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Abstract

This document summarises the key findings of the policy brief included in Deliverable 1.1. The brief compiles data sets and indicators on women's agricultural and rural activities in several European countries.

It presents a summary per country of data that are publicly available but also of policies related to women's empowerment. Examples include parental leave regulations and gender-specific measures included in the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. All this information is considered highly relevant for policy decisions.

The document contains nine abstracts focusing on relevant actors and practitioners in the nine case studies per country and is completed by a tenth abstract offering an overview and comparison focusing on supranational actors and practitioners.

This work has been coordinated by the academic teams from the nine participating countries. The review of the European Union content was carried out by the Lithuanian academic team.

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01 Norway

Strengthening women-led local food innovations in rural Norway

1.1. Introduction

This practice abstract highlights the most relevant and available data and trends related to gender aspects in strategic documents, innovative initiatives and legal position and ownership of capital in Norwegian agriculture. Though the statistics indicate few gender differences related to framework conditions and initiatives for innovative measures, men dominate the statistics of the fastest growing enterprises, as well as those firms who earn the most and survive the longest.

1.2. Key Statistical Findings

1.2.1. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

Almost half of those who want to innovate are women. However, only 30 % of those who actually start a business are women. Furthermore, only 19 % of the enterprises that have survived after five years and only 10 % of the enterprises thriving and growing after five years are run by women entrepreneurs. (Entrepreneurial statistics are only available at the national level).

Women's participation in voluntary contribution/work (It is not specified whether this participation is conducted at the local level or a higher level) related to fund-raising events, voluntary and information work, campaigns or political work were about the same as men's – between 6 and 30 %, with less than 1.6 % gender difference. At the same time, women's active participation in an organisation, action group or political party during the last 12 months were 9.8 % against the men's 10.1 %.

Even though the statistics indicate few gender differences related to various forms of societal engagement, the proportion of women decreases as companies become more growth-oriented and the proportion of companies that survive in the long term and with the best income is dominated by men.

1.2.2. Gender dimension in strategic documents

Parents in Norway are entitled to paid maternity/paternity leave as long as they have an occupational activity with pensionable income, earning more than half of the basic amount on an annual basis, for at least six of the last ten months before the benefit period begins. Pregnancy allowance is graded based on the woman's work percentage relative to her employment relationship. Maternity/paternity pay can be given to employees, self-employed people and freelancers. Parental allowance in Norway is divided into three parts, including the mother's quota, the father's quota, and a quota for baselined distribution between the two. The parents can choose between 49 weeks in total covering 100 % of their salaries, or 59 weeks in total covering 80 % of

their salaries.

The regulations of maternity/paternity leave and childcare (a highly subsidised, low-cost service in Norway) indicate that the structures are well placed for women to be able to combine family life with entrepreneurship.

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

In 2020, 83.8 % one-person businesses in agriculture registered with farm-based activities were managed by men, while the remaining 16.2 % were managed by women. In 2018, the participation of women workers in informal employment in agriculture in Norway was below 10 %. In 2016, female farmers had income from additional business activities related to their farm (60 %) just as often as their male colleagues. These statistics do not differentiate between men and women-led farms.

Together, these numbers indicate a large, skewed distribution in men's and women's legal position and ownership of capital in agriculture. At the same time, we know that only one person can be registered as the operator of the farm in the Norwegian system, but that the farm in many cases is run as a family business and/or run jointly by the two spouses. The statistics nevertheless indicate that agriculture is still a male-dominated industry.

1.3. Conclusion

The statistics indicate few gender differences related to various forms of societal engagement. However, a lower share of women than men innovate and the longer a business is running, and the bigger it grows, the less women stay in the game. Why is this? Our Living Lab will gather experiences and insights and develop and suggest promising solutions to how the system can be adapted to better support the diversity of innovation processes and strategies among women innovators with local food innovations in rural areas.

