

Triggering Agri-Environmental Change: New Trajectories in Farm Decision-making



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Lee-Ann Sutherland

Structural change in Swedish agriculture: where are we heading?

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

15 October 2015



Farmer decision-making



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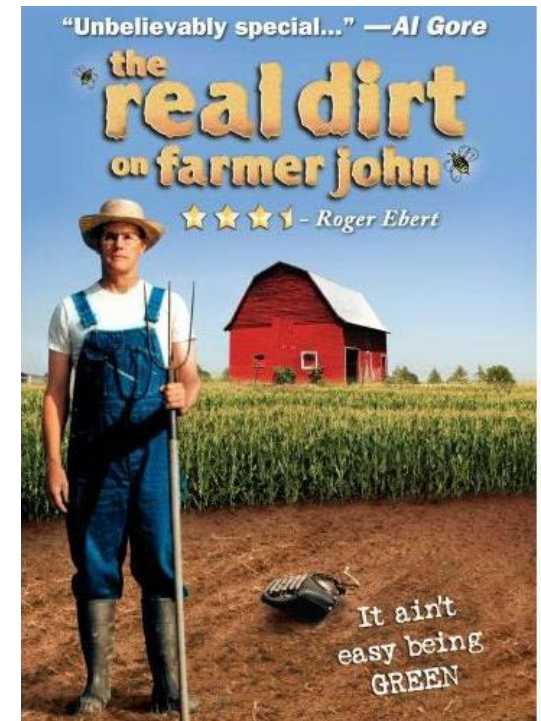


Overview

- How farmers 'see' the environment
 - Different types of farmers
 - 'Good farming'
- The 'triggering change' cycle
 - Path dependency
 - Trigger events
 - Active assessment
 - Implementation
 - Consolidation
- Young farmers, new entrants and environmental change



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Different types of farmers...



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How they 'see' the environment



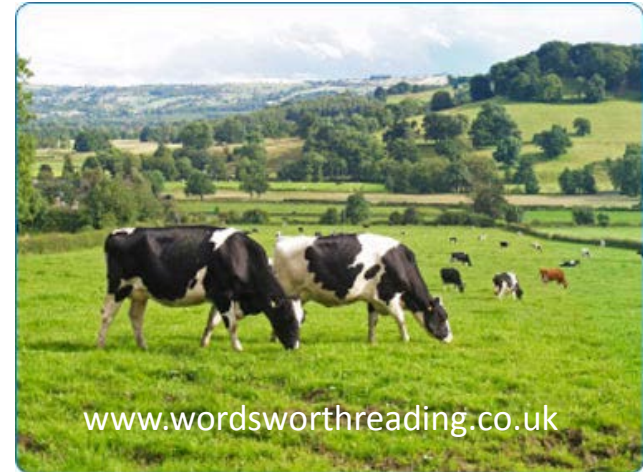
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How they 'see' the environment



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Changing definitions of 'good farming'

