



New entrant farming policy as predatory inclusion: (Re)production of the farm through generational renewal policy programs in Scotland

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Abstract

New entrant policy, literature, and research offers an important angle for exploring where dominant agrarianism is reproduced and contested. As new entrants seek access to land, finance, and expertise, their credibility is filtered through a cultural and policy environment that favors some farming models over others. Thus, seemingly apolitical policy tools geared at getting new people into farming may carry implicit norms of who these individuals should be, how they should farm, and what their values should entail. A normative gaze of farming often masks the financial, cultural, labor relation, and land tenure dimensions that are the underlying drivers of agrarian change. This paper applies social reproduction theory to explore a diversity of social labor processes that new entrant farmers practice to arrive at the point of agricultural production. Interviews with new entrant and successor farmers in Britain (excluding Northern Ireland) are presented first, followed by an analysis of new entrant policy instruments over the last two decades in Scotland. We find that new entrant policy fails to engage with a crisis of social reproduction in the food system because of a commitment to agrarian ideals of the self-sufficient and entrepreneurial farmer. By inviting newcomers into a dynamic of increasing precarious and uncompensated labor, very often by way of family relations, new entrant policy may act as a form of “predatory inclusion.” We argue that to be successful in reproducing the agricultural sector, new entrant farmer policy must be first a policy at attending to relations in the social sphere. Recognizing and supporting the diversified strategies farmers take on to assemble land for production would not only drive more just policy, but set the conditions for a more adaptive food system.

Keywords New entrant farmer · Farm policy · Predatory inclusion · Social reproduction · Agrarian change · Land reform

Introduction

In January of 2023, the “Pitgersie Farm” in Aberdeenshire, Scotland was put up for sale, described in the farming press as a “classic family farming unit which one would be proud to own” (Davidson 2022). The 600 acres of land and infrastructure was listed for £3,920,000. Such valuation of agricultural land across the UK is on the rise. In Scotland

for example, 2021 saw a 31.2% increase in farmland value¹ (McMorran et al. 2022, 5). In the same breath, however, the 2021 average farm business income was £46,500 with 29% of all farms across the UK operating at a loss (DEFRA 2022). Many new entrant farmers² operate with financial debt and uncertainty about whether the farm business itself will be able to service that debt (Pate and Thomson 2023, p. 17). The disparity between inflated farmland prices and the purchasing power granted by the business of farming raises worrying questions about how new farmers are meant to reverse the trends of an ageing and depopulating rural sector as well as confront a gathering ecological crisis.

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¹ The average farmland value in the US increased by 12.4% between 2021 and 2022.

² The term new farmers or new entrants is contested. While we discuss these complexities in the literature review, we employ the term new entrant farmer as opposed to young or beginning farmer because it tends to accept a broader range of farming modes at the point of transition. What we are concerned with is a set of qualities attributed to new entrants, which may be useful for analysis of the food system.

Policy in the domain of new entrant farmers coalesces around the goal of generational renewal. These interventions manifest as an apolitical policy priority in a variety of geographies like the US, EU and UK (Sutherland 2023). Policy, non-profit and institutional activity to support new entrants tends to invoke a technical framing with singular focus: Renew the ageing farmer demographics by increasing the number of newcomers into agriculture (Calo 2020). The main strategy within the technical approach to generational renewal is the development and encouragement of new agricultural “business models” that would deliver the adequate incomes to new farmers to overcome barriers to entry like land access and livelihood persistence (Calo 2018).

An established farm property such as Pitgersie Farm is ostensibly the top rung of the so-called “farming ladder,” a common metaphor that defines the pathway to successful farm proprietorship as a series of incremental business endeavors that slowly increase in scale, responsibility, and permanence. New farmers are told that the application of the correct knowledge and business innovation are the ingredients for a successful upwards trajectory, eventually reaching a top rung defined by land tenure security and financial success (Pickard 2021). But trends of farmland loss, institutional investment in farmland (Scottish Land Commission 2022), rural gentrification, and new entrants ceasing or pausing operations after years of effort suggests that the farming ladder is snake oil masquerading as rural policy.

An analytical frame of social reproduction is useful to understand how farmers under agrarian capitalism carry out the deeper social work underpinning food production. Much modern farming is characterized by market relations and even peasant-like smallholders who practice some form of self-sufficiency are dependent on wage relations and production of commodities (Bernstein 1986, 2014). Like other domains of wage work, then, petty commodity farmers are found to practice self-exploitation and uncompensated labor in order to bring goods to market (Friedmann 1978; Galt 2013, 2; MacAuley and Niewolny 2015; Pilgeram 2011). Uncompensated labor like care work is the classic example from social reproduction theory, as the accumulation of profits under capitalist production requires this “free” maintenance of the labor force (Katz 2001). Because the production of commodities relies on labor in the social sphere as a form of subsidy, there is a prevailing interest to maintain the conditions of work that delivers free input into production.

In this paper, we suggest a new entrant policy based on the mythos of business innovation is ineffective because it fails to address a crisis of social reproduction that underlies problems of generational renewal (Brent 2022). Through interviews with new entrant farmers in England, Wales, and Scotland, and analysis of contemporaneous new entrant programs, we highlight the dynamics between a policy that adheres to norms of the ideal farming model and the

experiences newcomers face. By revealing how new entrants labor to reproduce themselves, we aim to show how new entrant policy (re)produces the food system (Barca 2020). New entrant policy maintains the social conditions that deliver “free” inputs into production via propping up idealized assumptions of farming practices, familial labor, and land relations.

As capitalist agricultural logics continue to erode the social base for farming, a narrowing pathway for meeting the adequate form for agriculture places the reproduction of the food system in further jeopardy. In this context, new entrant policy and programs act as a form of “predatory inclusion” (Taylor 2019), where the efforts to invite previously excluded outsiders only furthers adverse conditions for new entrants. In brief, new entrant policy preserves a productivist model of agriculture rather than addressing the fraying social relations that have led to precarity in the rural sector in the first place.

We first introduce the concept of predatory inclusion, setting up a framework that explains the rational for, and the consequences of, a policy intervention that causes more harm to the very issue it aims to ameliorate. We then review recent critical scholarly developments on new entrant farmers. Finally, we apply core tenets of social reproduction theory—the incentive for capital to condition social labor as a subsidy, the exploitation of social labor, and the labor-conditioning force of the family—to the case of new entrant farmers.

Our critique of new entrant policy as predatory inclusion provides a starting point for thinking how generational renewal policy may be reworked to support alternative social conditions that restructure the labor of food production rather than merely reproduce the existing system.

