Definition of breeding goals for dairy breeds in organic production systems

L. Hjortø[1], A.C. Sørensen[2], J.R. Thomasen[2,3], A. Munk[1], P. Berg[4] and M. Kargo[1,2]
[1]SEGES, Agro Food Park 15, 8200 Aarhus N, Denmark, [2]Aarhus University, Center for Quantitative Genetics and Genomics, Institute for Molecular Biology and Genetics, P.O. Box 50, Foulum, 8830 Tjele, Denmark, [3]Viking Genetics, Ebeltoftvej 16, 8960 Randers SØ, Denmark, [4]NordGen, P.O. Box 115, 1431 Ås, Norway; jorn.rthomasen@mbg.au.dk

In a previous study, economic values for organic dairy production were derived from a stochastic, bio-economic model. In this study, we attempt to assess the Danish organic dairy farmers' acceptance of the results from the objective method. As a null hypothesis, all non-market values were assumed to be zero. In accordance with this, we designed a partial choice survey in a way so farmers were given a number of tasks. In each task the farmer was given the choice between two alternatives. The alternatives differed in means of only two traits. The differences in trait means were calibrated according to the objectively derived economic values, so that the difference in all traits had the same monetary value. Therefore, any deviation from equal priority can be interpreted as a non-zero non-market value. There are approximately 350 organic dairy farmers in Denmark and all of them will have the opportunity to participate in the survey. We included 10 traits corresponding to 45 pair-wise comparisons. The questionnaire and the subsequent analyses were conducted by means of the internet-based software 1000Minds. We expect the results to show that farmers give increased priority to some traits above the objectively derived economic value. The breeding goals defined by organic dairy farmers are to be included in a study designed to examine the possibility of setting up breeding schemes for dairy breeds in organic production systems.