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SOCIAL WELLBEING SURVEY

# 2023 SYNTHESIS REPORT

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# **SOCIAL WELLBEING SURVEY: 2023 SYNTHESIS REPORT**

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# SOCIAL WELLBEING

## HOW DO WE MEASURE IT?

The concept of social wellbeing encompasses multiple factors, that together help people live their best lives. Our research team has developed a framework that identifies five key domains related to wellbeing. Social wellbeing, thus, is viewed as maximizing one's experience in all of the domains.



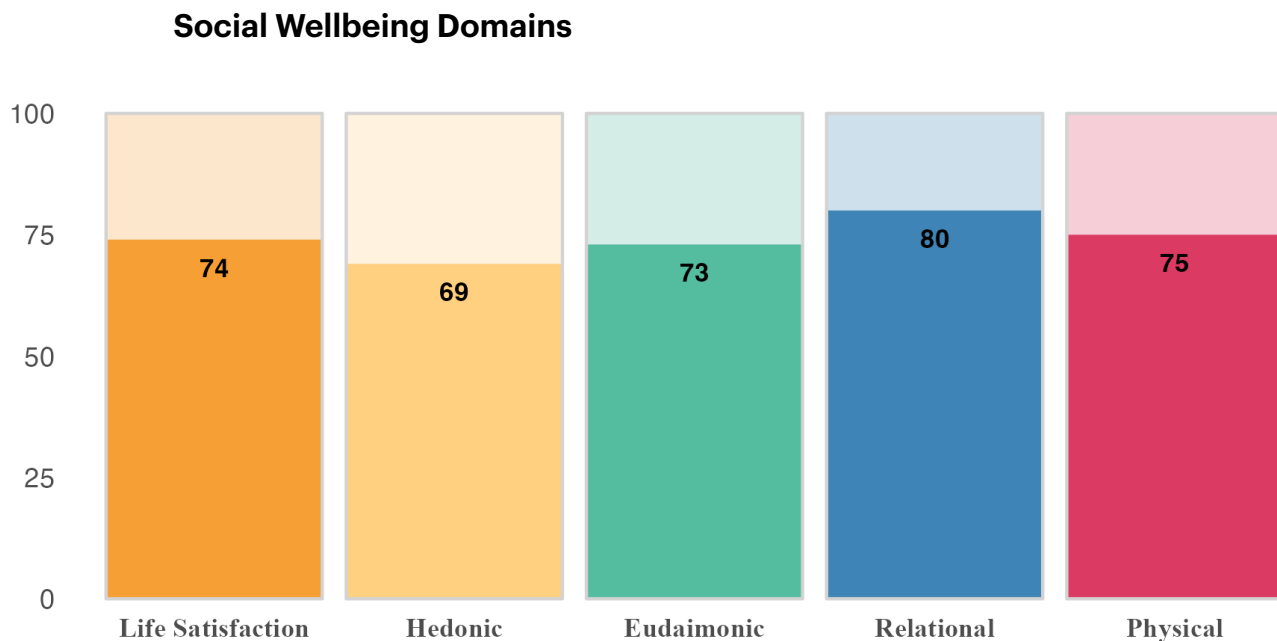
## FIVE ESSENTIAL DOMAINS

1. **Life Satisfaction:** is about feeling good with one's life as a whole.
2. **Hedonic Wellbeing:** refers to the experience of positive and the absence of negative emotions in life.
3. **Eudaimonic Wellbeing:** involves feeling a sense of accomplishment, and engaging in activities that provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment in one's life.
4. **Relational Wellbeing:** feeling loved, supported, and valued by those we have relationships with plays a big role in feeling happy and things going well in life.
5. **Physical Wellbeing:** being physically and mentally healthy to engage in daily activities, and having the economic resources that support enjoying life.

