EU CAP NETWORK

APRIL 2026
ISSUE NR 12

AGRINNOVATION MAGAZINE

ISSN 2363-2143

Agrinnovation

Spotlight on generational renewal

- → Innovation and knowledge exchange: effective tools to empower young and new farmers
- → Focus on farm succession: inspiring projects foster access to land, skills, support and well-being
- → Rural women lead the way: innovation through training and mentoring
- → Ready to grow: 5 tips for new entrants



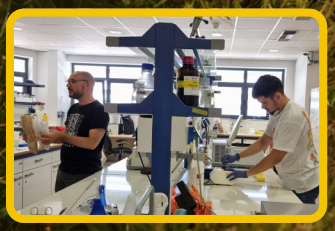
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Welcome

I am delighted to introduce this edition of Agrinnovation magazine, focused on one of the most pressing challenges facing European agriculture: generational renewal.

The future of our food systems and rural areas depends on attracting and empowering a new generation of farmers. Without them, we risk losing essential skills and traditions, compromising Europe's capacity to feed itself and maintain thriving rural areas.

The European Commission's Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture, presented in 2025, aims to double the share of young and new farmers by 2040. This is not simply about numbers – it is about fostering an innovative, competitive and resilient sector ready to meet future challenges, from climate change to geopolitical uncertainty.

Innovation and knowledge sharing are at the heart of this transformation. Young people seek careers that are technologically advanced, economically viable and environmentally responsible. They want to be part of the solution. Great examples of innovation and young leadership can be found across Europe, as I recently witnessed during a visit to the High School and Federal Office of Viticulture and Pomology in Klosterneuburg, Austria.

Through its activities for innovation, knowledge exchange and EIP-AGRI, the EU CAP Network connects research and practice, fosters partnerships across Member States, and supports the uptake of new solutions.

Looking ahead to the future Common Agricultural Policy and beyond, generational renewal must remain at the core of our policy framework. This means creating financial, social, technological and cultural conditions that enable young people from all backgrounds to enter farming, succeed and thrive.

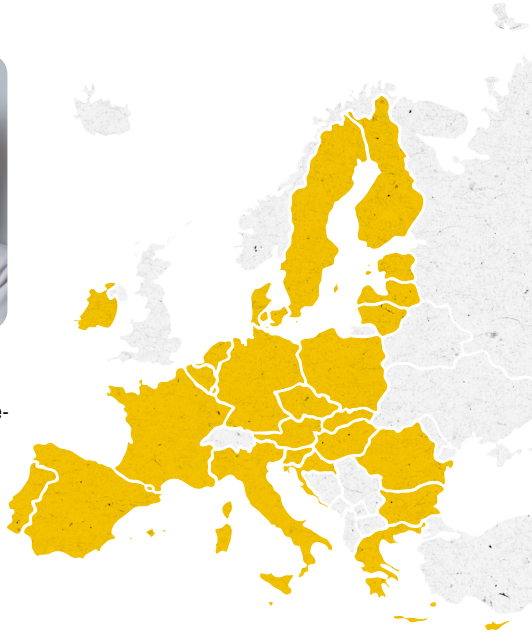
This magazine showcases how innovation and knowledge sharing, driven by the commitment of everyone involved, can inspire the next generation to build a sustainable, modern and resilient farming future for Europe. I invite you to be inspired by the stories shared here, and join us in shaping a future where farming continues to be a source of opportunity and pride for generations to come.

Sincerely,



ELISABETH WERNER

Director-General, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission





European spotlight on generational renewal

In October 2025, the European Commission launched the Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture. Its aim is to empower young farmers and attract more people into farming and forestry by promoting targeted support measures.

How can this strategy support the next generation of EU farmers, and what role can innovation and knowledge exchange play? We asked Maria Gafo Gómez-Zamalloa, Head of Unit for social sustainability at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

How will this strategy support farmers and foresters?



Maria: "The generational renewal strategy provides a shared vision across Europe to address the challenges that young and new farmers are facing. It focuses on creating the right conditions for them to succeed: easier access to land, financing, knowledge and training, rural services and farm succession. It also encourages better coordination between European and national initiatives. The strategy sees generational renewal as a shared ecosystem in which retiring, young and new farmers, rural youth, landowners, advisors and researchers all play a role."



How can innovation and knowledge exchange make farming more attractive for young people?

Maria: "Many young people are motivated by meaningful work, with environmental and community impact. They want to support sustainability, local food systems and responsible resource management. Innovation strengthens these motivations. Digital tools can increase efficiency, climate-smart and nature-based practices align with environmental values, and new business models create space for creativity and growth.

Knowledge exchange is equally important. New farmers need advice and training to navigate everything from regulations and business planning to day-to-day management.

The generational renewal strategy emphasises both. It promotes modern, integrated agricultural knowledge and innovation systems, ensuring strong links between farmers, advisors, research, demonstration activities and innovation projects."

