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Farmers, the CAP and Support for European Integration

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Sinnott/Winston: *Farmers, the CAP and support for European Integration*

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Farmers, the CAP and Support for European Integration

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EUI Working Paper **RSC** No. 97/14

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Introduction[1]

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the most comprehensive common policy developed and pursued by the European Community. It has also been one of the Community's most controversial policies, with controversy intensifying in recent years. Formally announced in 1957 as one of the key elements in the Treaty of Rome, its objectives included: increasing agricultural productivity; ensuring a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture; stabilising agricultural markets; ensuring the availability of agricultural supplies and reasonable prices for consumers (Treaty of Rome, Article 39).

Despite its many problems, CAP is generally considered to have helped ensure growth in agricultural incomes in parallel with growth in incomes in other sectors of the economy (Nugent 1994, p. 375). In this process, gains from the CAP have come to constitute a large proportion of net farm value added. This has varied by sector but even at the low end of these variations it remains quite significant; for example, in the mid-nineteen eighties, it ranged from 34 per cent in the pigs and poultry sector to 77 per cent in cereals to 91 per cent in dairying (Commission of the European Communities, 1994, p. 120). On the face of it, one would expect that the direct economic benefits of EEC/EU membership for farmers would have a positive effect on their attitudes to European integration. This can be stated in the form of a simple hypothesis: farmers will be more supportive of European integration than people in other sectors of the economy.

A systematic test of this hypothesis is important from a number of points of view. In the *first* place, the CAP remains a prominent issue on the EU agenda. Apart from the need to continue with the reform process already underway and apart from the very specific but highly salient problem of BSE, the agricultural issue will be pushed towards the top of the agenda by EU enlargement. It is clear that the European Union is committed to enlargement. It is equally clear that such enlargement will require changes to the Common Agricultural Policy far greater than those involved in any of the reforms undertaken so far. While farmers in existing member states will not be able to veto these changes, their reaction (anticipated and actual) could affect both the shape of the enlargement bargain that is struck and the pace of the enlargement process. The question of whether or not attitudes to integration among farmers have been affected by the

[1] The authors are grateful to the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Forschung, Köln, for providing the USIA and Eurobarometer data on which this research is based.

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Common Agricultural Policy has considerable implications for any attempt to assess the likely political fall-out from enlargement-related CAP reform.

Secondly, an investigation of the attitudes of farmers to Europe in the early years of the integration process should help in sorting out contested interpretations both of the origins of the Common Agricultural Policy and of an important aspect of the origins of European integration itself. Milward notes that "One of the most common explanations found for the Common Agricultural Policy is that it represented a Franco-German deal in which Germany, in return for a common market for its industrial exports, conceded to France a market for its agricultural exports" (Milward, 1992, p.283). It has also been argued that French parliamentary hostility to the European integration project was only appeased by the decision to include agriculture in the plan (Dinan 1994, p. 33). Milward has, however, dismissed the notion of a crucial Franco-German bargain on agricultural policy in very robust terms:

> 'This cliché, so often repeated, ought to be laid to rest. Agricultural exports were only a secondary, subordinate issue for both countries. Having decided in favour of an industrial common market France made it a precondition for concluding the treaty that it would vent more of its agricultural surpluses on the market of the Six, because no other solution had yet been found. The concept of a Common Agricultural Policy... embracing the regulation in common of output, prices and sales was not a French idea, but came much more from the Netherlands' (Milward, 1992, p. 283).

If the French stake in the Common Agricultural Policy as such was as clear-cut and as important as the traditional interpretation suggested, one would expect to find early and strong support for integration among French farmers both in comparison with other French citizens and in comparison with farmers elsewhere in the Community. On Milward's interpretation, however, French farmers should not be any more enthusiastic about integration at that stage than other French people. Of course, it would be surprising if the Europeanization of agricultural policy did not have an effect on farmers' attitudes in the longer run, though no more so on French farmers than on farmers elsewhere. In any event, an examination of the attitudes of French farmers to the EEC in the early years should throw some light on the matter.

The *third* reason for taking a closer look at attitudes to integration among farmers is a more theoretical one; it has to do with the controversy about whether or not attitudes to integration are determined by economic considerations (Anderson and Kaltenthaler, forthcoming; Bosch and Newton, 1995; Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993; Treiber-Reif and Schmitt, 1990). Bosch and Newton argue that farmers provide "an acid test" for the economic interpretation

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of determinants of support for integration (Bosch and Newton, 1995, p. 97). This is so, at least in a negative sense. If it were possible to show that support for integration among farmers is higher than support among other sections of the population, this would suggest that farmers are swayed by economic factors but would not prove the general proposition that support for integration is economically determined; if, however, no difference were found between farmers and people in other kinds of employment, the case for an economic interpretation of support for integration would be seriously dented. On the basis of an analysis of the data from eight selected years between 1973 and 1993, Bosch and Newton lean towards the latter view: '...the picture is a mixture of significant and insignificant, positive and negative, results. Looking at them as a clear and strong test of the economic interpretation of support for integration, they constitute, at best, no more than a partial exception to the finding that support for the EC is not generally rooted in economic calculations' (Bosch and Newton, 1995, p. 99). In the context of the debate about economic versus non-economic interpretations of support for integration, the issue raised by Bosch and Newton calls for further exploration and clarification.

