

# Expectations of the dairy sector about the future of dairy farming in Romania

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## Introduction

During INDAGRA 2018 (1 – 3 November Bucharest), a survey was carried out under professional visitors of this exhibition. All the interviewees had a relation with the dairy sector. Three Romanian students from the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest carried out the survey.

In total 85 people were interviewed, 38 dairy farmers and 47 other professionals with business in dairy farming. In this report, the other professionals are defined as stakeholders.

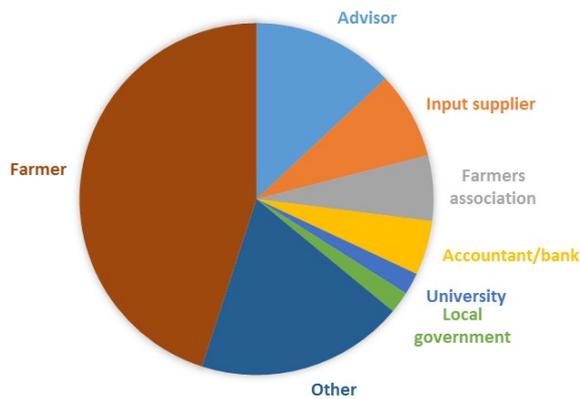


Figure 1: Profession of interviewees

## Results

On average, the farmers had 56 dairy cows on 54 ha land. The farms were divided into 3 size groups: small (less than 15 dairy cows, 12 farms), medium (15 – 45 dairy cows, 13 farms) and large (> 45 dairy cows, 13 farms).

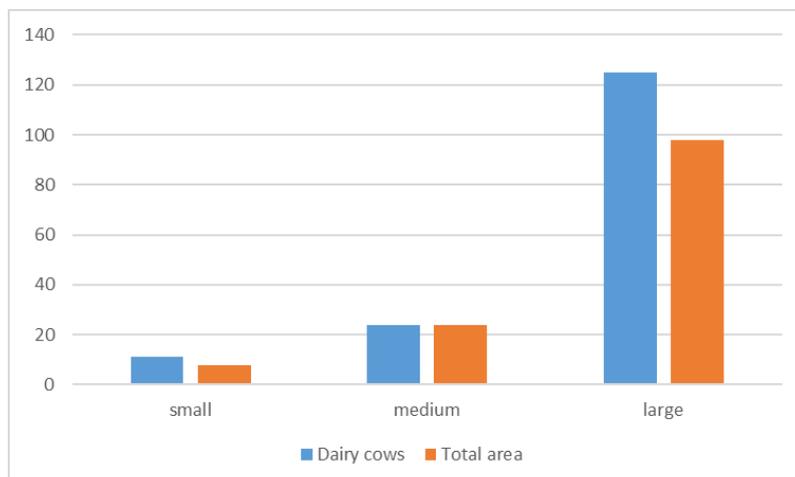
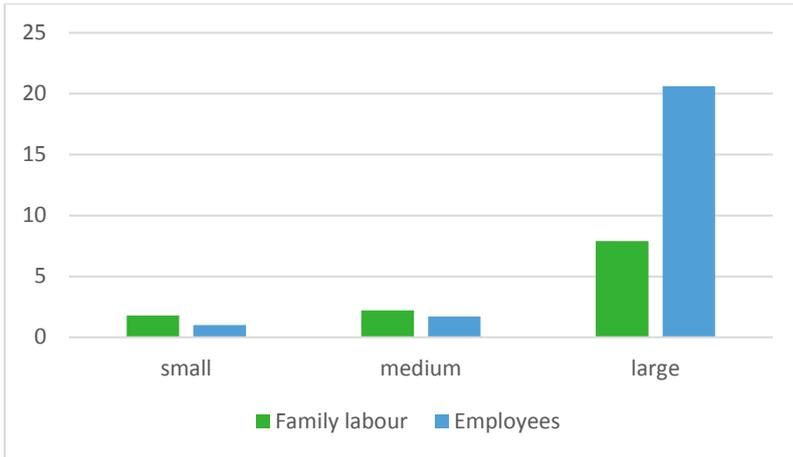
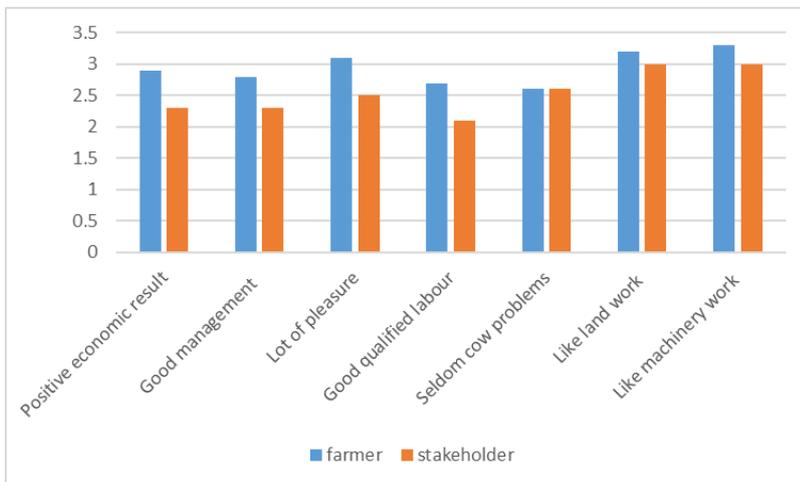


