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AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION



EIP-AGRI Focus Group

New entrants into farming: lessons to foster innovation and entrepreneurship

FINAL REPORT
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Summary

This report presents the findings of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group (FG) on New Entrants to Farming: lessons to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, which was established under the European Innovation Partnership Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI). New entrants are widely recognised as important to the ongoing vitality and competitiveness of the agricultural sector and rural regions in Europe, but very little has been formally published about this group. The FG brought together 20 experts from across Europe to compile the existing practical, educational and academic information available on new entrants to farming, focusing primarily on new entrants with limited prior experience in agriculture.

The primary aims of the focus group were to:

- ▶ Clarify the main challenges faced by new entrants
- ▶ Identify potential business and organisational models
- ▶ Propose potential innovative actions
- ▶ Identify needs from practice and possible gaps in knowledge

The focus group met twice and identified eight key issues, which became the topics of minipapers: access to land, capital, markets; gender issues among new entrants; voice of new entrants; urban-rural interactions; advisory/supportive systems for new entrants; role of local authorities; added value of new entrants; and definitions of new entrants.

The definition of new entrants was subject to considerable debate owing to the variety of ways by which newcomers can enter the agricultural sector, and the potential for these newcomers to be part of larger collaborative groups and legal entities. FG experts agreed that **new entrants can be of any age**, and that there is no single optimal definition of a 'new entrant'. Instead, they agreed that the definition should suit the purpose for which a definition was being sought.

There has been very little research undertaken which specifically addresses new entrants to farming; most of the research focuses on succession, which is by far the most common form of intergenerational renewal. It is therefore **impossible to accurately assess the number of new entrants in Europe**. The observations from the FG experts, in combination with the literature which mentions new entrants, suggests that new entrants tend to be younger, operate smaller farms, are more highly educated and are more likely to be female than is characteristic of mainstream farming, although women still represent a minority. New entrants are more likely to be involved in alternative agricultural systems (organic farming, short food supply chains, back to the land movements). This reflects both idealistic considerations, and the obstacles to entering commercial mainstream agricultural systems.

New entrants to farming typically have **multiple motivations**, including lifestyle, economics, and environmental aspirations. Although lifestyle was identified as the most common motivator, FG experts emphasised that **most new entrants also seek to make a living from their farm businesses**.

New entrants represent important sources of innovation and entrepreneurship within agriculture. Specific benefits from integrating new entrants into agricultural systems include:

- ▶ Introducing new knowledge or techniques
- ▶ Developing new business models based on end-users
- ▶ Developing more sustainable farming systems
- ▶ Developing new organisational models (e.g. share farming, pre-financing, crowd sourcing)
- ▶ Increasing connections between farming and the local community (particularly in areas where there is substantial land abandonment and/or depopulation)
- ▶ Adapting traditional knowledge to develop business innovations (e.g. artisanal food production)

As a whole, these actions stimulate local economies, creating new jobs and business opportunities. However, new entrants face a number of obstacles in establishing their new businesses. These barriers vary considerably

between regions. **The most common barrier identified was access to land.** Other issues include access to labour, capital, housing, information, and markets. New entrants address these barriers in a number of ways, particularly by diversifying their businesses, producing value-added products and becoming involved in sharing economies.

In terms of supporting new entrants, **local authorities were found to be particularly helpful** in some regions, enabling access to land, connecting new entrants to other local actors and using local procurement to enable access to markets. **Improving ICT access** was generally found to be useful. Specific models developed by and for new entrants include: career-ladder farming, contract farming, crowd funding, crowd sourcing, community supported agriculture, equity partnerships, farming incubators, junior-senior partnerships, land partnerships, share farming, social enterprise and workers' cooperatives. Several of these approaches were identified as options to be explored by future Operational Groups.

Next steps

The FG experts identified 16 topics for Operational Groups, elaborating on four: land partnerships, share farming, social enterprise and workers' cooperatives. These represent opportunities to enable new entrants to farming, addressing barriers to land, capital, market and labour access.

For research priorities, the FG experts identified research which would directly enable future new entrants to join the agricultural sector. **Their highest priority was to assess the support needs of new entrants,** followed by success/failure factors and collaborative business models. These were followed by the value added and characteristics of new entrants. Although the focus group experts did not prioritise research into the definition (and therefore numbers) of new entrants, or gender issues relating to new entrants, both are necessary to underpin any further policy development relating to new entrants.

The FG experts observed that new entrants as a cohort do not have a strong voice amongst European farming organisations. The FG group therefore recommends that **new entrants need a more consolidated presence, and connectivity to each other** (e.g. through a targeted European association, social media platforms, and open-source mapping of new entrants).



New Entrant Focus Group Experts

Introduction

This report presents an overview and synthesis of information compiled through the European Innovation Partnership Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) Focus Group (FG) on New Entrants to Farming: lessons to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, which was launched in 2015. The FG was established in order to assess what is known about *ex novo* new entrants to farming (newcomers to the agricultural sector who did not have previous farming experience). Specifically, the FG had the following objectives:

- ▶ Clarify the **main challenges** faced by newcomers to farming and identify **existing or potential solutions** that have the potential for further uptake by the farming community, particularly by other new farmers.
- ▶ Identify the potential **business and organisational models of newcomers** to farming, such as which knowledge they manage and how they acquire it, the use of technology, their access to capital (including land) and financial management, their marketing strategies, and cooperation initiatives.
- ▶ Propose potential **innovative actions** to enhance and stimulate the establishment of new agricultural enterprises and to multiply their positive effects within the agricultural sector, including ways to disseminate the practical knowledge gathered.
- ▶ Identify **needs from practice and possible gaps in knowledge** on those processes, which may be addressed by further research.

In total, 20 experts from across Europe were brought together to address these issues. Building on an initial [starting paper](#) written by the Coordinating Expert (CE), available on the FG webpage, the group discussed the defining characteristics, motives, challenges and innovative actions taken by new entrants to farming. This led to the identification of research priorities, potential operational groups and means of disseminating FG findings.



Focus Group
experts in group discussion meeting

Brief description of Focus Group process

An initial [starting paper](#), written by the CE was circulated in May 2015 to all of the FG experts, prior to the first meeting of the FG in early June. It outlined the current literature on *ex novo* new entrants to farming in Europe, starting with the challenge of accurately defining these individuals or groups. This was followed by an analysis of apparent motivations, characteristics, business models, barriers and potential growth scenarios, each with questions for further discussion in the FG meeting.

The first FG meeting was held in Lisbon, Portugal in June 2015. As 'homework' prior to the meeting, FG experts were asked to respond to a questionnaire on the characteristics of new entrants in their countries. They were also asked to prepare an example of a new entrant with whom they were familiar, in the form of a poster. In total, [23 case study posters](#) were displayed at the meeting.

The objectives of the meeting were to familiarise FG experts with the EIP Agri Service Point and FG processes; provide feedback on the initial discussion paper and findings from the homework; discuss the examples of new entrants provided by the FG experts; identify potential solutions for overcoming barriers to new entrants and identify topics for further elaboration through minipapers. These minipaper topics were:

- ▶ Access to land, capital, markets
- ▶ Gender issues among new entrants
- ▶ Voice of new entrants
- ▶ Urban-rural interactions
- ▶ Advisory/ supportive systems for new entrants
- ▶ Role of local authorities
- ▶ Added value of new entrants
- ▶ Showcasing new entrants
- ▶ Evidence based criteria for new entrant success/failure

Over the summer, the final two topics were merged into 'added value of NE' and a new minipaper on the topic 'defining new entrants' agreed with the EIP AGRI Service Point. A summary of the minipapers is available in [Annex 1](#).

The second meeting was held in early November, 2015 in Catania, Italy. During this meeting, the FG agreed on the final content of the minipapers; discussed potential Operational Groups that could test business models identified in the FG; and agreed on the key research questions, findings and next steps for dissemination of the FG outcomes. The FG also participated in a field trip to a new entrant farm, where olive oil was being produced for export to Sweden.

New Entrants to Farming in Europe

New entrants are widely recognised as important to the ongoing vitality and competitiveness of the agricultural sector and rural regions in Europe. In 2012, the report to the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (Directorate-General for Internal Policies - DGIP) on EU Measures to Encourage and Support New Entrants identified three possible routes into farming: inheritance, early retirement and *ex novo*. The New Entrants to Farming Focus Group was established specifically to address *ex novo* new entrants – individuals and groups who were not raised on European farms. Although direct succession within a farming business remains the most common mechanism by which 'new entrants' enter farming, there are indications that a growing number of *ex novo* new entrants are joining the industry, bringing with them a number of resources gained outside of farming, including skills, networks and financial capital. These new entrants are expected to introduce entrepreneurship and innovative production, marketing and management practices which spread throughout farming systems. However, the FG established that there has been **very little research into these *ex novo* new entrants** – how and why they come into the agricultural sector, what types of farms and businesses they establish, and the impact they have, or may have, on innovation within the agricultural sector.

Definitions

The first challenge in assessing new entrants to farming is to adequately define them. Entrance into farming with no previous experience or resources is unusual – **individuals who start farms frequently have some prior experience or connection to farming**, owing to the resource needs of new farm establishment (land, labour, capital, housing, skills and knowledge as well as social networks associated with farming). There is thus a substantial grey area between the extremes of *ex novo* new entrants and direct successors to farming businesses. There are also questions around the definition of 'farmers' (i.e. how much agricultural production is required to be recognised as a 'farmer') - individuals and groups entering the agricultural sector may undertake very small-scale commodity production, or commodity production that represents a minor part of a diversified business. They may work off-farm to gain the resources necessary to invest in a farming business, or be part of multiple income households. They may also be producing non-traditional products, such as edible insects. New entrants may also acquire the land base required for farming through a variety of mechanisms, such as rental, tenancy, and share farming. The new entrant may thus not be legally recognised as the 'primary farmer', although he or she is actively engaged in agricultural production. In addition, the new entrant may be a legal entity, rather than a person – collaborative groups may represent new entrants to farming. Limited companies may also represent new entrants to the agricultural sector. There are therefore a wide range of parameters from which to choose, when defining new entrants. The most common of these are identified in the New Entrant typology flowchart.

