

“Back to the Land” among “Neo-Rural” Farmers: The Price to Pay

Working Couples and Women’s Invisible Work*

*Madlyne Samak***

The article deals with the social processes that incite “neo-rural” women – *i.e.* who do not themselves originate from agricultural families – to become fruit and vegetable farmers alongside their partners and work in their shadow, with no professional status. It shows, first, the extent to which their decision to become independent workers is sometimes governed by family rather than professional considerations. Secondly, it exposes the causes of their statutory invisibility: beyond the feeble economic resources that constrain small farmers and limit their ability to pay into social security schemes, they largely ignore the existing systems and the risks incurred, and they mistrust the established forms of social protection, preferring to count on couple solidarity and develop individual strategies in compensation.

“Agricultural workers entertain professional and family connections in which work relations are both sex-related and generational” (BARTHEZ, 1982, p. 124). Produced by Alice BARTHEZ at the start of the 1980s, this analysis still applies today: agriculture, in France, continues to bear the strong imprint of family collaboration. In 2010, 71% of the work was carried out by the active members of a family – manager, co-manager, manager’s partners, family assistant,¹ family employee – while permanent, salaried workers, who have no family connection to the manager or co-manager,

* Traduction: Gabrielle Varro. Article published in French in *Travail et Emploi*, no 150, 2017.

My warmest thanks to Sarah Abdelnour, Sophie Bernard and Julien Gros for their comments and suggestions, and to Sibylle Gollac for her critical reading of my text during the seminar “Gender and independent labour. Sexual divisions among non-salaried workers” (*Genre et travail indépendant. Les divisions sexuées du non-salariat*).

** Institut national universitaire Champollion d’Albi, LISST-CERS (UMR 5193 CNRS/Université fédérale de Toulouse); madlyne.samak@univ-jfc.fr.

1. The status of family assistant is reserved for persons at least 16 years of age, ascendants, descendants, brothers, sisters, or blood relatives to the same degree as the farm manager or his/her partner, who live on the farm and take part in the work but without having the status of employee.

represented 17%,² and seasonal workers 10% (LAISNEY, LERBOURG, 2012). Property and know-how are usually transmitted inside the family, another particularity of the agricultural sector, characterized by the permanence of family undertakings (BESSIÈRE *et al.*, 2008).

However, despite that stability in the organisation of labour, women's place and status in agricultural production have not remained static, and gender inequalities in the sector have diminished.

On the one hand, over the past thirty years, woman farmers' situation has considerably improved from the point of view of autonomy and professional recognition. Until the early 1980s, farmers' wives were not recognized as full-fledged workers, they were considered to be "helping the family": the work they did on the farm remained invisible and they had absolutely no professional or social security except as their husband's beneficiary. Their professional and matrimonial status were one and the same (LAGRAVE, 1988; CANIOU, LAGRAVE, 1988), and their social entitlements, especially as regards retirement, non-existent.³ Since then, legislative changes have slowly but surely brought about the recognition of female farmers' work. In the first place, the agricultural law of July 4th, 1980, created the status of co-manager, which theoretically allowed women to have the same rights and responsibilities as their husbands. Though, in practice, few women accessed that status, the creation in 1985 of Private, Limited Liability Farming Companies – (*Exploitations agricoles à responsabilité limitée*, EARL), which allowed a husband and wife to be the sole partners of a company,⁴ was followed by an increase in the number of female co-managers.⁵ In 2010 in France, women's share in the manager and co-manager categories amounted to 27%, as against 8% in 1970 (LAISNEY, LERBOURG, 2012). Today, there are more woman managers or co-managers (42.6% in 2007) than wives working on the farm with or without an official status (34.4%) (BISAULT, 2009). Lastly, the agricultural law of 1999, by introducing the status of "collaborative spouse" (which replaced "spouse participating in the farm-work")⁶ also permitted a professional recognition of women's work, at the same time as it increased their social benefits.⁷ This status gives them the possibility of being eligible for a proportional pension and insured in case of a labour injury. True, the law does not give the woman a voice in decisions concerning the farm, where she is "put on the index", *i.e.* excluded (CANIOU, LAGRAVE, 1988) – woman farmers' rights are only derivative (they remain their husbands' beneficiaries and are therefore inactive

2. Seasonal labour is measured according to the number of yearly work units (*unités de travail annuel*, UTA), not the number of active workers.

3. For an historical analysis of the specific case of female agricultural employees, see ESCUDIER, 2017.

4. As opposed to the Agricultural Groups of Joint Farming (*groupements agricoles d'exploitation en commun*, GAEC).

5. "Developing corporate forms and their corollary, managerial positions, gives woman farmers the opportunity to access positions of responsibility. Mothers become their sons' partners in Agricultural Groups of Joint Farming, and wives become their husbands' associates in private, Limited Liability Farming Companies (*exploitations agricoles à responsabilité limitée*, EARL)" (BISAULT, 2009, p. 1).

6. Before the creation of the status of collaborative spouse, the status of spouse participating in the farm-work was part of the agricultural law of 1980; it meant the person was entitled to a fixed amount of pension upon retirement.

7. Since 2005, this status is available to persons united by a Civil Solidarity Pact (*pacte civil de solidarité*, PACS).

from the point of view of labour law) – but it did diminish the number of wives working on a farm with no status at all.⁸

Since the 1980s, though agricultural labour remains family-connected, an ever-growing number of farmers’ partners have chosen to enter the labour market as employees. According to the *Employment* survey (*enquête Emploi* 2000), only 43.4% of farm managers’ wives declared they were “active” farmers, *i.e.* eleven points less than ten years earlier (GIRAUD, RÉMY, 2008, p. 30). As to the agricultural census, in 2010 it revealed that nearly three-quarters of wives under 40 do not work on their husband’s farm (LAISNEY, LERBOURG, 2012). Clearly, the conjugal farm model is on the decline (DUFOUR, GIRAUD, 2012). But though man-woman parity is not an option in agriculture (RATTIN, 2006), it is nevertheless undeniable that farmers’ wives, by working more – and more often – away from the farm, or by accessing co-manager status, have gained in independence and professional recognition over the past thirty years.