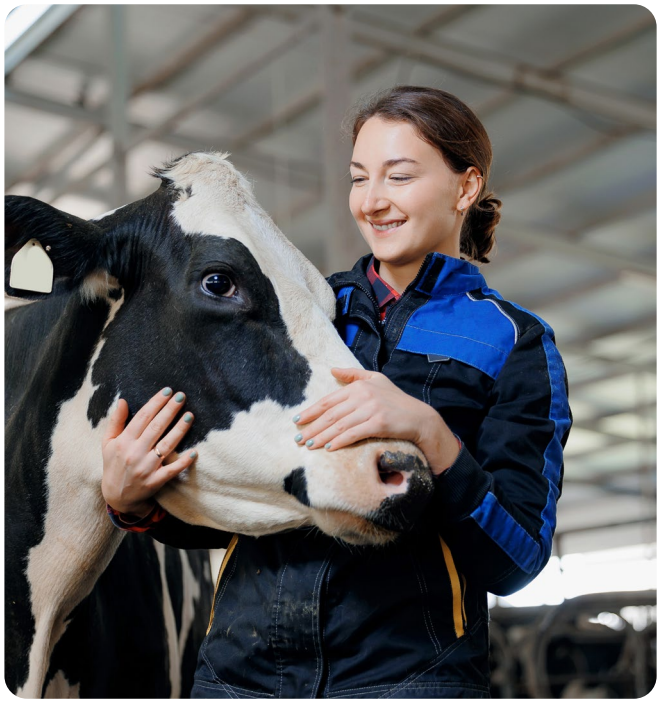


In what way can EIP-AGRI projects contribute?

Maria: "EIP-AGRI Operational Groups bring farmers, advisors, researchers and businesses together to create practical solutions for real challenges. For young farmers, these projects offer hands-on experience, networking and exposure to new technologies.

Horizon Europe multi-actor projects complement these projects by developing broader methods and knowledge on key topics such as climate adaptation, animal health and circular economy.

Together, these projects form a continuum of innovation, giving farmers practical support while connecting them to knowledge and successful practices across Europe."





Looking ahead, what would show that innovation and knowledge exchange are effectively supporting generational renewal?

Maria: "We will see progress when more young people, including women and those from non-farming backgrounds, enter and stay in farming. A strong participation in innovation networks and training would show that knowledge exchange is working. A wider adoption of sustainable, innovative practices on young farmers' holdings would prove that knowledge is reaching the field.

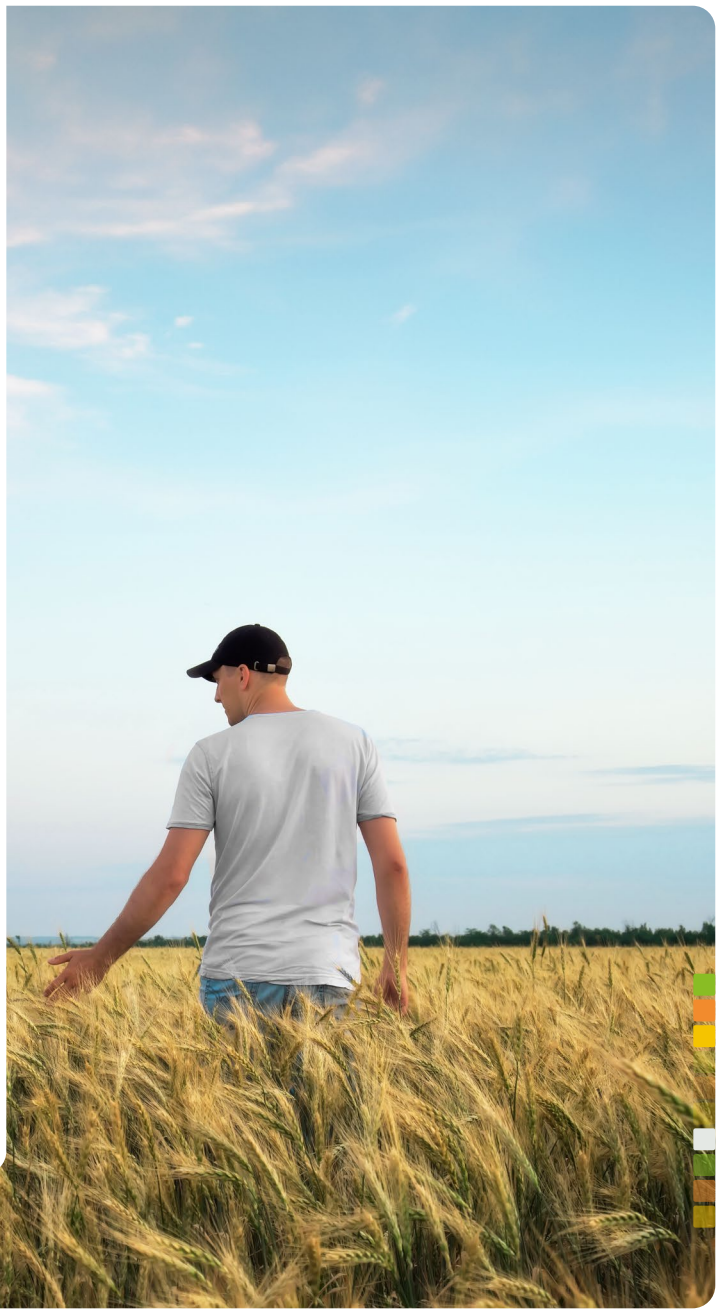
In sum, success would mean a resilient, competitive and future-proof agricultural sector in which young people can build viable businesses and contribute to Europe's sustainability goals."

→ Read the full interview **on the EU CAP Network website**.

→ Learn more about the **Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture**.

Next-generation innovation

Solutions for young and new farmers



Across the EU, thousands of farmers retire each year, while fewer young or new farmers take their places. Empowering a new generation is vital to safeguard the future of our agri-food systems and rural areas.

Young and new farmers face specific challenges, including access to land, affordable credit, knowledge and skills, and infrastructure, while farm succession remains difficult due to administrative and financial barriers.

