Editorial.
Issues and strategies for a comeback to earth¹

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A comeback to earth has already started. It can be seen in several molecular practices bringing more and more people, young people mainly, to turn or revert to agriculture. Some does it coming from urban habits to land into hill or mountain villages, some betting on the transition to multi-functionality, some inventing agricultural-related activities like short bread supply chains or rural co-housing. The very cities are changing their faces, filling up with social, household, collective gardens; forms of resistance and neo-rural agriculture are increasingly spreading out in various parts of the world. The two fifths of humanity are now part of farming families, while in the whole world we can count 1.2 billion of small and medium-sized peasant farms. It may be amazing, but today “millions of farmers in Europe are far more peasant than most of us can imagine or want to admit” (Ploeg 2009, 4).

Of course, it is not the first time a comeback to earth marks the destiny of human civilisations. In times of recession, land has always represented a primary asset to refer to. After famines, plagues, wars, structural economic crises, the shrinking of trade has regularly diverted funding flows to the countryside, which represented a safe investment away from market fluctuations. It has never been a retreat, though, producing just forms of passive adaptation. On the contrary, such moments have usually started creative phases in which new solutions, apt to transform the relationship with earth, have been developed. The ‘beautiful landscape’ of Tuscany sprang just out of the economical crisis of XIV century, bringing merchants to transform farmhouses and hovels into suburban villas surrounded by a countryside embellished by the hard peasant work which has long represented the stabilisation and the real strength of power in the nascent Medicean rule. One of the most famous social counter-exodus was the one by President Roosevelt in the America of “New Deal”, not only investing public money to support rural population and a better management of farms, but even encouraging urban population to move to agricultural areas. It was in those years that the movement known under the slogan “Back to the land” was founded (Caudo 2005).

The XXI century comeback to earth has got a peculiar character of his own, outlined in May 2013, in Milan, in the two-day conference of the Territorialist Society.² The following chapters draw some interpreting lines and suggest some action paths as a referral to read the several contributions presented in this Journal issue, addressing the theme from different points of view.

¹ Translation from Italian by Angelo M. Cirasino.
1. Selective comebacks

The feeble comeback to earth we can read in social behaviours highlights a slight counter-tendency with respect to a setting usually described as stagnant and - more - surrounded by increasing unemployment data. A kind of selective route emerges, cutting ties with the recent past and opening to multi-functionality, to the ability to create networks, the invention of new jobs, the opportunity to provide public goods and services, and mainly involving small to average farms. It’s not by chance that the few tentative signs of recovery in employment concentrate in central Italy, while the number of workers decreases in southern agriculture (based on the primacy of big farms with employees) and businesses and employment drop down in the industrialised North. The rural world of the former sharecropping areas, more flexible and innovative, in the long run seems better able to withstand the crisis of agro-industrial model than the ‘spearhead’ of Italian agriculture.

The crisis mainly affects the agro-industrial model arising from the long wave of ‘green revolution’ which gave a small number of big European companies control over nearly a half of the arable land. Over the past fifty years, in fact, we have attended the establishment of a dual model of agriculture with, on one hand, a promotion of the big industrialised farm, highly mechanised, supported by Community aid and marked by a strong concentration of capital and land together with an intense use of chemicals and fossil fuels, and on the other hand the marginalisation of the small family-based farm, which still maintained the nature of a proper economic activity, intimately integrated to territories, multifunctional and polycultural.

