

# An Overview of the French Landscape Characteristics and Dynamics on a National Scale Level

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# Introduction

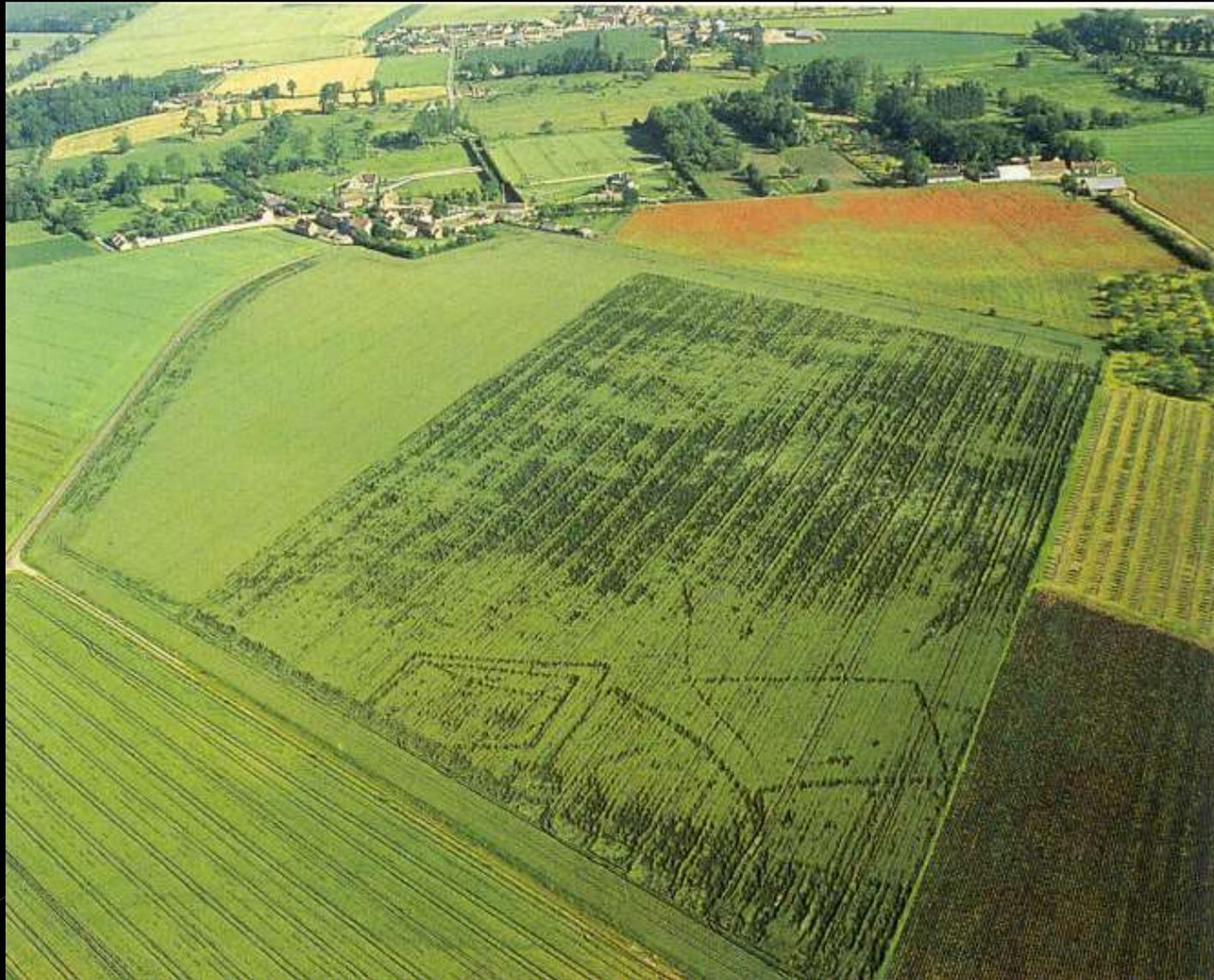
We will **summarize** the **history** of the **agricultural landscape in France** and **highlight** the **critical points** that marked this **evolution**.

