

WHERE MILK COMES FROM

EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONS OF FARM TOURISTS

Loes Wijnen



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Preface

After several years of studying, the final thesis was my last big challenge in university. Because all these years I had to do assignments that someone else created for me, I grabbed this final chance to study something that interests me personally. So, I decided to study camping on the farm. This topic has raised many smiles, but it is something that really interests me. I am curious about handicrafts and artisanal activities like growing your own food, cooking your own meals with unprocessed ingredients, making wool, knitting your own scarves and so on. The farm camping site seems like an environment that could attract people with such interests. I was wondering if that is why people visit farms.

Although the idea of studying people who camp at the farm seems pleasant, reality was sometimes a bit more difficult. Weeks were spent searching books and papers, reading them through and discovering that only 5% of the results were useful. Sunny days had to be spent indoors to transcribe countless interviews. It has to be said that when I had to choose between the sun and the thesis, the sun has often won. A slight delay in finishing this thesis has been the result. But in the end I am satisfied with the result. Despite the difficulties I have enjoyed finding interesting information, talking with all sorts of people on the camping sites and finally organizing everything in a coherent report. Most importantly, I am glad my curiosity about camping on the farm is satisfied.

This thesis would never have been written without the help of the farmers and respondents. Furthermore, the support and advice of my supervisor Henk de Haan, my parents, my boyfriend and my friends has been extremely helpful. I would like to thank you all!

I wish you much joy reading this thesis.

Loes Wijnen
Amsterdam, April 2011

Abstract

After the second world war, many changes have taken place on the countryside in West European countries. In order to keep the countryside viable, it is often suggested farm tourism can be helpful. The combination of giving farmers extra income, maintaining the cultural and natural heritage of the countryside and providing tourists a nice holiday seems perfect. However, in reality little income is generated through farm tourism. To improve this, it is useful to understand the motivations of farm tourists.

Motivations can be divided in push and pull factors. In this study the focus lay on what pulls tourists to the farm. Previous studies in farm tourism motivations indicated that the image of the rural idyll may be important. Another motivation could be that tourists do not want to visit mainstream tourism accommodations and therefore choose farms as a form of alternative tourism.

To study the motivations, 32 semi-structured interviews were conducted with visitors of farm camping sites. The interviews were held in three predominantly rural area's in the Netherlands: Friesland, Zeeland and Gelderland.

The results showed that the respondents usually preferred the countryside over the city. They are attracted by the pretty image of the countryside and the farm, but to say they romanticize the countryside would be somewhat exaggerated. The image these respondents have of the countryside is very positive, but usually quite realistic. Some of the tourists do have nostalgic reasons to visit the farm, although this is not always a motivation they are consciously aware of.

Some of the respondents reported they disliked mainstream tourism accommodations. They had chosen the farm because it is more quiet, more relaxed and gave them more freedom. Indeed, they did choose the farm as an alternative to mainstream tourism.

Other factors, like the recommendations of friends and the cheap character of the farm also played a role. More generally, the search for pleasure, the escape from the daily routines and spending time with family and friends were important motivations. Educational motivations and prestige hardly played a role.

In general it can be said that these farm tourists are looking for freedom, independence and space. These are exactly the values associated with the farm. Modernization of the farm may attract new visitors, but it may also scare away the old ones. For farmers with tourism facilities, it is mostly important not to restrict the space and freedom on the farm camping site.

Samenvatting

Na de tweede wereldoorlog hebben veel veranderingen plaatsgevonden op het platteland van West Europese landen. Om het platteland leefbaar te houden is boerderijtoerisme vaak als oplossing gesuggereerd. De combinatie van extra inkomen voor de boeren, het behoud van natuurlijk en cultureel erfgoed, en een prettige vakantie voor toeristen lijkt ideaal. In de praktijk brengt boerderijtoerisme echter vaak weinig op. Om dit te verbeteren is het nuttig te weten wat de motivaties van boerderijtoeristen zijn.

Motivaties kunnen worden verdeeld in *push* en *pull* factoren. In dit onderzoek lag de nadruk op wat de toeristen naar de boerderij trekt. Uit eerder onderzoek naar motivaties in boerderijtoerisme bleek dat het beeld van de rurale idylle belangrijk zou kunnen zijn. Een andere mogelijke motivatie is dat toeristen niet naar mainstream accommodaties willen en daarom kiezen voor de boerderij als vorm van alternatief toerisme.

Om deze motivaties te onderzoeken zijn 32 semi-gestructureerde interviews gehouden met bezoekers van boerderijcampings. Deze interviews werden gehouden in drie voornamelijk landelijke regio's in Nederland: Friesland, Zeeland en Gelderland.

De resultaten toonden dat de respondenten een duidelijke voorkeur hadden voor het platteland ten opzichte van de stad. Ze worden aangetrokken door het mooie plaatje van het platteland en de boerderij, maar de mate van romantisering van het platteland lijkt mee te vallen. Het beeld dat de respondenten hebben van het platteland is erg positief, maar meestal wel realistisch. Voor sommigen spelen nostalgische gevoelens mee in het besluit te komen, hoewel dat niet altijd een bewuste motivatie is.

Een aantal respondenten zeiden dat ze niet naar mainstream accommodaties wilden. Ze kozen juist voor de boerderij vanwege de rust en de vrijheid die het hen geeft. Zodoende is boerderijtoerisme voor sommigen een vorm van alternatief toerisme.

Andere factoren, zoals de aanbevelingen van vrienden en het goedkope karakter van de boerderij speelden ook een rol. Meer in het algemeen waren het zoeken naar plezier, het tijdelijk ontsnappen aan de sleur van de dag en tijd doorbrengen met vrienden en familie belangrijke motivaties. Educatie en prestige speelden nauwelijks een rol.

In het algemeen kan gesteld worden dat deze boerderijgasten op zoek zijn naar vrijheid, onafhankelijkheid en ruimte. Dit zijn precies de waarden die geassocieerd worden met de boerderij. Modernisering van de camping kan nieuwe gasten trekken maar oude gasten wegjagen. Het is voor de boeren vooral belangrijk ruimte en vrijheid niet te beperken en wellicht te vergroten.

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1.

INTRODUCING FARM TOURISM



1.1 Introduction

This study is on farm tourism in the Netherlands. Before explaining the research question, it is important to understand the backgrounds of farm tourism. This chapter will start with sketching the environment in which farm tourism takes place, i.e. the countryside. Next, the recent developments in farm tourism will be outlined, including what farm tourism entails exactly, what functions it has and how it is thought that farm tourism can improve the quality of life in the countryside. This outline will reveal some gaps in the knowledge on farm tourism and lead way toward the research question.

The rural

Farm tourism usually takes place in rural settings. Most people will have a global understanding what the rural is, but it is not easy to define the term in an all-encompassing way. Several authors have explored the rural, which has resulted in many different ways of defining the concept. Halfacree (1993) tried to organize these definitions and distinguished four categories: descriptive, socio-cultural, rural as a locality and rural as social representation.

The descriptive method of defining the rural employs socio-spatial characteristics. For example, Clout (1993, in Ilbery 1998: 3) describes the rural by its features: 'low population densities, open country and extensive land uses, lack of access to major urban centres, loose networks of infrastructure and relatively low numbers of people working in secondary and tertiary industries'. Using such criteria, the degree of rurality can be measured for any given area (Halfacree 1993, Ilbery 1998).

Although practical in use, this descriptive method of defining the rural has received considerable criticism. The outcomes depend greatly on several factors, such as the choice of variables, the quality of the data, the statistical techniques and at what scale the rural is defined. Generally, descriptive methods can be useful for specific research but do not give an all-encompassing definition of the rural. In fact, they are not definitions of the rural but simply attempts to express it. They should be considered research tools that try to fit with what people already intuitively consider to be the rural, rather than a definition itself (Halfacree 1993, Halfacree & Boyle 1998).

Where the descriptive method focuses on the rural territory, the socio-cultural method tries to define the rural society. The latter approach assumes that population density affects the behaviour and attitudes of people. Presumed is that people living in cities (with high population density) will have different values and a different way of life than

those living in the countryside. This approach sees a strong rural/urban dichotomy. Traits like industrial, secular and rational are associated with urban, whereas military, sacred and traditional are thought to go with rural (Halfacree 1993). This way, the rural can be defined as anything that is not urban (Heins 2001).

This way of defining the rural also faces severe problems. In many areas, elements of both rurality and urbanity can be found. People may have an urban lifestyle whilst they are living in the countryside. Using the socio-cultural method, it becomes evident that rural areas can contain many urban elements, and vice versa. Simply distinguishing between urban and rural does not give a satisfying definition for the rural (Halfacree 1993, Heins 2001, Ilbery 1998).

The rural can also be defined as a locality, according to those characteristics that make them rural. Halfacree (1993) mentions three possible options. First, the rural is often linked to the primary sector, especially agriculture. However, this sector can also be found in urban areas and it therefore not strictly bound to the rural. Secondly, the low population densities are thought to create specific patterns of collective consumption. However, now that friction and distance have lost much of its importance, this also no longer seems a good criterion. Thirdly, specific types of consumption could be thought to play a role for rural areas. Rural tourism or second-houses bought by city dwellers can serve as an example. However, yet again this can also take place in other areas and is not strictly tied to rural areas only (Woods 2005).

Because the rural is so difficult to define, some authors have pleaded to 'do away with rural' (e.g. Hoggart 1990). The rural is considered a 'chaotic conception' with no explanatory power (Halfacree 1995: 28). Nevertheless, the terms rural and urban are still frequently used in both academic and everyday language. 'Rural and its synonyms are words and concepts understood and used by people in everyday talk,' Halfacree states (1995: 29). Therefore, trying to understand what the rural encompasses remains relevant.

Halfacree (1995) sees a difference between academic and lay discourses¹. The concepts used in lay discourses can be overlooked in academic discourses. To claim that the rural does not exist is to disregard the lay discourse in which the rural is very much real. Giddens therefore claims that 'the technical concepts of social science are, and must be, parasitical upon lay concepts' (1987: 70). Similarly, Sayer (1989) thinks that scientists should examine lay knowledge, rather than dismissed it. When trying to define the rural, Halfacree therefore points out that 'lay discourses are thus not to be regarded as being

¹ For more types of discourses, see Jones (1995)

rooted in a probable myth but should be seen as interpretive repertoires derived from a disembodied but none the less real social representation of the rural' (1995: 32). The term social representations refers to 'organizational mental constructs which guide [people] towards what is visible and must be responded to, relate appearance and reality, and even define reality itself. The world is organized, understood and mediated through these social representations' (Halfacree 1995: 29). They are used to deal with the complexity of the social world, by enabling people to conventionalize the objects, persons and events they encounter, and by helping them prescribing and organizing subsequent behaviour. Halfacree states that '[whilst] our social representations of 'the rural' may be fetishized and misplaced, distorted, idealized and generalized, they nevertheless produce very 'real' effects' (Halfacree 1995: 32). Van Dam et al. (2002: 464) agree: 'Individuals do not behave on the basis of 'reality' (whatever that is) but on the basis of their image, interpretation or mental construct of this reality'.

In accepting this point of view, one has to realize that several 'truths' about rurality may coexist. Social actors can create the rural in different ways: the farmer sees the rural as a space for production, the tourist as a space for relaxation and the environmentalist as a space for nature conservation. What rurality is depends on who is concerned with it (Heins 2001).

Furthermore, Van Dam et al. (2002) point out that the rural does not necessarily needs to be set in the locality of the countryside. What some may consider as rural characteristics, like space or greenery, may also be found at certain places in the city. According to them, the rural is not strictly confined to the countryside but can be located anywhere.

It has become clear that finding an all-embracing definition for the rural is not feasible. Both objective descriptions and subjective images show a wide diversity of what is rural and what is not. Perhaps most importantly, it is necessary to realize that the rural is in fact a social construction. What people consider rural is flexible and differs over time and space. This cannot, and need not be captured in a descriptive definition.

Rurality in the Netherlands

This study focuses on the Netherlands, which is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Of all countries larger than 5.000 km² (thus excluding city or island states like Macau and Singapore), the Netherlands comes fourth in population density (after Bangladesh, South Korea and Rwanda) (GeoHive.com 2010). Because rurality is often related to low population densities, it is useful to reflect on whether the Netherlands actually has something that could be called the countryside.

When trying to determine which parts of the Netherlands are rural, it quickly becomes obvious that different definitions give different answers. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed a descriptive definition of rurality and applied this to its member states, amongst which is the Netherlands. This definition is based on population densities combined with proximity to urban centres. When applying this definition on a national scale, it appears the Netherlands has no predominantly rural areas at all. On a provincial scale, five out of 12 provinces would qualify as intermediate region; the rest is predominantly urban. When looking at the municipalities, 70 out of 450 could be defined as rural. These make out 31% of the surface of the Netherlands, but only 7% of the population lives here (OECD 2008).

However, the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS) measures the degree of urbanity by looking at the density of home addresses per region. A maximum of a thousand addresses per square kilometre is used to define rurality. Applying this measurement on municipality-level, it turns out 63% of the surface is rural, with 34% of the people living here (Steenbekkers et al. 2008). What is rural and what is not, clearly relies on which definition is used.

As shown before, descriptive methods of defining the rural have many flaws. It is therefore perhaps more relevant to examine what people perceive as rural in the Netherlands. A study by Heins (2001, 2002) amongst Dutch urban citizens gives some insight in this. They were given statements on the degree of rurality in the Netherlands. The results show that a small minority (4%) agrees that there is no countryside in the Netherlands and about 5% believes it only exists in the North. Over 8% finds that the countryside is everywhere outside the Randstad². A larger proportion (22%) thinks that the countryside is everywhere outside city and village borders. Some respondents felt they lived on the countryside themselves, even though the research was supposedly held amongst urban citizens only. The rest did not agree to any of the statements, indicating that for lay people it is also very hard to define what is rural.

In trying to find out which landscapes are seen as rural, Steenbekkers et al. (2008) found that the great majority of the Dutch (both urban and rural) see agrarian landscapes as rural. Similarly, the majority see forests, moors, lakes and rivers as part of the countryside, although 35% does not agree. Small villages with few or no facilities are also included, but 60% believes that larger villages with more facilities do not belong to the countryside.

² The Randstad is the region in which the four main cities of the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) are located.

All in all, the more specific descriptive definitions and the great majority of the Dutch population agree that there are indeed rural areas in the Netherlands. Where these areas are and what they consist of remain a matter of opinion.

1.2 Rural developments in the past decades

After the Second World War, a lot of changes have taken place in the countryside of Western countries. Woods (2005) gives a very useful overview of these developments, with the focus on Western Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Although many developments and processes have taken place, they could all be captured under the term globalization. Woods defines globalization as 'the advanced interconnection and interdependence of localities around the world, reflecting the compression of time and space' (2005: 33). People and places no longer exist independently but become more and more connected with and dependent on others. Woods mentions three types of globalization which are important.

First, a global economy has developed. Supermarkets sell food that no longer comes from the area where they are located, but from all around the world. Trade now takes place on an international level. Price, convenience and popularity of products have become more important than the place where it was produced. This has also resulted in the development of multinational corporations, which have great influence on what is produced and consumed. International trade has also become regulated on a global level.

Second, mobility has greatly developed. People can now move from one place to another in a very short period of time, using cars, trains and planes. The costs of travelling have also greatly decreased. This has resulted in more diverse patterns of migration and an increase in tourism worldwide.

Third, media have become globalized, resulting in a global mass culture. People around the world watch the same movies, hear the same music and read the same books. The images and values people hold become increasingly homogenized this way.

Naturally, these developments have had a great influence on rural areas. Traditionally agriculture has been the main source of employment in rural areas, as well as the driving force of the rural economy. Globalization has been very influential in the organization of rural societies (Woods 2005). Many of these changes have been caused by the developments in the economy and mobility as mentioned above. The government also played a great role, implementing rural policies in order to increase agricultural output.

Ilbery and Bowler (1998) saw this as the beginning of the productivist phase. According to them, agriculture was being industrialized, which was characterised by three processes. First, intensification meant that farm outputs per hectare increased. This was made possible with the use of new machines and chemicals. Second, concentration meant farms were growing larger in order to maximize cost-effectiveness. Many farms bought more land for this, meaning that others had to close down. Many farmers also started producing for one purchaser only, instead of multiple local buyers. Finally, specialization meant farms limited themselves to producing fewer kinds of products. Farmers could improve the quality of their output by focussing on one or a few products. Only a few specialized machines were necessary to produce them, rather than many machines to grow a great a variety of products. (Ilbery & Bowler 1998, Woods 2005)

The productivist phase saw a large increase in farm outputs, but also had a major influence on rural areas themselves. For example, the natural environment changed as larger stretches of land were used to produce a single crop. Together with the increased use of chemicals this led to pollution, erosion and loss of habitats (Woods 2005). Furthermore, the reduction of employment opportunities led to high out-migration and increased urbanization. For many, better employment opportunities were found in the cities. Because fewer people lived in the countryside, many rural services like shops and post-offices became no longer viable and had to close. (Gössling & Mattsson 2002, Maude & Van Rest 1985, Woods 2005).

After several decades, the increase of agricultural output became so great that it resulted in overproduction. Together with the increased international competition and rising input costs, this has led to a decreased income for farmers (Davies & Gilbert 1992, Evans & Ilbery 1989, McGehee 2007, Weaver & Fennell 1997a). Simultaneously, efforts were made to reduce the percentage of EU budget devoted to agriculture. These developments led to the creation of post-productivism, now coexisting with (not replacing) productivism (Ilbery & Bowler 1998). Woods (2005) distinguished four components: extensification, countryside stewardship, value enhancement and diversification.

Extensification is the opposite of the earlier intensification. Policies were developed to reduce the amount of chemicals used and promote the temporary retirement of farmland. Countryside stewardship recognises that farmers play a crucial role in the rural landscape. They are therefore encouraged to take care of the environment they live in, for example by restoring hedges or ponds and providing public access to their lands. Farmers are also stimulated to enhance the values of their products. An example of this is the production of regional specialties like Parma ham, which can be sold at a premium. Finally, diversification is aimed at making farms less dependent on the production of only one or a few products. Farms may choose to produce a larger variety of products or

expand their business into other sectors. This can include options like opening a farm shop or giving workshops. (Woods 2005)

Over time, the primary sector lost its importance for the countryside. A shift from production to consumption dominated activities has taken place. No longer is the countryside only the space for producing food, timber or minerals (Slee 2005). Instead the countryside has become a 'multifunctional arena', more and more considered as 'a public good, providing ecological, aesthetic, amenity and recreational spaces' (McAreavey and McDonagh 2011: 176). It provides goods and services to non-rural people who wish to escape the city, either temporarily or permanently (Marsden 1999). This process also changed the countryside, both physically and socially, over the last decades.

Many farmers have chosen to diversify their business outside the agricultural sector (Evans & Ilbery 1989). As early as 1978, research by the OECD showed that 'between 40% and 60% of farmers in the highly industrialized countries could be classified as part-time farmers because they derived more than half their income from non-agricultural sources' (Dernoi 1983: 155). Seeing as consumption of the countryside gained much in importance, it is not surprising that many farmers chose to focus on tourism. Considerable attention has been given to farm tourism by policy makers, academics and farmers themselves. In the next section, an introduction on farm tourism will be given.

1.3 What is farm tourism?

To understand what farm tourism means, it is first necessary to explain what tourism is. The term tourism has been defined in many ways, but the most popular and often quoted definition is given by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 1995): 'The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.'

Although people often think of tourism in relation to leisure, in this definition travelling for business or other obligations is not excluded, making it a rather broad term. In this study, when speaking of tourism, the focus will mostly lay on travelling for leisure purposes, but travelling for business purposes will not be excluded.

The UNWTO-definition gives only a maximum in the amount of time spent travelling to or staying at a different environment, and not a minimum. It is not uncommon that trips including overnight stays are considered tourism, while daytrips are termed recreation. However, in many studies on farm tourism, recreational activities at farms (such as the renting of kayaks for the afternoon or a guided tour) are also included, even though the visitors may not stay overnight. Because a clear distinction is not always easy or even

possible to make, both tourism and recreational activities on farms will be considered in this research when speaking about farm tourism.

Generally speaking, farm tourism refers to all tourism activities taking place on a farm. The term is often used as a synonym of agritourism, agrotourism, farm based tourism and sometimes even rural tourism (Philip, Hunter & Blackstock 2010). Although most authors agree that the former three are indeed different words for the same phenomenon, rural tourism is usually considered too broad a term. For example, a luxury hotel in an old castle in the countryside is part of rural tourism, but cannot qualify as farm tourism. Farm tourism is considered to be 'only one of the tourism activities within the general context of rural tourism' (Caballé 1999: 246). In this article, only the term farm tourism will be used, except when others are quoted.

What elements should be included in and excluded from farm tourism is still open for debate. In 2000, Busby and Rendle made a list of all definitions given in the previous 25 years, ranging from 'any tourist or recreation enterprise on a working farm' (DART 1974, in: Busby & Rendle 2000) to 'a form of rural tourism whereby paying guests can share in farming life either as staying guests or day visitors on working farms' (Davies and Gilbert 1992, in: Busby & Rendle 2000). However, no definition that was in agreement with all previous definitions was formulated in the end.

Philip, Hunter & Blackstock (2010) took on this challenge. They found out there are three issues at stake when trying to define farm tourism: should it take place on a working farm (that is, a farm that derives a part of its income from agriculture), what is the nature of contact between the guest and the agricultural activities, and what is the degree of authenticity in the tourism experience. This has led them to develop a typology of farm tourism:

1. Non working farm agritourism: Does not take place on a working farm, but still has some connection with agricultural heritage.
2. Working farm, *passive* contact agritourism: The working farm provides the context for tourism, but the tourists are not connecting to agriculture any deeper.
3. Working farm, *indirect* contact agritourism: Agricultural commodities are integrated in the tourism product, e.g. the sale of farm products.
4. Working farm, direct contact, *staged* agritourism: Tourists experience agricultural activities that have been put out on purpose, e.g. farm tours.
5. Working farm, direct contact, *authentic* agritourism: Tourists experience the real agricultural activities by participating in farm tasks. (Philip, Hunter & Blackstock 2010)

It should be noted that whether the tourist spends the night on the farm is not taken into consideration in this typology. Again, a distinction between tourism and recreation is not made. Nevertheless, this typology is very useful and is used in this article, with the exception of the first type. All tourism services on a non working farm are excluded in this research. This is because non working farms are inherently connected to the agricultural heritage since it takes place on the same location, sometimes in the same buildings, as the former agricultural activities. In a strict sense, this means all tourism activities taking place on a location that at some point in the past has been a farm could be considered farm tourism as well. Including tourism on non working farms would make the concept too broad to be practical. Therefore, farm tourism will be defined as 'tourism activities taking place on working farms, where tourists have passive, indirect or direct contact with the (staged or authentic) agricultural activities'.

1.4 Farm tourism as a panacea

Many scientists have pointed out the great potential of farm tourism to counter rural decline. Indeed, Sharpley and Vass notice that 'much of the literature on rural and farm tourism refers to tourism as a potential panacea to the socio-economic challenges facing rural areas' (2006: 1041).

