

FARM SUCCESSION

TOOLS AND METHODS TO PROMOTE A SUCCESSFUL FARM SUCCESSION



Examples from France, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands



For trainers, facilitators & advisors



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

"I STARTED WITH A TRIAL YEAR"

"When my girlfriend and I started farming, we allowed ourselves a 'trial year'. We tried to cultivate all kinds of vegetables. Just to get a feeling for what is possible on this specific site of 0.5 hectares that we rent from friends. And to learn what we personally prefer to grow."

Dominik Dax, started farming in Austria

"We established an agreement between our community owned farm and a candidate for succession. We always look for candidates in the same way. We commit ourselves to finding our successor three years before our own retirement and actively welcome young people for internships. So we meet potential candidates."

Michel Saunier, farmer on a jointly owned farm

"I could have sold it at a very good price, but I am in a good financial position and I wanted to set up a young farmer first and foremost. Moreover, it is also fun that I am now able to support the start-up of four farmers."

Phillipe Colleu is happy with his four successors

More farmers voices on www.farmsuccession.eu

Dominik Dax and business partners. Photo Dax farms



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COLOFON

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Intellectual Output of the Erasmus+ Project “Farm Succession in Europe” (2014-2016)

France - FRCIVAM Bretagne: www.civam-bretagne.org
France - InterAfocg: www.interafocg.org
Belgium - Terre en Vue: www.terre-en-vue.be
Austria - NEL: www.existenzgruendunglandwirtschaft.wordpress.com
Netherlands - Land & Co www.landco.nl and Landgilde www.landgilde.nl

www.farmsuccession.eu

Funding:



Partners:



ONE FARMER, FOUR SUCCESSORS

As a farmer in conventional pig breeding at Chavagne, France, Philippe Colleu could have transferred his farm to neighbours who wanted to expand their farms. Instead he decided to encourage the successive start of organic farmers with different systems, before getting retired in december 2014. President of his local CUMA – a cooperative for the collective use of farm equipment – for 20 years, he opposes a farmer owning too much machinery of his own. “It’s better to have an over-equipped cooperative, because an over-equipped farm is impossible to transfer”.

AUTHOR | ANTOINE BESNARD
PHOTO | MATTHIEU CHANEL

How did his farm transfer happen? Philippe Colleu talks enthusiastically: “In 2007-2008, I provided two hectares to a vegetable farmer, Jean-Martial Morel, who was responsible for training at the farmers school CFPPA in Rheu. He wanted to set up a farm and I knew him well. It gave him the possibility to start farming while he kept working part-time off-farm. In 2011, he was joined by a second vegetable farmer, Julien Rondouin. Jean-Martial also made room for his son working with them in vegetable farming by starting in Community Supported Agriculture, CSA. So I already had three successors.”

However, it did not stop there. “A young neighbour, Guillaume Aveline established himself on the main part of the farm in 2010: he took over 46 hectares for arable crops. Guillaume’s father worked the neighbouring farm organically since the 50’s, and sadly died several years ago. Guillaume studied to be a dentist, but instead of actually becoming a dentist, he decided to take over the family farm of 34 hectares. For arable crops this is a bit small, so I suggested to him to start working on the remainder

of my farmlands. I myself will stop my farming activities completely between now and 2014. But I want to keep making it possible for new farmers to start. Specifically by accompanying a new organic farming project with 300 to 400 goats to start on our farm. I used to farm pigs and worked with a straw-based stable system of a 1000 m² on farm, a covered manure storage of 600 m² and a corn silo. We asked for permission to change these buildings to use it as a dairy to produce 300.000 to 400.000 litres of goat’s milk per year.”

Phillipe Colleu is happy with his successors. “I could have sold it at a very good price, but I am in a good financial position and I wanted to set up a young farmer first and foremost. Moreover, it is also fun that I am now able to support the start-up of four farmers.”

Read the whole interview on www.farmsuccession.eu
Interview by Antoine Besnard, FRAB Bretagne, published in “Roads to successions in organic farming” by GAB-FRAB Bretagne. More information on www.agrobio-bretagne.org



INTRO- DUCTION

Farming and farmers are essential in providing us with food and a rural landscape. Farming is usually done as a family business in Europe. Farming communities and family business used to be and still are strong and close-knit. The continuation of farms and a community of farmers is a precondition for good food production, a beautiful environment, and life in rural areas.

Farming is changing. Smaller-scale farms and family farms are disappearing at a rapid pace everywhere in Europe. Sometimes this is because they lack a successor. The successful transfer of a farm is crucial. If the transfer process has not been prepared properly, and the participants are not sufficiently supported with guidance or advice, the transfer can easily fail.

More and more farmers stop, while their neighbours

grow in farm size. Farm children do not want to succeed their parents on the farm. This means an increase in extra-family succession. A new generation of people - who do not come from a traditional farming background - want to take up farming. Often academics looking for a career change, they can have different ideas about farming methods and they create new business models. This means new activities in rural areas - agriculture combined with nature and water conservation, recreation, care or education. These 'future farmers' bring innovation and sustainability. This strategy of 'regional farming' complementary to globally oriented farming brings new economic opportunities which might be an answer to regional unemployment or depopulation of a rural area. This also means a community of rural workers and multiple successors to one business. Farming requires a lot of capital to start - to acquire land, buildings or equipment - whilst growing crops or tending animals does not always provide a sufficient wage for the farmer. This means farming is increasingly a sector that is not easy to enter into for new entrepreneurs. Farming is also a farmer's life's work, attached to a long family heritage and social contacts. This means a great deal of emotions when letting go. This can also mean farmers delay thinking about their succession - when time to prepare for their succession would give them more chances to succeed.



Members of the Farm Succession Europe Network

Continuation of farming is important. These big changes in farm succession - from family to extra-family succession, from one to multiple successors, to new activities on farms - require a new answer. A new farming community is necessary to connect potential transferors and future farmers. Because: how do you meet each other if your successor is not your son? And new tools are necessary to educate farmers. Because: how do you work together in a community of successors, if you've always worked the fields on your own? How to transfer not only your land and farm, but also your knowledge and experience? And new financing models are necessary. Because: how do you succeed if you can't pay for land and buildings? How to benefit from the fresh suggestions of a new entrant farmer? We need new tools.

In this brochure a European network of organizations

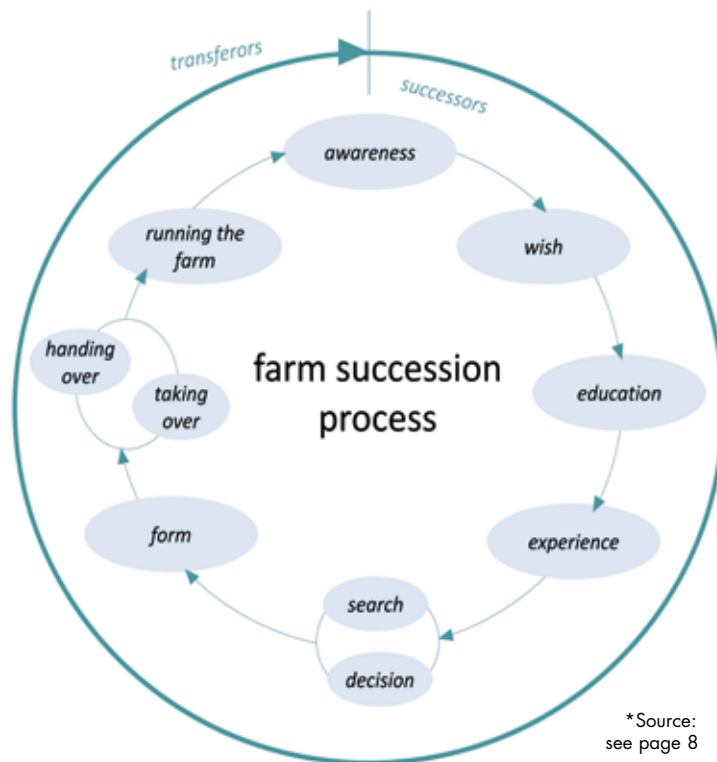
from France, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands combines in the Farm Succession Europe E+ network. We try to give an answer to these changes in farm continuity and succession. We present the tools we developed and use to connect farmers, to give them confidence in a new business model their successor wants to use or to explore alternative financing strategies. In this brochure we give examples of tools, farmers' stories on farm transfer and some context on farm transfer in our four countries. Of course this is not a complete overview. But we still hope and trust this will give farm advisors, facilitators and other people surrounding the farmer - as well as the farmers themselves - a new way of looking at farm transfer and rural communities. A new answer for a bright future in farming!

THE FARM SUCCESSION EUROPE E+ NETWORK

THE PROCESS OF FARM TRANSFER

A farm transfer is a long process. Youngsters will become aware that they want to become a farmer. Then they learn and gain farming experience. And they meet experienced farmers whose enterprise they want to take over, and have the courage to commit to transfer. An experienced farmer must share his or her experience and farm work with new farmers, have the courage and start a transfer, and finally, let go. Thus, farm transfer is more than one festive moment at the notary's office: it is lifelong work on farm continuity.

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*Source: see page 8

At least two parties are included in a farm transfer: the transferors and the successors. And each party could be a group, a couple or a single person. In general farm succession is the transfer of the life's work of an older person to a younger person, although not all successors are young and not all transferors are old. Of course, each farm transfer is unique, but the main steps in every process are shown in the circle of the farm succession on the right.

Life is not a neat circle. Although we show a continuous process in a circle, in reality life is never like that. For example, when farmers work together with potential successors from outside the family, suddenly their son comes back to the farm and wants to succeed. Or farmers find successors, who want to do something entirely different with the farm and the farmer is not willing to agree to this change. So: an overview of the process can help, as long as everyone gives themselves room to stop, start over and find new solutions to satisfy both parties.



1. Awareness

Transferors:
"I could transfer my farm – in time"

Successors:
"I could become a farmer"

1. AWARENESS. It is important that youngsters – or even older people seeking a new career in farming – are aware that farming is a viable profession, and fun to enter into. Experienced farmers should be aware of the need of transfer and be motivated to share their farm with students, workers and potential successors. **Extra-familial farm succession?** Potential new entrants without a family history in farming are usually older when they become aware of the wish to be a farmer. They can also be city kids with a higher education.



2. Wish

Transferors:
"We want to hand over the farm to our child(ren) or farmers from outside the family."

Successors:
"We want to be farmers and continue the (family) farm."

2. WISH. Potential transferors want to transfer their farm, successors want to take over a farm. **Extra-familial farm succession?** Potential new entrants need to express their wish to start farming quite explicitly: they need to meet potential transferors.



3. Education

3. EDUCATION. Farming is a profession, and you need to learn how to do it. In school, on the job or both. Training, also at different farms, is invaluable for becoming a farmer. **Extra-familial farm succession?** New farmers from a non-farming background need practical experience, which farm kids may have learned from a young age by helping out. Extra-family succession may also bring new, innovative business models to the farm.

Transferors:
"We want to teach new farmers, accept interns and offer work experience."

Successors:
"We want to learn to become a farmer."

CONTINUITY

At each stage in a farmer's life, they can consciously work on the continuity of the farm. When farmers are young, they can learn in school or on the job. As working farmers, they can share their knowledge by supervising interns on their farm. If they are a little bit older, they can experience being an employer and sharing responsibility, for example by giving a new entrant a small part of the farm to work on as an entrepreneur. And at the right time they can choose to work together with potential successors, still leaving enough time to fail and start over. Then – usually after a few years – the farmers can transfer and find a new role in life. In this process of lifelong learning, new entrants and more experienced farmers are connected.



4. Experience

4. GAIN WORK EXPERIENCE. After school, gaining work experience is vital to becoming a professional farmer and later to become an entrepreneur. Gaining experience can also be connected to education: school farms, school internships and experienced farmers working with new entrants connect theory and practice. Gaining work experience also lets transferors meet potential successors in an informal way. **Extra-familial farm succession?** Like in education, new farmers with a non-farming background may need more practical experience.

Transferors:
"We want to offer work and educate our workers."

Successors:
"We want to gain work experience and practice entrepreneurship."

