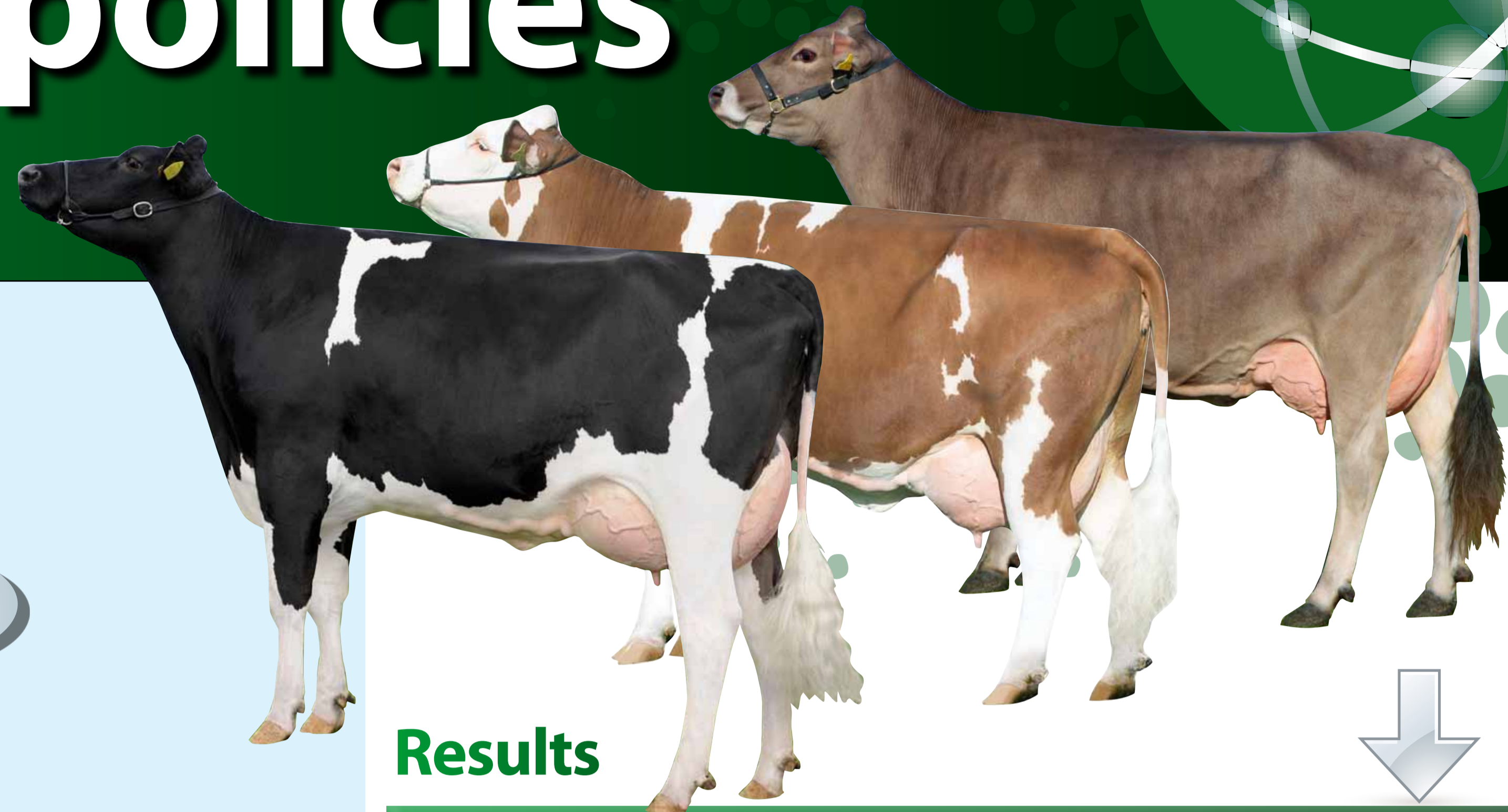


INFORMATION EXCHANGE and FUTURE PLANS of Slovenian cattle farmers under EU policies

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Objective

To examine how the situation of the Slovenian farmer in regards to information availability on the EU quota regulation and CAP premiums relates to decision making in farm management and strategy choices.

Introduction

Three research questions were formulated:

What information is received now and how is it received? In Figure 1 this question refers to the link **facilitator** > **farmer** and is indicated as **"awareness raising"**.

How does the farmer prefer to receive information in the future and what kind of information? In Figure 1 this question refers to the link **farmer** > **facilitator** and is indicated as **"feed back"**.

How to make decisions to react to new EU policies? (concerning farm management and strategy / future plans). In Figure 1 this question refers to the link **farmer** > **farm** and is indicated by **"decision making"**.

