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Consequences for work and identity**

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Introduction

In many regions and countries farmers have been looking to tourism as a possible source of additional or alternative income as farming has encountered problems (Kneafsey 2000, Brandth and Haugen 2005a). Housing and catering for visitors is not a new activity on Norwegian farms. Lately, however, farm tourism has received exceptional attention in agricultural politics and economics as an alternative source of income, and as an important activity that is expected to promote the sustainability of rural communities. It seems to be in the process of becoming accepted as a natural part of rural socio-economic activity together with farming.

Rural tourism has been an object of intensive research for several years (Page and Getz 1997, Sharpley and Sharpley 1997). The definitions of rural tourism are very general and broad. Lane (1994) identifies four criteria to qualify rural tourism: it must take place in rural areas, build upon the specificities of the rural world (open space, rural heritage, etc.), be rural in scale (usually implying small scale) and represent the complex pattern of the rural world (environment, economy, history and location). Farm tourism is one component of rural tourism, more closely related to agriculture than other rural tourism operations (Fleischer and Tchetchik 2005). Nilsson (2002) defines farm tourism as tourism based on the farm and the farmer: “The main actor, the farmer, in many ways represents the old idealized concept, is located in rural areas, and also requires a rural lifestyle – all commodified, packaged, and sold as farm tourism” (ibid. p.10). Clarke (1996) makes a distinction between ‘tourism on the farm’ and ‘farm tourism’. ‘Tourism on the farm’ implies that the farm environment and its essence are incorporated into the product (for instance participation in farm work) while the term ‘farm tourism’ is used where accommodations are divorced from the farm environment. Busby and Rendle (2000) describe a transition among farmers from tourism on the farm to

farm tourism. Farmers, who started tourism on their farms as an alternative source of income to agriculture, slowly divorced themselves from agricultural activities. This occurs when tourism revenue exceeds that for agriculture, they claim. The farm tourism product comprises three distinct categories; accommodation-based, activity-based, and day-visitor-based (Davies and Gilbert (1992).

One concern in research on rural tourism has been the impact of tourism on local cultures and the experiences of the tourists. Another focus of research has concentrated on tourism as a business sector, and its economic significance for the regional economy. Research has also dealt with the firm level, particularly business and financial factors, for instance what factors are associated with a successful enterprise. When it comes to the relationship between agriculture and tourism, one question has been the extent to which tourism benefits from the agricultural activities. Clough (1997) found that a majority of the tourists are quite happy not to see the farm. When they choose a farm, it is for its image, scenery and tranquillity (referred in Busby and Rendle 2000). Fleischer and Tchetchik (2004) found that tourism benefited little from farming, as farm activities were of little interest to the visitors. Similarly, in her study from Scotland, Frochot (2004) found that the rural theme was of little importance to visitors who showed limited interest in the rural lifestyle.

In this paper we are interested in the relationship between farming and tourism.

Understanding tourism as a transformative cultural force, we think it is important also to study the micro level of work and the challenges that the individual farmer meets in transforming his enterprise from farming to tourism, or from a primary production to a service industry.

One of the aspects that makes up the distinctive character of agriculture is its dependence on nature. To farm is to interact with nature. Farmers are connected to nature through their daily work, dealing with animals and plants. Production is heavily dependent on natural forces such as climate, weather and soil conditions and the cyclic and seasonal processes of nature. These characteristics of agriculture influence the use of the land and the gendered division of labour. A second aspect which gives farming its distinctive character is the diffuse division between home and workplace, private and public, working hours and leisure. Thirdly, in contrast to most modern forms of work organisation, work and power in agriculture is based on a heterosexual partnership. The family farm is and has been the basic unit of agricultural production in most Western countries. The gender hierarchy in family farming (the farmer

and farmer's wife) has traditionally valued the masculine over what is understood as feminine, and as a consequence women and women's work has been inferiorised and devalued (Brandth and Haugen 2005b).

In contrast, it has been held that farm tourism, like off-farm work, ranks the positions of the women higher than in farming (Danes 1998, and Girauld 1999 referred in Nilsson 2002). According to Girauld (1999), women's struggle for professional status on the farm is a strong driving force for farm tourism in France, where women have played a central role as a motor for development of farm tourism and thus have assumed a central position in such units (Nilsson 2002). This has brought husband and wife to a more equal status within the farm enterprise.