According to many researchers (e.g. Busby & Rendle 2000, Davies & Gilbert 1992, Deroi 1983, Embacher 1994, Garcia-Ramon, Canoves & Valdovinos 1995, Gössling & Mattsson 2002, Lobo et al. 1999, Maude & Van Rest 1985, McGehee 2007, Oppermann 1996), farm tourism can have many benefits for farmers, rural areas and society at large. These can be categorized as follows:

1. Economic

- increasing income for farmers
- diversifying rural economies
- providing job opportunities
- supporting local services
- preserving and developing infrastructures

2. Social

- reducing out-migration
- creating a transfer of ideas from urban to rural areas
- fostering social contact and cultural exchange

3. Educational

- providing information on food production and natural processes

- educating about the contribution of agriculture to the economy and quality of life
- providing urban people with an experience of rural living, thereby increasing the awareness of rural problems

4. Preservation

- preserving rural lifestyles and values
- preserving the landscape
- preserving the cultural heritage

The great majority of researchers thinks the development of farm tourism will have positive effects. Maude and Van Rest (1985) form an exception by pointing out the negative effects farm tourism can have. According to them, the development of farm tourism can cause damage to the natural environment. Furthermore, the establishment of self-catering facilities will reduce the housing supply for local people, the expansion of accommodations will create more competition for the established industry and local authorities may struggle with the high costs of creating tourism facilities. However, these critiques are seldom repeated and rarely taken into account.

Many scientists as well as politicians and policy makers in the West have only encouraged the development of farm tourism (Caalders 2003, Hegarty & Przezborska 2005, Nilsson 2002). Indeed, Davies and Gilbert state that '[farm tourism] unquestionably provides an excellent example of the way in which the complementarity that may exist between two apparently discrete economic activities - farming and tourism - can be used to mutual advantage' (1992: 58, emphasis added).

1.5 Farm tourism in practice

How well can farm tourism live up to these high expectations? Quite a bit of research has been done to answer this question, but an unequivocal answer cannot be given. Some studies show the effects of farm tourism are positive, others indicate they barely make a positive contribution and still others state that outcomes depend on certain business characteristics.

Much research focuses on the economic benefits for farmers. Deroi (1983) was one of the first to report on this. He states that farmers can earn an extra 5-15% from tourism. In former West Germany, 0,8% of the total farm incomes was derived from tourism, in Austria this amounted to 4% (Deroi 1983). A decade later, farm tourism was said to 'contribute to a secure livelihood for 10% of all farms in Austria' (Pichler, 1991, in: Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer 1994: 43), although it is unclear whether these are all

working farms. In Great Britain it was found that the tourism supplemented the income by 13-19% (Frater 1983). Research among farms with tourism facilities in Spain showed that up to a third of the total income of these farms came from tourism (Garcia-Ramon, Canoves & Valdovinos 1995). In Sweden, half of the farm tourism operations earned less than € 1000 per year, whereas only 10% earned more than € 2000 (Gössling & Mattsson 2002). Evaluating several studies, Weaver and Fennell (1997a) conclude that tourism usually contributes less than 5% to the gross farm revenues.

Nearly all these researchers admit that the extra income generated through tourism is not great, especially when viewed on a national level. Nilsson (2002) writes that farm tourism comprises only 0,3% of the turnover from agriculture in Europe. However, some researchers do point out that what might be negligible on state level may be highly significant on an individual level. Incomes from tourism have nearly always been used to increase the standard of living and to rehabilitate the home. The extra income may just be the difference between survival and bankruptcy (Dernoi 1983, Garcia-Ramon, Canoves & Valdovinos 1995, Frater 1983, McGehee 2007, Weaver & Fennell 1997a).

Besides economic benefits, environmental improvements have been noted. For people in North West Europe, farm tourism destinations can often be found closer to home than the sunny beaches of conventional tourism destinations in Southern Europe. The impact of transportation is therefore smaller (Gössling & Mattsson 2002). Also, farm tourists are often attracted to the natural environment, which makes farmers more aware of the importance of maintaining that environment (Caballé 1999, Garcia-Ramon, Canoves & Valdovinos 1995).

Several researchers have also studied the role of women in farm tourism enterprises. Their studies showed that the tourism enterprise on the farm is often initiated by women (McGehee et al. 2007). Women are usually highly satisfied with the tourism work. It means they can stay at home (with the children) and yet contribute financially to the household. The other household members value their work more, which improves the women's self-esteem. It also allows women to participate more in the public sphere and feel more integrated into the outside world (Garcia-Ramon, Canoves & Valdovinos 1995, Caballé 1999, Prados Velasco 1999, Iakovidou & Turner 1995).

Alongside these positive outcomes, there is also reason for some pessimism. A few researchers have pointed out that although the incomes from tourism may be enough for the farm's survival, they hardly have any effect on the region (Ilbery et al. 1998). The tourism businesses that were studied created no or only limited seasonal employment (Weaver & Fennell 1997a, Hjalager 1996), and many farms do not have the possibility to improve this by expanding the business (Oppermann 1996).

The addition of tourism to the farm also entails a lot of hard work. A study by Hjalager (1996) showed that for many farmers working in tourism, the results were lower than expected while the investment of manpower proved to be higher than expected. Sceptics Maude and Van Rest (1985) even claim that the returns are so low (6% return on capital), that farmers would be better off putting their capital in the bank and sparing themselves the efforts.

Many farmers also reported to find the work emotionally very demanding. They experienced difficulties with working with people from different cultural background, having to be friendly to visitors all the time or receiving guests who show no interest at all in the farming life and activities (Pearce 1990). Fleischer & Pizam (1997) point out that the reason that many farmers are struggling may be that the agricultural and guest-service values are simply incompatible.

Several authors (e.g. Barbieri & Mshenga 2008, Deroi 1983, Fleischer & Pizam 1997, Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer 1994) note that the characteristics of the farm, farm owner and region can play an important role in the level of success their tourism business has. These characteristics are for example:

- size of farm lands
- number of employees
- the time the farm has been engaged in tourism
- whether the owner is primarily engaged in agriculture
- gender of the owner
- race of the owner
- being involved in business operations
- level of local ownership
- the amount of work the tourism business requires
- the type of work the tourism business requires
- surroundings and scenery
- infrastructure
- partnerships and co-operations

Generally speaking, it can be said that larger farms, with more capital and employees in more aesthetically attractive regions will be more successful (economically speaking). Several authors point out that these farm were already more likely to do better than smaller farms, because they are in a better position to obtain loans or engage in partnerships. Farm tourism appears not to be very helpful (and certainly no panacea) to those small farms that most need help. Indeed, farm tourism may help larger farms at the

expense of smaller ones, thereby widening rural income differentials. (Caballé 1999, Hjalager 1996, Maude & Van Rest 1985)

It is important to bear in mind that many of these studies might be slightly biased in terms of the success of farm tourism. Most researchers have looked at farms that had some type of tourism facility present at the time of research. This, however, leaves out those farms that have tried and failed to earn an income through tourism. A farm that may have been in the tourism business for several years but had to give it up, can no longer be found when one is looking for a farm tourism facility. As a result, studies will always focus on farms that are (at least to a certain degree) successful. In the literature, no information can be found about the percentages of success and failure of farms that are or have been active in tourism. Consequently, the level of success of farm tourism still remains somewhat unclear.

Studies on the effects of farm tourism predominantly focus on the consequences farm tourism development has for the farmers and the region. Only a few give attention to what farm tourism means for the visitors. Some authors state that the satisfaction of farm tourists is quite high (Oppermann 1996, Pearce 1990). However, others note that the expectations of visitors are not always in line with what a farm actually has to offer. This can lead to misunderstandings or confrontations. People who envision farming life as tranquil and easy-going may be unpleasantly surprised by the large machinery or animal castrations on modern farms (Weaver & Fennell 1997a). Similarly, farms do not always have the facilities (anymore) to offer certain experiences that guests are looking for, such as wool preparation, milking or feeding (Hjalager 1996). The exact role farm tourism plays in the wellbeing of visitors and the degree to which it fulfils a certain demand remain very unclear.

To summarize: starting up a farm tourism business may help farmers to continue living and working on their farm, but will create few benefits for their region. The financial returns are usually small, but some social and environmental benefits are reported. To a certain degree farm tourism meets the expectations and benefits mentioned earlier, but so far it is certainly not the ultimate solution for rural decline.

Farm tourism in the Netherlands

In scientific journals, little attention is paid to the specific situation of farm tourism in the Netherlands. However, several reports have been published on this topic. They will be discussed here because this study focuses on the Netherlands.

The start of farm tourism in the Netherlands can be dated at the end of the 1960s (Veer & Tuunter 2005). Especially camping at farms received increased attention around that time. Farmers saw the opportunity to earn additional income, there was a shortage of regular camping sites and the existing supply of accommodation did not match well with the demand (Zonneveld 1988). In 1970 the *Stichting Vrije Recreatie* (SVR; Foundation for Free Recreation) was founded, which promoted camping at farms and gave the sector a great boost.

Looking at the studies on farm tourism in the Netherlands, some interesting figures on farm tourism in general can be found. In 1997, the number of farms in the Netherlands that offered some form of farm tourism was calculated at 2.258 (Van Koullil, Teeuwen & Voskuilen 1998). This included all possible kinds of farm tourism, such as camping sites, bed & breakfasts, rentals, sales and other kinds of recreation. In 2003, another research showed that a total of 2.462 farms offered what was termed 'agrotourism and accommodations' (CBS-LEI 2009). This number cannot easily be compared with the earlier study by Van Koullil, Teeuwen and Voskuilen, because in this research farms that sell their own products are seen as a separate branch and are not included in agrotourism. The follow-up research showed that the number of farms offering tourism facilities in 2005 had risen to 2.902, but in 2007 it lowered to 2.455. In 2008, only 2.147 farms offered tourism facilities at their farm (CBS-LEI 2009). It is unlikely that around 750 farmers have stopped offering tourism facilities between 2005 and 2008, because they need to earn back the investment costs for these facilities. It seems more plausible that many of these farmers have given up their farm business altogether to focus completely on tourism, and are therefore no longer show in farm tourism statistics. This idea is supported by the decrease in the number of working farms in the same period; from 81.830 in 2005 to 75.152 in 2008 (CBS-LEI 2009).

Research conducted in 1998 showed that farm tourism can be profitable in the Netherlands. Farms with different types of tourism accommodation had an average investment cost of € 18.000. Running costs amounted to € 6.000 on average, while the income was nearly € 10.000. The average profit therefore resulted in a little under € 4.000. Corrected for interests, the profits from tourism made out 17% of the total income of the farm family (Teeuwen & Voskuilen 1998).

This research showed that, similar to other countries, farms in the Netherlands that offer tourism facilities can make a small profit, but do not greatly improve their income. It should also be mentioned that in this research only 15 farms participated and that levels of income varied greatly from one farm to another.

1.6 Improving farm tourism

The lack of great successes in farm tourism in the Western world has not remained unnoticed. Many authors have put together recommendations for farmers so they can improve their business.

First, it is often pointed out that cooperation between farm tourism businesses could be mutually beneficial (Grefe 1991, in: Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer 1994). Especially businesses that supplement each other can gain a lot by working together, for example through reciprocal fee reductions. By doing so, they can improve their customer service and link itineraries (Weaver & Fennell 1997a). The cooperation with governmental tourism institutions should also be improved. This will help farmers become more aware and make the most of all the options open to them (Ilbery et al. 1998).

Second, working together can greatly improve the marketing and promotion activities farmers undertake. When they recognise that tourists look at the wider tourism product instead of the individual tourism facility, they may realize that cooperation can increase the number of visitors (Clarke 1996). A study by McGehee (2007) showed that one of the major obstacles preventing people from participating in farm tourism is their lack of knowledge on where to find it. Promotion is therefore perceived as a crucial element of success in farm tourism (Weaver & Fennell 1997a). It is not always necessary for farmers to greatly increase their marketing skills; often there are opportunities to join tourism boards and marketing organizations which will perform a large part of their marketing (Davies & Gilbert 1992, Evans & Ilbery 1992). However, more personal ways of marketing through the use of new media (especially internet) are gaining importance as well (Weaver & Fennell 1997a).

Third, it is mentioned that farmers should receive more training opportunities to learn more about what providing a tourism service entails (Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer 1994, Weaver & Fennell 1997b). So far, it appears that few farmers have received such training. However, in a study by Sharpley & Vass, one respondent mentioned that training is not always a good thing: 'endless training and business courses are unhelpful, visitors like to meet folk who are relaxed and natural, not playing a role' (2006: 1048). Training of farmers may therefore not always be helpful.

Finally, some emphasis is put on the need for farmers to be creative and innovating. By filling in niches and creating a specialty product, farms can stand out from the crowd. Instead of trying to attract a larger number of visitors, this may help to attract visitors who spend more (Hjalager 1996, Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer 1994).

1.7 Farm tourism demand

When formulating recommendations for improvement of farm tourism, surprisingly few authors seem interested in finding out who the visitors are and what it is they actually want. Most of the research focuses on the supply side of farm tourism, whereas the demand is often overlooked. Nevertheless, some research has been done in this field as well.

Studies that do look into farm tourism demand usually observe that this demand is growing (e.g. Busby & Rendle 2000), though usually these claims are not supported by empirical evidence. An exception is the study of Gössling & Mattsson (2002), which shows that the number of arrivals on tourism farms in Sweden has indeed grown between 1997 and 2000. However, this research was limited in time and space and gives little indication of the long-term developments in farm tourism demand. Perhaps because such detailed information on farm tourism is simply not available, many authors refer to more general trends in (rural) tourism. Lobo et al. (1999) see a growth in the demand for experiential, hands-on tourism activities, which they think is reflected in a growing demand for farm tourism. Butler (1998) claims that farm tourism mirrors regular tourism, which has shown a steady increase since the Second World War. According to him, increases in leisure time and mobility have created greater opportunities for people to engage in any kind of tourism, including rural tourism. These findings are supported by Fleischer & Pizam (1997), but farm tourism is never mentioned specifically. Thurston et al. (2002, in: McGehee 2007) note that a substantial part of the travellers going to rural areas will be interested in farm tourism, but give no evidence to back this up. One study showed that around 81% of the Dutch population would like to visit farms for tourism or recreation, while only 36% puts this into practice. This indicates there is a lot of potential for growth in farm tourism (Steenbekkers et al. 2008).

No claims are made anywhere that the demand for farm tourism is *not* growing, so it seems likely that indeed more people are visiting farms. However, the degree of this growth remains very unclear. It is also important to bear in mind that international tourists are still far more likely to visit urban centres than the countryside (Butler 1998).

When studying whom exactly visit farms, Frater (1983) found that mostly couples and family groups do this. Families with small children and the elderly were, surprisingly, underrepresented. Two decades later, Gössling & Mattsson (2002) concluded nearly the opposite: mostly families with young children and elderly couples visit farms. The difference in these findings cannot easily be explained, but may have to do with the studies taking place in different geographical locations or in a different time. Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer (1994) notice that farm tourism accommodations may

experience a change in who comes to visit. It is losing its image of cheap accommodation and may instead become more attractive to a better-off clientele with high environmental awareness.

Evidently the growth in visitor numbers and the profile of these visitors could do with more research. However, it is not only interesting to see who are visiting farms, but also their reasons for doing so. Very few studies have addressed this issue so far. Much more research could be done on farm tourism motivations, which will be the focus of this study.

1.8 Problem statement and research question

The problem can be summarised as follows. In theory, farm tourism is thought to have a lot of potential to revive the countryside, to improve the lives of rural people and create pleasant holidays for visitors. In practice, the results are not always as positive as one might hope. Farmers that do offer tourism facilities have to work hard and earn just slightly more than they did before. The effects on the countryside seem marginal. It is useful to investigate whether this gap between theory and practice can be bridged. Understanding why tourists want to come to farms can help farm tourism businesses. They may improve their facilities and promote their product in a way that matches better with what tourists want. However, until now the underlying reasons people have to visit farms, why they are attracted to these places and these activities, have received relatively little attention. These leads to the research question:

Why do tourists visit farms?

The approach taken in answering this question is explained in the next chapters.

1.9 Aims and relevance

The main purpose of this study is to gain more knowledge of the phenomenon farm tourism.

More specifically, the aim is to get a better understanding of the motivations of farm tourists. What makes them come to the farm? This study is a search for dominant motivations that are present amongst many or all farm tourists.

It is important to note that the aim is not to create a typology of farm tourists based on their motivation. The main reason for not choosing that path is that typologies can often

give a generalized picture. Typologies of tourists create boxes in which every tourist should fit. With tourism motivations, this means that certain motivations belong to a certain box. People with those motivations therefore would fit in that box. It is misleading to think that such a one-on-one relation exists. Multiple motivations play a role in the decisions people make. To put tourists in the box with the motivation that fits them best, still means ignoring the other motivations that play a role for them. Creating a typology of farm tourists based on their motivations, means generalizing their motivations. Although in certain cases that can be useful, it is not what this studies strives to do. Rather, an overview of all motivations will be given. The motivations that come forward most, will be pointed out.

This knowledge can be useful for people working in farm tourism, in farm tourism policy making and in science. These types of relevance will be discussed next.

Practical relevance

As shown earlier, in theory farm tourism could influence the countryside in a positive way, but currently it is only contributing marginally. The research questions posed in this article may help improve that.

A better understanding of the relationship between the image these tourists have of the countryside and the behaviour they show can be very helpful. If it becomes more clear what is so attractive about the farm camping site, this can be used in the promotion and marketing of farm tourism. Farmers may opt to add certain elements to their farm and remove others, if this fits better with image of the farm that people hope to visit. Similarly, policy makers may realize that farm tourism development has special needs and should be considered as a distinct field.

In the end, understanding the farm tourist's motivation better can improve the tourism product that is offered to them. More visitors may come and the success of farm tourism can improve. This, in turn, can help with keeping up the quality of life in the countryside.

Academic relevance

This study looks into the relationship between the images people have and the behaviour they show. The thought behind this is that people act on the images they have of reality, rather than an objective reality 'out there'. Understanding their ideas of the countryside, rather than looking at the objective variables of the countryside, may help understanding their tourism motivations and behaviours.

More specifically, as will be explained in the next chapter, this study adds to the debate on the rural idyll. Although the rural idyll has received considerable attention, few studies have attempted to establish the direct effects of this image. This study will look into this issue more intensely.

Additionally, the concept of alternative tourism will be studied, which may increase the knowledge on what tourists do not want from their holidays. This can explain why people choose to go to the farm, and not somewhere else. On a larger scale, it can give more insight in why some tourism destinations are more popular than others.

Until now, there is a lack in the knowledge on farm tourism motivations. However, motivations are amongst the most important aspects of tourism. Understanding why people visit farms can offer more insight into vacation decision-making processes and may lead to a better ability to predict and influence future travel behaviour (Uysal, Li & Sirakaya-Turk 2008). This study therefore aims to fill this gap of knowledge in farm tourism.

2.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND



2.1 Introduction

The research question posed in the first chapter is rather broad. There are hundreds of reasons why tourists visit farms. The aim here is to find those motivations which seem prominent in the majority of the visitors. It is therefore useful to narrow the research question down and formulate sub-questions.

Many academics and professionals have looked at both farm tourism and motivation issues before. In order to narrow down the research question, it is therefore useful to have a look at the results of previous studies. Both theoretical and empirical work can help lead the way to a theoretical framework which will guide this study.

This chapter will start with a brief overview in motivation theory. Motivation, both in tourism studies and elsewhere, has been studied extensively. This study will not look at motivations in general, but at the motivations of farm tourists specifically. It is nevertheless necessary to provide some background information on what motivation is. Then, the previous theoretical and empirical work on farm tourism motivation will be discussed. The findings from earlier studies show where more research is necessary and lead the way for this study. Eventually, more specific research questions will be formulated, which will indicate the direction where the answers can be found.

2.2 Tourism motivations

The motivations people have to go on a certain holiday are only one element of the complete decision making process. Other factors of influence include the attitudes people have, their personality, lifestyle, culture, the opinions of the people they travel with and the amount of money and time they have (see Decrop 2006). However, motivations can explain a great deal about why people choose certain places and activities in particular. According to Fodness (1994: 555), motivation 'is the driving force behind all behavior'. He explains: 'Basic motivation theory describes a dynamic process of internal psychological factors (needs, wants, and goals) that generate an uncomfortable level of tension within individuals' minds and bodies. These inner needs and the resulting tension lead to actions designed to release tension, which thereby satisfy the needs' (ibid: 555). This means that, when one is uncomfortable with something, he becomes motivated to change that.

Motivation plays a great role in tourism studies. Sharpley (2006: 16) states that 'generally, it is accepted that the consumption of tourism starts with motivation; it is

motivation that acts as the 'trigger that sets off all events in travel' ... It is the motivational stage that pushes an individual from a condition of inertia into tourism-consumptive activity, that translates needs into goal oriented consumer-behaviour. Therefore, the motivation to consume tourism has a direct bearing on the nature of tourist-consumer behaviour.' Perkins and Grace (2009: 226) see that 'motivational systems tend to be highly stable and have been demonstrated to predict a variety of preferences, consumer choices, and behaviors, including tourism'.

A much-used theory on tourism motivations was developed by Dann (1977). According to him, tourism motivations can be divided in push and pull factors. Push factors are those factors that lead to the decision to travel, for example escape or relaxation. Pull factors on the other hand are the features and attributes that attract the tourist to certain destinations, such as the warm weather (Dann 1977, Klenosky 2002). Push factors mostly help to understand why people travel in general, whereas pull factors make clear why people choose a particular destination. Dann (1981) points out that push factors usually precede pull factors; the question of whether to travel or not logically comes before the questions of where to go and what to do.

The central research question of this study is why people visit farms, a specific site with particular activities, features and surroundings. The focus will therefore lie on the pull factors that attract them to the farm. These pull factors may help explain why these tourists choose this destination, and not another. It should be kept in mind though that these pull factors are thoroughly entangled with the push factors that make them travel in the first place.

Several researchers have attempted to develop a more differentiated theory on motivations. Fodness (1994) has reviewed these theories and concluded there was still a need for an all-encompassing framework of tourism motivation. After conducting three consecutive studies, he concluded that there are six reasons for travelling:

- Ego-defensive: self-esteem, the expression of personal standards for fashionable luxurious holiday surroundings
- Knowledge: seeing how others live, experiencing different cultures, learning
- Reward maximization: seeking pleasure, relaxation, sports, fun, romance
- Punishment avoidance: escaping one's personal environment, problems, routines and obligations
- Value expression: showing your holiday experiences to others for status and ego-enhancement
- Social-adjustive: spending time with family and friends, meeting new people

Because these terms are somewhat complex, from now on they will simply be referred to as self-esteem, educational, pleasure, escape, status and social motivations respectively. This framework can be very useful in categorizing tourism motivations, thus creating better insight in what types of motivations play an important role.

The problem with categorizations of motivations, like the one Fodness proposes, is that they usually focus on push factors alone. They may explain why people choose to travel, but not necessarily why a certain destination is chosen. When looking for relaxation, one tourist may choose to lie on the beach all day, whereas another may opt for a week of meditation in the mountains. The same motivation then results in very different decisions. Consequently, knowing that a tourist wants to go on holiday to relax does not give much help in predicting which holiday destination this tourist will choose.

Typologies of tourism motivations are therefore not very helpful when trying to discover what pulls tourists to a farm. Instead, it is more useful to look at earlier studies in farm tourism. Although the reasons why tourists visit farms have received relatively little attention in the past, some motivation can be distinguished nonetheless. These will be discussed next.