The purpose of the present article is to examine attitudes to European integration among farmers from the foundation of the European Economic Communities up the mid-1990s in the light of the foregoing questions, speculations, interpretations and 'mixed results'. It does so by first clarifying the hypotheses involved, taking account of differences among farmers due to temporal, sectoral and national variations in the implementation and impact of the CAP. These hypotheses are then tested using public opinion poll data on attitudes to integration among farmers and non-farmers covering a period of more than thirty years. The final section of the paper summarizes the findings and discusses their implications.

Variations in the impact of the CAP over time

Four distinct stages in the development of CAP can be identified: the period in which the policy was established, the period of CAP in full operation and two periods of reform. While it is difficult to put precise dates on each of these stages, the following periodization seems plausible.

Establishing a Common Agricultural Policy: 1957-1967

Although ambitious objectives for the CAP were set out in the Rome Treaty, agreement on its detailed features did not begin to take shape until the early 1960s. As Milward puts it: '...The architects of the Common Market Treaty

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made the bold declaration that its signatories would shape a Common Agricultural Policy, without having reached any agreement on what its principles would be and having already manifestly failed in an earlier attempt to do so' (Milward 1992, p. 225). In the words of the Treaty itself: "The operation and development of the common market for agricultural products must be accompanied by the establishment of a common agricultural policy among the Member States....Member States shall develop the common agricultural policy by degrees during the transitional period and shall bring it into force by the end of that period at the latest.' (Treaty of Rome, Articles 38-40). Between 1957 and 1968, national agricultural supports were dismantled and gradually replaced by a Community system. In 1961 the basic list of agricultural products to be covered by the policy was agreed. This list was extended in 1963-64. Nineteen sixty four and 1965 saw an attempt to set common grain prices, an attempt that was dogged by Franco-German conflict over the price of wheat. In 1966 common prices were agreed for milk, dairy products, beef, veal, sugar, rice, oil seeds, olive oil; in 1967 a common price for wheat was finally agreed. The first year in which the CAP was fully operational was 1968, by which time most national price supports had been removed.[2]

The Common Agricultural Policy in full swing: 1968-79

Once fully underway, CAP's price support mechanism ensured farmers prices that were higher than the world average. In 1971, monetary compensation amounts (MCAs) were introduced to compensate farmers for exchange-related price differentials between member states. Then, in 1972, the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund was established to finance the CAP. Money was made available for farm modernization and the training of farmers and, in the mid 1970s, a scheme to aid farmers in mountainous or remote areas was introduced (Nugent 1994, pp. 368-374; Swann, 1992. pp. 222-231).

Milward summarizes the effects on farmers' incomes in this period as follows: '...the real increase in net farm income per person in France was higher than anywhere else in the Community...elsewhere in the Six incomes per head rose steadily in real terms, although not by more than elsewhere in the economy, until 1976-79, after which, except at first in the Netherlands, they began to fall' (Milward, 1992, p. 316). However, again with the exception of the Netherlands, there were, as Milward goes on to note, 'disparities ... between large producers, whose incomes grew more rapidly, and small producers'.

[2] This summary account is based on Neville-Rolfe 1984; Nugent 1994; Swann 1992.

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CAP reform stage one: 1980-89

By the end of the nineteen seventies, critics of the CAP were urging reform.[3] They argued that the policy was encouraging over-production, resulting in huge surpluses (beef and butter mountains, wine lakes etc.) and distorting international agricultural markets. Furthermore, CAP expenditure was such that the Community was in danger of bankruptcy. Reforms, gradually introduced throughout the 1980s, included: budgetary stabilizers aimed at controlling CAP spending; price freezes; quotas and other schemes to cut production; the suspension of intervention-buying for certain goods; and a restriction on intervention prices. Combined with falling demand and steady productivity, these measure led to a fall in agricultural prices of nearly 20 per cent over the period 1980-87 (Moyer and Josling 1990).

CAP reform stage two: 1990-94

Despite the CAP reforms of the 1980s, there were still considerable difficulties with the policy. For one thing, the problem of excess production and the burden on the Community's finances associated with this remained substantial. Also, the inequalities inherent in the system remained: because price supports were linked to the volume of food produced, 80 per cent of resources were going to large producers, that is, to 20 per cent of farmers. Furthermore, during the GATT negotiations, which were gathering pace at this time, there was enormous pressure on the EU to reduce the level and volume of its subsidies, which were distorting international prices, and to radically reform the CAP. In 1990 the US proposed that, by the year 2000, all subsidies should be cut by 75 per cent and export subsidies by 90 per cent. The EC Commissioner for Agriculture, Ray MacSharry countered with a proposal for a 30 per cent cut calculated on the basis of 1986 levels. In the following year MacSharry presented wide-ranging proposals for reforming the CAP under the title, *The Development and Future of Agriculture*. In 1992, the Council adopted a range of regulations, including reduced prices for a number of goods, such as cereals, butter and beef. A compensation scheme for price reductions was introduced but the amount of

[3] Britain had of course been a persistent critic of the CAP since joining the Communities in 1973. The source and nature of the criticism tended, however, to fortify resistance to change, though, as George notes, Britain received some support on this issue from Germany's Helmut Schmitt (George, 1994, p. 80). It could also be argued that the roots of reform go back in fact to 1968, which saw not only the full operation of the CAP but also the Mansholt Plan which aimed to radically alter the structure of agriculture in member states. Despite the publication of these proposals, significant reforms of the CAP itself did not begin until the 1980s.