MORE SUCCESSORS

Farm transfer in the last century became a process where a farmer (mostly one older man) hands over to a younger man. This is no longer always the case. Farms grow so big that multiple entrepreneurs run one farm together. Or starting farmers may want to add to the agricultural production with tourism, nature conservation or care on an existing farm. More successors are then needed, not always at the same time. Also the new successors are not always young, with some of the future farmers starting after academic studies, or crossing over from other professional careers like management.



The eight phases of the farm succession process:

1. Awareness
2. Wish
3. Education
4. Gain work experience
5. Search and decision
6. Form
7. Handing over and taking over
8. Running the farm

5. SEARCH AND DECISION. While gaining work experience, farmers may decide they want their own farming business. Then they have to search for a place to start or to take over, and research how this transfer may take place. **Extra-familial farm succession?** In 'search and decision' we find the main difference between continuing the family farm or extra-family succession. A child can continue and take over the family farm. Farmers who are not in a position to take over a family farm, need to actively search for land or a farm. Farmers who have no children who want to succeed, need to find a successor. The decision to transfer outside of the family still will be taken together with the children in most countries, due to tax and inheritance laws.



5. Search/ Decision

Transferors:
"We ask our children if they want to succeed. If not, we actively search to find successors."

Successors:
"We ask our parents if we can succeed. If not, we actively search to find a farm."

EXTRA-FAMILIAL

Farm transfer used to be a traditional process, where the eldest son takes over from his dad. This is no longer always the case. The youngest daughter or all the children together may want to take over. Or they do not. Outside of the family the extra-familial succession is then an option. Emotionally this can be difficult, as life and work on a farm are mixed and a long tradition is broken. The transferors in Austria usually stay at the farm after transmission, in France this is less common. Also financially and in terms of taxation (succession taxes) extra-family succession can be quite different from family succession. In the Netherlands for example, taxation laws favour business succession regardless of whether it's extra- or familial succession, in other countries they favour familial succession.

THE EIGHT PHASES OF THE FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm



6. Form

6. FORM. Potential transferors and successors think about the legal form in which they want to run the farm. They plan for the preferred working and living arrangements: do we want to live together or individually on farm or do we want to live separately from the farm? They also plan the management of the farm and the work arrangements over time. Also farmers plan a legal form and financing of the transfer. **Extra-familial farm succession?** Children are often familiar with the management and the shared living arrangements. New entrants need to familiarize themselves with living and working on a farm. Sometimes – but not necessarily – it is easier for new entrants to bring new ideas and change.

Transferors:

“We make a plan to hand over the farm, including living and working together and financing this transfer. We share and improve our plans together with our successor.”

Successors:

“We develop an idea of our future farm, including our wishes for living and working together and financing. We share and improve our plan with potential transferors.”



7. Handing/
Taking over

7. HANDING OVER AND TAKING OVER.

At some point while working together, the actual handing over of the farm takes place. This can be a single moment in time when the farm is bought, the transferor leaves the farm and the successor does the work. More common however is a gradual handing over, where transferor and successor work together for several years and the responsibilities gradually shift. Usually there is a clear moment when the takeover is communicated to other heirs, a contract is signed and the farm title is handed over. **Extra-familial farm succession?** In some countries children are treated differently in inheritance laws, tax and finance laws as opposed to extra-family succession. In that case, extra-family succession is more difficult.

Transferors:
“We hand over the farm.”

Successors:
“We take over the farm.”



8. Running
the farm

Transferors:

“We share some farm work or quit working on our farm.”

Successors:

“We take all responsibilities for working on our farm.”

8. RUNNING THE FARM. Transferors and successors run the farm together, with growing responsibilities for the successors. Eventually transferors quit working on the farm. **Extra-familial farm succession?** Running the farm together and living together largely depends on a country’s traditions. In Austria for example, with mostly family farms, the transferors are strongly connected with the house and the land, so they often stay on the farm. In France farmers often leave the farm after succession, even if their own children take over.

FINANCING

Farm succession requires more and more capital, at least to acquire the land and farm buildings. Financing possibilities and tax laws govern the transfer process. What is “smart” in terms of taxation? Usually this means that the potential transferor and the prospective farmer have to work together for some time to allow for a smooth transfer of assets. Actually being able to work together and getting two incomes from one farm is essential. Added to this, alternative financing strategies like land funds are being developed. These successful strategies require the farmer to be able to communicate with these investors.

*Source: The Farm Succession Process Adapted from Vieth, C., Roeckl, C., and Thomas, F. 2008. Höfe gründen und bewahren – ein Leitfadens für außerfamiliäre Hofübergaben und Existenzgründungen in der Landwirtschaft. Kassel University Press

TRANSFER TO AN EMPLOYEE

Gildas Guiavarch used to grow vegetables in the French town of Concarneau. At 48, he wanted to quit this physically demanding business. He transferred his farm to a long time employee, Gwénaëlle Le Sant. Soon afterwards Gildas Guiavarch happily started a job at a new garden in Quimper. "It is more relaxed."

AUTHOR ANTOINE BESNARD

PHOTO MATTHIEU CHANEL

How did the transfer work, we ask Gildas Guiavarch. "Gwénaëlle was my employee since 2008. She already lived and worked as a trainee to take over a farm. She is my little sister at heart. She really worked hard, and I think it is normal that I should ask her first. I do not think that I could have sold to anybody else. With the succession, everything goes very fast. There is a lot of money at stake. But it is very complicated, because my farm, it is my little baby." Still, Gildas Guiavarch was able to transfer.

The day you transferred your farm, was it special? "No, there was a real continuity. I took my job at Quimper in

September 2012, that is to say 4 months before the final day of the succession. I grew all our crops with the aim of having a successful harvest for fall and the beginning of winter for Gwénaëlle. It freed her mind and it made it possible for her to prepare her start in an easier way. In these last few months she worked completely autonomous, whilst still having the comfort of a salaried worker."

Read the whole interview in English on www.farmsuccession.eu

Interview by Antoine Besnard, FRAB Bretagne, published in 'Roads to successions in organic farming' by GAB-FRAB Bretagne. More information on www.agrobia-bretagne.org



MARTIN AND MARIA TAKE OVER WITH 'LEIBRENTE'

Farmers son Martin had four brothers, young parents and wanted to do things differently. So taking over at home was not an option. Luckily his mother found him an older couple willing to hand over their farm through the Austrian 'Leibrente' system. Now Martin and his wife Maria happily run their diverse farm.

AUTHOR | BERNADETT HANDL

Martin and Maria Brauchart are organic farmers since 1992, and stresses Martin, “we have a full-time business.” For the agricultural side of the farm may be small, with processing and direct sales a good living remains. Martin grew up on a conventional pig farm in the neighbourhood of the farm he took over. His parents were full-time farmers, and at age 15 he started talking with his parents about his wish to run a farm in the future. Because the visions of the two generations were different and he had four brothers, the prospects for him to get the family farm were small. He nevertheless got an education in agriculture and worked for agriculture-related firms. Still on the lookout for a farm.

And Martin got a farm through his parents.

Because: his mother got in touch with an old woman to buy pigs, and they talked about the difficulty of getting young people into agriculture. When Martin's mother told her that she has five sons, all willing to take over a farm, the old woman told her that her brother has been searching for a successor for a long time. Following this, the older couple looking for a successor got in touch with Martin and invited him to come to their farm. To his surprise, just after one visit the older couple offered Martin the farm. He took the

plunge and said yes. So they fixed an appointment with a notary a few days before Christmas and Martin was a farmer.

For the transferors it was important to know how

the successor wanted to run the cattle farm with cattle breeding and other activities. Martin didn't know about cattle breeding and organic agriculture at first, but he knew he wanted to manage the farm without pesticides and chemical fertilisers. For a start, they therefore agreed to work together for one year, for the transferor also to see how Martin would be running the farm. Martin happily agreed, also because he didn't know anything about cattle farming. They ran the farm two years like the transferor used to work before. Thus Martin found a farm without a successor where he could succeed. The takeover was financed with a 'Leibrente' contract, a special Austrian 'annuity of life' contract.

How does this 'Leibrente' work? With a contract

between two parties. The successor will operate the farm, pay a monthly fee to pay off the farm value and – here comes! – can reduce this monthly amount by the duty of care for the transferor. Care in kind, in this case the older couple still lives on the farm. By signing the 'Leibrente' contract the farm changes ownership



“We worked together
for two years.”

from the transferor to successor. Based on the value and life expectancy a monthly fee is agreed. Legally it is an aleatory contract, a difficult word for a ‘surprise’ clause in the contract. You do not know in advance what will happen.

After two years Martin met Maria, whom he later married. They are running the farm full-time. He is responsible for the arable farming and she for the direct selling and processing of the primary products. The livestock husbandry is their collective responsibility. They are trying to run the farm properly, while making sure that the work is not getting too excessive.

Two years after the succession, the transferor sadly died. There were some discussions with the children of the transferor, as they were not fully informed and wanted to use the farm as a vacation home. The children had advised their parents to rent out all the agricultural and forestry land. However, it was all legal and Martin and Maria are continuing the farm like the transferring couple intended. The transferors

didn’t want to rent the fields to a pig farmer, who ploughs all the grasslands to grow maize. They also didn’t want to live in a retirement home. These motivations guided them in realizing an extra-familial succession to make sure that the farm would be continued. Would Martin have had to buy the farm, or had there been less engagement from himself and help from his father and brothers, it wouldn’t have been possible for him to succeed.

The most important thing to Martin was the passion of the older farmer, which he tried to do justice. For him it was to try organic farming, to prove to himself that it’s possible to make a living as a farmer without pesticides and industrial products. He is quite happy and insists that succession is not a question of ownership, it should be a question of use of the land. With the ‘Leibrente’ system Martin and the transferor realized their own small scale ‘social land reform’.

Learn more about Maria en Martin Brauchart
<https://vimeo.com/130080041>

Read the whole interview in English on www.farmsuccession.eu

FARM SUCCESSION IN OUR COUNTRIES COMPARED

UTILISED AGRICULTURAL AREA, NUMBER OF FARM HOLDINGS AND DECLINE, % OF FARM MANAGERS UNDER 35 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER 55 YEARS OF AGE, AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE AND NUMBER OF ORGANIC FARMS

	France	Belgium	Austria	The Netherlands	European Union
Utilised agricultural area (UAA, in ha), 2013¹	27,739.430	1,307,900	2.726.890	1,847,570	174.613.900 (EU-28 total)
Average farm size (in ha), 2013¹	58,7	34,6	19,4	27,4	16,1 (EU-28 Average)
Number of farm holdings, 2000²	663.810	61.710	199.470	101.550	-
Number of farm holdings, 2013²	472.210	37.760	140.430	67.480	10.841.000 (Total number in EU-28)
Decline in number of farm holdings (in number of farms), 2000-2013²	191.600	23.950	59.040	34.070	-
Decline in number of farm holdings (in %), 2000-2013²	28,86%	38,81%	29,60%	33,55%	-
% of farm managers < 35 years of age, 2013³	8,81%	3,99%	10,94%	3,08%	5,37 % (EU-28)
% of farm managers > 55 years of age, 2013³	39,35%	47,96 %	28,16%	47,87 %	54,80% (EU-28)
% of the workforce working in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing sector), 2012⁴	2,8 %	1,3 %	4,5 %	2,5 %	5,2% (EU-27)
Number of organic farm-holdings, 2013⁵	25.467	1.487	21.810	1.646	-
Area of organic farming as a % of total UAA, 2013⁵	3,86%	4,56%	19,46%	2,56%	-

1. Source: Eurostat, Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics, 2015 edition.
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/9/91/Farm_structure_YB2016.xlsx

2. Source: Eurostat, number of agricultural holdings.
[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Farm_structure_statistics_\(20.12.2015\)](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Farm_structure_statistics_(20.12.2015))
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/6/67/Agricultural_holdings%2C_2000%E2%80%9310_YB14.png
 *Calculations Farm Succession Europe

3. Source: Eurostat, Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics, 2015 edition.
<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

4. Source: Eurostat, Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics, 2013 edition.
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/statistics/agricultural/2013/pdf/b0-1-2_en.pdf

5. Source: FiBL (2015): Data on organic agriculture 2005-2013.
<http://www.organicworld.net/statistics/>

Of the 10.8 million farm managers in the EU-28 agricultural sector in 2013, there were relatively few young farm managers. On average, for all EU Member States, managers younger than 35 accounted for only 6 % of the total number of all managers. On the other hand, more than half of the farm managers, (some 6 million farm managers, or 55.8 %) were aged 55 or above and thus close to or beyond the regular retirement age (Eurostat, 2015).