Green revolution projected the farm out of scale, releasing it from its national context and from any anchorage to local circuits and cities, and making it an increasingly fragile device. An agriculture based on arrangements that encourage erosion, with deep tillage and the...
use of chemicals endangering groundwater, exhausting lands and reducing biodiversity, is actually uneconomic, unable to regenerate the agricultural soil which is the material base of income production (Bevilacqua in this issue).9 Data from the last census of agriculture clearly highlight a crisis of the industrialised agriculture model, to which the dramatic employment decline in the sector can also be ascribed.10 The modernisation process, rooted in the industrial culture and based on a delegation of contextual knowledge to abstract and virtually universal procedures, acted in a meticulous and pervasive manner, tearing apart town and countryside, incapable of a fruitful and fertile dialogue. The illusion of an easy life in the city, free from the obligations of countryside, has broken the relationships between producers and consumers, leading to a “separation of convenience” (Ploeg in this issue) which shows today all its fragility. To a countryside abandoned to agribusiness, correspond cities populated by consumers completely unaware of the origin of their daily food. In short, a cultural deprivation took place, a termination of the deep relationships between society and territory from which people, city dwellers and farmers, have long made their living. City dwellers do not know the places where food comes from, and are immersed in adverts showing sugar-coated contexts, marked by a joyful countryside, slow paces, lush landscapes, strongly contrasting with the harsh reality of agro-industrial production made by machines, pesticides, prosaic landscapes, livestock kept in cages. On their hand, farmers are placed into an accurate information-education programme requiring methods and procedures determined by agribusiness, whose principles and effects they often do not know. Polarisation between metropolis in exponential grow and abandoned countryside, outcome of the “exodus” pointed out by Alberto Magnaghi in this issue, has in food production one of the weakest and most explosive links. In 2008, for the first time in history, urban population exceeded the rural one over a global scale. For year 2050 FAO forecasts a need to increase food production by 70% worldwide, for a population which will be increased by 2.3 billion and urbanised for more than 70% (FAO 2009). It’s not by chance, then, if in just one year and a half, from 2007 to 2008, the FAO price index for food has raised by more than 70%, wheat by 80% and corn by 90% (Baranes 2010, 2). Social revolts against soaring food prices have gone through North Africa, Asia and the Middle East and put at serious risk the socio-political stability of those countries, creating destabilisation and growing concern. To come back to earth also means to heal such wounds.

2. Spurious comebacks

The selective comeback to earth is populated by diverse and ‘spurious’ actors re-introducing in their action the desire for an all-round experience, not flattened on the logic of markets or on the EU forms which, in the recent years, have made farmers more similar to accountants than to landscape producers. This manifold world organises integrated activities promoting a revival of the peasant mode of production, made up of networks among

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9 According to Slow Food data, industrialised agriculture has also dealt a hard blow to biodiversity. 80% of the biodiversity related to food production has disappeared, a third of the native cattle, sheep and pig breeds is extinct or endangered: every 24 hours between 150 and 200 species are lost. Today more than 70% of the total environmental capital used for human food consumption comes from only 12 species of plants and 5 animal species. European Union estimates that by 2050, in the absence of effective countermeasures, the loss of biodiversity on earth alone will cost 7% of GDP. Impressive losses, not just economic or environmental, but also social and cultural (<http://www.slowfood.com/filemanager/campaign_docs/SF_PAC_ITA_LUNGO.pdf>).

10 According to Slow Food data again (see above), the European Union with its 27 Member States has lost nearly four million jobs over a period of nine years. From 1975 to 2005 Italy, France and Germany have seen their employed drop down by 2.3%, 2.8% and 3% per year.
small family, cooperative and community companies and complementary businesses,\(^{11}\) apt to return a meaning to rural landscapes also through forms of retro-innovation (Stumler 2006; Carrosio 2005; Ploeg 2009). For the best part, new agriculture can be attributed to a choice (Ceranì, Canale 2013) focusing on the quality of life, assuming that the opportunities offered by a context where it is pleasant and not stressful to live and breed children represent an advantage far greater and not comparable with any economic quantification. Most of the neo-agricultural practices are underground activities, set up by people who haven’t got a status of ‘farmer’ but are in fact, farming with not even a bailment and failing to emerge due to the troubles related to access to land, start up, paperwork or subsidy tailored for big business. Such multiple life trajectories draw a path of “re-peasantization” following a route opposite to agri-food empires (Ploeg 2009), sometimes also capable to transform historical institution like the commons, as in the case of the ‘Brotherhood and markets’ project by CUM (Consortium of the Men of Massenzatica), which in the last fifteen years achieved agricultural innovation and income growth (Pallottino in this issue). This vast cobweb, molecular and partially hidden, has seen a spread of several activities supporting the comeback to earth, more or less formalised and having self-education as one of the privileged actions, ranging from the convivial offer of room and board for working in the farm (as in the case of WWoOF\(^{12}\)) to training courses sponsored by public institutions, to public-private partnerships (such as those proposed by the Consortium for the protection of Leek in Cervere, Cuneo), to the French “agricultural nurseries” where expert farmers provide educational assistance to young people (Bonneau in this issue, Petrini 2013) supporting the creation of marketing networks.\(^{13}\)