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compensation paid was *not* related to the quantities produced. The effect of this was that small farmers would be compensated for loss of earnings while large farmers would have to bear a proportion of the loss (Swann 1992, p. 250). Other measures included the introduction of premiums; the beginning of the set-aside scheme in the arable crop sector, with farmers paid to discontinue production on a proportion of their land; incentives for early retirement and for the afforestation of agricultural land; and the encouragement of the use of environmentally-friendly farming methods.

These various measures add up to a second period of reform. Putting a precise date on the beginning of this period is difficult. For example, Rieger (1996, p. 111) argues that 'The agreement on CAP reform in summer of 1992 and its implementation in 1993 marked the beginning of a new phase'; on the other hand, proposals for extensive reforms were on the table and were widely discussed long before these decisions were taken and it was clear from an early stage that McSharry, who became Agricultural Commissioner in 1989, was going to be a radical reformer. Given that, in terms of the reaction of farmers, what is actively under discussion may be as important as what is actually decided on, provided of course that there is not a huge difference between the two, it seems better to date the second period of reform from the onset of McSharry's tenure as Agricultural Commissioner.[4]

Variations by Sector and Country

The reforms of the 1990s drew particular attention to a feature of the CAP that had been there since the 1970s, namely that the benefits vary according to the type of farming involved. Key variables in this context are the degree of commercialization of agriculture, the level of agricultural productivity, and farm size. As Swann puts it, 'bigger and richer farmers benefit most' because they have more to sell and can thus gain more from the CAP (Swann 1992, p. 233).

Sectoral variations also lead to variations between regions or countries in the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy. Because farm structure varies by region and some regions consist predominantly of large producers, CAP benefits some areas more than others. Given that, in addition, CAP supports for 'northern products' (livestock, cereals) have been more generous than those for southern

[4] As public opinion poll data for the mid 1990s becomes available for reanalyses, it will be possible to assess the impact of different phases of reform on farmer attitudes using alternative periodizations. This will be undertaken in a subsequent version of this paper.

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ones such as fruit, vegetables, and wine (Swann 1992, p. 8), the regional contrasts form a north-south pattern.

A further variable giving rise to difference between countries in their response to the CAP is the relationship between joining the Community and the CAP. When the original Six formed the European Economic Communities, the Common Agricultural Policy was simply an agreement on a set of desirable objectives. With the possible exception of France (see below), there was no particular association in these countries between joining the EEC and benefits from the CAP. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, in contrast, joined just as the CAP was getting into full swing and farmers in all three countries can be expected to have experienced an association between the benefits of the policy and membership of the Communities.[5] Finally, since Greece and especially Portugal and Spain joined when reform was already underway and since the CAP was less favourable to southern producers anyway, their farmers would be much less likely to have experienced the same association between benefits and joining as would have been the case with the 1973 entrants.

Depending on the historical interpretation adopted, France in the early years of the Communities can be seen as falling into either of the categories mentioned in the previous paragraph: on the basis of the central role which some historians have ascribed to agricultural policy in France's overall commitment to integration, France and French farmers could be regarded as experiencing a direct association, at least by anticipation, between membership and the benefits to follow. If, however, the revisionist interpretation is accepted and agricultural policy is seen as a secondary issue for France, then it is just like the other countries with no direct association between joining the Communities and the CAP.

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[5] This assertion, self-evident in the case of Denmark and Ireland, may seem surprising in the case of the United Kingdom, which, prior to joining the EEC, had a very different approach to food and agricultural policy and which is usually regarded as suffering rather than benefiting from the CAP. It is true that, with relatively few farmers, the United Kingdom receives lower than average receipts from the CAP. It is also true that as a net food importer it receives little or nothing from the CAP's scheme of export subsidies and that, particularly in the early years of membership, adaptation to the CAP led to increased food prices for consumers. All that, however, is from the point of view of the society and economy as a whole. The fact remains that *farmers* in the United Kingdom 'received their share of the disbursements under the CAP' (George, 1994, p. 133) and that, therefore, farmers themselves were beneficiaries. The sense of benefit on the part of farmers may have been enhanced be the realization, which had been growing throughout the 1960s, that the traditional British policy of subsidising agriculture by direct 'deficiency payments' to farmers was giving rise to financial difficulties and would have to be changed (George, 1994, p. 52).

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Hypotheses

This paper began with the simple hypothesis that farmers are likely to be more supportive of European integration than people in other forms of employment. An examination of the development and implementation of the CAP suggests that this hypothesis is much too general and that it is essential to develop specific hypotheses that take account of the main variations that have marked the actual working out of the policy. For the sake of the development of the argument, however, it is worth formally stating (and testing) the general hypothesis as it stands: *throughout the European Community/Union and over the entire period of the Common Agricultural Policy, farmers will be more supportive of the EC/EU than individuals in other forms of employment.* This hypothesis is designated Hg in order to distinguish it from the specific hypotheses that are the central focus of the investigation (Hs1, Hs2, etc.)

