

Strategic orientations on farms are becoming more diverse: in addition to those who focus on cost-effectiveness in conventional primary production, many farmers add value to their agricultural products through processing, direct sales and niche-products, or diversify their activities into non-agricultural businesses. This development indicates that farmers are taking the initiative and pursuing ways to develop their businesses. Obviously, this development implies the need for entrepreneurial skills.

In this study entrepreneurial skills are understood as the skills of recognizing and realizing business opportunities, networking and utilizing contacts, as well as creating and evaluating a business strategy. Are these skills relevant in the farm context? Do farmers consider these skills important? How do they assess themselves regarding these skills? How do farmers explain the development of these skills? What could be done to enhance the development of these skills?

This book's aim is to answer these questions with the help of a detailed analysis of qualitative interviews with farmers in six European countries. The book reports the results from the main study of the EU-funded research project 'Developing Entrepreneurial Skills of Farmers' (ESoF).