

# Agroecology for food democracy: through farmers' practices



# Agroecology

Definition: use of local resources, place based ecological and social relations to strengthen the farm.

It is about:

- Connecting agriculture to nature and society
- Knowledge, values and aspirations of farmers

Agroecological farmers are farmers that seek growth herein.





# Family farmers in Araponga

- Family farmers
- Green revolution promoted from the 1960s onwards.
- Monocropping of coffee, use of chemical fertilisers, specialisation in coffee (no food), sale to global markets.
- CTA, Arapongan farmers' union, farmers develop their own agroecology



# From degradation to resilience

## Problems

- Soil erosion and exhaustion.
- Yields declining, not all crops could be grown, prospects grim.



## Regeneration through nature

- Selective weeding, green manuring, trees, etc.
- Covers the soil surface
- Increases organic material



# From dependency to autonomy

Problem: increasing price of fertilisers and increasing price of food.

Autonomy by circumventing global markets and standards by producing their own:

- nutrients: trees, cattle
- food and processing: planting a larger variety of fruit trees and crops
- own market









# A Dutch intermezzo



De Groote Voort, Lunteren

## Ground production in nature

- to maintain resources and for resilience
- to circumvent global markets and standards



Veld en Beek, Renkum

# A Dutch intermezzo



Milk subscription



CSA



On-farm shop

Markets shaped by the interaction between consumers and producers e.g. price, standards and sustainability.



# Food democracy

Food and agriculture reconnected to nature and society and shaped by the knowledge, values and aspirations of farmers and consumers. Three levels of democracy found in these practices:

- Autonomy and resilience: grounding ecology and own markets
- Agency: new opportunities
  - relations of trust
  - relations of ecology
- Process: Being able to shape what was out of reach e.g. markets, research but also on-farm innovation processes.

# Thank you!