We have seen that the impact of CAP on individual farmers varies with farm size and especially with the degree of commercialization of the farming involved. Large farmers have been the main beneficiaries of the CAP. Accordingly the general hypothesis of a difference in support for integration between the farming and non-farming sector needs to be cast in more specific terms: *large farmers will be more supportive of integration than individuals in other employments* (Hs1). An equally important source of variation in the impact of the CAP is time. On the basis of the periodization outlined above, we hypothesize that (Hs2) *farmers will not be any more supportive of integration than individuals in other employments in the period in which the CAP was still only in the process of being established*[6] *(1957-67),* that (Hs3) *the greater support for integration among large farmers will be most evident in the period of CAP in full swing (1968-79*), (Hs4) *less evident between 1980 and 1989* and (Hs5) *least evident in the period 1990-94*

Turning to variations in the CAP by country leads first to a hypothesis which contrasts northern and southern countries: (Hs6) *the differences between large farmers and non-farmers in support for integration will be greater in northern European countries by comparison with southern European countries* We have

[6] Note that Hs2 applies to the contrast between *all* farmers and non-farmers, not to the contrast between *large* farmers and non-farmers. Since the bias in favour of large producers was something that emerged as the full implementation of the CAP got underway, there would have been no reason for large and small producers to have evaluated the anticipated benefits differently between 1957 and 1967. The more general nature of the hypothesis is fortunate as the data available for this period (described in the section on methodology below) do not allow a distinction to be made between large and small farmers.

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also seen that countries differ in terms of the context in which they became members of the Community and, in particular, in terms of the association between becoming a member and the prospect of benefits to farmers from the CAP. These variations lead to the hypothesis that (Hs7) *the differences between large farmers and non-farmers will be greater in countries in which there was a direct association between the act of joining the Community and the prospect of benefits to the agricultural sector.*

It will be immediately obvious that the relationships underlying Hs6 and Hs7 are intertwined. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom are northern *and* they experienced a direct association between joining and the prospect of benefits from the CAP. Greece, Portugal and Spain are southern *and* the association between joining and benefits from the CAP was more ambiguous. This means that any contrasts that may occur in farmer support for integration between these two sets of countries cannot be used to support *either* hypothesis: we simply would not know whether the differences observed were due to the context of entry to the Community or to the advantage accruing to northern as opposed to southern producers. The result is that Hs6 and Hs7 can be tested only in those circumstances in which one of the two variables just mentioned can be held constant: Hs6 can be tested by comparing the five northern original member states with Italy, since they all entered the Communities at the same time and therefore at the same stage of development of the CAP; Hs7 can be tested by comparing the 1973 entrants (Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom) with the five original northern member states, since they are all northern producers.

The condition referred to in Hs7 - an association between the act of joining the Community and the prospect of benefits from the CAP - is, as has been noted above, subject to contrary interpretations in the case of France. On the traditional historical interpretation of the origin of the Common Agricultural Policy and, indeed, of European integration itself, there was a very close association between French accession and the CAP. On this view, France was different from the other members; as a consequence, and in contrast to the overall hypothesis relating to this period (Hs3 above), one would hypothesize that French farmers would have been more supportive of integration than other sections of the French population in the period 1957-67. However, the revisionist interpretation of the role of agriculture in France's European policy, namely that the association between French accession and the CAP was secondary and tenuous, seems to be more persuasive. Accordingly, this analysis will test the hypothesis deriving from the revisionist interpretation, to the effect that (Hs8) *French farmers will not be more supportive of integration than other sections of the French population in the period 1957-67.* If the public opinion poll evidence

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confirms this hypothesis, it will add support to the view that the Common Agricultural Policy was not a crucial part of the deal for France.

Methodological considerations

The data

Eurobarometer and United States Intelligence Agency (USIA) surveys can be used to test the above hypotheses. The Eurobarometer surveys provide data on the attitudes to European integration of nationally representative samples in all member states in 1970, 1973, 1974 and twice yearly since 1975. For the pre-1970 period, the USIA surveys provide a more limited range of data on attitudes to integration for representative national samples in Britain, France, West Germany and Italy in selected years. As always with such data, before embarking on the analysis, it is essential to note the precise operationalization of the variables involved and any limitations that such operationalization implies.

Measuring support for European integration

Eurobarometer surveys include four potentially relevant measures of support for European integration. The four measures are usually referred to as the unification indicator, the membership indicator, the dissolution indicator and the benefits indicator;[7] each must be evaluated for the purpose of the present study in terms of, first, the substance of the question and, secondly, the time span over which it has been asked. Working back through this list, the last mentioned measure (the benefits indicator) can be ruled out immediately as it deals with the respondent's *perceptions* of whether or not his or her country has benefited from membership of the Community or Union rather than with the respondent's *evaluation* of the Community or the country's membership of it. The dissolution indicator does focus on the Community or Union, advancing the hypothetical situation of the dissolution or 'scrapping' of the Community or Union and asking respondents if they would be very sorry, indifferent or relieved as a result. A possible disadvantage of this indicator is that, as Niedermayer points out, the positive and negative response categories are asymmetrical: the positive category is strong ('very sorry'), whereas the negative category is moderate ('relieved') (Niedermayer, 1995, p. 55). The decisive disadvantage, however, is that the question, though first asked in 1970, was not asked again until 1981. It

[7] For an extended discussion of these four indicators see Niedermayer, 1995, pp. 53-57.

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is useless for the key period identified in the discussion above (1968-79) and therefore unsuitable for testing the hypotheses outlined.

On the basis of the combination of the criteria of substance and time span, the membership indicator, which measures the extent to which respondents feel that their country's membership of the EC/EU is a good or a bad thing,[8] is reasonably satisfactory. This question was first asked in autumn 1973 and has been asked twice yearly since 1975. Its advantages are that it is a fairly direct evaluation of the European Community or European Union as it existed at the time at which the question was asked and it gives reasonable coverage of the main time periods of interest, i.e. it gives complete coverage of the last two of our four periods of development of the CAP and covers over half the all-important 1968-79 period. Since its wording is more satisfactory than the wording of the unification question (see below), this question on attitudes to membership of the EC/EU will be used as the main indicator of attitudes to integration in the analysis that follows.

