



Agri-food chains and actors' strategies

Organized by

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier

Agri-food chains and actors' strategies

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Objectives

The Master "Agri-food chains and actors' strategies" is a 15-months training course designed for those having a university diploma of minimum level equivalent to the French *Baccalauréat+4* in the fields of economic and social sciences, management sciences or agronomy. The objective of this Master is to train specialists in agri-food economics and agro-industrial management (likely to work in firms, public administrations, or professional organizations) and who are able:

- to deal with problems arising from the regulation of agri-food chains at the various stages of products circulation;
- to control various management jobs so as to take in charge various functions within agri-food firms dealing with production, processing and services.

In the actual state of globalization of the economy which is opening to competitiveness, the efficient management of firms and the functioning of food firms are becoming a strategic stake. In developed countries, the introduction of recent innovations as well as the emergence of new food risks raise questions to all the actors of the food system. In southern and eastern countries, the economic liberalization, which tries to improve the performances of food firms, encounters multiple constraints which are combined to reach a low productivity level.

In order to overcome these constraints and build a competitive system, economic actors must have the adequate skills allowing them to control modern management techniques while having a precise knowledge of their own specific sphere of activity, i.e. agri-food economics. Accordingly, this course is meant to provide training in the use of theoretical tools, as well as the acquisition of professional experience (individual and collective training) allowing the trainee to be operational right at the end of the course.

More exactly, this course allows to acquire:

- **knowledge**: analysis of the agro-food system and its various chains, of the food processing industries sector, and of firms environment.
- **know-hows**: how to elaborate a strategic diagnosis of an agro-food chain and how to propose strategic projects for all the actors.

The **first part** is dedicated to theoretical and practical tools allowing the analysis of food chains, firms and markets.

The **second part** is dedicated to a professional training period within a firm and includes a thesis and its defence before an appointed jury.

Part 1

Post-graduate specialization course

This course is organized in 7 sections units (60 ECTS)

- Prerequisites**
- Upgrade in economics and management (micro-economics, financial analysis and statistics)
 - Upgrade in computer use (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Internet)
 - Introduction to documentary research

Section 1 **FOOD SYSTEMS ANALYSIS**
This course provides conceptual tools and methods (theory of systems, competitive analysis, industrial economy) allowing to grasp:

- the network of actors: production, distribution, catering
- consumers' food behaviour
- international dynamics of food systems

Section 2 **FOOD CHAINS ANALYSIS AND FIRMS MANAGEMENT**
Food chains analysis
Acquisition of approaches and methodological tools allowing to master different uses of the food chain approach, to analyse the functioning of agro-food chains and markets, mainly in the actual context of economic liberalisation.
Food firms management
Acquisition of the necessary concepts and methods for the understanding and the analysis of the food system, its dynamics and their application to the different agri-food chains.

Section 3 **MARKETS, POLICIES AND NEGOTIATIONS**
Main analytical questions concerning public choices, international markets and collective international negotiations. Case analysis and linkage between the three types of problems.

Section 4 **AGRI-FOOD GLOBALIZATION AND GEOSTRATEGY**
This section provides knowledge, approaches and tools for analysis allowing:

- to tackle problems arising from the internationalisation process, and its implications at firms level;
- to understand the regional economic dynamics of the various geographical areas, particularly: the European Union, developing countries, the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area...;
- to appreciate the role of international institutions, and to evaluate the stakes of current international negotiations.

Section 5 **MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**
The course deals with the international development of agro-food firms through the study of international marketing and international trade techniques.

Section 6 **MANAGEMENT OF DISTRIBUTION FIRMS AND LOGISTICS OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS**

This course allows:

- a global vision of the distribution sector and to understand the relations of interdependence binding the various actors implied;
- to understand the functioning of the various distribution chains, and the role of each partner;
- to learn the methods of modern logistics allowing to manage flows and information.

Section 7 **PREPARATION OF THE TECHNICAL DOSSIER AND OF THE PROPOSAL FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PERIOD**

- Preparation of a technical 'Dossier' centred on a topic connected with the professional training period.
- Preparation of a proposal presenting the different aspects of the professional training period.