Literature Review

Predatory Inclusion

In *Race for Profit*, Taylor (2019) introduces the concept of “predatory inclusion” to describe the way policies aimed at enrolling new groups of previously minoritized Black American home seekers ultimately undermine the ideal of more diversified homeownership. Inclusionary policies become predatory when they are based on the same exclusionary dynamics that drive the original need for policy intervention. For Black home seekers, being able to gain access to credit for homeownership supported a wave of debt burdens, when for example, black families were “permitted” to buy homes of substandard quality that demanded immediate and long-term repair. Predatory inclusion has been used to explain the creation of toxic environments amongst minorities (Cavender 2023), unequal outcomes within access to

credit programs (Charron-Chénier 2020), and access to the data economy (Donovan and Park 2022), but not to agricultural contexts.

The problem of marginal offerings is the first dynamic of predatory inclusion. Where access to land is normally thought to provide long term security and the potential for economic flourishing, facilitating access to lands of marginal quality may have the opposite effect. Scott (2018), argues that land access or property ownership when in a position of economic marginalization may increase exposure to harm: “Unlike the ideal property of Jeffersonian democracy, this marginal property does not enhance its owner's agency and capacity, instead it disempowers” (p. 139).

In the new entrant context, land markets often exclude farmers from the most productive land, funneling starters onto marginal lands. The consequence to inviting farmers into these contexts is difficult from a basic production standpoint (Kang et al. 2013), and risks these farmers being perceived as unproductive. They then may be labelled as inefficient and then encouraged to increase productivity to compete (Naranjo 2012). This has a consequence for farmer agency, but also for resilience, where farmers of marginal lands are set on a pathway of landscape simplification when the land may be better suited for more restorative or diversified production practices (Petersen-Rockney et al. 2021).

The second problem of predatory inclusion, as Taylor describes, is one where the logics of private home ownership may have worked for the dominant white class who enjoyed high mobility and access to stable incomes, but presented a dangerous risk for Black home seekers who were excluded from the same social benefits. The core logic of housing inclusion policies never challenged the assumptions that the lenders should turn a profit in exchange for housing access. This creates a tension: “When public policies are guided by the objectives of private enterprise, they are clinched in a dance of conflict” (Taylor 2019, p. 253).

The goal of reproducing farmers and the policies aimed at creating new entrants may be similarly clinched in a dance of conflict. For Black home seekers, structural racism blinded policy interventions to the deeper social needs of those seeking secure access. In the farming context, a persistent agrarianism blinds new entrant policy to the social determinants of farm establishment (Calo 2020) like the heteronormative “family farm” (Fuller et al. 2021; Goode 2022). Goode, in *Agrotopias*, a study of the antecedents to agrarianism, argues utopic vision of a nation's continuance, the proper class and ethnic groups of citizens, and whose livelihoods should be protected by the law are always wrapped in the ideals of the future of farming:

[A]grarianism was the remedy for the nation's reproductive problems—that American sustainability entailed the elimination of demographic threats and

the propagation of a racially homogenous, native born, middle-class, farming population. (Goode 2022, p. 9)

In the case of agriculture in many global North contexts, an agrarianism based on visions of (white, cis male) self-sufficiency, ruggedness, and family landowners has been well described as a dominant norm (Smith 1970; Fuller et al. 2021; Suryanata et al. 2021). This agrarian ideal has been shown to dictate policy like farmland property rights (Mariola 2005), food security plans (Tomlinson 2013) and farmer training programs (Calo 2020). The seemingly apolitical new entrant programs geared at getting new people into farming thus carry implicit norms of who these individuals should be, how they should farm, and what their values should entail (Sutherland 2023). This normative gaze too often masks the financial, cultural, and land tenure dimensions that are the underlying drivers of agrarian change (Minkoff-Zern 2014).

A policy goal to create newness may be continually in tension with a deeper agrarianism whose main function is preservation and the promotion of homogeneity. This agrarianism is a contributing factor to a food system characterized by homogenous racial ownership (Horst & Marion 2018; Shoemaker 2021), land consolidation (Fairbairn 2020), corporate concentration (Clapp 2022), and landscape simplification (Petersen-Rockney et al. 2021). Inviting farmers into this system without engaging with the ongoing logics that produce outcomes of homogenization may have consequences for the stated aims of generational renewal.

Problematizing beginning farmers: beyond the technical agronomic framing of new entrants

Research on generational renewal in the farming sector explores the challenges new entrants experience. New Entrants are found to face a range of barriers, with land access commonly cited as the most significant issue³ (EIP-AGRI 2016; Zagata and Sutherland 2015) driven by decreasing availability of secure tenancies, lack of succession with existing farmers, and high value of land. In Scotland, where land holdings tend to be larger than other European countries, there is also a lack of housing on or near land and competition in the land market with established farmers and investors (McKee et al. 2018; Scottish Land Commission 2022).

Analysis of the new entrant problem spans a spectrum; the pragmatic and the critical. At the pragmatic end, the “new entrant problem” is a technocratic issue resolvable

³ Other barriers not categorised as land access barriers include, for example, access to markets, access to capital, business skills and knowledge, and social networks (McKee et al. 2018: 10).

through well designed training or improving the market conditions of farming. The pragmatist view remedies the land access barrier by designing new business models and/or financing mechanisms that improve the renting or purchasing power of new entrants (Calo 2018; Helms et al. 2019; Thilmany et al. 2021; Jablonski et al. 2022a, b). The pragmatic view aligns with established policy discourse across Europe (EIP-AGRI 2016) and other global north contexts aimed at solving the new entrant problem.

At the critical end, the problem of demographic change is evidence that the logics underwriting the dominant food system threaten its own longevity. This literature contests the core assumptions of replacing ageing farmers with new farmers as this overlooks the broader social relations that prefigure who farms, and to what level of exploitation (Leslie et al. 2019; Weiler 2022b). Definitional challenges around age, ideal pathways to farming, and duration in the industry (EIP-Agri 2016) are evidence that the new entrant problem is acting on normative assumptions about the agrarian ideal. The word “farmer” in new entrant policy discourse is equated with single proprietors and owners of land and capital “which excludes the racial and gender minorities who have long been the backbone of the food system yet denied access to land ownership” (Leslie et al. 2019, 862). Kathryn Ruhf (2013) argues for a more inclusive understanding of new entrants as “prospective farmers” who play important roles in food systems through official and non-official labor economies. Rarely are migrant laborers, or short-term visa-holders who contribute significantly to the agricultural labor force (Thomson & McMorran 2019; Robinson 2021) considered when discussing new entrant policy.

Recent critical views suggest that new entrant policy works on assumptions that are disconnected from the political economic realities new entrants face (Minkoff-Zern 2014; Calo 2018, 2020; Korsunsky 2020; Laforge and Levkoe 2021; Pickard 2021; Rissing et al. 2021). A flurry of new entrant activity may obscure high dropout rates, as interview data from the US shows new farmers exiting the sector after a short time (Calo and De Master 2016; Carlisle et al. 2019a, b, 2; Rissing 2019; Mock 2021). Deeper political economic issues such as land ownership consolidation (Calo et al. 2022), agricultural policy (DeLonge et al. 2016), farmland financialization (Carlisle et al. 2019a, b), legacies of land theft (Horst and Marion 2018), the outsized power of corporate agribusiness (Clapp 2022), racial exclusion (Minkoff-Zern 2018; Weiler 2022a), and patterns of urbanization (Lobao and Meyer 2001) shape the outcomes of new farmers much more strongly than their agricultural skill development.

