

How can we better support the future in dairy farmers from the point of view of the stakeholders ?

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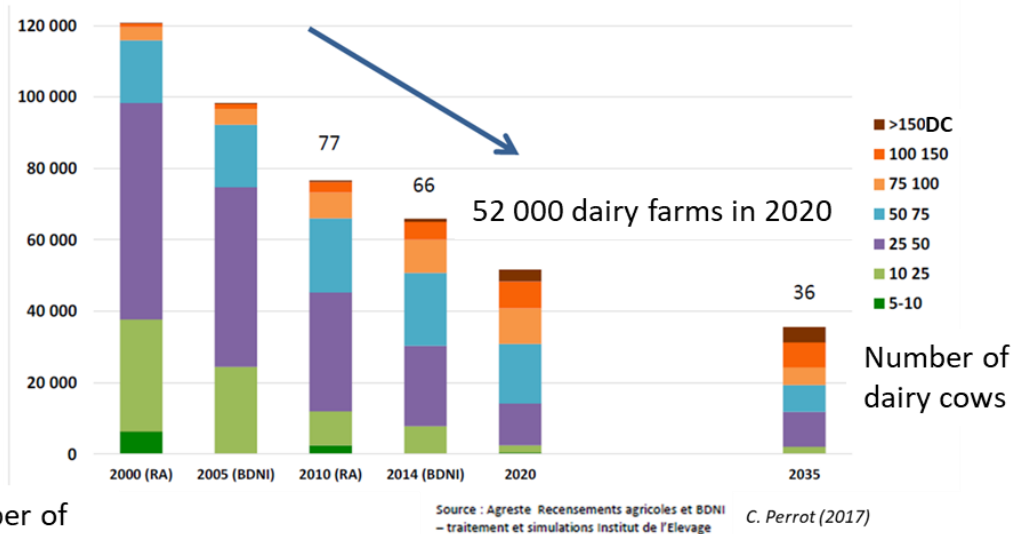
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Introduction French dairy farming: fewer but larger

Number of dairy farms and herd size in France



Number of dairy farms

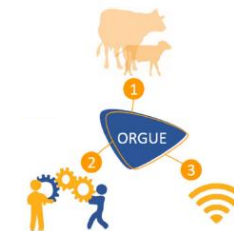
Between 1995 and 2015: - 56% number of dairy farms

Between 2000 and 2010: + 40% size of dairy herd

Depeyrot (2017), Perrot et al (2013)

Increase of agricultural holding based on family and non-family partnerships

Introduction **Orgue Project**



➔ **How can we better support the farmers of large herd? Now & in the future?**

What kind of agricultural holding?

Type 1



Individual / couple with
high level of labor
productivity

<2 LU*

Type 2



Individual / couple
manager with
employees

>3 LU incl 2 employees

Type 3



Several partners (family
or not)

