

Dr. Rachel Reckinger

Caritas, Luxembourg
Multidisciplinary Area of Research on Sustainability (MARS)



Alternative Food Networks in Luxembourg

Lunch Debate "Sustainable Food Practices"

29 rue Michel Welter, Luxembourg, 12:15-13:45, 03.10.2018

Four Case Studies of Alternative Food Networks in Luxembourg

co-labor

TERRA

Krautgaart

OUNI



Sustainable Food
Practices,

<https://food.uni.lu/>

Funding:

70 % Ministry of
Sustainable Development
and Infrastructures

30 % University of
Luxembourg



Alternative Food Networks

"Alternative food networks (AFNs) are commonly defined by attributes such as the spatial proximity between farmers and consumers, the existence of retail venues such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) and a commitment to sustainable food production and consumption." (Jarosz, 2008)



Alternative Food Networks

"Alternative food networks (AFNs) are commonly defined by attributes such as the spatial proximity between farmers and consumers, the existence of retail venues such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) and a commitment to sustainable food production and consumption." (Jarosz, 2008)



Governance:

1. Top-down: legal and political regulations, guidelines, frameworks etc.
2. Bottom-up: civil society, citizens' action groups, ethical and social responsibility businesses, associations etc.

Focus Today: Vegetable Growers

Resourceful community-driven initiatives for local food production and retail *versus* the current mainstream in Luxembourg

The farmer population is constantly shrinking with a tendency towards concentration

Farming type: dairy products (80 % of milk is exported), animal husbandry (including fodder) and meat

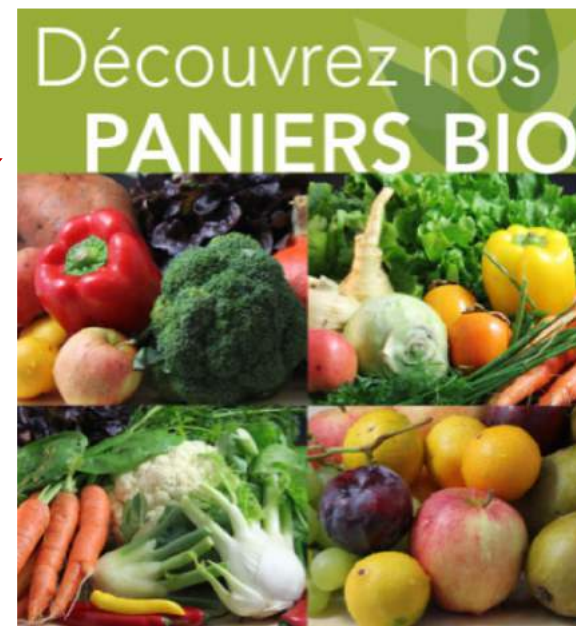
Vegetables (1,4 % on 0,07 % of land), potatoes (0,6 % on 0,4 % of land)

Organic farming: 4,3 % of farms (3,4% of farm land)

High demand for organic products: 80 % is imported

Company Profile

One larger producer (3,5 ha, 200 employees), established since 1983



www.co-labor.lu

Co-labor, organic producer



Social and Solidarity Economy Sector

20 % of turnover and 25 % of staff: Organic food production and import (distribution via box scheme: 170 weekly baskets), grocery store, canteen

Autonomy: 60 %; State-funded: 40 %

Company Profile



Social insertion is a challenge for work efficiency

Raising awareness but bound to satisfy customers

Main challenge: selling of surplus

Experimentation with compost, cultivation techniques, humus generation, green fertilisation, soil analyses, seeds etc.

Seeking to exchange on vegetable growing experiences



Company Profile

A small producer (1,3 ha), established since 2016 as CSA



www.krautgaart.lu



Partnership corporation

Background in natural sciences

Distribution via box scheme (100 weekly baskets)

CSA-members are not part of the company

Land is leased – even though the soil is their “bank”

Experimentation and eclectic assemblage of agroecological and permaculture practices

No-dig approach and no fuel-driven machinery

Company Profile



Botany sciences experimentation, Green IT technologies

Pick-up: conviviality, trust

Need to turn away from subsidised agricultural companies, no certification

Circular partnerships with local organic farmers (manure)

“Be innovative with existing techniques”



www.krautgaart.lu

Company Profile

A small cooperative (1,5 ha), established since 2014 as Luxembourg's first CSA

- Part of international movements: Transition and Permaculture
- Ethics: “people care, earth care and fair share”
- Non-monetary arrangement for free land
- Distribution via box scheme (200 weekly baskets)
- No-dig approach
- No fuel-driven machinery
- Low investments
- No loans



TERRA

Transition and Education for a Resilient and Regenerative Agriculture



HOME

ABOUT

EVENTS

GET INVOLVED

CONTACT



Company Profile



TERRA

Transition and Education for a Resilient and Regenerative Agriculture

GET INVOLVED



Members of the CSA get a share of the weekly harvest, access to events organised by TERRA and a reduced fee at our workshops and seminars.



