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Examples from farm tourism.**

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Abstract

Changes in agriculture from farming to tourism imply change from primary production to service work. Based on visits and interviews with entrepreneurs of four tourist businesses, this paper will explore consequences of this change for work. The tourist work on farms can be divided into three main categories (administration, accommodation and activities). All of them consist of multiple tasks that are gendered in both traditional and new ways. Women do most of the administrative work, men most of the activities, while accommodation work is done by both. An important part of tourist work is emotional.. As tourist hosts both men and women aim to create good feeling states in the guests, and the paper will deal with the gendered aspects of emotional work.

In this paper we explore gender aspects of farm tourism. In many regions and countries tourism has become a valuable source of additional or alternative income as farming has encountered problems. As an alternative to farming, tourism is one component of the changes in agriculture and the countryside from productivism to post-productivism and multifunctionality. In these processes there is a reduced emphasis on food production and increased focus on non-agricultural pursuits such as recreation and consumption. Understanding tourism as a transformative cultural force, we will in this paper study the micro level of work and the gendered implications of transformation of farm enterprises from food production to tourism, or from primary production to a service industry.

While agricultural change has been studied intensively from a structural or top-down perspective, the shift in agency, identity and relationships of agricultural actors that may accompany structural changes, have remained largely unexplored (Burton and Wilson 2006). There are, however, strong reasons to believe that micro-level consequences of agricultural change are varied and multi-faceted, and that they do not automatically follow in the same pattern as structural changes. In their study from the UK Burton and Wilson (2006)

demonstrated that there is a temporal discrepancy between structural change and farm identity in that farmers are still dominated by productivist self-concepts despite post-productivist undertakings. This is very much in accordance with gender studies that have found the family farm discourse to be particularly persistent, the master narrative of men and women being that of the farmer and farmer's wife (Brandth 2002). Despite much documentation on variations and changing practices of men and women in the wake of structural changes, conservative claims define gender differences as natural, and in agriculture, gender divisions seem particularly clear and direct.

On the other hand, there are studies that have found 'traditional' farm identities to be influenced by post-productivist factors (Reed 2003; Brandth and Haugen 2005; Watn 2006), and that gendered farm identities change in a way that incorporates old and new roles. In a study of forestry Brandth and Haugen (2005) noted that commodifying local natural and cultural resources makes it necessary for rural men to "look like local foresters/native rural dwellers, think like businessmen, and act like tourist hosts" (p.19). Furthermore, studies have pointed out that rural tourism may represent a threat to local culture and occupational identities in the primary industry (Petrzelka et al 2005), and that this in part may account for negative local attitudes towards change in general and tourism in particular. In their study of farmers who started tourism on their farms as an alternative source of income to agriculture, Busby and Rendle (2000) noticed that the farmers slowly divorced themselves from agriculture as revenue from tourism increased.

The family farm is and has been the basic unit of agricultural production in most Western countries. In contrast to most modern forms of work organisation, this is a form in which work and power are based on a heterosexual partnership. The gendering of family farming has been the object of much research over the last couple of decades (see reviews by Brandth 2002; Little and Panelli 2003). Its patriarchal gender hierarchy and its valuing of the masculine over what is understood as feminine, have made women and women's work invisible and belittled (Alston 1995; O'Hara 1998; Haugen 1998). The relations of production in which women work (the patriarchal household) have been seen as explanations of why their work is often dismissed as domestic (Whatmore 1991). When the distinctions between productive and reproductive areas are blurred as they are for women in family farming, the definition of work in terms of paid work has not turned out to farm women's advantage. Moreover, as women's route of entry into farming has commonly been through marriage

(Shortall 1999), their work has been linked to the ideology of wifehood, always defining them in relation to their husbands. According to Solheim (1998) marriage is the key to understanding the cultural stability in the complementary organisation of family work.

While gender has received attention within tourist research (Kinnard and Hall 1994; Swain 1995; Sinclair 1997), this has been the case to a much smaller extent within research on farm tourism. Studies we have come across, report somewhat differently on the gendered implications of farm tourism. On the one hand, they show that farm tourism, like off-farm work, ranks the positions of women higher than in farming and increases their power within the family (Danes 1998; Girauld 1999 referred in Nilsson 2002; Førde 2004). For the purpose of this paper it is interesting to note that women's struggle for occupational status on the farm may be an important factor in the growth of new businesses. This is reported from France where women were found to be a strong driving force for farm tourism, and where they have played an important role in the development of farm tourism and consequently 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. Through creative female practices (new products and new activities) women thus challenge the established gender discourses within agriculture and contribute to both continuation and renewal of the industry (Førde 2004). A multi-functional agriculture and farm-based tourism offer new opportunities for women and men, and it is the consequences for gender division of labour and men and women's role which is in focus of interest in this article.