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02 Spain

Women farmers in Spain: Gradual inclusion and recognition in a professionalised sector with the capacity to generate employment and income

2.1. Introduction

The participation of women in agriculture and livestock farming remains scarce in practically all Spanish autonomous communities, although the numbers are gradually increasing. The northern regions of the peninsula have been characterised by an agricultural sector that is not very competitive and barely attractive to women. However, the new orientations of the sector and its modernisation and technological advancement are steering the sector towards a necessary restructuring in which women and young people have much to contribute. Although women have always been underrepresented and undervalued in primary activities, the changes are slowly but steadily being laid for their progressive incorporation and economic and social recognition.

2.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

There are significant factors that still hinder the achievement of equality in the agricultural sector in Spain, such as the lower number of women leading farms, their higher average age, their lower levels of education, the smaller size of their farms, and their scarce representation in leadership positions. However, although the figures still show a significant gender gap, there is a progressive increase in the incorporation of women as farm managers and also in decision-making positions within cooperatives and other representative organisations, even though the progress is still very limited.

2.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

There are insufficient statistics to provide a comprehensive diagnosis of women's participation in innovative activities. In addition to the previously mentioned low female occupation in the primary sector, their lower participation in green activities (environment, renewable energy, natural resource management, etc.) must also be noted. However, some data seem to indicate a greater sensitivity of women towards engaging in organic farming activities, as well as diversifying their farms with other complementary businesses, such as rural tourism. Women's participation in the social sphere (social service jobs, involvement in community social life, home and family care, etc.) is higher than that of men, as has traditionally been the case. Nevertheless, women participate less in sectoral associations and do not hold a majority representation in decision-making positions in

entities such as local action groups.

2.2.3. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

There are increasingly more policies and strategies from various administrative areas that highlight the fundamental role women play in the agricultural sector and the need for support to ensure their occupational welfare as well as their role as pillars and integrators of the economic and social structure of rural areas. In Spain, the CAP Strategic Plan specifically includes the gender approach among its objectives. One of the most relevant actions of the Spanish CAP is the complementary payment to the basic income support for young people up to 40 years old, which is increased by 15 % if the person concerned is a woman. Additionally, many rural development support interventions apply positive measures for women. The Law on Shared Ownership of Agricultural Holdings is another example of support for women farmers and livestock breeders. It is also necessary to highlight the regulatory advances being made to improve the balance between work and personal life.

2.3. Conclusion

Significant gender differences still exist in the Spanish countryside. Women's greater dedication to domestic and care tasks, as well as the lack of services and infrastructure in rural areas, continue to be obstacles to their professional advancement. However, there is a consensus that women are a key component of agricultural and livestock activities. There are increasingly more strategies and action measures supporting rural women in general and those working in the agricultural sector in particular. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go for this group to achieve better status and well-being. The GRASS CEILING project is contributing to this goal by working alongside women, analysing their strengths and threats, making their innovative activities visible, and establishing collaborative networks.

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03 Croatia

Croatian women bringing changes: But are they recognised?

3.1. Introduction

Despite being a vital economic and social actor, the contribution of rural women in Croatia is unrecognised, insufficiently recorded and undervalued. Less than one third of women are registered as family farm managers, and their work is still not statistically recorded.

Rural and agricultural policy does not raise awareness of women's rights, challenge stereotypes or promote equal opportunities. However, women are known to be drivers of rural tourism activities and many social innovations. They are also particularly active in the civil sector, often as enthusiastic individuals who bring positive change to their local communities, but this is rarely publicly acknowledged.

This practice abstract emphasises the rural women's standing in rural economy and development in Croatia. It presents data and essential information on women's social and legal position, ownership status, involvement in innovative initiatives, and the gender dimension in rural policies, aiming to shed light on the key obstacles to gender equality in rural areas.

3.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

Less than 30 % of farm managers in Croatia are female. This percentage is decreasing due to the ageing farmers' structure and inability to attract young women to family farming (29.04 % in 2023). The gender gap is even more pronounced in commercial companies, trades and cooperatives. Also, the women farm managers prevail in the smallest economic farm size and they are rarely the owners of the land. This indicates that women in agriculture face multiple social and structural obstacles to their personal and business emancipation. Women employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries earn 90 % the wages earned by men in the sector, showing a slow shrinking of the pay gap in recent years. There is an overall lack of relevant economic data for female farm workers, moreover for non-farming women in rural areas, which is one of the major obstacles to creating meaningful policy measures to increase gender equality in the labour market, agriculture, the rural economy and society in general.

