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Vorschläge für Masterarbeiten/*Master thesis proposals*

Students who wish to write their master thesis at the Chair for Agricultural and Food Policy need a solid understanding of the fundamentals in agricultural economics and on how to conduct empirical analysis.

For this, I expect, that as a minimum, you have passed the following modules:

- "Microeconomics" (or "Economics and Environmental Policy" if you are not an AgEcon Student)
- **"Agricultural and Food Policy"**
- "Applied Econometrics" or "Quantitative Methods in Economics" (or another Master-level statistics module)
- "Agricultural Economics Seminar" (to learn how to write a scientific paper)

For students of the Master study program "Agribusiness" or "Agricultural sciences", this can be discussed on a case by case basis.

It is desirable that you also participate in "Advanced Policy Modeling Analysis", another class offered by our institute.

Once accepted, I expect you to **participate in the research seminar of the chair**, taking place Wednesday afternoons (3-5pm). More information here: <https://i420.uni-hohenheim.de/>

Language of the thesis may be English or German.

How to apply?

Please send email with short explanation of your interest and transcript of record to contact person mentioned below the topics.

Further question: please come to my (online) open office hours **Wednesday 10-12**. All information here: <https://apo.uni-hohenheim.de/>



Topic proposals

1. Vereinfachung der GAP

Zur Zeit laufen einige Gesetzgebungsverfahren und Initiativen, um die CAP zu vereinfachen (siehe Wieck 2025). Jedoch ist manchmal unklar, ob wirklich vereinfacht wird, oder ob nur die Standards/Anforderungen heruntergesetzt werden.

Zielsetzung: Analyse und Systematisierung der laufenden Vereinfachungsvorschläge

Vorgehensweise: Basierend auf Wieck (2025), systematisieren Sie die laufenden Vereinfachungsvorschläge und evaluieren Sie, ob die Änderung eine Vereinfachung bei gleichem Anforderungsniveau oder eine de-facto Absenkung der Anforderung darstellt.

Fokus: Deutschland und/oder EU

2. Simplification of the CAP

Several legislative procedures and initiatives are currently underway to simplify the CAP (see Wieck 2025). However, it is sometimes unclear whether simplification is actually taking place or whether standards/requirements are simply being lowered.

Objective: Analysis and systematisation of current simplification proposals

Approach: Based on Wieck (2025), systematise the current simplification proposals and evaluate whether the change represents a simplification with the same level of requirements or a de facto lowering of requirements.

Focus: Germany and/or EU

3. Reform der Finanzarchitektur der EU und Auswirkungen auf die 2. Säule der GAP

Der im Juli 2025 vorgelegte Reformvorschlag der EU-Kommission beinhaltet eine grundlegende Umgestaltung der Finanzierungsstruktur der GAP.

Zielsetzung: Abschätzung, wie bestehende GAP-Programme der 2. Säule in Baden-Württemberg in die neue Finanzarchitektur eingeflochten werden könnten

Vorgehensweise: Analyse des neuen GAP – Vorschlages, Analyse, wo die FAKT-Programme und andere 2. Säule Programme im neuen Vorschlag ihren Platz finden könnten, evtl. Interviews mit Ministerien, Stakeholdern, etc.

4. Analyse der Förderstruktur von Betrieben im Südschwarzwald und Analyse möglicher Auswirkungen der zukünftigen GAP-Reform

Die landwirtschaftlichen Betriebe im Südschwarzwald (Landkreise Breisgau-Hochschwarzwald, Lörrach, Waldshut, Schwarzwald-Baar-Kreis) bewirtschaften unter oft erschwerten Bedingungen Mähweiden, die sehr artenreich sind und aus Biodiversitätssicht sehr wertvoll erscheinen. Jedoch ist diese Art der Bewirtschaftung ohne Fördergelder nicht denkbar. Daher ist jede Reform der GAP eine Herausforderung und ein Unsicherheitsfaktor für diese Betriebe.

Zielsetzung: Analyse der relevanten Förderinstrumente und deren Höhe und Abschätzung, wie diese durch die vorgeschlagenen GAP-Reform erfasst werden.

Vorgehensweise: Mithilfe der öffentlich verfügbaren Förderdaten (<https://www.agrarzahlungen.de/>) soll analysiert werden, welche Mähweiden-relevanten GAP-



Instrumente diese Betriebe erhalten und in welcher Höhe die Zahlungen erfolgen. Diese Informationen sollen genutzt werden, um abzuschätzen, wie Betriebe in dieser Region durch die GAP-Reformvorschläge.

5. Reaktionen aus dem Politikumfeld auf die Proteste der Landwirte – eine systematische Analyse von Events und Diskursen

Zielsetzung: Untersuchung, wie verschiedene Interessengruppen mit gegensätzlichen Interessen sowie die breite Öffentlichkeit den politischen Diskurs und die Art der Informationen, die sie bei der Kommunikation über Agrar- und Ernährungspolitik verwenden, beeinflussen.

Vorgehensweise: Visualisieren Sie eine Zeitreihe der „Events“ rund um die Bauernprotest. Führen Sie eine Diskursanalyse von Pressemitteilungen und politischen Dokumenten durch, um die unterschiedlichen Interessen verschiedener Interessengruppen aufzudecken, indem Sie klassische Diskursanalyse (z. B. Vogeler 2022) mit „Text als Daten“-Ansätzen (siehe Gutierrez Domínguez et al. 2024 oder Mennig 2025) kombinieren.

Fokusland: Deutschland, EU oder Frankreich

6. Reactions from the political sphere to farmers' protests – a systematic analysis of events and discourse

Objective: To investigate how different interest groups with conflicting interests, as well as the general public, influence political discourse and the type of information they use when communicating about agricultural and food policy.