Tourism products and corresponding work activities are generically of a different kind from farm products and farm work. For instance, tourism products are intangible and cannot be sensed the way agricultural goods can. They are also experiential, being about creating a special experience for the visitor. Further, tourism work is interactional and processual, and the quality of the product depends on the quality of the interaction. Thus it involves tackling indeterminate and unpredictable situations for those producing them. A final characteristic is that the consumers/the visitors are present in the production process (Crang 1997:139).

A farmer working at producing intangible experiences in interaction with visitors faces challenges of a different sort from those who produce traditional farm goods. The differences between farm and tourist work is conspicuous, yet the differences may mask a great deal of common ground between the two types of activities. This paper will look into some of the differences and similarities between the two. What are farmers able to bring with them from their farming experience, and what completely new aspects of work do they face? Focusing on farmers who have gone from farming to farm tourism, the paper will look into the consequences of this transition for their work identity.

Data

This paper is drawn from an empirical study of farmers who have started farm based tourism, and it is part of a larger project on integrated rural development focussing on change in the rural economy. The paper is based on in-depth interviews with eight persons from five farms/four tourist businesses, plus our visits to five additional businesses and conversations

with their owners. The data was collected during the spring of 2005. The interviews lasted between two to three hours and were audio-taped and later fully transcribed.

The sample consists of cases that have been in operation between ten and four years and seem to have succeeded in the market. Two of them were known to us from previous visits, and the other two were recommended by key informants. The businesses were located in central Norway. All of them were run by couples. We conducted interviews with three women and five men. We intended to interview the couples together, but in one of the cases the woman was not available for interviewing. The interviews were semi-structured and flexible in style giving us the possibility to follow up on matters that were particularly interesting in each case. We had a list of items that we wanted to explore, and encouraged open discussion. Discussion centred on the transformation from farming to tourism and its implications. We were interested in the development of the product and the business, consequences for the farm and the family, their working situation, competence, division of work and gender identity.

The main cases, on which we base this paper, are described below.

The mountain farm

This was originally a sheep farm which at some stage had also had dairy cows. It is located in one of the most scenically beautiful mountain areas in Norway. In the years before the change to tourism, they had 120 sheep over the winter. The business is run by the same farm couple who had been operating the farm for forty years. In addition to farming, the husband used to work in construction while she ran the household. For many years they combined various activities such as farming, carpentering and hiring out one of the farm houses to visitors. When the tourist activities expanded to include the serving of food to groups, combining this with farm production became too difficult and strenuous. They ceased the farm production, leased the farm land to a neighbouring farmer and put all energy into the tourist business.

Today they are known for offering traditional foods based on the previous farm production and local, self-developed recipes. They offer day visits with cultural experiences for groups of between 10 and 100, overnight stays and functions (weddings, anniversaries, conference facilities). They have developed a farm museum, showing the farm history from way back, guided tours in the cultural landscape combined with serving meals outdoors. Three

generations are involved in the business today. In addition they employ locals on an hourly basis for serving food and cleaning.

The forest farm

This case is a small holding situated in a forested landscape surrounded by mountains. The owners bought the holding some years ago primarily because they wanted to live in the area. The holding had not been in productive use for many years, and the buildings were in great need of renovation when they bought it. After the young couple and their two children settled on the holding, they wanted to create their own work places based on the resources of the holding. Both the man and the woman had varied work experience from agriculture, outdoor life activities, tourism, handicraft and public services. She holds a part-time job off the farm.

Their idea is to make the place into a visiting farm where people can come to experience the atmosphere of an old, traditional farm. What they want to do is to recreate an idyllic idea of farming as it used to be in the past with many small animals wandering about the yard: goats, pigs, hens, ducks and cats. They offer various activities in the summer and before Christmas. Their farm tourism products comprise day visits and activity based products. They prepare and serve lunch for visitors, but do not have overnight accommodation. The barn has been restored and turned into a farm shop and conference and party facilities for small groups. It is four years since they started, and the business is still developing.

The coastal farm

This farm is located by the sea in an area which is much visited by fishing tourists. The farm dates back to the 18th century, being in production until the late 1990s when the couple sold the cattle and leased the land to a neighbouring farm. The farm gave employment to one person only. Besides farming the couple held jobs off the farm in transport and in teaching. Now, they are both fully occupied in the tourist business. The most important resources are nature and the landscape. It has a varied flora and fauna, in addition to the fishing possibilities in the ocean.