Material and methods

Data

A questionnaire with 27 main questions was sent to dairy farmers anonymously

1,114 questionnaires out of 5,000 distributed (22%) were returned; the sample represent 11 % of dairy farmers population.

Statistical methods

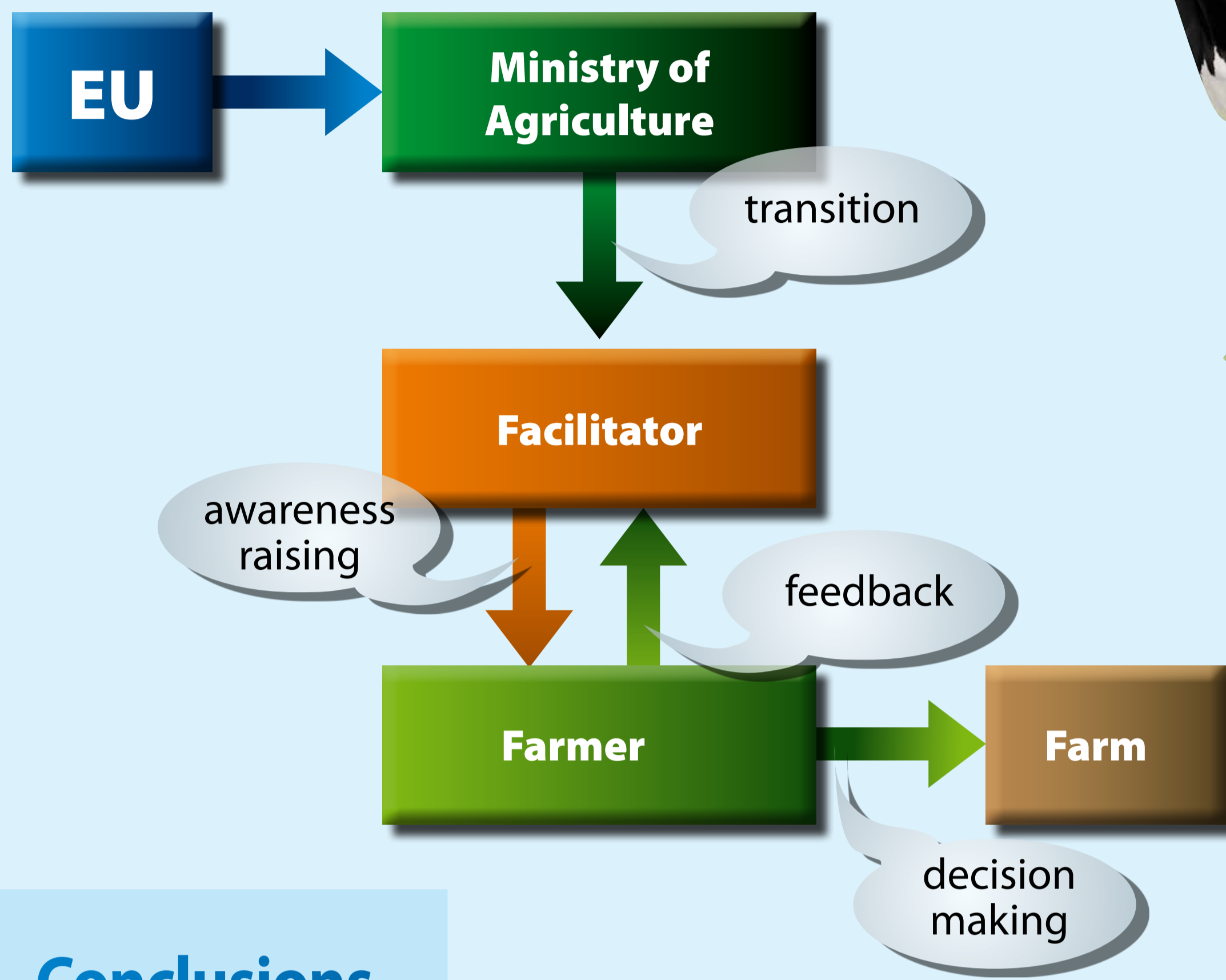
Data were analysed with STATISTIX 7 statistical program.

Three variables were selected to serve as a quick characterisation of the farm and farmer (see Figure 2).

Using the "Principal Component" technique 3 main factors were selected to characterize farm and farmer:

1. Age of farmer (years) - A
2. Farm size (ha of land) - F
3. Number of other activities than dairy - O

Figure 1. **Communication scheme of transmitting EU information to farmers**



Conclusions

Farmers have a high interest in info about EU premium programs, CAP general policies and advice about strategic plans.

Extension Service and Farmers' cooperatives act more towards all farmers, while Feed companies, University and Breeding Organisations work with the larger farms.

Farmers feel most comfortable with personal advice.