3. Urban comebacks

In this framework, a central role is played by the phenomenon of “urban ruralisation”, which takes the shape of an epochal turnabout and opens a new life cycle for settlements. The event is so meaningful to have introduced in the scientific debate new concepts, apparently oxymoronic, as those of urban agriculture (Donadeu, Fleury 1997; Donadeu 1998) or agrarian urbanism (Vidal, Vilan 2008; Waldheim 2010). In many European cities from Rome to Brussels, London, Paris, large and small areas are occupied by urban orchards, social and community vegetable gardens that generate in communities new forms of signification, narrative and use of urban spaces (Donadeu in this issue, but also many of the experiences

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\(^{11}\) Before our eyes it’s arising a world of entrepreneurs converted to the idea of a post-productivist agriculture, workers with no job turned to agriculture to find refuge in times of economic troubles. Newspapers are increasingly full of stories about unemployed or laid off people who gather to run large vegetable gardens, drawing not only an economic livelihood, but even a newfound solidarity and sociability. Just think about the reality of Rome, where the association Zappata Romana takes continuous surveys of all the experiences of shared green listing them back in an up-to-date map: “The map contains more than 153 shared areas, between gardens (66), vegetable gardens (57) and ‘spot gardens’ (30). They are all abandoned areas retrieved by citizens and associations taking direct care for their realisation and/or management against the degradation of urban green areas in Rome” (<https://maps.google.it/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=21780801209758818179.00049172a2e16e8f4d138>).

\(^{12}\) WWoOF (World wide opportunities on organic farms) is a worldwide movement that links thousands of volunteers together, fostering experiences based on a non-monetary exchange of conviviality and knowledge between farmers and young people who carry out activities in the farms for room and board.

\(^{13}\) The Couveuse offers opportunities for young entrepreneurs in agriculture, supporting them with land, training and marketing aid for two years; those interested in going on can rely on a joint seek for lots (even public) provided by local authorities (Bonneau in this issue). The Consortium for the protection of Leek in Cervere, Cuneo, have seen a growth in product demand and launched a call for unemployed people, granting them land, training assistance and marketing support for one year. Those interested in going on can rely on the local bank patronage (Petrini 2013).
described in the Work in progress section). The case of Athens is emblematic: the economic crisis has caused the inhabitants to crop the former airport, which quickly became a major horticultural area. In the United States, the case of Detroit illustrates the "great transformation": the most important Fordist city, now bankrupt, seen a reduction in a few years to nearly a third of its inhabitants, is dramatically thinner, with the abandonment of the buildings whose large areas of abutments are recaptured from agriculture.

The new process of urban ruralisation, which does not fail to be heard even in acts and positions taken by institutions, as reported in this issue by Serge Bonnefoy, highlights the crisis of modernisation, aiming at strengthening the urban ‘flesh’ with polarised rare services and functions, drying out the ‘bone’ areas of inland and mountains. Until recently urban systems, albeit nourished by an economy which was volatile and purely financial, seemed to tow. Today, the failure is overt. It is precisely the urban areas to collapse and fill with industrial relics, sheep and peasants practicing agriculture.