>3 LU with or without employees

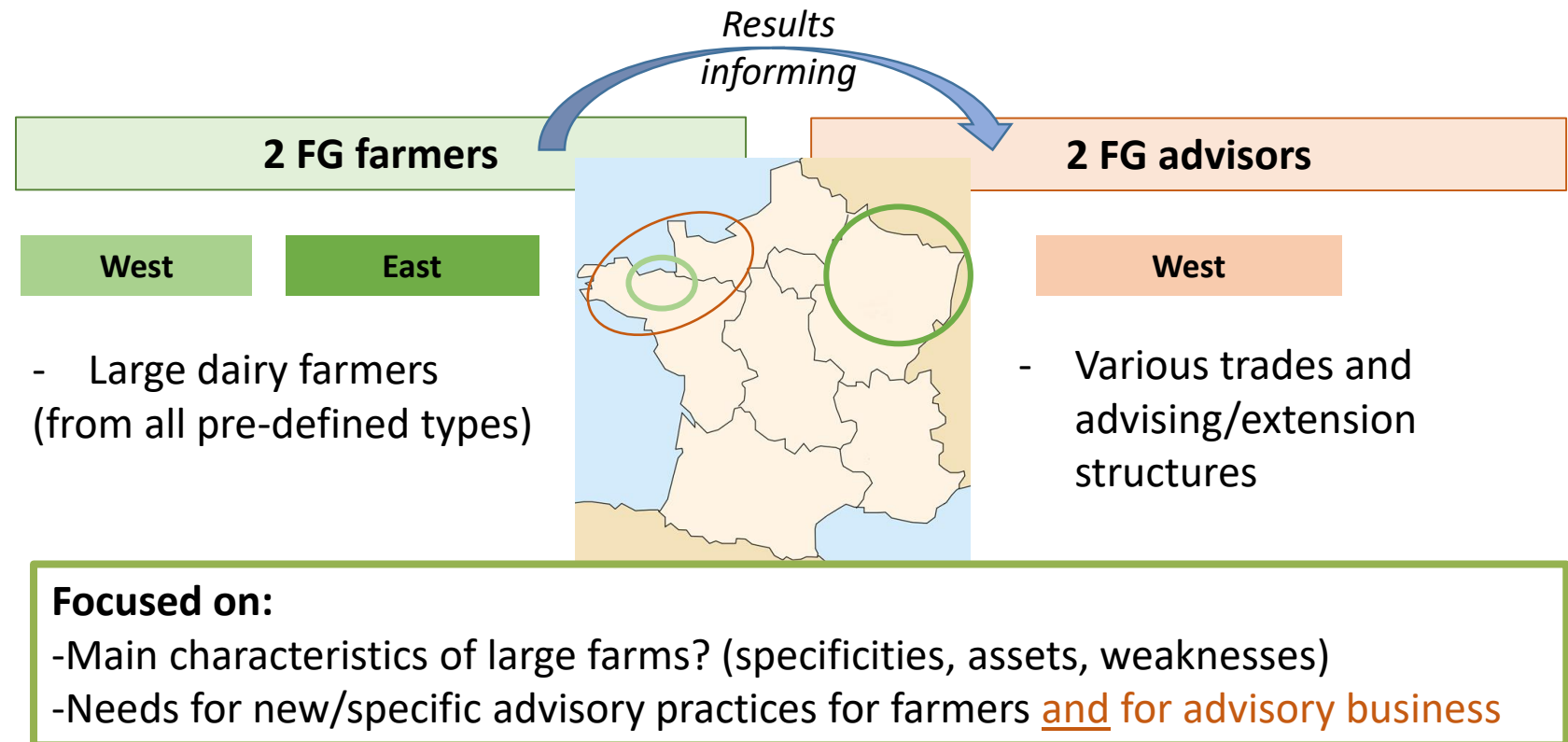
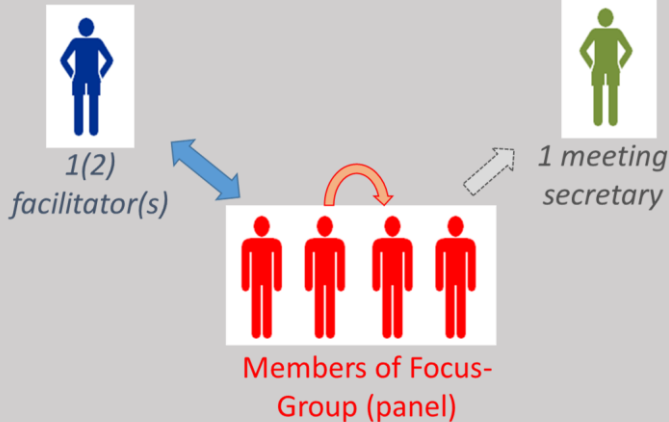
*Labour Unit

Method: Prospective thinking on farming support

Aim:

- Identify farmers' needs
- Identify advisors' needs

Focus group (FG):
method to collect perceptions, exchange and think on specific topic with a selected panel



Results: panel description



2017 2 FG farmers

West

n=12

East

n=14

Type 1



4

Type 3



8

Type 2



6

Type 3



8

2017-18 2 FG advisors

West

n=18

West

n=10

High diversity of advising services and trades

- Banks
- Veterinarian
- Milk recording
- Accountant
- Feedstuff / input sales
- Public extension
- Strategy and private consulting
- National social insurance for agricultural workers

Results: Main characteristics

Farmers' perceptions

In order of importance

- 
- 1. Working organisation**
 - 2. Human relationships, workforce management**
 - 3. Technical & economical steering**
 - 4. Strategic management & skills**
 - 5. Territory & society relations**

Results: Main characteristics

In order of importance



Farmers' perceptions

1. Working organization (W conditions)

- Fixed working schedule + intensive working rate
↗↗ efficiency

(too) Intensive workload

- Easier to be replaced among workforce

Not for type1

Complex & high mental workload

2. Human relationships & workforce management

- Working as a team: sharing satisfactions, risks, worries...

Not so easy to get on and work with ...

- Difficult to manage employees

Advisors' perceptions

Not specific

Difficulties increased by a high productivity level...

- Being a manager can be attractive but requires skills
- Collective decision-making procedure : a **difficulty for support and advice**

Results: Main characteristics

Main characteristics of large farms?

In order of importance



Farmers' perceptions

- 3. Technical & economical steering**
- Trickier LFS steering, ↗ risks ↗ mental workload
 - Precision livestock farming: easier to invest
farmer's eyes needed
 - Livestock management: at herd-scale rather than at individual scale
necessary hindsight
time-consuming

Advisors' perceptions

Overloaded systems

Can be a challenge

Same technical level but a great heterogeneity in economics

Results:

Main characteristics of large farms?

