



Some results from the Farmer Consumer Partnership project

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Farmer Consumer Partnership project (CORE-FCP)

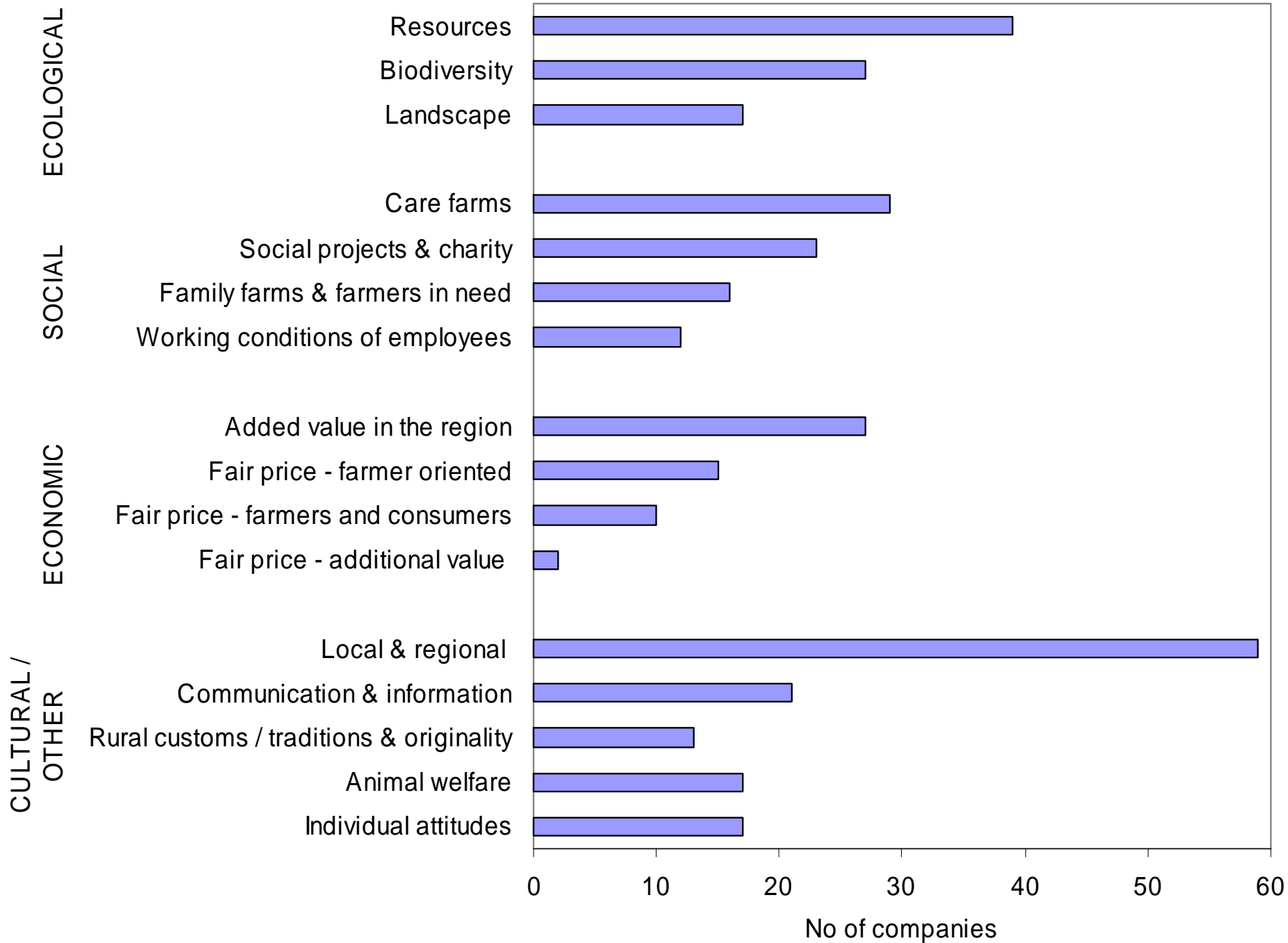
- Look for innovative generic communication arguments that can strengthen the link between producers and consumers in the European organic sector
- 5 countries AT, CH, DE, IT, UK



Project Objectives

- Identify Organic Plus values (more than EU organic regulations)
- What was used by more than 100 SME companies on websites and leaflets
- Testing of the most promising communication arguments with consumers (Different methods)
- Recommendations





