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Age Structure of Farm Owners and Managers: Problems and the Solutions Thereto in Latvia

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Abstract. The research paper presents the results of research on the situation and trends in the age structure of farm owners or managers in Latvia. The growing world population and the challenges caused by climate change make farmers reconsider their traditional farming practices. Therefore, scientists believe that the aging of farmers is a major obstacle to the sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas, as evidenced by the age structure of European Union (EU) farmers and other agricultural workers. Generation renewal is crucial for sustainable land management and food production. In 2018, according to statistical data, the share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in total gross value added in Latvia was only 3.8%. However, these sectors were the main job creators and drivers of economic development in rural areas. Therefore, *the aim of the present research is* to assess trends in the age structure of farm managers and owners and the policy instruments applied in Latvia. The results of the research show that despite the policy instruments implemented in Latvia after its accession to the EU to support young farmers and promote early retirement of farm owners, the aging process of farm owners and managers occurs relatively fast. The median age of farm owners and managers in Latvia has increased from 53 years in 2009 to 57 years in 2019, which could hinder the development of the agricultural industry and prevent the new challenge of growing global food demand and the negative impacts of climate change from being tackled.
Keywords: agricultural holdings; age structure; managers; owners; support instruments.

Introduction

The world's population is projected to double by 2050, so food production will also need to be increased significantly to meet population growth and ensure changing food consumption habits. The negative effects of climate change on biodiversity, soil and water quality, and changes in global market demand are increasingly being addressed worldwide. T.Balezentis *et al.* (2020) stated that "The EU agriculture policy has seen several rounds of reforms due to the changes in the global market and the resulting implications for food security", while I.Darnhofer *et al.* (2016) point out that "family farms play an important role in the European countryside, yet their number is steadily declining". Several scientists and policy makers have acknowledged that Europe has a problem with aging of farmers and a shortage of young farmers… (Eistrup *et al.*, 2019). The apparent shortage of young farmers occurs in countries where small-scale holdings are more prevalent, particularly Portugal, Italy, Romania and Greece (Zagata and Sutherland, 2015). Põder A., Viira A.H., & Värnik R. (2017) showed that the entry rate of non-agricultural enterprises in rural Estonia was significantly lower than in urban Estonia. The shortage of young farmers is one of the main weaknesses in the competitiveness of European agriculture. The lack of young farmers threatens the survival of the sector itself… (Kontogeorgos *et al.*, 2014).

J.Davis, P.Caskie, &M.Wallace (2009) emphasizes that "the main problems associated with the structure of the region's agriculture are relatively small scale of the majority of farm businesses and, more tentatively, the high average age of the farming population". Scientists from other countries are also of the same opinion. ... A reduction in the mean age, along with the professional upgrading of the agricultural workforce, constitute priorities of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) support measures. Attracting young

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people to rural regions also leads to an increase in the size of the holdings, based on the performed labour, and to an improved agricultural income (Aggelopoulos *et al.*, 2011). It has been found that the age of the farm manager is a significant determinant of the discrepancy between intentions and behaviour (Väre, Pietola, &Weiss, 2010). Younger farmers can plan for long-term development, and they invest more in business growth… (Davis, Caskie, &Wallace, 2013). Young farmers differ in the level of innovation, which relates to farm management and overall efficiency, information technology introduction and performance monitoring (McKillop, Heanuet, & Kinsella, 2018).

J.Ingram & J.Kirwan (2011) conclude that "generation renewal is crucial for sustainable land management and food production". Young farmers face various challenges when they are starting farming. They have no experience, lack capital and finances. Without a certain credit history and large assets, it is usually difficult for young farmers to obtain credit, earn enough income and balance their cash flow (Kropp&Katchova, 2011). J.C.D.Valliant *et al.* (2019) stress that "new farmers seeking to enter agriculture face some barriers that affect both access to land and passing it on". However, P.Milone & F.Ventura indicate (2019) that „a young new farmer generation, although it has limited access to scarce resources, has the determination to stay on the land and to introduce innovations to start and run the farm…". It is almost impossible for young farmers to begin farming due to a lack of experience, start-up capital and collateral for loans. Access to agricultural land resources has been identified as the most widespread barrier for young farmers to start farming ... (Eistrup *et al.*, 2019). In Latvia also, one of the main problems faced by young farmers when beginning their agricultural business is the accessibility of land as the main factor of production... To successfully begin farming and establish a competitive enterprise, a young farmer in Latvia needs, depending on agricultural industry, at least 20-100 ha of agricultural land. A.Kan *et al.* (2018) are of the same opinion that factors such as the unwillingness of young people to stay and work in rural areas and the agricultural sector is not profitable enough to invest are influential in this respect.

