Effects of an Interactive Strategic Management training on farm strategies, competences and agricultural entrepreneurship of dairy farmers in Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia

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Background

- Dairy farmers in CEE countries face important challenges after the fall of the communist regime and the accession to the EU
- Some farmers are able to deal with these challenges and others do not
- Empowerment of farmers may improve the capacities of farmers on strategic management and entrepreneurship and may enable farmers:
    - to better anticipate towards the continuous changes
    - To keep their farms viable
- A training method called Interactive Strategic Management (ISM) aims to strengthen this capacity.
- However, little is empirically researched on the contribution of such an intervention.
- Therefore the aim of the underlying research is to study the effects of ISM in a quantitative (empirical) way

Methodology (1)

- A survey was carried out amongst respectively 334, 334 and 362 dairy farmers in Poland, Lithuania and Slovenia in the 2nd half of 2011 and the beginning of 2012 (baseline survey at T0)
- Of these dairy farmers respectively 38, 47 and 50 were recruited in Poland, Lithuania and Slovenia to participate in a training about Interactive Strategic Management (ISM) (spring 2012)
    - Five (POL, SLO) or six (LIT) groups in each country; 6-10 farmers per group to stimulate discussion between farmers
    - 3 consecutive meetings
    - Farmer, farm and environment
    - Presentation of future plans on 3rd (last) training day
    - Facilitators trained by LEI of Wageningen UR

Methodology (2)

- Return meetings in the spring of 2013
    - Farmers meet again in their own group
    - It was discussed whether and how farmers had changed their farm strategy and future farm plan after the ISM training in 2012
- Repetition of the survey at T1 (spring of 2013)
    - Farmers who finished the ISM training (ISM group)
    - In each country approximately 50 dairy farmers who finished the baseline survey at T0 but who did not participate in the ISM training (control group)
- Research questions studied by means of a paired t-test:
    - Do the ISM farmers answer/ score the same questions differently at T0 and T1?
    - Do the farmers of the control group answer/ score the same questions differently at T0 and T1
- The hypothesis is that the ISM farmers do and the farmers of the control group do not.

Schematic overview of methodology

Preliminary data

	T0 (2nd half 2011, beginning of 2012)	**T1** (spring 2013) -score so far-
ISM group	135 farmers (38 POL, 47 LIT, 50 SLO)	79 farmers (16 POL, 37 LIT, 26 SLO)
Control group	895 farmers (296 POL, 287 LIT, 312 SLO)	97 farmers (8 POL, 15 LIT, 74 SLO)
TOTAL	1030 farmers (334 POL, 334 LIT, 362 SLO)	176 farmers (24 POL, 42 LIT, 100 SLO)

Preliminary results (1): farm strategies

	T0		T1	
	Control group	ISM group	Control group	ISM group
Relocate farm	10.3	5.1	9.3	5.1
Expand dairy production	**54.6 (1)**	**72.2 (1)**	**60.8 (1)**	**79.7 (1)**
Start new farm	2.1	1.3	3.1	2.5
Wait and see	33.0 (3)	13.9	35.1	16.5
Downscaling	11.3	6.3	12.4	1.3
Diversify agric. Activities	27.8	34.2	36.7	24.7
Chain integration	29.9	25.3	34.0	35.4 (3)
Diversify non-agric. activities	28.9	19.0	26.8	26.0
Cooperate with other dairy farmers	37.1 (2)	40.5 (3)	38.1 (3)	35.4 (3)
Further specialization	**54.6 (1)**	**69.6 (2)**	**55.7 (2)**	**60.8 (2)**