Generic arguments tested

Protection of Biodiversity	Protection of the diversity of wild plant and animal varieties on the farms	Protection of traditional plant varieties and traditional animal breeds
Animal Welfare	When the animals are transported to the slaughterhouse, they are accompanied and looked after by a person they know in order to reduce unnecessary stress.	Animal husbandry according to the animals' physical, physiological and behavioural Needs
Regional Production	Using regional supply chains to reduce food miles	Support of the local economy
Fair prices	Of the total price for every litre of milk, five cents are additionally paid to local Farmers	The farmers get fair prices that allows them to secure their livelihood and future
Care farms	Integration and participation of disabled people in the work place	Providing support and work for disadvantaged young people and former convicts
Social	Support for family farms	Good working conditions for farm workers
Cultural features	Revival of traditional artisan processing methods	Preservation of the local cultural landscape

Information-Display-Matrix (1200 consumers, May/June 2008)

Organic milk

Organic milk F Organic milk C Organic milk A Organic milk G Organic milk E Organic milk D Organic milk B

Fair prices Fair prices for farmers						
Price Product price						
Regional production						
Protection of biodiversity						
Social aspects of production						
Culture Preservation of cultural features						
Animal welfare						
Care Farming Support of disadvantaged people						

Information

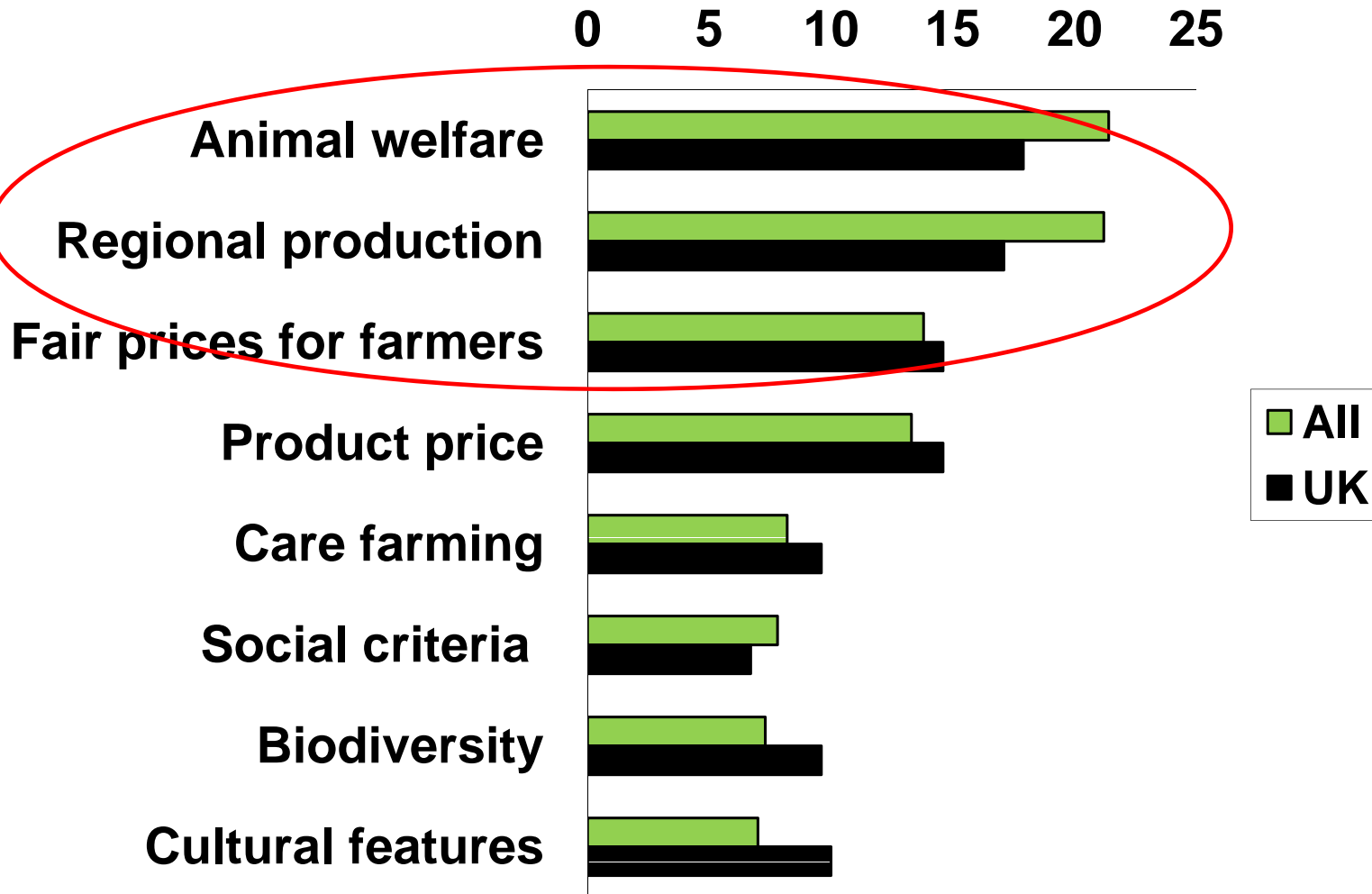
Fair prices for farmers, C:

The farmers get a fair price that allows them to secure their livelihood and future

interesting? close

By clicking on the empty fields you can see the information for the various products. Once decided for a product please click on the header of the selected product.

Most important attributes by First accessions (%)



Focus groups

- 3 per country in April 2009 (1 with regular)
- Animal welfare < regional, followed < fair price
- Most participants disliked
 - ◆ Emotional touch (hearts) and cartoon pictures
 - ◆ Lack of relevant info



Willingness to pay

- 80 consumers per country
- Nov 2009
- 6 choice sets
 - with and without OrganicPlus arguments



Results

- Many organic companies use arguments not covered by standards in communication
- Consumers are most interested in
 - ◆ ‘regional/ local production’
 - ◆ ‘animal welfare’
 - ◆ ‘fair prices to farmers’

Local and regional production

Local/regional supply and markets

- Environmental, economic and cultural aspects

- Not really covered in in any organic standards

PGI/PDO



- New labelling requirements
 - ◆ EU agriculture or
 - ◆ Country code

Concern

Organic standards

What we learned about “local”

- **Specific labelling of the place of production**
 - ◆ .e.g. from Berkshire (or farm address) rather than more abstract terms “regional product”
 - ◆ Allows consumer to judge themselves how local it is
 - ◆ Concepts of ‘local/regional’ vary between consumers and product categories
- **Potential confusion with other labels**

Impact on animals

Animal health and welfare is enhanced

- **Potential conflicts with other goals**
- **Defining animal welfare?**
 - ◆ Wellbeing in the sense of health and welfare
 - ◆ Animals rights
- **Emphasis on principles in the EU regulation**
- **Some coverage in rules**
- **Welfare certification protocols**
 - ◆ e.g. Freedom food
 - ◆ Welfare quality project

Concern

Organic standards

For example



***Products:* Meat**

***Activities:* Animals are slaughtered on the farm or at the small local abattoir nearby to reduce the transport distance. Slaughter is as quick and painless as possible.**

***Claims:* 'Well Hung Meat company'; Tasty, organic and produced to the highest standards of animal welfare**

What we learned about animal welfare arguments

- Consumers like animal welfare arguments and associate organic with high animal welfare
- Several issues already in standards
 - ◆ Free range
 - ◆ Access to pasture
- Difficult to justify additional premiums
- Difficult to identify clear organicPlus arguments that can be verified

Economic impact & fairness

Fair and equitable financial returns for all operators

Products available and affordable to consumer

- Not addressed directly in any organic standard



- Fairtrade standards
- Organic ethical trade pilot schemes

For example

Products: Dairy

Activities: A fair price

for local farmers, ensuring their
existence and future

Claims: 'Fair prices for our dairy

farmers: 5 cents directly; activ
for the domestic organic farmers
as fair prices ensure the future.



Fair price arguments

- **Willingness to pay only in Germany and Switzerland**
 - ◆ Where argument has already been used for several years
- **Consumers in UK focus groups clearly disliked thinking about farmer welfare**
- **Appears product specific**
 - ◆ Might work for dairy but not for eggs
 - ◆ Claims need to be verifiable

Final thoughts

- EU regulation does not cover several areas that are of concern to producers and consumers alike
- Differences between what farmers like to say and what consumers care about
- Efforts for “additional claim” should be well targeted
 - ◆ Areas of clear difference
 - ◆ That interest the consumer
 - ◆ Where claims can be verified
- Focus effort on communicating core concept of organic

Acknowledgements and further information

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The UK member of this network is DEFRA

Further information at <http://orgprints.org/17852/>