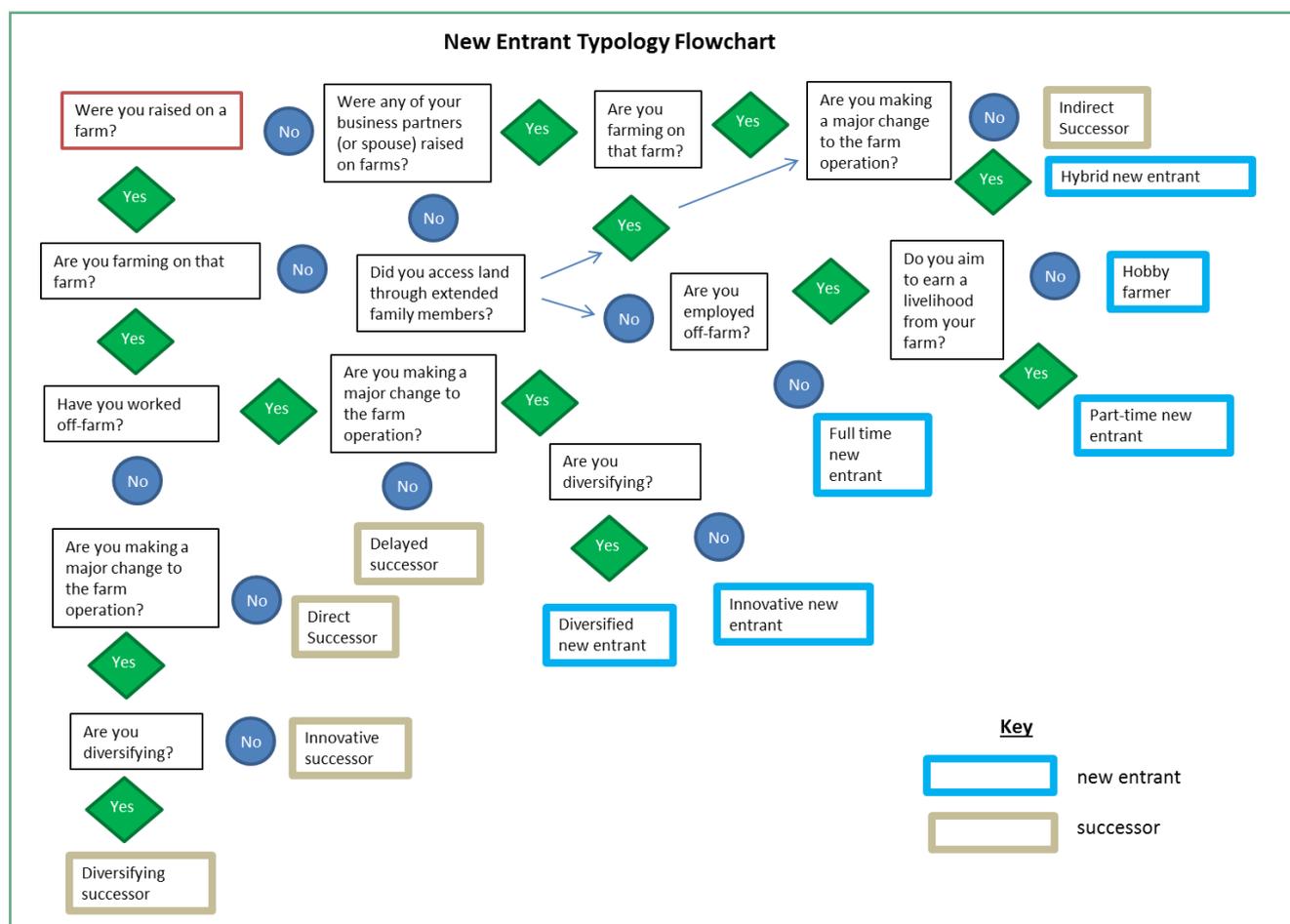


Figure 1: Flowchart compiled by FG 14 Coordinating Expert on the different types of new entrants

Existing definitions of new entrants can be found within European legislation. New entrants to farming are supported through the Common Agriculture Policy (2014-2020); supports include access to and top-up grants for the Single Farm Payment entitlements under Pillar 1, and business development grants under Pillar 2. The regulations are aimed at supporting young people to enter the agricultural sector:

For the purposes of this Chapter, 'young farmers', means natural persons:

- (a) who are setting up for the first time an agricultural holding as head of the holding, or who have already set up such a holding during the five years preceding the first submission of an application under the basic payment scheme or the single area payment scheme referred to in Article 72(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013; and (b) who are no more than 40 years of age in the year of submission of the application referred to in point (a).

17 December 2013, pp. 347

However, this definition is not consistent with Eurostat classifications, which define young farmers as sole holders under 35¹. Both definitions include farming successors who become the legal head of the holding prior to achieving an identified age; both cases exclude new entrants over the age of 40. **It is therefore not possible to utilise Eurostat figures to adequately assess the number of new entrants, or indeed**

¹ This definition is based on the construction of age intervals that are used in the Farm Structure Survey (under 35 years, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 years and over).

farming successors, working in the agricultural sector. FG participants agreed that definitions of **new entrants should include all ages.**

Options for defining new entrants are also available from other countries:

- ▶ The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines 'beginning farmers and ranchers' as individuals or groups who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less (Ahearn and Newton, 2009). If there is more than one operator, all must have less than 10 years' experience. The American definition includes corporations and has been critiqued for also including individuals and households who use their farm solely for residential purposes (Ahearn and Newton, 2009).
- ▶ The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (JMAFF) began to collect statistics on new entrants to farming in 2006, differentiating between new entrants who come 'back to home farms' from non-farming jobs (i.e. farmers' children or retired people); those who are 'new employees in farm businesses'; and those who 'create new farms' (i.e. who do not succeed to farmland by kinship) (Uchiyama, 2014).

There was considerable discussion in the focus group on the best definition of new entrants, and the conclusion reached that **suitable definitions needed to be developed to reflect the purpose of the associated activities.** For example, if the purpose is to enable young people, then an age limit may be appropriate. If the purpose is to enable innovation and diversification on farms, then the nature of the intended activity, rather than the characteristics of the individual or household, is most important. The FG experts stressed that **being born on a farm did not necessarily indicate that the resources of the farm would be available to an individual when a new farm or agricultural business was established.** The support needs of potential new entrants – across the spectrum of possible types – is thus highly variable.

Characteristics

To date, there has been limited research specifically addressing new entrants. Instead, **the academic literature focuses on farm succession processes**, with some literature on the successes and failures of new entrant and early retirement schemes. Information on new entrants is therefore derived from the experiences of FG experts, and the literature on types of farming where new entrants are more common (e.g. alternative agriculture, hobby farming).

Numbers of new entrants: There is **no clear evidence of the number of new entrants in European agriculture**, although DGIP (2012) records concerns about a shortage of new entrants, on the basis of declining cohorts of sole holders under the age of 35. In comparison, an American study reported that between 22% and 29% of farmers in the USA had become farmers within the past 10 years (Ahearn and Newton, 2009). However, this definition includes successors and the new farmers were a range of ages (i.e. not necessarily young). FG14 experts were clear that the category of new entrants should not be limited to farmers who are beneath a specific age.

Demographic characteristics: Based on available evidence, **while most new entrants are male, they tend to be younger, operate smaller farms, and are more likely to be female than other farmers.** These characteristics are also true of new entrants to American agriculture, who were also more likely to be non-white (Ahearn and Newton, 2009). New entrants exist across the range of ages and farm sizes. The higher percentage of women identified as new entrant farmers could be because women have historically been more active in alternative agricultural systems (for example, developing biodynamic farming). It may also reflect the relative invisibility of women in conventional farming systems, where men on family farms are traditionally identified as the 'primary farmer'.

Educational achievement: Madureira *et al.* (2015) found that new entrants to small-scale farming in the Portuguese, Bulgaria and British cases studied had considerably **higher educational achievement** than the average amongst farmers in the study regions (i.e. frequently to university level). This could reflect the younger age of many new entrants – younger people in general tend to have higher educational achievement. All of the FG experts who were new entrants had university degrees; FG experts thought this was likely to be typical of new entrants.

Geographic locations: **Different types of new entrants are more common in different types of regions:** lifestyle farms are more common in peri-urban areas, particularly those with high amenity values (e.g. attractive landscapes) and where there is low potential for commercial agriculture (Pinto-Correia *et al.*, 2015). Diversified farms are also more common in peri-urban areas, and are more likely to involve new entrants, although agri-tourism is more common in areas of high amenity value (vacation destinations) which may be more distant. 'Back-to-the-land' farmers typically choose remote rural locations. Land transfer and succession practices differ considerably between member states; access to resources can thus also be expected to vary between regions.

