

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts are invited for papers from anyone with an interest in rural entrepreneurship; we encourage contributions from academics and practitioners alike. Please indicate which of the conference themes you think is/are most appropriate and limit your abstract to 400 words.

Your Details

Name	Jennifer Fegan
Position	PhD Research Student
Institution/organisation and Postal address	Ulster Business School, Ulster University, Shore Road, Jordanstown, Co. Antrim, BT37 OQB
Email address	Fegan-j5@email.ulster.ac.uk

Please use the following headings: (boxes will expand as you type)

Title: Examining International Supply Chain Strategies for Rural Entrepreneurs with Premium Agri-food Products.
Purpose of this paper (please also indicate whether empirical, conceptual or case study etc) The key aim of this research is to identify the unique attributes and dynamic capabilities of successful agri-food international supply chains; and to determine how a rural entrepreneur with a premium agri-food product can achieve a competitive advantage in an international market. To meet the aims of the study a qualitative case study methodology will be used.
Design/methodology/approach (including limitations if applicable) This research will use case studies to explain how rural agri-food producers can build global premium brands through the use of their unique resources and their dynamic capabilities.
Findings Preliminary findings suggest that successful international agri-food products possess a number of key attributes which can be classified under the following four headings: Rare; Valuable; Un-substitutable and Difficult to Imitate (Barney, 1991). These findings offer an insight into how rural entrepreneurs can create a premium product that is capable of meeting consumer needs in a global marketplace.
Practical implications As BREXIT approaches for the UK economy, rural agri-food producers face uncertainty in exporting markets. However, rural entrepreneurs with premium agri-food products can take practical steps to ensure their products are capable of meeting consumer needs in international markets.
Policy Implications (if applicable) Government agencies should develop proactive policies to assist rural agri-food producers

strengthen their supply chains. This will ensure they are capable of supplying global markets in the aftermath of BREXIT.
<p>What is the originality/value of paper</p> <p>This paper aims to develop international supply chain strategies for rural entrepreneurs with premium agri-food products. Other research in this area has not focused on premium agri-food products. Additionally, this paper will provide practical recommendations for government agencies and organisations assisting rural agri-food producers.</p>
<p>Please state if your paper is a:</p> <p>Refereed research paper Practitioner Paper Presentation only</p>
<p>Please indicate the theme(s) that you consider most appropriate for your paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship, farming and the natural environment <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Rural Entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> International dimensions of rural entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> New approaches in rural theory, method and measurement <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities and challenges for rural development <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Innovation, EU funding and the role of Universities <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Social Entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Place Marketing

Are you interested in the Early-Career researcher development seminar on the 14th June?

Yes No

To apply to participate in the Early-Career research development seminar, PhD applicants must submit a short project description (max 4 pages) with name, project title, affiliation, outline of methodology(ies) and a letter of recommendation from their supervisor. Post-doctoral researchers should submit a short description of their current research interest (max 1 page).

SHORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TITLE: *Examining International Supply Chain Strategies for Rural Entrepreneurs with Premium Agri-food Products.*

STUDENT: Jennifer Fegan, Ulster University Business School

SUPERVISORS: Prof. Gillian Armstrong, UU, Prof. Paul Humphreys, UU and Dr. Lyndsey Hollywood, UU.

Aim

The key aim of this research is to identify the unique attributes and dynamic capabilities of successful agri-food international supply chains; and to determine how a rural entrepreneur with a premium agri-food product can achieve a competitive advantage in an international market.

Description

This thesis uses the resource-based view (RBV) theory to examine how a rural agri-food entrepreneur can obtain a competitive advantage in an international market. Seminal research in this area has shown that small agri-food producers can compete in global markets by pursuing a product differentiation strategy and targeting a niche market of consumers (Humphrey, 2006; Dentoni and Reardon, 2010). When a firm uses a differentiation strategy, it can uniquely position itself from its competitors and receive a price premium (Jobber, 2010). Therefore, through the provision of high quality premium food products, producers can differentiate their products and meet consumer's needs in a global marketplace.

Methods

To meet the aims of the study a qualitative method approach will be used. More specifically, this research will use case studies to explain how rural agri-food entrepreneurs can build global premium brands through the use of their unique resources and their dynamic capabilities. Case study research involves studying one or more situations in depth, and it is the recommended methodology to use in order to gain a rich and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being investigated (Yin, 2003). Using multiple case studies is a superior strategy to using a single case study approach because the researcher needs to ascertain whether or not the findings from the first case also occur in subsequent cases. However, it is also important to remember when selecting cases that the underlying principle is to select information rich cases (Perry, 1998; Yin, 2003).

Data Collection

In year 2 expert interviews were held with key members of DAERA (NI) and Bord Bia (RoI) to identify participants for the study.

One to one interviews with key actors (producers, farmers and retailers) in the agri-food supply chains were then completed. This facilitated an in-depth investigation of the research problem, and enabled the initial study objectives to be met.

After selecting the cases and conducting the interviews the data was then transcribed and is currently being coded. To ensure effective management of the data, the information will then be imported into NVivo (10) and analysed using this qualitative data analysis software package to develop key themes/concepts and assumptions

It is believed that this methodology will enable the researcher to collect the data in the most effective way, while gathering data from multiple actors in the supply chain will ensure reliability and validity of the findings.

References

Barney, J. (1991) Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17 (1), 99.

Dentoni, D. and Reardon, T. (2010) Small farms building global brands through social networks. *Journal on Chain and Network Science*, 10 (3), 159-171.

Humphrey, J. (2006) Policy Implications of Trends in Agribusiness Value Chains. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 18 (4), 572.

Jobber, D. (2010) *Principles and Practices of Marketing*. 6th ed. Berkshire: McGrawHill.

Perry, C. (1998) Processes of a case study methodology for postgraduate research in marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32 (9/10), 785-802.

Yin, R.K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.