



# Organic farming : An opportunity for dairy farmers in mountain area ?

*Implementation of development actions, taking into account barriers and motivations of farmers and dairy products field stakeholders*

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# The « Organic mountain » project

## ▶ A research and development project

- ▶ Financed by the French Ministry of Agriculture
- ▶ Managed by the French Livestock Institute
- ▶ 3-year long (2010-2012)

## ▶ A multi-stakeholders project :

- ▶ Mountains : Alps, Jura, Massif Central, Pyrénées
- ▶ Contribution of 8 agricultural development agencies



Massif Central



Alps



Jura



# Three main goals, for one stake



To contribute to the preservation of dairy farming in mountain by promoting high added-value projects

To facilitate and to support the development of organic farming

To answer the market demand

**Targeting and backing farms for which the conversion is relevant**



# A critical context for dairy farming in mountain

## ▶ A tensed economic context

- ▶ Near end of milk quotas
- ▶ Drop of milk price
- ▶ Questions about new-coming CAP

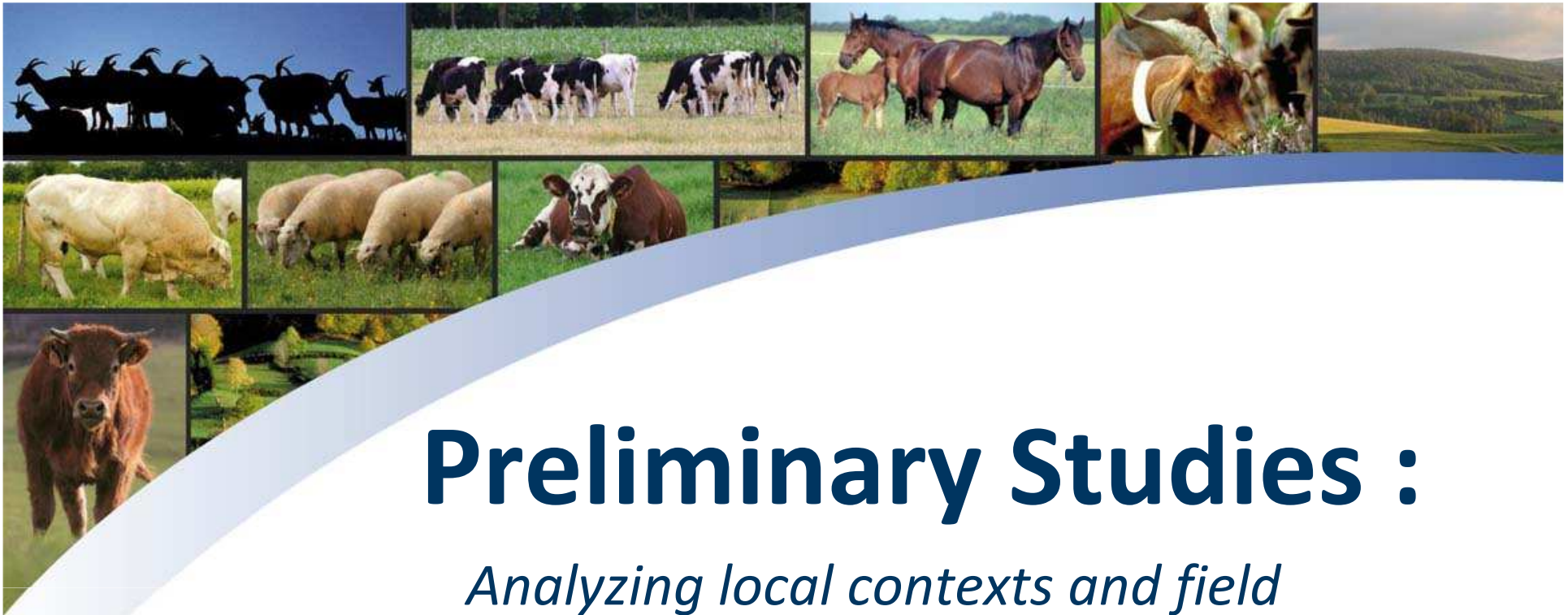
## ▶ Structural constraints partly compensated

- ▶ Old and small housing, high slopes, distance to dairies, no cereals in UAL,...
- ▶ Some specific supplies for mountain and organic farming
- ▶ Political support : National goal of 20% of organic farming before 2020 (3.5 % in 2011)



→ Need of specific support to farms of mountain areas, especially to help them to take place in the market of organic milk production





