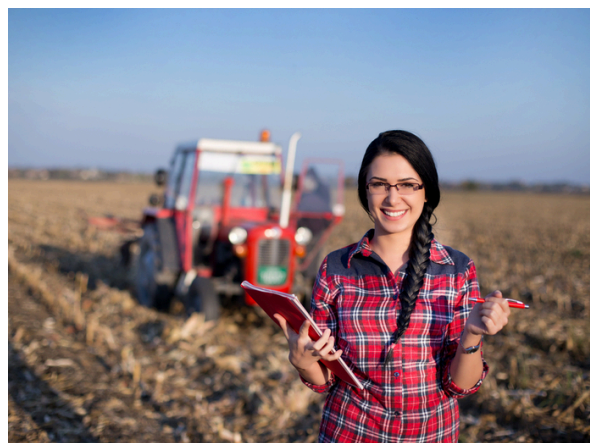


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Introducing NEWBIE, a project that is injecting innovative new business models and entrepreneurship into European agriculture

To grow and prosper, European agriculture requires a steady flow of new entrants into the sector. However, new entrants often face a significant number of hurdles to overcome in order to develop sustainable farming businesses. The NEWBIE project has come forward with a dedicated toolkit to help them, as well as the development of dedicated support networks to promote innovative business and entry models to get them off to a flying start.



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For an industry or economic sector to survive and thrive, new blood is required to inject fresh ideas into the mix, which then of course stimulates and powers innovation. Agriculture is no different, but for those who are keen to roll up their sleeves and get stuck into farming, as either a first-timer or inheritor, a full-time career or even a part-time vocation alongside other activities, there are some pretty big barriers to overcome first.

First the challenges, then the NEWBIE solutions

Securing access to land is difficult due to rising land prices and leasing rates, especially in regions where new entrants will compete with established farmers. In a chicken-and-egg paradox, access to capital to launch a new venture is often hindered by the need to acquire land first. Newcomers could also experience difficulty

in accessing crucial information needed to launch their business and may also be unaware of or struggle to enter established markets and integrate into existing supply chains.

This is where NEWBIE (New Entrant netWork: Business models for Innovation, entrepreneurship and resilience in European agriculture) comes to the forefront. The 4-year EU-funded project set itself the task of helping new entrants to agriculture overcome these hurdles and establish their sustainable farming enterprises. The project team have done this by fully assessing the barriers to entry in nine European countries and one of their big findings was a need for modern, up-to-date and practice-oriented agricultural education that is regularly adapted when necessary.

NEWBIE has also worked on a set of [‘practice descriptions’](#)  to facilitate new entrants into agriculture, all of which have been written to be easily accessible, and a multilingual umbrella toolkit, one for each participating NEWBIE country, that provides a collective online space where useful information for new entrants is collated and then subdivided into user-friendly sections to assist them with their ideas and business development.

Celebrating NEWBIE successes

The project can count many successful cases of new entrants benefiting from the support provided to them. One example is the ‘Snowdonia Shepherdess’, whose entry into farming was supported by a unique fellowship scheme that granted access to a landmark trust tenancy in the Welsh uplands. Another great case study is that of a 22-year-old Bulgarian farmer who was highlighted by NEWBIE due to his successful business model focused on brand amplification and an online store that gives him better access to the EU’s vast market. Finally, two successful Irish NEWBIE farmers also recently won distinguished awards as part of the ‘Irish Country Living, Women in Agriculture Awards 2020’.

NEWBIE has also worked to spur their charges forward by organising and hosting their own awards, one for each participating country.

With the project due to end in December 2021, the team have now entered their last year and will work to consolidate their final results. Moreover, NEWBIE will leave behind a strong legacy and its tools and materials will no doubt help many more new entrants into the world of agriculture to fulfil their ambitions.

Keywords

NEWBIE, agriculture, new entrants, innovation, sustainable farming

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