Gender inequality issues are not recognised in official policy papers; there is a visible deficiency of gender-specific data and a lack of any specific policy measures to address gender inequality issues. Strong gender stereotypes and traditional roles result in lack of childcare and elderly-care services

in rural areas: one in six municipalities do not have a kindergarten and the retirement home is available for only 3.68 % of the elderly population. Also, participation of women in politics and decision-making processes is very low.

3.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

There is no statistical record of female business start-ups, farm diversification or innovative activities in rural or other areas. Nor is there a standardised public register of LAG members. However, case studies and interviews show that women are crucial in starting and maintaining most rural tourism activities as well as many social innovations such as community-supported agriculture or educational programmes on family farms. Women are especially active in the civil sector, often being the enthusiastic individuals bringing positive change to their local communities, but rarely with any public acknowledgement.

3.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

Rural and agricultural policy does not raise awareness of women's rights, challenge stereotypes or promote equal opportunities, as it does not actively promote gender mainstreaming in all aspects of its creation and implementation. The Croatian CAP strategic plan and other related documents do not contain concrete measures aimed exclusively at women or concrete measurable results. Although Croatia had a strategy to promote women's entrepreneurship for the period 2014-2020, it has not been renewed and no measurable results are known.

3.3. Conclusion

Our research shows a lack of accurate, gender-disaggregated and publicly available data. There is no data on female members of cooperatives and LAGs, female business start-ups in rural areas or participation in social innovation initiatives in rural areas. Despite the lack of support for women innovators, farmers and entrepreneurs, there are exceptionally innovative rural women in Croatia, who are introducing different innovations in their rural context, and addressing relevant environmental, economic and social issues. However, they are neither sufficiently publicly recognised nor do they receive adequate institutional support. There are numerous obstacles which rural women face in everyday life, from the lack of kindergartens in rural areas to the lack of access to participation in policies/politics. Gender equality is not addressed by appropriate policies and women's empowerment is a step which is yet to be accomplished.

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04 Ireland

Highlighting and reinforcing inequalities: an assessment of available data on the position and activities of women in rural areas and agriculture in Ireland

4.1. Introduction

This practice abstract summarises the publicly available data on the position and activities of women in agriculture and rural areas in Ireland. Data available reflect the traditional gender inequalities faced by women. Where statistics are unavailable, the vital contribution of women to farm sustainability and the local economy is unacknowledged. This has critical implications for women's income, access to funding, training, and networks.

4.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

Longstanding gender inequalities in agriculture and rural areas in Ireland are reflected in the data available. Only 12 % of Irish farms are women-owned while 4 % are in joint male/female ownership (2020). Women perform around a third of farm labour without the status of farm or herd owner. Women's access to income is therefore limited where farm bank accounts are in the names of male family members. While data is unavailable on women's participation in cooperatives, their engagement with unions and farm organisations, seen as male domains, is low.

4.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

Although qualitative research reveals women's rich involvement in innovative initiatives, statistical data is not available to support this. No data exists on rural women's start-ups, farm diversification or social innovation activities. The 2020 Agricultural Census found that women hold 293 of the organic farms in the country, 17.4 % of the total. These figures highlight that women traditionally excluded from farm ownership are developing socio-ecological innovations on smaller and rented holdings.

4.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

Ireland's CAP national strategy 2023-2027 addresses gender equality by treating women as a special category with three targeted measures: a higher farm modernisation grant rate of 60 %, funding for women-only Knowledge Transfer groups, and EIP projects promoting gender balance. However, figures show that women receive only 8 % of CAP (EAGF) payments and, of the country's 31 LCDCs

tasked with the distribution of LEADER funds, only 18 have achieved the EU rate of 40 % female representation.

