

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to analyse the strategic behaviour of the Andalusian olive tree farms (farms with at least one olive tree parcel) through the concept of “strategic groups”, i.e., olive tree farms with the same or very similar strategy along certain strategic dimensions (supplies policy, structure, size, production, distribution channels, efficiency, dependence on environment, and growth) that can be measured by quantitative or qualitative variables. The presence of significant differences between groups implies that these farms follow different strategies, and accordingly deploy their strategic resources in order to compete. Data were obtained from a previous survey carried out in 2002 to describe the complete social and economic structure of the Andalusian agrarian sector (crops and livestock), not only the olive tree farms. Cluster analysis was used to form six strategic groups, ranging from extensive olive tree farms in dry farming to diversified farms in irrigated farming. The paper describes the main characteristics of each of the six groups found, and the relation between group membership and performance. Although there have been found significant differences between groups in terms of performance (margin per hectare), these differences are not relevant for five of the six groups. Future research will ascertain if more significant differences can be found.