Relations between farmers and cheese-makers in dairy ewe sector: What room for sector coordination?
Introduction: The dairy ewe sector

- **Professional coordination as a tool for territorial anchorage** (Interprofession body, PDO Applicant, Breed selection body)
  - In a context of chronic crisis, a solution for local actors would be to create sector coordination integrating their common interests and ensuring sector sustainability.
  - To what extent such joint trade organization can build a collective strategy?

- **Questions**
  - What kind of relationship between farmers and the cheese-makers buying their milk?
  - To what extent such relationships are part of the elaboration of a common strategy at sector level?

1. Context of the study and Methods
2. Diversity of relationships farmers / cheese-makers: a proposal for a typology showing several patterns
3. Genealogy of these patterns over time
4. Link with the agreements provided by the Interprofession bodies
Context of the study: regional sectors relatively new

Map of the area where Roquefort firms have collected ewe milk from 1904 up to 1980 (Delfosse, 1992)

- **Western Pyrénées (2011)**
  - 62 ML
  - 14,000 tons of cheeses
  - 15% on-farm processing
  - 30% PDO Ossau-Iraty

- **Roquefort sector (2011)**
  - 176 ML
  - 37,000 tons
  - 50% PDO Roquefort

- **Corsica Island (2007)**
  - 11 ML
  - 2,500 tons of cheeses included whey cheeses (Brousse, Brocciu)
  - 30% on-farm processing
  - 20% PDO Brocciu
Context of the study:

one interprofessional body for every area

- Farmers
  - Milk sellers
  - On-farm processors

- Milk-sellers

- Cooperatives for cheese-making
- Industrial processors
- On-farm processors
- Industrial cheese-makers

1460 milk sellers among the 1800 dairy ewe farmers
85% of total milk produced in the area

270 milk sellers among the 500 dairy ewe farmers
70% of total milk produced in the area
Material and Methods

- Comprehensive Approach
  - Semi-directive Interviews
    - Main traits of the relations between farmers and cheese-makers (milk price, hygiene regulation, formal farmer organization...)
  - Narratives and discourses from ancient farmers and cheese-maker managers
  - Analysis of several documents (professional archives and medias)

Map showing locations of processors and farmers: 6 processors, 28 farmers; 7 processors, 19 farmers.
Various patterns of relationships coexisting within every area.

Pattern of relationship

Firm characteristic

Size of the milk collection area

Modalities of exchange and negotiation

Qualification of the relation
Various patterns of relationships coexisting within every area / a Typology

- Market-oriented
  - Affiliate
  - 100 farmers
  - Negotiation on milk by contracts
  - Partnership

- Industrial
  - Affiliate
  - 100 farmers or more
  - Collective Negotiation
  - Firm Culture

- Paternalist
  - Family Firm
  - From 20 to 100 farmers
  - (collective negotiation)
  - Interpersonal / Firm management

- Handicraft
  - Small family firm
  - Less than 10 farmers
  - Individual Negotiation
  - Interpersonal relationship

- Civic
  - Cooperative or Farmers Society
  - From 10 to 30 farmers
  - Collective Negotiation
  - Cheese making as a part of the production unit

A great diversity of relationships
Genealogy and Evolution of the various patterns

1980-90

Roquefort Model
- Firm Model
- Civic Model
- Handicraft Model

2016

- Market-oriented Model
- Firm Model
- Civic Model
- Handicraft Model
- Paternalist Model

Strong reduction of Roquefort firms

Crisis perturbing the basin

After 30 years, the patterns are more diversified
The extreme diversity of firms’ strategies and patterns of relationships reduce the capacity of interprofessional bodies to decide and implement strong regulations.
Discussion et perspectives

- Toward a better understanding of the role of milk producers within each area
  - Farmers remain producers of raw material (even for PDO cheeses)

- Renew the approach of the interprofessional bodies
  - Adaptation to the specific stakes of every area
  - Difficulty for overcome the very contrasted patterns
    - Modalities of elaboration of common management rules
    - Modalities for managing the various actors’ representation
    - Present balance of powers

- Such a tool is useful but not sufficient
  - Conditions for implementing an effective professional coordination

- For ensuring the activity on a long term perspective:
  - What room for a territorial coordination?

⇒ DIVERSITY vs CONFLICTING HETEROGENEITY