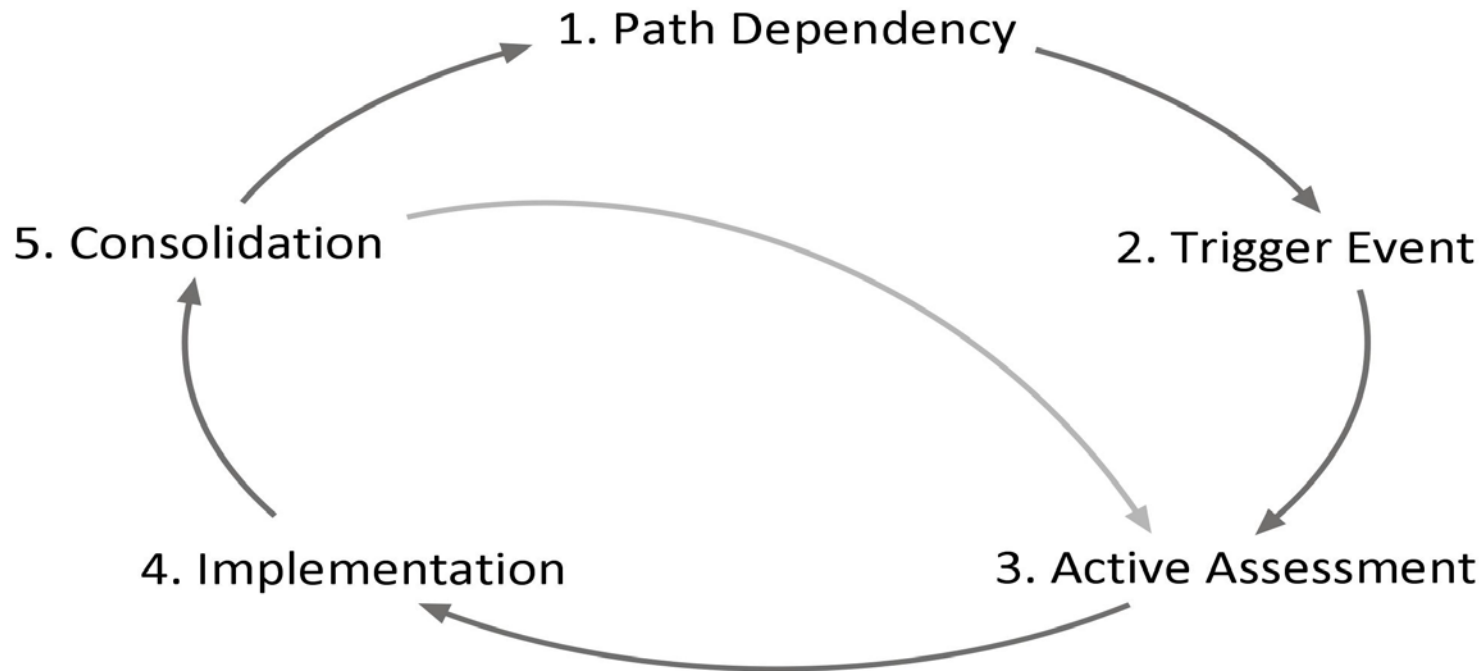
- 'good farming' = profitable farming
- environmental subsidies and regulations are here to stay
- lower input farming in regions with lower land quality



Pollen & Nectar Field Margin at Upton Farm Oxfordshire



The 'triggering change' cycle



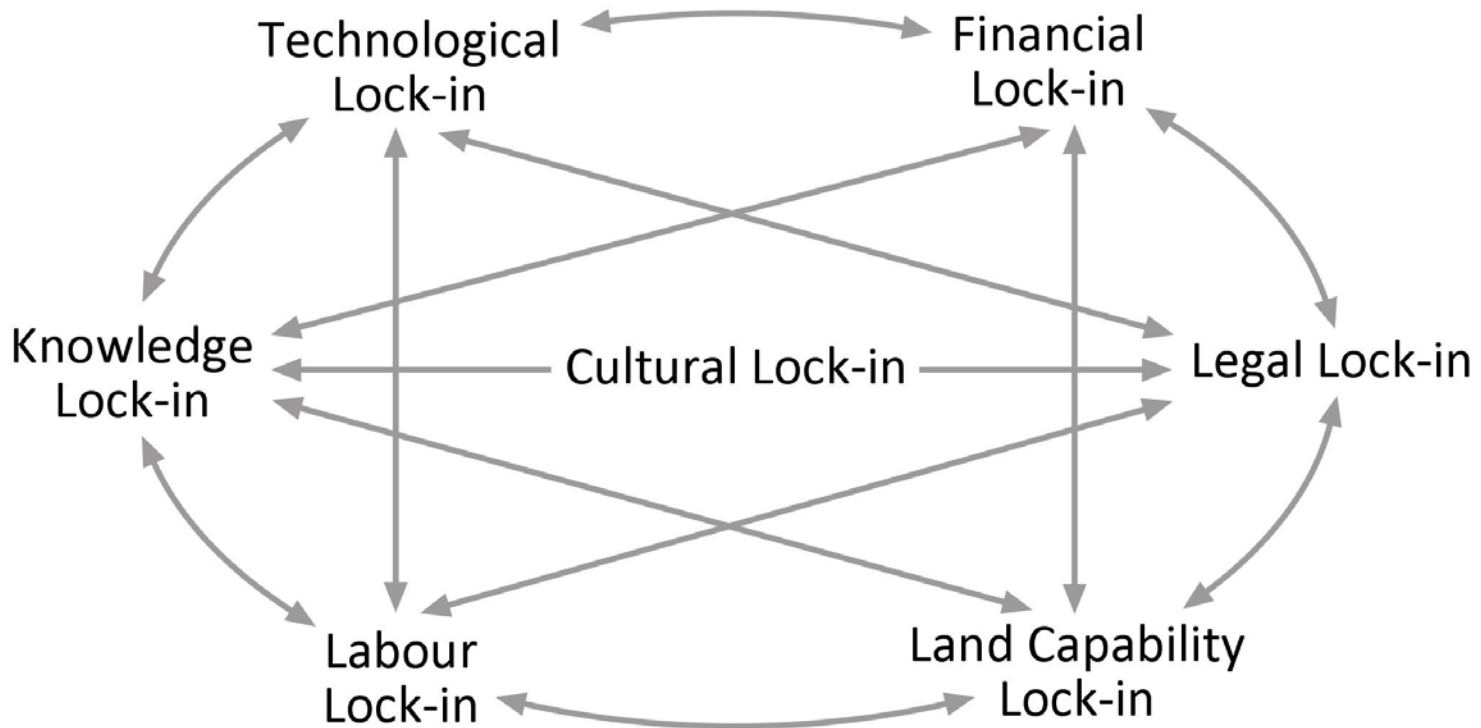
Sutherland, L.A.; Burton, R.J.F.; Ingram, J.; Blackstock, K.L.; Slee, B.; Gotts, N., (2012) Triggering change: towards a conceptualisation of major change processes in farm decision-making, *Journal of Environmental Management*.