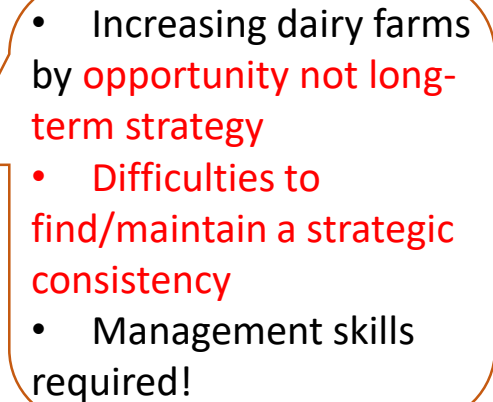
In order of importance

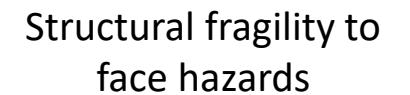
Farmers' perceptions

Advisors' perceptions

- 
1. Working organisation
 2. Human relationships, workforce management
 3. Technical & economical steering
 4. Strategic management & skills

4. **Strategic management & skills**
 - Depend on ratio production/LU
 - ↗ risks due to the size (uncertain context)
 - Economy of scales ??

- 
- Increasing dairy farms by **opportunity not long-term strategy**
 - Difficulties to **find/maintain a strategic consistency**
 - Management skills required!



Structural fragility to face hazards



Farm transmission??

Results:

Main characteristics of large farms?

In order of importance

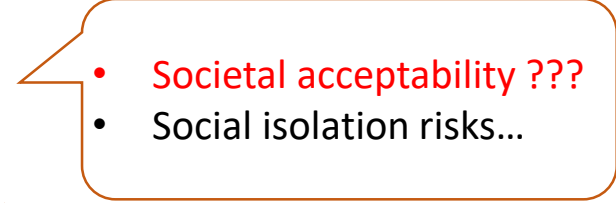
Farmers' perceptions

Advisors' perceptions

- 
1. Working organisation
 2. Human relationships, workforce management
 3. Technical & economical steering
 4. Strategic management & skills
 5. Territory & society relations

5. Territory & society relations

- Not a topic or a worry, but a true question for some areas

- 
- Societal acceptability ???
 - Social isolation risks...



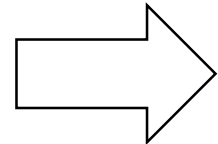
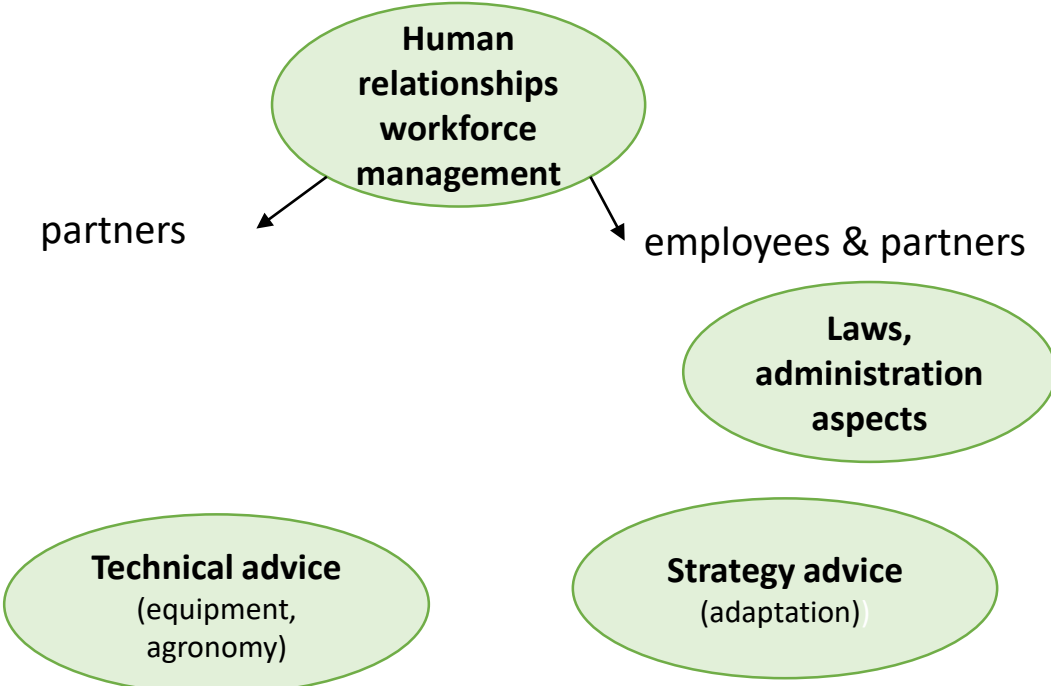
- Environmental impacts??