That strong trend nevertheless conceals places where farmers’ wives continue to model their professional activity on their partner’s, and to be active without any professional visibility. The survey carried out among organic fruit and vegetable producers in the Alpes-Maritimes Region revealed this totally different reality. For most of the male and female farmers interviewed (Box 1), a working couple remains the norm, and the die-hard notion that agriculture is a “conjugal activity” (*métier de couple*) (BARTHEZ, 1982) is even more striking among “neo-rurals”, *i.e.* farmers who do not themselves originate from farming families but have created their agricultural activity *ex nihilo*. This result is not surprising when replaced in its sectorial context – compared to other sectors, market gardening is largely an activity carried out by a couple (DUFOUR, GIRAUD, 2012) – but it is more surprising if one takes these farmers’ social characteristics into account. For, though one might expect these “neo-rural” woman farmers, who are mainly middle- or upper-class, highly educated urbanites (Box 2), to reinvent gender norms in agriculture, it turns out, on the contrary, that, in this group, not only are the near-totality of the farms run by a couple, but the invisibility of the woman’s work is due to the fact that, officially, it goes undeclared. In this article, we propose to present and explain these paradoxical results, and more precisely, attempt to grasp the social logics that lead these women to become farmers alongside their partners and work in their shadow, with no professional status. Gender inequalities at work among “neo-rurals” (farmers, artisans) have been pointed out in other research (LÉGER, HERVIEU-LÉGER, 1979; BAJARD, 2014), but rarely explored under the angle of their production and reproduction. The aim of this text is thus to underscore the fragility of women’s professional achievements, by showing to what extent, and why, certain social groups of farmers remain impervious to women’s work and in fact tend to reproduce gender inequalities in their own professional activity.

8. In 2007, they still amounted to 21.3% of the women active in agriculture (BISAULT, 2009).

Box 1

A Survey of Organic Vegetable Farmers in the Alpes-Maritimes Region

The data presented in this article stem from a study of organic market gardeners in the Alpes-Maritimes Region carried out between 2009 and 2012 as part of a doctoral dissertation. Aside from several corpora of administrative archives and the secondary analysis of a statistical survey, our study rests mainly on *ca.* sixty semi-structured interviews and the observation of a variety of collective situations, such as sessions of professional training and information bearing on “converting” to organic farming, or periods of commercial activity – selling on the market, or distributing vegetables in Associations to Promote Natural Farming (*Associations pour le maintien d’une agriculture paysanne*, AMAP). The interviews, principally carried out in the person’s home, were often accompanied by a visit to the farm and occasional participation in the farm-work, whereby I was able to both observe the workplace and learn how things are actually done.

Born in the early 1960s in some of the region’s fruit and vegetable farms, organic cultivation first developed notably in the 1990s, then experienced a second period of growth towards the end of the noughties: 181 farms received the “organic farming” (*agriculture biologique*) label in 2012. In 2011, market gardening was the main specialty of organic farmers (45% *vs.* 34.3% of all the farms in the region), well ahead of olive growing, fruit production and dairy farming (goatmilk). Though the small numbers of certified organic farmers do not allow for the exploitable agricultural statistics that would enable us to characterise the local organic agriculture with any precision, it is important to note that the twenty-two farms we visited during our survey represented a great variety of socio-economic situations, from the micro-farm, measuring less than a hectare in an elevated mountain zone, to the 7-8 hectares estate in a valley, comprising large numbers of greenhouses near a densely populated area.

Gender relations at work were not initially at the heart of our research, but the data collected on the life-courses and professional status of the women and men we interviewed permitted us to grasp certain aspects. Though the invisibility of work in an agricultural context classically refers to the lack of professional recognition and the fragmentation of tasks women do (LAGRAVE, 1988), in this article we mainly consider it from a statutory point of view.

Women Becoming “Neo-Rural” Farmers: Between Professional Rupture and Family Project

Our fieldwork confirms the notion that, in the domain of agriculture, labour is family-driven: of the twenty-two fruit and vegetable production units we visited (Box 2), fifteen were run *en famille* – the seven others were generally managed by a farmer – man or woman – working alone. In most cases, the family dimension was not the result of intergenerational relations, it was limited to the couple. There are several reasons for this: on the one hand, for *ca.* half of the persons interviewed, becoming a

farmer meant setting up a new farm: though their parents sometimes helped, they never participated physically or lastingly in the production process. On the other hand, at the time of the survey, the market gardeners who have taken over a family farm were

Box 2

The “Neo-Rural” Farmers of the Survey

Of the twenty-two farms covered by the survey, ten belonged to farmers – men or women – who did not themselves originate from a farming family; they had become vegetable farmers after having worked in a non-agricultural sector for a more or less long period of time. The corpora presented here is composed of the interviews carried out with these “neo-rural” farmers.

I have chosen to leave the expression “neo-rural” between quotation marks in order to convey my scepticism concerning the popular image sparked by the notion. As Ivan BRUNEAU (2006) has shown, these farmers, though not themselves daughters or sons of farmers, are not as unfamiliar with the rural milieu as one might think. More specifically, within the framework of the survey, those men and women designated as “neo-rural” often possess a knowledge of or an experience in agriculture: some have relatives in the sector (grandparents, uncles, aunts), others trained in a vocational school to become professional gardeners.

In the diversified social space we analysed, “neo-rural” farmers occupy middle or low-ranking positions, typically in small or average-size farms high up in the mountains (where only a seasonal production is possible), and therefore more or less remote from the main consumer basins. They have a relatively high level of schooling in common. Of the eighteen individuals active on the “new” farms at the time of the survey, fourteen had a school leaving qualification with a diploma (*baccalauréat* level or a technical, vocational or farm-manager certificate). Among them, half had gone to university (in psychology, biology, English, economics) or been enrolled in a *classe préparatoire* (not all of them finished). Four farmers only have a vocational certificate: they are the oldest of the “neos” and also those who were the oldest when they launched their activity.

However, these “neo-rurals” do not make up a homogeneous social group. On the one hand, though fathers’ professions reveal a predominance of individuals of middle-class extraction (six farmers had fathers in the intermediate professions, four came from families of independent workers), there were also four whose fathers were executives in a private firm, or teachers, and three whose fathers were workers or employees, their mothers generally home-makers. On the other hand, for those whose installation as farmers represented a career change, a variety of previous social situations are also notable: three of our interviewees had occupied intermediate positions; four farmers had been merchants or artisans (among whom three self-employed gardeners) and one a factory worker; four farmers had been previously employed, three as executives or teachers. Consequently, it is difficult to define a typical social position for these “neo-rural” agrobiologists (see the appendix for a detailed presentation of the farming couples interviewed).

on the average too old⁹ for their parents or parents-in-law to still be on the farm – the latter being either too advanced in age, or already deceased. Lastly, when visiting those family farms, I did not observe that the sons and daughters of the farmers interviewed were working with their parents: they were away studying, or in jobs that had nothing to do with agriculture. In short, in our study, the conjugal farm model was clearly dominant. In fact, of the nineteen partners we encountered,¹⁰ only four (all women) were employed outside the farm and did not regularly participate in the farm-work.¹¹ Aside from those four women, twelve partners worked full-time on the family farm and had no other professional activity; three (one man and two women) worked in a different sector of activity altogether, while contributing on a regular basis to work on the farm, intending to get more involved and, eventually, totally or partially, quit their salaried employment.