It is true that the unification indicator provides a slightly longer time span, having been asked in all EEC member states in 1970. It would thus add one extra data point to our measurement of attitudes to integration in the 1968-79 period. The wording of the question is, however, less satisfactory. Rather than focusing on the existing EC/EU, it refers to something much more general and aspirational, i.e. 'efforts being made to unify Western Europe'.[9] Because of its aspirational quality, its ordinal response format and the absence of an explicit neutral category, it consistently elicits a higher level of support for integration than the more concrete membership indicator[10] and is less effective at identifying positive and negative evaluations of the European Community or European Union as such. It has, however, one compensating advantage: as well as being asked in the Eurobarometer series, it was asked in more or less the same form in a number of the surveys in the pre-Eurobarometer USIA series of surveys conducted in several major European countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus it provides the only evidence on the attitudes of farmers to European

[8] The precise question wording is: 'Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY'S) membership of the European Union (European Community) is [READ OUT] A good thing / A bad thing / Neither good nor bad?'.

[9] The precise wording of the question is: "In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe? Are you [READ OUT] For - very much / For - to some extent / Against - to some extent / Against - very much?

[10] See Niedermayer, 1995.

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integration in the first developmental stage of the CAP, albeit for only three member states (France, Germany and Italy) and in a limited number of years. Consequently, despite the reservations noted above about the wording of the question, the unification indicator will be used to test the hypotheses relating to the early period of development of the CAP (1957-68).

Measuring farming occupation

For the present purpose, there are several limitations in the occupation questions in USIA and Eurobarometer surveys. First, for the most part, farmers and fishermen are included in the one occupational category. The two occupations are, however, coded separately in some recent Eurobarometers and fishermen appear in negligible numbers. It seems reasonable therefore to treat this category as consisting mainly of farmers. Secondly, sample size for farmers can be unacceptably low in individual surveys. This can be overcome by combining adjacent surveys to measure farmer attitudes over periods of time rather than for individual years and, following Bosch and Newton, by defining "farmers" as farmers *and* their dependent spouses, thus boosting the number of respondents in the category of interest.

Thirdly, it is not possible to distinguish directly between small and large farmers or between more commercial and less commercial farmers. In the absence of such specific measures, we use income as a proxy for size of farm, dividing farmers into small (two lowest income quartiles) and large producers (two highest income quartiles). This proxy variable has one potential weakness: the possibility that farmers will understate their income. Provided we can assume that all farmers make proportionately equal underestimations, however, this, if it occurs, should not affect our rough categorization of farmers into large farmer and small farmer groups.

Research design

The research design is a simple one: a systematic set of comparisons of farmers and non-farmers, focusing on the percentage point difference in support for integration. This is not, however, just a matter of bivariate comparisons; the main relevant control variables (more commercial versus less commercial farming, the stage of development of the CAP, northern versus southern production and the context of joining the Community) are built into the research design by being specified in the hypotheses. Furthermore, there are built-in controls for country and period effects: if conditions in a particular country are assumed to decrease or increase support for integration, they should, in principle, affect all sectors equally; if farmers stand out as different, it is presumably

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because they are farmers. Similarly with time: if some aspect of a given period (say the doldrums period of integration in the late 1970s) reduces support for integration, its effects should be felt across the board; if farmers turn out to be different, it can be inferred that it is because they are farmers.

There is one extraneous variable that escapes the various controls just indicated. The distinction between farming and non-farming occupation is closely related to educational participation, particularly third level educational participation. Education in turn is related to support for integration (Wessels 1995, p. 121). The result could be an underestimation of the difference in attitude to integration between farmers and non-farmers because pro-integration attitudes among non-farmers are boosted by the latter group's greater proportion of more highly educated respondents. In order to control for this possible distorting effect we have excluded those with third level education from the samples.

Results

The general hypothesis: farmers versus non-farmers (Hg)

The hypotheses that posits the existence of a difference between farmers and non-farmers in support for integration can be tested for the period 1973 to 1994 using the membership indicator. The differences are significant[11] and in the direction predicted by the general hypothesis (Table 1). While statistically significant, however, the difference is not substantively very meaningful in the sense that one would be most reluctant to claim any great support for a theory linking economic interests to preferences regarding integration or make any predictions about the attitudes of farmers on the basis of a difference of 5 percentage points. The general hypothesis passes the test in the statistical but not in the substantive sense. This is not, however, a cause for undue concern, because the burden of the argument in the paper has been that this very general hypothesis needs extensive elaboration and specification.

[11] The significance of this difference and of all the differences referred to from here on have been tested using the standard Chi-square test at the 0.05 level of significance.

