

Katarzyna WALKOWIAK

Adam Mickiewicz. University in Poznań

ORCID: 0000-0002-1568-7277

French Chambers of Agriculture in the Process of Creating and Implementing the Common Agricultural Policy 2023–2027

Abstract: In the context of the principle of subsidiarity and the participatory management of public policies, questions arise regarding the scope and manner of the participation of the representatives of the agricultural community in the creation and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), one of the EU's most deeply integrated policies. This issue is particularly pertinent in the case of France, a country with a diverse and robust agricultural sector, and the largest recipient of funding under the new CAP for the period 2023–2027. France is also distinguished by its chambers of agriculture forming a long-standing element of its political and administrative system. Given the connections between the chambers of agriculture and the state, as well as the recent institutional changes within the chambers' network, their future role as permanent participants in CAP decision-making processes is being called into question. Academic literature on this subject is rather scant, so institutional documentation was the main source of knowledge and analysis. Research methods, such as the institutional-legal method, document research and the systemic method were mainly applied.

Key words: French chambers of agriculture, Common Agricultural Policy, participation, public policy

Introduction

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the European Union's earliest policies that assisted the creation of the European single market. Established by the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and coming into force in 1962, it is based on three guiding principles: the creation of a single agricultural market, financial solidarity, and community preference. Since its inception, the CAP has undergone regular, thorough reforms in order to adapt to changes in the EU's structure, new consumer expectations, and changes in agricultural activity itself (Catala, 2013, pp. 37–66; Giuliani, Baron, 2023; Jurcewicz, Włodarczyk, Tomkiewicz, 2024; Walkowski, 2007; Puślecki, Kmiecik, Walkowski, 2010). The latest of these reforms came into force in 2023. This process has led to greater consideration being given to environmental issues, land management, and food quality and safety. The latest CAP reform also introduced a change in the implementation model (Trouvé, Bazin, 2018, pp. 97–112). The CAP currently relies on strategic planning and achieving objectives set out in national strategic plans drawn up by each member state and approved by the European Commission (European Commission, 2022). Unlike previously adopted rural development programs (RDPs), these strategic plans cover instruments under both pillars of the CAP: rural development (second pillar) and direct payments and agricultural markets (first pillar) (Włodarczyk, 2022, pp. 11–26).

In the context of creating and implementing one of the most deeply integrated European policies, as the CAP is, the question arises of the extent to which stakeholders, or

representatives of the agricultural community and rural residents, are able to participate in creating and implementing this public policy, and the manner of this participation. This question is particularly pertinent in the context of the EU's principle of subsidiarity, as well as the calls for involving citizens in governance and management processes, and for making public decisions through substantive debate and with the involvement of various stakeholders.

The above research questions are particularly relevant to France, a significant actor in European agriculture. French agriculture is extremely diverse, due to its varied landscapes, climates and soils. France's agricultural production is among the highest in the EU, reaching a value of €72.9 billion. The highest production value is generated by the wine (13.2%), milk (13.1%), cereals (13%), and livestock (9.9%) sectors. France has an annual budget of €9.1 billion for implementing the new CAP (2023–2027), making it the largest beneficiary among member states (European Commission, 2025). France is also a country in which chambers of agriculture (self-governing agricultural organizations) have been a permanent feature of the political and administrative system for over a century. Due to the links between self-governing chambers of agriculture and the state, as well as the institutional changes taking place within the network of French chambers of agriculture (especially the “regionalization” of these institutions and the increased powers of regional councils), questions have been raised about the future of the chambers and their continued presence in the French political and administrative system as participants in the decision-making process, including that related to the creation and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The legal status of French chambers of agriculture

For many centuries, agriculture formed the basis of the economy in most European countries. Grelowski observes that all other professions were to a larger or smaller extent related to agriculture in the early stages of development. Therefore, states naturally supported the development of agriculture and farmers did not need to defend their interests collectively. It was only the subsequent development of industry, trade and cities that resulted in agriculture losing its status as the dominant sector of the economy in individual countries. The greater liberalization of economic life, and the diminished role of the state in the economy associated with it, made it necessary for farmers to organize as a professional group to defend their interests and support agriculture (1947, p. 1953). Initially loose, voluntary agricultural associations were formed in Europe to defend the interests of their members, who represented various branches of agricultural production. However, the emergence of chambers of commerce in the mid-19th century, with their public law personality and compulsory membership, prompted the agricultural community to establish an organization that would defend their professional interests and perform administrative functions. Self-governing agricultural chambers, with public law personality and compulsory membership were such institutions. Their tasks included providing professional advice and issuing opinions on agricultural matters, similar to the existing chambers of industry and commerce in the industrial and commercial sectors.

The idea of establishing an official agricultural representative body first emerged in France at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1851, a law on agricultural chambers was passed, but did not come into force. The agricultural community objected to the government's excessive interference in these institutions. The 1919 revised law was also rejected by the farming community, with only temporary agricultural offices (Fr.: *offices agricoles*) being established. French farmers' lack of enthusiasm towards agricultural chambers can be explained by their fear of a new, unfamiliar organization, especially since the French Farmers' Society, which had operated since 1867 and brought together numerous various associations, enjoyed great trust within the farming community (Walkowiak, 2004, pp. 60–62).