A crisis always leads to positive innovations, and this one is about to reopen an effective dialogue between town and countryside. The agricultural world in transition (EU SCAR 2012), especially in periurban areas, aims at establishing agreements with urban dwellers, who specially invest in purchasing short chain food, sometimes finding echoes in policies and instruments such as food plans, agricultural parks and agro-urban projects (Poulot 2006). Many urban dwellers, on the contrary, are changing attitude by starting to regain possession of contextual knowledge, abandoning their passive role to become actors of the new relationship between city and countryside. They create networks and movements practicing paths of social re-appropriation of the distribution and trade processes, which represent alternatives to mass retail channels and return sale and marketing stages into peasant hands through a close encounter with consumers. This goal inspires the projects aimed at defining local agri-food systems (Cerdan Fournier 2007) through the interception of supply chains that bind production to processing, distribution, consumption, establishment as alternatives to standardised and outsourced consumption. On the same wavelength various modes of active support to producers have defined, ranging from the sharing of strategies and business risks to the acquisition of land to rent to farmers as in the case of the French Association Terre de Liens or the Italian Land Purchasing Groups, thus triggering  

14 Many are the experiences that have reopened the connection between citizens and farmers building a renewed solidarity between producers and consumers, starting from the Japanese teikei networks already active in the 60’s. From the Japanese experiences it comes in the 80’s to Community supported agriculture in the US and the UK, to AMAPS ("Associations pour le maintien de l’Agriculture Paysanne" - Associations for the conservation of Peasant Agriculture) in France, to GAS ("Gruppi di acquisto solidale" - Fair purchasing groups) or GAP ("Gruppi di acquisto popolare" - Popular purchasing groups) in Italy.

15 In the Milan area there are currently four recognised rural districts pointed at putting in place integrated network strategies integrated among farms, transformation actors, medium and short range distribution networks, joint purchasing groups, schools, cooperatives and so on (Borasio, Prusiscki in this issue), who experiment innovative forms of the agri-food system within a perspective aimed at territorializing policies: Agricultural Rural Milan District, Agricultural District of the River Olona and Davo Valley, Neo-rural District of the Three waters of Milan, Rural District Rice and Frogs.

16 These activities revolve around collective purchases of land to rent to farmers in accordance with agreements between the parties. The activity consists in the establishment of a society among several actors who subscribe shares to invest in the purchase of arable land, forest, pasture, and then rent them to one or more managers, binding them to run the good according to the shared directives, which may e.g. provide for the use of organic methods, collateral activities such as tourist accommodation or social assistance. In France, such activities are present since long and are managed by the association Terre de Liens, in Italy there are studies and some early application cases carried on by GAT ("Gruppi acquisto terra" - Land purchase groups). Terre de liens was born in 2003 from the meeting between farmers and citizens coordinating to face the urgent need to stop the disappearance of agricultural land. It is a project that appeals to citizens savings, gifts and voluntary work to directly intervene in
short networks, mutual trust and social capital. In some cases, authorities take part in this renewal by providing public lands in order to put territories into value. There are important examples pointed in this direction that, thanks to their implementation, facilitate the collective understanding of the path taken by the administration. One for all: the strategy of urban-rural park in the province of Bologna, which brings into play the endowment of public companies in the municipalities of agricultural plain, involving the public, private and voluntary sector.17 Such actions of sustainable food planning (Vlten, Wiskerke 2013) provide a good support for people presently excluded from the labour market, and stimulate new social models of consumption apt to preserve territories, shorten supply chains, lower prices and improve product quality.