Figure 2a: Number of dairy cows and total area (ha)



**Figure 2b:** Family labour and employees at small, medium and large farms

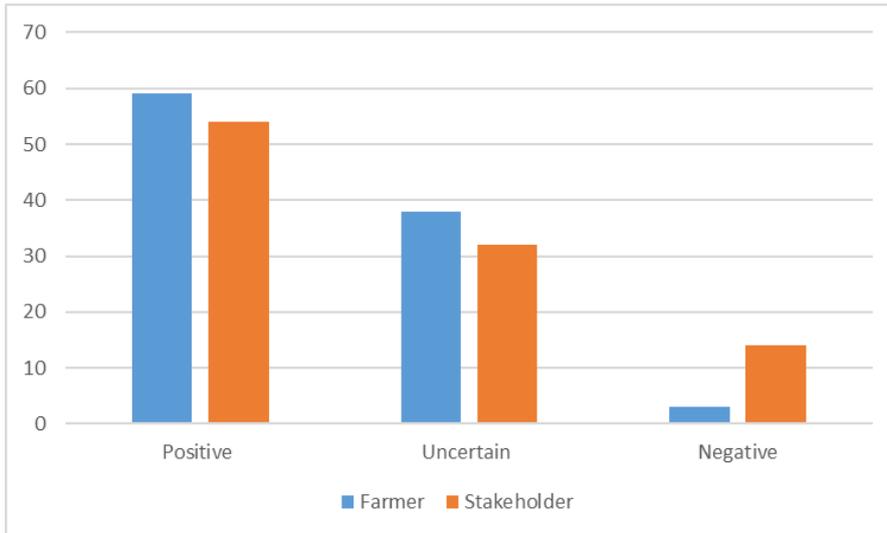
84% of the interviewed farmers had a successor.



**Figure 3:** score for satisfaction with current situation of the dairy farm (1 =do not agree at all, 5 = fully agree)

In general farmers are more positive about the current situation of their farm than stakeholders think farmers are. The higher the score, the higher the satisfaction. Farmers of larger farms are more satisfied than farmers of small and medium farms are, especially for the economic results.