2.3 Previous work in farm tourism motivations

Several studies show that practical considerations play quite an important role in the reasons why tourists choose a farm holiday. For example, some tourists select farms because they are cheaper than conventional holidays (Dernoi 1983, Frater 1983, Oppermann 1996, Zonneveld 1988). Others go here because they are in a convenient location, for example close to main attractions and not too far away from home (Caballé 1999, Fleischer & Tchetchik 2003). For these tourists it seems not particularly relevant that the holiday takes place on a farm. The farms they visit just happen to have the characteristics and amenities they are looking for, but in theory these could also be found elsewhere. Because these practical considerations seem unrelated to the agricultural nature of the farm environment, this study will not look for these motivations specifically (though they will be reported when found).

More interestingly, those visitors that do visit farms intentionally often state they appreciate the peaceful, natural environment (Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer 1994, Zonneveld 1988). This is probably influenced by the positive image many people hold of the countryside, including tranquillity, unspoiled nature, good health, good food, social interaction, child-friendly environments and security (Gössling & Mattsson 2002, Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer 1994, Nilsson 2002). It is thought that tourists seek these

values because they cannot be found in the utilitarian, materialistic and crowded urban environment of their everyday life (Gössling & Mattsson 2002, Prados Velasco 1999). Meeting the local people also plays a role in this (Busby & Rendle 2000, Pearce 1990). Some researchers presume that the farm must still be agriculturally active (Garcia-Ramon, Canoves & Valdovinos 1995, Peebles 1995, in: Busby & Rendle 2000), but others have contested this (Frater 1983, Fleischer & Tchetchik 2003, Pearce 1990). In general, it seems farm tourists are seeking to temporarily escape their urban life by visiting its opposite. Indeed, it seems they are attracted by the image that is known as the 'rural idyll'. This image appears to play a role in tourism motivations, but this relation has never been studied in more detail.

As a third motivation, several authors mention that farm tourists actively try to avoid commercialized tourism accommodations. They are looking for a more homely atmosphere, a more personal approach, generally not something that can be found in large hotels and resorts (Prados Velasco 1999, Peace 1990). In this sense, farm tourism can be considered as a form of alternative tourism (Nilsson 2002). These visitors might not have clear motivations why they visit a farm, but they do know what they don't want. The question of whether farm tourism functions as an alternative to mainstream tourism has not been answered yet.

Following the previous work on farm tourism motivations, the following two hypotheses can thus be formulated:

1. The tourist's decision to stay on a farm is influenced by the attraction of the 'rural idyll'.
2. Tourists want to get away from mass-tourism destinations, and therefore choose a farm as a form of 'alternative tourism'.

These statements will be tested in this study. First, it will be explained what exactly is meant by the rural idyll and alternative tourism, including the possible relation they may have to tourism motivations. This helps to formulate the research question more precisely.

2.4 The rural idyll

In this paragraph the theory on the rural idyll will be discussed. Special attention will be given to the existence of the rural idyll in the Netherlands, and what influence it can have on behaviour.

What is the rural idyll?

An image of tourism destinations can be described as a set of impressions of a place, or as the mental portrayal of a destination (Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez 2001). Many such images of the countryside exist in the minds of people, in the media, in scientific journals and elsewhere. One particular image is known as the rural idyll, in which the countryside becomes romanticized and idealized. Some authors speak of 'the pastoral' or 'Arcadia' (see Swaffield & Fairweather 1998). For the sake of simplicity, in this report the romantic image of the countryside will only be referred to as the rural idyll.

In the previous chapter it already became clear that defining the rural is an impossible task. Similarly, it is not feasible to find a definition for the rural idyll on which everyone agrees. Several researchers have described the phenomenon though. Little and Austin (1996: 102) observe: 'Rural life has long been associated with an uncomplicated, innocent, more genuine society in which 'traditional values' persist and lives are more real. Pastimes, friendships, family relations and even employment are seen as somehow more honest and authentic, unencumbered with the false and insincere trappings of city life or with their associated dubious values.' In short, the rural idyll 'presents happy, healthy and problem-free images of a rural life safely nestling with both a close social community and a contiguous natural environment' (Cloke & Milbourne 1992: 359).

Swaffield and Fairweather see the rural idyll as an ideological contrast between city and country life: 'a celebration of rural peace as opposed to urban noise and activity; of relaxation and pleasure in the countryside against the need for work in the town; of the social stability and harmony of rural life in contrast to the political uncertainty of the city ... and of the honest simplicity of rural dwellers, compared to the sophisticated but perhaps morally suspect manners of urbanites' (1998: 112-113). As Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen (2010: 195) summarize: 'The countryside has taken on a utopian, mythical status as being simpler, slower, more natural, more meaningful and thus superior to the urban.'

Bell sees the rural idyll as the combination of nature, romanticism, authenticity and nostalgia, 'all stamped onto the land and its inhabitants' (2006: 150). He distinguishes three ideal-types of the rural idyll: the pastoral ('farmscapes'), the natural ('wildscapes') and the sporting ('adventurescapes'). In this study, the focus will be on farmscapes, but it is important to realize that these other representations of the rural idyll also exist.

The idea that the countryside is a 'better' place is by no means new. Short (2006) illustrates that as far back as the ninth century BC, Greek writers reflected on the moral

values in agricultural life. This line of thinking was repeated by the Romans, and recurred during medieval times and the renaissance. However, it is generally thought that the rural idyll as it is known today, finds its roots in the nineteenth century with the rise of industrialization, urbanization and modernization (Bell 2006, Bunce 2003). Much of the literature on the rural idyll comes from Great Britain. The rural idyll seems to be more prominent there, perhaps because the processes of industrialization started earlier and had greater consequences for the population than elsewhere. According to Short (2006), in 1750 approximately 75% of the population of Great Britain worked in agriculture. By 1851, this had dropped to 21%. Much of the rural population had to exchange the village for the city, and the rural community for the individualism of the urban market place (Bunce 2003). The rural world, as it was known in the eighteenth century seemed to have disappeared completely around 1900 (Short 2006). This sudden and quick change from a predominantly rural to an urban society led to a fundamental shift in the understanding and appreciation of nature, agriculture and the countryside in general. According to Bunce (1994), two strands of thought influenced this change: one severely criticizing urbanism and one idealizing nature and country life.

Bunce describes that the industrial city from the beginning has been regarded as a pathological environment. Cities were related to crime, misery and poverty, which made them a threat to the stability of the established moral and social order. This grim picture was for example used in novel of Dickens and became the archetypal image of the Victorian city. (Bunce 1994)

At roughly the same time, nature became seen in a more romantic way. This was reflected in art and literature. Indeed, 'Bermingham (1986) argued that the emergence of countryside as a subject in English painting was paralleled by its destruction in reality' (Swaffield & Fairweather 1998: 113). The works of the romantic poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge, as well as paintings of rural landscapes of Dutch painters reflected and enforced the existence of the rural idyll (Bunce 1994, 2003).

Another way in which the positive sentiments for the countryside came to expression was through the formation of various social movements. Lowe (1989) summarizes the movements that were formed in Great Britain at the end of the nineteenth century for the benefit of preserving wildlife, landscapes and open spaces. Among them are the National Trust and the Royal Society for Nature Conservation. The Dutch organization *Natuurmonumenten* (Nature Monuments) was also founded around that time (Natuurmonumenten 2010). Movements like these both show that the conservation of the countryside was important at that time, and have ensured that protection of nature has continued. A century later, many of these organizations have been institutionalized and have great influence on what happens to the countryside.

Agriculture in general, and the farmer and his family specifically, play an important role in the rural idyll. Brass (2000) speaks of 'the agrarian myth': 'a discourse about the desirability/feasibility and 'naturalness' of small-scale economic activity (peasant family farming, artisanry) in the countryside... [It is supportive of] rural cultural forms/institutions based on this economic activity: namely, the family, village, regional, ethnic and religious identities which are perceived as being derived from Nature' (Brass 2000: 9). This discourse opposes all large-scale economic activities, which are considered 'non-indigenous, inauthentic and 'alien' (=non-natural) internationalisms imposed on an unwilling and mainly rural population' (Brass 2000: 9). Especially in the USA, farmers are traditionally seen as the founders of the nation and the bearers of good Christian, democratic values (Bunce 1994).

According to Brass (2000), farmers (or peasants) are important in three ways. First, they are the historical basis of social organization, ensuring food self-sufficiency and a source of military personnel. Second, they are the upholders of the present hierarchy and form a barrier against deviant political ideologies such as communism. Third, they are linked to the harmonious, folkloric image of village life, which is supposedly the key to national identity.

Thus, the peasant plays an important role. He lives close to the land, therefore his way of life is considered the most natural way. He is seen as the keeper of moral values and traditional virtues, and he represents the national identity (Brass 2000). The farmer is therefore indispensable for the truly idyllic countryside.

Contesting the rural idyll

The image of the rural idyll has existed for quite some time now. Its influence has been so strong that, for a long time, it has blinded people to the realities of rural life. However, in recent years more and more academics have discovered a dissonance between the image of the rural idyll and the realities of the countryside. Cloke (2003), for example, finds three fundamental flaws in the rural idyll. Firstly, although the countryside is often pictured as a rather homogenous place, in reality it differs much in time and place. The countryside around metropolitan areas can be very different from remote peripheries. The way people appreciate the countryside similarly differs. Secondly, rural areas are not static. Its functions change due to changes in society, such as increased mobility, globalization of the food industry and increased leisure time. The timelessness of the countryside presented in the rural idyll ignores the dynamic nature of these areas. Thirdly, the countryside faces social problems, just like cities do. Homelessness, poverty and deprivation occur in rural areas, but they are often less visible.

Bell (2006) points out that in picturing the countryside as a pure and unpolluted space, individuals and groups may in fact be excluded from it. Ilbery (1998) writes: 'Not all people living in rural areas conform to the rural idyll of a white, heterosexual, middle-class male who is able and of sound mind'. Those who do not meet these criteria, the 'rural others' (Bell 2006: 151), may be ignored in rural policies or even excluded from the countryside.

Additionally, not all rural inhabitants may be happy living in the countryside. For example, Matthews et al. (2000) found that there are children living in the countryside who do not experience it as idyllic at all. Rather, they may feel dislocated and detached from village life - even though parents often see the countryside as the ideal place to bring up children (Valentine 1997).

Not only academics see problems with the rural idyll. As Bunce (2003) shows, newspapers and magazines increasingly portray the problems that the countryside faces. One author writes: 'Oh yes, it's beautiful, unspoilt, exclusive, rich... [But there is also] social isolation, boredom and the long, slow death of the spirit due to a lack of stimulation' (Bosley 2000, in: Bunce 2003: 28). Similar articles can sporadically be found in the Dutch media (e.g. Truijens 2006).

In recent years, the outbreaks of several cattle diseases (like BSE and foot-and-mouth disease) also made severe cracks in the perfect picture of the countryside (Cloke 2003). All in all, it seems rather clear that the rural idyll is a myth.

The persistence of the rural idyll

So why is it that the rural idyll persists? One answer to this would be that 'the values that sustain the rural idyll speak of a profound and universal human need for connection with land, nature and community, a psychology which, as people have become increasingly separated from these experiences, reflects the literal meaning of nostalgia; the sense of loss of home, of homesickness' (Harrison 1982, in: Bunce 2003: 15). This suggests that the rural idyll persists simply because people have a fundamental need to believe that such a place exists.

More specific causes can also be identified. When discussing the roots of the rural idyll earlier, it became clear that it is considered a product of the discontentment with modern, urban life. According to Bell (2006), the rural idyll is essentially an urban creation. Bunce (2003: 20) writes: 'successive generations have appreciated [the countryside] from the comfort of their urban and suburban homes rather than from direct rural experiences'.

This indicates that it does not really matter what the countryside is really like; city dwellers just want to believe there is an idyllic place 'out there', which can serve as a retreat from modernity (Cloke & Milbourne 1992). The rural idyll persists because urban inhabitants want it to. Little and Austin (1996) point out that this also reflects certain power relations in society. The positive image is created and recreated by the wealthy middle-class, who benefit from keeping the countryside an exclusive place. Cloke and Milbourne (1992: 362) agree: 'The rural idyll can be bought and controlled and so wealth and power underlie the ideology of the idyll'. It is worth mentioning though that, although the rural idyll seems to be an urban invention, rural inhabitants might also see the countryside as an idyllic place (Heins 2001).

The rural idyll also plays a role in the creation of a national identity (Short 1991, in: Cloke & Milbourne 1992: 360). The countryside defines (at least partly) what a country embodies, 'a symbolic site for shoring up what it means to be English, or Dutch, or whatever' (Bell 2006: 151). The image is then used as a tool. Those in power who use that tool benefit from keeping that image alive. For example, in the Netherlands, after the separation from Belgium in 1830, the images of the countryside were consciously used to integrate the population and create a common identity (Van der Ziel 2006). This has proved to be very effective; today the majority of the Dutch say they love to see a grazing cow because that is the 'real Netherlands' (Frerichs & de Wijs 2001, in: Van der Ziel 2006: 11).

Some researchers point out that what people are exposed to in their childhood is of great consequence later in life, which is reflected in the persistence of the rural idyll. For example, Bunce (2003) writes that generations of urban schoolchildren have become acquainted with classical works in English literature, in which the rural world is portrayed in a very positive way. Similarly, Houlton and Short (1995) showed that certain toys, representing rural people, homes and other attributes, creates a positive connotation for anything rural early in life. The image of the rural idyll is shaped when people are young, and continues to influence them into adulthood.

Nowadays, the image is no longer reflected in art and literature alone. It is also reinforced by television and radio programs, commercial advertising, newspapers, magazines, movies, music, country-related organizations, religious movements, home furnishings, clothes and other products (Cloke & Milbourne 1992). The rural idyll becomes commoditized for the benefit of what Bunce (2003: 23) calls the 'countryside industry'. Any product, from a townhouse to a loaf of bread, can be marketed by using imagery of the rustic, authentic and idyllic countryside (Cloke & Milbourne 1992). Commercial organizations benefit from the existence and recurrence of the rural idyll, and therefore actively contribute to keeping it alive.

In sum, the rural idyll may be a myth, but because it is repeated and reinforced so often and in so many ways, that it has become a reality in the minds of people.

The rural idyll in the Netherlands

As said earlier, the rural idyll seems to have flourished most in Great Britain. It is useful to examine whether this image also exists in the Netherlands.

A few studies have been done in this field, and they show that the image that the Dutch population has of its countryside is highly positive. Steenbekkers et al. (2008) see that tranquillity, space and green are the keywords people use when thinking of the countryside, but beauty, safety and cleanliness also play a role. Most people feel that the provinces of Friesland, Drenthe and Gelderland have the nicest countryside, whereas Flevoland and Groningen are the least appreciated. The respondents dislike the more modern elements in the countryside, like greenhouses and wind turbines. These elements probably do not match with the image the respondents have of the countryside.

The Dutch population gives the countryside the average grade of 7,4 out of 10 (Steenbekkers et al. 2008). For the large majority, the countryside has a positive connotation, whereas one in five has neutral feelings and only a fraction has negative associations. This is in line with the findings of Heins (2001), who found that nearly three quarters of the urban citizens have a positive image of the countryside, and only 5% a negative. The age of the respondent can play a role though. Steenbekkers et al. (2008) showed that elderly people are much more positive than youngsters. The researchers believe this may be caused by the nostalgic images the elderly have of the countryside of their youth.

It is remarkable that the countryside is seen in such a positive light. Only a few decades ago, the countryside was predominantly seen as old-fashioned, conservative, predictable and suffocating (Steenbekkers et al. 2008). More recently the countryside was associated with agricultural problems like cattle diseases and manure surpluses (Heins 2001). Although such a negative discourse still exist, there seems to have been a turnaround in way the Dutch countryside is perceived.

Van Dam et al. (2002) explain that since the 1960's, the welfare level in the Netherlands has greatly increased. As explained before, the countryside was no longer purely a space for production. More and more it became a space for the consumption, such as recreation. Because people visit the countryside for leisure purposes, their image of it has changed in a positive direction. Nevertheless, they still strongly associate the countryside

with its agricultural function, and not its recreational or industrial functions (Steenbekkers et al. 2008).

All in all, the positive image of the countryside is dominant. This image is hardly disturbed by any negative elements. This leads these researchers to the conclusion that nowadays, many of the Dutch have an romanticized and idealized image of the countryside: the rural idyll seems to exist also in the Netherlands (Van Dam et al. 2002, Steenbekkers et al. 2008).

The influence of the rural idyll

It thus appears that the rural idyll is an image which is present in the minds of people living in the Netherlands as well as other Western countries. It should be noted that the rural idyll has varying degrees of significance across populations though. Some people have no interest in it at all, others may know of it but do not let it influence their lives in any way (Bunce 2003). Nevertheless, for some it plays a very significant role.

The images people have in their mind can influence their behaviour (see Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez 2001, Milman & Pizam 1995, Park & Njite 2010). Despite the fact that the rural idyll might not be 'real', it is an image that exists in the minds of plenty of people and they do act upon it.

It is not easy to establish the image of the rural idyll as a motivation for certain behaviour. After all, other images, beliefs and opinions influence behaviour simultaneously. In only a limited amount of studies an effort was made to establish the correlation between the image of the rural idyll in the minds of people, and the behaviour that leads to.

Most work on this topic has been done in migration studies. The main research question usually was whether the image of the rural idyll influenced the decision to move to the countryside. For example, Heins (2001, 2002, see also Van Dam et al. 2002) interviewed Dutch city residents who had plans to move. These respondents had a very positive view of the countryside; they consider it clean, healthy and safe. Consequently, the images of the countryside play a considerable role in rural living preferences for them.

Earlier, Halfacree (1994) had already found similar results. According to his study on counter-urbanization in Great Britain, many people move to the countryside because of the expected peace and quiet, attractive scenery, close community and relaxation.

Whereas Heins and Halfacree looked at people who intended to move, Swaffield and Fairweather (1998) have studied people who had recently taken the step to actually move to the countryside in New Zealand. Their findings show that idyllic images of the

countryside indeed played a role in their decision to move. However, it is noteworthy that those who had been living in the countryside for several years did not change their minds: 'they retained their positive views about rural living, and indeed aspects of these were reinforced' (1998: 121).

Similar findings are reported by Van der Ziel (2003). He interviewed Dutch residents that moved from the city to the countryside, both before and after the move. These respondents also reported that their expectations were met or even succeeded: 'It is even better than I thought,' she says ... This place, on a winding country road, they experience as an island of safety. An oasis ... everything feels 'uncomplicated', 'organic', 'very natural'.' (Van der Ziel 2003: 265)

These results raise the question whether the images these people held of the countryside were in fact idealized and romanticized. They thought very highly of the countryside before moving there, and these beliefs were confirmed once they had moved there. Was their decision influenced by the rural idyll or did they simply hold a highly positive but realistic image of the countryside? This distinction is difficult to make and is a great challenge when studying the influence of the rural idyll.

In tourism studies, the rural idyll has hardly ever been considered a possible motivation. When the rural idyll does come up, it is usually in relation to tourism materials like guidebooks or websites. For example, Daugstad (2008) shows that the information on rural tourism in Norway uses the rural idyll in pictures and texts to promote the countryside. This, however, does not say much about what role the rural idyll plays in the motivations of tourists.

Only recently more attention has been given to this. In the study of Sharpley and Jepson (2010) in the English Lake District, it was found that indeed many tourists came there looking for a romanticized refuge from modernity. This is not all that surprising, as the Lake District is perhaps the best known icon of the rural idyll. Much art and literature has been dedicated to this region, which make it a very popular region for tourism.

Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen (2010) studied the rural images held by Finnish people with second homes in the countryside. These authors used the three types of rural idylls as proposed by Bell (2006): farmscapes, wildscapes and adventurescapes. Survey results show that the Finnish countryside is very much seen as a wildscape, with pristine lakes and untouched forests. It was claimed that second-home owners have an idealized image of the countryside: 'The analysed rural representations excluded all signs of modern agriculture and postproductive sources of livelihood. Furthermore, rejected from the representations were those elements of the commodified countryside created to

correspond to tourism demand (cf. agritourism).’ (2010: 202) For Finnish second-home owners, the countryside is wild and unspoiled, which is its main attraction.

The Dutch countryside is very different from the Finnish countryside. Because of the high population densities, very few areas in the Netherlands could be qualified as wild. As demonstrated earlier, the countryside of the Netherlands is very much seen as a place of agricultural production. However, if the wildscape is the attracting force of the Finnish countryside, the farmscape could be the attracting force of the Dutch countryside, and perhaps the countryside of other countries as well.

In order to find out what role the rural idyll plays in farm tourism motivations, more research is clearly needed. Therefore, the following research question is posed:

What role does the rural idyll play in the decision to stay on a farm?

2.5 Nostalgia

Many authors mention that nostalgia is an important element of the rural idyll (e.g. Cloke & Milbourne 1992, Bell 2006, Steenbekkers et al. 2008). Because nostalgia may be of particular interest for tourism studies, this element will receive some special attention here.

What is nostalgia?

The word ‘nostalgia’ has Greek roots and stems from *nostos* (returning home) and *algos* (suffering). Thus, the term nostalgia means the suffering caused by the yearning to return home, literally ‘homesickness’ (Wildschut et al. 2006, Havlena & Holak 1991). The term was first used in the seventeenth century to summarize the symptoms of Swiss soldiers working abroad. Originally seen as a neurological or cerebral disease, it was considered a physical malfunction caused by being away from home. From the nineteenth century on, nostalgia was more seen as a physiological disorder, a form of depression. During the twentieth century, the meaning has continued to change and nowadays, it is no longer seen as a medical condition nor solely related to soldiers (Wildchut et al. 2006, Havlena & Holak 1991).

In 1979, Davis was one of the first to write about the sociology of nostalgia. He explains that nostalgia is ‘a positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward present or impending circumstance’ (Davis 1979: 18).

Several elements of this definition need further explaining. Firstly, the object of nostalgia has to be viewed in a positive light. When people look back on experiences or objects in a negative way this cannot be considered nostalgia.

Secondly, Davis claims that one can only feel nostalgia for something that he or she has personally experienced. In relation to the rural idyll, this would mean that people would have to have had a positive experience in the countryside in their past. However, Davis does admit that 'it is conceivable that 'nostalgia' qua word will in time acquire connotations that extend its meaning to any sort of positive feeling toward *anything* in the past, no matter how remote or historical' (ibid: 8). Indeed, in recent years, some authors have argued that if an object is embedded in a culture, nostalgia for that object can be learned (Fairly & Gammon 2005). It is therefore no longer necessary to have experienced something in order to feel nostalgic about it.

Thirdly, nostalgia uses the past to create a contrast with something negative in the present. As Short (1991, in: Little & Austin 1996: 102) writes: '[The countryside] is the location of nostalgia, the setting for the simpler lives of our forebears, a people whose existence seems idyllic because they are unencumbered with the immense task of living in the present'. Apparently, people who have an idyllic image of the countryside feel discontent with their current un-idyllic (urban) situation. This matches perfectly with the earlier description of where the rural idyll originally comes from.

The influence of nostalgia

In consumer studies, it has been shown that nostalgia can play a role in consumer preferences. Holbrook (1993), for example, showed that consumers who are more prone to nostalgia have a different taste in movies than those who are less nostalgic by nature. What people buy can thus be influenced by the proneness to nostalgia of the buyer. It would not be surprising, then, if nostalgia influences the decisions of tourists as well. In tourism studies, the role of nostalgia has received relatively little attention, but some studies in this field have done nonetheless.