4. Faulty comebacks

There are many ways to "come back to earth", some of them not virtuous at all (Osti in this issue) and in open conflict with the local population. For professional traders, purchase land in valuable rural locations is often only a profitable investment opportunity to exploit on the tourism market. The 'good life' of the tourism industry, however, leads to a distortion of the rural contexts of life, in which the signs of fatigue, the disorder of activities, the inattention to styles in restorations, which used to represent a considerable portion of the identity signature of places, are choked to offer a fine-looking view, sometimes totally false, to stressed tourists looking for beauty and peace.18 At a different scale we witness the phenomenon of land grabbing, which takes the worrying facies of a 'land accumulation' at the global scale. Societies in fast population growth erode their fertile land urbanising it, and then go to stock up on food supplies in poor countries. In this new food colonialism Asia, Africa, Latin America have took the role of global 'barn' for the rich countries shopping.19 Even the CAP can put in place phenomena of land grabbing at the local scale. European policy in recent years has distributed one third of all EU subsidies, which have been captured by big agricultural companies and corporations.20 Alongside the need to ensure food for a growing population in a context of constant overall decrease of fertile land, there is the need to address climate change in a context of increasing exhaustion of energy resources, which brings industrialised countries to buy land for cultivation of agro-fuels. Local people see thus quickly deleted their sovereignty on resource use, become "refugees in their own territories, providing friendly practices toward environment and biodiversity and ensuring intergenerational communication. The network is now spread throughout France with about 10,000 citizens involved, 150 farmers installed, a hundred of businesses acquired or being acquired, more than 2,000 hectares dedicated to peasant and organic farming, more than 500 candidates trained per year (see <http://terredeliens.org>).

17 See <http://www.provincia.bologna.it/pianificazione/Engine/RAServePG.php/P/273211020704>.

18 The peninsula is full of small towns transformed into aseptic stages in which citizens want to spend a few days a year, villages sometimes entirely privatised, where nothing is out of place, everything is in order and the ancient inhabitants are deprived of their own living space in exchange for pizzerias and trendy night spots where, if all goes well, some of them (few) can work.

19 According to Landmatrix, the most important among the websites that monitor land grabbing phenomena continuously and at global scale, lots with ongoing or already completed sale transactions amount at 42 millions hectares - almost 4 times the total current Italian UAA (see <http://landmatrix.org>).

20 Reporting data cited by Ploeg, Vidal says that in Italy, in 2011 e.g., 0.29% of farms received 18% of all the incentives of the Cap and the bare 0.0001% of these, which is to say 150 companies, have taken the 6% of all the subsidies. In Spain 75% of all subsidies went to 16% of large producers, while in Hungary, in 2009, 8.6% of all agricultural properties have taken 72% of the subsidies (Vidal 2013).
5. Towards an integrated, socially shared, high quality agro-food system

To foster the faint counter-exodus ongoing from urban areas to the countryside it is not enough to denounce land consumption and the diseconomies involved by urbanisation, nor the serious scientific argument on the increasing greenhouse effect, it is necessary to offer a possible social alternative apt to make life in rural areas attractive again and also economically sustainable, especially for young people. This means to put in place a massive, complex and interconnected project, as has been the modernisation in the 50's, which prepared societies and territories to accept the 'great industrial reorganisation' of cities and countryside, with agrarian representatives assisting farmers to teach them how to use chemicals and new machinery, with handbooks, books, technical institutes and university courses which trained the new technicians, not to mention the integration of the new urbanised people accompanied by social workers, movies, advertising.

Many of our territories are not ready to accept the new model of agriculture we are outlining. Hilly or mountainous areas are often devoid of services (schools, health and social services, libraries, etc.) that can enable young families to install. The plains around the city are like jumbles collecting buildings of all kinds: plants, canals now reduced to open pit sewers, high traffic roads, impacting crops. Many young people, even when glimpsing that chance, do not accept to end up in the 'plain hell' just to get a guaranteed piece of land until such sites are not restored and made suitable for farming. We need funding, directions, incentives to encourage the many virtuous comebacks to earth in the countryside like in the mountains or in the plains. A regeneration of the rural fabric may in fact be the primary foundation for the redevelopment of the settlement system as a whole, reasoning in an integrated way, by putting at work creativity, technical innovation, new and old knowledge in the service of a larger project in which ecology, economy and aesthetics come back together to produce a beautiful landscape in which it is pleasant to live. Below I will outline some priority actions.