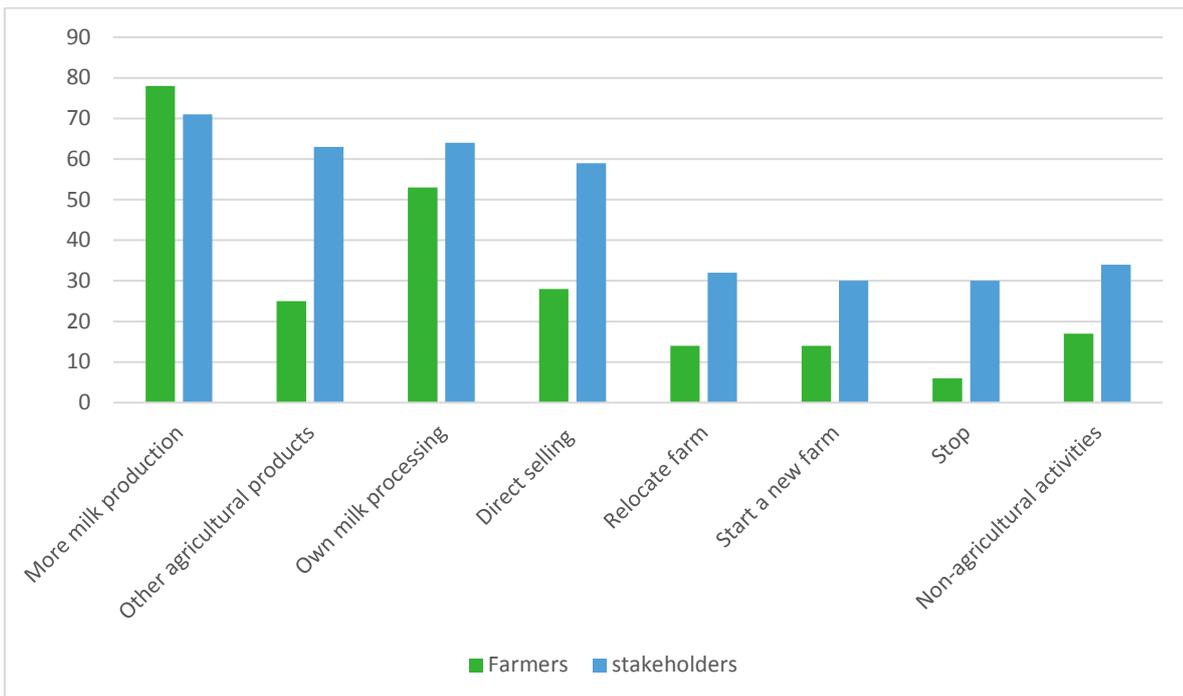
Another conclusion that can be drawn is that cow problems and qualified labour are more a problem. Machinery work and land work seems to be the most likely to be done.



**Figure 4:** Opinion about the future of your dairy farm (% of group)

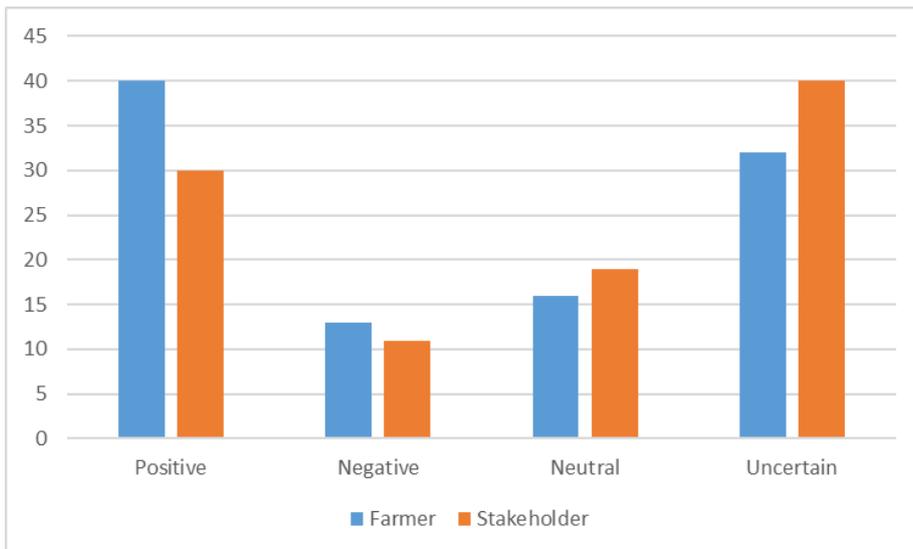
Almost 60% of the farmers is positive about the future of their farm, and only 3% is negative. Stakeholders are less optimistic and more negative about the future of dairy farms (14%).