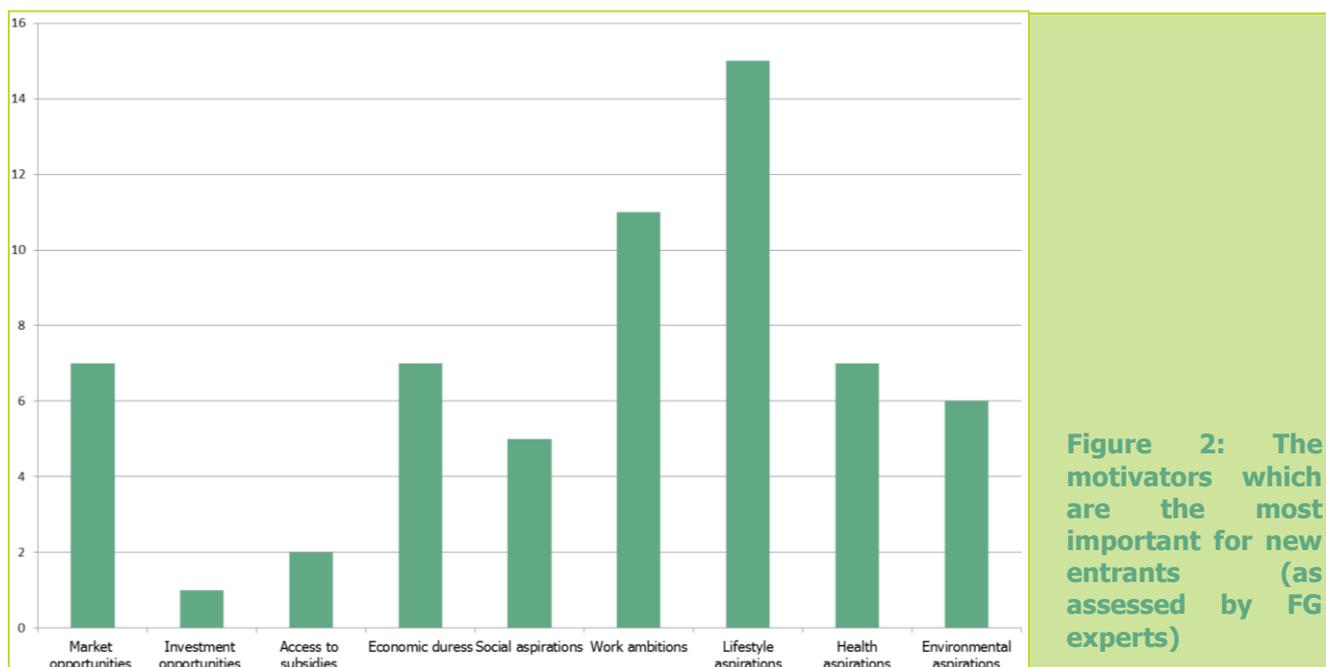
Commodity types: New entrants are **more likely to be involved in livestock production**, as opposed to cereal crops, owing to the stronger appeal of raising animals and the higher returns per land unit. Livestock production is also characteristic of most organic farms, where new entrants are more common. New entrants may also be **more common in horticulture**, primarily as part of short food supply chains, but also for self-provisioning). The much smaller land bases required for horticulture than for most commercial agricultural businesses is also a driver. Owing to the considerable barriers to land access, new entrants without access to land seek to establish viable businesses on small acreages.

Rates of success: It is difficult to distinguish exits rates from farming in general, as those operating commercially non-viable businesses may retain their land, contracting it out or retaining it for leisure purposes. Within the literature on organic and alternative farming models, the failure of some new entrants is noted, and indeed expected by conventional farming neighbours (e.g. Wilbur, 2013), but does not appear to be quantified. A percentage of mainstream farms can also be expected to be unsuccessful in any given year.

Approaches to farming: *Ex novo* new entrants appear **more likely to be involved in alternative and value added farming activities** (e.g. alternative agri-food networks, local certification schemes). It is well established in the organic farming literature that organic farmers are more likely to be new entrants (Rigby *et al.*, 2001; Padel, 2001; Loblely *et al.*, 2009). Participants in 'community supported agriculture' are typically new entrants. 'Back-to-the-land' migrants to rural areas are typically new entrants to farming (Wilbur, 2013). Madureira *et al.* (2015) identified a cohort of Portuguese farm microbusinesses being established to exploit opportunities in the specialist small-fruit sector. These part-time farms were typically established on abandoned or under-utilised land held by extended family members of the new entrants. Pinto-Correia *et al.* (2015) identified new entrants to small-scale farming in Portugal, the UK and Bulgaria, who were undertaking low-tech approaches to land management for 'lifestyle' purposes. UK research by Heley (2010) and Sutherland (2012) demonstrated a cohort of new large-scale rural land owners in the UK who similarly manage their land on a non-commercial basis, establishing hunting and shooting estates of varying sizes. Focus group experts from the UK and Ireland emphasised that new entrants without previous experience also become commercial farmers, although this has not been studied in the academic literature.

Drivers and motivations

In order to enable new entrants to farming, it is important to understand why they decide to become farmers. In the initial discussion paper, the CE identified the following potential motivations, derived from literature on specific types of farming where new entrants are more common (e.g. alternative farming systems, hobby farming). As part of the homework for the first FG meeting, the experts were asked to vote on the three motivators most commonly expressed by new entrants they knew. Findings are presented in Figure 2.



To these eight motivators, FG experts added 'reconnecting the food system' and 'political movement'. Overall, the **FG experts were keen to emphasise that although new entrants do seek particular lifestyles associated with farming, most also seek to establish profitable businesses.**

The drivers and motivators for new entrants are elaborated here with information from the FG discussions and minipapers.

Financial opportunities

New entrants to commercial farming can be expected to seek to make a living, or part of a living, from their farm. FG experts emphasised that achieving a viable business is important to the long-term establishment of new entrant holdings. Although hobby farmers may not seek to earn a profit, many hobby farms do seek to break even, and therefore have some commercial orientation.

Examples:

- ▶ The Portuguese micro-business start-ups in the PRO AKIS FP7 new entrant study identified the opportunity to generate supplemental income and access Rural Development Programme subsidies as important drivers (Madeirera *et al.*, 2015).
- ▶ The appreciating value of agricultural land and favourable tax status of operating a farm (including the opportunity to transfer wealth between generations) were identified as motivators by key informants in the Scottish FarmPath FP7 case study, although not by the lifestyle farmers themselves (Sutherland, 2013).



Economic duress

Self-provisioning is the historical foundation for agricultural production. Some new entrants can be expected to start farms in order to self-provision or as a form of employment after job loss.

Examples:

- ▶ Brunori *et al.* (2013) describes a cohort in Italy who returned to family-held land to produce agricultural goods in response to the economic crisis of 2006-2008.
- ▶ Madureira *et al.* (2015) also identified the financial crisis as a driver of new small-scale soft fruit production enterprises in Portugal. In that case, state supports were provided to new entrants to small-scale farming specifically to address the combination of high unemployment and land abandonment.

Lifestyle aspirations

Farming represents an important 'way of life' for a variety of groups. New entrants often seek a particular way of life or lifestyle when they enter the farming sector. For example, fulfilling a desire to maintain horses or livestock requires access to agricultural land. Equally, high quality food or environmental amenities may feature.

Examples:

- ▶ Farms are often identified as beneficial environments in which to raise children.
- ▶ Self-provisioning is important to small-holders and is practiced to varying degrees on commercial and non-commercial farms.
- ▶ A desire to produce healthy, pesticide free food is common amongst new entrants to organic farming. Low food miles also feature.
- ▶ Interaction with nature and environmental activities are common amongst lifestyle land managers (e.g. tree planting, construction of ponds).

Work ambitions

Farming as an occupation involves specific opportunities and constraints, which can be expected to factor in decision-making around entering the industry. Independence and running your own business have been identified as important motivators for farming in general (Gasson and Errington, 1993); these motivations can also be expected amongst new entrants.

Examples:

- ▶ Wilbur (2013) identified escaping from employment hierarchies, consumer culture and anxieties about social status as motivators.
- ▶ New entrant hobby farmers typically identify motives associated with the type of work involved in farming, such as manual labour, working outdoors, seasonal changes in work, participating in crop or livestock production.
- ▶ FG experts also identified being your own boss, working outside, developing new skills, looking for new challenges, exploring new horizons and providing better alternatives for specific groups (e.g. through care farming) as important work ambitions.

Social aspirations

New entrants may be seeking to join a particular social class or social movement when they become farmers.

Examples:

- ▶ Heley (2010) and Sutherland (2012) identified individuals establishing large-scale farming operations in part to establish themselves as members of a landed social class of estate owners in the UK.
- ▶ New entrants to crofting (small-scale farming in Scotland) in the PRO AKIS FP7 study expressed the desire to participate in and sustain cultural aspects of crofting, including maintaining a minority dialect (Gaelic) and communal land management, in addition to enabling the continuation of crofting as an agrarian form (Creaney *et al.*, 2014).
- ▶ New entrants participating in 'back-to-the-land movements' seek to disconnect themselves from urban society and consumerism (Halfacree, 2013).
- ▶ Participating in various social groups (e.g. pedigree and rare breed associations, small-holder associations) and attending associated events was identified as a goal of new entrants to non-commercial farming in the UK (Sutherland, 2012).
- ▶ FG participants also identified 'community building' as important to new entrants

Environmental aspirations

FG experts identified a number of environmental ambitions associated with becoming a new entrant:

- ▶ Climate change concerns, environmental motivations, reducing food miles
- ▶ Developing a more sustainable agriculture system
- ▶ Changing the food system from within

Overall, the literature demonstrates that motives are highly varied, and that most new entrants have multiple motivations for entering the agricultural sector. Many of these objectives are also shared by successors to farming operations (see Gasson and Errington, 1993).

What value do new entrants add to the European farming sector?

An underpinning assumption of the FG on New Entrants is that these individuals and groups are an important source of innovation and entrepreneurship for European agriculture. FG experts identified a number of particular skills, resources and opportunities that they believe New Entrants bring to agriculture.

Professional: Technical farming skills. Farming practices involve cultivating land, using various inputs and caring for livestock. Successors typically learn these skills through direct experience, whereas new entrants may have to rely on course material, face-to-face contacts with other new entrants, traineeships, apprenticeships, professional schools or even high school education in agriculture. Some new entrants bring in innovative technical skills, making effort to put their (academic) background into practice.

