

**Measuring sustainability in dairy farming by using preferences of experts and interest groups**

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The aim of this paper is to present a method for use in measuring sustainability in dairy farming. In this paper the methodological aspects are discussed in stepwise fashion. The first step is to introduce an outline for an analysis scheme of sustainability in dairy farming. The second step is to extend the analysis scheme to consider a wide range of possible attributes relating to sustainability of dairy farming. This is done using experts and/or interest groups for each specific aspect of sustainability. To prevent the method from becoming too complex and data intensive, in step 3 the same experts and interest groups as in step 2 are asked to select the most relevant attributes. In the fourth step attributes levels are expressed on a standardised scale by using utility functions derived for each attribute. Estimating importance weights for each attribute, which results in a sustainability index per aspect, is also part of step 4. Fifth step is to weight sustainability indices into an overall sustainability index. Both utility functions and importance weights are dependent on preferences of experts or interest groups. Conjoint analysis is the method chosen for measuring preferences and is therefore used in step 4 and 5 for measuring utility functions and importance weights.