In Latvia, the main kind of economic activity in rural areas is agriculture. In 2018, there were 78.1 thousand agricultural holdings in Latvia, the average managed land area of which was 38.2 ha - by 8.7 ha or 29% more than in 2010. From 2010 to 2018, the total utilized agricultural area in the country increased by 132.8 thousand ha or 7.3%, reaching 1937.9 thousand ha in 2018. In 2018, the share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in gross value added was only 3.8%, decreasing 0.6 percentage points in comparison with 2010 (CSB, 2019). In Latvia, there is a tendency that young people move from rural areas to cities; therefore, the age structure of farm owners is deteriorating.

Recent EU CAP reforms provide specific support measures for young farmers, as the young farmers are seen as more innovative, enterprising and more willing to change (Hamilton, Bosworth, & Ruto, 2015; Kontogeorgos, 2014). However, the CAP is considered to be the most expensive and extensive of the EU common policies… (Andersson, Höjgård, &Rabinowicz, 2017), which should be changed in the future to reduce farmers' dependence on support payments.

Therefore, *the aim of the present research* is to assess trends in the age structure of farm managers and owners and the policy instruments applied in Latvia to improve age structure in rural areas.

Research hypothesis: the age structure of farm managers and owners in Latvia is deteriorating; therefore, additional measures are needed to involve new entrants in agriculture.

Materials and Methods

The CAP provides for various support measures for young farmers (up to 40 years old). A new form of direct payment support for young farmers has been introduced under Pillar I of the CAP since 2015. In turn, support measures for the second pillar of the CAP are defined in the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) developed by each country (Eistrup *et al.*, 2019). Each RDP covers a period of seven years according to the financing period of the EU budget. But as acknowledged Andersson A., Höjgård S., & Rabinowicz E. (2017) "there have been several changes in the Rural Development Regulation…. It could be argued that these changes are mainly due to two factors: the evolution of EU policies in other areas and the influence of external forces". It is challenging to analyse support payments for rural development, especially over a longer period beyond several EU programming periods, as CAP I pillar payment and RDPs support measures are changing, it means the conditions for receiving support change, and it is difficult to find information on the results achieved. Therefore, authors employed relevant scientific literature and information from various national institutions – the Rural Support Service (RSS - institution, which is administrating all support payments in Latvia) (RSS, 2015-2019) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA, 2013, 2018, 2019) to provide a justification for the research problem.

Analysis of the farmer age structure was conducted in two ways:

1) Authors summarized publicly available statistical data on age structure of farm

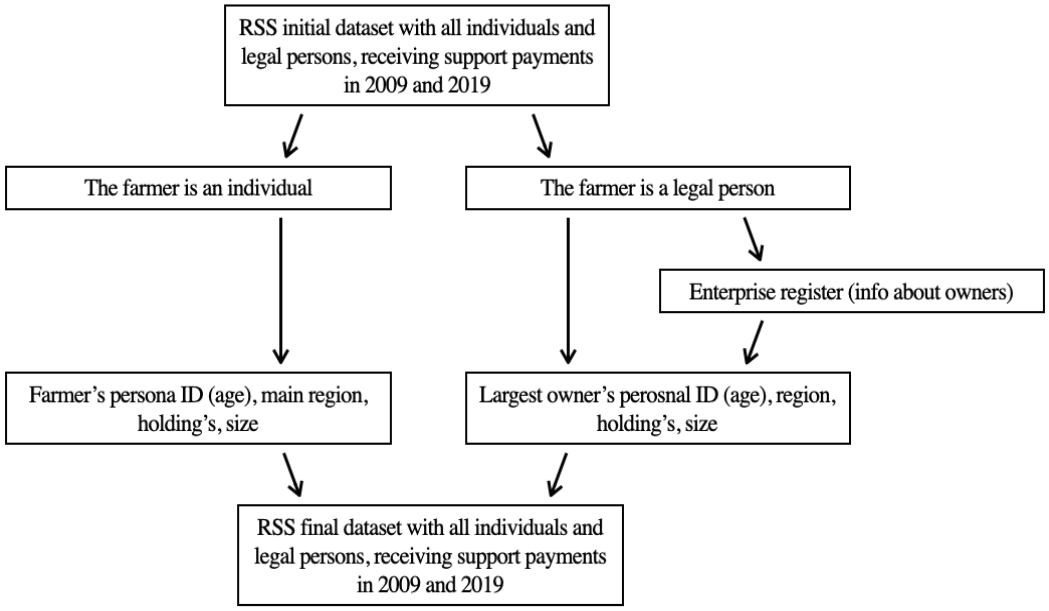


Figure 1. Research scheme and its main elements (steps).

managers from the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB, 2016, 2019, 2020);

2) Then micro level data from RSS is used for more detailed analysis on dynamics by age group (Nipers, 2019).

