Young farmers’ needs in Poland
Annex I.21 to the Pilot project: Exchange programmes for young farmers

Client: European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development

Rotterdam, 25 September 2015
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Rotterdam, 25 September 2015

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1 Introduction

Objective of the Pilot Project study on young farmers
The “Pilot Project: Exchange programmes for young farmers” has been commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) to identify the needs of young farmers, get an overview of the existing exchange schemes for young farmers and develop a guide to establish or improve exchange schemes for young farmers (DG AGRI, Tender No AGRI-2012-Eval-03). The study has been implemented by Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte in 2014-2015. The aims of this study were:

- To provide a comprehensive assessment of the specific needs of young farmers across the EU;
- To describe and access existing schemes and initiatives for the exchange of young farmers;
- To identify specific results of exchange schemes and specific support measures that have proved to be effective and efficient;
- To provide recommendations on the design, implementation and delivery of exchange programmes and schemes.

This country report on the needs of young farmers
The needs analysis was performed through desk research, interviewing on average 78 farmers per EU Member State and having a focus group in each of the 28 Member States. In the focus group the results of the interviews and the needs of young farmers concerning exchange schemes were discussed.

This report contains the needs analysis for Poland, and contains:
- General information on young farmers (chapter two);
- The needs of young farmers (chapter three);
- The needs regarding learning and communication (chapter four);
- The hindrances in obtaining information (chapter five);
- Sustainability of the exchange schemes (chapter six);
- The focus group participants (chapter seven).

The report is targeted at policy officers and other stakeholders interested in getting an insight into the needs of young farmers.

Where to find more information
The following documents can be found on the DG AGRI website:
- The 27 other country reports on the needs of young farmers;
- The Analysis on the needs of young farmers (report I);
- The Inventory and Analysis of exchange schemes for young farmers in EU-28 and a selected number of OECD countries (report II). Together with contact details of around 200 exchange schemes and case studies of 22 exchange schemes;
- A guide for successful exchange schemes for young farmers (report III).

All reports can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/index_en.htm.
2 Activities of young farmers

In the interviews, the young farmers were asked the following details, among others. Indicated in the table below are:

- The mean age of the interviewed young farmers;
- The % of young farmers with a Bachelors (BSc), Masters (MSc) or PhD;
- The mean hectares of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) that the respondents own or rent;
- The mean hectares of forestry that the respondents own or rent;
- The % of respondents that indicate that their farm is located in a favourable or less favourable area;
- The % of young farmers with organic farms.

Table 2.1 Some general features of interviewed young farmers (YF) in Poland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>EU-15¹</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>new MS²</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>EU-28³</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (mean (std))</td>
<td>26.5 (6.6)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>29.4 (6.0)</td>
<td>1241</td>
<td>29.4 (6.0)</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>29.4 (6.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% YF with high vocational education (BSc, MSc, PhD)</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha UAA owned (mean (std))</td>
<td>25.0 (50.1)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>77.7 (309.3)</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>51.9 (165.5)</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>67.2 (260.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha UAA rented (mean (std))</td>
<td>10.5 (17.6)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>56.7 (156.2)</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>49.5 (157.5)</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>53.7 (156.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha forestry owned (mean (std))</td>
<td>1.4 (3.5)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>20.7 (106.7)</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>5.4 (22.9)</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>14.4 (83.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha forestry rented (mean (std))</td>
<td>0.1 (0.7)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>2.5 (20.9)</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>1.3 (25.3)</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>2.0 (22.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% favourable area</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% less favourable or highly unfavourable area</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% YF with organic farms</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>1331</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015.

¹ n = the number of people that were interviewed in respectively Poland, EU-15, new Member States and EU-28.

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1 EU-15 are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

2 New Member States are the countries who joined the EU in or after 2004: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

3 EU-28 are all Member States, both EU-15 and new Member States.
Figure 2.1 Main activities of interviewed young farmers in Poland

Main activities of interviewed young farmers in Poland

- % of respondents
  - field crops
  - permanent crops
  - grazing livestock
  - horticulture
  - granivores
  - mixed crops
  - mixed crops and livestock

Source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015.

