

Farmer attitude towards advisory services in Sweden

BACKGROUND

Advisory services in agriculture have been and will probably continue to be a major contributor in the realisation of a sustainable development, both on farm and societal level. Being an intermediary in the knowledge system, advisors should not only provide scientific and relevant knowledge, but also tailor their activities to the farmers' needs.

AIM

To understand and highlight how well the advisory services fulfil the farmers needs and requirements.

CONCLUSIONS

- Most farmers are predominantly satisfied with the services the advisory services offer
- Advisors are highly valued as a source of knowledge and inspiration
- Advisory services have the most impact on the production side of the farming business
- Clear messages and honesty are the most valued traits among advisors
- The main reason when farmers choose not to use advisors is the expense.

METHOD

To be able to address these issues we decided to map the overall attitudes among farmers towards advisory services using a questionnaire.

To do this we decided to do a survey among farmers from all over Sweden across production types. The questionnaire was sent out to 2000 farmers, randomly chosen and distributed across different types of production.

The questionnaire consisted of 45 statements that the respondent was asked to evaluate on a 1-7 Likert scale.

Table 1. Number of responses for different types of production (study conducted Jan - Feb 2019)

	Poultry	Dairy	Beef	Pigs	Sheep	Arable	Total
Sent Out	100	405	700	102	100	601	2008
Sent back	32	128	233	38	25	247	700
Blank	8	25	45	1	5	49	132
Response rate	24,0%	25,4%	26,9%	36,3%	20,0%	32,9%	28,3%

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Among the farmers that answered the questionnaire 12 % do not use advisory services. Approximately one third answered that their use of advisory services will increase in the coming 10 years.

Table 2. Use of advisory services

Question	Answer	
		Percent of total
How has your usage of advisory services changed the past 10 years?	Increased	26,9%
	Decreased	19,7%
	No change	51,4%
How do you perceive your usage of advisory services will change in the coming 10 years?	Increase	33,6%
	Decrease	12,8%
	No change	37,6%
How well do the advisory services meet your needs?	Satisfactory	58,5%
	Unsatisfactory	10,9%

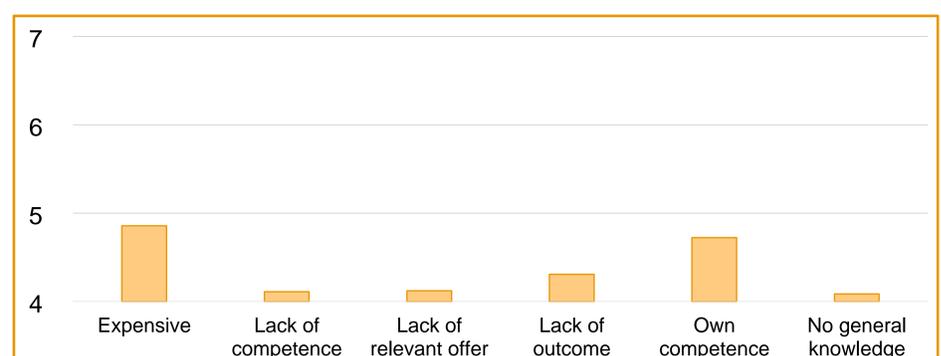


Figure 1. What is the reason when farmers choose not to use advisors?

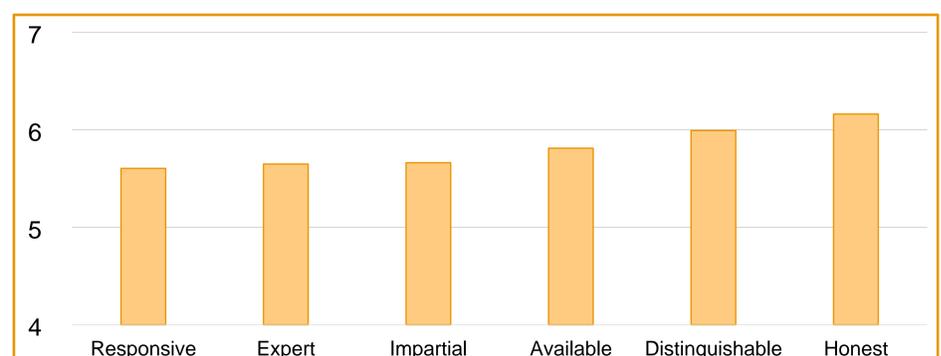


Figure 2. What characteristics do the farmers request from the advisors?

Advisors is the second, after farming industry magazines, most important source of knowledge and inspiration.

Local farmers' meetings and newsletters are also important.

The farmers see advisory services as a more important contributor to profitability and development in the case of production compared to the development of leadership and strategy.