One specific segment of tourism that could be said to cater for nostalgic travellers is heritage tourism. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines this as 'travelling to experience the places, artefacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past' (NTHP 2010). Nostalgia could certainly be a motivation to visit such a place.

Several studies in heritage tourism show that this type of tourism may indeed evoke feelings of nostalgia in travellers. For example, Goulding (1999, 2001) examined the visitors of a 'living museum': a reconstructed eighteenth century village, including houses and shops, where staff are dressed in period costumes and demonstrate old crafts. She

found that some visitors experienced feelings of nostalgia during this visit. Vesey and Dimanche (2003) have shown that Bourbon Street, the main attraction of New Orleans, uses imagery of the former red-light district to elicit nostalgia. However, these heritage sites may create feelings of nostalgia in its visitors, but it is not clear if nostalgia was a travel motivation for them in the first place.

In sport tourism, nostalgia can sometimes play a role. So-called 'nostalgia sport tourism' is concerned with tourists visiting places or artefacts that are related to historic sport events, such as the Olympic Games (Fairley & Gammon 2005). Although people may indeed be inspired by nostalgia to visit these places, Weed and Bull (2004, in: Fairley & Gammon 2005: 187) point out that this is hardly ever the main purpose of the travel.

On the other hand, for senior travellers nostalgia has been shown to be a prime motivation. For example, Cleaver et al. (1999) found seven main senior traveller motivations, of which nostalgia was the most important one. The study of Hsu et al. (2007) showed that for Chinese senior travellers nostalgia also played a role. For example, they would visit their ancestral or birth place, to bring back memories.

Sellick (2004) also studied the motivations of senior travellers. She formulated 48 possible travel motivations, based on earlier studies. As indicators of nostalgia, she distinguished the following options:

- To make pilgrimages to places which have memories for me
- To visit a place where my family's roots are
- To visit a friend or relative
- To be able to relive some of the good memories and good times from my past

Respondents were asked to what degree each of those 48 possible motivations played a role for them. The results showed that 30% of the Australian seniors are in fact motivated by nostalgia.

It should be noted that not all studies in senior traveller motivations distinguish nostalgia as a separate motivation. Sellick (2004) gives an overview of earlier studies which reveal different motivations, such as relaxation, family and friends, self-fulfilment and escape. Not everyone seems to agree, or perhaps recognise, that nostalgia may be a motivation for senior travellers.

Furthermore, nostalgia is not a sentiment solely experienced by seniors. Davis already noticed that nostalgia can be caused by sudden disruptions, like wars or natural disasters, or life transitions: 'those events that cause ... people to feel uneasy and to wonder whether the world and their being are quite what they always took them to be'

(1979: 49). He gives the example of people in their early twenties, leaving home to go to university. They may experience such a transition from a very familiar environment to an unfamiliar one as quite a shock. Many things they took for granted in life are being contested in this new environment, which may evoke a nostalgic reaction. Thus, young people can experience nostalgia as well. Several empirical studies confirm that age is not related to proneness to nostalgia (Holbrook 1993, Holbrook & Schindler 1994). People who are older are not necessarily more nostalgic. Consequently, nostalgia may be a tourism motivation for people from any age, and not just seniors.

The role nostalgia plays in visiting farms has not yet been researched. This study will therefore also focus on the question:

What role does nostalgia play in the decision to stay on a farm?

2.6 Alternative tourism

Looking at the second hypothesis, it is now useful to explore the concept of alternative tourism.

What is alternative tourism?

The term alternative tourism is rather vague. For something to be alternative, it needs to be contrasted to a certain 'original'. But what original type of tourism is meant by that? Generally speaking, it could be said alternative tourism is the opposite of mass tourism. Butler (1992: 31) observes that '[alternative tourism] is obviously not alternative to all other forms of tourism, but rather to the least desired or most undesired type of tourism, essentially what is known as mass tourism ... It is an alternative to the Costa Bravas, the Daytona Strips, Atlantic Citys and Blackpools of the world, and an alternative also to large numbers of people, tasteless and ubiquitous development, environmental and social alienation, and homogenization.'

The concept of alternative tourism can be, and indeed has been, applied in many ways. However, it has never been given an all encompassing definition. This makes the concept hard to work with; it can mean nearly anything an author wants it to mean. Nevertheless, De Kadt (1992: 47-48) sees that 'many of the approaches share an undertone of moral indignation, of rejection of normal, mass or mainstream tourism in which political hostility to transnational capitalism mingles with cultural and ecological unease over modern massconsumption society.'

Despite the difficulty in finding a definition for alternative tourism, several authors have tried to establish what makes alternative tourism different from mass tourism. Deroi (1981) was one of the first to explore this. According to him, the main point of distinction is the type of accommodation; in alternative tourism the guest stays at the home of the host. This results in a list of characteristics in which the two differ, which is shown in Table 1. Although the concept of alternative tourism is usually used in the context of tourism in developing countries, the way Deroi describes alternative tourism also fits perfectly with the general characteristics of farm tourism (Pearce 1992).

Conventional tourism	Alternative tourism
Commercial enterprise	Home industry, craft
Manager system	Family business
Business of its own	Secondary source of income
Multiple renting units offered (rarely under six)	Few renting units offered (rarely over six, except for camping places)
Major investments needed	Minor investments needed
High-cost service	Low-cost service
Higher level of comfort	Lower level of comfort
Revenues enter commercial business circuit and may not reach local population	Revenues go directly to local population
Tends to interfere with environment, changes the landscape	Fits into existing environment and landscape
Isolates tourists from locals	Allows contact between tourists and locals
Creates tensions between tourist and locals	Creates greater understanding between tourists and locals

Table 1. Conventional and alternative tourism (after Deroi 1981: 254)

Although Deroi sketches a believable picture here, plenty of authors after him have shown that alternative tourism may be defined using other variables as well. For example, alternative tourism is often used interchangeably with terms like ecotourism, green tourism or sustainable tourism (Holden 2008). The difference between mainstream and alternative tourism is not defined by the accommodation then, but by the degree of sustainability (which again can be defined in many ways). Indeed, Pearce (1992) observes that type and scale of facilities, location, impacts and many more variables can serve to distinguish alternative tourism from other forms. Trying to distinguish alternative and mass tourism based on just one variable does not seem a satisfying way to define them.

Another problem with defining alternative tourism, is that the comparison of alternative and mass tourism is usually based on ideal types: conventional tourism is contrived and

bad, whereas alternative tourism is authentic and good (Weaver & Oppermann 2000). However, Butler (1992: 35) feels that 'making simplistic and idealized comparisons of hard and soft, or mass and green tourism, such that one is obviously undesirable and the other close to perfection, is not only inadequate, it is grossly misleading ... Mass tourism need not be uncontrolled, unplanned, short term or unstable; and green tourism is not always and inevitably considerate, optimizing, controlled, planned and under local control'. In fact, it is often questionable if locally owned, small-scale alternative tourism would even be possible without the infrastructure that was created for mass tourism in the local area (Pearce 1992). Most authors therefore 'reject the diametric opposition of alternative being good and the conventional as bad, best summarized as: we do not need a "new" or "alternative" form of tourism, but a way of making the conventional more sustainable' (Godfrey 1993: 611).

Returning to the object of this study, it can be questioned if it is even necessary to define alternative tourism in terms of supply variables. Sharpley observes that most literature on ecotourism is primarily concerned with finding a definition, a conceptual framework for its study and case studies. 'In short, much of the academic attention paid to ecotourism is concerned with the nature of supply or, perhaps more appropriately, the supply of nature.' (Sharpley 2006: 8)

However, when the focus of a study lies on tourism motivations, it more relevant to look at the demand. The question is whether the tourists perceive a certain destination as an alternative to what they see as conventional tourism. Do alternative tourists have different motivations than mass tourists? Does a tourist choose a certain destination because he sees it as a good alternative to undesirable mainstream tourism destinations?

Looking into the literature on ecotourism, Sharpley (2006) comes to the conclusion that it is unlikely that ecotourists have different motivations than mass tourists. He believes that the environmental concern of ecotourists is subordinated to other motivations. According to him, these tourists may be looking for new tourism products like ecotourism, but the underlying reasons for going on holiday, such as escape and ego-enhancement, remain the same. To see if these claims are true, some empirical studies of alternative tourism motivations will be discussed next.

Alternative tourism motivations

It has become clear that there is no such thing as *the* alternative tourist. Rather, multiple types of tourism which could fit under the umbrella of alternative tourism can be

distinguished. Rather than trying to find the motivations of alternative tourists in general, most authors have chosen to study the motivations of these specific alternative tourists.

For example, ethnic tourism - where tourists aim to interact with indigenous, ethnic peoples - is sometimes seen as a type of alternative tourism. Lynch et al. (2010) investigated the motivations of tourists coming to Nova Scotia, Canada, in relation to the Aboriginal population, the Mi'kmaq. They found that many tourists are 'motivated to participate in Mi'kmaw cultural tourism for reasons of education, learning, and gaining a better understanding of Mi'kmaw culture' (Lynch et al. 2010: 5). These findings suggest that ethnic or cultural tourists may have education as an important motivation for their holiday. However, the comparison with the motivations of mass tourists is not made. It therefore remains unclear if education is a motivation typical for alternative tourists.

Ooi and Laing (2010) give a brief overview of the literature on the motivations of backpackers and volunteer tourists. The motivations of backpackers include escape, self-discovery, status enhancement and social motives (meeting other travellers). The motivations of volunteer tourists were considered both altruistic and ego-enhancing. Furthermore, personal development and development of skills as well as social and educational motivations played a role for them. It seems unlikely that mass tourists share (all) these motivations, but again the comparison is not made.

Perkins and Grace (2009) looked into Sharpley's claim that the ecotourist does not really exist. They studied if the motivations for choosing ecotourism products are qualitatively different from more mainstream tourism products. Sharpley's predictions are not confirmed by their survey findings: 'If people tended to rank ecotourism, wildlife tourism, and volunteer ecotourism highly, they tended to rank beach holidays, luxury resort holidays, and nightlife, gaming, and shopping lower ... In addition, the motivations for ecotourism experiences were qualitatively distinct from those of mainstream experiences' (Perkins & Grace 2009: 234). Thus, these authors conclude that ecotourists have distinct motivations. This suggests that there is indeed a qualitative difference in the demand between (certain) alternative and mass tourists.

The question is whether such a distinction also applies to farm tourism. A study from 1986 by the British Market Research Bureau suggests that 'farm holiday takers considered themselves as trying to get away from commercialized resorts. They were not looking for hotel standards of accommodation and felt quite strongly that they were 'open air types', that they were looking for something different' (in Pearce 1990: 341). This indicates that farm tourists are indeed distinct in their motivations. However, these findings have never come forward again since and it is useful to investigate whether they are still valid now. Therefore, the following research question is formulated:

What role does (the rejection of) mainstream tourism play in the tourist's decision to stay on a farm?

2.7 Authenticity

Authenticity plays a great role in the rural idyll. Where the city is seen as fake and contrived, the countryside is genuine, pure and sincere. Similarly, mainstream holiday destinations may be perceived as artificial, fake and commercial. If either the rural idyll or a desire for alternative tourism should play a role in the motivations of farm tourists, authenticity may be an influential factor in those motivations. It is therefore useful to look into this concept a bit deeper.

What is authenticity?

The matter of authenticity has been much discussed in tourism literature. That full discussion will not be repeated here, but a short overview will be given. Wang (1999) has provided such an overview. He shows that the first to consider authenticity in tourism was Boorstin (1964). According to him, mass tourism attractions are often contrived, what he calls 'pseudo-events'. In order to meet the tourists' expectations, the culture of the hosting country is commoditized and no longer authentic. Cohen (1988: 380) defines commoditization as 'a process by which things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, thereby becoming goods (and services)'. Boorstin adds that tourists usually prefer these contrived events to the real thing, because they match better with the tourists' expectations (in Wang 1999).

Contrary to this pessimistic view, MacCannell (1976) sees tourism as the modern pilgrimage. According to him, tourists seek authenticity to make up for the shallowness of modern times. Nevertheless, he agrees with Boorstin that it is increasingly difficult for tourists to find authenticity. Mostly they encounter 'staged authenticity', which is culture performed for the tourist's sake. Both authors agree that the absence of commoditization is crucial for authenticity (in Wang 1999, Cohen 1988).

Wang points out that both Boorstin and MacCannell have an objectivist approach to authenticity. Such an approach can often be found in museums. Here, experts test and decide whether an object or activity is what it is claimed to be, that it is 'the real thing'. Objective authenticity in tourism thus means tourists come in contact with original, genuine and unique objects. Even if the tourists feel they have encountered authentic objects and performances, an expert could still judge this to be inauthentic (Wang 1999).

This line of thinking has received a lot of critique (Wang 1999). Constructivists do not agree that an absolute, static original exists on which authenticity relies. Rather, authenticity is a social construction that is negotiable. Cohen (1988) remarks that tourists who are more concerned with the authenticity of their experience will apply stricter criteria to what qualifies as authentic than those who care less. Thus, it could be said that instead of a dichotomy between authenticity and falseness, there is a spectrum with different degrees of authenticity. Most tourists do not seek total authenticity. Rather, 'they will be prepared to accept a cultural product as authentic, insofar as traits, which they consider to be diacritical, are judged by them to be authentic. These traits are then considered sufficient for the authentization [sic] of the product as a whole' (Cohen 1988: 378). Whether something is considered authentic or not therefore largely relies on perspective. When tourists experience something as authentic, this is real in its own right, regardless of what experts believe.

Furthermore, traditions are invented through social processes. What was once contrived or artificial may over time be regarded as authentic, even by experts (Wang 1999).

Finally, authenticity is seen as a projection of tourists' expectations. They label those objects and experiences that match with what they had expected as authentic. People working in the tourism industry are aware of this, and often create tourism attractions that will fit with tourists' expectations (Steenbergen et al. 2008) Consequently, what is real in an objectivist way may feel inauthentic to tourists when it is not in line with what they expected, whereas the contrived may be seen as authentic (Wang 1999).

It should be noted that, next to objective and constructive authenticity, Wang (1999) proposes a third type: existential authenticity. This type of authenticity is not concerned with the authenticity of the toured objects and performances, but rather with the experience of touring itself. It involves personal feelings activated by the tourist activities undertaken. Tourists may themselves feel more authentic, or true to themselves, than in everyday life, because they feel free from the constraints of the daily. Where the first two kinds of authenticity are linked to objects or activities outside the tourists, the third is a potential state of being (Wang 1999).

The theory that people travel to find this existential authenticity is mostly related to the question 'why do people go on holiday?'. However, as said earlier, in this study the question is 'why do people choose this particular holiday?'. For this, the matter of constructive authenticity is more relevant.

2.8 Summarizing the hypotheses and research questions

In the introducing chapter of this article, the following research question was formulated:

Why do tourists visit farms?

Earlier work in farm tourism studies gave some indications on how this question can be answered. This led to the following hypotheses:

1. The tourist's decision to stay on a farm is influenced by the attraction of the 'rural idyll'.
2. Tourists want to get away from mass-tourism destinations, and therefore choose a farm as a form of 'alternative tourism'.

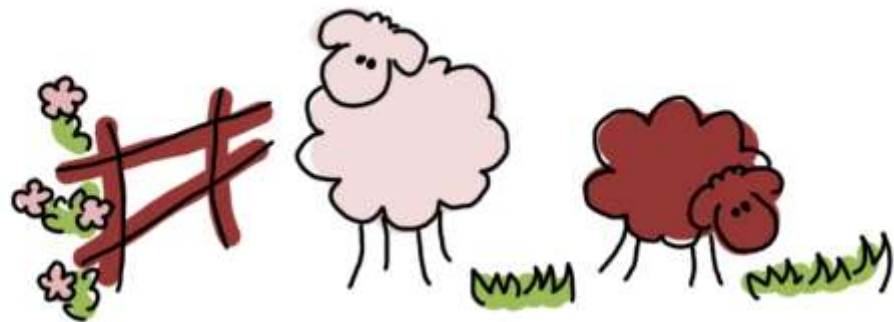
The theory on the rural idyll and alternative tourism have been explored next. As a result, the following, specified research questions came forward:

- ***What role does the rural idyll play in the decision to stay on a farm?***
- ***What role does nostalgia play in the tourist's decision to stay on a farm?***
- ***What role does (the rejection of) mainstream tourism play in the tourist's decision to stay on a farm?***

In the next chapter, it will be explained what research methods have been used to answer these questions.

3.

METHODOLOGY



3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the theoretical background of this study was explained, which led to the formulation of sub-questions. These questions now need to be answered.

An exploratory, qualitative approach was chosen for this study. With the use of semi-structured interviews, it was attempted to discover the motivations of farm tourists. Why this approach was taken will be explained first. Next it is described how data are collected. Then, concepts used in the interviews will be explained and operationalized. This means that it will be made clear what questions needed to be asked in order to find out if a concept is relevant or not. Finally, the analysis of the data is discussed and the chapter closes with the limitations of this study.

3.2 Approach

The previous chapter showed that the motivations of farm tourists may be related to the rural idyll, with nostalgia as an important element, and alternative tourism. To understand what role the rural idyll plays, it is necessary to find out what images people have of the countryside. Similarly, to get a grasp of people's ideas on farm tourism as opposed to mainstream tourism, it is necessary to find out how they feel about mainstream tourism in the first place.

The reasons why people feel attracted to certain places, and not to others, are closely related to the perceptions and views they have of these places. Such perceptions are not based on quantifiable criteria. For example, some people may feel attracted to a certain area because few people live there and this makes them feel at ease. For others, this lack of people may mean that the area is perceived as boring or unsafe. Thus, the low population density in itself says nothing about how an area is perceived and appreciated. In this sense, multiple truths about the same space can coexist. These constructions of reality cannot be captured in quantitative variables, but have to be understood within their context.

As a result, a qualitative approach was chosen to gain a better understanding of farm tourism motivations. This means that, rather than collecting a lot of standardized information about many tourists, more profound and rich information was generated by speaking in depth with a limited number of tourists. This inherently means the results are not representative for the whole population, but that is not the aim of this study. As explained in the previous chapter, the results will show which motivations can play a role

for farm tourists and which of those are most important. The richness of the data resulting from qualitative research will give a greater insight in what motivates farm tourists.

3.3 Data collection

As said before, many people can visit farms for different reasons. Some come only for a few minutes to buy some fruit and vegetables, others can stay for months as a volunteer. Because it is outside the scope of this research to study all these different types of visitors, the selection has been limited to people who stay on camping sites at working farms. This particular group is chosen because people who stay at least one night on a farm are thought to have made that choice more consciously than people who only come to a farm for a day or less. They have probably given more thought to where they are going and may therefore be able to give more insight into their motivations. On the other hand, people on camping sites will not stay longer than a few days or weeks. For them, staying at a farm will still feel like a holiday, unlike volunteers who may feel they temporarily live there. Speaking with people who consciously choose to stay on a farm camping site for a limited amount of time will therefore give an interesting insight in farm tourism motivations in general.

To find people who stay at farms, camping sites were visited in three regions of the Netherlands. These regions were chosen because of their rural image. Friesland in the North, and Gelderland in the East, were chosen because the Dutch population feels these provinces have the nicest countryside (Steenbekkers et al. 2008). Additionally, Zeeland in the Southwest was selected, because in this province camping at a farm was developed relatively early and extensively (Veer & Tuunter 2005). This also ensures a better geographical spreading of the camping sites. One camping site in Noord Holland was visited to conduct trial interviews. Figure 1 shows the locations of these regions.



Figure 1. Regions in the Netherlands where research took place

Two organisations related to camping on farms exist in the Netherlands: SVR and VeKaBo. Not all farms connected to these organisations are still working farms. The camping sites visited for this study were all members of SVR (with the exception of one, which was visited spontaneously). This organisation was preferred to VeKaBo, because through their website it was possible to select only those camping sites that were located on working farms. Farms were then selected based on geographical proximity to each other, making it easier to conduct the interviews without having to travel much between one farm and the next.

These farms were contacted by email approximately one week before the interviews to explain the purpose of this study and ask permission to speak with their guests. When the farmers did not reply, a telephone call was made to ensure the research would be allowed. Only a few farmers refused. The most heard reason was that hardly or no visitors were present at that time. Two farmers indicated they would be too busy to help because of festivities taking place. One farmer refused because he felt he had nothing to gain by this research.

A total of seventeen farms were visited: eight dairy farms, five crop farms, one goat farm and three farms that were no longer in use. It was only discovered during the interviews that some of the farms were no longer in use, even though they were marked as 'working farms' by SVR. After discovering these camping sites were not on working farms, no more interviews were held there. A list of all participating farms can be found in appendix 1.

The interviews were conducted in June and July 2010, partly including the school holidays. In June, most interviews were conducted in the weekends, to ensure enough people would be present at the camping sites. In July, camping sites were also visited during the week. No farms were visited on Sundays, as many of the farmers indicated this is a day of rest for them and the guests. The camping sites were visited between 10 o'clock in the morning and 9 o'clock in the evening. The weather on the days of interviewing was always good, with sunny skies and temperatures between 20 and 30 degrees Celsius. As a result, most people were sitting outside and were easy to approach. Those people present at the time of visiting were explained in a few words what the study is about and asked if they would be willing to participate. Approximately one in five refused, because they did not have the time or they did not feel like it. Only Dutch tourists were approached, but it should be noted hardly any foreign tourists were present on these camping sites. Only two non-Dutch tourists have been seen during the study (which was visible through the licence plate on their car). In total, 32 people have been interviewed: eighteen at dairy farms, seven at crop farms, three at goat farms and four at non-working farms.

The interviews lasted an average of 28 minutes. All interviews were recorded. Five of them had very poor quality because the respondent was sitting too far away from the recorder or the wind made too much noise. In one situation, the batteries failed. In another, all the family members present talked at the same time, making the recordings impossible to decipher. As a precaution, answers were written down during the interviews as well. The interviews were all transcribed afterwards. Those with poor recordings were not as rich in information as the others, but still contain much valuable information. The interviews held at farms that were no longer working were shortened, because not all questions were relevant. Nonetheless they have been included in this study, because people still felt they were staying on a farm.

3.4 Operationalization

A list of topics and general questions was put together to facilitate the semi-structured interviews. These questions included practical information about the respondent, such as age, home town, level of education, profession, who they are with and length of stay. This is not a quantitative study, so this information will not be used to find statistically relevant correlations between variables. Rather, they are simply used to give a better picture of who these people are and what their history is. Some variables can also be of specific use. For example, it is interesting to see if sentiments of nostalgia are related to age. The rural idyll is often thought to be an urban phenomenon, so it is useful to check if only the city dwellers idealize the countryside.

The topics of interest concerning motivation specifically had to be operationalized for the interviews. The main topics found were rural idyll, nostalgia and alternative tourism. However, most respondents will not immediately understand what the rural idyll is, nor will they think of themselves as alternative tourist. It was therefore necessary to find indicators that can signal the presence of these topics as possible motivations. Many such indicators have come forward in the theoretical background explained earlier. They include concepts like image, community, social cohesion, idealization, romanticism, landscape, individualism and authenticity. These concepts can help to signal if a certain topic plays a role. For example, when a respondent appreciates that everybody knows and takes care of each other in villages, this may indicate he likes the countryside for the social cohesion. In turn, this may mean the image of the rural idyll is present. It was therefore needed to ask multiple questions about the countryside and the farm, to discover if these concepts came forward.