The European Commission's Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture proposes specific, targeted actions under the CAP and through regional, national and European support measures, aiming to double the share of young and new farmers by 2040. Through innovation and collaboration, several CAP-funded EIP-AGRI Operational Groups explore solutions to support the next farming generation, building a more attractive foundation for them to enter a future in farming.

→ Find out more about the **Generational Renewal Strategy**

Young minds, ancient grains

To boost job opportunities for young people in the Italian region of Campania, the Operational Group Young in the field has set up targeted training, while turning unused farmland into fields for ancient grain production.

Ancient grains are known for their resilience to environmental changes, contributing to a more biodiverse food system. The Operational Group has tested the cultivation of four ancient grain varieties on recovered marginal lands, as part of a training programme for young people and start-up businesses.

Local farms took up an incubator role – providing test fields and sharing expertise on how to cultivate and process ancient grains. By supporting new agricultural youth cooperatives, the project offered young people and start-ups the opportunity to learn more about the farming business, and to develop entrepreneurial activities and products based on local cereal supply chains.



"We saw a clear interest from young people in being involved in these training projects", says project coordinator Antonio Di Cosmo. "Our model was shared with local municipalities and with other young farmers interested in diversifying their crops. Growing ancient grains can help reintroduce valuable economic activities in our rural areas. In addition, recovering marginal lands can reduce erosion and restore biodiversity, improving our agricultural landscape and turning neglected land into a resource."

→ Read more **in the EIP-AGRI project database**



Game-based learning for young farmers

To help young farmers find climate-smart solutions for their farms, a French Operational Group invites them to enter a "serious game". In playfully designed groups, they work together with other farmers to reflect on simulated scenarios, build skills, and come up with innovative solutions that match their actual needs. The results will feed into training materials for agricultural students and teachers.

→ **Get more details**



EU CAP Network highlights

- → The **EU CAP Network workshop on young entrepreneurs** spotlit innovative and inspiring practices that support young entrepreneurship in rural areas.
- → How to equip future farmers with tools and resources to help them succeed? Read recommendations in the factsheet **'Gen Z: leading generational renewal in farming'**.
- → The EU CAP Network report '**Generational renewal in the agricultural sector and young farmers**' provides insights into barriers and support for young farmers, based on evaluations from EU Member States.



Step-by-step guidelines for advisors and new entrants

Starting a farm can be challenging, especially for farmers who do not have any family ties to farming. Spanish Operational Group Terractiva has created guidelines that help advisors lead new farmers through the different steps – from finding land, to understanding legal rules and building a business plan. These tools open doors for newcomers and help fresh ideas take root on Galician farmlands.

"New entrants tend to have an innovative mindset, but they don't always have enough agricultural expertise, the knowledge to find land, or direct connections to the rural environment. These are critical in starting up a business."

NICOLÁS RON ARROYO
Local Action Group Mariñas-Betanzos, partner in the Operational Group

Terractiva created a toolkit for advisors and local organisations, focused on agroecological farming. It contains practical guidelines for obtaining access to land, knowledge, advisory support, business plans and other resources. This gives advisors better insight into the needs of new farmers, and equips them with tools to better support newcomers.

The Mariñas-Betanzos region has now tailored the toolkit to its local conditions, and to horticulture and poultry farming, which are key sectors in the region. An online platform supports the search for available land in the area, linking to local processing facilities, suppliers, or slaughterhouses.

Nicolás continues: "The results have been so well received that the toolkit is now also being adjusted to the needs of other local municipalities. Advisors, agricultural students and new farmers from different regions will be able to use the toolkit for their next steps into farming."

→ More info? Visit the **Terractiva** and **Mariñas-Betanzos** pages online.





The EU CAP Network seminar 'Innovative tools for advisors' shared practical tools to help advisors build their skills and strengthen their capacity to support farmers.

→ **Learn more**

Tips for new entrants

For over a decade, new entrants have been a source of inspiration and discussion within EU innovation and knowledge exchange – from a **Focus Group under the former EIP-AGRI Network** in 2015, to the recent launch of the European Commission's Generational Renewal Strategy. Among many solutions that were shared, here are five tips that new entrants can keep in mind.

Grow your know-how

Running a successful farm requires knowledge in many different areas. How to grow crops or take care of cattle is usually learnt through hands-on experience on the farm and through agricultural training. This can be quite challenging. Take the time to build your knowledge and keep learning! It really pays off on the farm.

Show that you mean business

Draw up a solid business plan with realistic figures. Avoid overestimating your potential income.

Let innovation meet tradition

Innovate, but never underestimate traditional knowledge and experiences from local, older farmers.

Build trust with local authorities

Get in touch with your local authorities. They may be able to help you get access to land, especially when it supports their goals, for instance creating productive green belts. Common land can also provide you with some nice opportunities.

Be inspired by fellow farmers

All farmers have their own way of producing, but they can inspire and support each other by working together and sharing solutions to tackle common difficulties.

And finally... dare to take the leap! Farming is an adventure like no other.





Food for thought: a Slovenian farm's recipe for sustainable growth

In 2011, Alenka Zapušek and her partner inherited a 1.5-hectare farm in the Slovenian village of Lindek. With backgrounds in biology and chemistry, they chose to grow environmentally-friendly crops that can be processed into natural products. The farm has recently diversified its activities, adding rural tourism and educational services.

"In our day-to-day work, we rely on common sense and a practical approach. But it's also essential to develop strong management skills, because a farm business needs clear direction for long-term planning", Alenka underlines. "When we started, we both worked for a research institute on energy, ecology and technology. We therefore chose to grow industrial hemp, herbs and spelt, which do not burden the environment."



