

# Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services



**Thematic Area:** Socio-economic performance.

**Priority:** How can working conditions be improved?

**Need:** Attractiveness of professions.

**Solution EU Number:** WC-16.

### Content of the Solution:

Organized substitution allows farmers to receive support during such key times. Two solutions exist to organise its replacement: the Agricultural Replacement Service and the informal group of farmers.

**Key Contacts:** Farmers from your locality and agricultural services as agricultural chambers or advisory services.

**Case Study:** Not available.



### Reasons for Implementing this Solution

Free up days to take time off, weekends, days,... Also enhance security (replacement in case of hard blow). Organized representation in agriculture ensures that sufficient workers are available during labour-intensive phases such as harvesting or sowing. These approaches enable flexibility, relieve farm managers during periods of illness or vacation and help to avoid bottlenecks. Organized planning ensures the continuity of operations without overburdening individual farmers.

### Description of Solution Strategies

There are two main approaches to this representation: the agricultural representation service and informal associations of farmers.

- Agricultural replacement or representation services are formal services that provide farmers with skilled labor when needed. This service can be particularly helpful in maintaining the farm during periods of illness or vacation of the farm manager. An example of this is the Respite Aid Scheme for Farmers, which was set up to continue farming activities and support farmers during periods of professional exhaustion.
- Informal groups of farmers to support each other in making representations. These groups often form spontaneously when people meet and interact regularly. The interaction is usually informal, personal and intense. Examples of such informal groups are friendship groups or mutual aid groups, which are often found in rural areas. One example is seed multiplication, where farmers work together to produce and share seeds.

In such groups, a coordinator is often appointed to plan the operations and ensure a balance of workload. These informal associations allow members to respond flexibly to work needs and use resources efficiently.



# Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services

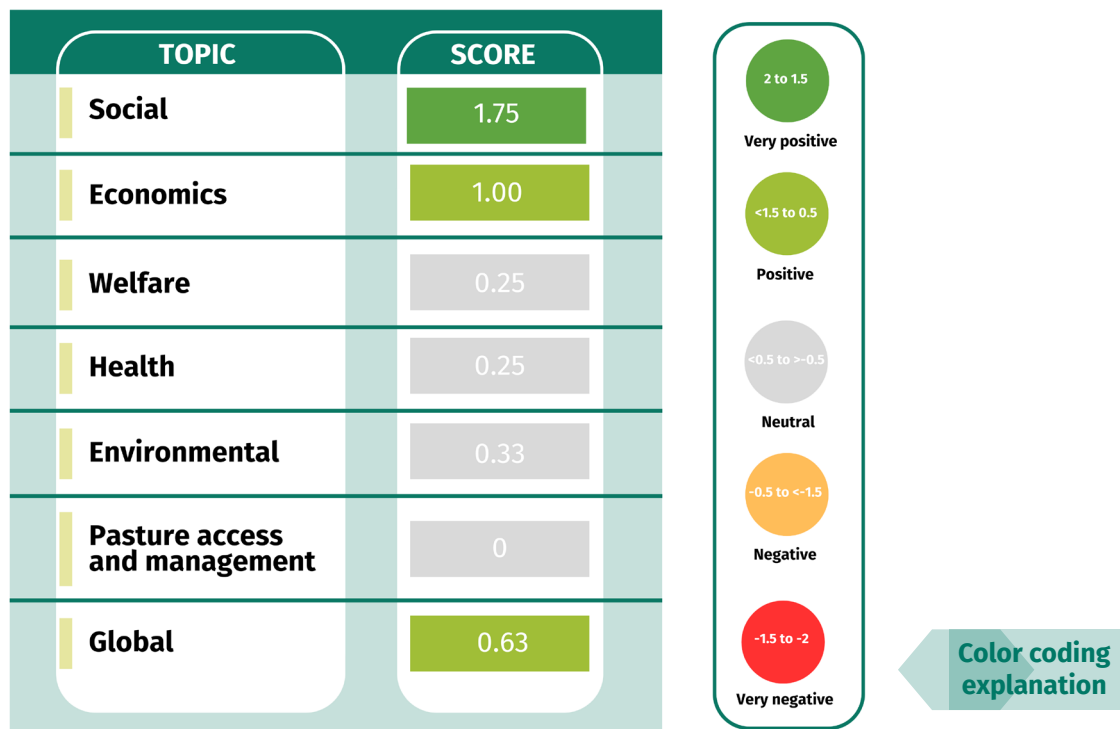
Both approaches - formal services and informal groups - provide farmers with valuable support to keep the farm running during busy periods or in the event of unforeseen breakdowns.

