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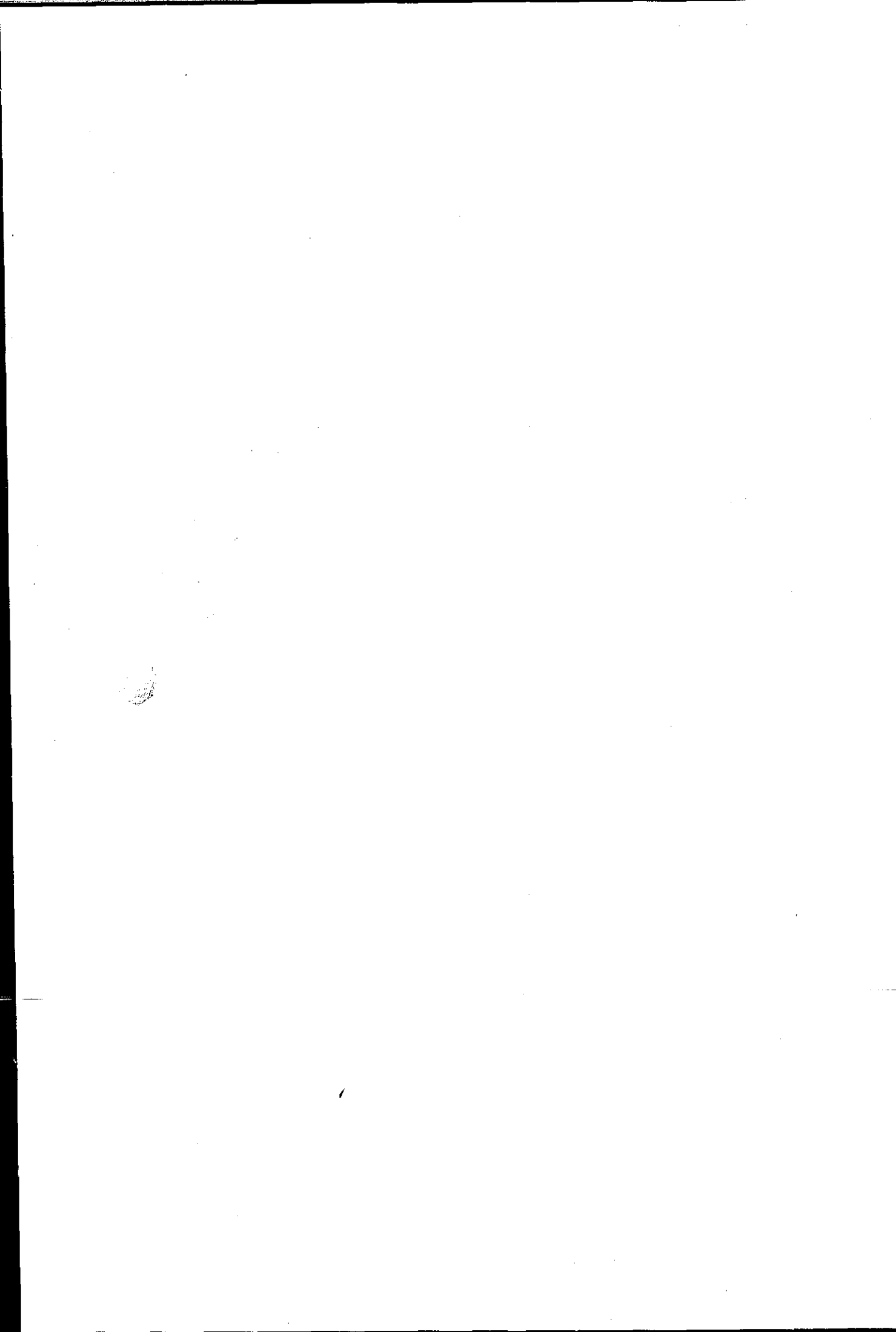
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Why do Dairy Farmers Continue to Farm?

Can Bourdieu's Theory Aid Our Understanding and Suggest
How Farmers Could Regain Some Control in their Industry?

**Why do Dairy Farmers Continue to Farm?
Can Bourdieu's Theory Aid Our Understandings and Suggest
How Farmers Could Regain Some Control in their Industry?**

by

Jane L Glover

Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy in Small Business of Loughborough University

May 2008

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Abstract

The research asked the pivotal question - Why do dairy farmers continue to farm? There is currently a lack of recognition for the social, cultural and symbolic merits of family businesses, and the non-economic contributions made to society. In critically reviewing the economic paradigm, which assumes man acts rationally in a world of perfect information, economic theory ignores the role of alternative forms of *capital* in acquiring power to conduct business successfully. Using Bourdieu's concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* offered sociological insights into small family farm businesses.

Bourdieu's generic forms of *capital* allowed for the appraisal of not only *economic capital*; but *social*, *cultural* and *symbolic capital*. A qualitative, mixed methods approach was chosen, through a series of ten ethnographic case studies conducted in Staffordshire. Bourdieu's work and qualitative methods allowed the farm to be investigated as a collective social unit. Each case study consisted of participant observation, interviews with the farmer, and where possible spouses and children.

The work demonstrates that whilst policy tries to shape how agriculture is conducted, it is not necessarily creating an environment in which farmers can empower themselves, and their business operations; as powerful groups seek to retain their position in the *field* (dairy industry). Sufficient levels of *social*, *cultural* and *symbolic capital* are vital for family farm business success; defined in economic (wealth) and non-economic (personal development, job satisfaction and lifestyle) parameters. For the farming world, the work extends Bourdieu's theory proposing the need to introduce *natural capital*. Nature's role in farming is critical and farmers need to utilise and support natural systems. Despite farmers losing control in their *field*, many have behaved in enterprising ways in order to

continue the family farm business. However, farmers need to increase their levels of all forms of *capital* in order to increase their power and position in society. Consequently, farmers must also protect their levels of *capital* in order to slow down further decreases in their power in the *field*.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture, Bourdieu, Family Farming, Small Business, Habitus, Field, Capital, Identity.

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My greatest gratitude goes to all the farmers, farmer's wives and siblings who gave up their precious time to talk to me. I would also like to express gratitude to representatives of industry organisations who provided me with help and were willing to talk to me. Without them, this thesis would never have been written.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Gordon and Ann, for their love and support, and to Mike a farmer interviewed who sadly lost his life in a farming accident in 2007.

Conference Papers arising from this Research

Why do some family businesses continue when the financial rewards are minimal? Presented at the 28th National Conference for the Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, November 2005.

The entrepreneurial farmer: The use of different forms of capital. Presented at the 5th Rural Entrepreneurship Conference, Riseholme Campus, University of Lincoln, February 2007.

Using an Ethnographic Study to explore the life-world of a small family dairy farm, presented at the 2nd Symposium on Current Developments in Ethnographic Research in the Social and management Sciences, Keele University, September 2007.

Using Bourdieu to explore the importance of Social and Cultural Capital in farming. Abstract accepted to WES 2007, Aberdeen University September 2007.
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Abbreviations

BSE – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

B&B - Bed and Breakfast

bTB - Bovine Tuberculosis

CAP – Common Agricultural Policy

DEFRA – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DTI – Department of Trade and Industry

EBL – Enzootic Bovine Leukosis

EU – European Union

GATT – General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs

GM - Genetically Modified

MDC – Milk Development Council

MMB – Milk Marketing Boards

NFU – National Farmers Union

RAT – Rational Action Theory

RDM – Rational Decision Making

RPA – Rural Payments Agency

RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

R&D – Research and Development

SFP – Single Farm Payment

SME – Small and Medium Enterprise

UK – United Kingdom

USA – United States of America

WI – Women's Institute

WTO – World Trade Organisation

YFC – Young Farmers Club

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Background to the Research

I have been involved with dairy farming all my life; my parents and most of my extended family are involved in the industry. Consequently, the survival of the farming industry and rural communities are important to me. After experiencing this life-world for many years, I began to question why dairy farmers continue their business operations and whether economic theory is able to provide a complete answer. For purely economic reasons, many in the business world would question why farmers have not gone out of business.

The research focuses on farmers, their motivations, and use of *capitals*. It is concerned with studying farmers in their natural setting, to explore their life-worlds. My own perceptions and personal background in the industry shaped the research process. For instance, I was aware that my respondents would more willingly talk to me than complete a survey. My interest led me to explore the vast literature surrounding agriculture, small (family) business, and sociology. In exploring the literature and thinking about the key problem – “why do dairy farmers continue to farm?” my thoughts progressed from an economic interest to a social one, focusing on the work of one social theorist - Pierre Bourdieu.

Farmers are involved in a complex industry where the ‘goal posts’ constantly change. They are heavily dependent on Government intervention. The degree and nature of this intervention depends upon the current Government. The dairy industry in Britain has gone through dramatic changes since the Second World War, exemplified by the recent Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms that aimed to change the industry from one that was subsidy-led to one that is market focused and environmentally-led. As the industry is experiencing

times of political, social and environmental change, it seemed an ideal time to conduct a study. Coupled with this there is a lack of understanding, both in the industry and in academia, as to what farmers do and why they continue their business operations, when their industry is in decline.

I believe this research has far reaching implications, not only for dairy farmers, but also in assisting people to understand why farmers are committed to their business and the life of farming.

1.2 Objectives of the Thesis

The objectives of this thesis are to examine the relevance of using Rational Action Theory (RAT) and the Theory of the Firm to answer an agricultural problem – “why do dairy farmers continue to farm?”. I question the appropriateness to use economic theory, especially when farmers are experiencing times of economic crisis and as a result of my instincts and knowledge of the industry, suggest that farmers are not continuing business operations for the sole purpose of profit maximisation. The thesis then explores the need for the problem to be investigated using social theory, focusing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Using this approach the thesis aims to illuminate areas which have contributed to farmers’ loss of power in their industry, and suggests areas where they may be able to regain some control.

1.3 This Research

In critically assessing RAT literature, rooted in the economic paradigm, I saw the need to explore family farm businesses from a sociological point of view. To address this need, I decided to use the work of Pierre Bourdieu (*field, habitus* and *capital*); this provides a useful set of conceptual tools enabling me to investigate

the social, cultural and symbolic factors in farming. In the context of family business, prevalent in farming, Bourdieu provides new insights into how such entities operate, and reveals the factors that drive farmers to continue farming.

Bourdieu's notion of *capital* includes: *economic* - money, commodities, means of material production and other material assets (Wacquant, 1996; Smart, 1993); *social* - the long standing social relationships and networks that individuals have created both personal and business connections, including individual and community (group) based networks; *cultural* - dispositions including social and family norms, knowledge and skills possessed by the individual, along with their cultural experiences and possessions; and, *symbolic* - the accumulation of all other forms of *capital*. "*Symbolic capital* is the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179), providing the individual with an identity and social position (status) in the *field*. In the context of farming, the *field* (dairy industry) is characterised by a patterned set of practices, in which competent action conforms to set rules.

Bourdieu's theories allow the researcher to explore family business in a way that does not separate the social institution into either family or business activity. His work exposes the social, cultural and symbolic factors inherent in the family farm business. However, I will argue later that Bourdieu's theory of *capital* neglects one of the most important forms of *capital* available to farmers – *natural capital*. I propose that, in the case of agriculture, *natural capital* should be combined with Bourdieu's concepts to fully understand the farmer's struggles for various forms of *capital*.

In doing so, my work acknowledges the role of the external business environment, which becomes part of the farmer's life-world. My thesis highlights how, over the years, farmers' position both individually and as a

group has weakened, and the results suggest where policy could help improve farmers' level of *capital* and their power in the *field*. For example, a lack of *cultural* and *economic capital* may result in farmers opting not to diversify their business activities, even though encouraged to do so by Government.

Previous work examining agriculture through Bourdieu's concepts is nominal. These works have tended to focus on one aspect of Bourdieu's work, for example *habitus* (see: Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002; Raedeke, 2003). I have been unable to find a study based on agriculture, which has used all of Bourdieu's concepts. Therefore, this work has the potential to significantly contribute to the literature.

The study was based in Staffordshire, involving family run farms. In Staffordshire, the majority of dairy farms are small family businesses, although some larger farms combine dairy and arable operations on one, or two, farming premises. The working environment (the farm) was observed to capture data, as well as the people involved in the business. The farmer was interviewed in each case and to add depth, where possible, interviews were conducted with the farmers' spouses and children.

Previous research has neglected to investigate the farm as a collective social unit made up of the farmer, spouse, any sibling(s), and non-family employed workers. Bourdieu's concepts provide a way to generate insights into the heterogeneity of farm businesses. His concepts allowed me to consider each individual's levels of *capital* coupled with their own *habitus*. The latter represents the accumulation of an individual's life experiences, encompassing certain ways of thinking, speaking, acting and reacting to situations. These factors, consciously and subconsciously, influence an individual's ability to act.

Farmers are not a homogenous group. There are divisions of class and power within the farming community, especially across the different sectors of farming. This thesis concentrates on the dairy sector and focuses on one group of family dairy farmers; within the sample, individual farmers behave differently (often in enterprising ways) in response to changes in the *field*. For instance, conventional farmers aspire to obtain a good standard of living through income maximisation, realised by cutting production costs and improving yields (Der Biggelaar and Suvedi, 2000). Others may expand their business activity in an effort to reduce costs (by gaining some economies of scale). Conversely, diversifiers will seek new business ventures in order to increase income (see: Carter, 1999, 2001 amongst others).

This research is important because it highlights not only the economic crisis in farming, but also that farmers are experiencing a social, cultural and symbolic quandary. In analysing family farm businesses using Bourdieu's theory of *capital*, I am able to demonstrate that all forms of *capital* can lead to increasing wealth; thus strengthening their position in the *field*. Conversely, decreases in all forms of *capital* weaken individuals' position in the *field*.

1.4 Outline of Methodology

The research methods chosen are consistent with the sociological approach to answering the thesis questions. Following the sociological threads of the research, a qualitative mixed methodology was chosen. A major factor in my decision to choose qualitative research methods was the exploratory nature of the work. The work uses case studies, within a broad ethnographic paradigm. Silverman (2001: 45) states that: "ethnography refers to social scientific writing about particular people". I am interested in the views of a specific social group (farmers), especially how they interpret their world. Ethnographic research aims

to: "uncover and explicate the ways in which people (farmers) in particular work settings (family farm business) come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation" (Van Maanen, 1979 cited in Cassell and Symon, 1994: 540).

A variety of qualitative techniques were used to collect primary data including: semi-structured interviews; periods of observation; and attendance at meetings. The aim was to provide an ethnographically 'thick description' of the workplace studied, as advocated by Geertz (1973). Each case study comprised of interviews with the farmer and where possible, family members. I was given guided tours of many of the farms I visited, which allowed me to see the farmers' working environments.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate that the researcher becomes immersed in the field being studied, to fully understand what is going on. In this instance, I drew on my own experiences in the industry (inductively generating data), to guide myself through the process of theoretical sampling and constant comparison. Re-joining Staffordshire Young Farmers Club (SYFC) helped me gain access to a wider contact base, besides my network of family and friends in the farming community. This wealth of contacts enabled me to overcome the main problem faced by many researchers in the field of small firms, namely gaining access. To enhance the process, I used Bourdieu's theory (deductive) as a way to classify the themes generated by concentrating on the four forms of *capital*. The findings do not permit the creation of a new theory but provide an alternative, sociological answer to the research questions through applying and extending Bourdieu's theory.

The initial case was chosen because of my personal involvement with the industry, and because it is my parents' family farm from which I have gained my

farming knowledge. The case provided a solid base upon which to select further cases. The cases were chosen using theoretical sampling; this allowed the research to be tailored as major themes and concepts emerged from the data. The data were analysed manually using constant comparison. The methodology and data analysis are discussed in more detail in Chapters Five and Six respectively.

The work focuses on the actions of the farmers interviewed, in the specific contexts of farming in Staffordshire. The value of this research lies in its capacity to provide insights into, and rich detail, of the *family farm business* and farmers' behaviour. The way in which I have used Bourdieu's work contributes to agricultural research, small (family) business research and rural sociology. My work highlights the different uses of *capital* in the family farm business, which benefits both the family and the business. Using Bourdieu in agriculture emphasises some of the issues farmers face, and the changing social make-up of farming. It also suggests how farmers may be able to regain some control in their *field*.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis begins with an overview of the agricultural industry to provide the reader with a clear understanding of its operations in the UK, and also specific factors affecting the dairy industry (Chapter Two). This sets the scene for the *farmer's working environment* and the issues (rules of the game) with which he has to contend. The chapter then examines the family business literature with the focus on family farms and the roles of family members.

Chapter Three explores economic theory, covering topics including entrepreneurship, rational economic theory and briefly touches on strategy and decision-making. The chapter critically assesses how economic theory promotes

'rational economic man' and the primary business goal of profit maximisation. The chapter investigates whether this is an appropriate means to assess the success of family farm businesses.

Chapter Four explores the work of Pierre Bourdieu. It investigates whether using a sociological approach can address economic theory's neglect of non-economic factors when assessing family businesses. Bourdieu's work provides a theory that allows economic capital to be amalgamated with alternative forms of *capital*. The chapter concludes the literature review with a synopsis of dairy farmers' life-world and why Bourdieu's theory helps aid our understanding of family dairy farming.

Chapter Five details the methodological approach, giving a rationale for using a qualitative, mixed methods approach. The chapter begins by defining the research question and reviewing the research methods used in the main disciplines. I then detail my choice of research strategy and data tools. The chapter then details the data analysis process and the techniques used. The chapter ends by detailing the reasons why the individual cases were selected.

Chapter Six provides the reader with an introduction to Staffordshire and farming in the county. The chapter then takes the reader through the data collection and analysis phases of the research. Theme generation is explored, before the major findings are elucidated. The chapter ends with the rationale behind the choice of the four cases to study in detail. Chapters Seven to Ten each discuss a specific case in-depth, providing examples of the main themes identified in the ten cases and exploring the level/use of *capital* in each family farm business.

Chapter Eleven provides a discussion of the findings and details how Bourdieu has contributed to the existing literature on agriculture and small (family) businesses. It answers the main question – “why do dairy farmers continue to farm?” taking the reader through the sub-questions – “does RAT tell the whole story?” and “can Bourdieu’s theory aid our understanding and suggest how farmers could regain some control in their *field*?” each answered as the thesis progressed. The chapter details why each *capital* is important, in the context of dairy farming and how my application of Bourdieu’s work has contributed to the literature.

Chapter Twelve concludes the research with an overview of the thesis chapters and summarises the key developments. The chapter documents the major findings, including detailing how farmers can regain some control in their *field*. The chapter suggests the implications of the research, and suggests areas for further research.

Chapter Two: Setting the Scene

This chapter sets out the operating environment facing farmers in the UK. It details the context (the agricultural industry, with an emphasis on the dairy sector) in which the thesis is set, and describes the factors shaping the agricultural industry, including the dairy sector. It shows how the current crisis in agriculture has evolved over many years, with developments in the industry creating challenges for the family business (Carlock and Ward, 2001). This leads to a review of the literature surrounding family business and family farms.

2.1 Agricultural Industry

2.1.1 History of Agriculture

United Kingdom (UK) agriculture consists of many different activities, principally dairy, arable, beef and sheep. The location of these activities depends largely on the climate, and type of soil, and the accessibility of resources and markets. The UK climate is favourable to producing milk, and dairy farmers are generally located to the West of the UK, where the microclimate and landscape typology favours animal grazing. Dairy farmers provide the UK population with a constant supply of fresh milk, as well as other dairy products, such as cheese, cream, butter and milk powder. However, agriculture is not just about food; farmers are involved in providing jobs, maintaining the environment and landscape, and supporting communities in peripheral areas of the UK.

Since 1947, more than 200,000 farm(er)s have gone out of business, an average of 11 disappearing every day (NFU, 2003). This reduction in scale has come in fits and starts, for example: the Policy Commission on Food and Farming (2002)

reported that 51,300 farmers and farm workers went out of the industry in the two years to June 2000, equivalent to 70 a day (Curry *et al.*, 2002). It is evident that change is not a new phenomenon in this industry. In the early 1900s, for instance, British agriculture went through a traumatic process of adaptation, emerging leaner and fitter, shedding labour and moving away from arable to livestock production (Howarth, 1990). Later on, after severe food shortages during and after the Second World War, the Government was committed to creating a constant food supply and maximising production through production subsidies (Grant, 1991). The rationale for protectionism is that food is a basic necessity of life, and a guaranteed supply is vital for the survival of society (Curry *et al.*, 2002; Francis, 1994), another premise is the biological nature of farming, discussed later.

Government support for agriculture in the late 1940s and early 1950s was judged to be a success story for both consumers and farmers (Howarth, 1990). Increased production in the industry was viewed as a necessary prerequisite for creating better living conditions for the millions of people in rural areas (Martinussen, 1999). The desire to increase production became a driving force behind structural changes in agriculture from the late 1950s to the present day. As a result, agriculture has become increasingly industrialised (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Saskatonn, 2003). Many tasks have become mechanised, obviating the need for manual labour and thus reducing the agricultural workforce. Farm business enlargement, intensification, specialisation and a strong trend towards industrialisation were key developments, especially in the dairy sector (Van der Ploeg, 2000).

Classical political economists saw agriculture as a barrier to growth (Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990; Fitzgerald, 2003); hence economic imperatives drove the direction of the industry, with policies created around economic gain and

industrialisation. Industrial progress revolutionised a number of discrete elements of agricultural production: tractors replaced horses, synthetic fertilisers were introduced and so on (Barlett, 1993; Fitzgerald, 2003). However, in spite of modern technology, the industry remains vulnerable to biological processes, such as disease, weather and reproduction cycles (Curry *et al.*, 2002; Francis, 1994).

In 1973, the UK joined the European Community (now the European Union - EU), introducing new policies and regulation for British farmers through EU directives. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) encouraged farmers to increase production and to depend on subsidies. Rewarding farmers for production created an ethos of intensification and expansion, highlighting how farmers' decisions are driven by Government policy (Burton, 1998). However, measures were then introduced in an effort to stop farmers over-producing, notably when milk quotas were introduced to curb milk production in 1984 (Halliday, 1988). Essentially: "European agriculture went through a period of uncertainty as policy-makers sought solutions to the problems of unwanted agricultural (food) surpluses and budgetary over-runs" (Burton, 2004: 359). In essence, policy makers sought to change the culture from production-led to market-led, a desire still being pursued today.

Some academics have suggested farmers were facing a crisis about their own identity and their role within society during the 1980s (Burton, 1998), as they were being encouraged to diversify their activities away from farming and towards more tertiary style industries, such as Bed and Breakfast and leisure pursuits (Barlett, 1986; Bryant, 1981; Bryant and Johnston, 1992; Lobley and Potter, 2004). As Burton (1998: 24) states: "the Government was trying to convert a dependent and traditional farming culture into one where farmers were independent and enterprising entrepreneurs". However, the industry has been

slow to embrace changing social and political environments; in 1994, for example, official bodies striving to modernise production methods expressed the hope that the advanced age of farmers might see change becoming more acceptable in another twenty years or so (Francis, 1994) – these hopes are still being harboured today in certain quarters!

Large surpluses in Europe, a legacy of production related subsidies, were exacerbated by a slump in world prices in the global recession at the beginning of the 1990s. By the end of the 1990s, world commodity prices had collapsed, a major shock to the global agricultural industry. This shock signalled the beginning of severe financial problems for UK farmers, especially as the downward trend of price reductions was accompanied by increasing input costs. In 2004, British farmers were receiving less in relative terms for their produce than in 1994 (NFU, 2004). CAP reforms (see: Lowe *et al.*, 2002) started to remove production-related subsidy payments in 1992; this process culminated in the introduction of the Single Farm Payment (SFP) in 2005. The SFP gives farmers a single payment that is decoupled from production. However, farmers in the 21st century are still being subsidised for environmental schemes through CAP, as part of the EU compliance with General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) requirements (see: Falkinham, 2004), and the UK Government is still encouraging farmers to diversify in response to CAP reforms.

The analysis above reveals that agriculture is highly regulated and highly politicised. Indeed, there is no industry subject to as much Government intervention (short of Government ownership) in advanced industrial countries as the UK dairy industry (Grant, 1991). The complexity of the institutional arrangements and schemes of Government intervention means that a high entry price has to be paid in terms of acquiring specialised knowledge (Grant, 1991).

Dairy farmers also have to produce under quota restrictions; if an individual farmer's production exceeds quota allocation and the national quota is surpassed, that farmer is penalised. As Howarth (1990) discusses, the more dependent an industry becomes on Government intervention, the higher the level of institutional uncertainty, creating problems for all involved with that industry.

Government interventions in the agricultural industry are not restricted to the UK Government, but extend to the political influence of the EU and other global organisations, for example WTO and environmental lobby groups. Mayerfield-Bell and Lowe (2000) argue that markets cannot be completely free in a democratic society. Governments endeavour to create enterprise cultures, yet impose high levels of regulations and intervention. It has been suggested that Governments have the power to make or break the agricultural industry (Curry *et al.*, 2002; Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990; Johnsen, 2004).

Errington (1994) stresses that UK Government policy is shaping life in rural areas. Rural development is becoming increasingly important as policy makers seek alternatives to agriculture in remote areas. The Government's current vision is for a profitable, internationally competitive and sustainable farming and food sector, yet one that is environmentally friendly, providing quality food and a healthy diet for people in England and around the world (Curry *et al.*, 2002). However, it is difficult to identify the true motive behind any particular policy decision to reform agriculture. Brooks (2003: 15) succinctly points out: "policy can be influenced by economic analysis, ideology, politics and even nostalgia".

2.1.2 Role of Farming

The UK agricultural industry allows the nation to be 66.5% self-sufficient in all food and 79% self-sufficient in indigenous food; food is plentiful and sold at

historically low prices (Curry *et al.*, 2002: 14). Yet, as previously mentioned, agriculture is not simply about producing food. The industry plays a multifunctional role in the economy, the environment and society, charged with producing food whilst preserving the countryside (Caskie *et al.*, 2000; Curry *et al.*, 2002; Potter and Burney, 2002). Hall *et al.* (2004) discuss how this multifunctional role has been used to defend spending public money through production subsidies and, now, through environmental support schemes for farmers. However, there is a need for farmers to take account of changed public expectations of their role, as: "farmers are increasingly seen as a tax burden" (Burton, 1998: 27).

There is decreasing public understanding of the connection between farmers and food production, in the wake of the continued growth of urban populations and the public's reliance on processed food and supermarkets (Burton, 1998; Bove and Dufour, 2002; Meades, 2003). Retailers are seen as the providers of food rather than farmers. Food can be imported from other countries as cheaply as it can be produced locally, even allowing for transport costs (a situation that seems almost beyond belief). Agriculture has long faced natural (see: Mann, 1990) and economic risks but, as farms and rural farm populations decline in numbers, the perceptions of the non-farm public become more and more significant in shaping policies on farming, food and the agricultural environment (Wimberley *et al.*, 2002). Such contradictions have led to conflict between farmers and the wider society.

Farming has created the picturesque countryside we know and value (Curry *et al.*, 2002, NFU, 2003). Preserving the existence of the rural idyll as an unchanging tranquil landscape of social stability and community (Halfacree, 1993; 1995) is becoming increasingly important to a population seeking respite from urban life (Burton, 1998). Nevertheless, the traditional role of the farmer as the producer of

food (Burton, 1998) is being called into question, in the face of increasing concerns over the environment. On the one hand, farming organisations (such as, the NFU) argue that farmers care for the environment whilst producing food, encouraging bio-diversity and natural habitats for wildlife. On the other, environmental lobby groups argue that environmental damage in the countryside over the last 50 years has stemmed from modern farming techniques associated with food production, including soil erosion, water pollution and the removal of natural habitat.

The last decade has seen a remarkable increase in the usage of large machinery, as well as bio-chemicals (fertilisers and pesticides, insecticides and herbicides). External organisations encourage farmers to use technological developments (for instance GM crops) to increase profitability in times of financial crisis. Modern food and agricultural technologies make it possible for consumers to enjoy stable inexpensive food (Wimberley *et al.*, 2002), but farming in ways that support environmental regeneration may increase production costs, leading to consumers paying more or further increasing the financial pressure on farmers. Since holding down the price of food is Government policy, it could be legitimately argued that policy makers are responsible for farming's impact on the environment (Wimberley *et al.*, 2002). Verhaegen and Huylenbroeck (2001) highlight another demand problem: consumers want low cost foods yet show increased interest in food quality and safety standards, again increasing financial costs for the producer.

Another important role that agriculture has to play is a social one. The social fabric of the countryside depends heavily on developments in the farming and food industry (Curry *et al.*, 2002). Without agriculture, many rural communities would simply disappear. Agriculture is still an important activity in rural and remote areas, and farms are an important source of employment (Kazakopoulos

and Girdarakou, 2003), as agriculture is often the only viable industry in rural areas. Farms may be the only employer and there is often little public transport that enables people to work further afield (Martin *et al.*, 2002). Farming families support an array of small rural businesses, such as village shops and post offices, as well as providing support for other rural institutions, for instance schools and churches. However, many young rural people have had to move out of rural areas to find employment and affordable housing in urban areas.

Whilst rural communities are changing in their demographic make-up, Hellerstein *et al.* (2002) provide evidence that farming is part of the cultural landscape of the countryside and conclude that the public values rural amenities, open space and scenic beauty, and also farming as a way of life. It is this way of life that many city dwellers seek to achieve, either by moving to the countryside or taking holidays there. Without farming, the social structure of rural areas would be quite different.

Along with changes in rural communities, the traditional social networks for farmers are being lost; many local cattle markets are closing, and there are fewer organised gatherings, decreasing the opportunity for farmers to interact and engage in discussions. The Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (YFC) is also experiencing change, as many new members are from non-farming backgrounds.

2.1.3 Constant Change

As Howarth (1990) discusses, arguments for official support revolve around the contention that agricultural activities are unique; farmers face different production processes compared to other industries. The fundamental difference is that the countryside is not a factory (Fitzgerald, 2003). Farmers have had to develop systems that allow them to maintain production, in an environment in which physical conditions and economic circumstances may vary from year to

year (Lev and Campbell, 1987). Despite modern technology, fields and animals are not machines hence farmers cannot guarantee a pre-determined production level for a given period. A machine can be programmed to produce a specific output per hour (Fitzgerald, 2003), yet farmers have to gauge output for the coming year, based on output and price in the current year. There is also a time lag between planning output and produce eventually reaching the market.

Many uncontrollable factors affect the time, volume and quality of production, thus increasing the risks for the farmer. These factors include the weather, natural disasters, and diseases, including BSE (Spriggs and Isaac, 2001), Foot and Mouth Disease - FMD (Donaldson *et al.*, 2002; Mephram, 2001), and Bovine TB (Enticott, 2000). This unique susceptibility to natural and/or biological risks contributes to the rationale behind subsidies for farmers. In the case of dairy farmers, they have to plan production years in advance because it is nearly two years before cows start to produce milk. Even then, milk supply cannot be fully controlled. Each cow produces different amounts of milk, according to its: age; genetic make-up; stage of pregnancy and susceptibility to disease; quality of feed (corn, grass and silage) and environmental (weather) conditions. The interaction of these natural and biological factors means that a constant milk supply cannot be completely guaranteed, unless the market is over supplied.

As stated earlier, change is a constant theme in the farming industry. Besides natural changes in weather, growing conditions and the seasons, there are economic changes impinging on the farm business, such as swings in supply and demand, quota restrictions and changes in monetary policy. UK farmers have responded to severe market conditions by developing new initiatives to improve sales and restore confidence in British food. This demonstrates renewed determination to survive and a long-term commitment towards their farm businesses and the industry. In this respect, Lobley *et al.* (2002) believe that there

is likely to be a greater uptake of agri-environment schemes in future, along with an increase in farm building conversions.

The dairy industry has seen major changes over the last 35 years. In 1973, there were 87,225 milk producers; by 2002 this had reduced to just 25,548, a reduction of 61%. By 2002, around 2,000 dairy farmers were going out of business every year, an average of 40 per week (Curry *et al.*, 2002). Average herd sizes have increased from 38 to 85 cows (an increase of 123%) over the 30-year period from 1973-2002 (Falkinham, 2004). Milk yield per cow also increased by 200 litres per cow, per year (Colman *et al.*, 2004), although the number of cows has decreased by 136,000 (source: DEFRA statistics 2003). In 2003, there were approximately 23,000 dairy farmers in the UK (DEFRA, 2003), and numbers further declined to 19,011 in 2006 (MDC, 2006).

There has been considerable change to the structure of British agriculture including moves to specialisation (the concentration on fewer activities at the farm level); the key change in this respect has been declining numbers of mixed and general cropping farms (Furness, 1983; Haynes-Young and McNally, 2001; Lobley *et al.*, 2002). Specialisation (and consolidation) is particularly visible in the dairy sector, where there has been a greater concentration of productive resources in the hands of fewer farmers (Lobley *et al.*, 2002; Van der Ploeg and Long, 1994). However, compared to other industries, there are still a large number of individual small enterprises supplying the market. The dairy industry occupies a special socio-economic position because milk is produced every day, giving a regular income to numerous small-scale producers.

Milk production is highly labour-intensive, with high fixed costs of production and transport. The sector has the highest degree of protection, owing to the economically vulnerable position of small milk producers. The nature of milk

(perishable and bulky) requires strict and comprehensive quality regulation. Dairy farmers are currently facing intense financial pressures, with both margins and profits in decline. In response to the changing economic climate, many milk producers have increased herd size and production whilst reducing overhead costs. However, Dent (2000) suggests that these measures alone are insufficient to ensure the long-term viability of the sector.

The last decade has seen fundamental changes in economic and legislative influences on farm businesses. The disruption of long established trading patterns through BSE, FMD, and animal rights campaigns (for instance, opposition to live exports: Lobley *et al.*, 2002), alongside increasing input costs and falling commodity prices, has affected the economic and social make-up of farming. Perhaps equally important, agricultural markets have separate production and processing/marketing systems; the latter are dominated by a small number of very large oligopolistic suppliers and food retailers (price-makers) who use their unequal bargaining power to financially squeeze the individual farmer (Fitzgerald, 2003; Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990). As farmers are price-takers in complex agro-industrial markets, farm production becomes the weakest link in the food chain (KPMG, 2003; Saskatonn, 2003; Whatmore *et al.*, 1991); the outcome has been a decline of the farmer's share of the retail food price (Curry *et al.*, 2002). The price received is often below the cost of production, driving many farmers out of business (Turner, 2003).

The factors above have contributed to the financial crisis facing farmers, a crisis exacerbated by other organisations gaining power and increasing their capital share. As a result: "in such circumstances, the global manufacturers of farm inputs have the power to extract wealth from local farms, with predictably negative results for local economies, as well as reduced food security for the nation as a whole" (Saskatonn, 2003: 21). Farmers also suffer from the actions of

official bodies. For instance, the imposition of numerous rules and regulations has led to the standardisation of food production, resulting in social marginalisation of farmers and their families, with the loss of rural identity, biodiversity, and landscape.

Agricultural borrowing is at an all time high of £10 billion, and four major clearing banks dominate the UK agricultural credit market; yet farm investment is at a thirty year low (NFU, 2003). Borrowings have mainly been used to cover increasing operational costs rather than investment in capital assets. Declining farm incomes and capital stock, coupled with increasing debt, have substantially reduced profits for UK farmers (Whatmore *et al.*, 1991), and contributed to consolidation in the agricultural (dairy) industry. Farmers need to produce more to service debt levels but this requires increased investment in capital, and hence further debt; these pressures can only be sustained by fewer, larger farms across the developed world (Francis, 1994).

A more sociological explanation for consolidation in the industry lies in the work of Weber (1930); he notes that the capitalist economy is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action. The system educates and selects the economic subjects it needs, through a process of economic survival of the fittest (Weber, 1930). The consolidation present across the supply chain in agricultural markets today, suggests that capitalism still operates largely along the lines described by Weber in the 1930s. For instance, three companies control 95% of the agricultural fertiliser market, four control 77% of agro-machinery market and three control 90% of the UK frozen food market (Ward, 1990) and still holds true today. In the retail sector, four supermarkets control 75.4% of the market; Tesco has 25.8% of that figure, with sales equivalent to £63,900 a minute (Farmerslink, 2004), with: "over 95% of

people do their main shopping at supermarkets and do not know where food originates from" (Curry *et al.*, 2002: 16).

2.1.4 The Market and Prices

The instability of agricultural markets means that reaching an equilibrium of supply and demand is problematic because of the time lapses between the decision to produce, and availability of the product on the market. This forces farmers to continue with production, irrespective of market conditions (Howarth, 1990). These 'cobweb' cycles form another unique feature of this industry (Grant, 1991). It is not easy to stop and start milk production, for example, at the precise point when milk production becomes financially viable. This inflexibility of output in relation to price changes, and the prevalence of trapped resources, such as buildings and machinery, all add to the financial risk of farming.

Price and income inelasticities associated with basic foods stuffs exacerbate competition in the food chain, promoting higher value-added versions of existing food products (Meades, 2003; Whatmore *et al.*, 1991). In situations where prices are permanently low, and in some cases falling, the only way farmers are able to achieve higher prices is to pursue value-added products. However, adding value to commodity products is not easy and generally involves branding; this has taken over in the food industry (Meades, 2003). Food is sold as a brand, rather than a necessity for survival. This process does not benefit farmers, unless they own the brand name rights. Profits are thus moved from producer to brand-owner.

"Farm incomes fell by 37% in real terms over the ten-year period, 1988-1998" (Gasson *et al.*, 1998: 2). These low incomes are another justification for Government support (Howarth, 1990). However, it can be argued that those

with the lowest income do not receive the highest level of support. Around 36% of farmers had a total income of less than £6,000 and only 4% had a total income of £50,000 or more (DEFRA, 2002). It appears, therefore, that many farmers are not benefiting from Government assistance. The SFP will not address this issue because payment depends upon the acreage farmed and historic subsidy payments; support formerly increased in line with production.

Persistent low UK milk prices, between 8 and 13% below the EU average over the period 1998 - 2003, have had a major impact on UK dairy farming and its financial sustainability (MDC, 2003). In 2002/03, the average total cost of milk production was 18.33 pence per litre. The weighted average milk price for the same time frame was 16.89 pence per litre, the lowest since 1987 (Colman *et al.*, 2004: viii). Colman and Harvey (2003: 2) argue that: "almost 60% of dairy farmers (contributing 40% of UK output) failed to cover full costs". This is also the case elsewhere; 30% of dairy farmers in Europe do not make any profit per litre, hence a significant number of small scale farmers will eventually cease milk production.

Coupled with low prices, there have also been sharp increases in transaction, labour (especially in the UK), and energy costs that have exacerbated the financial pressures on farmers (Van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2000). Increases in machinery costs have resulted in many farmers outsourcing harvesting and other work requiring specialist machinery. High entry costs make it almost impossible for new entrants to start their own farm business, unless they can find a council farm to rent or they inherit their parents' farm.

Bio-security issues have also not helped the financial situation of UK farmers. The UK has fallen behind other countries when dealing with bio-security. The BSE crisis in the early 1990s still affects the cattle sector today; it reduced

consumer confidence in beef and destroyed the export market. The FMD crisis in 2001 (Mephram, 2001) saw hundreds of thousands of animals destroyed and the loss of years of work in building breeding lines. Finally, Bovine TB is still a major cause for concern for many cattle and milk producers (see: Enticott, 2000). These diseases have all had a negative impact on an already fragile industry.

Survival strategies for farmers usually comprise: farming their way out of difficulty the traditional way; or, diversifying business operations to supplement farm incomes. Generally speaking, farmers' spouses (in most cases wives) will be involved in diversification activities. Diversification, known as pluriactivity (discussed later in Chapter Three), is seen as a way to improve the economic viability of farms. Such activity contributes to rural development (see: Carter, 1998; 1999; 2001; Carter and Ram, 2003; Fuller, 1990). Nevertheless, it needs to be operationalised at the farm level in order to be successful (Van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2000).

2.1.5 Knowledge

The fragmented nature of the agricultural industry has led to a lack of coherent employment policies or recruitment strategies. Pay rates, specialist knowledge and working conditions vary enormously across the industry. Job descriptions and formal contracts are rare, and many people are employed through word of mouth (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Farming is a multi-skilled occupation (Ashby, 1925) with many transferable skills: farmers are businessmen, engineers, conservationists and animal nutritionists. Yet farming is still perceived as a low skill industry, even though successful farming calls for a wide range of business and technical skills (Curry *et al.*, 2002; Gasson, 1998). Skills need to be developed through vocational training, with standards developed by agricultural universities (Curry *et al.*, 2002).

Gasson (1998) explored the educational background of farmers and found many successful farmers left school at 16 to work on the farm, learning as they go. The majority of farmers are unaware of the skills they possess (Curry *et al.*, 2002). Knowledge is passed down from generation to generation and the majority of English farmers are from farming backgrounds. Whilst qualifications gained can help family members gain employment away from the farm, this can create problems for the succession and continuation of the family farm business. Once farming habits and skills are lost, they will be difficult to relearn (Gasson and Errington, 1993).

The problems above are especially pertinent in the dairy sector. Dairy farmers experience problems in finding a reliable workforce, and depend heavily on family labour. Finding cover for sickness and holidays can be problematic (Green and Blakenley, 2001). The dairy industry is renowned for anti-social working hours, with the average dairy farmer working 60-70 hours per week, 22 hours more than arable farmers. Dairy farmers on average take only 9 days holiday per year. The effective rate of pay is £2.90 per hour; farmers' incomes have exceeded the national minimum wage only twice in the last seven years (RABDF, 2004). "The UK farmer's average age is 55 years old" (ADAS, 2004: 25). The ageing farming population stems from a combination of two factors: a reduced rate of entry by new young recruits; and a reduced rate of retirement or exit by older farmers. The problems are illustrated by the fact that British dairy farmers are now looking to employ foreign workers from Eastern European countries and Poland as they cannot find native herdsmen.

The agricultural industry as a whole is experiencing a transfer in knowledge, from farmers to scientists and the professions, such as veterinary science. Along with knowledge, profits have moved away from the farmer (Le Heron, 2003). It is commonly acknowledged that farming has become capital intensive (Howarth,

1990), as farmers have been encouraged to utilise increasingly scientific methods of production (fertilizers, GM crops, large machinery and mechanisation). This move has transferred the power of knowledge from farmers to multi-national corporations, thus affecting the social and environmental benefits of farming (Woods, 2004).

The physical limitations imposed by nature have been circumvented by the endless possibilities of technology and science, and these, in turn, have transformed both the farmers' and consumers' experience (Fitzgerald, 2003). According to Cochrane (1979), the individual farmer is on a '*treadmill of technology*' and this sentiment is still valid today. As more and more farmers adopt improved technology, output increases against a static demand, thereby over supplying the market and reducing the price of the product (Howarth, 1990). The average farmer has to adopt innovation merely to survive; in effect, farmers have to run harder to stay in the same position, as all adopters achieve normal rather than supernormal profits (Howarth, 1990).

2.1.6 Summary

The history of agriculture in the UK is one of change, but the pressures on farmers today are perhaps greater than they have ever been. Farmers have had to adapt to economic, social and political changes, yet they are still faced with a whole range of natural and biological challenges at a time when technology is driving forward major structural changes in their industry. Small scale farmers are put at a disadvantage by the power of large organisations (whether retailers or equipment suppliers). The role of the farmer is also being called into question in the face of competing demands for the provision of cheap food and environmentally-friendly production methods. Meanwhile, knowledge passed on from generation to generation is being threatened by advances in science. The interaction of these factors has led to a major financial crisis as reducing prices

are coupled with increasing costs (Gasson *et al.*, 1998: iii). If there is no upturn in farming profitability soon, the next generation of farmers will not have the financial resources to invest in future food production and the environment.

2.2 Small Business

Small business has become one of the most fashionable areas of academic study over the last decade. Government and other agencies have recognised the economic importance of small businesses as generators of entrepreneurs and the seedbed for larger firms. However: "small firms are not homogeneous; each is different with special characteristics" (Burns and Dewhurst, 1996: 5), and thus heterogeneity is a particular feature of the agricultural industry.

Carland *et al.* (1984) distinguish between the entrepreneur and small business owner, suggesting that the entrepreneur establishes and manages a business for the principal purpose of profit and growth, driven by innovative behaviour and the utilisation of strategic management. The small business owner, by contrast, is an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purpose of furthering personal goals. The business is the primary source of income and consumes the majority of the individual's time and resources. The owner perceives the business as an extension of his or her personality, intricately bound with family needs and desires (Beaver, 2002; Birley, 1996). Using this classification, the majority of farmers would be characterised as small business owners.

People choose to become small business owners for different reasons. Anderson and Jack (2000) suggest individuals use enterprise to empower themselves to achieve diverse goals. Caley *et al.* (1992) note that rewards are not primarily financial, but derive from the way of life that running a small business involves.

Personal satisfaction is gained from being in control, doing a good job and providing a quality service, in the hope of economic rewards, but with the reality of survival as a base line goal (Carter and Jones-Evans, 2000). This thinking underlies my initial thoughts about why farmers continue to farm, especially their commitment to their businesses for reasons other than profit. Small businesses place a great value on independence, hence embarking on a high-growth strategy might lead them to feel their independence is threatened (Burns and Dewhurst, 1996). Farmers may feel that high-growth is not possible in a highly saturated market, or they may be unaware of alternative business strategies available.

