Different kinds of systems approaches

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What is a systems approach?

Two perspectives:

1. Agriculture as a system
   - Without human actors
   - With human actors (often farmers)

2. Agricultural science as a system
Science as an observer of systems

E.g. soil system, cropping system

Observing actor systems

Actor (e.g. a farmer)
Action research

Actor 1
(an action researcher)

Actor 2
(e.g. a farmer)

SYSTEM

UMWELT

Science as actor and observer

Actor

SYSTEM

UMWELT / ENVIRONMENT

Observer
Conclusions

- Science works at different levels of reduction and involvement
  - but values still play a role
- There are normative and empirical disciplines in science
  - but there is always an interplay of facts and values
More information

- My workpage -- http://www.alroe.dk/hugo
  - Alrøe and Kristensen (2002) Towards a systemic research methodology in agriculture
  - and other related papers

- DARCOF -- http://www.darcof.dk