Other studies have shown that the gendered division of work in family farming continues in farm tourism and even that the tourist enterprises reinforce the traditional separation of work by gender (Garcia-Ramon et al 1995; Cánoves et al 2004). Garcia-Ramon et al found that the new tourist activity was integrated by women into their already "invisible" domestic work (preparing food, cleaning and washing clothes) and that it was not considered as an occupation. According to Hjalager (1996), "the accommodation and catering services may be regarded as an extension of the ordinary household services to comprise services being made available also to 'strangers'" (p.108). Even if the women in such cases did not achieve financial independence, they greatly valued their work in tourism which permitted them to earn some income without leaving the home. It allowed them to socialize with guests and to feel more integrated into the outside world (Garcia-Ramon et al 1995).

Cánoves et al (2004) document a gendered division of tasks and specialization of activities in farm tourism, depending on whether the tasks were performed inside or outside the house. Men in general manage services like outdoor activities, while women are more likely to be in command when it comes to indoor activities. Such findings show that tourism has not modified the male-female relationship in the household as the different jobs still respond to clear gender patterns. Hjalager (1996) further points to the fact that tourism activities occupy idle manpower resources within the farm household, and that the activities are made possible as a consequence of a (re)allocation of family labour. The norm is that particularly the wife and older children are the active partners. Typically, the tourism services offered are female work operations on the family farm. This may also be an advantage as is shown in Nazou's (2006) study of women's activities in tourism in Greece. In these women's businesses the qualities of the domestic space and work was extended to the tourist market, and the creation of a nice and friendly family atmosphere, was their main product.

To the extent that farm tourism is based on the family as a unit of production and takes place in the home, one may expect the same gender pattern to be maintained. To a large degree many services being offered by farm tourism are similar to the work women have been doing in the home. On the other hand, compared to farm work and farm products, tourism products and corresponding work activities are generically of a different kind. This raises interesting questions also about men's role in the new businesses.

Tourism products are intangible. One cannot sense them the way agricultural goods can be sensed. 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 (Crang 1997:139). The concept "emotional labour" has been used to capture people's attempt to create interactional quality and manage the emotional climate within a relationship. The task of creating "feeling states in others" (Hochschild 1983:7) are "activities that are concerned with the enhancement of others' emotional wellbeing and with the provision of emotional support" (Erickson 2005:338). It is a type of work that reflects the positive and caring aspects of the maintenance of interpersonal relations. Emotional work is not merely about stifling one's feelings. It is also about bringing a feeling into being as a response to social norms about what one should be feeling ("feeling rules"). A person's expression of emotion thus comes to be socially shaped and subjected to a high degree of management. Hochschild (1983) stresses that emotion management must be

conceived as work, since it requires time, effort and skills. Tourist hosting has many elements of emotional work, and in this paper we are interested in how men and women share this work.

The management of feelings has become increasingly commercialized (Hochschild 1983). In the service industry a whole range of new jobs have been created in which workers are paid to adjust their feelings to the needs of the customer and the demands of the work situation. To a very large extent these jobs are occupied by women. Flight attendants have received much attention in the literature on emotional work (Hochschild 1983; Forseth 2001; Witz et al 2003) and represent a most relevant example of the practice of commercialized emotional work. In this type of service work, it is necessary to present a calm, pleasant, smiling appearance and produce a positive experience for the passengers. It is necessary to be able to read people, know what to do in emergencies, when passengers get sick or drunk, know how to calm people and reduce the risk of panic. It is not acceptable to show anger and tiredness (Forseth 2002). Flight attendants are the company's front towards customers. It is the quality of the interaction that separates a good service from a mediocre, and the work is embodied as appearance, behaviour, feelings, speech, tone, body language and facial expressions are central tools in the interaction with customers. When workers' bodily appearance and behaviour become part of the service product, the distinction between person and product is blurred.