Most dairy farms could be categorised as small businesses, in relation to UK or European definitions based on turnover or employment. However, as Carter (2001) points out, farming businesses are rarely included in any analysis of the small business sector. Burns and Dewhurst (1996: 2) estimated that: "over two-thirds of small businesses consist of only one or two people and often the second person is the spouse". Sole traders and partnerships are more common in agriculture than other sectors (Burns and Dewhurst, 1996: 10). The agricultural industry contains a relatively small proportion of enterprises with five or more employees (Martin *et al.*, 2002: 35).

Within the small business sector, family businesses occupy a unique position. Most farm businesses in the UK are family run operations. The business, the owner-manager and the family interact to create the overall characteristics of the organisation. Family businesses are unique institutions in the socio-economic environment (Davies and Harveston, 2001). Attention now turns to this element of the small firm population.

2.3 Family Business

Essentially, a family business is one that is: "owned or controlled by one family" (Burns, 2001: 358). The importance of family businesses and their special features have inspired a growing number of scholars to study different aspects of the family business (Leenders and Waarts, 2003). It is the most traditional form of business enterprise, and remains dominant in national economies (Dash, 2003). Irrespective of scale of operation, legal form, industrial activity, social-political state and market development, family businesses provide a critical infrastructure for economic activity and wealth creation (Poutziouris *et al.*, 2004). Weidenbaum (1996) argues that family businesses are the most substantial economic force in society. The family business has been the backbone of many continental European economies for decades (Burns, 1996; 2001), and they represent around 68% of UK small and medium-sized enterprises - SMEs (Martin *et al.*, 2002: 43).

Despite the prominence of family firms across the globe, they lead a tenuous existence. Few survive for more than a few years, and fewer still are able to walk the delicate line between success in business and success in family relationships (Dyer, 1986; Gersick *et al.*, 1997). Only 24% of UK family businesses survive through to the second generation, and only 14% make it beyond the third generation (Martin *et al.*, 2002). It is important to note, however, that many family farm businesses have survived beyond the third generation and almost a third have farmed in the same area for over a century (Lobley *et al.*, 2002). Succession is the ultimate test of success for the family business; this is a process that occurs over a long period of time, not as a single event (Gersick *et al.*, 1997). Many family farm businesses have achieved this success surviving to the third and fourth family generation.

Founders of family businesses can have a profound influence on the organisation's culture. Thus: "the founder's beliefs, business acumen, decision-

making rules of thumb and values; are part of the basic structure of the enterprise" (Gersick *et al.*, 1997: 135). When family members work together, patterns of behaviour, values, beliefs, and expectations are often transferred (usually unintentionally) to the work environment (Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990; Danes and Olson, 2003). Families know that being in business together is a powerful part of their lives, and employees in family businesses know the difference that family control makes in their work lives, company culture and careers. Family businesses tend to have a high level of commitment to achievement, and perseverance to a long-term strategic vision; this stems from individual pride, family pride and family tradition (Brockhaus, 1994). The friction between loved ones and business interests is what makes family business unique (Carlock and Ward, 2001). Therefore: "in balancing family and business tensions, over-emphasis on the business erodes family communications, identification, loyalty, time and emotions, whereas over-emphasis on the family erodes business communication, business relations, performance appraisals, decision-making and strategic options" (Carlock and Ward, 2001: 6-7). The family has a deeply personal stake rooted in generations of family and business history (Carlock and Ward, 2001; Gersick *et al.*, 1997; Moores and Barrett, 2002). Freud suggested that love and work are the main sources of self-esteem and pleasure in life, and only when both are balanced do we achieve satisfaction (Carlock and Ward, 2001).

The experience of most family firms is one of frustration, conflict and unfulfilled dreams. However, family firms represent relatively stable systems, so long as the founding entrepreneur is in place (Morris *et al.*, 1996). The problems facing a family business cannot be completely avoided – they must be managed (Dyer, 1986). The family can foster high ethical standards, positive commercial values and a sense of responsibility, which can contribute to the transfer of entrepreneurial skills from one generation to the next (Poutziouris *et al.*, 2004).

However, advocates of professional management argue that family businesses are unable to react to changing environments owing to the conflicting goals of the family and the business (Dash, 2003).

The criteria for success in family business involve a blend of economic success with the attainment of non-monetary goals, such as self-determination, pride and personal satisfaction, reputation and technical accomplishments (Churchill and Hatton, 1987). Achieving these, sometimes conflicting goals, depends on the ability to manage three networks: the familial network, encompassing all the members of this institution; the organisational network, including all the people who take part in the business (family and non-family, at all management levels); and the environmental network of external stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, banks, and other institutions (Bauer, 1993; Gubitta and Glanecchini, 2002). Donnelley (1964: 97) argues that successful family firms are those where a "rare harmony is achieved between the normally competing values within the individual and organisation". In these circumstances, family members understand and support one another by working together to achieve the company's mission, thus creating harmony that can have significant economic benefits (Scarborough and Zimmer, 2003).

Goffee (1995) argues that the research literature on family businesses is limited; he suggests that attention should be given to the social and organisational features of the family business. The majority of research focuses on the issues of succession and the separate sub-systems of the family and the business. Few researchers look at how these two sub-systems relate to one another, a key feature of family business.

Families and businesses have often been treated as naturally separate institutions, or systems (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). For example, Hollander and Elman (1988) see the family as the non-rational component, and the business as the rational component; when the two parts clash, the 'business' side (such as structure, functions, purpose) loses out to power, sentiment and the emotional issues of the family. By contrast, Aldrich and Cliff (2003) claim that the two components are inextricably intertwined. Kepner (1983) is also critical of the two-dimensional models, suggesting they encourage dualism and polarity; he argues that consideration of the business versus the family obstructs the understanding of their relationships. Kepner (1983) suggests the need to look at a co-evolutionary perspective of family and enterprise as a relationship based on incentives. Fletcher (2000) also highlights the inadequacy of a dualistic conceptualisation of 'family' and 'business'.

The emerging conceptual model of family businesses, therefore, holds that: "they are actually made up of two overlapping, highly complex systems; the family and the business each have their own norms, membership rules, value structures and organisational structures" (Gersick *et al.*, 1997: 5). Previous research has focused on how these two dimensions conflict, stifling entrepreneurial activities and creating succession issues (Goffee, 1995), rather than how each system can contribute to the other. In a further development, Gersick *et al.* (1997) propose a three-dimensional view of the family firm that takes account of the company's position in terms of three overlapping dimensions (the family, ownership and the business) with each having a life-cycle. The three-dimensional model can be used to aid understanding of the source of interpersonal conflicts, role dilemmas, priorities and boundaries in family firms; however, it still focuses on separating the family business into sub-systems.

Morris *et al.* (1996) state that if a family firm is approached from a 'total system' perspective, then it can be said to consist of a number of subsystems, including the business, the family, and the founding entrepreneur, each with separate entities. Riordan and Riordan (1993) are critical of the 'systems' view for its separation of the business/family systems, and for the lack of attention given to the human element, the discretion possessed by key decision-makers, and the ways in which values, beliefs and ideologies may influence decision-making.

This academic field is critical to my research as this thesis explores how the family and business are interlinked through different forms of capital and looks at the whole picture rather than the separate sub-systems. My approach follows Riordan and Riordan (1993) by focusing on how the business uses different forms of capital, and the types of capital that individuals bring to the family business. In doing so, the research is able to explore the social, cultural and symbolic importance of the family business.

2.4 Family Farms

The biological nature of the farm production process distinguishes it from other family enterprises. Family agriculture as a form of subsistence is one of the oldest activities known to humanity. It represents a structure that has produced wealth in many countries and formed a basis for the establishment of local, national and even international trade relations (Francis, 1994). Family farming is an important aspect of agriculture and presents an interesting set of issues for researchers, in both agriculture and business. In the words of Gasson and Errington (1993: 60): "the persistence of farming on a family scale within a capitalist economy has exercised the minds of political economists and rural sociologists for decades".

The English farmer is sometimes quite a remarkable entrepreneur and producer for the market, even though s/he has nearly always rented his/her estate (Gerth and Mills, 1993). The family farm is flexible in its response to changes in its environment, and: "family ties have the strength, longevity and resilience to meet the requirements of modern production techniques" (Francis, 1994: 10). Farm families adapt themselves in varying ways to the legislative, political, economic, social and religious influences which impinge on their lives (Gasson and Errington, 1993). A strategy may be in place, although not formalised as in larger corporations. The behaviour of farm families, the way they organise work and make decisions in the farm business, and their reactions to the rapidly-changing economic climate for agriculture, cannot be predicted entirely from knowledge of structural constraints, hence decisions are not always entirely rational (Gasson and Errington, 1993).

The farm is usually the place of residence, as well as a workplace. The family's consumption and leisure activities are also likely to revolve around the farm, making it difficult to separate the business from the way of life (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Family life can be very hard, but there tends to be a close knit family unit, whereby everyone helps one another out and children learn the hard work ethic. Family issues spill into business and business into family; individuals are required to enact different, often competing, roles simultaneously. This interaction confirms that separating business and family systems is difficult, especially in deciding which activity relates to which system (Gersick *et al.*, 1997; Carlock and Ward, 2001).

The farm itself is both dependent on, and a provider for, the farmer (and his/her family), and it may develop an identity of its own, representing the cumulative role-play of previous generations of farmers and the means by which a farmer can display significant symbols of farmer identity. In this way: "the boundaries

between the identities of the farmer, the farm family and the farm itself become blurred" (Burton, 1998: 238). With most farms being passed from generation to generation, the financial and frequently emotional survival of each generation is linked to the farm's success (Johnson and Booth, 1990; Rosenblatt and Keller, 1983). The two-generation farm family, in which the older generation father and mother are actively involved in farming with their adult children, has been the centre of considerable attention and research (Marotz-Baden and Cowan, 1988; Rosenblatt and Anderson, 1981; Weigel and Weigel, 1988). Stokes and Blackburn (2002) and Anderson and Jack (2000) also highlight the importance of passing the farm onto the next generation as an issue of prestige, and keeping the family name on the land. The power of tradition inevitably predominates in agriculture, thereby creating and maintaining rural populations on the European Continent which do not exist in a relatively new country, such as the United States.

The continuation of farming has three distinct meanings according to Gasson and Errington (1993): keeping the name on the land; keeping farming in the family; and maintaining farming on a family scale. The primary objectives for family farms are to maintain family control, and to pass the business onto the next generation (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Lobley *et al.*, 2002). "If anything, exposure to financial pressures has intensified the family character of farming" (Johnsen, 2004: 421). A considerable body of literature (for example: Gasson and Errington, 1993; Potter and Lobley, 1996a, 1996b; Bryden *et al.*, 1992) suggests that family events and processes such as births, marriage, ageing, succession and retirement can trigger restructuring in agricultural businesses (Lobley *et al.*, 2002).

The family farm is, therefore, a unique system in that family and economic roles overlap as all generations receive their livelihood from the same farm

(Christensen, 1959). The formalising of partnership, poor health, or taking an off-farm job affects the distribution of workloads, and management of the farm, as well as relationships among family members (Ballard-Reisch and Weigal, 1991). Shucksmith and Herrman (1999) talk of an ethos in the farming community including hard work, ideologies of independence and individualism.

2.5 The Roles of Family Members

In general, farmers are employers and organisers of labour. As Ashby (1926: 5) states: "farmers are a combination of workers, businessmen and craftsmen or artists". Farmers have a particular belief about being born to farming, rather than seeing farming as a skill to be learnt as in any other business, for example: "their claim that farming is 'in the blood' encourages many farmers to believe their role as agricultural producer is somehow pre-ordained; they have therefore been infused with moral responsibility to nurture life and feed the human population" (Burton, 1998: 238). Onderstein *et al.* (2003) suggest that, owing to his unique position, the farmer adopts different roles in strategic planning (as an entrepreneur or manager), the implementation of the chosen plan (as manager or craftsman) and the resulting performance (as a craftsman).

Farming is a male-orientated industry. Saugres (2002) found that many male farmers did not regard their female counterparts as true farmers. Pini (2002) also found that women themselves do not regard what they do as important to the farm business. Gasson and Winter (1992) describe gender division as an important issue in the sociology of agriculture. Male farmers typically exert more influence over farm decision-making, deciding (say) when spring calving will take place or whether to buy more quota, whereas women play supportive, even subordinate roles (Gasson, 1992; Gasson and Winter, 1992). As stated earlier, farmers hold differing objectives, typically to: be a farmer; maintain

independence; keep control of the farm; and, hand it over to a successor (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Yet some male farmers do not see daughters as a 'natural' successor. Wives may aspire to greater personal autonomy – a chance to share decision making power and control (Gasson and Errington, 1993), but tend to be committed to the survival of the farm, and to the maintenance of their husband's mental well-being (Kelly and Shortall, 2002).

Many farmers' wives grew up on farms or had some experience of farming prior to marriage. Evidence suggests that 60-70% of farmers' wives are doing manual labour on the farm (Whatmore, 1991; Whatmore *et al.*, 1991). Wives often clean sheds, bring cows in for milking and feeding, look after the calves, clean the dairy and milking equipment, collect eggs, maintain the home, garden and care for children. In addition to this role, many farmers' wives undertake the greater part of the secretarial and paperwork, keeping financial records and so on (Gasson and Errington, 1993: 149). However, wives are increasingly seen as additional sources of income, as they seek off-farm employment or start their own businesses (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Gasson and Winter, 1992; Kelly and Shortall, 2002; McKay, 2001; Whatmore, 1991) – this issue is discussed further in Chapter Three.

The economic role of women in farming has changed over recent years; off farm income is becoming increasingly important to maintain the farm business, and is often a vital aspect of a farm family's overall strategy for adapting to the structural and economic constraints of the agricultural market (Danes and McTavish, 1977). As education and training levels both within and outside agriculture rise, and personal mobility increases, the farming population is shrinking; at the same time growing numbers of farmers are marrying women from outside agriculture (Gasson and Errington, 1993).

Gallo (2004) suggests that the upbringing children receive at home is crucial for a future career in the family business. The children learn about the values, the history, and the culture of the business. They observe how the family deals with problems that develop over time. Whether the children ultimately embrace or reject the family business depends on the example given by parents, brothers and sisters (Lambrecht, 2005). Farming children often start helping out on the farm and continue to do so if they intend to take over the family business. Children from farming backgrounds have been brought up in an environment which values hard work, how to work with nature and the like (Francis, 1994).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the operations of the agricultural industry and the dairy sector. Exploring the family business literature has highlighted the need to understand family businesses from a 'whole systems' approach as advocated by Riordan and Riordan (1993), rather than trying to separate the family business into sub-systems as argued by Gersick *et al.* (1997).

Each family member has a role to play in the business, as well as being a member of the family. They also possess different levels of capital that can be used in the business. The analysis above suggests that the crisis facing farmers is not just financial but also social and cultural. This contention has led me to evaluate critically the usefulness of rational economic theory in assessing family business success and hence to explore the phenomenon of why dairy farmers farm from a social perspective.

The next chapter explores the economic paradigm and the use of economic criteria to judge business success and business owner goals.

Chapter Three: Economic Theory

This chapter describes the key principles of economic theory, and explores whether it can legitimately be used as the sole means to appraise family businesses and to determine the behaviour of the family business owner. Economic theory assumes that all individuals are profit maximisers and neglects the non-economic reasons to be in business. This chapter argues that family businesses, in particular, have reasons to be in business besides those found in the traditional economic school of thought.

3.1 Economic Theory

In Western societies, the pursuit of economic capital is the dominant principle (Vandenberghe, 1998). All economic activity in a market economy is undertaken, and carried through, by individuals acting to provide for their own material interests (Weber, 1968). The economic man is one who in his economic relations is moved only by regard to his own material interests (Ashby, 1925; 1926). As Fligstein (2001: 13) implies: "it is evident that economic theory begins with the idea that individuals are profit maximisers," based on the premise that social institutions would not persist if they were not economically efficient.

As noted in Chapter Two, Weber (1930) states that the capitalist economy forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action. The manufacturer who, in the long-run, acts against these norms will inevitably be eliminated from the economic scene; just as the worker who cannot, or will not, adapt himself to the norms will be thrown into the streets without a job (Marshall, 1982; Weber, 1930). Weber (1958: 70) argues that: "the development of rational economic action from the

instinctively reactive search for food, or traditional acceptance of inherited techniques and customary social relationships, has been to a large extent determined by non-economic events and actions". In other words, action will be 'economically orientated' so far as it is concerned with the satisfaction of a desire for utilities (Weber, 1968).

Economic theory only acknowledges the rational responses of an individual to potential opportunities or, more precisely, to average chances (like the rates of profit offered by different markets). The Theory of the Firm postulates that rational economic man has the single objective of profit maximisation, and is always able to select the most appropriate means to attain this goal. He does this by using all the relevant information available to make a rational choice, therefore: "economic information is a function of one's power over the economy" (Bourdieu, 1990: 64) and some people will have access to a greater volume of more valuable information than others. Thus, some scholars argue that economic man is a perfect (or in Weber's words an ideal) type, useful for purposes of argument, but not encountered in real life (Chell, 2001; Gasson and Errington, 1993). In essence: "the real world is so complex that the notion of perfect rationality must also be abandoned" (Gasson and Errington, 1993: 89).

Some academics argue that farmers are primarily businessmen, who have sought to respond entrepreneurially to market opportunities (Bryant, 1989). If the changing market demands non-agricultural opportunities for which farm resources can be used to advantage, farmers will diversify (Torkko and Lehtinen, 2003). However, the economic crisis faced by farmers and the fact that many continue farming in the same way (Gasson *et al.*, 1998) suggest that, according to economic theory alone, farmers' behaviour is not rational. Many family businesses are also not profit maximising; they seek independence and business continuation, rather than growth (Carlock and Ward, 2001; Moores and Barratt,

2002). Therefore, using economic theory to judge the success of family businesses appears inappropriate, when many do not conform to the bedrock of economic theory. The next section explores rational decision-making in more detail.

3.2 Rational Decision Making (RDM)

According to RDM, objectives set the tone for business decisions and actions, within the constraints of the resources available. However, a firm is inanimate and cannot have objectives. In studying business behaviour, therefore, it is the objectives of individual that are relevant. In economic theory, the relevant individual is the entrepreneur, defined as someone who specialises in taking judgmental decisions about the co-ordination of scarce resources (Casson, 1982). Building on the scene set out in chapter two, it could legitimately be argued, that following Casson's definition farmers could be described as entrepreneurs. RDM is a major part of traditional economic theory and, as argued above, requires perfect information to be available to the decision maker.

In the family firm, major decisions will affect both the family and the business. The family business establishes sets of values, norms and principles that generate behaviour adapted to the needs of both the family and business (Davis and Stern, 1980). The challenge is to maintain appropriate boundaries between the family and tasks required for the successful development and operation of the business (Beckhard and Dyer, 1983). As explained in Chapter Two, successful family businesses manage to balance family (emotional) and business (rational) tensions (Carlock and Ward, 2002).

The principle of rationality states that: "human beings will, given enough information, seek to maximise their gains by obtaining the highest possible

return for any given resource, or else they will seek to use the smallest quantity of a resource to obtain a given return" (Cohen 1976: 104; cited in Barlett, 1980: 88). Rationality is often defined as: "choosing the option that has the highest expected value among those potentially open to us" (Arnold *et al.*, 1998: 296). The neo-classical model of perfect competition implies that decisions are taken by individuals with the objective of profit maximisation. Critics argue that managers of firms seek to maximise utility and that a variety of goals including power, control, prestige and the desire for 'the quiet life' should be included in the utility function (Ward and Lowe, 1994). It could be argued that rational behaviour can be described as any action which is expected to enhance the satisfaction of the individual small business owner; a rational choice for the business owner under this premise is thus the course of action expected to give the most satisfaction (Thornton, 1961).

Rationality is bounded. There are constraints on information available to the decision taker at any one time, so decisions are always made in a climate of relative risk and uncertainty (Chell, 2001), and subject to individual and organisational constraints (Barlett, 1993; Chell, 2001). Risk taking is also affected by human biases when estimating the risks involved. Entrepreneurs are often associated with risk taking action (Chell, 2001). In contrast, intuitive thinking is more flexible and spontaneous than rational-analytical thinking, enabling owner-managers to respond holistically and imaginatively to problems (Chell, 2001).

Most agricultural decisions must be made in the absence of perfect information. The nature of the industry itself is uncertain, a result of the biological nature of farming as discussed in Chapter Two. The 'outcome' of an act is usually expressed as a probability distribution of possible outcomes (Barlett, 1980). Farmers cannot be expected to act rationally in a world where outcomes cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty. In addition, farmers face various

resource, price and yield risks, making their production and incomes volatile, season to season, and from one year to another (Hossain *et al.*, 2002). These risks stem from factors beyond farmers' control, such as disease, weather, climate changes, political changes, crime and soil type (Pannell *et al.*, 2000). Moreover, the adoption of modern technology, general economic conditions, price and income elasticity of commodities in local and international markets, and public and private institutional policies all influence farmers in their decision-making (Barlett, 1980; Grant, 1991; Hossain *et al.*, 2002; Howarth, 1990).

Burton (1998: 65) asserts that: "research up until the 1960s focused on the economic models of agricultural behaviour in the mistaken belief that agricultural decision-making was based entirely on the economic rationale". Academic work in the field of economics has since been concerned with understanding and modelling the processes and consequences of decision making among farmers. As a result: "models of farmers' behaviour have been developed for a variety of specific situations, from assessing the effects of changes in policy to changes in behaviour as a result of the introduction of new technology" (Willok *et al.*, 1999: 286). These models may fail to account adequately for the behaviour of individual farmers, or may yield highly constrained models of specific behaviours (Bingswanger, 1980; Anand, 1983; Polham, 1983; Collins *et al.*, 1991; Willok *et al.*, 1999).

The consensus of opinion in the literature now suggests that farmers' behaviour is not driven solely by profit maximisation. Rather, it results from complex processes influenced by a range of socio-economic and psychological variables (Gasson, 1973; 1974; Casebow, 1981; Heffernan, 1983; Ilbery, 1985; Coughenour and Tweeten, 1986; Gilmore, 1986; Coughenour and Swanson, 1988; Gasson and Potter 1988; Carr and Tait, 1991; Willok *et al.*, 1999). The decision-making processes of farmers do not easily lend themselves to modelling by mathematical

methods, traditionally used by agricultural economists (Pannell *et al.*, 2000; Willok *et al.*, 1999), as illustrated below.

Chayanov's (1966) theory of agricultural decisions rejects the traditional economic cost-benefit calculations in the study of family farms. From his research conducted in Russia, he suggests that family farms do not behave in the manner appropriate to capitalist firms for two reasons: firstly, farmers are neither well-informed nor are they necessarily competent statisticians; secondly, utility decision models themselves are gross simplifications of reality (Barlett, 1980: 196). Studies of satisficing behaviour (Simon, 1957) have been utilised to explore farmers' non-economic goals. To date, research in this field has tended to concentrate on farmer-satisfying behaviour, predominately perceived as driven by attitudinal motivations, despite recognition by researchers that a sociological perspective may provide new insights into the operations of family farm businesses (Burton, 1998).

The fact that people act rationally has, of course, been acknowledged by many sociologists, but sociologists stress that human actions involve both rational and non-rational elements (Browning *et al.*, 2000). Such views recognise traditional or habitual action, emotional or affectual action, and various forms of value-oriented action alongside the purely rational types of action. Weber (1920) built an influential typology of action around just such concepts. Weber proposed that there were four types of social action: purposeful or goal-orientated rational action; value-orientated rational action; emotional or affective motivation action; and traditional action. His ideas were taken up by Parsons (1937) and became a part of mainstream sociology. What distinguishes rational choice theory from other theories is that it denies the existence of any kinds of action, other than the purely rational.

The perception among many mainstream agricultural economists and farm management specialists is that farming trails behind other industries, being the last to apply modern business management practices and needing to catch up with other, more enlightened, sectors (Gasson and Errington, 1993). In studying the family farm, some agricultural economists have emphasised that the farm business may have objectives other than profit maximisation, hence they highlight family issues (for instance: Harrison, 1975; Fennell, 1981; Peters and Maunder, 1983). In particular, some economists have been influential in keeping family issues in focus in farm survey work, notably the role of farmers' wives and the contribution of very small farms (Buchanan *et al.*, 1982; Ansell *et al.*, 1989; 1990). Hunt (1976) observed that British agricultural economists are not actively concerned with the farm household. Fifty years earlier, one of his predecessors had made the same point. Ashby (1925: 16) argued that: "it is strange that the most important of the living things on the farm, the farmers and their families, the workers and their families, and the conditions of economic and human success for them, have never been studied".

Agricultural economists have also neglected the importance of values, norms and beliefs when considering how farmers' make decisions. While rational considerations may explain why particular individuals introduce and enforce social norms, they cannot explain how these norms come to be internalised. The rational choice approach only explains what people *do*. It can explain why people might institute a norm and might enforce it, but it cannot explain why farmers should change their values. For example, in farming there will be norms relating to acceptable practices, for instance being a good or bad farmer, which depends on the beliefs of individual farmers.

"Values tend to be more permanent property of the individual, less likely to change with time and circumstances" (Gasson and Errington, 1993: 90). Personal

values are relatively stable and abstract forms of self-related goals, whereas personal norms are more transient and refer to specific beliefs of the person about the appropriate behavioural realisation of a value in a specific context (Eisenberg *et al.*, 1989). Values must always remain a 'given' in the rational choice approach and, to explain how they change, it is necessary to introduce additional psychological mechanisms, not connected to rationality (Heath, 1976; Friedman and Hechter, 1990; Granovetter, 1986).

There is recognition in previous studies that farmers' perceptions of themselves, and their efforts to maintain these self-perceptions in the eyes of significant others, may influence their decision-making (Burton, 1998). The way people see themselves in their world generates a frame of reference, by which an individual recognises him/herself and hence pre-selects both goals and behaviour adopted from an array of alternatives. The image farmers hold about themselves significantly affects behaviour and business decisions, and defines the components of appropriate farming practice (Seabrook and Higgins, 1988). Farmers, therefore, make decisions based on, amongst others things, their beliefs formed by their perceptions (Pennings and Leuthold, 2000).

Farmer identity is changing (or is being forced to change) with increasing globalisation, restructuring and enlargement of the EU. Independence is prized highly among the farming community (Gasson, 1973; 1974b; Shucksmith, 1993). Farmers like making their own decisions about what they do with their land, but changes in the external environment mean that these decisions are increasingly driven by restrictive Government policy (Burton, 1998; Gasson and Errington, 1993).

To summarise, farmers may not act rationally according to the Theory of the Firm or rational economic man, because values, norms and beliefs (individual

and family) as well as the lack of perfect information, contribute to seemingly non-rational decisions. This suggests the need to explore why farmers farm from a sociological perspective, encompassing both economic and non-economic factors. The next section explores the notion of entrepreneurship.

3.3 Entrepreneurship

The UK Government believes there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship (discussed in the earlier section 2.2 on small business) and economic development, and that entrepreneurship offers opportunities to revitalise and diversify declining industrial areas, legitimise activity that might otherwise be in the black economy, and relieve economic and social exclusion (Bridge *et al.*, 1998; Deakins and Freel, 2003; Kirby, 2003).

Entrepreneurship has, to date, been considered largely as an economic rather than a human or cultural behavioural concept (Hill and McGowan, 1999). According to Cantillon (1931), the entrepreneur is an individual who seeks out opportunity, with the primary objective of profit. Schumpeter (1934), in attempting to differentiate entrepreneurs from business owners and managers, maintained that it was *innovation*, the creation of new combinations of means of production, which distinguished the entrepreneur. Even so, his model was economic; he approached the entrepreneur from a functionalist perspective - as having a key role to play in the development of the economy (Cohen, 1997).

As previously stressed, economists assume that a business owner's long-term goal is to maximise profit (Hall, 1995). This may be true for the growth and wealth seeking entrepreneur, but is not the case for many small firms and their owners. Many small business owners seek independence and the lifestyle offered by owning a business, as highlighted in Section 2.2. Each small business

has its own culture, based on the values held by the owner-manager, as well as other factors, such as the industry in which business operates, the life cycle of the business, and so on (Bellamy, 2003). Under economic theory, success is defined by profit maximisation, but the small business owner may define success through survival and independence rather than growth (Curran, 1999). Failure to grow may stem not from a lack of motivation, but from the variety of constraints faced by SMEs (Durrani and Boocock, 2006). The principal internal constraints are a lack of resources, including limited capital and fewer sources of information, and pressures on the owner-manager's time (Buckley, 1989; Marlow, 1998). Success based on non-monetary factors is difficult to define, whereas success based on economic theory is based on the generation of profit which is measurable through the unit of money. The problem of how to measure non-economic factors is discussed later in Chapter Eleven.

3.4 Strategy

Chandler (1962: 16) defined strategy as: "the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, the adoption of courses of action and allocation of resources necessary for carrying out the goals". Strategy is a bottom-up, future-orientated process (Finlay, 2000). Small businesses are likely to be operating in a single market, or a limited range of markets, probably with a limited range of products/services (Johnson and Scholes, 2003; 1993). The strategy chosen depends upon a number of factors, both internal and external to the business. Internal factors include the personality of the business manager, his goals, motives and values. External factors affecting a business can be summarised by Porter's 'Five Forces' model which depicts the power of buyers and suppliers, the threat of substitutes, barriers to entry and competitive rivalry affecting the business.

Strategic planning for any organisation is about assessing the firm's capabilities and matching them with the external environment (Carlock and Ward, 2001). Small businesses do not usually have formal written statements of strategy but they may specify them in very general terms (Schindehutte and Morris, 2001). Even if not written down explicitly, each farm will have daily routines of farm operations and will plan certain tasks, such as harvesting and spring calving. Nonetheless, the degree of formal planning in family farm businesses is increasing, as regulation requires more farm processes to be documented. Strategy can provide a clear outline of the available alternatives to the owner/manager, thus aiding the decision-making process, in the face of changes in internal or external factors. As previously stated in Chapter Two, strategic management in the family firm occurs at the nexus of three intertwined areas: the family; management; and ownership (Hoy and Verser, 1994). Recent studies have explored the interactivity between personal experience and business 'strategy' (Watts *et al.*, 1998), and the power of critical incidents, both 'private' and 'business', as learning experiences (Deakins and Freel, 1998; Cope and Watts, 2000).

Many people in family business resist planning, and even fail to develop systematic frameworks for thinking about future strategies for their families and businesses; long-term success requires formulating family and business plans (Carlock and Ward, 2001). Carlock and Ward emphasise the importance of accommodating family values in the strategic development of family business, and argue further that the business is a way to perpetuate the family's tradition and business heritage, keeping the family together and generating wealth. In these circumstances, evaluating the strategy of family farm businesses purely on economic grounds fails to take into consideration the long-term goals of passing on the business to the next generation, and maintaining independence. Therefore, family businesses' financial policies typically lead them to minimise

the risk of losing independence, thus preferring to finance growth with bank loans or retained earnings rather than outside equity finance (Moore and Barrett, 2002).

Strategic decisions often have major resource implications for organisations, with implications for operational decisions (Johnson and Scholes, 1993; 2002). Strategic planning thus encompasses major decisions about farm policy, such as what to produce and whether to buy additional land, and also tactical day-to-day management decisions, for instance which job shall be done first today (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Onderstein *et al.* (2003) imply the strategy of a farming business is chosen by the farmer alone and mainly the result of his/her preferences, interests, capabilities and assessment of the internal and external environment. In many cases, the external environment will be the stimulus for change, while internal factors such as the farmers' capabilities will affect how the strategy is implemented in the business.

For the individual farm, restructuring involves the recombination or reallocation of resources (principally land, labour and capital) to economic activity, either within or off the farm (Lobley *et al.*, 2002). Previous research suggests that farmers will stick to tried and tested practices, with the decision to leave farming taken only after all other alternatives have been exhausted (Lobley *et al.*, 2002; Gasson and Errington, 1993).

The need for farmers to reduce costs seems to have become the dominant strategy pursued by many farmers (Van der Ploeg, 2000), even if reasons to pursue such a strategy do not conform to rational action theory; for example, the choice may not be to maximise profits but simply to keep the family business going. Cost effective farming strategies provides farming families with a way of countering the increasingly threatening situation of limited quotas, decreasing

prices, the high cost of land and quota, and the obligation to farm in a more environmentally sound way. Another way for farmers to increase profits, besides reducing costs, is to diversify their business activity.

3.5 Diversification and Pluriactivity

Agricultural systems have restructured in response to market changes, such as falling prices, over-production and intensification (Ilbery, 1991). The diversification activity of farmers has been likened to portfolio entrepreneurs as farmers have created new businesses in the desire to increase their incomes (Carter, 1999; 2001). Weersink *et al.* (1998) question whether the decision to pursue diversification is strategically driven, or stems from the entrepreneurial tendencies of the farmer. Diversification is a strategy used by farmers throughout the world. It can encompass new agricultural businesses and/or non-agricultural businesses (for instance, tourism) and also working for someone else. However, as Lobley *et al.* (2002: ii) point out: "dairy farmers are most likely to be involved in traditional restructuring (through economies of scale, cost efficiencies or updating facilities), while arable farmers will participate more in diversification".

There is a substantial amount of literature examining different aspects of diversification in farming (for example: Carter, 1999, 2001; Dent, 2000; Fuller, 1990; Harrison, 1982; Ilbery, 1991; McNally, 2001; Potter and Burney, 2002; Shucksmith and Winter, 1990; Torkko and Lehtinen, 2003; Weersink *et al.*, 1998). Most of these papers examine the participation of farmers in 'pluriactivity' – the: "mix of agriculture and non-agriculture activity" (Hawkins *et al.*, 1993: 277) pursued by farming families when income from agriculture is declining. From as early as the 1960s, farmers have been encouraged to diversify their activities as a

transition to leave farming. Somewhat ironically, farmers have used diversification as a way to remain in farming (Burton, 1998).

However, non-economic factors may mean that diversification schemes are not adopted. The traditional nature of farming culture affects farmers' willingness to adapt to new roles; diversification represents a leap towards a new lifestyle. Farmers may not have the necessary skills, or think they are unable to succeed in new activities. Allison (1996) observes that farming gives farmers their identity and sense of achievement, and anything that interferes with the original use of the farm can only threaten this sense of identity. Farm schemes offering financial incentives to farmers to give up their present, highly valued way of life cannot be expected to arouse much response if many of those eligible are less concerned with maximising income (Gasson, 1973). Policy makers experience difficulty in persuading farm households to restructure (diversify) their activities in the light of economic imperatives. Farmers may not have the financial resources and may not be able to borrow money to set up new ventures (economic constraints). In addition, McNally (2001) suggests that diversification does not necessarily increase farm income, and many new businesses are integrated into the original farm business. She also emphasises family farms do not generally have the resources to diversify - land, buildings, labour, knowledge and so on.

The next section delves into the motivations of farmers, and factors that affect their behaviour.

3.6 Motives, Values and Behaviour

Economic theory treats motivation as a fixed parameter, explaining variations in economic behaviour in terms of resource availability. Economic motives drive the desire to obtain the greatest possible material gain with the least possible

effort. However, Schumpeter holds that entrepreneurs were motivated by the opportunity to improve their social mobility and position in the classes (Gray, 1998). Many people decide to become self-employed for non-economic rewards, including the need for: achievement; independence; power or control; indirect benefits; approval; and personal development (Chell, 2001). On the same lines, Scase and Goffee (1980: 32-33) argue that: "personal satisfaction is acquired through developing a business, rather than by enjoying a high personal standard of living, and starting a business is seen as an escape from society". These differing attitudes to goals and motivations feed through into behaviours. Small firm owners motivated by non-economic goals must be strongly convinced that any changes to their business operations recommended in (say) a management training course will increase income (Gray, 1998), by contrast those motivated by growth and wealth may not see the benefits of trying to improve their family life previously argued by Carlock and Ward (2001).

As mentioned previously, the Theory of the Firm postulates that rational economic man has the single objective of profit maximisation and is always able to select the most appropriate means to attain this goal. On the other hand, satisfying a number of inconsistent goals simultaneously results in satisficing (Simon, 1957) rather than profit maximising behaviour (Gasson and Errington, 1993). The primary aim of many family businesses is not to maximise profits but to maintain control, passing on a secure and sound business to the next generation (Carlock and Ward, 2001; Moores and Barrett, 2002). Autonomy, independence, survival and succession thus mingle with more orthodox economic objectives of maximising profit (or returns) in the short or long-term (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Again these findings suggest a need for a more sociological assessment of farm business and family farming.

Over 80 years ago, Ashby (1926) classified the motivations of farmers as: desire of economic advantage or fear of economic need; hope of reward, or fear of punishment; feeling of honour, striving for recognition or fear of shame; and need of occupation and pleasure of activity. Ashby (1926: 7) postulates that: "if the desire for profit or the greatest possible material gains for the least possible effort is not the only motive actuating farmers, it is desirable to enquire what other impulses may be". Age also affects motivations. One study suggested that older generations felt they were born to be farmers, while younger generations felt they had more choice and opportunity available to them (Villa, 1999).

The need to credit both economic and non-economic goals is emphasised by Ashby (1925) who states that no man has a single motive that is constantly active everywhere, even within the sphere of business. The farmer notoriously mixes business activity with personal life: they merge imperceptibly one into the other: "farming is not a business but a life" (Ashby, 1926: 5). Farming values consist of aspects, such as 'freedom of decision', 'good income', 'pleasant physical surroundings' and the like (Coughenour and Swanson, 1988).

Farming values may refer to: instrumental – making a reasonable income, expanding the business; social – continuing the family tradition, prestige, working with family; expressive – pride of ownership, personal growth, self-expression, gaining respect for doing worthwhile job; or intrinsic – enjoying the work, outdoor life, valuing hard work and independence (Gasson, 1974b). Previous work (Ashby, 1926; Gasson, 1973; Gasson and Errington, 1993) found these values were all important aspects of farming, and it is their ordering relative to one another which influences farmers' decisions in situations of choice.

The values farmers hold are key justifications for the need to assess family farms using sociological theory. Sociological theories are more descriptive and usually agnostic, or sceptical, as to the ultimate effect of social structures on economic efficiency (Fligstein, 2001). Farmers might be described in these terms as having an intrinsic work orientation, where performance of work tasks is valued for its own sake, and economic and social considerations are liable to be subordinated to intrinsic ends (Gasson, 1973). All farmers do not have the same objectives when participating in the agricultural industry, yet all farming is based on the hiring or purchase of resources such as land, labour, fertiliser, and feed. There is a strong business foundation in farming. The profit motive may receive varying emphasis by different farmers in their objectives, but to some degree it will be present for all (Clarke and Simpson, 1959). Some deeper appreciation of motivation, if taken in conjunction with the already extensive knowledge of resource constraints, should eventually lead to a better understanding, and prediction of farmers' behaviour (Gasson, 1973).

3.7 Conclusion

Using economic theory to assess the success and the motivations of family business does not take into consideration additional factors that are important to the family and the individual. These factors relate to the social, cultural and environmental position of the family and the business, and the multifaceted contribution agriculture makes to society. Economic theory fails to take into consideration the emotional side of the family business and the non-economic goals of both the family and the business. It also neglects the role of other family members in business operations and, as such, the farm needs to be considered as a collective social unit. There is, therefore, a need to explore family business and the reasons why farmers farm from a sociological perspective.

Chapter Four: Pierre Bourdieu

There are many competing theories in sociology - Functionalism, Symbolic Interactionism, Marxism to name a few. However, sociologists have the common belief that behaviour is rooted in the social origins of the actor. This thesis does not attempt a critical assessment of social theories; rather it applies the work of a major protagonist in this field to a particular social group (farmers). The social influences on farming represent a serious gap in knowledge (Ilbery, 1983; Young *et al.*, 1995), and I argue strongly that a sociologist brings new perspectives to the central question of this thesis.

This chapter explores the sociological perspective of farming in relation to, and focusing on, the work of Pierre Bourdieu. I am convinced that Bourdieu's ideas and his interest in power are well suited to the central thrust of my thesis. The remainder of this chapter presents a critical review of the sociological approaches most appropriate for the subject matter of my thesis.

4.1 Why Bourdieu?

Bourdieu's theory is one of many sociological theories that could have been used, but, after careful consideration, I felt that his concentration on power and the relevance of his work to the farming community suits what my thesis is trying to show and works well with my epistemological stance. Bourdieu's work does not discount the economic side of the argument, but his theory of *capital* complements it with social and cultural factors. Using Bourdieu offers a novel way to analyse family farm business from a deeper sociological perspective. Bourdieu's theories of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* enables me to examine the whole 'family business' picture, including the *field* in which the

business operates, to explore why farmers continue to farm. His theories allow me to consider the economic, social, cultural and symbolic position of farmers.

Bourdieu's work follows the anti-positivism movement in America and the thinking behind the Chicago School of Sociology, typified by Mead and Dewey (Robbins, 2000). Bourdieu focused on the world of symbolic formations through which social life represents itself; he was interested in the sphere of cultural customs, and symbolic forms of expression (Honneth, 1986). Bourdieu attempts to decipher the social logic of group-specific tastes, dispositions to act in a certain way under given circumstances, lifestyles and habits existing alongside each other within the social space, bringing them together under the broad concept of everyday culture (Honneth, 1986). Essentially, Bourdieu is concerned with what people do in their daily lives (Jenkins, 1992); likewise, this thesis is fundamentally interested in farmer's daily lives, hence the applicability of Bourdieu's theories is clear.

Becker and other scholars' have attempted to extend the 'economic approach to human behaviour' to domains outside the traditional province of economics. However, what distinguishes Bourdieu's thinking is its specifically sociological dimension to: class-based variations in the meanings and uses of nominally identical goods and activities; the social constitution of the various modes of interest, investment and profit; and, especially, the class-based, systematically unequal distribution of the instruments needed to appropriate and accumulate both material and symbolic goods (Brubaker, 1985).

Bourdieu's main theoretical contribution has been to develop conceptual 'tools' (Jenkins, 1992; Le Hir, 1995). His key concepts – *field*, *capital* and *habitus*

- are neither political nor are they designed to meet the demands outside the social sciences (Robbins, 2000). Instead, they make up a 'thinking tool' to encourage the scholar to embark on empirical research with a theory that follows concrete data rather than the other way around (Grenfell and Kelly, 1999). It was impossible, Bourdieu (1986: 422) argued: "to understand the social world without acknowledging the role of '*capital*' in all its forms, not just the one form recognised by economic theory".

Bourdieu claims that social life may be conceived as: "a multi-dimensional status game, in which individuals draw upon their economic, social, and cultural resources in order to compete for status" (Anderson and Miller, 2003: 21). First of all, all games have rules, and these determine, to some extent, what players can and cannot do when participating in the game; for example, rules govern how a product is sold (say milk). The same is true of social life. Laws govern what people can do, prescribing acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Second, games are learned through explicit teaching, as well as experimentally in practice (Jenkins, 1992). So farmers would learn skills and gain knowledge (about the game) from their parents and institutional education (school and university).

Bourdieu proposes that individuals are equipped with the ability to understand and control their own actions, despite the circumstances of their lives (for example, even if individuals possess low levels of *capitals* they can control their behaviour). As a result, individuals become agents of their own actions. Agency is conceptualised in terms of individuals' relation to structures within a particular *field* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). For Bourdieu, agents are conditioned in their strategic behaviour by their location in the competitive game-playing character of the *field*. For example, farmers who plan their actions strategically in pursuit of economic gain will have less

of an impact in the market, in terms of pricing and profit margins, than retailers who devote an entire division to strategy. Agents in such *fields* compete, collude, negotiate and contest for positions through bargaining and power struggles for *capital* (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Thus individuals and groups aspire to accumulate *capital* in order to increase their power, and hence their position in the *field* (Bourdieu, 1986). Agents are able to influence rules of the game, depending on their position in the *field*. According to Bourdieu, power relates to the possession of *capital*, agents with more *capital* have greater power (control and ability to influence others) in the *field*; agents with power hold dominant positions in the *field*.

According to Bourdieu, a social group's position and life-chances are measured by the economic and cultural goods the group is able to acquire and hold onto in the social struggle over the distribution of money and titles (Honneth, 1986). A social group's locality will also have an effect on this process. Those in a better position (dominant agents) are able to increase their share of the available *capitals* and hence their power. Dominant agents may inhabit a location (say in the supply chain) with better infrastructure which, in turn, means they are able to engage in *capital* exchange mechanisms more frequently and more efficiently, engaging in action, which maintains their *capital* share. In the agricultural industry, it is easy to identify agents (groups of agents) that occupy favourable positions, for example Government and retailers.

Alongside struggles for *capital* and the area a group inhabits, the social recognition of a life-style (and hence the values it symbolically represents) depends on the degree to which the currently held norms of action and value conceptions have found social acceptance (Honneth, 1986). For instance, acceptable behaviour in farming may not be acceptable to certain

environmental groups. In the rural community, values were originally created by farmers and farm workers, who made up a large proportion of the workforce (before the industrial revolution). These values, which have been passed across generations, now conflict with new (urban) values from incomers to rural communities. Farmers recognise the farming 'way of life', albeit one which holds many meanings for them, whereas outsiders may not accept the farming lifestyle, thus finding it difficult to gain social acceptance in small, remote farming communities.