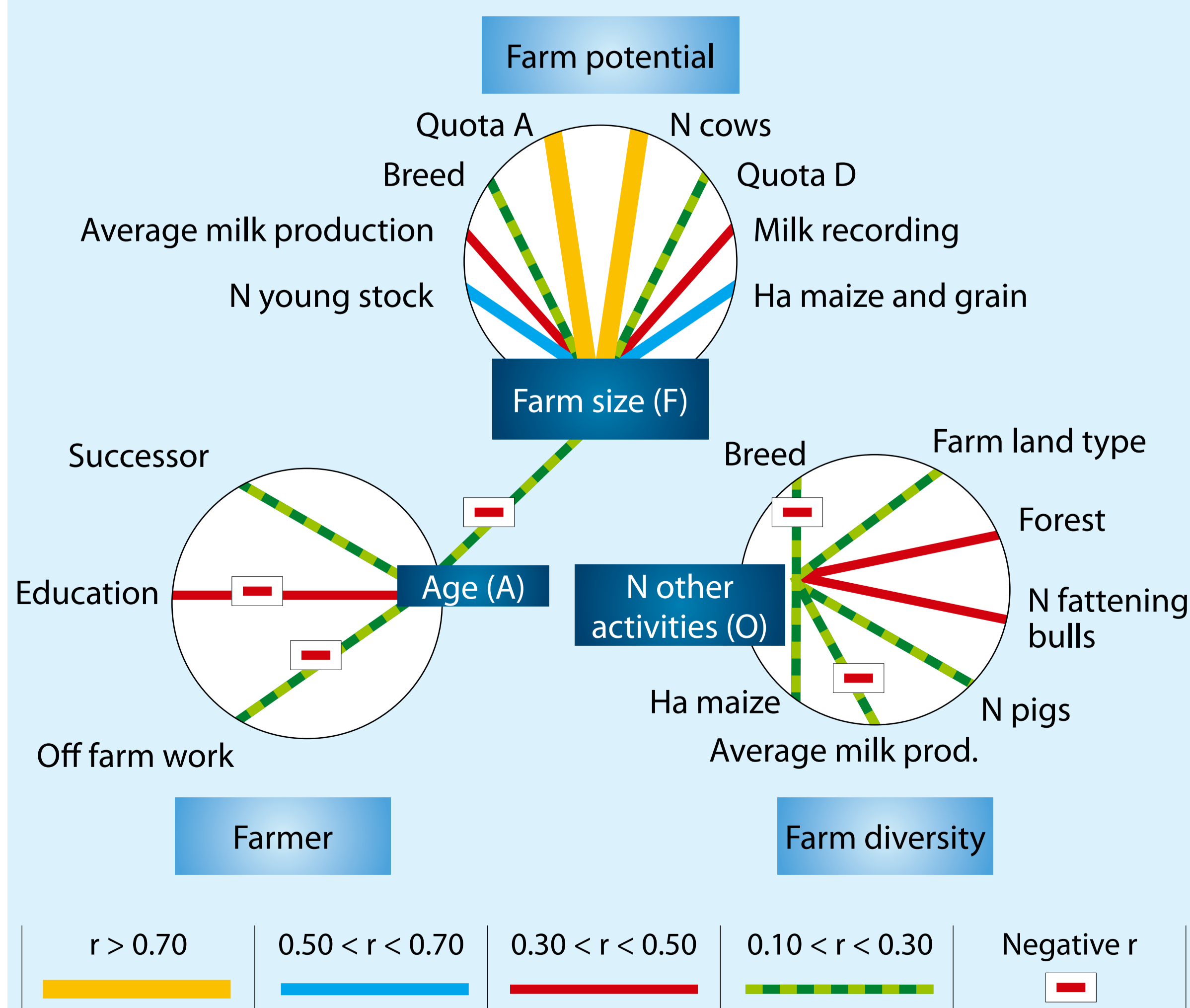
About 40% of the farmers intend to keep the farm more or less the same in the near future, while about 50% want to develop their farm business further. More than half of these developing farmers look for specialisation (56%) and less than half for diversification (47%).

Developing farmers can be seen as the client group with most potential for info and advice. Maybe this is even more the case for farmers who plan to diversify.

The high interest in info and advice asks for an intensive communication by utilizing the right channels to do so. Farmers do indicate preferred channels of communication. For instance, larger farms choose for other facilitators than the smaller ones.

The high interest in information and advice in Slovenia is a solid base for supporting the development of strategies to adapt to the EU-environment and for the creation of opportunities for the future.

Figure 2. **Main factors characterizing the farm and farmer**



Main factors clustering farm and farmers' characteristics

The sample of farmers represents the more future oriented farmers (larger farm, high percentage of successors, etc.)