In France, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands farming is still mainly a family business. The average age of farmers is increasing in every country to over 50 and even 55, as is the number of older farmers without a successor (at least one third of farmers over 55 has no successor). More than 3% of farmers a year stop farming, resulting in a decline of 30% of farms in a decade. Remaining farms grow in size. In every country we witness an increase in extra-family succession and even in succession by new entrants from outside of agriculture. This is a small trend, but it is increasing.

AUTHOR | MARIA VAN BOXTEL

CAPITAL NEEDED INCREASES

Land prices and consequently farm prices are increasing rapidly. Land prices average from € 5.500 per hectare in France up till € 54.900 per hectare in the Netherlands for agricultural land. Only France has an active policy on stabilizing land prices through SAFER, a public-private body actively monitoring land prices with the ability to buy land. Due to high land and farm prices, the capital required to start a farm is very high in every country, especially in respect to the low level of income which can be achieved by farming. To be able to retire, farmers need to sell their farm at a high price, because investing in the farm usually takes priority over putting money in pension schemes. Adding to demand for farmland is the pressure of neighbouring farmers wanting to buy the land to increase the size of their own farm, as well as the pressure on land needs from outside farming for building, nature or infrastructure.

RENT OR LEASE

Apart from buying a farm and land, renting or leasing land is a good possibility to start a farm. Tenancy laws give excellent rights to current tenants, because protecting their farm continuity is important. Although rent prices may be low and are not favourable to the landlord and -owner, owners do not sell the land as the EU premium they receive is important to supplement their income, like in Belgium. Up to 70% (Belgium) to even 75% (France) of the agricultural land is being rented out, which gives the user a lower security and thus borrowing capacity and results in low land mobility. However, renting land offers an excellent and low cost starting position, in all four countries.



I found a successor, but she really wanted to be a baker instead of a grain farmer. I thought she was mad, but I gave her a chance. Now she bakes the most delicious breads from our grain and it is a huge success. She contracted out the farm work to a neighbour!

TAX ADVANTAGES FAVOUR CONTINUITY INSIDE THE FAMILY

Continuation of farming is important to most countries. Because farming is family based and capital transfer is very high on farm takeover, most countries give a variety of tax advantages if a family member takes over the farm. Either in allowing farmers to value their farm according to a lower 'agrarian' value instead of market value and/or in high tax exemptions on the donation parents make to the child taking over. Countries do not generally give these same exemptions to non-family members. Only the Netherlands has a tax policy which makes no distinction between family and extra-family business transfer: if you start with farm transfer in time and the new farmer continues for 5 years after transfer, there is no tax difference between a child and an extra-family successor.

Read more about each individual country and farm succession on www.farmsuccession.eu

NEW WAYS OF FINANCING SUCCESSION

Most farm transfers are financed by family and/or a bank. A small number of new entrant farmers is seeking new ways to start. Belgium and Austria show a growing number of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms, where citizens take part of the risk. France and Belgium have successful land funds 'Terre de Liens', 'Terre-en-vue' and 'De Landgenoten', buying farm lands financed by citizens and renting them out to (starting) farmers. Each country is experimenting with some form of farm funding in addition to bank funding. Even large scale investment companies rediscover the stability of investment in land, they can offer rent agreements which are attractive to new farmers.

YOUNG FARMERS' SUBSIDIES HELP – IN PART

The four countries use some form of starting subsidies or investment subsidies for starting farmers under 40 years of age. Usually some form of young farmers support exists through EU subsidies. These are also available for extra-family successors and new entrants. But in the way the conditions are set up, they strongly favour family succession (especially in Belgium and Austria) or favour taking over existing farms with the same business model (especially in Belgium). In the Netherlands this young farmers subsidy is newly introduced (2014), and even the young farmers association is unhappy about the limited amount of support (maximum 20.000 euro) and strict investment criteria. The higher grant and long term availability make the French young farmers support more effective. The age limit is sometimes a problem for new entrants seeking a second career in agriculture, as they are usually older.

I thought I'd sell my farm and live in the village within a year. It took me four years of working together and one failed attempt with a potential successor who knew nothing of pig production.

RETIREMENT POSSIBLE FOR FARMERS?

Countries make a pension available to all citizens (the Netherlands), all workers (France) or through additional private pension schemes (all four countries). As farmers generally choose to invest in their farms and not in a pension scheme, usually a big part of their pension is either based on staying on the farm or on the sale of the farm. Thus farmers pensions are usually low in all four countries. So all countries struggle with an ageing farmers' population having no money to retire on. This is especially difficult for farmers' wives who were not an official 'worker' – when widowed they often have no choice but to sell up. The Netherlands offer a basic state pension for all citizens. Austria has an interesting lifelong, privately paid pension possibility for farmers in the 'Leibrente' contract (see also page 10).

INCREASING SUPPORT FOR FARM SUCCESSION

Witnessing the decline in farms and farm workers – sometimes combined with rural unemployment and depopulation – governments, farmers' organisations and the financial sector actively engage farmers to think about and act upon their succession. Mostly this contains supporting projects (the Netherlands), actively handing out starting and investment subsidies (France, Belgium and Austria) or even a national policy on farm succession (France) with instruments to aid farm succession like a farm transfer diagnosis, a matching platform and subsidies on advice and guidance.

NEW ENTRANTS, NEW PLANS

We witness an increasing trend in new entrants wanting a different type of production and marketing. New farmers wanting a small business they can afford, wishing a short supply chain, a part-time farm company or combining production and processing. There can be a mismatch with the farms offered for takeover. Experienced farmers offer large scale production farms, highly specialized and capitalized. It can be difficult for both parties to imagine the possibilities to match in these cases.

“CUSTOMER RELATIONS ARE ALSO IMPORTANT TO HAND OVER”

“Gradually handing over: for us this is a nice way. For years we have worked closely with our staff and our customers. It is not easy to transfer your farm at once, because you can get isolated socially. This gradual transfer to Fred gave us the possibility to develop other interests. Moreover, it gave Fred the chance to get to know the staff and the customers. Especially in organic farming, where customer relations and loyalty are very important. It takes years to build a good customer base.” **Vegetable farmer André Vollenberg from Grubbenvorst, The Netherlands, passes on his business outside of the family to Fred Willemsen.** Read more on page 41 or on www.farmsuccession.eu

“I use about 50 hectares for growing cereals and organic horticulture. My rented land of 6,3 hectares of horticulture surrounding my farm came up for sale. I needed to find € 170.000 quickly to buy it. Luckily land cooperative Terre-en-vue made it possible to buy the land.” **Jean-François Depienne continues with his successful farm Bio Lorraine in Arlon, Belgium.**



Vegetable farmer André Vollenberg
from Grubbenvorst in The Netherlands
Photo's Dick Boschloo

TRANSFER A COMMUNALLY OWNED FARM

Michel Saunier was one of the four members of a communally owned farm, in France called a GAEC. An extra challenge: four successors to find!

AUTHOR ANTOINE BESNARD | PHOTO MATTHIEU CHANEL

Michel Saunier and his associates started to think about succession early. They were inspired by a group of colleagues talking about new production systems. “In the 90’s, we gathered a group of farmers from twelve dairy farms in Southern Loire-Atlantique and Nord-Vendée together, to think about changing our usual practices of milk production to a new system of grazed pastures. This GRADEL group was aimed at both mutual technical aid and collective reflection on the economic consequences plus employment needs. We shared our accountancy results. The question of succession was introduced when we talked about production: we thought about the longevity of our systems. We didn’t want to invest too much capital into the system, because this would make it difficult to transfer. We were about fifteen years before the first farmers in our group wanted to retire, the first around 2005. Since we started discussing succession within GRADEL, each retiring farmer was successful in finding a new candidate, around twelve successions.”

A succession with several takeovers spread out through time. “I was an associate of a jointly owned farm, a GAEC, which started in 1967. Each time

an associate retired, we found him a successor. So we had to face the question of succession with several transfers spread out through time. Always with these two questions: how to find a successor and how to ensure that the transition goes well. Not only the transfer of the capital, but also of the acquired skills. We established an agreement between the communal farm, the GAEC, and a candidate for succession. We always look for candidates in the same way. We commit ourselves to finding our successor three years before our own retirement and actively welcome young people for internships, and we do more. This way we meet potential candidates.”

Transfer of capital and not through wages. “If it works out with the young farmer, he becomes an employee of the farm for two years. He gets the same working conditions and the same salary as the other associates. In our organisation, the real income is higher than the actual money transfer that serves to pay the wages. The rest, the balance, is his share in the farm capital. In case we break up, it stops and the employee was paid for his working time and he loses his share in the capital. If he stays, which was always the case with us, the successor starts to capitalize. The non-available part that

was not distributed as direct income is considered as a participation to the capital. In this way, when he becomes a full associate after two years, the young farmer has already started to collect capital in the farm. If needed, the rest is taken over by the whole farm. Linked to the reflections in our GRADEL group, we put a limit within the jointly owned farm GAEC for the capital owned per individual farmer. We made the amount such that the young farmer is able to take over almost his whole share with the young farmer’s subsidy the state grants us. He does not need to lower his wage to gain capital. We managed to get four new members of our GAEC in this way, and with success.”









Read the whole interview on www.farmsuccession.eu
Interview by Antoine Besnard, FRAB Bretagne, published in ‘Roads to successions in organic farming’ by GAB-FRAB Bretagne. More information on www.agrobio-bretagne.org



TOOLS FOR A SMOOTH FARM TRANSFER

We – the participants of the Erasmus+ Project ‘Farm Succession in Europe’ – collected the tools and methods we use for a smooth and successful farm transfer. These tools are used and improved by us. We now share them with you! If you have comments, experiences or improvements to suggest, feel free to share them at www.farmsuccession.eu.

THE EIGHT PHASES OF THE FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS

FARM SUCCESSION IN PROCESS	 1. Awareness	 2. Wish	 3. Education	 4. Experience	 5. Search/ Decision	 6. Form	 7. Handing/ Taking over	 8. Running the farm
Guides to farm transfer: for farmers and advisors	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Film Portraits and Screenings	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Coffee Talk on farm succession	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■
Mentoring in farm transfer	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Matching Platform on farm succession	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Farms to practice your skills: School Farm and Test Farm	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	□
Analysis: farm potential	□	■	■	■	■	□	□	■
Collective Training ‘preparing my farm succession’	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	□
Case Study on farm succession	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■
Role Play ‘meeting a young farmer’	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■
Economic Valuation	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■
Land Fund: Land Co-op Terre-en-vue	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■

Here we give a short description of each tool. Additional information, like examples or the excel sheets to calculate a valuation, you can find online at www.farmsuccession.eu. For the tool ‘Research and Science’ see www.farmsuccession.eu

Legend:
 ■ very useful tool in this phase
 ■ also useful tool in this phase
 □ tool not used in this phase

TOOL 1

GUIDES TO FARM TRANSFER: FOR FARMERS AND ADVISORS

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

FARMERS GUIDES

A guidebook on farm transfer directed at farmers is a useful tool to make entrepreneurs aware of the need to start thinking about future succession. A successful example is the guide developed by the advisory network FRCIVAM Bretagne and its partners. The guide is printed (3000 copies a year), available for free to the public and distributed at public events for farmers. The target group are transferors and potential transferors. AUTHOR | MARIE POISSON



CONTENT

The Chamber of Agriculture in Brittany built up a network with banks, agricultural syndicates, cooperatives, accountants, authorities and other partners. The network aims to support potential transferors.

The guide on farm transfer gives a 30 page overview of the farm succession process. It provides a step by step tool for farmers to anticipate, decide and act on farm transfer. Readers can easily identify questions and answers about different topics, like the minimum age to be retired, amount of retirement available, declarations to stop the farming activity, subsidies and workshops and contact information. The guide also gives helpful checklists, for instance on what to talk about with the bank. A blank page to write notes and stories of transferors and advisors is included. Each partner in the network is mentioned under contacts and promotes and distributes the guide.

