



# GRASS CEILING

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Practice abstracts  
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Lithuania





# Women in Lithuanian agriculture: challenges and support gaps

## 6.1. Introduction

This practice abstract examines a crucial aspect of Lithuanian agriculture and rural areas: the role of women. It presents available data revealing that while Lithuania boasts the highest percentage of farms managed by women in the EU, their role is inadequately reflected in statistics, with insufficient attention given to gender equality in shaping agricultural policies.

## 6.2. Key Statistical Findings

### 6.2.1. Women's legal position and ownership of capital in agriculture

Over the past decade, Lithuania has seen a 38 % decline in the number of women-managed farms and a 3-percentage-point decrease in the share of women-managed farms. Despite this, the 2020 agricultural census showed that women manage 44.9 % of farms, the highest rate in the EU. This achievement is partly due to previous prioritisation of women-managed farms in CAP strategic plans and payments for young farmers. However, this figure represents legal ownership rather than actual farming practices.

The gender gap in land management and production is notable. Women manage approximately one-quarter of Lithuania's total agricultural land. Farms led by women are significantly smaller—less than half the size of men's farms—and the standard output of women-managed farms is only about one-third that of men-managed farms. These limitations hinder the capacity of women-managed farms to attract investment, adopt innovations, and benefit from economies of scale.

Additionally, gender inequality in rural areas is evident in income disparities. Over the past decade, women's income has consistently lagged behind men's by approximately 6 %, a gap that has remained largely unchanged.

### 6.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

Women in rural Lithuania demonstrate significant potential for innovation, with over one-third

holding tertiary education degrees. However, data on their participation in agricultural cooperatives, unions, and rural start-ups remain scarce and fragmented. Available information indicates gender balance among council and LAG members, but comprehensive statistics are lacking.

In 2020, women managed 330 organic farms, accounting for 32.4 % of the total. The proportion of organically farmed land managed by women is higher than that managed by men, illustrating women's potential to drive socio-ecological innovations on farms.

### 6.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

Lithuanian public policies have gradually become more gender-inclusive, as reflected in the rising Gender Equality Index. However, gender issues are still not adequately addressed within agricultural policy documents. Existing measures fail to address gender disparities or promote equal opportunities comprehensively. While the 2023–2027 CAP includes measures that support small and young farms—which may indirectly benefit women-managed farms—there is no effective mechanism to support the balance between farming and childcare during maternity and parental leave.

## 6.3. Conclusion

The study highlights significant gaps in gender-disaggregated data and the need for more comprehensive, publicly accessible statistics. Women play a vital role in Lithuanian agriculture, especially in managing smaller, more diverse farms that contribute to national food security and innovation. Despite facing limitations in capital and scale, these women-led farms have the potential to supply healthier and more innovative food products. However, the current policies fall short of addressing gender inequality effectively. To realise the full potential of women in agriculture, targeted policy measures and practical support for women's empowerment must be prioritised.

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