

Extended Abstract

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Paper/Poster Title	Generational Renewal in farming - an Irish perspective
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Abstract prepared for presentation at the 97th Annual Conference of the Agricultural Economics Society, The University of Warwick, United Kingdom

27th – 29th March 2023

Abstract	200 words max
<p>The research aimed to assess the effectiveness of the CSP Strategic Plan (CSP) in addressing generational renewal in Ireland. The research was conducted in two phases: an extensive review of the CSP and case studies with key stakeholders in the sector. The research case studies comprise of stakeholders from local authorities, researchers, farmers and local organisations.</p> <p>One of the basic contradictions found in the strategy document, and in the definitions regarding generational renewal, was in the exclusion of certain cohorts of farmers, and subsequently their exclusion from possible scheme benefits. This exclusion is often a result of overly restrictive definitions of who is considered a "farmer" under various definitions and the importance given to each actor in the strategy.</p> <p>The findings highlight the need for intersectoral interventions to address all aspects of the next generation taking up farming and agriculture. The competitiveness of the sector and the aspirations and needs of 'young' and 'new' farmers can be improved through the implementation of the research findings and the stakeholders' reflections in informing future policy. Addressing the gaps identified can form the starting point for improving the CSP and form the basis of a real transformation in farming and CSP for future generations.</p>	
Keywords	Agriculture, CSP, young farmer, generational renewal
JEL Code	Q000 see: www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php?class=Q)
Introduction	100 – 250 words
<p>The research has been completed as part of the Ruralization project, funded under the Horizon 2020 programme, which gathers 18 partners from 12 different countries including not only research organizations but also partners that implement innovative practices. This diversity will guarantee a wide range of perspectives and situations thus ensuring the project formulates solutions and recommendations which respond to the diverse needs and features of rural areas in Europe. The RURALIZATION project is based around the idea that a process of 'ruralization' can change development patterns in rural areas overcoming population and economic decline and generating new opportunities.</p>	



This research aims to assess the effectiveness of Ireland's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan in terms of generational renewal and seeks to evaluate the impact of the CSP on rural areas, in terms of providing necessary support for young, new farmers and rural start-ups. The research covers a wide range of topics, including the intervention logic, measurement and the impact of CSP subsidies and policies on generational renewal. Case study interviews with experts and farmers have been carried out to gather a comprehensive perspective of knowledge, understanding and constructivism. The ultimate goal of this research task is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the CSP and to offer policy recommendations on how to improve the support for generational renewal in rural areas.

Methodology

100 – 250 words

To assess Objective 7 of CSP and the EU framework, the research was conducted in two phases: an extensive review of the CSP and case study interviews with key stakeholders in the sector. Stakeholders from local authorities and organizations, universities and farmers' associations were involved. A gender-balanced approach provided us with unique lessons and insights into how this policy works and what elements are necessary for further progress. The interviews were structured to gain a comprehensive understanding of Objective 7. The questions were about the structure of the CSP, its strategy effectiveness, and any potential areas of improvement. Challenges associated with rural areas and how this could affect any policy implementation were discussed.

The results and the analysis of the policy review and stakeholder interviews were divided into two assessments as well: a) the national CSP, which included the analysis of indicators and definitions and planned intervention and b) the EU framework, comprising the common criteria for defining new and young farmers, its support rationale, interventions framework and common indicators.

Results

100 – 250 words

- **Basis' contradictions:** Although the SWOT analysis faithfully represents some of the main causes limiting this generational renewal, they are at the same time somewhat disconnected in their translation to the logical intervention. Many proposed opportunities were not sufficiently exploited and not all threats were adequately covered.
- **Restrictive definitions:** The definitions of Young farmer and New farmer do not represent a small group of farmers, some who have been 'invisible' to the regulation. Again, the definition of an 'Active' farmer seems to play an important role in this issue.
- **Lack of awareness and research:** Although some initiatives offer opportunities for improvement, others still need to be adjusted to the real needs. This requires much more research and increased focus/interest in the diverse profile of farming, its future projections and in social/cultural aspects that are not included in the current policy. There also seems to be no real awareness of the dimensions of the CSP. Gaps remain in raising awareness and disseminating information about CSP to farmers.

- Gaps between the relevance given to each actor: While young farmers seem to occupy a large space in the intervention logic, what will happen with new farmers or rural start-ups is not entirely clear as only producers are considered.
- Disconnection between national policy, local needs, and European guidelines: European policies are not properly translated into the regional context. There is a mismatch between local needs and Government policies. This requires a bottom-up approach and clearer guidance from European institutions.

Discussion and Conclusion

100 – 250 words

Discussion:

The results of the policy review and stakeholder interviews revealed some limitations of current policies affecting generational renewal in agriculture. The SWOT analysis used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats only brings up some of the main causes limiting this renewal but is disconnected in its translation to the logical intervention. The definitions of young farmers and new farmers are also restrictive and do not adequately represent the diversity of the farming community. Furthermore, the definitions of young farmers and new farmers are limited and do not adequately represent the diversity of farming communities. These limitations hamper the effectiveness of policies that support intergenerational renewal in agriculture.

The assessment of the EU framework showed that there are common criteria. However, there may be gaps in the implementation of these in the regional context, taking into account the needs and requirements of the farming industry.

Conclusions:

In conclusion, the current policy review and stakeholder interviews have revealed several policy limitations affecting the generational renewal in the farming industry. To address these limitations and ensure the success of the generational renewal, it is necessary to conduct more research from the bottom-up and increase the focus on the diverse profile of the farming industry, its future projections, and its social and cultural aspects.