At the beginning of the interview, general questions about the countryside and the city were formulated. People were asked if they felt the location where they were at the

moment of the interview was the countryside. They were asked how they felt about the countryside and the city, the landscapes, the people who live there, and where they prefer to spend their free time. The role of the farmer was also discussed. These questions were asked to test if the respondents identified with the image of the rural idyll.

Questions about the respondents' pasts were asked in order to find out if sentiments of nostalgia were felt for the countryside and the farm. Respondents were asked if they had spent time on farms in their past, and how they felt about this. They were also asked if they thought things had changed on the farm, and whether this was for the better or not.

Furthermore, questions about other holidays and general holiday preferences were asked. Why did they choose to go here, and not somewhere else? Learning more about someone's other holidays gave greater insight in whether they saw this particular holiday as alternative tourism.

Although the matter of constructive authenticity received some extra attention in the theoretical background, it was not used directly in the interviews. It is outside the scope of this study to investigate whether authenticity by itself is a motivation for farm tourists. Authenticity is quite complex and difficult to measure, because tourists are usually not aware that a search for authenticity may be of influence on their travel motivations. Therefore, authenticity is simply used as a tool. References to authenticity may signal whether the rural idyll or elements related to alternative tourism play a role in farm tourists' motivations. More general questions were formulated about their motivations to visit a farm. Should authenticity play a role, then it was expected to show through in their answers to these questions.

The topic list used in all interviews can be found in appendix 2.

3.5 Data analysis

All interviews have been analyzed with the aid of softwareprogram ATLAS.ti. The transcripts have been uploaded and then coded. Coding makes the analysis of the interviews easier in two ways. First, long quotations can be summarised in short codes. For example, when asked if a respondent wanted to participate in farm activities, she answered:

“Well I never thought about it. I have let calves suckle my hands a few times, very funny, and I would like to know how everything works, because you hear things, which makes you think ‘I never thought about that’. You see cows in the meadows

and you don't think anything further of it. Yes, you get milk, butter, you name it, but now you get more involved, I think it interests me. But to actually participate, no, not now." (3)

This piece has been coded simple as 'participation farm activities: no'. After all interviews had been analyzed, going through the list of codes gives a kind of summary of all the important things that have been said during the interviews. All irrelevant information is put to one side and the essence remains. This way, certain structures and regularities become more visible.

The second advantage of coding is that it makes it clearly visible how many respondents have said something similar. For example, twelve respondents could not think of any negative characteristics of the countryside. Making the data more quantitative in this sense has the advantage of showing quite clearly if a majority of the respondents holds a certain opinion. Similarly, a certain quotation may be found particularly interesting, but may have been said by only one respondent. Both general tendencies and unique exceptions are relevant. Coding helps making them more visible.

It is important to note that, although coding is a useful tool, the aim is not to reduce all data to quantifiable units. The nuances of what is being said are not visible looking just at the code. In the quotation used above, the respondent does not only say she does not want to participate in farm activities; she also says that it does interest her nonetheless. The coding helps distinguishing the main tendencies, but it is necessary to look at the full quotations in order to understand what the respondents really mean.

No coding list was made beforehand. However, the codes were categorized immediately, using the concepts that came forward from the theory. In each category, attachments were added to clarify the content. The following quotation can serve as an example:

"Previously, a farmer could, he could easily talk for half an hour with the neighbour but that's not possible anymore of course. The farms have gotten much bigger and I don't know, I can't overlook everything, but maybe the farmers were better off then than they are now." (4)

The sentiment of 'things used to be better in the old days', which comes forward from this quotation, is very much in line with the theory on nostalgia. Therefore it was coded in the category 'Nostalgia' with the attachments 'people used to have more time' and 'things used to be better'.

All transcripts were coded this way. To ensure that no double codes were created, the list of codes was checked several times during the whole coding process. Double codes were merged. This resulted in a final list of 275 unique codes. Some codes have been collected in code families, making it easier to find, for example, all the separate advantages of staying on a farm rather than at a regular camping site.

With the aid of these codes and quotations, the main findings of this study could be extracted. These will be discussed in the next chapter. Note that all interviews were held in Dutch and relevant quotations have been translated to English to support this study's findings.

3.6 Limitations

Before continuing to the results, it is necessary to reflect on the limitations of this study. Although every effort is made to get the best results, limitations in time and opportunities meant that not all possible courses of action could be taken. Several of these limitations will be discussed here, to help interpret the study findings.

Of course the choice to select only tourists staying on farm camping site is already limiting. All other farm tourists were consciously excluded in order to narrow the study down. This was necessary because interviewing all different types of farm tourism would have been too time consuming. It is nevertheless important to bear in mind that different types of farm tourists may have different motivations. This study therefore can never fully answer the research question.

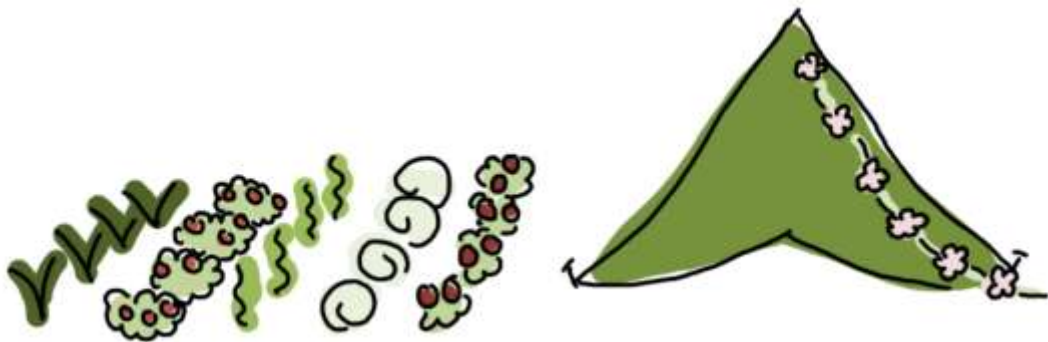
Furthermore, the respondents were found using convenience sampling. The people who participated in the interviews were at the camping site at the time the researcher visited. This means people who were staying at the camping site, but not present at the time the researcher visited, could not be approached. Added to this, some people refused to participate, usually because they were about to go cycling or grocery shopping. As a result, the respondents that did participate were perhaps more passive than the average farm tourists. Also, in approaching potential respondents, the researcher may have subconsciously selected those who seemed to have time to spare. That means seniors may have been approached more easily than families with children. Indeed, many of the respondents were seniors (more on this in the next chapter). However, outside the school holidays, most camping sites truly appear to be visited predominantly by seniors, whereas families seem only to come in July and August. It is impossible to say if seniors are overrepresented in this study or if this is indeed a realistic representation of the types of people that visit farms.

As mentioned before, not all interviews were recorded well. Although during every interview notes were taken as well, the danger exists that the researcher has put down those answers in her own words. The interviews that did not have good recordings are therefore less reliable in representing what the respondents really felt and thought. To overcome this problem, only the general information retrieved from these interviews has been used. No quotations from these interviews have been used to illustrate the findings, unless when absolutely certain the respondent said something in a particular way (which was always indicated in the notes).

Finally, it is noteworthy that the role of the researcher should never be overlooked. Because semi-structured interviews leave space to deviate from the topic list and to ask follow-up questions, not one interview would ever be the same. The life history of the researcher always plays a role in what follow-up questions are asked and how the answers are interpreted. Similarly, the respondents are (unconsciously) influenced by who is interviewing them. The researcher of this research, a 27-year-old white female, may have gotten different answers than a 50 year old black male would have gotten. In this study, the effects of this problem are kept to a minimum because all interviews and their interpretation are done by one person. If the respondents were influenced by the researcher, at least they were all influenced in the same way. Furthermore, the researcher has consciously attempted to be neutral in the interviews and the analysis, letting the respondents do the talking.

4.

RESULTS



4.1 Introduction

After explaining the theoretical background and the practical approach of this study, it is now time to see what the farm tourists actually say. First, a short description of the settings will be given. The surroundings and the atmosphere of the camping sites will be described in order to create a better picture of what the respondents talked about. Then, a sketch of the farm tourists' profile is given, so it becomes more clear who exactly visit farm camping sites.

Earlier in this study three motivations which can play a role in the tourist's decision to go to a farm were distinguished: tourists may find this type of holiday has the right characteristics and is therefore a practical holiday choice, they may be attracted to the rural idyll, and they may choose this holiday because they do not like mainstream holidays. The focus of this study lies on the second and third option. This chapter will show to what degree they seemed to be present amongst the respondents.

Of course, not only motivations related to the rural idyll and alternative tourism play a role. Because the aim of this study is to discover all prominent motivations of farm tourists, the final part of this chapter will focus on other motivations found.

4.2 The setting

The regions where the interviews took place were selected for their rural character. It is therefore not surprising that the visited farms were located in what can be called rural settings. Nearly all the farms were located on country roads, a few kilometres outside the villages. They were usually surrounded by meadows where cows could graze or fields with crops. In the visited regions in Friesland and Zeeland there was hardly anything to obstruct the view, whereas in Gelderland there were also forests. The camping sites were all located on flat pieces of grassland right next to the farm. Only one camping in Gelderland was located in an area which was slightly hilly. The views of most camping sites were wide, although some farmers had put hedges along the edges of the site.

All camping sites had between 15 and 25 places for tents or caravans. Usually these would be placed next to each other with quite a few metres of grass stretched in front of them, or placed along the edges of a rectangular field, all facing each other. On some sites the space was divided with a few hedges as well. The places were usually rather spacious, although it was usually hard to tell where one place stopped and the next

started. However, caravans and tents never stood back to back, and usually quite a lot of space was unoccupied, giving a spacious feeling.

When there was a division of space, this was always done with natural greenery and never with fences, walls or wires. In general, the camping sites were decorated in a natural fashion, but always very orderly and controlled. The grass was trimmed on a regular basis and the hedges were nicely pruned. Nature was never allowed to go 'wild'. Additionally, on many camping sites cars were not allowed on the terrain itself (except to put the caravan in the right place). The absence of cars ensured that the grass was not damaged but also that the view was not spoiled.

The camping sites had one or sometimes two buildings with sanitary facilities. Although they were usually quite basic with only a few toilets and showers, most of them also had a washing machine present. They did not have many luxuries, but it was usually still more than the absolute basics.

Some camping sites had an indoor space for recreation. Usually this was located in an old shed which was originally used for the agricultural purposes. This is practical because the farmers can give this redundant space a useful function again. Also, no new buildings have to be put up which again could spoil the view or perhaps the authenticity of the setting.

In sum, the camping sites were limited in size yet had a spacious feel to it. They were surrounded by fields, emphasizing the agricultural setting. They used natural elements to structure the space but always in a tidy and controlled manner.

4.3 The respondents

A total of 32 interviews were held. Usually, only one person was interviewed at time. However, often the partner of the respondent was present as well, and sometimes they intervened. Their comments usually served to confirm the main respondent's answers and have therefore been included in this study. Of all the people who were interviewed, 21 were women and 11 were men. In four of the women's and three of the men's interviews, the partner also contributed. The respondents are given a number and will from now on be referred to by this number. An overview of the respondents and their characteristics can be found in Table 2.

Num ber	Gender	Age	Home town	Education	Here with	Profession	Former profession	Accommo- dation	Length of stay now	Interview location
1a	F	49	NA	secondary	2 horses 1 dog	housewife	trade	caravan	2 months	Nijemirdum
1b	M	52		secondary		unfit to work	trade			
2	F	31	Heereveen	IVT	2 sisters	housewife	NA	caravan	1 night	Nijemirdum
3	F	59	Alphen a/d Rijn	secondary	husband	housewife	hairdresser, police	full season	NA	Lemmer
4	M	58	Rolde	secondary	wife	unfit to work	carpenter	full season	weekend	Lemmer
5	F	44	NA	secondary	husband	NA	NA	full season	weekend	Lemmer
6a	M	65	St. Maarten	HVT	[no one else]	pet store owner	[none]	caravan	weekend	Oudemirdum
6b	F	63		secondary		landscaper				
7	M	76	[Veluwe]	secondary	wife	retired	army	caravan	2 weeks	Oudemirdum
8	M	63	[Zeeland]	secondary	wife, 1 dog	retired	painter, antiques trader	one month	weekend	Heeg
9	F	59	Haarlem	HVT	husband, 1 dog	homecare team leader	[none]	full season	long weekend	Heeg
10	M	70	Gorinchem	secondary	wife	retired	manager limestone plant	full season	summer	Kerkwerve
11	F	22	Rotterdam	university	boyfriend	student	[none]	full season	week	Zonnemaire 1
12a	M	66	Rotterdam	secondary	[no one else]	retired	civil servant	full season	summer	Zonnemaire 1
12b	F	62		primary		housewife	industrial association			
13	F	61	Maassluis	secondary	husband	housewife	bank	caravan	long weekend	Zonnemaire 2
14	F	62	Apeldoorn	IVT	husband	housewife	pharmacy assistant	caravan	8 nights	Zierikzee
15	F	23	Driebergen	IVT	boyfriend	child care	[none]	full season	weekend	Zierikzee
16a	M	53	Zutphen	university	[no one else]	publising firm	[none]	one month	weekend	Serooskerke
16b	F	48		university		text writer	[none]			
17	F	72	Brouwers- haven	secondary	husband	housewife	[none]	caravan	10 nights	Serooskerke

Num ber	Gender	Age	Home town	Education	Here with	Profession	Former profession	Accommo- dation	Length of stay now	Interview location
18	F	60	Dronten	IVT	husband	housewife	secretary	caravan	week	Oostkapelle
19	F	68	Drunen	NA	husband	retired	family care	full season	long weekend	Meliskerke
20a	F	70	Wouden- berg	secondary	[no one else]	retired	restaurant manager	full season	weekend	Koudekerke
20b	M	72		secondary		retired	welder			
21	F	56	Leidschen- dorp	IVT	husband, in-laws, grandchildren	geriatric nurse	[none]	caravan	weekend	Leimuiden
22	M	39	Schipluiden	HVT	wife, son	nurse	[none]	caravan	weekend	Leimuiden
23	F	62	Schiedam	IVT	[alone]	retired	nurse	tent	2 weeks	Leimuiden
24	M	45	Egmond	secondary	wife, children	conveyor belts	[none]	caravan	3 weeks	Aalten 1
25	F	45	Heemskerk	IVT	husband, children	cleaning	[none]	caravan	3 weeks	Aalten 1
26	F	68	Hoogkarspel	secondary	husband	retired	cafe	caravan	2 months	Aalten 1
27a	F	61	Den Haag	IVT	[no one else]	volunteer church leader	homecare team	caravan	2,5 weeks	Aalten 2
27b	M	62		HVT		bus driver	army			
28a	F	70	Schiedam	secondary	[no one else]	housewife	[none]	caravan	1 week	Aalten 2
28b	M	73		secondary		NA	NA			
29	M	47	Ede	HVT	grandson	trainer horticulture	[none]	tent	3 nights	Woold
30	F	36	Krimpen a/d IJssel	IVT	husband, son	housewife	pharmacy assistant	tent	3 weeks	Woold
31	M	48	Haarlem	IVT	wife, daughter, friends	driving instructor	[none]	tent	2 weeks	Woold
32	F	40	Dordrecht	IVT	husband, children	housewife	civil servant	caravan	3 weeks	De Heurne

Table 2. Respondent characteristics

All respondents came with their partner, with the exception of three: one had come with her sisters, one with his grandson and one had come alone. Four of the respondents had brought their children, three had come with their children as well as relatives or friends and their children. Finally, three people had brought their dog and one couple had also brought their horses.

A large majority (28 respondents) stayed in a caravan, sometimes with a permanent place on the camping site. All the respondents had already been camping in the past, before this particular holiday. Many of them had already visited the same camping site as where they were now, others had only been elsewhere. It seems that most of them had previously stayed on farm camping sites as well, but this question has not literally been asked, so there may have been exceptions.

The length of stay varied between one night and the whole summer. The visitors interviewed in June were usually there just for the weekend, sometimes with the Friday or Monday included as well. From July on, when the school holidays had started, more families with children could be found. They would usually stay for two or three weeks. Many of the visitors with permanent places would come and go whenever they pleased. In the low season this usually meant a weekend every now and then, in summer they would stay there most of time and only return home occasionally.

The average age of the respondents 55 years old; the youngest was 22, the oldest 76. Note that only the ages of the people who were interviewed are included in this calculation. The ages of the children are not taken into account so the actual average age of all farm tourists would probably be lower. Fifteen respondents - nearly half of the total sample - were over 60 and only two under 30. The latter two reported they came to this camping site because their parents had a permanent place there. Five out of the seven respondents aged between 30 and 45 had brought their children with them. The findings of Gössling & Mattsson (2002) that it is mostly elderly couples and young families that visit farms, seems confirmed in this study. It is unclear what is the average age and profile and farm tourists in the Netherlands, so these findings are not necessarily representative for all farm tourists. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how many seniors were found on farm camping sites, and how few people between 15 and 40.

The respondents came from all over the Netherlands. Some lived in very small village with only 1500 inhabitants, others lived in cities like The Hague and Rotterdam. It is certainly not the case that only city dwellers come to farm camping sites. The distance from the respondents' homes to the camping site differed. Some chose a camping site that was close to their home, so the effort to reach it would be small. Others chose a

camping site further away, sometimes as far as three hours driving which is nearly the maximum distance between any two places in the Netherlands.

The level of education of the respondents seems to be on the low side. Fourteen of them had only been to secondary school, and some of those had not even finished this. Notably, eleven of them were 58 years old or over. Some of them blamed their relatively low education on the time when they were young. Shortly after the Second World War, many did not have the opportunity to continue studying, because money had to be earned. The level of education is in this case not an appropriate measure for intelligence. Nevertheless, it shows that these respondents never had vocational or scientific training. Another eleven respondents had attended *Middelbare Beroepsopleiding* (Intermediate Vocational Training, IVT). Four respondents had attended *Hogere Beroepsopleiding* (Higher Vocational Training, HVT) and two had a university degree. For one respondent the level of education is unknown.

Only ten respondents were (still) working professionally, ranging from taking care of the elderly to working in a publishing firm. Ten female respondents were housewives, though seven of them had worked before they had had children. Eight respondents had retired (early), two more were unable to work anymore due to physical problems. One respondent was still studying and one respondent's profession is unknown.

In combination with the level of education of the respondents, it can be concluded that farm camping sites attract mostly tourists from the working classes and pensioners. Some higher educated upper middle class tourists were encountered as well, but they formed the minority.

4.4 Rural images

So what is it that pulls these people to the farm? To explore this, their opinion on the countryside and the city was asked first. This gives greater insight in the rural images they hold.

The countryside

One of the aims of the interviews was to establish whether the respondents felt they were in the countryside. These camping sites were selected because they were in a supposedly rural environment and it was necessary to see if the respondents agreed with this.

In general, all the respondents agreed that the farm they were staying on was indeed in the countryside. However, several respondents mentioned that the countryside is different than the coast, the forests or the mountains. One female respondent in Zeeland, when asked whether she thought this environment was the countryside, answered:

“Yes [because] you see towers when you’re cycling. We’ve been in Winterswijk [in Gelderland] as well and there you don’t see them, that takes a little getting used to ... It’s beautiful there, don’t get me wrong, but it’s not the countryside because there are all these forests so you don’t see the church towers.” (17)

This may also have something to do with the Dutch word for countryside, which is *platteland*, literally ‘flat land’. Some respondents felt that the countryside really has to be flat. For them, hills or mountains could never qualify as countryside, despite living up to other expected characteristics of the countryside.

Many countryside characteristics were heard during the interviews. The feature most mentioned is its agrarian character. Related to this, many people think of farms, meadows and animals, particularly cows.

Many also think of the amounts of open space that can be found in the countryside. Characteristics like the wideness of the view, spaciousness, few buildings, small villages and no highways were all mentioned. Together with that, the countryside is also thought to have tranquillity and silence. One respondent mentioned freedom as a characteristic.

The naturalness of the countryside is also mentioned. People think of terms like nature, green, water, insects, nice smells, fresh air, sea and wind.

Some respondents think of the social side of the countryside and mention the solidarity, hospitality and friendliness of the people who live there.

In terms of aesthetics, the respondents find it beautiful, diverse and attractive.

When being asked about the general characteristics of the countryside, only one respondent gave a distinctly negative answer; she thought the landscape was boring.

Respondents were also asked about the characteristics of the city. Many respondents opposed the city to the countryside. On hindsight, this may have been influenced by the order in which the questions were asked. When asking about the countryside, many people gave positive answers. This is not surprising, as they chose this space for their holiday. When the next question then concerns the city, many answers may have been more negative than when another topic had been treated before. Compared to the countryside, the city had more negative connotations for most respondents.

The main characteristic they mentioned was *drukke*, which can be translated as crowdedness, hustle or rush. Basically, they felt there are (too) many people, cars, buildings, shops and facilities. The city is big, oppressive, dirty and noisy. Two respondents noted that although the city was crowded and busy, they did not mind because whenever they went there, it was a conscious choice to do so. The tranquillity of home is more appreciated after visiting a city.

The social side of the city is seen as multicultural, but also impersonal, lacking in solidarity and not very safe.

On the more positive side, some respondents also feel the city is sociable. They appreciate the good infrastructure and the fact that all facilities are located closely to each other.

The respondents were first asked to give the general characteristics of the countryside and then city. Although this question was meant to evoke a neutral description, many respondents also expressed how they felt about these places. To establish a clear picture of their opinion, the respondents have also been asked what they feel are the positive and negative characteristics of the city and the country.

Many of the positive elements of the countryside are opposed to the negative ones of the city. An overview of these can be found in Table 3.

Countryside	City
Fresh air	Bad smell
Nature	No nature
Solidarity	Impersonal
Clean	Dirty
Little traffic	Much traffic
Tranquillity	Rush
Solitude	Crowded

Table 3. *Opposing opinions on countryside and city*

The respondents mostly appreciate the countryside for its natural qualities. They like the amount of space, the quietness, the small scale of everything and the lack of artificial light at night. One respondent said:

“You can see all the seasons, in the fields, the products, I think that’s beautiful.” (18)

Remarkably, two respondents said they liked the countryside because it felt like home, whereas another said she liked it because it ‘felt like holiday’. Although these two

opinions seem to be contradicting, the countryside had positive connotations for all three respondents.

Some negative elements of the countryside were also mentioned. The most heard problem is that facilities like shops are not good or too far away. Furthermore, the insects, the smells, the dirt on the roads and the wind are not appreciated. A few respondents state that the countryside is lovely in summer, but not in winter:

“When we just had the caravan, we have been here once in November, when all the fields were ploughed and dark and gloomy, quiet, you see a little light burning here and there, you know? In summer it is lively ... But if it’s so quiet and foggy and the earth is cold, then you say, I’ll be buried alive here.” (12a)

Interestingly, quite a few respondents could only think of negative elements that might bother others, but not them. Especially the idea that city dwellers find the countryside smelly seems to live among the respondents:

“A lot of young people do not choose to be a farmer anymore, and those farms are sold to city dwellers, who then find that it smells bad. Well, then you shouldn’t come to the countryside, yes I find that stupid.” (26)

Twelve respondents could not think of any negative elements of the countryside. One of them explained that for a holiday, you look for a place that you like, so preferably this is a place without negative elements. It is interesting that so many people seem so utterly satisfied with their holiday environment. However, one respondent mentioned that he was not looking for negative elements either. It is plausible that most people can think of something negative in the countryside when they think long enough, but they do not want to do that because they do not want to think negatively of their holiday destination.

