



## City Farms: a bridge between agriculture and citizens. 1992. Updated 1994

We find:

That there is a too great distance and lack of understanding between the farmers (producers) and the consumers of agricultural produce (consumers):

- most people rarely come into contact with farms: even in the country there is little contact;
- most farms have become producers of basis products and rarely participate in the distribution sector;
- through processing and distribution the relationship of the food sold and that produced by the farmer is often lost, e.g. chickens become separate legs, breasts and wings and a head of lettuce becomes mixed lettuce;
- in other words, the origin of the product is hard to find, e.g. a very old example is bottled milk, fancy yoghurt;
- people get little opportunity to see domestic animals in their own environment so no longer understand why domestic animals are bred and raised. Reactions against this from RSPCA members are a logical consequence;
- most farm incomes have fallen as prices paid to the producers have fallen, but the prices paid by the consumers have continued to rise.

Agriculture has tried to put its case to the consumer : exhibitions, fairs, publications, radio programmes etc., but at the same time adverse publicity has been increasing all :

- agriculture pollutes
- agriculture costs money
- agriculture produces too much

Whenever the consumer comes into direct contact with the farmer, he does not bother to encourage the farmer in his work. The relationship between consumer and producer in respect of direct sale of farm products at farm shops or at tourist farms is depends on economics and prices.

City farms, Jugendfarmen, Kinderboerderijen, Fermes d'Animation, Gezinsboerderijen, 4 H-Farms may not all have started in reaction to the above facts, but without doubt they were first in Europe to do something about it ;

- "Fermes d'Animation" say that pupils ought to get reacquainted with domestic animals, as all follows automatically afterwards;
- "Jugendfarmen" want have the youngsters experienced living environment as natural as possible;
- "City Farms" arose from the people's wish to experience the living environment as naturally as possible;
- "Gezinsboerderijen" try to solve the problem of the alienation of the young people and adult by involving them in the world of nature and agricultural activities;
- but there are also therapeutic projects. Disabled persons were often employed at farms, but nowadays this manual labour is called "therapy". Even riding is now called "hypotherapy".

However, we feel confident that, at this time of change City Farms are a good way of bringing many people into contact with modern agriculture and horticulture. Moreover, City Farms offer quality - giving the participants good information and guiding them towards their main concern.

In the Norwegian countries, the agricultural organizations themselves founded the 4-H-Farms, which are now members of the EFCF.

Within the European Union our initiatives have always been held to be "something not originated with us", whereas the agricultural organizations were the first to applaud the value of the City Farms.



We have written this paper because City farms have something to present to the agricultural organizations.

Thanks to the EFCF, founded in 1990 , a whole network has been created in order to :

- organize courses and training
- provide relevant publications
- plan exchanges
- hold conferences
- exchange information
- set up collaborative projects
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With a view to increasing the number of active farms and to improving the quality of help, guidance and information.

City Farms are visited daily by interested people who have already made the first move towards agriculture; they are well placed to promote public relations in agriculture. They will make demands upon the rightness and the origin of food products They will appreciate the farmer's work and will be able to talk production methods. They have a respect for nature and realise the importance of sensitive farming the permanent maintenance of the landscape that people enjoy.

City farms are more than a mere product of their times or a return to nature. We would even venture to suggest that the City Farm movement which will succeed in helping urbanised people to relate to the wider environment and improve their quality of live.