

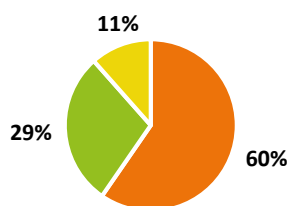
A3.3 Policy actor: Farmers

Farmers play a vital role in the food system as they grow crops and raise animals to fulfil the demands of today's food supply chain, therefore they retain their importance for the dynamism of European rural areas. However, **employment in agriculture** in the EU has been steadily decreasing from 2000 (about 16.7 million people) up to now (about 10.5 million people) (Eurostat, 2018), and this agricultural workforce is mostly concentrated in Central and Southern Europe. Farmers constitute a **heterogeneous stakeholders category**, with considerable differences in terms of size, resources, wealth and production. Even if small farms might appear inefficient and irrelevant for the modern agriculture dominated by large-scale markets, they indeed play an important role for rural sustainability in Europe.

From our food policy mapping, it emerges that farmers act more as **primary targets** (79 mapped policies) rather than **ultimate beneficiaries** (52 mapped policies).

Proportion of mapped farmers-related policies by POLICY GOAL

Farmers as *ultimate beneficiaries*



Farmers as *primary targets*



The mapped food policies involving farmers mostly focus on:

- o the **agri-food business**, especially when farmers are *ultimate beneficiaries*, as they take advantage of trainings and advice, quotas, support for investments in their business structure and facilities, agricultural machinery, new products, processes and technologies;
- o the **environment**, especially when they are *primary targets* since, having an important impact on its status, they are incentivised to take action in order to mitigate possible adverse effects (e.g. to lower the intensity of the GHG emissions deriving from their productive activities).

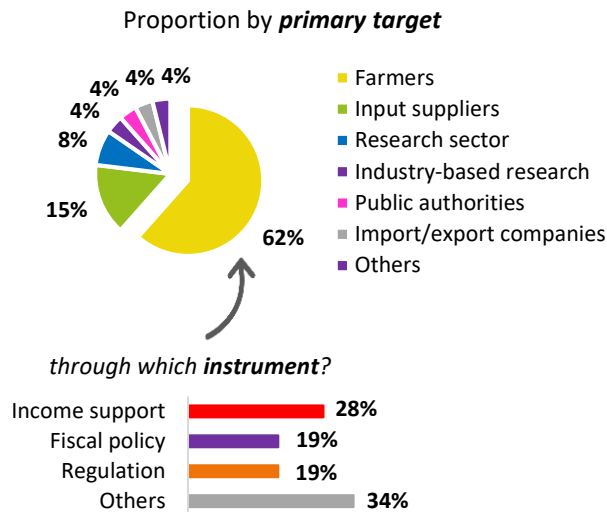
Why is only a small share of nutrition policies implemented through farmers?

*Is their job more relevant for guaranteeing food safety than ensuring a **balanced and sufficient diet**?*

*How could they contribute to encouraging a **shift to healthier food among consumers**?*

Rural areas in the EU still face many societal challenges, including high unemployment, lower income and lack of infrastructure and services. *Are EU food policies focusing enough on **equity** to benefit farmers? Does agricultural productivity constitute higher priority than **social cohesion**?*

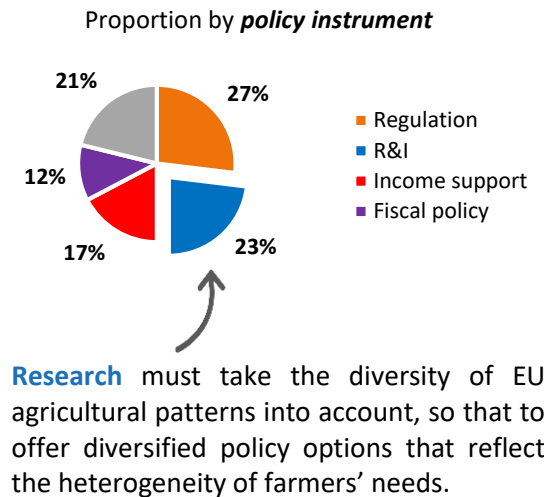
Farmers as *ultimate beneficiaries*



The vast majority of food policies that benefits farmers is directly implemented through farmers themselves (62%), mostly through **income support**, **fiscal policy** and **regulations**.

*Is there room for **bottom-up policies** to empower farmers?*

*How can farmers' co-participation in policy making foster a **more inclusive growth of rural areas**?*

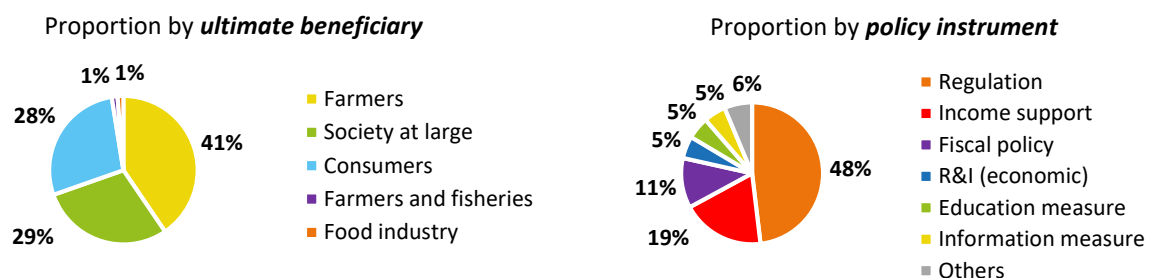


*Does **R&I** meet farmers' practical needs?*

How can the dialogue between those implementing R&I and those benefitting from it be facilitated?

*Can **participatory agricultural research** integrate farmers' experience and skills into an enhanced **rural innovation process**?*

Farmers as *primary targets*



As expected, the mapped food policies acting through farmers ultimately benefit:

- o **Farmers** by making the **agri-food business more viable and socially balanced** through **income support** and **fiscal policy**;
- o **Society at large** by **reducing the environmental impacts of agriculture** through **regulations**;
- o **Consumers** by guaranteeing **food safety standards and controls** through **regulations**.

Research and **education measures** do not seem to play a relevant role in targeting beneficiaries through farmers' activities. However, despite differences between countries, the majority of farm managers generally have only practical experience and no structured agricultural training.

*Could the provision of **free tailor-made advice, trainings and transfers of knowledge** strengthen farmers' role in addressing food policies beneficiaries?*