Proper chambers of agriculture were established in France by the Act of January 4, 1924, several years after the end of World War I. This act, together with several others, still forms the legal basis for the operation of chambers of agriculture in France (Lois et décrets n° 0003 du 04/01/1924).

Since the establishment of agricultural self-governing bodies in France, many decrees and laws have been passed that have strengthened the position of the chambers of agriculture year by year. In 1954, the National Fund for the Support of Chambers of Agriculture was established to ensure that the chambers participated in the country's economic development. On the basis of the 1959 decree on the dissemination of agricultural knowledge, chambers of agriculture were given the opportunity to establish technical services and employ around 200 agricultural technicians (Atrux, 2007).

The October 4, 1966 decree imposed an obligation on each chamber of agriculture to establish agricultural development services. In 1969, regional chambers of agriculture were granted public organization status. Thus, French chambers of agriculture at all levels of management became public institutions, run by elected representatives of the agricultural community and subject to state supervision (Walkowiak, 2005, p.62).

Membership of chambers of agriculture is relatively widespread in France. Alongside farm owners, their family members and agricultural workers, the chambers also include tenants, retired farmers, cooperative representatives, representatives of the Agricultural Insurance Fund and institutions crediting agriculture, as well as representatives of the forestry and agri-food industries and agricultural trade. Given their broad and diverse membership, French chambers of agriculture can be considered true representatives of agriculture and related areas. However, it should be noted that the decisive vote belongs to farmers, who hold the largest number of seats. The network of agriculture chambers represents 2.5 million voters (Assamle Nationale, 2020; Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025).

French chambers of agriculture operate at three levels of representation: departmental, regional, and national. Among the 88 departmental chambers of agriculture at the departmental level, there are four chambers for the overseas departments (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion and French Guiana) and one interdepartmental chamber for the Île-de-France region. In addition, there are thirteen regional chambers covering the large administrative regions of France. The national level is represented by Chambres d'agriculture France (Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025a).

The network of chambers of agriculture and each of its constituent institutions is tasked with improving the economic, social and environmental performance of farms

and their sectors. Through the services they provide, the chambers support the sustainable development of rural areas and agricultural enterprises, protection and improvement of natural resources, reduction of plant protection product use, and the fight against climate change.

Within the scope of their tasks and competences, departmental chambers of agriculture ensure the implementation of regional programs for the development of agriculture and rural areas. They also initiate and ensure conditions for the development of rural areas and participate in designing agricultural programs developed by departmental authorities. Furthermore, they participate in the development of territorial cohesion plans, sectoral plans and local spatial development plans. In the forestry sector, departmental chambers of agriculture exercise their powers in accordance with the provisions of the forestry act (Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025a).

Each departmental chamber has a group of advisers specializing in cultivation, breeding, entrepreneurship, environmental protection and specific regional production areas, such as wine production, mountain farming and local development. Departmental chambers may be members of associations, unions, agricultural cooperatives, and other agricultural organizations, provided that applicable laws and regulations permit this. With the consent of the regional chambers, they may participate in establishing joint-stock companies if the companies' objectives fall within the chambers' competence (Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025a).

Like departmental chambers, chambers of agriculture at the regional level have the status of public law corporations. They perform a consultative function for government administrative bodies and local authorities at the regional level. Regional chambers of agriculture comprise representatives of departmental chambers, with each chamber's voters having to be represented at the regional level. Alongside state, local authorities and public institutions, a chamber of agriculture is an advisory and representative body for agricultural interests in each region (Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025a).

Regional chambers have the following tasks, among other things: they ensure the development and coordination of regional programs for the development of agriculture and rural areas; manage, organize and coordinate the activities of departmental chambers of agriculture; establish regional strategies in accordance with national guidelines and adopt the budget necessary to implement these strategies. They also provide legal, administrative and accounting services and communication activities to the departmental chambers of agriculture under certain conditions. They contribute to the development of guidelines for contractual policies of the state and the regions, as well as spatial planning and natural resource management plans of interest to the regions. They consult on regional plans for the development of vocational training and career guidance for young people and adults. They also contribute to the development of EU regional programs within their remit (Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025a).

Regional chambers analyze public policies within their remit and participate in development, monitoring and evaluation for the departmental chambers of their constituency, in accordance with the guidelines set by the national representation (Chambres d'agriculture France). They also conduct economic and forecasting research and communicate the results of this research for practical purposes. They develop, coordinate and pro-

mote appropriate training programs focusing on the economic, social and environmental performance of agricultural activities and sectors. They develop certified services and promote the creation and takeover of agricultural enterprises (Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025a).