Calo (2020), suggests the lasting commitment to self-sufficiency in new entrant policy and much non-profit advocacy is driven by the “yeoman myth,” where the imaginary of the family farm creates a set of new entrant interventions grafted onto deeply entrenched unequal land politics. The result is

a funneling process, where only an homogeneous group can gain access to the means of agricultural production, reducing the diversity of viable farming models (Horst and Marion 2018; Leslie et al. 2019; Shoemaker 2021; Sutherland and Calo 2020; Argüelles 2021; Shoemaker 2022).

Despite the inherent problems with the new entrant policy arena, new entrants are crucial for the future of agriculture. New entrants may be important for shoring up the labor base for more knowledge-intensive agroecological farming (Carlisle et al. 2019a) or a future of scarce fossil energy (Smaje 2020). Research suggests adaptive capacity in agriculture requires a “deep and broad” diversification that is threatened through a narrowing of new farmer possibilities (Carlisle et al. 2019b; Petersen-Rockney et al. 2021; Petersen-Rockney et al. 2021).

The critical lens on new entrants asks, what would an alternative agricultural system look like that enables new entrant establishment instead of merely trying to reproduce the numbers of current farmers?

Social reproduction theory and generational renewal in agriculture

A framework that offers explanation of the “new entrant problem” is social reproduction theory (Katz 1991, 2001; Federici 2019; Rodríguez-Rocha 2021). In this frame, demographics, processes of rural outmigration, and the loss of farm enterprises is a consequence of a crisis of social reproduction, where the ability to reproduce farm livelihoods is diminished by the dominance of productivist logics in agriculture (Lobao and Meyer 2001).

Social reproduction is concerned with the “making maintenance, and exploitation” of the labor force under capitalist production logics (Katz 2001, p. 712). The key insight of social reproduction theory is that the work of producing laborers exists not in the sphere of production, but in the social sphere (Bhattacharya and Vogel 2017; Bakker 2007, p. 541). As Fraser (2022) states: “The capitalist economy relies on—one might say, free rides on—activities of provisioning, caregiving, and interaction that produce and maintain social bonds, although it accords no monetized value and treats them as if they were free” (p. 53).

Under a profit motive, “the economic impulse of capitalist production conditions the so-called ‘noneconomic’ forms of labor” that people carry out (Bhattacharya and Vogel 2017, p. 59). The result is a forever tightening of the social sphere, leading to, in the words of Nancy Fraser, “widespread social exhaustion and time poverty” (2022, p. 53). This tightening is a threat to the fabric of society, as individuals must continually hollow out their social world in the interests of capital. Because the labor in the social sphere is a form of subsidy to commodity production, social reproduction theory explains policies that keep the subsidy flowing.

The way capital exploits informal labor for surplus production is also a core theme of agrarian political economy scholars. Early work observed how smallholder and family farmers may practice “self-exploitation” in order to reproduce themselves amidst the tightening time poverty and declining wages under capitalist agriculture (Mann and Dickinson 1978; Galt 2013; McMichael 2003, 2012; Chayanov 1986). An original Chayanovian argument linked the competitive durability of family farmers to the ability to temporarily degrade the physical body and mental self in hard times only to earn less than the average rate of profit (Mann and Dickinson 1978; Pilgeram 2011; Meek 2014). Strategies like under consuming, sacrificing needs of family members, production for subsistence, or introducing non-commodity production revenues like tourism, are all observed methods smallholders use to keep up their wages or maintain access to land (Marsden 1988; Galt 2013; Cousins 2022).

This dynamic of self-exploitation applies to contemporary accounts of farmers whose declining revenues spurs increased labor time (Guthman 2004; Pilgeram 2011; Galt 2013; Beckett and Galt 2014). Here, alternative rationalities for organizing labor like ecological regeneration, direct to consumer relations, and feeding the hungry can come into conflict with the capitalist imperative to exploit labor for accumulation. Research shows how farmers who practice labor for non-capitalistic purposes end up adding “free” labor from family relations, hiring in exploitative wage labor, and privileged mobility to seek land of acceptable price (Galt 2013; Pilgeram 2019; Rissing 2019; Argüelles 2021; Pickard 2021). Thus, the social labor of farmers is often subordinated by the capitalistic relations embedded in petty commodity production. In a recent important dissertation, Brent (2022) argues that analyzing generational renewal through social reproduction theory highlights the ways new entrant farmers care for themselves and the land as opposed to a technocratic struggle over issues at the point of production.

The family, (self) exploitation, and the social labor of new entrants

Social reproduction theory also offers reasons for how such exploitative labor relations may be conditioned through informal forces like norms, myths, land tenure, and familial relations (Ossome 2021). The family, in this lens, is a key institution that structures and disciplines forms of social work. The interpersonal relations of the family can prefigure the ways farmers secure access to land, distribute benefits, and do the work of food production (Leslie et al. 2019; Ossome 2021; Cousins 2022).

Encouraging the persistence of family farming may perpetuate oppressive social relations characteristic of family

dynamics where social labor is exploited and marginalized. As Minkoff-Zern cautions in her hopeful analysis of new Latino/a farmers in the US: “Family relations vary, and unequal gender relations can be amplified in a family business, particularly an agricultural one” (Minkoff-Zern 2019, p. 152).

In drawing attention to the relationships that are shaped and formed in agriculture, Leslie et al. (2019) show the injustices that are formed by an agricultural system dominated by capitalist heteropatriarchy, problematizing concepts of family farms in relation to sexuality, gender, class and race. For instance, while there has been greater recognition of the role of women’s labor in family farming, this is not an emancipatory option for people who are single or not cisgender: “Cisgender heterosexual women who were at a disadvantage in accessing farmland because they were women may have exerted their cisgender and heterosexual privilege to access land through a husband” (Leslie et al. 2019, p. 865).

One counter to these issues is the feminist Marxists position of “abolishing the family,” or a decentering of the heteronormative nuclear family as the only kinship relation (Lewis 2022). Expanding the notion of family, the argument suggests, would allow for more dispersed forms of care work that would allow for distributed management of agricultural labor rather than relying on and exploiting the structure of the family.

The literature about the role of the family in agriculture and social work more generally creates important questions for how policy intervenes to entrench or disrupt these norms. For this research we thus focus on the way new entrant policy implicitly or explicitly acknowledges the role of family labor in new farm establishment.

