Agricultural census and other surveys: Structural changes of French farms



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Family farming:

- a broad concept that concerns most countries
- it includes smallholders' farming, peasant farming,
- and that goes further in developped countries ... but how far?

Definition of the « family farming » in the french context, a proposal :
(FAO HLPE Report (2013) and Sourisseau eds. (2014))

- 1) LABOR: a large part (if not all) of the labor factor is provided by family members
- 2) the farm familly supplies ALL THE FACTORS : the family owns the operating assets and controls the land
- 3) DECISION MAKING: the operational & economic decisions come from the family, which is responsible for the incurred risks and lives off the land it operates

Structural trends in the French Agriculture (2010 Census) :

• 490 000 farms for 966 000 people and 27 million hectares (av. 56 ha)

• But 40% of those represent 3,2% of the production and 7,2% of the land area: subsistence farms and hobby farms.

• The number of French farms is still decreasing (-2% per year) so the average area is increasing

• New corporate forms have appeared (''GAEC'', ''EARL'', others) : 57% of the land

• There is an important diversity in French farming: complex farms, subsitence farms, hobby farming, diversified operations, highly specialized farms, etc.

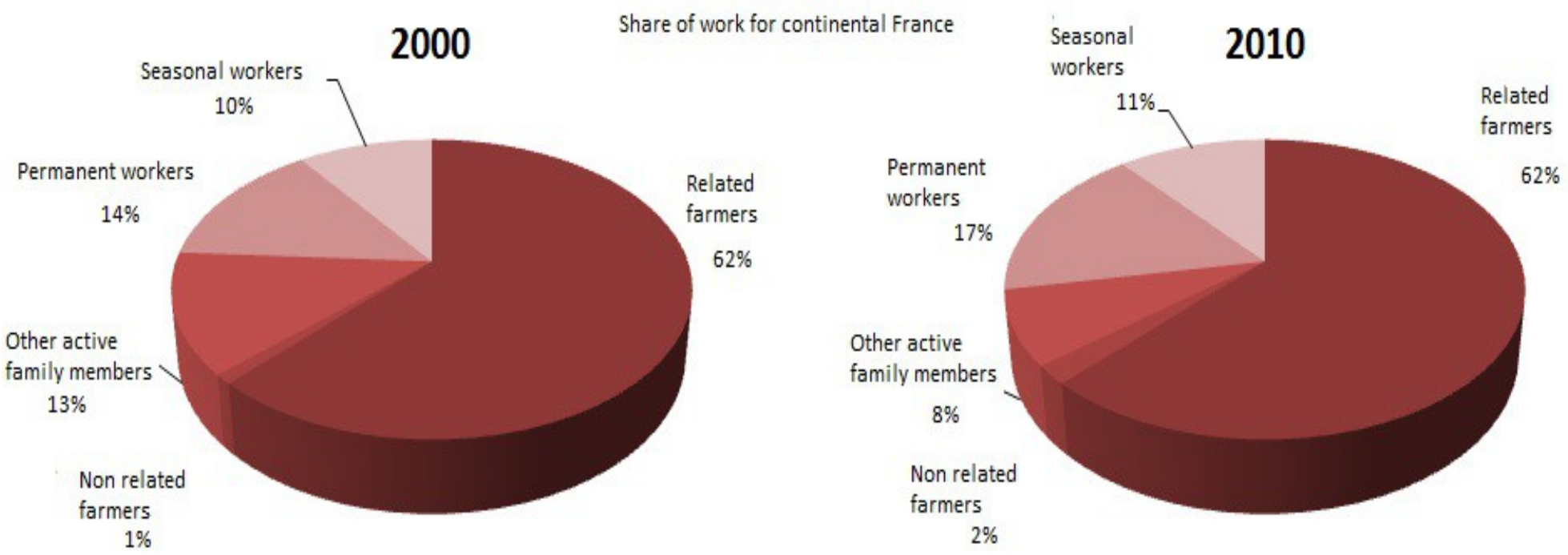
Is the French farm evolving away from the Family Farm model ?

