Environmental attitudes and motivations of farmers

Behavioural and economic drivers and barriers to green change in agriculture

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SESSION 1: Multi-level policy initiatives to reshape the CAP

#AEEUForum2023
OVERVIEW

• Research context and design
• Result highlights
• Conclusions and suggestions
• Acknowledgement
Research context and design

• 2022, EU, Hungary. Relatively new legislative and strategic framework at EU level: Green Deal, Farm2Fork Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, …

• Before the new CAP period 2023-2027

• Environmental effectiveness of the previous CAP period (II. pillar)

• Assignment from the Ministry of Agriculture: preparation to the establishment of the new „Green” CAP Advisory Network

• Questionnaire compiled with combined methodology, mainly based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2006)

• Sample: 500 farms of the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)

• Data analyses
Results - Environmental attitude versus policy awareness

Environmental attitudes of the farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most environmentally aware</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High environmentally aware</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average environmental awareness</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less environmentally aware</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least environmentally aware</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Method: NEP-scale, Dunlap et al, 2000).

Environmental policy awareness

(Open question about Green Deal objectives)

- No answer: 50% (252 farmers from n=504); wrong: 2%;
- Perfect answer: 11%, good: 18%;
- General, superficial knowledge: 19%

Cross-tab analyses: environmental attitudes versus policy awareness

There is no relationship between the environmental attitude and the knowledge level about environmental and climate policy objectives of farmers in Hungary.
Results – Short-time motivations and long-term perspectives

Motivations and expectations influencing the farmers willingness to change

Neither inner motivation, nor outer expectation: 25,5%

Inner motivation; 33,7%
Inner & outer motivation; 26,8%
Outer (business partners) expectation; 25,5%

Long-term environmental economic vision

Answer options (either/or):
A) Meeting environmental requirements is also beneficial for me in the long term, as it ensures the maintenance and improvement of the natural resources necessary for my farming (69%)
B) Meeting environmental requirements is likely to reduce my income and/or increase my costs (31%)

Good news of these two results:
• $\Sigma$: 75% inner and/or outer motivation/expectation
• 69% trust in long-term payback of environmental measures (answer “A”)

Both are important influencing factors
Results - Ambitions and concerns

Farmers plans for environmental improvements in their practice

- Yes, also without any financial support: 42.3%
- No, because I already fulfill the environmental requirements: 39.3%
- I am not sure yet: 8.1%
- No, not interested in environmental protection: 2.3%
- Yes, but only with EU / national financial support: 9.7%
- Who are the „uncertains” (40%) What do we know about them? How can we engage them?

1) Half of them belong to the group that perceives neither internal motivation nor external expectations.
2) Among them, there are a higher than average proportion of those who have more critical attitude towards environmental expectations (answer „B” on the previous slide).
3) Every environmental attitude groups are equally represented among them

Main motivation of the different groups:
Lower environmental aweness ➔ avoiding negative financial consequences
Higher environmental awareness ➔ preserving the environmental status as a key resource for future farming
Conclusions

• Market (social) expectations are a driving force in the environmentally conscious behaviour of farmers

• Financial returns and economic considerations are inevitable elements of farm-level decisions

• There is a significant demand for personal and practical consulting activities (complex advisory support services, practical knowledge).

• Policy should focus more on farmers attitudes, fears and needs, to make sure they feel safe in the middle of this storm of ecological crisis and multiple societal expectations
Acknowledgement

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• Organisers of the Forum

Thank you for your attention!

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