Statistical data are obtained from sample surveys. Data of the RSS are micro level data for each farmer receiving any of support payments. This RSS information allowed the authors to identify the ages of almost all – 67.5 thousand support beneficiaries in 2009, 60.1 thousand in 2014 and 57.0 thousand in 2019. The data obtained are sufficient to identify the situation and dynamic of the changes. A step-by-step methodology for calculations is presented in Figure 1.

Considering, that for majority of the population there is year of birth in a unique personal identification code, RSS provided information of the age of a land manager. For companies, information is linked with data from Enterprise register, to identify the only owner's (or the owner with the biggest share in the company) age from the personal identification code. If there are equal shares of different owners, average age is used. Information is allowing to identify farmer's age, size of the holding and a region in which the largest part of the managed land is located. All information is provided anonymized.

Results and Discussion

1. Policy instruments for improving the age structure of farm managers and owners in Latvia

According to A.Kontogeorgos *et al.* (2014), the CAP has established various policy measures and motives for new entrants to agriculture. The Member States – Greece, Ireland and France – have been among the main beneficiaries of this policy scheme, which encourages farmers aged between 55 and 66 to retire and transfer their land to a younger farmer, with multiple effects (Bika, 2007). In Estonia, the results of the research indicate that the farm growth probability is highest in the 40-49 year age group (Viira, Põder, &Värnik, 2013). Since joining the EU, several CAP support instruments have been available in Latvia for tackling the problematic age structure of farmers, mainly available under CAP Pillar 2, i.e. funding for rural development (Table 1).

Latvia Single Programming Document Objective 1 Programme 2004-2006 (2003), which contained the support measure "Setting Up of Young Farmers". The objective of the measure was to support the involvement of young people in agricultural activities. During the programme period, 298 new agricultural holdings received EUR 6.8 million support, increasing the proportion of young agricultural business owners by 1.3% (Yearbook on the European Union …, 2007).

The Rural Development Plan of Latvia for 2004-2006 (Cabinet of Ministers…, 2004) contained the support measure "Early Retirement". The measure made it possible for elderly farm owners who were unwilling or, for various reasons, unable to continue and develop their business, to transfer their holdings or part thereof to other owners and receive early retirement support. The support has been received by 694 individuals, and the support scheme lasts until 2021 (State Audit Office, 2015).

Table 1

Rural development support measures to improve the age structure of farmers in Latvia for 2004-2020

Support measure	Programming period	Document	Unit of measurement	Results
Setting Up of Young Farmers	2004-2006	Latvia Single Programming Document Objective 1 Programme 2004-2006	Supported farms	298
			Funding, million EUR	6.8
Early Retirement		The Rural Development Plan of Latvia for 2004-2006	Supported persons	694
Support for Young Farmers	2007-2013	The Rural Development Programme of Latvia for 2007-2013	Supported farms	472
			Funding, million EUR	18.0
Early Retirement			Supported persons	0*
Start-up Support for Young Farmers	2014-2020	Latvia Rural Development Programme (National) 2014-2020	Supported farms	276**
			Funding, million EUR	12.0**

* Measure was not implemented. ** At the beginning of 2019.

Source: authors created based on State Audit Office, 2015: MoA, 2013, 3018; Nipers, 2019.

The Rural Development Programme of Latvia for 2007-2013 (Table 1) contained two measures: 1) "Support for Young Farmers", which aimed to encourage the involvement of young people in permanent agricultural activities; 2) "Early Retirement", which aimed to promote the takeover and development of agricultural holdings through replacing and improving their management and involving young and economically active individuals in agricultural activities. Under the support measure "Support for Young Farmers", 472 farms instead of the planned 350 ones were supported, i.e. 35% more. In total, EUR 18 million or 94% of the planned amount was invested in the mentioned farms. This means that throughout the programme period, the projects implemented were on average 30% smaller than initially planned (the programme envisaged EUR 54614 per project, whereas in fact it was EUR 38186). However, the support measure "Early Retirement" was not implemented because meeting the liabilities undertaken under a similar support measure in the period 2004-2006 continued in the period 2007-2013, disbursing EUR 46.6 million (MoA, 2013, State Audit Office, 2015).