The figures above and below highlight the difference between the main activities of young farmers that have been interviewed and the main activities of farmers in general as included in the Eurostat statistics.

Figure 2.2 Main activities of farmers in Poland according to Eurostat

Main activities of farmers in Poland according to Eurostat

3 Needs of young farmers

The needs of young farmers have been identified through, among others:
1. Which issues they perceive as problematic, e.g. the possibility of buying land, having access to credit, having the right machinery, having seasonal workers, etc.
2. Which knowledge needs the young farmers have.

3.1 Challenges for young farmers

The interviewed young farmers were asked which issues they perceive as problematic. This is shown in the figure below.

**OUTCOME**: In general, the interviewed young Polish farmers perceive the listed bottlenecks as less problematic than other young farmers in the EU.

**Figure 3.1 General needs of young farmers** – percentage of interviewed young farmers who perceived the issues mentioned in the figure below as problematic

During the focus group meeting, the needs of young farmers in Poland that were not initially included in the study were discussed.
The needs that were discussed are:

- **The availability of land:**
  - The availability of land was assessed by young farmers in the survey as not very important. However, according to the focus group, there is a significant problem in access to land for young farmers starting a business in Poland. The main reason is the high price of land compared to Polish earnings. These high prices are indirectly caused by the complex situation of agricultural ownership and fragmentation of agricultural holdings in Poland;
  - The institution responsible for the management and sale of land in Poland is the Agricultural Market Agency (AMA). The AMA develops tools to help young farmers to purchase land, for example the pre-emption right that allow farmers who rent land for more than three years to purchase it based on the price offered by the AMA. Despite this and other supporting tools, purchasing land remains an investment that is inaccessible to a large proportion of young farmers in Poland;
  - Participants in the focus group underlined the need of creating more efficient supporting programmes for farmers who want to leave agriculture and start a new occupation. There are already many programmes in this field. The focus group mentioned that many programmes are already active and offer plenty of experience to learn from. However, it seems that there is still room for new programmes to be introduced. One of the most common supportive tools for Polish farmers is direct payments. However, participants explained that this kind of support also appears to have negative consequences. Farmers might use the money from payments not to develop their production but for their current needs. To illustrate this, land was often sublet and used by other farmers, when direct payments remained an unconditional financial support to land owners. Experience has shown that farmers who receive this ‘free’ money are less motivated to grow their business and to adjust their production to the demands of the market.

- **The need for cooperation and farmers’ associations:**
  - As indicated by the respondents themselves, many farmers see a great opportunity in joint action, integration and cooperation. This opportunity is mainly seen because of the growing awareness of the benefits offered by this approach. According to the focus group, it is unfortunate that the realisation of the benefit of collective action has been very slow in Poland. It is difficult to persuade farmers to organise the most basic forms of collective action, such as the joint use of machinery. The main obstacle was seen by the focus group in the current attitude of Polish farmers towards cooperation. Polish farmers have a high level of self-confidence and a fear of cooperation due to the fear of potential loss. According to the focus group, these types of attitudes were shaped by the political and social situation in Poland over the past 200 years. The Polish rural community directly reflects the mentality of other social groups in Poland;
  - One of the major issues discussed during the meeting was related to the small number of farmers’ associations. Young farmers in Poland are concerned about any form of public participation. Associations are often seen as a threat to private agricultural businesses. Despite this national problem, more and more farmers see that without forming a common front, they cannot be competitive on the European and global market;
  - According to the focus group the producer groups are a basic form of cooperation that is acceptable by an increasing proportion of farmers. Being a member of such a group gives the ability to negotiate prices with processing plants and distributors. The cooperation of farmers can reduce operating costs and can contribute to the growth of professionalism (for example through the exchange of know-how). The group is able to hire an accountant, pay advisors, and raise money for joint investments that might improve their competitiveness;
  - Another issue that underlines the necessity for creating associations among farmers involves the guarantee to professional knowledge support. Currently the dominating sources of information among farmers are private companies that sell seeds, plants, machines or
animals. According to the focus group, this kind of information is usually focused on making more profit by the company and making farmers dependent on their products;
- There is a lack of experience and awareness among young Polish farmers of using professional knowledge support. According to the respondents, being associated in any way with legal or semi legal bodies might be a first step to creating a demand for this kind of knowledge-based help.