Ireland has statutory provisions for Maternity, Paternity, Parental and Parent's Leave but its Maternity Leave is among the worst in Europe. While the entitlement is to 26 weeks plus an optional 16 weeks, employers are not required to pay women on Maternity Leave, this depends on individual contracts. A state Maternity Benefit is available for the initial 26 weeks but often this results in a significant drop in women's income. Self-employed women can claim this payment with sufficient tax contributions. Paternity Leave is only two weeks, reinforcing that childcare is the responsibility of women.

4.3. Conclusion

While some statistical data exists, it is mostly unavailable or fragmented and inadequate to reflect women's position and activities in rural areas and agriculture. Systematic gender-informed data collection frameworks are required to capture women's work on family farms, business initiatives and participation in funding programmes at a national level for all relevant policies to combat, not reinforce, women's longstanding invisibility in rural Ireland.

Location: Ireland

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05 Italy

The Italian agri-food sector is still male-dominated. Women challenge barriers through multifunctionality and innovation

5.1. Introduction

This practice abstract explores the gender dimension in Italian agriculture, focusing on the most relevant facts and trends. It sheds light on small improvements in women's participation, advocating for better data and accurate analysis of ongoing, but often unnoticeable, changes.

5.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

Only 31.5 % of farms in Italy are managed by women, which is regrettably average for Europe. Compounded with the fact that farms managed by men have double the standard output, or value created, compared to farms managed by women, it is clear that farming remains a male-dominated sector in Italy. Farms managed by men also tend to be larger and employ a much higher percentage of the available workforce, despite the important and often under-valued contributions that women make to the agricultural sector. Women in Italy perform a little less than a third of general farm labour, and provide about a third of unpaid family labour. However, the gap between the standard output of men and women-managed farms has narrowed slightly, the latter showing a higher percentage increase.

Despite these setbacks, women remain active in farm diversification, sustainability and multi-functionality. Women-led farms account for 40.8 % of the total educational farms in Italy and 35 % of agro-tourism farms. The gender gap also tends to take second place to the generational gap in agriculture because the vast majority of utilised agricultural area is managed by older generations, but is always more or less evenly distributed by gender within any generation.

5.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

Many gaps remain in terms of available data for women's involvement in innovative initiatives. Data on women's participation in agricultural cooperatives, unions, or social innovation initiatives in Italy isn't available, and data about Italian women's start-ups in rural areas doesn't exist. What little data there is demonstrates a significant gender disparity with some recent positive trends. For instance, there were only 18 women-run start-up businesses in agriculture in 2022; however, there were only

9 in 2019, showing improvements over the past two years. The overall women participation rate in Local Action Groups in Italy reached only 27.7 %, with very few managerial and board positions being filled by women.

5.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

Public policies and their implementation are slowly becoming more gender inclusive. The importance of gender issues is recognised in the Italian CAP strategic plan for 2023-2027 which envisages several measures to support women, and young farmers, although the situation varies significantly across different regions.

Preparatory work for the new European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund programming period (2021-2027) highlighted that the integration of women in the traditionally male-dominated fishery sector is still low, despite some recent progress. Management of skill development and support for complementary activities are specifically recommended to enhance the role of women in the world of fishing and marinas. And from a regulatory point of view, recognition of the figure of the support worker, already envisaged in agriculture, and respect for the rights of female fishers' employed in small-scale fishing, are advocated.

Finally, in more general terms, Legislative Decree No. 105 of 30 June 2022, implementing Directive (EU) 2019/1158, includes significant changes regarding the regulation of parental leave and flexible work arrangements.

5.3. Conclusion

While highlighting some important data gaps, GRASS CEILING analysis also reveals signs of women's resilience and innovation in the agricultural sector. Although there have been small improvements and women are making niches for themselves through multifunctionality and innovation, significant gender disparities remain that could be addressed with a systematic gender-sensitive implementation of existing policies and strategies. Rural women in Italy deserve a place at the table, not just a foot in the door.

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06 Lithuania

Do Lithuanian women farmers have enough support?