31 farmers have answered the question if farmers are satisfied about the last 5 years. 61% is satisfied about the past, and 16% is not satisfied. 54% think a lot of farms will stop, and 34% disagrees with that.



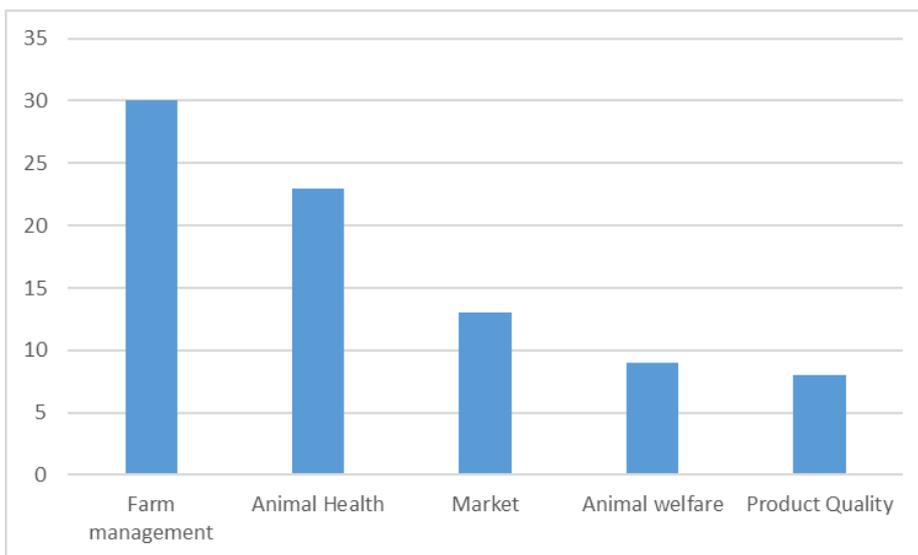
**Figure 5:** Focus for the development of dairy farms in future (% , more answers possible)

78% of the farmers is planning to expand their dairy production, and 53% will develop their own milk processing. This is according to the opinion of the stakeholders. However, the stakeholders think that farmers will expand more other agricultural production and direct selling of products than farmers think. Relocating farms, starting new farms or stopping with farmers will happen more in future from point of view from stakeholders, compared with farmers.



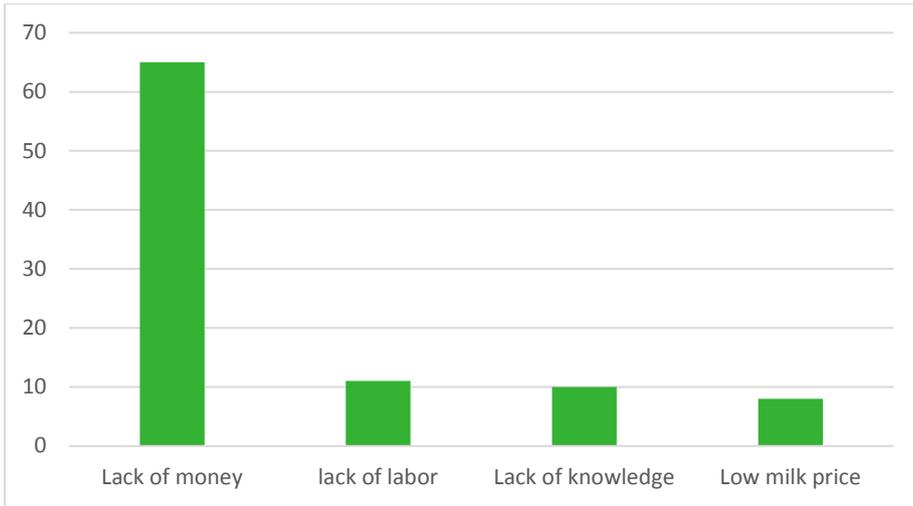
**Figure 6:** Expectations with regard to the milk price in the coming five years

Farmers are more positive about the milk price in the future than the stakeholders. There are differences between stakeholders and farmers. The group of larger farms are more negative about the milk price in the future than the smaller farmers.