The result is hardly surprising if one considers the fact that farmers' wives generally work on fruit and vegetable farms (DUFOUR, GIRAUD, 2012), and on multifunction farms (LAISNEY, LERBOURG, 2012), where certain tasks still require considerable female attention (BESSIÈRE *et al.*, 2014).¹² But, in the light of our study, it can also be interpreted as a product of the deliberately conjugal nature of the “back to the land” movement or of build-a-new-farm projects. In fact, the conjugal farm model is even more popular among “neo-rurals”. Of the ten “new” farms we visited during our survey, only one was managed by a single woman (Table), and another by a market gardener who was married but worked alone. The eight other farms were run – or would soon be run – by both members of the couple. A working couple would thus seem a necessary condition for setting up in agriculture. How then does accessing independence fit in with the professional farming trajectories of these men and women?

TABLE – The Place of Conjugal Work on the Farms Covered by the Survey

	« Neo-rural men and women »	« Men and women taking over a farm »
Single	1	2
In a couple but working alone	1	3
Working as a couple (or planning to do so)	8	7
Total	10	12

Field: Totality of farms covered by the survey.

Source: Survey SAMAK, 2014.

9. The men and women farmers interviewed were on the average quite advanced in age, a fact that is linked to their demographic rather than their professional situation; due to urbanisation and the high rate of disillusionment with agriculture, the farmers in the Alps region were on the average 58 years old (Agreste, *Enquête sur la structure des exploitations 2005*).

10. Three women were single or divorced.

11. As in the case of the bakers studied by Isabelle BERTAUX-WIAME (1982), women's refusal to enter the family business is all the more likely if they occupied a stable position before their husband created his enterprise.

12. Tasks such as milking or selling on the market imply very set and rigid schedules; it is difficult to find personnel to carry out such tasks for a salary.

“Neo-Rural” Farmers: From Rural Community to Professional Conversion

Though the social and political motivations for setting up as “back to the land” adepts reveal a certain continuity – an alternative to urban living and salaried employment, and a rejection of the consumer society (BRUNEAU, 2006) – one is obliged to acknowledge that becoming a “neo-rural” farmer today is not exactly the same as twenty years ago.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a “neo-rural” installation did not reflect a true career conversion. It usually came in the wake of living in one of the rural communes that cropped up following the events of May 1968.¹³ It was also sometimes a prospect contemplated upon leaving school, after having been significantly marked by the “back to nature” ideology. In our survey, such was Stéphane Muller’s case.¹⁴ Born in Germany in 1959 of a father who was a minister and a housebound mother, towards the end of the 1970s, when he was 18 and after a short time in college, he was taken by his brother (who was a little older and had already travelled in France) to Tournot, a small town in the Alpes-Maritimes, where he met several members of the “neo-rural” community that had formed in the village. Very quickly, Stéphane and his fiancée of the moment decided to settle as farmers in the region and took over a small herd of cattle. In 1986, when given the chance to buy a piece of land in Tournot, Stéphane, his brother and their two partners jumped at the opportunity and bought it jointly. Stéphane decided to go in for vegetable farming, took his degree in agriculture, obtained subventions, and created a farm in his own name.

During the years 2000-2010, in most instances, setting up as a “neo-rural” marked the end of a professional bifurcation. There were two classic cases.

In the first and most frequent case, agriculture looked like a promising new path for aspiring artisans who found it difficult to enter the job market. Since market gardening does not require any particular, formal training (on condition one has the sufficient economic resources to acquire a piece of land),¹⁵ to young people wishing to exert an artisanal activity, it looks like a good opportunity to readjust their professional ambitions and become independent without having to go through the stage of being employed that such activities often require. For example, Julia and Laurent Faure’s professional perspectives were quite uncertain before convincing their parents, top executives in private firms, to buy somewhat more than a hectare of land. Born towards the end of the

13. As of the early 1970s, Danièle LÉGER and Bertrand HERVIEU-LÉGER (1979) described the itineraries of former commune members setting up in agriculture. See also PAGIS, 2015.

14. Names and place names have been changed to respect the anonymity of the persons interviewed.

15. Though market gardening seems a likely alternative, all the more as it only requires a small amount of economic capital compared to other agricultural specialisations, these bifurcations are made possible by the deployment of resources, generally institutional or family. Through mechanisms such as donations, inheritance or availability of property, it is frequently our interviewees’ parents who make it possible for them to set up in agriculture. In the rare cases when no sort of family capital is available, institutional resources can contribute to enhance individual savings, such as unemployment insurance accumulated during the pre-establishment period or property or land that can be rented from local public authorities.

1970s, Julia dropped out of school after her eleventh year and tried in vain to get a job as an apprentice baker, then became pregnant at 18 and concentrated on taking care of her son full time. At the end of the 1990s, after failing his examinations, Laurent's idea was to become a cabinet maker. But he rapidly realised that only the carpentry sector could offer him work and perhaps training. After a few months in a woodworking firm spent discovering the world of repetitive, "boring" labour, and difficult work relations ("the more I got ahead, the less I wanted to be employed"), he dropped his first idea. After two years out of work, he got himself hired in a building and construction firm, first as unskilled labourer then as project manager, for approximately one year, but he was "not very convinced". For the young couple, aspiring to become artisans but with no qualifications of any sort, setting up in agriculture seemed like a credible professional alternative, the more desirable as it promised a future of independent work, allowing them *a priori* to attain their ideal, a "self-sufficient family life".

In the second case, less common among our interviewees, setting up in agriculture meant withdrawing from a stable professional position (LANDOUR, 2012, 2017; PEREZ, 2014), such as manager, permanent employee, or even merchant. It was more like a professional rupture (DENAIVE, 2015), motivated by the desire to experience "real work" (BIDET, 2011) and/or by the desire to live "differently" by changing one's milieu and way of life. For instance, by becoming a farmer, Laure Castain (age 46),¹⁶ former executive in a company of public works, sought to realize her "vocation" (of which her father, also an executive, had frustrated her when she was a child), as well as to break out of a professional situation that had become "idiotic", because it was neither sufficiently "gratifying" nor allowing her to balance her professional and family life.¹⁷

"I was constantly on the road, in my car all the time. My sectors covered half the country. That too started getting on my nerves, it was tiring to be on the road all the time. I didn't find it very gratifying to eat miles of tarmac eight hours a day. [...] It's a stressful job, with people working in very hard areas, a lot of unknowns. [...] I was glued to my cell-phone, my son on one side, the maxi-cosy and the telephone on the other, ridiculous."

Experiencing a problematic work situation, which for some means bad working conditions (instability, stress, but also a glass ceiling or conflicts with the hierarchy), and for others a lack of sense (boredom, ethical conflicts),¹⁸ seems to be a recurrent factor today in professional conversion trajectories: at the junction of multifaceted and complex biographical processes that put into play the various spheres of life, becoming a farmer is more and more akin to a form of professional *exit* (HIRSCHMAN, 1995).