The strength of Bourdieu's work lies in its ability to be applied at different levels of analysis: micro, meso and macro. His work can be applied to many different contexts, and previous research has covered diverse topics including the exploration of career choices (Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003), investigating an urban community (Rosenlund, 1996), migration (Mahar, 1992), European and American Colonialism in Africa (Goke-Pariola, 1993), peasantisation in Nigeria (Schiltz, 1982), educational differences (Alheit, 1996; Rupp and De Lange, 1989), differentiating social classes (Anderson and Miller, 2003; Roos and Rahkonen, 1985), gender (Sayce, 2005) and relationships between sport and life-style of youths (Sack, 1988).

The objectives of this research are not to critique Bourdieu's work, nor to provide a historical account of how other scholars have utilised Bourdieu's concepts, but to use his work as one social theory that can be used to answer an agricultural (and small business) problem. There is ambiguity in his writing. He does not always define adequately the terms he employs, and there is sometimes inconsistency in the way he utilises concepts (DiMaggio, 1979). So, it is essential that I now explain and define each concept.

4.2 Bourdieu's Concepts

4.2.1 *Field*

For Bourdieu, *field* is a social space in which agents (individuals with the ability to control and understand their behaviours) are positioned with given resources. The *field* provides a structure (and rules of the game) where actions enable agents to gain control over these resources; Bourdieu defines resources as four forms of *capital*: *economic*; *cultural*; *social*; and *symbolic* (Bourdieu, 1986; Flint and Rowlands, 2003). The *field* is defined as a network or configuration of objective relations (Bourdieu, 1986; Wacquant, 1989). Individuals' positions in the *field* are determined by their present and potential situation in the structure of the distribution of power (or *capital*) through agents and institutions. Possession of *capital* commands access to specific profits at stake in the *field* (Bourdieu, 1986; Griller, 1996; Wacquant 1989). Access to profits depends on how the *field* is structured and the distribution of power, whereby dominant and dominated coexist and must abide by the rules of the game (Fligstein, 2001).

"Each *field*, by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance, and is both the product and producer of the *habitus*, specific and appropriate to the *field*" (Jenkins, 1992: 84, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). The limits or boundaries of a *field* are a matter for empirical investigation, suggesting that they are a social, as well as an analytical (or theorised) construct. Bourdieu does not tell us how the existence of a *field* is to be determined, or how *fields* are to be identified (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu does state that: "every *field* constitutes a potentially open space of play whose boundaries are dynamic borders, which are the site of struggles within the *field* itself" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 104). The *field* is the crucial mediating context, wherein external factors and changing

circumstances are brought to bear upon individual practice and institutions. The logic, politics and structure of the *field*, shape and channel the manner in which 'external determinations' affect what goes on within the *field* and become a part of the ongoing history and operation of the *field* itself (Jenkins, 1992: 86).

In the context of agriculture, for example, the history of food production and subsidies illustrates this linkage between external factors and market operations. As such: "the consequences of power, particularly politics, impinge upon the weaker *fields* and structure what occurs within them" (Jenkins, 1992: 86). Therefore, the powerful retail *field* will define what happens in the dairy industry *field*. In the case of farming, politicians decide upon rules (quotas, CAP, cross compliance and so on), thereby structuring what happens in the dairy industry, including volume of production, price mechanisms and responses to environmental legislation.

Field, *habitus* and *capital* are directly connected; *capital* must exist within a *field* in order to have meaning. One of the most important properties of *fields* is the way in which they allow one form of *capital* to be transformed into another (Bourdieu, 1986). This is done through social interaction and *capital* exchange mechanisms. Naturally, the volumes of *capital*, as well as the structure of *capital*, become important dimensions of the *field*. Struggles for recognition are fundamental to social life, and the accumulation of particular kinds of *capital* is part of those struggles (Bourdieu, 1984). For example, *cultural capital* comprises goods and practices, some of which we might call consumable cultural goods (artefacts, family heirlooms), while others consist of personal cultural skills (table manners or conversation). Cultural skills and knowledge are necessary to comprehend rules of the game, and to be cultured is seen as a social advantage (Anderson and Miller, 2003).

Bourdieu compares the 'social field' to a casino, suggesting we gamble not only with 'black chips' representing our *economic capital*, but also with the 'blue chips' of our *cultural capital*, and the 'red chips' of our *social capital* (Alheit, 1996). These various *capitals* might not always be substituted for one another but, in combination, they may, in turn, breed new (*symbolic*) capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Field, 2003). Bourdieu places individuals (players/actors) in the context of the *field* in which they are engaged (Sayce, 2005). The *field* becomes the playground, where the patterned sets of practices are played out (Sayce, 2005). In the *field* (playground), agents realise individual strategies by playing according to, and openly reproducing, the rules of the game, as defined by the specific set of *capital* most valuable for holding (and obtaining) power in that *field* (Bourdieu, 1986; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). Rules of the game are instigated by the players who possess the most *capital*, which gives rise to power and ultimately control in the *field*.

People struggle to maintain their position, or alter the distribution of *field* specific *capital* to enhance their position (Bourdieu, 1991). The *field* is thus metaphorically a *field* of forces in which struggles for position and legitimate authority take place (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Mahar, 1992). Each stakeholder brings *capital* to the game. This can be *economic*, *social*, *cultural* or *symbolic*. *Capital* gives rise to power, required to influence the rules of the game (Bourdieu, 1984). For example, retailers have access to a substantially greater power base than family dairy farms. *Capital* also provides the basis for Government power (Flint and Rowlands, 2003), as the Government is able to control each form of *capital*: *cultural capital* (through the education system); *social capital* in terms of its highly sophisticated networks; and *economic capital* as a result of the huge revenues it receives from

transactions in the *field*. Governments use their power to control rules of the game, which ensures they remain powerful.

4.2.2 *Habitus*

While the *field* defines the structures of the social setting in which the *habitus* operates, the *habitus* is defined as schemes of action, the embodied history of active presence of the whole past, of which *habitus* is the present (Bourdieu, 1990; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). In other words, *habitus* refers to an ensemble of schemata of perception, thinking, feeling, evaluating, speaking and acting that pre-formats all the expressive, verbal and practical manifestations and utterances of individuals (Krais, 1985). It signifies not just how we think about the world, but the bodily 'system of dispositions' we bring to the *field*: "a way of thinking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech and ... a certain subjective experience" (Bourdieu, 1977: 85-7; Adams, 2006: 514). The *habitus* thus provides individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives: "it 'orients' their actions and inclinations without strictly determining them" (Bourdieu, 1991: 13). The *habitus* is only seen in the *field* through the actions, reactions and behaviours of agents to the rules of the game. The *habitus* determines how each agent plays the game.

The workings of experience are not merely accounted for in the dynamics of the present moment; they have historical foundedness so the meaning of experience always has, to some extent, its own inscribed pretext – its predispositions or 'habits' in the sense which Dewey (1922) employed the term (Ostrow, 1981). Habits shape the *habitus* over time, becoming part of daily routines that are part of how people function. Dewey (1922) proposes habits are not merely reactions or behaviours which have a tendency to repeat themselves; rather they are projective sources of behaviour and perception, or

the precognitive, funded meanings, which form the foundation for all experience (Ostrow, 1981).

Habitus is a socially constructed version of the world, viewed as 'natural' rather than consciously-conceived, ensuring that individuals are more disposed to act in some ways than others (Bourdieu, 2000). Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus* invokes a process of socialisation, whereby dominant modes of thought and experience inherent in the life-world are internalised by individuals, especially in their early years, but also through their continuing experiences and social interactions (Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002). As a result, *habitus* shapes an individual's identity by distinguishing their character. Malin and Birch (1998) describe social identity as groups to which we belong, representing part of our self-concept, and contributing to self-esteem. The family hands on what Bourdieu calls the primary *habitus*, which consists of a set of generalised schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action; this provides the basic conceptual categories and action frameworks through which people think about and respond to the social world (Connolly, 1997). Thus, the values of one generation are embodied in those of the next. In essence: "*habitus* is a nexus of lived meaning" (Ostrow, 1981: 294; Bourdieu, 1972: 294), an embodied phenomenon that signifies how one thinks about the world one lives in.

The theory of *habitus* is incomplete without a notion of structure that makes room for the organised improvisation of agents (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 19). This is where the *field* becomes important. *Fields* limit what agents can do, make some actions possible more than others, or encourage a certain bodily deportment rather than another, but there is often an opportunity to 'play the game' in more ways than one (Bourdieu, 1985; 1991). In order to understand and explain the action of players in the game (*field*), one needs

information about their dispositions and competence (their *habitus*), and the state of play in the game, as well as the players' individual location (social position/status) in the *field*. At a deep level, it is because of players' *habitus* and the way in which it shapes perception, motivation and action that players are disposed to recognise and play the *field* in the first place (Crossley, 2001; Bourdieu, 1986; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). *Habitus* determines players' different behaviours in relation to the *field*, and how players' behaviours are asserted and changed in response to their practice. This helps to shape their preferences within the *field* where the game is played, and acknowledges that one's future experiences are shaped by one's past experiences (Bourdieu and Wacquat, 1992).

The agent's *habitus* interacts with the *field* to produce strategies, as agents act in pursuit of the 'specific profits' available through competition in the *field* (Griller, 1996). Bourdieu suggests that we do not choose our strategies consciously; they are a product of the interaction of our unconscious *habitus* and *field*, hence our strategies (for playing the game) do not act as rules ordering a particular action in a particular circumstance (Jenkins 1992). However, this assertion negates suggestions that individuals react in response to their environment, and therefore must choose the most appropriate form of action (strategy).

The theoretical construct of '*habitus*' presents a number of conceptual and empirical ambiguities. In places, Bourdieu writes as if each *field* generates its own specific *habitus* (Jenkins, 1992). Elsewhere, it seems to be the case that agents bring their own pre-existing and historically-constituted *habitus* to whichever *field* they are engaged in. Both interpretations could be true as individuals must acquire their *habitus* as part of their process of social and personal development within a *field* or *fields* (Jenkins, 1992). One further

complication with using *habitus* is that it can refer to the individual or a collective of individuals (part of a social group); such as the family (household); in the latter case, *habitus* takes into account the predispositions of all those involved in the unit. In this thesis, *habitus* relates only to the individual farmer; the *habitus* of other individuals act to shape the farmer's life-world.

The next section explores *capital*, the foundation for power struggles in the field.

4.2.3.1 Capital

In economic thought, the term capital originally meant: "an accumulated sum of money, which could be invested in the hope of future profits" (Field, 2003: 12). In recent years, the concept of capital has been extended from *economic capital* (Savage *et al.*, 2005) to cover *human capital* (Becker, 1964), *social capital* (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003), *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1984) and *symbolic capital* (Bourdieu, 1997). Bourdieu's theory of *capital* proposes a sophisticated alternative to that offered within rational choice thinking (Savage *et al.*, 2005). Bourdieu (1986) argues that *economic capital*, despite its visibility and tangibility, is not the only important form of *capital* in industrial capitalism.

Bourdieu (1984: 14) identifies four different forms of *capital*: "*economic capital* in the strict sense (material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property and so on); *cultural capital* (knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications); *social capital* (actual or potential resources from social networks); and *symbolic capital* (accumulated prestige or honour)". Bourdieu considers these forms of *capital* to be mainly in the hands of the dominant classes, who occupy pinnacle

positions in society (Lin, 2001). Bourdieu views profit (*capital*) as what is at stake in the perpetual struggle in society, or the social *field* (Wacquant, 1989; Lin, 2001).

In the structure of the *field*, the unequal distribution of *capital* is the source of struggles for *capital*, for example: the appropriation of profits and the power to impose the laws functioning in the *field* are most favourable to *capital* reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986). *Capital* can accumulate over time and has the potential to produce profits, and reproduce itself in identical or expanded forms (Bourdieu, 1986). Dominant players are able to influence rules of the game (through the use of *capital*) hence operations in the *field*. *Capital* thus gives rise to power, enabling dominant groups to play the game with an advantage. In this sense, Bourdieu's work is similar to Weber's theories of power through class (*economic capital*), status (*symbolic capital*) and politics, defining rules of the game (Roth and Wittich, 1978).

4.2.3.2 Economic Capital

Economic capital is referred to by Bourdieu, in similar terms to those of Marx, as money, commodities, means of material production and other material assets (Wacquant, 1996; Smart, 1993). Income is an important aspect of *economic capital*. Bourdieu postulates that *economic capital* is at the root of all other types of *capital*, because it can be converted more easily into *social*, *cultural* and *symbolic capital* than vice versa (Bourdieu, 1986). *Economic capital* can have both positive and negative affects. It enables actors to purchase material goods and other forms of *capital*. Those with high levels of *economic capital* are in a strong position to acquire other forms of *capital* and they are also able to hold dominant positions in society. Bourdieu tends to neglect the 'dark side' of *economic capital* accumulation, whereby *economic capital* can create a sense of greed and contempt between groups and individuals. Wealth

also stays with those who already have large shares of the available *economic capital*, curtailing the ability of less dominant groups to increase their power and *capital* share.

4.2.3.3 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital can exist in three forms. Firstly, in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; over time, these become part of the *habitus*, learned from family or gained from personal experiences. Secondly, in the objectified state in the form of cultural goods - pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments and so on, including exposure to these goods through cultural experiences by visiting museums, art galleries and theatres. Lastly, in the institutionalised state, that must be set apart because it is controlled and verified by the dominant groups, for instance educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1977; 1984; 1986). In essence, Bourdieu sees *cultural capital* as knowledge, expertise and experience embodied in individuals, and derived from one's social origins (Bourdieu, 1986; 1991).

The embodied *cultural capital* of previous generations functions as a 'game playing' advance, by providing children from the outset with the example of culture incarnated in familiar models, enabling the newcomer (child) to start acquiring the basic elements of the legitimate culture from the beginning, in the most unconscious and impalpable way (Bourdieu 1984; Gunn, 2005). To be cultured is a social advantage (Anderson and Miller, 2003), as *cultural capital* involves the accumulation of credentials, skills and knowledge acquired through upbringing and education, which may then be employed to accumulate and utilise *economic capital* (Flint and Rowlands, 2003). Bourdieu's notion of *cultural capital*, as an indication of social class, equates with Daniel's (1983) classification of prestige; *cultural capital* is negotiated by the professionals (lawyers, accountant, academics and politicians) through the

process of credentialism; for instance, certificates, qualifications and the like (Grenfell and Kelly, 1999). This gives rise to a status hierarchy amongst farmers themselves (as some possess more qualifications than others); the wider rural community; and the dominant players (particularly Government, retailers) in the *field*. The latter tend to hold higher levels of *cultural capital*, and thus greater status in the *field*.

Over the years: "the growth of mass public schooling is a response to the removal of job-training activity (for boys at least) from the household when men went out to work in return for a wage" Coleman (1990: 581). Weber's (1978) warning that: "patents of education will create a privileged 'caste' has proved prescient: the technocrats who head today's capitalist firms and Government offices have at their disposal a panoply of powers and titles of property, education, and ancestry without historical precedent" (Wacquant, 1996: 245). Developing Weber's assertions, Bourdieu states that *cultural capital* consists of familiarity with the dominant culture in a society, particularly the ability to understand and use 'educated' language. Dominant groups (Government) decide what should be offered as education, and what is assumed as prior knowledge of the individual before they attend school (Bourdieu, 1986). He argues that the possession of *cultural capital* varies with social class, yet the education system assumes the same possession of *cultural capital* for all (Sullivan, 2001).

Bourdieu's emphasis on the strategic importance of the familial inheritance of *cultural capital* in the context of struggles for scholastic titles, leads him to conceptualise the family as the basic unit of class formation, and distributive class struggle. This continues a line of argument first brought forward by social theorists, as diverse as, Schumpeter and Parsons (Joppke, 1986). According to Bourdieu, working class families possess no *cultural capital* to

hand down to their children, nor do they develop the cultural disposition in their children. Working-class people, in Bourdieu's mind, do not engage in legitimate cultural activities, and are in no position to understand or appreciate legitimate culture (Rigby, 1991).

Bourdieu again does not specifically mention the 'dark side' of *cultural capital*. For instance, individuals may not have access to the resources needed to improve their *cultural capital*, nor do all individuals have the money to pay for cultured experiences and artefacts; therefore farmers may not possess cultural artefacts' such as art works or poetry; or visit museums and so on.

4.2.3.4 Social Capital

Bourdieu is not the only scholar to have an interest in *social capital*. Coleman, Lin, Flap, Burt, Erickson, and Portes share the understanding that *social capital* consists of resources embedded in social relations and social structure (Field, 2003). Like Becker's *human capital* (which spans parts of *social* and *cultural capital*), *social capital* is an investment on the part of the actor to increase the likelihood of success in purposive actions (Lin, 2001). The relationship between *social capital* and *human capital* is significant but open to question. Some academics have proposed that *social capital* helps to produce *human capital* through information and knowledge sharing (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990), while other scholars argue that *human capital* results from higher education and greater work experience (*cultural capital*) contributing to the accumulation of *social capital* (Lin, 2001). In this thesis, I follow Bourdieu's thinking and focus on *social capital*. Unlike *human capital*, *social capital* is not strictly speaking a property of individuals (Furstenberg, 2005). Individuals engage in interactions and networking (*social capital*) hoping to increase profits, by discussing their working practices or by finding new outlets for selling their produce.

Social capital depends on the social setting and social circumstances of the people involved. Therefore, farmers will have different levels of *social capital* compared to professionals. Irrespective of the forms of *social capital* being considered, some individuals will have greater *social capital* than others. Loury (1977; 1987) distinguishes *social capital* as the set of resources inherent in family relations and in community social organisation, useful for the cognitive or social development of a child (Coleman, 1990). Bourdieu takes a different view; although *social capital* derives from family relationships, he sees its type and content as shaped inevitably by the material, cultural and symbolic status of the individual and family concerned (Bourdieu, 1990). *Social capital* is thus defined by Bourdieu as: "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable (long-standing) network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1983; 1986: 248).

Some social ties (networks), resulting from their strategic locations and positions (status), carry more valued resources and exercise greater power on organisational agents' decision-making (Clarke, 2000; Lin, 2001). The volume of *social capital* possessed by a given agent depends on the size of network connections s/he can effectively mobilise, and the volume of the *capital* (*economic, cultural or symbolic*) possessed in their own right by each of those to whom s/he is connected (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore: "the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously, aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long-term" (Bourdieu, 1986: 249). It is argued that increased networks of relationships, reciprocity and levels of trust, act as viable mechanisms to enhance levels of *social capital*.

(Lin, 2001). The social values and norms held by an individual, will also affect the level of *social capital* they possess.

Coleman (1990) was able to show that *social capital* was not limited to the powerful; it could also convey real benefits to poor and marginalised communities, and the individuals within them. *Social capital* according to Coleman represents a resource, because it involves the expectation of reciprocity, and goes beyond any given individual to involve wider networks whose relationships are governed by a high degree of trust and shared values (Field, 2003). *Social capital* contributes to collective action by increasing the potential costs to individuals who choose not to partake in collective action. In the farming context, such costs include an inability to share information for best practices, which could in turn lead to increases in operational costs and reduce efficiency. Thus, collective behaviour builds trust in networks, fostering robust norms of reciprocity and facilitating flows of information, including information on actors' reputation (Putnam 1993a). *Social capital* can enhance *economic* and *cultural capital* through the: "investment in social relations with expected returns in the market place" (Lin, 2001: 3).

Social capital has been widely accepted as an important asset for creating and maintaining healthy communities, robust organisations and vibrant civil service (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993a; 1993b; Yimberlake, 2005). Society and community are seen as being constructed through processes of political struggle in which *social capital* is mobilised, expended and accumulated (Lee *et al.*, 2005). Elder and Conger (2000) suggest that high levels of *social capital* are created when couples work together and involve their children in a common enterprise (for instance, small family businesses). As Furstenberg (2005: 813) identifies: "in family systems where co-operation is required, children may be permitted, if not expected, to participate, thus creating a sense of lasting

obligations across generations". *Social capital* contributes to and, in turn, is enhanced by family solidarity (Johnston and Percy-Smith, 2003).

Bourdieu, like Coleman, shows no interest in the 'dark side' of *social capital* (Field, 2003). Society and prevailing organisations can use institutionalising organisations (for instance schools) to enforce rules, rituals and controlling behaviours (Lin, 2001). These institutions are often operated by dominant players in the *field*. Bourdieu claims that *social capital* is inherently unevenly distributed. Those who have the most connections (especially, through valuable networks) are liable to use them to advance their own interests, thereby causing further inequality (Field, 2003). Thus, powerful groups can limit or undermine the *social capital* of those who are less powerful (Schulman and Anderson 1999; Field, 2003). As Field (2003: 79) states: "dominant groups can promote social exclusion, reinforcing the relative disadvantage of dominated groups". Those who possess relatively high levels of *economic* and *cultural capital* also tend to have high levels of *social capital* (Field, 2003), although subordinate groups with strong *social capital* as a whole can thrive despite the absence of *economic* and *cultural capital* (such as, the miners' unions).

One problem with *social capital* is that while financial, physical and even human capital can be given a 'cash price' and traded against other commodities in the market place, *social capital* cannot. Social networks are not so readily translated into the language of the market place, nor traded against other commodities (Field, 2003).

4.2.3.5 Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital refers to the possession of symbolic resources. Bourdieu defines a symbolic resource as any one, or combination of *capital* in circulation:

economic, cultural and social. By pointing out the regularities among the types of *capital*, and their frequency of use, the underlying internal symbolic structure of the *field* could be revealed (Bourdieu, 1991). Through interacting with different social groups, the individual develops an understanding of the symbolic significance of objects, attitudes, and behaviours of the group and the community's culture of which the individual is part (Burton and Wilson, 2006). Weber suggests the possession of symbolic resources could be defined as the status of the individual. Bourdieu argues that social life may be conceived as a multi-dimensional status game (within which there are struggles for power), whereby individuals draw upon their *economic, social, and cultural capital* resources in order to compete for status (Anderson and Miller, 2003).

Symbolic capital for Bourdieu consists of the: "prestige and renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179). He suggests that *symbolic capital* is perhaps the most valuable form of *capital* accumulation in a society (Bourdieu, 1977). *Symbolic capital* is often the only legitimate way to accumulate resources, but these symbolic resources can themselves be utilised for economic gain. Though it may reside in individuals, Bourdieu came to define the production of *symbolic capital* as a socially constructed process, a type of alchemy through which the social class divisions inherent in other forms of *capital* become naturalised (Bourdieu, 1986). *Symbolic capital* always fulfils ideological functions (Joppke, 1986). It can be argued that *symbolic capital* exists only in the eyes of the others, while the other forms of *capital* have an independent objectification as either money, possessions (farmhouse, land, buildings, animals, machinery and so on) or behavioural attitudes and dispositions. Grenfell and Kelly (1999: 74) suggest that: "these forms of *symbolic capital* can be thought of as expressions or manifestations of one's *habitus* during social exchanges". In our societies, and at the very heart of the

economy, we still find: (in paternalism) “the logic of symbolic goods and the alchemy which transforms the truth of relations of domination” (Bourdieu, 1998: 101). According to Bourdieu, families possess different amounts of symbolic and material resources, which enable them to gain advantage for their members (Furstenberg, 2005).

Crucially: “in family business the business (essentially derived from the family) has symbolic value, and crucially, a moral pressure to continue these types of business” (Bertaux and Thompson, 2005: 41). The symbolic value of the family business is a fundamental point which is developed throughout the data chapters.

4.3 Applying Bourdieu’s Concepts to Dairy Farming

This section takes Bourdieu’s concepts and applies them to dairy farming. Throughout this section, I refer to Bourdieu’s concepts in relation to farmers, but the situation/explanation could easily relate to farmers’ spouses and children.

4.3.1 *Field*

In this thesis, the *field* is characterised by a patterned set of practices in which competent action conforms to the set rules of the game. The *field* is a playground (or battlefield), in which agents endowed with a certain *field*-relevant *capital* try to advance their position by playing the game (Bourdieu, 1986; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). The *field* refers to the dairy industry.

The logic and the problems surrounding the *field* have previously been discussed in Chapter Two and are represented diagrammatically in Appendix A. They are summarised as: power of buyers and suppliers; increased

pressure from globalisation and multinational corporations; and the rules of the game set by Government and dominant players. Within these *fields*, there are rules of the game and powerful groups endeavour to influence these rules. For example, supermarkets will try to influence policy that affects the whole *field*. The *field* (identified as the dairy industry) has many players. The key players in the *field* are around 19,000 dairy farmers, four main banks, four main retailers, Government, a small number of milk buying co-operatives, and farm suppliers (water, electricity, corn, and so on). In this *field*, each player is struggling to maintain (even increase) their share of available *capital*. Possession of *capital* according to Bourdieu, gives rise to power and the ability to influence the rules of the game. The *habitus* determines the acceptable behaviour in these *fields*. Dairy farmers operate in a highly controlled environment, where rules are created by powerful institutions seeking to maintain their share of the available *capitals*. Policy changes (discussed in Chapter Two), affect not only how the *field* operates, but also the individual's business and how his/her *habitus* responds to these changes.

The rules of the game are shaped by the *field* and the players who have the greatest share of the available *capitals*. For example, industry pricing mechanisms are set by the retailers; these determine the price of the product and the prices paid to suppliers of the product. The farmer operating in the *field* (dairy industry) has certain rules that must be obeyed, for example: food hygiene standards, animal welfare and basic business rule of practice (see: Chapter Two for market operations). The rules of the game depend on regulations (politics) and market operations. There are different rules of the game for different sectors of agriculture, and between different diversification activities. It is not an even playing ground; agents have varying access to different types of *capital*. The heterogeneity of the farming community brings with it diversity and further struggles for *capital*, as different group of farmers

have different objectives; a critical concern is that these struggles for *capital* reduce the power of the farming community as a whole.

4.3.2 *Habitus*

In this thesis, the *habitus* is defined as the accumulation of the farmer's life experiences, encompassing certain ways of thinking, speaking, acting and reacting to situations. These factors consciously and subconsciously impact on the farmer's ability to act in the present situation, forming a practical sense (feel for the game) for what they should do. The *habitus* thus provides farmers with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives. In essence, the *habitus* provides farmers with a pre-determined perception of their location in the *field*, and how they should play the game.

As Bourdieu (1998: 25) says: "the *habitus* is the kind of practical sense akin to intuition for what is to be done in a given situation; in sport, this sense is referred to as the 'feel' for the game, that is, the art of anticipating the future of the game, inscribed in the present state of play" (Bourdieu, 1998: 25). For farmers, the 'feel' for the game relies on intuitive thinking, when dealing with biological factors, social norms, values and so on. For instance, farmers must have a sense of what is normal for a healthy cow, and when an ailing cow can be treated by the farmer, or whether the vet needs to be called out.

Farmers proceed through the agricultural cycle, as master players proceed through the chess game, they use an extensive body of knowledge to define potential problems, and identify alternative solutions at each point in the cycle. Farmers are not necessarily conscious of the criteria that determine possible courses of action, and may appear to communicate very imprecisely about them (Barlett, 1980). Skills are learned over a long period of time, and processes eventually become part of the *habitus* (in the form of habits). As a

result: "skilled farming is an activity requiring great amounts of learning and experience" (Barlett, 1980: 133). Daily routines become a mere habit after decades of doing a job in a certain way.

A farmer's *habitus* will be shaped by his/her experiences of family life, social institutions, political affiliations to farming, cultural experiences and so on. The *habitus* of other members of the family business will also affect the farmer's behaviour. Thus, a lifetime in farming will result in the farmer conducting certain aspects of their business merely as habit. For example, farmers work practices have become habitual, such as their milking routines, explaining why farmers find it difficult to document what they do. Learning is an irreversible process. The *habitus* at every moment structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences. For example, whether the farmer has travelled, and the social institutions they have been involved with besides the family (YFC, NFU and so on), are modified by new experiences (for instance, diversifying business activities); within the limits defined by their power of selection, *habitus* would affect the diversification activity chosen.

This brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences common to members of the same class (Bourdieu, 1990). Early experiences have particular weight, because the *habitus* tends to ensure its own consistency. This defence against change could explain the reluctance of farmers to stop production-based farming. The *habitus* influences any response to new information, by rejecting information capable of calling into question accumulated past experiences. Farmers may reject, or be slow to accept, any new information that questions their life long approach to farming, for example the removal of production based subsidies would imply a changing

role for farmers in society from primary producer of food to caretaker of the land.

Farming is a major part of farmers' identity; their life-world revolves around farming, embracing everything farming represents. This results in some farmers being unreceptive to events (such as, policy changes) that may adversely alter their accustomed life-world. For example, as discussed above, politicians' efforts to restructure agriculture have, to a large extent, been met with opposition. Such efforts seek to change farmers' and other farming family members' long-established *habitus*, but they conflict with their life-worlds. Thus, policy-makers experience difficulty in persuading farm households to restructure and diversify their economic activities to conform to new imperatives (previously discussed in Chapters Two and Three). For some farmers, diversifying appears instinctively wrong, going against the grain of their *habitus* (Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002). As a consequence, farmers favour options that respect their *habitus*. Such options may not appear rational (according to RAT and Theory of the Firm), but these farmers seek to satisfy a number of business and personal goals.

Farmers can be exposed to this information accidentally or by force, and s/he may try to avoid exposure to such information (Bourdieu, 1990: 60-61). For example, older farmers may only immerse themselves in social settings in which they feel comfortable (for instance, livestock markets). In socialising and sharing knowledge across generations of the family, the family is able to continue its own legacy as attitudes, values, perceptions and so on are instilled in the next generation (see: Elder and Conger, 2000; Frustenburg, 2005). Therefore, what farmers learn during their childhood experiences, becomes highly important in shaping their *habitus* and ultimately how they operate their businesses. Farming communities share a culture that has evolved over

the years, shaped by farmers and their families. *Habitus* thus depends on the lived meaning (Bourdieu, 1972) of farming and how farmers see this. For example, farmers have been brought up on the premise that maximising food production was paramount. They may also have been raised in hard times, especially post WWII, when farmers had to be resourceful and things were recycled rather than thrown away. They are not used to, and have not been educated to, cope with the huge volume of paperwork, generated over recent years.

4.3.3.1 *Capital*

The unequal distribution of *capital* is the source of struggles for *capital*. This action can be seen in the dairy industry, as retailers use *capital* to gain power to control the market place. Retailers are able to maintain their *capital* base and thus strengthen their position. With the exception of *economic capital*, the farmer may or may not know the importance of each form of *capital*. The farmer may also be unaware s/he is using different forms of *capital*. For example, the family may only be regarded as a form of labour in economic terms, this ignores the fact that individuals possess skills and knowledge (*cultural capital*). An agent's (farmer's) stock of *capital* (buildings, money, cows, and investments) is a crucial resource in allowing them to gain advantages within *fields*. However, *capital* is *field* specific and does not necessarily allow advantage to be translated into other *fields* (Bourdieu, 1997; Savage *et al.*, 2005: 39). For example, *social capital* (networks such as, the NFU and YFC), may not be able to provide assistance in (say) the sports industry.

4.3.3.2 *Economic Capital*

In this analysis, I use Bourdieu's view of *economic capital* – money, commodities, means of material production and other material assets (Wacquant, 1996; Smart, 1993).

The family business generates income, allowing the purchase of goods and services, and any surplus can be re-invested in the business. This *economic capital* can be passed on easily from one generation to the next, in the form of business and personal assets. Many farmers are in the position of being asset rich, but cash poor; cash is more easily converted into other forms of *capital*, or used for purchasing goods and services. It is evident that some farmers are struggling to produce enough income for the family, let alone generate enough excess money to reinvest in the business. There is a lack of *economic capital* available to farmers, as a result of pricing structures in the *field*.

Economic capital can also be used to purchase other forms of *capital*, such as: university education, to increase institutional *cultural capital*; political influence through political donations (*economic capital*) aimed at influencing rules of the game, and so on (exemplified in the farming context by the political power of environmental and animal welfare lobby groups compared to the NFU); and social status (*symbolic capital*) through acquiring goods and services (in the farming context, the size of the farm, machinery and equipment used). High levels of *economic capital* enables agents to exert more power than others, for example: over the distribution of profits across the milk supply chain, whereby retailers and milk buyers retain the majority of any profits. Hence, farmers struggle for sustainable levels of the market price for milk, resulting in reduced business profits, and often difficulties in covering production costs.

4.3.3.3 Cultural capital

For the purposes of this thesis, *cultural capital* refers to the long established dispositions including social and family norms, knowledge and skills possessed by the individual, along with their cultural experiences (visiting museums, art galleries - in the context of farming this may include yearly

agricultural shows) and possessions (art, poetry books, artefacts - in the context of farming this could refer to farming newspaper, magazines and books).

Cultural capital encompasses the farmer's knowledge of running a business and the industry they operate in, as well as providing the farmer with a degree of status in the community by, for example, owning sophisticated machinery, computerised systems and so forth. *Cultural capital* includes education and the transmission of social dispositions across family generations. This could explain the behaviour patterns between grand-father, father and son in family farming, as *cultural capital* can shape the *habitus*. *Cultural capital* is cultivated, transmitted and enhanced in contexts of family practices. Knowledge and skills regarding the family business are passed on, as parents and children work closely together, not only during the succession period, but also in the years leading to succession (Moore and Barrett, 2002).

In a masculine dominated industry, such as agriculture, the notion that sons learn the family business operations from their fathers links well to Bourdieu's idea of *cultural capital* transfer. In the family farm business, sons tend to work alongside their fathers, learning on the job, with many leaving education at 16. Women, whose role Bourdieu neglects, *do* play an important role in the family business, providing labour for the business, instigating new business ventures, running the family house and in some cases have off-farm employment.

The skills required for livestock rearing (patience, persistence, responsibility and self-control) facilitate effective social interactions (Francis, 1994). In other words: "the highly bounded social world of family farmers is likely to encourage the development and reinforcement of a distinctive family farming ethos, with a strong moral order" (Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002: 40).

However, if fewer and fewer farmers' sons intend to farm, the process of learning the skills on the job from previous farming generations could be lost (reducing the levels of *cultural capital* available to farms); this could lead to a decline in traditional skills, such as hedge-laying and maintaining ditches. Many farmers do not possess the institutional *cultural capital* that others (in dominant positions) in society have, but they possess a wealth of family transferred business and life skills. Farmers, along with other minority groups, have their own legitimate culture, which they understand and value. For example, the farming community has a sense of what constitutes good and bad farmers.

4.3.3.4 Social Capital

For the purpose of this thesis, *social capital* refers to the long-standing social relationships and networks that farmers have created, both personal and business. This includes individual and community (group) based networks. *Social capital* can be enhanced by the perceived economic status of the actor, for instance lawyers and accountants would have higher levels of *social capital* (networks) than farmers. These networks would also be a source of *cultural capital* and *economic capital*; however, the economic returns from these networks are questionable.

Bourdieu (1990) suggests *social capital* derives from family relationships; the type and content of *social capital* is shaped by the material, cultural and symbolic status of the individual and the family. *Social capital* is used in the *field* by players to consolidate their position in the game (Sayce, 2005). In this case, a farmer could use *social capital* in the form of networks to increase his/her awareness of land for sale or rent, new technology or farming practices. A farmer may go to local livestock markets to sell animals, and take the opportunity to interact with other farmers. 'Talking shop' could alert the

farmer to alternative processes for improving product yields which could, in turn, increase *economic capital*. *Social capital* can be found in institutional networks that bring farmers together for meetings (DEFRA, YFC, NFU and so on). These settings could be described as controlled *social capital*.

Farmers have access to different forms of *social capital*, but these are usually restricted to friends and family, as many farmers are socially and physically isolated, and hence excluded from dominant group networking. Farmers cannot engage easily in networking (outside family and friends) because of their geographical isolation when compared with urban counterparts. They do have better networks than some groups, but these networks in themselves do not generate the power needed to influence dominant groups, such as milk buyers and retailers. Information is rarely shared in the farming community, although the MDC and DEFRA are trying to encourage online benchmarking (it is worth noting that farmers may not possess the *cultural capital* to use the technology). Farmers are reluctant to use new technologies, such as the internet (MDC, 2003), and are wary of sharing business, and personal information with others, a common feature of small family businesses. The nature of the business will also shape *social capital*; in family businesses, as family and business systems overlap, personal and business networks could be utilised to solve a business problem.

4.3.3.5 Symbolic Capital

In this thesis, *symbolic capital* refers to the accumulation of all other forms of *capital* providing the farmer with symbolic resources. "It is the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179), providing the individual with an identity and social position (status) in the *field*. Bourdieu defines a symbolic resource as any one or combination of *capital* in circulation - *economic*, *cultural* and *social*; these symbolic resources can themselves be

utilised for economic gain, for example, in extreme cases the farm could be sold (Bourdieu, 1991).

Symbolic capital is important for many farmers. The most important symbolic resource for many farmers is the farm. It is the culmination of hard work, dedication and family commitment. The farm represents the investment of *economic, social, cultural* and (*natural capital* - discussed later). Keeping the family farm together symbolises the hard work and struggles that past generations have had to keep the farm business going; the symbolic importance of the dairy herd should not be underestimated, as the farmer has often invested considerable resources in improving herd genetics over time. The farm name provides family members with shared meanings and understandings of events and objects. At the same time, the farm has an identity (defined social position) within the farming community. It could be argued, that it is not birthright that determines the connection with farmland, but rather the accumulation of *symbolic capital*. The farm landscape is not simply a workplace, but rather, as Leopold (1939) observed sixty years ago, it is: "the owner's portrait of himself". If one considers the reaction expected from the prospect of destroying (painting over) an old family portrait, it becomes relatively simple to understand why farmers are resistant to many suggested changes to the industry, encouraged as part of CAP reforms (Burton, 2004).

The land allows for the expression of identity for the farm family; land symbolically becomes an integral part of the farmer/farm family. In representing the symbolic actions of generations of farmers, the farm provides a store of *capital*, which any new entrant to farming can draw on to support his/her identity as a farmer (Burton, 2004). Landowners' use of *symbolic capital* binds them to the land, in a way that, on the one hand, associates them with

natural heritage, but, on the other hand, makes the land their property, thus allowing them a powerful position in the country (Samuel, 2000). Cannadine (1990) postulates that landowners have lost their power in modern British society; Cannadine's argument is based on a generalised notion of power, rooted in economic wealth (Samuel, 2000). Landowners' decline in power began in the 19th Century with the decline of the aristocracy; this was a time when many farmers were tenants but I would argue that the land remains symbolic for the landowner, land-owning farmer and tenant farmer alike. However, tenant farmers are clearly in a less powerful position. The thesis explores the notion of power within the *field*, in relation to the possession of *capital*. Bourdieu's notion of power results in those (individuals, groups, organisations and the like), who are in dominant positions are able to control the rules of the game.

4.4 The Farmers' World - How Can Bourdieu Aid Our Understanding?

In the field of sociology, there has been increasing interest in the farm household. Redclift and Whatmore (1990) attribute this to changes in the wider economy, such as urban-to-rural migration and the growth of self-employment and home-working. While rural sociologists may be more open than agricultural economists to the 'family' dimension of farming, this is not to suggest that all sociological approaches should be accepted uncritically (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Bourdieu's work offers conceptual 'tools' which allow the researcher to consider economic, social, cultural and symbolic factors in determining why farmers continue to farm.

The farmer's world is as much the world s/he lives in, as the world that is lived through him/her (see: Ostrow, 1981: 281). The life-world creates the environment in which farmers conduct their daily lives and make decisions.

Farmers are inherently socialised into a certain life-world, absorbing beliefs, behaviour, perceptions, and so on (constituting the *habitus*) from their peers, family and education. As Ashby (1926: 5) observes: "if we want to know how or why a farmer acts in a certain way or how to induce him to act in a certain way, we have to enquire why men act, and especially why men act as they do when they live in the sort of social environment and general circumstances in which farmers live". Consequently, in order to understand a farmer's actions, one must enter the life-world to experience first-hand how the family business operates, the *field* operations, and the utilisation of different forms of *capital*.

Shucksmith and Hermann (2002) argue that farmers are likely to pursue highly diverse strategies, according to individual circumstances, values and attitudes (as well as their *habitus*). The actions of farmers and farm household may therefore be viewed as the outcome of interplay between: the individual's own 'disposition-to-act' (the product of socialisation and interaction); the farm household's material resources (size of the farm – *symbolic capital* and assets – *economic capital*, labour skills – *cultural capital*, position in the life-course – affects *social capital*, tenure and so on); and external structures, such as policy, relative prices, labour market opportunities, and social and cultural norms.

Agriculture, more so than other sectors, has been characterised by tradition and 'family farm thinking' (Thorsen, 1993). Many believe that the industrialisation of agriculture has led to severe sociological and economic problems in rural towns (Conner, 2004), and resulted in: "farmers' life models and life courses are changing, and challenged in the overall processes of modernisation" (Villa, 1999: 328). This process has had a weakening effect on the power of farming families to influence politics at local and national levels.

The farming community is a heterogeneous group, which makes it difficult to research behaviour, because individuals will act according to their *habitus* in any given environment. Thus, even within the farming community, there are major differences between the farm businesses from the small holder with less than 100 acres to the large scale farmer with over 1,000 acres. These differences further reduce the power of farmers as individuals and as a group. Therefore, even within the farming community, there are groups of farmers (agribusinesses) that hold much higher levels of power and accumulate more of all types of *capital* than (say) family farmers. On the same theme, arable farming will have a higher concentration of agribusinesses, whereas dairy farming is generally a family affair. These differentials in power and *capital* have implications for how these different types of farmers behave. This thesis concentrates on the family dairy farmer. However, even within this smaller segment of farmers, it is acknowledged that there will be marked differences in behaviour and *capital* share.

It has been a consistent theme of this thesis that severe market conditions, have created a sense of economic crisis in the industry; farmers struggle for *capital* to maintain their life-world. In post-war British agriculture, farmers became accustomed to gaining the respect and approval of others, conforming to certain practices that their *habitus* permits (Newby *et al.*, 1981; Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002). The acceptable norm was to produce as much food as possible to feed the nation, and farmers were heralded for achieving this aim (Howarth, 1990). This is not the case nowadays Government and other institutions are trying to change farmers' *habitus* and life-world. The mixture of traditional and modern elements in food production has resulted in the social and technical transformation of agriculture that, in turn, threatens the farmer's life-world (Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002). It is somewhat ironic

that the life-world within which farmers and their households are embedded is changing radically, in response to the success of farmers at producing food.

Bourdieu's work offers new insights into the current crisis in farming. External players are trying to convert farmers' long-established *habitus* and life-world to ways in which external players perceive as acceptable behaviour. The changes in agriculture are causing a crisis in the farmers' life-world (Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002). This crisis is predominately a result of changes in rules of the game (regulation, policy, and legislation) initiated by dominant groups. Retailers, global organisations, and Government all have the ability to control the market place. Governments form the bedrock rules of the game, so the *field* (dairy industry) is highly controlled and susceptible to political influence (Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990).

The Government's attitude to agriculture dictates how favourable the economic environment (game playing *field*) is to farmers (Grant, 1991; Johnsen, 2004). Farmers are a group dominated by powerful institutions hence farmers experience pressures from *field* operations as discussed in Chapter Two. Bourdieu's interest in power complements the issues of unequal distribution of *capital* in the *field* and the concentration of power in the hands of large dominant groups. As a consequence, many in the farming sector in the UK are experiencing a sense of crisis (Drummond *et al.*, 2000), as economic pressure is combined with a feeling of being beleaguered by ill-informed public opinion and unsympathetic politicians (Holloway, 2004: 319).

Farmers' status, job satisfaction and even mental health are threatened by changes in agricultural policies. These radical changes impinge on the life-world of farmers, leading them increasingly to question their self-worth (Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002). Many of the established decision-making

models are based largely on normative theory, which assumes all farmers are profit-maximisers. Family businesses may not have access to all the information required to make a rational choice, nor do they exist solely to maximise their wealth. As argued in Chapter Three, therefore, decisions may not be wholly based on economic factors. For many farmers, farming is a way of life, yielding satisfactions other than monetary ones (Grant, 1991; Saugres, 2002). As a consequence, farmers seek to preserve their life-world and will seek strategies to stay in farming rather than maximise profits by leaving the industry or diversifying away from the core farm business. Farming is also a culture; once involved with farming, it is very difficult to let the grass roots go (see: Gray, 1998; Brunso *et al.*, 2003; Johnson and Rasker, 1995). As Conner (2004: 33) states: "just because 'the market' determines some outcome, does not mean we have to live it".

In essence, using the Theory of the Firm and judging farmers according to rational economic man, neglects the very substance of farming and what it represents. The need to include the social, cultural and symbolic meanings of farming and how these factors shape the behaviour of farmers requires a set of theories that considers each of these in relation to the wider world. Bourdieu provides a comprehensive set of conceptual tools, which allows me to consider each of these factors in isolation and also their inter-dependency.

4.5 Conclusion

Bourdieu provides a versatile tool allowing the researcher to explore farmers' behaviour. Using Bourdieu's theory in agriculture and family businesses has previously been under utilised. Despite some questionable aspects, Bourdieu's approach provides a useful way to explore the social nature of family farm businesses and the farmer. His theory provides concepts to

investigate some unique properties of agriculture, especially social, cultural and symbolic contributions. This requires the business to be assessed in terms of the use and contribution of different forms of *capital*.

