

# Rural transformation and development for resilient food systems

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George Vlahos

Agricultural University of Athens

# Innovation for resilience ?

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- Always a problem...
  - Authorities afraid of failure
    - Stick to the usual and easy for the farmers to accept
  - Banking system extremely cautious
- ...aggravated during crises
  - Priorities: ensure economic viability in the short term
- Research and advice aim towards competitiveness, securing market access

# However during the recent crisis

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- Collective initiatives from rural areas arose in different sectors and regions.
  - Reactive – Driven by negative factors
    - The model of subsidy maximizing farming could not be followed either due to policy changes, external pressures and/or lack of access to land /entitlements
    - A market strategy reached its limits
- Why is this a transformative change?
  - Delegitimation of co-operatives
  - A very small role in competitive sectors

# Successful initiatives had common characteristics

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- Market oriented – Extrovert character
- Control and monitoring the production process
- Actively seeking linkages to research and advisory services
- Consider farmer awareness and training essential part of their strategy
- Focus on quality, food safety and environmental performance

# Strategies

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- Not relying on public support to start collaboration for innovation
- Use quality standards and environmental friendly practices in order to maintain and/or gain markets meeting consumer expectations.
- Seek public support for an already established effort.

# Some examples

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The role of research and advice

# Climate change

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- The mainstream proposal for adaptation:
  - Business as usual and insure for negative impacts /damages
- Their approach
  - Resilience:
    - Use varieties/races resistant to dryness, lack of irrigation water.
    - Adopt practices to reduce needs (reduce evapotranspiration+ less water needs)

# Circular farming

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- Increase organic matter
  - Improve soil quality
  - Reduce use of synthetic fertilisers
  - Increased carbon sequestration
- Incorporate residues.
  - Phytosanitary issues
- Compost pruning residues



# Plant protection

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- The mainstream proposal
  - Precision agriculture
- Their approach
  - Biological control – More adaptable
- New enemies
- Increased resistance to conventional Plant Protection Products