16. Interviewees' age was calculated with reference to the year 2010.

17. This argument refers to the impact of gender (here represented by the sexual constraints imposed by childcare) in the itineraries of professional withdrawal, as pointed out by Julie LANDOUR (2012) in her work on the executives of a polling institute.

18. Cases of professional conversion due to ethical conflicts in the workplace were observed during a survey done after my doctoral dissertation. For example, Ludovic, an engineer specialised in air quality control, quit his job because he was politically opposed to the direction taken by his firm. His story is described in SAMAK, 2016.

The Gendered Mechanisms of Convergent Professional Aspirations

If a “neo-rural” undertaking can be the end result of a professional fork in the road – reorientation or rupture – how is one to interpret the fact that the new professional project is carried by both members of a couple? In the case of the Faures, it is evident that working was a problem for both Julia and Laurent since both found it difficult to enter the job market. From the outset, the couple also shared the same desire for independence – she as a would-be baker, he as a cabinet maker – and for living close to nature. Other agricultural couples have found themselves in the position of being mutually dissatisfied or professionally insecure, which goes along with aspiring to work less or “differently”, and a determination to change their way of life or turn daily life into an ecological and social alternative (PRUVOST, 2013). Jean-Paul and Suzanne Fèvre (55 and 52), settled since 1999 on a one-hectare farm, were both more or less inactive when they became farmers. Their professional insecurity turned out to be a factor that permitted their professional aspirations to converge, the better as they corresponded to Jean-Paul’s desire to work the land and to their shared “back to nature” ideal – part of the political socialization that was their common inheritance.¹⁹ Based on the pre-existing professional dissatisfaction of both partners, and on their mutual aspirations in terms of lifestyle, these installation itineraries worked out easily, without strife or discord.

But setting up a business in agriculture also sometimes supposes, for the women of the survey, that they must give up stable and comfortable professional situations to allow their partners to reconcile their family life and professional project. In that case, it represents a last resort, reflecting family-induced logics rather than a fully consented professional exit, as the life course of 33 year-old Chloé Mongin illustrates. I met her in 2009, during a technical training session organized by the professional association of organic farmers. As the daughter of expat teachers, Chloé grew up and studied the economics of health abroad. At the start of the years 2000, she landed a position of research engineer in an international organization based in Cameroon. At the time, she considered living there and bought a house that she renovated from top to bottom (“I did some phenomenal work on it!”). After several years of professional experience, she even registered in a doctoral programme (by distance learning at a Paris university) to advance her career as research scholar. Yet, in 2008, she decided to return to France and settle down as a fruit and vegetable farmer on a one-hectare piece of land belonging to her partner Gautier’s family. During our second interview in 2010, she was still attached to her employer by a part-time contract,²⁰ while continuing

19. Jean-Paul and Suzanne belong to the cohort of organic farmers born between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1960s, who had lived during a time that fostered critical minds and a tendency to challenge the social order. In their particular case, commitment to their Union (*Confédération française démocratique du travail*, CFDT) in the 1970s, as well as taking part in “alternative” or socially committed projects (co-ops, holiday camps for orphans, a humanitarian mission in Nicaragua), were at the origin of their spirit of revolt and contributed to their aspiration to become farmers and radically change their way of life.

20. That temporary situation corresponds to an economic strategy that makes it possible for the couple to create their enterprise, as the excerpt from their interview illustrates. In fact, farmers’ wives’ salaries are often the economic resource that permit a farm to survive (BESSIÈRE, 2010).

to administer the farm (a one-man company declared in Gautier's name), filling out forms to obtain a loan, creating a website, setting up an AMAP. But she planned, once her ongoing pregnancy over, to end her contract and dedicate herself completely to the work on the farm:

“We decided we wouldn't stay in Cameroon, but at first I continued to work at a distance and in the country; I go there approximately every three months on average. When I'm here, I work at a distance part-time, which gives us a salary and an income that at least makes up for the slowness of the administration [to give them the green light], and to survive all their stupidities. Now that I'm pregnant, I mean to stop after my maternity leave and stay here because traveling with a baby... I have many friends who've done it, I see what... it's complicated, it's hard on the couple, it's hard from many points of view and I don't want any of it. So we're going to see if we can both live here and make a living... My idea, for instance, is to create a saffron-factory, the land here lends itself to that... It's very intensive but I'd do it by periods, so it's possible to do it along with other activities, olive-growing, market gardening, they're pretty complementary.”

Though Chloé seemed rather enthusiastic at the idea of becoming a farmer and already imagined herself developing a self-enhancing production of saffron within the conjugal enterprise, it remains that her choice was prompted by family and marital rather than by professional considerations. On the one hand, if she accepted to leave the city and the life she loved, it was first of all to make her relationship with Gautier a durable one. He did not want to settle in Central Africa due to his visceral attachment to his own environment: “I was too connected to stay [in Africa], I'm just a peasant, I admit [...] I'm attached to these valleys. [...] I'm a country lad, the city is really hard on me.”²¹ On the other hand, if Chloé chose to give up her job and her salary, it was mainly because she was reticent to raise her future child in her present working conditions, and share her child's education in ways that would be “hard on the couple”. Teleworking, with regular trips to Cameroon while raising children, was not for Chloé a desirable prospect, all the more as she planned to get involved in her child's upbringing in rather innovative and considerably time-consuming ways.²² By setting herself up as a farmer next to her partner, Chloé was not leaving an unfulfilling job, but rather seizing the opportunity to become a “good mother” (GOJARD, 2010), while giving Gautier the chance to be fulfilled both professionally and personally, as well as to become a “good father”.

It is also likely that leaving Cameroon was made easier by the fact that the village where Gautier planned to live offered an “exceptional quality of life”²³ and was barely a few miles distant from her own parents, retired teachers whose presence would be

21. It is also plausible that Gautier wanted to stay near his daughter (born of a previous marriage), but he did not mention it himself when he gave his reasons for not wanting to settle in Africa.

22. For example, Chloé planned to speak English with her child on a daily basis to allow him/her to become an early bilingual.

23. Artisans who settle in rural districts sometimes consider that their living conditions are a valuable social retribution for the work they do (BAJARD, PERRENOUD, 2013).

welcome in view of her future maternal status, a way of drawing closer to the family support networks. The nearness of family as well as Gautier’s local anchoring – both his grand-father and great-grand-father had been “renowned” cabinet-makers in the village – may also have represented native capital (RETIERE, 2003), giving them access to a clientele and a better social position.²⁴ All these factors were probably decisive in Chloé’s decision to become a farmer – a decision that objectively placed her in a downward spiral, socially and economically, and led her to sacrifice the professional career on which she had embarked.