Approach: Visualise a time series of 'events' surrounding the farmers' protests. Conduct a discourse analysis of press statements and policy documents to reveal diverging interests of various stakeholders combining classical discourse analysis (e.g. Vogeler 2022) with "text as data" approaches (see Gutierrez Domínguez et al. 2024, or Mennig 2025).

Focus country: Germany, EU or France

7. Systematisation and mapping of international value chain obligations

Research objective: What international rules and norms exist around agri-food value chains? Provide an overview and systematization.

Approach: conceptualisation, literature review, "text as data" compilation of collected information, visualisation

8. Analysis of trade data and constructing disaggregated agri-food chain value data to improve the understanding, how shocks influence the outcome, structure, resilience, and stability of agri-food trade.

Research objective: Develop a unique agri-food trade data set to better understand how sustainability norms and shocks impact agri-food value chains

Task 1: Constructing international disaggregated value chain for the agri-food sector, we follow the approach that the ITC has taken: they start with by categorizing products of the HS system at the 6-digit level into outputs if they are processed and non-intermediate goods and inputs in all other cases (see (International Trade Center 2022), Annex 1), and subsequently, they link this information with additional data sources.

The products that we will focus on are the following harmonized system (HS) product codes:



- 07 (fresh and chilled vegetables),
- 08 (fresh, dried, and preserved fruits),
- 09 (coffee, tea, mate, spices),
- 1005 (maize or corn)
- 20 (preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts, or other edible parts of plants).

In terms of regional coverage, the four priority programme target regions will be entered as separate entities (e.g. India and Tanzania), whereas for the two EU target regions (Germany and Poland), both intra-EU and extra-EU trade will be considered. The data will be sourced from the ITC trade map¹, and will cover the period from 2000 to 2025. Yearly, monthly and quarterly data will be available at HS 4 or HS6 digit level.

Task 2 will focus on detecting empirical patterns in our agri-food trade data for the aforementioned product groups. We will use simple descriptive trade indicators to identify patterns across products, partners, and regions. These include measures of trade volume and value, diversification and concentration (e.g., number of trade partners, Herfindahl–Hirschman Index), and volatility over time.

9. Topics around labor rights and compliance and due diligence obligations of German and EU companies in international value chains

10. The impact of school feeding programmes on food demand in Malawi

Master thesis in collaboration with the project UKDULA:

Research objective: Provide an overview on the relation between school feeding and resulting demand for local procurement potential for agri-food products

Approach: Conceptualisation and literature review, understanding of procurement regulation in Malawi, spatial mapping (e.g. using GIS) of location of schools and agricultural production, Focus country: a selected region in Malawi

A cooperation with the UKUDLA team in Malawi is expected, including a stay in Malawi for three months (supported by an UKUDLA master thesis scholarship).

11. The dichotomy of South Africa of being a net agri-food exporter and having a highly food insecure population at the same time

Master thesis in collaboration with the project UKDULA:

Research objective: Does better food availability (one of the food security dimensions) could provide a solution to this problem? What could be the role of financial investments into agriculture?

Approach: Conceptualisation and literature review, establishment of a quantitative relationship and assessment (e.g. by using a simulation model approach) of the relationship between agri-food production and investments into agriculture

¹ <https://www.trademap.org/Index.aspx>



A cooperation with the UKUDLA team in South Africa (University of the Western Cape) is expected, including a stay in Cape Town for three months (supported by an UKUDLA master thesis scholarship).

12. Determinants of Food and Nutrition Insecurity: A Micro or Macroeconomic Impact Analysis

The nature, challenges and causes of food and nutrition insecurity are heterogeneous across regions, countries and households. The exogenous and endogenous factors have been adduced to have gingered and/or aggravated food and nutrition insecurity, however, the intensity and magnitude of these factors are household-, country- or region-specific. Mitigating the proliferation of the challenges demands a policy mix, which is often deficient in developing countries. This study investigates the determinants of food insecurity and the impact magnitude of these determinants at either the micro or macroeconomic level.

Supervisor: Dr. Olayinka Kareem

13. Trade Policy and Food Trade Flows: Any Impact of the Emerging Trade Policy Measures

The current and evolving global trading system has and will affect global trade, especially for developing countries. Hitherto tariffs are often negotiated downward, particularly in agri-food trade, due to the trade arrangements and/or agreements while the proliferation of non-tariff measures (NTMs) has been acknowledged. While tariffs are now rekindled in the global trading system, technical measures stand out among NTMs, as they could sometimes double the impact of the tariffs. To this end, this study will investigate the effects of trade policies on food trade flows in south-south trade relations, north-north relations or south-north relations.

Supervisor: Dr. Olayinka Kareem

14. Trade Facilitation and Food Trade in Developing Countries.

The food supply chains have been enmeshed with different challenges ranging from endogenous which include formal and informal hurdles, and exogenous shocks. The challenges have impacted not only the producers and traders but also the national economy in developing countries. The improvement in food trade facilitation will have multiplier effects at the macro- and micro-level, which can impact the attainment of sustainable development goals. This research will demonstrate with whatever means permissible in economics, the impact of food trade facilitation on food trade in a developing country or region.

Supervisor: Dr. Olayinka Kareem

15. Food Import Intensity and Penetration and Food Security in a Developing Country

The issue of food security has become topical in recent decades owing to the global economic downturn and other overlapping crises within and across countries that impact not only food accessibility but also food stability and utilisation. Food trade has been acknowledged as one of the avenues to stimulate food insecurity resilience. Although the nexus of food import flows and food insecurity has been investigated, the effects of food import intensity and penetration



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on food insecurity are still an empirical issue that needs to be investigated. This study will determine the effects of food import intensity and penetration on food insecurity in a developing country.

Supervisor: Dr. Olayinka Kareem