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## The analysis of farm population with respect to young farmers in the European Union

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### Abstract

The position of young farmers in countries of the European Union is different. In the EU-28 treated by Farm Structure Census of Agriculture nearly 9 million businesses. Most farms are located in Romania, Italy and Poland on the other hand, at least in Luxembourg, Malta and Estonia. The largest farms in the EU-28 are in Slovakia (119.3 hectares) in the Czech Republic (134.6). On the other hand, the smallest farms are in Malta (1.2 ha), Cyprus (4.9 ha), Greece (5.6 ha), Slovenia (7.5 ha) and Italy (9.0 hectares). Romania (11.0 ha) and Poland (12.3 ha). The aim of the paper is to analyse position of young farmers in the European Union countries. In the average of the 28 member states of the Union, more than half (55%) of the private farmers is over 55 years old. This rate is prominently high in Portugal (73,4%), not much lesser in Bulgaria (70,3%), Italy (68%) and Romania (67,5%). Meanwhile the age consistence of farmers in Austria and Germany is good, where less than quarter of the farmers belong to the mentioned age class. Hungary is in the middle, similarly to the average of the Union, or Malta and Greece.

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### 1. Introduction

Important dimension of structural change in the EU agriculture is the general ageing of farming population. Only 6% of EU farm managers are younger than 35 years, while more than half are 55 years old and older. (Happe, Balmann, Kellermann, Sahrbacher, 2008)

The number of farmers in the youngest age group has declined more strongly than in any other age group across the EU-27 between 2003 and 2007, most significantly in Cyprus (–24%), Bulgaria, Estonia and Romania (–18%). On

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the other hand, the number of farmers in the oldest age group has decreased at a slower pace – in one out of three EU countries it has even increased. (European Commission, 2012)

The difference between the number of young and older farmers can already be found in less recent years and is evident in almost all Member States. Nonetheless, considerable differences can be observed in the age structure across the EU-27. For example, in 2007:

- the EU-12 had a higher share (7%) of young farmers (under 35 years) than the EU-15 (5%), but also a higher share of elderly farmers (above 65 years) (31% in the EU-15, 34% in the EU-12);
- Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Romania had less than 5% of young farmers and more than 40% of elderly farmers;
- Poland had the highest share of young farmers (12%), while the highest share of elderly farmers was found in Portugal (47%). (Székely, 2009)

All of the above highlights a trend towards fewer and larger farms, increasingly mechanised and run by an ageing farming population. This trend will continue in the future and will depend on a number of factors, not least the policy environment. Results from the Agricultural Census 2010, once they become available, will highlight recent developments and serve as an input for future policy discussions. (Haskins, 2011)

## 2. Material and method

The aim of the paper is to analyse position of young farmers in the European Union countries. Realization of the already mentioned objective required the research within the period of the years 2000–2010. While getting the primary data, we considered the data from the secondary information databases of the Eurostat and FAOSTAT. We used basic organizational and economic relations and numeric calculations while analyzing and forming the theoretical and practical solutions.

We used following methods:

In paper was used T-Test dependent samples by statistical programme STATISTICA version 12. The dependent t-test is testing the null hypothesis that there are no differences between the means of the two related groups. If we get a significant result, we can reject the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences between the means and accept the alternative hypothesis that there are statistically significant differences between the means. We can express this as follows:

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

$$H_A: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

T-Test was used to test hypothesis about differences between groups of famers under the age 35 years and group of farmers above 55 years.

Multiple regression models enable us to assess the relationship between the response variable and each of the predictors, adjusting for the remaining predictors.

We used also multiple linear regression to model the relationship between two groups of farmers (young and old). Every value of the independent variable  $x$  is associated with a value of the dependent variable  $y$ . The regression line for  $p$  explanatory variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_p$  is defined to be  $\mu y = 0 + 1x_1 + 2x_2 + \dots + px_p$ . (Prokeinová, 2013)

## 3. Results

In the EU-28 treated by Farm Structure Census of Agriculture nearly 9 million businesses. Most farms are located in Romania, Italy and Poland on the other hand, at least in Luxembourg, Malta and Estonia. In terms of farm size are the largest farms in the EU-28 in Slovakia (119.3 hectares) in the Czech Republic (134.6). On the other hand, the smallest farms are in Malta (1.2 ha), Cyprus (4.9 ha), Greece (5.6 ha), Slovenia (7.5 ha) and Italy (9.0 hectares). Romania (11.0 ha) and Poland (12.3 ha) belong to the same group of countries with the smallest farm size. The average size of farms in the EU-27 is 22.0 hectares of land (year 2010).

In the EU countries it could be observed a slow increase in average size in size categories over 8 ESU and a little decrease in lower categories nearly in all former member state. (Takács-György, Bandlerova, Sadowski, 2008 and Takács 2008)

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