Get involved with the management and decision-making of TERRA by becoming a co-operator. You get the right to vote in the General Assembly and the opportunity to be more actively engaged with the organisation of TERRA.



Do you want to get some hands-on experience working on a Permaculture production site? Do you have administrative skills? TERRA relies on helping hands for its success, so please contact us if you are interested in participating!



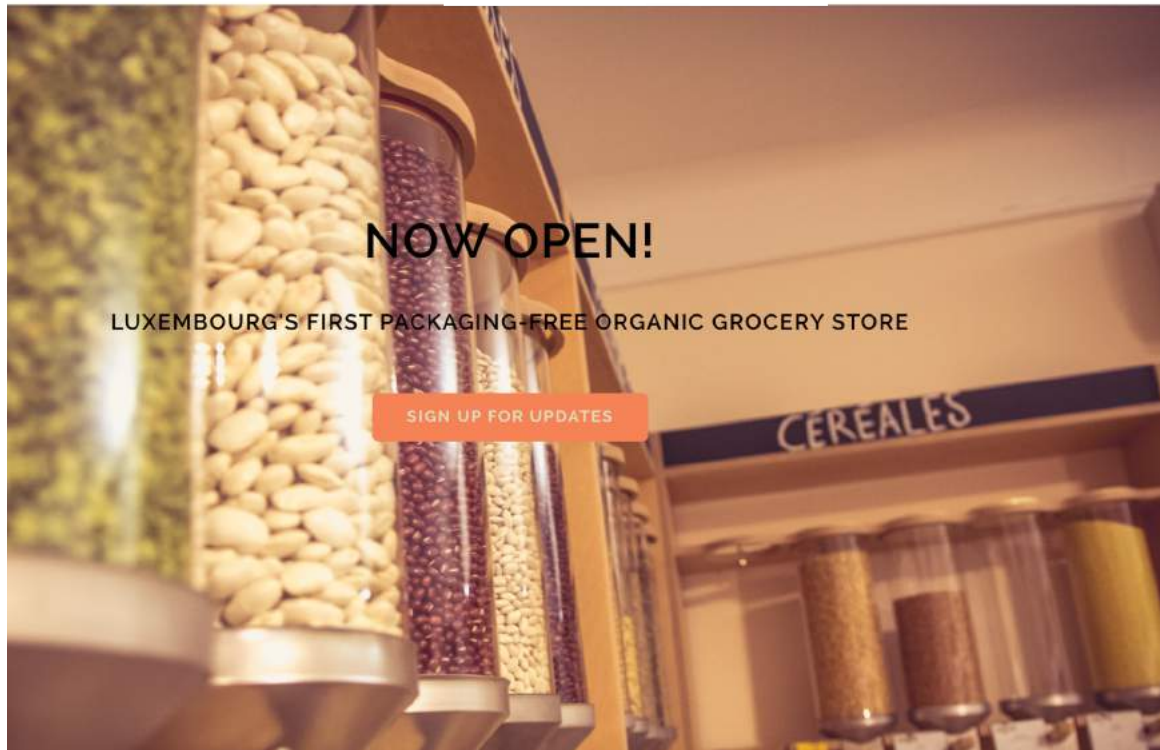
TERRA offers a variety of engaging, fun and educational options for schools, kindergardens and daycare centres. We cater for children of all ages. Have a look at our program!

www.terra-coop.lu

Company Profile

Luxembourg's first organic, packaging-free grocery, established since 2016

OUNI



<http://ouni.lu/en/> 09.11.2017



Six female founders, partly members of board of directors
Zero waste movement
Four employees with a competitive salary
Cooperative
Rent of the commercial premises at real-estate price (inner city)

Sourcing: Packaging-free & organic, as regional as possible (ongoing optimisation process)

Company Profile

OUNI

As of today, we have:

838
Oct. 2018

~~751~~

MEMBERS

245600

CAPITAL (€)

OUNI is a cooperative business, which means that it is fully owned and operated by its members.
We offer two types of membership:



MEMBER

Regular members own one or more shares, can vote and be elected to the BD, can get a return on their investment and are invited to special events.



ACTIVE MEMBER

Active members have the same rights and benefits as regular members, but in addition volunteer 2 hours per month and receive special discounts and a starter package.

But there are many more...



