

Workshop 3: How transition to agroecology questions knowledge production and learning dynamics

Convenors: Hélène Brives (ISARA-Lyon, France), Daniele Magda (INRA, France), Julien Blanc (MNHN, France)

Impulse talks:

- Erin Silva (University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA) - "Fostering Transitioning: A Model of Facilitating Agroecological Practice Adoption in the US"
- Juliette Anglade (INRA, Mirecourt, France) - "A social experiment on an experimental farm station : exchanging and sharing knowledge and experiences to support the agro-ecological transition toward more autonomous farming systems"
- Anne-Claire Kubala (Fédération Régionale des CUMA, France) - "Innovation in groups: production and transfer of knowledge"

This workshop session explored the question of how to facilitate agroecological transition. More specifically, it looked at how to overcome the opposition between traditional scientific knowledge and empirical knowledge, with a specific focus on the role of intermediary actors as a crucial link between these two sides. The impulses presented different places and projects in which researchers and farmers are working together to produce knowledge. Erin Silva spoke of the OGRAIN project, which helps grain farmers in the midwest of the US to switch to organic farming. It provides networking, mentoring, and conferences, and is built on the premise that farmers learn best from other farmers. Juliette Anglade presented INRA's project in Mirecourt, France where a farm that is transitioning to agroecological practices hosts exchange days for a multi-factorial learning experience. Her team is specifically studying the knowledge and experience sharing among the different participants during these exchanges. Anne-Claire Kubala is involved with a CUMA in the Rhône area of France where there is a smaller innovation group within the larger cooperative that takes risks and then presents their findings to the larger group. This not only capitalizes on the different risk-aversions of the farmers, but also allows them autonomy in their own learning and sharing process. All of the projects presented demonstrate that the actor-learning and knowledge-sharing process can take a variety of forms, and that there are many ways to facilitate and agroecological transition.