

Theme 20. Civic agriculture / Society oriented agriculture

Proposal for a Working Group on:

Civic agriculture for an urbanizing society: production models, consumption practices and forms of governance.

Maria Fonte e Giacomo Crisci

Corresponding convenor:

Maria Fonte

Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II

mfonte@unina.it

After the pioneering work of Tom Lyson in 2000, the qualifier of 'civic' for agriculture and food networks has become more widely used in the literature on rural studies. Nonetheless a univocal and clear definition of what makes agriculture and food networks 'civic' is still lacking.

Civic agriculture is often associated to positive externalities: economic and social development, inclusion and food democracy, rural development, agrarian justice and ecological citizenship. It also associated to the diffusion of agro-ecological practices and short supply chains: community supported agriculture, farmers' markets, Solidarity Purchasing Groups are usually considered forms of civic agriculture. Still the essence of 'civic' values are collective values, so that civic agriculture is essentially an agriculture that bases its production and distribution system on the respect of collective goods or commons.

What does imply to say that, in the economic process of food production and distribution and in different contexts, civic agriculture must take into account land, natural resources and food as commons? How a civic agriculture centered on the 'economy of the commons' may respond to new demands and challenges emerging from an urbanizing society? What in that respect is the role played by farmers and other producers, consumers and other actors in the food network?

To look at civic agriculture from the perspective of the 'common good' implies new production models, new consumption practices, new forms of governance. This Working Group encourages papers that analyze from a theoretical and empirical perspective the emergence of forms of civic agriculture in the North and South of the planet, the role they can have in developed and less developed countries and regions, the systemic changes they are bringing at level of productions, exchange, consumption and governance, taking into account the concepts of multifunctionality and co-production, food justice and ecological citizenship, horizontal subsidiarity and new forms of coordination between the state, the market and civil society organizations.