Managerial: Financial management and administration skills, including human resources and customer management. New entrants often enter the sector with computing or internet-based skills, which are useful for dealing with the regulations and subsidies involved in European agriculture. New entrants also bring management skills from previous jobs. Managerial skills are also useful for developing relationships with clients and creating innovative communication channels with shorter supply chains and local consumers.

Opportunity: Recognising business opportunities and managing risk. The non-farming experiences of new entrants leads to flexible recognition of new business opportunities, drawing on previous work and consumption experiences. For example, new entrants with backgrounds in social work or health care can see opportunities



in care farming. New entrants also appear better able to experiment with new approaches, as they are not confined by socialised farming norms.

Cooperation and networking: Skills in establishing relationships within and outside of the agricultural sector. *Ex novo* new entrants are typically disconnected from traditional agricultural knowledge systems (e.g. formal agricultural advisory systems, informal family supports) as well as connections to mainstream marketing channels. However, they often actively seek to become embedded in their new locales, and bring networks established in earlier careers, which can provide a foundation for new marketing opportunities (e.g. short food supply chains, niche marketing).

As a result of these skills, the FG experts identified a number of benefits that new entrants bring to the agricultural sector:

- ▶ Introducing new knowledge or techniques
- ▶ Developing new business models based on end-users
- ▶ Developing more sustainable farming systems
- ▶ Developing new organisational models (e.g. share farming, pre-financing, crowd sourcing)
- ▶ Increasing connections between farming and the local community
- ▶ Using traditional knowledge to develop business innovations (e.g. artisanal food production)

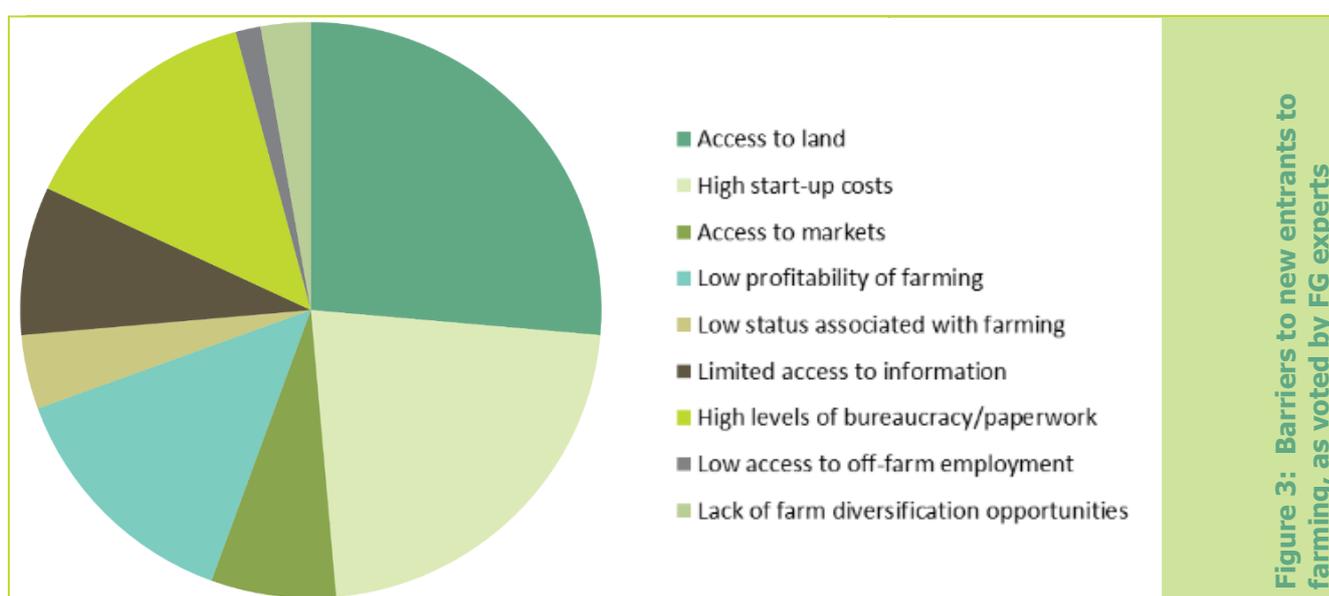
As a whole, these actions act to stimulate local economies, creating new jobs and business opportunities. However, new entrants face a number of obstacles in establishing their new businesses. These are explored next.

New entrant business models and innovative actions

New entrants face a number of obstacles to establishing viable farming businesses. These include access to land, labour, capital, housing, markets, skill development and the networks associated with acquiring these resources. The particular obstacles faced by individual new entrants vary depending on their previous experience, access to resources and geographic location.

Barriers to new entrants

In the initial discussion paper, the CE identified a range of barriers for new entrants to farming. In the home work for the first focus group meeting, the FG experts were asked to vote on which of these barriers were most important in their home countries (see Figure 3). Additional barriers identified by the FG experts were marketing knowledge, the lack of support from existing farmers and technicians, and that current institutional supports were oriented towards assisting existing farmers.



FG experts agreed that **the most common barrier to new entrants is access to land**. Establishing a commercially viable farm frequently requires a large land base. The rising capital value of agricultural land and its limited availability is a major barrier to new entrants (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Land prices and leasing rates are very high in some locations, driven by high demand from investors, hobby farmers and existing farmers intent on achieving economies of scale, and intensified by side-effects of tax and environmental legislation. Recent changes to the Single Farm Payment, decoupling it from production and linking it to land use rights (and indirectly to land ownership), has had knock-on effects in demand for agricultural land. In addition, available land may not be formally advertised, and thus transfer limited to local networks. Rental agreements have been experimented with as means of facilitating new entry (e.g. Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Ilbery *et al.*, 2010). Tenanted land is becoming more difficult to secure by new entrants, as owners typically prefer to reallocate land to existing tenants when it becomes available, or to offer land to successful existing farmers, thereby reducing their own risk (Ilbery *et al.*, 2010). Contract farming is a potential entry point (whereby the contractor owns the machinery and provides labour, making decisions on land management with varying degrees of autonomy from the land owner) (see Lobley *et al.*, 2004 for a UK example), but little is known about this practice. The increasing number of contract farming arrangements may indeed also be a barrier to new entrants. Small-scale farms can also be difficult to access, where the rewards of selling are limited in comparison to the loss of a valued family resource, which is instead retained for recreational use (Moragues-Faus, 2014). When land becomes available, new entrants find themselves competing for land with existing farmers, who are attempting to achieve economies of scale. Land fragmentation is also an issue, particularly in countries where land is traditionally divided between multiple successors (e.g. 'multiple succession', see Burton and Walford, 2005). Resultant units may not be economically viable.

Access to capital is a related issue for new entrants. **Contemporary mainstream commercial farming businesses are highly capital intensive.** Farming successors have traditionally been able to leverage the capital value of their family's land to securing funding for new investment; this option is only available those who own land. Lack of credit history, and assets to secure loans can be prohibitive to young new entrants in particular. New entrants may also face high interest rates, particularly outside of the Euro zone. The low profitability of many farming enterprises makes it difficult to repay what loans are available, and is in itself a barrier to new entrants, owing to the associated issues with low quality of life.

Available **labour markets** can pose important barriers. New entrants often need to support themselves with off-farm income while establishing their businesses, resulting in the need to find local employment. They also compete with local labour markets when seeking to hire employees; skilled labour may not be available, particularly for commodities or businesses which require substantial amounts of seasonal labour (e.g. horticulture, viticulture, on-farm processing).

Access to information: FG experts identified **three primary knowledge issues facing new entrants: technical knowledge, finding networks and knowing where to find information.** A particular strength of new entrants is the networks they draw on outside of agriculture, enabling diversification and innovation (Sutherland *et al.*, 2015). However, Madureira *et al.* (2015) found that new entrants to small-scale farming in the Portuguese, Bulgaria and British cases studied were initially disconnected from traditional agricultural knowledge systems. They also had differing knowledge needs and preferences. *Ex novo* new entrants typically have not acquired production skills from being raised on farms, and may also struggle with the paperwork (particularly subsidy access) characteristic of contemporary agriculture. For example, in all three cases when formal advisory services were accessed, this was primarily to complete subsidy applications. Peer-to-peer (farmer-to-farmer) learning is often the most useful for developing production knowledge; more formalised training is needed for accessing markets. Alternative approaches are more common amongst new entrants, and they can learn about market demands from customers through direct marketing. **The information sources available to new entrants vary widely across Europe**, from well-established programmes that include mentoring in France and Belgium, to more limited, theoretically oriented agricultural education found in many Central and Eastern European countries.

Access to markets can be a further problem: New entrants may be unaware of or unable to break into established marketing channels. Distance from markets and awareness of consumer demands are issues. It can be difficult for new entrants to integrate into established supply chains (e.g. accessing the dairy industry). New entrants are more likely to be involved in alternative marketing schemes (e.g. short production chains, locally certified food).

Housing was also identified by FG experts as a barrier. In order to relocate to a rural area, the new entrants require housing, in addition to a land base. Housing is in high demand in some rural areas, particularly in peri-urban regions and regions with high levels of tourism.

Farming in some European regions is **low status**. Zagata and Lošťák (2014) found that agriculture and farming are low status in many European countries, acting as a social barrier to entrance. Evidence from Greece suggests that the unwillingness of young women to live in rural areas limits the entrance of women to farming, as well as the establishment of new entrant farming households (Gidarakou *et al.*, 2007).

The barriers described also vary by geography – natural and political. Different regions have different legal structures, support options for new entrants, marketing and technical infrastructure, as well as biophysical suitability for producing particular commodities. Urban agriculture (agriculture within cities (including new concepts like roof-top farming, community gardens) faces competition with high demand for land for housing, infrastructure and leisure purposes; zoning restrictions are also issues. However, labour and markets are not usually problems. Peri-urban horticulture similarly faces high land prices and competition, as well as difficulty competing with urban labour markets. Markets are readily available, but new entrants must compete with established horticultural enterprises. In areas of intensive land use, land is again difficult to access, owing to competition from established farmers and land holders. Accessing conventional markets is not usually an issue, but labour and capital represent barriers owing to low supply. Accessing land is less of a challenge in regions

with extensive agricultural production, but these regions may be distant from markets and may have low local labour availability.