Results: farmers' needs for advice topics and practices

Topics



Few needs spontaneously expressed
But difficulties to adapt to a changing context



Advising practices

Visits and peer exchanges



West

A close partnership with an advisor



East



“A look from outside”

Results: advisors' needs for advice topics and practices

Topics



How to bring farmers to anticipate, develop a strategy and preventive approach?

Strategic approach

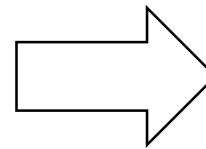
Project management

Specific risks & Preventive approach

Technical & economical references

Work conditions

Human relationships and management



Advising practices

Support with a long-term contract, subscription contract...



Coaching session (for farm partners)



Training sessions for farmers to become « boss »

Farmers' networking, Social (& professional) networking

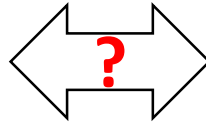


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Conclusions:

Farmers

- Some specific difficulties (human relationships, mental workload, facing hazards...)
- **No particular needs** for advices
 - Except for developing “manager skills”
for very precise technical aspects
- Want peer exchanges (and no advisors...)



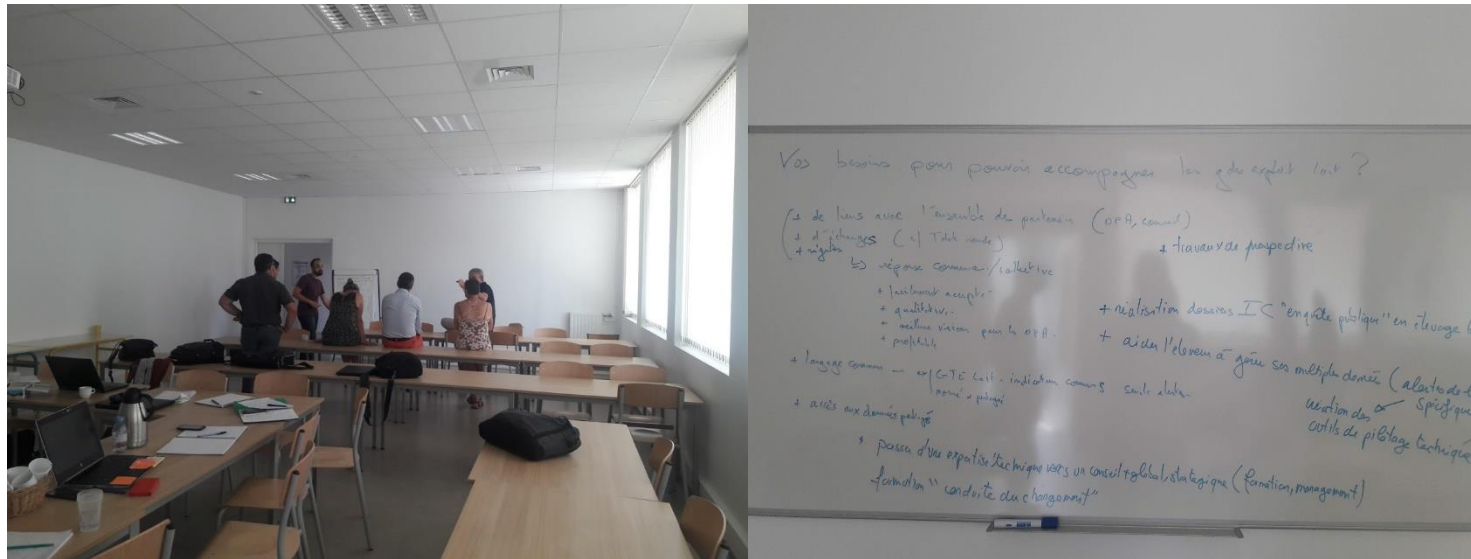
Advisors

- Some specific difficulties (lack of strategy, strategic consistency)
- A need **to change in advising practices** to give an adapted service
 - long-term and preventive approach based on new adapted references
 - linking data from diverse structures
- More competition bwn advising structures



How to change practices and supply new advising approaches when farmers are not ready to invest money in them?

Thank you for your attention



Thank you for all the people involved in this project and the focus groups

Results : strong interest to exchange



2017 2 FG farmers

West

12 farmers

123 dairy cows
1 million litres of milk
157 Ha (incl. 53 Ha crops)

East

14 farmers

150 dairy cows
1.353 million litres of milk
233 Ha (incl. 127 Ha crops)

Type 1



4

Type 3



8

Type 2



6

Type 3



8

2017-18 2 FG advisors

West

18 advisors

West

10 advisors

High diversity of advising services and trades

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