Understanding recent changes in French farm structures through:

1. Labor
2. Land control
3. Asset control
4. Decision making and risk managment

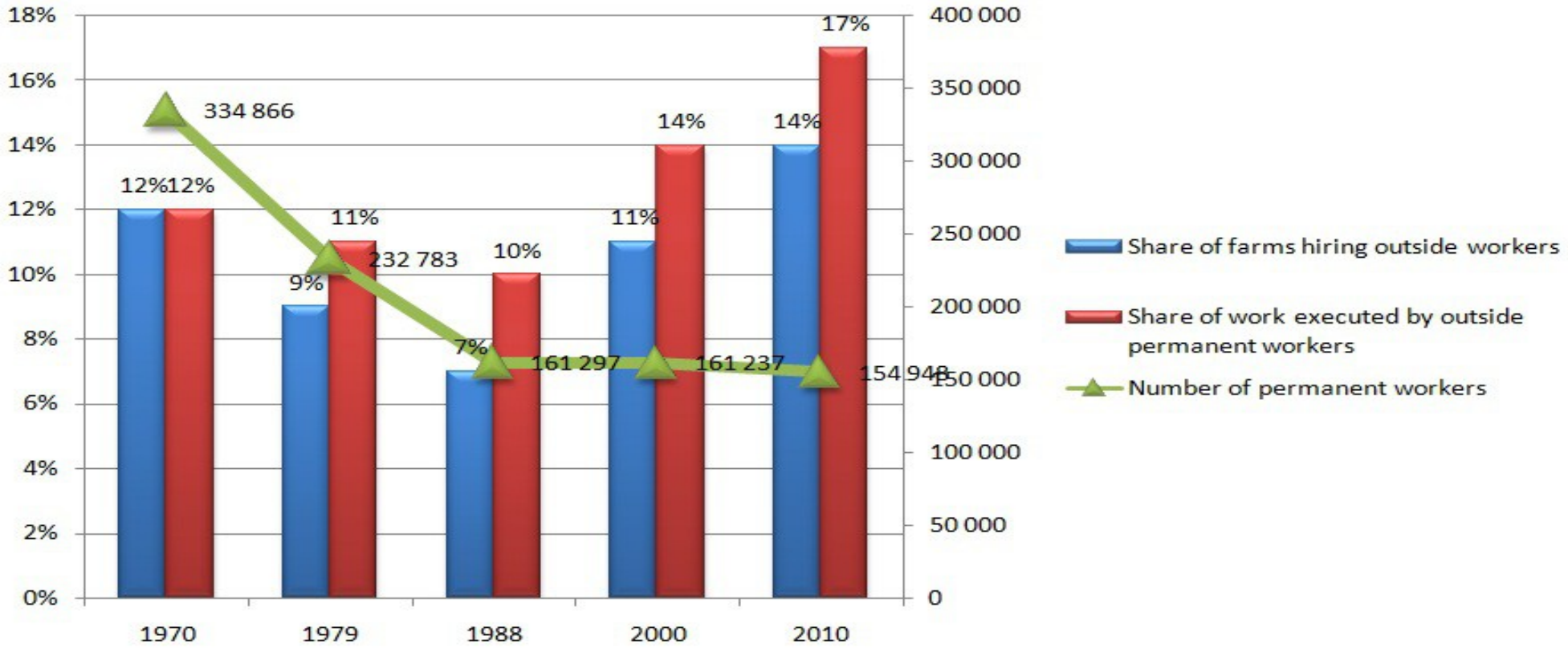
1. Labor

- In 2010, some 966 000 people work regularly on one of the 490 000 farms of metropolitan France
- 72% of the work is executed by farmers (farm heads, co-owners and other family members)
- The share of work executed by hired workers, though increasing since 2000, remains low: 17 % for permanent workers, 11% for seasonal workers



- There are 154 000 permanent hired jobs for 490 000 farms (17% of executed work)
- Stability since the late 80's after a sharp decline
- While the number of farms decreases, the share of farms with hired labor increases