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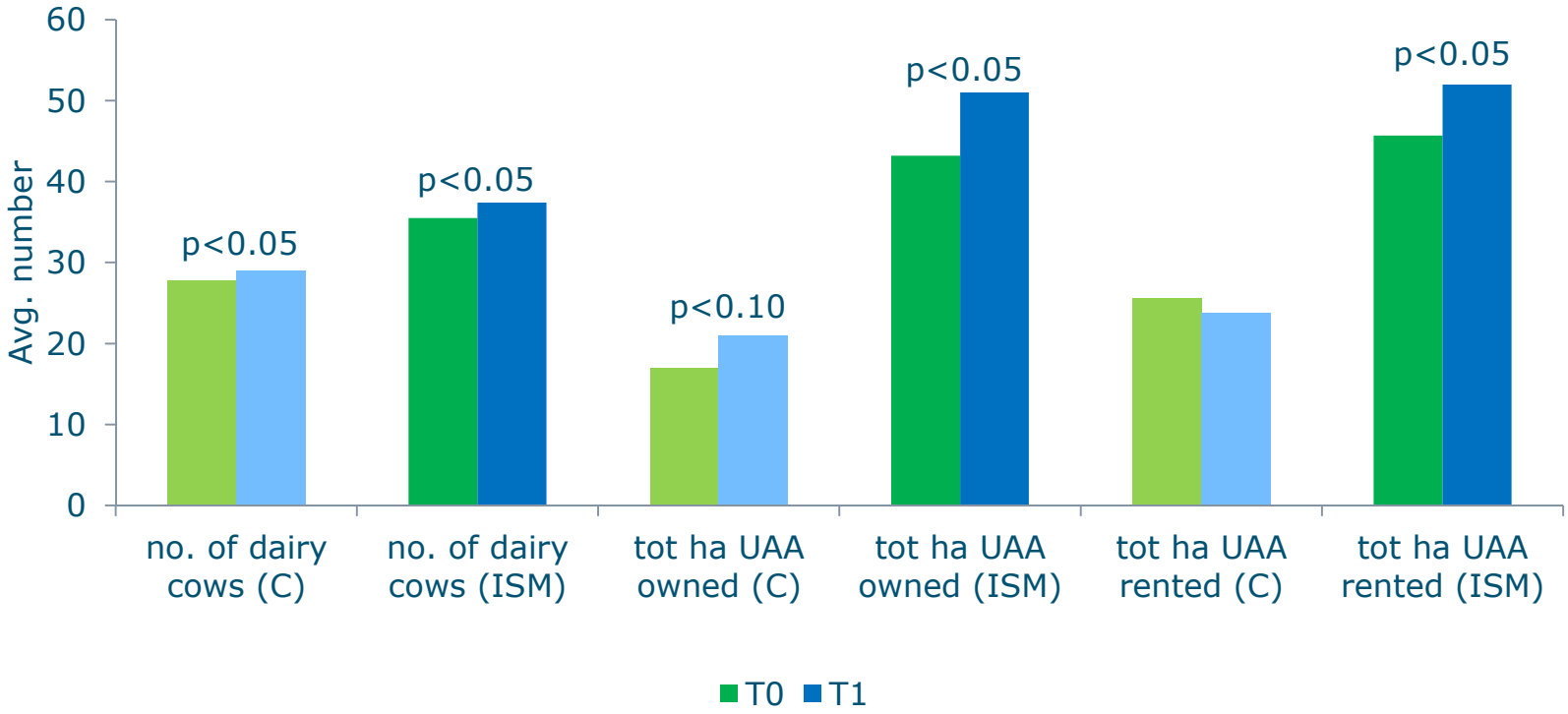
