



Citizen participation in agricultural innovation processes

Agriculture in an urbanizing society

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Introduction

- Agricultural innovations focus more on sustainability;
- Farmers, scientists and government originally involved;
- Societal perspective indirectly interpreted.





Citizens

- Increased interest (open farm days, debates on animal welfare, Slow Food movement);
- How do they appreciate agriculture?
- Depends on knowledge, experiences and interests (Aarts and Van Woerkum, 1994);
- Value-orientations to distinguish citizens (TPS-NIPO; Motivaction);
- Value-orientations have an effect on the image of citizens on agriculture (Goenee and Le Goff, 2004; Boogaard, 2009; Caron-Flinterman et al., 2010).





Citizen participation

- “The practice of involving members of the public in agenda-setting, decision-making and policy-forming activities of organisations / institutions responsible for policy development” (Rowe and Frewer, 2005);
- Citizen participation improves quality of decisions;
- Various methodologies: from consultation to interactive, deliberative processes.





Criticism

- Key concepts are generally not well defined;
- Scientific research is dispersed and reflections are rare (Van Asselt and Rijkens-Klomp, 2002);
- Still many questions!





Four cases

- Three cases with early involvement of citizens using different methodologies;
- Unknown solutions;
- One new case in which a promising (technological) key solution was chosen;
- Strongly defined design boundaries, goals and means.



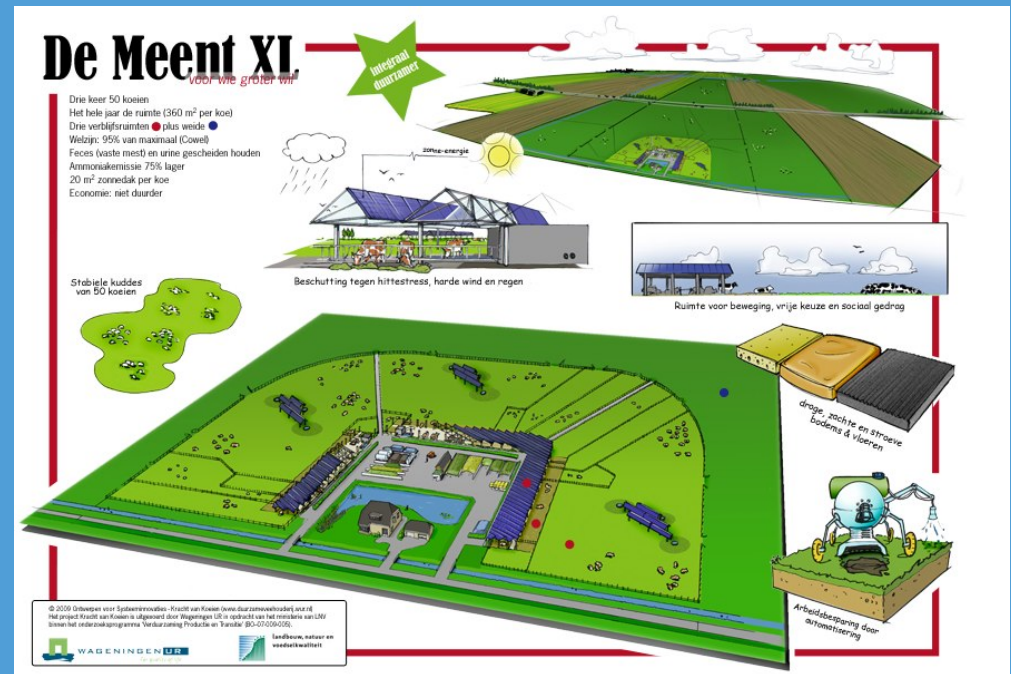
'Loving hens'

- Three groups of eight citizens (traditional citizens, post materialists and cosmopolitans);
- Attitudes were integrated in design process;
- Designs were tested with citizens;
- Great alterations of one of two designs (Bos et al., 2004; Groot Koerkamp and Bos, 2008).



'Cow power'

- Large study on citizens perceptions;
- Programme of Requirements;
- Some citizens participated in design;
- Low impact on final designs (Bos et al., 2009; Bos and Van Eijk, 2009).



'Agromere'



- Survey with 350 citizens by telephone;
- 550 citizens completed digital survey;
- Two focus group discussions;
- Outcomes used in design process.





'Soilless cultivation of outdoor crops' (1/2)

- Soilless cultivation as promising technological key solution;
- Semi-structured group interviews;
- Focus on both cultivation systems and products;
- Positive and negative associations with soilless cultivation and its products;
- What are arguments for these associations?





'Soilless cultivation of outdoor crops' (2/2)

- "What's in it for me?"
- Naturalness, integration into the landscape, neat and tidy;
- Terms will be further studied and used in redesign;
- Research on taste, nutritional value and storage life;
- Communication and marketing.





Results (1/2)

- Different types of participation used in the four cases;
- Influence of citizens varied: great in 'Loving Hens' and 'Agromere', low impact on final designs in 'Cow Power' and unknown in 'Soilless cultivation of outdoor crops'
- Question that arises: can you explain impact by the method of participation used?!





Results (2/2)

- Consultation can provide valuable information and influence design;
- Risk of consultation: depends on “goodwill”;
- Dominance and group pressure;
- Participation: equal position and input;
- Risk: citizens are not considered as equal partners;
- Input is subjective.





Discussion

- Not a complete overview of cases;
- 'Soilless cultivation of outdoor crops' will continue with citizen participation in redesign processes;
- Questions:
 - How to deal with diversity of society? Selection of participants?
 - Influence of project conditions and participants?
 - Are there risks?
 - Impact on realisation?





In the end

- Meaningful and valuable information;
- Choice of method: goal of the project and role of citizens;
- Consultation first, then interactive deliberation.





Questions?