### Implementation Steps

1. List needs analysis
  - Identification of labor-intensive phases (e.g. hay harvest, foaling season).
  - Determination of labor requirements per season.
  - Check whether a formal or informal solution is more suitable.
2. Selection of the organizational form
  - Agricultural agency service: cooperation with existing service providers who provide qualified labor.
  - Informal group of farmers: formation of a network with other farmers who represent each other.
3. Structuring the cooperation
  - Appointment of a coordinator or contact person.
  - Establish rules for exchange and distribution of work.
  - Ensure a fair rotation principle to avoid overload.
4. Planning and organization
  - Creation of a schedule for assignments. Documentation of assignments for follow-up.
  - Definition of emergency measures for unexpected bottlenecks.
5. Implementation and adaptation
  - Start of the substitution structure and regular evaluation.
  - Obtain feedback from participating farmers.
  - Optimization of processes based on practical experience.

## Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services

### How Will this Solution Impact the Performance of your Farm ?



**Socioeconomics:** This solution will support the performance of your farm because it fosters a strong network, facilitates knowledge and skill sharing, creates synergies, and optimizes resources through shared equipment and labor exchange. It also helps rationalize investments by pooling specific services and machinery. However, success depends on fairness, well-defined roles, mutual trust, and working within smaller, regionally similar groups to ensure balanced exchanges and effective collaboration.



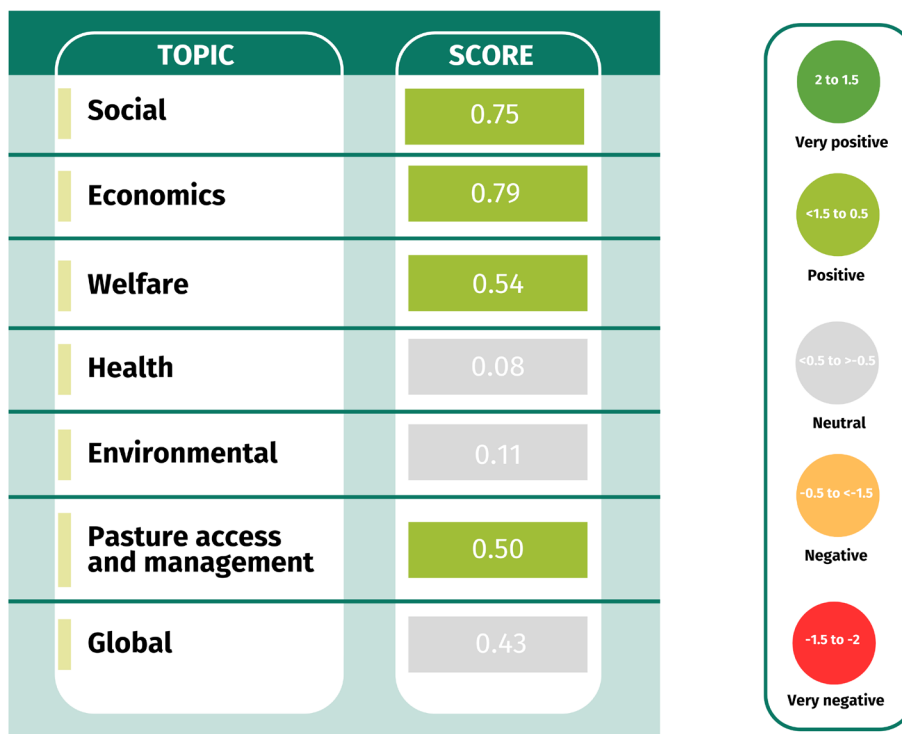
**Health & Welfare:** This solution may have negative effect on the farm performance in health aspects due to possible transmission of infectious diseases with the rotation of employees. It has little effect on the performance of the farm in welfare aspect as it doesn't induce better feeding practices, social company for horses or free movement of horses.



**Environmental Sustainability:** This solution has no effect on performance related to environmental sustainability or grassland management. However, it might have some positive effect through sharing equipment, skills, knowledge and practices on climate change adoption and mitigation.

## Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services

### How Will this Solution Impact the Resilience of your Farm?



**Socioeconomics:** This solution could slightly support the socio-economic performance of the farm facing external challenges because it can help mitigate the impact of inflation and limit potential financial degradation. By sharing resources and possibly using a joint service provider, it also reduces maintenance costs and enhances overall efficiency.



