

An experiment in collective and solidarity-based access to land



Séminaire européen “Economie rurale”

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French Agricultural and Land Background (1)

A very agricultural country

First Agricultural Country of the EU:

- 3,5% of the GDP, 65 M € (incl. agro-food business)
- agriculture : 53% of the French area
- 500 000 farms, 3,4% of active population

A regulated land market

Land planning by local authorities (at various territorial levels)

SAFER and their mission: regulating the land market and promoting the setting-up of farmers

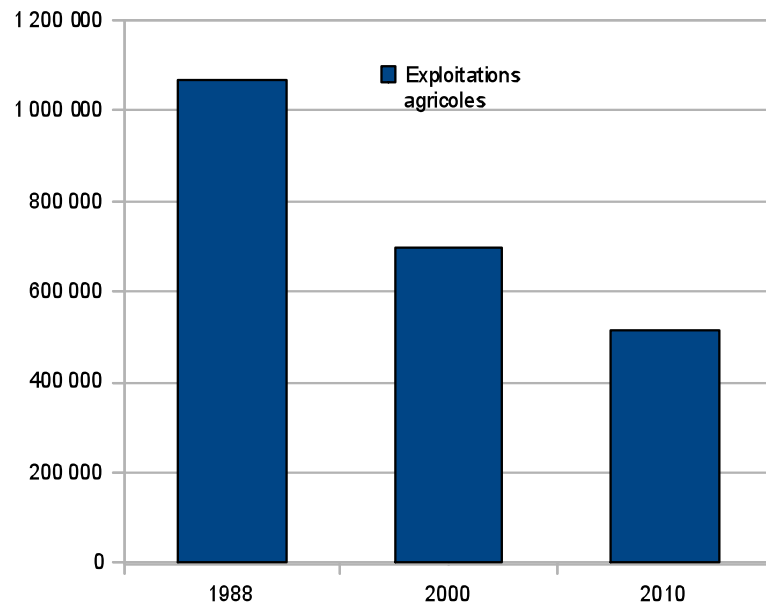
Corpus of law protecting farmers' rights

But some difficulties...

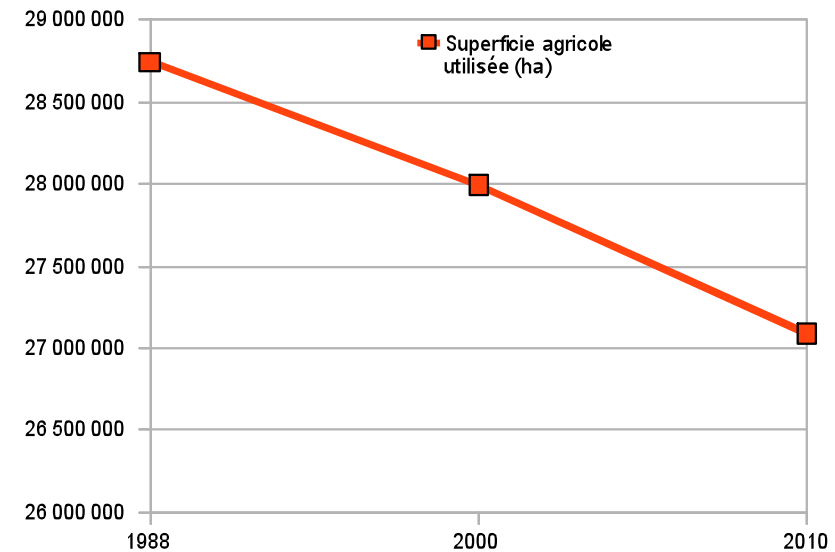


French Agricultural and Land Background (2)

