

Title: Low-input Farming and Territories

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Abstract:

H2020 **LIFT**

(Low Input Farm & Territorial agroecological approaches)

Goal:

To identify and understand how socio-economic and policy drivers impact on the development of ecological approaches to farming and assess the performance and sustainability of these approaches.

Selected Studies:

Interviews¹ of Irish conventional and organic farmers revealed considerable similarities in the underlying values of both groups of farmers, however the drivers of these values differ. While 'profit' is an important value for both groups, it is driven by 'developing the business'/'resource use efficiency' for conventional farmers and 'environmental concerns' for organic. Similarly, 'pride'/'satisfaction' are important for all the farmers but relate to 'efficiency' for conventional and 'low input' for organic farmers. 'Tradition' is also important, relating to a 'way of life' for conventional farmers and to a 'holistic' approach for organic farmers. These findings highlight the importance of language in devising and communicating policies as 'efficiency' and 'low input' may achieve the same policy goals but need to be targeted differently to take account of differences in conventional and organic farming values. Similarly, the use of the term 'traditional' could be seen as either as old-fashioned or as a desirable way of farming.

Barriers to the expansion of the Irish organic dairy farming were mapped² by comparing supports for conventional and organic dairy across the 'Innovation System', from EU and national policy, to research and advisory capacity, to farmers, processors and marketing and was backed up by in-depth interviews with organic stakeholders. The study showed that while demand for organic dairy produce is high, greater policy, research and advisory supports are needed to incentivise conversion, while capital investment is required to increase capacity. However, all of these factors need to be addressed simultaneously and the 'innovation system' stakeholders need to move together.

¹ Means End Chain approach

² Net-Map (World Bank)