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
First contact: a way to attract farmers	Impersonal
Developing a guide makes working together with all the partners easier	Each farm succession case is specific – a document can't sum up and clarify all the different situations
Raises awareness of farm transfer as a process	Can lead to self-promotion of partners
Administrative information is easier to understand in print or online	It gives the farmer a lot to do, hiding the main problem of farm succession: spot the transferors and contact them

CONTACT

Country: France

Organisation and contact: FRCIVAM Bretagne, Marie Poisson

Website: www.transmission-en-agriculture.com

More information? accueil@civam-bretagne.org

OTHER EXAMPLES

- The farmers guide 'Ekoland special Opvolging gezocht', developed by Landgilde in the Netherlands. To reduce costs, it was printed as a special edition of the monthly magazine Ekoland. Distribution to all magazine subscribers ensures a good attention amongst all organic farmers. Download at www.landgilde.nl/zelfstudie
- The young farmers guide 'Hofübergabe/Hofübernahme' developed by Landjugend, the Austrian rural youth association, gives an excellent overview of the Austrian context. Download at: www.landjugend.at



HANDBOOK FOR ADVISORS

A handbook on farm transfer written for advisors will give them ideas, tools and recommendations about advising on farm successions and new entrants in farming. A useful example is the handbook 'Transmettre les fermes et s'installer demain. Accompagner les cédants et les futurs agriculteurs' developed by the French InterAfocg network of adult education.

AUTHOR | MATHILDE LERICHE



CONTENT

InterAfocg and its members produced the handbook 'Transmettre les fermes et s'installer demain' for facilitators and advisors to use in their daily work with transferors and future farmers. The handbook has three parts:

1. Guiding transferors, with the subsections: from idea to project, analysis, mobilization of your resources, try-out of your project. Each subsection gives steps with objectives, tools and advice.
2. Guiding new entrants or successors, with the same subsections and similar steps.
3. A compilation of educational tools to be used guiding the transfer process.

CONTACT

Country: France

Organisation and contact: InterAfocg, Mathilde Leriche

Website: www.interafocg.org/publications_5.php

More information? interafocg@interafocg.org

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Gives a global overview in guiding farm succession	No individual solutions
Gathers all the partners in this process	More theoretical than practical, not always the answer to a specific problem of a farmer
Gives advisors choices between a lot of tools and approaches to work on farm transfer	
Focus on group work	



“EXPERIENCED
FARMERS GIVE ME
USEFUL **ADVICE**”

Annette Harberink started Natuurderij Keizersrande in The Netherlands - Photo Dick Boschloo

“I made my own commission of advisors. With people who know what they are doing, like a dairy farmer I worked with as an intern. He comes to my farm, walks around and tells me: ‘feed more hay to your cows’. People who tell me how to improve my farm, they are useful to me.” *Annette Harberink, started a dairy/nature farm from scratch in the Netherlands*

Did you ever doubt your transfer to an employee? Gildas Guiavarch is not impressed. “I totally trusted Gwénaëlle. Here, everybody has always been doing everything. I always wanted employees who were able to complete all the tasks, it made it possible to have skilled workers and it improved their skills as well. In case of a problem, they are more able to take the relevant decisions. It takes more time to explain, but once it is learned, it works.” *Gildas Guiavarch, retiring farmer in France*

“We didn’t want to invest too much capital into the system, because this would make it difficult to transfer.” *Michel Saunier, farmer on a jointly owned farm in France*

Read more on www.farmsuccession.eu

TOOL 2

FILM PORTRAITS AND SCREENINGS

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



To raise awareness about farming and farm succession and to motivate potential future farmers the Austrian NEL network successfully developed three film portraits about succession and new entrant farmers. The NEL network uses film screenings with an added discussion to meet farmers: potential transferors and potential future farmers.

AUTHOR | BERNADETT HANDL

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Working time: for the film portraits is 2-5 days, depending on your skills. The working time for film screenings is 2-5 days.

Target group: depends on the topic – potential future farmers, potential future transferors, people who want to start a farm, transferors, successors and people interested in agriculture, general public and politicians.

Objective: to create recognition for new entrant farming. The film portraits and the screenings excellently communicate the topics of farming, extra-familial farm succession and farm start-ups. The film portraits are a useful tool for organisations that support starting farmers and the process of farm succession.



CONTENT

New entrant farmers and extra-familial farm succession are not given much attention in Austria. To change this, NEL launched a film project to make their stories visible. NEL filmmakers travelled through Austria interviewing starting farmers, their farms and daily work. The films promote that there are people who have successfully started an agricultural career, contrary to the image of people leaving agriculture and farming dying out as a desirable occupation. Another important aim of the film project is to motivate and encourage people who





are thinking about starting up their own farm and to show them successful and viable good practice examples. Thus potential farmers should be inspired and encouraged. As of 2015 three short film portraits of about 10 minutes length have been published in German and further productions are planned.

Film screenings with up to 150 people followed by discussions with new entrant farmers and potential farmers are used to get in touch with different people. The movies are also accessible online. Watch an example at vimeo.com/user40898122/videos

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Pictures and films can transport a message simply and attract many people	Only a certain fraction of a very complex reality can be shown (danger of romanticisation)
With volunteers a film project is also possible on a low budget	Nobody wants to participate in a portrait on failed farm transfers
'Film Portraits' are a good foundation for starting discussion processes	
Obstacles of farming and farm transfer can be shown and can counteract the romanticism of farming	

DEVELOPMENT

Film portraits could be combined with meetings on farm transfer, like the coffee talk with potential transferors and successors as guests. Screenings may take place on a farm, where a farm succession took place or where the potential transferor is searching for a successor.

OTHER EXAMPLES

The NEL film project was inspired and is linked to the project www.future-farmers.net, a Dutch and European initiative showing new entrant farmers all over Europe on film.

CONTACT

Country: Austria

Organisation and contact: NEL - Netzwerk Existenzgründung in der Landwirtschaft, Johann Gangl, Bernadett Handl

Website: www.existenzgruendunglandwirtschaft.wordpress.com

More information? nel.office@gmx.at

START-UP WITH VEGETABLES

Dominik Dax does not come from a farm, but started farming anyway in 2014 in Kremstal, a region in Upper Austria.

AUTHOR | ISABELLA LANG

The young student Dominik Dax and his girlfriend had wished for their own farm business for some years. Dominik started as an agricultural science student in Vienna, but quit university after a few years to start with a more practical education to become a skilled agricultural worker. During that time he gathered work experience on different vegetable farms. Dominik knows that this practical training and work experience were most helpful, but not quite enough. Still he started his own farm business.

“In 2014 we started our own small vegetable production on rented land of 0.5 hectare with two plastic tunnels. The land is part of a farm which belongs to good friends, so it was easy to set up a rent contract. We started with a few chickens

and a wheelbarrow; there was no need for a lot of starting capital.” Dominik chose the farm well: “Former vegetable growing on this farm was a big advantage, because the basic infrastructure like a cooling room, irrigation ditch and a washing room was still there.” When Dominik and his girlfriend started farming, they allowed themselves a ‘trial year’ where they tried to cultivate all kinds of vegetables just to get a feeling for what is possible on this specific site and what they preferred personally.

From the very beginning, selling their

products was never a problem. Luckily at the time they started their farm, the first Foodcoop was formed in the region. A Foodcoop is a consumer cooperative to buy and distribute mainly organic and locally produced products from small

scale farmers. In Austria there are about 50 Foodcoops and the number continues to rise. As Dominik already had a good network in the region, it was easy for them to work with the cooperative. Apart from that, they are the only organic vegetable farm in the whole district, so their products are very popular. On top of working with the Foodcoop, they have a stall on a farmers market once a week and sell to an organic restaurant and to a local shop.

Dominik and his girlfriend looked for land for a few years. After finishing school, they decided to rent from friends. Also their plastic tunnels were bought second hand from friends. Thus their investment costs remain low and no financial aid or loans were needed to start up this small vegetable farm. Dominik has a life outside of farming and is happy with the combination of farm work, selling and enjoying the good life.

Learn more <https://vimeo.com/130081395>
Read the whole interview on www.farmsuccession.eu



TOOL 3

COFFEE TALK ON FARM SUCCESSION

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

Presenting successful farm transfers in an informal way is the main aim of the Coffee Talk, a tool the FRCIVAM network has been using for the past ten years. It is also successful to promote the exchange of experiences about farm succession between transferors and potential transferors.

AUTHOR MARIE POISSON | PHOTO DICK BOSCHLOO

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Working time: preparation: find a place and a person, who is willing to be the host; make flyers; write articles; invite people; prepare the evening; be there and moderate. The event takes 2-3 hours (an evening).

Costs: the CIVAM network pays the costs (except drinks in a pub).

Target group: transferors and potential transferors.

Group size: 10-20, registration in advance is useful for catering.

Place: at a farm or in a pub.

PR: articles in newspaper, local press, word-of-mouth advertising between the farmers.

CONTENT

The FRCIVAM network uses an informal coffee talk to exchange experiences amongst future farmers, but also uses a coffee talk with older farmers since 2010. Why? Because participants seemed unwilling to exchange in a formal setting like a training. FRCIVAM concluded it needed to build a base of trust and confidence first. This trusting atmosphere can be built if the meeting is informal and farmers hear directly from another farmer – a peer who invites them to the talk – that it is possible to transfer. The Coffee Talk is organised at a farm or in a pub.



Ideally, the event takes place in the evening, because then farmers are more freely available. A nice location is very important to build a relaxing atmosphere for informal exchanges.

Facilitators communicate about the event on newspapers and local press, but invitations by the farmers themselves by word of mouth makes the organisation much easier. The hosting farmer can help to organize the evening and invite neighbours and peers. Most of the neighbours and other participants are just curious and interested to visit the farm, and then get

an insight in transfer. A Coffee Talk mixes farmers who don't know how to transfer with farmers who are aware of farm succession.

The event starts with a tour of the farm. Then the participants present themselves and their farm. The role of the facilitator is to moderate, to make sure that the presentation is mainly about the farmer and succession, not only focussing on the number of cows the farmer owns or the technical data on milk production. Then the host, a transferor himself and sometimes the partner, talks about their successful farm transfer. Additionally the transferor and successor talk about their experiences. Subsequently leave time for questions about the transferors case – some are technical, others more general. At the end of the Coffee Talk it is very important to keep informal time to share a glass and to talk to each other and with the facilitators about their own situation.



Photo: FRCIVAM

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Relaxed atmosphere	Find a host and people who are able and willing to talk about their experience
Organisation: bring flyers, drinks and cakes, publish articles.	Too many participants
Host is involved in the organisation : invites public, puts the place in order, thinks about their own situation	For people who don't communicate well: a small group session could help and at the start of the session, the advisor presents rules on communication (non judging)
Free exchange	
Free entrance	Distance of driving : about 40-50 km
Openness	

DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER EXAMPLES

The location really influences the group conversation: choosing an old farm house is very successful, because participants are curious to visit the farm, peers appreciate to be welcomed by colleagues and the host is involved in the organisation.

A Coffee Talk has also been used without any facilitator. An older farm couple has invited their

neighbours to their house to talk about succession. The participants seemed satisfied to talk freely. However, it requires more time and energy for the host.

A Coffee Talk has also been used for a more specific subject: transfer my dairy farm. Dairy farmers feel more involved, but it can exclude other farmers. They could talk about technical ways to produce; often, behind these technical questions they raise other aspects. We mixed the public by inviting both transferors and potential successors. It is difficult for both parties to then break the ice. In our experience it results in a less trusting atmosphere as it will be seen as a matching meeting.

In Belgium, a similar tool is practiced by Terre-en-vue about land. It is called Tuper'terre, and mixes new farmers and older farmers to connect them in their search for land in an informal way.