- Consultancy and knowledge support provided by banks:
  - This need has been addressed only indirectly in the survey. According to the focus group, there is a great need among farmers for professional advice of banks with regard to the repayment of loans. In Poland, farmers are afraid to take out loans because of the risk of bankruptcy. The failure of agricultural activities may be influenced by external factors that are difficult to predict such as adverse changes in the weather or changes in the market. The hesitation of young farmers to take out loans affects small-scale investments in the Polish countryside, which negatively impacts the efficiency and development of agricultural production. In addition, respondents indicated that in the country there is a general lack of confidence in private credit.

- Low level of trust:
  - The main obstacle faced by Polish farmers that didn’t appear in the survey is related to low levels of trust among young Polish farmers. This low level of trust blocks initiatives to cooperate even when they are considered necessary. Even the need to create producers’ groups is, according to the focus group, being blocked by this aspect of Polish society;
  - Polish farmers cooperate better when it comes to informal groups. At the same time, young farmers are becoming more and more aware that these sort of face-to-face initiatives need to be transformed into more formal structures.

- The law of succession:
  - Despite being assessed in the survey as not really important, there is a great need to modernise the law of succession in Poland. A particularly important issue is the right to distribute land after the death of the owner, and the resulting legal consequences of ownership. It is an obstacle to efficient management of a farm’s ownership. Fortunately, a lot has been done to adapt this to the constantly changing social and economic conditions.

- Minimise the risk of investments:
  - This need has been addressed only indirectly in the study (for example as needs related to the knowledge economy, finance and knowledge). According to the respondents though, the lack of certainty related to investments in agriculture is especially important to young farmers in Poland. The high risk of investments is directly related to low levels of cooperation among farmers. The creation of producers’ groups might have a beneficial effect in using human and investment potential by rationalising the production process of members’ farms;
  - The biggest concerns among farmers are related to the market. There is no assurance that the products they grow today will be in demand in a few months. There is a need for professional advisors who can assist farmers during the whole investment process;
  - According to the focus group, bank insurance provides partial security, unless it’s taken by a group of farmers. This still remains uncommon in Poland. On top of that, bank policies are not always fully understood by loan takers from rural areas. These rural loan takers often have a limited education and knowledge, as well as a lack of support from professional advisors;
  - The same applies to government support within agriculture programmes. Young farmers don’t always have enough information and knowledge of these programmes to fully use this sort of help. In addition, government regulations change quite often in Poland, which makes it difficult to keep track.
The focus group concluded that the risk related to difficult weather conditions always remains in agriculture. This can be minimised by organising cooperation between farmers and banks.

According to the focus group there are many circumstances that block young Polish farmers from starting their own farm. All of them have been described in the above-mentioned points, from which the most important are:

- Limited access to affordable land;
- Little trust among farmers which blocks effective cooperation and limits the chance to conduct profit-making agricultural business;
- Lack of profitable support from private financial institutions (loans, consulting, flexible tailor-made conditions);
- Lack of support from non-profit institutions like local associations;
- Weak political and economic position of individual farmers in comparison to processors and distributors companies;
- Significant risk of conducting an agricultural business (unstable outlet, legislation, weather conditions, competition), in relation to the expected return.

### 3.2 Knowledge needs of young farmers

The interviewed young farmers were asked how likely it is that they will develop the skills mentioned in the table below through trainings, courses, workshops, study groups or participation in an exchange scheme. The results are included in the figure below.

