

iSAGE Training  
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# Case study research design and methods

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Innovation for Sustainable  
Sheep and Goat  
Production in Europe



THE ORGANIC  
RESEARCH  
CENTRE  
  
ELM FARM

# What is a case study?

A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident

(Yin 2014)



# What is a case study?

- Is an experiment a case study?
- Is a history a case study?
- Is a survey a case study?
- Are interviews case studies?



# What is a case study?

## A case study inquiry

- Relies on **multiple source** of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion
- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis



# Triangulation

The convergence of data collected from different sources, to determine the consistency of a finding



# How to conduct a case study?



# Conducting case study research

Step 1: Designing case studies



Step 2: Preparing to collect case study evidence



Step 3: Collecting case study evidence



Step 4: Analysing case study evidence



Step 5: Reporting case studies

# Conducting case study research

## Step 1: Designing case studies





# Designing case studies

- Research questions (“who”, “what”, “where”, “how”, “why”)
  - Use literature to narrow your interest
- Identifying units of analysis
  - Select the case(s)
  - One or multiple case studies?
  - Replication, not sampling logic
- Identifying data collection ‘tools’
  - Qualitative, quantitative, mixed



# What are the practices needed to support lamb meat supply chains?

- Innovation?
- How important is collaboration?
- Is there anything that market players should learn?
- How to support farmers?
- What marketing channel(s)?
- How to improve supply chain alignment?

# Conducting case study research

Step 1: Designing case studies



Step 2: Preparing to collect case study evidence

# Preparing to collect case study evidence

- Case study protocol
  - Overview of the case study
  - Data collection procedure
    - Gaining access to key organisations or interviewees
    - Who to interview?
    - Data collection questions
    - Guide for the case study report
  - The pilot case study

