



**Land and Ecosystem Degradation and  
Desertification:  
Assessing the Fit of Responses**



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**Stakeholder  
Workshop  
Brief summary**

**June 27, 2013**

**Agia Barbara, Crete, Greece**



**Department of Geography**



**AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY  
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## **Stakeholder Workshop organized by AUA and AEGEAN**

### **Brief summary of the main points that emerged from the Messara study site stakeholder workshop on June 27, 2013**

The stakeholder workshop for the Messara Valley study site was held in the Agia Barbara community on June 27, 2013. The participants included the Mayor of the municipality of Gortyna, local council members, members of farming associations and farmers.

The most important issue that was brought to the fore was the problem of water stress. Conventional agriculture is related to land degradation due to water overuse and the extensive use of the chemicals. Also, new types of cultivations have been introduced which need more water and it is very difficult for them to adapt to the local environment. Most of the stakeholders agreed that they should improve their local cultivations which completely fit to the local climate-soil characteristics.

Another issue is that many farmers are not "real" farmers and they are only interested in getting subsidies. Given the lack of state controls and because of the lack of spatial/land use planning, the farmers do not exploit (cultivate) the land and they use it for other projects (e.g. photovoltaics in high productive areas). The social capital of the area is very low; there are many conflicts because some people have not equal access to the natural resources. The population will decline further if the people are not given advice by the state in order to cooperate with each other and change these negative conditions. Agricultural training and rural planning with the cooperation of the locals and the regional authorities are needed. The solution for farmers is to produce organic products in response to the growing demand for quality agricultural products but they need a successful example of this model in order to be persuaded.