**OUTCOME:** In line with the bottlenecks faced, the knowledge needs of the interviewed young Polish farmers seem to be less than those of other young farmers in the EU, with the exception of skills related to applying for grants and credit.
Figure 3.2 Knowledge needs of young farmers – percentage of respondents who answered that it was likely that they will develop the skills mentioned in the table below through trainings, courses, workshops, study groups or participation in an exchange scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Category</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Obtain specific technological knowledge necessary for the farm | EU28: 70  
EU15: 65  
Poland: 60  
new MS: 55 |
| Develop a farm strategy | EU28: 60  
EU15: 55  
Poland: 50  
new MS: 45 |
| Skills related to applying for subsidies/ grants/ credit | EU28: 45  
EU15: 40  
Poland: 35  
new MS: 30 |
| Financial skills | EU28: 50  
EU15: 45  
Poland: 40  
new MS: 35 |
| Management skills | EU28: 55  
EU15: 50  
Poland: 45  
new MS: 40 |
| Communication skills | EU28: 60  
EU15: 55  
Poland: 50  
new MS: 45 |
| Networking skills/ ability to create partnership | EU28: 65  
EU15: 60  
Poland: 55  
new MS: 50 |
| Resource and nature/ environment management | EU28: 70  
EU15: 65  
Poland: 60  
new MS: 55 |
| Marketing skills | EU28: 55  
EU15: 50  
Poland: 45  
new MS: 40 |
| Skills related to the improvement of animal welfare | EU28: 50  
EU15: 45  
Poland: 40  
new MS: 35 |
| Foreign languages | EU28: 40  
EU15: 35  
Poland: 30  
new MS: 25 |

Source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015.

The focus group indicated that the results say little about the real need to improve the knowledge of young farmers in Poland. In their opinion, this mostly stems from low awareness of how to practically apply knowledge.

According to the focus group, the reason for this lack of awareness can be found in the Polish education system which does not promote an entrepreneurial attitude and does not teach how to search for knowledge and information individually. Neither does the education system promote lifelong learning as a necessary tool to keep updated on economic and political situations, and technological innovations.
4 Needs regarding learning and communication

Young farmers were asked about their needs regarding learning and communication:
- Through which sources do young farmers like to obtain knowledge?
- Which persons or institutions are information sources for young farmers?

4.1 Most used information sources

The interviewed young farmers indicated that the following sources were most used for obtaining knowledge.

**OUTCOME:** The interviewed young Polish farmers seem to be less interested in field days or excursions, individual advice, agricultural trainings or courses, participating in workshops, joining a study group or network and online training or e-learning through the internet as sources to obtain knowledge than other young farmers in the EU. They seem to be more interested than their peers in the use of social media as source to obtain knowledge.

![Figure 4.1 Sources that young farmers use to obtain knowledge (% of respondents)](source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015)

The **focus group** confirmed that the results of the survey relate to the sources of knowledge for young farmers. One of the main sources of information is the internet and YouTube. The internet was evaluated as the most functional and common tool to gain information and knowledge by Polish young farmers. The focus group suggested that the internet should be used more wisely and strategically to share more professional and verified information. This channel of communication
should be used to promote information about government support programmes, exchange programmes and pass on professional knowledge related to farming and business. The internet can also be used for integration purposes among farmers. According to the focus group, the internet should be used by farmers' associations and governmental bodies to provide up-to-date information about legal regulations.

The focus group indicated that films on YouTube contain step-by-step instructions related to farmers everyday problems. They are easy to access (without leaving home), free of costs, and can be watched as many times as needed. According to the focus group, there is no other source of information that can be as attractive as YouTube for young Polish farmers.

The focus group explained that trainings are becoming less and less popular among farmers in Poland. After the numerous and various trainings that were offered to Polish farmers over the few last decades, there is a common opinion that the vast majority of them were a waste of time. Offered trainings were often not professional and in many cases did not pass any practical knowledge onto the participants. Some of them offered support that failed to match the experience and knowledge level of participants. The trainings were either too advanced or too basic. Above-mentioned situations reduced farmers' willingness to obtain knowledge from trainings and pushed them to look for support from more face-to-face and practical oriented sources like YouTube or personal advice.

According to the focus group, trainings (or other method of knowledge transfer) provided to young farmers in Poland should:

- Broaden their knowledge and practical skills;
- Cover the whole variety of issues that are necessary to efficiently manage an agricultural business;
- Increase awareness about recent trends and technological solutions in agriculture;
- Provide a comprehensive background on the recent economic situation in the country;
- Provide information about recent legislation and support programmes;
- Support farmers in finding an occupation outside agriculture (if needed).