5.1 Introducing different devices for the different agricultures

The world of agriculture is diverse and can not be embodied in a single valid definition to identify rules, constraints and incentives. Different agricultures have goals, functions and needs also very distant from one another. For large organic or conventional capitalist farms there will be no problem in managing records of chemical treatments or following papers for benefits, while for a small farmer even accessing incentives may be tough. It is therefore necessary to ensure a simplification of bureaucratic procedures for small farmers, to prevent them succumbing to the many obligations modelled on the shape of industrialised agriculture. Non-productivist agricultures are variously articulated and have a broad range of abilities and needs that can hardly find a visible account able to obtain some form of political representation. The active support to the establishment of a collective actor

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21 The current regulations, for example, consider a farmer who has got just one horse exactly like as a breeder of 100 head of cattle, and the same if one has one cow, one goat or five beehives. For each of these livestock sectors farmers must produce different certifications, most often under the jurisdiction of different offices located in different cities.

22 In some cases there are still traditional 'resistance' forms of tenure and cultivation, passed unscathed through the process of modernisation. In other cases, things are much more complex. We find innovative agricultures ranging from amateur farming and horticulture in urban and periurban areas, to part-time farming, to organic, sustainable, biodynamic agriculture, to social, peasant or 'underground peasant
able to respect differences, become a reference for territorial and rural policies, is definitely a primary objective. This generates the request for a different treatment for different agricultures, so as to decline in a targeted way directions, standards, subsidies and planning incentives of urban and rural policies. Interesting opportunities open here, requiring a careful monitoring and a “positive discrimination” in favour of the emerging agricultures (Onorati in this issue), to foster real integration, social cohesion and cooperation that can trigger re-conversion processes for agro-industries and empowerment for small businesses and other farming activities in a logic of co-existence among different modes of production, unified by shared goals and parameters for cultivation and production.

5.2 Linking non-market activities with production of common goods
Not all agricultural activities are aimed at competitiveness and markets, as highlighted by the new, polysemic dimension assumed by peasant agriculture (Ferraresi in this issue). Some types of agriculture are expressly post-productivist, multi-active and multi-purpose (growing, breeding, processing, direct selling, education, hospitality, etc.). In addition to the personal satisfaction derived, such activities generate environmental and territorial protection, improve the social quality of places, build socio-economic proximity networks around the pivot of agriculture. To highlight the multiple benefits of this activities, also in terms of ecosystem services, leads to abandon the vision that considers their carriers as missed or failed farmers, placing them under the light of common goods manufacturers useful to the entire community.

5.3 Ensuring access to land
To foster a comeback to earth we need first of all actions aimed at returning to agriculture the dignity it deserves in our society, making it a lifestyle choice viable and dignified, on the material side as well as on the cultural one, starting from the younger generations, reconstructing narratives open to new civil mythologies, focused on the positive value of the countryside and rural life, as highlighted by Pierre Donadieu, Ermanno Olmi and Massimo Angelini in this issue. Attention should be paid not only to those who already are in agriculture, but also to those who would like to get into it. We should put in place devices apt to untie problematic knots as the availability of credit, the unwillingness of governments to grant public lands to farmers, the lack of equipment and services in the inner areas. Ensuring access to land also means breaking the perverse mechanism that leads to de-ruralise rural assets, letting it flow back into the housing market (barns, rural residences dismem-