They started the tourism business by offering room and board in their own house and having an open café on Sundays. The growing demand led to an expansion. They built cabins by the sea for tourists interested in fishing. In a later expansion the barn was renovated, and space was made for a restaurant, bar, kitchen, seminar rooms, library, bathrooms and a shop. In

addition, they built a new breakwater, a pier and a boathouse, and expansion of these facilities is still going on. They present their farm as “a place for recreation, seminars and get-togethers for friends and family.” A museum on the farm attracts visitors with an interest in local cultural heritage. They have made a speciality of serving traditional, local food. Their farm tourism products are mainly accommodation and activity-based, but they are also available for day visitors.

Most of the work is done by the couple themselves, but they also hire additional skills locally when it comes to IT, accounting and serving. In the summer season they have extra help.

The wilderness camp

This business is based on two neighbouring farms located in a peripheral forest and farm area with mountains, lakes and rivers in the near vicinity. Both farms had average areas of productive land, but with large outfield forest resources. They had been dairy farms for 150 years, and sold the milk quota and leased their land. Looking for additional income, they started by building a camp site and offering adventures in the wilderness for school classes, but as the workload grew, the combination with dairy farming became hard to manage. One of them says:

It was simply too much to do. The pressure of work became too heavy. When we started this business, the idea was that it should be a supplementary income to farming. But when the snowball started to roll, it rolled faster than we could follow. And we found ourselves up to the eyes in work. So we had to make a decision.

The decision was to concentrate on the tourist business. Today the camp requires work equivalent to three man years divided between a manager, tourist host, chef and jack of all trades. In addition they depend on seasonal labour on an hourly basis. Before going full time into tourism, both the men were farmers. The woman on one farm had part time work outside the farm, but left it for the business. The woman on the other farm is not involved in the business.

Their farm tourism products are accommodation-based and activity-based. They offer several products, all based in the camp site where they serve food made from local raw materials such as moose meat, trout and berries, have overnight accommodation and games. Packages are

tailor-made for groups and might include activities like fishing safari, mountain climbing, hiking, canoeing/paddling, cave expeditions, dog sleighing, and many more. They also offer guided moose hunting during the season.

'Tourism on the farm' or 'farm tourism'?

All but one of our cases could be described as 'farm tourism' as they do not invite guests to participate in farm work and its essence is not incorporated into the product. The link with farming activities is weak. Only on the forest farm is there 'tourism on the farm' in the sense that they have some minor production (herbs) and animals and the idea is to give the guests opportunity to take part in some authentic activities related to peasant farming.

In this paper it is the transition from farm production to tourism that is the focus of interest. What are the similarities and differences between the two activities? In which ways does it represent a continuation and in which ways does it represent a break?

Continuation of farming?

The resources of the farm as a basis

One of the most important aspects is that the tourism business builds on the resources of the farm. As one of the men emphasized, "It is a tourist product that is based on the farms and the persons who live on the farms. Without the farms and the outlying fields, there would not be any tourist business." This means that it is dependent on the location of the farm being attractive to visitors. Particularly the outfields and the qualities of the landscape, but also the farm buildings and the cultural history of the farm, convey this value. "We had a lot of outlying fields, and we saw a potential," one of them said. "After the children moved out", another one said, "we were left with a big house with eleven rooms and a kitchen (...) and we asked ourselves what we had, what we knew and what we wanted to do. (...) We live in a beautiful area..." One of the things that characterises these places in the countryside is quietness – the absence of noise compared to cities. In the winter it is very dark, no artificial lights that prevent the experience of a starlit sky. "We may sell the darkness, for instance, to people living in cities. We may even sell the quietness," one of the women visualized.

In agrarian ideology, taking care of the farm resources and improving them for successors is a central imperative. What we find, is that the businesses continue to take care of and build on

local traditions, but for commercial reasons. They are commoditising and thus passing on elements of their past lifestyle. The constant development and improvement of the business parallels the idea of continuous expansion and modernization of the farm. None of the businesses had external investors. The owners use their own capital, avoid large loans and work hard building up the business. What profit they make, is commonly reinvested in the business.