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, due to emigration and insufficient attractiveness of agribusiness, the number of women-managed farms in Lithuania has decreased by 38 %, and the share of women-managed farms has decreased by 3 percentage points. According to the agricultural census of 2020, Lithuania leads the EU in the number of farms managed by women, with these farms comprising 44.9 % of all farms in the country. This result can be partially attributed to the prioritisation of women-managed farms in previous support periods under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) national strategic plans, as well as payments for young farmers. Still, one should note that this figure reflects the legal farm ownership rather than actual farming settings.

Available statistics reveal a gender gap in land management and production. Women manage about one quarter of the total utilised agricultural land area in Lithuania. Farms managed by women are characterised by being small in size as they are less than half the land area in comparison to those managed by men. Moreover, the standard output generated by women-managed farms is only about one-third of that generated by men-managed farms. This implies that women-managed farms have limited opportunities to attract external investments, implement innovations on the farms, and benefit from economies of scale.

The gender inequality in rural areas is also illustrated by the lower income of women compared to men. Over the past ten years in Lithuania, this gap has remained virtually unchanged, with a consistent gap of about 6 %.

6.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

Lithuanian women have significant potential for innovation activities, as more than one-third of women living in rural areas possess tertiary education degrees. However, serious gaps persist in

terms of available data for women's involvement in innovative initiatives, women's participation in agricultural cooperatives, unions, and women's start-ups in rural areas in Lithuania. Fragmented information about women's participation in Local Action Groups (LAG) reveals that gender balance has been ensured among council and LAG members.

In 2020, women managed 330 organic farms in Lithuania, accounting for 32.4 % of the total. The proportion of organically farmed areas relative to the total managed by women is higher than for areas farmed by men. This highlights the potential of women to develop socio-ecological innovations on farms.

6.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

Public policies and their implementation are gradually becoming more gender-inclusive in Lithuania, as evidenced by a growth in the Gender Equality Index in recent years. However, in the context of the agricultural sector, the importance of gender issues is not adequately addressed in policy documents, and the existing measures neither address gender disparities nor promote equal opportunities. However, it should be noted that the current Lithuanian CAP (2023–2027) allocates numerous measures to support small farms and young farmers. These measures will indirectly create more favourable farming conditions and contribute to the financial capacity and income stability of women-managed farms. In Lithuania, there are substantial opportunities available to receive allowances related to maternity and childcare periods. However, there is no effective mechanism to facilitate practical support when balancing farming and childcare during maternity and childcare leave.

6.3. Conclusion

The study conducted indicates a lack of accurate, gender-disaggregated, and publicly accessible data. Women's roles in Lithuanian agriculture are crucial for national food security as more women than men operate small farms specialising in horticulture, dairying, and own more mixed farms. Despite having less capital, these smaller and innovative farms run by women have significant potential to ensure supply of staple, healthier, and innovative food products in Lithuania. Effective policy measures to address gender equality are not in force, and increasing the empowerment of women remains a goal for future policy frameworks. Undoubtedly, the lack of statistical data on economics of women-managed farms hinders the identification of policy priorities and preparation of targeted support measures.

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07 The Netherlands

Is Dutch agriculture still a man's world? The invisibility of women farmers and their lack of recognition in farm property, politics and policy

7.1. Introduction

This practice abstract delves into a crucial yet often overlooked aspect of Dutch agriculture and rural areas - the role of women. It presents the available data and measures taken to promote gender equality, shedding light on the fact that despite their significant contributions, women remain largely invisible in statistics, policies, and politics.

7.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

Dutch women play an indispensable role in agricultural enterprises. We estimate that Dutch women perform around a third of the farm labour. However, most women do so as family members without proper payment, profit sharing, or co-ownership of property.

Interviews reveal that a significant proportion of women are part of a partnership. Still, co-partners have not appeared in the statistics for several years, further hindering women's visibility. Only the partner who works the most hours is listed as the head of the firm—and that is a man in 94 % of cases! So, women managers seem to exist only in 6 % of the farms, and data on women's farm work is only collected for those few women.

