

FOURCHE ET CHAMP LIBRE

in theory and in practice

« We are farmers, landless people, aspiring farmers, and individuals who want to regain control of food production. » Reclaim the Fields

What is Fourche et Champ Libre?

Fourche et Champ Libre (FeCL) is a **network of people and places** that, through their lifestyles and practices of resistance, oppose the agro-industrial model and the capitalist system.

It is a tool for linking

- places or initiatives for rural settlement, which include self-sufficient projects often considered "non-standard"
- individuals wishing to learn about alternative agriculture, expand their imagination of what agricultural settlement can be, and train in various farming practices.

Why Fourche et Champ Libre?

The institutional agricultural training model today is not suited to all types of settlements. This model promotes the idea that the sole advantage of agriculture lies in productivity, genetics, robotics, and economic profitability, even when it sometimes incorporates the concept of local and organic agriculture. **An alternative to the devastating industrial agriculture model** involves a return to local and regional practices, based on real needs, autonomous production methods, and concrete participation of residents in decisions that affect them.

In Europe, there is a significant lack of transmission of emancipatory practical and ideological knowledge. We need existing farms or places to take on the transmission of know-how, basic production techniques, and ways of living together and collective organization.

Strengthening the network means **giving everyone the opportunity to train in agriculture**, reclaim lifestyles, and participate in their dissemination. It also supports the creation of a tool for collective emancipation and new farms of resistance.

The network's intentions

The network of companionship aims **to open up new social and political imaginaries**. It seeks to contribute to the reclaiming of the knowledge and practices necessary for the establishment of new farmers. It relies on the encounter between individuals wanting to embark on an agricultural project and those already established in agriculture.



Companionship is a privileged space for Popular Agricultural Education, aimed at **individual and collective emancipation**. It allows for the connection of theory and practice around the issues of

- Access to land
- The right to produce according to one's own method
- The right to use and exchange free seeds
- The right to gather, share skills, and form collective farms.

Fourche et Champ Libre participates in the **transmission of the peasant lifestyle**, particularly in all it entails concerning modes of action, awareness and practices of struggle, solidarities, and collective resistances to the capitalist system and systemic oppressions (sexism, cis-heteronormativity, racism, classism, ableism...).

Self-managed training sessions may be organized within the network to share peasant knowledge of daily life, basic practices, and specific techniques. Through self-management, it is up to everyone to take part!

Who is the companionship for?

Companionship is for anyone wishing to learn outside of traditional agricultural training, whether they have experience or not, whether they are young or old, and whether they have agricultural installation projects and/or a desire to become more self-sufficient in terms of food. This companionship does not aim to offer rural tourism opportunities.

- Are you looking for a collective living place with a large vegetable garden and a bakery?
- Are you looking for a farm to practice motorized or non-motorized cereal cultivation in different seasons?
- Are you looking for an agricultural collective built by a majority of queer people?
- Are you looking for a place deeply engaged in local struggle while engaging in market gardening?