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agriculture’, to actors involved in agricultural networks, related to a wide range of active and reflective citizenship made by aware tourists who frequent farm holidays and places of rural hospitality, purchase groups, classes and parents involved in school gardens and rural education and so on. The associations of the “Popular campaign for peasant agriculture” snapshot this plurality of economic forms, production structures and agricultural markets by distinguishing among “businesses totally included in the agro-industrial market (high capital and technology intensity, commercial supply chain, high income areas), small (economic and physical) size businesses working, with high labour intensity and low capitalisation, for proximity markets but also sometimes domestic and foreign, and finally self-consumption and small businesses with limited direct sales (low technological intensity and little or no capital, marginal territories).” Taking as reference the economic size of farms provided by the last Census of Agriculture we have: “- non business farms (gross income less than 10 thousand euro) 1,086,000 (67%)
- intermediate farms (between 10 and 20 thousand euro) 225,000 (14%)
- enterprises (more than 20 thousand euro) 310,000 (19%, of which 70% with less than 100 thousand euro and 30% with more than 100 thousand euro).

To censed realities should be added the self-production of the countless informal farming practices, which provide food for self-consumption and non-monetary exchange, still not valued at present” (see Popular campaign for peasant agriculture, Presentation to Italian Parliament of the guidelines for a framework law on peasant agricultures, Rome, October 10th, 2013, Chamber of Deputies newsroom).
bered, etc. raising the prices of the farms flowed back into the real estate market at quite different costs. A simple action that would allow the entry of new forces in the agricultural world is also in providing public lands, which should be given in use (where this is compatible with the asset value and its conservation) to youth, couples, groups, cooperatives engaged in a sustainable management pointed at the common good. Without the ability to access land, there can be no virtuous comeback to that land.

5.4 Thinking in terms of integration
To restart designing territories able to regenerate due to the presence of agriculture requires to leave the logic of sectorization and switch to that of integration, reconnecting what modernisation had disconnected (Triul in this issue). It means then to assess the effectiveness of actions in systemic terms, taking into account the flows and cycles of matter and energy (air, water, soil, energy) but, even more, means to relocate the farms in the territory of reference which the green revolution had expelled them from, creating and stabilising local markets and proximity economies within a vision traceable to the bio-regionalist approach (Berg 1978; McGinnis 1998; Jacobson 2001; Magnaghi 2013; Saragosa 2005; Sale 1985; Taylor 2003). To think in terms of integration means arranging designs apt, at the same time, to produce an income for farmers, healthy food for consumers, beautiful sceneries for tourists, places of entertainment for people, ecosystem services for the whole community. It is essential therefore to provide new forms of territorial governance and public action that, according to what Giacomo Becattini in this issue calls the “territorialist lesson” by Pietro Leopoldo, refocus on the mosaic of territorial knowledge the definition and management of the complex relations linking production, processing, distribution and consumption, thus strengthening local markets and social cohesion.

5.5 Increasing the multiple intensity of agriculture
Conceiving territories as a construct which is at the same time natural and cultural leads back agriculture, primary production of territory, within a groove in which these two dimensions are strongly interpenetrated (Magnaghi 2010). In the first place, it will be necessary to come back to labour-intensive activities, which means activities of care, attention, respect, knowledge not aimed at generating economic considerations, but pointed at the production and reproduction of biodiversity: “protecting biodiversity is an imperative not just because it helps make money. It is important because it makes life” (Shiva in this issue).
The new model of agriculture must include multiple intensities sensible to the ecological functioning of territories, to food traceability, to the creation of long and short networks, the integration between functions, the creation of landscape beauty. The process of crop intensification increases the cultural capital spread among farmers, entrepreneurs, residents, students, affecting the strengthening of local social capital (networks, shared values, research-action activities, education/training projects, local knowledge, collective experiences) which, in turn, multiplies the opportunities to strengthen socio-economic capital (Bocchi in this issue). Training people to this new vision is essential both in and out of academic contexts. Self-education, first of all, must be enhanced by involving farmers

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23 Switching from a standard agriculture, which adapt contexts (terrain modelling) and soil (fertilisers, landfill), to an agriculture that respects earth fertility, without eroding or moving soil, means re-activating a big lot of activities requiring intensive care. Of course, it is also necessary to re-learn what the farmers have forgotten through specific activities of agro-ecological investigation about the functioning of territories. Graduation courses should offer educational initiatives in which territorial and rural planning are taught according to systemic and agro-ecological methods. Such a reorganisation of academic knowledge must be accompanied by a widespread dissemination of contextual knowledge related to the peasant mode of production. Many farmers are already regaining knowledge and awareness and are building self-organised information and teaching events where expert farmers explain ground
practicing peasant production in training courses, assisting self-managed courses and providing more complex activities through public-private partnerships.