Many studies have been concerned with the theoretical conceptualization of work in the household to capture the *organization* of the many tasks (Mederer 1993; Doucet 2001; Erickson 2005). In addition to emotional work, the management of time, or "the invisible orchestration of family work" as Mederer (1993:134) has termed it, has been conceptualized as "the third shift" (Hochschild 1997). Women are commonly found to have the overall responsibility and the main management of work in the household (Doucet 2001; Smeby 2005). It is women who are responsible for the planning, smoothing and management of family members, and this is a type of work that has become more important with the increased time deficit of modern everyday life. When Carolyn Sachs describes women's tasks in the farm household to consist of running errands, supervising farm labour and "filling in" or doing "what needs to be done" (1996:134), this may be an example of the third shift, which is all the work in between occupational work and family work. In agricultural studies it has been interpreted as an assistant's work, but it may just as well indicate a manager's job. This is in

accordance with Smeby (2005) who in her study of dual earner couples with small children found that the mothers were the managing directors of the family.

In the tourist sector work is relational, and emotional labour constitutes an essential aspect of hosting tourists. 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, as for instance when the comforts provided by the farming household are commercialized. As Hjalager has pointed out, the introduction of strangers as users of these comforts “will change relations from a family-based, long-term mutual dependence into a short-term economic relationship” (1994:108).

As farm tourism is constructed out of the gendered institution that agriculture is, it is an interesting question how the new post-productivist activities come to embody gender relations. Previous studies report both increased power for women and continuation of unvalued female-labelled tasks in the household, and our question is what commercialization will do to gender practices and statuses in our cases from Norway. The analysis consists of three parts: first we look for gendered motivations to start farm tourism. Is the motivation to increase women’s status? Secondly, we focus on the gendering of tasks in tourist work (administration, accommodation and activities), and thirdly, our focus is on the emotional aspects of tourist work.

Data

The paper is based on a pilot 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 data is mainly in-depth interviews with a sample of eight persons from five farms/four tourist businesses. In addition it draws on information gained through visits to five additional businesses and conversations with their owners. Data was collected during the spring of 2005. The interviews lasted two to three hours and were audio-taped and later fully transcribed.

The sample consists of cases that have been in operation between four and ten years and seem to have succeeded in the market. The businesses were located in central Norway. All of them were run by a couple and in one case by two farm couples. The youngest informants were in their thirties and the oldest in their sixties. Only the youngest couple had children living at home. The others had grown-up children, and thus had more free time to invest in the business. 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. Another couple were divorced, and the new wife was not involved in the business.

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 tourist activities offered had weak links with farming activities. On one farm only did they have some minor production (herbs) and various small farm animals to create an idyllic image. The idea was to give the guests an opportunity to experience activities related to peasant farming.

None of the businesses had external investors. The owners had invested their own capital and worked hard at building up the business in order to avoid large loans. What profit they made, was commonly reinvested in the business. The farm businesses studied all started out quite modestly. The basis for the tourist business was both the farm resources and income from off-farm work. When the tourist business grew they first quit their off-farm work. 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. When the work expanded, they gradually reduced farming, and today none of them have income from traditional farm production. They lease the farmland to neighbouring farmers.

The workload is considerable in all the enterprises, particularly perhaps since they have been in a developmental phase for several years. They accept that there is more work than financial returns since they have a long time perspective and expect the business to gradually become

more profitable. There exist seasonal peaks to some extent. In low seasons/the winter there is rebuilding. Some of them have expanded their activities to arrange anniversaries, weddings and local celebrations. In this way they have activity all year round, but the majority of guests (tourists) come in the summer.

Gendered motivations to start a tourist business?

As pointed out in the introduction, women's motivation for farm tourism has been found to be related to aspirations for an increase in status and income (Girauld 1999). In our cases this was not so. One reason was their engagement in off-farm work. Even if the women had a history of being involved in the farm, only one of the women went directly from work on the farm to being engaged in the tourist business. Two of the women quit their off-farm jobs in order to be involved in tourism, and the fourth one still held an off-farm job on a part time basis in addition to work in the farm tourism business. Since they already had alternative job opportunities, starting with tourism was not something they expected would increase their status and income. Their motivation was, however, to create new income opportunities on the farm.