We also lack data on women's participation in cooperatives, farm unions, or other decision-making bodies. Their invisible presence may contribute to the fact that predominantly men were invited to participate in policy negotiations.

7.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

Women contribute to economic (social and environmental) prosperity through on-farm diversification and off-farm jobs.

Again, statistics are lacking, but case studies repeatedly point to women's important role in multifunctional agriculture and regenerative farming. The same goes for women's engagement in social innovation initiatives in rural areas, local action groups, and rural start-up businesses. Women are indispensable for vital rural areas, yet data is non-existent.

7.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

The current CAP (2023-2027) encourages support for gender equality, which the Dutch National Strategy addresses by announcing support for female farmer networks, strengthening female agricultural entrepreneurship, and considering gender issues in LEADER projects and local action groups. So far, there is no information on the results achieved.

Dutch women have a right to paid maternity leave when employed or registered as entrepreneurs at the Chamber of Commerce. The payment depends on their salary or the profit declared. State contributions to childcare costs depend on income and are available for employees and entrepreneurs.

7.3. Conclusion

GRASS CEILING not only highlights the lack of official data but also showcases the resilience and innovation of women in the sector. It advocates for a more comprehensive understanding of the Dutch agricultural sector and the diverse roles of men and women farmers. This can only be achieved through rigorous data collection and analysis. Let us study the reality of women farmers, collect the baseline data, and use it to do justice to their contributions – a crucial step for the sector's future.

Location: The Netherlands

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08 Scotland

Scotland's rural women: what the data does and does not show, and why this matters

8.1. Introduction

Women make a vital socio-economic contribution to Scotland's rural economy, notably but not exclusively within agriculture, including in crofting, a traditional type of smallholder farming in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Qualitative evidence shows the importance of rural women's work but there is a lack of relevant statistical data.

8.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

Statistics for the category of 'rural women' are unavailable. Why? Because many sources do not break down data by gender. And when they do, they make no distinction between rural and urban areas. Data is also obscured in other ways. The Annual Scottish Agriculture Census shows that in 2021 there were 11,800 women owner-occupiers working on farms, i.e. 40 % of the total number of working occupiers. But as 'owner-occupier' includes spouses, this hides the fact that only 7 % of these women own farms themselves.

The 'Women in Farming and the Agriculture Sector' (2017) report shows that women face gender-specific obstacles limiting access to land and to training, and that few women occupy leadership roles. Around half the staff of the National Farmers Union (Scotland) were women but there had never been a female president; no women had served on its national boards or committees, nor chaired its regional boards or committees. Within the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF), women had more proportionate elected representation, with 3 out of 9 board members being women. As per details supplied on request, SCF has had 5 women chairs since its founding in 1985. In 2023, it appointed its first female CEO. The report of the Women in Agriculture Taskforce (2019) made recommendations to address the identified barriers.

8.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

The 'Women in Farming' (2017) report above shows that 29 % of survey respondents were interested in diversifying their farm business in future, especially women crofters (38 %) and those born on a farm. This interest is reflected within Scottish Agritourism (the official body for the sector), where women comprise 7 board members, 3 of 15 Destination Leaders, and two thirds of its 300 members.

Crofting traditionally depends on diversification. The Scottish Government's Economic Condition of Crofting: 2019-2022 report shows:

- Between 2014 and 2022, the proportion of female crofters rose from 13 % to 30 %.
- Twelve per cent of crofters were undertaking biodiversity activities; 18 % were creating woodland or forests; and 34 % planned to conduct such activities in the period 2023-2026. As the report does not break this data down by gender, the proportion of women involved is unknown.
- A greater proportion of women crofters (16 %) than men (11 %) ran bed and breakfast or holiday-let facilities.

The Social Enterprise Census shows that between 2015 and 2021, the proportion of women-led social enterprises in Scotland rose from 60 % to 71 %, but the proportion in rural areas only went from 32 % to 33 %. The data is split by urban and rural, and by gender, but the census does not show how these categories intersect.

8.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

CAP 2023–2027 does not apply to Scotland due to Brexit. Government documents relating to the Basic Payment Scheme do not refer to gender.