The farm produces hydrolates: liquid by-products from distilling aromatic plants such as hemp, lavender, sage or rosemary. They are used to make soaps and other cosmetic products that are beneficial for the skin. The farm also produces herbal teas, spelt flour, and hemp oil, flour and protein.

Since 2020, the farm has diversified its activities and income sources with rural tourism. Alenka also delivers hands-on workshops for companies or women's retreats, on natural cosmetics and sustainable living.



"Lifelong learning is crucial to developing know-how on producing and processing our products. So is networking. Being part of entrepreneurial networks has helped me expand my knowledge and open up opportunities for cooperation."

ALENKA ZAPUŠEK
Slovenian hemp farmer

→ Watch Alenka's story on the **website of the Horizon 2020 new entrant network NEWBIE**.

Explore the results of the **EU CAP Network workshop 'Growing alternative crops for new market opportunities in a changing climate'**.

Focus Groups update

Every year, three new EU CAP Network Focus Groups tackle specific challenges faced by European farmers, foresters or rural communities. In each group, 20 experts with complementary expertise explore bottlenecks, solutions and successful practices. Looking ahead, they propose needs for further research, and ideas for new EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects.

Since 2013, 58 Focus Group topics have been discussed, ranging from forest health to competitive mountain areas, protein crop production, and recovering abandoned lands.



Propose topics for EU CAP Network activities

Do you have an idea for a Focus Group topic? **Share your proposal.**





What's new?

Three EU CAP Network Focus Groups started their work in autumn 2025:

- **Forestry and forest health: new and emerging pests and diseases**
- **Innovative and sustainable ways to strengthen the role of farmers in revitalising the European wool value chain**
- **Innovative on-farm energy production systems**

→ Browse all Focus Group topics and results **on the EU CAP Network website**.

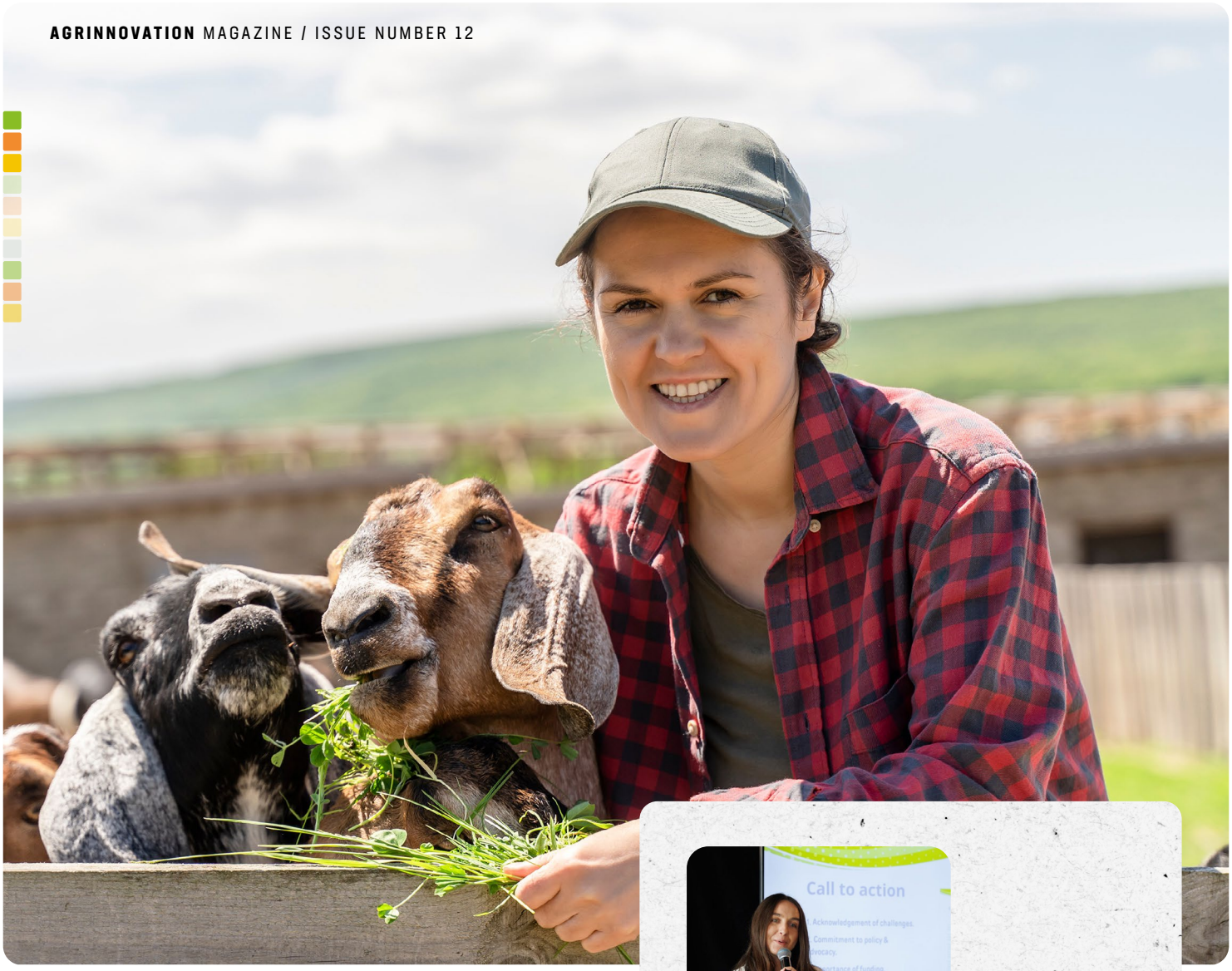
→ **Subscribe to the newsletter on innovation and knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI** to stay updated on new calls for Focus Group experts.

