

Organic rapeseed production in Finland

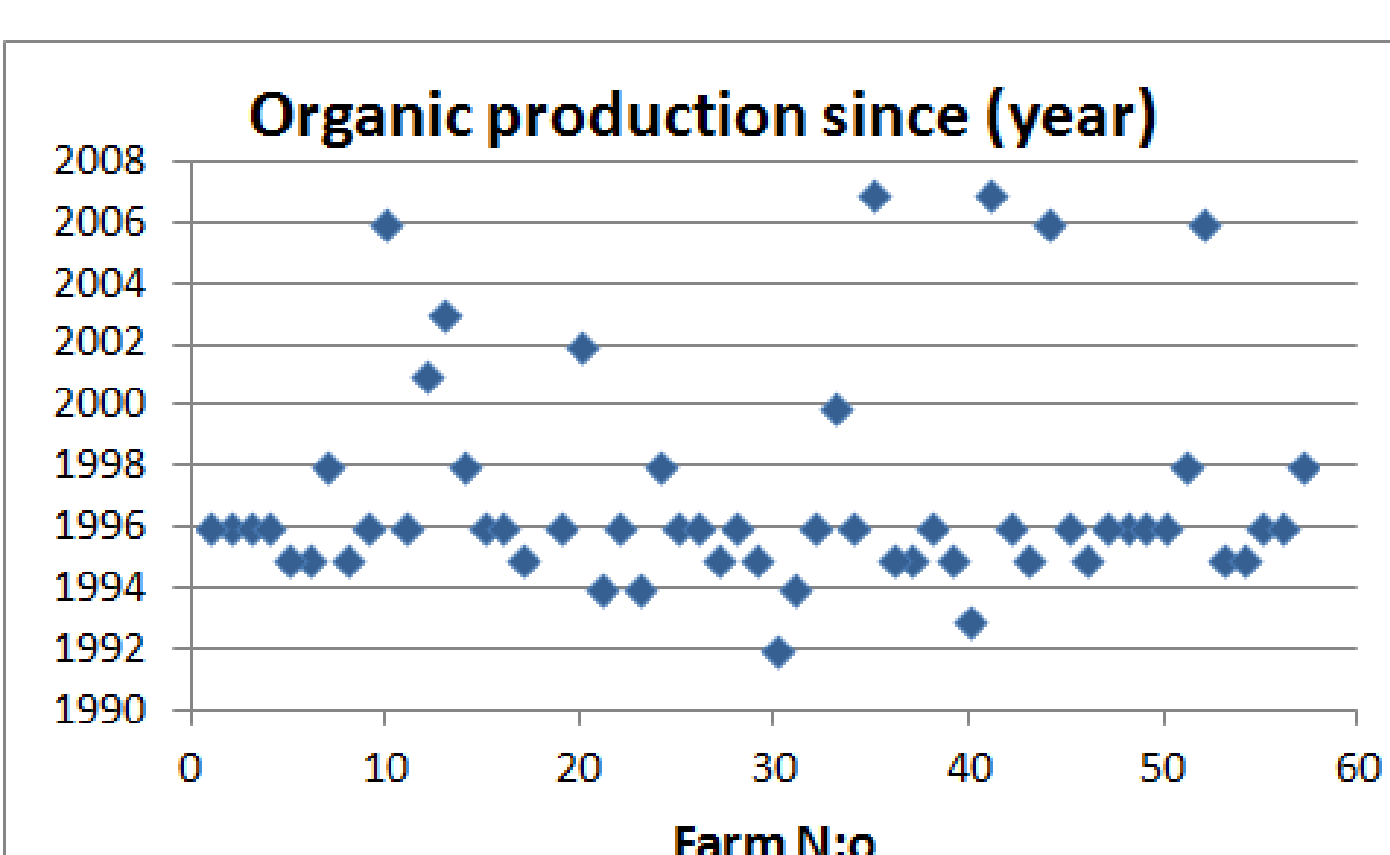
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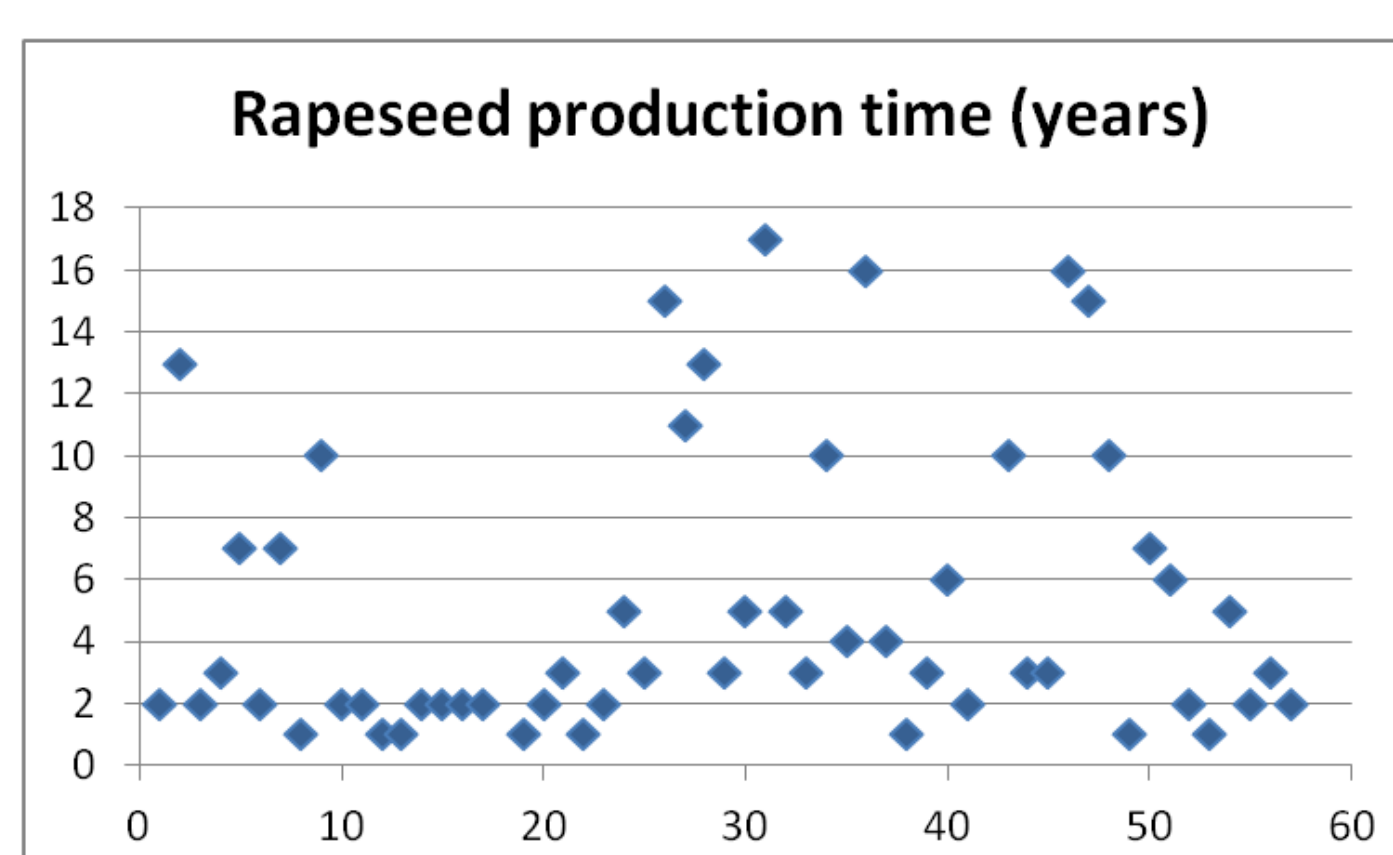
We interviewed 56 organic rapeseed (turnip rape) growers in four agricultural districts* in Finland.