The same sort of logics, between building a social future (BERTAUX-WIAME, 1982) and family responsibilities, prompted Samia Verdier (38) to throw herself into the idea of creating a farm with her partner. As the daughter of modest immigrants (father blue-collar worker and mother homemaker), Samia grew up in an industrial town of eastern France. Towards the end of the 1980s, after earning her *baccalauréat* and two years of higher education that she did not complete at a school of economics, she met Florent, the son of employees (father accountant and mother secretary), who was then registered in a professional training programme, and married him. Not terribly keen on their studies, and aspiring to live in the mountains, Samia and Florent left for Savoie and at first lived on irregular, seasonal jobs. After a few years, Samia obtained an open-ended contract (CDI) in a large retail firm where she became floor manager, while Florent did small jobs and renovated the house they had bought together. Tired of not being able to find stable and satisfying employment and wanting to be professionally independent, Florent decided at the start of the years 2000 to aim for agriculture; buying a two-hectare plot of land where they could have a wooden dwelling built was done thanks to the sale of their house and a bank loan.

My first encounter with Samia took place in 2009, and during the interview, I could see that, though she did not call herself a “vegetable farmer”, her role on the farm was crucial:

– How do you share the work between you?

Samia: – At first, we didn’t really know but little by little it turned out that he’s the vegetable farmer. [...] So he gets the land ready, because it’s him with the machines, he does the planting, the irrigation, and I weed. That’s it. That, and the markets. The vegetables, we do together. The market is me because he doesn’t... He likes to talk but he doesn’t like working in the market.

– And the work in the house?

S.: – Oh that’s me [laughter]! Go on! It’s really to despair. Because it’s not considered work. Cutting wood for heating, that’s work, but cleaning, putting things away, washing, that’s not work.”

24. Sybille GOLLAC (2013) highlights what being a native signifies in the strategies deployed by the lower classes aspiring to rise on the social ladder. They do so not by accumulating scholarly capital but rather by obtaining a promotion inside the company or creating their own business, strategies that bring into play social capital and local family prestige. Although neither Gautier nor Chloé come from poor families (Chloé’s parents were teachers and Gautier’s public servants), their installation resembles those analysed by Sybille GOLLAC.

Samia's personal involvement in her husband's farm was not limited to selling on the stands in the market, an activity that seemed to give her much satisfaction, she also participated in harvesting and did most of the weeding – a considerable part of working in the fields consists in weeding the crops – and took care of most of the paperwork to manage the farm. Yet, when her spouse decided to set himself up as a fruit and vegetable farmer, Samia was not sure she wanted to work with him. She thought of finding a job. Though both aspired to live in the mountains, agriculture was not part of her plans:

Florent: – At first, when we settled in, Samia didn't really know... She didn't know if she wanted to do that. We didn't know if we'd make it, etc. So we kept our options open and thought: maybe you'll find a job. And for two-three years we were undecided.

Samia: – No, we were undecided but we had our nose to the grindstone, so...

F: – As a result, you never really thought: "I want to do it." Well, she continues doing it, but in fact we've never really spoken about it again.

S: – Well yes, because bit by bit when you sell, and people come back, you think oh well, we've done something they seem to like, it works, it would be stupid to drop something good to run after some unknown thing... on top of it all, it's very gratifying. That's it, it's true that in the end I must love the land because if I didn't I wouldn't have stayed, don't you think? It's stupid to drop something that works.

F: – In any case, I left it up to her. At first, she wasn't really enthusiastic...

S: – Ah no, it wasn't really my thing."

And further down in the interview:

S: So we arrived with three kids, a baby and I had to do it [the farm] all at the same time. It was hard [...] because to find myself there with three kids was hard, it took us such a long time, well... not that we neglected the children completely, but as a mother I felt that I wasn't giving them the attention I should."

One might say that Samia was swallowed up by her husband's professional project. The prospect of having to face the huge amount of construction implied by building a house and then a farm, and at the same time raise three young children was daunting, and in the end she had neither the time nor the energy to wonder whether or not she wanted to be a farmer, nor to weigh the pros and cons of farming or taking a job with a salary. Yet, since arriving in Savoie, her family and professional situation had vastly improved: after several years of precarious and subordinate jobs, she had attained a stable and responsible position with an "almost satisfactory" salary, and her husband took care of their second child while working on the house. But, even though she did not particularly aspire to become a farmer ("it was not at all my thing"), she put her own professional existence on the back burner in order to make her husband's project feasible, which caused her to undergo a radical gender shift back into domesticity.

However, she gradually became attached to working the land and to the social recognition she obtained on the markets; she would find it "stupid" today to give up the family business. But in the last analysis, it is really in order to allow her partner to

realise his professional ambitions and make his dream of independence come true that Samia had become a farmer: in order to become part of her own professional trajectory, that activity had to fit in with family contingencies – helping her husband and raising her children – it was not what she herself hoped for professionally.²⁵

Carole Martin (30) became pregnant in 2012, and, though she claims to be a “passionate orchid lover”, all of a sudden left her job as paid manager-and-accountant at her cousin’s flower-shop in order to assist her partner Christophe Tissot set up a three-hectare farm in a lowland zone. If maternity appears to give women the incentive to involve themselves more deeply in their partner’s enterprise, it is because farm-work seems to make reconciling professional activity and childcare simpler, albeit their choice generally implies moving farther away from family networks and cooperation.²⁶ It is probable that “neo-rural” woman farmers are, from that point of view, less likely to refuse participating in their partner’s enterprise than the daughters or daughters-in-law of female farmers, because they are less aware of the sacrifices and dependencies entailed. As Céline BESSIÈRE has shown, if young farmers’ partners are so keen on working away from the farm, it is because they do not want to “have the same fate as their mothers-in-law, who ‘slaved away their life’”, and consider that being employed outside the farm is the instrument of their emancipation (BESSIÈRE, 2010, p. 162). On the contrary, “neo-rural” woman farmers do not have farming mothers or mothers-in-law as counter-models and probably feel the need to free themselves from a condition they can only imagine far less.

In the end, it is striking that, when a woman creates a farm after a professional conversion, both members of the couple *do not* automatically change their professional orientation. If Jean-Pierre Revel was willing to follow his partner, formerly a hair-dresser near Paris, and accept her idea to build a vegetable farm, it is because he himself aspired to retire and sell his business, and saw it as an opportunity to change his own way of life. For Laure Castain, on the contrary, the choice of agriculture was not devoid of conjugal complications: her partner was a top executive in a company of public works and did not wish to give up his career and embrace her project, despite the fact there was a small child in the family. The couple did not survive the difficulties triggered by her agricultural project: Laure ended up divorcing and obtained custody of her son. This example shows that, on the ground, the “common cause” (GOLLAC, 2003) comprised of childcare and building a social, professional and familial future does in fact function as a factor permitting “neo-rural” farmers’ aspirations to converge – but they converge above all in one direction: women who were working for a salary are incited to quit their jobs and support their partner’s agricultural project.