Watch the latest EIP-AGRI challenge videos

In these videos, farmers talk about their solutions to challenges raised by EU CAP Network Focus Groups.

→ **Austria**: Pig farmer Franz takes part in an on-farm animal welfare programme. This allows him to differentiate the farm's products in the market, generate new income and stay competitive.

→ **Greece**: In Crete, Panagiotis' chestnut grove has been affected by chestnut blight and weakened by climate change. He is applying a microbial-based method to strengthen the resilience of the trees and protect them for future generations.



Young voices from the field

Young farmers and newcomers in EU agriculture and forestry are bringing fresh perspectives, up-to-date skills, and a strong drive to approach traditional practices with creativity and innovation. With the right support, the next generation has the potential to build a sustainable, modern and resilient farming future.

We spoke with Marion, Conor and Neus, who are each taking steps to support generational renewal in agriculture. We asked them

① how they are doing those steps,

② what they think the best opportunity is for young and new farmers, and

③ if they have any advice.



MARION PICOT
Secretary-General at CEJA – European Council of Young Farmers

① At CEJA, we work to influence EU policies so that they make farming a viable career choice for the next generation. Through training, working groups and peer-to-peer learning, we also help our members develop skills in leadership, policy understanding, communication and strategic thinking.

② The most effective solution lies in a long-term policy framework that includes targeted CAP measures for young farmers, effective risk-management tools, access to finance, and support for succession planning. When young farmers are given the tools, trust and economic prospects to build resilient businesses, generational renewal becomes an opportunity.

③ Don't stay alone. Seek out networks, farmer organisations and peer groups, locally, nationally, or at the European level. Too often, we underestimate collective action. But that is where great ideas take root.

→ Read the full interview **on the EU CAP Network website**.



CONOR WYNNE
Dairy farmer,
County Kildare, Ireland

(1) I don't come directly from a farming background, but I've had a love for all things farming since I was young. I started working at a dairy farm at 16 and continued all the way through college. When the farmer decided to slow down, we agreed I would start leasing the farm in January 2025, at age 22. The land, the cows, the milking parlour, sheds and machinery are all included in the lease, which is only for seven years. This is to avoid being locked into a long lease if it turns out in five years' time that this actually isn't for me. We will review after two years. The end goal is to buy my own land. I believe that this is the way I'll be able to do that.

(2) Partnerships or leases can be a solution to link ambitious young people to older farmers who struggle to find a successor. For this, you will need to build trust, and that can take some time.

(3) You'll need to work hard, and approach every person you meet the same way. You never know what opportunity they can bring you in the years to come.

→ Read the full interview **on the EU CAP Network website**.



NEUS MONLLOR
Founder of agro-social consultancy company Amaterra, Spain

(1) We advise public administrations on actions that support young farmers and new entrants. We help create the right conditions to make farming socially sustainable, ecologically friendly, and rooted in local communities. We have, for instance, actively supported **EIP-AGRI Operational Group RETA**, which has developed into a key **national network of farm incubators** supporting new entrants and farm renewal.

(2) There are strong opportunities in well-supported mentoring schemes, gradual farm transfer, cooperation between generations, and advisory services that accompany farmers over time.

(3) Go step by step. Farmers today juggle production, processing, marketing and networking, making life complex and demanding. Take the time to build a project that fits your values and your life, not only the market.

→ Read the full interview **on the EU CAP Network website**.





Walking a mile in her boots: empowering rural women through innovation and training

Female farmers and entrepreneurs take up key roles in our rural economy. Women make up 31.6% of all EU farmers, facing common challenges related to access to land and knowledge. In addition, rural women need solutions to increase their participation in the labour market, receive equal treatment and payment, and benefit from tailored training and support.

Several European innovative projects provide training, mentoring and inspiring role models to empower rural women, supporting gender equality and female-led innovation in European agriculture, forestry and rural areas.



Growing a business: from city roots to farm innovation

"You're from a big city. And you're a girl. And you want to start a farm?" Neighbours reacted with scepticism when Ina Grecka started preparing the farmland she had just bought. Yet support from her family and insights from a European innovation project helped her grow her business into an innovative farm with strong ties to the community.

Originally from the Lithuanian city of Vilnius, Ina had little experience in managing a farm. Its first steps were supported with CAP funding for young farmers. Helping hands from Ina's mother and mother-in-law helped her manage the farm, called 'Yellow boots', while raising two young children.

In growing her sustainable berry, grape and shiitake mushroom business, Ina has always embraced innovation – from the tools to make farm work more efficient, to the educational workshops that let visitors experience the nature of farming. Ina joined the Horizon Europe project GRASS Ceiling as one of its eight Lithuanian Living Lab participants, representing female farmers who are developing innovative and sustainable farm practices.



"I took part in various training and networking activities on marketing, adopting innovation, leadership and sustainable farming", Ina says. "One of the most valuable aspects was connecting with other female farmers. We exchanged ideas, discussed challenges and tested products, building a strong sense of community and mutual motivation. It helped me see innovation as a process of small but meaningful improvements in everyday farming life."

→ Find more inspiring stories of female innovators **on the GRASS Ceiling website**.

More female-led innovation? Discover Horizon Europe 'sister' projects **FLIARA** and **SWIFT**.