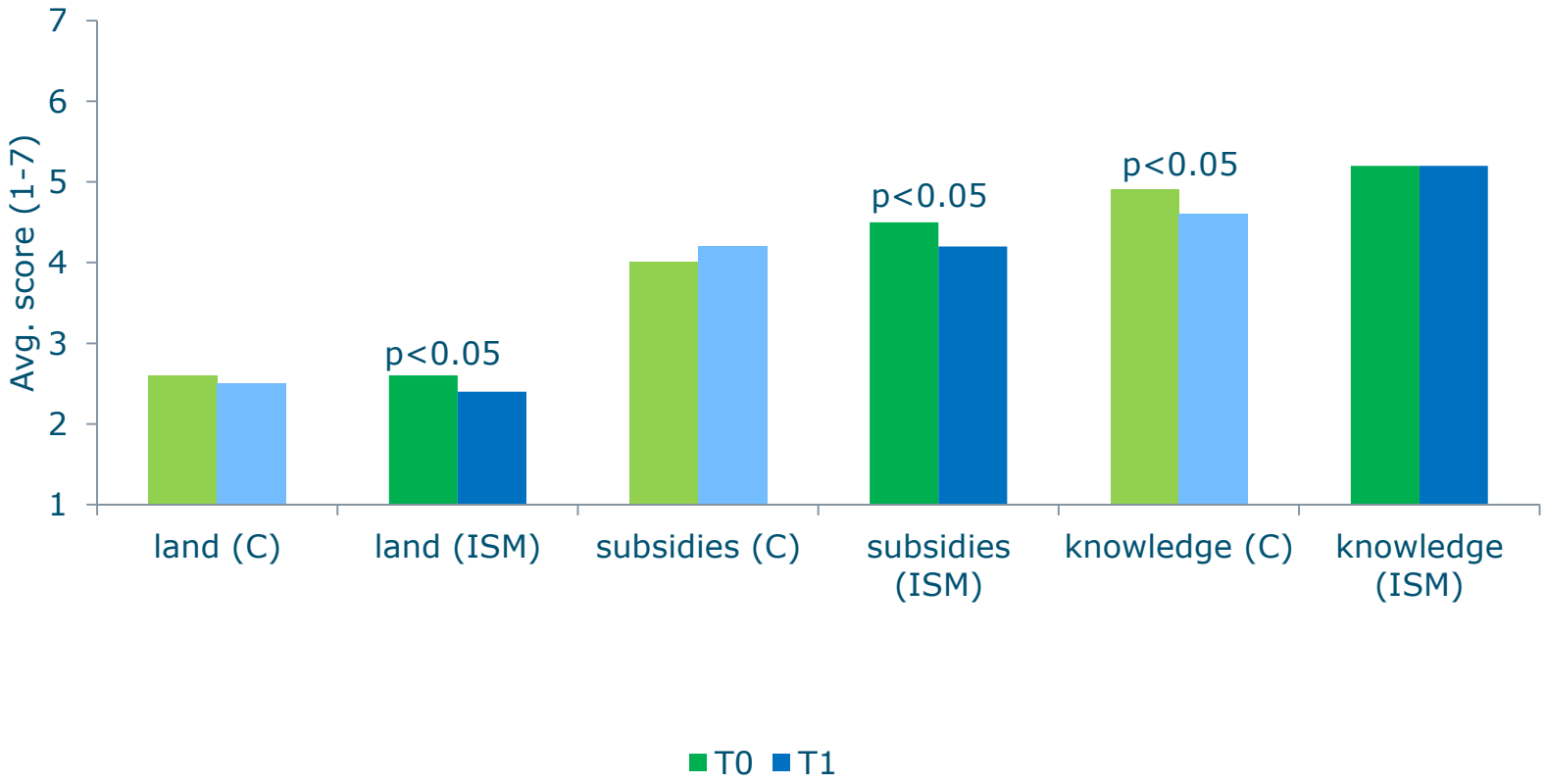
Preliminary results (3): farm features