Besides the earlier negative elements of the city, some positive sides have also been mentioned. The respondents like the possibilities to go shopping or visit museums and restaurants. For some the city offers the opportunity to do something out of the ordinary. Several appreciate the sociability (*gezelligheid*) of the city. The city is appreciated, but all respondents could think of at least one negative element in the city as well.

In short, the respondents have a highly positive image of the countryside, whereas the feelings about the city range from mixed to highly negative. But does the image the respondents have of the countryside match the rural idyll?

The rural idyll: the physical environment

Some of the respondents sketched a somewhat idyllic picture of the countryside. One respondent describes the countryside as:

“Beautiful, every season is different. In autumn, you say everything is gray, brown, ploughed, and in spring you see everything flourishing again, I love it, the trees are blossoming, the orchards. Yes I think it’s beautiful everywhere.” (17)

Most idyllic images that were mentioned had a clear reference to the past, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Besides these, only a few references were made to the romance of the landscape and countryside environment. Two respondents mentioned that farms could be very romantic and rustic, but they did not find that on the farm they were staying on:

“When you see a farm surrounded by high trees, when you see that you think ‘yes, that’s the way it is’... But this farm is a bit in-between, a real farm camping site is different ... Then you’re camping in an orchard, more small-scale [than here].” (16a)

“That rustic [feeling] that the farmer gives, that real rustic camping in the orchard is so nice, that’s possible in Limburg and the Betuwe.” (21)

Here, the matter of constructive authenticity comes forward. These respondents did not perceive the camping site they were staying on as the ‘real’ rustic farm camping. Although they were staying on an objectively authentic farm, in the sense that these were still agriculturally active, the respondents nevertheless did not perceive them as such. Apparently they hold an image of what an authentic farm should look like, and they did not find it here. It should be noted that this did not seem to bother them at all though. The matter of authenticity is not something that came forward as being very important for these tourists.

The rural idyll: the social environment

Besides natural elements, social elements also play an important role in the rural idyll. The people who live in the countryside form the communities which are considered crucial in the rural idyll. A word that was mentioned frequently to describe the countryside community was *gemoedelijk*, which can be translated as genial, kind-hearted or good-natured. All respondents have such a positive image of the locals:

“[People in the countryside,] they are usually more genial than the people in the city, especially in the North I find. But really friendly in the countryside, that attracts me. With us in Drenthe it’s like, the front door is always locked. Yes because everyone comes around the back, and the coffee is always ready.” (4)

“I would like to live in this area. Just because the people are more genial, it’s a different atmosphere, everything is more relaxed, a little. Well I don’t know what it’s like here in the village, or in a bigger town in this area, maybe it’s not like the people there keep an eye on each other or help each other either, but in a village it’s usually different.” (32)

The general feeling is that people are friendlier, more hospitable and more relaxed in the countryside. They have more time and are not as rushed as the people in the city, and the respondents find this very pleasant. Without exception all respondents have something positive to say about the people in the country.

However, a few come up with some negative traits as well:

“Here in Friesland [people are] very friendly. Here it’s good. [In other places there is] a different mentality, more closed ... In Drenthe. Horrible. Twente. In Twente the people are friendly, but they let you talk and you don’t hear anything from them.” (1a)

Together with them being more reserved than city dwellers, the people in the countryside are also thought to be more direct. This, however, is not usually considered a bad thing:

“It’s very straightforward, without fuss, confident ... They say what they think, not so uncertain, just pure nature.” (23)

The farmers specifically are also very well thought of. They are considered hospitable, helpful people that are close to nature:

“If you need something, the farmer can get you anything. This one time I need a needle [and the farmer provided me with one].” (5)

“I think there is no better manager of nature than a traditional farmer. Nowadays the farmers no longer manage nature, they only pollute it ... Without subsidies they mow everything down, whereas in the old days every farmer would mow around birds’ nests.” (1b)

In general it can be said that the respondents find the countryside a friendlier, more relaxed and overall just a better place than the city. Their image of the people living in the country and the countryside communities is remarkably positive, though not necessarily idealized.

The importance of farms

Although the respondents do not make many references to the romance of the countryside, they do feel that the countryside and its farms are very important. The development of large-scale farms is considered a threat by many:

“If we didn’t have farmers anymore then, well. I don’t know, everything would run wild or, er, no, it should stay. But it shouldn’t be so intensive.” (14)

“The industrial developments are negative, and the industrial developments are mainly intensive farming. I’ve been there once, a long time ago, at a pig farm, that’s – the stench, you don’t see the animals, I didn’t like that very much.” (29)

In fact, one respondent gives the impression that only small-scale farmers are ‘real’ farmers. Industrial farms are considered something different. Answering the questions of why she feels that farms are important, she said:

“I would rather have meat from a cow that walked around here, free and well taken care of, than out of a cage with 500 cows, I still find that very important.” (15)

Twenty-one respondents have been asked what they think the negative influences of farms are. Eleven of them could not think of anything negative when asked directly. Surprisingly, one respondent who stayed at a goat farm, said she did not know any negative effects, while one minute later she did talk about Q fever. This cattle disease, that can also be harmful to humans, was present at some goat farms in the Netherlands only months before these interviews were taken, and was given much media attention. Although this respondent was aware of the existence of this disease, she still did not think of it when asked about negative influences of farms. This tendency to ignore anything negative about farms is in line with the earlier findings that the respondents tend to think only of the positive side of their holidays, but also shows that farms are thought of in a very positive way.

Those respondents that could come up with negative influences, mostly referred to the effects of large-scale industrial farming. One respondent commented:

“Pollution, like CO₂ emission and soil acidification, has mostly to do with those larger companies. Although if you have a lot of small ones – with small companies it’s manageable.” (31)

The government, whether local or national, is considered one of the main problems. Many respondents feel that farmers are being neglected or hassled by the government and therefore can no longer do their work the way it should be done:

“Well, under the pressure of the government to persevere ... the activities become more large-scale, more use of pesticides, more production, I understand that, I would have to do the same if I were a farmer ... but at the same time it’s also a threat, monoculture, you destroy your own landscape that way.” (16)

Similarly, some respondents feel that farmers are not fully appreciated by the rest of the Dutch population either:

“I think a lot of people think badly about farmers for whatever reason, they have no idea what needs to be done before they have a glass of milk on the table, or a bowl of yoghurt or a piece of meat. Because you need farmers for that.” (24)

The fact that farmers are the producers of our food plays a prominent role in the minds of the respondents. About half of the respondents state that farmers are important because they ensure self-sufficiency in terms of food:

“I think the Netherlands should be able to supply its own food.” (32)

“[Farmers are important] for the food supply ... If you only have import you are completely dependent ... If people no longer work in the fields, you’ll end up with only forests. It’s a threat to the Netherlands, far too much import.” (1a)

Many more comments were made on the importance of farms and their owners. They are thought to be important because without them the landscape will change (or even, the countryside will disappear), they form the binding element of countryside communities, they produce many products which creates diversity in the shops, they are keepers of cultural inheritance, create a counterbalance for the technological predominance in the city and more.

Indeed, the farms and the way farmers live are very much considered part of the Dutch identity:

“I feel it’s something that belongs, it just belongs to the Netherlands and if it [farms] were to disappear I would regret it ... Yes it would be a shame if it were to disappear.”
(15)

“I cannot bear to think that it [farms] wouldn’t be here anymore, it really belongs to the Netherlands.” (27a)

This shows that at least a part of the agrarian myth (as described earlier) is alive amongst the respondents. Although farmers may not be thought to be the barrier against foreign military forces or ideologies, they are seen as the keepers of the Dutch identity. They live closer to nature and should not be pestered so much by government policies. The Netherlands would not be the same without farms and their owners.

It should be noted though, that none of the respondents said they visited the farm in order to help maintain the farm heritage of the Netherlands. When asked if they came here in order to support the farmer, one respondent pointedly said:

“No, it’s not a charity.” (16)

Most of them did feel that staying on a farm helped the farmers to survive, and they did appreciate contributing this way, but it was never their goal.

Nostalgia

Earlier in this report nostalgia was defined as ‘a positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward present or impending circumstance’ (Davis 1979: 18). This definition contains a positive element of the past and a negative element in the present. Preferably this positive element of the past was experienced first hand, but it was shown that this is not always necessary.

In a very direct way, nostalgia can motivate tourists to go back to the place where they grew up. Only one of the respondents had indeed come to the region where she used to live when she was young. However, she chose to go there because her daughter lives there now. Going back to her roots was not her main motivation to visit this area specifically. Another respondent explained he came to Zeeland because he had been coming there for years, since this was the place his father had grown up. For him, it was not so much a trip down memory lane, more a matter of routine.

Nostalgia can also play a part in a more indirect way though. For example, positive memories from childhood-experiences on a farm may inspire people to go to farms again later in life. To test this, they were asked if they had ever visited farms in the past. Only twelve respondents had never visited a farm when they were younger. Out of the twenty respondents who did visit farms when they were younger, 17 had positive memories of those occasions. They felt the farm had a lot of nice places to play and gave them a lot of freedom. They also liked being around animals.

“In my childhood in Zeeland we had all these animals, horses, cows, calves, pigs, chickens, doves, a dog, cats and a sheep. Everything, it was really a farm like you still see in children’s books, you know, as a child that was great fun.” (18)

“Everything that had to do with the farm [was fantastic]. The cows, and the milking back then, I’m not talking about nowadays, I think the romance has come off a bit, but back then it was like that. The farmers had to milk by hand, you can’t imagine it anymore now. And the free life, on a farm, all children should experience that.” (19)

One couple even brought up their childhood memories themselves. When they were asked whether this environment was the countryside for them, the man said:

“[Yes] because here things still happen the way you were used to from the old days, not in the city. The cows are grazing, really the feeling with outdoor-living, in my childhood I had the same.” (27a)

His wife added:

“Everything goes much slower, change of pace, really a cultural difference, how people see things, life, here it’s much more related to family the way it was in the old days, you don’t hear that anymore in the city.” (27b)

Three respondents were not really positive about the farm experiences of their past, but not negative either. They felt little connection with farms or simply considered them as a normal part of life back then, which was neither good nor bad.

One respondent expressed mixed feelings about her childhood on the farm. Although she liked the freedom, her siblings and neighbours were all boys, which meant sometimes she felt lonely.

About half the respondents were asked if they felt their experiences of the past played a role in their decision to come to a farm now. Seven of them felt that was not the case.

Eight said that they might have been looking for that same atmosphere of the past, so they felt their memories may have influenced them.

Whether they had spent time on a farm in their youth or not, most respondents did have certain ideas about the changes between then and now. Many expressed sentiments that things used to be better in the past. People had more time and were more relaxed. There was a stronger sense of solidarity, people had to work together to get things done. Also, animals could still be seen outside in the meadows.

“Everything was more relaxed, people had to work long days, but they were also much more at ease.” (14)

“Perhaps the farmers were better off then than they are now. Not as easy, because there was much more handwork. But everybody had to participate on the farm. And it’s not like that anymore. There are farms where the wife doesn’t participate at all. You used to help each other, and you had to do so because there was nothing else.” (4)

Next to the positive elements of the past, a lot of criticism was given on the present. The respondents feel that the rules have become too strict and the farmers have to work very hard for very little money nowadays:

“The environmental rules become stricter, they [the farmers] have to change, more hygienic, manure surpluses, quotas, they must get rid of the manure. The milk price is dropping, they earn less and less while they should be getting more.” (21)

The love for the profession also seems to have disappeared:

“This farmer himself says out loud: if I didn’t have to milk tomorrow, I would quit immediately. No heart for the cause, no love for the profession. You see that with a lot of farmers. They have grown into it, they do it, but for many it’s not a heritage but a nuisance. The financial pressure is too great. There is no successor, no maintenance. If you love something, you take care of it.” (1b)

Although many feel that the past was better, a different sound can also be heard. For example, the many rules may have caused changes for the better. The farms are now more efficient and hygienic. The farmers take better care of their animals and are more aware of their effects on the environment:

“When I look back to my youth, there was hardly any attention for chemical pesticides, fertilizers and the likes, whereas now I see everything is more animal-friendly, they try as far as the operating permits, you have to consider that too, but I believe they hardly use chemicals anymore and also hardly any waste water with fertilizers in it.” (12)

By far the largest (perceived) change in the countryside is the mechanisation of the farm enterprises; 20 respondents mention this. The feelings about these changes are mixed though. Some respondents feel alienated by the technologies introduced on the farm:

“What scared me a little was that here, at the farm over there, that the cows walk out of the meadows and into the barn and then they walk underneath this door and they are milked by a robot. I thought that was very peculiar.” (6)

However, others feel that the farmers had to work very hard in the past, and the technological advancements may have improved their situation.

When the respondents were asked if they felt the changes were for the better according to themselves (not for the farmers), many felt indifferent. Only a few expressed a small sense of loss, but most felt that this was a natural development that cannot and should not be stopped:

“It’s a pity, basically, but that’s just the way it is, with everything. In the city, in the old days you used to have 1001 small groceries, that’s just not possible anymore.” (24)

In short, quite a few respondents had happy childhood memories on farms. Similarly, many felt that life was better in the old days than it is nowadays. Especially the senior respondents seem to picture these romanticized images of the countryside of the past. Life might have been hard in those days, but it was also pure and honest. Nevertheless, another group felt that the present was in fact better than the past. Technological improvements have made life in the countryside better for those who live there and technological advancements are part of the natural course of development.

4.5 Alternative tourism

To find out whether people go to farms because they do not appreciate other accommodation types or destinations, the respondents have been asked about their other holidays. All respondents said they go on other holidays as well, and most go abroad from time to time.

Many of the elderly people reported that they used to go on camping holidays all over Europe, mostly France, but now that the children are grown up, they do not feel the need to do that anymore:

“When the children were little we always used to go abroad, like most, probably, but when they didn’t come with us anymore we thought ‘is it really necessary to go to the South of France in the high season’, well we talked about it and we had had it with that.” (19)

Other seniors reported that they spend a lot of time on this camping site during the summer months, and went away in winter.

The respondents in their forties and fifties saw their time on the farm camping site as a little getaway, whereas the ‘real’ holiday was planned for some other time. Many of them go camping in West European countries. Some also included city trips or holidays to other continents.

The families with young children had usually been to other countries before they had children, but now felt that a farm camping site suited them better:

“In the past we have been to the Canary Islands, Portugal, Greece, nearly all European countries where nearly everybody goes to, but when we had children we consciously decided not to do that anymore because I think, we think, and everybody should decide for himself, that with small children the Netherlands is a very nice place to stay. The disadvantage is that good weather is not guaranteed. But if the weather is bad, you do something else [so you get to see more of the Netherlands].” (24)

As said, most respondents liked to go camping on their other holidays as well. However, some of them also sleep in hotels or apartments from time to time. Several respondents remarked that they would only stay in a hotel for a limited amount of time, not more than five days or so. Usually they go to hotels if feel they have no other option, for example on a skiing holiday, or if it is just more practical:

“[We go on] trips with the car, Germany, France, Italy ... If it’s just for a few days, I don’t feel like putting up the tent.” (31)

Eighteen respondents express a clear preference for small scale (farm) camping sites opposed to large regular camping sites or hotels and apartments. Nine others said they appreciated many types of holidays and didn’t have a clear preference.

According to these respondents, the camping site where they were staying on at the time of the interview had many advantages. These included that it was cheaper, cleaner, more small-scale, and it had more privacy, tranquillity and a free view. The most important advantage was the sense of freedom and independence the respondents felt on the farm camping site:

“Here you are your own boss, basically, and there [in a hotel] you’re not. It is easy, I have to say. You don’t have to do anything yourself ... You eat and you go away, that’s it. You don’t have to do anything yourself. And here you have to clean and you have to buy groceries, prepare your own meals. But we prefer this.” (4)

“Camping is more free. If you are in a hotel room you have to wait for diner and everything. It’s nice, but here you can eat whatever you want, get out of bed whenever you want.” (14)

Many disadvantages of mainstream hotels and camping sites were reported. Respondents felt these accommodations often lacked atmosphere, had too many rules, were impersonal and too commercial. In case of mainstream camping sites, many felt the places for the tents or caravans were too small. Most importantly, the respondents thought these accommodations were too crowded and noisy:

“[In Callantsoog] we regularly visit a five star camping site, well they have everything you can imagine, but no peace and quiet.” (6)

“[We were in a hotel in Gran Canaria], that was all inclusive, but this year was the last time we did that. Next year we’ll take a bungalow [because] those crowds were awful. With those all inclusive [buffets], it’s really disastrous how people attack that, and everyone stays around the hotel. It’s crowded, it’s full.” (9)

In general, people were rather negative about mainstream accommodations. Some even felt quite strongly about it, saying they would never visit large camping sites or actively try to avoid going to hotels.

Nevertheless, quite a few respondents do visit other accommodations from time to time, and several could see the advantages as well. With hotels, you’re assured of a sleeping place for the evening and sometimes a meal as well. The sanitary facilities are perceived as better or cleaner. Especially in the low season, regular camping sites can be equally cheap and sometime more lively:

“We have stayed there [on a large camping site] once in the low season, in Zeeuws Vlaanderen [in Zeeland] because it lies directly on the coast, we could go to the beach in five minutes to go for a stroll. And it is quieter there as well, because it’s the low season ... Our place was next to the exit so we could go to the beach quickly. And there were more people of our age in the low season, it’s more sociable.” (18)

One of the differences between mainstream and farm camping sites is the amount and quality of the facilities. Some respondents said they didn’t need any special facilities or luxury:

“There is another camping [in this town] with a swimming pool, with bells and whistles and everything [but we don’t want that]. As plain as possible, as simple as possible, the sanitary facilities as well, that’s just fine.” (5)

In general the need for special facilities was varied. Most people said it was nice there was a playground available for the children. Even if they did not bring children themselves they were not disturbed by its presence. No one thought a little shop was necessary, but on the farms where farm products were for sale, people did not mind it either.

More interestingly, there were a lot of different opinions concerning activities organized by the owners of the farm. Some people said they hugely appreciated whatever was being organized, like making campfires or baking pancakes. Others reported that if a camping site were to organize such events, it would be a reason for them not to go there. When asked if she thought a farm camping site should offer any facilities, one respondent answered:

“No because then it’s not a farm camping site anymore.” (2)

Clearly she held a certain image in her mind of what a farm camping site should be like, and special facilities do not fit in.

When the respondents were asked if they desired wireless internet, many said they would like it, although they did not really miss it. Four reported that they had internet on their mobile phone so they had access to internet anyway. One respondent felt strongly that farm camping sites should offer internet:

“Well internet is nearly a must, I think, it’s hardly any effort if you own a camping site to install wifi, it costs absolutely nothing ... You just build a little transmitter and you’re done. The whole camping site can freely, or freely, against payment, but it

costs so little that you could just offer it for free. It's hardly any effort for all camping sites to just do that." (6a)

Other respondents feel it does not belong on a camping site:

"I don't need that [internet]. You can go to the village, to the library ... I do that maybe once or twice, sometimes you're expecting something, but for me it's not necessary. People just ask for it, despite this being a farm camping site." (24, emphasis added)

The presence of televisions on the camping site evoked similar reactions. About half of the respondents did have a television with them, especially those who had permanent places on the camping sites. They reported that they mostly used it to watch the news, because otherwise they felt out of touch.

Others strongly felt that a camping site is no place to be watching television. In answering the question if not bringing their television was a conscious choice, one respondent said:

"Yes, for tranquillity, just because otherwise you'll be watching that box again instead of reading or doing something together." (13)

One respondent could not even explain why she did not watch television, it just seemed wrong to her:

"Three weeks without television ... I want to watch it but I don't. No we brought a radio and a portable cd-player and that's enough ... I can't explain why, holiday is holiday." (25)

The disliking of television and internet seems an indication that these respondents do not appreciate these 'easy' forms of entertainment and distraction. They appear to feel that, during the holiday, you should be able to entertain yourself. Indeed, a few respondents said they actively avoided camping sites with entertainment for the children:

"Farm camping sites don't have the entertainment that you're just not looking for, like discos for children or clowns. Yes it's a conscious decision [to come here]." (16)

"[Here is] no artificial fun, the children have to entertain themselves, the same goes for us, I find that important." (31)

The idea that mainstream camping sites with entertainment create 'artificial fun' indicates that the respondent feels those places are in a sense not 'real'. The matter of

authenticity does seem to play a role here. To be able to entertain oneself is preferable, and can be reached by going to a farm camping site.

However, when the respondents were asked if they would be interested to see a demonstration of farm activities, most were quite enthusiastic. Although such a demonstration can be seen as a performance for tourists and therefore not objectively authentic, most respondents gave the impression that they felt this was a good way to see the 'real' work that farmers do:

"It's interesting to see how somebody else does things. We usually choose an enterprise of which we think, well, that's quite nice. A farm we visit in Brabant is a worm farm, for fishermen ... we have seen that a few times and it's really quite interesting to walk through such a business." (32)

This goes to show that authenticity is indeed constructed in the minds of these respondents. Whereas children's entertainment is contrived, a demonstration of farm activities would be real enough to be perceived as authentic.

4.6 More motivations

The search for the main motivations of tourists to visit farms was the reason this study was set up. To get a better focus, earlier studies were consulted. These showed that the rural idyll and alternative tourism were possibly of great importance. However, other motivations can play a role as well. These will be discussed next. The framework of tourism motivations as proposed by Fodness (1994) is useful as guidance, but other possibly influential factors are also discussed.

Self-esteem

The self-esteem motivation relates to how a certain holiday can make tourists feel good about themselves. According to Fodness (1994) this is usually related to the availability of fashionable or luxurious restaurants and accommodations. It is safe to say that none of the respondents feel that camping on a farm qualifies as a luxurious holiday. Perhaps the opposite is more relevant; a few respondents seemed proud to say they did not need a luxurious holiday:

"It doesn't need to be super deluxe, as long as it's clean, right? The farm we go to in Brabant, well that isn't super deluxe ... they still have the old bathroom in use and

that has got tiles from the '70s, but it's clean. And then it's fine. I mean, the tiles could be purple for all I care." (32)

Some of the respondents seem to feel good about being content with just basic facilities. Rather than improving their self-esteem by going on a fancy holiday, they do so by doing the opposite. It should be noted that this certainly does not apply to all respondents; many went on other, more luxurious holidays besides this particular holiday.

Educational motives

The respondents did not usually mention they came to the farm because they wanted to learn more about it. Educational motives are not actively present in the minds of these tourists. Nevertheless, many of them did mention that they find it very interesting to see what happens at a farm:

"Just this week, he [the farmer] was ensiling, he used to do that with grass and sugar beets, but that probably gave that infamous smell. Now it's done with potatoes, so you don't smell it. I didn't know that, so you learn something again." (7)

Many attached even more importance to the education of (their) children:

"Here they can play and learn about cows. Everything is still in use, that's fun for the children, everything is open so they can see everything." (21)

The idea that children do not know enough about where food comes from is strongly alive amongst many respondents. Respondents with children feel that their own children know enough about it, but others - especially children living in the city - are thought to know nothing about farm life. In general, the respondents feel that farms have an important educative task, which should be part of every child's upbringing, so children understand food isn't made in a factory:

"Children think that milk comes from a carton from a factory. I mean, we know better." (26)

"When the milking takes place and you drink it from a glass, straight from the cow, that's great for city children, 'oh that's where milk comes from, not from the factory'." (27a)

When the respondents were asked why they thought farms were important, the educational function was the third most heard answer, after landscape preservation and food supply.