Most growers were not satisfied with the yields, but found rapeseed cultivation profitable because of good price and well functioning markets. Turnip rape could also be used as a late sown crop if a winter crop failed, as its late sowing provided ample time to detect overwintering failure and prepare the soil. Some organic farmers used rapeseed to mechanically reduce weeds with temporary spring fallow and several soil cultivations allowed by its late sowing.

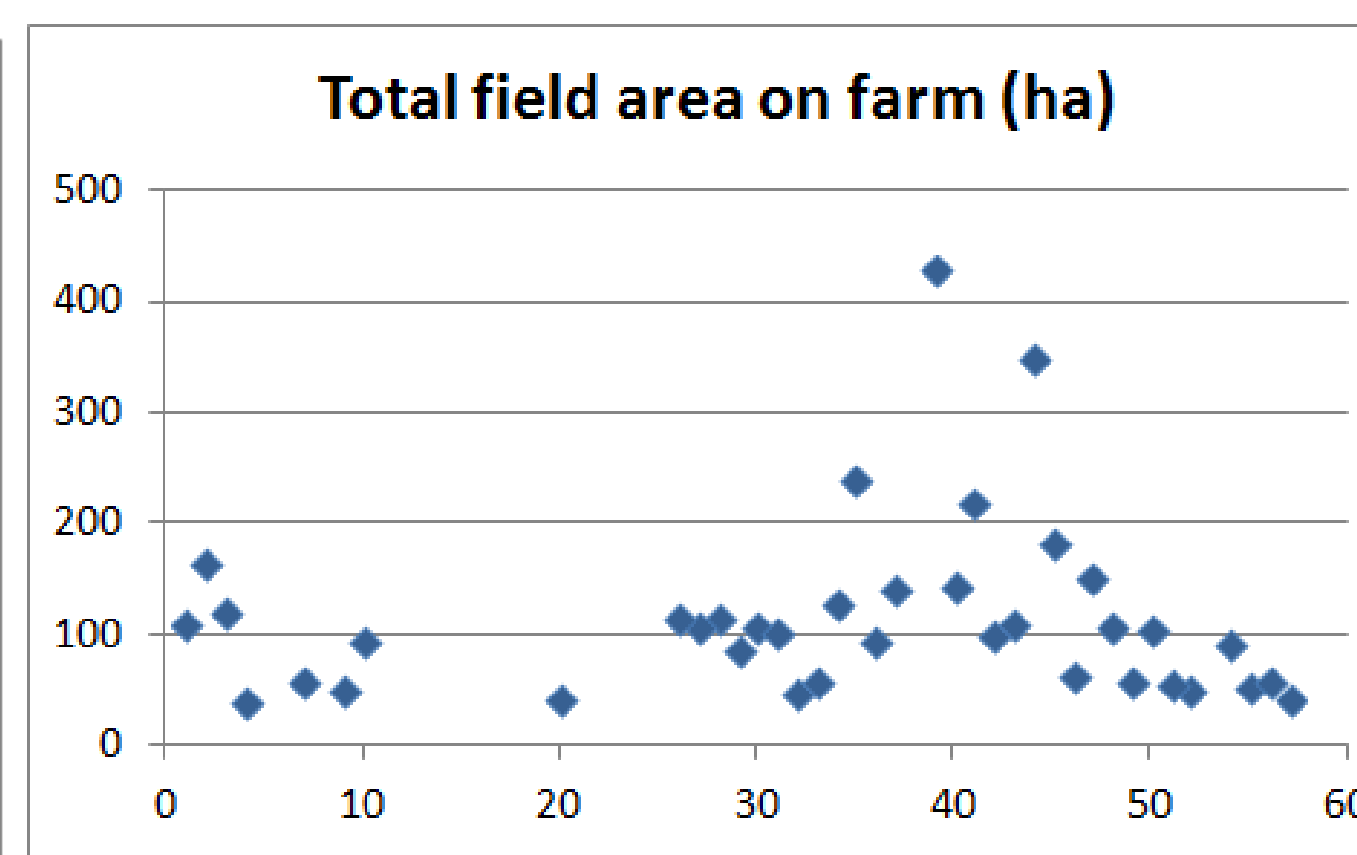
The most successful growers are real Gyro Gearloose's of the organic farming society, with own solutions for different problems and eternal optimism .



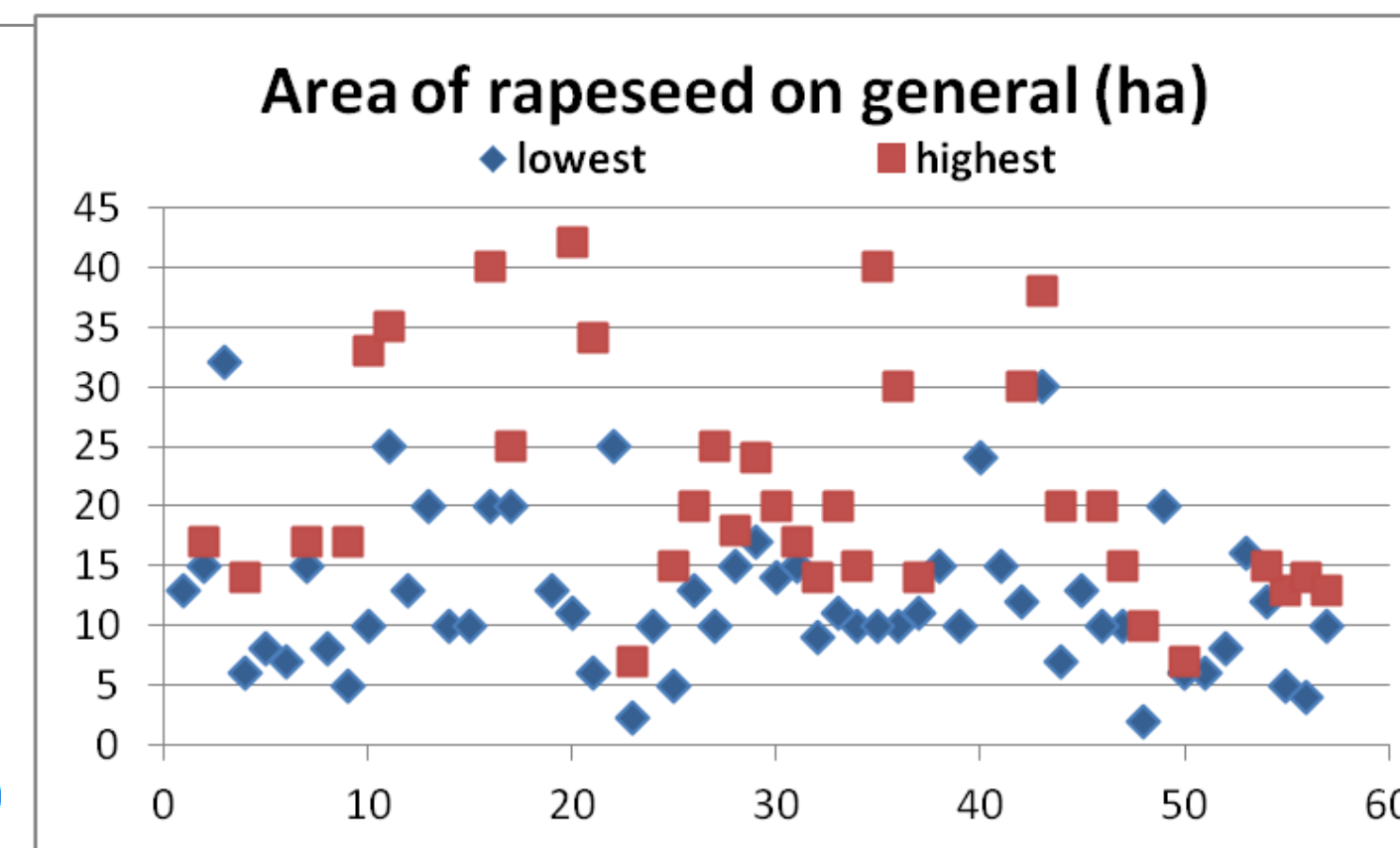
Most interviewed farmers* started organic growing right after Finland joined EU