**Figure 7** Priorities for farm development in future (% mentioned)

The most important priority for farm development in the future is farm management, as higher production level, better labour etc. The second priority mentioned is improving animal health. Market issues are mentioned as third priority, such as better price for milk or developing own markets. Animal welfare (better housing) and product quality have a lower priority.



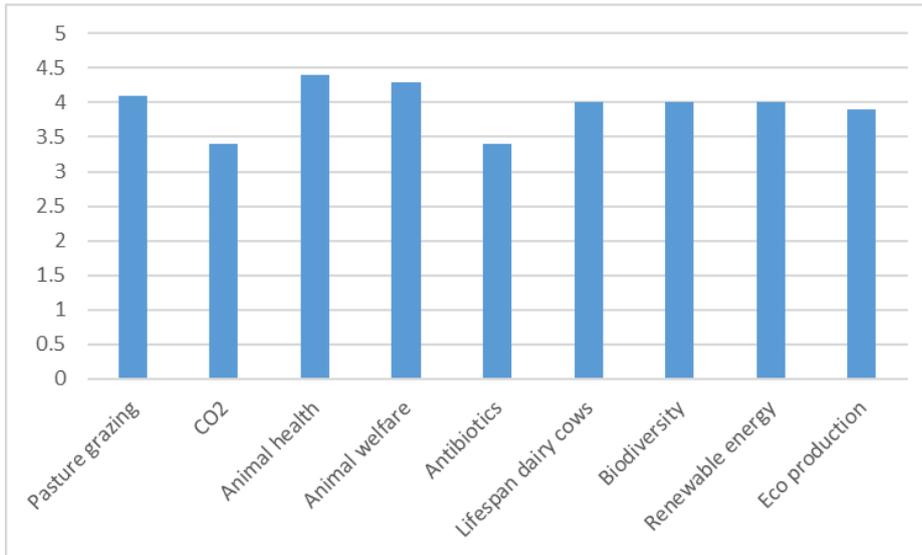
**Figure 8** Blockades to develop profitable dairy farming

An open question about the blockades for development of dairy farms showed that 65% mentioned lack of money. Far behind 11% mentioned lack of labour, 10% lack of knowledge and 8% the low milk price.



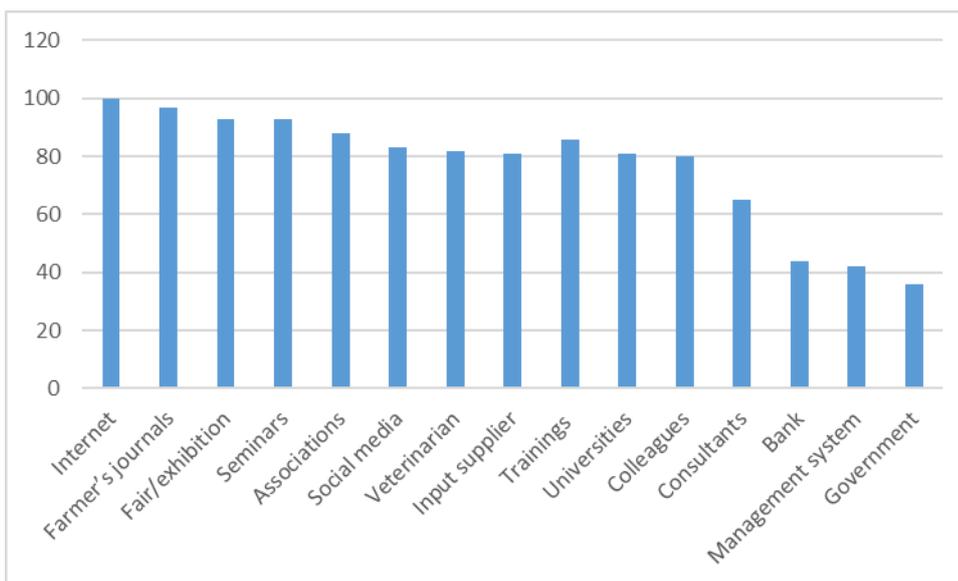
**Figure 9:** Availability of resources: percentage of total number of respondents who found it difficult to obtain

Qualified labour and European subsidies seem to be the most difficult to obtain. Especially dairy farmers find it hard to get qualified labour. Commercial credit is the next barrier. Land to buy or to rent and advice is a bit easier to obtain. Knowledge regarding dairy farming is for most farmers not difficult.