Chambres d'agriculture France is a public institution that heads a network of chambers of agriculture (Code rural et de la pêche maritime, 2025a). It is authorized to represent these chambers before the state, regional and local authorities, as well as on the international stage. This umbrella organization's mission is to provide technical, legal, economic and financial support to regional, departmental and interdepartmental chambers, as well as issue opinions on public policies related to agriculture and rural areas. Among other things, Chambres d'agriculture France issues opinions on the annual budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, proposals for purchase prices for agricultural products, and production limits proposed by the European Commission. There is a special directorate for European and international affairs in the organizational structure of Chambres d'agriculture France. Among other things, it is responsible for maintaining relations with Community bodies and European agricultural organizations, as well as with agricultural attachés at French embassies (Chambres d'agriculture, 2025). Chambres d'agriculture France has an office in Brussels and is a member of Copa-Cogeca, a European association that brings together agricultural organizations, trade unions and cooperative organizations. Copa-Cogeca's main objective is to represent the interests of EU farmers (COPA-COGECA, 2025).

Strategic Plan under the Common Agricultural Policy 2023–2027

The new CAP came into force on January 1, 2023 after many years of discussions and debates in European and national institutions. The new programming, which aims to be more environmentally and socially friendly, has introduced many changes to the way the CAP is managed by member states, as well as to aid programs and access criteria.

CAP 2023–2027 focuses on ten social, environmental and economic objectives, including ensuring fair incomes for farmers, competitiveness, a stronger position in the food chain, climate and environmental protection, biodiversity, support for young farmers, rural development, food quality, health and innovation (Barral, Detang-Dessendre, 2023, pp. 47–50).

As previously mentioned, a new feature of this programming period is that each member state must draw up its own national strategic plan, specifying how it intends to implement the CAP at a national level (Regulation (EU) 2021/2115). The French National Strategic Plan under the CAP 2023–2027 (Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire, 2025), approved by the European Commission on August 31, 2022, focuses on three key objectives:

- 1) increasing income support for farmers to secure basic production capacity throughout the country (economic objective);
- 2) encouraging greater diversity in production systems, supporting the autonomy of production and territories, and strengthening the resilience of the sector by promoting rational outlays (environmental objective);

- 3) encouraging generational renewal by increasing support for young farmers (social objective).

Prior to the adoption of the Strategic Plan for the CAP 2023–2027, a nationwide debate on the future of French agricultural policy was held as part of the ImPACtons initiative. The topics of the debate were determined jointly with the chambers of agriculture (Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire 2025a; Chambres d'agriculture France, 2025).

Various stakeholders cooperated to develop the principles and methods for implementing the CAP in France. The main partners were the state and regional authorities. The chambers played an active role in consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and regional government agencies. The proposals submitted by the agricultural chambers were developed in collaboration with representatives from various sectors, and prepared by teams based primarily in regional agricultural chambers. Their experts participated in setting budget levels for the so-called eco-schemes, providing for support for organic farming and risk management systems. They also formulated proposals for integrating changes resulting from the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Green Deal. This enabled regional specificities to be taken into account in the plan and prepared the way for periodic reviews of the CAP.

As with the development process, the implementation of the French CAP strategic plan identifies tasks to be performed by numerous public entities, including agricultural self-governing organizations. Some of these tasks are related to the statutory competencies of the chambers (such as advisory services and training), while others have been entrusted to the chambers under agreements with the state or region. Eco-schemes, for example, is a new CAP 2023–2027 mechanism supporting practices that go beyond minimum requirements, including agroecology, precision farming, agroforestry, and biodiversity protection. French chambers are responsible for implementing four processes within this program: voluntary practices, environmental certification (e.g. HVE) fostering biodiversity, and land set-aside premiums (hedgerow subsidies) (Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire, 2025).

The President of Chambres d'agriculture France sits on the National Monitoring Committee for the CAP 2023–2027 Strategic Plan (Décret no 2022-1525). In this regard, chambers of agriculture have been tasked with collecting, processing and sharing data for monitoring and evaluating the CAP Strategic Plan.

The achievement of the objectives of the CAP, as well as the state's objectives with regard to supporting the competitiveness of French agriculture and its agroecological transformation is facilitated by an agreement between the government and the agricultural self-governing organizations signed on November 25, 2021 by the Minister for Agriculture and the President of Chambres d'agriculture France (Contrat d'objectifs, 2021). The agreement takes into account the objectives and tasks of the Chambers of Agriculture's Strategic Program adopted for the 2019–2025 term (*Le projet stratégique...*, 2020). The program has been implemented in all regions and departments. It consists of three main axes: axis 1 – supporting agriculture in the context of economic, social and climate change; axis 2 – creating value for territories; and axis 3 – integrating agriculture and society. The agreement commits the network of chambers of agriculture to optimizing management, organization and resources. Internal audits, reporting obligations

and monitoring of results are an important part of the French chambers of agriculture's institutional restructuring project.