Some started canola growing at once after moving to organic, some a bit later



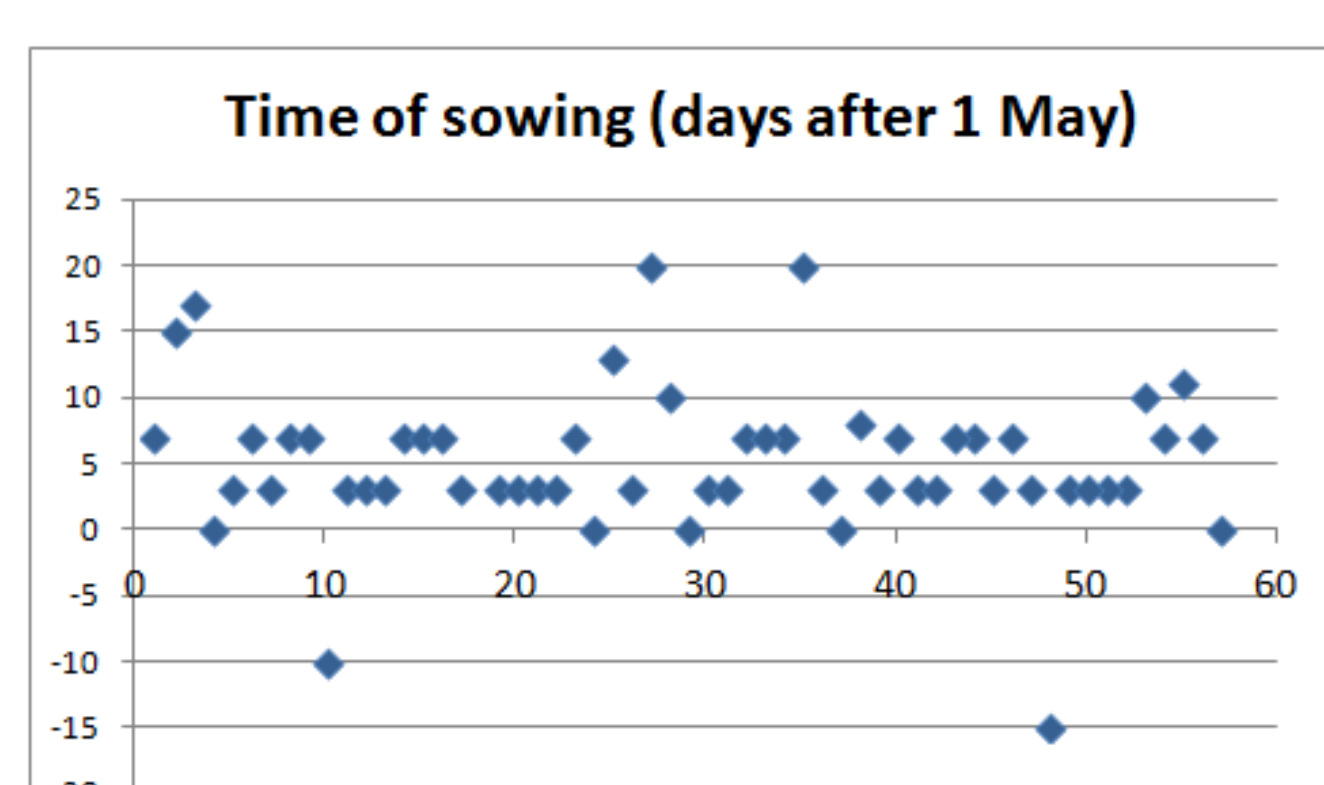
As with conventional farms, the field area has grown after joining EU



