**AMAP (French CSA) CHARTER:**

**THE FRUIT OF A PARTICIPATORY INTER-REGIONAL APPROACH**

March 2014

**PREAMBLE**

AMAPs[[1]](#footnote-1), (or Association pour le Maintien d’une Agriculture Paysanne in French) were born in 2001 in France. The motivation was the growing citizens’ awareness of the crisis in the fields of food and agriculture.

Insecurity and food waste, ecological imperatives, the loss of peasant agriculture to a productivist model, increasing pressure on agricultural land, the hegemony of hypermarkets and the unequal access to food both here and in other countries are all factors that contributed to mobilising citizens and experimenting with a different agricultural, economic and food model. The Charter of Peasant Agriculture and the organic food movements inspired this model.

AMAPs are strongly grounded in the concept of sharing, and to transform agriculture at both social and ecological levels. They also aim to change our relationship to food by generating new forms of solidarity. They are concrete alternatives that are being developed by civil society.

The objectives are to:

Maintain and develop economically, socially viable local agriculture that is also fair and ecologically sustainable, wit a low environmental impact, that creates economic activity and employment, social connections and territorial dynamics

* Promote an attitude of responsible citizenship to food
* Support local, fair, social solidarity economy
* Contribute to food sovereignty that supports peasant farmers of the world in the spirit of solidarity. In terms of terminology, the term “AMAP” refers to a collective of all those committed to a local contractual solidarity partnership. This partnership shall have no commercial intermediary, and is enduring. An AMAP member is a voluntary individual who signs one or several AMAP valid contracts with one or more farmers. The AMAP group is in a not-for-profit relationship constitutes an association, whether formally registered or not. An AMAP farmer may sign one or several AMAP valid contracts with AMAP members. AMAP members and farmer(s) jointly build a new kind of relationship to agriculture and food. Inasmuch as they do this, they are co-producers. They jointly commit to respecting the principles of the AMAP Charter. This Charter is the founding document for all French AMAPs. It replaces that previous drafted in May 2003. Its objective is to provide byelaws for AMAPs. Each AMAP shall be responsible for independently defining how it operates, within the respect of the principles of this Charter.

AMAP MEMBERS AND FARMERS RESPECT AND IMPLEMENT **5 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

**PRINCIPLE 1**

A PEASANT AGRICULTURE APPROACH

An AMAP situates the approach to co-production in a framework of respecting the principles of local peasant agriculture. In particular it:

 Supports conservation, continuity and establishment

Encourages independent operation of the farms

 Is part of the territorial dynamic and solidarity

 Supports the economic viability or partner farms

 Is attentive to the social conditions of agricultural activity

**PRINCIPLE 2**

AGROECOLOGICAL PRACTICE

AMAPs support agriculture that respects humankind, the environment and animals in accordance with the fundamentals of organic agriculture. In particular the commit to agricultural practice that is:

Sustainable, diversified and adapted to local terrain; break with agrichemical practice (use neither chemical fertilisers nor synthetic pesticides…) and have no relationship with any company involved in the commercial appropriation of living organisms (use no GMos…)

*  Supports plant and animal biodiversity
* Contributes to preserving and peasant seeds
* **PRINCIPLE 3**
* HIGH QUALITY ACCESSIBLE FOOD
* An AMAP jointly produces food that is of high quality in terms of taste, health and safety and environmental criteria. It aims for coherence between supporting agriculture and territorial dynamics as well as the needs of the local population. This is why each AMAP works to expand the accessibility of such food for all.
* **PRINCIPLE 4**

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POPULAR EDUCATION

AMAPs aim to create participatory conditions and enable citizens to acquire knowledge on agricultural and food issues, through discussions, learning and information sharing. They:

Organise on the basis of the involvement of all members

* Ensure information is circulated in an on-going manner
* Work to build quality relationships between peasants and AMAP members in a convivial framework of dialogue, social connection, trust and shared responsibility
* **PRINCIPLE 5**



SOLIDARITY RELATIONSHIPS WITHOUT MIDDLEMEN

AMAP members and farmers jointly commit to share the production without middlemen for a given period of time through solidarity contracts. (The duration and timing of the contract is linked to the activity cycle of the farm and depends on the kind of food specified in the contact).