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Table 1: Attitudes to EC/EU membership by farming/non-farming occupation 1973-94 (percentages)

	Non-Farmers (a)	Farmers (b)	Difference (b-a)
Good	56	61	5
Neither	23	21	-3
Bad	13	10	-3
Don't Know	9	9	0
N	339735	22617	

Source: Cumulative Eurobarometer file 1973-91, Eurobarometer 36-41.1

Size of farm (Hs1)

The strategy of breaking this general hypothesis down into a more specific set of propositions that take into account the variations in the implementation of the CAP pays an immediate dividend, even with the first step in the process of specification - the introduction of the distinction between larger and more commercial producers and smaller less commercial ones. It will be remembered that income is used as a proxy variable to get at this distinction. The results show that across the Community and over more than two decades, large farmers were more likely than either small farmers or non-farmers to see membership as a 'good thing'. However, the differences in support between the two main groups of interest (large farmers and non-farmers) are still not very substantial: 69 per cent of large farmers took a positive view of membership of the Community or Union compared to 58 per cent of non-farmers (Table 2). This eleven percentage point difference represents some progress in confirming the expectation of differences in attitude to integration arising from farming occupation but the differences remain muted because the hypothesis is still too general, covering, as it does, very different phases in the development of the CAP.

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Table 2: Attitudes towards EC/EU membership by farming/non farming occupation and nature of farming enterprise 1973-94 (percentages)

	Non-Farmers (a)	Small Farmers (b)	Large Farmers (c)	Difference (c-a)
Good Thing	58.3	59.6	68.6	10.3
Neither Good Nor Bad	20.4	19.6	16.7	-3.7
Bad Thing	13.4	12.2	8.9	-4.5
Don't Know	7.8	8.6	5.8	-2.0
Number	421812	10371	5880	

Source: Cumulative Eurobarometer file 1973-91, Eurobarometer 36-41.1

Period effects (Hs2, Hs3, Hs4 and Hs5)

There are certain data limitations on testing the first period-specific hypothesis (Hs2: *large farmers will not be any more supportive of integration than individuals in other employments in the period 1957-67*): the data only relate to three member states (Germany, France and Italy), they are confined to the unification indicator and, at present, they are only available for the years 1962-65. On the other hand, one could argue that the three member states in question are the most important ones, that they account for the bulk of the population of the original six-member EEC and that, while it has some disadvantages, the unification indicator is a valid measure of attitudes to integration. The final limitation mentioned (the fact that data are only available for the period 1962-65) is, perhaps, the most serious; it is, however, one which we hope to overcome in time.[12] In any event, the results from the limited data to hand are striking : farmers in these states at this time were not only *not more* supportive

[12] Additional USIA surveys for this period are currently being cleaned and checked at the Zentralarchiv in Cologne. When they become available they will be used in a more extensive test of this hypothesis in a revised version of the paper.

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of integration, they were significantly *less* likely to hold a favourable attitude to efforts to unify Western Europe. Whereas 78 per cent of non-farmers in France, Germany and Italy showed a favourable attitude to integration between 1962 and 1965, only 60 per cent of farmers shared this view. Even allowing for qualifications arising from the data limitations, this is quite strong confirmation of the hypothesis that *farmers will not be any more supportive of integration* than individuals in other employments in the period in which the CAP was still only in the process of being established.

The third specific hypothesis (*the greater support for integration among large farmers will be most evident in the period 1968-79*) is the crucial test of the economic interpretation of farmer versus non-farmer support for integration.

Table 3: Attitudes to efforts to unify Western Europe by farming/non-farming occupation 1962-65 (percentages)

	Non-Farmers	Farmers	Difference
For	78	60	-18
Against	4	8	4
Don't know	18	32	14
N	5697	629	

Source: USIA data: 1962-65

This was the period of CAP in full flight; if it were ever to have had a positive effect on farmer support for the EEC, it would have been in this period. Once again, there are data limitations in testing this hypothesis: as noted above, the first year in which the membership indicator is available is 1973. Accordingly, the test applies only to the period 1973-79. The results, presented in the left-hand section of Table 4, amply confirm the main hypothesis (Hs3): between 1973 and 1979, across the Community as a whole there is almost a twenty percentage point gap between support for integration among large farmers (72 per cent) and support among non-farmers (53 per cent). It is clear that, in this period, the CAP was winning the hearts and minds of those engaged in commercial agriculture. Small farmers lay in between their large farming

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colleagues and the rest of the population: between 1973 and 1969, 64 per cent of them expressed the view that their country's membership of the Community was "a good thing". This finding is, however, ancillary to the main result: large farmers were substantially (almost twenty percentage points) more supportive of integration than those in non-farming occupations during the heyday of the operation of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Hypothesis four proposes that the differences between large farmers and non-farmers will be less evident between 1980 and 1989 by comparison with the period 1969 to 1979. The data in the middle section of Table 4 confirm the expectation: the gap in support for membership between large farmers and non-farmers shrinks to 11 percentage points in the 1980s. The fifth hypothesis - that the differences will be least evident in the period 1990-94 is also confirmed: the difference between large farmers and non-farmers in the latest period is 5 percentage points (see Table 4).

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Table 4: Attitudes towards EC/EU membership by farming/non-farming occupation, nature of farming enterprise and period of CAP development 1973-94 (percentages)

	Non-Farmers (a)	Small Farmers (b)	Big Farmers (c)	Difference (c-a)
1973-79				
Good Thing	53	64	72	19
Neither	23	20	18	-5
Bad Thing	14	10	6	-8
Don't Know	10	7	4	-6
Number	81329	2338	1645	
1980-89				
Good Thing	54	55	65	11
Neither	24	23	19	-5
Bad Thing	13	11	9	-4
Don't Know	9	11	7	-1
Number	172900	5577	2512	
1990-94				
Good Thing	62	62	67	5
Neither	14	13	13	-1
Bad Thing	17	17	14	-3
Don't Know	7	8	6	-1
Number	92240	2546	1268	

Source: Cumulative Eurobarometer file 1973-91, Eurobarometer 36-41.1

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North versus south (Hs6)

EC member states have had varying experiences with the CAP. The first of these variations arises from the bias in the CAP in favour of northern products; the resulting hypothesis is that *the differences between large farmers and non-farmers in support for integration will be greater in northern European countries by comparison with southern European countries* (Hs6). Because, as argued above, the relationship underlying this hypothesis is entangled with the hypothesized relationship between support among farmers and the timing of entry to the Community, Hs6 can only be tested in relation to the six original member states, comparing Italy, on the one hand, to the other five (northern) founding member states. The relevant period for testing the hypothesis is 1968-79, i.e. the period of full operation of the CAP and prior to the onset of reform.

