The Development of Social Sustainability Indicators using FADN data

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1. Key Message

This study aims to develop an additional suite of social sustainability indicators, building upon the current set of indicators designed within the Teagasc National Farm Survey (NFS). The expansion of social sustainability indicators is imperative for the evaluation and observation of policies regarding rural sustainability and development, in addition to providing socio-economic statistics on current farm and community level conditions.

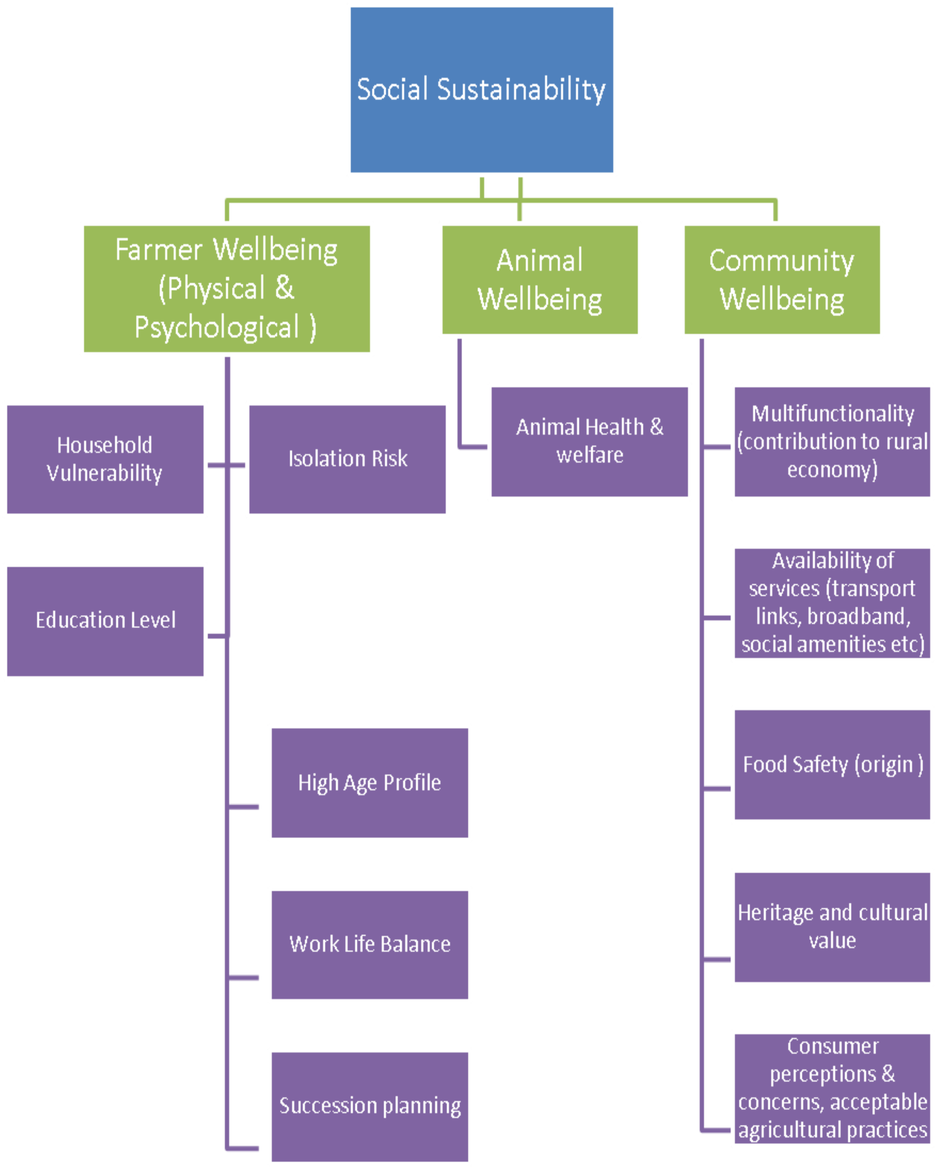
2. Introduction

Social Sustainability has been defined as *'The extent to which social values, social identities, social relationships and social institutions can continue into the future'* (Black, 2004). Much focus to date has been on the environmental and economic pillars with more research and data required to better evaluate the social dimension of sustainable development.

3. Methodology and Data

An extensive literature review was conducted with the objective of developing a list of potential new social sustainability indicators. The process was also informed by previous work undertaken within the NFS and the EU FLINT project. Data collected through the Teagasc Small Farms Survey 2015 also provided specific socio-economic data for consideration. A list of potential indicators were thus derived and these relate to three general headings:

Farmer Wellbeing, Animal Wellbeing and Community Wellbeing.