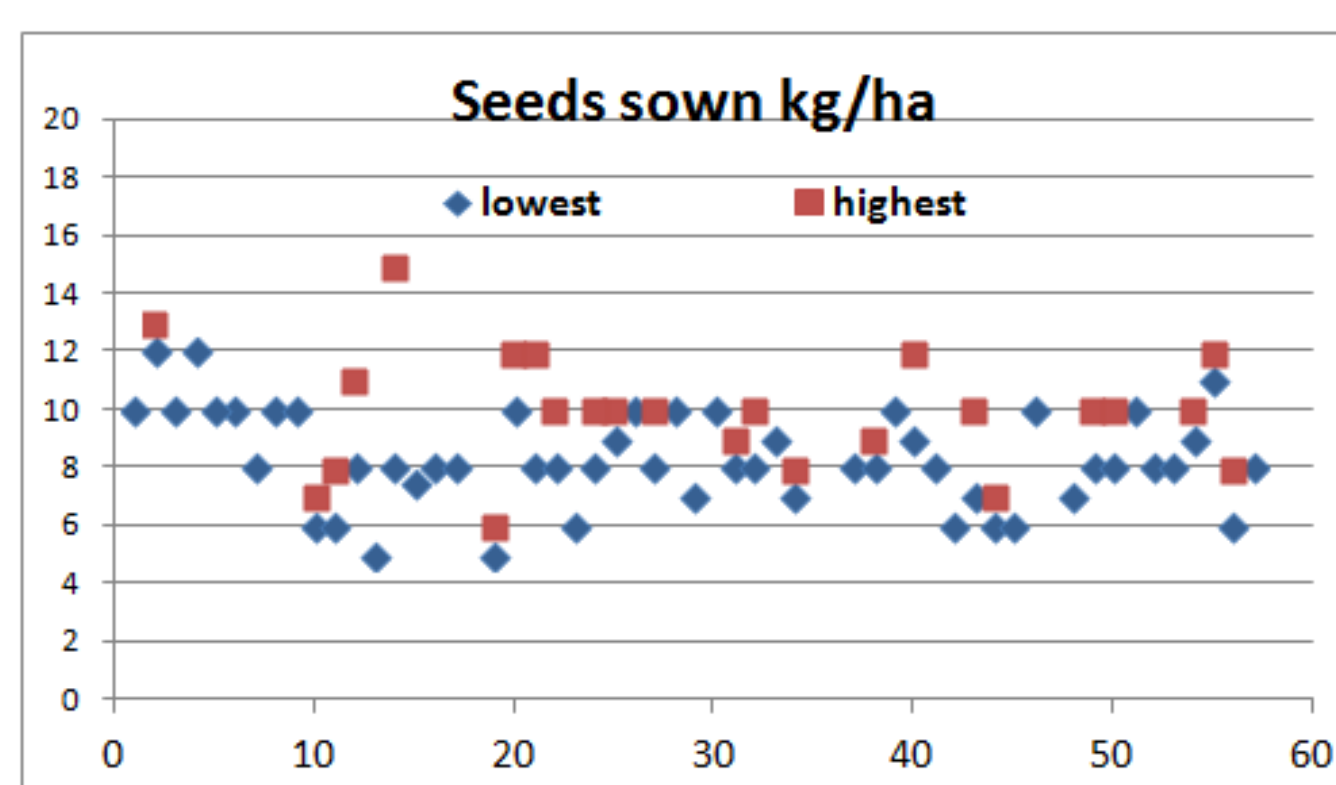
Rapeseed growing areas, again, are small