Methods

We apply social reproduction theory to investigate new entrant farmers’ experiences and then compare this to national new entrant policies. Interviews with both successor and ex novo new entrant farmers with less than ten years of experience as a proprietor of a farming business were carried out in 2019 and 2020 in Scotland, Wales and England. Interviews began by selecting ten “innovative” new entrant farming models selected by criteria of an European consortium project. Having made these contacts, a snowball sampling method was employed, avoiding over sampling of any one form of agricultural model. Twenty-nine farmers were interviewed on twenty-three separate units. Fourteen interviewees identified as “women” and fifteen “men.” Farms included commodity grain operations, livestock farming, market gardens, and mixed operations, and ranged from 5 acres to 1,500 acres. Interviews were transcribed and paired

with detailed observations taken during farm visits. Observations and interviews were coded emergently. Once core themes were described interviews were second pass coded. Names when used are pseudonyms.

We contrast these interviews with an analysis of new entrant policy in Scotland. Critical policy analysis understands the importance of values and norms in policy formulation, challenging positivist assumptions about impartial policy creation (Behagel et al. 2019, p. 480). The intention is to show how policy constructions of new entrants frame agriculture, generational renewal, and land access in practical and prescriptive texts (Bacchi 2012). Taking a ‘what’s the problem represented to be’ approach allows a critical investigation of how the problem of new entrants is defined, understood, and approached (Bacchi 1999).

The policy analysis focuses on Scotland which has had a significant policy program relating to New Entrants compared to Wales and England. The analysis is applied to new entrant policy documents by the Scottish Government (see appendix for full table of documents reviewed). This includes the annual Programme for Government from 2016–2022, which sets the overarching framework of policy and legislation. Other documents include key vision documents for agricultural policy, and practical documents relating to three key strategic priorities identified for new entrant policy by the Scottish Government: finance, land access, and advice. Documents reviewed for financial support include criteria for the Scottish Rural Development Programme targeted funding packages for new entrants and young farmers and the Scottish Government commissioned evaluation of this grant scheme which ran from 2014–2017. In relation to land access, documents examined are from the Farming Opportunities for New Entrants group which was established in 2016 and focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on land access, as well as Scottish Government Commissioned evaluation of the starter farm initiative. Website content and a Scottish Government commissioned evaluation of The Farm Advisory Service also established in 2016, is included in the analysis. A total of twenty-three documents were included, which, collectively provide a picture of the vision, standards, practices, and rules that are expected of new entrants, framing the Scottish Government’s expectations of what the priorities and goals of new entrants should be.

Selected documents were collected from the internet between November 2022 and January 2023 and then entered into NVivo for qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis was conducted through inductive and deductive methods (Manser 2022, p. 157). The first reading included deductive coding to identify key characteristics of new entrants, new entrant farm models and how they develop, and the social relations linked with new entrants. This helps to undertake the ‘what’s the problem’ form of analysis by describing how policy portrays who is considered as eligible and how the

social structures facilitate their participation in the system. These themes were then refined to create a set of codes to run a final pass over the documents for analysis of problem formation and the subsequent policy design.

Results

The following results section is in three sections. The first two parts describe the analysis of new entrant interviews, showing dynamics of social reproduction in the realm of 1) land tenure, and 2) the homogenization of farm systems towards productivism. The third section outlines new entrant policy and its underlying assumptions.

Getting and keeping the land: The social labor of new entrants

This section will describe the various strategies that are evidenced by new entrants in the social labor of gaining and maintaining access to land. This includes the additional labor required to improve marginal lands, the social labor of managing relationships with landowners and others in positions of power, and a reliance on family labor. We show how overcoming land access barriers requires much more than financial assets, but continuous and varied social labor.

Farmers interviewed take on marginal lands because this is the only way farmers can gain access. The capital improvements required demand extra sources of income or labor, which is frequently carried out within the family. The concept of marginal land includes not only the growing capacity of the soils and infrastructure, but also the tenure security.

Callum’s experience on marginalized lands shows the uncompensated cost embedded in the time delay before he can draw from the land’s full productivity because of the capital improvements had to make.

Bare land is cheaper [...] there’s a big delay between getting the land and it being anywhere near productive, like years [...] My son is three years old and we moved into the house two weeks before he was born so when we started building me and [my partner], we moved onto the croft and lived in a static caravan for about a year, a year and a half maybe, as we built the house.

Fiona, who took on a piece of derelict land in the uplands, described the framed pictures of the family working on farm buildings as “holiday pictures”, accepting that the pre-labor carried out during the family holiday is part of their job as a food producer.

To float the farm during the period of improvements, farmers pour in their savings, syphon their off-farm incomes

into the farm business and dedicate hours of time to construction for housing, that is often absent on ‘accessible’ land.

Another needed strategy to maintain land access is how farmers carry out the labor of “maintaining and massaging relationships” (Ferguson & Li 2018, p. 12) so as not to run afoul of landlords. In some instances, this work of massaging relationships comes in the form of persuading landowners that their business model is sound, even though earning stable revenues as a new entrant would be the exception to the rule. Bonnie and Eóghann both have full time jobs working as agricultural consultants and this income stream was added to the “business case” when they applied for a desirable tenancy.

We couldn't have built a business case if we didn't have full time jobs, to do the farm outside as well. [...] It's less risk, at the end of the day, is basically what [The land-owning entity] told us.

In the eyes of the land-owning entity, the cashflow from two full time jobs, was a necessary subsidy to realize the productive capacity of the land and in turn the investment security of the owners.

Because new entrants may be seen as risky prospects for existing land-owning entities, Ruadhán's family's land access story shows how they framed their identity to overcome apprehensions of the landowner. They managed the perceived risk of newness by appealing to the agrarian ideal of a young family.

Luckily the people that sold this croft, they are our neighbors, they really wanted to sell it to a young family that were going to croft⁴ and they probably accepted, well they did accept a lesser price to get the right people rather than sell it to a higher price to get the wrong people.

In Ruadhán's case, the “right people” are an enterprising young couple with ambitious plans to restore the productive value of the land while raising a family, willing to put in their own savings towards that goal.

A classic case of social reproduction concerns the often-gendered domain of care labor. For new entrant female farmers who are primary care givers for children, the above challenges of improving the quality of a new patch of land is compounded. Fiona's start to farming also came with parenting a young child, and their partner was often away working to subsidize the farm enterprise. Fiona noted when she had

to do a farm task, she often needed to line up the nap time of their toddler first. This required getting up earlier than normal and performing a myriad of care tasks. Sometimes she had to do the job with the toddler in tow: “[B]eing a full-time mum is more than just a 37 ½ hour week [...] if you had any visitors you were, like, great babysit while I nip off and do something.”

