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PROtein, Foods, Environment, Technology and Society (PROFETAS)

IT Research Project

No. B/2001/01

Partners:

- Department of Policy Science and Policy Analysis, [Twente University](#), The Netherlands.
- [Product Design and Quality Management Group](#), Wageningen University, The Netherlands.
- [Environmental Economics Group](#), Wageningen University, The Netherlands.
- [TNO](#) - Nutrition and Food Research, Zeist, The Netherlands.
- [ATO](#) - Agrotechnical Research Institute, The Netherlands.
- [LEI](#) - Agricultural Economics Research Institute, The Hague, The Netherlands.
- [Plant Research International](#), The Netherlands.
- [Institute for Environmental Studies](#), Vrije Universiteit, The Netherlands
- Centre for World Food Studies, Vrije Universiteit, The Netherlands

PROFETAS (PROtein Foods, Environment, Technology And Society) is a multidisciplinary research programme on sustainable food systems. The present system of food production and consumption has a considerable and rapidly increasing impact on the environment. Meat production, in particular, is not attractive from an environmental point of view, as a result of the inefficient animal conversion of feed into meat. However, meat is clearly attractive to consumers all over the world. Since the non-meat protein products presently on the market do not meet the expectations of most western-style consumers, they do not constitute realistic alternatives to meat. The prospects for replacing meat-derived ingredients by non-meat ingredients is more promising. However, information to support this view is currently lacking. The central research theme of the PROFETAS programme, therefore, is the question whether a partial transition from animal to plant protein foods in the western-style diet is:

- more sustainable than present trends
- technologically feasible
- socially desirable

The programme has a chain-oriented perspective, in which western-style consumer preferences are central.

See project [website](#) for more information

Organic, Agroecological and Low External Input Agriculture: Opportunities and Constraints on Sustainable Farming in The South

IT Contributing Project No. B/2001/03

- Partners:**
- Department of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University, Wales, UK
 - Department of Rural Sociology, Wageningen University, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

This research project will build upon recent reports highlighting the potential of organic, agroecological and low external input farming in The South. These reports identify many examples of good practice which have created multiple and synergistic benefits, including: improving yields, farmers incomes, food security and health as well as the restoration of degraded land. However, the relative importance of these benefits varies considerably, according to farm type, agroecological context, market orientation and the existing knowledge base. These factors create different incentives and constraints that influence farmers' willingness to adopt sustainable farming practices.

This project will be developed through a series of partnerships with research institutes and/ or NGO's in a limited number of developing countries in order to identify:

- The extent of organic, agroecological, low external input and intensive (including GMO) farming systems within these countries. Identification and classification of heterogeneity in farming practices and cultures and analysis of current trends in farming practices and the factors (e.g. cultural, institutional, economic, demographic etc) underlying these.
- Analysis of the main actors involved in driving (and sometimes resisting) these different development trajectories.
- Analysis of the extent to which the different farming systems (identified above) meet the objectives of the different actors (identified above), with a particular focus on the

aspirations of different farming groups. This analysis to include case studies of successful and failed initiatives.

- Assessment of the role of indigenous and exogenous knowledge. Is the former strong or weak? How is it maintained and is it endangered? How can it be preserved, valorised and more widely disseminated? The roles of the scientific and extension communities - are they supportive of the development of indigenous knowledge, indifferent to or in conflict with it?
- Conclusions - what works and what doesn't. Whose sustainable farming systems satisfy? What are the opportunities and constraints for further take up? What is the potential for transfer of best practice on a local, regional and international scale? What actions are required by the policy and donor communities to more fully develop the potential of these approaches?

(1) Parrott, N. and T. Marsden (2002), [The Real Green Revolution](#), Greenpeace Environmental Trust, pp. 153.

Towards Sustainable Households: A Methodology for Developing Sustainable Technological and Social Innovations

IT Research Project

No. B/2001/04

Partners:

- [Manchester School of Management](#), UK
- [Delft University of Technology](#), the Netherlands

A high factor environmental efficiency improvement, towards a Factor 20 by 2050 AD is needed due to the assumed doubling of the world population.; This is in combination a fivefold increase of wealth per capita with a halving of the total global environmental burden. However, this cannot be achieved through good housekeeping and technological innovation alone; any technological solution will have to be combined with *social innovations*, in lifestyles and cultures. This paper describes the conclusions of the *SusHouse* (Strategies towards the Sustainable Household) Project that has been exploring possible socially and technologically innovative strategies for sustainable households. The Project has covered 3 household 'functions': Clothing Care, Shelter (Heating, Cooling and Lighting) and Food (Shopping, Cooking and Eating). These have been studied in 5 European countries (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, and UK). The methodology of the project involved stakeholder workshops, the construction of *design-orienting scenarios*, environmental, economic and consumer assessment of the scenarios and strategy formulation. The paper describes:

- The methodology for devising *Design-Orienting Scenarios*, with examples from the three Functions
- The results of environmental, economic and consumer acceptability assessments of these Scenarios

- Comments on how the methodology can be developed and applied.
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Technological Transformations in Food Consumption and Production Systems

IT Research Project

No. B/2003/01

Partners:

- [Manchester School of Management](#), UK
- [University of Cardiff](#), UK

This project aims to explore the role of technological innovation in all the elements of the Food Consumption and Production System (including agriculture, food processing, distribution and consumption) with respect to how they might contribute (or not) to system sustainability. It will do this by examining the claims for sustainability of supposedly competing 'strategies' for the transformations of FCP Systems, using the production and consumption of a number of case study foods as examples.