1. Introduction

The managerial tasks in agriculture are currently shifting to a new paradigm, requiring more attention on the interaction with the surroundings, namely environmental impact, terms of delivery, and documentation of quality and growing conditions (e.g. Sigrimis et al., 1999; Dalgaard et al., 2006). Among other things, this managerial change is caused by external entities (government, public) applying increasing pressure on the agricultural sector to change production from a focus on quantity to an alternate focus on quality and sustainability (Halberg, 2001). This change has been enforced by provisions and restrictions in the use of production input (e.g. fertilisers, agrochemicals) and with a change of emphasis for subsidies to an incentive for the farmer to engage in a sustainable production rather than based solely on production. In general, this change of conditions for the managerial tasks on the farm has necessitated the introduction of more advanced activities monitoring systems and information systems to secure compliance with the restrictions and standards in terms of specific production guidelines, provisions for environmental compliance and management standards as prerequisites for subsidies. Until now, farmers most often have dealt with this increased managerial load by trying to handle manual a mass of information in order to make correct decisions. The increasing use of computers and the dramatic increase in the use of the internet have to some degree improved and eased the task of handling and processing of internal information as well as acquiring external information. However, the acquisition and analysis of information still proves a demanding task, since information

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +45 89991930.
E-mail address: claus.soerensen@agrsci.dk (C.G. Sørensen).

© 2010 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.