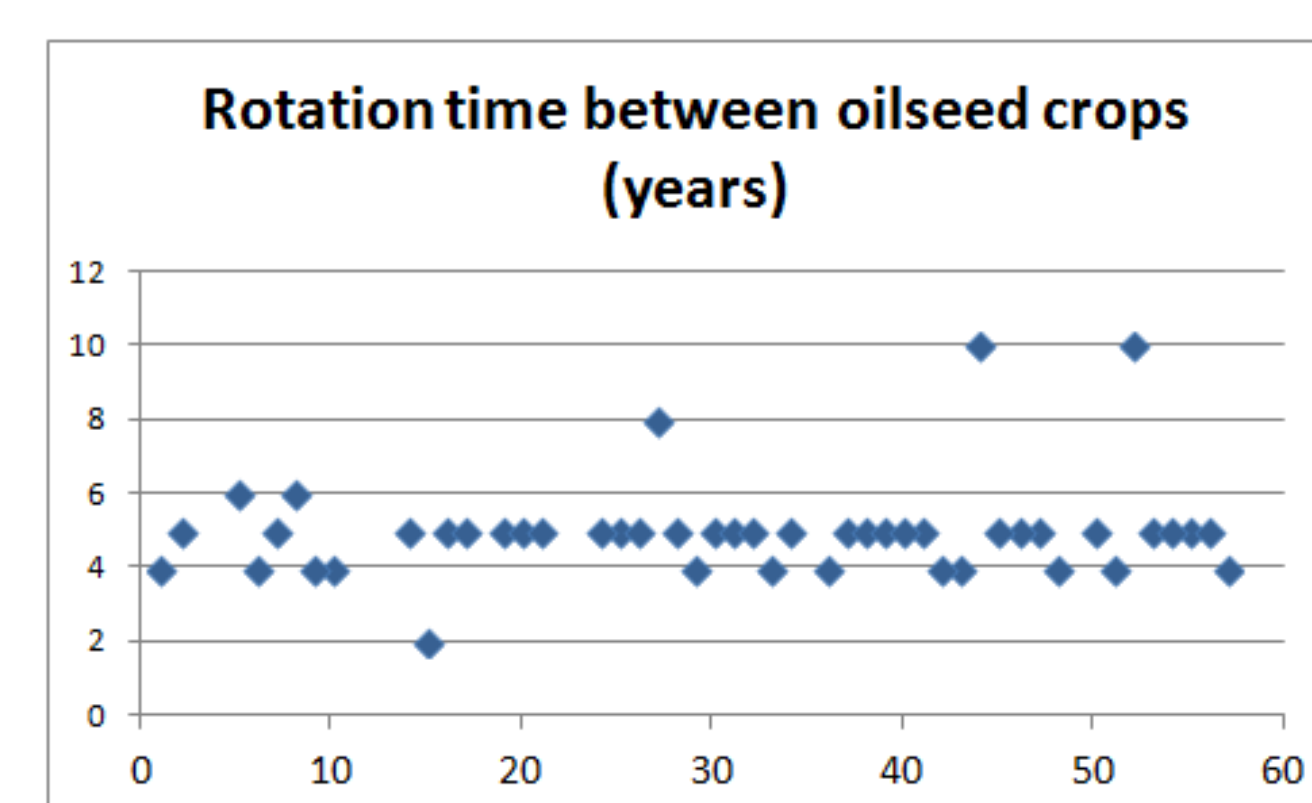
Farmers sow and manage according to recommendations:



1) Sowing is late. Normal sowing time in southern Finland is beginning (first week) of May



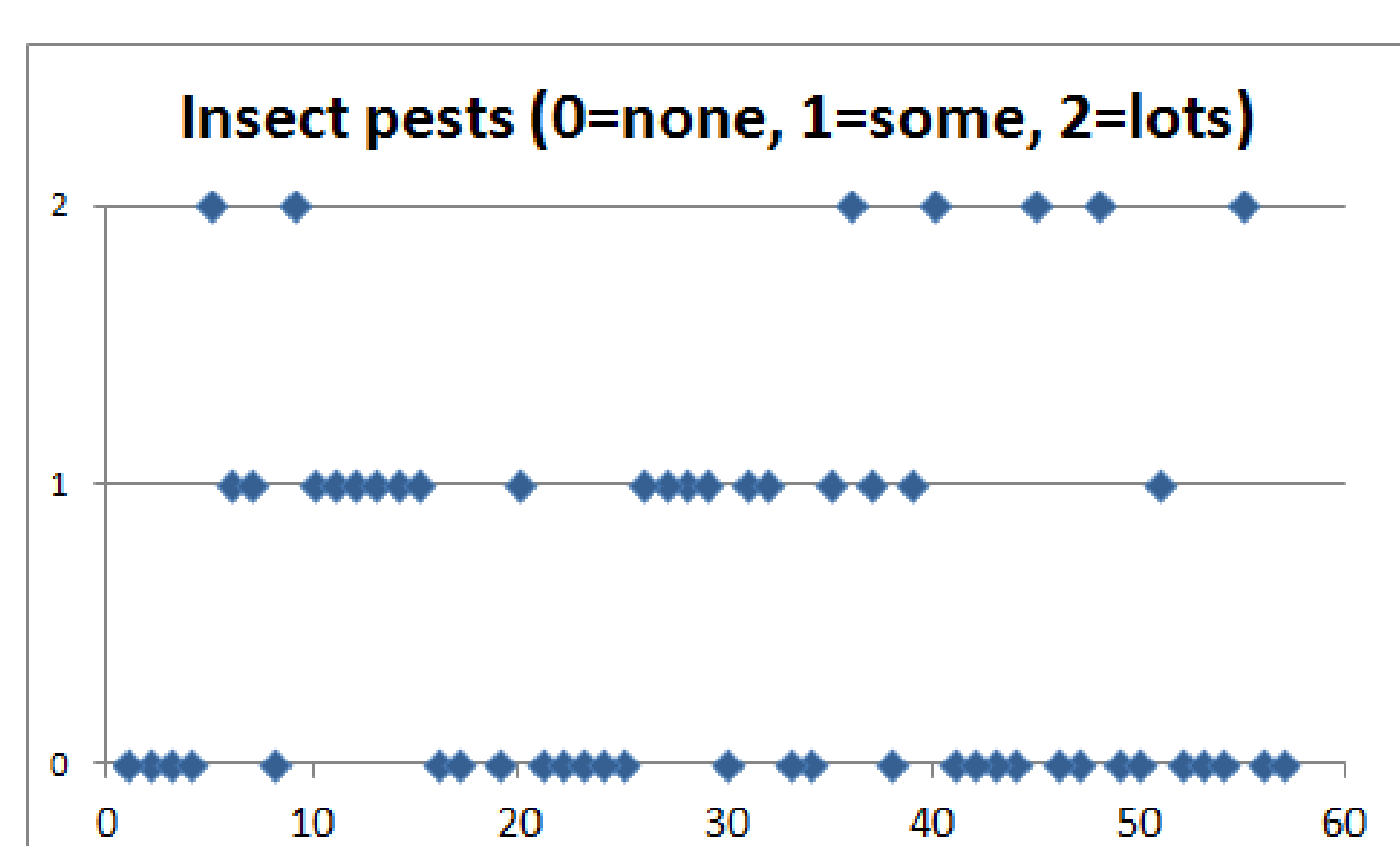
2) Most sow reasonably small amounts of seeds