Results

What info is received and how it is received, and associations with farm and farmers' characteristics

Variable (answer)	n	Mean	SD	Association with main factors ¹⁾			
				A	F	O	R ² (%)
Questions concerning what info is received now							
Q5a: Did you receive explanatory info about quota system? (no=0, yes=1)	1096	0.94	0.24				0
Do you receive sufficient info about milk deliveries during the year compared to reference quantity? (no=0, yes=1)	1079	0.91	0.29		+	***	1
Questions concerning how and from whom info is received							
If Q5a yes: from whom you received explanatory info? (no=0, yes=1)							
1 Ministry of agriculture and agencies	1001	0.38	0.49			+	*
2 Extension Service	1001	0.40	0.49	-	*		1
3 Agricultural chamber	1001	0.10	0.30			+	***
4 Farmers Co-operative	1001	0.59	0.49				0
5 Co-operative Union	1001	0.01	0.09				0
6 Farmers Union/Syndicate	1001	0.02	0.13			+	*
7 Dairy industry or milk processor	1001	0.09	0.29				1
8 Other organizations	1001	0.06	0.24			+	**

How does farmer prefer to receive info in future and what kind of info, and associations with farm and farmers' characteristics

Variable (answer)	n	Mean	SD	Associations with main factors ¹⁾			
				A	F	O	R ² (%)
Questions concerning how farmer prefers to receive info in future							
How do you prefer to receive info and advice? (no=0, yes=1)							
1 Orally by advisor	1093	0.68	0.46				1
2 By participating in study group	1093	0.50	0.50			+	***
3 On Radio / TV	1093	0.24	0.42	+	*		1
4 In agricultural magazine	1093	0.54	0.50				0
5 On paper in form of leaflet	1093	0.35	0.48	-	**		1
6 By internet	1093	0.22	0.41	-	**	+	***

Questions concerning what kind of info farmer likes to receive

Variable (answer)	n	Mean	SD	Associations with main factors ¹⁾			
				A	F	O	R ² (%)
Would you like more explanatory info about? (no=0, yes=1)							
1 Milk premiums	1114	0.72	0.45				0
2 Suckler cow premiums	1114	0.20	0.40	-	*	+	***
3 Beef premiums	1114	0.32	0.47			+	***
4 Agricultural environment measures	1114	0.25	0.44				0
5 Extensification premium	1114	0.30	0.46				1
6 Early retirement program	1114	0.31	0.46			+	*
7 Compensation payment for regions	1114	0.39	0.49			+	***
8 General EU agricultural policies: CAP	1114	0.62	0.49			+	***
Do you like advice in adapting daily management of farm to the quota amount you have? (no=0, yes=1)	1052	0.49	0.50	-	*	+	***
Do you like to receive assistance in planning a future plan/strategy for you and your farm? (no=0, yes=1)	992	0.65	0.48	-	*	+	***

How to make decisions to react on new EU policies, and associations with farm and farmers' characteristics

Variable (answer)	n	Mean	SD	Associations with main factors ¹⁾			
				A	F	O	R ² (%)
Questions about how to make decisions on management of the farm							
In case of exceeding quota: do you plan to change daily management of farm to adapt to quota? (no=0, yes=1)	723	0.68	0.47				0
If yes: 1 By selling some cows?	491	0.38	0.49		+	-	**
2 By feeding less concentrates?	491	0.50	0.50				0
3 By using less Nitrogen fertilizer?	491	0.23	0.42				0
Do you consider using more beef bulls on your cows under a quota system to improve quality of calves? (no=0, yes=1)	1085	0.47	0.50				+
Questions about how to make decisions on farm strategy/future plans							
Q11: What are your plans for the future of your farm? (no=0, yes=1)							
1 I do not think about future plans	1114	0.06	0.23	+	***	-	***
2 I consider to stop farming	1114	0.01	0.11	+	*	-	*
3 I keep farm as a hobby	1114	0.03	0.16			-	***
4 I consider to keep farm as it is now	1114	0.41	0.49	+	*	-	***
5 I consider to develop the farm further	1114	0.49	0.50	-	***	+	***
If Q11-5 is yes, would you							
1 Develop the farm by increasing number of dairy cows?	296	0.56	0.50			+	**
2 Develop the farm by starting or enlarging another branch?	256	0.47	0.50				0
Do you consider to go in future into ecological or bio-dynamic farming? (no=0, yes=1)	663	0.04	0.19				0
Do you plan to invest in new barn or parlour? (no=0, yes=1)	787	0.63	0.48	-	*	***	9
Do you consider to look for part-time off farm work? (no=0, yes=1)	656	0.06	0.22	-	*	-	**

¹⁾ Associations are tested by a linear regression model: variable = constant + b₁A + b₂F + b₃O. Constant is not presented. A is age of farmer; F is farm size; and O is number of other activities. Significance of b's is indicated by: * (p<0.05); ** (p<0.01); *** (p<0.001). The sign of b is indicated by - in case of negative association and + for a positive association.