Swedish dairy farmers' and trotting-horse trainers' perceptions of animal welfare inspections

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Background

- In Sweden, like in many other countries, private standards (e.g. quality assurance schemes) have been developed, in addition to the legislation, to guarantee a “good welfare” for the animals involved in certain activities – a way to get a “social license to operate” for the actors/companies.

- Animal owners have to comply with both the governmental legislation and private standards, hence, they will have both official inspections and private audits.

Aim

The aim was to investigate how dairy farmers and trotting horse trainers in Sweden perceive the official animal welfare CAB inspections and the KRAV, Arla and the Swedish Trotting Association's private audits, both separately and in relation to each other, and to identify any factors that potentially influence their perceptions.

Dairy farmers

Official AW control

- AW legislation
- Inspections carried out by the County Administrative Boards (CAB)

Private audits

Arlagården®

- Mandatory if delivering milk to Arla
- Mainly on the same level as the legislation
- Inspections carried out by auditing companies

If organic

- KRAV standard
- Inspections carried out by auditing companies

Trotting-horse trainers

Official AW control

- AW legislation
- County Administrative Boards (CAB)

Private audits

The Trotter Health Standard

- Developed by the Swedish Trotting Association (STA)
- A prerequisite for getting a trainers licence
- Mainly on the same level as the legislation
- Inspections carried out by specially trained employees

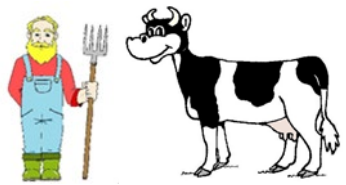
Materials and methods

- Electronic questionnaire
- Trotting-horse trainers and dairy farmers
- The AW legislation, Arlagården®, the organic KRAV standard and the Trotter Health standard

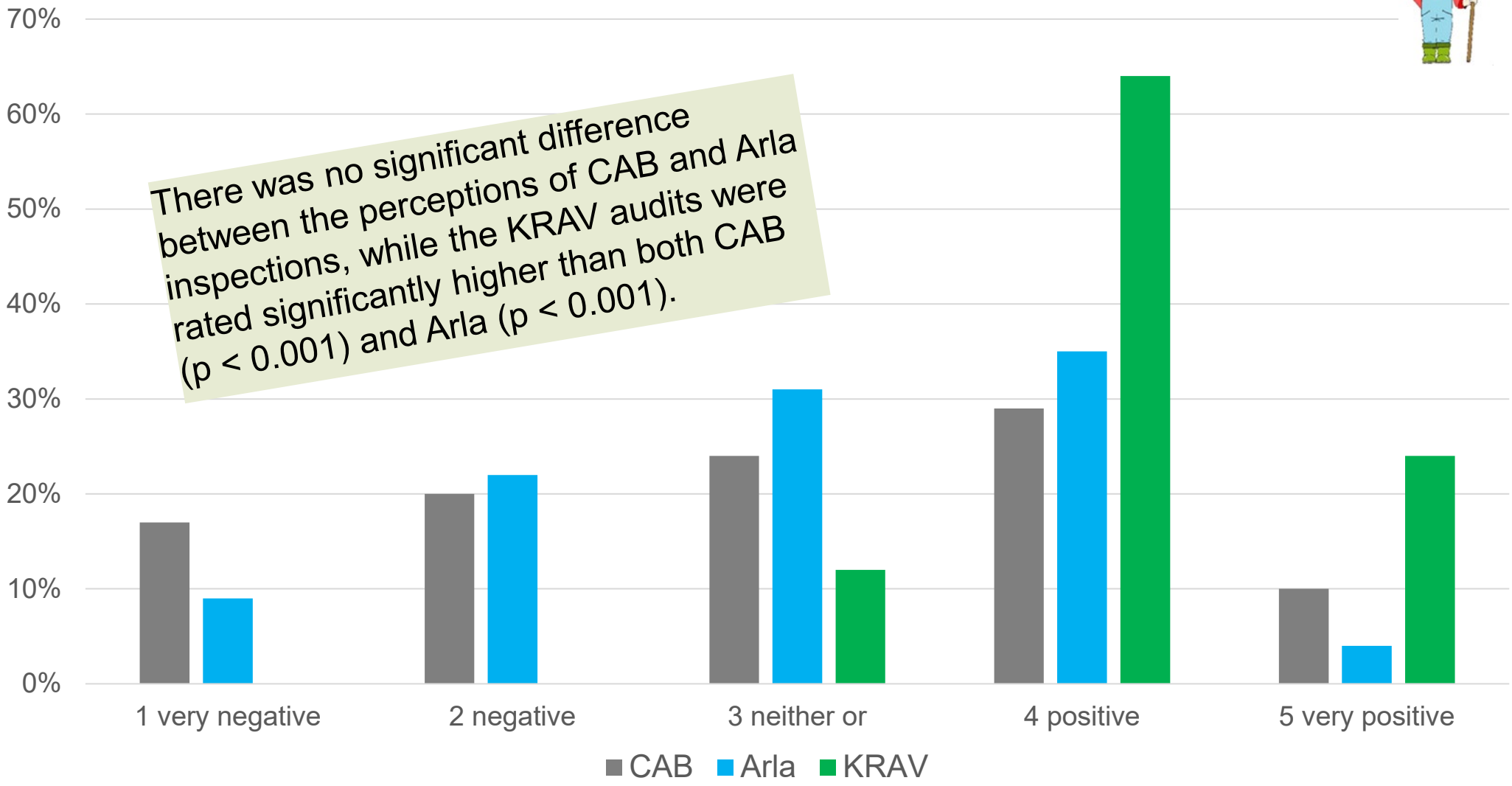
- Respondents: 216 dairy farmers and 396 trotting-horse trainers