5.6 Equipping territories
The turnabout in the comeback to earth requires a vast project aimed at re-balancing and re-equipment materially both the ‘flesh’ and the ‘bone’ of our territories, to enable them again to perform functions and services relying on a no more marginal role for agriculture. The contexts in which urbanisation has been concentrating in the recent years, and those depopulated by urban polarisation, must be equipped, to restore what modernisation has marginalised or buried under the urban “lava flow” (Magnaghi 1990), with roads, ecological networks, logistic support for short production and supply chains, ponds for herbal purification, farm holidays, primary services for inland areas and so on.

5.7 Designing at the local scale
The comeback to earth is realised through a local project, using specific resources which cannot be artificially reproduced in a thoroughly different manner with respect to what industrialised agriculture has done to date, changing the face of places, pushing crops in unsuitable environments, creating artificial conditions (modelling, landfill, fertilizers, etc.), grabbing the land in the weakest contexts. Pairing landscape peculiarities with peculiarities of products is exactly a formula that many farmers are using to advantage. That is where we need to restart from, from the here and now of all those involved at the local scale in agriculture and horticulture (Donadeu 2013). Even European policies will increasingly be locally declined, direct subsidies to morpho-typological peculiarities of local territories, their reproduction rules, the resolution of their specific problems. Time after time, forms of local governance will prompt agreements, projects and promotions able to build networks and arrangements among farmers, local businesses, residents of rural towns and cities in order to create cultural ferment and new lifestyles, in a virtuous chain able to feed itself. Social animation should nourish social strategies tailored for places to create agreements, consortia for the production of local products, educational farms or fair purchasing groups that will represent a reference for the individual and collective growth.

In conclusion
These first elements of redevelopment of open territories can be used by rural world in selective forms, combining traditional wisdom and expert knowledge for an appropriate use of technologies, thus raising the overall system productivity against the diseconomies and imbalances of the agro-industrial system. The farmer, now as before, is the leading manufacturer of agricultural landscape but, with respect to the past, its action is increasingly integrated within a complex framework consisting of multiple actors, instruments and policies. The farmer has the opportunity to play a leading role in the great project of reconstructing agricultural landscape as long as several conditions are guaranteed: planners are given the task of identifying governance tools which are complex, inclusive, integrated and propelling, active and respectful of differences, paving the season of co-planning and co-design; farmers the one to seize the interest in joining this great process, in which they are the key differences, show how to work land, teach restoring artificial drainage systems, disseminate local varieties of plants, show how to grow and crop them, and so on. One example for all, the many publishing and teaching activities revolving around the Florence Fierucola (Agostini I. in this issue).
actors. We need a great investment for innovation and public projects apt to create social
debate and attention to such an issue, which is becoming more and more central.
In the texts collected in this issue the various disciplines of territorial science have dealt with
the comeback to earth, providing theories and actions ranging from the design of multi-
functional agricultural parks to the preparation of agencies for the control of real estate
dynamics, from the tools to ‘perennate’ agricultural areas to the use of conditionality, up to
new agro-urban economies, methods to support access to land, creation of short chains,
experiences of urban agriculture, socio-productive re-use of rural buildings and inhabited
countryside, enhancement of social capital in agriculture, the creation of local Food Sys-
tems, the maintenance and renewal of the institution of commons and much more. In this
first issue the journal Territorial Sciences suggests viable, tangible and vital alternatives to
the relentless urbanisation with the hope that the route already in place could soon find
effective forms of support.

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