Latvia Rural Development Programme (National) 2014-2020 (2020) contains the support measure "Start-up Support for Young Farmers", the aim of which is to support the implementation of young farmers' business plans for the establishment of new farms or the takeover of existing ones. The amount of funding available in the period was EUR 15.8 million. At the beginning of 2019, 276 projects were under implementation, 22 had already been completed, and public funding of EUR 12 million or 76% of the available amount had been reserved. EUR 11.3 million had been paid in the previous period under the support measure "Early Retirement" (RSS, 2015-2019).

Several investment measures under the RDP provide for an extra rate of public co-funding investments for the development of agricultural enterprises if the projects are implemented by young farmers under the age of 40 (in the periods 2004-2006, 2007-2013 and 2014-2020). For example, in 2017 in the support measure 4.1 "Support for investments in agricultural holdings" 38% of 1174 projects were projects of young farmers (but in 2018 55.9% of 916 approved projects were projects of young farmers. This shows the interest of young people in associating themselves with rural life through agricultural production (MoA, 2019).

As recognized by May *et al.* (2019) … a payment given to young farmers to prevent them from leaving the farm could be an option.... Similar opinion has a Rumanovská L. (2016) that ... young farmers support supposed to be such a measure crucial for reaching competitiveness for their farms and even to increase the number of young farmers (Pavic *et al.*, 2019). But the authors agree with Milone P. &Ventura F. (2019) that sometimes „it emerged that the young new peasants do not feel supported by the EU policy instruments designed to foster the generational renewal in agriculture…".

Following the *EU direct payment* reform of 2014 (CAP I Pillar policy), it was considered in Latvia that support for young farmers should be continued. Therefore, a new kind of direct payments – *Payment for Young Farmers* –, which is an extra payment to natural and legal persons for the areas of their first

Table 2

EU direct payment scheme "Payment for Young Farmers" implementation results in Latvia in 2015-2018

Indicators	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018/2015, %
Beneficiaries, number	1744	2448	2701	3208	184
Total area, ha	55788	75365	79105	97543	175
Amount per ha, EUR	42.20	42.20	42.20	49.26	117
Funding, thousand EUR	2360.9	3152.7	3295.8	4792.4	203
In 1 application, ha	32.0	30.8	29.3	30.4	95
In 1 application, EUR	1354	1288	1220	1494	110

Source: authors calculations based on RSS, 2015- 2019; MoA, 2019.

Table 3

Age structure of farm managers in Latvia in 2010 and 2016

Year	2010		2016		2016/2010	
Age goups, years	Number	Structure, %	Number	Structure, %	Number	Structure, %
18-24 years	469	0,6	402	0,6	-67	0,0
25-34 years	4069	4,9	2957	4,2	-1112	-0,7
35-44 years	14257	17,1	8912	12,7	-5345	-4,4
45-54 years	22467	26,9	17884	25,6	-4583	-1,4
55-64 years	17318	20,8	18671	26,7	1353	5,9
> 65 years	24806	29,7	21106	30,2	-3700	0,4
Total	83386	100,0	69932	100,0	-13454	0,0

Source: authors calculations based on CSB, 2016.

established agricultural holdings declared for the Single Area Payment Scheme for up to 90 hectares of their farmland, was introduced in 2015. The maximum duration of the payment is five years from the first application for it (Cabinet of Ministers…, 2015).

In 2015, based on the applications for the Payment for Young Farmers, indicating an increase of 84% in the number of young farmers and a 75% increase in the area they managed in the period 2015-2018, but declared area in one application decreasing by 5%, but financing per one beneficiary increasing by 10% (Table 2).

Similar processes occur also in other EU Member States, for example, Hennessy T. (2014) stresses that CAP Pillar I policies have invested significant resources in farms and have ensured the survival of those that would otherwise have gone out of business.

2. Analysis of the age structure and farmland areas of farm owners and managers in Latvia

CSB data analyses. The population of Latvia continues declining and at the beginning of 2019 it totalled 1.92 million. In 2019 compared with 2010, the population declined by 9.5% (CSB, 2020). The negative demographic situation in Latvia as well as technological progress affect the decline in the number of agricultural employees and farms.

The age structure of farm managers deteriorated – in 2010, 49% farm managers represented the age group of up to 54 years, while in 2016 it was 43%. The proportion of farm managers aged over 55 increased from 51% to 57% over a 6-year period (Table 3).

A similar situation is observed among farm owners (Table 4). In 2010, 49% farm owners were aged under 54, while in 2016 it was only 42%. Consequently, the proportion of farm owners aged over 55 increased from 51% to 58%. It should be emphasized that in 2016 the number of farm owners aged from 18 to 24 years decreased by 98 persons, while in the age group from 35 to 44 years a decrease of 5472 persons was reported, and 4709 persons in the age group of 45-54 years.