As in farming, work and home are located at the same place. It is a constant challenge to keep separate work and leisure, public and private.. The tourism activity is organised as a family business. In all our cases the husband and wife had started the business together and were involved as partners in the work. Where there was an older generation on the farm, they assisted, but without having any formalised role. During summer vacations children helped out, and also in cases where they might have special skills, for instance in designing the web page.

To choose to establish farm tourism at a time when agriculture is under pressure means that they aim to be able to continue as self employed rather than seeking off-farm employment. As one of them put it:

“We built up this place because we wanted to stay right here. If we had continued with farming, we would have had to build a new barn and doubled the number of cattle. We couldn’t take the risk to invest so much money with the low prices of meat. So we found that it was better to try something else, something with which we are very happy today.”

By choosing to continue to live and work on the farm even if they do not have any traditional farm production, implies a continuation or a choice of the self employed farm life style. Part of this life style is about independence and freedom to steer the course themselves and make decisions based on their own priorities.

Being farmers gives them authenticity and legitimacy as experts on nature. As Pearce and Moscardo (1986) points out, it is authentic people rather than authentic places which are the focus of the tourists’ concerns. The visitors expect the hosts to be knowledgeable when it comes to nature and the local culture. “They want someone to talk with; somebody they can

ask questions and receive answers,” one of the hosts said. They need someone to “go with them in the forest and tell them about the flora and about the birds and the animals and things like that (...) I can share with them what I learnt in my childhood. I am the one who knows the locality.”

The guests are not interested in seeing a farm in production with dirt and smell and modern machinery. Rather, they are interested in the near past presented in a romanticised version.

“What we need to offer is the image that people have of country life, often stemming from children’s books of idyllic and nice courtyards ... pleasant surroundings, chicken toddling around the yard, and things like that. This is the image people have of living on a farm, and that is what they come to experience, I believe.”

This romantic version of farm living is a modern construction, and a way “to adjust the old to the new,” as was said.

Having been farmers whose own history is connected to the place gives them a legitimacy as authentic representations of the local heritage. This is considered important in order to succeed.

Gender division of work

To some extent the complementary division of work common in family farming is continued in the new activities. The husbands do the building, the repairs and are the janitors. They have the main role in the outdoor activities involving guests. Guided hunting trips, fishing, canoeing, hiking are all activities done by men. Women do most of the work inside, including decorating and setting tables, booking and book-keeping. One of the women commented:

“I think that one of the most important reasons why the camp became like this is that both men and women were involved from the start, developing the concept. We (the women) introduced the food aspect and the soft values. And this is what distinguishes us from many other wilderness camps... for wilderness activities - to hunt and all such things, are very masculine.”

One of the men described their division of work in the following way:

“I do not want to enter the women’s premises. I have tried to take telephone calls, but that does not work. So I try to avoid doing office work and various other things like decorating, setting tables, etc. ...the finish, so to speak. My job is to cook and to do maintenance work, things like that. (...) She knows how to arrange things and make it look nice. ”

What is interesting and might be understood as a break with the common gendered division of work is that it is often the women who are labelled as managers in these businesses. In some cases men describe themselves as ‘hired men’: “She is manager and financial director. I think that’s fine. She manages the business and pays the bills and she is the bookkeeper and has the financial overview. I am more like a hired man.”

What is similar to farming is that in a family business it is necessary for the partners to be flexible and assist where there is a need. This is due to the fact that there are seasonal peaks and unforeseen events. In farming women have been labelled “the flexible gender” (Thorsen 1993). In the family tourist business it is necessary for both to be flexible workers. Regarding more traditional female work like preparing meals, waiting on tables, cleaning and making beds, we find many examples of the couples sharing this work. One of the men describes:

“Regarding cooking and serving the guests, it varies whether it is she or me. It depends on who has the time to spare. So we supplement each other. Primarily it is my wife who takes care of this [cooking and serving]. But I assist.”

However, when they have employees, it is normally female hired labour helping out during peak seasons on an hourly basis: “We have neighbours we can call on when we arrange big parties. It is commonly women,” one of them said. When they hire people, the gendered division of labour is very traditional: men build and do maintenance work, women make beds, clean and serve.