The presentation is divided into three parts.

1. An overview of the **historical passage of time**.
2. **The present agricultural landscapes** on a national scale level.
3. **Illustration of** regional landscapes of "**Puys chain**".

And finally, how the **current policies will** affect the future agricultural landscapes in France.

# 1. a. Archeological Basis



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➤ Agriculture was introduced where **vegetation was already burned**.

➤ First signs of **domestication** of plants and animals.

➤ The **plowing techniques** are improved by the Celts (after their invasion in 1500 BC) along with the creation of green fertilizer.

➤ Creation of **first cities** with agriculture taking place around them.

**Geometric forms** are adapted for agricultural lands by the Romans.

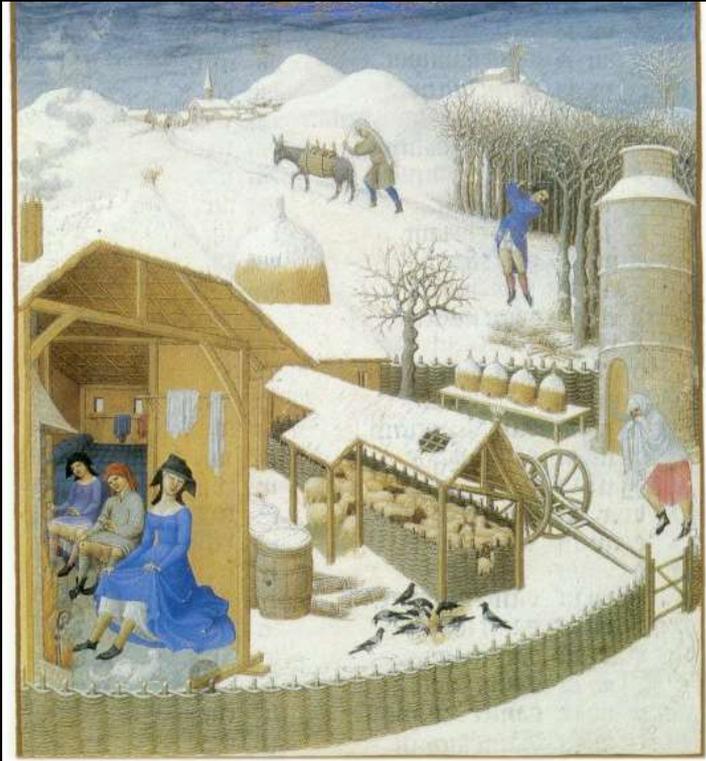
➤ In 500 AD: the **end of the Roman empire** → decline of cultivated lands.

➤ At the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century → **deforestation** increases to the benefit of agricultural lands.

➤ The kings and lords take **conservative measures** to stop the decline of forest.

➤ 1200-1300: Constitution of the **first open fields** in the Parisian Basin.

# 1.b. The Making of the French Landscape



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## Late Middle Ages(1300-1500):

The Hundred Years War and the Black Plague → demographic crisis.

## Early Modern

### 1500- 1600 (Renaissance):

- The **population increases** → **extension of agriculture** into new areas using **terracing techniques** on land slopes , **drainage of wet lands** and **irrigation of areas affected by drought**.
- Beginning of **land concentration** and **consolidation of open fields** plots in the Parisian Basin.

### 1600-1700

- Introduction of **new plants**: tomatoes (from USA), potatoes (from Peru), and corn (from Colombia).
- 1669: a **new rule** is introduced allowing the **intensive and rational exploitation of forests**.

### 1700-1800

- In August 1789: **Abolition of the feudal taxes**.