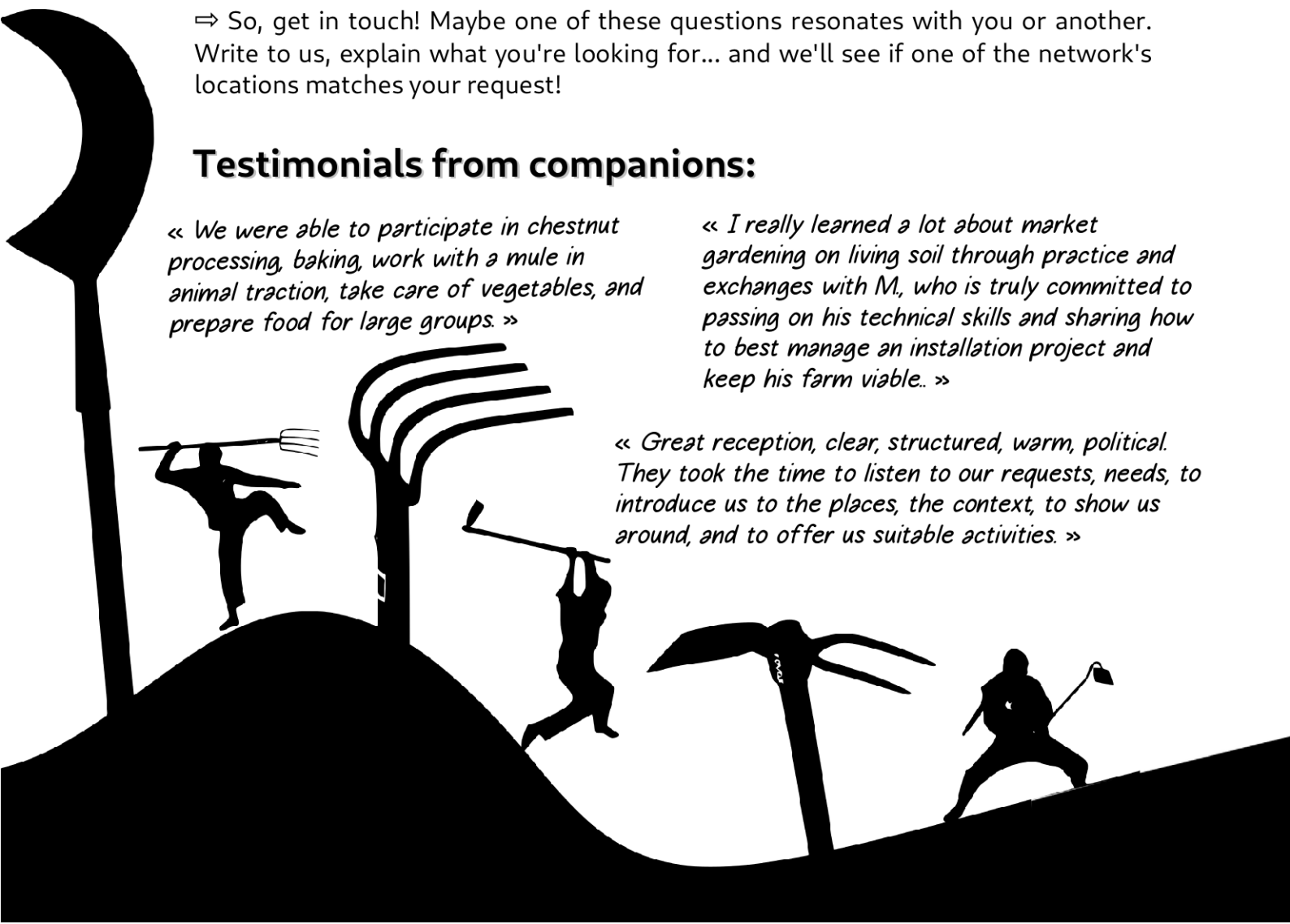
⇒ So, get in touch! Maybe one of these questions resonates with you or another. Write to us, explain what you're looking for... and we'll see if one of the network's locations matches your request!

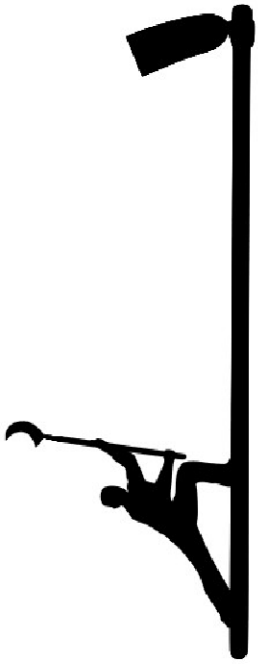
Testimonials from companions:

« We were able to participate in chestnut processing, baking, work with a mule in animal traction, take care of vegetables, and prepare food for large groups. »

« I really learned a lot about market gardening on living soil through practice and exchanges with M, who is truly committed to passing on his technical skills and sharing how to best manage an installation project and keep his farm viable.. »

« Great reception, clear, structured, warm, political. They took the time to listen to our requests, needs, to introduce us to the places, the context, to show us around, and to offer us suitable activities. »





What are the Fourche et Champ Libre places?