The information mission and advisory services of chambers of agriculture with regard to the CAP

As early as the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the European Community required member states to establish structures responsible for achieving the objectives of agriculture and related areas. This involved coordinating activities to improve farmers' professional qualifications, organizing scientific research, and disseminating agricultural knowledge. Later, in the 1970s, member states were required to develop socio-economic advisory services for farmers in accordance with the directives of the Council of the European Communities. These services included providing information and training on agricultural development prospects, supporting retraining for people working in agriculture, offering information on early retirement options and providing advice and guidance on agriculture and related areas. In 2007, the European Union obliged member states to provide an agricultural advisory system for financing, managing and monitoring the CAP (Walenia, 2022, p. 135). Monitoring the agricultural economic situation in individual areas and sectors, as well as evaluating public policies such as the CAP, provides valuable information to help decision-makers and other stakeholders make informed choices. CAP mechanisms affect the functioning of agricultural farms in accordance with specifications and conditionality rules. For some sectors, the proposed support in the form of direct payments and investment support is essential for maintaining economic balance and profitability. Farmers invest in means of production and make financial commitments that often exceed the duration of an agricultural policy. For this reason, predictability and stability in annual support and investment aid are important.

Providing advice is one of the most important roles of agricultural chambers. Research into the modernization of the agricultural sector after World War II has demonstrated the pivotal role played by agricultural chamber advisors in disseminating technical progress and professionalizing agricultural activities (Brunier, 2015, pp. 53–65; Brives, 2008, pp. 208–219). Currently, agricultural chambers are among the accredited institutions supporting farmers in accessing support under the CAP. They are members of the Agricultural Advisory Service, consisting of authorized organizations that provide advisory services in land and farm management, particularly with regard to implementing support conditions under the CAP. Importantly, only accredited entities can issue 'certificates of conditionality', confirming compliance with the requirements for receiving 100% payments (Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire, 2024).

Since 2022, agricultural chambers have made all CAP-related regulatory information (including animal breeding, environmental standards, organic farming and environmental certifications) available free of charge on the info-reglementaire.proagri.fr website. This tool covers all sectors, enabling the dissemination of information and allowing farmers to establish direct contact with advisors from their local chambers of agriculture (PROAGRI Info Réglementaire, 2025).

In connection with the implementation of the new CAP 2023–2027, chambers of agriculture have helped farmers to anticipate the consequences of regulatory changes and to make informed decisions by developing simulation tools, such as MonSimulateurPAC. This tool enables users to simulate the impact aid from the first and second pillars of the CAP may have on their farms, including basic payment entitlements, payments to young farmers, aid for breeding specific livestock species and crop production. For instance, on the basis of practices observed in the previous programming period (2019–2021), the Regional Chamber of New Aquitaine indicated that initial simulations of farmers' responses to the requirements of the eco-schemes program raised concerns that many applicants would be unable to access the program. Support in the form of simulations and advice (e.g. regarding crop rotation adjustments) made it possible to significantly exceed the forecasted results (Chambre régionale d'agriculture Nouvelle-Aquitaine, 2024).

Advisory bodies operating within the network of chambers of agriculture are authorized to provide advice to individuals and groups on the following issues: conditions for receiving support; greening and land maintenance; modernization of farms and enhancing their competitiveness; sectoral integration; innovation; promotion of entrepreneurship; operational requirements related to the Water Framework Directive; requirements related to the application of the directive on the use of plant protection products; organic farming and diversification of activities; measures related to climate change mitigation and adaptation; biodiversity; and water protection.

Currently, chambers of agriculture finance their advisory services primarily through EU, national, and local subsidies; funds from tax on undeveloped land, which varies by department; and paid advisory services (Cour des Comptes, 2021). However, due to a reduction in public funding in recent years, they must primarily operate on the basis of contracts with other entities, develop a wider range of paid services, and compete with other organizations. Overall, the reform of public policies requires chambers to combine some activities at the regional level to reduce operating costs. In this context, the commercialization of advisory services is an important issue for the survival of these organizations. They must not only generate sufficient financial resources to maintain their activities, but also establish their position in an increasingly commercialized advisory space. Departmental chambers of agriculture, in particular, must change how they advise farmers and reorganize. They are facing a reconfiguration of this space, which affects the types of advisory entities, such as cooperatives, commercial enterprises, consultants, and associations. It also affects the resources that these entities must have to be competitive, such as financing methods, types of activities, number and type of employees, and location. Departmental chambers must cooperate with new entities from outside the agricultural sector, such as associations, local governments, and agencies, which have their own vision of advisory and guidance services, and thereby influence the direction of the advice given to farmers. Additionally, there has been an increase in staff turnover in chambers of agriculture in recent years; some engineers remain in their positions for only one or two years. This is explained by a lack of recognition for their work, inadequate compensation, and limited opportunities for advancement (Catallo, Pahun, 2025). Nevertheless, the number and qualifications of agricultural chamber employees remain a strong asset of the network, which employs 8,230 people, including 6,430 managers and advisors. Data shows that advisors from the agricultural chamber network support

more than 75,000 CAP-related declarations each year (Chambres d'agriculture France, 2025a). According to a 2023 parliamentary report, the amount of strategic phytosanitary advice issued by the chambers has increased significantly since 2021 (398 recommendations in 2021, 3,738 in 2022, and 5,144 in 2023) (Assemblée Nationale, 2024).