TRAINING SEQUENCE

- Prerequisites** (0 ECTS)
September
- Upgrade in micro-economics and management
 - Upgrade in computer use
 - Introduction to documentary research
- Section 1** (6 ECTS)
October
- FOOD SYSTEMS ANALYSIS**
- Introduction to the Mediterranean region
 - Actors, their behaviour and food systems dynamics (6 ECTS)
- Section 2** (6 ECTS)
November
- FOOD CHAINS ANALYSIS AND FIRMS MANAGEMENT**
- Food chains analysis (3 ECTS)
 - Agri-food firms management (3 ECTS)
- Section 3** (6 ECTS)
December
- MARKETS, POLICIES AND NEGOCIATIONS** (6 ECTS)
- International markets of agriculture and food products
 - Agricultural, food, agro-environmental and rural development policies
 - International negotiations on agriculture and multilateral environmental agreements
- Section 4** (6 ECTS)
January
- AGRI-FOOD GLOBALIZATION AND GEOSTRATEGY** (6 ECTS)
- Section 5** (6 ECTS)
February
- MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**
- International marketing (3 ECTS)
 - International trade techniques (3 ECTS)
- Section 6** (6 ECTS)
March
- MANAGEMENT OF DISTRIBUTION FIRMS AND LOGISTICS OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS** (6 ECTS)
- Section 7** (24 ECTS)
April and May
- PREPARATION OF THE TECHNICAL DOSSIER AND OF THE PROPOSAL FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PERIOD**
- Preparation of a technical 'Dossier' centred on a topic connected with the professional training period. (6 ECTS)
 - Preparation of a proposal presenting the different aspects for the professional training period. (18 ECTS)

Detailed course description

Prerequisites **Micro-economics and management**

Reminder of fundamentals in microeconomics, management and statistics. Lectures and exercises.

Computer use

Presentation and exercises for the use of common software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and the Internet.

Introduction to documentary research, allowing the use different documentary databases dealing with agricultural and rural development (CIHEAM-IAMM, Agropolis, CAB, FAO... databases).

Section 1 **FOOD SYSTEMS ANALYSIS**

The general objective is to supply the necessary concepts and methods for the understanding and for the analysis of the food system and its dynamics and their application to the different agri-food chains. Through a method based on the systemic approach, on the economic analysis and on management sciences, this course describes the structure and analyses the functioning of the agri-food complex by laying further stress on the following points:

- the tools for the macroeconomic analysis of food systems,
- the basic concepts and tools required for the analysis of food consumption and of consumers' behaviour,
- the actors of the systems, their characteristics and their strategies,
- industrial economy and the behaviour of agri-food firms.

Evaluation procedure: Classroom examination and group work.

Section 2 **FOOD CHAINS ANALYSIS AND FIRMS MANAGEMENT**

This section includes two complementary teaching units.

Unit 1: Food chains analysis

This unit aims at the acquisition of the necessary concepts and methods for the practice of strategic analysis applied to various actors, in various contexts:

- chains and markets,
- firms pertaining to the food system,
- organizations of the associative or mutualists type,
- public institutions.

This unit is based on a number of case studies, the main objectives being to:

- to learn how to define the elements of a strategic plan and grasp its implementing procedure;
- illustrate the modern management process using practical examples of European firms (large firms, small- and middle-size firms), and firms in developing countries;
- to allow to understand the nature and the bases of the main agro-industrial policies implemented in various countries and their impact on the management of agri-food firms;
- To contribute to a better knowledge of the challenges and current stakes of the agri-food firms in the case of economies in transition.

Unit 2: Agri-food firms management

The food chains approach lies at the basis of the formation and development of the agri-food economy taken as a discipline, since allows to analyze and explain the behaviour and strategies of the various economic agents intervening at the successive stages of the production, circulation and consumption process of agricultural and agri-food products.

The richness of the food chain approach certainly lies in its capacity to grasp the increasing complexity of reality: the food chain represents a relevant space for the design and implementation of strategies; on a regional and/or local scale, it represents a very fruitful context for co-operation within the field of territory development. This unit aims at three types of objectives which will allow participants:

- to identify an agri-food chain and analyze its operating modes;
- to understand the mechanisms of interdependence, the balance of power, the conflicts and stakes characterizing the various economic agents they are composed of;
- to understand the transformations of agri-food chains in relation to the development process, as well as the heterogeneity and specificities of agri-food chains in developing countries;
- to be aware of the main methods used for the analysis of food chains, particularly the methodological contributions from industrial economics and spatial economics.

Section 3

MARKETS, POLICIES AND NEGOTIATIONS

The objective is to provide basic knowledge and capacity for critical analysis regarding the three aspects of political economy concerning the agricultural issue *stricto sensu*. This course includes lectures, case analyses, group work and a simulation game on an agricultural negotiation. Courses serving as a link between the three sections ensure the problematics continuity of these three fundamental parts of public policies.

This course is thus structured around three parts.

1) The 1st part deals with “markets”

Based on the case analysis of two large markets of agricultural produce (wheat, fruit and vegetables), the course develops the main analytical problems concerning the analysis and regulation of international markets: competition and competitiveness, segmentation, protection, oligopoly and oligopsony effects.