CONTACT

Country: France Organisation: FRCIVAM Bretagne
Website: www.paysans-creactiv-bzh.org<http://www.interafocg.org/afocg69>
More information? accueil@civam-bretagne.org

TOOL 4

MENTORING IN FARM TRANSFER

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

The Agricultural Chamber of Austria and partners successfully use mentoring in the farm transfer process to achieve a smooth transfer. AUTHOR | BERNADETT HANDL
PHOTOS | DICK BOSCHLOO

CONTENT

Farm transfer can be a very emotional process. Not talking about certain aspects or communicating in a harsh manner can negatively impact the transfer. A guidance or mentoring process may help the participants to find their way in transferring the farm to the satisfaction of all. The mentoring consists of individual guidance of the transferor and the successor for a certain period of time. Different organisations in the network offer different aspects: some are more focussed on facts (like the legal framework or social rights), other partners focus on interpersonal relationships, communication, the history of participants and the farm. Mentoring can be done privately or in a group.

Mentoring includes information on the process of farm transfer, legal framework, emotional aspects, personal changes but also changes in business or responsibilities at work, content of contracts and funding for successors. The most important questions that will be worked on are:

- How is the situation in the family and at work?
- What should be shared and what separated? How do we share responsibilities?
- Which agreements do we need from children or other heirs?

During the process of farm transfer there are a lot of obstacles. Therefore it is very important to be well prepared. Guidance and mentoring helps with problems and topics the transferors and successors wouldn't otherwise think about themselves.



ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Experts in the process guide the process of transfer	Time intensive: all participants have to make time for the mentoring or seminars
An objective person, not included in the process, helps with the legal frames and communication	Long distance, costs involved
In groups the participants learn from each other	Usually aimed only at in-family farm transfer

DEVELOPMENT

Recently, extra-family farm transfer became more relevant. Therefore the advisors on farm succession are getting more familiar with extra-family farm transfer and its specific requirements.

OTHER EXAMPLES

The trainings by the Dutch young farmers association NaJK called ‘on the road to farm transfer’, ‘financial insight’ and ‘Rabobank successors perspective’ target successors and starting farmers and focus on communication skills as well as on succession

information. The Rabobank Successors Perspective (Opvolgers perspectief) is a series of 10 meetings in which beginning farmers get an idea of their farm transfer possibilities, their wishes and opportunities and the financial possibilities of farm transfer. This training is given in association with the young farmers association NaJK. The NaJK provides young farmers with a first training on ‘on the road to farm transfer’ (Bewust op weg naar bedrijfsovername) and ‘financial insight’ (financieel inzicht) as well as a separate training for farmers partners ‘also your business’ (ook jouw zaak). It is given by independent trainers who work for Rabobank, a cooperative bank and the agricultural bank in the Netherlands. Thus these partners provide a successful training of several regional groups of young farmers every year to prepare them for farm succession. The young farmers association NaJK uses their own young facilitators and successfully works together with accountancy firms and banks, because these financial advisors are amongst the first to hear of a farm succession. More information? www.bedrijfsvernameportal.nl/cursussen/ Landgilde uses a checklist of steps to make a farm transferable and provides mentoring, see also tool 5 on the next pages.



TOOL 5

MATCHING PLATFORM ON FARM SUCCESSION

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

Noticing an increase in extra-family farm succession and wanting to improve the success rate of these farm transfers, the biodynamic association of the Netherlands, Warmonderhof school and Land & Co advisory service created the matching platform Landgilde. Its main objective is matching potential transferors and successors.

AUTHOR | MARIA VAN BOXTEL

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Working time: general management about 6 days a year, time used varies greatly with each match. Preparation: build website and database with farmers, promotion of the website. The actual matching involves an intake with farmers with a checklist, put up and promote matching ad.

Cost: website approximately € 500,- a year, maintenance of database.

Target group: new and experienced farmers seeking working places or succession on farm

Group size: 20 to 50 advertisements a year, 500+ facebook friends, 600 visits a month, a good portion of the total target group of about 1.500 organic farmers and 8.000 multifunctional farmers in the Netherlands.

Registration: farmers write their own ads or call the facilitators, who put ads on the website.

PR: direct communication on website www.landgilde.nl, facebook and in organic farmer magazine 'Ekoland'.

CONTENT

Landgilde is a matching website to inform farmers about work or learning opportunities on a farm. And Landgilde informs farmers about farms needing a successor. Organic and multifunctional farmers can add an advertisement themselves for volunteers, interns, workers or successors. Young or new farmers can also apply with an ad. Advertisements for work on a farm and for farm succession are subject to a selection process by a farm advisor, to guarantee ads that give clarity on what the farmer really has to offer. Farmers then have to fill out a questionnaire on aim, price, living arrangements and selection process. Placing an advertisement is free of charge, if help is required in selecting an appropriate candidate, a fee is charged. For transfer the farmer cannot be contacted directly, only through a facilitator, to prevent misuse and help with selection. Each ad is online for 3 months and the farmer receives an automatic e-mail to update.

The Matching Platform only works with constant communication on farm succession. Landgilde has a network of farm advisors as well as a network of lawyers, notaries and accountants familiar with organic farming and extra-family farm succession.

An important part of the matching platform is the checklist of questions farmers should ask themselves before the search. Questions are asked of both parties. These questions are about the farmer's core values, living arrangements during and after succession, exploitation of the farm (how to run it and make money during and after succession), capital needed to transfer the farm, how and when to inform customers and businesses, financing and taxes, legal arrangements, risks, rules about the farm transfer process and communication (when to tell who, how to celebrate if successful). For serious farm transfer

candidates on both sides, Landgilde will ask the farmers to complete the answers to these questions before starting the conversation with each other, so you know what you want before starting the farm transfer. After completing both checklists, the farmers may then rewrite their lists into one document for farm transfer. Of course this may change over time, but only with expressed permission from both partners in the farm succession. This process can be done with a farm advisor.

Farm advisors and coaches associated with the biodynamic association – who already regularly meet up with most biodynamic farmers – also use a checklist of phases in farm transfer so as to start the conversation on farm transfer at the appropriate time in a farmer's life.

www.landgilde.nl

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Easy communication about farming opportunities	Only works in context of meetings, courses, school and other contact with farmers
Low cost communication (facebook) and farmers' magazine (Ekoland)	

CONTACT

Country: The Netherlands

Organisation: Landgilde

Website: www.landgilde.nl

More information? Maria van Boxtel, mvanboxtel@landco.nl

DEVELOPMENTS AND OTHER EXAMPLES

Adding to the group of farm advisors, notaries and real estate agents who work with the Landgilde checklist increases the network. We plan to improve by adding more contact moments.

Paysans Creativ, the French matching platform for creative farming is part of a website on farm transfer by InPAct network with 2000 visits each month. Each ad can be accessed freely, but the future farmer cannot contact the transferor directly. Thus, facilitators could give them other ads that the future farmers hadn't seen before, and could also screen candidates. Each ad is online for 3 months and the facilitator receives an automatic e-mail to update it.

www.paysans-creativ-bzh.org

Hofgründer, the main matching platform in Germany by the Stiftung Agrarkultur leben targets both potential farm transferors and successors. In addition to information and advertisement space, Hofgründer provides advising services for transferors and successors, seminars about farm start-ups and farm succession, education for advisors and publicity for the subject of extra-familial farm succession.

www.hofgruender.de/hofboerse.html

The ÖBV – Via Campesina Austria Hofbörse is an Austrian matching platform mostly aimed at small scale farms and succession.

www.viacampesina.at/cm3/hofboerse.html



“WE WORK EVENINGS OR WEEKENDS”

“We are the fourth user, so we often use the machines in the evening or on weekends. Or even on a Sunday” *Florian Ghyselinck, LONK farmer 2015*

Can you combine your own farm with school classes and practical work? “I like to think so”, laughs Sune van der Woude. “But maybe our teachers do not agree. Of course it is a condition that you can combine school and the farm. This is why we work evenings or weekends.”

Do you learn entrepreneurial skills? “Yes, because we run the farm together and are entrepreneurs. We have to compromise, we learn a lot. And we know each other much better now.” *Sune van der Woude and Michael Mans, LONK farmers 2015*

Photo LONK



TOOL 6

FARMS TO PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



SCHOOL FARM

To practice farming skills, Warmonderhof School for biodynamic farming in Dronten, The Netherlands, offers fourth year students a one year period to learn how to farm and how to be an entrepreneur on their 18 hectare school farm.

AUTHOR | MARIA VAN BOXTEL

CONTENT

The Warmonderhof school is attached to four farms on site and on these farming students get their practical farming education. LONK School farm is an extra, fifth farm at some distance from the school, and this farm is aimed at teaching a select group of students to become entrepreneurs. LONK farm is run by new students (2 to 4) every year, they are advised by a nearby farmer, but take their own decisions. Warmonderhof school and the school farm foundation select the students to farm for one year. Conditions: students submit a plan to farm that follows rules of organic farming, has 1:6 rotation with at least two rest crops. The students hire farm equipment from a group of nearby farmers, order their own seeds and manure, and sell their own produce. This is a big challenge for them, but also gives them a possibility to experiment. The nearby farmer Joost van Strien gives the young entrepreneurs his guidance. A committed farmer with experience and an enthusiastic attitude towards knowledge transfer nearby is invaluable for succeeding with a project like LONK farm. The school foundation helps the students with the financial side. All farming costs including land lease are subtracted from the farm returns; the rest after taxes is the students' profit for a year's farming. Individual farmers who have young farmers in training on their farm also give out land to young farmers to learn to be an entrepreneur on a small

scale (maybe 3 ha in rotation on the bigger farm). This gives young farmers the opportunity to practice entrepreneurship and develop their own business contacts.

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Excellent learning experience for young farmers on entrepreneurial skills as well as professionalism as a farmer	You do need land which can be leased out and you need a farm and/or teaching community around the school farm
Low costs with time spent by teachers and willing farmers, students earn their own farming costs back	Small target group (2 to 4 students a year)

CONTACT

Contact for LONK school farm:
run by Stichting Schoolboerderij Dronten, Ton Kempenaar, www.cahvilentum.nl and Warmonderhof school, Ruud Hendriks, www.warmonderhof.nl

"I FIND IT MUCH EASIER TO START THIS WAY"

Yoann is planning to work together with Claire, who took over her father's vegetable farm a year and a half ago. While getting the farm ready to start a new activity – he plans to install a baking oven– he wanted to be able to start baking bread and test recipes, improve his knowledge about grain production, start finding customers and working together with Claire in the everyday management.

While being a CIAP trainee, Yoann bakes bread on the farm of his local mentor, adjusts his financial plan and gets ready to see the banks and has found a market and a farmer's shop to sell his bread; all this is possible without taking any big financial risks as his activity is still hosted by the CIAP. "I find it much easier to start this way," he says happily.

Photo Dick Boschloo



Photo Dick Boschloo

TOOL 6

FARMS TO PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



TEST FARM

To facilitate the start-up of new entrant farmers, a test farm was created where a new farmer may test his plans for one year. The partners in de CIAP44 or Coopérative d’Installation en Agriculture Paysanne who operate the test farm in Loire-Atlantique in France, turned it into a cooperative in 2013, making it easier for institutions and organisations to get involved in the project.

AUTHOR | MARIE POISSON

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The Test Farm is aimed at training starting farmers.

The starting farmer can use the land of the Test Farm for one year. In this year training is subsidized in 200h of training about being an entrepreneur, taught by advisors. The rest of the year is dedicated to the practice of farming, being trained by farmers and encouraged by a group of people (citizens, farmers, representatives).

Materials needed are a plot of land and a group of people to encourage the starting farmer

Group size: 10 to 20 starting farmers per year in the training course

citizens. The ‘Paysan Creatif’ training enables the beginning farmer to strengthen their skills concerning entrepreneurship, set up their farming project while starting to take over a farm and test their project before officially launching it. During the one year training period, the trainees get a small salary from the government training fund or a regional unemployment scheme. The CIAP44 has already trained more than 60 people in this way.

CONTACT

Country: France
Organisation: CIAP (Coopérative d’Installation en Agriculture Paysanne) 44
Website: www.jeminstallepaysan.org/Ciap44
More information? ciap44@orange.fr

CONTENT

The Test Farm ‘Paysan créatif’ is a one-year subsidized training period for starting farmers, wanting to test their farm activity in a safe environment. It was initiated by the cooperative CIAP 44 in the department of Loire-Atlantique. The program is divided in three parts: a new farmer gets 200 hours of courses and counselling on entrepreneurship, a test piece of land or equipment in the area where the starter is planning to launch the farm and a training part on the farm of a local mentor farmer from the area.