Three of the men held off-farm jobs in addition to farm work before they started with farm tourism. Their main motivation was to create their own work place on the farm and be their own employer. In order to do so, they had to start an activity that could generate more income than what farming could supply. For those who went from full time farming, important motives were to improve their income and working conditions on the farms, for instance by being less bound to dairy production and finding more socially rewarding work. 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."

For both women and men establishing farm tourism at a time when agriculture is under pressure, was motivated by a wish to be self employed rather than continuing in or seeking off-farm employment which would have been the most realistic alternative. As one of the women put it:

"We built up this business 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.”

The establishment of the new enterprise was very much a joint family decision. The women were strong partners in the development of the business, in one case undoubtedly being the main motor. The couples stressed, however, the importance of agreement and mutual support between themselves; “It takes two to operate this kind of business.” In all our cases husband and wife are business partners and they both contribute with their particular skills and knowledge. Starting farm tourism implied a conscious choice of a self-employed lifestyle. For those quitting off-farm jobs it was a return ‘back’ to a farm family business.

In agrarian ideology, taking care of the farm resources and improving them for successors is a central imperative. The motive to maintain and develop the farm property by building the tourist business on the resources of the farm can be seen as a continuation of this ideology. As one of the men emphasized, “We have 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 they are 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. By developing a tourist business on the farm, they saw the farm as more economically viable and attractive also for the next generation.

As seen, the motives to change to tourism were not highly gendered in our cases. Increasing their income, using and developing the resources of the farm and running a family based business are motives that represent a choice of self-employed lifestyle. They have their ideological roots in farming at the same time as diversification and agricultural ‘crisis’ are important forces for the start of the businesses. Building so strongly on many of the same ideas as family farming, but in a new business involving new tasks and competencies, may constitute a challenge for gender relations. In what ways the new work is gendered, will be the topic of the next section.

Gender division of work

Compared to farming, tourism implies new tasks and a new context for performing traditional tasks. We are interested in what the change from production of goods in traditional farming to production of services in tourism means in terms of the gendering of tasks. To capture the diversity in the processes of change, we have divided the work into three categories: administration, accommodation and activities.

Administrative work

Administration, the ‘orchestration’ of the business, is in many ways similar to that of administering a family household. It is multi-faceted; it involves having an overview over all the details and what needs to be done. It involves both management and secretarial work. One important part of it is to plan, supervise and delegate work (to family members and hired people). It involves dealing with potential customers, answering telephone calls, taking orders, and making plans for visits and events in cooperation with the customers.

What is interesting is that it is the women who are labelled as responsible managers in these businesses, while the men describe themselves as assistants or ‘hired men’. One of them said it like this:

“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.”

These are different positions from that of the family farm discourse and may be understood as a break with that type of gendering. On the other hand, it is clearly a continuation of the work of women. The managerial and administrative tasks that have become women’s responsibility in the tourist business are parallel to their administrative tasks in the household –the third shift. One difference from the farm household seems to be the change in statuses. Business administrative work is more visible and given a somewhat higher status. 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.”

This man calls the managerial work “office work.” Traditionally, office work has not held the status of ‘real work’ in a masculine farming context, and there is definitely a down side to these tasks for women.

One of them is the telephone. The telephone is an essential tool in administrative work, demanding presence and constant availability. It also means being constantly disrupted from whatever other work one is doing. Answering telephone calls is a type of task which men tend to avoid, arguing that women are more ‘fit’ for doing this task as it is important to be friendly and accommodating, convincing potential customers that they can offer exactly what they are looking for.

One of the aspects that are known to make up the distinctive character of the family farms is the diffuse division between home and workplace, private and public, working hours and leisure. This aspect is maintained. Some of the administrative work, like the telephone calls, tends to be performed in-between other work tasks. Moreover, as long as the women have to be available, the separation between work and leisure is blurred. “Holiday for me is to leave the phone,” one of the women claimed, while another stated: “I have two weeks a year without the phone. Otherwise the phone chases me no matter what time it is, day and night”.

One of the women, who was the manager of the tourist business on the farm, said that in the beginning she had her office in their private house. Quitting her off-farm job to work in the family business at home, made local people define her as a “just a homemaker” always available for helping out whenever anyone asked her to do so. Moreover, she had to juggle the domestic work and her office work all the time. She explains: “When I was doing office work, I had to start the washing machine, and then I had to prepare a meal in between, and then hurry to do some office work.” After a while she moved her office to a section of the barn that was rebuilt for that purpose. This helped to mark her work as occupational and thereby as something else than housework.