4.2 Young farmers obtaining information from people and institutions

The interviewed young farmers were asked from which people and institutions they obtain knowledge. The figure below presents an overview.

**OUTCOME:** The interviewed young Polish farmers seem to use almost all the information sources in the figure below less than other young farmers in the EU.
The focus group confirmed the results of the survey which show that Polish farmers obtain knowledge mostly from their neighbours, village mayors, the internet and companies that sell everyday products to farms. According to the participants, young Polish farmers show significant respect and trust to village mayors and the other members of the local government. Farmers maintain personal relations with members of the local government. For young farmers, the local government remains a trustworthy source of information related to economic and legal issues. Because of the significantly low level of interest in and trust of more formal groups, local or village associations are rarely popular among young farmers in Poland. The exceptions to this are informal networks of friends that are responsible for providing support and information. Polish farmers prefer informal groups. Today they remain one of the core elements of their local identity.

The focus group confirmed the survey results that pointed out the communication problems faced by young farmers. There is a lack of professional communication between farmers and professional advisors/consultants/banks to support farmers with necessary knowledge and information. The reason for this situation is a lack of cooperation between farmers, as well as the lack of (financial) sources to get professional support for individual farmers. The low level of integration and cooperation blocks Polish farmers from institutionalising their needs. There is also a need to increase effective communication between farmers and banks. More effective communication should decrease the risk of farmers’ investments and should encourage the farmers to develop their agricultural businesses with tailored support from banks. The focus group also discussed the need
to increase communication between farmers and processing companies/ distributors in order to establish a more flexible system of delivery. Today, farmers complain that big companies use the lack of economic and political power of farmers to dictate prices and conditions.
5 Hindrances in obtaining information

The interviewed young farmers were asked which issues were hindering them most in obtaining information, e.g. lack of time, too many sources, the language in which the information is available, the costs of the information, lack of good internet connection. The figure below describes the results.

**OUTCOME:** The hindrances that the interviewed young Polish farmers perceive in obtaining information are more or less in line with that of other young farmers in the EU, although the language barrier seems to be a bigger hindrance in Poland.

**Figure 5.1 Issues that hinder young farmers in obtaining information (% of respondents)**

Source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015.
6 Suitability of exchange schemes

The young farmers were also asked about the suitability of the exchange schemes to address their knowledge needs and their interest in participating in these schemes. This was done by asking about:

- Participation of young farmers in exchange schemes and their satisfaction and awareness of exchange schemes;
- Young farmers’ attitudes with regard to participating in an exchange scheme;
- Issues that hinder young farmers in participating in an exchange scheme;
- Intention of young farmers to join an exchange scheme;
- Opinion of young farmers about exchange schemes.

6.1 Participation of young farmers in exchange schemes and their satisfaction and awareness of exchange schemes

The interviewed young farmers were asked:

- How aware they are of existing exchange schemes in their country;
- If they participated in an exchange scheme;
- If they improved their skills after participating in an exchange scheme;
- If the exchange scheme taught the young farmer what he wanted to learn.

The figure below presents an overview.

**OUTCOME:** The number of interviewed young Polish farmers that did participate in an exchange scheme or is aware of an existing exchange scheme is lower than that of young farmers in EU-28 and EU-15, but is more or less comparable to that of young farmers in other new Member States. Like other young farmers in the EU, young Polish farmers who did participate in an exchange scheme were content about it.

**Figure 6.1 Participation of young farmers in exchange schemes and their satisfaction about and awareness of exchange schemes (% of respondents)**

[Graph showing participation and satisfaction of young farmers in exchange schemes across different regions]

*Source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015.*
The focus group added that most of the participating young farmers in the survey, have not participated in any sort of exchange programme. Almost none of them have any knowledge about such programmes (costs, objectives, procedures), and only a few of them know anybody who participated or is able to provide any information about such programmes. The reason for this is that there are almost no exchange programmes in Poland available for young farmers. The exchange programmes that are available do not directly mention support to young farmers but target a broader group of young people from different communities. Young farmers are significantly under-represented in these programmes. The reason for this is their lack of awareness of the benefits related to exchange schemes, as well as the specific mentality of farmers in Poland. This mentality shows that young Polish farmers are more anxious about leaving the country and experiencing a different culture than young people from the cities. Also, young Polish farmers have less financial resources and knowledge and they know fewer people who have taken part in this sort of initiative and who will encourage them to do it.