This partnership encourages transparency between AMAP members and farmers. For each category of food the contract stipulates:

 The reciprocal nature of the commitment of the two parties as defined in the charter

 Determines a fair price for all that takes the economic viability of the farm and social conditions of those who work on it into account.

THESE PRINCIPLES TRANSLATE INTO **THREE COMMITMENTS**

AN ECONOMIC COMMITMENT

• **AMAP farmers shall:**

 Deliver the diversified share of season food produced on their farm, be it fresh or processed at agreed intervals. In the case of processed food, the contract will include specific reference to transparent, traceable processes.

*  Ensure the means to deliver the shares on a regular basis as defined by the contract.
*    Agree with the AMAP members in a transparent way on a stable overall price that is guaranteed and fair and for the duration of the contract.
* Solidarity between producers may allow for occasional exchange of food of a similar kind. This must be transparent and in explicit agreement with the AMAP members.
* • **CSA members shall:**
*  Sign contracts and prepay for the produce for a contractual period and at a fair price. No money may change hands at the place of delivery.
*  Take fluctuations and unforeseen aspects of farmers’ activities into account in a fair and just manner.
* AN ETHICAL COMMITMENT
* **• AMAP farmers shall:**
*  Carry out their activity and develop it in accordance with and respect of the principles of the AMAP Charter, in cooperation with the members
*  Be transparent in terms of the agricultural practice for all produce (fruit and vegetables, meat and eggs as well as processing of any kind)
* **• AMAP members shall:**
* Work to ensure the on-going existence of the AMAP
*   Their practice shall evolve in accordance with the principles of the Charter
* SOCIAL COMMITMENT
* **• AMAP farmers shall:**
* Be present at the delivery point (they may occasionally be represented by someone else)
* Create and nurture connections with the AMAP members

Raise awareness of AMAP members on their work and life on the farm

Take part in the organisation of visits to the farm and pedagogical workshops

  Be involved in the AMAP movement and its partners.

**• AMAP members shall:**

Be involved in the life of the AMAP (deliveries, communication, activities, relationship with farmers, continuity of partnerships, networking…)

* Be respectful of the way the AMAP operates
* Participate in farm visits and the organisation of visits
* Participate in the pedagogical activities and support the farmers
* Be actively involved in the life of the CSA movement and its partners



**A LIVING MOVEMENT IN CONSTANT EVOLUTION**

ONGOING IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE

In order for the principles and commitments of AMAPs to become a reality, they should be accompanied by actions that aim to analyse and support the collective progression of practice.

This is why participatory evaluation encourages the shared evolution of both farmers and members in an AMAP. AMAPs decide on the means of achieving this with the support of networks and associate partners.

A DYNAMIC GROUNDED IN TERRITORY AND NETWORKS

And because AMAPs are much more than a “share”, they are part of a territory and contribute to creating a local economy that is based on solidarity and fairness.

Individual AMAPs shall be involved in the CSA movement in order to ensure the on-going existence, dissemination and visibility of CSA. They shall therefore participate in the creation of new AMAP farms.

The AMAP movement encourages the positive dissemination of the “AMAP spirit” in all sectors of social solidarity economy. It encourages the creation of other local solidarity partnerships (crafts, finance, culture etc).

An experimental, Experimental, creative approaches are at the core of this Charter, and aim to include AMAPs in a citizens’ movement that is both alive and transformative.

This Charter shall be signed by all AMAP members and farmers.

The signatory shall write “Read and approved” above his/her signature.

Date

1. 1 « AMAP » is a registered term with French copyright authorities. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)