Mentoring for innovation

EIT Food project EWA (Empowering Women in Agrifood) supports female entrepreneurs through an innovation network that now includes nearly 600 women from 13 countries. In 2025, the Portuguese edition of the EWA programme welcomed ten participants to develop ideas ranging from the circular economy and biotechnology to digital tools and sustainable nutrition. They received intensive training, tailored mentoring, ongoing support, visibility and networking opportunities.



"My mentor helped me understand how to translate research into market opportunities. Sharing experiences, receiving feedback and learning from other women in the EWA community has given me clarity and confidence to build my own path in agri-food."

ÍTALA MARX
EWA participant



EWA regularly launches calls to join its training programmes. Stay updated **through the EWA website**.

Focus on farm succession

The European agricultural sector is ageing faster than all other sectors. The average age of an EU farmer is 57, and only 12% of all farmers are younger than 40 [1]. While many farmers are retiring, farm succession is still met with administrative and financial barriers, including limited access to land or affordable credit.

Several European projects are exploring innovative solutions to foster generational renewal. They offer tools and support to guide farmers through the succession process, and help ensure access to land and necessary skills, making the profession more attractive to new or young farmers.



Land financing for small-scale farmers

With European land prices steadily increasing, access to land has become one of the main hurdles for young or new farmers to enter agriculture. The French initiative Terre de Liens has established an alternative way to finance land, based on the principles of crowdfunding.

Since 2003, Terre de Liens has acquired farmland to support a new generation of small-scale, agroecological farmers. The land is rented to new farmers under long-term agreements, encouraging environmentally sustainable farm practices.

The money to buy this land is sourced from donations and legacies – in land, farms or money – or shares bought by citizens. This participatory system gives over 22 000 citizens an active role in land management and a direct stake in supporting sustainable farming.

"Terre de Liens currently owns over 12 000 hectares of preserved land, with more than 400 farms and around 861 farmers across France", says Cécile Duchier of the Access to Land network, coordinated by Terre de Liens. "We offer tailored support to help farmers in the succession process and the search for land." Terre de Liens has 19 local associations with over 1 600 volunteers. They are the ones visiting and supporting the farmers, building trust.

"Terre de Liens is part of a rich network of non-profit organisations that address generational renewal in a participatory way", Cécile states. "By connecting citizens, local authorities and rural communities, we hope to maintain the value of our lands, soils, and rural landscapes, as a common good for future farmers."

→ **Learn more**

→ Did you know? In Spain, the **Escola de pastores de Catalunya** similarly supports farmers in the succession process and search for land.



[1] *Source: 'Generational renewal in agriculture', European Commission*



Fostering well-being in farm succession

Retiring farmers often suffer worries and mental strains in finding a suitable successor. An Irish Operational Group has shown that dedicated support can alleviate these concerns for farmers and their families.

Farmers worry about not finding a successor, not being able to identify the right one, or having potential successors with no interest in taking over. Other concerns involve what family may think, or how to tackle financial and legal issues. "At the start of our project, half of the 30 participating beef farmers did not have a plan in place. Most of them had never even discussed the process of farm succession with a consultant", says project coordinator Breian Carroll.



Through a series of consultations, the Operational Group's team of experts helped farmers and their families develop a succession plan, address legal and financial concerns, and informed them of further support options. The results are positive, Breian confirms: "Over 85% of the farmers who took part said that their participation helped to soften some of the stress that existed for them at the start of the project."

→ **More info**



"I always wanted to do something innovative, not continuing the way my father and grand-father did. We started producing special crops like popcorn, quinoa, sweetcorn and garlic. If you bring innovation to your farm, you're taking some risks, and it's very important to make sure that you have a market to sell your new products to. In addition to direct sales, we, for instance, have a good partner buying our products."

CHARLES WELBES
Third-generation young farmer
from Luxembourg





Matchmaking between farmers and successors

Dutch Operational Group Land in connection has explored a range of matchmaking activities and financing mechanisms to connect retiring and aspiring organic farmers. Following the end of the project in 2020, these initiatives still prove valuable for new generations.

Land in connection set up speed-dating sessions and an online matchmaking tool to help farmers find a successor. At 'farm-in-farm' companies, existing host farms provided land and machinery, acting as incubators for small start-ups. This lowered the threshold for new entrants to start learning how to run a farm.

Project coordinator Maria van Boxtel gives an update: "The matchmaking tool is still available in the 'Landgilde' matching platform. We still get up to 30 good farmer-successor matches per year. We are sharing our results and tools, including a step-by-step roadmap for farm succession, with young farmers, agricultural students and teachers at dedicated networking events.

→ More details in the **EIP-AGRI project database**

Browse the EIP-AGRI project database to discover Operational Groups that are fostering generational renewal through innovation and collaboration.



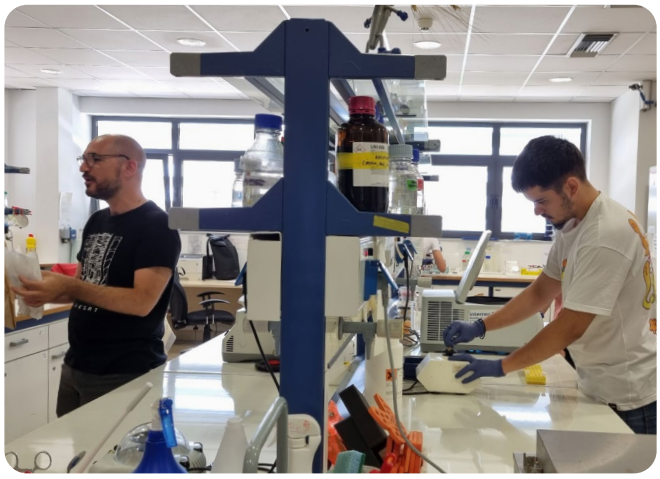


Boosting business skills for agri-entrepreneurs

While agriculture is the main source of income in the border regions between Bulgaria and Greece, many small farms struggle to stay competitive. The Interreg project 'Bu4Inno' helps farmers from the cross-border area strengthen their business skills through training and innovation support, fostering local rural entrepreneurship.

