

## Work satisfaction as a component of social sustainability – results from Austrian dairy farmers

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Farmers are often affected by mental health issues. Work satisfaction is of high importance also in the broader context of social sustainability and, as recognised in the concept of One Welfare, interconnected with animal welfare. We hypothesized that farmers in innovative farming systems would show higher work satisfaction than those in reference systems.

116 dairy farmers from 50 family-run farms, 25 with cow-calf contact rearing (CCC, Innovative) and 25 with early separation (Reference) filled in a questionnaire with 5 themes on work/life satisfaction as well as physical and mental load (**PML**). Five-point or, for general life satisfaction, 11-point Likert scales were used wherein higher values correspond to higher satisfaction or, for PML, higher load.

Principal Component Analysis revealed one **factor** for each theme. 85% of farmers were (very) satisfied (score  $\geq 4$ ) with their **profession**, 55% with their **workplace** and 83% with their **life in general**; no person was (very) unsatisfied (score  $\leq 2$ ) with those themes. **PML** was reported to be (very) high (score  $\geq 4$ ) by 20%. 33% were (very) satisfied with their **free time**, while 28% were (very) unsatisfied.

To test for system differences, linear regression models were calculated including the independent variables farming system, gender, organic status, number of calves and of cows.

Farmers on CCC farms assessed their **PML** lower (regression coefficient  $B=-0.278$ ,  $p=0.044$ ), but other themes were unaffected. Number of calves was negatively associated with **free time** ( $B=-0.44$ ,  $p=0.011$ ) and **workplace satisfaction** ( $B=-0.02$ ,  $p=0.013$ ).

Our hypothesis was confirmed partly. The data revealed quite high satisfaction with life as farmer and life in general despite dissatisfaction with free time and high PML in some farmers in our sample. A bias due to convenience sampling can be expected. The data will be used for an integrated farm-to-fork evaluation considering animal welfare, social, ecological and economic sustainability in the scope of the project "COWLEARNING" (funded by FWF CM 400B).