



## Some results from the Farmer Consumer Partnership project

Susanne Padel



# Outline


- Introduction
- OrganicPlus values/arguments
- Testing arguments with consumers
  - Preferences and willingness to pay
- Conclusions

# Farmer Consumer Partnership project (CORE-FCP)

- Develop 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) 
- Testing of the most promising communication arguments with different methods
  - IDM, Focus groups, Sales experiments
- Recommendations

# Economic impact

**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

# Local and regional production

**Local/regional  
supply and  
markets**

- **Limited provision in any standard**

**PGI/PDO**



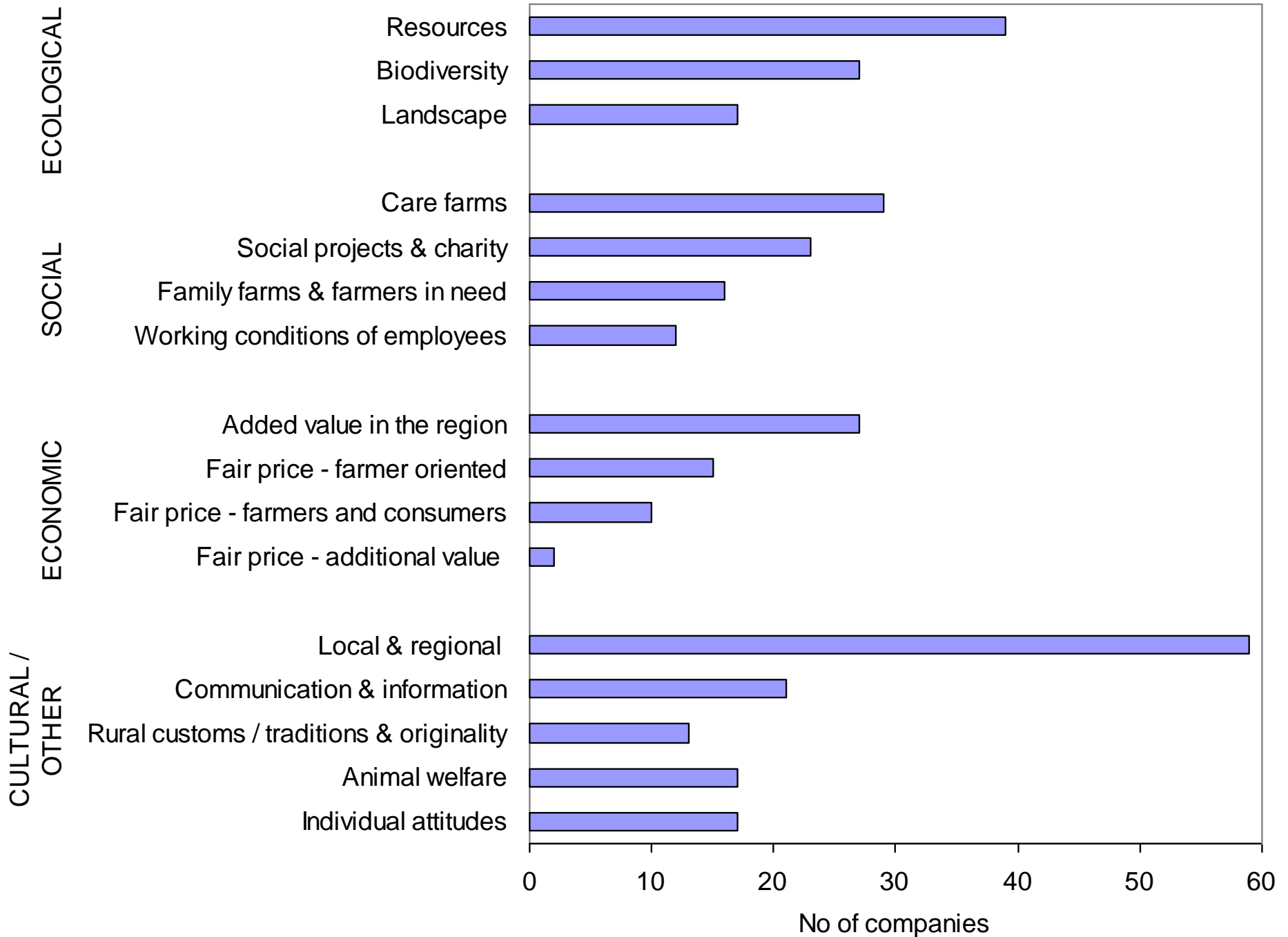
- **New labelling requirements**
  - EU agriculture or**
  - Country code**

- **Environmental, economic and cultural aspects**
- **Difficult to categorise**

# Impact on animals

**Animal health and welfare is enhanced**

- Potential conflicts with other goals
- Define animal welfare?
  - Wellbeing in the sense of health and welfare
  - Animals rights
- EU some provision
- Stronger emphasis on principles in the new regulation
- Welfare certification protocols
  - e.g Freedom food
  - Welfare quality project





