




Young farmer innovation practices for agricultural & rural development

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Overview of presentation

- Topic and content
- Research questions
- Framework
- Proposed methods
- Issues to be decided






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Topic and content

- Young farmer innovation practices for agricultural & rural development
 - National Farm Survey 2010 Sample 65 young farmers represents < 5000 young farmers(18-35years of age)
 - 5% farming population
 - Demand for agriculture education courses on the increase=> Teagasc 2010/2011 new enrolments at 1,673 students, pushing total students over +3,000.






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Topic and content continued

- Motivation
 - Food Harvest 2020=> targets for growth, 50% dairy, 40% beef.
 - Removal of milk quotas in 2015 =>greater room for expansion.
 - Food security => increasing world population, climate change, increased food demands.
 - Decrease in opportunities for off farm jobs due to economy.
 - Future landholders=>survey conducted by Macra (2011) highlighted:
 - FARM EXPANSION: 86% young dairy farmers want to expand in coming years, 75% young beef farmers wish to do the same,
 - 25% young dairy farmers increase production by 40%+ in next two years and 14% of young beef farmers wish to boost production by same amount.

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Research Questions

- What kind of innovation is taking place among the young farming community in Ireland?
- What are the significant factors which determine young farmer involvement in innovation practices?
- To what extent is the generation and exchange of knowledge as well as its application/s by young farmers influenced by social networks?
- How useful is the innovation systems framework for understanding young farmer innovation?

Framework

- **Innovation**
 - Innovations are 'new creations of social and economic significance' (World Bank:2006:18)
 - Can be brand new, more often a combination of existing elements.
 - Innovations can also be radical improvements but can also consist of many small improvements.
 - Can be triggered in many ways.
 - Technical, managerial and institutional in nature.
 - Earlier view of innovation usually described as linear however more recently innovation has been recognised as a systemic process.

Framework continued

- Innovation systems approach – overarching framework for this research
- World Bank (2006:6):
define an innovation system as ' comprising organisations, enterprises and individuals that together demand and supply knowledge and technology and the rules and the mechanisms by which these different agents interact'.

The innovation system concept will be useful in the analysis of YF innovation as it focuses the interaction of actors involved in the innovation, including the factors which affect demand for and use of knowledge.

Proposed methods

- **Social network analysis (SNA)**
 - Useful tool in mapping IS because it focuses on the relationship between people and groups and its ability to capture knowledge flows and other attributes within such interactions.
 - In the context of innovation, SNA provides a view of how to understand how actors interact, how info and resources move between and among them and how actor roles and relationships are structured.
 - Recognised in literature that networks play an important role in promoting the development of innovations (Pittaway et al :2004).
 - Innovation is now seen as systemic process and arises from complex interactions between individuals, organisations and their environment.

Proposed methods continued

- Propose to conduct case studies using interviews with farmers in different regions of the country e.g. BMW region vs. south-east. Farm enterprises e.g. dairy and beef and conduct a case study on each for the regions selected.
- Different locations for the research may highlight the issues farmers face in distinct areas.

Issues to be decided

- **Defining young farmers**
 - Identify young farmers on the basis of being the main decision makers on the farm.
 - 18-35 years (used in the Department of Ag, criteria for grants and schemes)
 - Based on experience (length of time farming)
 - Young farmer (dependent i.e. farming under someone else's name versus independent i.e. farming in their own name)
- **Types of innovations which could be examined**
 - Financial management, land management practices
 - Adoption of specific technologies in certain systems e.g. dairy
 - The idea of something new e.g. diversification
 - Increasing importance of role farm partnerships may be examined