Decrease in farm numbers and agricultural area



Farms: - 50% in 22 years



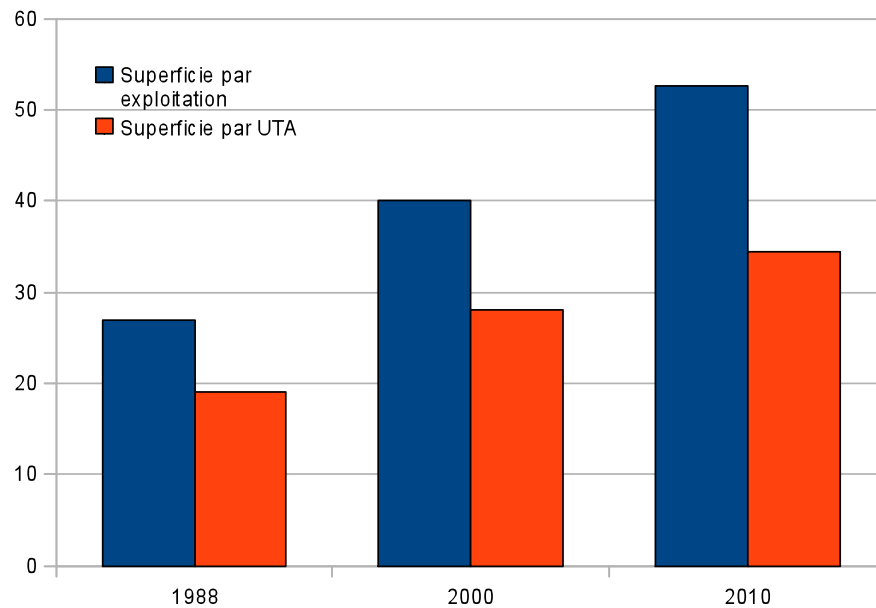
Area: -75 000 ha/year on average (1988-2010), with an acceleration in 2000-2010



French Agricultural and Land Background (3)

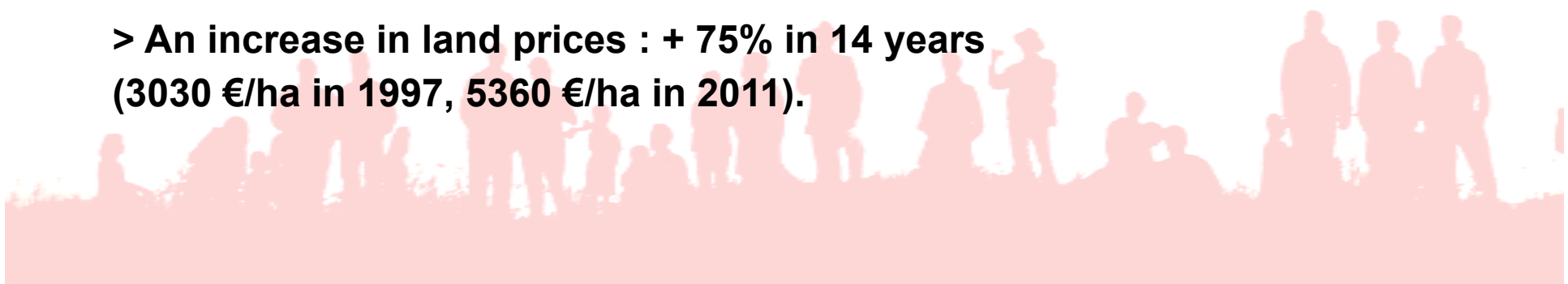
Pressure on agricultural land

> An increase in farm size



+ 50% in 22 years

> An increase in land prices : + 75% in 14 years
(3030 €/ha in 1997, 5360 €/ha in 2011).



Organic Agriculture in France

Not enough organic!

Almost **40% off organic products are imported**, French agriculture does not meet the growing demand of consumers.

Only **3,5 %** of agricultural areas are cultivated in **organic** farming, while the government took a commitment to reach 20% in 10 years.

Access to land is a major obstacle to the development of organic agriculture, in particular for future farmers who are **new entrants**.



At the root of Terre de Liens...

Terre de liens was born out of the encounter of several movements around the issue of rural and agricultural land:

- People's Education**
- Creation of social and economic activities in rural areas**
- Ethical Finance**
- Organic and Biodynamic Agriculture**



Few dates...

1998 - 2003 : maturation of the project within the people's education association RELIER. The association Terre de Liens was born in 2003.

