



Agroecology

Transforming society through food production and the peasant** struggle

This document strives to define the concept of agroecology as understood by the peasant farmers of the European Coordination Via Campesina.

We are food producers and see agroecology as a way of life and a way of interacting with our surroundings. It is also our way of making progress towards Food Sovereignty.

We understand agroecology as a process of individual and collective transformation, above and beyond specific agroecological techniques and practices. We are committed to moving forward together, excluding no one. Our aim is an agriculture based on peasant autonomy, independent of oil and other fossil fuels; a farming system that protects landscapes without GM crops, patents or agrochemicals.

Agroecology entails a comprehensive view, where processes and practices are adapted to local conditions, at all scales. This concept affects and transforms all aspects of life.

Below we present six essential principles for bringing this about.

1. Feelings

Peasant sentiment is an essential part of agroecology. It is based on awareness, and love and respect for the Earth, the commons, nature and all life forms.

2. Diversity and biodiversity

Agroecology favors biodiversity as harmony and synergy among various systems: natural, social and cultural.

Agroecology fosters and safeguards agricultural ecosystems in viewing them above all in terms of local diversity and interacting systems.

3. Peasant knowledge

Agroecology protects, shares and pools traditional peasant knowledge in its various contexts and realities.

It enhances intergenerational transmission and exchanges from farmer to farmer. It fosters innovation through observation, creativity and continuous learning and provides means for overcoming new challenges.

4. Community

Agroecology fuels trust and cooperation between communities, large and small, rural and urban.

Agroecology entails a change in values, from individualism to cooperation, it heightens egalitarian social relations and community spirit.

We assert the need for mutual recognition between peasants and society, and for respect for our dignity as workers of the land.

5. Peasants' rights

Our rights as peasants such as the right to seeds, to land, to water and to the commons are among the prerequisites of agroecology.

Agroecology is a means to decentralize power and to restore peasant independence.

The agroecological model respects local agriculture everywhere in all communities as it is based on solidarity and cooperation between all regions and all peasants. Agroecology cools the planet and contributes to the fight against climate change.

6. Struggles and social transformation

We need peasant farming to strengthen our grassroots and to further our political agenda.

Agroecology, along with the peasant struggle is legitimate day to day resistance in our fight for Food Sovereignty.

We must not let them divide us. Our agriculture has many forms but has only one heart, peasant farming!!!

Evenstad, Norway, March, 2014.

** The use of the word peasant is not neutral in the UK. This is a document reached by consensus with farmers all over Europe. Therefore although some of the language may sound odd to UK ears, we trust that its meaning is clear.