



ECCA 2019 | Lisbon | 28–31 May
European Climate Change Adaptation conference

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Title: Agricultural drought risk management in Central Europe - A survey study of Austrian crop-farmers

Theme:

6 - Climate risk management and resilience

Sub-theme:

6.1 - Risk management and systematic reduction of hazards in climate-sensitive sectors

Keywords: drought, agriculture

Abstract of presentation:

Objectives, methods, results and conclusions

In the face of climate change, drought risk and in turn drought resilience are increasingly problematic also in parts of Europe where it has not traditionally been an issue. For example, media worthy agricultural droughts affected Western, and Central European countries, four out of the past five years. Consequently, national and EU policy making are increasingly looking to support drought risk management. It is thus important to study farmer's behavior and decision making with respect to drought. To date, agricultural risk management and climate change adaptation have been studied most often in low-income countries, while for high and middle-income countries the focus is often on the US and Australia.

We present results from a standardized survey among 500 crop farmers in Austria with three main aims: First, to describe the use and perception of agricultural management practices and their relevance for drought risk; Here, we have a particular interest in farmer's preferences with respect to insurance, premium subsidies, and alternative compensation schemes. Second, to test the usefulness of some of the common theories used to analyze the drivers of individual behavior, most importantly Protection Motivation Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Third, to explore the communication channels used by farmers to gather information with respect to drought risk and drought risk management.

We critically discuss our findings in relation to other European studies in the field and highlight the need for a more consistent development of sectoral surveys of individual behavior. Our insights apply most importantly to European countries with a small-scaled agricultural sector, which faces additional pressure from liberalized markets. Thus with respect to practice, we seek to inform the design of nationally specific integrated risk management policies, which enable drought risk management and drought resilience at multiple levels.