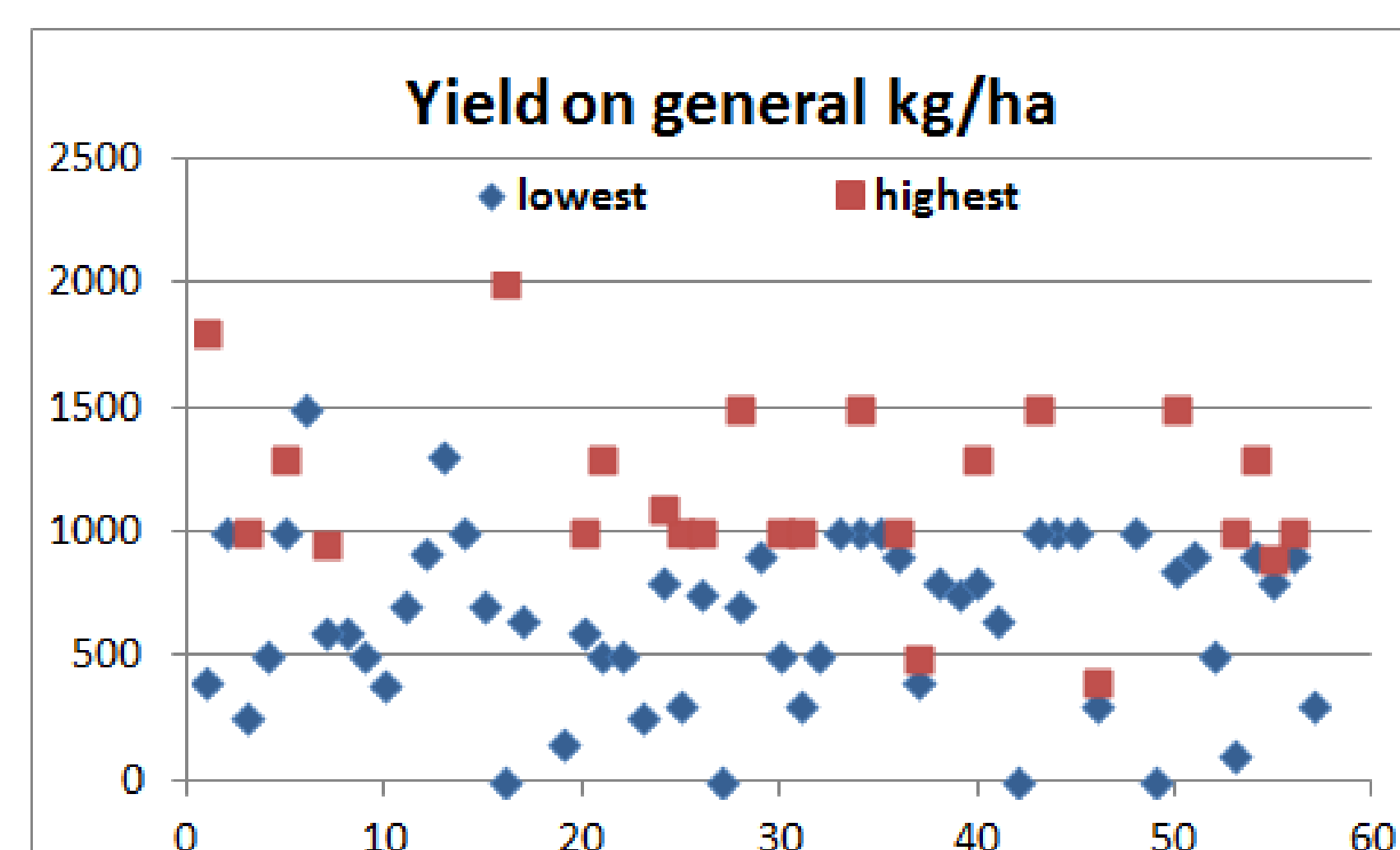
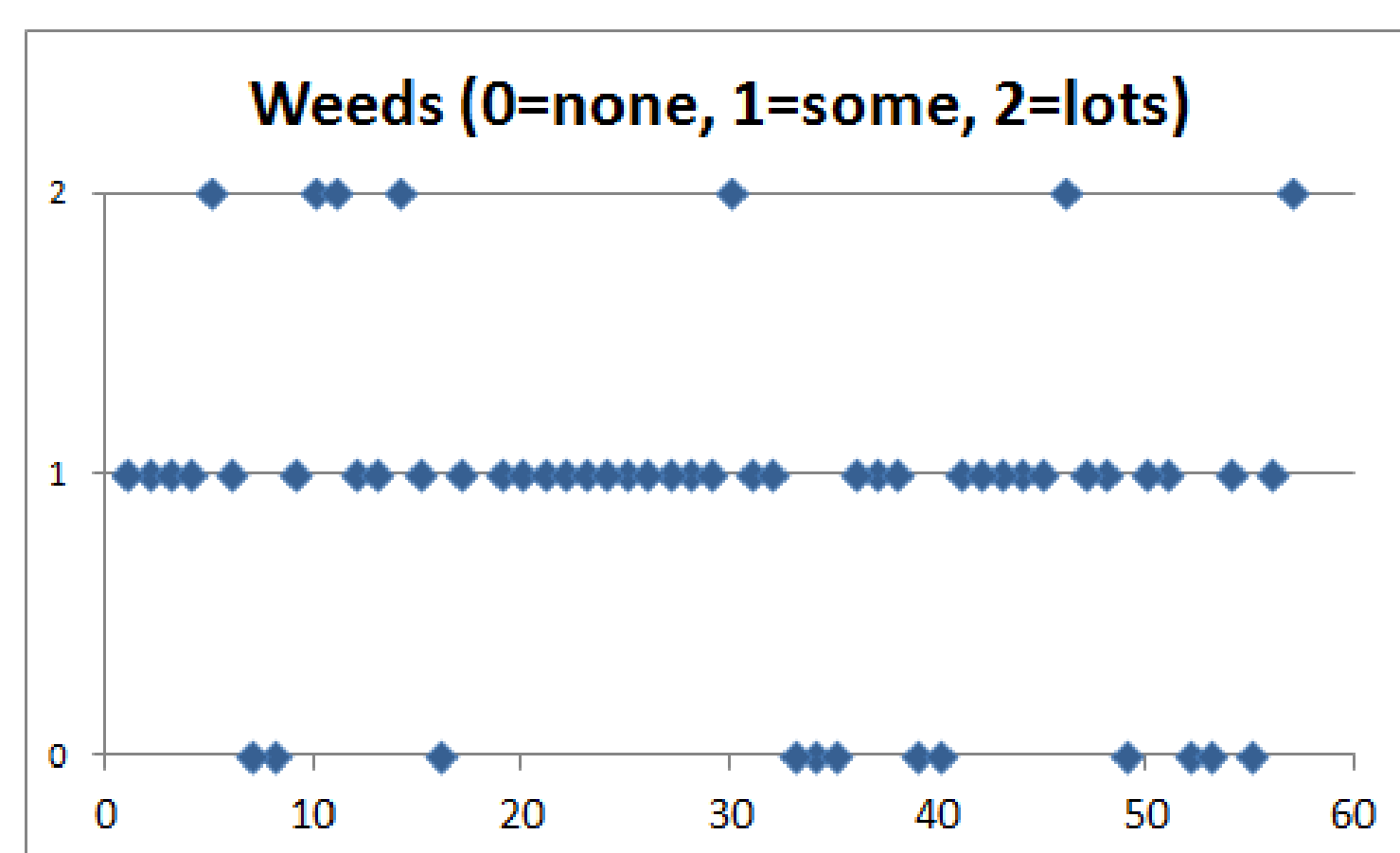
3) The rotation times between rapeseed crops are long



The equipment is modern, and the rapeseed fields may look as good as or better than in conventional farming. This farmer cultivates biodynamically, not just organic.



Sometimes insects and in most years weeds cause problems



Yields vary a lot. Yield above 1000 kg per ha is considered a success.

There are almost no problems with diseases, because of the long rotation times between rapeseed crops.

Late sowing causes often drought problems in spring, and heavy rains in summer may cause shattering of seeds. Because of long growing time, autumn rains often delay harvesting and can prevent harvests totally.

The yield could be higher, especially as the input prices have been rising (meat and bone meal especially)

* Farms 1-12 are from Uusimaa (South, Helsinki district), 13-27 Varsinais-Suomi (South, Turku surroundings), 28-43 Pirkanmaa (Central, Tampere surroundings) and 44-56 South-East Finland