# 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.





**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

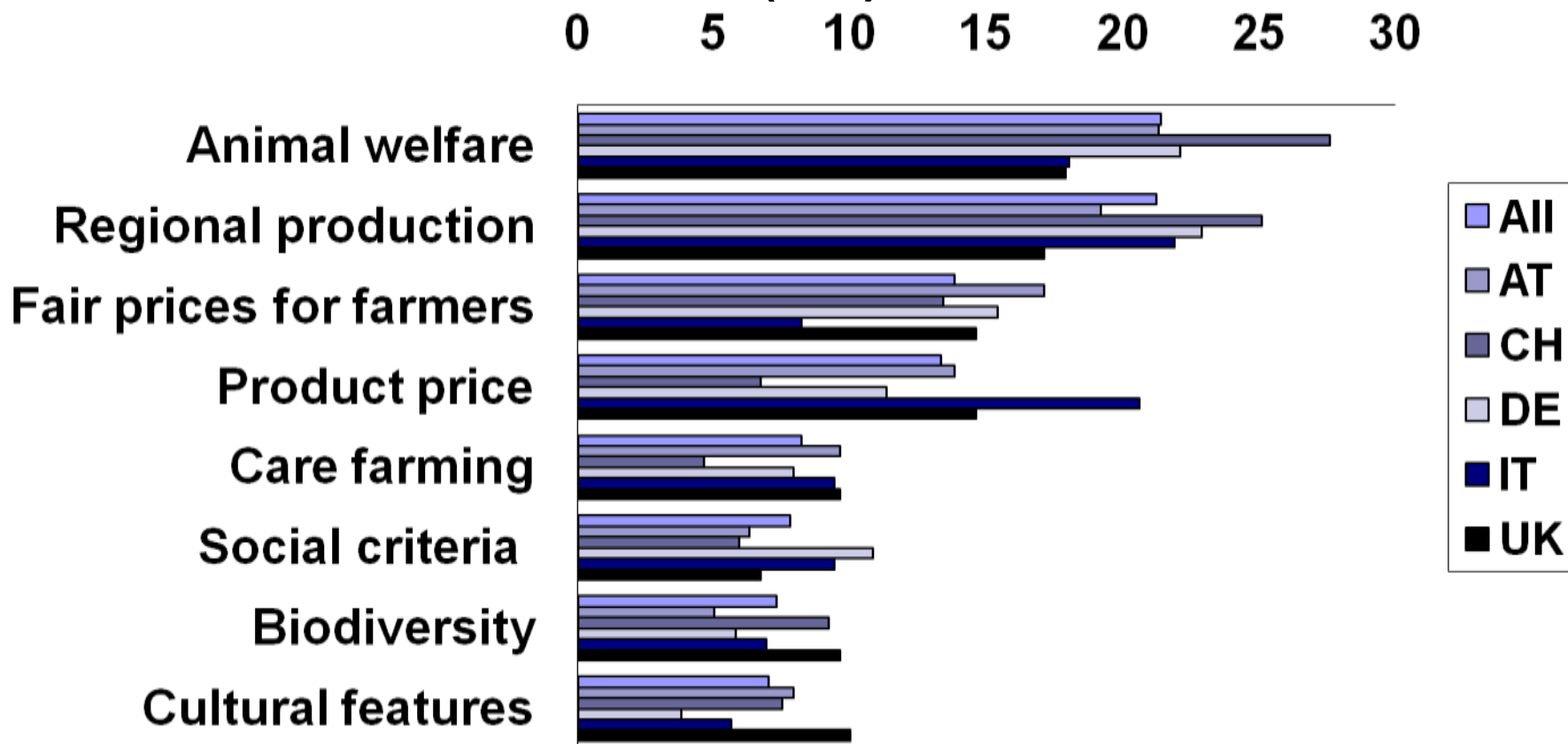
Good working conditions for farm workers

**Cultural features**

Revival of traditional artisan processing methods

Preservation of the local cultural landscape

# Most important attributes by First accessions (%)



# Focus groups

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



# Willingness to pay (Nov 2009)

- 80 consumers per country
- 6 choice sets
  - with and without OrganicPlus arguments
- Products with organicPlus were preferred
  - “from the respective region” preferred in all countries
  - except AT “highest animal welfare standards”
  - “fair prices” only relevant in DE, CH



# Conclusions

- Many organic companies use arguments not covered by standards in communication
- Consumers are interested in
  - 'regional production'
  - 'fair prices to farmers'
  - 'animal welfare'

# Regional production

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

# Animal welfare

- Consumers associate organic with high animal welfare
  - Difficult to justify additional premiums
  - Difficult to identify clear organicPlus arguments (standards must clearly differ from EU organic) that can be verified
- Important to explore as part of the general organic message



# 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

# Fair price arguments

- Willingness to pay only in DE/CH
  - Arguments already longer in use
- Consumers in focus groups clearly disliked thinking about farmer welfare
- Appears product specific (dairy but not eggs)

# 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; actively for the domestic organic farmers as fair prices ensure the future.



# Final thoughts

- **Some** consumers appear willing to pay for **some** 'ethical attributes' of organic products
  - Difference between regular and occasional consumers
  - All three most promising areas (regional, animal welfare, fairness) are not clearly defined
  - What verifiable claims can be made?

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- Further information at <http://fcp.coreportal.org/>