



The farmer as a main factor of structural change and sustainability in rural development: a Slovenian case-study

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Landscape and culture





Introduction



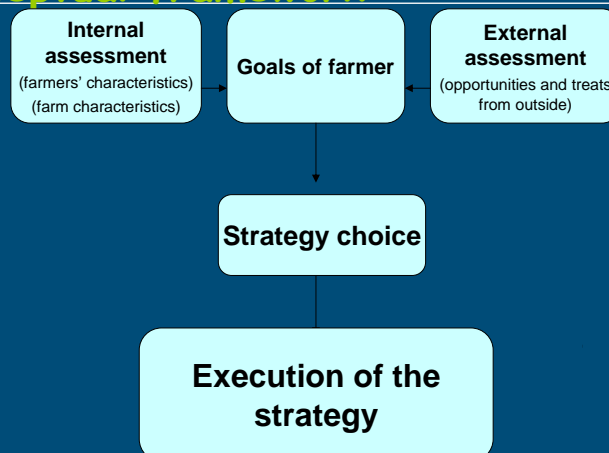
- After accession to EU, farmers in the new member states had to adjust to the EU agricultural policies and market
- Slovenia is country with less favourable conditions for agriculture
- For these countries is typical that dairy herds are small and mainly consist of dual purpose breeds such as Simmental and Brown Swiss breeds
- In the past 10 ha of agricultural land was the maximum allowed
- In EU period the number of farms decreased substantially and the average herd size has grown considerable during the last 10 years

Objectives

- To determine main **characteristics of the Slovenian farm and farmer**
- To determine differences in **future strategies and plans of cattle farmers**
- To get insight into **the entrepreneurial characteristics of Slovenian dairy farmers**
- To make an **external assessment**



Conceptual framework



- Based on the strategic management concept
 - Modified after David, 2009

Material and methods

Questionnaire for three groups of farmers

Group of farmers	Distributed questionnaires	Returned questionnaires	% of returned quest.
Cika	269	111	41
Suckler	500	121	24
Dairy	5,000	1,114	22



Questionnaire Results



Characteristics of the farm

Variable (answer)	Cika farmers	Suckler cow farmers	Dairy farmers
Number of farms	111	121	1,114
Average no. of cows / farm	3.8	11.1	19.1
Agricultural land in use (ha)	8.8	12.1	17.1
Type of farm (% total)			
Flat farm	6	17	43
Hilly farm	33	37	19
Mountain farm	46	32	14
Farm with less favourable land	15	14	24
Breed (% of total)			
Only CIKA cows	47		
Mixed herds (Cika / Br / Sim / Beef)	53		
Only Holstein-Friesian cows	-		

Characteristics of the farmer

Variable (answer)	Cika farmers	Suckler cow farmers	Dairy farmers
No. of farmers	111	121	1,114
Non agricultural employment of farmer/wife	61%	64%	32%
Having a successor on the farm (% YES)	55%	62%	69%
Age of farmer (years)	53 yr.	54 yr.	52 yr.
Education of farmer (% of total):			
Public school	44%	11%	40%
Vocational school / Gymnasium	53%	69%	54%
High school / University	3%	20%	6%

Future plans of cattle farmers

	CIKA %	Suckler cow %	Dairy %
No future plans/to stop farming /keep hobby farm	n=111 20	n=121 14	n=1114 10
Keep the farm as it is now	46	55	41
Develop the farm further	34	31	49
- by increasing number of cows	n=38 76	n=37 38	n=541 64
- by starting/increasing with a new branch:	82	70	54
Horses	16	23	6
Agro-tourism	32	26	5
Local products	15	14	2
Changing to organic farming	44	43	6

Interest of cattle farmers in different tasks of farming

Tasks	Cika farmers	Farmers with suckler cows	Dairy farmers
Care for animal health and fertility	72	48	77
Feeding of cattle	59	49	75
Management of grassland and pasture	47	60	63
Organisation of work / labour input	47	43	63
Farming in economical way / entrepreneurship	37	52	61
Animal breeding work	51	38	60
Working on sound environment (use of fertilisers, manure, etc.)	54	32	51
Protecting nature elements on farm	44	17	26

Data collection and analysis - II. part

- Farmers questioned in Slovenia and in the Netherlands



Entrepreneurial orientation of farmers in The Netherlands and in Slovenia

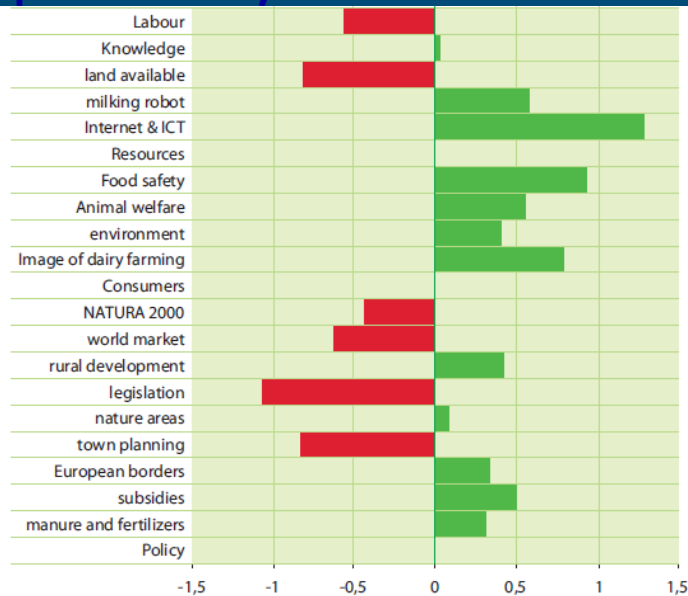
	The Netherlands average sample	Slovenia visitors of meetings
Proactiveness	4.43	4.78
Innovativeness	4.36	5.35
Autonomous	4.27	4.01
Experiencing success	4.62	3.91
Expectations	3.75	4.02
N=	120	120

Reference: Verhees, F.J.H.M.; Klopčič, M.; Kuipers, A. (2008). Entrepreneurial proclivity and the performance of farms: a comparison between Dutch and Slovenian farmers
In: XIIth conference of the European Association of Agricultural Economists,
Ghent, Belgium, 26-29 August 2008. Ghent.. – Ghent, Belgium

Data collection and analysis - III. part

- To deepen the analysis, an additional questionnaire was distributed asking for **social and economic factors** affecting the developments plans **of dairy farmers**
- Number of Q send was 1500; number of Q returned was 576 of which 525 were used for analysis (35% response rate)
- Data reduction by Factor analysis
- Multiple linear regression

Opportunities (+) and threats (-) as experienced by the farmers



Size of milk quota is negatively related to the farmer' opinion on following skills

- Low input farming
- Diversification
- Risk averseness (avoids risks)
- External locus of control
- Resources not available
- Legislation
 - Negative opinion on legislation
- Being a farmer
 - (work with animals, in field, with machines)

Hilly/mountain vs flat farms

- Farmers in hilly, mountainous and flat areas have about the same idea about a modern farm
- Farmers in flat regions are more clear in wanting to achieve such a future farm set-up than in hilly and mountain regions
- Farmers in hilly and mountain regions probably see more difficulties in reaching this goal



Conclusions

- There is large variation of dairy farms in Slovenia in farm size, milk quota and natural circumstances in the samples of farms studied
- About half of Slovenian farmers want to expand:
- Cika and suckler cow farmers have different view on life than dairy farmers
- External factors do affect the strategy making
- **Entrepreneurship is associated to the size of farm**



Thank you for your attention!

Questions???