

## Extended Abstract

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<b>Paper/Poster Title</b>	<b>A Comprehensive Insight to Collaborative Farming for Generational Renewal in the Agricultural Industry</b>
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**Abstract prepared for presentation at the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Agricultural Economics Society, The University of Warwick, United Kingdom**

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<b>Abstract</b>	<b>200 words max</b>
<p>The increasing average age of farmers and the economic vulnerability of many farm enterprises are indicators of the challenges facing the development of a sustainable rural economy. These challenges have a significant impact on business continuity and succession planning. Collaborative farming and alternative farm business structures offer potential frameworks for families to farm together and for new entrants to join the industry. This study provides a comprehensive insight to collaborative farming in Ireland and investigates how various collaborative farming arrangements assist in meeting the challenge of farm business continuity and generational renewal. Data is gathered through desk-based research to present a holistic overview of collaborative farming arrangements and alternative farm business structures in existence in Ireland. Subsequently a cross-country comparison of collaborative farming and alternative farm business structures will be conducted and the findings will enable recommendations on elements of best practice to assist in policy formulation and enhancement of generational renewal programmes in Ireland.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b>	Collaborative farming, farm succession, alternative farm business structures, new entrants,
<b>JEL Code</b>	Q130
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>100 – 250 words</b>
<p>The aging farming population and the decline in the number of younger farmers are global issues of concern for pursuing sustainable agriculture. Indeed, almost one third of farm managers in the EU-28 are aged 65 years or over (Eurostat 2020). This increasing average age of farmers and the economic vulnerability of many farm enterprises are indicators of the challenges facing the development of a sustainable rural economy. These challenges have a significant impact on business continuity and succession planning. Collaborative farming and alternative farm business structures offer potential frameworks for families to farm together</p>	

and for new entrants to join the industry. However, the Irish farming sector has low adoption of such farming structures to date. The objectives of this study are to provide a comprehensive insight to collaborative farming in Ireland and to investigate how the various collaborative farming assist in meeting the challenge of farm business continuity and generational renewal. We also conduct a cross-country comparison of collaborative farming and alternative farm business structures and recommend elements of best practice to assist in policy formulation and enhancement of generational renewal programmes in Ireland.

**Methodology**

**100 – 250 words**

This study is conducted via a desk-based research approach. The data will be collected from various reports, research papers, websites of government, agencies, farming bodies, internationally published studies and data bases. We bring information from these various sources, and analyse the data to provide a holistic overview of the current situation regarding collaborative farming in Ireland and compare it with situations in other EU countries. The data will be analysed to produce tables, graphs and/or charts to show key findings. It will provide a holistic and comprehensive insight by bringing together data from multiple sources and contribute to inform policy development.

**Results**

**100 – 250 words**

Preliminary results: While collaborative farming arrangements are well established in many countries such as Groupement d’Exploitation en Commun (GAEC) in France, on which the Irish farm partnership model is based, these structures are still relatively new in an Irish context. In Ireland, various collaborative farming arrangements are available such as Registered Farm Partnerships; Succession Farm Partnerships; Contract Heifer Rearing; Share Farming and Limited Companies (Teagasc 2020b) and offer various benefits such as facilitating succession, tax relief and workload sharing. Farm Partnerships were first introduced in Ireland in 2002 as ‘Milk Production Partnerships (MPPs)’ and gradually developed to apply to all farm sectors grown substantially to approximately 3,500 farms in 2022 (DAFM 2022). However, this number only represents approximately 2% of all farms in Ireland. Furthermore, the number (share) of farms in each collaborative farming structure is revealed (2010/2015/2020). In addition, the number of collaborative farming arrangements in existence is analysed by farm type, age, and by profitability of the farm, to provide deeper insights. A cross country comparison of the Irish collaborative farming landscape with that of other European countries (France, Netherland, Germany, Poland and UK) provides an insight to Ireland progress in this area. For instance, in France GAECs has about 10 % share among farms in 2020 (Ministry of

Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France 2020). In Netherland, there is a legal entity in the form of a professional or public partnership, so called ‘maatschap’ in Dutch, which facilitate gradual transfer of control from the farmer to their successor.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

**100 – 250 words**

Through the comprehensive review of collaborative farming in Ireland, in order to develop policy which will facilitate the growth of collaborative farming structures and thereby contribute to generational renewal, it is essential that a holistic understanding of the current collaborative farming arrangement in existence is developed. Once this holistic understanding is developed, a comparison with the landscape regarding collaborative farming arrangements in other European countries will provide insights as to how the Irish scenario compares. Based on these finding it is important to design policies which provide incentives and are targeted in the right areas to allow farmers to identify, and work along with, potential successors to address the generational renewal challenge. A limitation of this study is the lack of availability of comprehensive databases over time to provide more detailed insights. For future research, we plan to conduct interview with farmers to identify their level of awareness/knowledge of collaborative farm arrangement in Ireland along with an identification of the benefits and challenges they present, which will help to gain an understanding of policy requirements from the farmers’ perspective in this area.