# Preliminary Studies :

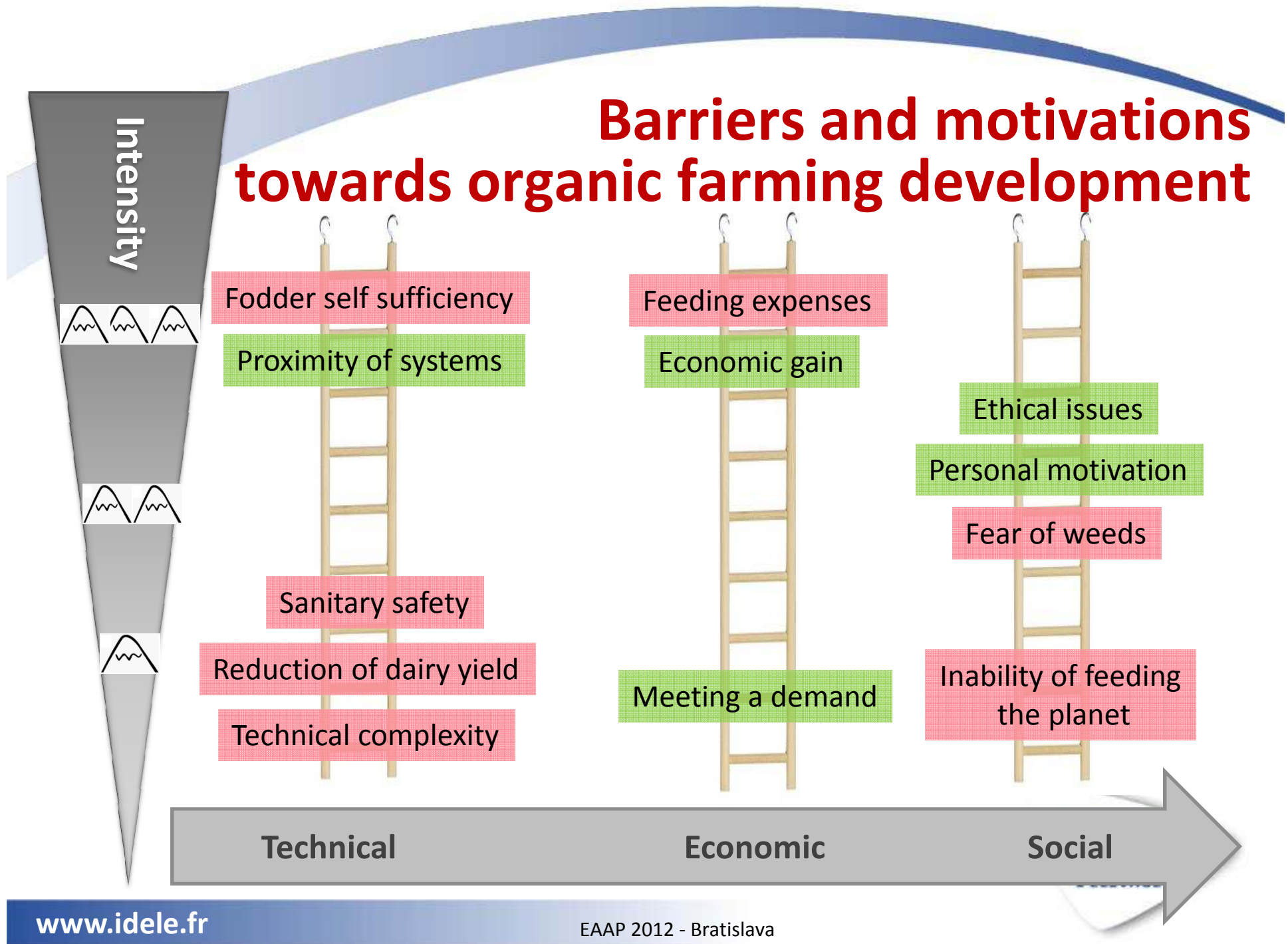
*Analyzing local contexts and field strategies to identify barriers and motivations towards organic farming*

264 semi-structured interviews

- With 163 farmers (25 of them are organic)
- With 101 advisors



# Barriers and motivations towards organic farming development





## Specific local context influence on conversion to organic farming

### ► Potential competition or synergy with other quality schemes

- The cons : Better remunerative milk price, loyalty to the historical cooperative
- The pros : habits of dealing with strict requirements, diversification of products

### ► Existence of a remunerative local dairies' project

- The cons : farmers dependence to these projects
- The pros : group dynamic, specific premium





# Synthesis of actions implemented on field :

*Collecting feedbacks from stakeholders and farmers*

35 semi-structured interviews

- To sum up actions that have been done, and assess their impact
- To provide tools and ideas to develop organic farming in regions with similar issues





# Basic action plan

1

- **One-day training courses**
  - Organic Farming principles, few technical aspects, project presentation

2

- **Diagnosis before conversion**
  - Economic assessment of impacts caused by a conversion on the farm

3

- **Other training courses**
  - Discussions between farmers and local coordinators on different ways to manage the system



# Success Keys : how to manage a development project ?

- ▶ To **involve farmers** in the project building, as early as possible
- ▶ To organize **focus groups**
- ▶ To involve **both organic and conventional** farmers
- ▶ To rely on **leader farmers**
- ▶ To create a **strong synergy** among stakeholders
- ▶ To give **time** to farmers
- ▶ To propose a **clear and long-term dairies project**





## **Conclusion : Should we encourage the development of organic dairy farming in mountain ?**

### **▶ Mountain context is a barrier :**

- ▶ Climate and slopes : strong impact on forage self-sufficiency
- ▶ Competition with other quality schemes

### **▶ But a high potential exists :**

- ▶ Small extensive farms with systems close to organic farming
- ▶ Need for these farms to diversify their production in order to be prepared to the near-end of milk quotas
- ▶ Existence of a market for organic dairy products (organic milk sales : +6 % between 2010 and 2011)





Thank you for your attention



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