Preliminary results (4): availability of resources



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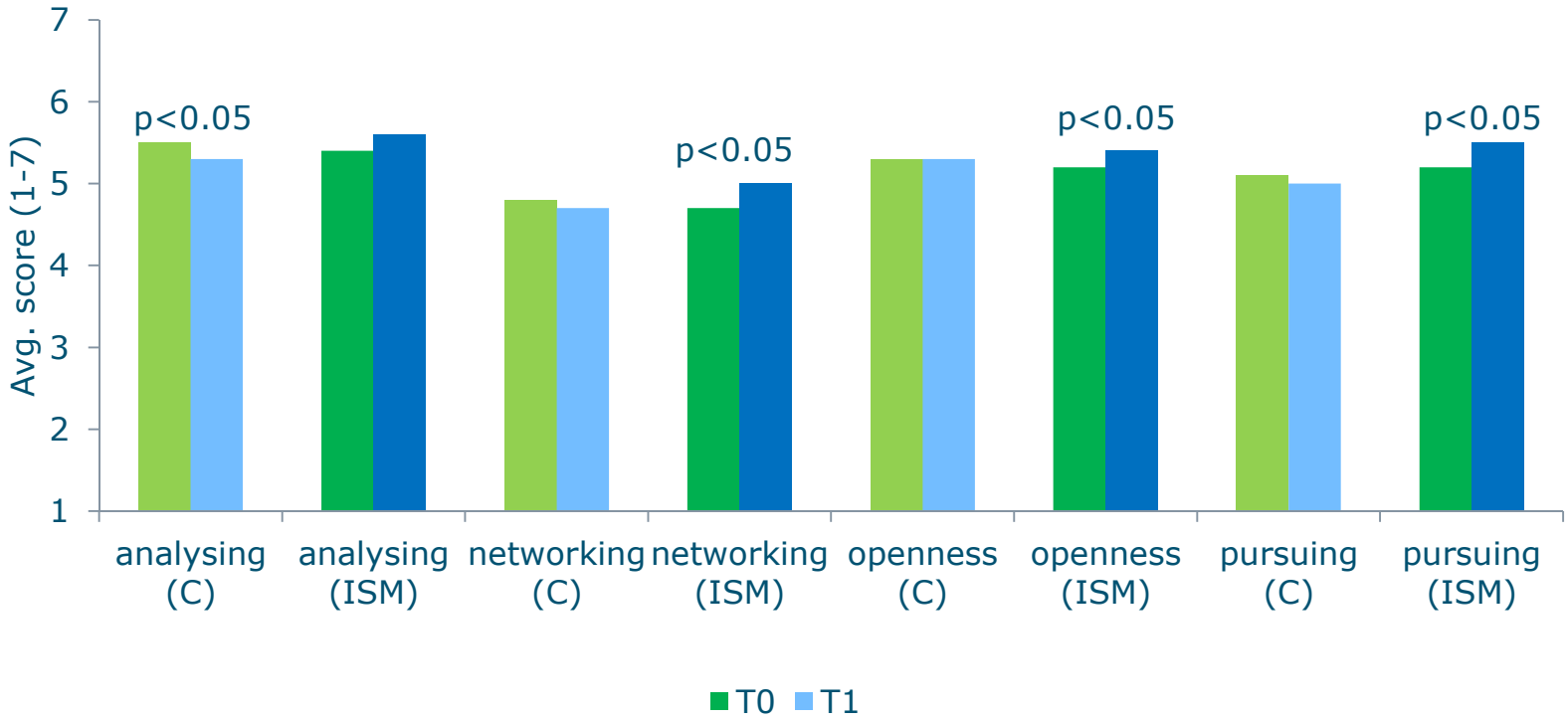
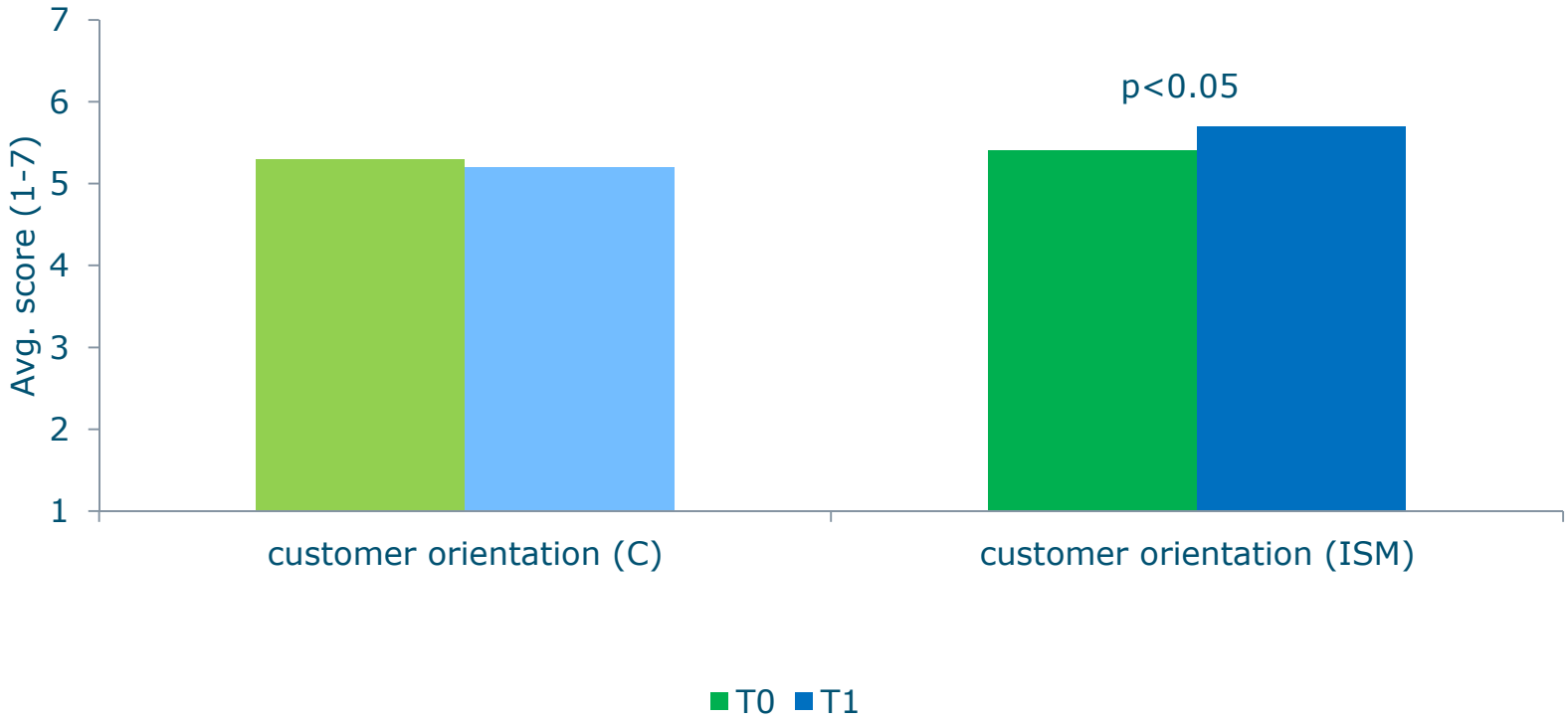
Preliminary results (5):competences