Dominant groups are able to control their share of the *capitals* to a greater extent than the farmer. The availability and use of these *capitals* affect how farmers run their businesses, take advantage of opportunities and develop strategies to operate their business. The farmer's *habitus* determines what is perceived as an opportunity, and how effectively and efficiently *capitals* are utilised.

The primary research question - Why do dairy farmers continue to farm? - has been developed through further questions generated from the literature and my pre-existing knowledge of the industry. Firstly, "does RAT tell the whole story?" In addressing this question, the value of using RAT in family businesses was contended and subsequently led me to review social theory and to focus on Pierre Bourdieu's work, which led me to my next question - "can Bourdieu's theory aid our understanding and suggest how farmers could regain some control in their *field*?"

In using Bourdieu's work, I am able to concentrate on the issue of power and how *capital* possession, accumulation and generation can affect a person's position in society, and indeed, the *field* they are operating in. This leads me to question how farmers can become more powerful in their business operations, and how can they engage in more efficient *capital* exchanges.

The next chapter details the methodological process and the issues surrounding the multidisciplinary approach.

Chapter Five: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological process used for the thesis. The nature of the phenomena studied, and the adoption of Bourdieu's theory in the family business and agricultural fields, influenced me to use a qualitative methodology. The qualitative approach: "seeks to interpret social phenomena, producing a rich understanding of the complex meaning structures social actors construct in their specific social environments" (MacPherson *et al.*, 2000: 50). Within the broad qualitative perspective, the techniques of grounded theory (theoretical sampling, and constant comparison: Glaser and Strauss, 1967) underpin the ethnographic case study approach, utilising the data collection tools of interviewing and participant observation. Using ethnographic case studies grounded in empirical observations provided rich data that allowed me to develop new insights into family dairy farming.

The aim of this study is to uncover the working lives of farmers and the resources they need in order to regain power in their business operations. It aims to enlighten those from outside the industry, as to the problems farmers face and wider social and cultural settings that could enable farmers to become more successful (powerful).

The chapter begins by exploring the methodologies used in the disciplines. It then details the processes used and provides justification for using a multi-methods approach in order to answer the research questions. Details of the data collection process are given, along with justification for choosing each case. The chapter ends by detailing the data analysis process.

5.1 Academic Research Fields

The research question covers three main academic fields discussed below, namely: agriculture, small business and family business as set out in Figure 1.

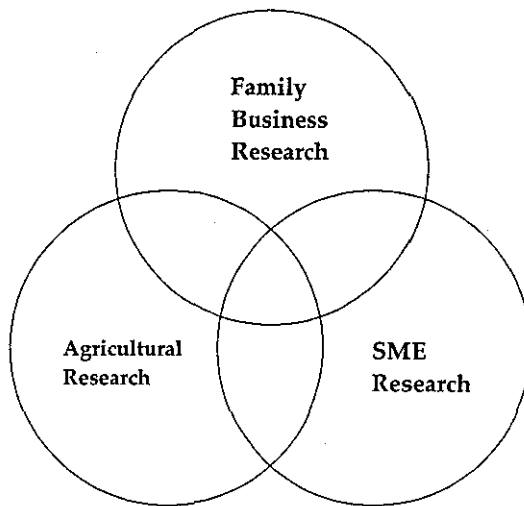


Figure 1: The Research Fields

Agricultural research has developed rapidly over the last decade addressing such issues as nature and the environment, human health, and animal welfare, as well as a general concern for the sustainability of modern agriculture (Alroe and Kristensen, 2002). For some considerable time, agricultural science and industry have employed a common set of values, stressing the need to increase production and productivity (Alroe and Kristensen, 2002). The majority of studies in agricultural research have utilised quantitative techniques. However, descriptive papers adopting a case study approach are also common (for example: Gray, 1998; Hill, 1993; Saugres, 2002). Previous work on agricultural and rural studies has concentrated on the effects of changes in policy (generated by the powerful groups in the *field*) on the

farming community (see: Bateman and Ray, 1994; Brooks, 2003; Fuller, 1990; Lowe *et al.*, 2002; Marsden, 1990; Schoon and Grotenhuis, 2000; Shucksmith and Winter, 1990). Research has also focused on the level of diversification undertaken in the farming community (for example: Barlett, 1986; Carter, 1999, 2000, 2001; Carter and Ram, 2003; Ilbery, 1991; McNally, 2001; Potter and Burney, 2003; Torkko and Lehtinen, 2003). As Johnsen (2004: 430) points out: "family farming may have faded from academic discourse in recent years, but its dynamism suggests it deserves to be placed back at the forefront of rural studies' research agenda". The agricultural sector offers the small business researcher a unique opportunity to analyse issues surrounding the family business nexus (Hill, 1993), business continuation between family generations (Brockhaus, 2004; Moores and Barratt, 2000; Carlock and Ward, 2001, Gersick *et al.*, 1997), and the incidence of multiple business ownership (Carter, 1998; 1999; 2001).

This research aims to add value to the agricultural field, particularly to the area of rural sociology. It explores the family farm business as a collective social unit and examines how individuals involved in the business bring different *capitals* to the business. It shows the inter-relations between the family and the farm in terms of *capital*. The research sheds light on farmers' decision-making behaviours, and how their *habitus* ultimately affects their position in the *field* and their business operations.

Many family farm businesses fall into the small business category (see: section 2.2 above). Small business research is not a discipline in the conventional academic sense, rather, it is: "an area which can be described more accurately as multi- or cross-disciplinary to a degree rare elsewhere in social and business research" (Curran and Blackburn, 2001: 8). Small business is a difficult area in which to conduct research, owing to the diversity of the sector.

The wide range of small businesses and the unique characteristics of their owners exacerbate the problem of obtaining representative samples (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). Curran and Blackburn (2001) state that generalisations will be difficult; they argue that a study of one kind of small enterprise such as 'start-ups' or 'family businesses', however well conducted, will offer conclusions whose wider applicability will be easy to challenge. The interactions of the small business with the external environment (*field*), especially environmental, social, and political groups are also an important aspect of my work - as advocated by Curran and Blackburn (2001).

Curran and Blackburn (2001) contend that small businesses generally involve the main business owner, (in this case the farmer) but their activities lack clarity and formal procedures, thus making measurements difficult and propositions even harder to test. These potential drawbacks support the choice of a qualitative methodology. The majority of small business research concentrates on the motivations and actions of the entrepreneur or owner manager, but consideration must be given to other people involved in the business, such as employees, suppliers and customers.

Curran and Blackburn (2001) stress that the biggest problem in researching small businesses is gaining access to these firms. Firstly, this can stem from a lack of databases containing up-to-date lists of small businesses. Secondly, small business owners are very busy and may not respond kindly to researchers wishing to take up their time. Finally, some business owners are sceptical about the relevance of research. Each of these factors holds true for farmers. The small business researcher has a wide audience to reach, from policy-makers to SME support staff, small business owners, and the general public (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). However, social science and business research should not be solely driven by the immediate concerns of policy-

makers, nor should it necessarily be carried out with medium and longer-term policy implications in mind (Robertson *et al.*, 1990). I addressed these assertions by simply aiming to detail the thoughts of farmers about why they farm and did not set out to with the intention of addressing policy issues.

This research shows that family farming can provide some important insights into small businesses operations, in terms of areas where individuals and the business lack *capital*, as well as why SMEs experience difficulties operating in their particular *fields*. My research uses Bourdieu's conceptual tools to provide new findings on how (family) SMEs operate. Furthermore, using my premise that the family farm business should be investigated as a collective social unit addresses the concerns of Curran and Blackburn that small business research tends to focus only on the entrepreneur.

An important form of small business is the family business (it must be noted that family business are not restricted to SMEs, as many large corporations are family businesses). Although family firms represent a predominant form of business in our society, family business research emerged as a distinct field only during the 1990s (Brockhaus, 2004; Dyer and Handler, 1994). Family business has struggled for an identity in an effort to be recognised and accepted as an intellectually rigorous, independent domain (Lansberg *et al.*, 1988; Astrachan *et al.*, 2001). Within this category of research, areas to receive attention include: succession (Handler, 1989, 1994; Lansberg, 1988; Morris *et al.*, 1996; Stavrou, 1999); culture (Dyer, 1986); strategic planning (Donnelley, 1964; Ward, 1987); and the conflict between the family and business element (Davies and Harveston, 2001; Hollander and Elman, 1988; Grote, 2003). Family business research has generally been conducted using qualitative methods, mainly in-depth interviews and content analysis. Yin (1989; 2003) calls for more patient, case-intensive methodologies, while Handler (1994)

criticises the overuse of case studies and urges researchers to broaden the range of research methods. Wortman (1994) goes further by stating that scientific measurements in family business research need improvement. He points out that sample size has tended to be small but, even without that constraint, opportunities exist for simple statistics as well as in-depth statistical analysis. By contrast, Dyer and Sanchez (1998) suggest the need for more collaboration between academics and practitioners, with a call for more case studies and cross-cultural work. Gaining access to family businesses can be even more challenging. Family businesses prefer privacy (Ward, 1987; Whistler, 1988; Lewyn, 1993a and 1993b), believing that disclosing firm specific information is no different from disclosing family specific information (Hoy and Verser, 1994).

Again, in family business research there has been little use of Bourdieu's concepts. Family businesses rely on the family as a social unit and the distinction between family and business is hard to decipher. Using Bourdieu's concepts of *capital* and *habitus* provides an alternative analysis of family business and shows how each system relies on the other for *capital*. Bourdieu provides a way to evaluate areas where family farm businesses could achieve higher levels of *capital*, hence improving their position (status) in the *field*.

To summarise, the research provides valuable insights into family dairy farming and builds on Bourdieu's theory of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* by proposing an extension to his forms of *capital* in the context of farming.

5.2 The Best Way to Answer the Research Questions

The research methods chosen are consistent with the sociological approach to the inquiry. As an exploratory piece of work, applying a theory to an area not

previously examined in this way was a major factor in my decision to choose qualitative research methods. As previously mentioned, farmers are not a homogenous group, for example: "evidence from the literature on identity and culture in farming, although scarce, suggests that identity sub-cultures exist within the farming community and farmers can recognise and differentiate between these groups" (Burton, 1998: 75). In this context, conventional farmers aspire to obtain a good standard of living through income maximisation, by cutting production costs and improving yields (Der Biggelaar and Suvedi, 2000), while diversifiers will seek new business ventures in order to increase income.

Most previous research has neglected to investigate the farm as a collective social unit comprising the farmer, the spouse, any children and non-family employed workers. My contention that the farm should be researched as a collective social unit contributes to the literature, and Bourdieu's concepts provide a way to give insights into the diverse heterogeneity of farm businesses. This approach allows me to consider each individual's level of *capitals*, and their *habitus*. The latter is the accumulation of the individual's life experiences, encompassing certain ways of thinking, speaking, acting and reacting to situations, that determines their behaviour. These factors consciously and subconsciously influence an individual's ability to act in any given situation, forming a practical sense (feel for the game) for what they should do.

In considering Bourdieu's different forms of *capital*, areas requiring improvement can be identified, and the results suggest where policy could help improve farmers' level of *capital* and their power in the *field*. For example, a lack of *cultural* and *economic capital* may result in farmers opting not to diversify their business activities, even though encouraged to do so by

Government. Previous studies examining agriculture through Bourdieu's concepts are rare. The lack of previous research is a key problem for this study. Few studies have used Bourdieu's concepts to explore the life-world of dairy farmers (Glover, 2007a and 2007b). These works have tended to focus on one aspect of Bourdieu's work, for example *habitus* (see: Shucksmith and Hermann, 2002). In recent years, a few American studies have used Bourdieu to explore sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry (Carolan, 2005; Raedeke, 2003).

This lack of comparable works led me to choose qualitative methods were chosen as the best way to answer the questions. Qualitative data collection and analysis focuses on interpretation, emphasising subjectivity rather than objectivity. The process is also flexible. Glaser (1992) emphasises the necessity for the researcher to be more creative and less processual in his/her methodological approach. Thus, under the broad qualitative paradigm, I saw the need for a mixed methods approach in order to gather the data I deemed necessary to answer the questions. I have used deductive data techniques (previous knowledge of the industry and the literature), as well as data inductively generated from the case studies.

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding individuals' perception of the world they live in (Bell, 1993). Such methods are privileged within the naturalistic approach; they are thought to address a number of reservations about the uncritical use of quantification in social science practice (Cassell and Symon, 1998; Symon and Cassell, 1994). Caley *et al.* (1992) state that qualitative methods are designed to discover what happens in 'real life' - the complex configuration of action and belief (see: Hammersley, 1993: 20). Conversely, quantitative methods are concerned with collecting facts and studying relationships between sets of facts, using scientific statistical

techniques to reach generalisable conclusions (Bell, 1993). Quantitative methods are considered to be reliable, valid, objective and clean (MacPherson *et al.*, 2000).

Dilthey (1910) claimed that objective and 'scientific' studies did not do the best job of acquainting man with himself. Dilthey (1910) suggests that man can only learn about himself by studying his own actions and utterances, and examining how his actions affect other people. Human studies are founded on this relation between lived experience, expression and understanding. The best way to study a particular phenomenon is to become personally involved with it (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992) and qualitative methods allowed me to do this. This research takes an ethnographic stance, and uses the term ethnography in the same way as Silverman. He says (2001: 45) that: "ethnography refers to social scientific writing about particular people". I am interested in the views of a specific social group (farmers), especially how they interpret their world. Therefore, ethnographic research aims to: "uncover and explicate the ways in which people (farmers) in particular work settings (family farm business) come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation" (Van Maanen, 1979 cited in Cassell and Symon, 1994: 540). As a result ethnography emphasises the need for researchers to participate fully in the lives and activities of the subjects; without such direct 'lived' experience of the setting (Denzin, 1997; Gill and Johnson, 2002).

Bourdieu insists that language cannot be analysed or understood in isolation from its cultural context, or the social conditions of its production and reception (Jenkins, 1992). Ethnographers place emphasis on observation and semi-structured interviews, having a commitment to naturalism (Denzin, 1997; Fielding, 2001; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Silverman, 2001).

Ethnography is committed to comprehending the behaviour of subjects (farmers and their family) in their natural and everyday settings (the farm), through an inductive development of an empathetic understanding of actor's (farmer's) rationality; in this case (using grounded theory techniques), the focus is on why farmers continue to farm (Gill and Johnson, 2002). As Watson (1994: 6) states: "there is attention to social meanings and the processes through which the members of particular worlds make sense of those meanings to themselves and others".

As Charmaz and Mitchell (2001: 167) describe: "grounded theorists explicitly analyse a pattern to develop middle-range theory; and ethnographers strive to describe how action is played out in the social world and within the lives of its members". Using elements of grounded theory and ethnography has enabled me to look for patterns in my data and correlate with the work of Pierre Bourdieu extend his theory of *capital*. This research does not follow grounded theory to the letter. It merely applies grounded theory processes (theoretical sampling and constant comparison) to aid and structure data collection and analysis. Grounded theory refers to: "theory generated in the course of the close inspection and analysis of qualitative data; it is an idea that forms a central tenet of naturalistic research" (Hammersley, 1993: 21). Grounded theory inductively generates theory from data that has been systematically obtained and analysed (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998; 2001); it provides a methodology suited to small business research, as well as exploring the action and interaction of humans (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). The researcher observes and understands behaviour from the participants' point of view; thereby learning about participants' worlds, their interpretation of self in the context of given interactions, and the dynamic properties of interaction (Locke, 2001).

Grounded theory methods preserve an open-ended approach to studying the empirical world, adding rigour to ethnographic research by building systematic checks into data collection and analysis. The logic of grounded theory entails reviewing data before moving forward into analysis, then returning to the field to gather further data and refine the emerging theory. As Charmaz and Mitchell (2001: 162) suggest: "this logic aids in overcoming several ethnographic problems, especially: 1) going native; 2) lengthy unfocused forays into the field setting; 3) superficial random data collection; and 4) reliance on disciplinary stock categories".

Data were collected inductively and deductively through the iterative process of theoretical sampling (see: Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1996; 1998; 2001). Theoretical sampling (discussed later in the chapter), implies that cases are selected for their theoretical merits, rather than facing the problems of representative samples (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). In this process, data were gathered through observing the (farmer) in real situations [on his farm] (Charon, 1995) and learning about the (farmers') world (attending meetings and social gatherings) in order to understand their behaviour (Locke, 2001). Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest this should be done by engaging in interaction with people using their own language (farming terminology) and on their own terms (interviewed at their farms). The result is an explanation of categories, their properties, and the relationships among them, grounded in the data (see: Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser 1978; 1992; 1998 2001; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

In determining farmers' behaviour, social factors must be understood. Science must understand how humans define situations and act in the present, by applying past experiences (*habitus*) to solve problems confronting them, for instance: how farmers see themselves in the world they live in, their

perceptions and their interactions within society. The premise is that all social inquiry must be grounded in the particular empirical world studied, in this case dairy farming (Locke, 2001). Knowledge is an active process rather than a state. Farmers are thus subject to their own inborn laws of thinking (*habitus*) and are part of an interacting society. Man (the farmer) finds himself inhabiting an environment (*field*) of objectified forms he cannot control, for instance, the external business environment, and society (Rock, 1979). This thesis aims to portray and define the business environment through the farmers' eyes and their actions (as noted in the objectives outlined in Chapter One). It explores their social symbolic meanings of their life-world. Bourdieu (1972; 1986; 1991) suggests that people will react to structures in their world. For example, farmers will not only have symbolic meanings for things that shape how they behave, but also social structures that will affect how individual farmers behave. Therefore, the key to understanding behaviour is to observe people in real situations (Charon, 1995).

The epistemological nature of the study is essentially interpretive. As Bryman (2004: 13) explains: "interpretivism is an alternative epistemology to positivism, being predicated upon the view that a research strategy is required, which respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences; this requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action". This research draws on sociological theory which Weber (1947: 88) describes as: "science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its causes and effects" (Bryman, 2004: 13). The key point in Weber's description is that causal explanation is undertaken with reference to the interpretive understanding of social action, rather than to external forces that have no meaning for those involved in that social action (Bryman, 2004).

As a result of the underlying epistemology, my research is concerned with emergent themes and ideographic description (Cassell and Symon, 1994). The interpretative paradigm is interested in individuals' (farmers') lived experience from their point of view, thus the outcome is a subjective reality (Locke, 2001). Bryman and Bell (2001) share Locke's view that, in contrast to natural science, emphasis on understanding the social world is achieved through an examination of the interpretation of the world by its participants. Interpretivists participate in the life-world to better understand, and express its emergent properties and features. Van Maanen (1979; 1983) suggests interpretivism seeks to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning (in this case, the meaning of why farmers continue their business operations), not the frequency of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Cassell and Symon, 1994). The interpretivist assumes that interacting individuals approach their life-worlds from the standpoint of typified stocks of knowledge that reflect their embodied locations in pre-existing and emergent political, economic, ritual and moral structures of crystallised social experience. This standpoint relates to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. The next sections detail the research techniques and tools used in the thesis.

5.3 Qualitative Research Methods

5.3.1 The Case Study

The distinctive need for a case study arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena, in this instance family dairy farming. A case study strategy is preferred when the inquirer seeks answers to 'how' and 'why' questions (MacPherson *et al.*, 2000). Yin (2003, 1994) states that: "the case study method allows retention of the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, organisational

and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations and the maturation of industries". Case studies are especially useful where it is important to understand social processes in organisations and environmental contexts (Symon and Cassell, 1998), a key aspect of this research. As a research strategy, the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual (farmer), group (farming family), organisational (farm business), social, political and related phenomena (Yin, 2003). A case study strategy can be used to explain, describe, illustrate, explore and evaluate (Cassell and Symon, 1994; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003). As Yin (2003) states, case studies provide: depth rather than breadth; the particular rather than general; relationships rather than outcomes; the holistic rather than the isolated; natural rather than artificial; and multiple rather than singular methods. Case studies have an important function in generating hypotheses and building theory (Cassell and Symon, 1994). As MacPherson *et al.* (2000: 52) assert: "the case study is perceived as a way to raise questions about the purpose, meaning and implications for social change and policy direction as a result of findings".

Case study research involves: "detailed investigations, often with data collected over a period of time, of one or more organisations, or groups within organisations, with a view to providing an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study" (Hartley, 1994: 208). The case study researcher faces a strategic choice in deciding how many cases and the complexity of each case that is studied (MacPherson *et al.*, 2000; Yin, 2003). Ethnographic research involves a small number of cases investigated in detail, producing data interpreted for meaning and functions of human action (Huberman and Miles, 2002). Yin and Heald (1975) point out that each case study may provide rich insights into a specific situation but may not be suitable to base generalisations on. Case study research produces rich

understanding of social sites (family, family farm business) and the structure of meanings created by the actors who operate there (MacPherson *et al.*, 2000). Patton (1987: 149) states that: "the case study narrative is a readable, descriptive picture of a person (or programme) making accessible to the reader all the information necessary to understand that person (or programme). The case study is presented either chronologically or thematically (sometimes both). The case study narrative presents a holistic portrayal of a person (or program)". In this thesis, case studies were both chronological (telling the history of the family and the farm) and thematic (focusing on issues relating the family farm business).

The single case study inquiry aims to collect detailed information, using a variety of data-collecting procedures during a sustained period of time (Verschuren, 2003; Yin, 2003). Small family businesses, each being individual and dynamic, are not like large organisations. Often there are only a few people working in SMEs; many family farms are run by the husband and wife; sometimes employing one person. Separate functional departments, such as accounting, marketing and so on, found in large organisations are not distinguishable in small family businesses; coupled with this there tends to be low levels of staff in small family businesses which does not lend itself to a single case conducted over a short period. As a result, multiple case studies were chosen. Evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, with the overall study being more robust (Herriott and Firestone, 1983); this approach allowed me to compare and contrast across cases and between the people interviewed (Burton, 2000). Therefore, using multiple cases can support arguments for the legitimacy of case studies (MacPherson *et al.*, 2000: 56). Yin and Ragin advocate the use of multiple case studies suggesting the single study has several limitations regarding analytical power and pervasiveness and generalisability (Verschuren, 2003). Using multiple

cases means I can investigate variations with respect to farmers and their behaviour, as well as variations with respect to the businesses.

Cases were identified through theoretical sampling and chosen to fill theoretical categories which: extend the emerging theory; replicate a previous case; further test the emerging theory (Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003); or, offer a polar (contrasting) case (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sampling allowed flexibility and creativity in the data collection process. It involves the collection of data to generate categories, in order to develop properties and propositions. Whilst collecting, sorting and analysing data, I considered the selection of my next case to reinforce, extend or contradict developing themes.

Theoretical sampling cannot be predetermined before embarking on the study (as is the case in quantitative studies). It is a form of non-probability sampling that depends on the researcher's ability to make decisions about what to observe based on constraints such as opportunity, personal interest, resources, and, most important, the problem to be investigated (Jorgensen, 1989). As Strauss and Corbin (1990: 192) succinctly say: "the sampling decision evolves during the research process itself". It allows the exploration of a theoretical point, by asking questions to persons who are likely to generate information (Glaser, 1996). Theoretical sampling is purposely biased in order to obtain information that is needed to further develop the theoretical properties of a category (see: Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998; 2001). Thus: "the basic criterion governing the selection of cases; is their theoretical relevance for furthering the development of emerging categories" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 49).

Theoretical sampling also applies to selective observations made in each single case study (Jorgensen, 1989). Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that no single

kind of data within a category, or single technique for data collection, is necessarily appropriate. Their thoughts are a major reasoning behind my mixed methods approach. Different kinds of data give me diverse views (or vantage points), from which to understand a category and develop its properties. As a result: "data collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45). The process involved reading documents, interviewing and observing all at the same time, since all slices of data are potentially relevant. This process is extremely difficult to follow in practice, as the researcher tends to focus on one aspect of the experience, for instance interviewing.

5.3.2 Data Tools

As previously stressed, scholars encourage the use of more than one data collection tool (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Huberman and Miles, 2002). My research utilises interviews and participant observation. The outputs were arranged into a coherent case study for each farm.

5.3.2.1 Interviews

Interviews were chosen as the main data collection tool. From personal experience, farmers prefer to talk to someone, rather than fill out forms. Many farmers lead socially-excluded lives and enjoy talking to people, especially those from within the industry. Most farmers are very knowledgeable in their *field*, but perhaps do not have the necessary communication skills to put their point across to organisations (institutions), such as the Government. This research provides an opportunity for farmers to talk to an 'insider' about the life of farming. The goal of any qualitative research interview is to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee, and to understand how and why s/he comes to have a particular perspective. Qualitative research interviews generally have the following characteristics: a low degree of

structure imposed by the interviewer; a preponderance of open questions; and a focus on: "specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee" (Kvale, 1983 cited in Cassell and Symon, 1994: 176).

Semi-structured interviews are the most common interviewing tool used with grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; 1992; 2001), because they have the potential to generate rich and detailed accounts of the individual's experience. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility (Cassell and Symon, 1994; Kvale, 1983, Kvale, 1996), allowing adaptation to each context, organisation and individual (Correia and Wilson, 1997). They are flexible enough to allow discussion to lead into areas, which may not have been considered prior to the interview, but may be relevant to the study. Although: "semi-structured interviews require a great deal of skill and practice" (Goulding, 2002: 59), I chose this type of interview for my research project.

5.3.2.2 Participant Observation

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue that, in a sense, all social research is a form of participant observation, because we cannot study the social world without being part of it. Barnes (1996) suggests it is useful for grounded theory researchers to experience the culture of respondents, by living or working in their culture, prior to investigation. I had the benefits of working on my parents' farm for over seven years, before embarking on the research. As stated by Goulding (2002), I need to be attentive to respondents' beliefs, customs, habits and cultural context. In most cases, I was an observer-as-participant (Bryman, 2004); this means that I would be observing the setting, people and so on, but would not be participating in their lives. The exception was my parents' farm where I was a participant-as-observer (Bryman, 2004),

whereby I was in regular contact with the people who were aware of my role as a researcher, and I was fully engaged in their daily lives.

5.3.2.3 Alternatives

There were alternative methods of data collection that I could have utilised; these include focus groups and life histories. However, I decided against using focus groups, because I felt they would not suit the process of data collection and analysis I would be undertaking. In addition, I could get neither individual accounts from each member in the group about their business, nor would I have been able to conduct these in each farmer's natural setting. The need to see farmers on their farms and my desire to speak to individual family members was a key part of my reasoning for choosing qualitative methods.

I could also have chosen to conduct life histories, which could have produced some rich data into the lives of farmers across generations. However, this would not have been the most efficient way to produce data to explain why farmers farm, their motivations and their current levels of *capital*. I decided that the data I was seeking to collect might end-up getting 'lost' in highly detailed life histories.

5.4 Why a Mixed Methods Approach?

I practically combined participant observation and interviews in ethnographic case studies, as the best way to collect data, not only on the farmer, but also on his working environment. In using interviews and participant observation, I was able to see farmers in their natural environment and talk to them (Glover, 2007b). I felt this was important in order to describe farmers' natural setting, where they worked, objects they had, and so on. Interviewing farmers, I could

inquire about their economic, social and cultural positions in the context of farming. The case study provided a way for me to obtain the depth of knowledge I required. I also needed to arrange and manage the data collected systematically; this involved different methods at the same farm, and collecting information from different people involved with each farm.

Using a qualitative, mixed methods approach gave me the flexibility I needed to change the direction of my study if necessary, depending on the outcomes from the data collected. It allowed me to probe interesting answers, also facilitated the use of different data collection tools (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001). Once gathered, the data were analysed using constant comparison procedures (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The processes of theoretical sampling and constant comparison generate theory by jointly collecting, coding, and analysing data, deciding what data to collect next and where to find it, in order to develop Bourdieu's theories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser 1978; 1992; 1998; 2001). The application and extension of Bourdieu's theories was generated using interpretive procedures. The extended theory was generated from the data, in this case, refers to an efficient tool that guides the development of knowledge through making connections among observed phenomenon, thereby helping build conceptual frameworks that stimulate understanding (Sutton and Straw, 1995). My works extends Bourdieu's concepts by including the concept of *natural capital* in his theory of *capitals*. Further data are collected according to theoretical sampling techniques. The nature of the research question, and the techniques used to answer it, utilised both inductive (data) and deductive (literature) techniques. Multiple data collection methods strengthen theory by triangulating evidence (Huberman and Miles, 2002). They also allow for the multiple level of analysis (Yin, 2003), namely the farm (collective group of people), the farmer (the individual *habitus*), and the *field* (industry). Using participant observation

alongside interviews, I could collect visual data on farmers working environments.

5.5 What I Did – Outline of the Research

5.5.1 Data Collection

The contribution to knowledge is constructed from farming families' interpretations of their life-world and my interpretations of the narratives produced. The research was carried out in a systematic and rigorous way and the reliability of this study holds true for the farmers interviewed. It has to be recognised, however, that it would be hard to replicate the same conditions because of the unique circumstance of each business. The results are highly case specific and deeply rooted in the individual thoughts of the people interviewed.

Weber (1946) pointed out that all research is contaminated to some extent by the values of the researcher, and it is: "only through those values do certain problems get identified and studied in particular ways" (Silverman, 2001: 54). My involvement in the industry and the rural community for over 15 years will undoubtedly affect my approach to the research. I have first hand experience of a particular lifestyle of farming. My own perceptions and values will affect how I collect and analyse the data, and I acknowledge that the work represents only the views of the group of farmers and their families that were interviewed at that particular point in time and may not represent other farming families in Staffordshire. Outsiders to the industry may also have completely different views to those interviewed.

The nature of qualitative research (subjective) means that it is open to the introduction of bias for data collection and analysis. Case study research has also been tarnished with a view that it lacks rigor and biased views are allowed to influence the direction of the findings (Yin, 2003). Theoretical sampling and the utilisation of farming networks, such as YFC and NFU may introduce bias in terms of the types of farmers who are involved with these organisations are selected for inclusion in the research. As Glaser (1996: 9) states: "theoretical sampling is purposely biased in order to get information that is needed to further develop the theoretical properties of a category. Once a category has become fairly well explained, incidents are no longer compared with one another: they are compared with the category within which they fall". Using theoretical sampling means that future cases are selected on the data outcomes from the previous case. Therefore, for example, if the YFC is highly important and a source of social network for case one, then future farmers will be selected on the premise of using social networks (YFC, NFU) to help their business operations. The data, therefore, is representative of the (small) sample chosen and may not represent the views of other dairy farmers in Staffordshire. Selecting more contrasting cases may help to reduce the level of bias in the sample. However, in this thesis there was a need for depth not breadth, and I therefore decided to have a few highly detailed cases rather than more cases which lack detail. There may also be specific factors affecting farmers that I have not identified in the data, which could determine case selection and issues which are pertinent to those farmers not represented by the sample.

As previously stated, my values and experiences in the industry were the stimuli for the identified research question, which developed into initial question – "Why do dairy farmers continue to farm?" and two subsequent questions – "Does RAT theory explain the whole story?" (Chapter Three) and

"Can Bourdieu's theory aid our understanding and suggest how farmers could regain some control in their industry?" (Chapters Four, Eleven and Twelve). I am aware that personal experiences will affect both the respondent and myself. As Archer (1995: cited in Dey, 1999) argues: "we do not live by propositions alone, but also by myths and mysteries, tastes and prejudice, empathies and animosities which tend to cloud our judgement and derail our logic". This also holds true for the thoughts and views of those outside the farming community, generally those imposing sanctions (rules of the game) on how farming business operations are able to run, as well as influencing the thoughts of farmers themselves about the wider world and their social meanings. Thus, this research represents the views and opinions of the people who have been interviewed their responses may be biased owing to factors that have impacted on their lives, for example the recent BSE and FMD outbreaks which are still pertinent to the people I have interviewed, therefore they may perceive things to be worse than they are, hence the use of the term crisis in the data analysis. However, this work reflects how these people feel at this particular point in time.

In order to provide anonymity, farms, farmers and their families have been given pseudonyms, and specific information about them and their businesses has been kept to a minimum, this was also a reason for not including pictorial documentation in the case chapters. Whilst I recognise that the lack of detail may make it difficult for other studies to make direct comparisons with this research, the need to protect the identity of the people involved takes precedence over the requirement to provide detailed information.

The research began in October 2003. In December 2003, I conducted my first interview for case study one, and continued interviewing for cases until June 2007. Qualitative data, mainly in the form of transcribed interviews

accompanied by observation notes, have been used. Data analysis was performed whilst collecting data, using the constant comparison method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser 1978; 1992; 2001). The case studies, conducted in Staffordshire comprised of interviews with the farmer, the farmer's wife and children (where possible). Participant observation involved noting my first impressions of the people interviewed, the premises, and included guided tours offered by many of the farmers interviewed.

Curran and Blackburn (2001) note that researchers concentrate on the SME owner-manager, but stress many other people affect the business. My assertion that the farm, as a collective social unit, is the basic unit of analysis led me to study the responses of various individuals involved in the family farm business. The family farm business thus provided a suitable foundation to explore roles within the business. Areas such as general working conditions and specific *field* changes in the life-world could also be fully explored.

Farmers, like everyone else, construct narratives (or stories) through which they make sense of events and experiences for themselves, as well as for others. Narratives are not easily quantified as they contain references, meanings, symbols and so on. Nevertheless, narratives offer vital insights into the life-world of farmers. As Van Der Ploeg and Long (1994: 35) state: "such narratives are inevitably partial, in the sense that they represent events in a way that reflects, and helps to constitute, the authority of the storyteller and is dependent in part on the audience and context". Glaser and Strauss both acknowledge the benefit of researchers immersing themselves in the field of their inquiry (see: Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1998; 1992; 1978; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This approach is highly beneficial when researching a particular life-world. Being involved in the agricultural industry all my life, I

gained vital contacts with local institutions relating to the industry such as the local agricultural society and rural hub. I also re-joined and became an active member of my local Young Farmers Club (YFC). I became county Social and Funding Committee secretary for a year, and attended national YFC meetings, including the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee. The YFC was not intentionally used to generate a sample of farmers from which I picked my cases, according to theoretical sampling. YFC was used as a means to become more involved with the younger (next) generation of farmers and links to other farming organisations. From YFC, I gained access to other network groups, including the Government initiative Fresh Start, as well as the opportunity to act as an ambassador, showing children around the Royal Show. This gave me access to different societal groups, and allowed me to listen to their views on farming and food production. I was a scholar at the Oxford Farming Conference 2006 and co-organised an Agricultural Forum for Staffordshire YFC. All these events provided me with an opportunity to engage in conversation with a diverse range of people involved with the industry, at different levels of power.

During this time, I spent a considerable amount of time reading the literature to acquire empirical information. I also immersed myself in industry journals and publications, as well as the general media surrounding agriculture. I used these experiences and accumulation of knowledge as a way to guide myself through theoretical sampling. I had the opportunity to attend meetings held by all these organisations the NFU, DEFRA, MDC and Staffordshire Rural Hub, were informed about my research. The time involved with my parents' family farm allowed me access to the practical workplace. I saw first-hand some of the issues affecting farmers' strategic decision-making behaviour such as milk yields, silage quality, calving patterns, and meeting milk quota

demands. I was part of the life-world I was researching, and hence gained a clear understanding of the issues faced by farmers in their everyday lives.

The ethical issues surrounding the use of data from the place where you work include data protection and disclosing sensitive business information. In order to overcome this, I used the data collected only to provide an insight into the daily running of a farm, and focused on the factors affecting farmers' decision-making. I kept a daily diary, noting down situations I felt were relevant, for example unforeseen changes in plans and daily work routines. The strategy of writing about relevant observations is often seen in ethnographic research, and is an active part of grounding the research in its intended context (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Participant observation (participant-as-observer) of my parents' family farm was conducted prior to the main data collection phase for the cases, the observation notes taken were not formally documented in the thesis, but a sample can be found in the Appendix D. Such observation enhanced the ethnographic elements of my mixed methods approach.

Each case represents a family dairy farm business. Using multiple cases, I was able to strategically select farms (Bryman, 2004). This allowed me to establish commonalities, and also differentiating features that led farmers to pursue different approaches to conducting business. Yin (2003: 47) suggests that: "the logic underlying the use of multiple case studies requires each case to be carefully selected (through theoretical sampling) so that it either: a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) to extend and test the theory; or b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication) to extend the theory". Or, as Huberman and Miles (2002) put it, theoretical sampling can be used to select cases to replicate previous cases or extend emergent theory, or they can be chosen to fill theoretical gaps and provide

examples of polar types (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Huberman and Miles, 2002). Every case serves a specific purpose within the overall scope of inquiry.

Unlike participant observation conducted on my parents' farm, subsequent cases followed observer-as-participant methods. For each case, I followed Jorgensen's practical advice on conducting participant observation. Table 1 below summarises the observations that were made for each case. Observations were also made on the approach to the farm, where it was located. I took observations during the interviews including detailing where the interview took place. Making observations helped to form descriptions for the case; this enabled me to add context and depth, and an element of story-telling (an ethnographic element).

Table 1: Observation Schedule

Farm yard layout.	Spatial arrangement of the farm.	Characteristics of the yard, objects etc.
Farm House.	Characteristics.	Location in relation to farm.
Animals.	Characteristics – breeds.	Where they were.
Machinery.	Characteristics – type.	Where it was.
The farmer, spouse and children.	Clothing.	Characteristics.
Working environment.	Actions, behaviour etc.	Objects

On arrival at the farm, I looked for the main features of the physical land specification: for example: were the fields being grazed by cows? the breed of cow and were any grazing efficiency techniques being used? Were the buildings typical or unusual; how was the space organised (was the farm yard tidy? And where were the vehicles, equipment and so on? I also noted down

the spatial organisation of the place where the interview was conducted. How are things organised, how do people act in these spaces? I noted the farmer as he greeted me, if I was given a guided tour I noted how the farmer was as he showed me round and how many people are there and what were they doing? Finally what were the characteristics of the people? How the people looked, age, gender, ethnicity, attire, signs of social status and rank or anything visibly unusual about them (Jorgensen, 1989: 83).

When conducting interviews in a setting such as the respondent's home, it was important that I was able to understand and relate to the language and dialogue that farmers used. My prior knowledge helped me tailor interviews to each individual to obtain the data I required (as suggested by Glaser, 1978). Interviews were structured only in terms of the areas I wanted to cover, resulting from data from previous case(s), and/or my involvement with farming and the farmer's working environment. This process allowed me to change direction and follow new ideas. Open questions were asked so that 'leads' could be followed up when they arose. A formal interview schedule was not prepared but topic areas to cover and possible questions to ask were noted down prior to the interview (see: Appendix B). Farmer and business characteristics were collected using a pre-interview pro-forma (see: Appendix C).

In the interviews, my main aim was to establish why the farmer was continuing the farm business and the history of the family business. I was not concerned with the financial data of the farm business and found that this helped to create a level of trust between myself and the respondent. Respondents were eager to talk about how the business had been passed through generations, and their plans for the future. Some were able to define easily why they were farming, whilst others found it difficult. In these cases, I

entered into a dialogue in order to find out why. In some cases, I was able to interview the farmer's spouse and children. I wanted to explore their role and how they felt about the business. As the theoretical focus of the thesis emerged, not all of the questions asked in the first interview replicated those asked in the final interviews. The interviews have been successful in generating a rich narrative account of the respondents' life history, the life history of the family farm business, and patterns of behaviour between generations. The interviews have also uncovered some interesting social and cultural aspects of farming.

Whilst interviewing, I attempted to note down non-verbal communication. This became too complicated, as I made notes on what was said, in case tape recording failed. I also evaluated each case. This process assisted when making memos for code and categories. Memos include written theoretical questions, coding summaries, and category properties which are used to monitor and stimulate coding (memo examples can be found in Appendix D). Memos were written continuously throughout the entire research process to reflect upon and explain the meanings ascribed to codes. Memos also aid the identification of relationships between codes, clarify, sort and extend ideas, and record crucial quotes or phrases (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1996; 2001; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The only danger is that I become too close to the subject and introduce bias, however, this is a problem with most qualitative research inquiry and I felt that the rich data generated and my in-depth knowledge of the data after the process outweighed these concerns.

Respondents were supportive of the work I was doing, and generous in giving me their time and sharing information. Similarities between the respondent and myself, helped to create rapport and reduce resistance (see: Oakley, 1981;

Rousse, 2004). Understanding the context, and having the ability to sympathise with current issues affecting farmers' businesses, also helped in obtaining truthful insights. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Transcribing the interviews provided another opportunity to reflect on what was said in the interview and make additional memos for theoretical developments.

The data have been collected from ten family farms across Staffordshire using theoretical sampling techniques. The next section details why the cases were chosen, and includes a table summarising the characteristics of the farms and the people.

5.5.2 The Cases

As Charon (1995) recommends, farmers were observed and interviewed in their own environment, learning about their life-world, including their working environments (Locke, 2001). Each farm and farmer face individual issues, for example, changes (discussed in section 6.1.3) in rural demographic make-up, herd sizes, location and subsidy requirements and a farmer's *habitus* will shape his/her behaviour and how they act in the social world. As this study relies on elements of ethnography, it is difficult to create a sampling frame; instead, ethnographers ensure they have access to a wide range of individuals relevant to the research question, studying many different perspectives and ranges of activity (Bryman, 2004). Theoretical sampling ensures that cases are selected for a purpose, to fit the rationale underlying the research project (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). The heterogeneity of the group meant that only certain factors (elements) of the cases would be common, with differences being observed across a range of factors. For example, they are all dairy farms, but spouses have varying roles, farm size is different and so on.

A detailed description of the cases, key findings and case evaluations can be found in Appendix I.

5.5.3 Why Cases Were Chosen

Case One was chosen because it is my parents' family farm business, with two family members from the same generation run the farm. The two partners (brothers), one partner's wife and daughter were interviewed. This case provided an opportunity to document what it is like to live and work on a family farm; an ideal way to be part of the life-world I am researching. Working in, and researching, the same environment provides rich insights into the life of family dairy farmers, and offers a good foundation upon which to select further cases. I can observe farmers and their families in their natural environment. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend, being closely involved with the research topic is advantageous and has helped in selecting subsequent cases. My parent's farm is where my initial interest in the research topic started. This case study also enabled me to test my interview questions and make alterations for future interviews. Glaser (1978; 1992; 2001) advocates flexibility in the data collection process, modifying the interview as data collection and analysis progressed.

Case Two complements Case One, virtually replicating the case (Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin 2003) in so far as it is another family farm, with no identified successor (filling the conceptual categories of family (roles) - ownership, attachment and identity). The case enhances the emerging theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The farm is located in the Staffordshire Moorlands, where the grass quality is not as good as the previous and subsequent farms located in the lowlands (generating the category - locality). The farmer has three daughters, ranging from eleven to seventeen, who help with chores although not fully committed to farming. None of them has been identified as

successors. The farm currently operates with two generations involved in the business. The farmer Steven, and his wife, Jess work full-time and Steven's mother helps out occasionally. The farmer and his wife were interviewed.

I chose case three as another good example of a family farm. It is entirely a family enterprise, with all members committed to the future of the partnership and the business. Unlike previous cases, it is a tenanted property and allows the theory to be extended (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003) from farmer-owned farm to tenanted properties (filling the conceptual category of ownership). I chose the case to explore the similarities and differences between owner-managed farms and tenant-managed holdings (theoretical replication: Yin, 2003). This case also differs from previous ones because there is an identified successor working on the farm and committed to securing the future of the family business (filling the succession theme). In previous cases, the farmers had daughters who had not been identified as successors for various reasons. I wanted to see whether having identified a successor affected the farmer's decision-making and future investments in the farm. The farmer, his wife and son were interviewed.

Case Four is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven. This case represents another family farm, similar to Case One and Two, but complementing and further testing the emerging theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Yin, 2003). The people involved know no other life apart from farming. They also grow maize to feed the cows during winter months. The farm has been in the family for decades; it is now into the 4th generation, with 3rd generation members still involved. The farm has not participated in diversification. There are no plans to expand the farm or herd size, providing the family continue to make a reasonable living. The case fills the conceptual categories (succession, ownership, identity, roles and so on) identified in the previous

cases and extend the theory by introducing the category of 'principles' (tradition). The farmer, his partner and son were interviewed.

Case Five is discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight. The main reason for choosing the case was because all the traditional brick buildings had been sold to fund a new dairy unit as part of a herd expansion strategy. The new unit (one building) contains everything under one roof, another reason for choosing the case extending the conceptual categories of ownership, identity and the work environment. As in previous cases, all family members contribute to the business and work together (filling conceptual categories - role and family) in response to changes in market conditions. The farmers in the cases examined so far could not really be described as risk-taking to such a degree in order to secure the future of the family business. This case also shows the farmer strengthening the core dairy businesses rather than trying to diversify activities. This case extends the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003), demonstrating a radical change in business operations and provides an example of how farmers have responded to the economic crisis. The farmer and son were interviewed.

Case Six is discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine. This is another family farm. Only one generation of the family is involved in the family business. The farm is run as a husband and wife team, with one employee, a girl who milks the cows. The family have two young children, both girls. This case is slightly different because the farmer had to re-start the dairy herd after losing their entire herd in the 2001 Foot and Mouth (FMD) crisis. The farmer had nine months with no animals on the farm before re-stocking the dairy herd. The case contrasts (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Huberman and Miles, 2002: polar type) with previous cases, as the farmer had the opportunity to leave the industry but subsequently decided to remain in the dairy industry. The case

extends the theory, adding a further dimension, as the farm has seen dramatic change over a relatively short period of time. They have also experienced the devastation that disease can have on their business.