25. These results confirm those obtained by Marie GILLET and Dominique JACQUES-JOUVENOT (2004) on woman farmers who had not inherited agricultural property: for these women who come from other social milieus, their occupation is the result of a conjugal rather than a professional choice.

26. Chloé’s case is an exception, since Samia and Carole, as well as Laure and Julia, settled far from their own and their partner’s families.

Towards a Recurrence of Woman's Invisible Work?

Concerning their professional standing, “neo-rural” woman farmers’ situation sometimes exacerbates the differences observed between men and women in the more old-fashioned establishments.

The difference was already perceptible in the enterprises of the “take-over” farmers we visited, since women’s professional standing there is rarely equal to their husband’s. With the exception of one of the women interviewed, whose aged father had urged her to take over the farm alone when she was 19, and who today runs the family EARL (company) together with her husband, farming couples usually prefer the status of collaborating spouse. The women do not challenge that subservient status, even though they are sometimes the vectors through whom the property and know-how get transmitted (particularly when it is a son-in-law who takes over the farm), because to them it seems to be part of an immutable and legitimate, gendered order of things.²⁷

But among “neo-rural” working couples, the statutory inequalities between women and men are even more noticeable. Excluding situations where one of the partners did not declare farming as their main occupation because they occupied another, more advantageous status as employee, independent worker or pensioner, we noted that five of the eight women-farmers interviewed simply do not have any professional status at all, and are not even declared to be working on the farm.

The Absence of Status: A Limitation and a Resource

How should these women’s peculiar position be interpreted, given that before becoming farmers, four of them had occupied stable professional positions? On the one hand, if these farming couples never envisage the status of co-farmer, collaborating spouse or employee, it is due to the economic constraints that weigh on them. The social security contributions induced by co-farming are at a cost that these small farmers do not think they can support, given the modest benefits generated by their activity.²⁸ It is then nearly always²⁹ an unthought-out, automatic, masculine supremacy that casts the man as head of the business and the woman as invisible worker.

27. This is hardly surprising since, as Philippe CARDON (2004, p. 124) suggests, “women reproduce the very conditions leading to their own exclusion from inheriting the profession, because subconsciously they acknowledge that transmission along the male line is the legitimate way”.

28. On these farms, invisible work does not only concern women: the local expression “lending a hand” can refer to unpaid work carried out by friends and relatives as well as to undeclared labour done by anonymous workers (SAMAK, 2016).

29. Except for the Faures, a couple in which Julia is manager and Laurent undeclared. The disparity between the professional statuses of “neo-rurals” woman partners may correspond to their different levels of education and previous professional standing before becoming farmers, but our data do not permit verifying that hypothesis, since almost all have similar levels of education (*baccalauréat* and over) and occupied relatively equivalent positions in the social order (hair-dresser, skilled employee in a supermarket, a co-op, a printer’s shop). Then too, the case of Julia Faure is a counter-example, because, even though she has few educational credentials and never had another occupation than that of vegetable farmer, in her couple she is the only one in the couple to be declared.

On the other hand, in their interviews, the women concerned by that professional invisibility justify their situation as much by their own carelessness at the time they had decided to become farmers – sometimes a source of regrets – as by their lack of faith in the social system guaranteed by the State. Brigitte Serres (62) is a former 1968 “activist” (« *soixante-huitarde* ») who fell into agriculture by way of the “back to the land” ideologies that flourished at the time. Born into a merchant family and with a university degree in psychology, she first started her career as a teacher in the Caribbean, before returning to mainland France after her marriage broke down, a few months before May 1968. She then participated in the creation of a rural commune with a group of friends in Tournot, a village where for several years she lived on subsistence farming and raised her children. In the mid-1980s, once the commune had disbanded, Brigitte and her partner Gérard decided to make market gardening their occupation: they rented plots of land from a farmer which they cultivated, and created an individual farm in Gérard’s name. After a few years, they had the opportunity to buy a three-hectare piece of land and took out a loan of 800,000 francs, which forced them to considerably step up their production. Brigitte’s activity was crucial for their business: she took care of most of the sales (serving four markets each week), transformed fruit into jam and the rest of the time did the actual farm-work (sowing, weeding, harvesting). Her role on the farm was reinforced when, towards the end of the 1990s, Gérard fell sick and was forced to curtail his activities and work only part-time. Though the couple could count on many friends and family members to “lend a hand”, Brigitte was nevertheless, because of the debts they had accumulated, obliged to work doubly hard. She has never been officially declared as a farmer, and though today she seems to somewhat regret her carefree attitude, she also expresses – tongue in cheek – the little faith she has in the way society protects peasants:

“I’m nothing here, I’m not declared. [...] True, I realize it wasn’t the best choice. But, well, when we settled in there weren’t many... in the world of agriculture, you have to get married. But since I’d already been married once and it was a bad experience, I’d sworn never to marry again. There you have it, it’s dumb but that’s the way it is, I stuck to my decision, I didn’t get married [laughter]. Which means I don’t have a status. I do have medical coverage, but that’s all, no pension... And when I realised... I told myself: ‘Alright, now’s the time to make things legal, because things have changed a bit.’ But when I realized what a peasant’s pension amounts to, I thought that, in the end, the minimum pension, you know, well, it’s not worth much [laughter].”

Brigitte’s words underscore the correlation in French law between the professional and the marital status. She never had a status because she didn’t want to marry. The failure of her first marriage, and experiencing life in a commune, where the traditional conjugal model is discarded and marriage is considered a “bourgeois institution”, had convinced her to cohabit with Gérard under common law. It is only since 2005 that unmarried couples (united by civil law or simply concubines) can request the status of collaborating spouse. That is why she never really worried about her professional status. Besides, her words convey the low esteem in which she holds the socialised

system of social protection: noting the scantiness of farmers' pension schemes, Brigitte decided it was best not to pay into the system and preferred to build a guesthouse instead, to give herself some extra income. Lack of confidence in the State is common among small farmers and independent workers, who prefer to rely on solidarity networks rather than on the State to keep their business going.³⁰ However, though Brigitte is a university graduate and grew up in the city, she is also the daughter of merchants and the grand-daughter of farmers. It is not impossible that living in a commune as she did in the seventies – which depended on pooling together the money some earned in a job and on the domestic production (subsistence farming) of others – and its ramifications, such as the artisanal or agricultural activities various members of the community did on the side – also went towards bolstering her belief in interpersonal solidarities, and in “making do”, to the detriment of formal modes of working and of sharing resources. In the same way as she continues today to barter and exchange with members of her entourage – “neo-rurals” or “peasants from around here” – and to resort to non-commercial forms of doing business (receiving or lending a helping hand) (WEBER, 2000, 2009) and “close protection” (CASTEL, 1995), she is convinced she will be able to support her couple when they retire by running a guesthouse together, supposed to secure them an income. Apparently, the failure of her first marriage and the erstwhile breaks in her conjugal relationship with Gérard have not ruined her idealized image of conjugal solidarity.

