

CFP EURHO 2017 Session: Talking about agro-food crises in the political sphere in the 19th and 20th century

Discussion published by Laura Eskens on Tuesday, September 27, 2016

Call for Papers for EURHO 2017 Session

Talking about agro-food crises in the political sphere in the 19th and 20th century

This is a CFP for a session on the **Rural History Conference, 11-14 September 2017, Leuven**, <https://kuleuvencongres.be/ruralhistory2017>

Session: **Talking about agro-food crises in the political sphere in the 19th and 20th century**

Interested to propose a paper? **Send an abstract (100-500 words) of your paper** to Laura Eskens (laura.eskens@kuleuven.be)

Deadline for submission: 14 October 2016

(Please note: This CFP is NOT an official submission to EURHO 2017. EURHO 2017 first requires submitters to put together a session. The lead submitter will send in the session proposal for potential approval for the conference.)

Successive agro-food crises have tortured Europe during the 19th and 20th century. Both overproduction (affecting the producers because of low prices) and shortages of food (with higher food prices for consumers) have led to disorganized agro-food markets. In the first case we speak of an agricultural crisis (like in 1880's, 1930's,...), in the second case of a food crisis or even a famine. In more recent times, food hygiene caused a new type of food crisis, with a mass panic among consumers as a consequence (such as the Dutch Planta-affair of 1960 or the Belgian Dioxin crisis of 1999). A fourth type of crisis is one within the agricultural sector itself. Unrewarding incomes, absence of succession, terrifying loans and high suicide figures are labelled by farmer associations as yet another crisis.

Agro-food crises have mainly been studied from a (quantitative) economic or a political perspective (how did governments react?). The word "crisis" is, however, in the first place a discursive concept and a rhetorical tool. As a sociological study on discourses of rurality states: *"The words always communicate a specific view on an event"* and have a strong effect on rural identities and realities (Gunnar L. H. Svendsen, 2004). Analyzing the public speech about crises is a necessary dimension to understand their social impact.

In this panel, the concept of crisis will be studied as a political construction. Papers analyzing and comparing the "talking" of political actors (MP's, Ministers, consumer groups, farmer associations,...)

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<https://networks.h-net.org/node/16806/discussions/145829/cfp-eurho-2017-session-talking-about-agro-food-crises-political>

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in press, Parliamentary/Ministerial meetings, party programs, etc. are welcomed. Various questions are at stake: when and how are scarcity, overproduction or problematic food quality issues perceived as a crisis? Which words (“crisis”, “malaise”, “critical stage”, “impasse” etc.) and metaphors are used? Which events (factual events, climate, war, political decisions etc.) are understood as the cause of a crisis? Is the crisis seen as something exceptional or rather as a longer state of misfortune? How is the idea of crisis confirmed, nuanced or rejected? And who profits and who suffers from a crisis discourse?