

Dream contract factsheet 13: Unione Comuni Garfagnana (Italy)



Dream farming-landscape

Objective

When asked what kind of agricultural landscape they would like to see in 2040, our stakeholders unanimously responded: “a harmonious and cared-for landscape”. Among the sceneries they paint a valley full of colours, with different plots of grains, wheat, maize, rye, cultivation of potatoes, tomatoes, orchards always in bloom, hazelnut groves, chestnut groves with bright *metati* (typical small buildings for chestnut drying), woods and manicured pastures. They imagine a lively rural life, an agricultural food system that enhances the agro-biodiversity and ensures the presence of these specific products in a local market, starting from school canteens, but especially in catering, able to make known a territory and its history through its products. Taking care of our territory means making it efficient and functional to the new challenges and opportunities of the coming years. Trying to put in production varieties at risk of extinction and contribute to increase the agro-biodiversity bringing with it the value of organic, landscape creation, soil fertility and consequently affecting in a benevolent way all the spontaneous fauna and flora. It also results in health benefits through a more varied and nutritious diet.

Enablers

- Tourists who are aware of sustainability
- Growing interest in local products
- Presence of farmers who are guardians of biodiversity
- Possibility of producing quality agriculture
- Growing use of online sales tools (food barrio) capable of reducing territorial isolation

Inhibitors

- Abandonment of rural land
- Lack of a reference model to strive for that is not a simple copy of agriculture before the 1950s.
- Increasingly frequent catastrophic events due to climate change
- Excessive splitting of property
- The advanced age of those involved in agriculture
- Difficulty in finding seeds

Actors involved in defining the dream landscape

The main actors are the local producers. But consumers and politicians are the actors who can make the dream contract concrete.

Method used

For the dream landscape an online meeting with the support of a professional who guided stakeholders (custodian Tuscan farmers) towards the expression of their wishes regarding the landscape was held, complemented with questionnaires and comparison with positive or negative landscape images.

For developing the dream contracts several online meetings were organised in which we opened up a dialogue with Tuscan custodian growers, worked in synergy with universities, research centres and associations committed to protecting biodiversity (Food Community Association, Cacio local association and National Association of Chestnut Cities).

Dream contract

Objective

The dream contract aims to consolidate the system of protection of biodiversity of agricultural and food interest, based on results and referring only to conservation, introducing proposals for the enhancement and dissemination of knowledge. Currently, the process of reforestation of agricultural areas has led to the presence of more than 70% woody cover and the contraction of high altitude pastures. Expanding agricultural production with endangered breeds and varieties would create a harmonious and diverse agricultural landscape in all seasons of the year and at different altitudes. Increasing contractual requirements relating to environmental issues involving soil fertility preservation, increasing insect populations, sustainable use of water resources, preservation of different biotopes (physical environments), improving the lives of local inhabitants in terms of well-being and making the area more attractive for sustainable tourism.

Measures

Production of seeds of endangered varieties using low environmental impact techniques (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1. Production of seeds of rare varieties in CIL Unione Comuni Garfagnana.

Benefits envisaged

- Societal/environmental benefits:
 - Well-kept and lively area for the population and visiting tourists
 - Healthy food for the population.
 - The whole tourism sector (restaurants, shops, travel agencies): enhancing productions so strongly identified in their territory, can become a tourist destination.
- Benefits for farmers:
 - Public financial contribution.
 - Private financial contribution from consumers.
 - Non-financial contribution through the improvement of the image of the area and of the self-esteem of the individual company.

Application domain

- Farm types: Small farms and breeding farms
- Land use: arable land, orchards, vineyards, chestnut groves, pastures, etc.
- Land tenure conditions: private and public

Contract duration

Ideal contract period: Minimum 5 years, renewable depending on results

Actors

- Farmers: For valorisation farms are needed, for conservation it is important to facilitate access to the contract to private individual hobbyists
- The tourism sector (restaurants, shops, travel agencies): enhancing productions so strongly identified in their territory, can become a tourist destination. There is a need to identify one or more entities that can form a network to propose itineraries to discover farms that produce agro-biodiversity, visits to the Germplasm Bank and the collection fields. The tourism sector could also commit itself to supporting production through advertising.
- Land owners: the local population could facilitate access to land as owners.
- Voluntary associations (e.g., Food Community) could play an essential role in networking tourism and agriculture

Access to land

N/A

Payments

- Direct public and indirect private funding (consumers trained by buying the products; private companies, involved in the agri-food sector, support small-scale biodiversity production and gain visibility)
- Currently result-based, but in the future aiming for the combination of actions and results
- Individual payments, no collective of farmers will be involved.

Monitoring

- Monitoring should be carried out directly by the farmer on what he grows, other actors (to be defined) should monitor the use of products in catering and sales.
- A form of participatory self-monitoring for farmers should be devised.