6.2 Young farmers’ attitudes with regard to participation in an exchange scheme

The interviewed young farmers were asked:
- If they consider participating in an exchange scheme in their own country useful;
- If they consider participating in an exchange scheme in their own country realistic;
- If they consider participating in an international exchange useful;
- If they consider participating in an international exchange realistic.

The figure below presents an overview.

**OUTCOME:** The interviewed young Polish farmers seem to be more pessimistic about the usefulness of participating in exchange schemes than their peers in other EU countries.

![Graph showing attitudes towards exchange schemes](image)

Source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015.

6.3 Issues that hinder young farmers in participating in an exchange scheme

The interviewed young farmers were asked which issues were hindering them most in participating in an exchange scheme, e.g. lack of time, no replacement at their farm, language barrier, the costs of the exchange, lack of knowledge on the exchange. The figure below describes the results.
OUTCOME: The hindrances that the interviewed young Polish farmers perceive in participating in an exchange scheme are more or less in line with the other young farmers in the EU, although the lack of time and lack of knowledge seem to be less important issues.

Figure 6.3 Issues that hinder young farmers in participating in an exchange scheme

6.4 Intention of young farmers of joining an exchange scheme

The interviewed young farmers were asked if:
- They have the intention of joining an exchange scheme in their own country;
- They will join an exchange scheme in their own country;
- They have the intention of joining an exchange scheme abroad;
- They will join an exchange scheme abroad.

OUTCOME: The intentions of the interviewed young Polish farmers of participating in an exchange scheme, both in their own country and abroad is lower than that of their peers in other EU countries. The results are included in the figure below.

Figure 6.4 Intention of young farmers of joining an exchange scheme (% of respondents)

Source: Ecorys in cooperation with LEI and Aequator Groen & Ruimte, 2015.
6.5 Opinion of young farmers about exchange schemes

The interviewed young farmers were asked their opinion of exchange schemes. They were asked if it would be a valuable experience for them, improve their skills (either management, marketing, networking skills), cost them a lot of time or money and if it would improve the family income or farm results. The figure below presents the results.

OUTCOME: The perception of the interviewed young Polish farmers on what participation in an exchange scheme will bring them is a bit less optimistic compared to their peers in the EU. The interviewed young Polish farmers however say more often that participation in an exchange scheme will cost them a lot of money.

Figure 6.5 Opinion of young farmers about exchange schemes (% of respondents)

The focus group agreed that any sort of exchange programmes will be beneficial for young farmers. Visits abroad aimed at learning, gaining knowledge and bringing openness towards new cultures and ideas will be able to bring new perspectives to Polish farmers. Exchange programmes might be able to solve many problems pointed out during the survey and focus group discussion, like the lack of awareness of economic and political mechanisms or the lack of knowledge and practical information among Polish farmers. According to the focus group it is probably the most important thing to promote new attitudes among young farmers in Poland. Those include entrepreneurship, resourcefulness, group-oriented initiatives and willingness to cooperate. Exchange programmes were collectively defined by the focus group as a serious and necessary tool, able to bring significant change to the situation of young Polish farmers.

Needs that may be addressed by the exchange programmes, according to the focus group:
- Bring openness towards new cultures and ideas;
- Gaining knowledge and information;
- Overcoming the existing communication barriers;
- Improving of foreign language skills;
- Increasing creativity;
- Motivating young farmers to take new challenges in life.
7 Focus group participants

The following people participated in the focus group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and surname</th>
<th>Organisation/ English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2 Dariusz Suszyński</td>
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<td>3 Beata Szybińska</td>
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<td>5 Mieczysław Paradowski</td>
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Reporter and moderator: Maciej Kwiatkowski, Ecorys Poland
Date focus group: 13 August 2014
Place: Warsaw, Poland
Sound analysis, inspiring ideas