To a large extent women have been a strong motor in the development of the business. The main motive has been to create their own workplaces on the farm, and ensure increased activity on the farm in the future. The women have made a conscious choice of life style when they started farm tourism together with their husbands. Two of them quit their off-farm jobs

in order to be involved full-time in the farm tourism business. This shows that they have had alternative career opportunities and skills other than from farming. This contradicts the claim (Girauld 1999) that women start tourism-related businesses in order to improve their own position on the farm.

Differences between farm work and tourism as work

Being front stage

Tourism is a service industry where the owners are forced to relate to a market in order to attract visitors and sell their products. This is one of the main differences from farm work, which is a primary production of material goods. As a farmer one traditionally has not had to market one's products –at least not when making use of established channels of sale, mainly agricultural co-operation.

Being a service occupation, it is the customers who define the working conditions to a very large extent.

“As a tourist host you have to present/offer yourself all the time. (...) Therefore it is quite exhausting to be a host. It is much more strenuous than to milk cows. And then you are responsible for the well-being of the guests – to make sure that they enjoy themselves. You must dance attendance on the customers. It is necessary to succeed in this business. The guests who come here must feel appreciated and receive good service. When we charge them for having a nice adventure, it is obvious that we must deliver.”

Tourist hosting is demanding in a different way from farm work. Working with tourists means they have to relate to people instead of animals as they did before. It demands concentration on the guests, and being front stage the whole day. This has consequences for the way they present themselves and the clothes they wear. They need to be available and in a good mood. One of the women explained:

“You can deal with animals without giving them one hundred percent attention. But... when it comes to people, whether it is a telephone call or whatever... you must be very attentive. You can’t talk to them, you must talk with them.”

One of the women told of an episode where she had been working very hard for a long period of time and hardly slept for a whole week, and still she tried to meet the expectations of being a happy and gentle hostess. A guest came when she was feeling the most down and said: “Oh, it’s so nice to stay here with you because here is never any hustle and bustle.” “Then I knew that I had succeeded,” she said. In contrast to farm work the service aspect of tourism plays a very important role. Part of it is that they need to strive to earn a good reputation all the time.

Their attitude as hosts is considered to be very important. The guests have to be met in a friendly way and be made to feel significant. No matter how good the product is, if they fail as hosts, nothing functions. “I think one must be aware that when you do farm tourism, you are part of the product whether you like it or not,” one male host explained to us. If they want guests to come back, they must communicate that the guests’ needs and desires are most important. This implies being sensitive to other people. They have to deal with others’ emotions, provide support and build positive social relationships. Their role as hosts demands behaviours performed to embody positive emotions and emotional wellbeing in others, as well as to build positive interpersonal relationships. Tourist hosting holds a strong element of emotional work.

Flexible service work

Tourist hosting implies having to be flexible in order to meet the various wishes from the guests. What we see, is that they often extend the business to meet the needs. At one of the businesses some guests expressed a need for single rooms, so they built single rooms. In another case, a group of guests wanted dinner at midnight, so they served dinner at midnight. When a customer expressed a need for a larger seminar room, they rebuilt the barn to meet this demand.

The work takes all their time, particularly perhaps since they have been in a developmental phase all the past years. They accept that there is more work than money since they have a long time perspective. There exist seasonal peaks to some extent, especially at the coastal farm, where they work ‘day and night in the summer’, as she puts it, when the fishing tourists

are there. But at the same time they are expanding into the conference market and the local market for private parties and functions, something which ensures them a more even number of visitors. Moreover, in the winter there is the rebuilding. At the mountain farm they have guests all year round, but the main type of guests that come in the summer (more buses with day-visitors) are different from the visitors they have in winter (course participants). As a consequence the work load varies.

In principle the work is boundless, and all of them put a vast amount of work and effort into the business. When it comes to how they organise their time and set boundaries, however, they are very different. At the forest farm, general opening hours are limited to week-ends in the summer; in addition they receive groups which have made appointments. In this way they are able to plan their spare time. “If we had been open every day, we would have encountered big problems. Our children would not have received enough attention from us.” Some have a conscious and professional attitude towards the boundaries between work and leisure. The aim is to create a work situation that combines the best from both ‘worlds’: the freedom implied by self employment, and the possibility of taking time off from work. “You need one day that is different from the others. So, I try to keep Sundays free,” one of them said.