2) The second part deals with “policies”

Based on a thorough analysis of the common agricultural policy and European mechanisms concerning rural development, this part also takes as counterpoint an agricultural policy in a Mediterranean third country. Special attention is paid to environmental questions and their incidence on public choices in rural, agricultural and food concerns.

3) The third part deals with “negotiations”

Based on the analysis of WTO and its different bodies functioning, this part proposes a simulation game on negotiation around the constitution of positions about particular ‘Dossiers’ elaborated during group work.

Evaluation procedure: Classroom examination and ‘Dossiers’ elaborated during group work.

Section 4

AGRI-FOOD GLOBALIZATION AND GEOSTRATEGY

Due to international development, firms are likely to encounter three main types of constraints: a) the complexity and turbulences inherent to the international context; b) difficulties to control activities beyond national borders; c) risk-taking at both commercial and financial levels.

This course thus attempts to provide knowledge, approaches and tools for analysis allowing to cope with the new needs resulting from the recent changes affecting the international context. The two units of **Section 5** below provide the techniques and methods allowing the analysis of the international development of agri-food firms likely to solve these problems.

At the end of this first unit, trainees should be able to deal with problems arising from the internationalisation process; the following objectives should be reached:

- awareness of the complexity of the new international context and its implications at firms level;
- ability to identify the tendencies, the main actors, their balance of power (firms, States, international organizations), and to analyse the main forms of the phenomenon;
- understanding the regional economic dynamics of the various geographic areas, namely of: the European Union, developing countries, the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area;
- appreciation of the role of international institutions and estimation of the stakes involved in current international negotiations.

The educational approach rests on the principle of practicals making use of the Internet. For this course, the Web site presents, in addition to relevant lessons, the objectives of the training, exercises, a section entitled 'Tools' comprising: the bibliography, video records, the useful links and relevant documents whose study may be either compulsory or optional.

Section 5

MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Unit 1: International marketing

This part addresses the concepts and models for analysis usually used in international marketing, allowing: to identify and evaluate export markets, decision-making regarding the modes of international development, as well as marketing mix adaptations, by estimating the cultural dimension and its impact on policies to be implemented.

Individual work: exercises to be prepared and compulsory scheduled reading.

Unit 2: International trade techniques

This part deals with the methods and means allowing to minimize the risks of international business by using the set of commercial, legal and administrative techniques of international trade. At the end of the course, trainees should be able to identify the risks involved in an international context and in the business activity (import/export of food products), and to be acquainted with the techniques and basic methods allowing to cope with them.

Individual work: exercises to be prepared and compulsory scheduled reading.

Section 6

MANAGEMENT OF DISTRIBUTION FIRMS AND LOGISTICS OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS

During the two last decades, the saturation of internal markets, the appearance of new outlets and a certain standardization of consumers' tastes and aspirations, have contributed to the development of big distributing firms, and have accelerated the internationalization process. In this fast changing context, the effective management of a logistics chain becomes a major stake. The logistics function, described as the "management of flows of goods and information to which they are linked, which firms receive, transfer and put forward", constitutes a global approach ensuring better productivity regarding products circulation from the supplier to the customer, thus allowing better satisfaction on the consumers' side. The objective of this section is:

- to provide adequate knowledge about the trading and distribution sectors and to be aware of the stakes involved;
- to acquire the methodological tools implemented for the analysis of trading processes and of the logistic of agri-food markets and their functioning;
- to understand the organization and functioning of different trading channels for food products;

to learn the methods of modern logistics allowing to manage flows and information.

Section 7

PREPARATION OF THE TECHNICAL DOSSIER AND OF THE PROPOSAL FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PERIOD

Written technical 'Dossier' on a topic in connection with the proposal for a professional training period (theoretical work).

Written proposal for the professional training period presenting the mission entrusted, its context and relevant problematics, the implemented methodology, the working schedule. This report is defended before an appointed jury of teachers.

Part 2

The Master of Science course

Professional training period in a firm, resulting in a thesis and its defence (6 months, 60 ECTS)

Achievement of the individual 6-months training in a firm or institute pertaining to the agricultural and/or food sector. This professional training period in real firm management situation finalizes the training provided and gives the opportunity to trainees to demonstrate their capacity to analyse a complex situation and finally draw out the useful recommendations for the firm (10 ECTS).

Thesis connected with the professional training period: more than a mere report describing or synthesizing the situation, it must include an introduction reminding the context of the mission and the problematics, as well as the description of the objectives of the mission and of the methods and concepts implemented.

