

Youth employability in agriculture and rural communities

Across rural Europe, young people face more than just an employment challenge. CORE's research shows that work, **housing, public services, skills and well-being** are all interconnected. When these conditions weaken, it **becomes harder to stay in rural areas**, even for those who wish to remain connected to farming and rural life.



A European Context



In 2023, **12.3%** of young people in rural areas were not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared to **10.3%** in cities.



355 out of 406 predominantly rural EU regions recorded negative natural population growth between 2015 and 2020.



Between 2005 and 2020, the share of EU farm managers aged under 35 fell from **7.3% to 6.5%**.

What shapes the employability of rural youth?

€ MAKING A LIVING

For many young people, rural livelihoods depend on combining different income sources. Farming is often part of the picture, but it is not always enough on its own.



RESPONDENTS DID NOT CONSIDER THEIR HOUSEHOLD INCOME SUFFICIENT.

🏠 LIVING IN RURAL AREAS

Young people do not only consider employability in terms of the number of jobs available. They also take into account housing, services, mobility, and the overall quality of life in rural areas.



SAID THE LOSS OF PUBLIC SERVICES MAKES YOUNGER PEOPLE LEAVE.

🔧 WORKING CONDITIONS

Work in agriculture and rural economies is often characterised by long hours, seasonal peaks, and uncertainty. These factors impact both employability and well-being.



FELT OVERWORKED DURING PEAK PERIODS.

Where is support needed?



- Access to land, finance and start-up opportunities.
- Stable incomes and viable career paths.
- Housing, services and connectivity that support rural life.
- Advice, mentoring, skills and healthier working conditions.

This is based on a literature review and survey of young people in Austria, Spain, the Netherlands and Poland conducted by CORE. The survey findings describe the respondent group and should not be interpreted as population averages.

Read the full CORE report for comprehensive evidence, national differences and policy context.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE REPORT](#)