

Dairy Farmer and Consumer Perceptions about Social Sustainability

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Introduction

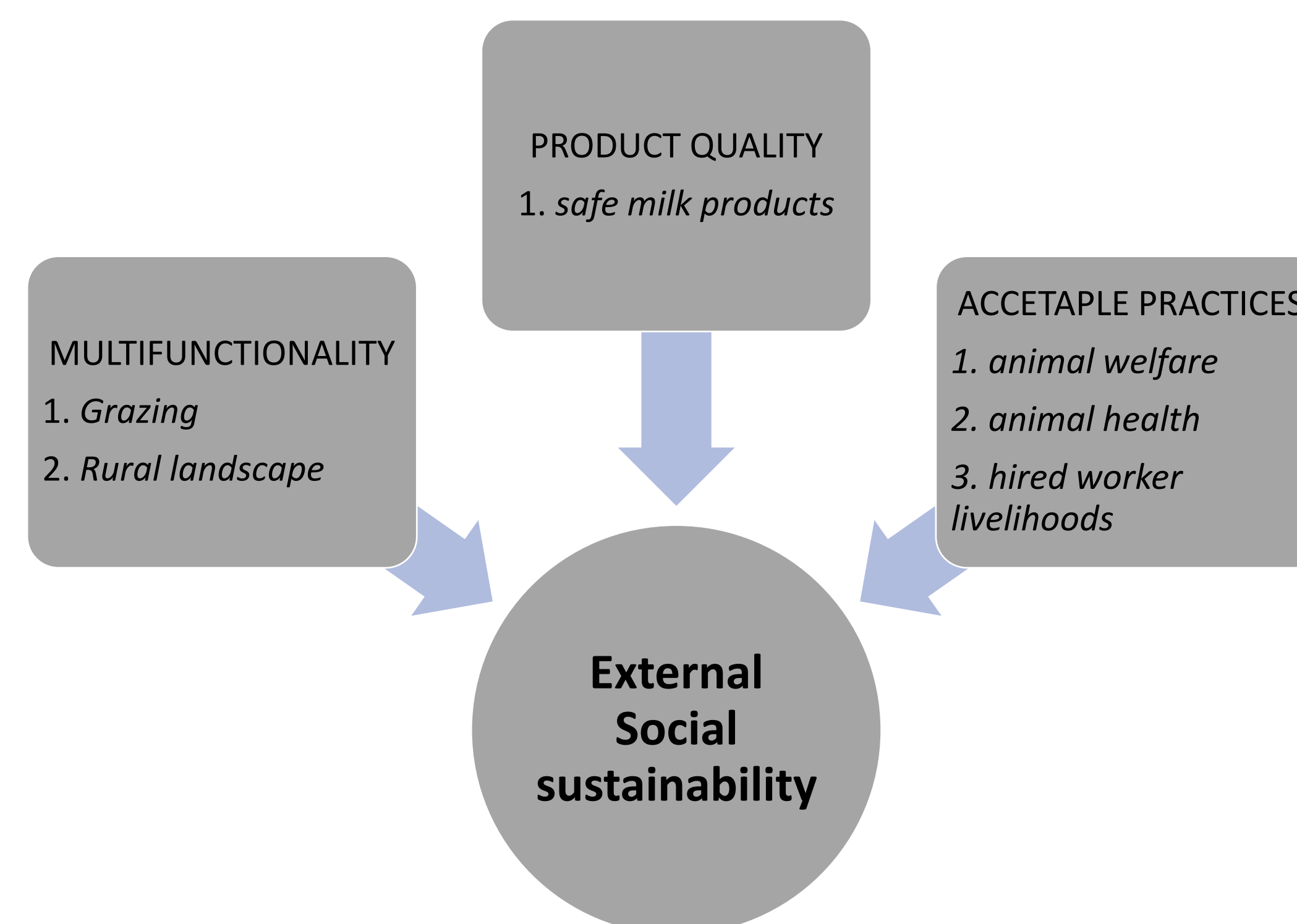
- ❑ Social sustainability focusses on societal impacts of agriculture.
- ❑ Given its multi-faceted nature, multi-stakeholder perspectives are critical to establishing a framework for social sustainability.
- ❑ The challenge is to create a metric consistent with the expectations of key stakeholders.
- ❑ This depends on a proper understanding of stakeholder views.
- ❑ This study examines dairy consumer and farmer perceptions about social sustainability in the dairy industry.
- ❑ The primary goal is to identify points of convergence between key stakeholder views on social sustainability.
- ❑ The relative weights attached by farmers and consumers to different social sustainability indicators are estimated and compared.

