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AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

Local authorities and new entrants into farming: lessons to foster innovation and entrepreneurship

Why are new entrants to farming good for local communities?

New entrants – people entering farming for the first time, or returning to farming after a period of off-farm employment – are an important resource for the development of rural communities. Often they are highly educated and bring business skills and networks from other jobs.

New entrants who establish successful businesses can stimulate local economies, creating new jobs and business opportunities for example by:

- ▶ Creating new jobs for themselves, their employees and other members of the supply chain
- ▶ Making more productive use of local land
- ▶ Contributing to the development of local tourism
- ▶ Being part of a 'local food' culture which highlights and increases sales of local produce
- ▶ Reinvigorating traditional knowledge to produce artisanal goods
- ▶ Increasing connections between farming and the local community through involvement in school programmes, walking tours, and short supply chains
- ▶ Providing local housing
- ▶ Undertaking sustainable agricultural practices, improving the environmental conditions of local land



LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities and new entrants into farming

What can local authorities do to increase the number of new entrants and contribute to their success?

New entrants are a heterogeneous population, with wide-ranging needs. Support for new entrants should reflect this range of needs (as opposed to 'one-size-fits-all' approaches). The primary barriers are access to land and capital, but new entrants can also benefit from access to markets, housing, training opportunities, and links to local communities and networks. Some actions can be undertaken at no cost for the local authority and can make a real difference.

Local authorities in some parts of Europe are encouraging new entrants by:

- ▶ Enabling access to land, by intentionally allocating land owned or managed by the local authority to new entrants; allowing temporary use of abandoned land
- ▶ Increasing access to markets, by targeting local procurement towards local new entrants
- ▶ Acting as bridging agents between new entrants and other local actors, enabling collaborations and market access (e.g. business owners, banks, land owners)
- ▶ Offering subsidies and business mentorship programmes
- ▶ Subsidising access to housing close to the farm, so that new entrant resources can be directed towards farm development
- ▶ Enabling new forms of access to capital, such as crowdfunding
- ▶ Establishing regional branding to increase profitability of production
- ▶ Providing public investment in general and market infrastructure in particular

Some local authorities have also been able to develop specific schemes to attract new entrants, including land support funds, subsidies, specific interests for loans, investment aid and targeted advice on a range of production and marketing issues. Subsidised loans can help deal with high or fluctuating interest rates; and subsidised / publicly covered insurance can address the risk of crop failures.

Would you like further information?

The final report of the Focus Group 'New entrants into farming' gives a broad overview of the subject as well as useful insights into the definition of new entrants, their access to land and markets, advisory support systems and more.

[Download the final report](#)

[Get all the information at a glance in the new entrants factsheet](#)

[Find Focus Group members from 15 European countries through the Focus Group webpage](#)

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