

Excavating innovation strategies to boost strong multifunctional GI systems

Objectives

This paper deals with the GIs' strategies oriented towards innovation adoption for building up multifunctional agricultural systems. The recent trend in the GI markets calls for renewing the GI business models on account of the growing competition not only between GI and non-GI products but also within the GI systems. To be innovative, farmers not only develop new technologies, but their novelties emerge as the outcome of different ways of thinking and different ways of doing things and in recombining different pieces of knowledge in an innovative way (SCAR, 2012). This paper is set against this background to analyze innovative strategies of the Italian GIs farms aimed to trigger the GI transition towards strong multifunctionality paths (Wilson, 2008). More precisely, the paper seeks to analyze the adoption of innovation related to diversification in other gainful activities carried out by the Italian GI farms. Both on and off-farm diversification into farm-related and farm-diverse activities depict entrepreneurial strategies targeted towards more (economic, social, and environmental) sustainable GI systems (Guareschi et al., 2023), providing both commodity and non-commodity output (Belletti et al., 2002).

Methodology

Data analysis is drawn on the FADN data set and the last Census of Italian Agriculture (2020), to excavate the adoption of innovation strategies aimed at diversifying farming activity. Accordingly, we will consider the innovation adopted in the Italian farms, with special reference to innovation for other gainful activities adopted by the farm adhering to a GI system. The analysis will be done by articulating the farm territorial localization according to the rural areas delimited by the Strategic National Plan (urban, specialized agriculture, rural intermediate, and rural marginal areas). Data will be processed through a multivariate analysis, with the purpose of classifying the innovative GI farms based on their contribution to building up a multifunctional farming sector.

Expected results

The contribution is set against the background of new business models adopted by the GI farms along the path of a multifunctional farming system, which represents a policy objective in a rural context. As pointed out in the Long Term Vision for Rural Areas 2040, resilient, prosperous, diversified, and innovative farms are key dimensions for supporting sustainable rural development models. The paper tries to evidence emerging strategies for GI farms oriented towards farm diversification, targeted toward empowering sustainable business models.