Support for membership among farmers and non-farmers in the original Six is shown country by country for the period 1973-79 in Table 5.[13] In four of the five northern original member states, large farmers are more likely to be supportive of membership than are those in non-farming occupations. The differences are statistically significant in all four cases, including the case of West Germany where the difference amounts to only 7 percentage points.

Table 5: Attitudes to EC/EU membership by farming/non-farming occupation, nature of farming enterprise, period of CAP development and country, 1973-79 (percentages)

	Non-farmers (a)	Small farmers (b)	Large farmers (c)	Difference (c-a)
France				
1. Good Thing	56	52	69	13
2. Neither Good Nor Bad	29	28	22	-6
3. Bad Thing	7	15	4	-3
0. Don't Know	9	6	5	-4
Number	9858	347	197	

[13] The evidence in this part of the paper is presented country by country so that note can be taken of individual country peculiarities and anomalies while at the same allowing an overall comparison to be made between groups or types of countries.

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Bel/Luxembourg				
1. Good Thing	60	56	70	10
2. Neither Good Nor Bad	20	24	19	-2
3. Bad Thing	4	8	5	1
0. Don't Know	16	12	7	-9
Number	11964	145	119	
W. Germany				
1. Good Thing	57	30	64	7
2. Neither Good Nor Bad	26	41	25	-1
3. Bad Thing	6	12	6	0
0. Don't Know	11	16	5	-6
Number	9867	92	288	
Italy				
1. Good Thing	69	68	64	-5
2. Neither Good Nor Bad	18	18	24	6
3. Bad Thing	4	5	5	1.3
0. Don't Know	10	10	7	-3
Number	9516	395	125	
Netherlands				0
1. Good Thing	71	79	76	5
2. Neither Good Nor Bad	16	13	15	-1
3. Bad Thing	4	6	7	3
0. Don't Know	9	3	3	-6
Number	9054	72	107	

Source: Cumulative Eurobarometer file 1973-91

The fifth northern member state (the Netherlands) seems somewhat anomalous: the differences between large farmers and non-farmers are in the predicted direction but are not statistically significant; small farmers in the Netherlands, on the other hand, are somewhat more supportive of integration than large farmers and, if we combine all farmers in the Netherlands into a single categorty, we find that farmers as a whole are significantly more supportive of integration than non-farmers. This makes sense when one recalls Milward's observation that disparities in gains from the CAP obtained everywhere *except in the Netherlands*. The anomaly is, therefore, more apparent than real and, once the lack of differentiation between large and small farmers in the Netherlands is taken into account, the Dutch case fits into the pattern obtaining in the other five Northern member states. In contrast to this pattern, and as predicted in the

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hypothesis, large farmers in the only southern member state (Italy) relevant to this test are *not* more supportive of integration, if anything, they are actually marginally less likely to support membership than non-farmers.

The context of joining the Community (Hs7)

The same kind of methodological consideration that limits the test of the hypothesis just considered to the six original member states limits the test of Hs7 to a comparison among northern member states: on the one hand France,

Table 6: Attitudes to EC/EU membership by farming/non-farming occupation, nature of farming enterprise and country (Britain, Denmark and Ireland) 1973-79 (percentages)

	Non-farmers (a)	Small farmers (b)	Large farmers (c)	Difference (c - a)
Denmark				
1. Good thing	33	72	78	45
2. Neither good nor bad	27	14	14	-13
3. Bad thing	29	10	4	-25
0. Don't know	10	4	4	-6
Number	8839	249	322	
Ireland				
1. Good thing	52	69	81	30
2. Neither good nor bad	23	17	12	-11
3. Bad thing	20	10	5	-15
0. Don't know	6	4	2	-4
Number	8986	991	377	
UK				
1. Good thing	34	46	59	25
2. Neither good nor bad	23	21	23	0
3. Bad thing	36	21	16	-20
0. Don't know	8	12	2	-5
Number	11201	33	87	

Source: Cumulative Eurobarometer file 1973-91

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Germany, Belgium/Luxembourg and the Netherlands, and, on the other hand, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. The first group comprises states in which the act of joining the Community was not directly associated with benefits from the CAP;[14] in the second group of three countries there was such a direct association. The hypothesis is that *the difference between large farmers and non-farmers should be greater in countries in which there was a direct association between the act of joining the Community and the prospect of benefits to the agricultural sector* (Hs7). Evidence relating to this hypothesis can be found by comparing attitudes to integration between 1973 and 1979 among farmers and non-farmers in the five original northern member states in Table 5 with the three northern member states that joined in 1973 in Table 6. The mean difference between large farmers and non-farmers across the three countries which joined the Community as the CAP was getting into full swing was 33 percentage points; the corresponding mean difference in the five northern states that did not have this experience was 9 percentage points. The hypothesis that the direct association between entry to the Community and benefits from the CAP would show up in a greater gap between large farmers and non-farmers is amply supported.[15]

French agriculture, the CAP and European integration (Hs8)

The traditional historical interpretation places benefits to French agriculture right at the centre of the picture as the main source of the Common Agricultural Policy and as a primary motivation of France's adherence to the Communities. If this were indeed the case, one would expect that the anticipation of these benefits would have played a role in French public debate and would have

[14] The possible contrary interpretation of the role of agriculture in the French decision to join is tested below.