Preliminary results (6): customer orientation



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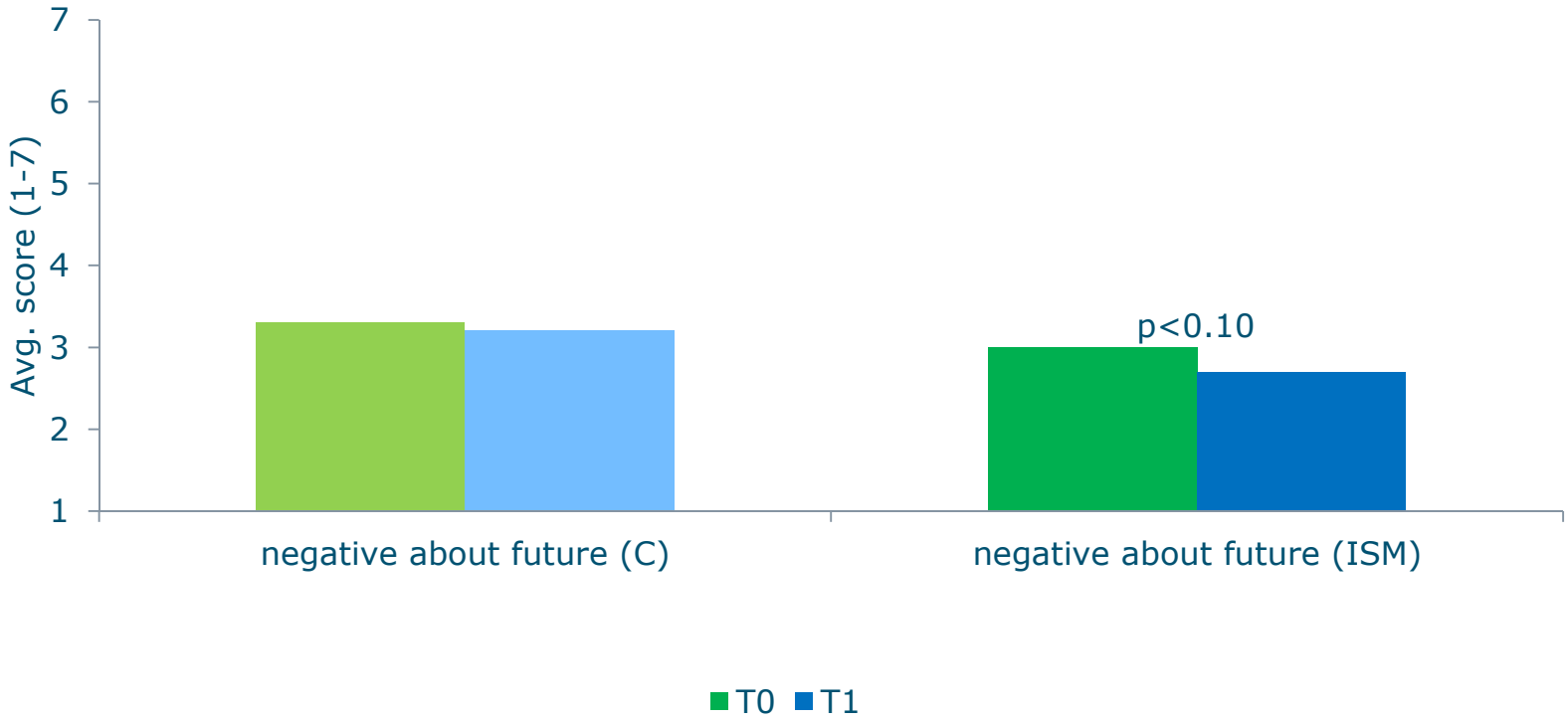
Preliminary results (7):negative about the future