On the other hand, we see many examples of work and leisure merging as in the agricultural life style. The product may not be defined clearly enough so that they become tempted to constantly start new activities and may end up having an enormous range of tasks. At one of the farms they had opened a small café which meant that the woman had to be more or less present all the time: “Guests may just drop by to have a cup of coffee (in the farm café) and a chat. Sometimes I have the impression that I am a kind of psychologist... But, I like it very much.”

Another aspect of the flexible work is that they work when they must in order to satisfy their guests. “We have a lot of night work. When we arrange parties, we start work at three o’clock in the afternoon -and then it’s morning before we can go to bed.” Irregular working hours are similar to agricultural work, but in tourism it is not nature, livestock or the seasons, but the customers who rule. In contrast to farm work, they cannot leave the scene. And in contrast to most farm work, they need to be very punctual. “The cows can wait half an hour, but not the guests”, as one of the men puts it.

People instead of animals

All of them stressed that they liked being with and talking to people. This is also regarded by them as one of the most important qualifications for starting and succeeding in the business. “You need to like it (talking to people), and be fond of people. That’s the most important qualification. You need to enjoy having people close upon you.” This is a big contrast to the farm occupation which they describe as a lonely occupation. One woman exclaimed: “I enjoy it [hosting] very much. It is much better than farm animals and farm work! (...) For me it has been a very positive change. I found it very lonely out here before.” One of the men put it this way: “As a farmer you were alone most of the day. Now I work together with people and meet new people all the time. (...) This is a positive difference.”

One aspect of the change to tourism which they stress as positive is the feedback they receive from the visitors. One couple told us the following:

She: “It is so rewarding. You receive so much yourself... The response we get from the tourists, I do not think all occupational groups experience the same from their work.”

He: “It is edifying. It gives you energy.”

She: “It is enormous, the positive feedback from the guests! It is wonderful!”

He: “Yes, that’s right.”

Another said:

“To be a tourist host... no days are the same. It is very rewarding work. You work with people, and you get close contact with people, and you get nice and friendly feedback. It is a very good working place in that respect. It is never dull, it is very varied.”

As we see from the quotes, the farm tourist hosts declare that they are satisfied with the transformation. They enjoy the work of farm tourism and find it more rewarding than farm work, both economically and socially.

All the farm businesses studied started out quite modestly. Two of them combined farming with tourism for some years, adjusting their work schedule to meet the needs both of the visitors and the farm. They all gradually expanded when the demand grew. The overall

picture is in accordance with Busby and Rendle's (2000) claim; that farmers becoming engaged in tourism slowly divorce themselves from agriculture. Our question is how this affects identity.

Identity: Farmer or tourist host?

We are interested in how the transition into farm tourism affected their work and identity. One way to find out was to ask how they labelled themselves. The answers demonstrated that they identified strongly with farming. One woman explained:

“It is the farm that is the basis for us being able to run this business. So we feel like farmers. We have never used the farm as efficiently – so one hundred percent - as we do after having starting with farm tourism.”

One of the former dairy producers argued similarly:

“I use to fill ‘farmer’ in official papers, because I think of myself as still being a farmer. I live on a farm and even though I do not farm, I administer the farm land. And we run the tourist business on the farm; it is a part of the farming, too. So, still I count myself as a farmer”.

One of the other men puts it this way: A farmer “that’s what I am. The business is part of the farm, and we use the land [the outlying fields]. So even though I do not produce milk, I produce adventures based on the farm resources.”

What we see from the quotes is that they communicate an identity as farmers. This identity is based on the farm location as a special place. It is the place they belong to. Although the farm production is closed down, and part of their identity as farmers was probably weakened when the animals disappeared, they seem to define identity now by linking it closer to the land, the place, the buildings, and ‘the new production’ rather than to traditional production; “we still live from the farm, it is a family business,” one of the women emphasized.

However, the transition has not been straightforward. One of the couples told us that it was difficult to give up keeping the sheep which had been part of their working life for so many years, but as the business increased there was no way to avoid it:

He: The biggest change for me was to start cooking on a full time basis. I was in the kitchen for up to 16 hours at a maximum. And then we had to quit farming. Although I did enjoy being in the sheepcote. (...) It felt very strange for a long time.