Gaart-à-Vous



The Four Case Studies: in a Nutshell

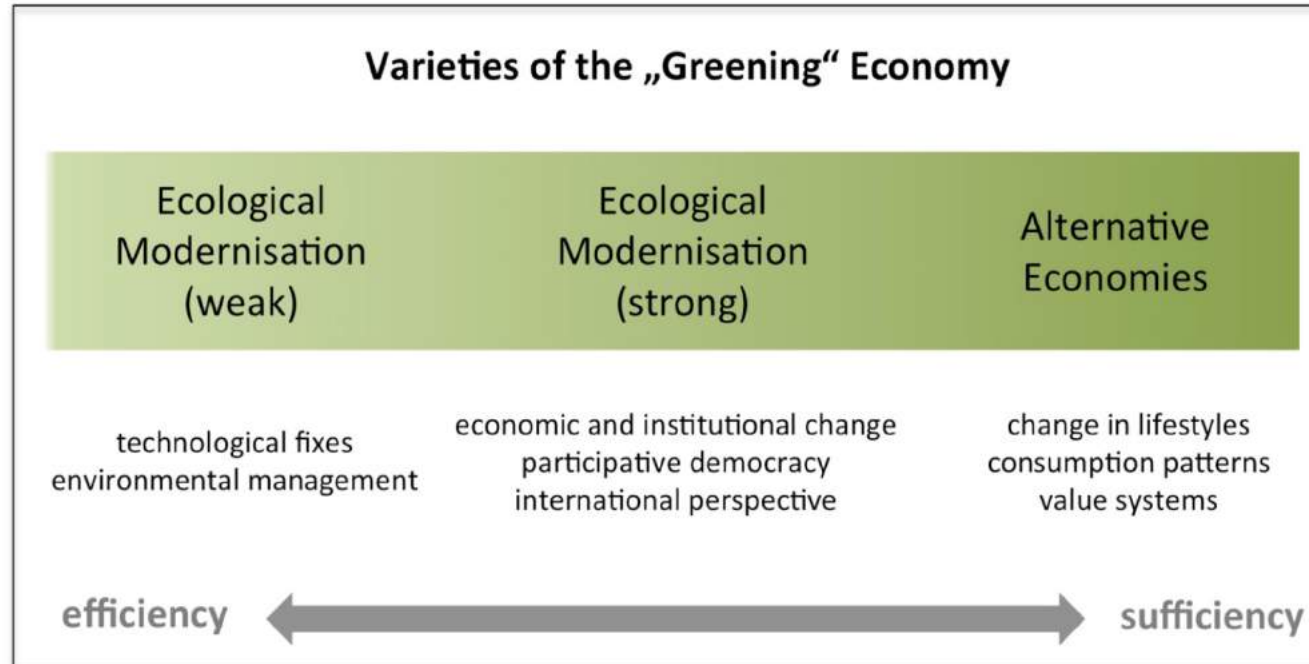
What these Alternative Food Networks have in common

- Niche for experimental autonomy
- Make a change in an economy of ethical quality: structural alternative, rather than reformation within the existing value-chain
- Ubiquity and exemplarity

The Four Case Studies: in a Nutshell

What these Alternative Food Networks have in common

- Niche for experimental autonomy
- Make a change in an economy of ethical quality: structural alternative, rather than reformation within the existing value-chain
- Ubiquity and exemplarity



The Four Case Studies: in a Nutshell

Differences Among these Alternative Food Networks

- More classical set-ups experience more classical challenges
 - Import
 - Social assistance
 - Lack of a regional vegetable selling/procurement platform
- Idea of the Cooperative business is more or less binding
- Deliberately sustainable consumption efforts are done easier in CSAs, perceived by consumers as most “alternative”

Conclusion

Heterodox roleplayers: creation of resourcefulness from innovative niches → cultural shift

Daily practices stay embedded in social, cultural and economic constraints and routines: ambivalences between deliberate and mundane forms of consumption → subjectively felt “alternativeness”.

Need for political regulations and commercial incentives for a central procurement platform.

AFNs carve out a protected space on a small scale (develop know-how, build networks)

→ Ground their alternative knowledge claims onto agricultural practices and community backing. Once they will have a voice, it can be taken into account by policies.

Dr. Rachel Reckinger

Caritas, Luxembourg

Multidisciplinary Area of Research on Sustainability (MARS)

rachel.reckinger@uni.lu
<https://food.uni.lu>



Lunch Debate "Sustainable Food Practices"

29 rue Michel Welter, Luxembourg, 12:15-13:45, 03.10.2018

Further reading, following Rachel Reckinger's presentation

Reckinger, Rachel (forthcoming in 2018): "Social Change for Sustainable Localised Food Sovereignty: Convergence between Prosumers and Ethical Entrepreneurs", *Sociologia del Lavoro* (4/2018), special issue "Prosumers on the move: overcoming the line between labour and consumption".

Jarosz, Lucy (2008): "The City in the Country: Growing Alternative Food Networks in Metropolitan Areas", *Journal of Rural Studies* (24), p. 231-244.