

Are Land Managers on the way to Multifunctionality? Application to a case study in Southern Portugal

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A great number of land managers in Europe, witness today the decrease of farm income due to the rise of input prices, the progressive cuts of production subsidies and the fluctuations in the prices of agricultural products. At the same time, in the context of the Common Agricultural Policy reform, the need to maintain European agriculture's competitiveness in global markets, ensuring high production standards and responding to the new demands for non-agricultural goods and services, is indeed reinforced. The question which arises is whether land managers will be enterprising and dynamic enough to face the challenges imposed by such uncertain political, market and public demand context. Although there is literature backing up a transition of rural areas, from productivist towards post-productivist, in central and northern European contexts, evidence of such phenomena occurring in the Mediterranean context is still lacking. The hypothesis proposed to be tested is whether the municipality of Montemor-o-Novo is in a process of transition from productivism to post-productivism, in which land managers no longer see agriculture exclusively from a production perspective, and progressively consider other functions such as environmental protection and the provision of non-agricultural goods and services (hunting, tourism, etc.). For this purpose surveys were applied to 119 land managers in Montemor-O-Novo. Different types of land managers were identified based on their attitudes about agriculture system and behaviors on their farms. The results demonstrate that, although environmental protection and production of non-agricultural goods and services in agriculture are widely recognized by society, land managers still hold, in general, a productivist identity and therefore a multifunctional transition taking place at the farm level in this study area is currently not evident.