# Conducting case study research

Step 1: Designing case studies

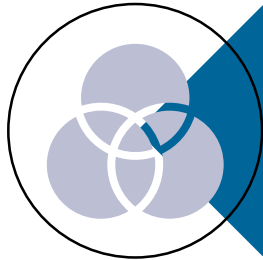


Step 2: Preparing to collect case study evidence



Step 3: Collecting case study evidence

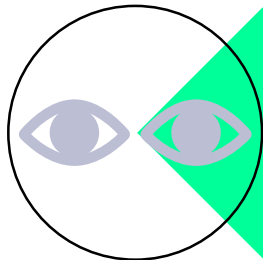
# Collecting evidence



Use multiple source  
of evidence

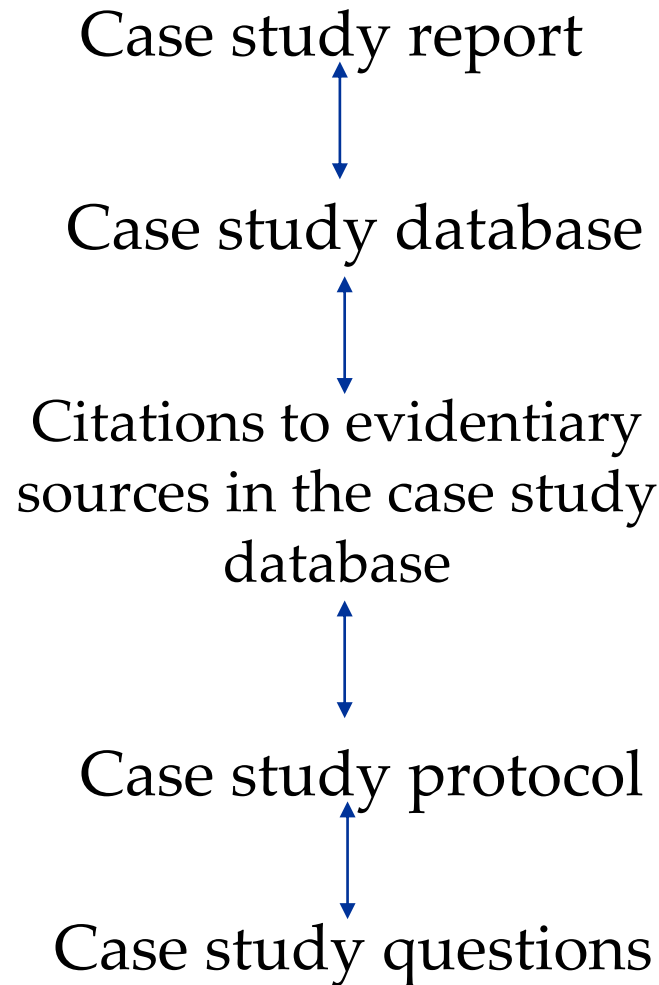


Create a case study  
database



Maintain a chain of  
evidence

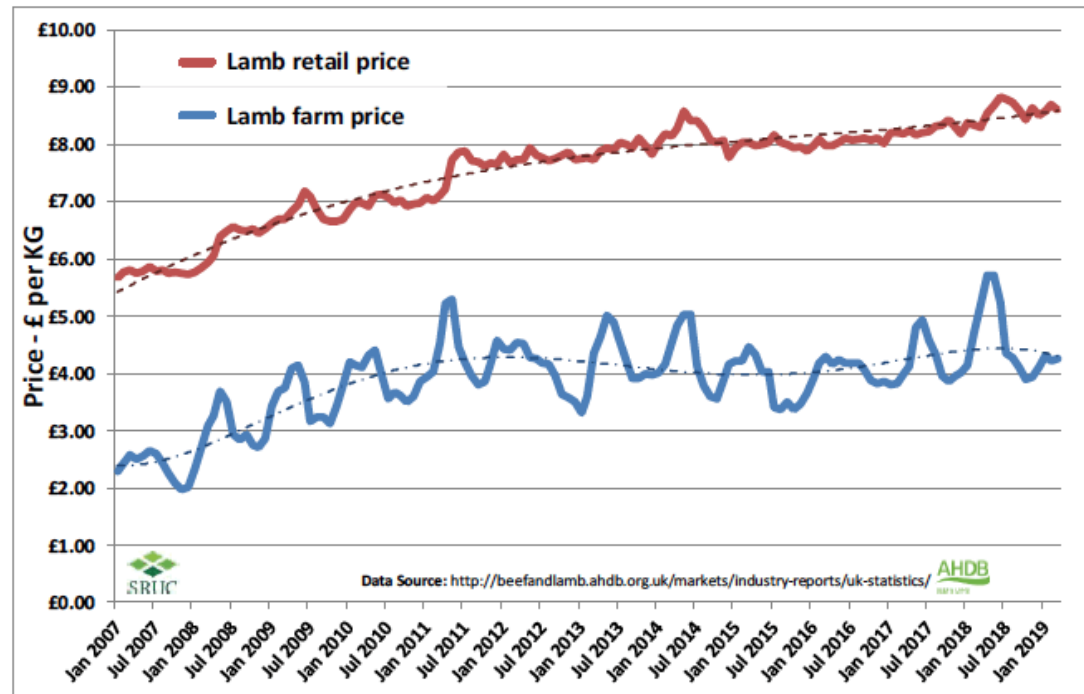
# Maintain a chain of evidence



# Use multiple source of evidence

## The Cost of Production for lamb meat case study (UK)

SMKT gives cost of production (CoP) contracts for British lamb farmers. Is CoP a best practice for lamb meat supply chain?





# Use multiple source of evidence

## The Cost of Production for lamb meat case study (UK)

SMKT says the contract provides a unique opportunity for SC alignment

Farmer A says it is a 'win-win' opportunity

Farmer B says the farm price is low, but he stays in the CoP scheme...

**What is the difference between farmer A and farmer B then?**

**Is CoP a 'best practice' for supply chain?**



# Conducting case study research

Step 1: Designing case studies



Step 2: Preparing to collect case study evidence



Step 3: Collecting case study evidence



Step 4: Analysing case study evidence

# Analysing case study evidence



- Relying on theoretical propositions
- Working your data from the 'ground up'
- Examining plausible rival explanations

# Cross-case analysis

- First, analyse each individual case as a individual case
- Identify patterns across cases
- Grouping and pattern matching to reduce the amount of data



Inventory of practices that have contributed to improving the supply chain performance

# Pattern matching example

| Practice                            | Number of replication engaged in practice | Case study |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------|
| Information sharing                 | 4   | A, B, C, H |
| Cost sharing                        | 2   | A, D       |
| Buying on cost of production        | 1   | A          |
| Providing quick feedback on carcass | 4   | A, C, H, L |
| Differentiation of target markets   | 8   | .....      |
| Sourcing alignment with branding    | 2   | .....      |



# Rearranging individual practices into 'meta' constructs

| Practice                                     | Number of replication engaged in practice |
|--|---|
| <i>Establishment of key learning points:</i> |   |
| Feedback on carcass                          | 4   |
| Cost of production                           | 1   |
| Drafting animals                             | 1   |
| <i>Collaborative planning</i>                |   |
| Information sharing                          | 4   |
| Benefit sharing                              | 4   |
| Cost benefit                                 | 1   |
| <i>Buying on cost of production</i>          | 1   |

# Generalisation?



## *Analytic generalisation versus statistical generalisation*

**Statistical generalisation** is used to extrapolate probabilities from sample/population

**Analytic generalisation** is used to generalise theories as well as generalise to other concrete situations

# Some conclusions (as an example of iSAGE SC case studies)

- Marketing and branding strategies require strategic sourcing to reduce lamb meat supply inconsistency and uncertainty
- Working relationship between downstream and upstream actors is recommended to identify quality specification of lamb, develop and market a range of products that optimise the use of that specification and reduce waste
- .....



# Thank you!