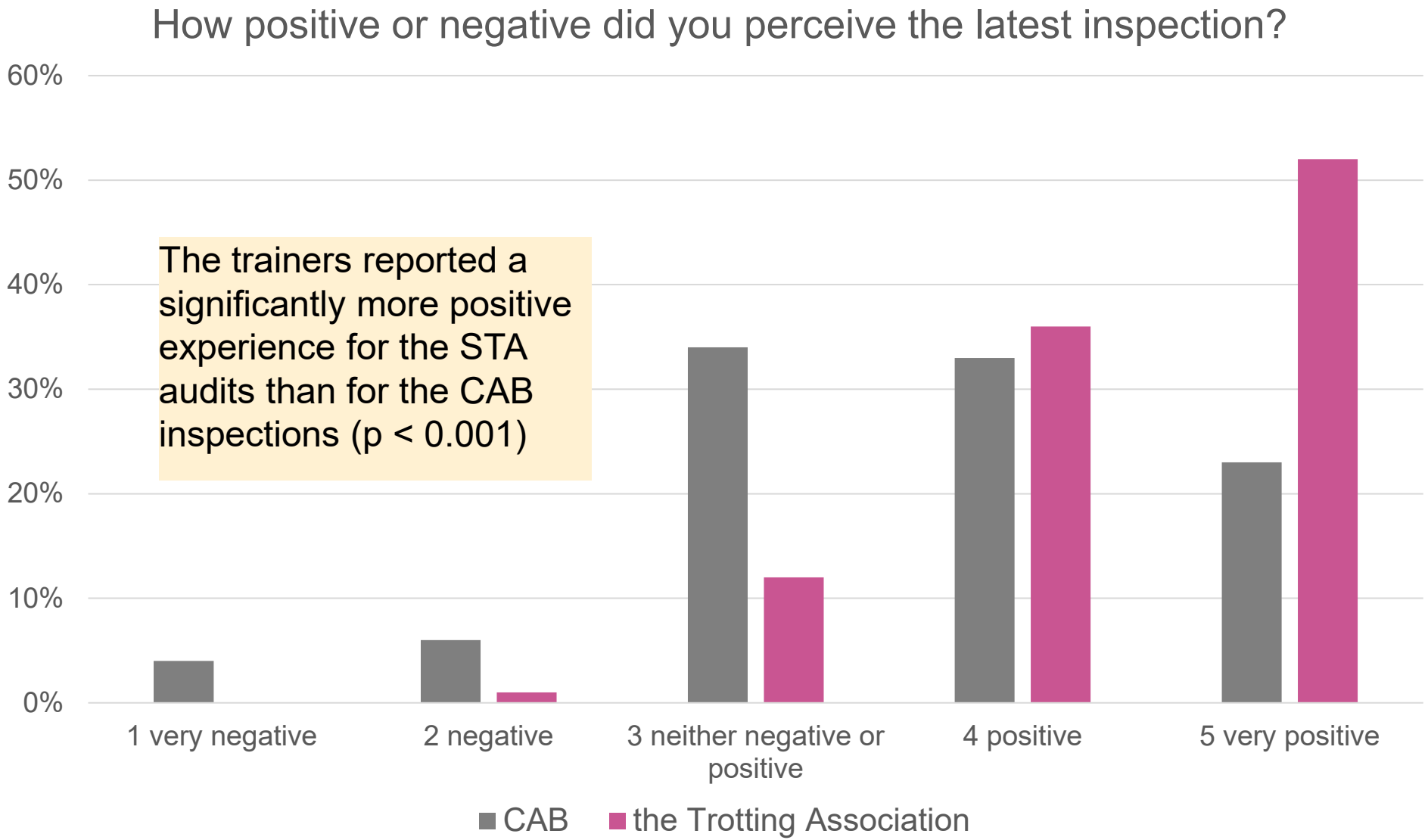
Results
- their view on the latest inspection