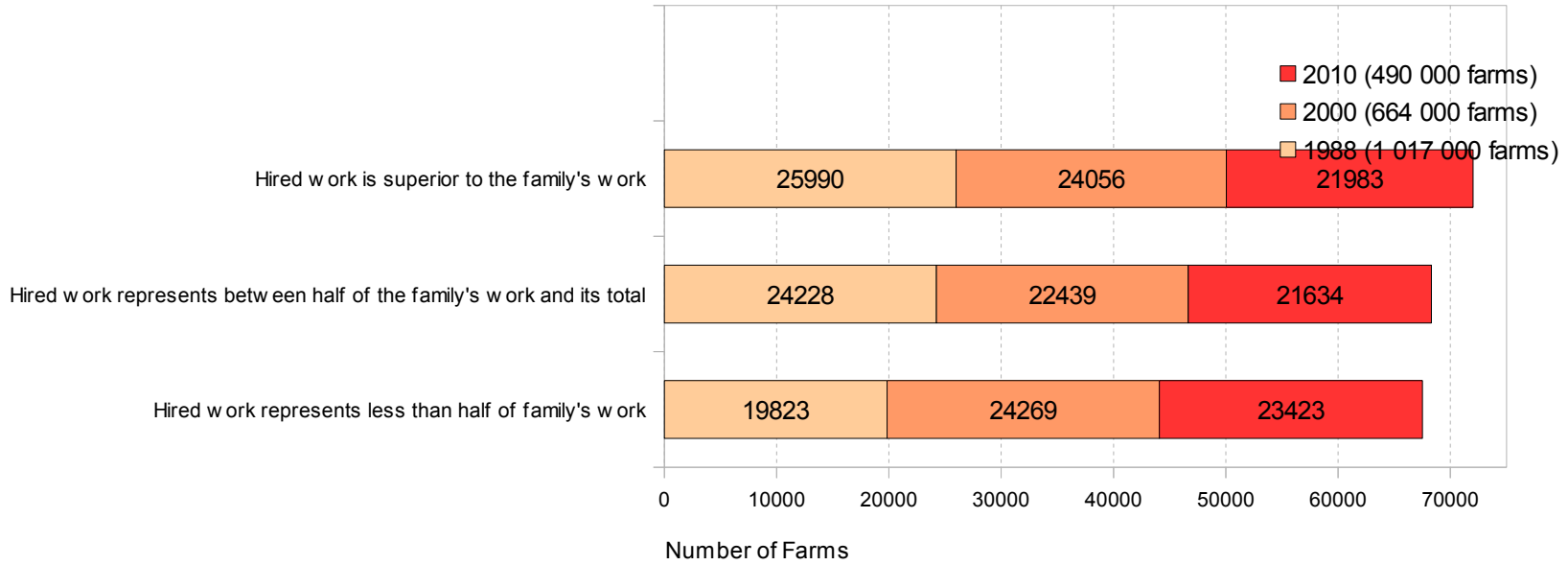
Farmers operate bigger farms thanks to more efficient capital and technologies, not through an increase in outside workforce