It was the same story with the Verdiers; there too, the fact that Samia's work was not declared was a foregone conclusion:

“ – When you established the farm, were you both declared as main managers?

Samia: – I don't exist. I have no status.

– And what is the reason?

S.: – Well, at first I didn't want to declare farmer as my main occupation because I didn't want to multiply our expenses. Oh yes, because if you double the cost, you can't make it.

Florent: – The problem with the MSA (Farmers' Mutual Insurance [*Mutualité sociale agricole*]), is that you pay but when you see what they give you, you fall flat on your face. If there's an accident, if you have a labour injury, you just fall over.

S: – How much does he pay, 3,500 euros a year? 3,500 euros of contributions, multiplied by two, well you've got to produce 3,500 more in goods. It's *fff*...

F: – So we thought what we're going to do for our pension in any case, we're going to build a guest-house. That's the idea. Instead of paying... Anyway, we're against speculation, even before the crisis. Whatever they're offering, investments, whatever. So whatever we have, we invest it in the land. And next year we'll start on the

30. As Florence WEBER (2008) pointed out, informal labour exists mainly in economic sectors with a large proportion of (very) small enterprises, dependent on seasonal labour and where profit is never guaranteed (restaurants, construction and public works, agriculture). What is more, in artisanal activities, commerce or agriculture, the limit between an invisible, unpaid domestic economy and paid labour is unclear, and entrepreneurs frequently resort to different family members for work which is more or less remunerated, claiming they occasionally “lend a hand” (see, among others, WEBER, 2008; ZARCA, 1993; GUICHARD, POUSSOU-PLESSE, 2017).

guest-house. [...] We thought, it'll be a bit of our pension. If we have health issues, it'll be a bit of an income. And then, whatever happens, we're together, we're married, everything we've got is both of ours, anyway we don't want to pay, we don't want to pay the MSA.

S: – It's true I could have been a contributor, if only as a farmer's wife.

F: – Maybe we should get some information. [Addressing me] I don't know if you know...

S: – This has been going on a while, every time the subject comes up, *pff*... I don't bother.”

Married, and co-owners of the land and the house they built, Samia and Florent at no time even think of breaking up. Their economic strategy is based on the solidity of their couple – their marriage, the guesthouse in view of their retirement – rather than on society as a whole. They do not see the fact of not declaring the woman's work as a moral issue. It is part and parcel of an economic rationale deliberately pushed to the side-lines, a deviation from the dominant norm – they are opposed to speculation and reject the idea of basing their pension on it, for example by taking out a life-insurance policy – but also a deviation regarding the State, which to their mind does not represent a system of true solidarity. From that standpoint, gender inequalities in professional statuses can be considered one of the possible manifestations of the “alternative” ethos of “neo-rural” farmers. Since their economic resources are hardly sufficient to pay for medical coverage for each member of the couple anyway, these farmers turn their backs on both the economic structures and the public social security systems, while placing their trust in personal relationships and inter-individual solidarity.

The Consequence of Ignoring the Systems and Risks that Exist

If these woman farmers think their social protection can only be entrusted to their own couple, it is also because they disregard both the risks actually incurred and the existing systems of social protection. As Florent Verdier's words on the status of collaborating partner illustrate, we observed they were sometimes relatively ignorant concerning the official systems available and their entitlements. In their situations, marriage and co-ownership (of the house and/or the cultivated land) blind them to the institutional, collective systems of social security (“we're together, we're man and wife, everything that's here is both of ours”).

In addition, these farmers do not measure the economic risks incurred by a divorce; in particular they do not know that women's economic contribution to the farm, whether productive or simply financial, is largely underestimated by the judge when it comes to a legal separation (BESSIÈRE, GOLLAC, 2014). That is what emerged from Anne Ragon's experience: she woke up to her own statutory non-existence when at age 46 she saw the effects of her brother-in-law's divorce on her ex-sister-in-law. The daughter of cattle raisers in the Vendée, Anne lives with Stéphane Muller mentioned earlier, the vegetable grower of German descent settled in the village of Tournot since

the 1980s (cf. *supra*). But she was not there when Stéphane first set up his farm with another woman. When she arrived in Tournot in the early 1990s, it was the end of her exiting the agricultural sector, which she managed to do by traveling abroad (in Austria and “all over”), by being employed (in a printing shop), by living in the city (Paris), by taking a two-year degree in philosophy (*Diplôme d'études universitaires générales*, DEUG), and by being active in a protest movement against poor housing. At first an unpaid volunteer on Stéphane's farm, she was to remain more than fifteen years an undeclared worker on her own partner's farm: the couple only decided to marry³¹ and register Anne as collaborating spouse at the MSA in 2008. In fact, in 2007, Stéphane's labour injury caused him to be inactive for several months, which pushed Anne to review her situation: she understood that it was important to be officially protected in a way that corresponded to her status as full-time worker. As already mentioned, she also became aware of the shakiness of her status as invisible worker when her brother-in-law Alain divorced Nila – they occupied an attached house and shared the property of the land on which they all lived – Anne and Stéphane as organic fruit and vegetable farmers, Alain and Nila as ewe breeders. The conflicts surrounding the management of the flock generated by the divorce made Anne aware of the need to protect herself *a minima* against that possibility:

“Before I got married I was an outlaw, though I paid, I worked, and all. OK, you don't care for a while but one day you think maybe, you never know, you can't tell what'll happen. And then they started fighting up there and you think wait a minute, listen, Nila too was collaborating spouse and then, all of a sudden, nothing. No more power. It's a real mess, even though everything they had they'd done together. That's what gave us the idea to make it all legitimate. So I should at least be protected a minimum.”

Her case thus reveals the potentially temporary nature of the invisible work of the women interviewed. As soon as they become aware of the risks, and once the economic conditions required to pay for the social contributions are met, the statutory recognition of these woman farmers becomes a possibility. Samia Verdier and her partner Florent, as well as Suzanne Fèvre and her partner Jean-Paul, said during their interview that they had already thought of fixing that situation of statutory invisibility – but without acting on it. Rather than a cause for conflict between women and men, or of male opposition to women working (ZARCA, 1993), to these farmers, preoccupied above all by the fragile economic balance of their enterprise, gender inequality is a “given”, a non-priority. But the danger is that the realization comes too late to have any real economic and social impact, as the case of Brigitte Serres (above) made very clear, and that therefore the women remain dependent indefinitely.



