

Invitation to the Conference

“Land sharing vs. land grabbing” New ownership models for sustainable land use

European Agricultural Policy Conference

Organised by Demeter International

16th October 2012
8.30h to 16.30h

Venue: North Rhine-Westphalia Representative Office to the European Union
Montoyerstraat 47 Rue Montoyer
B-1000 Brussels



Background information

In recent years, land grabbing has become a serious problem for developing countries. It is estimated that 200 million hectares of land have been subject to large scale international investments in the last decade. Many farmers (mostly smallholders) have lost their land and their food security is endangered as a result.¹

However, land grabbing does not only affect farmers in developing countries, but also European farmers. Commercial interests, such as speculation for urban development and industrial agricultural investments, often endanger access to land for sustainable and equitable use.

Demeter is an organic farmers' association with almost 90 years of history and experience in sustainable and resource efficient farming. There are a lot of Demeter farms which are practising new land property models already for decades. These farms can be considered as excellent examples of how the question of land property can be realised alternatively. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is another example of successful land management. Thus, conflicts about land ownership could be solved.

European policy-making on the international level affects land ownership issues. Demeter International and its partners want to invite decision makers of the European institutions and stakeholders in the field of agricultural policy in Brussels to discuss the issue. Internationally renowned speakers, NGOs and farmers will present aspects of new land ownership models.

Aims of the conference:

- To discuss the situation of land grabbing vs. modern models of land sharing
- To present existing alternative land ownership and management models
- To encourage decision makers in European agricultural policy to implement new instruments for sustainable land ownership

languages: English, French and German
moderation: Arie van den Brand (Groupe de Bruges)²
Nikolai Fuchs (Nexus Foundation, Geneva)

Participants: The conference addresses particularly representatives of the European Parliament, the European Commission as well as stakeholders and interest groups in Brussels which are active in the field of European agricultural policy.

¹“Investitionen in Land und das Phänomen des Land Grabbing“, BMZ- Strategiepapier 2/2012, Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), Bonn, Germany
http://www.bmz.de/de/publikationen/reihen/strategiepapiere/Strategiepapier316_2_2012.pdf

For global land grabbing in English language see: “Global land grabbing and trajectories of agrarian change: a preliminary analysis”, Journal of Agrarian Change, Vol. 12 No. 1, January 2012
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2011.00339.x/pdf>

² The Groupe de Bruges is an independent network and think tank on European agricultural and rural development policies

Conference Programme

8:30 Registration

9:00 Opening and Welcoming

Representation North Rhine-Westphalia (Rainer Steffens, Head of the Representation)

Demeter International (Andreas Biesantz, EU-Liaison Office)

European Commission (Andreas Pilzecker, DG Agriculture)

9:30 Panel 1: Land Sharing versus Land Grabbing

Political situation and perspectives

Nikolai Fuchs (Nexus Foundation, Geneva)

“Food security and land ownership in a global context”

Martin Häusling (Member of the European Parliament, The Greens/EFA)

“Legume and feed cultivation in the EU - An alternative to land grabbing in South America”

Diana Mincyte (Yale University)

“Land grabbing and alternatives in post-socialist Lithuania and North Eastern Europe”

Stefan Dorondel (Francisc I. Rainer Institute of Anthropology Bucharest)

“Romanian Agriculture between subsistence, large associations and land grabbing”

11:00 Coffee break

11:15 Panel 2: Land sharing versus land grabbing

Social and economic situation and perspectives

Sjoerd Wartena (Terre de Liens, France)

“La Foncière and le Fonds – two financial tools to acquire farmland for sustainable use”

Uwe Greff (GLS Bank, Bochum, Germany)

“Financing new landownership models and sustainable land management”

Stéphane Lejoly (Chante Terre, Belgium)

« Are new landownership models the emerging parts of a new economic paradigm? »

Maarten Roels (Terre-en-vue, Belgium)

“Reviving the Commons through citizen connected agriculture”

12.30 Discussion

12.50 Lunch break with biodynamic and organic food

13.45 Panel 3: Practice reports

Modern landownership models and sustainable land use

Hartwig Ehlers (Managing director, Hofgemeinschaft Weide-Hardebek, Germany)

Practice example 1: Social farming: Experiences and reflections to create new resources out of social added value - Synergies are resources of the future”

Peter Brown (Biodynamic farm manager, Tablehurst Farm, Forest Row, East Sussex)

Practice example 2: “The Tablehurst farm – a pioneer of CSA”

Martin von Mackensen (Biodynamic farm manager, Dottenfelderhof, Germany)

Practice example 3: “The Dottenfelderhof – collective farming for over 40 years”

14.45 Coffee break

15.00 Panel 3: Practice reports

Reports continued and presentation of a new study on landownership

Christoph Klemmer (Biodynamic farm manager, Hof Sophienlust, Germany)

Practice example 4: “The model community farm Sophienlust”

Christian Hiss (Regionalwert AG, Eichstetten am Kaiserstuhl, Germany)

Practice example 5: “Citizens as regional shareholders”

Titus Bahner (Projektbüro Kulturlandschaft Hitzacker, Germany)

Presentation of the study: “Bodenmarkt und neue Eigentumsformen im Ökologischen Landbau” (Study in German language with English abstract)

„Liberating land from the commodity market: new forms of ownership in organic farming”

16.00 Final discussion and conclusions

16.30 End of the conference