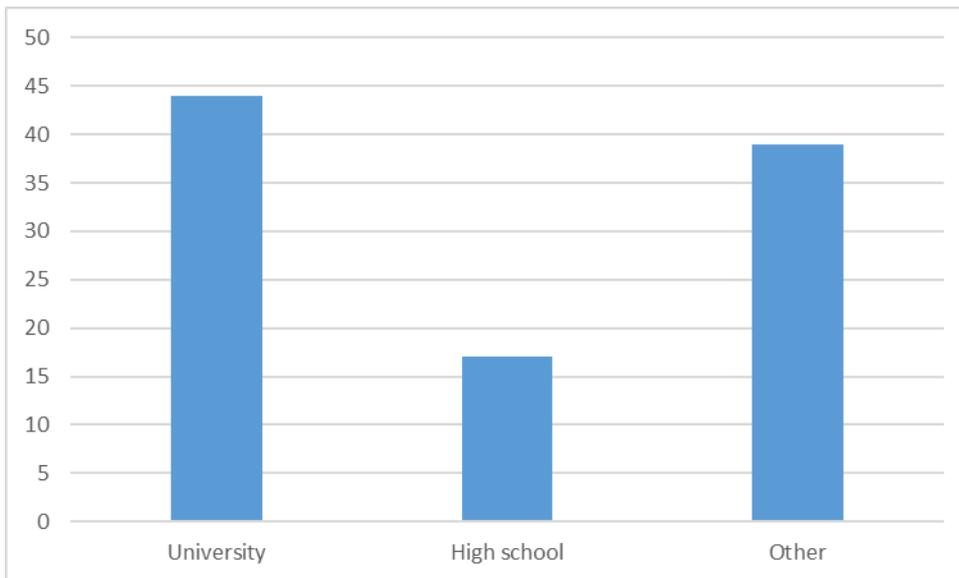
**Figure 10:** Average score on importance of societal issues in future (farmers and stakeholders, 1 = not important at all, 5 = very important)

Most important are grazing, animal health and animal welfare, followed by lifespan of the cows, biodiversity, renewable energy and eco production. Antibiotics and ammonia and greenhouse gases are of less importance. In general, a high score has been given to the societal issues.



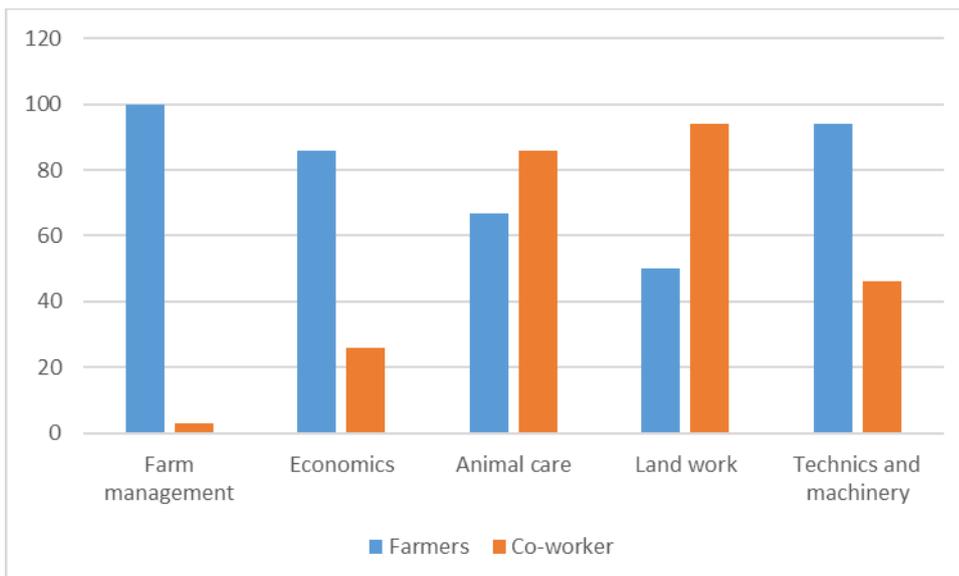
**Figure 11:** Important sources of information of farmers (%)