31. Under the community of property matrimonial regime, which gave her the ownership of one eighth of the farm (after Stéphane had bought back the part belonging to his ex-wife).

Over the past few decades, women’s situations in the French agricultural sector have improved from the point of view of social recognition, and their professional trajectories have become increasingly less dependent on their partner’s. But the phenomenon comes in different shades and shapes and certain situations are characterised by the persistence of couples working together and by the fact that women’s work remains invisible. In this survey, conducted among organic fruit and vegetable growers in the Alpes-Maritimes region, it appears that nearly all the “neo-rural” women work in couples, frequently without any professional status. Wondering what social logics preside over their decision to become farmers next to their partners and work in their shadow, as it were, led us to cast light primarily on the fact that, if indeed “neo-rural” installations today are the outcome of a professional rupture or reorientation, the long and short of it is that they have set up as couples, which points mainly to family-driven logics. In the first place, though having children and building a social, professional and family future does show that the professional aspirations of “neo-rural” farmers converge, they nonetheless seem to converge mainly in one and the same direction: the women are incited to give up their salaried employment and throw themselves heart and soul into their partner’s agricultural project. Secondly, their statutory invisibility is primarily the result of economic constraints: being more often than not in situations of economic subsistence, these farmers are obliged to accept configurations that are unequal in terms of gender. But those inequalities may also be due to their relative ignorance of the risks involved and the ways to protect themselves, and to real misgivings as to the formal systems of social protection that exist, which lead them to put their trust in conjugal solidarity and develop individual strategies as a compensation. In such situations, resorting to emotion (the marital commitment), mutual support and reciprocity, or yet again to the argument of the non-mercantile and “alternative” nature of their economic choices, is a convenient arrangement that allows neutralizing the practical and symbolic tensions those gender inequalities could generate.

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APPENDIX – LIST OF THE FARMING FAMILIES INTERVIEWED

“Neo-rural” farmers (men and women)

CASTAIN

♣ Farm: 1,8 ha market gardening

♀ Castain Laure: manager, age 46*, father executive in the private sector, mother homemaker

∞ Marital status: single, divorced

FAURE

♣ Farm: 1 ha market gardening

♀ Faure Julia: manager, age 31, father executive in the private sector, mother homemaker

♂ Faure Laurent: undeclared, age 32, father executive in the private sector, mother executive secretary

FÈVRE

♣ Farm: 1 ha market gardening

♂ Fèvre Jean-Paul: manager, age 55, parents railway workers

♀ Fèvre Suzanne: undeclared, age 52, parents shopkeepers

MÉRIEUX

♣ Farm: 1.4 ha market gardening

♂ Mérieux Michel: manager, age 62, father railway technician, mother schoolmistress

∞ Marital status: married, partner works outside the farm

MONGIN-ROSTAN

♣ Farm: 1 ha market gardening

♂ Rostan Gautier: manager, age 38, parents tax officers

♀ Mongin Chloé: part-time employee outside the farm (temporarily), age 33, parents teachers

MULLER-RAGON

♣ Farm: 1.5 ha market gardening

♂ Muller Stéphane: manager, age 51, father minister, mother homemaker

♀ Ragon Anne: collaborating spouse since 2008, undeclared from 1992 to 2008, age 46, parents farmers

MARINI-SERRES

♣ Exploitation: 2.2 ha market gardening

♂ Marini Gérard: manager, age 60, father army officer, mother homemaker

♀ Serres Brigitte: undeclared, age 62, parents merchants

REVEL

♣ Exploitation: 0.5 ha market gardening

♀ Revel Monique: manager, age 55, father industrial designer, mother homemaker

♂ Revel Jean-Pierre: retired, age 58, father mason, mother homemaker

TISSOT-MARTIN

♣ Exploitation: 1.2 ha market gardening

♂ Tissot Christophe: manager, age 36, father technician in industry, mother homemaker

♀ Martin Carole: undeclared, age 30, parents' profession unknown

VERDIER

♣ Exploitation: 1 ha market gardening

♂ Verrier Florent: manager, age 40, father accountant, mother secretary

♀ Verrier Samia: undeclared, age 38, father blue-collar, mother homemaker

* It was agreed that interviewees' ages would be calculated with reference to the year 2010.

Farmers (men and women) who took over a farm

BRUNO

♣ Farm: 2 ha market gardening

♂ Bruno Patrick: co-manager, age 51, father accountant (employee), mother homemaker

♀ Bruno Christine: co-manager, age 46, parents farmers

CARATTI

♣ Farm: 8 ha market gardening

♂ Caratti Paul: manager, age 74, father overseer in a factory, mother homemaker

♀ Caratti Mireille: collaborating spouse, age 68, parents farmers

CARDAN

♣ Farm: 1.5 ha market gardening

♂ Cardan Philippe: manager, age 50, parents farmers

♀ Cardan Sanya: collaborating spouse, age 43, parents farmers

GARRIDO

♣ Farm: 2.5 ha market gardening

♂ Garrido Antoine: manager, age 56, parents farmers

♀ Garrido Élise: collaborating spouse, age 60, father head-waiter, mother homemaker

LAMY

♣ Farm: 1 ha market gardening

♂ Lamy Victor: manager, age 56, parents farmers

∞ Marital status: married, spouse works outside the farm

MASSIERA

♣ Farm: 1.2 ha market gardening

♀ Massiera Marie: manager, age 51, father blue-collar worker, mother public employee

∞ Marital status: single, divorced

MURET

♣ Farm: 0.8 ha market gardening

♂ Muret Pierre: manager, age 57, parents farmers

∞ Marital status: single, divorced

OLIVETTI

♣ Farm: 4.7 ha market gardening

♂ Olivetti Éric: manager, age 52, father executive in industry, mother homemaker

♀ Olivetti Florence: collaborating spouse, age 50, parents farmers

PRÉVOT

♣ Farm: 0.8 ha market gardening

♀ Prévot Janine: manager, age 57, father works manager, mother school teacher

♂ Prévot André: manager (in a tree nursery next to the farm), age 57, parents farmers

PUJOL

♣ Farm: 4.5 ha market gardening

♂ Pujol Roland: manager, age 52, parents farmers

∞ Marital status: common law marriage, spouse works outside the farm

ROSSO

♣ Farm: 3 ha market gardening

♂ Rosso Bernard: manager, age 62, parents farmers

∞ Marital status: married, spouse works outside the farm

SOREL

♣ Farm: 0.4 ha market gardening

♀ Sorel Colette: manager, age 46, parents vegetable farmers

∞ Marital status: married, spouse works outside the farm (but plans to work on the farm part-time)