In a different form of familial labor, the start-up work on Bonnie and Eóghann's new tenancy relies on support from family members to develop their farming enterprise. They borrow heavy machinery from Bonnie's father at no cost: “My dad's farm is just five miles away [...] so that's part of the reason that we could make this work just because dad is so close.”

The ability to take on larger three-year tenancy of 395 acres was contingent on the support of Bonnie's father's equipment loan. These traditional kinship relations within the normative family are crucial for the success of these new entrants. At the same time, this subsidy to production may be harder to access for those outside the family.

When support through familial relationships are not available to new entrants, sustaining good relationships with other members of the local community in positions of power or authority are then essential to securing land tenure. In the example of a council owned farm which employs Emily, her work required massaging relationships with other powerful bodies in order to maintain the support for the council project. External pressure for the council to sell the land to make up declining revenues put Emily's tenure into question: “We were just getting ready to calve and they phoned us and said that land has been sold, you have to get everything off it.”

Emily was forced to rally support to keep the remaining land as agriculture, lobbying councilors about the lands potential value for local constituents: “If you do [the councilors] a favor like going to an event with them, they are quite good at helping you out if anything bad were to happen”.

Getting and keeping land is thus a project of continuous social work and maintenance of social relations.

Pressure to climb: New entrants and norms of entrepreneurial selfhood

New entrant farming success as entrepreneurial self-sufficiency is a key narrative that drives the exploitation of the social sphere. Farming is subsumed by a norm that says an entrepreneurial approach will lead to sufficient incomes for the farmers. Reproduction strategies through labor other than farm labor is viewed as a short-term anomaly that will eventually be rectified by improvements to the business model. Isla and Grace, siblings, internalized a message they received that the farm economics alone ought to be able to reproduce their livelihoods.

⁴ This research makes reference to crofts, a form of smallholding unique to Scotland. A croft is a parcel of land that has use restrictions placed upon it in an effort to keep the land as agricultural. Crofting legislation was first put in place in 1886 and tends to influence land mostly in the Highlands and Island region of Scotland.

The vice-Chair of the [farmer's union] came up and said, 'it is a way of life, farming is a way of life, but it is a business and it needs to be able to make you money.' And it does. [...] I teach part-time, just now I'm working full-time but I kind of switch between both, so I'm not so reliant. But the farm needs to be able to support Isla and her family in the future, so it has to be looked on as a business.

The labor that reproduces new entrants, be it self-exploitation of the farmer, or the off-farm income from a family member is viewed as a temporary problem that resolves as farmers apply more entrepreneurial elements and scale up their enterprise to ascend the farming ladder.

One of the pathways to actualizing the vision of self-sufficiency is through expansion, which paradoxically may include a greater labor burden than before. Isla and Grace inherited a 1200-acre mixed barley and livestock operation, yet the goal of entrepreneurial self-sufficiency is visualized through taking on more land. As they increase the size of their holding, they highlight efficiency as a corrective goal.

Efficiency is something we've been speaking about, me and Isla, and trying to be as efficient as possible and getting things done so that we do have time – we don't want to be doing it 24/7, [...] we don't want to have to be stuck here all the time.

Thus, while the logic of entrepreneurial self-sufficiency drives them to expand, they rest their hopes in efficiency to solve the impending increase in labor time.

New entrant farmers all expressed clear motivations and bold visions for what their labor of farming could produce. However, the moment these farmers stepped onto the land, the material threads that assemble a farm together began to pull the vision into different directions. These constraints pushed these farmers to follow the dogma of business model efficiency. Callum's grand vision for diversified agriculture is tempered with the norms of economic self-sufficiency:

The real Nirvana would be no till, seven year rotation of grain, potato and veg with a certain amount of animals in that system but I think the scale of the animals would be very low and the main product would be the arable... we've almost gone the wrong way in what we now have – so our herd of cows is two breeding cows and I can see the economies of cows, like if we ten times it and we had twenty breeding cows you can start to see how you could earn a living from that.

To uphold the ideal of a financially stable unit some would have to move away from a holistic farming approach towards a more simplified/monoculture model to increase production, profits, and yields. Like Callum's vision, massive scale production is rarely in the plans of *ex novo* new entrants. Instead, a

common theme emerged of a desire for finding the appropriate scale to match their labor time, land capabilities, and consumer needs. While the norms of new entrant entrepreneurial pluck suggest expansion and growth, Callum's vision highlights a desire for balance between expansion and diversification.

The capacity to stay true to these wishes quickly fades. Ben, A dairy farmer of 10 acres lamented the pressures that came with recent scale increases due to its impact on quality management of animal welfare.

I guess with even fewer animals I could be having even more thought about exactly what they're eating and like ... not producing loads and loads of shit and not producing loads and loads of milk. [...] I can see an attraction in being even smaller and being able to do things even better for each animal.

While Ben enjoyed visualizing a down-scaling that would reduce the stress on his labor effort, he quickly waved away the concept, because he was already on a treadmill of expansion.

The normative vision of owning a farm property at the top of the "farming ladder" was dominant amongst several of the interviewees. Eóghann looked back with distaste towards his grandfather's career as a farm manager, because working as a waged farm manager risked a damaged body and no assets to show for it. "[H]e was sitting there through no fault of his own with a broken body, and yes, some money in the bank but nothing else so that's why I didn't want to be a farm manager."

In contrast Stewart elected to work as a farm manager at a large private estate after years of failing to find a tenancy of his own. From this vantage, he expressed skepticism about the future of new entrants' ability to transition to owner occupiers.

Farms that come up for sale round here tend to be gobbled up by someone who's already got a lot of land and family coming through. That won't help young people from outwith the industry to get in. So, do you just do what you can to get those people in [...] Farming won't stop. People will just keep getting bigger and bigger.

Stewart's vision of the future for new entrants is not more owner occupiers but a deeper proletarianization of the farm labor relationship.

Norms of new entrant policy: an analysis of Scotland's NE programs

The Scottish Government established new entrant support schemes to achieve generational renewal, bringing in "new blood" (Scottish Government 2016a, 22) to the industry. Successive Programme for Government documents from 2007 onwards identify the need to encourage more new

entrants into farming, primarily through development of land access opportunities.

Even though the sector is under unprecedented stress, we must continue to encourage more people into farming. To future-proof the industry, we will release more public sector land in Scotland for new entrants. Since 2016, more than 6,400 hectares of land have been released to help 61 new entrants take their first step onto the farming ladder. (Scottish Government, 2019a: 87)

Policy objectives cover three main areas of new entrant support: land access, capital for business start-ups, and advice and training services.