[15] A potential objection to this interpretation of the evidence is that the overall level of support for membership among non-farmers in the countries that joined in 1973 was so low that it would be surprising if there was not a big gap between non-farmers and farmers. The objection fails to take account of the point made above in discussing the research design, namely that there is a built-in control for country effects: if support for integration is low in a particular country for some reason, it ought to be low in all sectors of the society; if it is significantly higher among farmers, it can be presumed to be because they are farmers. The weakness of the objection can be illustrated by a detailed consideration of the Irish case. Support for membership among non-farmers in Ireland in the 1970s (52 per cent) was only marginally less than support among similar groups in France (56 per cent) and Germany (57 per cent). Yet, from these similar starting points as it were, large farmer support was 29 percentage points higher in Ireland, compared to thirteen points in France and seven in West Germany.

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filtered down and affected attitudes to integration among the prospective beneficiaries. Contrary to this, there is the view that agriculture was a secondary issue for the French and that France was not the architect of the CAP; the implication of this view is that French farmers' attitudes to integration would have been no more positive that those of farmers anywhere else or than those of other French people during the first decade of the Communities.

The results of the test of these contrary interpretations are presented in Table 7. They show that French farmers are actually significantly *less likely* to support the unification of Europe than their non-farming compatriots between 1962 and 1965: support for integration among non-farmers was 76 per cent; among farmers it was 55 per cent. As Table 7 shows, it is not that French farmers were very much more opposed to the unification of Western Europe than other French citizens; rather, they were much more undecided or knew much less about it. This is not compatible with the notion that the CAP was a make-or-break issue for the French. In short, not only is the hypothesis derived from the historical interpretation which emphasizes a Franco-German agriculture-industry bargain not supported, the evidence points fairly decisively in the opposite direction. The hypothesis derived from the revisionist view and put forward above that agriculture was a secondary issue for France as well as for Germany and that, therefore, French farmers would not be any more pro-integration than other French people is more than supported by the admittedly limited evidence that is available.

Table 7: Attitudes to efforts to unify Western Europe by farming/non-farming occupation, France 1962-65 (percentages)

	Non-farmers (a)	Farmers (b)	Difference (b - a)
For	76	55	-21
Against	6	10	4
Don't know	19	36	17
Number	2530	403	

Source: USIA surveys 1962-1965

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Summary and conclusion

The eight hypotheses put forward as a means of disaggregating the excessively general hypothesis that farmers will be more positively disposed to European integration than other sectors of the population have been confirmed by the evidence considered. The various limitations of this evidence have been set out above. Taking them into account, we can still conclude with reasonable confidence (i) that large farmers are somewhat more supportive of integration than non-farmers; (ii) that there was no difference between farmers and non-farmers in the first, developmental period of the CAP (1957-67); (iii) that there was a very substantial difference between large farmers and non-farmers during the heyday of the CAP (1968-79); (iv) that the difference between these two groups was less in the first period of reform (1980-89); (v) that there was a very small difference between them in the second period of reform (1990 - 1994); (vi) that the differences between large farmers and non-farmers were greater in Northern as compared with Southern member states and (vii) in states in which there was a direct association between the act of joining the Communities and benefits to farmers; finally, we have found that (viii) not only were French farmers not more supportive of European integration than other French people during the period when the CAP was being developed, they were actually less supportive.

These findings have considerable implications for the issues posed at the outset of this paper. The first issue was the political implications of future agricultural policy reform, whether the reform envisaged is simply part of a continuing process or is a result of the policy adjustment that would be required by further enlargement of the Union. By showing that higher than average levels of support among farmers depends on the stage and state of the CAP and on the kind of farming involved, this research suggests that high farmer support for integration could be eroded by further reform, particularly if the requirements of enlargement meant that such reform cut deeply into existing CAP benefits.
The second issue raised was the part played by the Common Agricultural Policy in the Franco-German agreement underpinning the Treaty of Rome. While this issue is mainly one for historians to resolve on the basis of archival evidence, the fact that French farmers were not more but considerably less supportive of European unification than other French people between 1962 and 1965 lends some support to the view that was not the key to the deal as far as France was concerned.

Finally, if farmers are regarded as a test case of the economic benefits theory of the origins of support for European integration, the outcome for the theory is positive. Farmers' support for integration appears to respond to the economic

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benefits deriving from the CAP, though this responsiveness is only evident when one takes account of the fact that these benefits have varied over time, by sector, by country and according to the context of initial membership of the Communities. As emphasized at the outset, this result does not prove that support for integration is determined by economic calculations. It does, however, show that the economic interpretation holds in a special but crucial case, crucial in the sense that if, the results of the test had been the reverse of those obtained, the economic interpretation would have looked very shaky indeed. In short, this aspect of our results provides necessary but not sufficient evidence in favour of the economic interpretation of public support for European integration.

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