She: “Sometimes we fed the sheep at two o’clock in the morning, as we didn’t find time before. After evening events, Ola [the husband] had to change his clothes and go to the sheepcote, while I did the dishes before we could go to bed. After a while the combination was very difficult, as we got more tourists.

The tourist- related activities demand a lot, and combining them with farming becomes difficult, not only time-wise, but also as regards professionalism and presentation of self. In many respects a professional tourist host does not sit well with being a farmer. As a farmer it is not how you look that counts, but the work. As a tourist host, it is not only the work that counts, but also how you appear. Cooking and serving guests for instance demand that you don’t smell of the cowshed or have dirty fingernails.

The ambivalence concerning work identity is illustrated in the following dialogue between the couple. When asked what they call themselves, they say:

She: Tourist host, no, I call myself hostess or landlady.

He: Then I am the hired man

She: No, you are the cook

We: If you have to fill in your profession on a form, what do you put?

She: I call myself a hostess

He: Host. We are hosts

She: Yes, because we rent out our farmland to a neighbour. He will care for the land. And then we can’t precisely label ourselves farmers any more. We have turned into full time tourism.

Identity requires some element of choice, however limited. They chose to close down farm production and they chose to invest themselves in the work with visitors. “We could have kept the tourism business on a small scale and then we would have been able to continue with farming as the main occupation,” one of the women said. “But for us, it went so well, and we

enjoyed it more, both of us.” In many ways they are drawn into the new identities as they have to assume so many new roles. When they host, cook, serve, guide, etc. these tasks influence how they see themselves.

Since identity is negotiable, interaction with guests is also important for their identity construction. In relation to the guests, work identity is about marking themselves as different. It is the selling of otherness and the unique (see Urry 1990) that is their asset and main product. It is their local authenticity and their life as (former) farmers that attracts visitors. This is a central reason why it is important to maintain the farm identity.

Identity is formed by the work they do. The tasks they perform and the positive feedback they get, influence how they see themselves. Therefore, one may say that the more professional they get at tourist hosting, the more they remove themselves from their farm identity. This is a paradox: some visitors may not find the place interesting to visit if it resembles any other restaurant or conference site. It is the soul and uniqueness of the farm site, its heritage and the hosts as representations of this uniqueness that make it attractive. On the other hand, to do a good job at hosting is also about professionalism, which is a prerequisite for a flourishing business. This means that they need to be self-conscious about what it means to be a professional host at their particular place.

The persons we have interviewed in this paper do identity all the time. Their farm identity is important for the business, but it is constantly challenged by the new and different requirements of tourism. As we see from the quotes, identity to match the new work roles may be in transition, and some of them have gone further than others towards the construction of a new identity.

Conclusion

In this paper we have been concerned with the differences and similarities between farming and tourism. We have seen that to start farm related tourism does not represent a complete break with farming, but in many ways a continuation of an active farm. Pluriactivity has been a typical adaptation and development strategy for Norwegian farmers. Through tourism and tourist related activities they are able to live on the farm and make a living based on the farm and its resources.

What we also see, is that the new business does not mean less work. On the contrary, the need to constantly rebuild and renew the farm to meet the demands and challenges from the guests, implies an enormous amount of work. Similar to farm work, the new work is boundless with irregular working hours and no clear distinction between work and leisure. In theory they may regulate their work, but the flexibility and lack of specialization means that they are always on duty. At the same time as they are the managers, they are the 'servants' of others.

One aspect of the work that is different from farm work concerns the service aspect and the elements of emotional input. To be sensitive to others, to create a positive experience for the guests and to maintain a good reputation are vital parts of the job. Service work emphasises embodied performance that contrasts with farm work. As they themselves are part of the product, they must perform as experts in many respects. The quality of the product depends on the quality of the interaction between the hosts and their guests.

Tourism is experienced as more rewarding than farming in many ways. In addition to the economic outcome, it is found to be less lonely, it gives them more positive feed-back and increased status as innovators and entrepreneurs in the rural community. To run a business based on the farm and its resources gives the owners a competitive advantage as there is a market for places that represent authenticity and uniqueness.

To deliver a credible product, it is necessary for them to feed into tourists' ideas and expectations of the place and its people. For that reason it is necessary to maintain a relatively strong identity rooted in farming. One of their main challenges is found just there: how to maintain a farm identity without farming?

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