolt, need to sell it now. Local shops used to buy local stuff, now all a part of Odin so they cannot buy. Only harvest when it's ready.

Amsterdam vs. Countryside

Fermented foods as value added products for farmers?

Farmers want to sell – so they go to the shop – it's a lot of work. Need to re-think how to take work from the farm.

Group of people once every 6 weeks you have to do veg boxes etc. also a team emergency harvesting and fermentation.

We (farmers) don't have the money to pay people's wages.

In the countryside if you are not local, people have a fear of the unknown.

Anyone who's part of the CSA – membership fee and you work on the land – integrated on certain points. People integrated into the network not only as consumers.

Foundation for small scale farmers is community.

To stop dichotomy between producers and consumers. How can you be in solidarity without only being consumer?

VK – don't have legal structure.

The land prices in the NL is the highest in the whole world – very strong speculation – rich people buying all the land.

E – our CSA is 0.96 because it doesn't reach the quota of 1 hectare we are being forced to pay 1000 euros more in rent per year. Sandy soil. Policies that protect the bigger farms, when it is the smaller farmers that desperately need all the help they can get.

**Q: more privileged people as customers. How do you upscale from niche market?**

A - put solidarity in front of the CSA concept – in general it's rich and informed people.

VK – co-op is left thinking people from anarchist circle – not so many rich people – as a workers coop you are obliged to do 6 shifts a year. A lot of strata of income in groups. People talk and tell other people – word of mouth.

Albert Heijn convenience culture.

BG – literacy – technology or food – ecoliteracy – indirect investment in the future – understand when your lettuces will bolt because you are in that environment to learn for yourself.

CSA Shop – monthly fee pays workers wages – sociative economy – Steiner

Food value – AH low cost food – CSA increase in minerals and nutrients in crops. 8P vs 80p of the money spent on food per year.

Risk sharing as part of CSAs: beginning of the year you have the most costs. If people pay up front they can help with these initial costs. Giving less is difficult! Easier to give more than to give less. Pick yourself – people can decide – long term commitment between producer and consumer.

“Everyone eats”

Development of CSA beyond pick your own veggies – lets start with CSA cheeses, meat, dairy etc, Conscious consumers.

Always go back to the individual. How do we attack this bigger corporate world – conflict going on between two worlds. How to take action? Structural change – politicise – degrowth.