List of social sustainability indicators

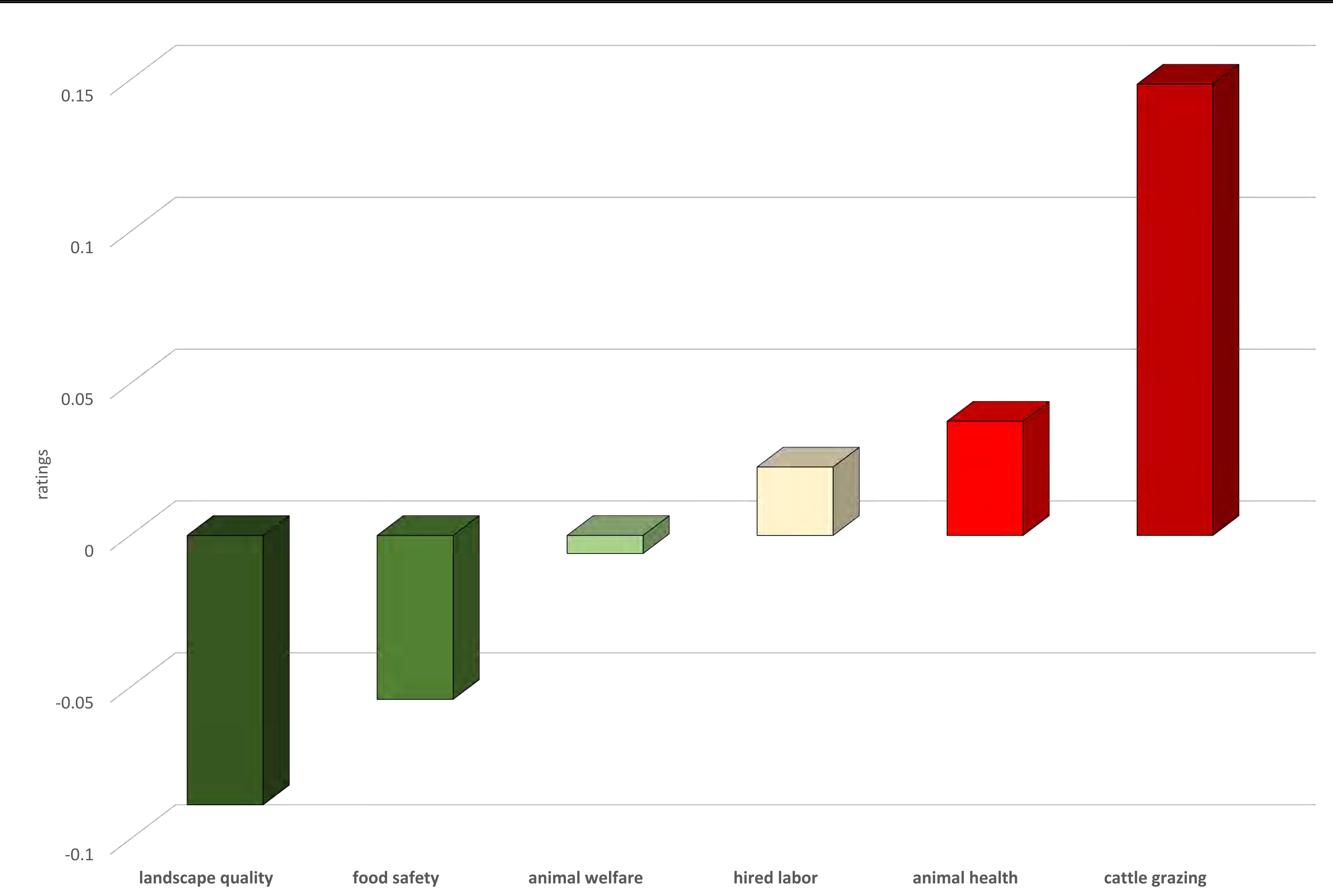
The following social sustainability issues were examined:

- A reputation for producing safe products (*food safety*)
- The opportunity for cattle to graze outdoors (*grazing*)
- The effect of dairy farms on rural environments (*rural landscape*)
- A good record for animal welfare conditions (*animal welfare*)
- A livable wage for hired dairy workers (*worker livelihood*)
- Cattle health (*Animal health*)