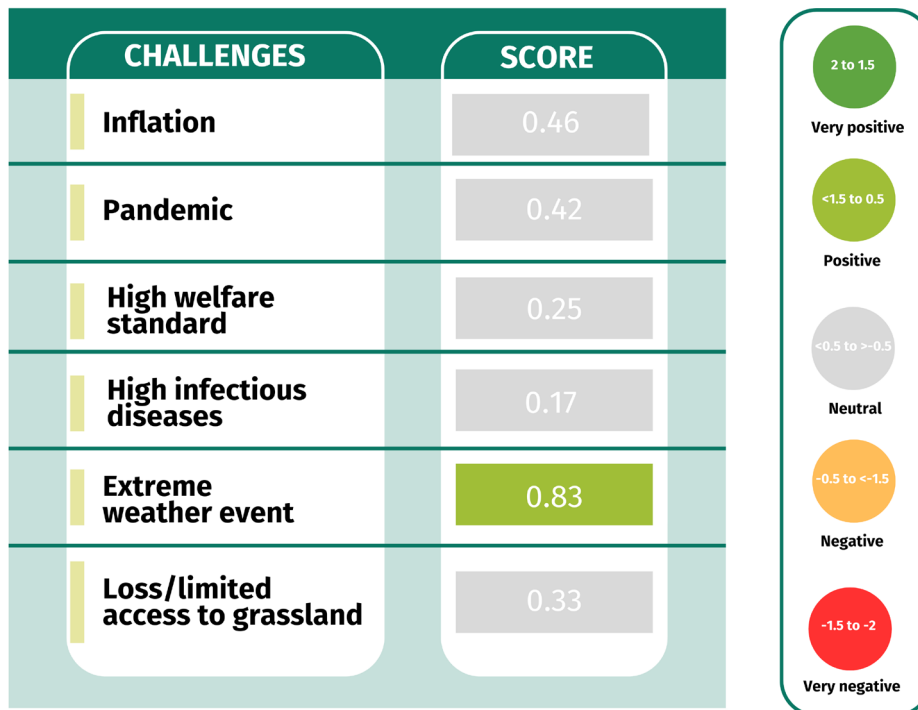
**Health & Welfare:** This solution could slightly support welfare performance of the farm facing external challenges because well-being of humans can help to support welfare of horses and being able to benefit from help facing any type of challenge to is a source of comfort. For the health performance facing external challenges, the effect is neutral.



**Environmental Sustainability:** This solution has a positive effect on farm’s ability to recover from defined challenges from grassland management perspective due to potential reduction in maintenance costs (possibly a joint service provider), sharing knowledge and increasing responsiveness. This solution does not have an effect on farm’s resilience related to environmental sustainability.

## Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services

**How Can this Solution Help your Farm Cope with Specific External Challenges to Become More Resilient?**



**Inflation & Social Crises:** This solution won't have a significant effect on the overall performance of the farm in the face of pandemic or inflation, as there is a balance between the positive and negative effects, resulting in a neutral score.



**Welfare & Diseases:** This solution may have negative effect of farm resilience as per health challenge as, due to high rotation of the staff, it can lead to the transmission of infectious disease. It has a neutral effect on the potential of the farm to respond to legislation forcing welfare improvement, on one hand “new eyes” would see what resident employees may overlook, but on the other, the staff unfamiliar with horses may not be as attentive as familiar handlers to individual problems of particular horses.



**Climate Change & Access to Land:** This solution has a positive effect on farm's ability to recover from extreme weather events related to abnormally high temperatures, excessive rainfall, draught, strong winds and storms by providing possibilities for “extra hands”, shared knowledge, work and planning. This solution does not have an effect on farm-level resilience in case of loss or limited access to grassland.

# Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

#### Costs

##### Socioeconomics:

- Availability of skillfull interleavers.
- Costs for manpower or replacement services.
- Organizational expenses for coordination and planning.
- Membership fees for formal replacement services.
- Potential training costs for replacement staff.
- Potential cost for insurance for external people.

##### Health & Welfare:

- Additional effort for the coordination of common husbandry and care practices.
- Higher requirements for health checks and hygiene regulations for communal husbandry.
- Possible transmission of diseases between farms.



#### Benefits

- Reduction of absenteeism and operational downtime.
- Higher operational efficiency through better work organization.
- More stable income situation for farmers.
- Social benefits through stronger networks and cooperation between farmers.
- Possibility to annual leave, Free up weekends.
- Cope with everyday unforeseen events (accidents, illness).
- Cope with workloads peaks.



- Improved horse care through shared responsibility and expertise.
- Increased welfare through regular care, even during vacation or sick periods.
- Reduced risk of neglect or misdiagnosis through collaboration.
- Possibility of sharing vets and feed supplies at better conditions.
- Increase of equine wellbeing, if human wellbeing (reduction of stress, animal abuse).



# Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services

### Costs

#### Environmental Sustainability :

- Optimizing travel to limit carbon footprint.

#### Cooperation between Farms:

- Organizational effort for the coordination and administration of the cooperation.
- Possible membership fees or charges for shared services.
- Dependence on other farmers can lead to conflicts or planning problems
- Investment in shared infrastructure or machinery.