RSS data analyses. A comparison of the age structure of farm owners/managers between 2009 and 2019 revealed a clear increase trend in the average age (Figure 2) – in 2009, the median age of owners/managers was 53 years, while in 2014 it was 55 years and in 2019 – 57 years. A similar situation was observed in all regions of Latvia. We can see that

Table 4

Age structure of farm owners in Latvia in 2010 and 2016

Year	2010		2016		2016/2010	
Age goups, years	Number	Structure, %	Number	Structure, %	Number	Structure, %
18-24 years	423	0.5	325	0.5	-98	0.0
25-34 years	3855	4.8	2671	4.0	-1184	-0.8
35-44 years	13708	17.0	8236	12.4	-5472	-4.6
45-54 years	21749	26.9	17040	25.6	-4709	-1.3
55-64 years	16831	20.8	17939	27.0	1108	6.1
> 65 years	24241	30.0	20302	30.5	-3939	0.5
Total	80807	100.0	66513	100.0	-14294	0.0

Source: authors calculations based on CSB, 2016.

most of the farm owners/managers who were between 40-49 years in 2009 have survived and now make the age group 50-59, but the number of older persons (from 60 year and more) in 2009 decreased in 2019.

The increase in the average age of farm owners could not be explained by general aging alone, as birth rates decreased significantly after 1990, and the individuals born in that period were in the age group of 20-29 in 2019.

The next Figure 3 shows changes in various age groups of farm owners/managers. To reveal the situation more accurately, the age of all farm owners/managers in 2009 was increased by 10 years. This makes it possible to visually represent the age distribution of farm owners/managers in 2019 provided that they are the same as those in 2009. Figure 6 shows that the number of owners/managers in the age group of 50-59 in 2019 remained practically the same as in the age group of 40-49 in 2009.

The data also allow an analysis of the movement of farm owners/managers among various age groups. Assuming 2009 as the reference year, provided that the same owners/managers have became 10 years older, the curves in Figure 7 should coincide. A very small decrease in the number of farm owners/managers who were aged 40-49 in 2009 was observed (about 0.6 thousand). In contrast, significant decreases in the number of farm owners/managers were observed across all the age groups of over 40-49 – 3.2 thousand had left the group of farm owners/managers who were aged 50-59 in 2009, 5.8 thousand or 43% had left the group of those aged 60-69, and 6.2 thousand or 70% had left the group of those aged 70-79.

At the same time, less than 2 thousand individuals had joined the group of farm owners/managers who were aged 30-39 in 2009, while 3.5 thousand individuals had joined those aged 20-29, more than doubling the total number of farm owners/managers in the group.

This process occurred partly owing to the inheritance of farms, yet some farms were re-established. However, Figure 3 shows that the net increase in the number of farm owners in younger age groups was lower than that in the number of farm owners leaving older age groups.

An analysis of the data indicated a causal relationship – the average farmland area for the farms

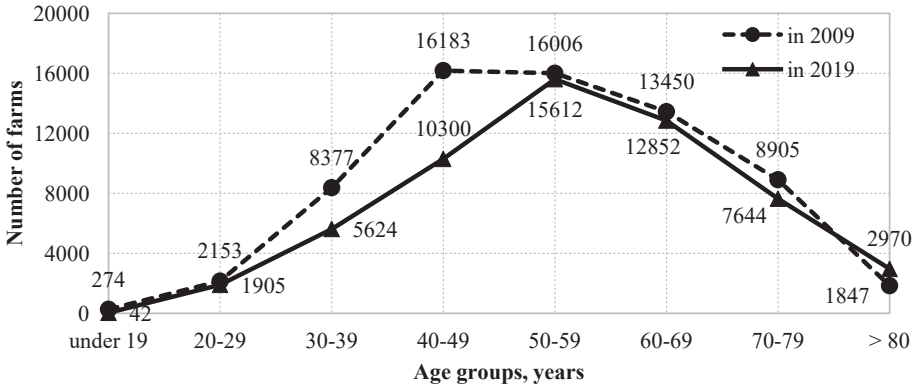


Figure 2. Distribution of farm owners/managers by the age group in Latvia in 2009 and 2019 (Nipers, 2019).