2003 - 2006 : publication by Terre de Liens of a resource handbook and technical support to collective land ownership schemes.

2006 : Creation of the Foncière, with the goal of raising citizens' savings

2007-2010 : Creation of regional associations.

2009 : Creation of the Endowment Fund, with the goal of receiving donations and legacies.

2013 : Transformation of the Endowment Fund into a Foundation
"recognised as being in the public interest"



The mission of Terre de Liens

1- Preserving agricultural land and ensuring good land stewardship (land= commons)

- * Fostering an evolution of people's connection to land and individual ownership
- * Freeing land from land and real estate speculation

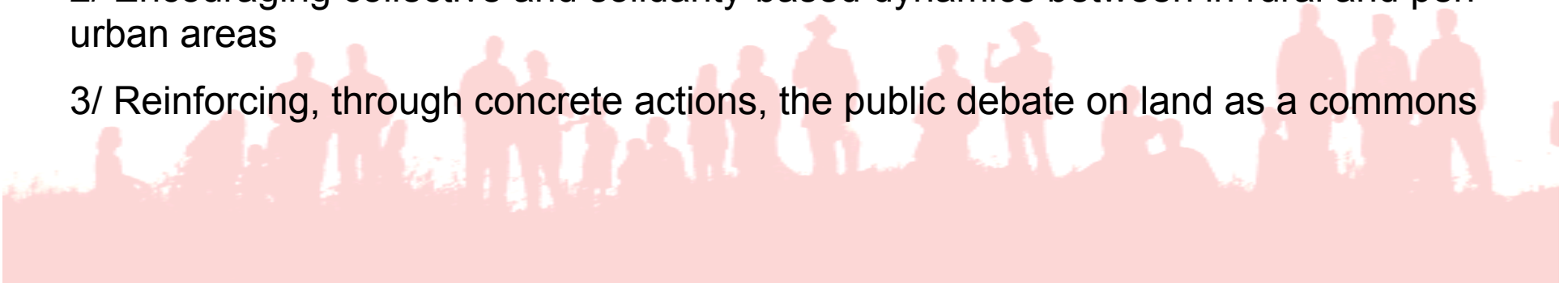
2- Constructing collective responsibility

Enabling all local stakeholders and citizens to get involved in land management, creating relationships, fostering the evolution of agricultural models.