Case Seven was chosen purely for the scale of the operation. The case is a family run business, although family involvement is only in a managerial capacity. The farm has a portfolio of different businesses. This contrasts with previous cases (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: polar type), in many respects, but also replicates some of the features of family owned farms, further testing and extending the theory and emerging themes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin 2003). The business operation is large in comparison to previous cases and is run more as a 'Theory of the Firm' business operation. The aim is to maximise profits, unlike previous family farms, thus offering me the chance to investigate a different type of farm operation.

Case Eight is discussed in more detail in Chapter Ten. This case is a good example of how a farm has diversified. It is one of three farms owned by the same family, the Hutchinsons, who have a farm manager to run the dairy farm (extending the conceptual category – ownership). The farmer interviewed is a paid manager and lives in the farmhouse. The farm diversified 15 years ago into cheese making. The tourist side grew from farm tours to a shop and tearoom. The tourist side of the business now runs independently and has its own manager. Again this case extends the theory, building on and substantiating the themes generated from previous cases (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992; Yin, 2003). The farmer, his partner and son, and a family friend were interviewed.

I chose Case Nine because the farm is trying to survive on the outskirts of a city and therefore faces different challenges to those located in the countryside. It is also a tenanted property. As an edge of city farm, it has added problems, affecting daily operations; these problems include more time spent checking animals to make sure gates have not been left open, fly tipping and litter, increased crime, arsonists, joy-riders in fields and extra pollution being right next to the motorway (extending the conceptual category – locality). The case complements Case Three as it is another tenanted property, but its location extends the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003). The farmer, his wife and daughter were interviewed.

Case Ten was chosen as the farm is a large operation combining dairy and arable farming, and is similar to Case Seven. The case extends the theory and reinforces themes generated from the previous cases (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Yin, 2003). The farmer is the Deputy Chairman of the Staffordshire branch of the NFU. He has been involved with farming all his life and has a positive outlook on his business and the industry. He does not have an identified successor, but wants to expand the business. Case Ten tests the theory (Yin, 2003) and provides an opportunity to validate the data and theory emerging from the previous cases.

5.5.4 The Farms and the People

The tables over leaf provide information on the farms and the people involved in each case. As previously mentioned all names have been given pseudonyms to address confidentiality issues.

Table 2: The Farms

Case	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Farm name	Hill Top Farm	Cliff House Farm	Lower Hayes Farm	Flat Fields Farm	Reeds Farm	Bankside Farm	Dunsting Dairy Farm	Lydner Farm	Thorney Trees Farm	Chapel Farm
Acreage	220	220	300	200	170	250	1700	400	200	690
Acres owned	90	165	0	190	120	250	1700	20	0	690
Herd size	110	115	166	150	240	110	400	150	80	200
Milk produced	950,000	910,000	1,400,000	1,254,000	1,760,000	850,000	3,300,000	1,250,000	500,000	1,800,000
Workers: Family	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1 & 1 PT	2
Non-family	2 PT*	1 relief	2 PT & 1 relief	1 FT*	3- 2 relief, 1 day release	1 FT	7 FT	1 FT on the farm	3 FT	4 FT
Successor	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Table 2 continued: The Farms

Case	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Generation	3 rd	2 nd	3 rd / 4 th	4 th	3 rd / 4 th	2 nd	3 rd	3 rd	3 rd	3 rd / 4 th
Family at premises	69 yrs	45 yrs	4 yrs	90 yrs	63 yrs	60 yrs	70yrs	15 yrs	22 yrs	80 yrs
Diversified	No David - FT job	No	No Cassey - FT job	No Sally - FT job	No Julie - FT job	Yes - B&B	Yes - property	Yes - farm shop, tours, cheese	No Maggie - FT job	No
Contractors used	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Reasons case chosen	Family farm, land owned and rented.	Wet Moorlands location, family farm.	Tenancy family farm seeking to expand.	Family farm, operated same for years.	Family farm Expanded And built new unit.	Family farm, re- stocked after FMD.	Large family farm recently doubled herd size also grow corn.	Large farm diversified operation making cheese.	Tenant farmer outskirts of city.	Large family farm also grow corn.

* FT - Full-time, PT - Part-time

Table 3: The People

The case	The People	Family connection	Role in family business	Age	Education	Years farm	Years at premises	NFU member	YFC member	Hrs worked each week
1	Chris	Farmer	Manual labour daily operations	61	Secondary modern	52	All life	Yes	Yes	80
	David	Farmer	Manual, paperwork, decisions	59	Secondary modern	50	All life	Yes	Yes	40
	Melanie	Wife	Manual & paperwork	56	Girls High School	30	11	No	No	30
	Amy	Daughter	Covering Sick days & extra work during busy seasons	23	Post-graduate	15	11	No	Yes	5
2	Steven	Farmer	Manual & paperwork	42	YTS day release	26	6	Yes	Yes	79
	Jess	Wife	Milking & paperwork	39	Secondary modern	20	6	No	Yes	35
3	Pete	Farmer	Daily operations & decisions	55	YTS day release	50	4	Yes	Yes	75
	Brett	Son	Manual and paperwork	28	NVQ level 3 & 4 farm mgmt	16	4	No	Yes	75
	Cassey	Wife	Paperwork	52	Secondary modern	20	4	No	Yes	15

Table 3 continued: The People

The case	The People	Family connection	Role in family business	Age	Education	Years farm	Years at premises	NFU member	YFC member	Hrs worked each week
4	Mike	Farmer	Manual and daily decisions	68	Secondary modern	60	All life	No	Yes	70
	Sally	Partner	Paperwork	57	Secondary modern	20	20	No	No	25
	Ben	Son	Manual and paperwork	32	YTS day release	16	All life	No	Yes	70
5	John	Farmer	Manual and decisions	52	HND Agriculture	40	All life	Yes	Yes	80
	Julie	Wife	Financial paperwork	49	Book Keeper	27	27	No	No	5
	Edward	Son	Manual and paperwork	26	BSc Agriculture	10	All life	No	Yes	70
6	James	Farmer	Manual and paperwork	45	Secondary modern	30	All life	Yes	Yes	75
	Caroline	Wife	Paperwork and runs the B&B	41	Secondary Modern	18	18	No	Yes	45
7	Paul	Farmer	Decision maker, manager	42	HND Agriculture	24	All life	Yes	Yes	40

Table 3 continued: The People

The case	The People	Family connection	Role in family business	Age	Education	Years farm	Years at premises	NFU member	YFC member	Hrs worked each week
8	Phil	Farmer	Manages the farm decision maker and daily operations	54	HND Agriculture	40	10	Yes	Yes	80
	Kate	Wife	Paperwork and manual work	53	Secondary modern	30	10	No	Yes	20
	Matt	Son	No longer involved	28	GCSE	-	-	No	Yes	-
	Gary	Family friend	Feed merchant rep.	50	Secondary Modern	-	-	No	Yes	38
9	Daniel	Farmer	All farm operations	56	YTS day release	45	20	Yes	Yes	80
	Maggie	Wife	Paperwork if needed	55	PhD	25	20	No	No	10
	Jen	Daughter	No longer involved	32	BSc Medicine(Doctor)	-	-	No	Yes	20
	Tom	Son	No longer involved	30	BSc Electrical engineering	-	-	No	Yes	35
10	Karl	Farmer	Decision maker, manager	40	HND Agriculture	25	20	Yes	No	65

5.5.5 Data Analysis

I decided against using a computer package to analyse the data, after consulting colleagues and attending workshops for NVIVO. I felt that for qualitative research, I should be as close and involved with the data as possible. For some, including myself, the concern is that computers not only alter the relationship between researcher and data, but add an insurmountable distance, fundamentally at odds with the 'closeness to data' treasured in qualitative research (see: Crang, 1997; Tesch, 1990). The researcher can lose sight of the 'ends' and purpose of qualitative data analysis, instead becoming fixated on the means offered by the software available (Burton, 2000: 239). As Burton (2000: 240) states: "Computers let the researcher look at their data differently as they interface with the data through the computer"; this gives the researcher a different relationship with his/her data compared to manual approaches (Stroh cited in Burton, 2000: 239). As argued by Stroh (2000), computers dictate the ways in which data can be stored. Data has to be in on-line format (for instance, straightforward typed text). For instance, it is very difficult to include sketches in computer packages (see: Cook and Crang, 1995) hence constructing farm layouts using the drawing facilities on Word was challenging.

Computer programs do not necessarily make the job of analysing data any easier, but can help to make the process more effective, arguably rigorous and systematic (Burton, 2000). Some computer programs replicate the manual process of cutting chunks of data, assigning a code to them and storing them, for example word processors (Burton, 2000). This is no more than I am able to do myself. Another factor in rejecting computer packages is that they are only as useful as the person using them; I had limited knowledge and access to the packages available. I also felt that conducting constant comparison manually, even though heavily time consuming,

allowed me to make mistakes, yet easily correct them. There is a danger that poor attention, caused by fatigue and being so close to the data, may diminish rigour in the coding process. I overcame this by taking regular breaks and constantly reviewing the initial list of codes.

In qualitative research, the distinction between data collection and data analysis may not be clear-cut. In interviews, for example the interviewer will often be creating, testing and modifying analytic categories as an iterative process, such that data analysis may be considered an organic whole that begins in the data-gathering stage, and does not end until the writing is complete (Potter, 1996). The grounded theory process of constant comparison provided a way to structure the process. Constant comparison has an important part to play in ethnographic research (Walford, 2002). Constant comparison between fieldwork and theorising is advocated as a product of ethnographic data analysis, even when not all claims of the grounded theory approach are supported, as is the case in my research (Bryman and Burgess, 1994).

Glaser (1996: 98) states that: "the process of constant comparison continually compares data to data, concept to data, concept to concept, and linking concepts back to the data". The researcher seeks to avoid tunnel vision, while making use of analytical comparison of cases, aiming to describe and explain complex and entangled group attributes, patterns, structures or processes (Verschuren, 2003: 137). Glaser (1992) emphasises the value of 'constant comparison' lies in, allowing categories and conceptual properties to emerge.

I transcribed the interviews myself (examples in Appendix E), as well as analysing observation notes. This kept the process for each type of data

collection tool consistent between cases. After transcribing each interview, I read the transcripts once (stage one), to familiarise myself with the data I had collected. The second time, I read through and made notes/comments on things the farmer said which stood out as either predictable or unusual (stage two). The third time I read through, I began to code the data and pick out themes, using different coloured felt pens for different codes, for example, purple for lifestyle, way of life and the like (stage three). Stages one to three were repeated for the interview transcripts for the farmer's spouse and children. The next time I went through the data (stage four), I started to look for commonalities and differences between family members, for instance did father and son share similar views or not? Stage five involved relating my codes and categories to Bourdieu's work.

Once I had completed stages one to five for the first case, I moved onto the next case and repeated the process for stage one and two. At stage three, I looked for codes and themes that had been identified in the previous case first, then went through the data again for additional themes and codes. I then repeated stage four and five. Stage six involved comparing the whole case with previous case(s) to identify any similarities and differences. As the process evolved, I began to look for categories from the codes, for example external influences. For a full discussion of the themes identified, see: Chapter Six and Appendix F. Chapters Seven to Ten, each discuss a case in detail; for a comprehensive table of themes, codes and categories for each case, see: Appendix G.

Throughout my whole data collection and analysis phase, I constantly reviewed the analysed data and looked for new themes, concepts and categories to emerge (see: Appendices F and G). Whilst making comparisons both inter and cross case memos were written to keep track of categories, and

so on; noting down any thoughts I had on the data (Glaser, 1978, 1992). During data analysis, I read, analysed, and considered the literature I had read prior to the start of data collection, whilst collecting new data. This sequential process enabled the literature to become part of constant comparison. The literature was then compared to the emerging theory and assisted memoing by verifying the coding and categorising of data. The thesis evolved as data collection and analysis took shape. New topic areas were explored and those already explored, but, subsequently found not to be relevant, were removed from the main literature review, for example detailed analysis of owner-manager and entrepreneurial characteristics, and types of entrepreneur.

Using case studies as a strategy to organise my data allowed me to make comparisons within each case and between cases. Data for the cases were organised into groups, allowing me to compile a coherent case study for each farm investigated. The findings are grounded in the data, but essentially guided by the work of Bourdieu. My work extends his theory of *capital* proposing the inclusion of *natural capital* (discussed later in Chapter Six) as well as applying his work to agriculture, which has rarely been done before.

As categories and their relevant properties emerged, a core category was identified. The core category is the focal point of the findings, the central idea, event, or happening. In this case, farmers' feeling of powerlessness affects their ability to run their businesses successfully; hence, power became the core category. Therefore, what can be done to enable them to regain their power? The core category pulls together all the strands (themes, codes, categories) in order to explain the area under study; as such: "it has theoretical significance and its development should be traceable back through the data" (Goulding, 2002: 88). The development and application of

Bourdieu's theory is grounded in the voices, actions and experiences of those studied providing a new perspective of farmers' motivations and behaviour.

There are boundaries to the generalisability of the work (Glaser, 1978; 1992; 2001; Blumer, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The findings are true for the people interviewed in the cases studied and may not provide findings that are transferrable to other dairy farmers in Staffordshire, owing to the small sample size, and any bias that may be present in the data collection and analysis phases, as a result of my close involvement with the industry and the process of selecting farm for inclusion in the study. The sample only represents a very small fraction of the total number of dairy farmers in Staffordshire. However, each small business owner is an individual and no two people will act in the same way under given circumstances. The results of any research project thus depend upon the stance of the participants (farmers), in relation to how they view the world they live in and accumulate their knowledge. However, it has been possible to identify some general trends and hence some areas where farmers could become more empowered, discussed later in Chapters Eleven and Twelve.

5.6 Conclusion

"Qualitative research is in keeping with an empirical approach that aims to generate (or in this case extend) theory from the data" (Baumard, 2001: 102). The research methods used were seen as the best way to answer the research questions and a feasible way for me to conduct the research. Using grounded theory in an ethnographic influenced qualitative study gave me a structured process to follow, assisting data collection and analysis. I used case studies as a way to organise data, in order for me to conduct constant comparison between each farm and between family members in the same

farm household. In the case of this research, exploration and interpretation were deemed important, therefore in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews were chosen as the data collection instrument.

Using a mixed methods approach gave me a high degree of flexibility and allowed me to tailor data collection and analysis in order to generate data I needed. Semi-structured interviews gave me enough focus to make sure I asked the right questions, but also the flexibility to follow up leads. Using participant observation provided a micro-context, so the reader has an understanding (a picture) of the work place, the person interviewed and where the interview was conducted.

The research provides valuable insights into family dairy farming and builds on Bourdieu's theory of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* by proposing an extension to his forms of *capital* in the context of farming. The next chapter details farming in Staffordshire and describing theme generation, before explaining why four cases (Chapters Seven – Ten) were chosen for inclusion in the thesis.

Chapter Six: Dairy farming in Staffordshire

The purpose of this chapter is to link the literature and methodology chapters with the data chapters, providing the reader with an insight into dairy farming in Staffordshire. Building on Chapter Five, this chapter gives an explanation of the themes identified during data analysis from all ten cases, and it ends by setting the scene for the data chapters, where four cases are explored in detail.

As previously stated the data were collected from a small fraction of dairy farmers in Staffordshire. Dairy farmers in other regions may face different challenges, for example land type and micro climates, which could present additional adversity. The views expressed are solely the views of the individuals interviewed, and may not represent the views of other farmers in Staffordshire or farmers from other counties. Nonetheless, the results are true and valid for individual cases, based on the interviewees' interpretations of the circumstances facing them. Farmers are a heterogeneous group, and the research has addressed their individuality through the use of a qualitative, mixed methods approach. This followed the methods of social theory and was tailored to individual case needs to ensure the collection of relevant and timely data.

Using interviews and participant observation, I was able to see farmers in their natural environment and talk to them. I felt this was important, in order to describe farmers' natural setting, where they worked, objects they had and so on. The case study was well suited to organising the data from multiple sources. The methodological approach generated a vast amount of diverse data and also allowed me to be flexible in both data analysis and collection. Combining elements of grounded theory with ethnographic research provided in-depth, rich data giving insights into the real world of farming.

6.1 Farming in Staffordshire

This section explains what farming is like in Staffordshire. It explores the local context of farming and the challenges farmers face; it examines how farmers perceive dairy farming in the region, and discusses the changes taking place in the farming community. Regional factors affect how farmers are able to play the game; for instance, geographical location, soil type and micro-climates are unique to farmers in Staffordshire.

Staffordshire was chosen as the region to conduct the study (a map can be found in Appendix H), because it is the county where I grew up on my family's dairy farm, and where I gained my knowledge on dairy farming. I have many farming contacts in Staffordshire, clearly an advantage when researching small family businesses. This may introduce bias in terms of the sampling region but as Curran and Blackburn (2001) point out, gaining access to research small family businesses is often difficult and can be a major methodological issue. This is more pertinent for family business owners as they are often reluctant to share information with 'outsiders', seeing it as an invasion of their private life, since the business and personal life are so inter-related (particularly true for farmers).

Farming is characterised by variety, as highlighted in Chapter Two. It is impossible to make generalisations about farming (Pannell *et al.*, 2000). As Howarth (1990: 24) states: "there are geographical variations in the area (typology, soil, type, and climate); different types of farming (dairying, arable, cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry); variations between farms of different sizes and variations between performances, owing to the farmers' technical and business management ability". In Staffordshire, livestock farming is the main agricultural enterprise. Dairy farming makes up a large proportion of this, making Staffordshire one of the principal milk-producing counties in England.

The section now looks at some of the challenges faced by farmers (location, changes in the *field* and the farming community) in relation to Staffordshire, from the perspective of the farming families interviewed.

6.1.2 Location

Staffordshire has a varied landscape (and land types) ranging from woodland (Cannock Chase), and heath and moorland in the North, to a broad belt of rich pasture land divided into dairy farms (with some crop based farming) on mainly clay based soils in Mid-Staffordshire and the South-East of the county. Staffordshire also has large urban areas.

“Staffordshire lowland is a good area for farming, especially dairy farming as the grass is good for [milk] yields” (Linda, Dairy Hygiene Inspector).

Location is a major factor affecting what farmers are able to do with their businesses, especially in relation to their ability to deal with ‘rules of the game’ in the *field*, whether (say) maintaining constant levels of milk, or complying with NVZ regulations. As highlighted in the quote below:

“Organic farming would not suit this farm. It’s a wet farm, not the best land in the country you know. There is a place for organic though, but I feel that it is not here”.

J – “So in a sense your location is affecting your production”.

“Yes, it’s a barrier I guess, but on the other hand, this is where the personal bit comes in – it is where we want to live, I like living round here. It’s not the best farming location in the country; my father always wanted to leave and I was always against it. I do like living here. It is a bit of a barrier to increasing profits, consultants say I should move, but I love it round here” (Steven, Case 2).

Having a wet farm can make certain tasks difficult, especially harvesting and spreading manure. Another disadvantage is that extra measures need to be taken to ensure the farmer complies with cross-compliance legislation (part of the SFP), such as preventing soil erosion from poaching (more common when the ground is wet). It can also affect the profitability of the farm (*economic capital*).

Farming communities are, in many respects, self-contained and isolation can be an issue; for example, rural areas in Scotland, Wales, Midlands and South West England will all have different struggles for *capital* as a result of farm location. Poor grass quality will reduce the productiveness of farms in Highland areas, while farms located on the outskirts of urban areas have added problems to deal with. Daniel highlights the potential conflict between rural and urban communities (also discussed in section 6.1.4).

"Crime is a big problem. We live next to the motorway and get people short-cutting along the lanes. They don't care about the fact there could be people walking, on horses, or cows on the road; and they look at you in your tractor as though you are some kind of social inferior. I'm surrounded by city and suburbia"
(Daniel, Case 9).

As well as location, changes in the industry also affect farmers' decision-making behaviour.

6.1.3 Changes

Change is a familiar feature of dairy farming, a fact well documented by the farmers interviewed and the literature (refer to Chapter Two). Herd sizes have increased from under 10 in post-war years, to an average UK herd size of 120 cows in 2005. In Staffordshire, the average herd is 112 cows (Source: DH1, Government Statistics), although some farms (including some in Staffordshire) have well over 200 cows. Changes in dairy herds over the years have been quite dramatic. In 1981, there were 110,537 dairy cows in Staffordshire; by 1991 this had fallen to 100,253 and by 1999 there were 90,664 (Source: MAFF and DEFRA Statistics). The main breed of cow in dairy farming is the Holstein Friesian, although some farmers are now cross breeding to rectify some genetic problems of the breed. Dairy farmer numbers have also decreased. In 1990, there were 1,418 dairy farmers in Staffordshire; by 2005, there were only 872 and this had

reduced to 707 by January 2007 (Source: MAFF and DEFRA Statistics); representing an average loss of 42 dairy farmers per year, over a seventeen year period. These changes are well known in the farming community.

"I can safely say that things have changed considerably since the 1960s/1970s. Farmer numbers dropped with increased mechanisation and changes in production techniques and regimes. Cropping has also changed. Milking techniques have changed with the increase in production" (Linda, Dairy Hygiene Inspector).

"Today 200 cows is not regarded as a large farm, ten years ago 200 was seen as a massive herd size and rare" (Pete and Brett, Case 3).

"But you know even us with 400, it's not large, you have 600 – 800 cows under one roof. That's a lot of cows under one roof. It is geared to making profit by having it all on one site...Now 300 cows, ten years ago - you were big" (Paul, Case 7).

Farmers respond to these changes in the *field* (and rules of the game) by playing the game in pursuit of different strategies (strengthening the premise that farmers are a heterogeneous group). Increasing herd sizes have been a common response to industry changes, mainly to counteract decreasing *economic capital* available to farmers. Many farmers sought expansion to achieve economies of scale, including a few of the farmers interviewed.

"If you go to the head of the game yourself a little bit, try spreading your costs, which often means increase production. The only economic way of increasing profit is to increase the price you charge for your goods. Well that is impossible. You can cut your costs; well we are all trying to do that all the time – whether we have done that enough, I don't know. Or, you can increase production and spread those costs. It is hard, but I think you have got to try and look at increasing production where you can...there are a lot of people going out; but there are also a lot of people expanding" (Steven, Case 2).

"We have expanded the cows recently. I think there is still money to be made" (Paul, Case 7).

Coupled with structural changes (increases in herd sizes) in the *field*, farmers identified two major transformations in the rules of the game over the years: the introduction of milk quotas in the 1980s (Halliday, 1988); and the change from production led, to environmental led subsidies.

"The biggest change from college I have seen is a change in the subsidies policy from production led to environment led...We were production led, paid to produce more, and now it's completely turned on its head. Now, subsidies are based more on environmental schemes and the acreage farmed. On the milk side, definitely, the advent of milk quotas at the start of 1980s... and the demise of the MMB in the 1990s, as a result of the Government demanding it be split up for freer markets..." (Paul, Case 7).

These changes also point to the issue of farmers losing power, especially the demise of the Milk Marketing Boards (MMBs) and the growing power of suppliers and buyers in the market. This has weakened farmers' position in the *field*, affecting their ability to acquire a share of the available *capitals*, hence farmers find it increasingly difficult to play the game effectively.

The increase in herd sizes, previously mentioned, has been synonymous with mechanisation of the milking process. Significant changes in farming have seen moves from manual labouring and horsepower, to the present widespread use of tractors and machinery (identified by: Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990). Over the decades, changes in technology have changed farmers' work routines adjusting their work practices accordingly. Even though mechanisation has reduced the volume of manual work, evidence from my research suggests this has been replaced with increased red-tape and paperwork (succinctly put in the quote below), changing how the game needs to be played. Farmers have to complete paperwork, and use their abilities to farm, in order for their businesses to be successful.

"We used to have to do most things by hand, and this was the case for my parents. Everything was by hand or by horsepower. Mechanisation has seriously changed things, but we don't seem to have more time for off farm activities. We are still working as hard as ever".

J – "Do you think these changes are for the better?"

"I don't know really, some of the mechanisation has reduced the hard labour work. But then there's the increased red-tape and the need to write everything down" (Pete, Case 3).

Another area experiencing change is the social make-up of rural areas, a factor that was long a strength of farming communities.

6.1.4 The Farming Community

Local livestock markets are an important part of the rural community and farming's connection with the wider social world. Staffordshire has many small market towns, one of which had held a weekly market on a Wednesday since 1251. The livestock market ceased trading on Wednesday 26th October 2005 (after most of the interviews had taken place). The cattle market is now held every Wednesday at a city market nearly 20 miles away, although there are still a few local cattle markets held in the far North of Staffordshire. There is a social acceptance of a particular way of life for farming communities and farmers alike. Many of the farmers interviewed see farming as having a specific culture (as found by: Burton, 1998, 2004; for further detailed discussions see: Chapter Four).

"The culture of farming is good. Young Farmers (YFC) is a great organisation. I spent a lot of time at meetings and other things. It is a good way to meet like-minded people, and socialise in what would otherwise be a remote isolated job. I was the secretary for my local club and the social and funding committee" (Brett, Case 3).

There are cultural differences between countries and in how 'outsiders' in society perceive farmers in a different light.

"The culture over there is different to here. In the Mid West agriculture is a major employer and the majority of people are involved with agriculture. In the

UK farmers are a minority group, they are a small part of the population" (Karl, Case 10).

The social aspects of farming are different; many of the farming families stress that they feel part of a community. This is a major part of the cultural and social side of farming.

"I like the social, well the community aspects of farming. You're part of a community and a larger family in a sense, even if it is slightly disjointed from the rest of the population, well society" (Brett, Case 3).

However, there are changes in rural communities that are creating tensions.

"The ones that move into the village and start complaining, that it is not quite how it should be; not how they imagined. They cause trouble; last year we got a bit of mud on the road, so I took a brush down (mechanical one operated by a tractor), and brushed it up. The women then complained that I had brushed it to the side of the road. That sort of thing, you think, why do you bother? You do your bit and then they complain again. It annoys me, not to mention people fly-tipping, now that really does annoy me, when you get people dumping things in your gateways and fields - I have to clear it up" (Paul, Case 7).

Farmers feel their way of life is threatened by urban dwellers migrating to the countryside. They believe urban migrants have an idealistic view of living in the countryside, and are ill-prepared for some of the realities.

"The people who are moving into the countryside do nothing but complain, because their ideal of what it should be like is far removed from the reality of people who work in the countryside. We have to work everyday. We have to do work when we can, otherwise if we don't work on a bank holiday when the weather is fine, we could miss our harvest. So it's tough for the people who wanted a quiet bank holiday. The countryside is not quiet all the time, animals make noise, and there will be tractor noise because we do have to work" (Daniel, Case 9).

Farmers were concerned about the weakening rural community. They felt the influx of urban dwellers had created tensions and unstable communities, as a

lack of understanding about the nature of farming (principles) and the realities of country living did not fit their urban ideals. Farmers believe that these tensions are reducing their feeling of solidarity (reducing *social capital*).

"The farming community is getting weaker and we get people living in the village who moan about cows mooing and the smell of the muck. You just think - well this is the reality of the country life. It isn't the ideal that it is made out, you have muck on the road, you have mess, you have cows making noise, farmers working into the night to get crops in and you will get power cuts and things like that" (Chris, Case 1).

6.2 Summary Results from the Ten Cases

The farmers interviewed worked on average 69.5 hours per week, ranging from 40 – 80 hours; their spouses worked an average of 20 hours per week, ranging from 5 – 35 hours; and adult children worked an average of 55 hours, ranging from 5 – 75 hours each week. The average age of the farmers interviewed was 53, ranging from 42 – 68, below the national average of 58 (Source: DEFRA, 2003). The age of farmers' spouses ranged from 39 – 57, averaging 52 years of age. The average age of children was 28, ranging from 23 – 32 years. All the farmers have farmed all their lives, and both their parents and grand-parents had farmed. Many of the spouses' families had also been involved with farming for generations. The farming families in this study, on average had been farming at the present farm for 52 years.

The business characteristics vary enormously between the ten cases, and the four detailed cases (Chapter Seven – Ten) show how they are different. The majority of farmers run their businesses as partnerships, with a mixture of owned and rented land. All farms are run as family businesses, with varying degrees of family involvement. The farms were a mix of tenanted and farmer-owned properties. All the farmers use contractors for specialist work ranging from

silaging to hedge-cutting and harvesting. The average acres farmed was 435. Acres owned range from 90 to 1700, and acres rented range from 10 – 400. The average herd size was 172, above the averages for both Staffordshire and the UK, with the sample size ranging from 80 to 400 cows. The average litres of milk produced was 1.4 million per year.

Over half of the farmers interviewed were either in the process of expanding herd sizes or had recently expanded. The rest were continuing to do what they had always done. Some of the smaller scale farmers expressed concerns that larger units were not best for animal welfare. Large units were seen as 'factory farming' with the work ethic being profit not passion orientated. Farmers had mixed reactions to diversification; one farmer found working with the general public demanding, others pursued areas that do not require close work with the general public, for example property or environmental schemes. One had sold barns for conversion to pay for expansion plans.

6.3 Theme Generation

From the first round of data analysis and inductive theorising, the main themes identified from the ten cases are detailed in the Table 4 below. During the process of data analysis, I referred back to the literature when necessary, to see if my findings were consistent with previous findings and/or how my findings contributed to knowledge. For a breakdown of the themes, codes and categories generated from the data, see: Appendix F. The themes identified in the table below during stage one of data analysis are all individual themes. During this stage of the analysis, no grouping, coding or categorisation has taken place, the reader, at this stage, should treat each theme as discrete. Therefore, it does not matter whether the table is read left to right or top to bottom.

Table 4: Themes Identified from Stage One

Themes				
Power	Tension	Finance	Identity	Nature
Temporality	Succession	Control	Sociality	Culture
External environment	Emotional attachment	Opportunity	Working environment	Principles
Roles	Rules	Perceptions	Understanding	Family
Values	Capabilities	Satisfaction	Locality	Changes
Lifestyle	Support	Labour	Skills	Pressures

Table 5 details, in a very simplistic way, the development of the themes into codes with the aim of developing categories which relate to the core category identified in stage three as power. At this point in the data analysis phase it is possible to see where the links of my work to that of Pierre Bourdieu begin. Bourdieu was interested in the source and distribution of power, which as data analysis progressed, became an area of interest for my work. Table 5 should be read from left to right, but develops themes identified in Table 4 and incorporates new themes identified in the progressive stages of data analysis, so that they can be broken down into codes and categories in future data analysis stages. At this stage in data analysis I was also looking for links between codes and began to group them together as shown in Table 5 below. Reading from left to right the reader can see the development of codes for example external environment, which later related to the *field*. During the next two stages (four and five) of data analysis the coding was developed, before the final stage when codes and categories were related to Bourdieu's concepts.

Table 5: Themes Developed in Stage Two and Three

Power – Core Category	
Code	Related themes and codes
External environment	Rules – policy, legislation. Market – pricing, operations. Competition for resources. Changes – constant. Opportunity - past, present and future. Temporality.
Working environment	Routines – habits, work practices. Roles – Gender, Age. Location - affects farming practices. Family - (farmer wife/husband, son/daughter), conflict, resource. Control. Independence. Succession. Satisfaction.
Culture	Tensions - between different societal groups. Way of life. Community. Values - complete list see: Gasson (1974). Perceptions. Ways of working. Understanding.
Identity in society	Emotional attachment. Principles. Born to farm. Perceptions. Ownership – farm, animals, land. Tradition.
Nature	Land. Animals. Source of emotional attachment. Resource.
Social	Networks, Perceptions, Friends and Family, Industry bodies.
Knowledge	Capabilities. Skills. Understanding of the rules.
Economic factors	Finance – debt. Money. Costs. Pricing.

Table 6 below summarises my framework and has been developed from Tables 4 and 5. The categories listed from top to bottom all relate to the core category – power. The struggles for power and the levels of *capitals* possessed by individuals and institutions are played out in the *field*. Reading the table from left to right, in the left hand column the categories are listed and these have then been related to Bourdieu's theories. For example, comments relating to prices, money, income and debt can be clearly identified in the text and are all

legitimately part of *economic capital*. The codes and categories listed below are investigated in more detail in Chapters Seven to Ten. For more detailed coding, see: Appendices F and G.

Table 6: Simplified Codes and Categories.

The <i>field</i> (the farmers life-world) where the game is played out to accumulate capitals and hence power	
CORE CATEGORY	
POWER	Power. Dominant. Dominated. Control. Rules. Level of <i>capitals</i> .
Category	Codes
<i>Habitus</i>	Roles. Related to culture – creating values, beliefs, norms, instilled in the family. Affects work practices. Related to knowledge.
Economics <i>Economic Capital</i>	Money. Assets. Cash. Debt. Costs. Prices. Investment. Capital.
Capability <i>Cultural capital</i>	Skills. Knowledge. Know-how. Values. Norms. Education. Qualifications. Understanding.
Sociality <i>Social Capital</i>	Networks. Meetings. Friends. Family. Isolation. Tensions. Community. Markets. Changes.
Symbolism <i>Symbolic Capital</i>	Identity. Born to farm. Tradition. Status. Ownership. Pride Emotion.
Nature <i>Natural capital</i> – my addition to Bourdieu's work.	Disease. Animals. Vegetations. Climate. Weather. Land. Cycles. Attachment.

6.3.1 *Field* Issues

Field issues covered numerous identified themes (touched on in the previous section); power, tension (6.1.4), roles, rules (6.1.3), changes and principles to name a few. The *field* is where the game is played out to accumulate capitals and increase individuals' level of power. In essence, the *field* encompasses all the codes and categories identified in Table 6, which have been developed and simplified from Tables 4 and 5. These factors affecting the *field* are also explored in greater detail in Chapters Seven to Ten.

Power

As data collection and analysis progressed, power became the core category – a key element of Bourdieu's work. The core category affects all other codes and categories. For example, power creates tensions between different groups of people, affecting roles within organisations, the *field* (dairy industry) and rules for the game. There were significant power struggles in the *field* between farm businesses and external institutions (Government, retailers), but also between family members in the business. For example, farmers reported annoyance with the high level of Government inspections, the perceived power of inspectors and the duplication of information that adds to daily work pressures. As the quote below demonstrates, farmers feel that they have become powerless in the *field*, whilst dominant groups are able to make money from milk production.

"Oh it is, if you look at milk – well obviously you have done all this work and you have got the figures about margins, but the balance of power is very much with the retailers. I was talking to somebody I know and they are in partnership with a large village convenience store not far from here and she was telling me that they have never made more money out of milk. They buy it cheap and sell for good money, their percentage has never been more profitable than it is now, because dairy companies are falling over themselves to sell it. 'Buy it from me, I'm a bit cheaper for milk' and that is what is going on" (Steven, Case 2).

The balance of power in the *field* affects the distribution of *economic capital*. Those in powerful positions have the ability to shape the *field* (see: Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990; Fitzgerald, 2003). They are able to influence the rules of the game to maintain their *capital* share. As a result, the power of farmers over the years has decreased to such an extent that it is causing economic crisis for many small family dairy farmers.

"I don't really have any regrets and the situation would be so much better if the Milk Marketing Boards (MMB) hasn't been split up and Milk Marque was still here. We would have had the same bargaining power as the supermarkets. We are not able to get cost of production back for our produce and I thought it was illegal to buy goods below the cost of production. Supermarkets and Governments: there is a serious lack of control over them. If nothing is done then producers will be continually squeezed. The only reason the world market works is because it centres on slave labour and a few powerful people making billions" (Daniel, Case 9).

Rules

Changes and rules depend on the structure of the *field*, and those who hold the greatest power in the *field*. Each farmer (farm business) has different long and short term strategies, which are generally not documented. There was a general consensus amongst farming families that paperwork (rules of the game) was seen as a chore, preventing farmers from doing their job properly.

"The enjoyment of farming has been removed by the Governments obsession with form filling" (Daniel, Case 9).

It also adds pressure to the business and is a major time constraint. Farmers cite paperwork as the major factor that reduces job satisfaction levels, and some older farmers see paperwork as a way to force them out of the industry. It could be argued that these farmers do not possess the *cultural capital* needed to complete the tasks.

Work Environment and Business Operations

All farmers described their working environment as challenging with long hours, especially when seasonal work increased work loads. The younger generation were more concerned with the effects of long hours on their social life. In return for long hours of work, farming families felt that the financial rewards were low. Farmers want enough money to be able to provide for their family and to invest in their business. Working and living in the same place is not an issue for farmers, but it affects their spouses and adult children more, as work flows over into the home. The boundaries between work and home life become increasingly blurred (see: family business literature, Chapter Two). Spouses found this a greater quandary than farmers. The issues of working and living in the same place include: paper work, completed at night when the farmer finishes working outside; and phone calls at night with inspectors, amongst others, trying to contact farmers. Family life can end up being over-run by the business. The family business can also be a source of family conflict, particularly between generations (see: Carlock and Ward, 2001; Gersick *et al.*, 1997; Moores and Barratt, 2002).

Most farmers interviewed made the final decision on business matters. Farmers with identified successors (namely their sons) fully involved in the business, share decision-making, in the hope that, if they make mistakes, they are in a safe environment. The input of spouses in decision-making, ranges from no consultation to full inclusion. In most cases, joint decision-making between family members was reported, although the farmer had the ultimate say on the chosen outcome. There were exceptions, especially where the farmer was passing over more responsibility to his son, and hence wanting him to learn how to make decisions.

The strategies that farmers pursue range from increasing the herd size, or diversifying activities to generating sufficient income for the family. Farmers who rent premises have less freedom, as they often need to seek landlord approval before any alterations are made. Farmers comment that planning is important, yet they do not document plans, other than those required to secure loans. Tasks are completed as a matter of habit (their *habitus*) and adjusted depending on uncontrollable factors, such as the weather. Most planning is done in the farmhouse, usually over the kitchen table, and rarely formally documented.

Farmers have to deal with changes in their business operations and the skills needed to operate the business successfully, for example learning about management techniques to assist with running diversification activities. Most farmers see themselves farming in the future, except those retiring in the next five to ten years. Of those retiring, two have sons already involved full-time in the business to carry on. The older generation raises concerns that fewer younger generations are entering farming.

6.3.2 Roles

Family members (by definition) play an important role in the family farm business. This leads to consideration of power struggles within the family business. The roles family members play in the business and the power they have in the family business was heavily dependent upon gender. Gender issues were also apparent in terms of business succession, discussed below.

The women interviewed class themselves as farmers' wives. Wives play subordinate roles to their husbands; they tend to do the manual labour and the paperwork, but (as discussed above) are generally not consulted on strategy or business direction. Some of those involved in the decision-making often shared

the responsibility with their husbands, but generally he had the final say. The role of women in farming in my study confirms previous research (Danes and McTavish, 1997; Gasson, 1992; Gasson and Winter, 1992; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Saugres, 2002), Women play a diverse role in both business and family life (Danes and Olson, 2003), possessing a wide range of skills and knowledge (capabilities – *cultural capital*). Many of the wives interviewed were not involved with the farm, or had minimal input; they had careers besides farming, to increase household income, and were only involved in the business for paperwork. However, the wives were highly involved in raising the family and maintaining the farmhouse.

"A farmer's wife is not the same as being married to a farmer. A farmer's wife is a job in itself, there ought to be a profession 'farmer's wife'. That is somebody who is interested, supportive and part of the business. My wife tends to do more milking now than she ever has. We have only lived on the main farm for 6 years, but she seems to be doing more to help me out. If we are going to milk extra cows, extra production has got to come with no extra wage costs; if there is any extra work to do me and Katie have got to do it. She does 90% of the paperwork, she is committed to it. She kept a little red book one week and she did 30 hours on the farm alone, not including what she does in the house."

(Steven, Case 2).

Adult children had varying roles in the business, many helped out their parents with work on the farm or in the house. Daughters were not seen as natural successors by one farmer, highlighting the gender issues in the family business (relating to succession, see: Gasson and Errington, 1993).

"You see it's a big issue because a lot of small farmers haven't got natural successors, see myself I have three daughters. Ok daughters can take the farm on, but they are not a natural successor. Sons are the obvious successor, but a lot of farmers' sons now go to University. They see a different world their non-farming friends have a different life. They go on holiday. Their parents have a lot of time for them, they take them to football on a Sunday... Perhaps I am one

of the last of the generations to do this, but if you were expected to work on the farm - you worked on the farm. People have got more choice now. Dairy Farming its still a good profession, but if you're forced into it and you don't like it - it's more like a sentence" (Steven, Case 2).

It appears that sons are given preferential treatment in succession. There are also different expectations as to the role of farmers, as succinctly put in the quote below.

"People have diverse expectations of the industry and not everyone has the same view. Those involved have a specific view of the industry, what agriculture should do and getting the maximum output from the land. People outside the industry - Government and the public, have a broader view. For example, they see environmental protection and the landscape as more important. The lifestyle thing is more important to them. This means there is tension between the two different views and opinions. Food production isn't as important as it once was. The public don't view food security as important. Yet those in the industry see food production as very important" (Karl, Case 10).

These changing views of the role farmers should play in society conflicts with many farmers' *habitus* and their perceived identity in the social world (discussed more in Chapter Eleven).

Farmers commented that age was a key factor in determining what was done with the business operations. Age affects the *habitus* and ultimately determines behaviour. Older farmers close to retirement age took the view that they would carry on as they were. Succession was important for farmers, especially those who had identified someone to take over the business. Younger farmers with no children hoped that one day their children would take over the business. The older generation commented that they had been expected to take over the family farm business, and there was an obligation or a calling to do so. Such expectations suggest that, when children behave like their parents (generational patterns of behaviour discussed further in Chapter Eleven), their *habitus* has been shaped in their early years to value the business and farming.

In all cases, family was highly important. Most farmers had been farming all their lives and had learnt their skills from their father, which have been passed down the generations (*cultural capital*). Farmers and their spouses noted how bringing children up on the farm grounded the children for life, by teaching them about the need to work hard, as well as the values of responsibility and respect (for an in-depth account of values associated with farming, see: Gasson, 1973; 1974a; 1974b).

"I have been involved with farming all my life. I don't know anything else. I don't really know any life beyond the family farm. I started off helping out on the family farm when I was ten and have been working on it ever since. I also spent some time as a herdsman for another farmer in the local area to make money for the family. I missed most of my education helping at home. We were a big family and my older brother had to go on national service" (Chris, Case 1).

I now move on to investigating Bourdieu's forms of *capital* in relation to my findings.

6.3.3 Economic Capital

Analysis of my ten cases confirms previous research (academia and industry publications) with respect to the impact of increased costs and reduced profit margins. In economic terms, farming has become the weakest link in the supply chain, receiving the lowest share of the profit margins for milk production (identified by: Coleman and Harvey, 2003; Curry *et al.*, 2002; DEFRA, 2002; Whatmore *et al.*, 1999) but still holds true today. Farmers recognise that there is no surplus *economic capital* to re-invest in their businesses, even covering costs can be difficult.

"The problem is there is not the capital to re-invest in equipment, let alone expanding. We don't want to get too much into debt, otherwise it's a spiral out

of control and the farm no longer is family thing, it becomes the property of the bank" (Brett, Case 3).

To counteract falling levels of *economic capital*, some farmers responded to changes in the *field* by expanding their businesses. They have done this in order to increase their share of the available *capitals*, namely *economic capital*. There are costs in the *field* specific to the dairy industry, for instance milk quota.

"We have expanded the cows recently, I think there is still money to be made, we haven't got the high costs of milk quota that we once had. There is a market for milk in the country particularly this area [Staffordshire]. We have probably got the biggest of a whole range of milk buyers we sell ours to Muller. They can't ship it all from abroad, and Muller keep on expanding. Its not in the milk buyer processors interest to have an industry that doesn't make profit all the away down the chain. Since 1980, we have bought two million litres of milk quota that has been a big cost. It was 14 pence per litre, which is a big cost; even though you might be getting more for your milk, it is still a big cost for you to have to cover" (Paul, Case 7).

Those farmers that have expanded on large scale tend to be profit orientated, and behave more like RAT businessmen.

"I'm profit orientated; if it wasn't slightly profitable then I wouldn't do it. I would miss farming if I wasn't doing it. I would miss the challenges it gives me. The farm needs to be profitable, because I have to pay for three children in boarding school. I think education is very important, it is key to their lives, which is why they are educated in private schools to give them the best possible chance they can have in life" (Paul, Case 7).

As mentioned above, and confirmed in the quote below, many farmers do not have the economic resources to reinvest in their businesses. A major problem for many farmers is the industry lacks a standard accounting format to work out the true costs of production. In many cases, for example, family labour is ignored. There is no consensus in the industry as to what remuneration family members should be receiving for their work.

"There is no money for reinvestment, so you don't bother about that and only spend money when something goes wrong. You pray nothing goes wrong, because you can't actually afford to have major works done. Profit is important. I couldn't keep going if I wasn't making a small profit. I'm not bothered about making millions, I just want to make enough for the work I do and that means I need to receive cost plus 5% for my produce in order to survive. I have other costs of living to cover such as tax and council tax rates etc. The biggest problem is people don't really know the true cost of production; they don't think about family labour and how much that costs" (Daniel, Case 9).