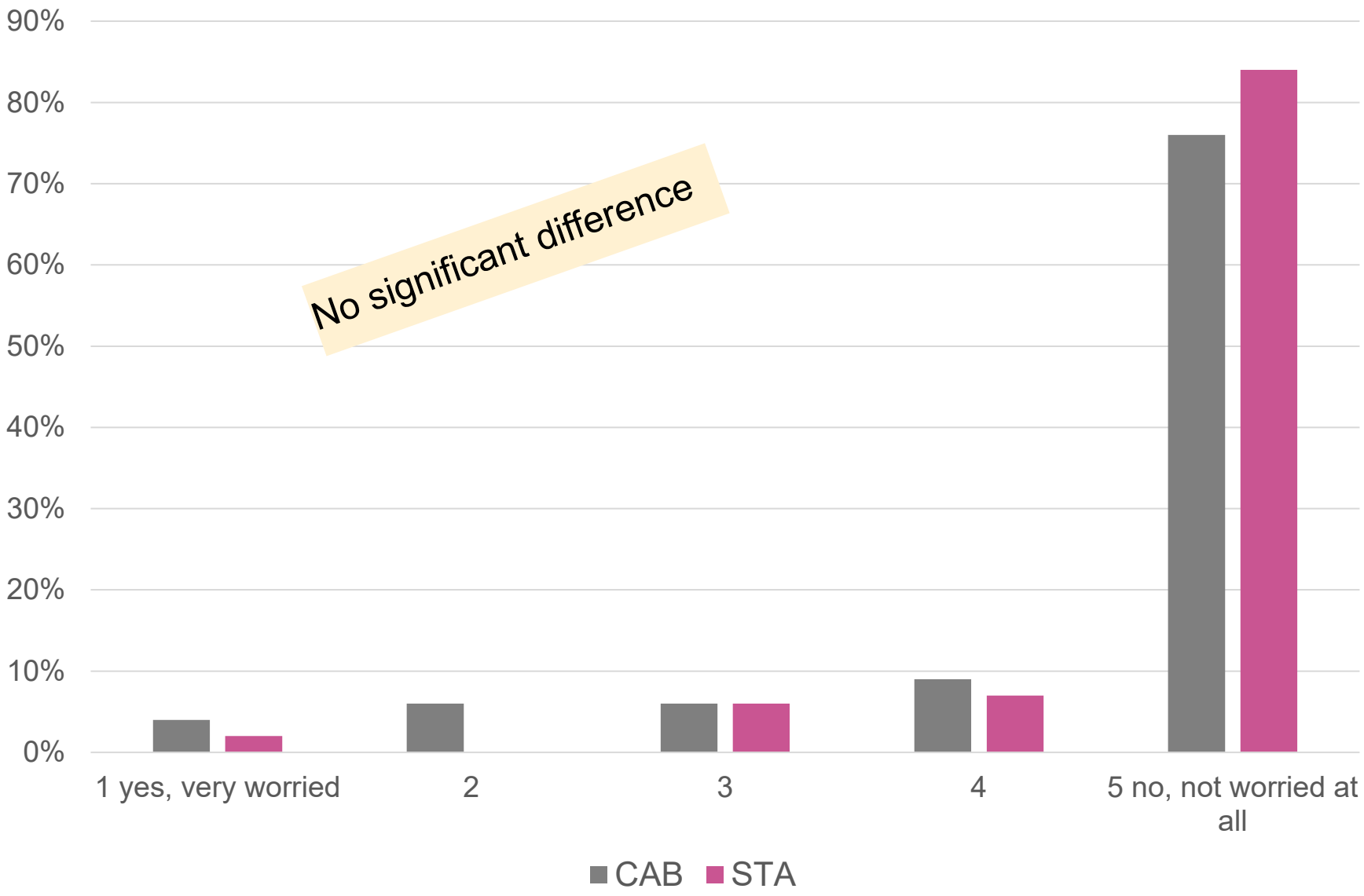
How positive or negative did you perceive the latest inspection?