On top of the sources of information are the farmer's journals and internet. The second group consists of seminars, fairs. The third group consists of farmers associations, trainings and courses, the social media, the veterinarian, input supplier, universities and colleagues. The group with the lowest score consists of accountants and banks, government and management information systems. There are differences between the farmers and the stakeholders as the stakeholders in general have a higher score and for them colleagues and other individual advisors have a higher score.



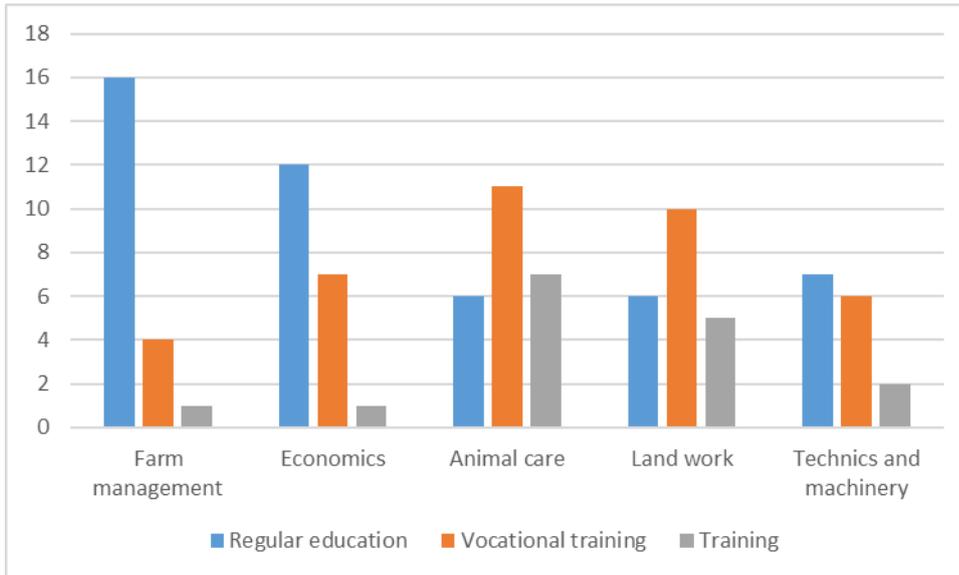
**Figure 12:** education of farmers

On average 44% of the farmers have an university education. In the group of farmers with a large farm 70% has a university education.



**Figure 13:** skills mentioned to improve by farmers and co-workers (%)

Animal care seems to be the most important skill to be educated, followed by farm management, land work and economics. In general, regular education is most important, but still there is a strong need for vocational training. The more 'theoretical' skills should be educated by regular education, and land work and animal care by vocational training.



**Figure 14:** What type of education is considered as best for the different skills?

### Conclusion

In general, farmers are positive about the current situation of their farm, esp. farmers of larger farms. Almost 60% of the farmers is positive about the future of their farm. Farmers experience problems with cow health and qualified labour. It seems that the interviewed dairy farmers are more 'land' farmers than 'cow' farmers, as they like the machinery work and land work.

Almost 80% of the farmers is planning to expand their dairy production, and more than 50% will develop their own milk processing.

Farm management and animal health are mentioned to be very important to improve in future. Lack of money is the greatest barrier for farm development. European funds and qualified labour seems to be very difficult to obtain.

Farm management, economics, machinery, and technics are important skills that need to be improved. For the co-workers farmers think that animal care and land work should be improved. The more 'theoretical' skills should be educated by regular education, as land work and animal care by vocational training.

In general, the group of non-farmers (stakeholders) are more critical about future of dairy farming. They are less positive about the milk price in future. As they are more specialised in giving advice they think that availability of land, money is more a problem and knowledge, and access to EU funds is less a problem.

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