Participating farmers’ opinions of Finnish FADN/profitability bookkeeping

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Background

Farmers participate voluntarily on Finnish profitability bookkeeping

No monetary compensation to farmers – we pay with valuable, comprehensive farm reports

Do we really?

Let’s ask them!

• Note: the term "bookkeeping" refers to the Finnish application of FADN (and some other) data collection system as perceived by a farmer
The goal

- To find out the usefulness of bookkeeping reports for farmers
- To get feedback for development
- To find weaknesses on our implementation
- To help the ProAgria organisation (data collection) to develop their services
- To get critique
Data and analysis methods

A Webropol survey to the participating farmers in spring 2018 (+ typology from FADN-records)
• a ”15 minutes questionnaire”
• Questions on usefulness, utilisation, reliability, practices, environment, management, values
• 201 answers given, response rate 25%

Analysis with
• Frequency tables
• Cross tabulation
• Summed variables
• Correlations
• Wordclouds
Are the bookkeeping results useful at all?

- Generally, it currently serves my needs well
- I would recommend participation to another farmer
- The results are referenced in media well enough
- The free reports are worth the effort of participating
- It is useful for the Finnish agriculture
- It is useful in monitoring my farm results
Are the results accessible and reliable?

- The Economy Doctor website is clear and informative
- The comparison report (time series and group comparison) is clear and informative
- The annual farm report is clear and informative
- The results of my farm are unrealistically positive
- The results of Finnish agriculture are unrealistically positive

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What do farmers do with the reports?

- I can get support for analysis from another person
- I analyze the reports and take corrective actions
- I analyze the reports and search for explanations for performance differences
- I read the reports and do some comparisons, but these don't guide my actions
- I don't use the reports in any way
Farm properties, farmer characteristics and use of the bookkeeping results

Is the variation in level of
- "Bookkeeping reports use activity"
- "Overall satisfaction in bookkeeping"
connected to
- Farm size
- Phase of farming
- Farmer’s managerial thinking
- Farmer’s values

?
Some summated scales were calculated based on (exploratory-confirmatory) factor analysis

- On managerial thinking:
  - "Business orientation"
  - "Management anguish"
- On farming values:
  - "Instrumental"
  - "Intrinsic"
  - "Social"
  - "Expressive"
Correlations...
Correlations…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Business orientation</th>
<th>Management anguish</th>
<th>Instrumental values</th>
<th>Social values</th>
<th>Intrinsic values</th>
<th>Expressive values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0,23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction</td>
<td>0,16</td>
<td>0,16</td>
<td>0,16</td>
<td>0,24</td>
<td>0,26</td>
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- Some low but significant correlations between farmer traits and bookkeeping reports use activity & overall satisfaction
- No association with farm size
Analyzing the open questions with wordclouds

- The most important reason to participate?
- What is the biggest challenge/the most tedious part?
- Any ideas how to develop the bookkeeping system?
The most important reason to participate
The most important reason to participate? (– 3 items)
What is the biggest challenge / the most tedious part?

hours

inventories
What is the biggest challenge / the most tedious part? (– 2 items)
Any ideas to develop the bookkeeping system?
Any ideas how to develop the bookkeeping system? (-1 item)
Conclusions

• Generally, farmers are satisfied with the system
• Farm reports are appreciated and utilized at least in increasing farmer’s knowledge of their own situation
• Use or satisfaction are not dependent on any measured properties of the farm or farmer

• To gain more utility, farmers need support or a discussion partner to analyze the results/reports
  → extension organisation’s role
  → Who would pay for it?

→ Combine the data collection routines with analysis of past performance
...conclusions

• To lighten the data collection burden we should develop
  – alternative methods for working hours recording (mobile devices!)
  – Automated data transfers from systems of different authorities or operators
  – Electronic forms for farmers to enter data directly into the process

• Farmers’ awareness of the whole system should be increased
  – Importance in the point of view of policy making
  – General enlightenment on the workflow and data processing
  – More interaction between Luke, ProAgria and farmers!