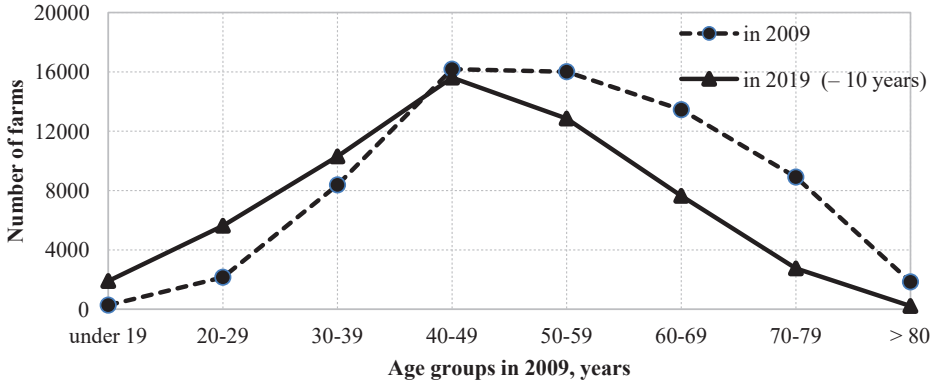


Figure 3. Changes in the number of farm owners/managers broken down by age group in Latvia in 2009 and 2019 (Nipers, 2019).

of younger owners/managers was larger. However, significant changes have occurred over the last 10 years. In 2009, the youngest age group, i.e. the farm owners/managers aged 20-29 had the largest average agricultural land area, and the average farmland area in each subsequent age group became smaller. For example, in the group of farm owners/managers aged 20-29, the average farmland area was 49 ha, 34 ha in the age group of 30-39, 28 ha in the age group of 40-49 and 23 ha, 14 ha, 10 ha and 9 ha, respectively, in the following age groups. In contrast, the situation in 2019 was different. In the age groups of 20-29 and 30-39, the average farmland area was 43 ha. In the next age group, i.e. 40-49, the average farmland area was similar – 40 ha, while in the next age groups the average farmland areas were 34 ha, 26 ha, 16 ha and 10 ha, respectively (Figure 4).

It could be concluded that the land consolidation process occurred practically across all the age groups of farm owners/managers. An exception was farm owners/managers who were in the age group of 20-29 in 2009 and moved to the age group of 30-39 in 10 years. In this age group, the average farmland area decreased due to the entry of many young owners/managers, including inheriting medium-sized farms from the older age groups of farm owners/managers.

Another exception was the farm owners/managers aged 70-79 who had moved to the age group of over 80 in 10 years – the average farmland area in this age group had remained unchanged.

A research study done in Estonia shows that older farmers choose not to continue farming (Viira, Põder, & Värnik, 2014). An analysis of the age structure of farm owners and the sizes of farm holdings shows that the shares of older owners of holdings are declining rapidly and the size categories of agricultural holdings increase (Zagata & Sutherland, 2015).

3. Regional differences in the age structure of farm owners/managers in Latvia

The statistical regions of Latvia (NUTS3 level – Figure 5) were analysed to assess the age structure of farm owners/managers and the changes therein. Riga and Pieriga regions were not included in the analysis (because the effect of Riga did not allow an accurate analysis).

Although the trends were generally similar for all the regions of Latvia, there were some slight differences. For example, over the last 10 years, the

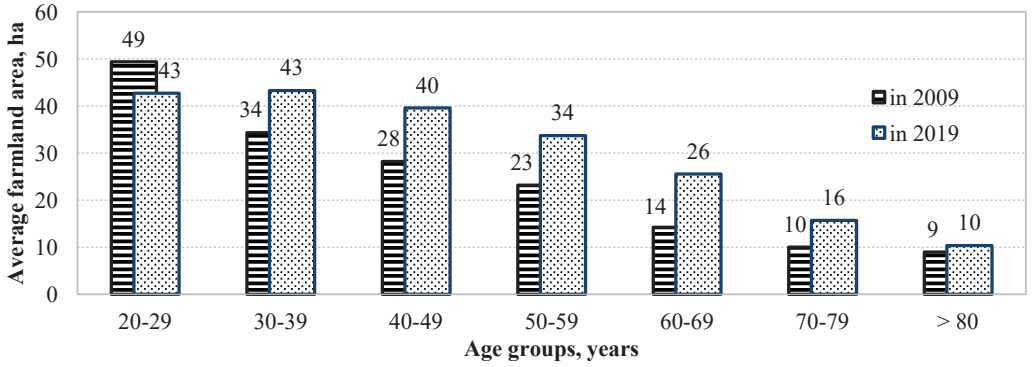


Figure 4. Average farmland areas across various age groups of farm owners/managers in Latvia in 2009 and 2019 (Nipers, 2019).