The Citizens' Summary for the UK European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (2021) shows women in the sector receive less funding then men. It attributes this to under-representation and lack of awareness of their roles. The Scottish Government's 'Women in Scottish fisheries: literature review' (2022) found that women make a key contribution but their roles are under-reported and relevant data is lacking.

Regarding parental leave, women employees can take up to 52 weeks leave; men may take two; or parents can share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay. Self-employed women can claim a maternity allowance based on recent National Insurance contributions.

8.3. Conclusion

The lack of quantitative data inhibits the recognition and support required for the contribution of rural women to realise its potential. A key first step will be to adopt collection methods that provide data specific to the category of 'rural women'.

Location: Scotland

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- https://www.grassceiling.eu/results-resources/deliverables/
- https://www.grassceiling.eu/living-labs/scotland/
- https://www.gov.scot/publications/women-farming-agriculture-sector/documents/
- https://www.gov.scot/publications/final-report-women-agriculture-taskforce

09 Sweden

Women – the invisible farmers and rural entrepreneurs

9.1. Introduction

While Sweden is often seen as a gender equality forerunner, gender inequalities persist in agriculture, forestry and other rural businesses.

9.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

In the case of Sweden, rather than the legal position of women in general, we would like to refer to the legal position of women entrepreneurs in agriculture, forestry and rural areas.

Men own just under four out of five farms, while forest business-ownership is more evenly distributed among women and men. However, women and men jointly manage farms to a higher degree than the figures indicate. Women business owners on farms and in rural areas are thus often invisible in the official statistics. This is sometimes due to farms and forest businesses being sole proprietorships, whereas there can be only one registered owner. Farms are also often transferred through 'patrilineal inheritance' in spite of gender-equal legislation.

Overall, the number of farms is decreasing and the farmers are ageing in Sweden. Almost half of the farm owners, their partners and family members also have a major occupation outside the farm. Women are underrepresented as board members in the largest farmer association in Sweden.

Recent quantitative research finds that women's entrepreneurship is important for rural viability, as they provide a wide range of services necessary in rural areas. This is often unrecognised and not reflected in their incomes as they are lower than men's, and are more sensitive to business and industry variables, while women's rural businesses are not much smaller than those of men. For men, marriage has positive effects for the earnings but negative effects for the earnings of women.

9.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

Our living lab work and interviews within the GRASS CEILING project indicate that women are entrepreneurial and develop socio-ecological innovations in relation to farming and forestry. Yet there is a lack of data.

9.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

Despite women's contributions to farm, forest and rural development, limited focus is put on

women and gender equality in EU and Swedish agricultural and rural policy. Sweden's CAP strategic plan (2023-27) primarily represents men farmers as the main target sector of the population and gender is not integrated into the policy. The policy does not challenge gendered divisions of ownership or gender stereotypes. Recent research suggests that the previous Swedish rural development programme pays lip service to gender equality, stating that it works for gender equality and gender awareness, while in reality it takes no action.

The governmental bill on rural policy does not mainstream gender, but argues that women's entrepreneurship is a strategic economic growth issue, and that a broad variety of businesses and entrepreneurs in rural areas are important for competitiveness, renewal and sustainability. However, no concrete policy measures are formulated to this effect.

9.3. Conclusion

GRASS CEILING not only highlights the lack of official data, but also showcases the resilience and innovation of women in the farming, forestry and rural areas. It advocates for a more comprehensive understanding of the Swedish agricultural, forestry and rural entrepreneurship and the diverse roles of men and women.

Location: Sweden

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10 European Union

Women's position in EU agriculture and rural areas: unveiling persistent gender gaps

10.1. Introduction

This practice abstract examines a critical yet often overlooked aspect of agriculture and rural areas in Europe – the role of women. It presents available data collected at the European Union (EU) level and within the individual countries participating in the GRASS CEILING project.