While these three strands indicate somewhat of a holistic approach to new entrant support, land access is commonly cited as the most significant barrier and so is core to the Scottish Government's new entrant policy. The Agricultural Holdings (Amendment)(Scotland) Act (2022) promised to reform agricultural tenancies to address the long-term declining trend in tenancy supply. The Scottish Government has also developed the Starter Farm Initiative which operates to encourage public landowners to provide land access on publicly owned land, particularly the the national forest estate. This scheme has offered ten new entrants the opportunity to take up ten-year tenancies with the expectation that the tenancies would be recycled for the next cohort of new entrants at the end of the ten-year period (Pate and Thomson 2023). In 2016 the Farming Opportunities for New Entrants (FONE) group was established by the Scottish Government to continue to identify support for new entrants primarily through land access opportunities. The signature policy recommendation emerging from the FONE group was the establishment of the Scottish Land Matching Service in 2019 which acts as a brokering service between landowners and land seekers with around twenty agreements having been made by the end of 2022.

Analysis of the Scottish Government policies and subsequent support package design reveals three core themes relating to how the problem of generational renewal is defined: Individualism, innovation, and improvement up the farming ladder.

Individualism

In the new entrant policy documents new entrants were frequently defined as individuals or new entrants in the singular form. Support programs are designed to “allow individuals to develop” (Scottish Government 2016b, p. 1) to build “a new generation of talented, skilled, and dynamic individuals” (SAC consulting 2022, p. 21). Eligibility criteria for the new entrant and young farmer support packages do acknowledge the possibility of new entrants operating with business partners or groups, however stipulate that the new entrant must

have some form of majority control over the farming enterprise to be eligible to apply for the funding. This is potentially to overcome loopholes that allow more established farmers to access additional capital by bringing on board a new entrant. The policy response to “game playing” is to favor individuals or create systems of hierarchical control.

While policy directions and criteria seldom refer to family farming, policy evaluations – as opposed to policy directions and criteria for support – highlight the ongoing relevance of family labor, and familial networks in supporting individual new entrants. For instance, the grant scheme evaluation highlights the importance of family farming in relation to land access through succession and labor (Scottish Government 2022d, p. 6). The Starter Farm Initiative, giving new entrants a secure 10-year tenancy was seen as an important opportunity for some tenants to be able to grow their family:

Many tenants' family circumstances had changed since the start of their tenancy, with many getting married or having children. The benefits to family life of securing a tenancy compared to their existing grass lets was summed up by one tenant: “it was easier than seasonal grazing, as [it's] in one place [seasonal grazings were geographically dispersed]...the house was near. (Pate and Thomson 2023, p. 11)

However, due to the limited profitability of farming, reference is made to existing family farms not being able to sustain a new entrant: “Even in farming families, the business might not be of sufficient scale to support a new entrant” (Scottish Government, 2023). Increasingly farming operations are only able to financially support one individual, potentially even on a part-time basis. However the labor of the partner was an essential part of the farm as a family unit:

All interviewees that answered felt that their spouse worked “part time” on the farm with estimates of between 20% and 50% FTE given. The main reason for spouses, generally women were working less now on the farm than before was due them providing childcare or off farm income from employment elsewhere. (Pate and Thomson 2023, p. 19)

The Women in Farming and the Agriculture Sector report (Shortall et al. 2017) commissioned by Scottish Government to “establish a baseline position on women in farming” (p. 4) found that, in other cases, “women, especially new entrants, often become the primary farmer when children are young”, being more likely to need to be at home on the farm to fulfil care duties, while their spouse worked outside of the farming business to earn off-farm income. The consequences for the overall health and safety practices of the industry should not be underestimated as “women reported taking risks while fulfilling childcare responsibilities and farming activities simultaneously” (ibid: p. 14).

Innovation & Entrepreneurialism

Policy analysis reveals an assumption that new entrants will bring with them not just ‘new blood’, but also a certain set of characteristics that will enable their economic survival. In policy discourse, new entrants are consistently characterized as being innovative and entrepreneurial. The phrase “New Entrants are recognized to be vital for the future of any industry as they drive innovation and best practice” is repeated across several documents (Scottish Government 2016b, Scottish Government 2022f, p. 3). Policy seeks to identify individuals who will bring new ideas and innovation to the industry to meet industry challenges, stating that: “[E]vidence proves that entrepreneurs will succeed provided entry opportunities exist” (Scottish Government 2016b, p. 2).

Subsequently, grant scheme criteria prioritize entrepreneurialism and innovation: “This grant scheme aims to contribute towards an increase in the number of entrepreneurs who farm and build profitable, innovative businesses which respond to the industry’s changing economic environment” (Scottish Government 2017b) and advisory services prioritize innovative agri-business models: “In 2021 [the new entrant] topic will equip the next generation into Scottish agriculture with the skills and knowledge to ensure viable agri-businesses are created. These businesses will be encouraged to be innovative and dynamically run by the next generation” (SAC consulting 2022, p. 24).

A key objective of the Starter Farm Initiative, echoed elsewhere in new entrant policy, is to create part-time farming opportunities for new entrants. The Starter Farm Initiative describes “the basic remit is to provide a business opportunity to a new entrant that will, typically, generate a part-time income for the farming family” (Scottish Government 2016b). The low income from farming is understood as a problem that can be solved by inducting entrepreneurial people into farming who are able to rely financially on off-farm income and diversification of their business model to succeed, as well as family labor to support farm operations. Despite this part-time policy objective, more than half of the starter farm tenants worked full time on the farm, with over half of this group also working other jobs on top of full-time farming (Pate and Thomson 2023, p. 9). The part-time concept is strongly linked to the concept of innovation and entrepreneurialism; however, it is not clear that this innovation and entrepreneurialism actually relates to the activity of farming and food systems, or whether it relates to the farmers ability to span different work sectors in order to support agriculture. As the quote from new entrant David illustrates, the risk of resolving the problem of farm income through ‘innovative’ business diversification may in fact undermine the actual activity of farming:

Small tenant farmers, crofters, nearly none of them are making their money from their agriculture. They instead work, they have another gig that allows them the flexibility to do the agriculture [...] you need something else to prop it up. [...] I’ve seen examples of that, holiday cottages... that again subsidize the actual farming, but I’ve also seen that go wrong where you can very easily end up with crofts that are only doing tourism and they are not growing any food.

Without making explicit policy objectives regarding farming models clear, new entrant policy can be seen to create a funneling towards certain farming models. As capital is perceived as a barrier, “New Entrants may find it easier to grow a business using livestock (particularly sheep) rather than invest heavily in machinery & equipment” (Scottish Government 2016b, p. 13). Consequently, land opportunities provided to new entrants “consist mainly of bare land with very little in the way of housing. Most of this land will be for grazing purposes and there are only a very few examples of opportunities in arable production” (ibid). Similar implicit assumptions about business models are made in funding criteria where “it is a condition under the scheme that proposals for non-traditional agricultural operations (for example, horticultural enterprises) will be assisted only if they are supported by a business plan that identifies market outlets for produce from the proposed development” (Scottish Government 2019b). In contrast, business models focusing on livestock do not have to identify market outlets in their business plan due to the assumption that they will sell into established national supply chains often oriented towards export.

