

FEED THE REGIONS

**For the right to a healthy balanced diet for all
For agro-ecological land laws
For youth employment**

**Minga, Nature et Progrès and Frères des Hommes have decided to participate in the
2010 regional election debates.**

Making the food issue a priority for development is not a step backwards, but a response to the crises facing humanity (food crisis, preservation of biodiversity, climate changes). It is also a means of offering, to all citizens, the prospect of gainful employment which neither industry nor services can provide alone. It is to respond to an emerging social demand by young people, more numerous and better qualified, who wish to make a career in food farming. It is to respond to the supply shortages of institutional catering firms, by supplying high-quality local produce.

Making the food issue a priority is to construct, along with the South, a sustainable response to the issue of world hunger, by creating food sovereignty from a local to an international level, based on farming policies which favour an increase of small food-producing plots, the creation of training schemes, and a widespread placement of young people in agro-ecological and food-producing trades.

Making the food issue a priority is to question current town and country planning policies, which consume, in France, the equivalent of 60 000 hectares in farmland each year, roughly the equivalent of a department every six years. It is to use the land to change development policies, and to give citizens new rights and freedom.

Making the food issue a priority is to slow down the growth of supermarkets and to support local independent shops, the creation of outdoor markets and of processing and warehousing facilities.

Making the food issue a priority is to question an economic development which for several decades has accommodated a high level of unemployment and financial insecurity, at all levels of society. To preserve the exorbitant gains of a privileged few, it induces world leaders to support a financial system which is harmful and unfair, burdening tax-payers, salaried workers and future generations without contributing to the economy.

Inter-regional Coordination
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Making the food issue a priority means:

- Enabling peasant farmers to support themselves in the face of financial pressure from mass distribution and certain sectors of the food industry. A recent report from the General Directorate for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control shows that farmers (especially dairy farmers) and consumers have been fooled by public policy in support of dishonest supermarket advertising, which claims to defend public purchasing power.
- Taking into consideration the fact that, although we need farmers, we must put an end to a certain type of farming which is more and more dangerous for health (cancer, fertility problems), which is exhausting the soil and polluting land and water, and which destroys wild and cultivated biodiversity. The development of green algae in Brittany linked to the concentration of pig farming; the disappearance of wetlands in Poitou due to the excessive hydraulic needs of corn crops; these are two examples amongst many.
- Developing and promoting cultivated or wild biodiversity, (plants and animals) on farms, encouraging the exchange of skills and of reproducible seeds between farmers and gardeners, promoting native species of local wildlife, and protecting a regional heritage against the onslaught of GMO's, bio-piracy, and unfair competition; varying production and promoting food self-sufficiency.
- Designing urban regulations which halt urban progression and which associate the construction of state-subsidized housing with access to farming plots.
- Making gardening and cookery an obligatory part of the school curriculum, so that we are less dependent on agro-industrial processed foods.
- Offering to those who wish it, particularly young people, the possibility of producing and selling healthy food, accessible to all, and access to resources (land, water, seeds, small machinery, housing...)

Making the food issue a priority is everyone's business

In a prolongation of the campaign "Feed Europe", launched in May by Minga and Nature et Progrès as an appeal to European election candidates, the regional elections next March will be the occasion to raise these issues, by inviting each candidate to commit to clear and quantifiable goals, as follows:

- A regional employment strategy for resettling the countryside, based mainly on apprenticeship schemes (first-time or further education), research, training and accompaniment to promote small-scale projects and agro-ecological crop techniques, to respond to the needs of institutional catering (hospitals, retirement homes, canteens...)
- An ambitious land policy, to prioritise the protection and development of food crop production in suburban areas.
- A citizen's watchdog committee which would supervise the progress of this policy throughout the mandate.

Today, seeds have become commercial products which can be confiscated via intellectual property laws, and the earth has become an object of unprecedented speculation, fed most notably by the spread of urban development into rural areas. Public debate on this subject will thus raise strong opposition. It is no accident that tentative attempts at protection have not been a success (law of 2005 on the development of rural areas). With this in mind, we call for massive citizen mobilization, organised around regional groups, in order to set up proposals concerning the territories of each region before the end of the year.

An initiative of Minga, Frères des Hommes, and Nature & Progrès.

Main signatories :

Réseau Semences Paysannes, Amis de la Terre France, Comité National de Liaison des Régies de Quartier (CNLRQ), Coopaname, Action Consommation, Confédération Paysanne, Réseau Ecobatir, les AMAP d'Ile de France, de Rhône Alpes, du Limousin et de la Région PACA, Terre de Liens Rhône-Alpes, FNAB - Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique des régions de France, Fruits Oubliés Réseau, Slow Food France, Agrisud International, Alliance Paysans, écologiste, consommateurs Loire, terre et Humanisme,...

Leading figures:

Dominique Méda (Holder of the Aggregation in Philosophy), Jean Gadrey (Professor of Economy), Jacques Testart (Honorary Director of Research at INSERM), Isabelle Stengers (Philosopher, Université Libre de Bruxelles), Christian Jacquiau (Diploma in Public Accounting), Christian Vélot (Lecturer in Molecular Genetics at Université Paris Sud), Michel Onfray (Philosopher), Marc Dufumier (Agricultural Engineer and Professor at AgroParisTech), Philippe Desbrosses (Farmer, Doctor in Environmental Science), François Plassard (Agricultural Engineer, Doctor in Economy), Olivier Porte (Director), Gilles Clement (Landscape Gardner)...