Farmers want a reasonable income to provide a standard of living for their family. Farmers feel they do not get the financial reward for the work done, or the recognition for providing food for the nation. Milk price is a major factor when making future decisions, and farmers and their families felt that the price of milk was too low and unsustainable. Farmers believe dairy companies are willing to undercut one another, just to sell a little bit more milk (rules of the game – retaining their power). Buyers (milk co-operatives and retailers) and sellers (agricultural products, corn, utilities etc.) to farmers have greater control (power) over the market. Everyone interviewed expressed concern over the lack of *economic capital* to re-invest in the business and provide an income. There was also concern amongst the farmers about the need to finance increasing debts.

6.3.4 The Learning Environment – *Cultural Capital*

Some of the farmers expressed their concerns over the lack of new entrants to the industry (lack of opportunity) and felt it was a shame that many farmers' sons were not staying in the industry. This suggests that it is difficult to move into the *field*. Farmers highlighted the lack of skilled labour for the *field* (Curry *et al.*, 2002), especially those trying to find herdsmen. Farming requires technical as well as business skills. The farmer must possess both if his/her business is to be successful (*cultural capital*). This is a major issue with SMEs in a specialist area.

The SME owner-manager not only has to have the skills required for his/her niche market, but s/he also needs to have the business acumen in order to run his/her businesses successfully. The multi-skilled role of farmers (previously found by: Ashby, 1925, 1926; Curry *et al.*, 2002; Gasson *et al.*, 1998), and highlighted in the narratives, is vital. The family business provides a 'learning environment' for such business and personal skills. There are also differences between the family generations, as opportunities to study have led to increased skills in management, for example the growth of university degrees in farm management.

"I have obtained an NCA and NVQ level 3 and 4 Farm Management. I also have my HGV licence and spent a few years driving for a local haulage contractor. I enjoyed studying agriculture at college and went with some of my fellow YFC members and old school friends" (Brett, Case 3).

A few farmers were lucky to have had the opportunity to experience working in different countries. This also enabled farmers to experience the culture of farming in other countries. As described by one farmer below:

"I went to Harper Adams College in 1982 and did my HND in Agriculture. I spent a year of that time working on a dairy farm in Northumberland. It was a three year sandwich course. Before I went to college, I spent a year working on a farm in Staffordshire. I came home from college in 1985 and in the spring of 1986 I went to America on an exchange programme".

J- "Did you find this helped you to develop skills"?

"Yes, America was a great experience for me I worked on a dairy and arable farm in Ohio. It was a family farm of 400 acres and they had about 400-500 cows in tie stall barns, which was something I had never come across before. They also had pipeline milking, which again I hadn't seen before. The cows were fed on loose hay (alpha hay). They had maize and soya beans on the arable side which I had no experience of growing. It gave me new skills for when I came home and I experienced a different farming life. I was given more responsibility as the farmer had just undergone heart surgery. So I was left to look after the cow side of the business pretty much on my own. I learnt a lot from this experience" (Karl, Case 10).

6.3.5 The Social Side of Farming – *Social Capital*

This theme is discussed in more detail in Chapters Seven to Ten, because the social aspects connected to farming proved very important. Farmers need to be able to socialise, and opportunities to do so are decreasing. There is evidence that farming lacks *social capital* and the occupation can be isolating.

"Farming can be a very isolating life. Working and living in one spot and it can be quite isolated from people with no close by neighbours. It can be lonely and would not suit all personalities" (Melanie, Case 1).

Reducing levels of *social capital* can result in social isolation, by reducing further the opportunity for farmers to network. In peripheral rural areas, life farming can be the only activity and employer. This is especially true for local market towns. The closure of livestock markets has reduced the chances for farmers to meet in a natural setting and also connect with the public.

6.3.6 *Symbolic Capital*

The emotional attachment to the land and the animals became an important factor in relation to Bourdieu's *symbolic capital*. Many farmers have known nothing else besides farming and love what they do. Farming represents their social identity.

"I grew up on the family farm and when I went to university I really missed the animals and getting up early in the morning, going outside and feeding the animals. I loved working on the farm in the fresh air. I miss it now, even though I haven't been involved for over ten years. I'm a qualified GP and even though it is what I always wanted to do, I still miss the farm. It grounded me well for life, giving me a hard working ethic. You have to work hard for something, if you want it you have to work for it. I miss watching things grow and develop, being involved with the family business. There is something special about that, which I can't really explain. People involved with family businesses, especially family farms will know what I am talking about" (Jen, Case 9).

Family businesses instil family values (as stated by: Elder and Conger, 2000) and children recognise these values as important for a good working ethic in careers outside farming. Children who have left farming in the pursuit of alternative careers miss farming and the world it offers, even though they left farming because they could not see a way to make money in farming.

6.3.7 *Natural Capital*

The discovery of the significance of nature led me to return to the literature to define the concept – *natural capital* – and strengthen my understanding of how I could use this concept with Bourdieu's framework. There are differing views as to what *natural capital* is; it can also be known as *environmental capital*, or *biological capital*. The concept of (environmental) *natural capital* arises from the early work of environmental economists, who view the natural resources of the planet (such as biodiversity, nutrient cycling, waste assimilation, water and air supply) as a 'capital resource' comparable with *economic capital* and human-made *capital*. Like other forms of *capital*, (environmental) *natural capital* can be depleted, enhanced and in some instance replenished (Shepherd and Gillespie, 1996).

Natural capital is based on a more functional definition of capital as: "a stock that yields a flow of valuable goods or services into the future" (Costanza and Daly, 1992: 38). Other authors argue that *natural capital* denotes the contribution of natural resources to economic well-being (Gowdy, 1994). As Costanza and Daly (1994) suggest, ecosystems are renewable *natural capital*, that can be harvested to yield ecosystem goods (such as wood) but also yield a flow of ecosystem services when left in place (such as erosion control and recreation). Non-renewable *natural capital* is more passive. Fossil fuels and mineral deposits are the best example.

Costanza and Daly (1994) argue that *natural capital* produces a significant portion of the real goods and services of the economic system, so failure to adequately account for *natural capital* leads to major misperceptions about how well the economy is doing. Manufactured capital (processed milk, cheese) is itself made out of *natural capital* resources, with the help of other forms of capital (Costanza and Daly, 1994). (Environmental) *natural capital* and the functions it performs provides a basic support mechanism for all of human activity, now and in the future, providing food stuffs, minerals, biodiversity and air and water. The appropriate management and wise use of (environmental) *natural capital* has a key role to play in ensuring environmental sustainability (Shepherd and Gillespie, 1996). Sustainability is a key issue in agricultural research.

Natural capital can have benefits, through providing resources for farmers to grow things. It can also have drawbacks, such as disease and negative climate changes. The dark sides of *natural capital* are the factor that farmers find the most difficult to control. They have the threat of disease BSE, bTB and FMD, all of which have the power to destroy the farmers' business, and their world as they know it (see: Chapter Eight for a more detailed insight). *Natural capital* has the power to cause serious crisis for farmers. *Natural capital* also has the ability to empower agents, in this case farmers, as increasing the amount of land they own means that farmers are able to extend their business operations and increase their herd.

In this thesis, *natural capital* refers to the renewable ecosystem and resources (animals, grass and food production) and non-renewable systems, for instance fossil fuels and minerals. The applications of these resources enable agents (farmers) to advance their position in the *field*.

All the farmers interviewed care about their animals and have high animal welfare standards. This is an important signal of the emotional attachment that farmers and their families have to farming. They are annoyed that 'bad' farmers are allowed to continue farming, despite copious amount of rules and regulations (rules of the game). The farmers, and their spouses and children recognise that animals and land are their main assets. These assets need protection and caring to provide income. Farmers are concerned about bio-security and disease is clearly a major threat to their business. Natural disasters affect the business, especially production levels. All these factors culminated in the creation of the category: *Natural capital*.

"Bio-security is lapsed, almost non-existent in this country; yet it poses such a threat to animals and humans alike. The foot and mouth crisis highlighted this shortfall. Natural disasters can also affect global food production and with no food mountains left in Europe, one has to question where the food will come from" (Amy, Case 1).

"The problem with farming is that it is so dependent on the weather. I am currently trying to get corn in whilst it is dry. I can't afford to mechanically dry it off as I cut it, because of the fuel costs, and I know I won't recoup these costs on what I will get for the corn when it is sold" (Daniel, Case 9).

Farmers are worried about the lack of Government understanding and recognition of the risk of importing disease. They are also concerned over the natural resources being destroyed in other countries.

"We are importing food from countries where disease is endemic and threatening our own health and the health of our animals, but that doesn't seem to matter to the Government. We are importing food from places like Argentina and Brazil where they have - BSE, FMD, Ebola and so on. They have other diseases and animals are kept in appalling conditions compared to ours, and before people get on their high horse that 'it is unfair to compare the two', then why do we have all these standards in this country, if we are not allowed to make comparisons? Brazil is destroying the rain forest at such a high scale to

have these commercial beef units. Surely that is not environmentally friendly or agriculturally sustainable. We can produce enough beef for ourselves in this country so why do we need to import?" (Daniel, Case 9).

Farmers believe they are fully capable of producing enough indigenous food to feed the UK nation. Imports could be viewed as another change that has undermined farmers' role in society. Farmers are aware of the wider implications of *natural capital*. Nature is at the root of their emotional attachment to the job.

"I don't really know what motivates me. I like working outdoors with animals...We didn't lose our herd from foot and mouth but I was very worried, and I don't think I could have stayed here and watched my animals being killed for no real reason. Our animals would have gone as a contingency slaughter. It made me realise how much I would miss them and how horrible it would be without them" (Karl, Case 10).

6.3.8 Summary

The interview data aim to show that farmers and their families have access to, and utilise, different forms of *capital*, both consciously and subconsciously. With the exception of *economic capital*, farmers may or may not know the importance of alternative forms of *capital* or even that they are using these forms of *capital*. For example, the family may only be regarded as a form of labour in economic terms, without awareness of the fact that individuals possess skills and knowledge (*cultural capital*) and are part of valuable networks (*social capital*).

All forms of *capital* are constantly transferred between the family and the business. For example, the father will teach his son how to run the family business (sharing *cultural capital*) and, in turn, the son/daughter will work on the farm, saving labour costs (*economic capital*) and bringing new ideas to running the business, especially if they have been to university.

Figure 2 below demonstrates where the inductive elements of my work meet the deductive elements Bourdieu's theory. Themes identified during data analysis have been interpreted and related to Bourdieu's theory in the final stages of data analysis. Figure 2 also includes my contribution to Bourdieu's theory, suggesting the need to add *natural capital* in his theory of *capitals*.

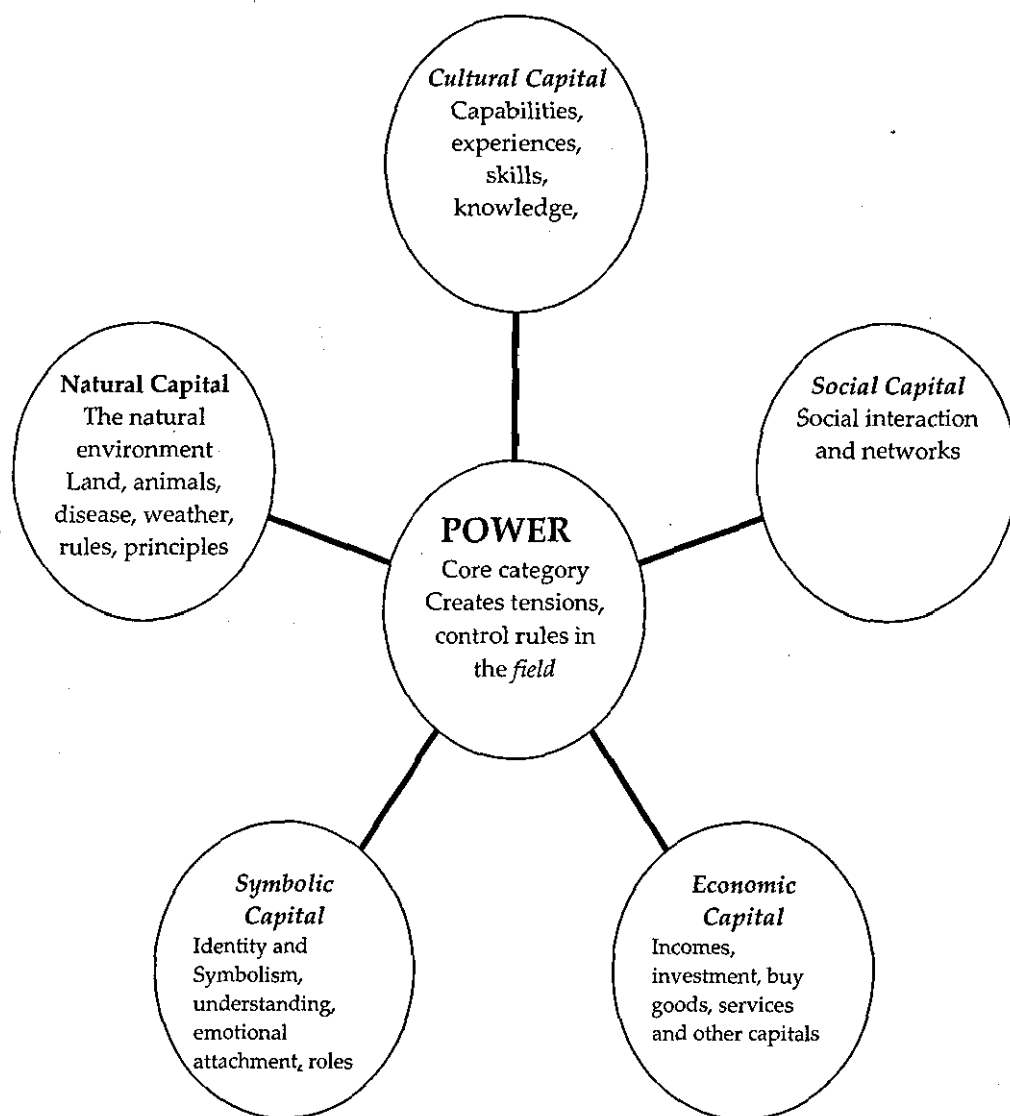


Figure 2: Refined Categories to Emerge from the Ten Cases

6.4 So Why Farm?

None of the farmers regret choosing farming as a career, which became an important feature in developing identity as a category. Most farmers, their

spouses and adult children couldn't imagine doing anything else; they enjoyed working outdoors and with nature, as well as the opportunity to live in the country (code in locality category). Having the job autonomy to plan their work days and owning their own business (independence, code control) were important for farmers and their family members involved in the business. As one farmer succinctly says:

"I like where I live and I guess I don't know anything else. I don't really want to do anything else. Farming offers a kind of security; in the fact that I have a job. It is my own business and I am responsible for what happens" (Pete, Case 3).

Farmers cited profit as a reason to farm, as well as providing for their families, watching their children grow-up and being part of the family business. The farmers interviewed did not want to make vast amounts of money, just enough to have a reasonable income (sustainable levels of *economic capital*). All the farmers commented on the way of life farming offered them, even if they were profit orientated. The quote below demonstrates the variety of reasons to farm, and it is a view shared by many farmers.

J – "What aspects of farming are important to you"?

K – "I guess making a good living is the main reason to work. Yes, making a reasonable income, and do a good job. I think it is important to have done a job and made sure you did it well. I like to ensure that my cows and crops do well, and we have done everything we can to get the most out of both of them. Profit is important, and to make sure the cows are well cared for. I like to get the best from my farm... Farming does give you a good way of life: time to myself; to see my family and my children grow up; and be involved with the wider farming community".

J – "So is it a way of life"?

K – "I guess so. I have done nothing but farm, so it is the only life I have known and there is nothing else I want to do. Like I mentioned before I'm not sure why I went into farming but it is what I always wanted to do from an early age" (Karl, Case 10).

It is important for farmers to ensure that their land and animals are nurtured and cared for appropriately. This point was stressed by farmers, spouses and children involved in the farm business.

The farmers' spouses and children echoed farmers' views on why they farm, citing; lifestyle, outdoor work (working environment), working with animals (nature) and independence (control) as important. Succession became one of the most important factors in why farmers farm. All farmers reported high levels of job satisfaction commenting on how they enjoyed their work and the work environment; farmers had high levels of pride in their work and strove to maintain their way of life. All farmers stated they wanted a reasonable income (*economic capital*, previously discussed), stating that current market forces did not provide this (*field operations and rule of the game affect farmers struggles for capital*). Some farmers remarked that enjoyment was being eroded by policy, namely red-tape and bureaucracy (rules of the game). The downsides of farming were cited as long anti-social hours, and little recognition for the work they do.

In essence, farming is farmers' identity and way of life; it is who they are and their role in society. In asking why farmers farm, therefore, it is their life and farming becomes as much a part of the farmer as the farmer is a part of farming (see: Ostrow, 1981). This section has introduced the reader to some of the themes, codes and categories developed in the process of data analysis. The next section explains why four cases were chosen for inclusion in the thesis.

6.5 Four Cases in the Thesis

From the initial ten cases, I chose four to study in detail for the purpose of answering the research questions. These four cases provide detailed insights into the operations of the family farm business and farmer behaviour. I chose these

cases based on the data gathered, and because they represent different types of farmers within the dairy farming community. Although the categories below are somewhat arbitrary, the classification takes direction from Weber's (1920) social action, which was chosen in response to the case findings, business operations and case evaluations. I suggest that the *habitus* is influenced strongly by one type of action, see: Figure 3 below. Therefore, the classifications below stem from my interpretation of Weber's work and findings from my data, which are then applied to Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*. The social action preference of each farmer's *habitus* will determine his behaviour in response to changes in the *field*. The social action of the farm as a collective social unit depends on the *habitus* of the farmer, their spouses and children. In most cases, the farmer is the powerful figure in this small social collective unit (the farm business) and he generally has the ultimate say in what happens to the business.

Firstly, Weber (1920; 1978) suggests there is purposeful or goal-oriented rational action where both the goal and the means are rationally chosen (Roth and Wittich, 1978). In the case of this thesis, this would be the economically rational *habitus* demonstrated by the farmer in Chapter Eight. Secondly, Weber (1920) proposes there is value-orientated rational action, whereby a goal is pursued even though it may not be entirely rational. In the case of this thesis, the valued *habitus* is displayed by the farmer in Chapter Ten. The farmer values where he lives and breeding cows. Thirdly, there is emotional or affective motivation action (Weber, 1920; 1978). This is where the action is anchored in the emotional state of the actor rather than the rational goal. In the case of this thesis, this represents the idealist *habitus* and is depicted by the farmer in Chapter Nine. Finally, Weber names traditional action whereby the action of the individual relies on 'the eternal yesterday' (Weber, 1920; Roth and Wittich, 1978). In this thesis, this represents the traditionalist *habitus*. The farmer in question sees no need to change what he is doing, as seen in Chapter Seven.

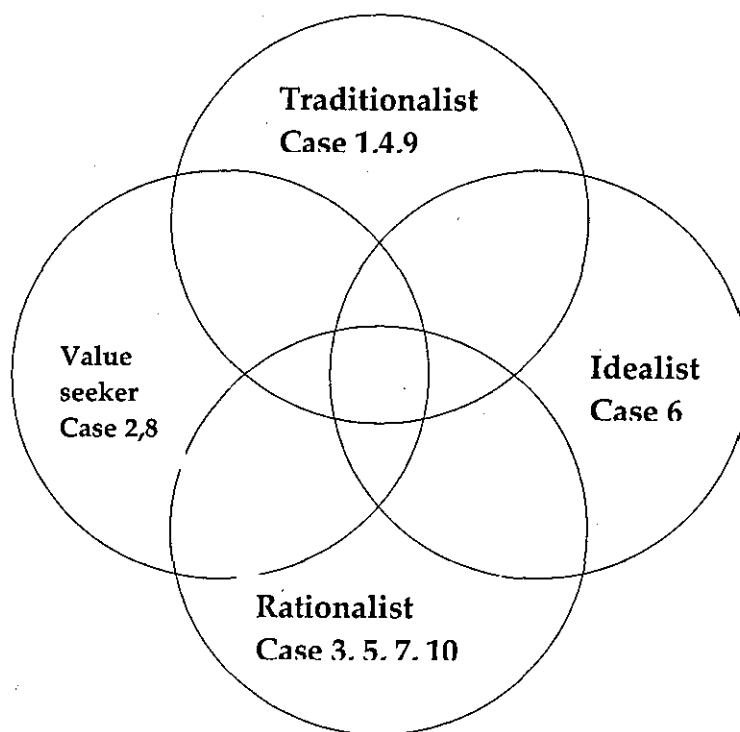


Figure 3: The Four Types of *Habitus*

Rational Action Theory (RAT) or economic theory assumes that each individual, and hence business will act in the same way – to maximise profits. The four cases show each individual has different reasons to be in business. Essentially, farmers' behaviour depends on their *habitus* and the type of social action that *habitus* prefers. Weber suggests that each individual will fit into one of the four types of social action, however this may not be the case with dairy farmers in Staffordshire and as a result some farmers in Staffordshire may not easily fall into these four types. These classifications have been based on the data collected from the farmers interviewed and since the sample may be biased it is possible that there are other types out there.

The cases classified in Figure 3 cover the themes that have been identified in the previous sections above, and illustrate how these themes link into the life-world of farming. Chapters Seven to Ten are structured as follows: a brief review of why the case was chosen and why I decided to use it as a detailed case in the thesis; then, the location of the farm is described; a brief insight is presented to my first encounter with the farmer and what I saw on arrival, as well as detailing family members' roles in the business. Each case study also includes a diagrammatic layout of the main farm holding and participant observations of the people and the place. This adds to the context of the case and helps the reader to understand the conditions of work and so on. The cases provide the family and farm history adding a micro level contextual background to the case. This adds depth to the industry (see: Chapter Two) and regional (see: 6.1 above) contexts.

In each case, as many people as possible connected to the farm have been interviewed. A view of the business can be seen from the farmer, their spouse and children. Data collected from the interview are analysed producing themes, which are linked, where appropriate, to the *field*, *habitus* and the different forms of *capital*. Detailed breakdowns of the themes, listed codes and categories, can be found in Appendix G. Where ever possible quotes are left in their entirety; I chose to use this as a way to present my findings in the hope that I do not lose the context, depth and meaning of the quotes. Each case is discussed and summarised and concludes with a critical evaluation.

Chapter Seven: The Traditionalist

7.1 Reasons for Choosing the Case

As previously stated in Chapter Five, this case was chosen because it replicates (Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003) many features of Case One and Case Two. The farm has been in the family for decades and is now into the 4th generation of family management. Farming is all the family have known. The main household income is derived from farming; the farmer has not diversified and does not intend to. There are no plans to expand the farm, for instance herd size, providing the family continue to make a reasonable living. The business is not in debt. When interviewing the farmer and his son, it becomes clear that their social action could be described as traditionalist, in line with Weber's understanding of the concept, that is action which relies on 'the external yesterday' (Weber, 1920). Their *habitus* is more influenced by past action that becomes habit, rather than pursuing new experiences and reshaping their *habitus* in line with these experiences.

To reiterate, the *habitus* is the accumulation of the farmer's life experiences, encompassing certain ways of thinking, speaking, acting and reacting to situations. These factors consciously and subconsciously impact on the farmer's ability to act in the present situation, forming a practical sense (feel for the game) for what they should do. The business operates as it always has done (following tradition); changes are only made in response to alterations in the rules of the game. Data were gathered using participant observation and interviews with the farmer, his son and the farmer's partner.

7.2 The Case

The farm is located in Mid-Staffordshire, close to Cannock Chase, near a small village surrounded by neighbouring farms. The farm is situated off a small lane up a long, bumpy, winding drive with fields on either side. At the end of the drive is a large yard, which was clean and tidy. The majority of farm buildings were on the left, stretching for some distance. The farmhouse stood on the right, with more farm buildings in front of me.

In the yard, there was a tractor and trailer, and an old car parked in front of an open garage. Ben (the son) greeted me at the front door, wearing jeans and a jumper. He had dark hair and was medium build and height. The interview with Ben was carried out in the farmhouse kitchen. Walking through the front door, the kitchen was situated to the left; this was a characteristic large farmhouse kitchen, with an old blue and red tiled floor, and a large multi-fuel Aga on the near wall. A wooden table, covered in farming-related documents was pushed up against the far wall. The sink, under a window, had kitchen units either side stretching along the back wall.

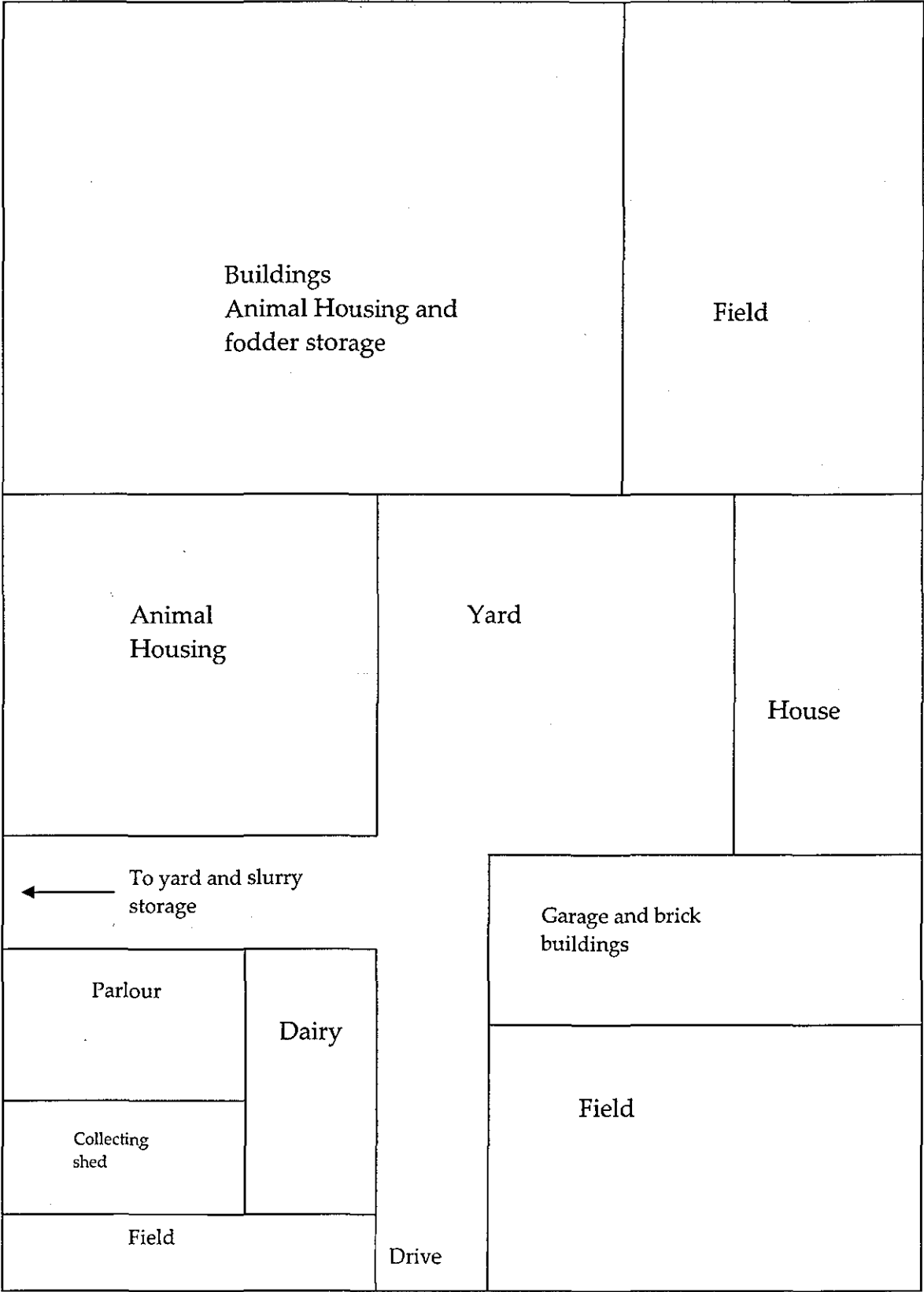
Ben's father, Mike, is separated from his mother, Sue, who lives in a separate dwelling, two miles away. Mike's house is a relatively new, large modern dwelling. It has steps leading to the front door, a large double garage and two entrances from the lane. Sally (Mike's partner) greeted Ben and myself at the door, she wore jeans and a blue sweatshirt. She had light brown hair and was medium build and height. Mike and Sally were interviewed in the kitchen. The kitchen was modern, compared to the traditional farmhouse kitchen. There was no Aga, just a modern cooker and new looking kitchen units and sink. There was a kitchen table, covered in farming documents relating to the SFP and new cross compliance regulations. To the front of the kitchen there was a three-piece

suite, table and a television. Mike sat in one of the chairs, wearing a shirt and pull-over with jeans. He was medium build, slightly taller than Ben and was beginning to go grey.

7.3 Family History

Both sides of the family have been involved with farming for as long as they can remember. The farm is now under joint management of third (Mike) and fourth (Ben) generation family members. Mike comes from a farming background. Mike's father moved to Flat Fields Farm when he was nine years old. The family previously farmed at Manor Farm, Cotton. Mike's mother farmed at Meakin, before she met his father. Mike's brother and sister farm in Staffordshire, as did Sue's mum and dad. Ben's brother, Hugh, used to work on the farm, but left after disagreements with Mike. Hugh now works as a feed merchant and relief milks for various farmers at weekends.

Figure 4: Farm Layout – The Traditionalist (not to scale)



7.4 Farm History under Family Management

The family have been farming at the premises for 90 years. The business is run as a father and son operation with one full-time worker, a Latvian, who recently replaced the former dairyman after 12 years service. They also employ a relief milkman when required. They own 200 acres and rent ten. Business operations have not changed over the years. No additional land has been acquired over the last five years, and production levels have remained constant. Since 1980, the herd size has grown by around 30 cows, stabilising around the present 150 mark. The dairy cows are registered pedigree Holstein Friesians. The intention is to continue business operations as they are, to provide a reasonable living for the family.

Mike and Ben have known nothing else but farming, each continuing the family tradition of dairy farming. Mike worked on the farm from a very early age, taking on more responsibility as he grew older, until he took over from his father. Mike bought the farm from his father and gradually built it up to the size it is today. Ben started milking the cows when he was 14, and has farmed ever since. From the age of 15, Ben had to increase his responsibilities, both on the farm and caring for his disabled mother, who has Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Ben worked full-time on the farm from the age of 16. Farm work came before education, though he completed the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) day-release. He can spend up to 80 hours a week working on the farm. Ben concentrates on the day-to-day operations of the business, while his father makes more long-term decisions.

Farm contractors are used for silaging, spraying, sowing grass seed and hedge cutting. Maize is grown on the farm to feed the cows, and new CAP regulations now require set-a-side. The farm business has not diversified, although they are

applying for the environmental stewardship scheme for Pillar Two funding on top of Pillar One, money (SFP).

7.5 The Farmer

Mike is over 65, and still works full-time on the farm. He is involved with all aspects of the business. He is very outspoken and willing to share his views. Mike has no formal qualifications (lack of institutional *cultural capital*). However, skills and knowledge have been passed on across each generation (*cultural capital*). Mike learnt everything he knows about farming from his parents, along with his own experiences of running the farm (these experiences also shape his traditional *habitus*). Mike is currently preparing his son to take over more of the decision making, whilst he is still able to share his experiences and provide guidance (mentoring and transferring *cultural capital*).

Mike's *habitus* is ingrained from his lifetime experiences of working on the family farm (traditional way of working). He talks about being born and bred into farming (farmer identity, see: Burton, 1998; Seabrook and Higgins, 1988). He was prepared for a career in farming when he was born (pre-ordained action). There seems to be a calling (born and bred) that Mike went into farming, which is part of Mike, his identity and place in society.

"I was born and bred into farming. I have always lived on the farm. It is my only interest and at my time of life, I have no other options available to me".

Burton (1998, 2004) also found that farmers claim farming is 'in the blood', it is pre-ordained and farmers have a moral obligation to nurture. Identity later became an important code relating to *symbolic capital* and connected to farmers' emotional attachment to their businesses. Identity has also been identified as an important factor for entrepreneurs (Rae, 2000). As Leopold (1939) says, the farm as a whole is: "the owner's portrait of himself".

"I like my cows. I like having things to a high standard. I guess it is more a pride thing really, I don't want someone saying I'm a bad farmer".

Having a pride in what he does relates to Mike's identity and how he sees himself in society. His animals are important to him and his business. He believes he farms to a high standard, which accounts for the healthy looking animals and a tidy farmyard. He does not want to be seen as a bad farmer. He wants to be seen as a good farmer in both the farming community and the wider social world (identity).

Mike has seen many changes to farming in his life. These changes are affecting Mike's life-world; some changes are challenging his long established (traditional) *habitus*. As data analysis progressed, changes previously mentioned in Chapter Six became an important feature of the *field*. To re-cap, the *field* is characterised by a patterned set of practices in which competent action conforms to the set rules of the game. The *field* is a playground (or battlefield) in which agents endowed with a certain *field*-relevant *capital* try to advance their position by playing the game (Bourdieu, 1986; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). Many of these changes were instigated by dominant groups (namely the Government), who control rules of the game.

"In the war years, there was a reliance on the farmer to feed the nation. After food shortages farmers worked the land hard to provide food for the nation".

Farmers' traditional role was to produce food; this was heralded by Government and public alike shortly after WWII (see: Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990 for a detailed account).

"Now there is more peace, which is not a bad thing, farmers are not relied on. Food is used by countries as bargaining power a way to trade and barter with other countries. Global markets are used as mechanisms to crash commodity prices. These practices have bad effects on developing countries. The global economy may not be good for national economies".

Mike feels uneasy about the level of Government power and their ability to control global and domestic markets. He is also concerned about the sustainability of agriculture.

"If farmers are forced out, we will not have a food industry. Government thinks it can manage without the industry, but what happens if we get to the stage where there is global war and Britain is not self-sufficient in food? What will happen then? We are being told that the world population is rising, especially in developing countries. We are importing food from these countries and taking away their produce, so we can have cheap food and they end up starving – Is this fair? Is this sustainable agriculture? Is this globally moral? – I don't think so. UK Farmers could supply the UK with indigenous foods".

Mike believes farming has a future, but is concerned about the lack of new entrants into the industry. He points to the educational system, suggesting food and farming are not promoted as good industries to work in.

"Yes, there is a future. But, I'm concerned about the lack of new entrants into the industry and the lack of those being encouraged in education to go into farming. I don't think there are enough farmers' sons prepared to carry on either. The only people who have enough money to buy a farm are those rich city slickers, who don't want to farm. If people are lucky enough to have no borrowings and own their farm, then they are in a better position to carry on".

Mike is concerned about low levels of *economic capital* available to new entrants to start their own farm business, especially when changes (in rules) in the industry have resulted in a more aggressive and competitive market, where struggles for *capitals* have intensified. This could account for reductions in *social capital*, especially trust and co-operation between farmers, which are essential to promote useful networks and *social capital* (see: Coleman, 1990; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 1993 for detailed critiques of *social capital*).

Ben and Mike hold similar views about the tough future facing farmers, as a result of the changes in how the *field* operates and rules of the game. Farmers

feel that the identity and role of farmers will only be valued again when food shortages are experienced by society. They both believe that farms will have to get larger to survive, a point raised by other farmers in Chapter Six, as Mike says:

"The good days have gone for milk and I don't think they will return. The future will be tough, very much survival of the fittest. If food shortages are experienced, farmers may be seen as more important once again. Farms will get bigger. There is no future for the small holding; unless it is someone who is rich, just playing at farming; and not doing it for any other reason than a hobby".

For Mike, succession is a major part of the life-world and an important goal for the family business. Succession is a major reason why family businesses continue and seek long-term orientated goals (highlighted by: Carlock and Ward, 2001; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Gersick *et al.*, 1997; Moores and Barratt, 2002). He raises the point that he was born to farm, not do paperwork (it could be argued he does not have the skills – *cultural capital*, to cope with the volume of paperwork). His action may be better explained through the suggestion that his traditionalist *habitus* rejects work tasks that conflict with his pre-dispositions of what farming entails. Mike does not like the additional work task of paperwork, seeing his role as primary producer of food (traditional view). Farming is a major part of who Mike is, his identity. I asked Mike when he would stop farming, he replied:

"Farming is my life and I will carry on until I can't do anymore. I don't want to know about the paperwork. If it wasn't for Sally helping, I would bury my head in the sand - so to speak. I don't understand most of it and I don't want to. It is not my job to do paperwork. I was born to farm, not do paperwork. If I wanted to do paperwork, I would get a job in an office somewhere. Those that farm and finish, because their sons don't want to continue, is such a shame; there is no one to continue these farms. The farm is sold, generally not for farming purposes, because farmers cannot afford them. It is people from outside the rural community and this is not really a good thing, unless these people understand what the countryside is about. It is not about ideals and it doesn't look beautiful

all the time. It may not be the idealistic dream they had. You get power cuts, and muck on the road; there will be a certain amount of inconvenience and noise all hours with farmers try to get their crops in. It is inevitable. Then these people complain and you get tensions, in what was a happy community”.

Mike is aware of the tensions in the rural community (discussed in Chapter Six). Farmers need to cope and manage these tensions, which could strengthen their position in the *field*. Farmers need to strengthen their collective behaviour amongst themselves and this goes against what Governments have been trying to instil in farmers – to become independent businessmen.

7.6 The Son

Ben is 32 and single. He has always lived on the farm premises, and has farmed full-time for 16 years. Ben completed YTS day-release but he openly admits that he has no other formal qualifications (lack of institutional *cultural capital*). He has learnt all he knows on the job (*cultural capital*) and believes he will be farming in the future. He appreciates that other jobs may not be better.

“I guess I drifted into farming. It is all I have known all my life and I can’t really see myself doing anything else. My father assumed I would go into farming, and working on the farm came before anything else. I would have to leave doing school work in favour of helping out on the farm, even during exam time...When I was doing exams and work needed to be done on the farm, my dad would say that the farm work was more important. So I didn’t leave with many qualifications. All jobs these days require you to be computer literate and work in an office, which is something I couldn’t do. There are better and worse jobs out there, so the grass may not be greener in a different job. I can see a future for farming. Although it won’t be easy and things will get harder. Things will get more difficult with red-tape and things like that. The market will also be harsher. We will be competing against one another, as well as imports. We will have to be very price and customer focused, with a high regard for the environment”.

Again, farming for Ben is 'in the blood'; it was pre-ordained (a pre-given identity) that he would take over the family farm (a moral obligation to do so). Ben feels that Mike planned his career for him, grooming him to take over the farm from a very early age. It was assumed Ben would become a farmer and, as such, his career was planned out for him, in the same way that his father was 'born and bred' into farming. Farming is his pre-ordained identity (Burton, 2004). Ben had to sacrifice his education for the sake of the farm business, resulting in a lack of institutional *cultural capital*.

Like Mike, farming is a major part of Ben's life. Ben's *habitus* is ingrained with his own experiences in the industry and knowledge (*cultural capital*), and his social networks (*social capital*) derived mainly YFC. Ben also learnt his skills and knowledge from his father, which Bourdieu sees as the primary process in transferring knowledge, forming the basis of values and instilled disposition to act (*habitus*). Hence, fathers and sons tend to act in similar ways. All of Ben's skills and capabilities are connected to farming and he believes he lacks relevant skills to do other jobs. As a result of his traditionalist *habitus*, he cannot see how these skills could be transferred to another career, even though farming is a multi-skilled profession (Ashby, 1925; Curry *et al.*, 2002; Gasson, 1998).

"I have never been to college. I didn't really finish school properly. So I guess I'm trapped in farming, which is good and bad. At least I'm not stuck in an office. I would have to have a job outside, if I wasn't doing farming and there aren't many of those about. All my skills are connected to farming: breeding; milking; and tractor driving. Life is getting harder as more and more people want a piece of your business. They are cutting prices and increasing costs, reducing my profitability, which we aren't able to control. We cannot demand a price for our milk. Then there's paperwork, which is becoming a mine-field, as more rules and regulations are placed on us".

Ben describes the downsides to farming, commenting that life is getting harder as 'rules of the game' constantly change, resulting in powerful groups retaining

and even increasing their share of *economic capital*. When asked about his motivations to work, Ben comments that these change over time, suggesting that age affects what farmers do (previously mentioned in Chapter Six).

"When you're young, you are driven far more than when you get older. I think you see things in a different light: more hope, more ambition, than when you have done a job for so long, and you start to realise that things are not as you imagined. I was born and bred into farming and the hard work ethic, although as you get older you do tend to lose enthusiasm. I do enjoy where I live, but it's tough".

Ben explains the positive sides to farming. He enjoys the variation in work tasks and job autonomy to plan his day. This gives him a level of control over his own destiny, a reason why people choose to run their own business. His life-world revolves around farming, which is part of his identity and his position in the *field*.

"I couldn't work in an office. I like the variation of jobs, one day won't be the same as the next day. You've got milking, baling, ploughing, fencing, book work to do. You are your own boss, you can plan your days as you like, so long as you get the work done. Though milking is the one task that needs to be done at the same time each day".

Ben thinks he will be farming in the future but he is apprehensive about it.

"I don't really know what the future holds, anything could happen. I don't really focus on the future. I look at what happens today and concentrate on today's challenges. I will probably be farming, but I don't know what the future is for the industry. I think if the Government is determined to stop the UK farming and turn it into a national park for recreation, then they will."

The power of the Government is something Ben is aware of, and he has negative feelings towards the Government, especially the way they exercise their power in the *field*. When asked if he would leave the farm, Ben replied:

"This is my home and I have a lot of friends round here through YFC and I don't think there is anywhere else I would rather be. We have good grass land, mainly flat and produces well for us. We know about our machinery and buildings, we know where repairs need to be made etc. A new farm would be a bit of a gamble.

We have no reason to expand, we don't need more land so there is no reason to move".

Ben sees the farm, not only, as his place of work, but the place where he lives. Therefore, he has a level of emotional attachment to every aspect of the farm. Ben feels he 'knows' his farm, its faults and strengths, and therefore he feels comfortable staying where he is (familiarity and links to his traditional *habitus*). The farm has good grass land, which is important for the business's level of *natural capital*.

7.7 Farmer's Partner

Sally works full-time for social security. Her regular income each month contributes to the household's income (*economic capital*). Sally also helps on the farm doing the majority of paperwork. Sally only became involved with farming after meeting Mike.

"My partner, he is a farmer. I have had little bits to do with the industry before that, but not that much. My involvement increased when I met him. I also work for social security full-time. I will support my partner, and his son wants to go into farming".

Sally is very passionate about the issues facing farmers. She comments on the downsides of farming, especially the complication of paperwork (suggesting a lack of understanding – *cultural capital*, to cope with the rules of the game).

"Farmers work long hours and they need to be repaid for their hard work. SFP is another complication, although the entry level stewardship should only be what a good farmer is already doing bar a few minor things. I do think we should be allowed to farm. Not spend most of our time pushing paper around and dealing with people who are allowed to make mistakes. We are penalised, if we make a mistake".

Sally does identify good aspects of farming and appreciates that she lives in a nice place; farming allows her to live in the countryside.

"We live in a beautiful place and we have something of our own. We have our own business and we work for ourselves. I came into farming, so I guess I don't see things the same as someone who was brought up on farming. So we continue and I know that Mike will never do anything else and he is good at his job, farming not paperwork. Whereas I can do the paperwork, so we make a good team".

Being involved in the family business is important for Sally. She sees that each member has a role to play in the business, and use their own talents (capabilities – *cultural capital*) for the good of the business. The family enjoy having their own business.

The next section explores the business operations in more detail.

7.8 Business Operations

The business is operated as a family business with three family members, each having a role and contributing to the business operations, along with one full-time employee. It is clear that Mike is thinking about the future, handing over more responsibility to Ben, who has a high level of respect for his father.

"I'm involved with the day-to-day running of the farm and the decisions made in order to make sure the farm runs smoothly. Decisions relating to greater aspects of the business are shared with my father, who ultimately has the last say. He has built the business up and it is only fair that he has the last say as to what we do. I prefer to do the daily work, than to make decisions for the future".

Mike on the other hand, wants Ben to take more responsibility, before he retires.

"We jointly make decisions. Although Ben needs to become more involved, as I reach the stage where I want to take a back seat and eventually retire".

Mike is a mentor for Ben, encouraging him to learn how to make decisions, whilst he is able to offer guidance, each having important roles in the business. Mike specifically wants to pass the business onto Ben (succession) and strives for

high animal welfare standards. Mike's animals are very important to him and his business (*natural capital*). He is emotionally attached to his animals and he strives to improve the quality of his herd. When conducting participant observation, it is clear that cows are one aspect of the emotional side of farming (*symbolic capital*, in terms of investment in time, money and knowledge).

"I want to pass my farm onto my son, but my main strategic decisions revolve around my animals; improving housing, and the herd genetics to increase cow's milk yield and longevity. The welfare and genetic standards of my cows are very important to me and the business. I have not used sexed semen or any other biotechnological advances".

The business does not use technology, such as the internet, although milk recording is used. This action reflects their traditional *habitus*, as they operate the business as they have done for years. As Mike says:

"We don't have a computer, all the paperwork is done manually Sally helps Ben with the paperwork. We do however milk report and that is the only, vaguely computer related thing we do".