Opportunities for overcoming barriers

FG experts identified a number of general options for addressing these barriers, as well as specific examples of business models which have been successful to date. The general options include

- ▶ diversifying the farm business (e.g. into agri-tourism, landscaping, social or green care, education)
- ▶ producing value-added products that are differentiated from conventional products and supply chains (i.e. niche marketing)
- ▶ developing a share economy (sharing resources with others instead of owning them).

Improving access to internet and communications technologies: Madureira *et al.* (2015) also found that younger new entrants were particularly adept at using ICT on their farms, particularly for advertising the farm business and diversification activities (e.g. advertising their bed and breakfasts) (Maureira *et al.*, 2015). Pinto-Correia *et al.* (2015) identified access to ICT (e.g. high speed broadband) as an important factor in the decision to relocate to a lifestyle property. In her cases, ICT was not specifically identified as important to business development; instead, ICT represented part of an amenity lifestyle and enabled remote working.



Post-it session identifying key questions

Local authorities were found to be particularly important for supporting new entrants to farming.

Local authorities can enable access to land by intentionally utilising land owned or managed by the local authority for new entrants (e.g. through low cost rents for new entrants, establishing 'farming incubators', enabling access to housing); using local procurement to provide markets for new entrants' farm produce; and acting as bridging organisations to connect new entrants and other local actors, enabling collaborations and market access. A few local authorities also offer subsidies and business mentorship programmes to new entrants.

Specific opportunities for supporting new entrants were identified in the minipaper on barriers and solutions for access to land, capital, labour and markets (Lorleberg, 2015, see [Annex 1](#)), and are reproduced here:

Career-ladder farming: A stepwise entry in an established farm business, known from and practised in New Zealand dairy production. A young farmer enters a farm as an employee or manager, can later proceed as a contract milker and gain entrepreneurial responsibility as "labour-only sharemilker". This means he/her brings in only his labour force in the dairy production, and all other assets including cattle are provided by the farm owner. The remuneration of the share milker will be a certain predetermined share of the milk turnover or profit. Beyond being a labour-only share milker there are several better remunerated options, e.g. the "50-50 share milker", depending what quantity of inputs is provided by the share milker (whether and why he/she finances variable inputs and brings in machinery and own cattle). The final steps of such a career are being an owner of a farm and later perhaps to add a junior partner to retreat stepwise from active operation.

Contract farming: A farmer outsources part of the - or all - operational farming activities to a contractor, while staying legally responsible for the business, with associated tax and subsidy implications. It is often a way for elderly farmers without successors to retreat gradually from the active business, and it can offer new entrants a stepwise entry possibility into farming without owning land, property, or without a tenancy being a phase of an entry process. There are also "mixed" forms of contract farming and share farming (e.g. where the field operations are completely sourced out and paid by a predetermined share of the harvest).

Crowd funding: In principle a lot of small capital owners together finance a new business. Often crowd funding is organised based on the web to reduce transaction costs; capital donors often support with their money a common vision with the new business idea. This is not an entry model per se, but an intelligent way of financing a new start-up business.

Crowd sourcing: Outsourcing of tasks to volunteers, mainly organised via the internet. Not an entry model per se, but a means of limiting labour costs or accessing additional labour (e.g. in critical phases of a start-up operation).

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): In principle CSA can be considered as a community based farm financing / marketing form: The owner(s)/managers of a farm set up a comprehensive production plan at the beginning of the year, estimate the physical output and calculate the production costs. A group of persons / households / families pays a fixed sum per month / per year and buys the whole production to cover their personal food needs. The sum depends on personal needs and personal economic conditions of the participating consumers and is calculated proportionally to the overall farm production costs: all participating consumers cover together, with their fixed payments, the total production costs of the farm. An advantage of the system is the strong producer-consumer-relationship, and that it takes economic pressure from a farm. The model is also suitable for small and middle sized operations with little opportunities for increasing their farm size - and can be an instrument for saving small family farms, in the long run, from structural change. This is not exclusively a new entry model, but CSA farms offer participation possibilities in farm operation, which can serve as an entry model for new entrants: If successfully started, there can soon be a need to develop new activities and business branches, offering chances for new (co-)entrepreneurs.

Equity Partnership: In an equity partnership, partners form a new joint venture business for pooling their resources, typically capital from one side and labour / knowledge from the other side. Often the labour partner is employed, or working as the farm manager. See also junior-senior-partnership and career-ladder farming.

Incubator-supported start-up: Economists define a business incubator as an enterprise or an organisation, which supports young entrepreneurs to set up their business. Typically incubators offer office space, planning, subsidy, financing and marketing advisory, but also equity capital and - referring agriculture - in some cases also land. Public local authorities can act as incubators for new entrants in agriculture, but also NGO's and established private enterprises or private persons interested in developing the sector. An outstanding example is the French network "Réseau National des Espaces Tests Agricoles" (RENETA), which provides land to new entrants for testing their business idea in practice and limiting like this the risks and damages in case of a failure.

Junior-Senior-Partnerships: An entry model, where a young / new farmer cooperates with an established experienced farmer, who needs (qualified) labour support and/or looks in the long run for someone to continue with the business. The new entrant can start as an employee, and later be a business partner with a defined share of input and output. There are also cases involving more junior and senior partners, working together in different legal enterprise frameworks. Typically those partnerships set up a new legal business platform, which rents the fixed assets like land and buildings (sometimes also machinery) from the individual partners. This kind of entry model has great advantages especially where land prices and leasing rates are very high and where established farmers have a clear interest in continuation of their farm business.

Land Partnerships: Land partnerships can be understood as a generic term for different ways of cooperation and interaction between landowners and people interested in or already running a rural business / a farm without or with insufficient own land property. The "Land Partnership approach", as proposed by the UK Fresh Start Land Enterprise Centre, defines it as a guided process for creating sound new business relationships by bringing together landowners and new entrepreneurs for cooperation within several forms of legal frameworks. Types of legal frameworks can be contract farming, licences, share farming, partnerships, conventional tenancies and long term lets (Fresh Start Land Enterprise Centre, 2015).

Share farming: or share cropping (if only field production related) is a form of co-operation, where two parties join their resources to farm together while staying independent from one another with their business. Typically the landowner provides land, buildings, fixed equipment (sometimes also livestock or specialised installations like irrigation facilities), while the farmer provides management knowledge, labour, variable inputs and sometimes also a part of the mobile machinery and/or livestock. Input costs are financed in agreed proportions and every partner gets a predetermined share of the final output (Fresh Start Land Enterprise Centre, 2015).

Social enterprise: The objective of a social enterprise is to create societal benefits rather than profit by applying commercial business methods. They can be non-profit or (also) profit oriented and can be developed in several legal frameworks. Their financing is typically realised by a mix from commercial turnover for products and services, but also from donations and public support related to their societal tasks and contributions. There are also several social enterprises run or set up by new entrants, who sometimes bring in their former experiences in a new combination of commercial and social engagement. Depending on individual circumstances, a convincing social enterprise idea can receive public support and be like this also a new entry model for social entrepreneurs in farming.

Workers' cooperative: A cooperative enterprise, which is owned and managed in self-responsibility by its workers. As a new entry model in agriculture it has the advantage, that a lot of persons combine their resources and knowledge and improve to their chances for business success. On the other hand, participants must have a joint vision of this approach and personal ability to teamwork and team decision making. Worker's cooperatives can be an entry model for persons interested in urban or peri-urban agriculture, among them also those, who want to keep non-farm jobs besides their farm engagement.

Next Steps

As an outcome of the FG, a number of recommendations were made. These include research priorities, potential Operational Groups and opportunities for disseminating FG findings.

Research priorities

The FG undertook a 'voting' exercise to identify the highest priorities. In general, **the FG experts prioritised research which would directly enable the new entrants to join the agriculture sector**, through better understanding of their support needs, proliferation of new collaborative development models and recognition of reasons for the success and failure of past efforts.

1. Support needs of new entrants
2. Success/failure factors
3. Collaborative business models
4. Value added of new entrants
5. Characteristics of new entrants (and associated data issues)
6. Role of local authorities

There was very little support for research into the policy implications of different definitions of new entrants, or gender aspects. However, research into the definition (and therefore numbers) of new entrants, or gender issues relating to new entrants, both are necessary to underpin any further policy development relating to new entrants.