Conceptual Framework

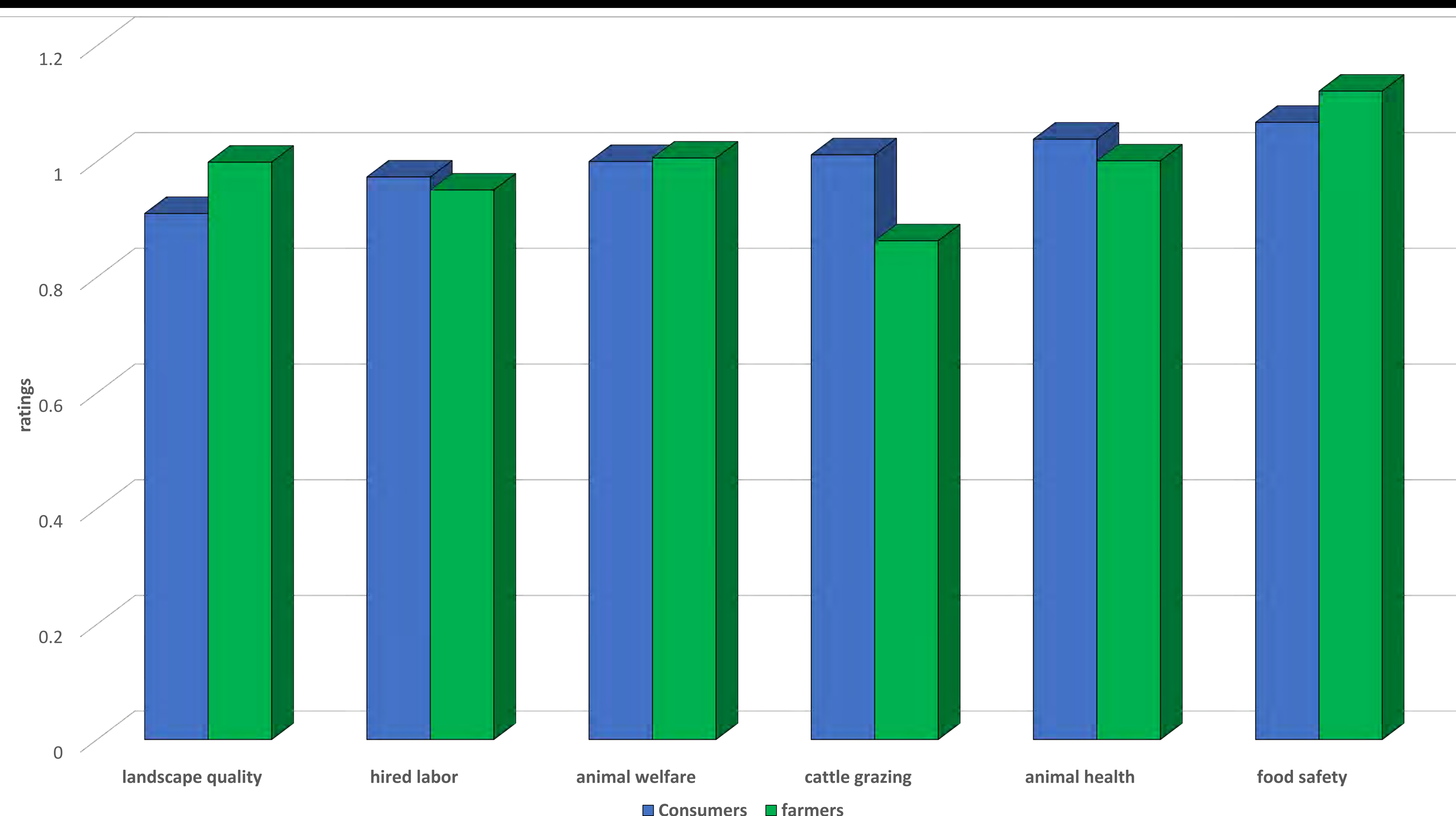


Net difference between relative Importance ratings social sustainability-consumers versus farmers



Note: positive differences denote instances where consumer ratings exceeded farmer ratings. The negative differences denote the reverse

Relative importance ratings of social sustainability indicators - consumers versus farmers



Summary of Results

- ❑ Consumers rated food safety as the attribute of highest importance. The impact of dairy production on landscape quality was perceived to be least important.
- ❑ Consistent with consumer ratings, farmers placed the rated food safety most highly. This was followed by the contribution of dairy to landscape quality. Access to grazing pasture was ranked as least important by farmers.
- ❑ Consumer and farmer views are most consistent on the importance of farm animal welfare.
- ❑ The two stakeholders show the greatest wedge in views on the value of landscape quality (farmers) and cattle grazing (consumers).
- ❑ Consumers also appear to place a higher emphasis on animal health and the welfare of hired farm labor on dairy farms relative to farmers.