Pleasure

The pleasure motivation plays a role for those tourists who go on holiday to have fun and feel good. Partly, the rural idyll could fall under this motivation but other factors play a role as well. For example, many respondents go to the farm camping site because it is fun for children:

“We read on the internet that you can help [the farmer], that’s a very nice feature for my son.” (22)

Indeed, the fact that the holiday destination should be fun for the children seems to play a very important role for some:

“You look at what activities there are for the children, children can entertain themselves very well also, but they also enjoy, I hear in the morning ‘I’m off to the farm’ and then you see, what they do around there, they are just hanging around and there’s not much to do, but you don’t hear them, you don’t see them. Last year we wanted to go swimming, [they said] ‘no, not now, we have so much more to do here’.” (32)

For many it is also important that they can do their favourite leisure activities. The majority of the respondents mentions cycling as one of their main activities whilst on holiday. Reading, walking, swimming, gardening, playing puzzles or knitting were also mentioned. Some people like to visit towns in the neighbourhood, others simply want to relax and do nothing at all. A few have chosen a certain camping site specifically because they could fish there.

Escape

Some respondents said they were glad to be away from their daily routines for a while. Unlike the suggestion of the rural idyll, where people want to escape the crowds of the city, many (though not all) said they lived in a rather peaceful environment. It was not so much the busy city life they tried to get away from. Rather, they simply wanted to avoid the daily chores and routines for some time:

“At home, you’re always busy, we have a big house with a big garden and you always have to do everything and here you do nothing. That’s the tranquillity you get when you just leave.” (6)

“If you have your own house, there is always something to do. That’s why you shouldn’t stay at home during your holiday.” (24)

Although their daily lives may not be very hectic, many respondents appreciate a change of setting every now and then.

Status

Whereas the self-esteem motivation serves to make tourists feel better about themselves, the status motivation is aimed to raise the esteem others have of them. By going on a fancy or unusual holiday, others may be impressed and the prestige of the one going on holiday may increase. As said before though, going to a farm camping site is not considered luxurious or special. Perhaps if one usually goes on very extravagant holidays and now decides to take a step back and enjoy a simple farm holiday instead, this might impress people. However, no examples of this have been found in this study.

Social motives

Not only the characteristics of a holiday destination are important for tourists; the people they meet play an important part as well. Some respondents had a strong social motive to go to this farm, for example because their son lived close by or their brother was also staying on the same camping site.

In addition, the friendliness of the farm owners can be important:

“The people of this camping site are super. Hospitable and very friendly and that plays a role too.” (3)

Some respondents had been coming to the same camping site for many years and felt a strong connection with the farm owners:

“We speak with them several times a day. We drink coffee there, they drink coffee here, that’s how it goes. And if they have to go away in the evening we babysit their children, that’s how it goes.” (10)

“I think we also come back here because you get to know the people, you build a friendship, it’s familiar.” (27b)

Several respondents commented on the fact that the right amount of contact with other guests is important as well:

“Everyone keeps to himself and sometimes in the evening you come together here and we’ll have a wine and a beer and that’s it for another few weeks. If you need each other everyone is there for you, no problem, everyone brings something for the others every now and then, then we’ll have herring, they go out in the evening and bring back herring for us or asparagus from Limburg, every time something new. That’s nice, everyone keeps to himself and when you need it, you have each other. You never think for a second ‘oh dear do I have to join’, you know? That’s the great thing about this camping site.” (12)

The degree to which the respondents want to meet other people varies. Some feel the farm camping sites are a little too tranquil sometimes:

“It’s quiet now, sometimes too quiet, to be honest. This year there aren’t as many caravans as previous years. I quite like it to have a chat with someone from time to time. And that’s not always possible now.” (9)

The wish to meet friendly people, whether they be relatives, old friends or new guests, was much heard.

Practical considerations

A few respondents commented they chose this place because it is close to where they live:

“[We chose this because] it’s close to home, we are going away for a long weekend, then you look for something close by. Why would you drive all the way to Limburg?” (21)

Several referred to the cheapness of farm camping sites. One family said they wanted to go on holiday for a few weeks, and staying on a farm was financially the best option:

“We’ve been camping at farms for years, because it’s cheaper and you can still go on holiday then.” (32)

Finally, multiple respondents commented they were member of SVR. For them, it seemed natural to choose an SVR camping site. Usually, they selected a town or region where they wanted to stay, and simply looked what the SVR had to offer there:

“I have a brother who lives in Westkapelle and I asked him, what is a nice place in Walcheren [the region where Westkapelle is located], close to you. He said ‘well then you should take Oostkapelle because then you have forests and beaches, it’s nice for cycling ... So we just looked at the internet, the site of SVR, and I just picked the smallest camping site.” (18)

It becomes clear that there are quite a few practical pull factors that are important for these respondents.

Recommendations

When being asked why they had chosen this particular holiday destination, about half the respondents replied this camping site had been recommended by friends or family:

“We had friends that used to come here, they asked us to join ... We were to come for two, three days, because I thought that would be plenty. We stayed 14 days, we liked it so much, we have never been anywhere else since. For 27 years.” (20)

The influence of peers and word-of-mouth is obviously of great importance. For many, the choice of destination doesn’t seem a conscious decision. If friends like a certain place, many respondents trust their opinion and try the farm themselves.

The working farm

Previous studies suggested that another pull factor may be important as well, namely the fact that the farm is still in use (see Garcia-Ramon, Canoves & Valdovinos 1995, Peebles 1995, in: Busby & Rendle 2000). Most respondents of this study indicated that it is not all that important to them, but many do appreciate it. They would have chosen this camping site whether the farm was active or not, but it is considered a bonus that it is still agriculturally active, especially for the children:

“It’s nice. On Sunday our grandchildren will visit us here and they love it ... It’s not necessary, but when it’s here, it’s great.” (6a)

One of the respondents who stayed on a crop farm commented:

“We hardly notice [it’s a working farm] because they only grow crops. If they had cows with calves, that would be different, with animals, but you barely notice it here.”
(14)

It seems that the main attraction of the working farm is the animals, which provide education and amusement. However, a farm that is no longer agriculturally active, but still has a few animals on the premises, would be just as good for most. A farm camping site without animals is less attractive, especially for parents who bring their children.

5.

DISCUSSION



5.1 Introduction

In the overview of the study results, the general motivations of these farm tourists have been outlined. The presence of certain rural images, nostalgic feelings and resentments towards mainstream tourism destinations has also been established. But do these images and attitudes influence the tourists' motivations? People have many opinions, ideas and feelings about all sorts of things. The challenge of this chapter is to distinguish to what degree these ideas influence the motivations to stay on a farm.

The same concepts as treated in the previous chapters will be used here. However, they will be more integrated, to present a clearer picture. The motivations will be categorized into pull and push factors, as first suggested by Dann (1977). First, the pull factors will be discussed. What amenities make tourists go to the farm? The focus of this study was on the pull factors, but Dann already made clear that these are always interlocked with the push factors that make tourists go on holiday in the first place. Therefore, the push factors will be presented as well. Finally, some attention will be given to factors that were thought to play a role, in this study or elsewhere, but turned out to have hardly any influence at all.

5.2 Pull factors

Several pull factors could be distinguished. The environment (both physical and social), nostalgia, escape, recommendations by others and practical considerations will be discussed here.

The countryside environment

The physical

The physical, or perhaps more appropriately, the natural environment of the farm is very important for farm tourists. Their image of the countryside is highly positive, especially with regard to the greenery, the openness and the tranquillity. They consider the countryside environment as natural, which they think is very pleasant. These findings are in line with earlier studies on the Dutch countryside (Heins 2001, Steenbekkers et al. 2008).

It is safe to say these natural elements play a very important role in the decisions to go to the countryside. These farm tourists clearly appreciate these elements and therefore choose this environment as their holiday destination. However, it does not quite explain

why they choose a farm to stay at, rather than for example a regular mini-camping site. Other factors play a role in this decision.

The social

The farm tourists also hold a high opinion of the people living in the countryside. The residents are considered more friendly and more helpful than people living in cities. Indeed, some tourists considered them more honest and real: pure nature. The perceived close social community is also seen in a very positive light.

The degree to which this social environment plays a role in the decision to go the farm is much less clear than the natural environment. Of course tourists are pleased with the idea that people are friendly on their holiday destination, but it does not seem to be their reason to go there. No references were made to the pleasantness of the people in a certain region in relation to their decision to go there. Certainly it is not one of the main reasons to stay on the farm.

The view of the countryside is highly positive. But is it romanticized or idealized? Is it in fact the picture of the rural idyll that attracts them to go there?

The rural idyll

Earlier findings on the existence of the rural idyll usually base this on the presence of very positive images of the countryside in the minds of people, as well as the absence of negatives images (Steenbekkers et al. 2008, Van Dam et al. 2002). According to these studies, this combination of very positive and lack of negative views on the countryside means that the visitor's view on the countryside is romanticized. After all, many studies (e.g. Cloke 2003, Bell 2006, see Chapter 2) have shown that the countryside is not perfect. Social exclusion, poverty and deprivation as well as aesthetically unpleasing and undesirable elements can all be found in the countryside. Not knowing about or referring to anything negative in the countryside is therefore presumed an incomplete, idealized and unrealistic picture.

The farm tourists interviewed in this study indeed had predominantly positive views on the countryside. When asked to describe both positive and negative elements of the countryside, most could only come up with positive ones. Whenever they could think of something negative (like unpleasant smells), it was usually something that others might find disturbing. In accordance with the earlier studies, this would confirm that the rural idyll is present in the minds of these farm tourists. They do not necessarily paint a particularly picturesque picture, with rolling hills and flowers in cottage windows, but they do feel that generally life is better there.

The opinion these tourists hold of farmers fits well with this positive image. The farmer is seen as very important for the country. He grows the food we eat, he creates the landscape we see and, more generally, he represents the Dutch identity. In accordance with the agrarian myth (Brass 2000), the farmer leads a more pure and natural, and thus superior, life. Again, this overly positive perception points to the presence of the rural idyll in the minds of farm tourists.

These tourists do not easily see the more unpleasant sides of the countryside. Although their image may not correspond with the 'ugly' truth about the countryside like Cloke (2003) describes, it is nonetheless the way they experience it. The rural idyll may be a myth, but it nevertheless an image that lives in the minds of people. Critics of the rural idyll sometimes seem to suggest that people who believe in the rural idyll are somewhat deluded. However, this is simply the way these tourists experience the countryside. Whether their image of the countryside is realistic or not makes no difference to the behaviour of these tourists.

It is altogether not very surprising that tourists have a better impression of a place than locals. People living off tourism try to make the environment as pleasing as possible. They are friendly with tourists when they are in contact with them. After all, they earn their money through tourism. If tourists get a good impression from the place, if they feel it is beautiful and the people are friendly, then they may return. People living in the countryside may consciously or unconsciously work on keeping the image of the rural idyll alive. Can tourists be called deluded when they believe the picture that is presented to them?

Although the above does point to a presence and influence of the rural idyll, it is nonetheless necessary to have a closer, critical look at what these tourists have said. When asked to describe the countryside, they came up with positive or neutral elements only. When asked if they could think of anything negative in the countryside, few of them managed. But in discussing the difference between the past and the present, many mentioned the negative side effects of the industrialisation of agriculture. Cattle diseases, pollution and mass-production of animals were all mentioned. Although some tourists feel these industrial farms do not belong to the 'real' countryside, most understand how these farms came about and somewhat reluctantly say that the industrialisation is the natural course of development. Thus, they do feel that some negative elements are present in the countryside after all. This suggests that they may paint the idealized picture of the countryside when asked for it directly. However, while talking about the countryside it becomes clear that, perhaps subconsciously, they know it is not the perfect world, even though they wish it was.

For this study, references to authenticity were seen as an indicator that the rural idyll may play a role. Few references to the authenticity of the farm were heard during the interviews. Even when something was said about 'real farm camping sites', the tourists were talking about other farms, in other places. There was no sign that they came to this farm camping site because it felt so real. This brings more doubt to the existence of the rural idyll as a motivation.

Another suggestion that is made in the theory of the rural idyll, is that it is an urban invention. Some feel that it is indeed a utopia, invented by city people who never even visit the countryside. Presumably, only people who live in the city can invent this perfect picture. This is what Bunce (1994) refers to as 'the armchair countryside'.

However, it is certainly not only urban dwellers who come to the farm camping site. Many of the visitors live in the countryside themselves. Those who do live in the city visit the countryside frequently. Not one of the respondents had come to the countryside for the first time in their lives. Heins (2001) has already noted that city dwellers who visit the countryside frequently appreciate it even more than those city dwellers that hardly or never go there. Moreover, even people who have moved to the countryside can maintain their positive, perhaps idyllic images about the countryside, as the studies of Swaffield and Fairweather (1998) and Van der Ziel (2003) showed.

Presuming that the theory of the rural idyll is 'correct', these findings suggest that the farm tourists are not led by the image of the rural idyll. Rather, they simply have a very positive image of the countryside, which matches with their experience. It is not idealized or romanticized, it is what they encounter in reality.

In conclusion, it becomes obvious that the farm tourists are attracted by the beautiful image of the countryside. However, to say the attraction is in fact the rural idyll is up for discussion. Not all elements fit well. This either suggests that the tourists are not pulled by the rural idyll as such, or it means the theory on the rural idyll needs to be fine-tuned.

Nostalgia

Returning to Davis's (1979) theory, three specific elements of nostalgia were distinguished: the object of nostalgia needs to be viewed in a positive light, it usually refers to something that has been experienced personally and the past is used in contrast with something negative in the present. Especially the senior farm tourists held views that correspond with this theory. The farms of the past are seen in a positive light. Animals were still outside in the meadows, farmers were milking by hand and knew the cows by name. Most of them had been to the farm when they were young and thus have experienced the farm of the past first-hand. The present state of affairs on the

countryside and farms specifically is viewed in a negative light. The small-scale farm of the past is contrasted to the current industrialization of the countryside, with mass-production of animals, pollution and diseases. Nostalgia is clearly present in the minds of these farm tourists.

To what degree nostalgia plays a role in the motivations to come to the farm is more difficult to establish. Sellick's study (2004) presented a list of possible motivations. As indicators of nostalgia, she distinguished pilgrimage, family roots, visiting friends or relatives and reliving good memories from the past.

Making a pilgrimage and reliving memories of the past were never mentioned by the farm tourists. Their reasons for coming to the farm are not that obviously motivated by nostalgia.

Visiting friends or relatives, on the other hands, was mentioned by quite a few. It can be questioned, however, if this is really a motivation related to nostalgia. If it were friends from the past, or relatives that were not visited for many years, then indeed nostalgia could be an influencing factor. However, this was not the case for these farm tourists. Their friends or relatives were seen on a more or less regular basis. The aim was not to reminisce, but simply to see each other again. The reasons for visiting friends were socially motivated, not nostalgically.

A few of the farm tourists did visit the region where their family roots could be found. However, this was more due to practical considerations than to nostalgia. They did not aim to go to the exact same location as where they grew up. They definitely did not consider this holiday as some sort of pilgrimage.

Obviously, nostalgia was not the direct and clear cause for going on a holiday for these farm tourists. Nevertheless, in a more covert way elements of nostalgia did come forward in their motivations. For example, some indicated that they were perhaps motivated to go to the farm because they had good memories of farms in their youth. But, they did not need to return to the same location as where they had been when they were young. They were not looking for the exact places where some of their memories were created. Rather, they were looking for the same feeling, the same atmosphere.

This is different than in, for example, nostalgia in sport tourism. Fairley and Gammon (2005) described how sports nostalgics may return to certain locations where historic sport events had taken place. In these cases, however, it needs to be the exact location where the event took place. Just like the farm tourists, they are looking for the same

atmosphere as back then, but for sport tourists, this can only be found on the location where the action took place. The nostalgia felt by farm tourists is less specific.

It is important to remember that not all farm tourists expressed nostalgic sentiments. Some indeed felt that the present countryside may be different than the past, but not necessarily in a bad way. Even so, for some of the tourists feelings of nostalgia did play some role in their decision to go to the farm. It is not as clear cut as a pilgrimage, but nevertheless they do show a certain yearning to go back in time and trying to find the good life of the past. For most this was a latent motivation, not one they would easily express without being prompted, but it did play a role for them all the same.

Escape: from mass tourism

Looking at the full picture of the destinations choices these tourists make, it becomes clear none of them are only farm tourists. All these tourists go on other holidays as well, or have done so in the past. Nevertheless, a distinction can be made.

Some of the farm tourists have a very diverse range of holiday destinations. They go to different countries, stay at a variety of accommodations and the degree of luxury also varies. Although their preference is usually to go camping, they do not feel a strong need to stay on farm camping sites specifically. If a swimming pool is present, for example, this is not necessarily seen as a negative element by these tourists. When these tourists stay on a farm, they are not looking to get away from the mainstream tourism destinations. Rather, they enjoy the diversity of tourism options that are open to them.

For some of the farm tourists, it seems the farm camping site is the destination that fits best with the life stage they are in. Many of the seniors said they had enjoyed other kinds of holidays when they were younger, but now they want to avoid the fuss of going far away anymore. Similarly, several of the parents with young children had been abroad a lot before they had children, but now found that the farm camping site is the best holiday destination. They do not choose the farm out of some kind of fundamental believe, but simply because this is the right kind of holiday for them at this moment in their life.

However, there is another group of farm tourists that holds a different opinion. These tourists do not like the crowdedness of mainstream accommodations and rather choose the tranquillity of the farm camping site. Indeed, they feel quite strongly opposed to more commercial forms of tourism. They actively avoid going to places with loud music, internet facilities and entertainment for children. They look for peace and quiet, a natural environment and spaciousness instead.

Of course it can be questioned whether this group of farm tourists is indeed a distinct group of alternative tourists. Sharpley (2006) theorized that ecotourists do not have different motivations than mainstream tourists. Perkins and Grace (2009) have contested this, by making a comparison between mainstream and ecotourists.

In this study, only the motivations of the farm tourists have come forward. A comparison with mainstream tourists is not made. It seems fairly obvious though that some of the features sought after by farm tourists (like tranquility or greenness of the environment) are not shared by all mainstream tourists. Nevertheless, this does not prove that the two are fundamentally different.

However, there is one characteristic that makes this group of farm tourists obviously and undeniably stand out from mainstream tourists. Their disliking of mainstream tourism destinations and accommodations makes them, by definition, different from mainstream tourists. Their strong desire to get away from the crowds, the noise and artificial fun makes these farm tourists what could be called alternative tourists.

It is important to note that in tourism studies, alternative tourists are often seen as the 'good' tourists. They bring something to a tourism destination instead of only taking things. They do not destroy but contribute to the destination community. In a sense, they are helping the world to become a better place.

The farm tourists in this study did not have such altruistic or environmental motivations though. Although they all enjoy nature very much, they are not particularly environmentally friendly. Similarly, they are not aiming to live their life more sustainably. They do not choose the farm because it is less polluting to go there since they are relatively close by, or because camping creates little disturbance for the natural environment. They simply choose the farm because they like that environment best; it is the place where they expect to find most pleasure. In this sense, they are no different than mainstream tourists after all.

Regardless of whether these tourists could be termed alternative tourists or not, there is one more characteristic which makes these tourists stand out. They all have in common that they appreciate the freedom and independence the farm camping site offers them. Although they may go on several types of holidays, they usually express a preference for destinations where they are not bound to many rules, to group activities or to time schedules. The farm is therefore a very attractive destination for them.

Recommendations by friends and satisfaction

The recommendations of friends and relatives were of great importance to choose this particular camping site. The farm tourists did not usually ask for advice, but it was given

to them voluntarily. Quite a few tourists had received a recommendation years ago, decided to try it for themselves, and never went anywhere else since. The initial recommendation turned into satisfaction, which became a motivation to return the next year. Especially those tourists with a (semi-)permanent place on the camping site no longer even questioned their holiday destination. The fact that they are going to the same farm camping site every time has become a given.

Again, it should be said that this motivation does not apply to all farm tourists. Some of them try going to a different camping site each year. For them, recommendations did not play a great role. They may have been satisfied with the previous camping site, but their desire to go to a different region plays a more important role. The farm tourists can hardly be called great explorers, but some degree of change every now and then is nevertheless necessary for some. However, the fact that they keep returning to farm camping sites in general does indicate that they are indeed satisfied with such a holiday environment, which is again a motivation to go there.

Practical considerations

Although not a very innovative insight, it is important to note that practical considerations are quite important for the farm tourists. The distance from home to the destination and the price of the accommodation are deciding matters in the holiday choice.

The distance is not a pull factor of the farm specifically though. If tourists are looking for a camping site close to home, this need not be one situated on a farm. The fact that people do choose to go to a farm camping site indicates that distance is not the only motivation. Rather, the distance limits the options that are open to these tourists.

The cheapness is more closely related to the fact that the camping site is situated on a farm. It is not a necessary, intrinsic feature for a farm to be cheap; in theory a farm camping site could be luxurious and expensive. In reality the farm tourist perceives that virtually all farm camping sites are cheaper than regular camping sites or other accommodations. For some of them, this is one of the reasons to choose the farm camping site as holiday destination.

5.3 Push factors

Beside the more specific factors that pull tourists to the farm, several push factors were also found. These include pleasure, escape and social motives and will be treated next.

Pleasure

Pleasure is obviously an important motivation for farm tourists. For those visitors with children, the enjoyment of the children seems even more important than personal enjoyment. Indeed, many seem to think along the lines of 'when the children are having fun, I'm having fun'. If these tourists would go on a holiday without their children, they might choose a different destination. However, these children greatly enjoy the farm environment and consequently their parents enjoy going there.

Not all farm tourists bring their children (or even have children). Those who come alone, come to the farm for their own enjoyment. In part this means relaxation, doing nothing at all. But leisure activities, hobbies and sports, are also part of the fun. These tourists enjoy walking, cycling, fishing or sight-seeing in the countryside and this enjoyment motivates them to go on this holiday.

It is not very surprising that pleasure is a motivation. In fact, it is difficult to imagine someone travelling voluntarily for leisure purposes (i.e. going on a holiday) for whom pleasure does not play a role in the motivations. Even challenging holidays, like climbing a mountain, or 'difficult' holiday activities, like visiting a war memorial centre, will bring tourists rewards or a sense of fulfilment. In no sense can farm tourism be considered challenging or difficult; pleasure is easily within reach. Perhaps the biggest threat to enjoyment on the farm camping site is boredom. However, not one visitor has referred to that. The farm holiday is very much enjoyed.

Escape: from home

Although 'escaping' may be putting it quite strongly, many farm tourists do feel they want to get away from home for some time. This is not so much to escape hectic city life, but rather the daily chores and routines. Many of the activities on the farm, like shopping, cycling and reading, are also done at home. Other than a change of setting, the farm has very little to offer that the tourists cannot find at home. Yet, simply getting away from home is important for these farm tourists.