The guidance document developed by the FONE group for public bodies wishing to offer out farming opportunities also assumes livestock farming as farming model that new entrants will adopt: “Please outline the farming system you will employ. This will include making reference to the breeds and class of livestock, supplementary feeding methods and how you will manage the stock on a day-to-day basis” (Scottish Government 2022e). Despite the evidence that many new entrants do not want to go into traditional livestock business models (Scottish Government 2016b, p. 23) criteria for new entrant support schemes are inadequately designed to accommodate farming models such as mixed farming units or community supported agriculture projects.

Improvement & the farming ladder

The approach to creating part-time farming opportunities in the livestock sector is linked to the notion of the ‘farming ladder’. The idea of the farming ladder invokes rungs of progression in terms of a range of different factors including

Fig. 1 A Table from the Scottish Government Report on New Farming Starter Opportunities on Publicly Owned Land Indicating the Farming Ladder Model. Source: Scottish Government 2016b, 7

4.3 Indeed, feedback to the Group suggests that smaller areas could be more influential in providing the initial opportunities needed. The opportunities should be looked at as a ladder allowing progression from very small beginnings up to larger units and into full scale farming businesses or agribusinesses:

	Potential Area	Equipment Required	Suggested Term
Starter Units	2 – 20 Ha	Limited Equipment	Flexible to suit or 5 years
Intermediate Units	20 – 70 Ha	Some equipment, possible housing	5 -10 years
Full Time Units (or Longer term Units)	70 HA +	Equipped with options for housing	10 years or more depending on unit

number of working hours, farm size (Ha), capital investment and duration of tenure is outlined in the table below (Fig. 1).

The assumption is such that the ideal opportunity for a new entrant is to start out on smaller parcels of land working on a part-time basis as a way of building up capital to upscale to a full-scale farming business with relatively more secure tenure. The table above indicates a logic that either new entrants move on to larger holdings with longer term security, or through farm consolidation and market negotiations to increase their tenure security. There is little evidence to show that these farm ladder strategies work in practice, with most evidence to show that farm consolidation is enacted by established farmers rather than new entrants, often at the expense of new entrants, and an overall reduction in tenure length in the agricultural tenancy sector (Moody 2018).

As crofting is considered small scale it is considered as a good option for the first rung of the ladder. However, crofting tenure is very secure and so it is disregarded as an ideal first rung opportunity by the government (Scottish Government 2016b, p. 7). In order to get on the first rung of the ladder new entrants must also be willing to sacrifice long-term tenure: “In order not to block progression from smaller opportunities it is important that New Entrant opportunities allow for progression beyond New Entrant status” (Scottish Government 2016b, p. 13). Therefore new entrants must identify their exit strategy from land opportunities that they might be able to establish (Scottish Government 2022e).

The problem of generational renewal is defined as initial access to land, with the assumption that intervention ought to allow people onto the first rung of the ladder. However, what we see in practice is a lack of clear options for tenants at the end of their tenancy as the overall dynamics of land access remain unchanged. The Starter Farm Initiative evaluation demonstrates this as the majority of tenants state that they do not see that there are opportunities to either purchase or lease agricultural land to move to at the end of their ten-year tenancy (Pate and Thomson 2023, p. 13). One of the starter farm new entrants explained the view from the end of the scheme:

The cast iron guarantee at the start of [the starter farm program] is that in ten years’ time, we want the publicity again so we’re gonna re-lease these farms to new entrants again and by that time, you’ll have enough money in capital and experience to move onto something else. Well, we’re seven years into that. Ten years and there is just no tenant who’s renting out. There’s none.

By defining initial access as the primary problem experienced by new entrants, policy becomes focused on maximizing the number of initial access points available. However, this avoids addressing discussions about the overall structure of agriculture tenure and what impact that might have on new entrant success. Accepting some form of ladder in terms of farm business development does not necessarily imply that short-term tenancies are supportive or generative towards that aim. Other impacts on short-term tenancy opportunities can relate to loss of community connections and embeddedness for instance in children changing schools, and loss of labor or employment to the community (Pate and Thomson 2023, p. 3).

In 2018, the Scottish Government funded Farmer Intentions Survey, conducted every ten years, included criteria for the first time on New Entrants. Inclusion of new entrants was particularly revealing in terms of tenure trends, showing that new entrants are more likely to be owner occupiers than farmers from any other cohort, with eight out of ten new entrants owning their land (Hopkins et al. 2020, p. 2). The main route for land access at present is to become an owner occupier, which presents a significant challenge to the viability of the farming ladder as it is currently conceptualized. This also raises wider questions of social justice as land prices continue to escalate. New entrant opportunities will become increasingly exclusive and homogenous.

Discussion

In the paper, we argue that new entrant policy acts as a form of “predatory inclusion” (Taylor 2019, 91) due to its failure to adequately engage with and even foster a crisis of social

reproduction on farms. Our analysis describes farm policy built on logics of individualism, entrepreneurialism, implicit family relations, and an assumption that tenure security is earned through incremental ascension up a farming ladder. This contrasts with interview data showing that the work of getting land and starting to farm is dependent on uncompensated care labor, family relations, and self-exploitation.

The result is a conflict, where new entrant capacities are pressured to conform to agrarian ideals embedded in policy design. This conflict funnels new entrants into a farming system reliant on exploited social labor. Such an incentive to maintain the flow of “free” labor from the social sphere to subsidize the production sphere is a core insight of social reproduction theory (Bhattacharya and Vogel 2017).

Viewing the problem of new entrants in the context of the crisis of social reproduction allows us to “address questions of the making, maintenance, and exploitation of a fluidly differentiated labor force” (Katz 2001, p. 709). When agrarian ideals like traditional family and self-sufficiency are assumed, but go unrecognized in formal support mechanisms, these norms discipline social labor in service of agricultural production. The herculean efforts that new entrants take on to prepare the land for agricultural production may prop up the renewal of farming to some extent. Yet, this comes at great reliance on a fraying labor reserve in the social sphere, like dependence on family members with a tractor to lend, constant massaging of relations with landlords, or working to put a child to sleep in order to do other farm work. As Katz (2001, p. 710) warns, when “social reproduction gets unhinged from production,” continued reliance on social labor threatens the reproduction of agriculture, the very problem targeted by the stated aims of new entrant policy.

Policy aimed at rural regeneration welcomes new farmers to a structure that threatens access to the long term benefits of agriculture. This is a core feature of predatory inclusion, where policies that grant short-term access to land generate long-term financial liability (Cavender 2023). Scott (2018, 139) describes this paradoxical access to land as a “tether” that is disempowering rather than emancipatory. As is the case of the farmer recruited to the “starter farm” program, the lack of suitable next steps in the broader farm tenure landscape means that all of the improvement to soil, infrastructure and local knowledge put into the land is potentially lost to the new entrant but captured by the landowner.