Bu4Inno supports young farmers, rural start-ups and SMEs with the knowledge and tools they need to start new businesses or develop products with higher added value.

Two business incubators in Gotse Delchev (Bulgaria) and Thessaloniki (Greece) provide vocational training, mentoring, and guidance on sustainable business models, product development, digital skills and marketing, complemented by an online platform for lifelong learning.



The project connects farmers, processors, researchers, SMEs and industries from both sides of the border. Nearly 150 young farmers and rural entrepreneurs have taken part in joint training sessions and study visits, encouraging cooperation.

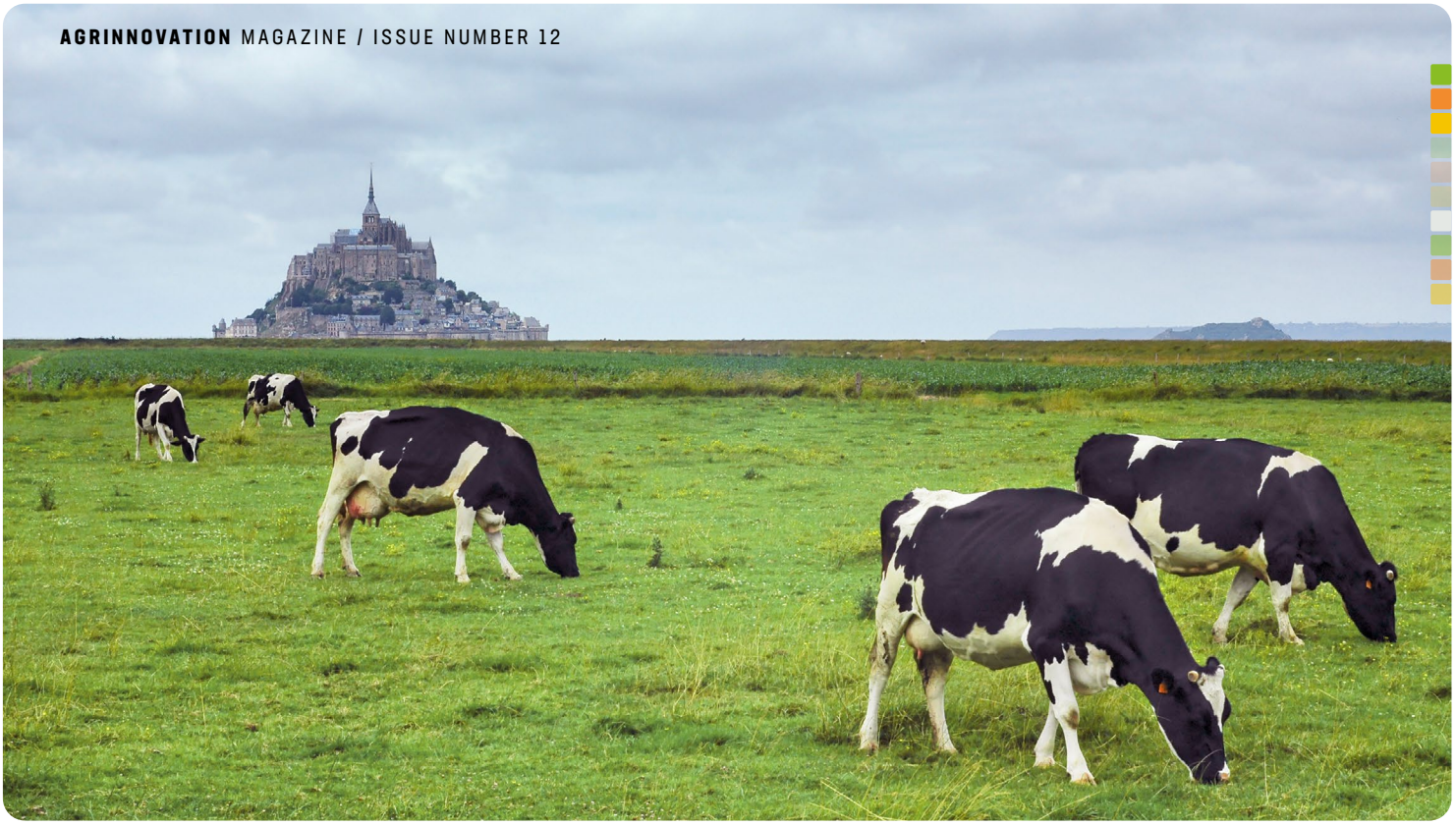
"This kind of support is vital for building an entrepreneurial mindset, especially in remote rural areas where access to innovation support is limited."

ROSITSA DZHAMBAZOVA
Bulgarian business incubator

"This kind of support is vital for building an entrepreneurial mindset, especially in remote rural areas where access to innovation support is limited", says Rositsa Dzhambazova from the Bulgarian business incubator. "The programme has inspired more than 40 young farmers to come up with new ideas – including marketing local products paired with sustainable tourism. Four new businesses were created, and over ten expanded their range, including a family farm that added cows, milking robots and renewable energy to their usual crop cultivation. This shows that cross-border collaboration can truly help build resilient value chains for local communities."