Rural Development — CAP Pillar II

European rural development policy constitutes the second pillar of the CAP. It is financed by a special fund: the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Unlike the first pillar of the CAP, which is financed entirely by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF), the second pillar is co-financed by the EAFRD and national public funds from member states, local governments and other public entities. France has €2 billion per year in EAFRD funds to finance rural development policy between 2023 and 2027. While the implementation of the EAGF is the responsibility of the state, implementing the priorities of the EAFRD for the 2023–2027 programming period is shared between the state and the regions (Kahn-Ambroise, 2024, p. 20).

Following the partial regionalization of the CAP, regional councils became responsible for its management with the involvement of regional agricultural sector representatives, who are also represented by regional chambers of agriculture (Décret n° 2022–1636, 2022).

To adapt the CAP 2023–2027 framework and intervention mechanisms to meet local needs and implementation methods, regional authorities signed cooperation agreements with relevant regional chambers, the same as occurred at the national level. These agreements typically address the regional chambers' obligations under laws and executive acts, as well as their partnership in implementing plans related to CAP priorities. Regarding all topics covered by the partnership, regions leverage the chambers' expertise to develop agricultural and sector forecasts in the face of economic, climatic, and social changes, as well as to identify changes and appropriate measures in regional support policy. Chambers may receive regional grants for support activities under agreements with the region and special regional programs.

These agreements stipulate that regional chambers of agriculture must submit an annual report on their activities to the regional council, which will evaluate the achievement of regional chamber of agriculture's objectives and new initiatives proposed for the coming years. To monitor operational activities, regular meetings are planned between the regional chamber of agriculture's services and the regional administration.

The specific territorial link of agricultural self-governing bodies in France distinguishes chambers of agriculture from other economic organizations. Thanks to their extensive coverage, which nearly rivals that of local government units, these chambers play a pivotal role, partnering in rural development management. Often, people in key positions in the regional government administration also hold positions in the chambers. In some cases, half of the members of a regional council's agriculture committee are advisors from the chamber of agriculture (Catallo, Pahun, 2025). This strong representation of chambers of agriculture in regional government structures further strengthens their regulatory and operational capacity in regional agricultural policy and rural development.

The working population in agriculture continues to decline in France as is the case elsewhere. Between 2000 and 2020, the farming population fell from 764,000 to 496,000, and 43% of farm owners are now 55 or older (Cour des Comptes, 2023). Due to the declining rate of farm transfers, CAP regulations stipulate that each member state must allocate 3% of EU funds (EAGF and EAFRD) to support generational renewal in agriculture between 2023 and 2027. France's policy for young farmers amounts to €1.1 billion, €746 million of which comes from the second pillar (Kahn-Ambroise, 2024). This is the largest EU budget dedicated to supporting young farmers.

The change in how the CAP is managed has led to regional strategies that mobilize local actors to promote generational renewal in agriculture and settlement in rural areas. In this context, chambers of agriculture are interested in regional strategies to identify their characteristics and provide advice on accessing start-up aid appropriate to the strategy's conditions. This is particularly important as the regionalization of aid for settling in rural areas has created disparities between regions. Additionally, there is dynamic competition between regions, which can destabilize the agricultural and economic balance of rural areas by creating inequalities in settlement opportunities and preferential conditions for new residents. For example, the Young Farmers Grant program, which has historically been managed and regulated at the national level, is now being transferred to the regional level. Under the CAP 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, regions manage applications and decide on the criteria for granting aid (Kahn-Ambroise, 2024). The amount of the grant for the same application may vary depending on the region and its specific criteria.

Agricultural chambers have been tasked with developing tools for rapidly assessing the adaptability and profitability of farms to facilitate decisions about taking over or buying a farm, or starting some other activity in rural areas. For instance, the Regional Chamber of Agriculture in New Aquitaine is spearheading the CasDAR Reflex Accompagnement Humain de la Transmission Agricole project. This initiative aims to share, promote, adapt, and implement proven tools and support methods for farm transfers in the project's target regions. Thanks to this project, a regional group of farm transfer advisors has been established, an agreement has been signed with France Travail to organize internships for farm transferors without buyers, and training and webinars on know-how transfer have been conducted, with over 100 advisors participating. Additionally, a mentoring system for advisors has been introduced (Cour des Comptes, 2023, pp. 71–76).

Conclusions

Chambers of agriculture in France operate as public law corporations. Their characteristics of self-governing entities, as defined by administrative law theory, place them among chambers of commerce under the continental model, also known as the French model. The chambers represent the collective interests of the agricultural community with government authorities, local governments, private and international entities. In addition to their representative role, the oldest role that most directly corresponds to their status, agricultural chambers provide public services, particularly agricultural training and advice. They are also involved in research and development, sustainable rural development, agroecology, natural resource protection, and climate change initiatives. They

perform public service missions delegated by the state, such as establishing and taking over farms, organizing work experience, keeping animal registers, running business formalities centers and agricultural property registers. They have legislative initiative in matters concerning villages, agriculture, and rural areas.

Chambers of agriculture have competencies related to administering the EU's Common Agricultural Policy mechanisms. Their administrative responsibilities include managing agricultural intervention mechanisms, setting agricultural production standards, managing agricultural resources, and assessing activities and the qualifications required for running an agricultural enterprise.

