

PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS IN ORGANIC FARMING AS AN EXPRESSION OF AGROECOLOGY AND AS PART OF AN ECONOMIC DEGWOWTH PROGRAM: THE EXPERIENCE IN ANDALUSIA

EUROPEAN UNION ORGANIC FARMING INSPECTION SYSTEM

Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 of 24 June 1991, on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring there to on agricultural products and foodstuffs

"Any operator who produces, prepares or imports from a third country products as specified in Article 1 for the purpose of marketing them shall: a) notify this activity to the competent authority of the Member State in which the activity is carried out (...) b) submit his undertaking to the inspection system referred to in article 9' (Art 8.1)

"Member States shall set up an inspection system operated by one or more designated inspection authorities and/or by approved private bodies to which the operators producing or preparing products as referred to in Article 1 shall be subject" (Art. 9.1)

"Member States shall adopt the measures necessary to ensure that an operator who complies with provisions of this Regulation and pays his contribution to inspection expenses has access to the inspection system" (Art. 9.2)

Official Inspection System

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Barriers for small and mid-sized organic producers:

- High expenditures
- Difficulties understanding bureaucracy
- Dependency on distant (foreign) standars
- Loss of autonomy and empowerment

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS)
in organic farming have been shaped to supplement Official Inspection System when producers are small or mid-sized and marketing channels are short

"Participatory Guarantee Systems are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange"
(International Federation on Organic Movements)

PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM PROJECT IN ANDALUSIA

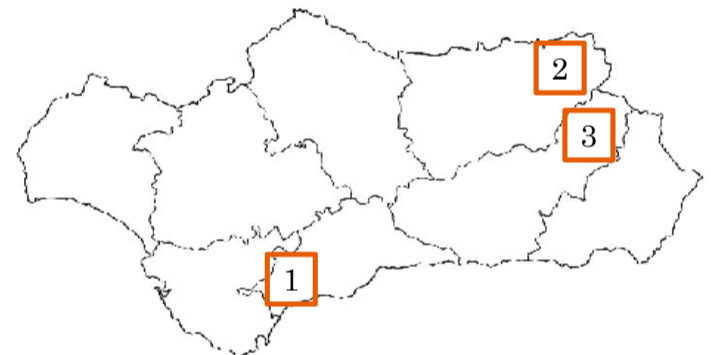
Main characteristics

Institutional support
-Dirección General de Agricultura Ecológica (DGAE), Junta de Andalucía (Organic Farming General Direction, Government of Andalusia)

Development period
-2005-2007

Territories

1. Serranía de Ronda (Málaga)
2. Sierra de Segura (Jaén)
3. Castril y Castillejar (Granada)



Main common characteristics of the territories within the project

- ❖All territories are located in areas with high environmental value, officialy protected in several cases (*Parque Natural de Sierra de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas, Parque Natural de Sierra de las Nieves, Parque Natural de Grazalema...*).
- ❖From a demographic point of view we see as given in the various territories aging population, being the proportion of elderly people present in these areas above the average of Andalusian municipalities. Also most of the territories have lost population in recent years.
- ❖The primary sector is one of the main economic activities in these territories, with olives, cereals and almond trees like agricultural crops more abundant.
- ❖The farms are characterized by small size, geographic dispersion and remoteness of the main markets of sales.

Phases of the PGS project

- ✓Technical research on the problems of the small and medium sized organic producers in Andalusia (*Estudio sobre la situación actual del Sector de la Agricultura Ecológica en Andalucía*, Cuéllar Padilla & Torremocha Bouchet, 2005)
- ✓Demand for participation by the three territories involved after in the project (Serranía de Ronda, Sierra de Segura, Castril and Castillejar)
- ✓Individual structuring of the three groups
- ✓Periodically joint meetings and continuous communication between the groups and project technical coordination
- ✓Development of the PGS internal regulation

Topic	Andalusia PGS
Regulatory Standars	Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91. Agricultural recommended practices Socioeconomic standars
Kind of inspection	Three people annual visit (producers and technicals) and continued social control. Ten per cent extra inspections (random visits)
How is the certification obtained?	A report of the annual inspection visit is discussed by the PGS Quality Commission. It autorizes or not the use of the PGS seal by the inspected producer.
Who verifies compliance with standars?	Other producers and consumers among group members and a person of a technical profile invited to the visit group
Who pays the costs?	-Annual fee of the PGS group (the same for all members) ... 30 EUR -Group visit transfer to the farm (inspected producer) -Random inspections (group cost)

Adapted from Cuéllar Padilla (2008: 169-170)

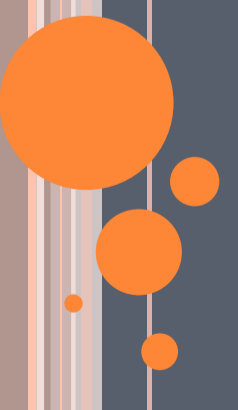
PGS project achievements and difficulties

Achievements

- Consolidation of working groups: empowerment and trust within members
- Formation of durable structures like Cooperativa Biocastil
- Favourable response of all working groups implicated in the project
- Support of other public initiatives on short market channels (*Organic Food for Schoolchildren in Andalusia*)

Difficulties

- Lack of legal recognition of the seal of PGS, wich leads it to have to be supplemented by the official inspection system. The iniciative becomes weak.
- Finally, the change at the end of 2007 in the administration of DGAE led to a definitive end to the PGS project, without giving solutions to problems of legal recognition mentioned.



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