Stakeholder Consultation: A series of stakeholder interviews were conducted in order to validate and critique the proposed indicators. These stakeholders represented the various sectors involved in rural affairs, such as members of the Irish food industry, farmer representative groups, government departments and rural development agencies.

Questionnaire Methodology: A mixed methods approach utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods was chosen for the stakeholder questionnaire analysis. Concurrent data collection methodology was utilised with a semi- structured questionnaire consisting of a number of open ended questions (Qualitative) and ranking questions (Quantitative).

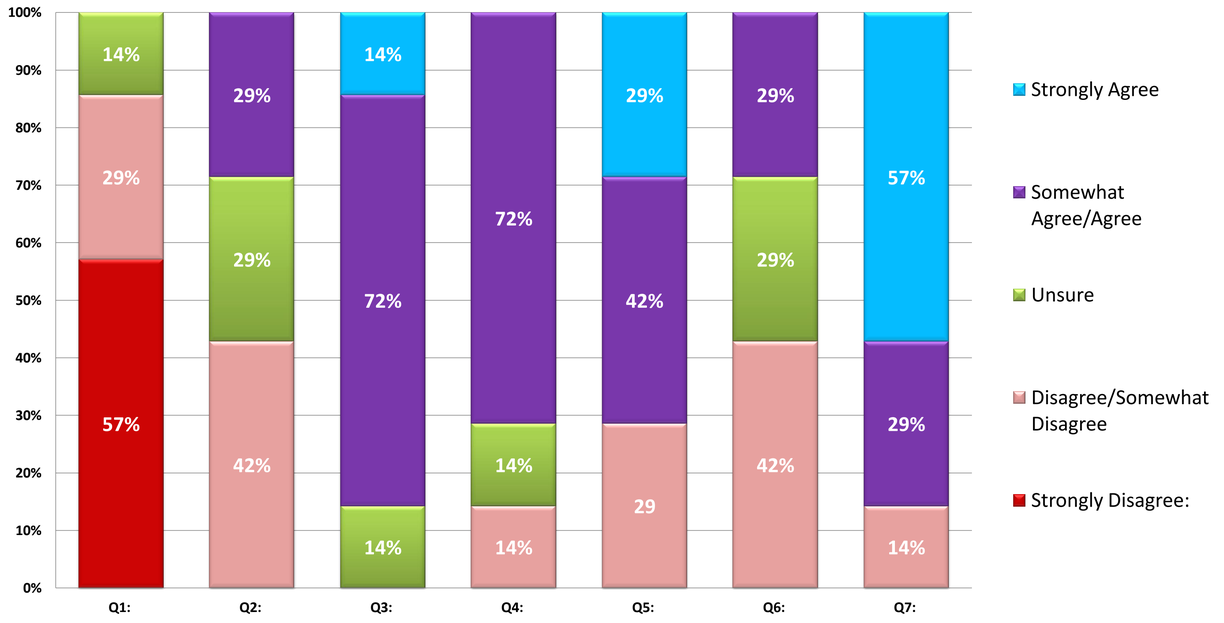
4. Results

Qualitative analysis: Several themes were obtained from the stakeholder questionnaire:

Farmer Well-Being	Animal Well-being
Farmer Physical & Psychological Well-being • Loneliness and mental health • Financial pressures • Rural Crime • Access to farm labour **Social Isolation** • Access to services (e.g. banks, Garda stations) • Social interaction (e.g. GAA clubs, marts etc.) **Succession** • Challenges around farm transfer • Attractiveness of farming as a career	**Animal Welfare** • Poor Animal Welfare as an indicator of poor farmer well-being • Animal Comfort (housing and health) • Consumer queries **Community Well-being** **Rural policy & development** • Resilience and change • Effect of emigration on rural regions • Availability of services **Broadband** • Challenging for business and communication

Quantitative Analysis: supported the themes obtained from the Qualitative analysis.

Stakeholder opinion on selected social sustainability issues



Q1: Access to high speed broadband is rural areas is satisfactory
Q2: The work life balance and stressful nature of farming is impacting upon the psychological well- being of Irish farmers
Q3: Farmers sense of security has deteriorated over the past 5 years
Q4: Consumers would be willing to pay extra for an agri-food product produced with a high level of animal welfare considerations
Q5: The levels of antibiotic use in Irish livestock needs to be reduced
Q6: Younger farmers receive sufficient policy supports to develop their livelihoods
Q7:Consumers are increasingly querying sustainable farming practices

5. Future Work

Key themes around social sustainability informed by the stakeholder consultation process in addition to data previously collected through the Teagasc NFS and Small Farms Survey will form the basis for the further development of social sustainability indicators within the Irish FADN dataset. To this end new data will be collected in 2018. This research provides a blueprint for the replication of this approach across the wider EU FADN dataset allowing for the assessment of sustainability across the EU.

6: Acknowledgements

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7. References:

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