60 years of land consolidation in Flanders (Belgium)

Time to retire ... or to keep on rocking in a green world?

Ludwig De Loose

9-11th November 2016

Symposium on Land Consolidation and Land Readjustment for Sustainable Development
Le plat pays

Belgium: 3 Regions (Flanders, Brussels, Wallonia)

Regions responsible for territorial issues (1980)
Too much of everything

- 6,500,000 inhabitants - 479 inhabitants per km²
- Land use
  - 61% agriculture
  - 24% built-up
  - 13% forests and other nature
- 7.8% Natura 2000
- Average agricultural plot size 1.43 ha
Hungry

Regional importance of the arable sector
Who is he (and what is he to you)?

- What is VLM (Vlaamse Landmaatschappij)?
  - Flemish Land Agency (FLA)
  - government agency
  - responsible for managing open space
- What does VLM do?
  - organize a sustainable open space
  - offer solutions for land development
  - shape and inspire rural policy
  - stimulate sustainable agriculture
Born to be wild

- **Project instruments**
  - Land consolidation (1956)
  - Comprehensive land consolidation (1956, 1970)
  - Land consolidation in combination with big infrastructure works (1976)
  - Voluntary land consolidation (1978)
  - Land banking (2006)

- **General instruments**
  - Manure legislation (1991)
  - Agro-environmental agreements (2000)
Where the streets have no name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law</th>
<th># projects</th>
<th>km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956/1970</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>1.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Global Surface (km²)

- Flanders: 13.522
- Agriculture land: 6.182
- LC: 1.958
I will survive

Integrated Land Development
Nature Development
Land banking

New Integrated land development
The times they are a-changin’

- **1956: law - monofunctional approach**
  - Agriculture improvement: plots are exchanged in order to create regular, accessible land areas which are as close as possible to the farm headquarters, roads are laid, drainage modified, etc.
  - with (very) little respect for nature and landscape structures

- **Since ’70 and ’80: growing (environmental) concern**
  - Nature conservation organizations opposing nature destruction
  - Farmers opposing top down approach

- **Since’80 and ’90: Legislation for environmental protection**
  - Environmental impact assessment; Natura 2000, water directive, forest compensation.... => regulations
The times they are a-changin’

- **Since ’90: integrated projects - broad objectives**
  - Local opportunity-driven approach to include all the themes that play a role in the open space: development measures on issues such as the environment, nature conservation, landscape care, archeology, recreation, village renewal, mobility questions ...
  - Rio, Kyoto: climate change: include adaptation and mitigation strategies (water retention capacity), CO² reduction, ...
  - agriculture improvement however remains a central focus!

- **Since 2000: rising complexity (legislation, participation)**
  - changes in CAP (permanent pasture, organic farming, ...)
  - new impulses in spatial planning to take into account
  - => less degrees of freedom = less land mobility
Changes
You can’t hurry love
Formidable

- Strong tools for making and realising plans

- Integrated plan design
- Adaptation of public property
- Building a land bank

Land bank 180 ha!
(allocation land to agencies responsible for nature conservation)
Formidable

Distribution of costs for recent projects

- Anderen (vnl. eigenaars)
- Steden en gemeenten
- Provincie
- Vlaams Gewest
- Europa (Interreg, PDPO, EFRO)
What difference does it make?
Love me two times

1983 LC

Flanders
State of the Art

1749 ha
800 ha drained
Driver’s seat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Km before</th>
<th>Km after</th>
<th>Decline (km)</th>
<th>Decline (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 farms</td>
<td>714,2</td>
<td>278,5</td>
<td>435,7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average per farm</td>
<td>26,5</td>
<td>10,3</td>
<td>16,1</td>
<td>60 (SD 21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flemish Land Agency 15/11/2016
Smoke on the water
Nothing really ends

- All instruments still exist and are applied

- Integrated land development recently adapted to future claims: more tools can be chosen according to specific demands:
  - Development tools:
    - development works (by virtue of the law)
    - establishment of easements for a public use
    - compensation for loss of value of land
  - Management tools:
    - management agreements
    - compensation for services
Nothing really ends

...more tools can be chosen according specific demand:

→ Development tools
→ Management tools
→ Complementary tools
  × local land banks
  × voluntary relocation/conversion/closure of farms
  × obligation to buy
→ Acquisition and land mobility tools
  × right of pre-emption
  × voluntary re-allotment
  × re-allotment by virtue of the law
  × exchange of use
  × re-allotment with planning exchange
Keep on rocking in a free world

- Re-allotment within land development instrument is adapted to use in peri-urban areas

- WHY?
  - 1/ different valuation system for users and owners
    - For owners: based on the market value
    - For users: based on the suitability of the land for the current land use

- 2/ Combination with zoning exchange is possible
Happy ending

- Land Consolidation
  - almost 1/3 of Flemish farmland was subjected
  - gradually evolved to integrated projects
  - projects grow extremely complex + take longer (15-20y)
  - a strong but complex tool to build a sustainable future for rural areas
  - number of projects declined and future is uncertain
- New instrument with bigger toolbox
More than this

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https://www.facebook.com/VlaamseLandmaatschappij
https://www.linkedin.com/company/vlaamse-landmaatschappij
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le plat pays</td>
<td>Jacques Brel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much of everything</td>
<td>Admiral Freebee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungry</td>
<td>Dotan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is</td>
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<td>Born to</td>
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<td>Where</td>
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<td>I will suspect</td>
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<td>The time</td>
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<td>Changes</td>
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<td>You can</td>
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<td>Formidable</td>
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<tr>
<td>What difference</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Love me</td>
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<td>Driver’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smoke</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing really ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockin’ in the free world</td>
<td>Neil Young</td>
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<tr>
<td>Happy ending</td>
<td>Joe Jackson + Elaine Caswell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than this</td>
<td>Roxy Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Thank you for your attention