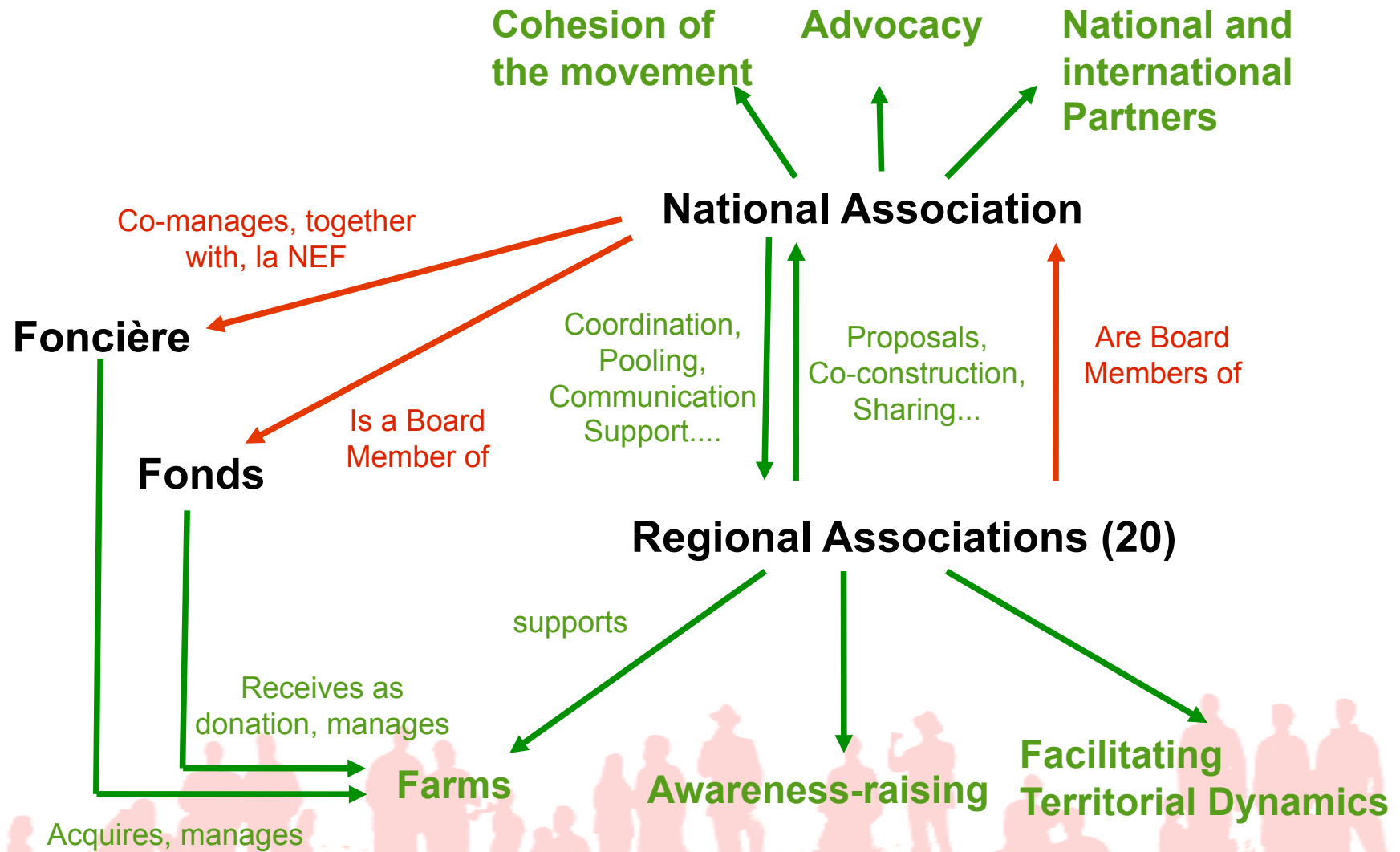
3- Contributing to the development of organic, biodynamic and peasant farming

It rests on the principles stated in **Terre de liens Charter:**

- 1/ Supporting socially, economically and ecologically sustainable projects
- 2/ Encouraging collective and solidarity-based dynamics between in rural and peri-urban areas
- 3/ Reinforcing, through concrete actions, the public debate on land as a commons