Their socio-economic potential stems from the universality of membership in the chambers, which provides them with real decision-making, administrative, organizational, and functional capabilities in matters relevant to agriculture and rural development. Since the chambers bring together diverse economic entities, they have unique integrative capabilities. They should represent agricultural producers while taking into account the legitimate, albeit highly diverse, interests of all members, and create a unique forum for cooperation enabling the initiation of fundamental processes of change expressed in agricultural policy strategies at all levels.

In recent decades, chambers have undergone significant institutional reforms. The number of farms decreased from approximately 800,000 in the 1980s to 410,000 in 2020. Consequently, the number of agricultural chambers dropped from 114 in 2010 to 103 in 2020 (Chambres d'agriculture France, 2022). Additionally, their operating model has changed; they now compete with private entities and must offer commercial services, forcing them to innovate and professionalize their staff.

Despite their status as public entities and their historical institutional role in the French political system, the legitimacy of agricultural chambers as powerful representatives of the agricultural community is sometimes questioned (Catallo, Pahun, 2025). Voter turnout in chamber elections decreased from 37% in 2013 to 28.5% in 2019 and 26.4% in 2025 (Chambres d'agriculture France, 2013; Chambres d'agriculture France, 2019; Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire 2025 b). Furthermore, elections to the agricultural chambers, held every six years, impact more than just the management of the chambers. These elections select individuals to serve on agricultural chambers at the departmental and regional levels, as well as on the Chamber of Agriculture of France. However, they are widely seen as an indicator of the balance of power between agricultural trade union representatives (Pahun, 2022). Five main trade unions sit on the agricultural chambers in France, each with its own history and vision for agricultural development (Aubert, Dagorn, 2024). Thus, the outcomes of these elections influence the selection of potential partners for discussions on developing and implementing local, regional, or national policies associated with the chambers, as well as the distribution of the total annual pool of state funds allocated to finance trade unions. This distribution is based on the number of votes and seats each union garners in the agricultural chamber elections (Assemblée Nationale, 2024 septembre 26).

Chambers are legally obligated to facilitate the implementation of the CAP, acting as a 'natural intermediary of the state' and receiving part of their funding from performing delegated public tasks. In turn, the state depends on the network of chambers of agriculture to carry out these tasks. Regarding the assessment of results, however, this network,

particularly as concerns the umbrella organization, has attracted numerous critical comments from entities such as the Court of Auditors (Cour des Comptes, 2021). In response to this criticism, the state and regions have introduced a more detailed system of task performance indicators and expenditure control in their agreements with the chambers of agriculture. The goal is to make the chambers more efficient and effective in performing their tasks.

The Common Agricultural Policy 2023–2027 has not yet been finalized. However, the agricultural crisis affecting Europe has prompted French agricultural chambers to launch a debate on the CAP's future. They recommend returning to the five fundamental objectives of the CAP as outlined in the 1957 Treaty of Rome: increasing agricultural productivity, ensuring a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, stabilizing markets, guaranteeing supply security, and ensuring reasonable prices for consumers. According to the chambers, these objectives remain unchanged and can only be achieved by protecting the agricultural sector and supporting farmers. With this in mind, the entire network of chambers of agriculture has developed 27 specific proposals aimed at providing better protection for agricultural producers and increasing support for farmers in the process of transforming agriculture and rural areas (Chambres d'agriculture France, 2025b).

For several years, agricultural chambers in France have undergone dynamic modernization and reorganization, yet they still face numerous challenges, including the need to change the electoral law, assess their own effectiveness, improve transparency, and strengthen representativeness. However, French agricultural chambers are not new institutions without tradition or positive experience. While some view the chambers as archaic institutions that do not fit into modern reality and require reform, their significant accomplishments, robust legal standing, and exceptional capacity in supporting French agriculture and rural development, including within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy, justify the continuation of their operation as an institution performing public service duties.

Bibliography

- Assemblée Nationale (2020), *Rapport d'information*, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/opendata/RINFANR5L15B3702.html>, 23.11.2024.
- Assemblée Nationale (2024), *Rapport*, https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/16/rapports/cepestici/116b2000-t1_rapport-enquete, 20.05.2025.
- Assemblée Nationale (2024, septembre 26), *Proposition de résolution visant la mise en place d'un scrutin à la proportionnelle intégrale des représentants des chambres d'agriculture et à une affectation des fonds publics en conformité avec ce mode de scrutin*, N° 296, Dix-septième législature, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/opendata/PNREANR5L17B0296.html>, 20.05.2025.
- Atrux M. (2007), *L'Assemblée permanente des présidents de chambres d'agriculture (APPCA) et la vulgarisation au début des années 1950: une institution à la conquête d'une nouvelle légitimité ?*, "Ruralia" 21, <http://journals.openedition.org/ruralia/1841>, 23.11.2024.
- Aubert R., Dagorn G. (2024), *Quelles différences entre les syndicats agricoles? FNSEA, Coordination rurale, Confédération paysanne...*, "Le Monde" novembre 19, <https://www.lemonde.fr/les-de>