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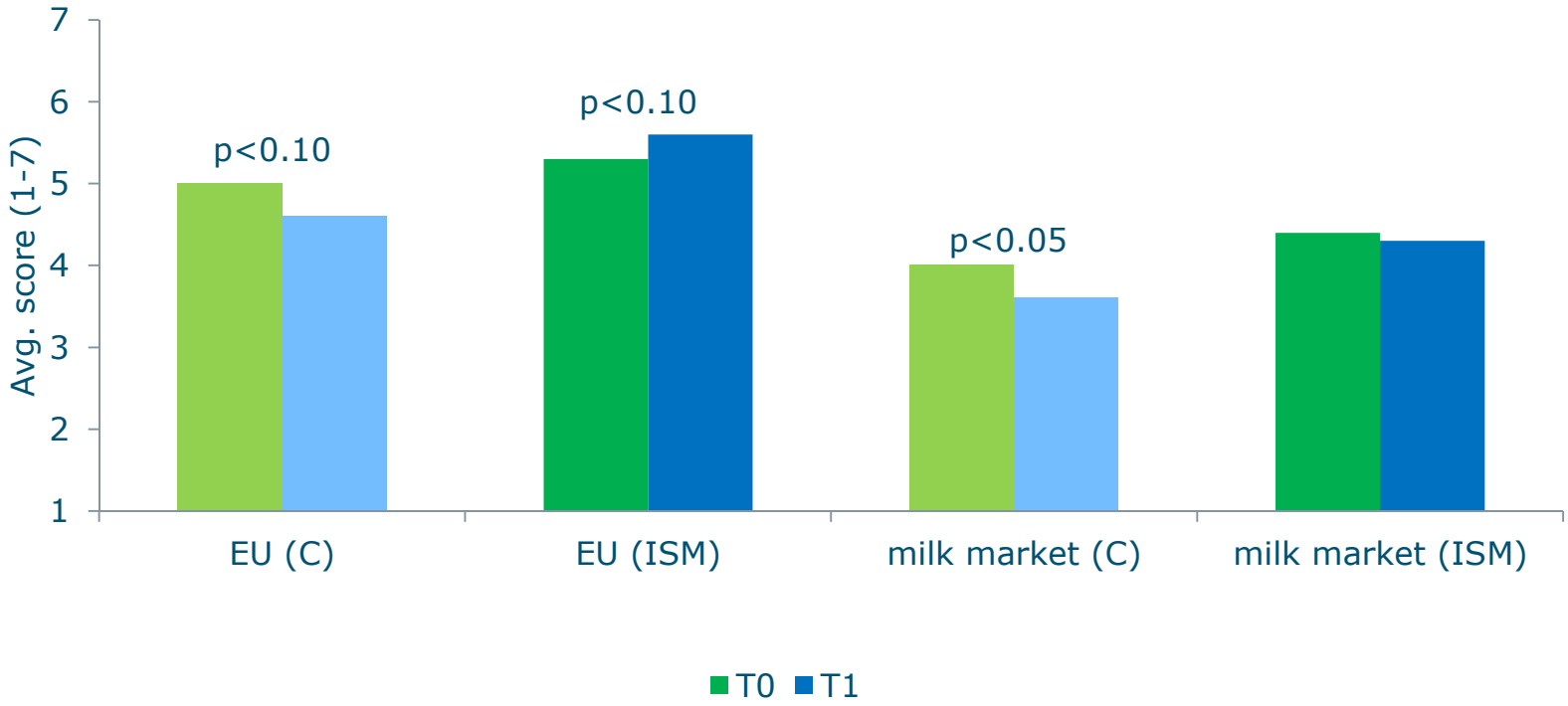
Preliminary results (8):opportunities and threats



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Preliminary conclusions

- ISM farmers seem to have become more aware of their environment:
    - They were more pessimistic about the availability of land and less optimistic about the availability of subsidies after ISM trainings
    - They perceived EU related factors more as an opportunity, while farmers of the control group perceived these factors and the milk market situation less as an opportunity
- ISM farmers perceived their openness and networking and pursuing competences higher after ISM trainings; farmers of the control group perceived their analysing competences lower.
- ISM farmers perceived their skills regarding customer orientation higher after ISM trainings
- ISM farmers were less pessimistic about their future after ISM trainings (but they were not very pessimistic about it before ISM trainings either)
- Did the ISM trainings indeed empower the farmers??

Thank you for your attention

Questions??

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