Any business planning is conducted over the kitchen table, which results in business and home life merging into one, a common feature of family farming.

This is highlighted by Sally:

"We plan over the kitchen table. We discuss things and then we decide what we are going to do. Mike and Ben are responsible for breeding and day-to-day decisions. I get involved if it requires paperwork, especially from new regulations. It is hard to separate business and home life. We live in a house away from the main farm and Ben lives with his mum on the farm. But work still invades into your home life. There is paperwork everywhere and you have phone calls at night; people calling to sell you something, or conducting a survey".

The family are not long-term (business) goal orientated. They do not want to radically change (which would go against their traditional *habitus*) but, at the same time, they do not want a situation where the business begins moving

backwards. They want to keep making a reasonable income (*economic capital*).

As Ben puts it:

"We don't have a long-term goal. You can become so blind to achieving that goal, you don't consider alternatives that may be better for you and your farm. I'm happy with the way things are going and even though we are not radically moving forward, we are not moving backwards or getting left behind. The key element affecting our decisions is the supply and demand of our produce. We alter things accordingly to retain profitability for the business".

Any change in business operations are in response to changes taking place in the *field*, namely the buyers' market and declining milk prices Ben says:

"We decided to change milk buyer because Dairy Farmers of Great Britain (DFoGB) are looking to take over Birmingham Co-op and we fear they will squeeze the milk price down. Once our notice time expires, we're moving to Arla, who pay more for producing over a certain litreage a day, and pay more for butter fat content, rather than penalising it. Arla commented in one of its presentations that supermarkets need farmers, but we have to question this, because they don't treat farmers with any respect or any dignity".

Mike shares his son's views and adds:

"If we keep a level production, for example only differ by 10% either way we get a bonus; and if we produce a certain butterfat level, we get a bonus instead of being penalised by the Co-op. I had to use 64,000 litres of quota so I wasn't penalised for my butter fat content. Also if we keep above 3,100 litres a day, we get a bonus. I know people who supply Fauld, which is now DFoGB and they are struggling with the low milk price, and dealing with the company".

These comments highlight how changes in 'rules of the game' (and how different buyers have different rules) force changes for small businesses as they try to retain *economic capital* and continue to play the game.

The business is run in a traditional way, with Mike having the final say on business decisions and business matters discussed over the kitchen table (reflecting their traditional *habitus*). Family and business life overlaps in complex

ways, a characteristic of family business. Each family member has knowledge and skills (*cultural capital*) to offer the business and, in the case of Mike and Ben, these have come from the family that have farmed over generations and have learnt from their own experiences and passed this knowledge onto children (Elder and Conger, 2000; specifically *social capital* see: Lowry, 1977; 1987).

The next section, investigates the *field* in which the farm business operates in and investigates the views of those interviewed.

7.9 The *Field* and Rules of the Game

Changes in the industry (rules of the game) and changes in other *fields* (retail, cereal, banking and so on) have resulted in market operations becoming increasingly aggressive. This is changing a life-world that many farmers have become accustomed to, and conflicting with their traditional *habitus*, as Mike says:

"Farming is becoming less a way of life and more an aggressive industry, requiring business ruthlessness and strategy".

Ben acknowledges changes in policy affect how the business is run (namely increases in paperwork). He also realises these are not confined to farming. Ben talks about the changes he has seen in farming since the 1980s. He now feels under pressure and that his business is becoming increasingly controlled by (powerful) external organisations.

"We are now rushing to do work. We always seem to be under pressure to get things done. There is far too much paperwork. I feel that you are not able to look after your animals the way you want to, or do work the way you used to. The nanny state stops you doing things, and stops you thinking for yourself...I guess it's the amount of red tape (legislation) we have to deal with. The fact is it creates extra work, which we cannot possibly find the money to pay someone else to do.

So we have to do it ourselves, increasing our working week. That is why I'm now doing over 80 hours a week. Double the normal working week".

Ben, Mike and Sally talk about factors affecting their working environment. These quotes highlight the importance of knowing the rules of the game, and the impact that dominant groups (Government) can have on how small businesses are run.

"The amount of paperwork distracts you from your original purpose and reasons for working, which is to farm and that means to produce something. Not write about what you are doing. Policy is another factor, as well as supermarkets and how they operate in the market" (Ben).

"Paperwork puts pressure on the rest of the farm work. It means that other things have to be left, so that paperwork can be done. So odd jobs are left until they are absolutely desperate. We are forced into doing it [paperwork] because it now relates to the income that you are going to get" (Mike).

Paperwork (already mentioned in previous quotes) is a recurring problem, identified by the family. Rules are ambiguous and difficult to understand. As Sally says:

"I'm very annoyed about the amount of paperwork there is. I'm increasingly burdened with new paperwork to read and new things to do. It's a nightmare it has taken a long time for me to understand it. After doing a day's work, it is not nice to have to sit down and work out things for cross compliance. It seems to be worse than bureaucratic Governmental bodies, and they're bad. You have added problems with people telling you what you can and cannot do. For example, the Environment Agency: in terms of spreading manure - where and when you can do it".

Rules of the game are created and regulated by dominant groups with higher levels of *capital*, especially institutional *cultural capital* (see: Bourdieu, 1986; 1991). These rules constrict how farmers operate their businesses and what they are able to do at certain times, particularly environmental legislation. Mike is highly opinionated about policy and Government. He feels that farm inspectors lack

understanding of the 'principles' (which relates to the natural side of farming) and farming's connection to the natural world.

"We have all these inspections now and extra paperwork because of CAP, animal welfare, dairy hygiene, and animal medical and movement records. Most of the people inspecting farmers don't know what farming is. They probably have never seen a cow before they got the job, let alone how to look after one properly. They want people to do things a certain way. Every farm should do the same and produce homogenous food for a society quickly losing its taste buds. McDonalds is an example – it's all the same, it's tasteless. I tried it once just to see how bad it was. So we are standardising food and losing varieties of taste. Many crops varieties have been lost through GM and we will never get them back. I can see that rules and regulations create a comply or get out regime. If you don't comply you can't sell your produce and you can't get SFP. You only get payment for keeping your land in good agricultural condition and write about it! Government are forcing you out with paperwork".

This quote highlights some of the problems farmers face, principally regulations and inspections. Inspectors do not have a clear understanding of farming and the effect nature has on the business. Mike feels alienated by the introduction of vast amounts of paperwork, suggesting his lack of institutional *cultural capital* affects his ability to cope with the paperwork now involved with farming. Paperwork goes against his traditionalist *habitus*, which was formed at a time when farmers were allowed to farm, and their primary aim was to produce as much food as possible for a nation that was starving after the war. Those in power have not helped farmers to overcome their fear of paperwork. Instead, the family feel punished via inspections and, if they fail to comply, their payments are reduced.

Sally also has strong feelings about inspectors and succinctly points out that:

"Most people inspecting farmers are young, fresh out of university and have probably never set foot on a farm before. They don't praise when something is

done right and they don't show you how it should be done. They just criticise. When you ask for guidance they don't know how to do it themselves, so no wonder farmers are annoyed with them. That is what annoys farmers, who have been doing things for years and to have someone who doesn't know anything about farming telling them what to do...It's an issue of pride for farmers – you see? They have been farming for an age, and now they are suddenly being told what to do. You need a certain amount of tact and sympathy if you are to get people to listen to you. Not some hot-headed person with a point to prove. Would they like someone telling them how to do their job?"

From this quote it could be argued that Sally is suggesting that, in order to change farmers' *habitus*, especially traditionalists, farmers should be coaxed into change by those in power. She feels there needs to be a level of respect for what farmers have done in the past. Therefore, people inspecting farmers should be tactful in instigating change. Mike believes inspectors should have been in the industry for some time to know and understand the natural element of farming and understand the principles involved. He says:

"Why can't they have people inspecting farmers who have been farmers. Dam good ones, who know what they are talking about, and sympathetic to our problems and offer guidance as to how we could get help and support to change things. Instead of young, arrogant people who think they know best, but don't understand farming".

Policy (rules of the game) affects decisions. Mike talks sympathetically about the added problems for tenant farmers. Yet, he speaks unfavourably about incomers to rural communities, perhaps seeing them as a threat with their higher levels of *capital* and greater power in the *field*. They also have a different perception and value of what the countryside should be (discussed in Chapter Six), which may go against his traditional *habitus*.

"SFP affects decision-making. All policy affects what we can do with our business. For example, we now have to have set-a-side to comply with SFP, because we grow a little bit of maize to feed the cows. Round London city people are buying land, inflating land prices beyond farmers reach, who cannot raise [economic]

capital to pay high prices; they cannot justify it to their bank manager. For example, County Council (CC) holdings sell the farmhouse (£250k), then sell barns for conversion (£300k - £400k) and you still have the land left which fetches £7-15k per acre! How can farmers afford this? Barn conversions are another interesting point, only rich people can afford them. It's not as though it is going to help young people in rural areas get housing. Why shouldn't they be entitled to live where they have grown up if they want to? They are the ones who will work the land in the future".

Mike comments at length on the financial pressures facing farming, exacerbated by the distribution of power (*capitals*) in the *field*. High levels of *capital* in the *field* lie in the hands of those with the greatest power (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, these agents are able to control the game.

"Input costs are increasing; fertiliser has increased from £95 tonne to £150 tonne. There are no alternatives apart from organic manure and you are restricted as to how much you can spread! I used to get £160 for Friesian bull calves, now they aren't worth £20. Semen can cost up to £50 and you may have to serve a cow more than once, so you are at a loss straight away! When the MMBs were in place we got 24pence per litre. It is never going to be that good again. We have to accept whatever price people say they will give for our produce; there is not normal costs plus margin in this business".

Not only are buyers reducing their prices for farmers' goods, but suppliers are increasing their costs. Both these factors have reduced farmers' profitability and share of *economic capital*. As Mike illustrates:

"Drugs [medicine] are a good example. Vets make large amounts of money from drugs. They can be bought direct for 33% less than from your vet, but you need a prescription from your vet to get them, and they aren't going to sign it for you are they, when they are making 33% profit on these drugs? Then my vet tells me it subsidises call out fees! Everyone else dictates how much we have to pay, we cannot bargain and say 'no' we won't pay that otherwise we wouldn't get suppliers. But people can say to us 'no' we won't pay that price for your milk. This is what you are going to get and you have to take it, otherwise you end up

with no buyer. I work 5.30 until 11 each day and I don't get anything like the wage other people doing these hours would get".

Ben thinks that a system needs to be in place to help farmers calculate true costs of production. This is a significant issue for the industry.

"The whole industry would be better if people reduced output by 10%, reducing supply and hopefully we would get a better milk price. I'm not someone who is an economist, or someone who is a marketer, but something needs to be done about pricing. A system of working out true costs and then making farmer co-operatives get a price as much above that cost as possible needs to be done. But that will never happen, someone will always be smart and think undercutting is best; just to get rid of more volume".

These passages highlight the unequal distribution of power in the *field*, and how power is used by dominant groups to retain their share of *economic capital*.

When asked about market operations (in the *field*), Ben has quite a lot to say, especially about what he believes is the profiteering of dominant groups, at the expense of less powerful players in the *field*.

"Supermarkets are the main determinant in the industry. They provide political parties with substantial money for campaigns etc. Therefore, they have to get something in return, Lord Sainsbury for example...Milk is used as a loss leader. It is used to get people in, who then buy other things, when they pop in for a pint of milk. Tesco made £billions. Who pays for this? Suppliers – on the whole, but also those that work for them. Supermarkets are not bothered where the produce comes from, so long as they get it cheap and can make a profit. Fuel protestors and those protesting about the price of milk get no public sympathy or support, like they would in France. Instead, the public see us as a nuisance to their daily lives".

Sally comments that life (playing the game) is getting too complicated. Her response highlights some of the negative sides of power (greed, excessive control held by dominant groups) which have a cost to others in the *field* and fuel the problems for farmers.

"All walks of life are getting too complicated, there's too much interference from the nanny state and excessive stress for people. Society is breaking down; no respect, no values: people don't seem to have values beyond selfishness. Being rich seems to be the only thing that matters, making money by having everything at a low price, but what price does this have on people. It's not just farmers in this country that are working for nothing, it's farmers across the globe and that's only the agricultural industry! What about the people working in sweat shops? It's all about slave labour, so we can have a lot for a little. Is this morally right?"

Mike highlights economic issues in relation to farm ownership and is sympathetic to the added problems faced by tenant farmers, such as how the lack of ownership affects planning.

"Tenants have no reason to stay after the initial five years tenancy. Many can only re-rent on a yearly basis after that. So how are you supposed to keep up with costs and plan year-by-year. For example, installing a new parlour will take years to repay. You work your life on the holding, seven days-a-week, perhaps have to sell your original house or borrow money to pay for the deposit and the rent. At the end of the day, when you have to leave, you have nothing and probably don't have enough money for a new house, especially in the current house price market. So what do you do? You probably can't live off the state pension and if you didn't make provisions yourself, you are basically stuck. So do you continue and die on the farm because you have no other option? I don't see what else these people can do. It is very sad, especially when they have worked so hard".

Sally expands on these concerns, especially for the smaller farms and their reduced share of the available *economic capital*. She talks about the changing social make-up of rural communities.

"We have problems of city people buying up land and farms forcing prices beyond the reach of people who want to farm – we'll have a landlord/tenant situation of peasant times, we're going back to feudal times. Tenancy farms have no future. They cannot sustain constant low prices and meet regulations. The smaller holdings say 70 acres or less may get family tax credit if they have children, but you cannot make a living out of farming on that. You need two jobs; the wife or

partner must have a job, just to survive. Where is the fairness in that? You might as well pack it in. I don't know why these people carry on, perhaps it's so they can keep the farm and keep living where they are. Council rents are cheap compared to private rents. In America and Canada there are no fourth generation farms. I think it will happen over here, especially with inheritance tax".

Ben, Mike and Sally talk about perceptions held between farmers and the wider society. They see the media creating problems for the industry in the image portrayed to outsiders (identity). The perceptions and understanding of those living in urban areas affect farming, as Government (and even retailers) have the power to control politics, and hence rules of the game. As Ben puts it:

"They [public] think we whinge about nothing and that we are getting thousands each from the Government as handouts. What about the car and the rail industry? Haven't they had handouts? The media doesn't give a good image of farmers, who only get into the press for some scandal or food crisis such as BSE, FMD. Those involved in the Sudan 1 scandal did not get the media attention that BSE got, nor the slander and accusations. Farmers were blamed for something (BSE) not entirely their fault. Farmers could not stop processors using non-meat animal products in beef burgers and other fast food, nor could they help it if people put animal by-products into feeds for protein and weren't told about it. They [public] see us whinging, bottom of the social ladder and living off the nation from huge subsidies".

Ben suggests farmers have lost power in the industry. He also suggests that the role of farmers in society (identity) is not fully appreciated and that a constant food supply is taken for granted. He believes this lack of appreciation stems from Government views.

"The NFU could do more, they could promote us more. The problem with the media is they always pick on the bad things. They never say what good has been done, nor report how bad it is in other countries - the animal suffering, or the conditions for food preparation in Eastern Europe or Arabic countries. Farmers have lost power and lack consumer confidence. Farmers have also lost respect for

what they do, as consumers have not had to go through food shortages and can buy food when ever they want".

Mike shares his son's views. He is concerned over the lack of Government acknowledgement of the dangers of importing disease (negative *natural capital*). Farmers are not able to control diseases, like FMD and bTB.

"FMD was a bad thing for the farming community, not only in terms of loss of earnings but increased regulation, still here today. It affects our business and our cash flow. People blamed us for disrupting things. It wasn't our fault. They only saw bad farmers on the telly, like the one where the outbreak started. If systems had been working properly then he (the farmer responsible) should never have been allowed to keep animals, especially if he had already been reported. The Government had been warned about these things, that disease may be on the brink, but they didn't do anything. FMD import restrictions on meat and food need to be in place; otherwise, we will end up with another disease outbreak. Bio-security is so lax, yet Government expect farmers and others in the food chain to do so much. How can farmers be accountable when borders are so easily penetrated?"

Mike discusses farmers' perceptions of good and bad farmers. How Mike is perceived by others is important to him and his *identity* in the farming community and wider society.

"Well, we can see both good and bad farmers. Good farmers – you know whether you are good at your job and you pride yourself on that. Like I said before, I have high, very high standards. My cows are what make me money, so I look after them. There is no point in maltreating them because at the end of the day it will cost you money. The farming community is very alert to good and bad farmers. Yet the authorities that be never seem to do anything with bad farmers. They let them keep farming and penalise everyone, instead of concentrating on those that are bad and giving the good ones a break. You sometimes feel like a naughty school child".

Mike values his animals, knowing they are his business's main asset.

Mike and Ben cite a lack of labour and changes in the rules of the game as reasons why some farmers are deciding to leave the industry.

"People are leaving the industry, but there are even fewer people entering the industry. This presents a labour problem. We find it very difficult to get qualified people to work for us. People are going out (of farming) because they cannot do all the work themselves, because of their age and they cannot find the labour" (Ben).

Finding people with the relevant qualifications and skills is becoming a major problem (lack of people with the necessary *cultural capital* to be employable). Mike believes constantly changing the rules of the game is forcing the older generation to stop farming. This suggests that the rules of the game go against the traditional *habitus* of many older farmers, who have neither the relevant *capitals* to cope nor are they given assistance to cope.

"People are going out of milk for two reasons: one - labour - they cannot find labour, especially people to milk. Finding a good herdsman is a complete nightmare. People don't want to work hard or they won't maintain your standards because it is not their business. Two - rules and regulation - dairy hygiene, BCMS, DEFRA, trading standards, cross compliance it's endless. You have inspector after inspector telling you what to do, how you should be doing things, that you need to spend money on your facilities etc. What money, I may add? If I had enough money to spend on these items don't they think I would have corrected the problem by now? There are more people inspecting farmers than there are farmers, perhaps money could be saved with an efficiency drive? I don't think the milk price in itself would make farmers leave unless it drops to such a low point we cannot possibly survive from it, then I do think it would become an influential part of whether we leave or not" (Mike).

The next sections examine the forms of *capital* and their use in the farming business.

7.9.2 *Economic capital*

To re-iterate, I use Bourdieu's view of *economic capital* as money, commodities, means of material production and other material assets (Wacquant 1987: 69; Smart, 1993).

Ben highlights the need for economic viability of the business and believes that their strategy of continuing as they are is the best way to stay in business. Ben and Mike talk about the need to make profit to live, but argue that it is not the only reason to farm. As Ben says:

"We are essentially working to pay too much tax. I feel the Government penalises people who work hard. I'm not profit driven, enjoying my work is more important to me, so long as there is enough money in the job to have a comfortable living. I spend far too much time doing paperwork. If I wanted to do paperwork, I would get an office job. I love working outside and with animals. The lifestyle of being outdoors all day is appealing. Way of life is important, although it is being eroded with rules and regulations; it is becoming a less enjoyable occupation. I love working with animals, looking after them and breeding dairy cows is what I enjoy".

Economic capital is closely linked to the distribution of power in the *field*. As Mike previously pointed out in this chapter, farmers are not able to retain their share of *economic capital* as suppliers and buyers determine prices. If Mike and Ben were acting according to RAT, then they should both be maximising profits or at least maximising their gain from the least possible effort. However, they will not risk expanding the business in the pursuit of increasing returns if that involves increasing debt. This reflects their traditional *habitus* to do things as they always have (risk averse).

"We wouldn't risk expanding and putting ourselves in a position where we are in debt. At the end of the day we own the farm and no-one can take it away from us".

7.9.3 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital refers to long-established dispositions including social and family norms, and knowledge and skills possessed by the individual, along with their cultural experiences and possessions. These relate to the *habitus* and traditional ways of working.

Mike talks about farming and comments that all his skills are connected to farming. He believes that he's too old to retrain for any other career. More importantly, he does not really want to do anything else.

"I can't see myself doing anything else. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

There is no point in me retraining to do something else".

This suggests that many older farmers lack the level of *cultural capital* (particularly formal education) needed in order to cope with the effects red-tape has on farm businesses and increasing competition. Ben talks about the need for a business head. He suggests that business skills are needed to ensure the business remains financially viable.

In today's world, you need a business head for whatever you do. The way of life is slowly disappearing. Stress creeps in, from pressures of being overworked and not receiving a decent wage for it. There must be financial viability to do things. Consolidation is a good way, or carrying on as you are, providing you are making money. I don't see expansion as the answer. Going forwards is not always the best thing to do. If you are borrowing more money and find you can't make repayments: you either lose everything, or end up working harder to keep what you had. Going backwards is not an option either. We are in the lucky position that we have no debt".

The life-world farmers know is changing; policy is trying to radically change the *field* and, as a consequence, is altering farmers' long established *habitus*, which centres on producing food (their identity in society). This affects the *cultural capital* possessed by farmers, including how they learn the business and other

skills they need. Mike believes more could be done to help farmers deal with new aspects of their business operations, namely paperwork. He believes the older generation do not have the necessary (institutional) *cultural capital* to complete paperwork.

“Old farmers can’t cope with all the paperwork. They can’t deal with it and don’t get any help from the authorities to transition over to this new bureaucratic industry. They need help, especially when they are one man bands”.

Those in powerful positions could assist by running courses or providing simple fact sheets. This could help farmers to improve their portfolio of skills and their capability to run their business in the highly competitive market. This is an area that industry needs to consider and address in a practical manner.

7.9.4 *Social Capital*

Social capital refers to the long-standing social relationships and networks that farmers have created, including both personal and business connections. This includes individual and community based networks.

Ben talks about social exclusion, especially a lack of understanding in the way outsiders view farmers, and farming.

J – “Do you socialise outside of farming?”

“Not really, apart from the people I met at YFC and my old friends. It is hard to meet new people though. It can be hard to find someone who is sympathetic to the long working hours and the nature of farming as an occupation. It’s like being socially excluded when you are out. You can’t stop out all night, because you have to get up at 5am in the morning and your non-farming friends don’t understand why you have to leave early. It does mean that you miss out on things. Years ago farming was seen as the gentry of society and women would be happy to marry a farmer, because of the prospects. Now farmers are near the bottom of the social ladder. Women don’t want to be tied to such an occupation that is 365 days a year and see family life suffer. Long hours in the summer months means you may not see much of your partner and some people cannot cope with that...I think farmers

will be rare breeds in the future. For farmer's sons like me, it is difficult to get out and meet people" (Ben).

Ben talks at length about the social side of farming. YFC is an organisation for like-minded young people, to socialise and learn new skills. The social side of farming is an important area for farmers and children. Generations of farmers attend YFC from the ages of 10-26 (a form of *symbolic capital* of the industry). YFC provides a way for young farmers to socialise with youngsters from non-farming backgrounds in villages and towns. YFC is an important part of farming's culture, and a valuable social network. It is a significant contributor to Ben's *social capital*. YFC also provides *cultural capital*, offering an environment for young people to learn new skills, for example business skills by running the local club, and farming skills such as hedge laying, motor vehicle maintenance or first aid.

Ben talks about YFC at great length and the friends he made.

"I have spent over 16 years in YFC, which became a major aspect of my social life. I met my best friend, Richard, there and have met many people through the organisation. YFC was great: competitions and socials; weekly club meetings in the pub; as well as many county events for people to go out and meet new people involved with farming. Without YFC you would never see anyone. Country Link is the next step up, but there seems to be much older people there. There is nothing for the late twenties and thirties age bracket, as a social network. There are no longer the cattle markets, where farmers used to meet and socialise. You can go weeks without seeing anyone, outside the corn-man and milkman! It can be a lonely life, you can feel alone and find your work is your only life".

YFC is an important institution for young people in rural (peripheral) areas and a way for young farmers, who may otherwise feel isolated, to socialise with like-minded people. This encourages networking and collective behaviour. Both these elements are important aspects of *social capital* (see: Putnam, 1993;

Coleman, 1990; Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001 for detailed debates on *social capital*).

Ben goes on to say:

"YFC has provided a place for me to meet people, be part of a local club, and a place for me to take part in farming activities and competitions. I did public speaking, which helped my confidence and enabled me to personally develop. I think it is a great organisation for those in rural areas. Although it is changing now, as the farming community is decreasing and more people joining YFC are from urban families who have moved to the countryside. YFC helps to create a community for younger people, a sense of belonging and things to do, otherwise we would have been very bored".

Like other aspects of the *field*, YFC has to adapt to address the changes taking place in the rural community.

YFC holds regular social events, which means young farmers and others have the chance to dress up and have a night out (also a chance to increase one's level of *social capital*).

"The 75th Anniversary for the local Club was a great night. There were many people there I hadn't seen for a long time, yourself included, it was nice to see people. It was an opportunity to catch up with people in a non-farming environment. It is good to get dressed up once in a while, rather than being in overalls and wellies. It's a chance to see people and not be talking completely about farming. Without YFC, I would have not met people. After leaving school, I lost touch with my old school friends. YFC provided a social aspect in an otherwise lonely occupation. YFC is a culture for young people in the farming community".

These quotes emphasise the important role YFC plays in rural areas and what it means to the people it caters for. In essence, YFC is a social institution for farming, having played a role in generations of young farmers. Mike also went to YFC. He also socialises through meetings, where he enjoys discussing things with fellow farmers.

"I went to YFC back in the good old days. It was a great social event and we had competitions and speakers. I found it very useful to meet people, go to dances, and get off the farm for a while. I also went to local farming discussion groups, which I found very useful as a way for local farmers to get together and discuss problems and solutions, but these were stopped. I also went to the Staffordshire Grass Land Society and was in the top three best farms all the time I was a member. I even came first once! They used to have speakers talking about different things; what we should be doing on our farms etc. Most of it used to go over my head. I always thought about what they said and wondered how they could possibly advise me, when they don't know my farm or my cows".

Mike found meetings with fellow farmers useful, notably the dairy meetings to discuss best practices and supply chain concerns (*field issues*).

"Meetings kept me up to date with things and got me away from the farm for a while...For dairy we used to have three meetings a year, organised by the dairy buyer that collected the milk. They provided a time and place for farmers to meet and to talk about matters concerning them. Over the last 12 months, these haven't been arranged. It was a good way to air your views and your concerns to those further down the supply chain. It also allowed us to talk about best practices and find out about people supplying us and where we could save money".

However, Mike is not keen to take advice from outsiders. He feels that they do not know his farm, and particularly his animals, as well as he does (*attachment – symbolic capital*). This view was strengthened when he witnessed other farmers receive poor advice and lose money.

"Advisors are not always right. I remember one told someone to reduce his stock when milk quotas came in. Then when he couldn't meet his quota, he had to buy cows back at a premium price, because good cows were at a shortage".

Mike does not perceive the NFU as a farmer orientated organisation.

"I'm also a member of Farmers For Action (FFA) although I'm not sure what good they are doing us. I'm not a member of the NFU. I don't think they do anything for us, except sell us insurance at a price higher than other providers. The organisation is not, in my mind, farmer friendly. It doesn't actively promote

farmers in a good light, which is why I don't waste money on expensive subscriptions".

Mikes views are shared by a few other farmers who are becoming increasingly disillusioned by the work the NFU does for the farming community.

Mike also talks about the planned closure of the local cattle market and the effects on the rural community and local economy. He believes that cattle markets are a central feature of rural areas.

"After BSE and FMD crises, trade auctions have closed. They were a central hub of the rural community and economy. It was the worst thing that could happen for a rural area. All other forms of trading came from livestock auctions (I think). Once trade moved, farmers were forced to find new outlets to sell animals, and the whole social atmosphere of a market and a chance to see people has gone. If my local market goes, it will be a great shame for all the farmers in this area. It will actually be disastrous. The market isn't like it used to be, at one time you couldn't park. They had a street market as well. The town would be a hub, buzzing with people. Now there are fewer farmers going and the market is almost dead. Many other local markets have shut. They are supposed to be relocating my local cattle market, but I can't see it happening. Why would Bradshaws pay that money out for an industry that is declining?"

Sally uses help-lines as a source of *social capital*, although she finds their levels of *cultural capital* insufficient.

"I have a very good relationship with the Environment Agency and members of other organisations, such as cross compliance, apparently James in London is very helpful, although I find that the others do not really know what they are doing. They are supposed to be on the help line! Sometimes you seem to be banging your head against a brick wall."

7.9.5 Symbolic Capital

In this thesis, *symbolic capital* refers to the accumulation of all other forms of *capital*, thus providing the farmer with symbolic resources. "It is the prestige and

renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179), giving the individual with an identity and social position (status) in the *field*.

All three members of the family see way of life as important. Even Sally is nostalgic about changes and the loss of small farm, she comments:

"It is one of the few areas where you see more than one generation of a family working towards the same goal. It is a way for parents to pass down skills and wisdom to their children, as well as material things (the farm and its assets). Things have gone wrong. I'm not saying that other people shouldn't be allowed to move to the country, but not at the expense of pushing out people who have been there for hundreds of years. Farming was once a way of life. It still is, for most of the older generation of farmers, but is becoming more of an industry where business, strategy, and the need to make profit take over, but at what costs? Will GM foods be the future? Will animal welfare suffer? Who knows? One thing is for sure you will never get back the small farms that have been lost, nor the buildings that have been turned into houses, which when you look at barn owls and other birds who use old farm buildings for nesting, their habitat is now someone's house, which goes against the whole issue of creating environments for wildlife".

Mike has high standards, and prides himself on his herd (symbolic to him of a good farmer), a culmination of his hard work, economic expenditure and knowledge of breeding lines and animal husbandry (linking *symbolic capital* to *natural capital*).

"Money does motivate me, but I enjoy what I do. Although in recent years, the paperwork is becoming a bit beyond a joke. To me it is a way of life. I have always lived on a farm and have always farmed. I don't know any other life. I farm to the best standard possible. I take a pride in what I do and enjoy rearing animals and hope I keep them in the best condition possible. I don't like people mistreating them".

Animals are important to Mike, they are an important asset to his business and represent the culmination of hard work for his business (*symbolic capital*). They also provide him with an income, as previously touched on.

J – “So animal welfare is a key issue for you”

“Yes it is. These animals pay my bills. Therefore, they need to be looked after in a good way and should not be allowed to suffer. Any good farmer looks after his animals, because he knows his income comes from them. We don’t need someone else to tell us that and create extra paperwork just to clarify it...High standards are key to my business. I want people who work for me to work to high husbandry standards. My son realises that I want high standards. It is a case of pride in the farming community. You don’t want to be seen as a bad farmer. You want to be seen as good farmers. It helps when selling your animals. People appreciate animals that have been looked after properly. I concentrate on creating a high genetic herd that produce good calves, which I rear as replacements for the dairy herd. I need to make money out of milk so my cows are important to me. They are how I make money. That is why they should be looked after properly, without them we wouldn’t have a business”.

Mike thinks ownership is important, and relates this to the emotional attachment with one’s farm. He believes it is this attachment that makes a farmer a good one. Succession (passing on the business) is important and allows symbolic capital to be passed onto children, who continue the tradition.

“My milkman has left and I cannot find anyone to replace him. I think people don’t have the same affinity with the business, if it isn’t theirs. They don’t really care about what they are doing and that is a key element in farming. You have to care about what you do, in order to be a good farmer”.

Ownership is important and relates closely to *natural capital* and what the farm represents.

7.9.6 *Natural Capital*

Nature became one of the main themes and led to the need to create a new form of *capital* in Bourdieu’s conceptual framework i.e. ‘*Natural Capital*’. None of

Bourdieu's *capitals* allows for the importance of nature and biological processes. These are highly important factors in the farming process (identified by: Curry *et al.*, 2002; Howarth, 1990, Grant, 1991; Fitzgerald, 2003); *natural capital* fits well with the rest of Bourdieu's *capitals* and has a significant impact on *symbolic capital*.

Natural capital refers to the renewable ecosystem and resources (animals, grass and food production) and non-renewable systems, for instance fossil fuels and minerals. *Natural capital* can have benefits in the provision of resources, but also drawbacks such as disease and negative climate changes.

Mike talks about 'principles' of farming (which are ingrained in his traditional *habitus*). He also talks about the lack of 'outsider' understanding of the natural element of farming.

"Well, the fact there is a time lag between having a calf and getting milk from that female calf. This can take up to a year and a half. If you are really unlucky that calf/cow can die before it even makes milk. You have lost a good cow that could have produced milk for you, for a good few years. So, you're back to square one after a year and a half of caring for that cow, as well as the expenditure. You are working with nature and nothing is guaranteed. They [outsiders] don't understand cycles, nor the facts of farming; cropping grass, the fact weather seriously affects grass quality, which in turn affects [milk] yields. Its all a cycle - one year can be good, another bad. But you just never know. You have to deal with it when it happens. You can't plan for things like that".

This quote succinctly demonstrates farmers' reliance on nature. It suggests that biological processes affect supply and nothing can be guaranteed (see: Francis, 1994).

7.10 Discussion

The family business and people involved have reasonable levels of *economic capital*, though the majority is tied up in assets, hence the business is asset rich but cash poor. If this business was evaluated purely based on RAT, it would be described as unsuccessful as it does not seek the single goal of profit maximisation. Using Bourdieu's theory as a way to evaluate the business sheds light on the alternative forms of *capital*, and how these are important to the business, and drives a longer-term view of the business, for instance *symbolic capital*.

In assessing the farm using RAT, and in light of the economic downturn in farming, the rational business man would have sold the property (which is not in debt, and would have made substantial profits). Therefore, Mike and Ben must have reasons for, and benefits, from farming that RAT ignores.

Mike is highly committed to the business being passed on to Ben, who wants to farm. The family is fully supportive of Ben's decision to continue the business. The life-world of farming is important for the family, both father and son like the job variation and working environment that farming offers them. The quotes demonstrate how family members think alike, and share similar views on factors from the external environment (*field*) that affect the business. Principles are important for Mike. Principles are defined as 'habits of thought' and business principles accordingly mean habits of thought suitable to the work of business (Veblen, 1904). In this sense, principles are part of the farmer's *habitus*.

The farmer's *habitus* (predispositions, mainly from early childhood experiences) affects his perceptions, values and ways of thinking. These factors affect how individual businesses are run. Values and way of thinking are passed across the generations, which could explain why parents and children share ways of

thinking and ways of behaving. In this case, Mike and Ben's *habitus* favours traditional social action. Farmers, as is the case here, learn (*cultural capital*) even though it is the family business from their parents and their own experiences of farming, in an increasingly competitive and sophisticated industry.

Rules of the game were frequently mentioned, especially the issue of additional paperwork created from changes in policy over the years. This point was raised by the majority of the farmers and family members working on the farm. Government policy has changed in recent years, increasing workloads for farmers, and other businesses suffering from the need to produce additional written work, which is difficult to understand.

Each family member interviewed, cited the lack of understanding from 'outsiders' on the 'principles' of farming. The interviewees have negative attitudes towards inspectors and their apparent lack of understanding. They also mentioned the effects that external institutions have on their business, citing Government and supermarkets as the major examples. These institutions regulate and retain power in the *field* in order to maintain their share of the available *capitals*. The recurring message from this family was that Government and others in the *field* control what happens (rules of the game). This, along with the other cases, resulted in power emerging as the core category (in line with Bourdieu's framework). 'Rules of the game' were decided by dominant groups, namely Government. These rules are shaping the industry and rural communities (also found by Errington, 1994; Grant, 1991).

When evaluating the levels of *capital*, it was apparent that each form of *capital* is used in such a way that the farm is run as it always has (traditionalist social action). The farm is steeped in tradition and habitual working, passed on across the generations and instilled in the *habitus*.

Economic Capital

The farm is owned by the farmer, who has no debt. However, incomes are relatively low compared to others in the supply chain (*field*). The farm is asset rich and cash poor. The farm will not be put in a position of debt to expand. Both father and son are able to draw a wage from the business that allows them to live comfortably.

Social Capital

The levels of *social capital* for Mike, Ben and Sally were relatively good. Sally was involved in more diverse networks from her own career, as well as farming networks. Mike and Ben, on the other hand, had built their social networks around farming, especially YFC, Staffordshire Grassland Society and fellow farmers. These social networks are established farming ones, steeped in their own tradition.

YFC is a lifeline for many young rural people, without which many young people would be very isolated. YFC seems to be at the heart of many networks and a source of different forms of *social* and *cultural capital*. The planned closure of the local cattle market will reduce the chance for farmers to meet and discuss matters concerning the market place and share information. YFC forms an integral part of the farming culture and 'way of life'. *Social capital* is important for farmers and is being diluted by less organised meetings for dairy farmers, cattle market closures and so on.

Cultural capital

Both Mike and Ben have low levels of institutional *cultural capital*, that is, school and college qualifications (Sally has a slightly higher level of education). However, they possess high levels of *cultural capital* in the form of capabilities,

skills and knowledge that have been passed across the generations. They have both learnt the family business from their parents and have used their own experiences as a way to learn how to farm.

Symbolic capital

Mike wants to be seen as a good farmer and he wants to be seen as a father who is passing on a credible business to his son. *Symbolic capital* accounts for the emotional elements of farming. The farmer's identity in this case is important. The farm embodies years of *capital* accumulation – *economic* (assets – farm buildings land, animals, machinery, a family income etc.); *social* (networks, family friends, professional associations and so on); and *cultural* (knowledge of generations, skills, knowing how to run the business etc.). Everything the farmer has worked for symbolises the family and Mike's identity. It is his footprint in the family's history.

Natural capital

Natural capital is also a major *capital* in farming; without it farmers would be unable to farm. It is also highly uncontrollable and the levels of *natural capital* vary according to location, time of the year, biological cycles and so forth. Mike and Ben are aware of this and, as such, believe that caring for their animals and the land is paramount for the success of the business.

7.11 Conclusion

The business as a whole has reasonable levels of *capital*. The business is not in debt and provides an income for Mike and Ben (*economic capital*). The farm offers Mike, Ben and Sally non-economic benefits including independence, a place to live in the countryside and an important asset to pass onto future generations (*symbolic capital*).

Neither Mike or Ben possess a high level of institutional education (*cultural capital*), but have learnt all they know about farming from their parents. Learning the family business is the favoured way to pass on *cultural capital* and gain the necessary skills and knowledge to run a successful farm business. As a result, Mike and Ben both have a wealth of knowledge on running their business, stemming from decades of farming in the family (rooted in their traditional *habitus*). They do not tend to strengthen their *cultural capital* through outsiders (for instance: consultants, courses and so on). However, learning on the job and learning from other family members may not be enough in the fast moving 21st century. The level of *social capital* available to the business stems from personal networks from all family members, with YFC being very important for Ben who would otherwise feel social excluded.

Farming is the family business, as well as a major part of the family's life-worlds and *habitus*. The future of the farm as a business depends on the rules of the game and how the *field* operates, for example a serious decline in demand would put the future of the farm in jeopardy. The levels of *economic capital* are better than some of my other cases, as the business is not in debt. The farmer is risk averse and he does not want to take on debt. Mike is passive and a traditionalist. He does not have a long-term strategy for the business, reflecting his traditional *habitus*. The farm is vulnerable to external changes, as are most farms, especially the market forces of the milk price.

For the traditionalist *habitus*, seeking to preserve the 'eternal yesterday' becomes more important than seeking to maximise profits. In cases like this, therefore, *capital* levels will be utilised and sought, in order to maintain business operations as they are.

Chapter Eight: The Rationalist

8.1 Reasons for Choosing the Case Study

The case was chosen because the traditional brick buildings had been sold to finance a new dairy unit, as part of an ongoing herd expansion strategy. This is a popular strategy promoted by consultants and industry leaders, encouraging farmers to pursue expansion in response to declining milk prices to alleviate decreasing profit margins by gaining some economies of scale from milk production. The new unit is one building, holding everything under one roof. The business now operates in a completely different way, in response to changes in the 'rules of the game'. This case follows on from previous cases and demonstrates the commitment to business succession across the generations. The cases examined so far could not be described as risk-taking on this scale to secure the future of the family business. The farmer did not originally plan to change things, in what he thinks, is such a radical way. This case also shows a farmer strengthening the core dairy business, rather than diversifying. Data were gathered using participant observation and interviews with the farmer and his son.

Both the farmer's and his son's *habitus* are influenced by action that has economic benefit. According to Weber's (1920) classification of social action, this farmer's behaviour leans towards a more rational *habitus*, even though there are signs of valuer and idealist social action when analysing the narratives. The rational *habitus* chooses the goal and the means of attaining that goal, solely to increase *economic capital*, for example, building a new parlour to make milking more efficient.

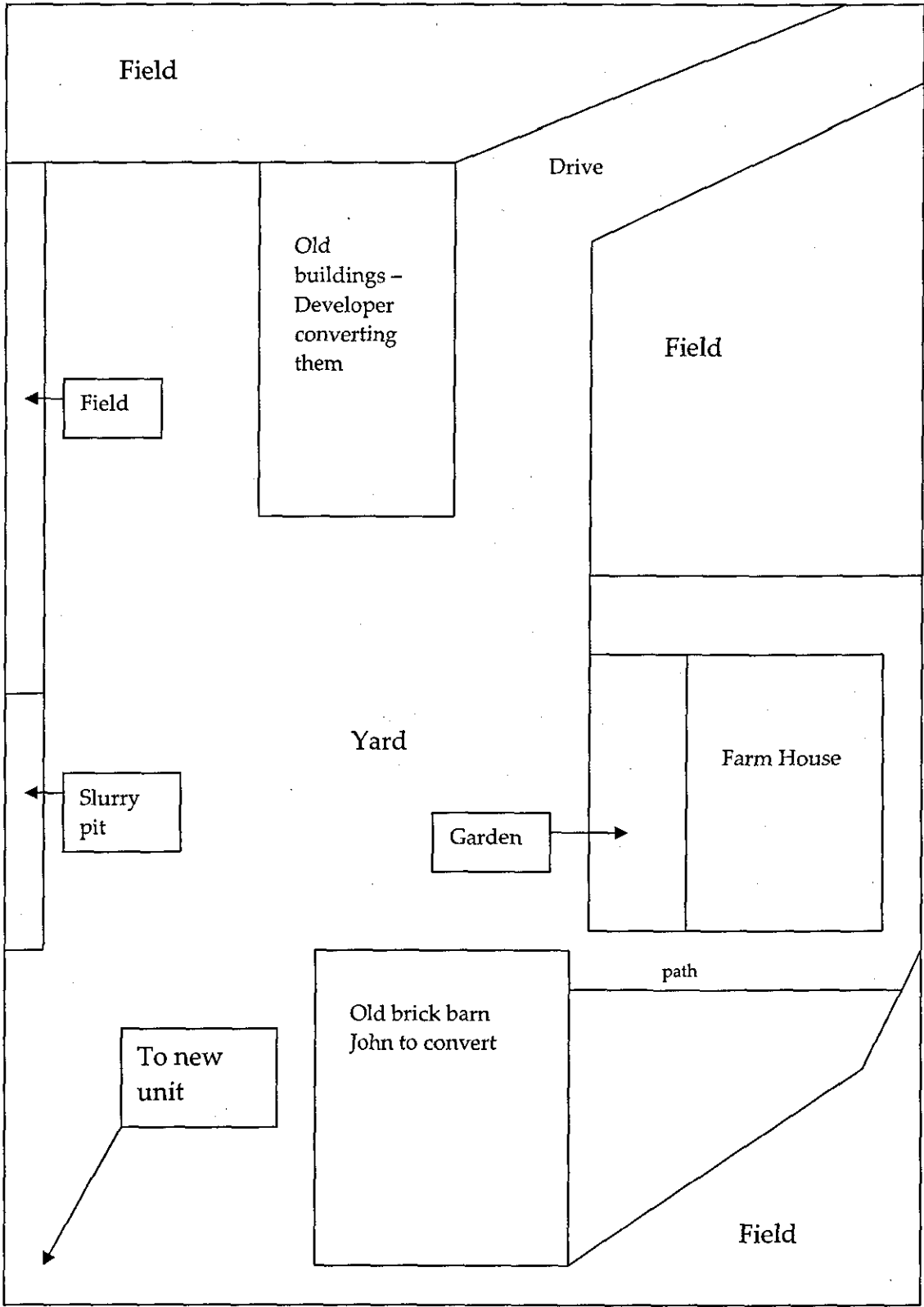
8.2 The Case

The farm is situated off a busy main road, down a long single-vehicle track, on the outskirts of a small village located not too far from Staffordshire's county town. Approaching the farm, there were fields to either side of the track. The dairy herd were out in one of the fields, strip-grazing. This popular technique, whereby an electric fence is used to control the amount of new, fresh grass the herd has each day, reduces wastage. When I entered the yard, the old, red-brick buildings in front of me, were being worked on by a group of builders. I later learnt they were being converted into dwellings for sale by the developer, who has bought the buildings from John.

There was an old 4x4 and a car parked in the yard. I was greeted by a black and white collie dog and the farmer, John, wearing wellies, and undone overalls, with a shirt and jeans on underneath. Walking up to the house, I noticed how it resembled a typical estate dwelling i.e. red brick, blue tiles and large white windows, all well proportioned. The apexes over the two top windows were symmetrical, with elaborate brick work round the eaves compared to modern dwellings. There was a small lawned garden at the front of the house. Round the side door (main entrance) was a large doormat surrounded by a collection of wellies and work boots.