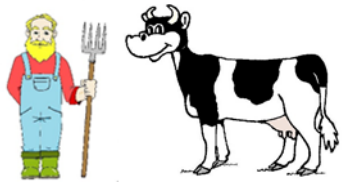
There was no significant difference between the perceptions of CAB and Arla inspections, while the KRAV audits were rated significantly higher than both CAB ($p < 0.001$) and Arla ($p < 0.001$).



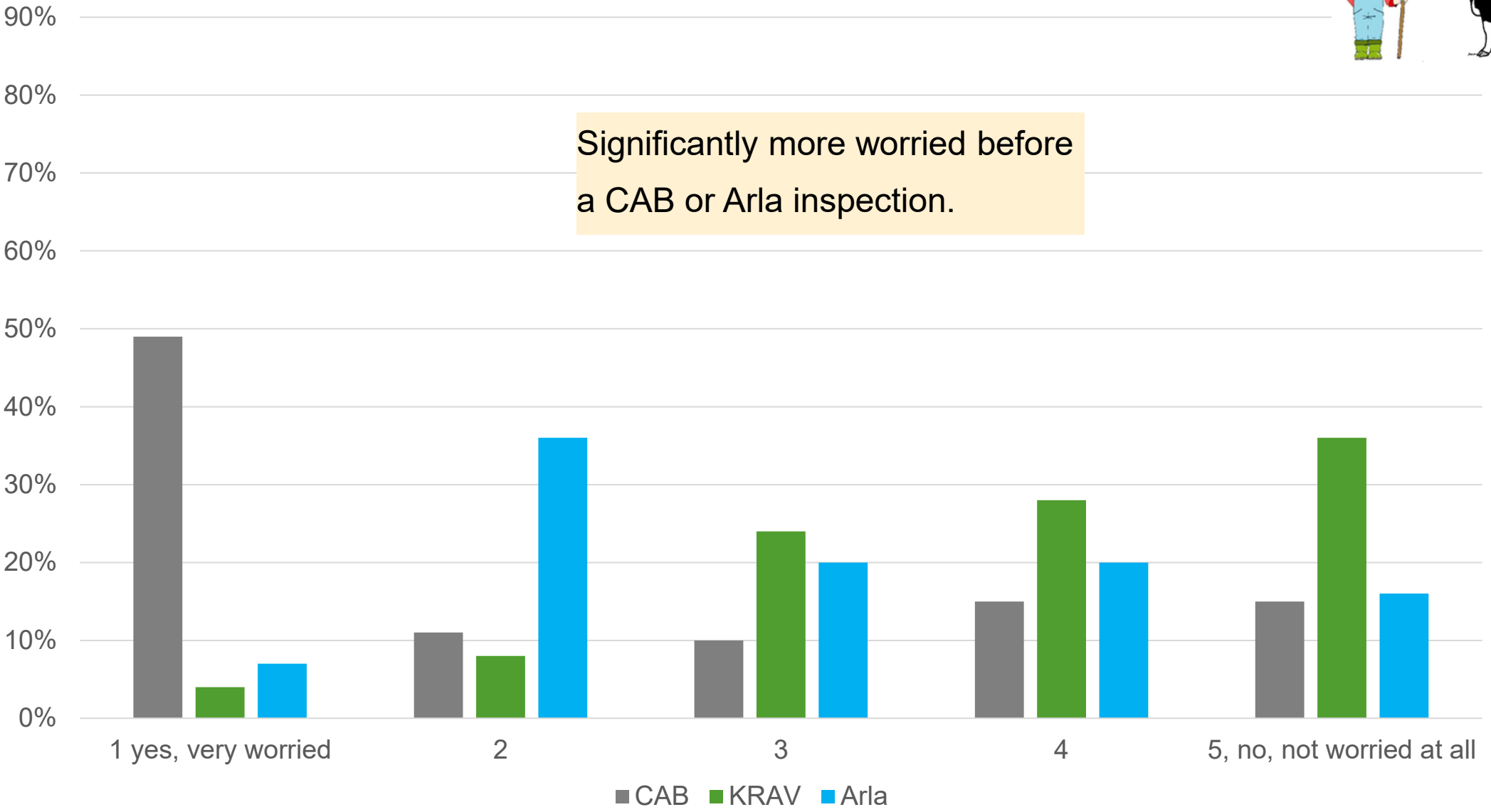

How positive or negative did you perceive the latest inspection?
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
The trainers reported a significantly more positive experience for the STA audits than for the CAB inspections (p < 0.001)
1 very negative
2 negative
3 neither negative or positive
4 positive
5 very positive
CAB
the Trotting Association


Worried before the inspection?
No significant difference
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
1 yes, very worried
2
3
4
5 no, not worried at all
CAB
STA

Worried before the inspection?

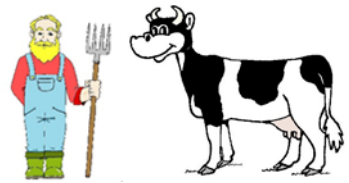


Significantly more worried before a CAB or Arla inspection.