If the new entrant farmer wants to, a local support group chosen by the prospective farmer can be created. This group combines the wisdom of local farmers, municipal councillors and interested

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Test an activity on site before launching it	Starting farmer needs to have found a place for their project
Connecting with local farmers	
Possibility of spending time working with the transferor before taking over their farm: getting skills transferred	

DEVELOPMENT

In Loire-Atlantique there is a high demand for test farms. Currently this tool is spreading in the rest of the region Pays de la Loire and neighbouring regions (Normandie, Bretagne, Poitou-Charentes).

TOOL 7

ANALYSIS: FARM POTENTIAL

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

To understand the potential of your farm for other types of production than you are used to, CIVAM network uses an analysis tool with farmers since 2005. It gives a 'diagnosis' of the potential of the farm and identifies new business models, which usually makes the farm more transferable. An advisor fills out an extensive questionnaire with a potential transferor, who then receives an easily readable report on new options on the farm.

AUTHORS | NOÉMIE PENNEC & MARIE POISSON

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Working time: preparation: 15 minutes, actual interview 2 to 3 hours and processing and feedback to the transferor also 2 to 3 hours.

Material needed: Computer, excel proficiency.

Target group: Transferor, one interview at a time.

Place: On farm.

CONTENT

The Analysis tool was developed to collect as much data as possible about a farm's transferability. It is used to open the mind of a potential transferors to different possibilities on their farms. The analysis itself consists of an excel sheet with data used as indicators. There are about 10 sheets requiring information about the farmer and the farm, each branch of agricultural production like cattle breeding or growing vegetables, processing possibilities like a bread oven or a cheesery and other activities like tourism. Also a sheet is filled with economic data from the farm, like ebitda (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization), subsidies, investments, lands, buildings, equipment and animals. A last sheet is filled with data on the surroundings: inhabitants, price of land, land availability. If the advisor and the farmer have filled out these sheets, the analysis tool gives the results. These results are a

graph giving a picture of:

- The current situation: diversity of the activities, land quality, care for the environment
- The option of continuing: quality of life (balance between work conditions and salary, happiness, available time off), financial health of the farm (financial autonomy, economic efficiency, technical efficiency), possibility to settle down (relationship with owners, land pressure)
- Future potential: adaptability to another production, potential to sell the products, potential to develop accommodation on the farm
- The situation of the farm transfer: steps done (finding a successor, evaluating the farm, etc.)

Some facilitators use the analysis for an individual talk about succession. It is a time consuming tool, it takes 2 or 3 hours of interview and then about 3 hours more for all the missing information and results. The facilitator completes the data sheets after the interview and sends the results to the farmer. The results of the analysis are shown in a brochure in clear graphs and give the farmer an idea about other activities, which makes the farm more transferable. This brochure proves useful in attracting farmers to other events about farm succession: the CIVAM network knows the farm potential and can invite a farmer to specific meetings and training sessions.

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Useful to imagine the future of the farm in all its complexity	It takes time to think about diversity
Advisor can add information or comments in the conclusion	It could be difficult to think about possibilities for the farm before searching a successor
It combines qualitative and quantitative questions: perceptions and official sources	About 6 hours to fill in all the blanks, it is too heavy to use. You can use it as a support for an interview.
Tool adapted for the diversity of farms and of productions	Transferors need to be able to share very personal data
Colourful and very detailed graph and booklet	It could be an exercise which closes your mind to other options than mentioned in the diagnosis sheets
Gives result for the transferor, it's important for them to have a picture of their farm, sometimes it's different from what they have imagined	Computer at the farm needed to complete it. It could create distance between farmer and advisor
Giving clear options to the farmer	No open options to add

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

This analysis is in French. It is not used often in Brittany because of the long time it takes to fill out the excel sheet and answer all the questions. The advisors who use it try to make it easier by sending the farmers the main questions beforehand.

The analysis might be improved by adding open options and having a quick scan version. Also to be added are criteria such as organic agriculture, breed of cattle, health of the herd, and to show how that influences the succession. It could also be useful to have a contract between the advisor and the farmer about confidentiality and using data, so farmers are more willing to talk about private data.

The results can be used to attract a potential successor. The potential transferor could use it as a nice start to imagine a future for the farm, the successor could start with a new activity and slowly start working the whole farm.

CONTACT

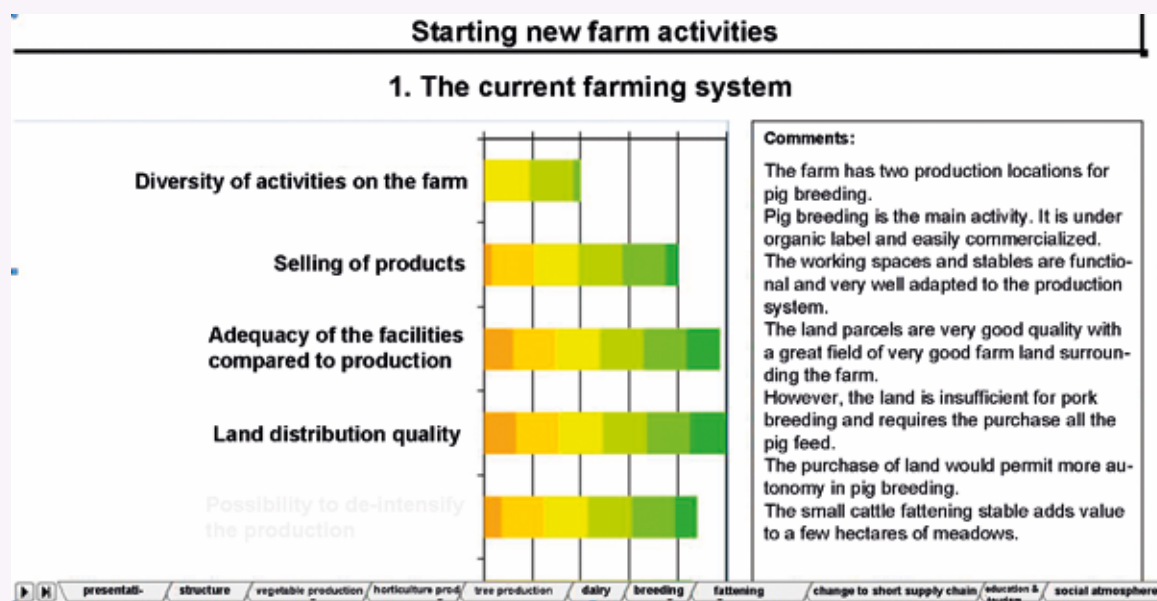
Country: France

Organisation: FDCIVAM 35

Website: www.paysans-creativ-bzh.org

More information? Marie Poisson,
marie.poisson@civam-bretagne.org

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ANALYSIS REPORT ON FARM POTENTIAL



TOOL 8

COLLECTIVE TRAINING 'PREPARING MY FARM SUCCESSION'

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

FRCIVAM Bretagne and Afocg du Jura (France) provide a collective training called 'preparing my farm succession' to introduce farmers to the succession process and inform on administrative, social and economic aspects.

AUTHORS | MARIE POISSON, NOÉMIE PENNEC & BLANDINE DORIN

PHOTO'S | FRCIVAM & DICK BOSCHLOO

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Working time: several days preparation and 4 days of actual training.

Costs: depends on the organisation that offers the workshop.

Target group: farmers at 2 to 5 years before retirement.

Group size: 6 to 10 farmers.

Registration: registration required online or by phone.

PR: advertisement in the communication tools of the organisation.

CONTENT

The collective training 'preparing my farm succession' helps transferors to formulate their own project, to formulate steps and to know where to find information. They get homework at the end of each workshop. They exchange in small groups (6 to 10 people usually) and between peers on farm succession, on several days spread out over two or three months. Farmers work with the training exercises themselves with their own data, are given homework to find information and to meet future farmers and new entrants. Also the transferors have to think about their future life, not as a farmer. This training is based on exchange and mixes information given by the trainer about what to do in a succession process with bottom-up experience sharing. A large part is devoted to individual presentations, social aspects and wishes for the future.



Photo Dick Boschloo

This workshop usually attracts farmers who are 2 to 5 years before retirement. The different workshop days can take place in the same room. It is usually a basic room where it is possible to share a meal for lunch, because a good and informal working climate is part of the workshop's success and helps people to connect with each other in a short time.

The training is organised in different days:

- **Personal:** define your life project after the end of your farming activity, identify your needs to succeed, share visions between farmers, stories of transferors.
- **Economic:** different ways to estimate the values of the farm, needs during retirement, ways to calculate your needs and income during retirement.
- **Communication:** about the farm transfer with the family, with the potential successor: ways to find a successor, define criteria (ideal, desirable, non-negotiable), simulating a meeting (with real starting farmers), how could the farmer act to establish a positive relationship, what to share in this partnership, stories of successors.
- **Further steps of my succession:** where to find information, administrative processes to transfer the farm, role of institutions and other organisations (stories), building an action plan.



ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Important to have time between the meetings (2 months) to think about your project	Sometimes lack of participants
Important to feel connected to others	Working time to organize it: find cases and stories, communication, driving, etc.
Participants don't know each other before and are able to call each other after the session to talk more about their succession	For the participants to be able to bring and show personal data (eg.: accountancy figures of the farm)
Talking about human feelings, relationships, psychological aspects	
Expressing feelings in a trusting environment	
Opening free exchanges between farmers about economic questions	

OTHER EXAMPLES

Workshops on farm succession in Austria are organised by the chamber of Agriculture Austria, LFI Ländlichen Fortbildungsinstitut, ÖBV (organic farmers association) and Via Campesina Austria. The workshops are aimed at transferors and successors, and support farm succession.

The latest trend is to include extra-familial-farm succession in the seminars or even offering seminars especially for this kind of farm transfer.

www.lk.at or www.lfi.at

The Dutch young farmers association NaJK provides young farmers with a first training on 'on the road to farm transfer' and 'financial insight' as well as a separate training for farmers partners 'also your business'.

www.bedrijfsovernameportal.nl/cursussen/

CONTACT

Country: France

Organisation: FRCIVAM Bretagne, Afocg du Jura

Website: www.interafocg.org/afocg39

More information? Blandine Dorin, Afocg.39@wanadoo.fr – (+33) 3 84 43 19 55

TOOL 9

CASE STUDY ON FARM SUCCESSION

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

To make farmers consider farm transfer, a group of farmers work on a case study on farm succession during a meeting on accountancy and management. InterAfofcg successfully creates a climate of trust in their groups, enabling farmers to work on a practical example of farm succession of two of their group members.

AUTHOR MICKAËL BERTHOLLET | PHOTO INTERAFOCG

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Work time for this case study is half a day, including preparation (1,5 hours) and actual work on the case study (5 hours).

Costs: included in the Afofcg membership, Afofcg offers permanent education to farmers

Target group: working group of farmers between 40-60 years of age

Group size: 6 to 10

Role of the facilitator and preparations: the facilitator determines the basic rules, which are based on respect, no pressure and no judgement. Preparing the meeting with the people in the 'case study' helps to reach the expected results. It is important for the facilitator to take notes and to summarize the exchanges, during the meeting and for future use.

CONTENT

French farmers participate in trainings on accountancy and management, organized by Afofcg du Rhône – a member of the InterAfofcg network. In one of these meetings the farmers work on the case study on farm succession. Ideally the case study is introduced by a couple of both transferors and successors, who are at the beginning of the succession process. They ask the group to give them peer support concerning the transfer of the farm. The group's work also makes

the group members reflect on their own situation. The work in these groups is based on the sharing of practices and experiences, guided by a trainer. The main objective of this meeting with a case study is to make farmers aware of farm succession.

The case study is worked on in five steps:

STEP 1. Inclusion (30 minutes): To really understand the case study, members of the group name positive aspects of this succession. Instructions were: "you are on the island of the successful farm successions for a journey, tell us what you are experiencing". With this method based on an unusual situation (out of frame) each member of the group quickly gets into the topic.

STEP 2. Appropriation (1 hour): A case study group session begins with a presentation by the transferor and the successor. This presentation is written out individually beforehand by each party. They answer the questions: what do I offer to my successor/transferor, what do I expect from my successor/transferor, my doubts/my fears regarding succession, what is non-negotiable. Afterwards, the group can ask for further information.