Accommodation

Accommodation consists of both 'first' and 'third shift' type work in Hochschild's terminology. The first shift involves cooking, serving, making beds, cleaning, and maintenance work, while the third shift is the necessary back-stage smoothing of work relations in order to construct the perfect 'scene' for the guests. It involves being there for the guests and accommodating their wishes.

As in farm work, the family business makes it necessary for the partners to be flexible and assist where there is a need. Traditionally, in farming it is women who have been defined as "the flexible gender" (Thorsen 1993), helping out and assisting the male farmer wherever there was a need. In the tourist business it is necessary for both to be flexible to some extent. This opens up for crossing gender boundaries and creating changes. Regarding more traditional female work like preparing meals, waiting on tables, cleaning and making beds, we find many examples where the couples share this work. One of the men describes it as follows:

"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."

Again we see that men define themselves as assistants, as not being the ones to have responsibility for this type of female-coded work. We may interpret this as a type of defence or a way to distance themselves from tasks that may be threatening to their masculine self-identification. In another enterprise, where the traditional cooking based on a farm speciality was one of the core products, the man was the chef. He took responsibility for cooking the main courses, and he enjoyed experimenting with creating local food dishes. This parallels what happens in the larger economy where men often take on a major role as cooks when the task becomes public and generates cash value. The woman in this case was responsible for the cold dishes normally served for lunch and also for preparing desserts.

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.

The farm couple often extends the business to be able to meet the needs of the guests. At one of the businesses some guests expressed a need for single rooms, so they built single rooms. When a customer expressed a need for a larger seminar room, they rebuilt the barn to meet this demand. In another case, a group of guests wanted dinner at midnight, so they served dinner at midnight. In principle the work is boundless. The product may not be defined clearly enough tempting them to constantly start new activities and creating an enormous range of work tasks.

While the men are responsible for building and maintenance work, often done in the winter, women do the various interior decorations, choosing colours and design, and setting tables. 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.”

Activities

The activities organized by the businesses comprise guided tours, mountain climbing, hunting, boating, fishing, canoeing and outdoor games inspired by older times such as running on driving logs, tree top climbing, throwing arrows and axes. These activities are core products and this is men's masculine domain. In this sphere the men are the experts and team leaders, and the activities and the accompanying equipment become symbols of rural male competence and knowledge. The work thus confirms their masculinity as experts in the field. One of the men explains how his work now is what used to be his hobby:

“I have always been interested in hunting and fishing. Otherwise I wouldn't have started this business. When we had to diversify the farm, we had to do something we were interested in. And now I am doing outdoor life and get paid for it.”

In farming, masculinity has been confirmed by outdoor work, often with machinery, be it in the fields, or forests and when it comes to fixing the buildings. By having the main responsibility for the outdoor activities within farm tourism this work continues to represent men and masculinity.

Emotional work

Emotional work, the creation of emotional well-being in others, is part of all the three main categories of tasks: administration, accommodation and activities. Exception are in those parts of the work that takes place backstage and is not relational.

While the women praise their husbands for being such good handymen, men praise the women for their ability to treat the customers well. "From the very first telephone talk with potential guests it is important to make them feel welcome to this place", one of the women said. 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. If they want guests to come back, they must communicate that the guests' needs and desires are most important, they say. This implies being sensitive to other people. 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."

Tourist work demands being front stage the whole day concentrating on the guests. Front stage work has consequences for the way they present themselves and the clothes they wear. "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. There is no room for smelly farm clothes and dirty fingernails, and it is necessary to always be in a good mood. One of the men who takes the guests out into the wilderness, reflects on his role this way:

"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.”

A woman 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 by 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. This is a good example of the “feeling rules” of tourist hosting, and how important it is to make the effort invisible. In contrast to farm work the emotional aspect of tourism work plays a very important role. Part of it is that they need to strive to earn a good reputation all the time. 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.”

