

# **Institutional Barriers for Young Generation Entrants into the Agricultural Sector in the U.S.**

**Hannah Levine**

**(Master-Thesis, 2022, Fol. 650,491)**

A disconnect has formed between young generation entrants and former and current farmers and farm owners, with young generation entrants in the United States being deterred from following careers in the agricultural sector. This claim is met with an increase in the shrinking number of young generation entrants, which has manifested itself through evolving times and subsequent hindrances that can be found throughout different facets of society.

Although some have briefly addressed these setbacks in the farming sector throughout the U.S., literature is very much lacking in that no literature currently exists to attribute these hindrances to any one thing explicitly. The pre-existing literature is also falling short in that policies which have been set in place to address barriers have been ineffective- with the trend of the shrinking number of young entrants continuing to rise.

This thesis addresses the knowledge gap(s) and disconnects by using an explanatory approach to tackle a proposed hypothesis through three curated research questions. The research questions further allow us to explore the "who," "why," and "how" components of this overarching discussion and better understand why there is this agricultural age gap between young entrants and current farmers. It incorporates semi-systematic and integrative analyses of literature read and secondary data analysis to synthesize information acquired and form a new perspective.

Results from this paper agree with the hypothesis and demonstrate that institutional barriers are causing the shrinking number of young generation entrants in the agricultural sector in the U.S. Within societies' social institutions, specifically the education, healthcare, and government institutions, various barriers to entry were explored and revealed to be caused by deeply embedded institutional issues. This thesis' findings bring together scattered information, place accountability, and

encourage newfound conversation on how flawed institutions and their respective barriers have caused increasing deterrents for these young generation entrants. With this being said, it is deemed that this contribution could allow for better-targeted policies in the future, stimulate awareness of incomplete information currently available to the public, and spark discussion by filling a knowledge gap.

Betreut von Dr. Maria Gerster-Bentaya

Geprüft durch Prof. Dr. Andrea Knierim