Figure 5. Map of (statistical) regions of Latvia (The Ministry of Environmental…, 2020).

decrease in the number of farm owners/managers in Zemgale and Vidzeme occurred due to the decrease in the number of farm owners/managers under the age of 50. Similarly, in Latgale the decrease in the number of farm owners/managers mainly occurred in the age groups of up to 50 years; however, the decrease was significantly larger. Besides, the number of landowners in the age group of 70-79 also decreased significantly in Latgale. In Kurzeme, in contrast, the decrease occurred in all the age groups of up to 60 years (Figure 6).

In all the regions, the average farmland area increased across all the age groups of farm owners/managers, except for the age group of 20-29 (Figure 7).

This process was particularly pronounced in Kurzeme and Zemgale, where the average farmland area in the age groups of up to 50 was approximately 50-60 ha. In Latgale, too, the average farmland area increased, although not so significantly, and was significantly smaller than that in the other regions – around 25-35 ha in the age groups of up to 50 years.

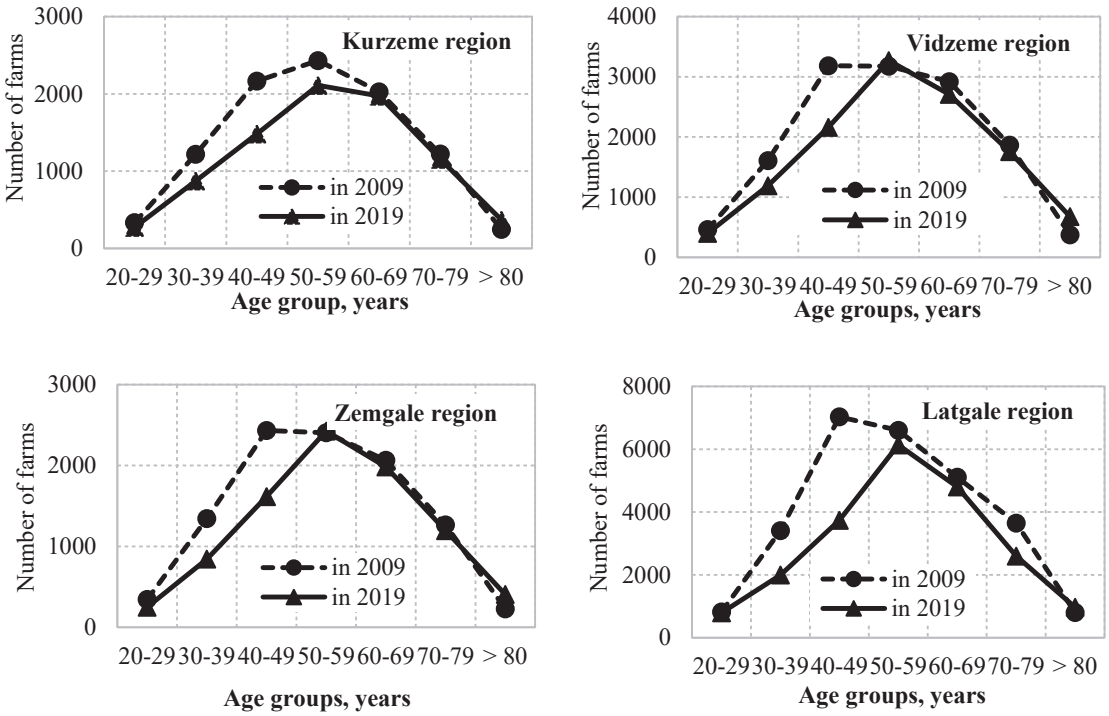


Figure 6. Number of farms by age group of owners/managers and by Latvia region in 2009 and 2019 (Nipers, 2019).