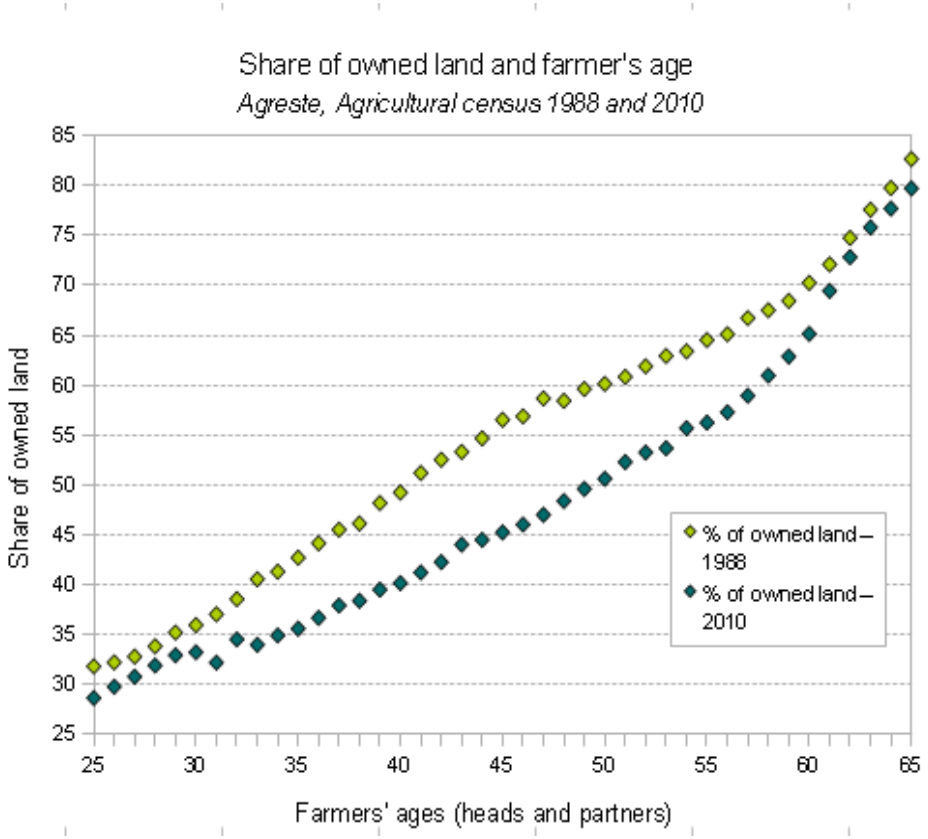
- In 2010, 14% of farms employ permanent workers
- Permanent hired work tops family's work in less than 4% of farms
- In the case of jointly run farms, most of the work is still carried out my related family members – only in less then 10 % of holdings is one of the co-owners not related to his or her coworker

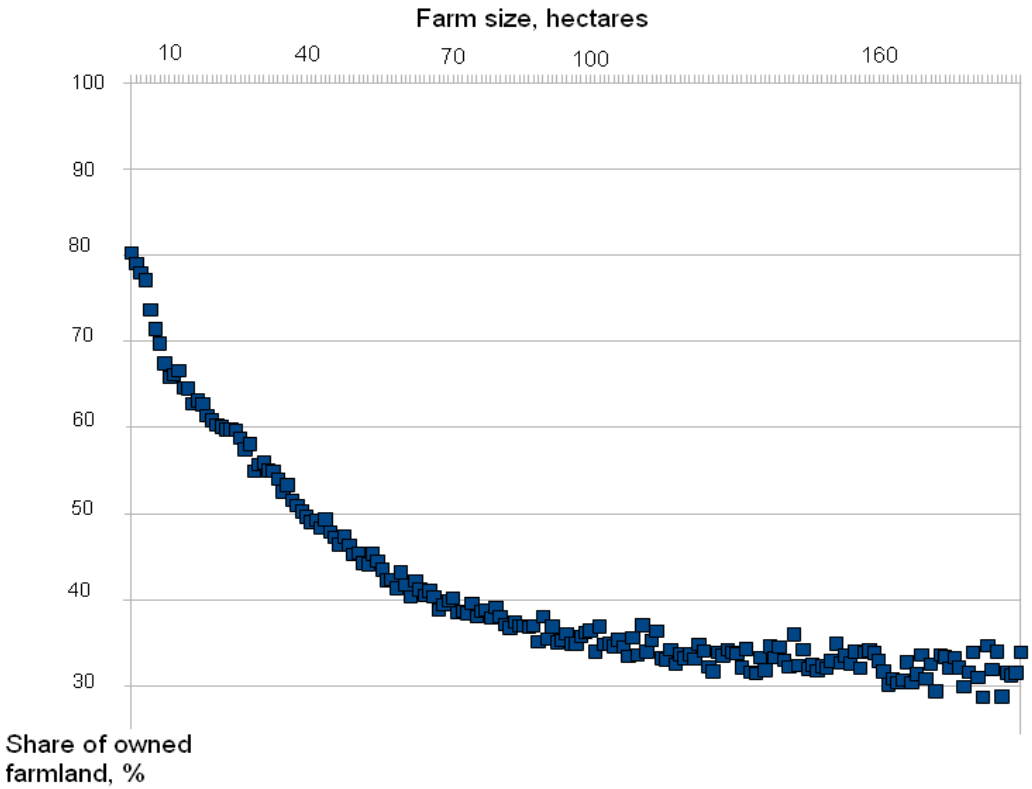
Distribution of farms using a hired workforce according to the ratio
[Hired annual worker's work / annual family worker's work]

