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Abstract dell'intervento di Margot J. Wylie

Margot J. Wylie, “Biodynamic and Conventional Methods of Agricultural Production – A Business-level Economic Comparison Within the European Context of the CAP.” Thesis in International Relations at the Università degli Studi di Firenze, Scienze Politiche, p. 96, June 2007.

This paper proposes to examine Biodynamic Agriculture and how this method compares, on a productive scale, to Conventional Agriculture, the predominant form of agriculture in Europe since WW2.

The importance of understanding the general production and earning capabilities of biodynamic farms finds its answer within the context of the European Union, and in particular, in the recent changes that the Common Agricultural Policy has undergone.

The European Union has gradually moved towards promoting sustainable agricultural systems namely through the 1992 Reform, Agenda 2000 and the 2003 Fischler Reform. Biodynamic Agriculture represents one of the most sustainable forms of agriculture that is known but is barely mentioned in the *aquis* of the EU. In the recent past, Biodynamic Agriculture has even found itself at the risk of being rendered illegal by certain Regulations passed in the EU Parliament.

In order to ensure that this form of sustainable agriculture is able not only to survive but also to flourish, it is necessary to understand all of the benefits that this form of agriculture can offer to the EU's current agricultural situation. For this reason, the study attempts to verify the ability of the Biodynamic Method to effectively compete with that of the Conventional Method at both the productive and market levels while at the same time intrinsically respecting all of the EU's parameters for sustainable agriculture.

Due to a general lack of data, the study takes a micro-economic approach and compares the production levels, production and earnings of a biodynamic kiwi (*actinidia chinensis*) farm with those of a comparably sized conventional farm.

The data reviewed spans over 20 years and in the cross-comparison of production levels, costs and earnings, the results indicate the strong price advantage of Biodynamic kiwis over conventional kiwis. Production levels were similarly competitive, when the production per tree was considered, with only a slight disadvantage (3%) for the Biodynamic farm. Costs were almost identical.

Although the data is specific to one farm and the research is in its preliminary phases, the analysis demonstrates that in the case of the Biodynamic kiwi farm, the production levels and costs in production are not damaged by respecting the parameters for sustainability and environmental protection; parameters that are often seen as costs and calculated, in other methods, as the loss in production levels and earnings consequent to their observance. The biodynamic method, on the other hand, has demonstrated its continued competitiveness and thus the value that the promotion of this sustainable method could bring to EU agriculture in terms of quality. Furthermore, it demonstrates that this method deserves, at the very least, legislation that protects this form of agriculture's methods.