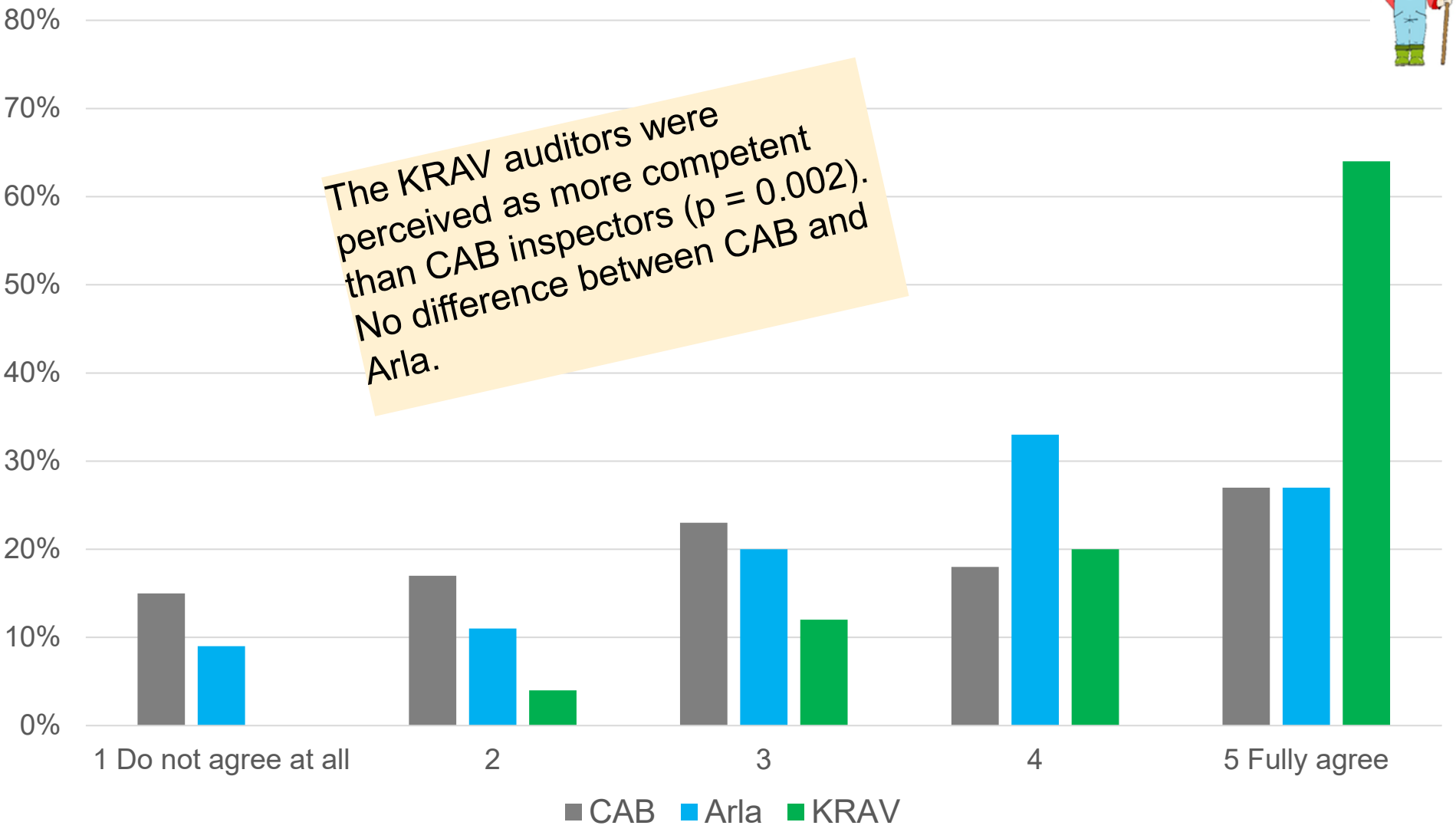



The inspector was knowledgeable and acted professionally?
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
The STA auditors were perceived as more competent (p < 0.001)
1 Do not agree at all
2
3
4
5 Fully agree
CAB
STA

The inspector was knowledgeable an acted professionally?

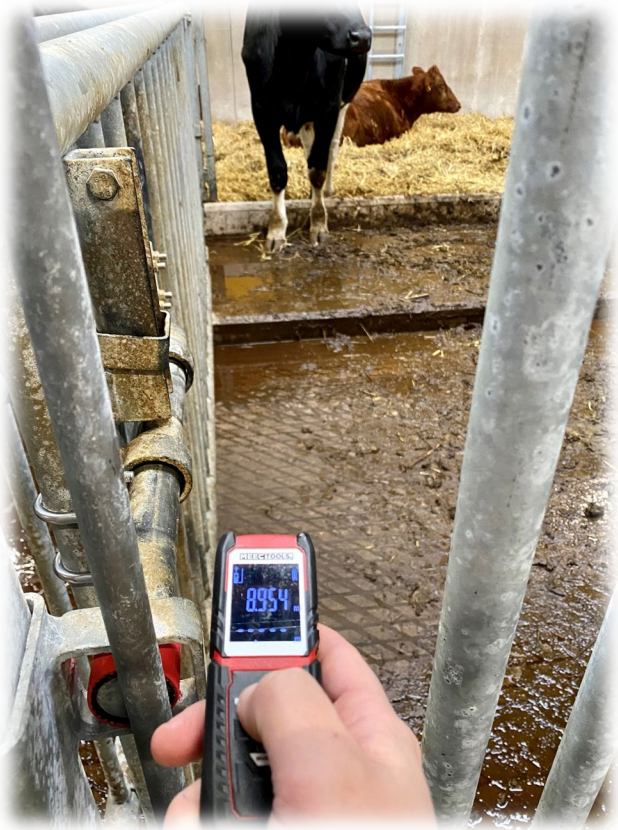


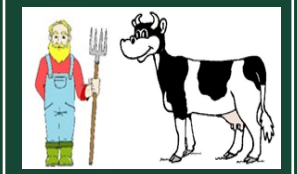
The KRAV auditors were perceived as more competent than CAB inspectors (p = 0.002). No difference between CAB and Arla.

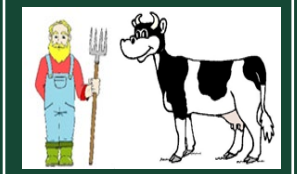


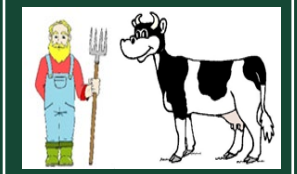
Results

- factors significally affecting the perception of an inspection (positive or negative)



Factors (affecting the perception)?		
Satisfaction over the current situation (the regulations and inspections)	Yes	Yes

Factors (affecting the perception)?		
Satisfaction over the current situation (the regulations and inspections)	Yes	Yes
The inspector was percived as competent	Yes	Yes
The inspector was pleasant, treated them fairly and could give them good advice	Yes	Yes