Path Dependency



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Trigger events

- “the accumulation of experiences which results in the recognition by the farm manager that a major change is needed”
- Positive or negative:
 - financial imperatives
 - intergenerational succession
 - entrepreneurial opportunities
 - crisis of belief
- Shift from “peripheral” to “central route processing”
 - Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986)



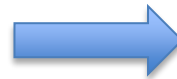
Active assessment

- Experimentation and knowledge seeking

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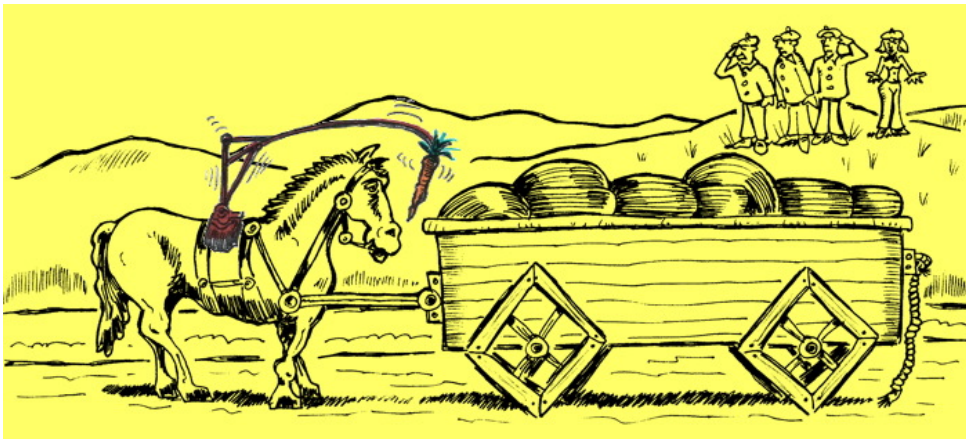


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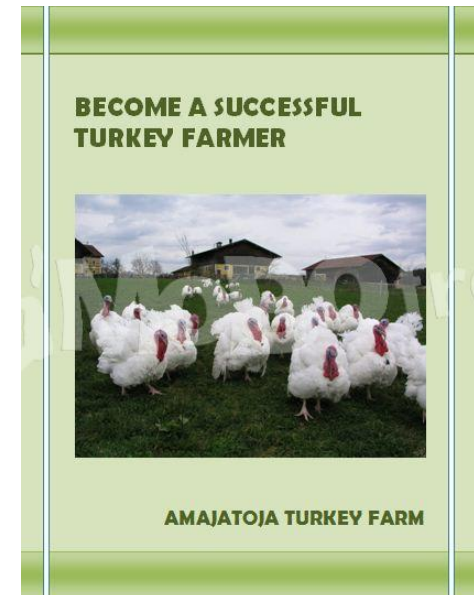
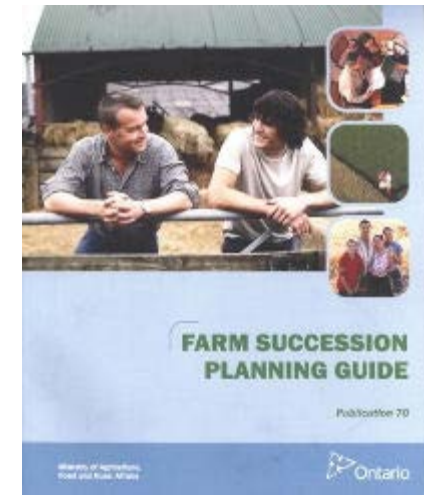