Further detail on the specific questions identified by FG experts are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Priorities

Research area	Potential research questions/issues
Support needs for New Entrants	<p>Survey on practical support needs for new entrants</p> <p>Who should help new entrants to access to market (Local authorities? Farmers' organisations? Others?)?</p> <p>What supportive or organisational measures are needed to make available land (plots) assessable to new entrants?</p> <p>Land access for new entrants and costs of land</p> <p>Influences on land price</p> <p>IT-tools on par with demand (specific for new entrants?)</p> <p>New funding/financing models/mechanisms</p> <p>What are the key skills or training required by new entrants and who/how can equip new entrants with them?</p>

<p>Success and failure factors of New Entrants</p>	<p>How long do new entrants stay in agriculture? Indicators of success and failure of new entrants Skills of new entrants (involve with success and failure) Psychology/sociology, analyse the decision of becoming a new entrant through the trans-theoretical model (steps of change) Key ingredients of new entrant success Success factors and greatest problems Study established new entrants, secret of their success Study new entrants that have failed</p>
<p>Value added of New Entrants</p>	<p>Assess what new entrants bring to the territory – in economy and in social How can you identify the tangible and intangible impacts of new entrants? Test benefits of local production models Impact of new entrants to region, employment, innovation, succession process, economy, etc. Increasing urban-rural collaboration for the benefit of more local based farm systems and farm jobs Measure social and other non-economical outputs from new entrants settling down in a territory (using alternative wealth measure indicators) What are the effects (measure that!) of a new entrant installation on a territory (employment, social relations, environmental consequences, etc.)?</p>
<p>Collaboration, business models of New Entrants</p>	<p>New models of relationships between new entrants and other industries How to foster cooperation between new entrants? What platforms do new entrants use for communication/networking? Study on new “organisations” of farming that the newcomers adapt (problems + best practices) New business models for overcoming barriers in access to land, capital, markets, labour Collaboration between new entrants and established farmers New entrants joint ventures (how do they find out, uptake and model types, positives and challenges faced, success rates) Co-operation/business models of new entrants Study all emerging new business models (from transnational approach) and combining different experiences from different countries</p>

<p>Characteristics of New Entrants + data issues</p>	<p>New entrants – revival of the depopulating European countryside</p> <p>Which tools could be developed to put together all data available from different Member States, analyse how to measure the new entrants (first step before developing surveys)</p> <p>Motivations and background of new entrants</p> <p>Who are new entrants and where they do come from?</p> <p>Inclusion of new entrants in Eurostat data</p> <p>Identify number of new entrants</p>
<p>Role of Local Authorities</p>	<p>Analyse the actions local authorities can offer (free market space, training, restaurants, land, etc.)</p> <p>New entrants ecosystem</p> <p>How to promote more flexible and adaptive behaviour/practices in agriculture and rural development administration (regional/national)?</p> <p>Different competencies of local authorities</p> <p>How to help local authorities develop an agricultural policy?</p> <p>Toolkit for local authorities</p> <p>How are local authorities assisting new entrants?</p>
<p>Voice of New Entrants</p>	<p>To what extent are new entrants involved in unions, chambers, lobbying organisations?</p> <p>Which are the reasons why some entrants don't want to have a voice? How could this problem be solved (give them a voice)?</p> <p>Survey how the regime considers new entrants</p>
<p>New Entrant definitions</p>	<p>Assess policy implications of different New Entrants definitions</p> <p>How many new entrants are there in European agriculture? Is this number increasing or decreasing?</p>
<p>Gender issues of New Entrants</p>	<p>How does the role of women in alternative agriculture differ from conventional agriculture?</p> <p>Direct marketing – a gender issue?</p> <p>Are female skills particularly relevant to new entrants' success?</p> <p>How do rural development policies impact on women?</p> <p>Is becoming a farmer empowering women?</p> <p>Are female new entrants more common in some sectors?</p>

Potential operational groups

The FG experts identified 16 possible topics for future Operational Group development. These were short-listed to four topics which were further elaborated.

Framework for OG project on “Toolkit for local administrations”

- ▶ **WHAT:** providing tools for local administrators to engage with new entrants
- ▶ **ACTORS INVOLVED:** no limits, leader needs to be a person from the agricultural sector (not a researcher!). Need municipalities as partners, other partners: university, rural development associations, local/regional farmers associations.
- ▶ **ACTIONS DEVELOPED:** start by selecting 3 pilot territories, interviewing new entrants who have tried to get into farming in past 5 years +, and established farmers. Second step – path making – showing individually how new entrants have been contacting/communicating with local authority/other farmers/etc. Build future toolkit + 3 different brochures (suggestion to have also video clips, which disseminate the results better than brochures).
- ▶ **RESULTS:** testimonies of how easy/difficult to get advice from local administrations, recommendations

Framework for OG project on “Incubators”

- ▶ **WHAT:** setting up new incubator structures and finding ways in which existing ones could be used by new entrants; testing models in practice with concrete projects
- ▶ **ACTORS INVOLVED:** existing incubators, research associations (university), young farmers unions/associations/regional associations, advisory services
- ▶ **BUDGET:** at least one full-time equivalent for network coordination (2 persons for new incubators), total duration 3 years (including 2 years testing on field), budget for participating partners
- ▶ **RESULTS:** incubator setup function; case studies for copying, supported start-ups/processes, continuation of network.

Framework for OG project on “Share farming”

- ▶ **WHAT:** how to make legal agreements; identifying who has land and resource and who wants to join; necessary to also review them.
- ▶ **ACTORS INVOLVED:** processors, experienced farmers, people with resources, people with facilitation skills (e.g. advisory service), landowners/entrepreneurs, legal and financial advisor, local authorities, agricultural schools to identify new entrants, scientific advisors, marketing advisors
- ▶ **ACTIONS DEVELOPED:** led by advisory service or other professional (question raised of whether it has to be a legal entity in order to be involved in an OG), call a meeting, create a database of people interested in being matched, assess resources available.
 - Matchmaking steps: 1. Taking stock 2. Bringing people together 3. Agreeing who will do what (business plan) 4. Legal agreements 5. Implementations 6. Constant review.
- ▶ **RESULTS:** number of share farming agreements in place.

Framework for OG project on “Joint processing units”

- ▶ **WHAT:** sharing equipment (cooking, cleaning, packaging, building-location, maybe transport to customers), combining different resources + developing new products. Target is to create added value, develop social capital, develop manual and organisation model how to run such unit
- ▶ **ACTORS INVOLVED:** local food safety associations to give advice, group of farmers willing to invest, technical professionals for advice, marketing expertise, process planning/organisation/inspiration. Partners - local authorities, institutions/schools, etc.
- ▶ **BUDGET:** Operational costs (brought in by farmers) + investments (machinery, building, etc. ~ 250 000 EUR) + salary (coordinator, etc., ~ 100 00 EUR) + feasibility study, marketing/research, manual, rules (~ 50 000 EUR), in TOTAL: 400 000 EUR

Follow-up actions from the FG

FG experts plan the following primary outputs (all available on the [Focus Group webpage](#)):

- ▶ FG Final Report
- ▶ Mini paper documents
- ▶ Case study document from the FG14
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation with key findings/outcomes of FG14
- ▶ FG14 brochure (EIP-AGRI publications, pdf-file at EIP-AGRI website + hard copies available at EIP-AGRI Service Point)
- ▶ 2 page factsheet about FG14
- ▶ Information notes for advisory services and local authorities
- ▶ Description of ‘new business models’
- ▶ List of contacts of FG14 experts ([Annex 2](#) of Final Report, EIP-AGRI website/FG page + user database)

Other messages from the focus group: voice of new entrants

The FG experts observed that new entrants as a cohort do not have a strong voice amongst European farming organisations. While most of these organisations have new entrant members, there is no organisation which intentionally lobbies on behalf of new entrants. The closest would be CEJA, the European Council of Young Farmers. However, they focus specifically on young people.

Analysis of the FG discussions demonstrates that although new entrants are a heterogeneous cohort, they face a similar range of barriers, and represent an important resource for agricultural innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe. The FG group therefore recommends that **new entrants need a more consolidated presence, and connectivity to each other (e.g. through a targeted European association, social media platforms, and open-source mapping of new entrants)**. European policies could also be structured to give incentives for existing organisations to 'make space' for new entrants in their structures. However, the authors also note that some new entrants may not want to be more visible, particularly if they are not pursuing subsidy access, or other institutional supports.

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Annex 1: Summaries of the Minipapers

The role of local authorities fostering new entrants into farming

Pepe Castro, Jean-Baptiste Cavalier, Neus Monllor, Charlène Nicolay, Irma Potočnik

One of the key findings of the new entrant focus group was the role that local authorities can play in enabling new entrants to farming. Here 'local authorities' are defined as the organisations that are officially responsible for all of the public services and facilities in a particular area or region.

Focus group participants identified a range of ways that some local authorities are currently enabling new entrants. These include **enabling access to land** by intentionally utilising land owned or managed by the local authority for new entrants (e.g. through low cost rents for new entrants, establishing 'farming incubators', enabling access to housing); using **local procurement** to provide markets for new entrants' farm produce; and acting as **bridging organisations** to connect new entrants and other local actors, enabling collaborations and market access. A few local authorities also offer subsidies and business mentorship programmes to new entrants.

The establishment of new entrant farms can have specific benefits for localities. New entrant farms represent economic development, which can increase local employment. New entrants are more likely to be involved in innovative business development, particularly related to local food production but also tourism, which can be part of a local authority's local food or tourism strategy. However, the majority of local authorities do not directly assist new entrants. The focus group experts believed this was because local authorities typically do not have an identified remit to intervene in agriculture, local authorities are not aware that working with new entrants could assist in achieving other objectives, or because local authorities do not have sufficient authority or access to resources (such as land) to undertake interventions. Handbooks and resources for local authorities have recently been produced by Terre de liens (in French) and are available on-line:

<http://www.terredeliens.org/guide-collectivites-telechargeable>

<http://www.terredeliens.org/collectivites-recueil-rhone-alpes>

http://www.terredeliens.org/IMG/pdf/guide_tdl_complet_pour_diff.pdf)

The examples of local authority assistance to new entrants were based on the personal knowledge of the focus group participants. These actions do not appear to have been the focus of any academic research, and therefore are not included in educational curricula. The authors therefore recommend research on this topic, and the creation of Operational Groups to further develop and disseminate these approaches.

Urban-Rural Relations

Andries J. Visser, Teresa Pinto-Correia, Wolf Lorleberg

This minipaper focuses on the opportunities for new entrants in (renewed) urban-rural interactions. Cities have traditionally depended on the (food) production capacity of their hinterlands; agriculture has relied on cities for markets and labour. The globalisation of the agri-food system has eroded this sense of interdependence. A growing group of city dwellers has become interested in food provenance (particularly valuing 'local' food), accessing the cultural and natural landscapes of rural areas for recreation, and are engaging in agriculture-related services like care, education and leisure.

