



Youth and young farmers' workshop

Brussels, 11-12 December 2013

Group 1 – Generational renewal in agriculture:

Funded by the



ENRD *Connecting Rural Europe*
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Main issues and challenges identified and support needed to overcome them

- **Access to land.** This has been identified as one of the main issues for newcomers in the farming business. Increasing difficulty in accessing credit makes the situation more critical. How can a young farmer buy land without a loan? Although buying is not the only way to access land, finding tenancies is also difficult. It was pointed out that in some countries, such as Ireland, old farmers retire very late. Nevertheless identifying successors appears to be challenging.
The setting up of programmes for young farmers and programmes that support experience sharing and; succession/retirement schemes can help alleviate problems related to access to land.
- **Access to credit.** Because access to credit for young farmers is difficult, it has a negative knock-on effect on access to public funding (as co-financing becomes very complicated without credit). A 100% support rate for farm modernisation would help young farmers get into business.
- **Lack of training and support.** Another important issue identified during the discussion is the lack of training – specifically on management and on integrating new practices. Specific training programmes for young farmers, such as Erasmus, could be possible solutions.
- **Exchanges between old and young farmers.** Retirement can be difficult for old farmers. Farming is more than a job for many. It defines who they are, not only in their family but also in the community. Often farmers do not have successors and so have no one to pass their knowledge on to. Currently, old and young farmers have few opportunities to get together and share experience. Young people looking to start a farm business but who are not from a farming family could benefit from the knowledge and support of older farmers. Possible support actions include organising mentoring programmes between old and young farmers, such as the Hill Farm Apprentice Scheme in UK, presented during the workshop. The creation of 'meeting points' and databases to enable young and old farmers to find each other. Furthermore, support for old farmers, such as the creation of an 'old farmers' network could be helpful.
- **Lack of political support and gender** were also identified as issues. More publicity of young female farmers (i.e. magazines/videos/twitter) can be useful. Farming needs to be seen as a viable contemporary business, not just as a traditional activity, and its societal values should be highlighted. This would also help to shift general perceptions about farmers. Young farmers have often a high level of education, are knowledgeable, innovative and use the latest technology.

Follow-up actions proposed

- **Young farmers have to be more proactive and lobby more**
- **Create local and regional young farmers networks.** The creation of a network can help to realise young farmers good ideas in a more effective way.
- **Need for more support from politicians, government, LAGs and ENRD**
- **Better use of social media to share experiences**
- **Increase showcasing of good examples of farming tools and strategies.** This can enhance the exchange of experiences and help to raise awareness about the importance of farming for the development and maintenance of rural areas.