Factors (affecting the perception)?		
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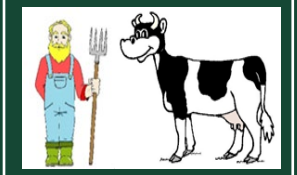
Gender or age of the inspector	Yes	No

Factors (affecting the perception)?		
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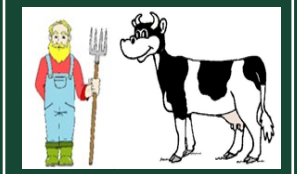
Gender or age of the inspector	Yes	No
Pre-announced inspection or not	Yes	No

Factors (affecting the perception)?		
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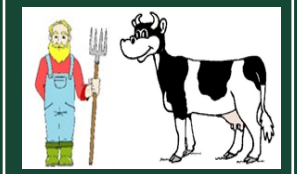
Factors (affecting the perception)?		
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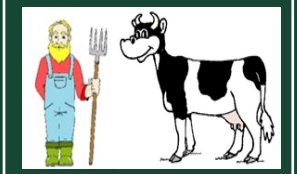
Gender or age of the inspector	Yes	No
Pre-announced inspection or not	Yes	No
Numbers of inspectors	Yes	No
The outcome of the inspection (i.e. if non-compliances were found or not)	Yes	No

Factors (affecting the perception)?		
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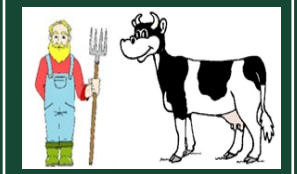
Gender or age of the inspector	Yes	No
Pre-announced inspection or not	Yes	No
Numbers of inspectors	Yes	No
The outcome of the inspection (i.e. if non-compliances were found or not)	Yes	No
Worriness before the inspection	Yes	No

Factors (affecting the perception)?		
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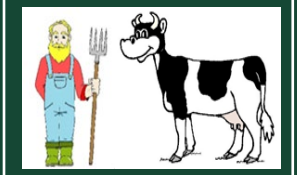
Gender or age of the inspector	Yes	No
Pre-announced inspection or not	Yes	No
Numbers of inspectors	Yes	No
The outcome of the inspection (i.e. if non-compliances were found or not)	Yes	No
Worriness before the inspection	Yes	No
Surprised when reading the inspection report	Yes	Yes

Factors (affecting the perception)?		
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The outcome of the inspection (i.e. if non-compliances were found or not)	Yes	No
Worriness before the inspection	Yes	No
Surprised when reading the inspection report	Yes	Yes
Official or private inspection	No	Yes

Main conclusions

- The trotting trainers in general had a more positive view of AW inspections than the dairy farmers did.
- The inspector’s knowledge, behaviour and manner were very important for the perception of an inspection.
- The dairy farmers answers reflected a much higher level of uncertainty and concern.
- Several factors can affect the perception of an inspection. Factors that can be highlighted, changed or explained in order to improve the perception of AW inspections.

Facts and conditions to consider when analysing the results

- More dairy farmers than trotting trainers had the animal business as their only financial income.
- The dairy farmers are depending on EU subsidies (risk of reduction if non-compliance is noticed during an official inspection).
- Almost half of the trotting trainers had never had an official inspection.

- Private audits are almost always pre-announced well in advance.

- Private auditors are often more specialised on the animal species/animal activities they inspect.

- If the inspector is a woman, she needs to be much more competent than a man to be considered an expert, i.e. trustworthy *(Carli, 2018).* Most AW inspectors in Sweden are women.

- There is often a more positive feeling if something is voluntary to join (*Martinez et al., 2007*), e.g. KRAV.

Thanks for listening ☺

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Publications:

Lundmark Hedman, F., Rodriguez Ewerlöf, I., Frössling, J. and Berg, C. 2022. Swedish dairy farmers' perceptions of animal welfare inspections. *Frontiers in Animal Sciences*, 3:1079457. doi: 10.3389/fanim.2022.1079457

Lundmark Hedman, F., Rodriguez Ewerlöf, I., Frössling, J., Berg, C. 2022. Swedish Trotting Horse Trainers' Perceptions of Animal Welfare Inspections from Public and Private Actors. *Animals*, 12, 1441. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani12111441

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