- codeurs/article/2024/11/19/fnsea-coordination-rurale-confederation-paysanne-queelles-differences-entre-les-syndicats-agricoles_6214301_4355771.html, 23.06.2025.
- Barral S., Detang-Dessendre C. (2023), *Reforming the Common Agricultural Policy (2023–2027): multidisciplinary views*, “Review of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Studies”, vol. 104, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41130-023-00191-9>, 23.11.2024.
- Brives H. (2008), *L'évolution du conseil agricole et du rôle des chambres d'agriculture*, “Pour”, 196–197(1), <https://doi.org/10.3917/pour.196.0208>, 24.05.2022.
- Brunier S. (2013), *Le rôle des chambres d'agriculture dans l'institutionnalisation du conseil*, “Pour”, 219(3), <https://doi.org/10.3917/pour.219.0053>, 24.05.2022.
- Catala M. (2013), *Les enjeux de la Politique Agricole Commune, du traité de Rome au marché unique, 1957–1993*, in: *Mouvements paysans face à la politique agricole commune et à la mondialisation (1957–2011)*, eds. L. Jalabert, C. Patillon, Presses universitaires de Rennes, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.26112>, 28.06.2024.
- Catallo A., Pahun J. (2025), *La gouvernance des chambres d'agriculture, enjeu clé des politiques de transition agroécologique Iddri*, “Décryptage”, N°01/25, https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/Catalogue%20Iddri/D%C3%A9cryptage/202503-IB0325-chambres%20agri_0.pdf, 15.07.2025.
- Chambre régionale d'agriculture Nouvelle-Aquitaine (2024), https://opera-connaissances.chambres-agriculture.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=218215, 23.06.2025.
- Chambres d'agriculture France (2013), <https://chambres-agriculture.fr/le-reseau-chambres/qui-sommes-nous/elections-2025-des-chambres-dagriculture/elections-2013>, 15.04.2025.
- Chambres d'agriculture France (2019), <https://chambres-agriculture.fr/le-reseau-chambres/qui-sommes-nous/elections-2025-des-chambres-dagriculture/resultats-des-elections-2019>, 15.04.2025.
- Chambres d'agriculture France (2022), https://opera-connaissances.chambres-agriculture.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=177304, 28.06.2025.
- Chambres d'agriculture France (2025), <https://chambres-agriculture.fr/sinformer/nos-ressources/pac>, 15.07.2025.
- Chambres d'agriculture France (2025a), <https://chambres-agriculture.fr/sinformer/nos-ressources/pac>, 28.06.2025.
- Chambres d'agriculture France (2025 b), <https://chambres-agriculture.fr/actualites/actualite/pour-une-europe-agricole-les-27-propositions-des-chambres-dagriculture>, 15.07.2025.
- Code rural et de la pêche maritime (2025), https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/section_lc/LEGITEXT000006071367/LEGISCTA000006138425/#LEGISCTA000006138425, 10.01.2025.
- Code rural et de la pêche maritime (2025a), https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/section_lc/LEGITEXT000006071367/LEGISCTA000006138343/#LEGISCTA000006138343, 10.01.2025.
- Contrat d'objectifs et de performance entre l'Etat et le réseau des Chambres d'agriculture 2021–2025* (2021), https://opera-connaissances.chambres-agriculture.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=169547, 12.03.2023.
- COPA-COGECA (2025), https://copa-cogeca.eu/home/copa_members, 15.07.2025.
- Cour des Comptes (2021), *Le réseau des chambres d'agriculture : une restructuration à achever pour plus d'efficacité*, <https://www.ccomptes.fr/sites/default/files/2021-03/20210318-07-TomeII-reseau-chambres-agriculture.pdf>, 17.02.2024.
- Cour des Comptes (2023), *La politique d'installation des nouveaux agriculteurs et de transmission des exploitations agricoles*, <https://www.ccomptes.fr/system/files/2023-04/20230412-Politique-installation-nouveaux-agriculteurs.pdf>, 12.03.2024.
- Décret n° 2022-1636 du 22 décembre 2022 relatif à la convention type de mise à disposition des services de l'Etat chargés de la gestion du Fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural

