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How innovations in agricultural sector could help small and medium-sized enterprises to face a policy evolution

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Introduction: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the economic driver in agricultural sector. They count for 99% of the total agricultural firms operating in Europe. Trade liberalization has proved to increase economic growth and alleviate poverty in poor and low-income countries. Therefore, the trend goes towards opening boundaries between countries. Nevertheless, pressures exist on SMEs to lower prices, broaden the diversity of products and increase environmental and governmental regulations.

Research Scope: Bilateral agreements on agricultural products were signed between Switzerland and the European Union in the end of the 20th century. Hence, farmers have to adopt strategies to face trade liberalization. The mapping of innovation sources will help to understand the economic trends. Focus on specific points will perform as the innovation adoption (e.g. involvement in a regional trademark, patent development) and the relevant alliances at national and international levels such as collaborations engaged with Universities. The impacts of the policy implementation will be explored through the lenses of structural changes such as employment and technology evolution.

Methods: Empirical data are used to perform a qualitative analysis (e.g. surveys to farmers, retailers, professional associations of the supply chain, federal institute of agriculture). Quantitative method is also used with econometrics for investigate the causal effects of concern.

Preliminary Results: A set of Swiss agricultural firms is identified with a focus on fruit producers. Regional influence is highlighted thanks to nine trademarks spread in several cantons. It will allow the comparison whether farmers are involved or not in marketing strategies.

Conclusion: The combination of quantitative and qualitative studies will shape the research to seek the determinant factors of farmers' decisions towards specific strategies. The structural changes occurring after the bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the European Union will help to understand the effect of a policy change. Besides, the focus on international collaborations between public and private entities (e.g., Universities and firms), the trademark impacts and the patenting evolution are useful to map the knowledge clusters.

Biography

Camille Aouinait is a student at Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, Switzerland.

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