# 1.c. French Identity under Construction

**LA TERRE FRANÇAISE**  
DOIT ÊTRE MISE EN VALEUR PAR UN  
**TRACTEUR FRANÇAIS**



LE NOUVEAU TRACTEUR  
RENAULT, CONSTRUIT  
EN GRANDE SÉRIE EST D'UN  
PRIX D'ACHAT RÉDUIT ET D'UN  
ENTRETIEN ÉCONOMIQUE -  
STOCK DE PIÈCES DE  
RECHANGE CHEZ TOUS  
LES AGENTS RENAULT

VENTE A CRÉDIT  
PAR LA D. I. A. C.  
44 rue de Lisbonne  
- PARIS -

**RENAULT**

BILLANCOURT (SEINE)

DRAEGER IMU

# 1.c. French Identity under Construction

## 1800-1900

- From 1876: beginning of the **reforestation movement**.
- A **serious economic crisis**, due to **importation** of less costly **wheat** from Africa and **beef** from America → as a reaction the French government **closes the border, blocking the modernization of culture**.
- **Erosion** in the mountains caused **by overgrazing** → **creation of a new law** for the reforestation of lands.

## 1900-1950

- More than **6 million ha of the UAA is lost** in one century (from 1880).
- After 1945 the agricultural population continues its migration.
- **Farmers expand, restructure and modernize** their agricultural plots.