The Terre de liens Movement



Concrete actions

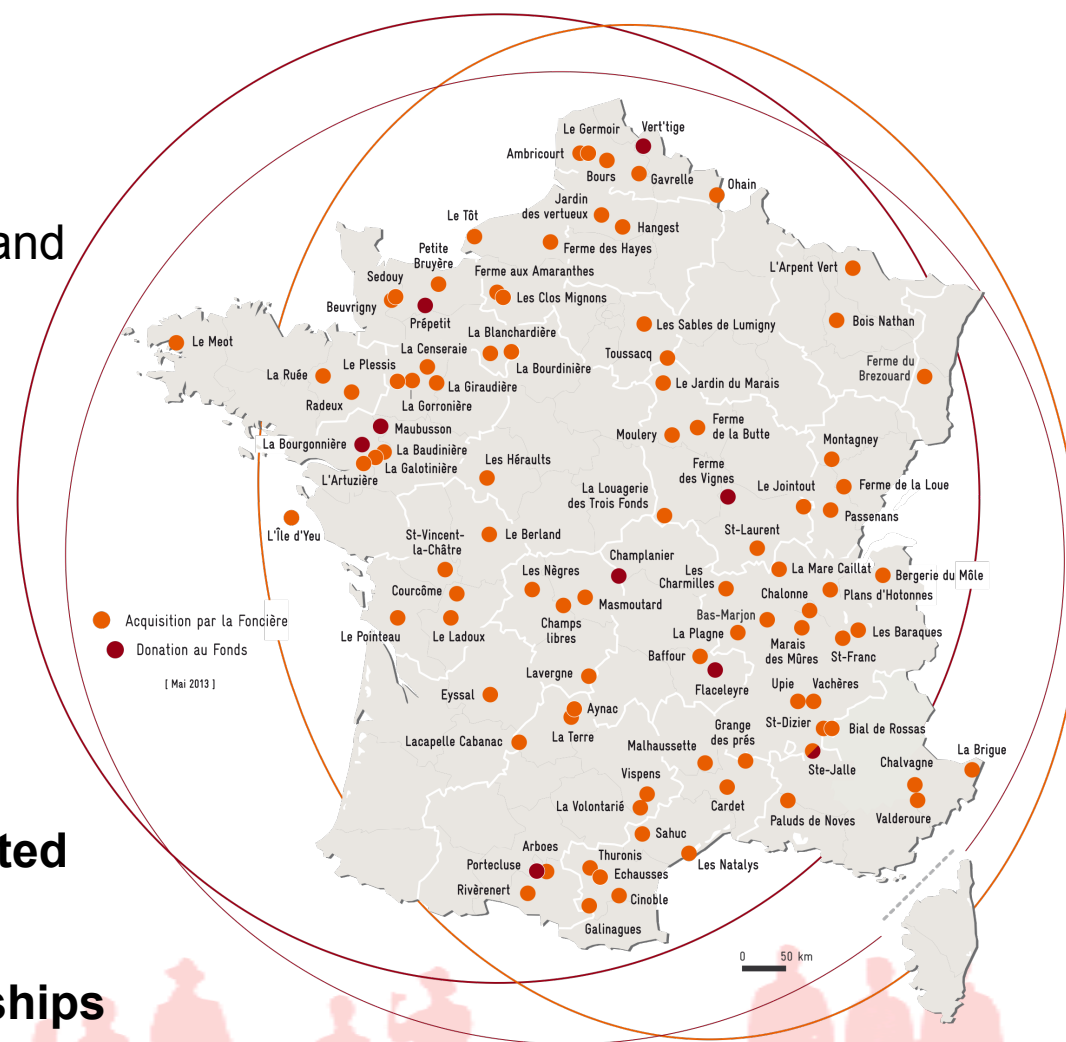
- **Supporting and advising collective acquisition schemes** (SCI, GFA,...)
- **Acquiring farms** (buying or receiving as donation), with the aim of enabling the setting-up or continuation of peasant farmers (organic, biodynamic, short-supply chains agriculture) and land preservation.
- **Citizen Mobilisation:**
 - through public debates, conferences, training...
 - through ethical finance (raising savings and donations for farm acquisition)
- **Intervention on territories :**
 - Collaborative work with a network of partners (Organic ag, CSA,...)
 - Raising awareness of 'conventional' agricultural and land bodies
 - Working with local authorities and local elected representatives (awareness-raising, training, supporting projects...)
- **Advocacy** and participation in public debate
- Participation to a **European network !**



Some results...

Since 2003 :

- > 20 regional associations
- > About **10 000 citizens** mobilised and active in Terre de liens
- > Over **150 farmers** set up or maintained
- > **A hundred farms** acquired, or in the process of being acquired
- > Over **2200 hectares** dedicated to organic and peasant farming
- > Over **200 future farmers** supported every year
- > An increasing number of **partnerships with local authorities**



Current challenges and next steps

A complex movement, celebrating its 10th anniversary, which has grown very quickly:

> **Combining unity and diversity:**

- * TDL is made of several organisations with different legal status
- * 20 regional associations, 20 origins and development, 20 local contexts
- * The reform of the constitution in 2010
- * A common strategic project under construction
- * The need to consolidate a common political thought

> **Managing the farms as well as possible :**

- * Relationships with the farmers
- * Issue of managing buildings

> **Ensuring the financial viability of the Movement in the long run**

> **Implementing the full implications of having a Foundation recognised by the State as being in the public interest**



Thank you for your attention



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