Implementation

- Overcoming 'lock-in' requires considerable new investment (technology, knowledge, culture)
- Vulnerable to further trigger events and return to status quo
- Alterations or refinements to original plans

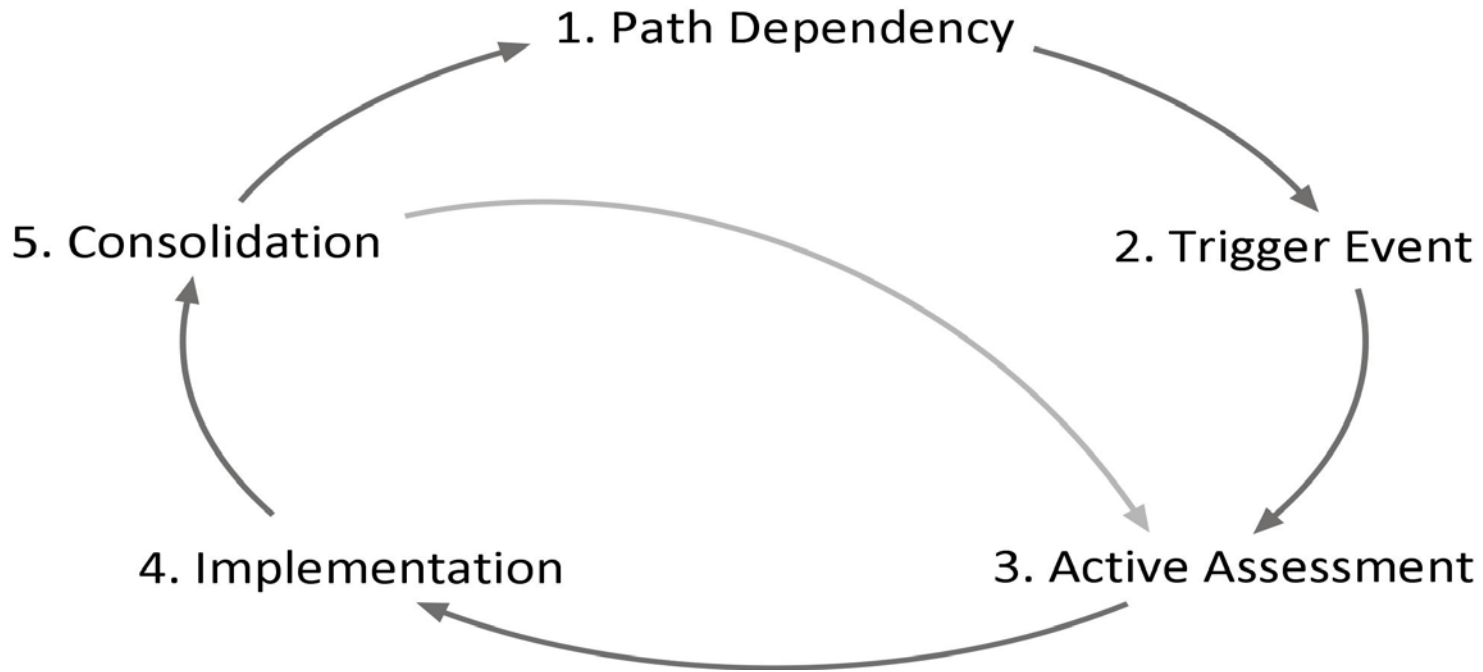


<https://performancemanagementcompanyblog.files.wordpress.com>





Consolidation and return to path dependency





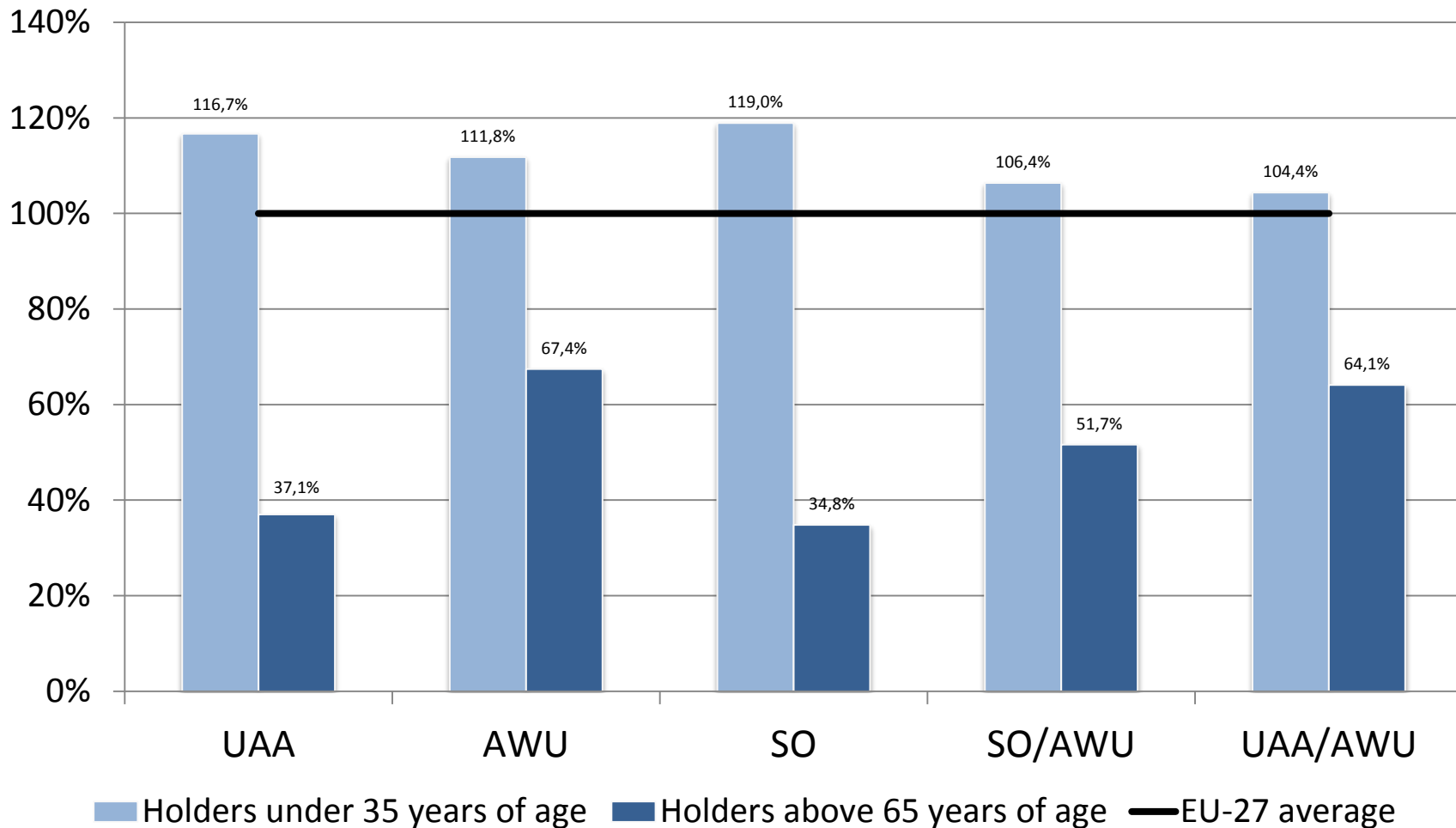
Young people, new entrants and the future of farming

Zagata and Sutherland, 2015

- Analysis of Eurostat figures
- Succession can be key to farm investment
- Challenge of defining ‘young farmers’ and new entrants
 - young farmers: “under 40 years of age, possessing adequate occupational skills, setting up on an agricultural holding for the first time, the farmer is established as the head of the holding” (Article 8, EC, 2005).
- Younger farmers are more ‘productive’