# 1.d. The Influence of the CAP

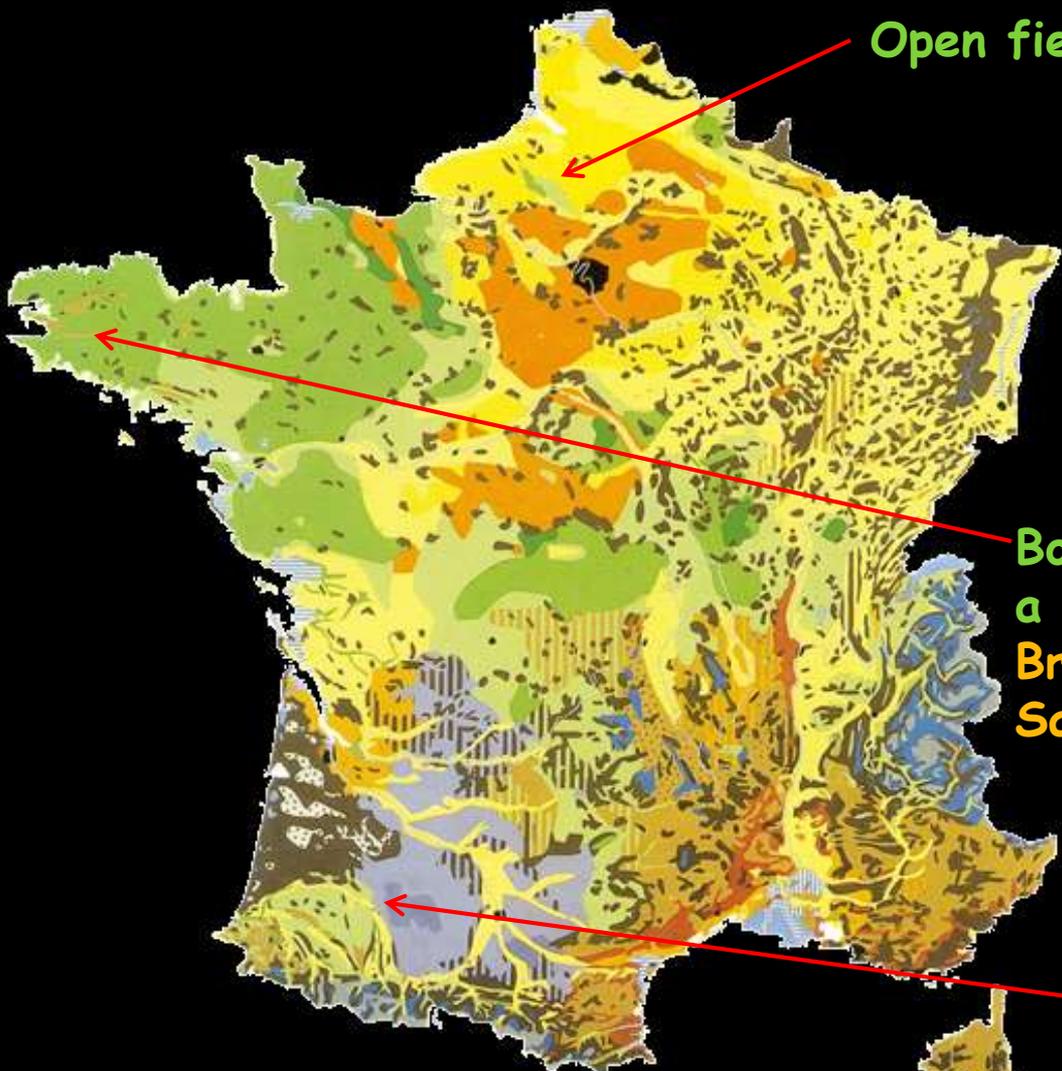


# 1.d. The Influence of the CAP

## 1950-2000

- 1962-1966: **CAP** → **intensification of production** favoring significant landscape changes.
- **Revolution** in agriculture and husbandry during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the century.  
→ **all these mutations have consequences on the environment.**
- **Cessation of cultivation in disadvantaged zones.**
- The **forest** in the last century **gains twice its surface.**
  
- During 1980: **Support of oilseed culture by the European Communities help their expansion.**
- The premiums for the uprooting of vineyards gradually reduce the share of vines.
  
- 1992: **Second PAC**, took into consideration **agro-environmental measures** → conservation of ecological places and landscapes.
- Development of agriculture over grasslands due to **greater financial support for agriculture than for husbandry.**

# 2. The Present Agricultural Landscapes



Open fields in north and the east



Bocage form a band from Bretagne to Saone plain



Aquitain type in Southwest



1. Agriculture traditionnelle	11. Forêt
2. Agriculture traditionnelle à faible densité	12. Forêt à faible densité
3. Agriculture traditionnelle à haute densité	13. Forêt à haute densité
4. Agriculture traditionnelle à très haute densité	14. Forêt à très haute densité
5. Agriculture traditionnelle à densité variable	15. Forêt à densité variable
6. Agriculture traditionnelle à densité très variable	16. Forêt à densité très variable
7. Agriculture traditionnelle à densité très très variable	17. Forêt à densité très très variable
8. Agriculture traditionnelle à densité très très très variable	18. Forêt à densité très très très variable
9. Agriculture traditionnelle à densité très très très très variable	19. Forêt à densité très très très très variable
10. Agriculture traditionnelle à densité très très très très très variable	20. Forêt à densité très très très très très variable
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25. Agriculture traditionnelle à densité très très très très très très très très variable	25. Forêt à densité très très très très très très très variable

0 50 100

## 2. The Present Agricultural Landscapes

The **Mediterranean part**: the marks of abandoned lands.



The **absence of agriculture** in the Mediterranean region was for the **benefit of the heather** that covers now all the old terraces of the region.



Agriculture of **olive trees** and **vines** find sometimes **new entries** in the region.



But **the south** of the Mediterranean region also has **vegetables** and **fruit trees**.

# A Large Diversity Related to Different Legacies of the Past

## ➤ **Natural heritages**

Climate passed and present, soils, landforms.

## ➤ **Cultural heritage**

Farming practices, local breeds, specific knowledge.

## ➤ **Economical histories**

Local and regional trades(wine from Auvergne combined with Algerian).

## ➤ **Social heritage**

Common laws, property transmission law.

## ➤ **Politic influences**

Napoleon Code, taxes system from the Ancient Regime.