STEP 3. Identification of the driving forces and obstacles for this succession (30 minutes): Then, the

members of the group share their thoughts about this situation. A summary of the driving forces and obstacles of the succession is made. The role of the group is to identify the challenges of the situation by using their own experience. This part of the session gives the transferor and the successor the opportunity to widen their vision.

STEP 4. The search for hypothesis (1 hour). The transferor and the successor express their thoughts to the group. These thoughts are analysed by the group to look for adjustments. The educational tool 'carousel of ideas' is used to widen the spectrum of the possibilities. The facilitator gathers all the proposals as well as the legal, fiscal and economic questions to work on in depth later.

STEP 5. Action plan (30 minutes): To summarize the selected decisions, a plan of action is made.

CONTACT

Country: France

Organisation and contact: Afocg du Rhône, Mickaël Berthollet,

Website: www.interafocg.org/afocg69

More information? mickael.afocg69@interafocg.org

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Working with a case study provides participants with a concrete example for which they can collectively provide solutions and ideas	It is important to create a climate of confidence and acceptance between group members
It broadens the view of transferor and successor	The facilitator has to take care of both successor and transferor because their situations are studied simultaneously

DEVELOPMENT

The members of the group are trusting each other, which facilitates the exchanges. It is a priority to set these respectful basic rules for the group beforehand. Facilitator and participants are all responsible for maintaining a climate of respect.



HANDING OVER GRADUALLY

Farmer Fred Willemssen is gradually taking over the organic Nursery Vollenberg. He recommends: "Go for your dreams." And especially to farmers' sons and daughters he emphasizes to go out and see other farms: "Gain experience at other companies, and only then decide what you want."

AUTHOR ELSKE HAGERAATS | PHOTO DICK BOSCHLOO



Fred Willemsen grew up on a conventional farm. Together with two brothers, he runs the family business with agriculture, pigs and horticulture. Next to farming he has a part time job outside of the farm for eight years, to strengthen his knowledge and to gain work experience. At 35, he opts for a private company of his own. He gets the chance to take over the organic farm Vollenberg, a successful chicory nursery and vegetable growing business in Grubbenvorst, near Venlo. The organic cultivation is new to Fred. "The customer-oriented production and marketing appealed to me. In the organic sector, you are more unique and there is a nice story behind your product."

Transferors
André and Gerri
Vollenberg have
been looking for
a successor. Their

daughters did not want to take over the company, though they would like it to continue. In 2012, André and Gerri start a collaboration with Fred, after 10 years of looking for a successor to take over the business including the indoors chicory cultivation, the farm staff and not just the land. They sign a preliminary contract with a number of conditions, such as target return, acquisition of the customer base and subject to funding. For half a year they work together, so Fred gets the hang of organic farming, gets to know existing customers and potential new markets. They only share the exploitation of the farm for the first 6 months. Then the next step: on October 1, 2012 Fred becomes owner of the nursery. He buys 6.5 hectare of land and all buildings and machinery, and is primarily responsible for chicory cultivation and the outdoor crops, such as potatoes, valerian and bok choy, and marketing of all vegetables. André holds the remaining 10.5 hectare as a sharecropper for two years. From 2015 on, Fred takes this land in use based on a six-year lease from André. Another piece of land he acquires as his part of the family business is split into three different companies; he converts his part of 19 hectares to organic production in 2013. He now has a farm ready for the future.

“Customer-oriented
production
appealed to me.”

To finance the acquisition, Fred has to win the bank's trust. He manages that because the bank knows to trust him from before, when he achieved good financial results in his family firm and the bank knows he is an entrepreneur. Also they see the potential in Nursery Vollenberg. There is a lot of work to do. Due to health concerns, André has been reducing his cropping and clients since 2011; he realizes only 50-60% of the original turnover. Fred has to win back these customers and expand. He holds an annual chicory and bok choy promotional action: both Ekoplaza health food supermarket and Fred are reducing the price. The profit is lower, but there are many new customers.

Fortunately, Fred can always contact André for questions. That's fine, because despite the good cooperation, starting and taking over a company takes a lot of energy. "Organic chicory was completely new to me. In the evening you are so tired, you work 40 hours a week together and then you also have the financial pressure. The first year you are lucky if you break even!"

The staff is still running the farm after the acquisition – and well. "I take care of the quality and the market, the staff takes care of the cultivation and harvest themselves." Thanks to this qualified team of workers he also took over from André and Gerri, Fred and his wife Nicole are able to have a break now and then. That is also important. "Holidays yield their money, because you can relax, and then you can go on." Fred notices that young farmers who take over from their parents sometimes stop again. He thinks it important to find out the type of business that suits you and what your own interests are. "Go out, look at it from a different angle and only then decide what you want." And for people who did not grow up on a farm he has encouragement: "Go for your dreams and do not stop. It is possible."

Elske Hageraats is a member of Toekomstboeren

Read the whole interview (in Dutch) in the brochure Land: Ruimte voor nieuwe boeren published in Dynamisch Perspectief, number 1 – 2016 www.bdvereniging.nl and www.toekomstboeren.nl
Read the whole interview on www.farmsuccession.eu

TOOL 10

ROLE PLAY 'MEETING A YOUNG FARMER'

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

Potential transferors benefit greatly from practicing the first meeting with a potential successor. FRCIVAM uses this role playing game successfully since 2005 by adding it to workshops or collective training sessions. Another option: both transferors and successors are present at the role play.

AUTHOR MARIE POISSON | PHOTO DICK BOSCHLOO

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Working time: preparation: about 3 hours and actual role play about 1.5 hours.

Materials needed: chairs, table and players, public.

Costs: free, part of a workshop or training.

Target group: potential transferors (optional: with potential successors).

Group size: 10-20.

Registration: registration is required for the workshop.

CONTENT

The CIVAM network has developed a role playing game to prepare older farmers for meeting their potential successors. This role play is usually part of the collective training 'preparing my succession' and focusses on social relationships.

We find that potential transferors are mainly focussed on pension rights and economic value during the succession process. The social point of view is often forgotten. They don't talk about farm succession with their family, especially their children, and even more so when these children do not want to succeed the farm. Potential transferors say they are not able to find or to talk to potential successors. Also facilitators are often not specialised in communication. Therefore the role play session is a good practice session.

One farmer plays the transferor, another the successor or children or other family members. Some farmers form the audience and take notes. Potential

transferors and future farmers could also be mixed in for this session, they can play themselves or they can play the transferor. The main aim of this session is to show that both participants have a 50-50 stake in the meeting, need to compromise and need to prepare themselves properly for the meeting.

THE ROLE PLAY HAS THREE PARTS:

• Ideal successors:

Participants identify criteria and classify them, which criteria are ideal, which desirable and which are non-negotiable. They present their criteria in the group. This exercise exposes contradictions in the expectations of both parties.

• Questionnaire:

Both groups answer questions to prepare a first meeting, as if they would prepare a job interview. One questionnaire is used for both groups, so they know what type of questions the other group could ask them.

• Role playing game:

The game method is inspired by Moreno (1889-1974) and can be played in different ways. The facilitator explains a situation, for example: "a couple of potential farmers are interested in a farm seen in an ad. They contact the older farmers by phone and they agree on a meeting at the farm. The old farmers welcome them." Actors will be identified to play. The scene lasts 10 minutes and the audience takes notes on what was said, position of the actors, non-verbal



communication. Then, the facilitator can change actors from the audience to change the situation. The role play is used to practice a situation, to train for making decisions and negotiations.

At the end of the role play, it is important to debrief. The facilitator asks about feelings and what everyone learned from the exercise. Role play requires a strongly built group, it is more suited to the third or fourth day of a series of workshops or a training session. At the end, the participants in the role play understand how important it is to prepare a meeting between transferor and successor in order to avoid going straight into a potential conflict. A lot of emotions can come up, be prepared for them and allow time to discuss them.

CONTACT

Country: France

Organisation and contact:

France Organisation:

FRCIVAM Bretagne,
member of InPact network in Bretagne

Website: www.paysans-creativ-bzh.org

More information? Marie Poisson,
marie.poisson@civam-bretagne.org

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Ability to react during the role play	Time needed
Own preparation aided by list of questions	Intense game can lead to aggression
Understanding the position of both sides	
Being close to real situations	
Intense game	
Talk about emotional topics on the farm succession process	
Farmers can improvise with different scenarios of a situation	

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

A role play is an excellent way to practice different situations, like meeting a young farmer, which you might be fearful of. A facilitator can also give different situations, like changing the way of producing. For example a potential successor wants to stop producing corn: how do you react? Always allow enough time for play and debriefing.

A possible improvement is to allow the audience to ask one or two questions during or after the role play.

TOOL 11

ECONOMIC VALUATION

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



Farmers have different ideas about the value of their farm, varying wildly between the market value and the value a successor is willing to pay. To explore different methods to estimate the farm value and give insight into market value and 'take on' value for a potential successor, trainers at Afocg de Haute-Garonne in France use an Economic Valuation tool since 2012. Usually as part of a training on farm succession.

AUTHOR GENEVIEVE DECLERCQ | PHOTO MARIA VAN BOXTEL

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Working time: for the trainer up to 1 day, 4 hours of preparation, 1 hour for training and debriefing afterwards.

Materials needed: paper documents with tables, optional: posters, projector & computer.

Costs: included in the Afocg membership.

Target group: farmers thinking about succession, ideally 3 to 5 years before farm transfer.

Group size: 6 to 8.

Registration: registration online or by phone.

CALCULATING THE ECONOMIC VALUATION CONSISTS OF A PROCESS IN THREE STEPS

STEP 1. My personal financial needs (2 to 4 hours)

The farmer fills out a table estimating personal economic needs after retirement, by checking over different expenses like housing, food and health care. First the farmer estimates, then the trainer may ask to fill out the actual figures from their accountancy report. Usually there is a big difference! Also, the precise amounts and sources of the income after retirement have to be identified (except income from selling or renting the farm, step 3).

STEP 2. Valuation of the farm (0.5 to 1 day)

The farmer then calculates the value of the farm,

based on a table and examples, according to different methods:

- The estate/market value. This is an estimation of the price of the farm according to experts and markets in the region. For this calculation farmers bring a list of their capital assets in their accountancy reports as well as different kinds of references to estimate the price (land price in the region).
- The take-on value. This is an estimation of the price of the farm according to the income it is possible to generate for a successor. And based on the capacity of repayment by the successor this income generates. Usually this 'take-on' value is much lower than the market value. It gives the transferor insight: if the successor can buy at this price, they will commit themselves in a project where the risks are acceptable.
- The sentimental value!

STEP 3. Prospects of lease or sale (2 hours)

For step 3, the three different values will be compared with the expected income of the farmers. This expected income is based on the income generated by lease or sale of the farm. The farmer then compares if this expected income covers their needs (Step 1). This comparison gives the possibilities in negotiation between the transferors' retirement needs and the financial capacity of the successor.

An example and the valuation tables: download at www.farmsuccession.eu

EXAMPLE OF AN ECONOMIC VALUATION

Table to fill out by the farmers: estimate of private needs during retirement

During my retirement, I wish to live on a minimum income of :	
To satisfy these needs, my income is: (at first except the income from rent or sale of the farm)	
Difference between my desired 'minimum' income at retirement and actual income (at first except the income from rent or sale of the farm):	= the amount I wish to take out by transfer of the farm



G GENEVIÈVE DECLERCQ,
TRAINER:
.....

A clear valuation helps to find a successor. It is better not to start negotiations with a successor that could be painful for the transferors, if the projects or proposed price are too different.

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Work on economic concepts: most farmers really want to do this	Should ideally be done longer in advance to transfer, and/or multiple times
Facilitator with economic knowledge needed	Requires some economic insight
Gives excellent insight in the difference between market value and take-on value for a successor	
Makes a farmer couple consider their choices and negotiation options	
Helps target potential successors and avoid painful differences in price or preferred activity	

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

It is important to feel at ease with basic economic concepts in order to use this tool with farmers, and also to be able to set up a climate of kindness, listening and sharing of experiences.