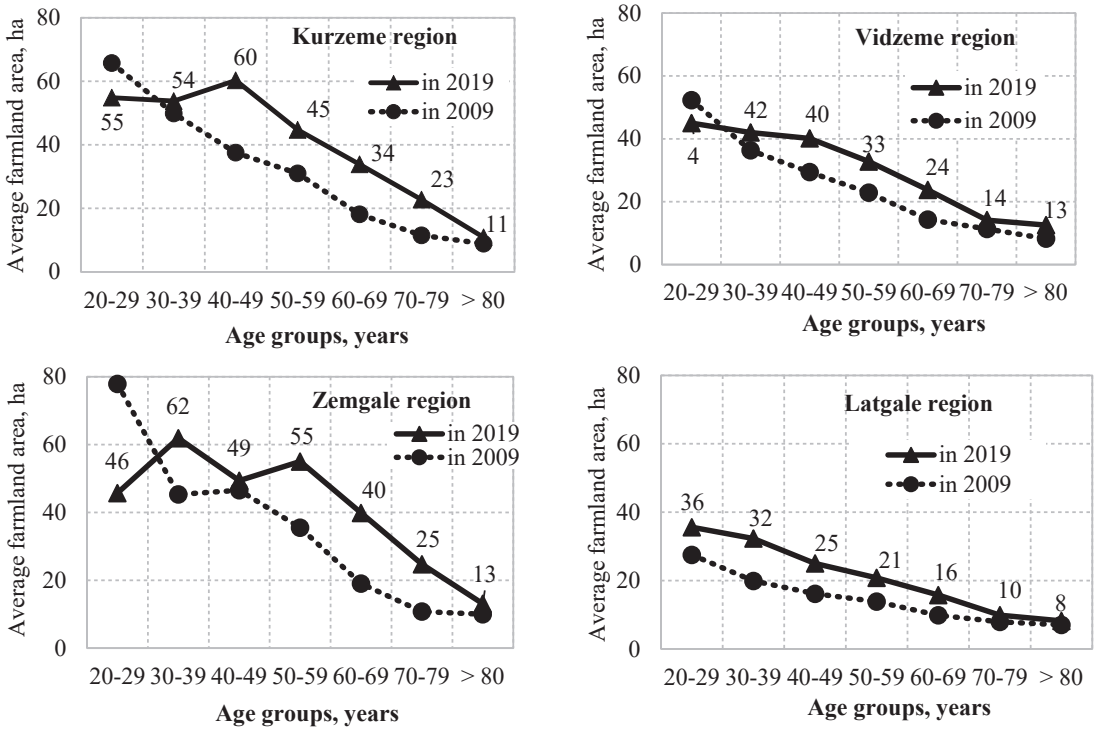


Figure 7. Average farmland area by age group of owners/managers and by Latvia region in 2009 and 2019 (Nipers, 2019).

In Vidzeme region, the average farmland area was approximately 40-45 ha in the age groups of up to 50 years, and in recent years the increase of the average farmland area was slightly larger than in Latgale but smaller than in Kurzeme (Figure 7).

The average farmland area in the group of farm owners/managers aged 20-29 was higher 10 years ago than now because the owners/managers who had inherited the land enter this group. As seen in the figures, the average farmland area in the groups of older owners/managers was significantly smaller.

Conclusions

1. Since joining the EU, several support instruments have been available in Latvia to improve the age structure of farm owners and managers. The main support measures for rural development are those under Pillar II of the CAP. In the period 2004-2019 in Latvia, 1068 farms received support (or the projects are still in process) under the measure "Support for Young Farmers" and 694 farmers under the measure "Early Retirement". Besides, an extra rate of public co-funding was applied to the investment projects implemented by young farmers in all the periods.
2. A new kind of direct payments – Payment for Young Farmers – has been available in Latvia since 2015. In 2018, the new payment was received by 3208 farms for a total area of 97543 ha, indicating an increase of 84% in the number of young farmers and a 75% increase in the area they have managed since 2015.
3. According to the CSB data, the age structure of farm managers deteriorated. In 2013, 46% farm managers represented the age group of up to 54 years, while in 2016 it was 43%. The proportion of farm managers aged over 55 increased from 54% to 57% over a 3-year period. The situation was similar in the corresponding age groups of farm owners.
4. The process of land consolidation occurred in agriculture in Latvia, and the average farmland area continued increasing. This process occurred faster in Kurzeme and Zemgale where the average farmland areas were larger than in the other regions 10 years ago as well. The consolidation was slower in Latgale where the average farmland area was smaller also 10 years ago. This means that the disparity in average farmland area increased between Zemgale-Kurzeme and Latgale.
5. There was a disparity in average farmland area among various age groups of farm owners/managers; the average farmland area was significantly smaller for older farmers than for younger owners. However, the alignment process has begun over the last 10 years and is expected to continue gradually.
6. The aging of farm owners/managers was relatively fast in Latvia. The median age of farm owners/

managers increased from 53 years in 2009 to 57 years in 2019. A similar situation was observed in all the regions of Latvia; however, the aging occurred a little slower in Zemgale and Vidzeme, whereas in Kurzeme and especially in Latgale it was faster.

7. The hypothesis that the age structure of farm managers and owners is deteriorating proved to be true, and it could be concluded that the support measures implemented have encouraged the entry of young farmers into the agricultural industry; however, the age structure of farm managers/ owners has not improved.

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