- au titre de la programmation débutant en 2023, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORF-TEXT000046793100>, 15.04.2025.
- Décret no 2022-1525 du 7 décembre 2022 relatif à la mise en oeuvre de la politique agricole commune et du plan stratégique national pour la programmation qui démarre en 2023, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000046704500>, 23.11.2024.
- European Commission (2022), https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance/key-policy-objectives-cap-2023-27_en, 15.12.2024.
- European Commission (2025), https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2024-01/csp-at-a-glance-france_en.pdf, 23.05.2025.
- Giuliani A., Baron H. (08 Oct 2023), *The CAP (CommonAgricultural Policy): A Short History of Crises and Major Transformations of European Agriculture*, Forum for Social Economics, DOI: 10.1080/07360932.2023.2259618.
- Grelowski Z. (1947), *Samorząd specjalny, gospodarczy, zawodowy, wyznaniowy według obowiązujących ustaw w Polsce*, Katowice.
- Jurcewicz A., Włodarczyk B., Tomkiewicz E. (2024), *Ewolucja zadań Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej – przeszłość, teraźniejszość, przyszłość*, „Przegląd Prawa Rolnego”, 1(34), DOI: 10.14746/ppr.2024.34.1.6.
- Kahn-Ambroise N. (2024), *Régionalisation de la PAC 2023-2027 : Focalisation sur les interventions FEADER liées à l'installation agricole. Sciences du Vivant*, https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-05100585v1/file/2024_TERPPA_Kahn_Diffusion.pdf, 23.03.2025.
- Le projet stratégique 2019–2025 des Chambres d'agriculture* (2020), https://opera-connaissances.chambres-agriculture.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=202824, 12.03.2023.
- Lois et décrets n° 0003 du 04/01/1924, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/secure-Print?token=Vb9wLeEcdyBUjchzBFEa>, 10.10.2024.
- Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire (2024), <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/le-systeme-de-conseil-agricole-sca-pour-accompagner-les-exploitants>, 10.02.2025.
- Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire (2025), <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/documentation-officielle-pac>, 14.05.2025.
- Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire (2025 a) <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/pac-post-2020-le-plan-strategique-national-en-cours-delaboration>, 14.05.2025.
- Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire (2025b), <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/elections-des-membres-des-chambres-dagriculture-2025-les-resultats-consolides>, 15.04.2025.
- Pahun J. (2022), *Gouverner l'agriculture localement? La capacité politique des collectivités territoriales sur la régulation du secteur Agricole*, “Géocarrefour” 96/4, <http://journals.openedition.org/geocarrefour/21213>, 12.07.2025.
- PROAGRI Info Réglementaire (2025), <https://info-reglementaire.proagri.fr/>, 15.07.2025.
- Puślecki Z., Kmiecik R., Walkowski M. Ł. (2010), *Wspólna Polityka Rolna w warunkach wzrostu konkurencyjności Unii Europejskiej*, Dom Wydawniczy i Handlowy Elipsa, Warszawa.
- Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU), No 1307/2013, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115>, 23.11.2024.
- Trouvé A., Bazin G. (2018), *La politique agricole commune: un compromis européen en crise*, in: *Les mutations récentes du foncier et des agricultures en Europe*, eds. G. Chouquer, M.-C. Maurel, Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pufc.5678>, 27.11.2024.
- Walenia A. (2022), *Samorząd rolniczy w procesie transferu wiedzy i doradztwa na rzecz rolnictwa i obszarów wiejskich*, “Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu”, 66(1).

- Walkowiak K. (2004), *Rola izb rolniczych w rozwoju wsi i rolnictwa w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Bankowej w Poznaniu.
- Walkowski M. (2007), *Regionalne i globalne uwarunkowania reform Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej Unii Europejskiej*, UAM, Poznań.
- Włodarczyk B. (2022), *Prawne instrumenty ochrony środowiska i przeciwdziałania zmianom klimatu, we Wspólnej Polityce Rolnej na lata 2023–2027*, „Przegląd Prawa Rolnego” no. 2(31), DOI: 10.14746/ppr.2022.31.2.1.

Izby rolnicze we Francji w procesie tworzenia i wdrażania Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej 2023–2027

Streszczenie

W kontekście zasady pomocniczości i idei partycypacyjnego zarządzania politykami publicznymi pojawia się pytanie o zakres i sposób uczestnictwa przedstawicieli środowiska rolniczego w procesie tworzenia i wdrażania Wspólnej polityki rolnej (WPR) – jednej z najbardziej zintegrowanych polityk UE. Szczególną wagę zyskują te kwestie w odniesieniu do Francji – kraju o zróżnicowanym i silnym sektorze rolnym, będącym największym beneficjentem nowej WPR na lata 2023–2027. Francja wyróżnia się też wieloletnią obecnością izb rolniczych w systemie polityczno-administracyjnym. Z uwagi na powiązania izb rolniczych z państwem oraz ostatnie zmiany instytucjonalne w sieci izb rolniczych pojawia się pytanie o przyszłość izb rolniczych jako trwałych uczestników procesu decyzyjnego w ramach Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej. Dostępna literatura naukowa na ten temat okazała się bardzo skromna, dlatego głównym źródłem poznania i analizy była dokumentacja instytucjonalna. Spośród zastosowanych metod badawczych podstawowe znaczenie miały: metoda instytucjonalno-prawna, metoda badania dokumentów i metoda systemowa.

Słowa kluczowe: Francuskie izby rolnicze, Wspólna Polityka Rolna, partycypacja, polityka publiczna

Author Contributions

Conceptualization (Konceptualizacja): Katarzyna Walkowiak

Data curation (Zestawienie danych): Katarzyna Walkowiak

Formal analysis (Analiza formalna): Katarzyna Walkowiak

Writing – original draft (Piśmiennictwo – oryginalny projekt): Katarzyna Walkowiak

Writing – review & editing (Piśmiennictwo – sprawdzenie i edytowanie): Katarzyna Walkowiak

Competing interests: The author have declared that no competing interests exist

(Sprzeczne interesy: Autor oświadczył, że nie istnieją żadne sprzeczne interesy)