This re-integration of the urban and rural provides **particular opportunities for new entrants**. These include **direct marketing** (through box schemes, farmers markets); **regional branding; agri-tourism developments; 'care farming'** (locating care for the elderly, psychiatric patients, children etc. on agricultural enterprises); offering **educational activities** for children; **landscape conservation**; and provision of **housing**. **New entrants are frequently more suited to acting on these opportunities than established farmers**, because they are not already embedded in bulk production systems and may themselves be from cities, with access to networks outside of traditional agricultural systems. Some new entrants also enter agriculture with the ambition of re-localising the agri-food system.

The re-integration of the urban and rural also poses some threats to new entrants – additional urban activity in the countryside can increase risks of disease spread, and may lead to objections to modern farming practices related to odour, pollution and high-tech industrial agriculture. The business models associated with these multifunctional activities are also more complex than for conventional commodity production, and additional skills to successfully develop (e.g. communication, teamwork, conflict resolution).



Small group poster discussion

Added Value of New Entrants

Andries J. Visser, Sjoerd Wartena, Tessa Avermaete

This minipaper addresses the skills new entrants bring to the farming sector, the determinants of success amongst new entrants, and what other farmers can learn from the successes and failures of new entrants. As there is little formal research on new entrants, the content of the minipaper primarily reflects the experiences of the focus group experts.

The focus group expert identified **five types of skills** that new entrants may bring with them:

- ▶ **Professional/technical:** skills associated with agricultural production. *Ex novo* new entrants do not have the production skills gained while growing up on farms, but may bring related skills from other experience (e.g. academic training). New entrants may also pursue different production skills than established farmers (e.g. organic production)
- ▶ **Management:** skills associated with financial management and administration. New entrants often bring these from other professional experiences but may struggle to access traditional agricultural knowledge systems.
- ▶ **Opportunity:** New entrants appear more likely to experiment with new business opportunities and take risks.
- ▶ **Strategic:** Skills in making use of feedback, strategic planning and goal setting. New entrants are less 'bound' to traditional views on running a farming business.
- ▶ **Co-operation/networking:** new entrants lack the networks that characterise traditional family businesses but may be more likely to participate in collaborative ventures and actively mobilise other stakeholders to pursue their ventures.

The motivations of new entrants are varied, and include personal ambitions (working outside, being your own boss, developing new skills, providing a healthy place for children); profit (gaining income, employment and developing new business models) and planet (relocalising food systems, increasing sustainability of agriculture, addressing climate change).

The minipaper identified areas where new entrants add value: intentionally including local people in farming businesses, stimulating local economies, appreciating local and traditional knowledge, introducing new knowledge and techniques, developing end-user based business models, development of sustainable farming systems and developing new funding models (e.g. crowd funding, box schemes). The authors argue that the prevalence and impact of these activities amongst new entrants requires research. They also suggest research into the characteristics and skills of new entrants, the business and organisation models and the successes and failures of 'veteran' new entrants.



Summarising small group contributions

Barriers and solutions for access to land, capital, labour and markets

Wolf Lorleberg, Jean-Baptiste Cavalier, Rositsa Dzhambazova, Vincenza Ferrara, Roberta McDonald, Alison Rickett, Irma Potocnik Slavic, Sjoerd Wartena

This minipaper addresses four major access barriers for new entrants, and potential solutions. The authors first describe the barriers at a general level, and then analyse them in relation to different types of location. **Access to land is the first challenge faced by most new entrants**, often linked to access to capital, owing to the high capital intensity of most contemporary commercial farming operations, as well as traditions of intergenerational succession. New entrants also face logistical challenges in breaking into established marketing channels, and accessing labour.

Urban agriculture (including new forms like roof-top farming, aquaponic systems, community gardens) has developed rapidly in the past decade. Approaches are typically small-scale, but access to land can still be an issue owing to its high value and zoning restrictions. Capital restrictions are secondary – **a number of innovative approaches are in place such as crowd funding, community supported agriculture and incubators**. Urban agriculture often attracts volunteer labour and has immediate access to markets. Solutions include negotiating with local authorities, community supported agriculture approaches and informal land use agreements.

Peri-urban horticulture similarly faces high land prices and competition, but has ready access to markets. Farms compete with urban labour markets and existing large-scale greenhouse production. Solutions include utilising consumer oriented business models, niche production of high value products, direct selling, product sponsorships and selling 'experiences' (e.g. workshops, farm visits).

Areas of intensive agriculture have high levels of competition for land, as existing farmers seek to realise economies of scale. Newcomers without access to inherited resources struggle to compete; without their own land, they also struggle to access capital. **Share farming, equity partnerships, contract farming and matchmaking services can address these issues**. Market access is not typically a problem but new entrants may struggle to access labour in these regions. Machinery and labour pools may be helpful.

Agriculturally disfavoured regions with extensive agriculture typically represent better opportunities for new entrants to access land, but there is increasing competition from urban investors, second-home owners and recreational land occupiers. Capital access is less of an issue owing to standard agricultural support and credit schemes through the CAP. Distance from markets and access to labour can be issues, owing to low population density. **Solutions include regional branding and diversification into tourism**.

Agriculturally disfavoured regions with agricultural potential are typically found in southern and eastern Europe. Land is often readily available, but capital access is an issue owing to high interest rates outside of the Euro zone, and Euro zone states with weak economies. Labour access and marketing can be challenging owing to outmigration. **Solutions include public investment in infrastructure, and product differentiation (including branding and certification)**.

The authors argue that the entrepreneurial spirit of new entrants is also a key resource for new entrants. Further details on the different types of entry models identified (e.g. career-ladder farming, contract farming, equity partnerships, incubator-supported start-ups, junior-senior partnerships, land partnerships, share farming, social enterprise and workers' cooperatives) are on pages 15-17 of this report.

Advisory and Supportive Systems for New Entrants

Jean-Baptiste Cavalier, Zoltán Dezsény, Rositsa Djambazova, Triin Luksepp, Agnès Papone, Miika Virpiö

The minipaper identifies **three primary knowledge issues facing new entrants: technical knowledge, finding networks and knowing where to find information.** New entrants by definition are attempting to make a change, and so may struggle to find the information they need within traditional agricultural advisory services. *Ex novo* new entrants typically have not acquired production skills from being raised on farms, and may also struggle with the paperwork (particularly subsidy access) characteristic of contemporary agricultural systems. Peer-to-peer (farmer-to-farmer) learning is often the most useful for developing production knowledge; more formalised training is needed for accessing markets. Alternative approaches are more common amongst new entrants, and they can learn about market demands from customers through direct marketing.

The minipaper also identified region-specific needs and opportunities. For example, formal education in Central and Eastern European countries is often too theoretical, and there is limited information available on non-conventional approaches (e.g. organic farming). In contrast, **there are well-developed 'farming incubators' in France, Belgium and Bulgaria, and internship programmes in Finland which enable hands-on learning.** France also has a network of community supported agriculture organisations which provide training and mentoring, as well as farming organisations which provide bureaucratic supports to new entrants. **Traditional advisory services tend to be occupied with providing administrative support (e.g. to access subsidies) and therefore have limited time available (and varying skillsets) in providing professional advice on production and marketing strategies.**



Sorting FG responses

Voice of New Entrants

Tessa Avermaete, Roberta Zahrl, Charlène Nicolay, Lee-Ann Sutherland, Adam Payne

The focus group experts identified the lack of 'voice' for new entrants at European and national levels, particularly amongst agricultural lobbying bodies. This may reflect the diversity of new entrants – as a heterogeneous group, it can be difficult to achieve a coherent message. However, analysis of the minipapers suggests that new entrants have consistent sets of needs (e.g. comprising access to land, labour, capital, markets, skills and knowledge) and can provide specific benefits to agricultural systems and localities.

Review of the major farming organisations (e.g. COPA-Cogeca, CEJA, IFOAM, Via Campesina) demonstrates that while they often have new entrant members, they do not particularly focus on new entrants. CEJA, for example, focuses exclusively on young farmers, which represent a subset of new entrants. New entrants are typically within the minority of mainstream organisations, if they are represented at all.

The authors argue that for new entrants to have a 'voice' they need a more consolidated presence, and connectivity to each other (e.g. through a targeted European association, social media platforms, and open-source mapping of new entrants). European policies could also be structured to give incentives for existing organisations to 'make space' for new entrants in their structures. However, the authors also note that some new entrants may not want to be more visible, particularly if they are not pursuing subsidy access, or other institutional support.



Overview of the day's work

Gender Issues Among New Entrants

Lee-Ann Sutherland, Neus Monllor, Teresa Pinto-Correia

In the EIP Agri Focus Group on new entrants to farming, it became evident that identified ***ex novo* new entrants to farming were more likely to be women than is characteristic of established farms**. As there is no demographic research on new entrants, it was impossible to assess this directly. Women can be over and under-represented in agricultural statistics – they may be under represented when working with a male partner who is identified as the 'primary farmer' or over represented when it is strategic for the farm business (e.g. for tax or subsidy purposes) to list a woman as the primary farmer.

The academic literature consistently demonstrates that women are more likely to be involved in specific forms of farm diversification, particularly those which are directly client-facing (e.g. farm shops, agri-tourism). As these activities are more common on new entrant farms, women are more visible. Similarly, women have historically been more involved in alternative agricultural production, which is also a common approach for *ex novo* new entrants. Research has demonstrated that women raised on conventional farms have tended to be socialised into gendered roles around being wives and mothers, rather than farmers, although this appears to be changing. The authors of the paper speculate on the degree to which engagement in farming is empowering to women, owing to the lower status of alternative agricultural systems (in farming communities), and suggest that further research is needed to address these issues.