Getting away from the regular environment to gain new experiences is a common feature in many kinds of tourism. The farm tourists do not seem to be very demanding in this sense. Although they do search for environmental elements like space and greenness, they hardly look for new experiences. Most of the activities undertaken on the farm camping site can also be done at home. Visiting the local museum or nearby villages is about as exotic as it gets. Clearly, they aim to escape the mundane home environment,

but do not mind that the new environment is in fact rather similar to home. As long as the actual location is different, most of these farm tourists are satisfied.

Social motivations

The importance of meeting other people ranges from moderately to very great. Some had very clear social motivations to go on this holiday: they would be close to friends or relatives. Others had come to the camping site so often that the owners had become their friends. The presence of these specific people in this specific place were the direct cause for this holiday.

For these visitors, the social motivation was not highly related to the farm setting. In theory they could meet with these friends or relatives anywhere, and the experience would virtually be the same. Perhaps their being on the farm shows that they all share the same preferences of environment or activities. However, this tells little about their motivations to stay on a farm specifically.

Other social motivations also occurred. Not all tourists had friends or family to visit, yet the presence of other guests was appealing. Social contact with fellow campers was appreciated and even searched for by some of the visitors, especially the seniors. For them, it was more relevant to go to the farm. It was not so much the features of the farm specifically that made them go there, but their preference for such an environment does play a role. These people go to the farm because they expect to find people there who have the same preferences. People with whom they have something in common (in this case a liking for the farm environment) are more likely to be friendly company than those with whom they share few common interests. The appreciation of the farm environment is thus combined with the potential of social contact.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, 'spending quality time with the family' was never mentioned. For the retired senior visitors this is not so remarkable, because most of them already spend much time together at home. However, for the fathers who work fulltime it could have played a role (the mothers were usually housewives and consequently at home more often). Possibly the concept of 'quality time' is not present in their minds or they simply feel they spend enough time with the family when they are at home also.

Pleasure, escape and social motivations are clearly push factors. They are the reasons these people go travelling in the first place. Although they are important motivations to go on holiday, they tell little about why tourists choose the farm specifically. Nevertheless,

they are motivations that are present amongst farm tourists. The same cannot be said for some other possible motivations, which will be discussed next.

5.4 Non-motivations

Beside some of the motivations discussed earlier, Fodness (1994) distinguished educational factors, status and self-esteem as well. This study showed they hardly played a role for farm tourists.

Educational motivations

Education is primarily seen as a push factor. Some people are interested in learning new things and therefore they travel. This, however, cannot be said for these farm tourists. They are not primarily motivated to go on holiday by a need to learn new things.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that education is never mentioned by farm tourists. The farm is seen by many as a very informative environment. For parents who come with their children, the educational aspect of the farm surroundings is frequently mentioned. They appreciate that something can be learned at the farm, and even feel this is a necessary element of raising children.

However, it is necessary to note that the children having fun had a higher priority than their learning something. Parents showed a preference for farms where animals were present. Whether these farms were still agriculturally active or not was of little interest. Parents did appreciate it when, for example, the children could see how cows are being milked. But, this was never a reason to choose this camping site over another.

To a lesser degree, the same can be said for the senior visitors. They usually appreciated seeing a little of the usual activities on the farm. Sometimes they would mention that their grandchildren, visiting for a day, really liked the presence of animals. If demonstrations would be offered, they would usually be happy to have a look, but it was not something they would miss if it was not there. Equally, they were usually not interested in participating in the farm work. It was nice if something could be learned, but not necessary.

In general, it can be said that the presence of animals was a point of attraction for the visitors. Many of them showed a preference for farms with animals. However, this was mostly because it was fun for the children. The farm still being in use agriculturally is of

little importance. Many respondents said it would not have made a difference to them if the farm was not a working farm. Especially on crop farms, where the agricultural activities were less visible, most visitors were barely aware that the farm was working.

In explaining the set up of this study it was mentioned that, accidentally, some non-working farms were visited also. The visitors interviewed on these camping sites did not mind that the farm was no longer working. Some had been coming there for years, and could compare the period before and after the retirement. To them, it did not make any difference. Again, these were originally crop farms, so there was very little awareness of the farms being in use a few years earlier.

These findings confirm earlier studies (Frater 1983, Fleischer & Tchetchik 2003, Pearce 1990), which claimed that farms still being active in agriculture is of little interest to the visitors. Although many feel that the farm has an important educative function, none of these farm tourists come to the farm to actually learn something about it. Apparently the educational function of the farm is considered very important for other people, but not for them. These tourists appreciated that something can be learned, but it is not a deciding point on which this camping site is chosen over another.

Status and self-esteem

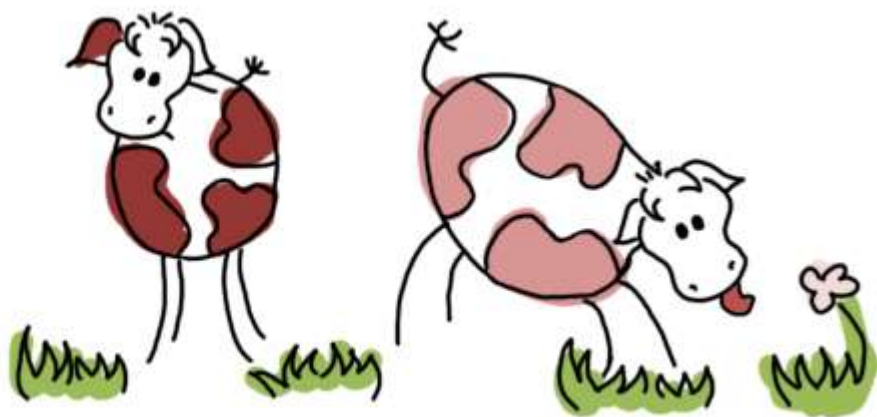
Farm tourists do not use their farm holiday to increase their prestige. In order for a holiday to be of influence on the tourist's status, it needs to have something special. Usually, very original or exclusive holidays can fulfil such a role. Because it is not very expensive to stay on a farm camping site, it is a holiday that is within reach of nearly everyone, at least in the Netherlands. Few people would regard camping on a farm as exclusive or original. Increasing status is clearly not a motivation to go to a farm.

Similarly, farm holidays do not seem to increase self-esteem. It is not a holiday where a certain accomplishment can make the tourist feel good about himself. The only thing that might make them proud, is the fact that they can enjoy themselves without any luxury. However, it cannot be said that this is the motivation that makes them stay on the farm. Tourists do not go there in order to feel good about their modest needs.

It should be born in mind that status and self-esteem are not motivations that tourists easily admit to. In fact, many may not even be aware that such motivations play a role. In studying the motivations of tourists, these may therefore easily be overlooked. That being said, these farm tourists gave little indication that either status or self-esteem may be of any influence on their decision to stay on the farm.

6.

CONCLUSIONS



6.1 Introduction

It is now time to see if an answer to the research question of this study can be found. For this, it is checked if the hypotheses can be confirmed. Together with the theory and empirical findings described throughout this article, this will help to understand why tourists visit farms.

Following this, some recommendations will be given which come forward from the knowledge that is gained with this study. With this, farmers and policy makers may get a greater insight in how to improve the farm tourism product. Furthermore, opportunities for future academic research will be pointed out as well.

6.2 Answering the research question

At the beginning of this study two hypotheses were formulated:

1. The tourist's decision to stay on a farm is influenced by the attraction of the 'rural idyll'.
2. Tourists want to get away from mass-tourism destinations, and therefore choose a farm as a form of 'alternative tourism'.

The findings of this study show that the rural idyll may indeed have some influence on farm tourists. They perceive the countryside as a better place and therefore like to enjoy their holidays there. Memories they have of the farms of their past are sometimes of influence on this as well. However, they do realize the countryside is not perfect. The image of the rural idyll does not fit perfectly.

Some of the farm tourists go on all sort of holidays during the year, including mass-tourism destinations. However, there is also a group that goes to the farm in order to avoid the crowds of mass tourism. Some of the farm tourists can therefore indeed be called alternative tourists.

These findings, as well as all the other information found in this study, can help in answering the research question:

Why do tourists visit farms?

The reasons why tourists visit farms are quite straightforward on first sight. People go there because they and their children expect to enjoy themselves there. They wish to escape the mundane home environment and like to get in touch with friendly people. More specifically, the natural and social environment of the farm and the countryside in general are found attractive. Space, tranquillity and greenness are the features of the farm camping site that are most loved. Some may look for the atmosphere they experienced on farms when they were young. Others may wish to get away from overcrowded and commercialized mass-tourism destinations. Finally, recommendations of friends as well as cheapness and proximity are also mentioned as good reasons to visit the farm.

Looking more closely at what all these farm tourists have told, some underlying motivations come forward. When the more practical motivations are moved aside, it becomes clear that these tourists are really searching **freedom, independence and space**. These concepts are interrelated and sometimes overlapping, but nevertheless distinct.

The countryside in general and the farm specifically are seen as a space of freedom. Farmers are seen as independent entrepreneurs, who can do whatever they wish whenever they wish to do it. According to the farm tourists, they are never hurried, know no stress and can decide for themselves. These are exactly the characteristics these tourists are looking for in their holiday.

Of course it can be questioned to what degree farmers are actually independent. Although many of them can indeed decide their daily schedule themselves, they are often dependent on multinationals who buy their products and on subsidies from the government. The low prices they get for their products, which many respondents recognize as a problem, means life for farmers is not always problem-free. However, the tourists are not confronted with the farmers' personal worries. The respondents may realize that the picture of the relaxed and independent farmer is not exactly true (anymore), but apparently what they find on the farm is close enough to what they have in mind. They are therefore not disappointed.

Freedom can mean different things to different people. Some tourists may experience freedom when they are staying in a luxury resort where everything is done for them. Farm tourists perceive freedom in a very different way. The farm gives them freedom because they can do everything they want to do, whenever they want to do it. They do not feel bound by rules or cramped by other people when they are on the farm camping site.

Of course farm camping sites have rules as well. Making a lot of noise, walking around naked or leaving trash lying around are not allowed there, because the other guests need to be taken into account. But these farm tourists do not wish to do anything crazy. The rules on the farm also apply in nearly every other social setting people encounter. Such social rules have therefore already been internalized during everyday life. It is not difficult at all to comply to the rules, because they are perceived as common sense. Just living the way they usually do is enough. As a result, it feels like there are no rules at all and this gives a sense of freedom.

The rules of other, more commercialized camping sites, hotels, holiday homes or resorts are perceived as much more strict. Guests are expected to eat at certain times, to sleep at certain times and to leave at certain times. Farm tourists may in fact follow the exact same schedule when they are camping on a farm, but they distinctly dislike the idea that the accommodation they are staying at decides this for them. They wish to make these choices independently.

The amounts of open space is a more physical interpretation of freedom. The countryside has wide views and feels very open. There are no large buildings, no traffic jams and no crowds of people in the countryside to obstruct this openness. Similarly, on the farm camping site itself the places for tents and caravans are big and spacious. The visitors are not too close to their neighbours, which gives them space to breath. Not feeling cramped and suffocated due to lack of physical space gives these farm tourists a sense of freedom.

6.3 Recommendations

So what is the use of knowing more about farm tourists' motivations? The relevance of these findings will be discussed here.

Practical recommendations

In the first chapter it became clear that agriculture is no longer a viable way to earn a living for many farmers. Offering tourism facilities at the farm is often suggested as a solution to keep the farm viable, but so far many farmers still struggle to earn enough money. Understanding why people visit farms can help farmers to improve their tourism facility.

If farmers think about changing anything to their tourism facilities, it is first of important to bear in mind that the perception of freedom is very important for their guests. In terms of space this means it is important that the places for tents and caravans remain large and spacious. If the farm environment allows it, a wide view on the countryside could be created or maintained. Additionally, there should not be too many rules. It is not advisable to remind the visitors of the rules either, because they perceive the farm as a place where there are few rules. The rules that do apply are naturally understood by them and do not need to be the focus of attention.

Furthermore, updating the facilities present on the farm may sometimes be an option. Part of the visitors appreciate a certain amount of luxury. For them, improving or expanding the sanitary facilities, installing wireless internet or organizing activities may be a bonus. However, other guests come to avoid such extras. For them, if the farm camping site starts to resemble mainstream camping sites, it becomes less attractive to go there. It is therefore crucial for the farmer to carefully consider who they wish to attract. Attracting more visitors who like luxury may mean losing others.

In terms of promotion it is obvious that internet plays a very important role. Quite a few visitors used the internet as the first medium to find information about the farm. Farmers seem well aware of this, as all visited farms had their own website. More interestingly, it is important to realize that many guests visit because they have been recommended to do so by people who have been there before. Promotion through word-of-mouth may be even more important than the internet. This is a type of promotion that is difficult to influence. Rather than spending a lot of money and effort in promotion, it may be more effective to invest in good service. Creating a higher satisfaction among the guests may result in more recommendations. Farmers may also opt to encourage their guests to tell others about the farm and thus stimulate word-of-mouth.

Finally, those farmers that do not have animals on the premises could consider getting a small petting zoo. Especially children, but adults also, really enjoy the presence of animals on the farm camping site. It adds to the feeling of being on a farm, which can be a bonus for crop farms and farms that are no longer in use.

Academic recommendations

One of the limitations of this study was that only farm tourists who stayed on farm camping sites were studied. People who only visit the farm for the afternoon could not be taken into account. However, it is well possible that their motivations to go to the farm are quite distinct from those who stay longer. Those who come to buy their fruits and

vegetables on the farm may do so because this suits their natural lifestyle. Those who come to see a demonstration on the farm may have education as their prime motivation. Further research into the motivations of other types of farm tourists is strongly recommended.

More generally, future research on tourist motivations could do with a better theoretical framework. In this study, the six motivations of Fodness could serve as a useful guideline, but they are mostly limited to push factors. When trying to understand all motivations of tourists going to a certain destination, clearly the pull factors need to be taken into account as well. Expanding the theoretical framework that Fodness proposed, so that it includes categories of pull factors as well, could be very useful for future studies in tourism motivations.

The rural idyll is an interesting image, that seems to have quite some influence on people's behaviour. Although a lot of theory on the matter exists, very few empirical studies have been conducted to back it up. Those that do exist usually confirm or deny the influence of the rural idyll based on the large amount of positive and lack of negative views that people hold of the countryside. However, this study showed that this may not be the complete picture. When asked directly, respondents may react in such contrasting terms. However, when other issues concerning the countryside are discussed, many do know that the countryside contains negative elements as well. The connection between the theory and the empirical world needs to be improved in order to better establish the role of the rural idyll.

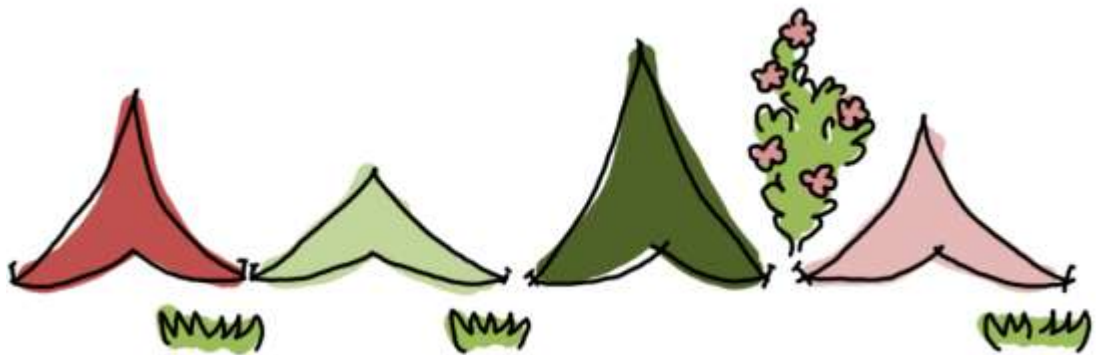
Finally, the role of nostalgia as a motivation in tourism decisions needs more attention. Until now, this topic seems much overlooked: only a few studies in tourism have given it attention. The high number of elderly respondents and the presence of nostalgia as a motivation in this study are remarkable. However, as said before, nostalgia is not only felt by the elderly. Rather, nostalgia is often a result of sudden (life) changes. For the seniors in this study perhaps it is related to the transition from working life to retirement. It may also be related to changes in society caused by globalization. When these respondents were young, many used to buy their food directly on the farm, whereas nowadays they feel many people hardly even know where food comes from anymore. This transition has taken years and has not created the same shock-effect as for example a natural disaster would have had. Nevertheless, in the greater scheme of things, globalization has been a relatively quick development which may have caused too great a change to grasp for many people. It would be interesting to test if such greater transitions also evoke nostalgic reactions.

Regardless of the causes, it seems that nostalgia plays a more important role as a motivation to travel for seniors than it does for younger people. Especially with the ageing

populations of many Western countries, the motivations of senior travellers becomes more and more important. The results of this study indicate that nostalgia may have more influence than it is given credit for so far. Therefore, it deserves more attention in the future.

It is always possible to conduct more research, to start new studies and to explore more subjects. However, the aim should always be to uncover unknown facts, to truly add something new to the body of knowledge rather than simply making it bigger. This study aimed to add new information on farm tourism specifically and tourism motivations in general. Hopefully this is helpful for the present and can also support future studies to create a better understanding of the world.

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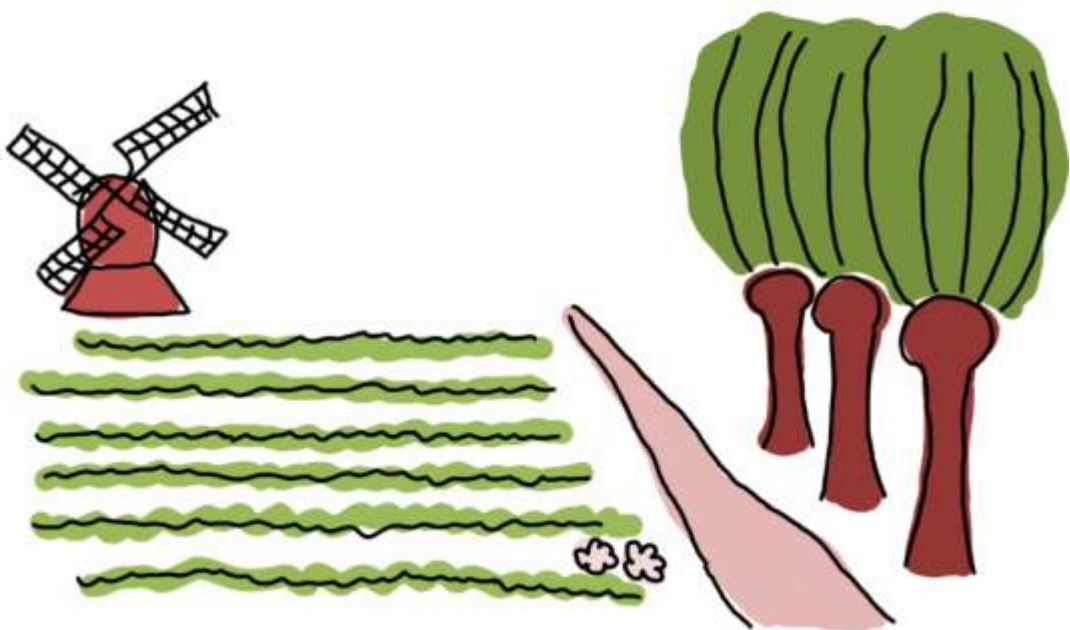
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APPENDICES



Appendix 1. Participating camping sites

Noord Holland

'Straat-hof' – Dairy farm
Willem van der Veldenweg 57
Leimuiden
<http://www.straat-hof.nl/>

Friesland

'De Groninger' – Dairy farm
Heaburgen 42
Nijemirdum
<http://www.campingdegroninger.nl>

'De Langesloot' – Dairy farm
Kooiweg 1-a
Lemmer
<http://www.delangesloot.nl>

'Kampeerboerderij Groen' – Dairy farm
Jan Schotanuswei 57
Oudemirdum
<http://www.kampeerboerderijgroen.nl>

'Poelzicht' – Dairy farm
Lijtschhuizen 6
Heeg
<http://www.boerehiem.nl/poelzicht>

Zeeland

'Mol' – Farm no longer in use
Zwaardweg 5
Kerkwerve
<http://www.kampeerboerderijmol.nl>

'De Wijde Blik' – Farm no longer in use
Stapelsweg 3
Zonnemaire
<http://www.minicampingdewijdeblik.nl>

'Zonnemaire' – Crop farm
Zuidweg 11
Zonnemaire
<http://www.campingzonnemaire.nl>

't Uulof' – Crop farm
Zandweg 37
Zierikzee
<http://www.campingtuulof.nl>

't Aardbeitje' – Crop farm
Oostkapelseweg 87
Serooskerke
<http://www.hetaardbeitje.nl/>

'Victoria' – Farm no longer in use
Kalfhoekseweg 5
Oostkappelle
<http://www.mini-campingvictoria.nl>

'Bijsterveld' – Crop farm
Mariekerkseweg 8
Meliskerke
<http://www.camping-bijsterveld.nl>

'Ons Weitje' – Crop farm
Strandweg 5
Koudekerke
<http://www.ons-weitje.nl>

Gelderland

'De Wolboom' – Dairy farm
Romienendiek 16a
Aalten
<http://www.dewolboom.nl>

't Lankhof' – Dairy farm
Markerinkdijk 59
Aalten
<http://www.tlankhof.nl>

'De Brömmels' – Goat farm
Meerdinkweg 5
Woold
<http://www.brommels.nl>

'De Blökke' – Dairy farm
Spekkendijk 41
De Heurne
<http://www.deblokke.nl>

Appendix 2. Interview topic list

Where do you come from?

How do you like living there?

Where did you grow up? (Countryside?)

How did you like living there?

Is this the countryside for you? Why?

What are the characteristics of the countryside?

How do you like the landscape of the countryside?

How do you like the people of the countryside?

What are the positive elements of the countryside?

What are the negative elements of the countryside?

What are the characteristics of the city?

How do you like the people in the city?

What are the positive elements of the city?

What are the negative elements of the city?

Where do you rather spend your leisure time, in the city or on the countryside?

Why did you choose this camping site?

Have you been here before?

How did you find this camping site?

Did you consciously choose a farm? Why?

What are your activities here?

Is it important that the farm is still in use?

Would it have made a difference if this was a regular (mini-)camping site?

Would you like to participate in the farm activities?

Do you have contact with the farmer? Is that important to you?

Is it important to you that farm stay active in agriculture in the Netherlands? Why?

Do you feel that farmers play an important role in Dutch society? What role?

Do they have a negative influence as well?

Do you think that camping here contributes to the survival of the farm?

Did you ever visit a farm in the past?

How did you like that?

Do you think much has changed over time on farms?

Do you think the way farmers treat the land and their animals has changed?

Do you think your visits of the past have influence on the decision to visit a farm now?

Do you go on other holidays? Explain

Do you ever visit cities?

Do you ever visit regular/large camping sites? Hotels? Holiday parks?
What type of holiday do you like best?

Would you like it if special events were organized on this camping site?
How do you feel about the playground?
Would you like it if demonstrations were held about farm activities?
Do you watch television here?
How would you feel if they offered internet here?

Do you value nature?
Are you conscious about eating good food?
Do you ever buy organic products?

What do you do in everyday life?
What do you do in your spare time?
Who are you here with?
How long are you staying here in total?
What is your level of education?
What is/was your profession?
What is your age?