Agreste, Agricultural Census 1988-2000-2010, Metropolitan France



2. Strong land control and progressive buy-out





- 63% of the land is rented in France, 68% of farmers rent some land - these figures are relatively stable

- The share of land in ownership increases with the age of the farmers (left) and decreases with the size of the farm (right) – this shows a gradual access to land property

2. Land control: the specificity of the « Fermage Status of 1946 »

Most of French agricultural land is either owned by farmers or leased within the *statut du Fermage*

With *statut du Fermage*, the tenant's rights are strong (it could be regarded as a form of property):

- Long term contacts, that are breakable only should the rent not be paid, or the owner want to farm personnaly
- The rental price of the land costs are under control
- Should the owner want to sell, the tenant has a priority to buy
- When the tenant retires, he has the right to transfer to family members the contract – the land can be passed on through generations

However, the data collected cannot capture new land lease contracts that have been available in the last 20 years, and that are not as tenant favorable

3. Asset control

- There is a growing share of corporate agricultural firms: 13 → 23% in ten years (GAEC: jointly run farm, EARL: associates own shares, and other classic firms)

- In individual farms and GAECs, all operating assets must legally belong to the farmers

- For EARLs, at least half of the operating assets must belong to farmers – data shows it is actually 90% (data: *MSA*, farmers' social security)

- For 85 % of other types of firms, data shows farmers own the majority of assets

	1970		1979		1988		2000		2010	
	Share of farms	Share of land	Share of farms	Share of land	Share of farms	Share of land	Share of farms	Share of land	Share of farms	Share of land
Individual farms	98,7%	96,5%	96,2%	89,9%	93,1%	81,8%	81,0%	58,0%	69,0%	43,0%
GAEC	0,3%	1,0%	1,2%	4,1%	3,7%	11,0%	6,0%	18,0%	8,0%	20,0%
EARL	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,2%	0,4%	8,0%	17,0%	16,0%	28,0%
Others	1,0%	2,5%	4,1%	5,9%	5,2%	6,9%	5,0%	7,0%	7,0%	9,0%
									31 %	57 %

4. Decision making and risk managment

New trends, that need quantification and analysis, could make some farms evolve away from family farming

External services, with the outsourcing of agricultural work (the farmer doesn't do the farming anymore):

- Work carried-out by service firms doubles between 2000 and 2010
- It represents from 5 to 10 days' work for farms that use it, but only 1,4% of total work
- Difficult to quantify - however, must be limited by the fact that farmers outsourcing to another may be forced to lease the land

''Integration'': farmers loose the control of their farm and become agricultural managers for industries (broiler) or other farmers (hogs)

- this case can not be identified through the traditionnal census

Conclusions

- *Family farming remains the largely dominant form of organisation in French agriculture*

- *Despite the decreasing number of farms, their diversity stays large*

- *As the number of farms diminishes and their size increases, jointly run farms by family members increase*

- *The trend of substituting assets for labor carries on, hired labor doesn't replace family labor*

- *New trends may announce further change to farm structures (renters' schemes, unsecure short term land leases, complex and hobby farms, integrated farms, etc.)*

- *These new trends call for a need for improved censuses and their crossing with administrative data*

Thank you for your attention

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