It is also important that farmers bring their own accountancy figures to work with (if they do not have their figures, the facilitator will have to base their training solely on examples). It could be interesting for the farmer to estimate their needs with the rest of their family, especially in the case of a couple, in order to come up with more realistic figures.

Using this tool opens all possibilities, and makes people accept that a farm could be transferred in a different way than it is used now. As the value of the farm depends on what we do with it. Ideally the topic of value should be addressed long before the actual succession.

CONTACT

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Organisation: Afocg de Haute-Garonne

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TOOL 12

LAND FUND: LAND CO-OP TERRE-EN-VUE

FARM SUCCESSION PROCESS



1. Awareness



2. Wish



3. Education



4. Experience



5. Search/
Decision



6. Form



7. Handing/
Taking over



8. Running
the farm

Land prices are high and make it difficult for successors to start. Land funds like the land co-op Terre-en-vue offer citizens in Belgium the possibility to invest in land and farmers the possibility to rent this land with long term lease contracts.

AUTHOR MAARTEN ROELS | PHOTO TERRE-EN-VUE

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Working time: Setting up a Land Co-op is a long term commitment of several months or even years. Terre-en-vue also uses ambassadors to inform farmers who seek support for access to land. For these ambassadors Terre-en-vue provides an ambassadors training. Preparing a training is 3 evenings of the training and explaining Terre-en-vue to a farmer in all details may take 1 hour.

Target group: Trainers, (future) farmers, shareholders, all people interested.

CONTENT

Rising land prices all over Europe make innovative farming methods more difficult. Also, it inhibits new entrants from starting to farm. Belgium also has high land prices, varying between € 25.000 and € 50.000 per hectare. To assist starting and sustainable farmers, a Land Co-op was set up in 2012 by a handful of NGOs and cooperative companies. They decided to create a citizen driven cooperative company to facilitate access to land: Terre-en-vue.

Terre-en-vue offers citizens the possibility to invest their savings money in a cooperative company by buying cooperative shares. The invested money is then used by the company to buy farmland that is then rented out to farmers through long term lease contracts. As land prices are disproportionately high



Jean-François Depienne bought 613 ha of his farm Bio Lorraine with Terre-en-vue funding
Photo Terre-en-vue

compared to lease prices, Terre-en-vue can only guarantee low or no financial return on the shares. This does not slow down participation: people who care about organic food and a healthy environment often feel helpless. A company like Terre-en-vue allows them to actively change the situation. Since 2012 land has been bought for 7 farms.

Terre-en-vue has to abide by the rules for financial trading companies, like provide a prospectus to investors. Terre-en-vue therefore has a cooperative company to give out the shares and land. It secondly consists of an NGO, where farmers and citizens are members and the ambassadors for Terre-en-vue make contact with new farmers and landowners and promote the cause of access to land. Terre-en-vue thirdly has a foundation to receive donations of land and money.

Terre-en-vue is a citizens movement. It is convinced of the truth that “walking alone one may go fast, but walking together we get further.”

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Social and environmental return on investment	No or low financial return on investment
Investors are connected to a farmer, a farm and access to land: meeting between farmer and citizen	Collective initiatives may be slow
Developed with participating citizens: volunteer labour and knowledge	Niche actor

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

Terre-en-vue has two main points to develop: financial stability and land stewardship. Like most other EU initiatives on access to land, Terre-en-vue is not a financially profitable company. It therefore set up an NGO that is almost fully dependant on subsidies. This puts a real brake on the development of Terre-en-vue. It therefore set up a foundation in order to attract private financial support as well. However, it remains important to underline that asking for public support is also a way to express to policy makers that their policies are not functioning for everyone and that initiatives like Terre-en-vue try to correct socio-economic injustice.

Currently Terre-en-vue focusses on land acquisition as a way to take land out of the market and to re-establish its status as a common good. However, land rental is an important way to get access to land in Belgium. Therefore, Terre-en-vue considers developing its platform called TupperTerre that connects (future) farmers and landowners. The main challenge will be to develop this project in a way that is coherent with the principles of the commons.

OTHER EXAMPLES

Different examples of land funds precede Terre-en-vue in Europe: Terre de Liens in France, Regionalwert AG in Germany, Stichting BD Grondbeheer in The Netherlands and the Biodynamic Land Trust in the UK. BD Grondbeheer in the Netherlands used to only accept gifts, but has just started issuing perpetual bonds in land thus trying to collect more investment. Austria has a communal investment company, a Genossenschaftsähnlicher Vermögenspool, see also www.vermoegenspool.at. These initiatives differ in impact, also due to the financial laws in their respective countries. Land funds and other initiatives set up an EU network in order to spread this financing tool more widely: www.accesstoland.eu

CONTACT

Country: Belgium
Organisation: TEV - Terre-en-vue
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More information? Maarten Roels info@terre-en-vue.be

SUCCESSION FINANCED BY A LAND CO-OP

The Jacquemart brothers took over the farm of their grandparents, now run as two separate farms called Ferme de la Sarthe and Ferme Jacquemart and located on the same site in Saint Gerard, Belgium. Both farms have potential successors on the farm: David's son Simon and Damien's daughter Valentine. Recently two new young persons came to join and successively take over the farms.

AUTHOR | MAARTEN ROELS



Danielle, Leonie, David and Damien Jacquemart - and Damien's dog Copain - are buying their rented land with landfund Terre-en-vue before transfer



Two beautiful biodynamic farms can be found in the Walloon region, run by two brothers. Damien and his wife Danielle Jacquemart manage 30 hectares of dairy cattle and sell dairy and meat directly from the farm. Brother David Jacquemart keeps cattle, bakes and sells bread plus vegetables and meat. Both brothers are in their fifties. How did they arrange their succession?

Rented land is sold by heirs

Both Jacquemart brothers took over from their grandparents, with mostly rented land. Together Damien and David rent 70% of the land they cultivate. The owner of most of that land died in 2013, and as she had no children the heritage is in the hands of 20 heirs. In Belgium the rule applies that if one person expresses the desire to sell, the other heirs are obliged to sell. With an average price of € 15.000 per hectare an amount of at least € 225.000 was needed to secure the land. As David and Damien do not wish to get into debt some years before retirement, nor wish to get land in private property, they contacted Terre-en-vue.

Financing succession by citizens

In June 2013 Terre-en-vue launched a search for citizen financing. Citizens can buy landshares in Terre-en-vue at a € 1000 each. Terre-en-vue uses this money to purchase the land and leased it back to the brothers and their successors. The campaign requires € 250.000 in total. Greenpeace endorses Terre-en-vue and has helped by sending an inspirational film to its members. Citizens investing receive no interest, but social returns. Thus citizen funding through Terre-en-vue makes the farm transferable, which would have been much harder with a bank loan plus interest to buy the land.

During this process several actions

were set up at the farm and many new people discovered the farm. This gave David's son and Damien's daughter a new interest in their parents' farm. In the same period Terre-en-vue got contacted by Quentin Ledoux, a youngster who was looking for a farm to start up a project with ducks. Terre-en-vue brought him in contact with the farm. Quentin now helps David with baking bread and he will start duck farming. In a similar way Terre-en-vue got contacted by Alice Mangin who was looking for a place to make goat cheese. She is currently making cow cheese at the farm, allowing Danielle to phase out her farm activities.

Until now the transferral process is a

by-product of the access to land campaign Terre-en-vue is running at the farm. In an organic and rather implicit way a mixed transferral process has started up, where intra-family and extra-family succession are combined. Parallel to the succession, the diversification of the farm seems also well on its way. Quentin will receive his first ducks and Valentine has prepared for the start of a vegetable farm. David and Damien continue to work at the farm but as more people will get involved, the next question will be what legal structure to set up and how to manage the relations between all the actors involved. This question will intersect with the question of the financing of the future farm succession. For now they work together happily.

Read the whole interview in English on www.farmsuccession.eu

OUR ORGANISATIONS

ERASMUS+ PROJECT

'FARM SUCCESSION IN EUROPE'

Our Erasmus+ project 'Farm Succession in Europe' aims to smoothen the transfer of family farms between the generations. Within the family or with an extra-familial successor, perhaps even with a fresh start from a new entrant in farming. All participating organisations work in farm succession or with new entrants. We therefore want to learn from each other about tools and methods facilitating farm succession, adapting and improving these tools to our national situation and spreading good examples. So as to keep happy farmers and to create vibrant rural areas. More on our project on www.farmsuccession.eu

ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN 'FARM SUCCESSION IN EUROPE'

CIVAM

CIVAM (Centres d'Initiatives pour Valoriser l'Agriculture et le Milieu Rural) is a non-profit organisation of farmers and rural inhabitants. It has regional branches all over France, like FRCIVAM Bretagne. CIVAM supports farming solutions based on sustainable development concepts (breeding systems based on grazing in meadowlands or organic culture). Local groups organize collective training and individual advice for farmers and future farmers, also on farm transfer or new start, and support local projects in agriculture or rural development.

www.civam.fr



LAND & CO

Land & Co is an agricultural consultancy firm devoted to giving advice on organic, sustainable and publicly accessible agriculture. In cooperation with the Dutch association for biodynamic agriculture and the school for organic agriculture Warmonderhof, Land & Co started a matchmaking service: www.landgilde.nl. Through this website, older and younger farmers can meet each other. Landgilde also offers information, guidance and training on farm succession and farm continuity.

www.landco.nl www.landgilde.nl





INTERAFOCG

InterAfocg is a French national farmers network providing collective training to farmers in the fields of economics (accountancy, management, strategy) and skills development. Eighteen local associations belong to the network. AFOCG aims at helping any farmer to fulfil their own project on farm, according to the farmer’s values, goals in life and the conditions on the farm. The main activity of AFOCG is to organize collective training sessions on any subject that can help farmers to manage their project, at every phase of this farm, whether at a start, during development or succession and transfer.

www.interafocg.org

TERRE-EN-VUE

Terre-en-vue is a cooperative company, non-governmental organisation (NGO) and foundation facilitating access to land in French-speaking Belgium (Brussels and the Walloon region), a country where land prices are among the highest in Europe. Terre-en-vue buys land in order to install long term leases with sustainable farmers. Terre-en-vue trains citizens to set up local initiatives around new or existing farms.

www.terre-en-vue.be



NEL

NEL (Netzwerk Existenzgründung in der Landwirtschaft) is a non-profit association devoted to support farm succession in Austria by means of adult education, information, advice, research and all other tools relevant to support the aim. It has set out to work on farm succession within Austria and cooperate with other organisations in Europe and worldwide who support the same goals. NEL especially focusses on new entrant farmers and transferors without a successor. To promote this topic, NEL organises film screenings, research projects and plans to start a matching platform on farm succession.

<https://existenzgruendunglandwirtschaft.wordpress.com/>

FARM SUCCESSION TOOLS

Farming and farmers are essential in providing us with good food and a beautiful rural landscape. All over Europe farming is changing. Farmers are ageing: on average they are over 55 years of age and more than a third lack a successor. Therefore smaller-scale farms and family farms are disappearing at a rapid pace everywhere in Europe. The successful transfer of a farm is crucial in keeping farming communities alive and food on our tables.

We witness big changes in farm succession – from family to extra-family succession, from one to multi successors, to new activities on farms. A new answer is necessary to connect potential transferors and future farmers. Because: how do you meet each other if your successor is not your son? And new tools are necessary to educate farmers. Because: how do you work together, if you've always worked the fields on your own? How to transfer your knowledge and experience? And new financing models are necessary. Because: how do you succeed if you can't pay for land and buildings? We need new tools on farm succession.

In this brochure an European network of organizations from France, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands – the Farm Succession Europe E+ network – tries to give new answers to these changes in farm continuity and succession. We present the tools we developed and use to connect farmers, to give them confidence in a new business model their successor wants to use or to explore alternative financing strategies. We give you examples of tools and farmers' stories on farm transfer.

This brochure will give farm advisors, facilitators and other people surrounding the farmer – as well as the farmers themselves – a new way of looking at farm transfer and rural communities. A new answer for a bright future in farming!

Intellectual Output of the Erasmus+ Project "Farm Succession in Europe" (2014-2016)
www.farmsuccession.eu

Partners:



Landgilde.nl



Funding:



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Avec la contribution financière
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