10.2. Key Statistical Findings

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

The EU agricultural sector exhibits significant gender inequality. The agricultural census of 2020 shows that, over the past decade, the proportion of farms managed by women increased by 3.6 percentage points, with women managing 31.6 % of farms across the EU. However, these data conceal important differences between EU countries. The lowest shares of women-managed farms were found in the Netherlands (5.6 %), Germany, Malta, Denmark, and Finland (less than 11 %). In countries with the highest shares of women-managed farms, such as Lithuania (44.9 %) and Latvia (44.8 %), men-managed farms still dominate. These figures do not necessarily reflect the actual empowerment of farm women accurately as, in some countries, the registration of farms under women managers had been incentivised by imposing it as a priority criterion in the investment support measures under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Indeed, in the Netherlands, the reported number of women-managed farms refers only to women who manage as a single farm head or as the farm head with the largest share of management rights, thereby rendering many female co-farm heads invisible.

Available statistics reveal a significant gender gap in resource distribution. In the EU, women manage only 17.4 % of the total utilised agricultural land area, with this proportion falling below 10 % in eight countries (Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Malta, Sweden, Slovakia, and Ireland). On average in the EU, farms managed by women are half the size (ha) of those managed by men. Moreover, the standard output generated by women-managed farms constitutes only 37.8 % on average in the EU of that generated by men.

Some challenges to gender equality in agriculture have been persistent. Over the past ten years, the income gap in rural areas has remained virtually unchanged with a consistent disparity of around 3.6 % in the EU. Additionally, the unfavourable age structure of female farmers further exacerbates gender inequality in the sector, with 40 % women farmers over 65 (compared to 33 % for men) and

only 5 % under 35.

10.2.2. Women's involvement in innovative initiatives

It is challenging to obtain a clear picture of women's participation in agricultural innovation activities across the EU and to evaluate their effectiveness due to the lack of statistical data. Formal gathering and monitoring of such data would enhance the effectiveness of policies promoting women-led innovation in agriculture and rural areas. Additionally, there is a lack of data on women's representation in agricultural organisations, such as cooperatives and farmers' unions, women-led business start-ups, and women's participation in local action groups. This gap renders limited knowledge about women's involvement in decision-making processes at both farm and (inter)national policy levels.

Eurostat reports that, over the last decade, the number of women-managed organic farms increased by 2.4 times, though the share of organic farms run by women was lower than for conventional farms run by women in the EU (26.9 % versus 31.6 %) in 2020. However, even in thirteen EU countries, the share of farms run by women was higher in organic farming than in conventional farming. Thus, women have potential to develop socio-ecological innovations on farms.

10.2.3. Gender dimension in strategic documents

The CAP objective for 2023–2027 includes gender equality, but most EU countries' National Strategic Plans give it limited attention. Italy and Spain have specific payment measures for women. Ireland offers higher farm modernisation grant rates, funding for women-only Knowledge Transfer groups, and EIP projects for gender balance. In the Netherlands, initiatives support female farmer networks, female agricultural entrepreneurship, and consider gender issues in LEADER projects and local action groups. Despite existing measures targeting women-managed farms, the example from Scotland indicates that support has predominantly been allocated to men (women receive only 8 % of CAP (EAGF) payments). The lack of gender-disaggregated data within the CAP complicates the development of tailored policy measures.

The regulations on paternity/maternity leave vary across EU countries, posing challenges for rural women in some countries as they may not be adequately financially safeguarded during this period. There are no specific measures targeted towards female farmers. The duration of maternity and childcare leave, income coverage level, distribution of leave between parents, and additional benefits provided to working parents shape the relevant policies.

10.3. Conclusion

There is a lack of accurate, gender-disaggregated, and publicly accessible data on gender equality in the agricultural sector. Publicly available data in countries covered by GRASS CEILING are often limited to sporadic initiatives. Enhancing the collection and dissemination of these data is crucial for understanding and fostering gender equality in agriculture. Comprehensive gender-informed data collection frameworks across the EU can inform policy decisions, ensuring that women's contributions are recognised and supported at all levels of the agricultural sector. While important data gaps are evident, women's resilience and innovation in agriculture of the EU is noteworthy.

Nonetheless, considerable efforts are still required toward achieving gender equality in the sector.

Location: EU

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