One of the stories we were told, dealt with a winter day when there was an avalanche that completely blocked the road and isolated the farm from the rest of the world. On the farm they had a group of guests who were expected to stay for three hours only. The electricity disappeared and it was dark all over. He tells:

“The first thing I did, was to light candles and fires in the stoves. It crackled and was really cosy, you know. Yes, they stayed for thirty hours! They had an extra evening meal and breakfast and lunch and dinner again, and then coffee before they left. I gave them a guided tour of the farm and had history lectures for them up in the attic. I played the accordion and sang a bit, and... It turned into a great experience for them. (...) And when the lights came on, one of them exclaimed: ‘Turn them off again, because now we are having such a good time here!’ (laughter)

This is a story where the man speaks of his role. We learn how he tackled an unexpected situation caused by extreme weather conditions and remained calm no matter how much stress there was in the situation. It is an example of how they as tourist hosts need to deal with others’ emotional uneasiness, provide safety and support, improvise and build positive

experiences and relationships. Many of the guests who experienced this blackout, sent them gifts and made return visits to the farm.

From the material we see that both men and women are involved in emotional work creating states of good feeling for visitors although there are differences in the way they experience and go about it. There is for instance something masculine about tackling natural forces although it mostly had to do with creating a safe atmosphere indoors.

Moreover, gendered expectations from the guests may represent challenges when it comes to constructing new gender relations. Guests may anticipate “good old rural hospitality” something which often implies traditional gender roles. Thus the relation between hosts and guests may be constructed in accordance to expectations based on traditional country stereotypes, the idealized/romanticized farmer and farm wife. In one of the cases the farm couple shared kitchen and living room with their guests for the first years of the business. When we visited the farm, they had opened a restaurant in the barn where she put her pride into serving plentiful portions of food. “I am scared that people think; my god, you can’t even eat to the full. I will not have a reputation of being stingy.” Her way of taking care of the guests has similarities to the well-known television programme about the Larkin family – humour, plenty of food and time for a chat.

Both men and women do their best to meet the visitors’ needs and expectations. However men seem to be more inclined to set limits and make clear that they have the power of control, something which the following dialogue illustrates:

He: This is a service trade. But it is we who manage. It is we who decide.

She: But we go out of our way to make them (the guests) satisfied

He: You have to set limits. You have to.

She: But I have difficulties saying no.

The woman told that she, contrary to her husband, hardly rested when there were guests on the farm. Even if she did not have any concrete work to do, she felt she had to be emotionally available just in case somebody wanted her. The men did emotional work, but were more ready to give instrumental statements like; “If the guests do not enjoy themselves, they just will not return.”

Conclusion: farm tourism as gendered work

The intention of this paper has been to explore what consequences the change to multifunctional agriculture may have for the gendering of work. We have seen that to start a farm business is a joint decision motivated by a wish to establish the farm as a viable and attractive place to work. It is not an escape from farming and the gender relations of farming; on the contrary it is a conscious choice of a self-employed life style on the family farm, be it in a new form.

The tourist businesses studied are small and family based something which means a low specialization of work and a high degree of flexibility. Tourist work is relational service work consisting of different types of activities, some produced front-stage and some back-stage. As we have seen, the work may be divided into at least three categories: Administration, accommodations, and activities, all of which are gendered in different ways. Some of the work is traditionally gender marked, while other tasks demonstrate more flexible gendering.

In our cases the administrative work is mainly women's work. While the third shift is invisible and unvalued in the family, it receives more recognition when it is exercised as paid work in a business. At the same time this position implies a boundless work; a work which demands availability and tends to invade the private sphere and leisure time. Moreover, this is not the type of work that has held most status in rural areas, and it does not seem difficult for men to entrust women with these tasks.

From what we have seen in our data, many of the tasks traditionally related to female domestic work (cooking, serving and cleaning) are flexibly shared between husband and wife, although women seem to hold the overall responsibility. The necessity of having two people to handle it, and the fact that it is done for business reasons may be what motivates men to assist. Building and repairs, however, is carried out by men only. This work is back-stage without any demand to deal with the guests and as such it does not claim emotional involvement.

The outdoor activities which are done by the men confirm their masculine identity and status, and may compensate for the female coded work in which they participate.

In this paper there is no opportunity to investigate emotional work in all its gendered complexity. However, what we do find is that men are more inclined to set boundaries against the invading character of the work, and express that they want to be in control themselves. They seem to have an ambivalent attitude towards emotional work and have a more instrumental approach to it. Women on the other hand tend to be more boundless, finding it difficult to put priority to their own needs for rest and relaxation. Since they take part in both administration and accommodation work, they assume a comprehensive emotional role –from the first telephone call to the farewells.

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