

2024 AAEA (The Agricultural & Applied Economics Association) Annual meeting

New Orleans, United States, 28-30th July 2024

The AAEA annual meeting 2024 addressed a wide variety of topics related to agricultural and applied economics. I contributed with a poster entitled *Farmer Behavior Towards Herbicide-Free Agriculture and Soil Conservation*. In my contribution, I explained why soil conservation production systems often rely on the use of herbicides, and how this affects farmers' ability to adopt herbicide-free agriculture. I further motivated how the Swiss case study provides a unique setting that allows us to understand farmers' decisions to adopt voluntary agri-environmental schemes in the face of opportunity costs and tradeoffs. I discussed the main results including the non-complementarity of the two systems from the point of view of adoption, and how behavioral factors including risk preferences, innovativeness and farming goals can help mitigate the challenges of joint adoption.

The large number of contributions in the conference allowed me to get more insights into the risk environment of farmers including understudied risk such as geopolitical risks and the timing of commodity sales/purchases behavior. Additionally, I got the opportunity to attend presentations that align with my research topics, including the role of risk preferences and risk perceptions on the adoption of risk-reducing technologies and soil conservation efforts. In this report, I present my main highlights from the conference. First, the importance of putting farmers at the center of agricultural economics was discussed. This aspect was reviewed considering the statistics suggesting that agricultural labor is the most hazardous industry, with laborers having significantly higher rates of fatality and injuries in the workplace. The challenge of the statistics is, however, the underreporting that is estimated to be up to 87% (Picciotto, Beatty, and Hill, 2023). Therefore, for policy makers to enact initiatives that tackle challenges, it is necessary to expand the use of conventional sources of information such as administrative data and surveys, to other sources of information that arise from the use of technologies such as smartphones.

Second, topics related to regenerative agriculture and precision agriculture with the use of autonomous machines were present in many sessions. The need to bring automation to these processes arises because agricultural practices such as prairie strips and strip cropping involve a large amount of labor, often not remunerated. This adds to the requirements of a sector that experiences labor shortages for the conventional tasks of agricultural production.

During the conference, I observed how my own research, mainly focused on Europe and Switzerland fits into the world's efforts to address the main challenges of agriculture. I would like to thank the Swiss Society for Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Sociology SGA for the financial support to attend this meeting.

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