→ **Learn more**





Preserving expertise in the cheese supply chain

Traditional cheesemaking relies on years of knowledge and skill. A French Operational Group is developing an online platform and decision support tool that captures and shares this know-how with current and future producers of PDO-certified 'Camembert de Normandie' cheese. The platform can help increase the number of authorised producers and preserve their artisanal knowledge for future generations.

Cheeses with a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status are closely tied to the natural resources of the region, such as the origin of the milk that is used, the pastures the cows graze on, and specific cheesemaking methods that must take place in the area. Producers depend on a wealth of knowledge to achieve a quality product that conforms to all necessary requirements.

"We run the risk of losing this expertise when producers or technical operators retire or change jobs, and new cheesemakers need to be trained", says Eloïse Modric of Operational Group DOCaMEx Camembert de Normandie PDO. "To avoid this, we are collecting practical know-how through a digital platform, making it available for current and future producers of Normandy Camembert PDO cheese."

The DOCaMEx platform itself is a national tool that has been developed since 2017. It offers a digital knowledge base that can be tailored to the needs of individual PDO cheese sectors.



The Operational Group is filling the platform's 'knowledge book' specifically with expertise on Normandy Camembert cheesemaking. Content decisions are made by a group of cheesemakers from small farms and traditional ateliers, SMEs, and production facilities from larger dairy groups, with the support of a cheese expert from the national dairy school of Saint Lô Thère. Supervised student groups have also helped to fine-tune solutions, such as on milk acidification issues.

Eloïse explains: "The platform gives PDO producers access to information about local factors that affect production, such as milk composition, which can, for example, be linked to pasture quality, combined with human know-how. It contains successful production methods and a good practice guide for regional cheesemakers. It features digital learning tools and a decision tree to help producers find solutions for specific problems they encounter in production, for example, those linked to the fermentation process."

The added knowledge is continually updated and improved, allowing it to be used as a basis for training, mentoring, and skill transfer between generations of cheese producers and dairy workers from the region. Ultimately, this also helps strengthen the identity and quality of the produced PDO cheese.

→ More details **in the EIP-AGRI project database** or on **the DOCaMEx platform**





Building trust for better agri-food chain collaboration

Results from the **EU CAP Network workshop 'Innovation in logistics to improve the position of farmers in a supply chain'** (May 2025) showed that trust is vital for a successful collaboration between producers, technology providers and others in the agri-food supply chain. Trust can be fostered through transparent contracts, open communication and a fair distribution of benefits, leading to better collaboration and long-term partnerships.

The workshop highlighted innovative ways to optimise supply chain logistics for farmers, producer groups and cooperatives, to help them become more competitive and gain access to new market channels, including digital technologies or new cooperation models.

→ **Read the report**





Community-powered farming for rural resilience

Farmers are continuously looking for efficient ways to manage their farm businesses, while answering consumer demands for more sustainable food production with shorter and more transparent supply chains. The Dutch 'Herenboeren' model offers an alternative way of managing farms, reframing them as community-owned enterprises.



The association of Herenboeren farms supports citizens across the Netherlands in setting up nature-driven, cooperative farm communities. Each of the 23 farms that are currently active is owned by a shareholder cooperative of about 250 households. They jointly buy or lease the land, and contribute to the farm's running costs. They are the sole buyers and consumers of the harvest.

The farms typically span about 20 hectares, producing vegetables, fruit, eggs and meat, based on regenerative farming principles. Each employs at least one full-time or part-time farmer, who manages the crops and the farm. This grants them long-term access to land, along with a stable and fair income.

"We've seen a noticeable interest from young farmers", says Herenboeren founder Geert van der Veer. "That's understandable, because this model gives them less financial stress and a more personal connection, producing for a local rural community instead of an anonymous market."

Citizens can help out on the farm and learn first-hand why biodiversity and healthy soil matter. The joint ownership allows them to become invested in a farm that produces local, sustainable food at a fair price.

→ **Find out more**



Herenboeren was highlighted by the Horizon 2020 multi-actor project Ruralization, which explored socio-economic opportunities in rural areas. **Browse the map of case studies** for more inspiration.



Technical information

Managing editor:
Antonia Gámez Moreno, Head of Unit – Rural areas and networks, AGRI-D1, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

Contents and editing:
EU CAP Network – Support Facility for Innovation and Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI

Layout:
EU CAP Network – Communication and Logistical Support team

Photo credits:
Adobe Stock; EIP-AGRI Operational Group 'Béal Átha na Muice - farm succession and well-being'; BGI Sustainable Ventures; EIP-AGRI Operational Group 'DOCaMEx Camembert de Normandie PDO'; Rositsa Dzhambazova / Gotse Delchev; EU CAP Network; European Commission; GRASS Ceiling project / Álvaro Sancho; EIP-AGRI Operational Group 'Land in connection' / Dick Boschloo; Neus Monllor / Amaterra; Marion Picot / CEJA; EIP-AGRI Operational Group 'Terractiva'; Terre de Liens / Rhône-Alpes; Terre de Liens / Sandrine Mulas; Vereniging van Herenboerderijen / Mark van Stokkom; Alenka Zapušek; Charles Welbes.

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Agrinnovation magazine is published in English, German and French and is available in digital format **on the EU CAP Network website**.

Manuscript finalised April 2026 | Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2026

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Publications Office of the European Union

Print
ISBN 978-92-68-36236-5 ISSN 2363-2135
DOI: 10.2762/6781653 KF-01-26-012-EN-C

PDF
ISBN 978-92-68-36235-8 ISSN 2363-2143
DOI: 10.2762/3316831 KF-01-26-012-EN-N

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