### Benefits

- Increased responsiveness in water and grassland management.
- Sharing of knowledge, skills regarding sustainability.
- Increased responsiveness in the event of climatic hazards.
  
- Lower operating costs through shared resources (machines, labor).
- More stable income situation due to more efficient work organization.
- More flexibility and better work-life balance through mutual support.
- exchange of experience and mutual transfer of knowledge.



## Technical Sheet for Solution Implementation

# Organized Replacement: Informal Farmer Groups and Formal Services

## Additional Resources

### Websites

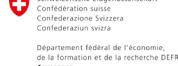
- [https://app.farmres.eu/success-story/respite-aid-scheme-giving-the-farmers-a-break-to-keep-the-farms-running?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://app.farmres.eu/success-story/respite-aid-scheme-giving-the-farmers-a-break-to-keep-the-farms-running?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- <https://declictavail.fr/fiche/8>

### Publications

- Aremu, P. A., Adewale. G. A., Isong, A, Gbadamosi, F. Y., Alokun, O. A. (2019). Farmers' Group Technique : An Efficient Tool for Agricultural Technology Transfer and Adoption. International Journal of Pure & Applied Bioscience, Vol. 7 (p. 41 – 48). [DOI: 10.18782/2320-7051.7510](https://doi.org/10.18782/2320-7051.7510)
- [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/850433/Hietanen\\_Leena.pdf;jsessionid=8717FB17412C7AA1F001E949ECA07DBD?sequence=2](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/850433/Hietanen_Leena.pdf;jsessionid=8717FB17412C7AA1F001E949ECA07DBD?sequence=2)
- [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/852220/Kivioja\\_Henna.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/852220/Kivioja_Henna.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)
- [https://www.mela.fi/uploads/2019/01/c4fe5942-lomitusta\\_kotielaintiloille\\_suomi\\_2020.pdf](https://www.mela.fi/uploads/2019/01/c4fe5942-lomitusta_kotielaintiloille_suomi_2020.pdf)

### Toolkits

- <https://app.farmres.eu/farmers-toolkit>



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## Ideas to Animate a Workshop About the Solution

- Ask an adviser specialized in creation of farmer groups/representation service to sponsor the workshop.
- Find a seminar room/model farm where the workshop can take place.
- Complete the required tasks and let the participants take part in these demonstration tasks so that they can get to know the system.

## Proposed Structure for the Workshop About Organized Replacement of Employees in Horse Stables:

### 1. Introduction to organized replacement of employees

- What is an organized replacement of employees?
- Key features and components of organized replacement of employees.
- Types of group organisation.

### 2. Benefits of Organized Replacement of Employees in Horse Stables

- Cost Saving, Increased Efficiency.
- Reduction of absenteeism and operational downtime.
- Cope with workloads peaks.
- Improved horse care through shared responsibility and expertise.
- Increased welfare through regular care, even during vacation or sick periods.
- More flexibility and better +work-life balance through mutual support.
- Exchange of experience and mutual transfer of knowledge.

### 3. Practical Applications on Horse Farms

- Rotation system for horse care: Farmers create a schedule where everyone in the group is responsible for grooming and caring for the animals at certain times. This can also be organized in the form of a mobile app or a simple calendar to spread the workload.
- Shared animal health care: The group sets up a regular vet visit or health check for all farms and coordinates the appointment to reduce vet costs. A common system for vaccinations and health checks is developed.
- Knowledge transfer and training workshops: Farmers organize regular meetings or training sessions to talk about current topics in horse husbandry, such as sustainable feeding or innovative techniques in pasture management.
- Shared use of machinery: Farmers agree to share expensive machinery such as tractors, mowers or hay balers at certain times. They draw up a plan as to who uses which equipment when and how it is maintained.

### 4. How to Choose the Most Suitable System

- Evaluation of the needs of the farm.
- Assessment of the structural requirements.
- Availability of groups in your region.



## 5. Hands-On Demonstration

- Live demo of handling apps, digital systems.

## 6. Maintenance and Troubleshooting

- Discussion about potential sources of error or problems with digitalisation (apps, programmes).

## 7. Case Studies and Real-World Examples

- Examples of farms or equestrian centers using organized replacement of employees.
- Discussion of how they have integrated these tools into their daily operations.
- Lessons learned and tips from farm operators who using this system.

## 8. Cost Analysis and Return on Investment (ROI)

- How to calculate ROI based on farm size, workload, and usage.
- Financial benefits from reducing strain on workers and improving productivity.

## 9. Q&A Session

- Open floor for participants to ask questions about specific concerns or experiences.
- Address any uncertainties regarding the effectiveness or cost of modular facilities.

## 10. Wrap-Up and Resources

- Summary of key points covered in the workshop.
- Additional resources for further learning (websites, suppliers, online communities).