As Taylor concludes, inclusion in the housing sector for Black Americans was only possible based on “exploitative terms” (2019, 18). The use of social reproduction theory helps bring context to the shape, disciplining forces, and consequences of that exclusion. Our research shows that as new entrants experience threats to their tenure or market security, they find more ways to self-exploit to maintain their access. Threatened with losing access to land,

farmers see their own unique vision of agricultural production slip away in favor of productivist models preferred by a policy discourse offering ascent via the mythical farming ladder. For some, they may work more hours to do the same jobs or believe their workloads will decrease through future efficiency gains. Others may lean into a particular identity in order to win access from local power brokers like councilors or landlords.

The establishment of new entrant farmers is a key site of analysis to understand the reproduction of farming writ large (Pickard 2021). Generational renewal is best viewed not as a technocratic question of business models nor optimal subsidy schemes, but rather as a key indicator of the political economic choices that shape the many possible forms of agricultural production (Sutherland 2023; Brent 2022). Even if new entrant policy is ostensibly about reproducing farmers, it also (re)produces farm relations. This means new entrant policy has an important role on any transformation of the food system (Carlisle et al. 2019b).

This analysis is limited by its focus on new entrants who are already on farms – those that conform to the policy ideal of a new entrant. The experiences of family members, of farm businesses that are structured to accommodate several people working together as cooperatives and business partnerships would be informative to an understanding alternate logics of social reproduction. There is a significant gap in the literature on new entrants who are not securely based on land or within a farm business, including seasonal and migrant workers and their experiences of generational renewal dynamics and agricultural transitions currently taking place in UK agriculture. New Entrant policy mostly omits these potential farmers, and our study suggest taking a social reproduction lens to migrant or itinerate farm labor ought to be productive work.

Conclusion: New entrant farming as care work

Again, consider Piterstgie Farm. Access to such an important piece of land, capable of fulfilling the food production needs of many, is prohibitive. The business of farming is not providing the income liquidity to bid on multi-million-pound properties with a credit history that shows zero profits. Nonetheless, new entrant policy displays an evergreen emphasis on developing business model innovation for new entrants, as if the right recipe for product development will switch the financial landscape from red to black. This dogged commitment to the farming ladder model is explained by a persistent agrarianism that upholds entrepreneurial norms of family farming thereby ensuring a consistent flow of social labor.

Given that new entrant policy ought to avoid the problem of predatory inclusion, how should policy be oriented to

address the issues of demographic change in the rural production sector? What changes to agricultural policy would enable a more diverse and just system of social labor?

New entrant policy could be transformative by facilitating a diversity of new farming relations and agricultural practices instead of merely producing more farmers. A truly inclusive new entrant policy could prioritize other societal demands such as dignified work, non-dominant kinship relations, ecological reconciliation, and community oriented food provisioning. For new entrant policy to succeed in its stated goals, policy makers may need to challenge the agrarianism at the heart of generational renewal programs. This could include decentering gender and/or family norms at the core of what it means to be a farmer (Leslie 2017; Leslie et al. 2019; Hoffmeyer 2020), introducing land reforms that challenge structural inequalities of landownership that make long-term tenure security impossible for all but a wealthy few (Calo et al. 2022), and fostering farm business models that do not mandate vertical ascent, but horizontal and socially embedded relations of care (Brent 2022).

Brent's assessment of agroecological farmers in the Basque country through the lens of social reproduction theory calls for new entrants to be seen as care workers, rather than entrepreneurs (Brent 2022, 225). This dynamic could be the building block for an alternative "critical agrarianism" (Carlisle 2014) that displaces dominant imaginaries of self-sufficiency and independent farmers with a renewed debate about what we ought to use land for.

Translating these theoretical arguments about bringing forth a new agrarianism through new entrant policy is an important project for scholar-practitioner-farmer coalitions. This could include experimenting with new land tenure models that provide long term social security untethered to the asset appreciation of land ownership. Fostering alternative forms of land tenure may create distinct pathways to long-term tenure rather than relying on the farming ladder. Scotland's new entrant policy has a unique opportunity to synergize with recent land reform Acts that facilitate a community right to buy land (Calo et al. 2022). However new entrant policy is currently untethered to these developments. Exploring how these new entitlements could be applied to community farming initiatives could be a priority that joins land and agricultural policy.

Designing new entrant policy without the idea of replication of the existing food system may also yield emancipatory agricultural policy. A new entrant policy designed from the perspective of landless, cooperative, and other marginalized farmers could unlock the potential of a new labor force that doesn't just want to farm, but wants to farm differently. Diversifying how new entrants farm is more than an issue of lessening the injustice of exploitation of social labor. Diverse family, labor, and land relations form the basis of a truly resilient food system.

Appendix

Document focus	Title	Publication Date	
Overarching government priorities	A Stronger Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2015–16	2015a	
	A Plan for Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2016–17	2016a	
	A Nation With Ambition: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2017–18	2017a	
	Delivering for Today, Investing for Tomorrow: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2018–19	2018	
	Protecting Scotland's Future The Government's Programme for Scotland 2019–2020	2019a	
	Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland	2020a	
	A fairer, greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021–22	2021a	
	A Stronger & More Resilient Scotland: The Programme for Government 2022–23	2022a	
	Overarching agricultural policy	The Future of Scottish Agriculture: A Discussion Document	2015b
		The next step in delivering our vision for Scotland as a leader in sustainable and regenerative farming: consultation document	2022b
Delivering our Vision for Scottish Agriculture Proposals for a new Agriculture Bill		2022c	
Agricultural Careers: New Entrants (Scottish Government webpage)		2023	
Rural Development: New Entrants Start-Up Grant Scheme full guidance		2017c	

Document focus	Title	Publication Date
New Entrant specific: Finance supports	Rural Development: Young Farmers Start- Up Grant Scheme full guidance	2017d
	Rural Development: Small Farms Grant Scheme and New Entrants Capital Grant Scheme full guidance	2019b
	New Entrants and Young Farmers Start- Up Grant Schemes Evaluation	2022d
	Report on New Farming Starter Opportunities on Publicly Owned Land	2016b
New Entrant specific: Access to Land sup- ports	New Entrant Farming Opportunity” Land Opportunity template document	2022e
	Farming Opportuni- ties for New Entrants information pack	2022f
	Review of Scotland’s Starter Farm Initia- tive: Tenant Insights on Scotland’s Starter Farm Initiative (SRUC)	2023
	FAS Business Plan 2022/23 (SAC con- sulting)	2022
	FAS Business Plan 2021/22 (SAC con- sulting)	2021
New Entrant specific: Advisory Service Supports	Farm Advisory Service: One to Many. Evalua- tion and Recommen- dations	2021b

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