Our social wellbeing survey integrates well-accepted tools to measure each of the 5 five essential domains in a scale from 0 to 100. We, then, combine the scores of the domains into an overall index (the Social Wellbeing Index). The results from this survey will help to understand how a producer could simultaneously improve the health of their land, the resilience of their operation and their happiness (social wellbeing).

# RESULTS

The social wellbeing survey was completed by 42 farmers in Michigan identified as the main or joint decision-makers on 29 farms during the summer of 2023. Sixty percent of our participants were 44 or more years old, 83% were married, 76% of them held a bachelor's or professional degree, and 50% of them reported an annual household income above USD 75,000. The following figure shows your scores for the five domains in our multidimensional measure of social wellbeing.



**Life Satisfaction (average score 74/100):** We assessed individuals' overall subjective evaluation of their lives. The average score of 74 suggests that participants report a generally positive level of contentment.

**Hedonic Wellbeing (average score 69/100):** Within this domain, we examined how often individuals experience both positive and negative emotions. Past studies utilizing similar methods have reported scores ranging from 62 to 70.<sup>1</sup> In our survey, the average respondent's score of 69 indicates a typical level of positive and negative emotional experiences.

**Eudaimonic Wellbeing (average score 73/100):** Our respondents achieved an average score of 73 in this domain, which is within the scores reported in past studies (72 to 76).<sup>1</sup> This indicates that

<sup>1</sup> Butler, J., & Kern, M. L. (2016). The PERMA-Profilier: A brief multidimensional measure of flourishing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 6(3).

producers in general demonstrate a reasonable degree of self-perceived value, a drive to achieve goals, and interest and dedication in their daily activities.

**Relational Wellbeing (average score 80/100):** We assessed the quality of relationships and how it influences individuals' wellbeing. With an average score of 80, our respondents demonstrated a significant level of satisfaction with the support received (or perceived) from their social networks. This exceeds the scores reported in other studies, which typically range from 69 to 73, indicating a relatively higher level of relational wellbeing among our respondents.

**Physical Wellbeing (average score 75/100):** Within this domain, participants were asked to assess their physical and mental health and financial conditions. An average score of 75 indicates that our respondents hold a positive self-perception regarding their own health, including mental health, physical fitness, and satisfaction with their financial resources to meet their needs.

## THE SOCIAL WELLBEING INDEX

Based on the scores obtained in the five domains of social wellbeing, we calculated an overall index with an average score of 74 out of 100. The index score suggests that the level of wellbeing among our participants falls within the range observed in other studies,<sup>2</sup> indicating, a perception that their lives, in general, are going well.

On closer examination of the factors influencing the general Social Wellbeing Index, participants generally scored higher in relational wellbeing, followed by physical wellbeing and life satisfaction. This indicates a notable sense of happiness with their interpersonal relationships, as well as their physical health among producers. Confirming this, when asked about the most important domains of wellbeing, our respondents consistently ranked relationships and health as their top priorities.

It is important to emphasize that there are no universally established benchmarks for defining low or good levels of wellbeing. However, our findings align with prior research where general wellbeing scores typically range from 70 to 80.<sup>3</sup> Another perspective we can take is that the scores in the different domains and the general index all fall within a range that is commonly associated with a healthy state of wellbeing.



<sup>2</sup>Brown, K., Schirmer, J., & Upton, P. (2021). Regenerative farming and human wellbeing: Are subjective wellbeing measures useful indicators for sustainable farming systems?. *Environmental and Sustainability Indicators*, 11, 100132.

<sup>3</sup>Sherren, K., Hodbod, J., MathisonSlee, M., Chappell, E., & King, M. (2022). Adaptive multi-paddock grazing and wellbeing: uptake, management practices and mindset among Canadian beef producers. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 46(9), 1304-1329.

*To our participants, thank you for your valuable time and insight. Your participation is instrumental in helping us understand the factors that contribute to the wellbeing of beef producers and the sustainability of grazing systems.*

*Thank you for being an essential part of this project!*