Post it notes on gender research questions

Defining New Entrants

Lee-Ann Sutherland, Sjoerd Watena, Charlene Nikolay, Andries Visser, Teresa Pinto-Correia

The term 'new entrants to farming' addresses a wide range of entry points to agriculture, ranging from *ex novo* new entrants (complete newcomers to the sector) to direct farming successors, who were raised on farms and then took over that farming operation. As a result, 'new entrants' are difficult to define, and the authors do not propose a working definition; instead they state that **a definition should be adopted which is 'fit for purpose'** (i.e. suited to the use for which it is intended). The term 'new entrant' also may raise barriers with existing farmers in some regions, who can see newcomers as competitors; several organisations in the UK and Ireland have instead adopted the term 'land business entrepreneurs'.

The focus group was intended to focus on *ex novo* new entrants; this cohort is relatively rare, as **most individuals entering the farming sector have access to some resources** (e.g. land through extended family members, training in agriculture). They may also be returning to a family-held farm later in life. **New entrants to agriculture are not necessarily individuals or families** – they may be collaborative groups or businesses. There was also the question of how much agricultural commodity production (and associated household income) is required for an entity to be considered a new entrant to farming, owing to the diverse types of businesses established by newcomers.

It was agreed that **new entrants could be any age** (i.e. not under 35, as defined in Eurostat, or under 40, as defined by Europe's new entrant support). Individuals starting farms later in life are often innovative and bring resources from earlier professional experience. Different types of new entrants therefore require different types of support. Identified types included: diversified new entrants, innovative new entrants, full-time new entrants, part-time new entrants, hobby farmers and hybrid new entrants. Successors may also be diversifying, innovative, direct or delayed.

The authors argue that owing to the lack of accurate statistics on new entrants, new questions should be added to Eurostat.



Characterising new entrants

Annex 2: Members of the EIP AGRI Focus Group

Name of the expert	Profession	Country
<u>Avermaete Tessa</u>	Scientist	Belgium
<u>Castro Leon Jose</u>	Farm adviser; expert from agriculture organisation, industry or manufacturing; expert from NGO	Spain
<u>Cavalier Jean-Baptiste</u>	Farm adviser; expert from agriculture organisation, industry or manufacturing; expert from NGO	France
<u>Dezsény Zoltan</u>	Farmer; expert from NGO; scientist	Hungary
<u>Dzhambazova Rositsa</u>	Expert from NGO	Bulgaria
<u>Ferrara Vincenza</u>	Farmer	Italy
<u>Lorleberg Wolf</u>	Scientist	Germany
<u>Luksepp Triin</u>	Farmer; farm adviser	Estonia
<u>McDonald Roberta</u>	Farm adviser; other	Ireland
<u>Monllor Neus</u>	Other	Spain
<u>Nicolay Charlene</u>	Other type of adviser	France
<u>Papone Fiamma Agnes</u>	Farmer	France
<u>Payne Adam</u>	Farmer	United Kingdom
<u>Pinto-Correia Teresa</u>	Scientist	Portugal
<u>Potocnik Slavic Irma</u>	Scientist	Slovenia
<u>Rickett Alison</u>	Expert from agriculture organisation, industry or manufacturing	United Kingdom
<u>Zahrl Robert Thomas</u>	Farmer	Czech Republic
<u>Wartena Sjoerd</u>	Farmer; expert from NGO	France
<u>Virpiö Miika</u>	Farmer; other	Finland
<u>Visser Andries</u>	Scientist	Netherlands
Facilitation team		
<u>Sutherland Lee-Ann</u>	Coordinating expert	United Kingdom
<u>Koorberg Pille</u>	Task manager	Estonia
<u>Guimarey Fernández Beatriz</u>	Back-up Task manager	Spain

You can contact Focus Group members through the online EIP-AGRI Network. Only registered users can access this area. If you already have an account, [you can log in here](#). If you want to become part of the EIP-AGRI Network, [please register to the website through this link](#)

Annex 3: Related documents and references

This is a copy of the content displayed in the [bibliography webpage](#) of the DG Agri Focus Group “New entrants into farming”. It’s a collection of additional documents, websites, projects and other related information provided by the members of the Focus Group. Most references are linked to their official sources, but some materials were directly shared by their authors/owners, and are only downloadable through that collaborative area (restricted to members).

Documents

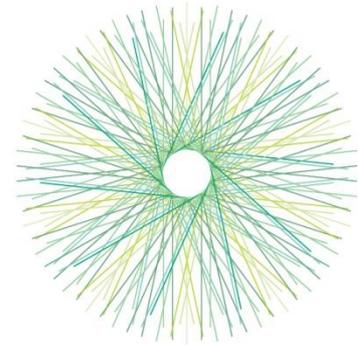
- ▶ [The Land Partnerships Handbook: Using land to unlock business innovation.](#) The Land Partnerships Group, 2015.
- ▶ References from Terre de Liens and Access to Land Network.
 - [Presentation of the European Network of Civic Initiatives on Access to Land for Sustainable Agriculture](#)
 - [Petition to the European Parliament: Preserving and managing European farmland as our common wealth](#)
 - [Securing access to land for new farmers](#), Veronique Rioufol, Nourish Scotland, 2013.
- ▶ French studies
 - [Enquête nationale sur les Hors cadre familiaux en agriculture: qui sont-ils et quels sont leurs besoins?](#), Jeunes agriculteurs et MRJC, Réseau rural français, 2013.
 - [Le devenir des agriculteurs installés hors du cadre familial: le renouvellement des générations bientôt assuré par des citoyens?](#) CNASEA, Etude, 2004.
- ▶ [Farm Entry: a comparative analysis of young farmers, their pathways, attitudes and practices in Ontario \(Canada\) and Catalunya \(Spain\)](#), PhD Final report, summary, reflections and presentation. Neus Monllor, 2012- 2013.
- ▶ [The new peasantries: Struggles for autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalisation.](#) Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, Earthscan, 2009.
- ▶ [Special Topic: Growing new farmers.](#) Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2010.
- ▶ FarmPath Project [full report](#) and [note](#) on new entrants and young farmers.
- ▶ PRO AKIS project (Prospects for Farmers’ Support : Advisory Services in European AKIS - PRO AKIS)
 - Country reports about new entrants and access to advisory services: [Portugal](#), [Bulgaria](#) and [UK](#).
 - [PRO AKIS Country reports – Inventory](#) of the AKIS and advisory services in the EU 27.
 - [Country case studies webpage](#).
- ▶ FADEAR (Réseau de L'Agriculture Paysanne - French Network of Peasant Agriculture).
 - Translation to English of the [Charter for peasant agriculture](#)
 - [Abstract of the 6 main lines for Peasant Agriculture](#)
 - [Original documents](#) and [URL](#) in French



- ▶ **Civic Initiatives Supporting New Entrants Into Farming In Europe: Drivers Of A New Agro-social Paradigm?** Master's thesis, Katharina Hagenhofer, 2015.
- ▶ **Farm Succession & Transfer Guide** published by Teagasc (Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority).

Other references

- ▶ **Future farmers in the spotlight**: Series of portraits of new entrants.
- ▶ Learning from North America.
 - **Greenhorns organisation** (EEUU):
 - Book **50 dispatches from the new farmers' movement**
 - Guidebook **Affording OURLAND: Greenhorns Guide to Financial Literacy**
 - **Documentary**.
 - **Farmstart**: Supporting a new generation of farmers (Canada).
- ▶ **AGTER: Online Knowledge Base of Natural Resource Governance around the World**. AGTER aims at contributing to the improvement of land, water and natural resource governance, and at conceiving new ways of managing these resources – ways that are better adapted to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.
- ▶ **AGIR - "Towards 100 exemplary farms"** regional programme: showcase of best environmental farm practices to other farmers in the region. (All docs and links in French)
 - overview **map of farms** in the best practice programme
 - Case study of **Pierre Fabre**
 - The **network** best farms in organic farming
 - **Guidelines** for applicants
 - **Review** on AGIR program and farms of PACA Bio network
 - Info sheet with **diagnostic proceedings** of AGIR
- ▶ Website of **Neo-Agri nonprofit organisation** to promote new peasants settling by facilitating knowledge sharing and networking among new peasants and between them and established farmers.
- ▶ New York Times article "**A Fading Tradition in Spain Gets an Unusual Boost: Shepherd School**".
- ▶ Website of **Access to Land Network (A2L)**, an European-wide website on access to land for agroecological farming. There you'll find **analyses** of the land situation in various countries, **case studies**, **reports**, **policy**, events and more.



eip-agri
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

The European Innovation Partnership 'Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability' (EIP-AGRI) is one of five EIPs launched by the European Commission in a bid to promote rapid modernisation by stepping up innovation efforts.

The **EIP-AGRI** aims to catalyse the innovation process in the **agricultural and forestry sectors** by bringing **research and practice closer together** – in research and innovation projects as well as *through* the EIP-AGRI network.

EIPs aim to streamline, simplify and better coordinate existing instruments and initiatives and complement them with actions where necessary. Two specific funding sources are particularly important for the EIP-AGRI:

- ✓ the EU Research and Innovation framework, Horizon 2020,
- ✓ the EU Rural Development Policy.

An EIP AGRI Focus Group* is one of several different building blocks of the EIP-AGRI network, which is funded under the EU Rural Development policy. Working on a narrowly defined issue, Focus Groups temporarily bring together around 20 experts (such as farmers, advisers, researchers, up- and downstream businesses and NGOs) to map and develop solutions within their field.

The concrete objectives of a Focus Group are:

- ✓ to take stock of the state of art of practice and research in its field, listing problems and opportunities;
- ✓ to identify needs from practice and propose directions for further research;
- ✓ to propose priorities for innovative actions by suggesting potential projects for Operational Groups working under Rural Development or other project formats to test solutions and opportunities, including ways to disseminate the practical knowledge gathered.

Results are normally published in a report within 12-18 months of the launch of a given Focus Group.

Experts are selected based on an open call for interest. Each expert is appointed based on his or her personal knowledge and experience in the particular field and therefore does not represent an organisation or a Member State.

*More details on EIP-AGRI Focus Group aims and process are given in its charter on:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/focus-groups/charter_en.pdf



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