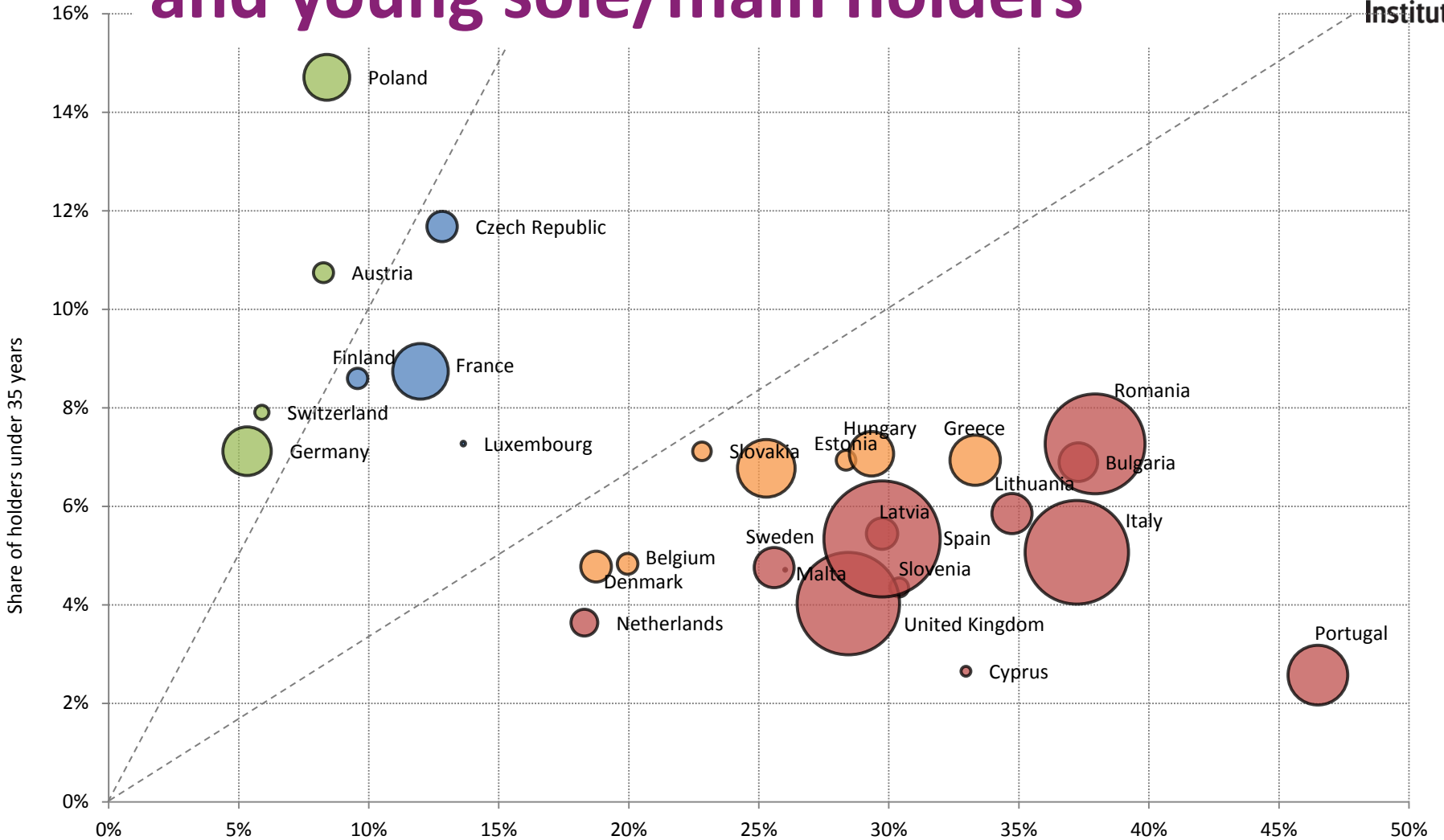
Economic performance of holdings managed by young and older farmers





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Relative share of farms with elder and young sole/main holders



Share of holder above 65 years

Eurostat 2011, Zagata and Sutherland 2015

EIP Agri Focus Group on New Entrants to Farming

Focus group structure

- Focus group participants from 15 countries
- Including 7 farmers
- Emphasis on identifying what is ‘known’ about *ex novo* new entrants

Findings to date

- High percentage of ‘alternative’ approaches to farming
- High levels of risk taking and innovative market approaches
- Barriers include access to land and capital
- Multiple motivations, including making a living, farming lifestyle, reconnecting the food system

Questions?

