

Coping with work constraints within complex crop/livestock systems in the African farming sector

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Topic:

The topic of this WG is exactly included with the theme of the symposium titled 'Work Dynamics'. Its main focus will be on the actual uses of work in the African agricultural sector and its perspectives. This is a very specific context still characterized by a vigorous demographic growth and intense pressure on natural resources. The African agriculture, particularly dominated by family smallholder units, still represents more than 30% of the total available workforce (in some countries, it may go up to 50% and above). Another key characteristic of this sector is its very limited uses of mechanization because of weak capital investments capabilities, implying huge future challenges to ensure its attractiveness for workers, particularly youngsters. The production systems are complex due to the diversity of crops cultivated and/or animals raised on farms, the seasonality of agricultural production (with different stages and duration of production cycles depending on the product), the multiplicity of production techniques (cropping practices, tools and equipment, irrigated or rain fed), and the diversity of farm structures, etc.

Aims:

The main goal of this WG is to bring researchers interested in the African agricultural sector to present updated knowledge on work uses. Proposals will be particularly focused on methods and results assessing work uses, work organization, such as the 'Work Balance' or 'QuaeWork' methods. Case studies will encompass situations from North Africa (Morocco), as well as sub-Saharan Africa (Benin, Ghana, Senegal, etc.). Analyses will focus on work efficiency and remuneration, as well as studies distinguishing the nature of the workers involved in agricultural activities (whether from within the family of the farmers or hired workers) are also encouraged.

Format:

This working group is expected to occupy at least two sessions of 1.5 hours each. The convenors will try to gather case studies' presentation from at least 4 countries and will also seek the presentation of a synthesis of all the case studies.