The spectrum of places in the Fourche et Champ Libre companionship is quite broad.

- It includes both peasant farms for commercial purposes and places that practice subsistence farming for self-consumption and bartering or donation.
- It is both clear administrative entities but also initiatives outside frameworks.
- For the most part, these are collective places. It can also be people who desire to form group at different levels (collective life, work, at regional scale...).
- Some of these places are trying, on their own scale, to take into account and fight against systemic oppressions (sexism, cis-heteronormativity, racism, classism...). Fourche et Champ Libre will be able to direct companions if there are specific requests. Some requests may not find a suitable venue.
- These can also be places in struggle: a place that organises political debates in rural areas, a popular garden in the city, a ZAD, landless farmers, people growing crops to supply solidarity canteens...

⇒ It all depends on who wants to join the network. It's up to you places and farmers to volunteer to welcome companions.

Why become a Fourche et Champ Libre host site?

- The network helps you to welcome people: we take care of receiving messages and direct requests.
- Fourche et Champ Libre is the strength of a network, creating links between current and future farmers. We pass on your news and projects. Perhaps one day, the network will organise collective workcamps on the local places?
- It's an opportunity to become aware of the existing skills in your collective, a chance to learn how to pass them on.
- It's an opportunity for outsiders to come into your collective: a breath of fresh air, political discussions, motivation and reflections on a whole range of subjects.
- And who knows, maybe one day a companion will join your place?



Testimonials of places

« I go through Fourche and Champ Libre because it facilitates political connections, something which is important in what we do here. »

« Welcoming people requires availability and energy; guidance from Fourche and Champ Libre makes it more more likely to work. »

« I'm interested in the fact that they can be long formats, it leaves time for transfer, the companion becomes part of the dynamic of the residents, so that she can be autonomous - in the activity and in the place. »

Other networks exist, and we'll do our best to make the connection and direct places and companions to the network best suited to their situation: compagnonnage paysan, réseau REPAS, A4, Reprise de Savoirs...

How does the companionship work?

How long and under what conditions should companionship last?

The duration of the companionship is agreed between the people and places according to the needs of the companion and the availability and expectations of the place. It must be sufficient time to enable the most appropriate transfer to take place. It is possible to imagine a variety of courses that can be continuous time or over several periods, in one or more different locations, in order to offer a wide range of agricultural practices and share different experiences. This companionship is unpaid. The administrative status of the stay, accommodation options and other arrangements are to be defined according to the host location.

Companions

- They write to Fourche et Champ Libre and explain their request.
- They will be invited to specify the know-hows and theoretical elements that interest them, as well as their objectives, with a member of the Fourche et Champ Libre collective.
- They will then be put in contact with farms in the network that match their criteria.
- They make arrangements with the chosen location(s) to specify the timing and terms of their companionship.
- Once on site, they take part in the life of the venue, its activities and operations. This experience is intended to be both a learning experience and a two-way encounter between people and a way of life.

The places, the peasants

- They take the time to pass on practical and theoretical knowledge; to present the venue and its organisation. This will be an opportunity to share your experiences and struggles.
- They provide the best possible support for the people they welcome, depending on the companion's autonomy discussed at the outset.

The Fourche et Champ Libre collective

It acts as a liaison between the companions and the farmers: choosing the locations and monitoring the people they welcome. There will be a small support session, with suggestions for questions to be exchanged and frameworks to be established between companions and places. Anyone interested in setting up this link-up or other related initiatives is welcome to join us and add their energy to the dynamic Fourche et Champ Libre ! It's a self-managed network !

Contact

<https://reclaimthefields.org>

If you are interested:

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*Silhouettes inspired by Kobudo, a "peasant martial art" developed in Japan as a result of the habitual use of their own tools during revolts. An example of self-defence practices that speak to us.