Defence of the above thesis before a jury of teachers-researchers and professionals (50 ECTS).

INDICATIVE MASTER THESES ACHIEVED IN “AGRI-FOOD CHAINS AND ACTORS’ STRATEGIES”

Titre : Implantation d’une méthodologie d’optimisation des coûts au sein d’une entreprise agroalimentaire (NCA). Cas de la direction des ressources humaines (2007)

Auteur : ALLOUCHE Fares (Algérie)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : L’importance de la gestion de la recherche et du développement dans une firme agroalimentaire (2007)

Auteur : CHOUEIRI Karim (Liban)

Directeur de thèse : Selma TOZANLI

Titre : Diagnostic de la filière karité dans le Cercle de Kita au Mali et insertion sur le marché (2007)

Auteur : DE OLIVEIRA Paula (France)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Analyse comparative des critères économiques et environnementaux des filières biogaz et hydrogène produits à partir des déchets par digestion anaérobie (2007)

Auteur : ELIAS Adèle (Liban)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Suivi d’un système HACCP appliqué au contrôle qualité dans une industrie porcine. Le cas de Campofrio Alimentacion S.A. (2007)

Auteur : GALLEGO GARCIA Margarita (Espagne)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Attractivité territoriale et stratégies des firmes multinationales : quelle attractivité pour les pays des Balkans ? (Grèce, Croatie, Slovénie, Turquie) (2006)

Auteur : GJANA Majlinda (Albanie)

Directeur de thèse : Selma TOZANLI

Titre : Contribution à la mise en place d’un système d’assurance qualité selon la démarche HACCP dans une entreprise marocaine de confiserie et chocolaterie : MICHOC (2008)

Auteur : HOUB DINE Boutaina (Marocaine)

Directeur de thèse : Selma TOZANLI

Titre : Diagnostic de la filière laitière de la vallée de Quijos en Équateur : impact d'un accord de libre-échange avec les Etats-Unis sur les systèmes de production et les fromageries (2007)

Auteur : JACQUET Bruno (France)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Analyse du marché algérien du blé dur et les opportunités d'exportation pour les céréaliers français dans le cadre du pôle de compétitivité Quali-Méditerranée : le cas des coopératives Sud Céréales, Groupe Coopératif occitan et Audecoop (2007)

Auteur : KELLOU Rym (Algérie)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Analyse de l'environnement concurrentiel et positionnement d'une PME dans le secteur de la boisson en Algérie. Cas de la Nouvelle Conserverie Algérienne NCA, Rouiba (2007)

Auteur : LAMANI Ouassila (Algérie)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Contribution à la mise en place du système Management qualité BRC – Démarche HACCP au sein de SAPIAMA-GPA (2006)

Auteur : MADOUNI Ahmed (Maroc)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Filières apicole, marketing mix des produits de ruche (2007)

Auteur : MASSOUD Edward (Liban)

Directeur de thèse : Selma TOZANLI

Titre : La traçabilité : une exigence pour les produits agroalimentaires latino-américains destinés au marché européen (2007)

Auteur : ORTEGA Franedith Carolina (Vénézuéla)

Directeur de thèse : Selma TOZANLI

Titre : Analyse stratégique de la fonction distribution. Cas d'une entreprise agroalimentaires en Algérie (ABC-Pepsi) (2007)

Auteur : OULD ABDERRAHMANE Samira (Algérie)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : La stratégie de distribution d'une entreprise agroalimentaire privée. Le cas Tchénouit/Candia en Algérie (2006)

Auteur : SETTAR Wissem (Algérie)

Directeur de thèse : Abdelhamid BENCHARIF

Titre : Intérêt et mise en place d'un plan d'hygiène basé sur la méthode HACCP. Cas de l'entreprise ABC-Pepsi (2007)

Auteur : ZEMIRLI Nabil (Algérie)

Directeur de thèse : Selma TOZANLI

ACADEMIC STAFF WITHIN THE PROFESSIONAL MASTER OF SCIENCE « AGRI-FOOD CHAINS AND ACTORS' STRATEGIES »

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- **MERDJI** M'hamed, Professeur de Marketing à l'École Supérieure de Commerce de Montpellier
- **SEIGNOUR** Amélie, Maître de Conférences à l'IUT de Nîmes
- **VERCHER** Corinne, Maître de Conférences à l'Université Montpellier 3 (Paul Valéry)

Maroc

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Tunisie

- **HASSAINYA** Jemael, Professeur INAT Tunis

Algérie

- **DJELLAB** Said, Directeur, Ministère du Commerce, Algérie