



Strategic Planning and Management on Farms

NJF Seminar 362
June 15 – 17, 2005
Vantaa, Finland



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15.-17.6.2005 Vantaa, Finland

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Farmers' joint reflection on strategies: example of using a learning tool

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How do we know what are the crucial dimensions of strategic planning on farms?

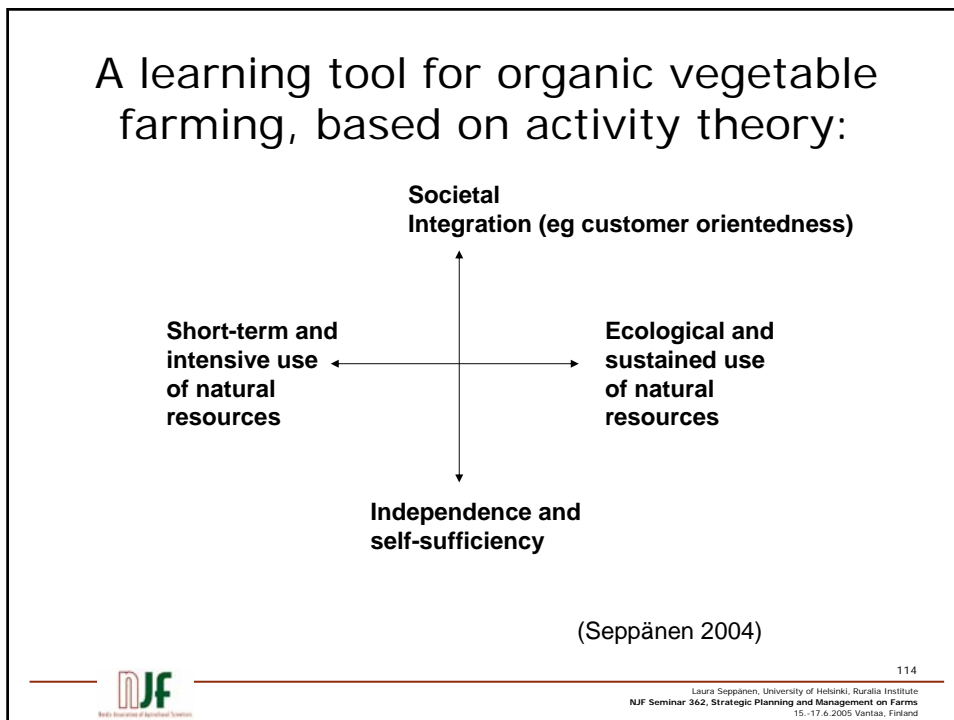
What motivates farmers for strategic thinking?

- Strategic planning as learning:
How to enable reflecting of different alternatives and not giving 'a right answer'?

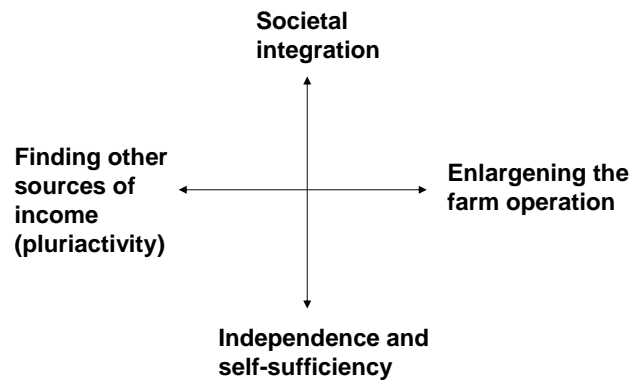


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A similar one for dairy farming could be:



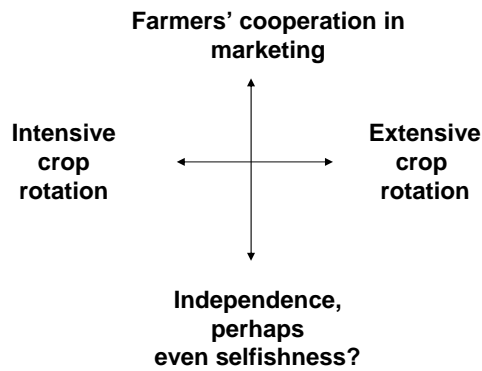
The framework was used in an educational event with organic vegetable farmers

- How to combine production and marketing?



- Five different organic vegetable farms were presented and discussed
- The task for the group was to place the presented farms in the framework

- At the same time, the group modified the framework:



-Later, the farmer or spouses were asked to place their farm in the framework

Conclusions 1:

- The presentation of different farms was essential for using the learning tool
- The way farmers modified the framework show locally important strategic dimensions
 - Farmers' cooperation in marketing was more crucial than customer-orientedness
 - Solutions in crop rotations are both heterogeneous and strategically important
- Strategic decisions go beyond the farm gate
- Farmers' community seems to be important for motivation

Theoretical ideas contributing to knowledge creation and motivation:

- A good learning tool helps farmers see their activities in the context of the general, historically formed farming
- A good learning tool promotes the local finding and showing of different important strategic alternatives
- Active use of both farmers' and advisor's knowledge in creation of new models and learning tools

See:

- Seppänen, L. and Francis, C. (forthcoming). Design of farmer education and training in organic agriculture. In Paul Kristiansen and Acram Taji (Eds.). *The Science in Organic agriculture*. CSIRO, Australia.
- Seppänen, L. (2004). *Learning challenges in organic vegetable farming: An activity theoretical study of on-farm practices*. Helsinki University, Institute for Rural Research and Training. Publications 1. Available at: <http://ethesis.helsinki.fi/julkaisut/maa/sbiol/vk/seppanen/>