Both interviews were carried out in a typical farmhouse kitchen. The floor was tiled in old blue and red tiles, and the sink under the window faced the old farm yard. There were kitchen units to either side of the sink, covering the whole wall. In the middle of the room, there was a large, old oak table with five chairs round it, a large wooden dresser on the far wall, and opposite a Rayburn. Farming literature covered the table and the dresser.

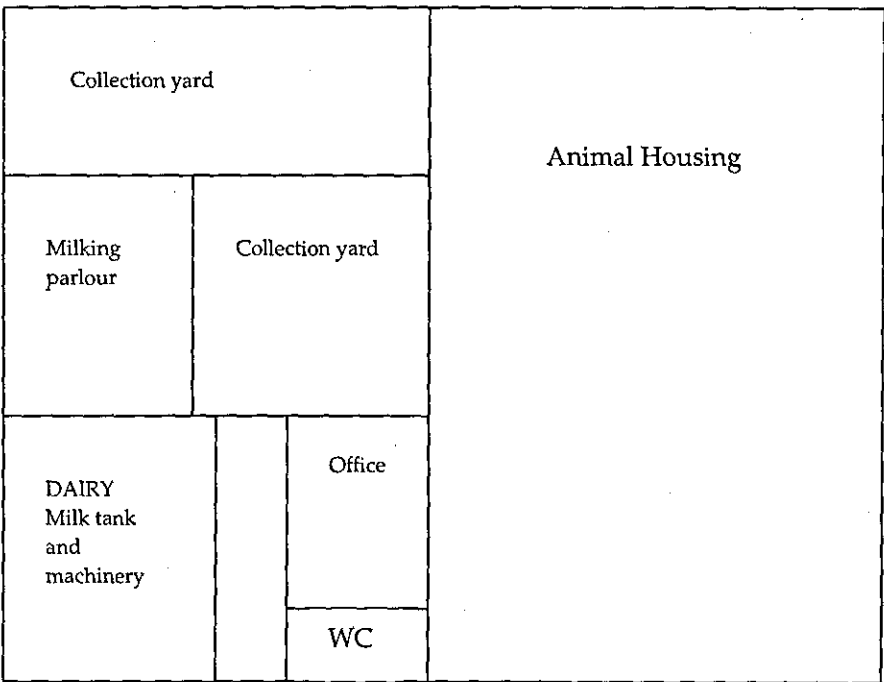
Figure 5: Farm Layout – The Rationalist (not to scale)



After the interview, John showed me round his farm. Walking round the back of one of the old buildings, on the far side of the yard, I was faced with the 'new unit' (see: Figure 6). He happily pointed it out and was keen to show me round. Looking around the unit, and talking to John, you got a sense of how proud he was of his achievement. Smiling, he talked about how his new parlour reduced milking time and low keeping all his animals under one roof makes daily routines easier. Some of his young animals were still inside; John explained they were his next generation of Swiss-Brown cross Holstein Friesian cows. He was proud of his breeding plan and had high hopes for future milk yields.

The 'new unit' was very clean, one could tell it was relatively new; the galvanised gates were still shiny silver, and the concrete was still intact. The milking parlour was large compared to other farms. In contrast to this almost clinical environment, the old buildings were surrounded by rubble and building equipment.

Figure 6: Layout of New Unit (not to scale)



8.3 Family History

John's grandparents farmed at Knosoll on the WoodEaton estate. When John's grandfather died, his grandmother continued the farm with Bill, who was employed to do the manual work. His grandmother and father took on the tenancy at Reeds farm in 1944. Bill continued to work full-time until John's father started working on the farm in 1952. Bill later retired in the 1960s. When John left school in 1968, he shared his father's tenancy at Reed farm. His father then secured another farm tenancy five miles away and the family moved there, leaving his grandmother at Reeds farm. In 1969, his younger brother left school and in 1971 his youngest brother left school, both to work on the farm. In 1976, John married and moved back to Reeds farm. In 1980, his father and brothers secured another farm in Shropshire and the partnership arrangements were changed, giving each son a farm tenancy in partnership with their father.

In 1982, both John's brothers married. Over the years, they expanded their businesses and diversified, offering Bed and Breakfast and rented out converted barns, which they had renovated themselves as a long-term project. They have both improved their dairy units, updating machinery and equipment as and when they can. In 1990, the partnerships were dissolved and each brother became sole tenants of their farms. In 2000, John's father retired from farming.

8.4 Farm History – Under Family Management

The farm has been farmed by the family over three generations, since 1944 and the fourth generation has just begun to take over some of the managerial responsibility. The farm was initially rented from the old Bradford Estate and when John was old enough he went into partnership with his father and shared the tenancy until 1990. The farm itself totals 120 acres and John rents another 50 acres. In 1993, John wrote to the estate asking if he could update the farm with a

new unit. The estate replied a year later, asking if John wanted to buy the farm. John purchased the farm and subsequently did not update the facilities. He could not raise further finance after borrowing money to purchase the farm.

In 2000, John secured an additional farm tenancy (Knowles Farm) three miles away from Reeds Farm, to facilitate herd expansions. The farm totalled 154 acres with buildings, which were used to house young-stock who grazed the fields during the summer and part of the winter months. The main dairy herd was still housed and milked at Reeds Farm. During the harvest season, 100 acres of silage (cut grass) was harvested at Knowles farm and stored for winter feed at Reeds farm. By 2000, the family farmed 274 acres before John's son, Edward returned from university.

John built the dairy herd to 185 cows by 2002, and has not bought any animals in for 24 years, because of the risks of buying in disease. He prefers a closed herd and knows the breeding lines of each cow, having bred them himself. In 2003, plans and construction for the new unit began with the sale of the traditional brick buildings. John invested an enormous amount of money into the new dairy unit at Reeds Farm. To make up the shortfall after selling the brick buildings, he raised a large mortgage. This case typifies what is happening in terms of (radical) farm restructuring. Selling traditional brick buildings has been a common activity for farmers to realise *economic capital* from their assets and update farm facilities.

The new dairy unit was built to accommodate everything under one roof, from the office to the parlour and animal housing, and has been in operation since November 2004. John retained one brick building, which he wants to renovate and rent out, in order to increase monthly income if milk prices continue to fall. Otherwise, John will live in the conversion and Edward will live in the

farmhouse. In 2004, John lost Knowles Farm tenancy, losing 154 acres and the buildings. John managed to secure 50 acres of rented land to compensate for some of the acres lost. The loss of acreage affected further expansion plans, and created operational problems. The dairy herd now (in 2005) stands at 240 milking cows, and all replacements are home reared. John has been cross breeding Swiss Browns, a smaller cow with good milk yields, with the Holstein Friesian for over 12 years. The average milk yield is currently 7,000 litres per cow and rising, equating to 1.76 million litres a year.

The farm is run as a family team: John, who does the manual work and jointly makes the business decisions with his son; his wife, Julie, who does the book-keeping for the farm, along with three other businesses; and, Edward, who does the paperwork and some manual work, making decisions jointly with his father. Two people are employed part-time to share the milking responsibilities, and John has a part-time YTS trainee (who he is training - sharing his own *cultural capital*). However, family members undertake the majority of the work. Contractors are used for all activities requiring specialist machinery, for example: silaging; slurry spreading; and hedge cutting. Before the partnerships were dissolved, these activities were carried out by the family, with the three brothers and their father sharing machinery. However, this created family tensions over how resources would be allocated during the busy summer periods.

8.5 The Farmer

John is the eldest of six, aged 52. He has lived and farmed in Staffordshire all his life. Both parents and both sets of grandparents were farmers. In 1968, John left school at the age of 15 to work on the family farm. He attained a National Certificate in Agriculture NCA, from Rodbaston Agricultural College in 1972

(institutional *cultural capital*). John is married and has two sons, one aged 26, and the other aged 24. He comments on the differences between the two boys.

"Mike my other son is 24, he lives and works in Manchester, city banking. He has no interest in farming at all and comes back to visit the family farm now and again. While he does enjoy coming back home, he doesn't want to be a farmer. He has never shown any interest in farming, he is completely opposite to Edward in that respect. We raised them in the same way, so I guess it is his personal preference and I would not force him into farming".

John is hard working, spending 12 hours-a-day on the farm, totalling over 80 hours a week. He describes himself as a workaholic, as does his wife.

"I enjoy my work. It is my life, and I have ambition. I want to provide for my sons. I suppose I could be described as a workaholic. I'm a very hard working man".

Farming and the work involved is part of John's life. Arguably it is his identity in the social world, and his work becomes symbolic of who he is and what his family represent (*symbolic capital*).

John is highly determined and motivated, believing his expansion plans will eventually pay off. He knows he has taken a huge risk to secure a future in farming for his son. He knows his business and what needs to be done in order to survive. I got the impression from walking round the farm (participant observation) and talking to John that he enjoys his job and the challenge, especially the manual work and working with animals, though he dislikes the amount of paperwork.

"Farming has now got very complicated. There is too much paperwork and bureaucracy. My son does all the paperwork. I have no intention to get involved. I won't do it".

This suggests John lacks the level of institutional *cultural capital* in order to cope with completing paperwork (like Mike, Chapter Seven). He is happy to pass this responsibility to his son.

John comes across as a talented and committed farmer, helping the younger generation by having an YTS trainee each year. John is securing his son's farming future, as his father did for him and his brothers. His father showed entrepreneurial behaviour by securing a farm for each son. John is taking a large risk with the new dairy unit (if somewhat calculated and based on advice from consultants).

"I have to say I'm not afraid to try something new and take a gamble, even if it is slightly calculated. I would not have expanded if I hadn't had help from outside professionals as to whether it was possible to cover the costs of expanding. If it goes wrong, I could lose everything, absolutely everything. It would be a lifetime's work, not to mention the work that my dad and granddad have done to secure farms for me and my brothers".

John is willing to try new experiences and expand his knowledge (*cultural capital*), resulting in adjusting his *habitus*. The only regret John has was not pursuing a career in football. As a result of this experience, he has been careful not to pressurise his sons into farming.

"I would have preferred to have been a professional footballer then come back to the farm in the early 70s. Yes, it was a shame, but like I said before I made the best of what I had. That is one reason why my son, who works in Manchester was never pressurised to be a farmer".

John was asked to describe what motivates him to farm. John enjoys his work, but he wants to make money (*economic capital*), a sign of his rational *habitus*. His life-world has been created around farming and his business.

"I enjoy farming. Basically I like to make money, which we have done in the past – quite a lot of money, but I enjoy the job. I'm very committed to farming, even though I was initially pushed into it by my parents instead of being allowed to follow my dream of being a professional footballer. I made the best of my situation; I didn't dwell on the past, not doing what I really wanted to. I would have returned to farming and I would have been in a better financial position...but I'm still highly focused and motivated".

Had John pursued a career in football, the family would have no doubt experienced a different life. John believes he would have returned to farming and pursued this as a career later on in life. There was an obligation (or expectation) by many in farming for the son to carry on the business. John wanted to become a professional footballer, yet he was directed into farming by his parents (family tradition). This again reinforces the premise that farming is 'in the blood' and the destiny of farmers is preordained, previously mentioned in Chapter Seven by Mike. Farming is part of the family history and represents who the family are in society. Farming is their identity (part of *symbolic capital*); it is their place in the rural community and defines who they are in the *field*.

The aspiration to pass on the family business has been followed across generations, becoming a value instilled in the *habitus* and a major reason to farm. John is committed to passing the business onto his son, just as his father did for him and his two brothers.

"I also want to pass on the farm to my son and get him set up for the future, just like my dad helped me and my brothers, by being forward thinking and expanding, finding us all farms and encouraging us".

Succession is important and symbolic of what the family represents (*symbolic capital* passed on to the next generation represents the family history). Farming is important for all family members and is a way for John to identify himself in the life-world. John has enjoyed his life as a farmer so far.

"Oh, it has been a good one. I have been very happy here. I have taken as many opportunities as I can. I'm sure there will be opportunities in the future, to rent more land and this is what I will do. With the SFP, people will take the payments and they will rent land out cheaply just to make it look nice and someone else will do the work. We are hoping that SFP will bring us more opportunity to rent more land at a better price".

John believes there will be opportunities in the future. However, he is relying on other individual's decisions, including any future changes in policy (rules of the

game) to provide new opportunities. John's decisions and hopes for opportunity are related to increasing his share of *economic capital*. The financial pressure the expansion has put the family under, coupled with decreasing milk prices and increased costs, has meant that John has had to keep working hard.

"I'm still as motivated as I ever was. I've always been motivated. I'm a workaholic and I enjoy what I do. I enjoy challenges and that's what keeps me going. But I'm trying to take things a little easier. The plan was to take things easier and let my son take over, but it hasn't quite worked out like that because we're under so much financial pressure now. I've got to keep going all the time".

Despite economic pressures, John enjoys the challenge of farming. The location of his business and home are important for John. John is maintaining a way of life, albeit a highly technical and skilled one. These positive factors weigh against the negative side of farming - hard work and long hours.

"I enjoy farming, working with cattle, seeing things grow. I enjoy what I do, so I guess that is one good point. I like where I live and I'm looking forward to converting the last barn. The bad points are it is hard work; I work long hours, but I like it".

John gets satisfaction from breeding cows and working with them. Farming is inherent in his *habitus* (part of his identity). John likes a challenge, working for himself and his own ambitions.

"I enjoy working with cattle - it's in the blood really, on my grandparents' side and my great grandparents' side, and I enjoy the life. I enjoy being my own boss and working for myself, and my own ambitions. I love my job working with cows. They are all homebred and I feel proud of my herd. It brings me satisfaction for the work I have done. I plan to do up the last remaining barn myself. I like the challenge of doing something for myself and seeing the end result. It should, if we rent it out, provide an additional income when farm incomes are falling, unless I'm living in it myself when I retire".

John is always thinking about ways to increase the monthly household income (*economic capital*). He sees the final barn, which he wants to convert himself, as

another source of income. If milk prices continue to fall, he will rent the property out.

8.6 The Son

Edward 26, wants to farm and has been to Harper Adams University, developing an interest in genetics and breeding dairy cows.

"I enjoy working outdoors and with cattle, that is where my interest lies, in breeding cattle and looking at ways to strengthen the dairy herd. I have always been interested in farming and I guess I took after my dad. My brother took after my mum, they are not interested in farming at all but dad and I love it!"

His reasons to farm reflect those mentioned by Ben in Chapter 7. He completed a degree course (high level of institutional *cultural capital*) and spent a year out working on Grosvenor farms in Cheshire, where John knew the farm manager.

Edward talks about changes, and found the experience of university (*cultural capital*) helped him to adapt accordingly. He feels he has enough support from his father to be able to make decisions.

"I guess I have seen changes over the years, even in my short lifespan! There has been increase in herd sizes and more emphasis on getting bigger to overcome decreasing prices. I have also seen increases in regulation. I guess paperwork is just part and parcel of farming now, though it is definitely not the enjoyable bit.....My dad will help me out when I make decision if I am struggling".

Edward is aware of the lack of *economic capital* available to farmers. When asked whether he sees a future, he replies:

"I do see a future in the industry. So long as you do as much as you can to produce high volumes of milk and keep your costs down, I think you should be able to survive. You also need to look at what new things you can do".

The next section explores the business operations in more detail.

8.7 Business Operations

The business operations were radically changed with the introduction of the new dairy unit, coupled with herd expansion. John's primary reason for this was to pass a viable business onto his son.

"A main reason for the expansion we have just done; and a reason why we sold the old buildings for development, is so my son can carry on the business.

Hopefully the business will eventually be in a better position to carry on".

Succession is very important for John and the new unit is his addition to the family's history (identity – *symbolic capital*). As Leopold (1939) would say, it is his contribution to the family portrait.

Activities involving paperwork have been moved out of the house and into the office. This has meant there is greater separation between work and home life. Paperwork can be done without the interruptions one would get in the house, for example in the kitchen (phone calls, people coming and going, Julie trying to cook). It also means that the family can have a home life separated from doing business work. As John says:

"The new unit has made routines and time management easier, things are done quicker. Milking time has halved and two men can now milk 30 cows at once. Everything is under one roof; the office, feed store, milk tank, milking parlour and all the animals. Having everything in one place means we can clean out one building rather than multiple buildings. The paperwork is computerised as much as possible, and online passport applications and movements are done from the office by Edward. This work was done in the house, so we have been able to separate out some of the work that was once done in the house. It is now done in the office, which is better in some respects because Edward can get on with the work without interruptions".

Edward echoes his dad's comments and likes his new working environment, saying he can work more efficiently (*rational habitus*).

"The new unit has certainly changed things for us. Everything is under one roof and I have an office to do the paperwork in, which is so much better than having

to do it in the house. I used to get interrupted all the time and now I only get interrupted with business matters, not family ones. I can also go into the house when I have finished and relax, rather than seeing work that needs to be done all the time”.

John was asked to explain why he expanded and pinpointed the aim of reducing work hours and securing the farm’s future:

“I enjoy my work. It is my life and I have ambition and want to provide for my sons. I suppose I could be described as a workaholic. I’m a very hard working man. I was supposed to be working less when the new unit was built. It was supposed to alleviate some of the hours spent doing certain jobs, for example reducing milking and cleaning out times. But I’m finding I’m working harder, just to stay in the same position, financially, that I was five years ago. I blame the increased work on paperwork and more inspections; increased work in terms of having to show more people around the farm and supervise them checking your work. I’m working harder to stay afloat and stay in the same place, which isn’t where I had imagined I would be. The time we have saved on the manual work and the actual farming has been taken up by other tasks; for example, paperwork for NVZ regulations, medical records and animal movements, which were hard when we had two holdings because every time we moved them we had to record it”.

Any time saved from changing work routines has been absorbed by increases in paperwork activities, introduced as new rules of the game. John has tried to make routine farm work more efficient (rational *habitus*), but still finds he is working harder to retain the same level of *economic capital*. The expansion has not been without its problems, namely losing the Knowles Farm tenancy. However, these do not seem to faze John, demonstrating his commitment to ensuring his plan works.

“In 2004, the farm business tenancy ended and with SFP, the landlord didn’t want to renew the tenancy. He wanted to see what would happen with the SFP and what happens money wise with land. This has made life difficult and created issues over various things; such as land available for NVZ regulations,

and other cross-compliance issues, especially the number of cows per acre and meeting density requirements. This created problems for further expansion plans, but it just means we have to re-adjust our plans, re-think things and find a way to overcome problems. It just isn't clear yet what we will do".

Business decisions are jointly made between John and Edward, although John has the ultimate say. He is the guiding authoritative figure (mentor), on hand to advise his son over making decisions (same as Mike).

"I like to give my son as many decisions to make as possible. I would rather he made mistakes now, while I'm still around to help, than in the future when he hasn't got any backup. I hope he will learn from them, and next time when faced with a decision to make he will make the right one" (John).

John sees this process as a way to increase Edward's knowledge of business operations, drawing on his experiences of the types of decisions Edward may face. In this sense, the family provides *cultural capital*, in the form of knowledge and skills, which are passed onto the next generation. In this process, values and acceptable forms of behaviour are also transmitted across generations. This process of "learning the family business" is important (Moore and Barratt, 2002), if the business is to survive the transition from generation-to-generation (Carlock and Ward, 2002). As Edward says:

"I'm lucky as my dad makes sure I'm involved with making decisions and he will tell me if he thinks I'm completely wrong, or I'm going to do something which would seriously affect the business. He is there on hand to help me, and I'm lucky to have this and be so involved".

The expansion was intended as a way for John to reduce his working hours. However, with increases in other forms of work on the farm, this has not happened. The new unit has changed, for the better, the every-day work routines (and hence business operations of the farm). The business is now run in a more efficient way, since the introduction of the new unit. These changes required a level of adjustment as John changed his long established daily

routines (*habitus*). For example, new technologies, such as the internet are utilised to reduce manual form filling.

The next section investigates the *field*, which the farm business operates in and investigates the views of those interviewed.

8.8 The *Field* and 'Rules of the Game'

The expansion was done to secure the farm's future in the *field*, with the hope of strengthening the farm's position to play the game. Changes in Government policy (rules of the game) affect what the farmer can do. As a result, John plans to cease arable farming to concentrate on the dairy side of the business.

"We also have a bit of arable land. I tend to focus on the arable, so that my son does the majority of the breeding for the cows and he can have more control over that side of the business, but I'm still here to help if needed. We are planning to stop doing arable and specialise on dairy, especially in light of cross compliance and CAP reforms. I think SFP and CAP reforms have made us decide to do that really. It isn't worth us doing bits of arable because of the new regulations with set-a-side".

John is responding to these changes in order to maintain his *economic capital* (business income). This involves specialising business operations for the perceived long-term benefit of the business. Changes in rules also mean daily operations and planning have to be changed. John finds rules of the game too ambiguous.

"We have cross compliance now with the SFP, which adds to the pressure of what we can do with the business. We have to do certain things in order to receive our SFP...."

J- "Can you give me an example?"

"Yes. Well you must know that we have to leave two metre margins around fields above a certain size. Then there's disagreement over where you measure from and what happens if your contractor makes the mistake, not you. It's such

a legal minefield for so many things, people will be suing people. Then there's monitoring what [manure] you are spreading and only being able to do it at certain times; for example you can't spread it when it's frosty, but if it is an issue for the environment and your slurry pit is overflowing, then you can spread when it's frosty".

Changes in Government policy (rules of the game) have to be accommodated when John makes decisions. This passage highlights the lack of clarity over Government policy. Environmental changes have the greatest impact on farmers' businesses and what they can and cannot do at certain times of the year.

Edward comments:

"I suppose we have things like; Government who tells us what we can do, and then we have the public to deal with. They are the ones that buy our produce and how we look to them is very important. Another factor that seriously affects what we can do on a daily basis is nature, especially the weather. We also have to deal with disease outbreaks".

John emphasises the effects of public perceptions and nature on his business. He recognises that changes in the eating habits of people will affect his business, particularly in terms of selling his product.

"Public perceptions are key. They affect your business and how much you can sell. For example, selling milk depends on people drinking it and being used for other things. The lifestyle of people is changing and we need to respond to these changes. But our pace of life, in terms of how quickly we can alter things is different. We rely on nature, and nature has its own pace of life, which isn't as fast as the pace of changing technology or things like that. Also, what people think of farmers has an effect on encouraging new entrants into the industry; whether they are from farming, or non-farming backgrounds. It will depend on what the public thinks and what they will buy. People, who see farming as bottom of the career list, are not going to encourage children to take it up as a way to make their living".

The quote above demonstrates how farmers rely on nature, and John tersely points out that nature has its own pace, which is not in line with the fast

changing technological pace of modern life. Building on findings from the Traditionalist Case, it became clear that *natural capital* must be included in any evaluation of farm businesses.

The next sections examine the forms of *capital* and their use in the farming business.

8.8.2 *Economic Capital*

Economic capital encompassing its future generation, accumulation and application, is important for John. The expansion meant that he had to choose between converting the buildings himself, or selling them to developers (personal development and satisfaction versus economic gain). The later was chosen purely to realise *economic capital* to cover some of the expansion costs. It was also essential to raise a substantial mortgage (a decision driven by his rational *habitus*, with a rational outcome in mind).

"My son will have the farmhouse eventually and we will have the last old farm building, which I want to convert myself. It will be my project. I would have liked to have done the others, but we needed the money straight away to pay for the new unit. I could have eventually made more money, but it would have taken too long. I would have enjoyed doing it as well. I like challenges and creating something myself".

John's financial burden is a worry for him. He is heavily in debt and risks losing everything the family have worked for.

"I have a large mortgage, which is a worry. It is a huge gamble and only done because my son is so keen to carry on. I do worry about the level of debt, but it had to be done. I employed advisors to see if my plans would work and pay off. The barns were sold for planning conversion. Like I said, I would have wanted to do them myself, but needed the money. I didn't have the time to do them, whilst building the new unit".

John does not know whether his gamble will pay off. He highlights the dependency on milk price, which in turn depends on 'rules of the game' as to

how market prices are reached. Milk price is a problem for farmers. They have no control over pricing. They are price takers (confirming: Grant, 1991; Fitzgerald, 2003).

"I have taken a large risk and don't know whether it will pay off or not. Only time will tell. Milk price will affect us a lot, due to the volume we produce and our reliance on it as a form of income. Milk price is a problem for the industry and I don't see how things will improve".

As previously highlighted, John likes to make money. Changes in John's business environment, over the years, have resulted in declining profits. Policy changes have increased form filling, which are necessary in order to receive subsidy payments.

"In the past we've been very lucky. After we joined the EEC we could make profit quite easily, but now times are very different. It is very hard to make a decent profit. We seem to be going faster and faster to stand still. There is so much plutocracy, especially in the last five years, it generally makes life difficult. Form filling. There's so much form filling and Edward can spend half an hour in the office every single day just registering cattle for cattle passports. Then you have IACS now being replaced with SFP forms, which are very difficult to understand and have highly ambiguous questions to answer. It just goes on we have forms for NVZ, dairy hygiene, farm assurance, cross compliance, its endless".

Edward is also driven to make money, but other factors are important for him; such as independence, especially control over his working day.

"I guess I want to make money and I think I can make money out of farming, but its more than that. I want to be able to work for myself and have the independence to plan my own day. How long it will be like that I don't know, with more and more of what you do controlled by policy".

Julie, John's wife, has a job outside of farming that contributes to the household income, confirming previous studies on the role of women in farming (see: Danes and McTavish, 1977; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Gasson and Winter, 1992; Gasson, 1998; Whatmore, 1991). The household has a stable income each month,

compared to fluctuations in monthly milk cheques. The only involvement Julie has in the farm business is completing PAYE. As John says:

"My wife has three part-time jobs, she is a trained book-keeper and does PAYE for two dentists and another farm, and then she does the books for this farm".

J – "Ok, so she brings in extra income for the household?"

"Yes. You see milk price is such a key issue, a small change affects our income a lot, especially as we are now producing more and have a higher level of debt.

There is only so much you can do to decrease costs and increase margins".

Economic capital is a major influence in any decision John makes. As a result of changes in the business, he now has to deal with servicing a high level of debt.

8.8.3 Cultural Capital

John values education. Both he (NCA) and Edward (BSc) are well educated, demonstrating again John's utilisation of institutional *cultural capital* (education). John also trains young people on YTS day-release. John has invested money (*economic capital*) into preparing his son to take over the family business, sending him to university and securing a placement for him at Grosvenor farms.

"Edward did a degree course [at Harper Adams] and did a year out, as part of his degree. He worked on Grosvenor farms Cheshire, as I knew the farm manager. My son is very much into breeding and interested in sexed semen".

Edward also spent time travelling, which gave him the opportunity to experience different farming techniques (expanding his *cultural capital*). From these experiences, Edward has also built up a good social network (*social capital*).

"I went to university and I have travelled and worked on different farms across the world, which has been a fantastic experience. I'm so lucky that I have been able to do it. It all started when I won a place to do an exchange with YFC, and I worked my way around after that with contacts from the people I met. I must have been really lucky to meet farmers who knew people. I spent a year out working in Cheshire for my university degree and that was really good. I learnt a lot in that year, more I think than I did sitting in lectures".

The family also provides *cultural capital* in the form of knowledge and skills, passed on from generation to generation (Elder and Conger, 2000; Frustenburg, 2004). These form part of the '*habitus*' as learned dispositions from past experiences and values are transferred at a very early age (Bourdieu, 1990). The family and business systems are inextricably linked (Gersick *et al.*, 1997; Moores and Barratt, 2001). Consultants were employed to verify John's feasibility study, an example of John utilising a social network (*social capital*) outside the family and employing *cultural capital* in the form of expertise (durable dispositions of the expert's *habitus*).

"I had a feasibility study conducted. I did one myself and had an outside professional to complete one as well, mainly to see if I could cope converting the barns myself. I couldn't, not with the rapid expansion we were doing and building a new unit. It would have taken too long before the money came in, which we desperately needed".

8.8.4 Social Capital

Social capital, especially social networks and a sense of membership to the farming community are important to many farmers. The opportunity for farmers to engage in exchanging information is decreasing, especially with the continued trend of livestock market closures. These provided farmers with a chance to increase their *social capital*, as well as an outlet to sell their animals. Social networks, including the family (Loury, 1977; 1987), and particularly John's brothers, provide avenues for John to discuss business matters in a social setting. This is done more regularly now they are not working together.

"... I guess now I'm not working with the family [brothers] we can see each other socially".

John and his brothers have pursued similar business directions hence John has been able to talk to his brothers about their experiences. John recognises the importance of socialising off the farm and having some leisure time. This avoids the social exclusion and isolation which affects some farmers. Socialising away

from the farm is an important aspect for well-being, even though it is related to farming. As John says:

"I have always done things off the farm as a way to escape the pressures and just have some time to myself. I think this is essential when you live and work in the same place.....I enjoy my work but you need to have other activities in order to get you off the farm and meet other people, so you are not a prisoner on your farm and excluded from social life."

As in the previous case, YFC played a significant role in providing a valuable social network (*social capital*) for John and Edward. John told me:

"I was a member of my local YFC and I was in Staffordshire NFU. My son is also a member of YFC, he is very involved with the organisation".

J – "Did you find that was a good way to meet people you otherwise would not have met?"

"Yes. This was a great organisation to meet people and to do things, be involved with something and meet like minded people. We did sports, had competitions and socials. I still see some of the people I went to YFC with now".

Edward is still highly involved with YFC (like Ben and their fathers) it is an important part of his life.

"I love YFC. I have made so many friends there and I have been involved with many aspects from club to national level. I have held positions on club committees and county committees. There are so many things you can do, farming and non-farming. For example, be treasurer of a club and gain business skills, first aid, machinery maintenance for farming, stock judging, public speaking - its great. I'm still involved with county meetings".

When I asked John if he socialises outside farming, he mentions sports then talks about social networks connected to farming. He highlights the importance of cattle markets for the farming community.

"Yes, even though I enjoy my work you need to have other activities in order to get you off the farm and meet other people. You need to be able to socialise, so you don't become isolated. Like I mentioned, I play sports - cricket and football.

I also like going to cattle markets and think Uttoxeter has one of the best pedigree dairy cattle markets in the country. It is a good place to sell your cows - get a good price, but also to meet people and discuss things. It's another way to get off the farm and see people. It has not been the same since the FMD outbreak. It has wound down and there is not the volume of people going. FMD spoiled it and all the new regulations have taken the shine off it. It has become another opportunity for you to be inspected. The only problem with the market in its hey day was parking. Most of my family live near the market town, so I would see them there selling their animals".

Social networks are important for building trust and sharing information (highlighted by: Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 1993a). When asked about the plans to close the local cattle market, John replies:

"It will be a shame when it shuts. I don't know where I will sell my animals if they don't re-locate it, which I don't think they will because people won't put money into something that is declining. Well, it will probably be for the best really, parking was horrendous. Not for the town, not for businesses in the town. Since FMD the traffic isn't there, so the parking isn't so bad. On the other hand, you see the businesses they haven't got so much trade. It is probably one of the best dairy markets in the Midlands. We take pedigree dairy cattle there to sell and it is a very good market".

Livestock markets provide a place for farmers to socialise (*social capital*), as well as engage in selling animals (*economic capital*). Many markets are being closed down and the closure of more livestock markets could further erode connections between farmers and the public. At local markets, mothers would take their children round to see the animals (a way to pass on *cultural capital* regarding farming to the public), though this stopped when the FMD crisis broke out.

"I go to market the cattle market because lots of my relations live near the town and I enjoy it because I meet some of my cousins. There's a new market at MD and its like a Tesco's. I don't like it, because it's all modern and it hasn't got the atmosphere".

There has been a reduction in the opportunity for farmers to meet through the NFU, despite the increasing membership fees. Farmers like John feel that the NFU is not being proactive enough.

"I don't think the NFU are doing enough to put public relations of farmers over.

I think farmers' markets have helped a lot in some towns; they have helped raise farmers profile a great deal, but more needs to be done".

NFU Committees are no longer run for the specific farming sectors, where farmers meet to discuss areas of concern for their particular sector (in this case dairy). These meetings provided vital *social capital* for farmers to exchange positive and negative experiences. As John points out:

"The problem is, over the years the NFU has gone weak. I'm in the NFU. I was chairman of the local branch some years ago, but there is a lot of apathy and I don't think they do enough for us, to promote us to the public and to make the public aware. As a Union, they have got very limited powers and are very fragmented. I was on the milk committee some years ago, but the milk committee has been disbanded and re-organised. The NFU is not the organisation it was".

Industry bodies, such as the NFU or MDC, may not be doing enough to assist farmers in strengthening their *social capital*, nor in passing on knowledge from farmer to consumer (sharing their *cultural capital*). A farmer's *habitus* and life-world is far removed from that of the urban dweller. Cultural differences need to be addressed to bring these two social groups closer together, in understanding what each of them do and what each of them want from food production and the countryside.

8.8.5 Symbolic Capital

The genetics and herd breeding programme are important to John. The herd becomes symbolic of the family farm and its history. John's long-term breeding plan (*symbolic capital*) is an accumulation of *economic*, *cultural* and *natural capital* that each generation has nurtured. These cows are symbols (physical attributes)

of John's work over the years, just as the new unit is symbolic of the restructuring of the business and the way forward. The farmer's *symbolic capital* represents their contribution to the family business. It is what they have managed to achieve with the available *capitals* that becomes the farmer's footprint in the family history.

8.8.6 Natural Capital

Natural capital is closely related to *symbolic capital*. John has not been afraid to experiment with his breeding, taking a long-term view, in order to improve the quality of his dairy herd. John is very passionate, yet calculated, in the expansion of his herd, and his breeding programme. This is a highly technical and scientific process and, as previously mentioned, gives John job satisfaction and pride. Breeding requires the *habitus* of the farmer to use knowledge (*cultural capital*) on which bulls to use with particular cows. There is great uncertainty over the outcomes of trying different genetics, as described above. It also requires scientific knowledge of the breeding qualities of the cows and bulls used. Edward shares John's interest in breeding. As John says:

"We mainly have pedigree Holstein Friesians but it's changing. We are now crossing them with Swiss Browns a cross-breeding programme, which we started 12 years ago. We now have four generations of cross breeds. My son is very interested in the breeding side of things, so we tend to experiment. In so much as, if we see something reported as a good cow for crossing with Holsteins to correct some of their faults, then we will try it. It is a long process before you see any benefits, or if your decision was right. It takes a long time for the genetics to filter through. It is also a risk, because you could end up with a cow that has all the faults from each breed. You have invested money into that cow so it needs to produce for you, not create problems for you. I like to know the breeding lines of each cow. I have picked the genetics. That's what gives you the satisfaction you see. It is breeding really good cows that will milk well and live good healthy lives. It's what the job is all about".

Breeding is highly symbolic of success for John coupled with the new unit (*symbolic capital*). He is proud of his achievement, which requires huge investments in time, money (*economic capital*) and knowledge (*cultural capital*).

"We built the herd to 180/190 cows by 2002. We now have 240 milking cows, which I think is quite an achievement as we have not bought any in. It is a slow process as they are all home reared and we have not bought any in for 24 years, because of the issue of buying in disease. I prefer to have a closed herd".

This also highlights the issue of nature and principles of farming as Mike described in Chapter Seven. Bio-security is a major concern for John. It is uncontrollable and unpredictable. FMD affected John's business, and he suffered both financially and emotionally, during and after the crisis.

"I moved out [of Reeds Farm] for FMD, because I had cows at Knowles Farm and didn't want them to suffer. I didn't see my family for a month, it was a stressful time. We had cows calving at Knowles Farm, which we couldn't bring home to the main dairy herd to be milked. It was a mess, the whole situation was poorly handled. We were lucky. We didn't lose our herd to any contingency culling or FMD itself. That would have been soul destroying, seeing our cows killed for something that wasn't our fault".

John and Edward have previously mentioned the effects that nature has on business operations and the principles of farming confirming the view of Mike in Chapter Seven. As John succinctly says:

"It means that you can't really plan what you are going to do, you can only plan round the weather. Nature has its own pace of life".

John and Edward both highlight nature and biological systems as major factors for farmers, for instance: the time it takes to grow things and the work involved in nurturing, before anything can be sold. This does not fit with the fast pace of modern life and changing technologies.

8.9 Discussion

Under RAT, and in light of the economic downturn in farming, the farm business in the previous case would have been sold by the rational business man (it was not in debt, therefore, it would have made substantial profits). The level of debt assumed by this business will substantially reduce any money the farmer may make if he sold the farm. John and Edward must have reasons to continue farming that RAT man ignores, even though they demonstrate rational social action (rational *habitus*). For instance, John's expansion strategy to increase profits in the long-term conforms to part of RAT profit maximisation. John could be described as entrepreneurial (Glover, 2007a), by responding to market (*field*) changes, in order to gain some economies of scale, with the intention of increasing profits (rational *habitus*).

The case typifies the popular strategy of expansion and updating facilities promoted by consultants and industry leaders (rational *habitus*). This strategy is in response to falling milk prices. It is seen as a course of action to alleviate decreasing profit margins by gaining some economies of scale. Milk price fluctuations obviously affect business cash-flow. The farmer offers his son as many chances as possible to make decisions, acting more like a mentor than a father. Both their *habitus* are open to new ways of working and each is grateful to their respective fathers for encouraging ways of thinking and grasping new opportunities, unlike Mike and Ben in the previous chapter who are happy to continue the business as it always has done.

From the interview, a recurring message portrayed by John is one of a father who is committed to passing on the family business to the next generation (identified by: Gasson and Errington, 1993). The family is fully supportive of Edward's decision to continue the business. This is the only reason they have constructed the new unit, even though it has put them in debt. The expansion was seen by

John as a viable strategy to enable the business to be in a position to cope with the future. However, the future expansion plans also depend on other people's reaction to the SFP. John enjoys challenges and is willing to take risks to achieve future financial gains. All major business decisions are future orientated, for example the breeding programme and the expansion itself.

John enjoys his work and is motivated by profit and non-economic goals, namely succession, independence, personal satisfaction and development. Edward also values independence and personal development (see: intrinsic goals Gasson, 1973, 1974a, 1974b). The family is an important part of the business, as all forms of *capital* are passed between the family and business in order to ensure each one is sustainable. John also comments on the problem of attracting young people to the industry, a fact identified by the industry itself.

As in the previous case, the farm business lacks power in the *field* and the farmer does not have a large amount of *capital* in order to play the game and increase his share of the available *capitals*. When evaluating the levels of *capital*, it was apparent that each form of *capital* is used in such a way that the farm is progressively moving forward (rationalist social action). For the rationalist, *economic capital* is the most important followed by *natural, cultural, social* and *symbolic*.

Economic Capital

After gaining access to *economic capital* through raising a mortgage, the family is heavily in debt, and highly dependent on milk price. The future of the farm depends on future economic returns from milk production. As is the case with the traditionalist, the rationalist also lacks *economic capital*. However, the rationalist also has high debts to service. Julie's income provides the household with a constant income each month, compared to the fluctuating milk cheque.

John does have assets which he could sell (an option many RAT businessmen would take). However, the net proceeds will be reduced by the mortgage hence the decision to sell is not straightforward.

The economic position of the farm is more unstable than the farm in Chapter Seven. John has risked his farm in the hope of future profits (RAT pursuit of growth, rational *habitus*). He has a substantial mortgage and risks losing everything, whereas Mike would not risk putting his business in debt. This puts the farm in a more vulnerable position to decreasing milk prices, as interest payments on loans still have to be paid.

Cultural Capital

Both the farmer and his son are committed to the business and have good levels of *cultural capital*. Each family member has knowledge and skills to offer the business. In the case of John and Edward, these have come from the family generations that have passed their own experiences and knowledge onto children (confirming: Elder and Conger, 2000). Edward has a higher level of education (institutional *cultural capital*) than his father. He also learnt from experiences working on farms abroad whilst travelling.

John has not been afraid to seek external *cultural capital* in the form of consultants, who possess higher levels of institutional *cultural capital*. John (NCA) and Edward (BSc) have higher levels of institutional *cultural capital* compared to Mike and Ben. This may be a factor that affects the type of social action that individuals pursue. It could account for the openness of the *habitus* to embrace new experiences, to look at the future in a more rational way and take greater risks for higher (expected) rewards. Mike and Ben are traditionalist, whereas John and Edward are more progressive, hence their action could be

argued to be increasingly like that of RAT businessmen, leaning towards rationality (rational *habitus*), seeking profit maximisation and business growth.

Social Capital

John and Edward have good social networks, increasing their levels of *social capital* compared to other farmers. They both utilise farming networks, to help themselves and their business. For instance, John secured a job for Edward as he knew a farm manager of a large enterprise. Having good social networks ensures they spend time away from the farm, which they believe is essential for their well-being. Mike, Ben, John and Edward all value the opportunities YFC gave them and the value it has in terms of *social* and *cultural capital*. They have all spent a long time in YFC and made life-long friends. John however is more willing to use professionals and seek help from professional networks than Mike, who distrusts consultants and the like. Edward has built up a valuable social network with other farmers from across the world. However, both he and Ben have found YFC an excellent experience.

Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is very important for John and is reflected in his passion to pass on a viable business to his son. He wants to be remembered for what he has done for the business, including keeping the family name in farming. John, Edward, Mike and Ben, all have good levels of *symbolic capital* relating to farming, namely their identity and the family tradition. Succession is highly important for each family, passing on a business that has accumulated *capitals* over a long time.

Natural Capital

For both farmers and sons, *natural capital* is highly important for their business. Their livelihoods depend on nature and they all realise this. It is their greatest

asset, but also a big liability. John, Edward, Mike and Ben all have interests in breeding cows and all feel that animals and the land should be cared for properly. John and Mike both operate closed herds, recognising the need to reduce importing disease. Their land and animals are very important to them and they cannot understand why people mistreat them.

To summarise, the expansion plans have pushed all the available *capitals* - *economic, cultural, social* and *symbolic* - to their limits. The expansion has stretched both the skills of the farmer and the economic resources of the entire family. John raised *economic capital*, selling the traditional farm buildings and raising a large mortgage. John was prepared to seek out and take advice from outsiders to ensure his plans succeeded. John utilised *social* and *cultural capital* in order to help him make a long-term decision over the future of his business, to secure it for his son's future in farming. He used *social capital* in the form of external social networks. Consultants were employed to check the financial viability of his proposals (*cultural capital*), thus contributing to future income and available *economic capital*.

In both cases (traditionalist and rationalist), father and son are committed to the long-term viability of the farm and want a viable business but address this need in different ways. *Economic, social, cultural* and *symbolic capital* have been accumulated over three generations: the business has been passed on; skills have been passed on; and the culture of the family has continued as someone from each generation has wanted to farm. John, Edward, Mike and Ben have all benefited socially from the YFC. They each expressed concern over the closure of local cattle markets; reducing the opportunity for farmers to socialise with one another in a 'safe environment' is regrettable. In terms of *economic capital*, Mike and Ben would certainly be in a better position as the business is not in debt.

John and Edward are at a greater risk from falling milk prices and increased costs, having borrowed a huge amount of money to fund the expansion.

8.10 Conclusion

John has utilised different forms of *capital* in order to ensure the expansion plan and new unit is successful. This case demonstrates that goals can be achieved by using different forms of *capital*. The expansion was undertaken for both economic and non-economic reasons. The plan was financed by John using *economic capital* in the form of realising *capital* from his assets and borrowing money. *Social* and *cultural capital* were used through networks of consultants to verify the viability of the study and personal knowledge and networks. For example, John used consultants' expertise (*cultural capital*) through his own *social capital* (social connections) to confirm his plans would work.

The case demonstrates a long-term planning ability and dedication to long rather than short-term gain. This long-term risk may not pay off, particularly if milk prices drop. If the gamble does pay off then the future of the farm is hopefully secured for the next generation, giving the son a business that is well placed for the changing industry environment. If the gamble does not pay off, the family risk losing both the farm and their family home. Edward will then have to decide how, or if, he wants to continue in the industry. The level of risk inherent in this change of direction should not be underestimated. A business built up over generations could be sacrificed in pursuit of growth. The next case explores a farmer who is described as an idealist.

Chapter Nine: The Idealist

9.1 Reasons for Choosing the Case

This case is slightly different, offering new insights into why farmers farm. The farmer had to re-build the dairy herd, after losing all his livestock in the 2001 FMD crisis. He had nine months with no animals on the farm. He spent a lot of time thinking about what the family would do post-FMD. The decision about their future was made by the farmer and his spouse. They considered moving to Canada and spent three weeks out there, researching emigrating, which would have meant not farming. They decided they wanted to farm and so re-stocked in 2002. The farmer must have had reasons for not leaving the industry, when he could have easily left with substantial compensation. This case complements (Yin, 2003) previous cases in many ways, but also extends the theory (Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003). It is also a polar case (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), as the farmer had the opportunity to leave the industry but chose not to.

The family must be committed to farming and see a future in the industry. It would be extremely hard, both emotionally and financially, to start the farm business from scratch, requiring great strength of character to find the energy and dedication to re-stock. They have also entered into environmental stewardship schemes and diversified into Bed and Breakfast (B&B).

When interviewing the farmer, it became clear that his *habitus* leans towards idealist social action, which Weber (1920) describes as an emotional state of the actor rather than a rational weighting. The farmer can be described as an idealist, especially in the way he talks about his farm and family. His past actions have been in pursuit of a lifestyle, a way of life, which he believes is ideal for the family. His *habitus* is more influenced by action that results in continuing

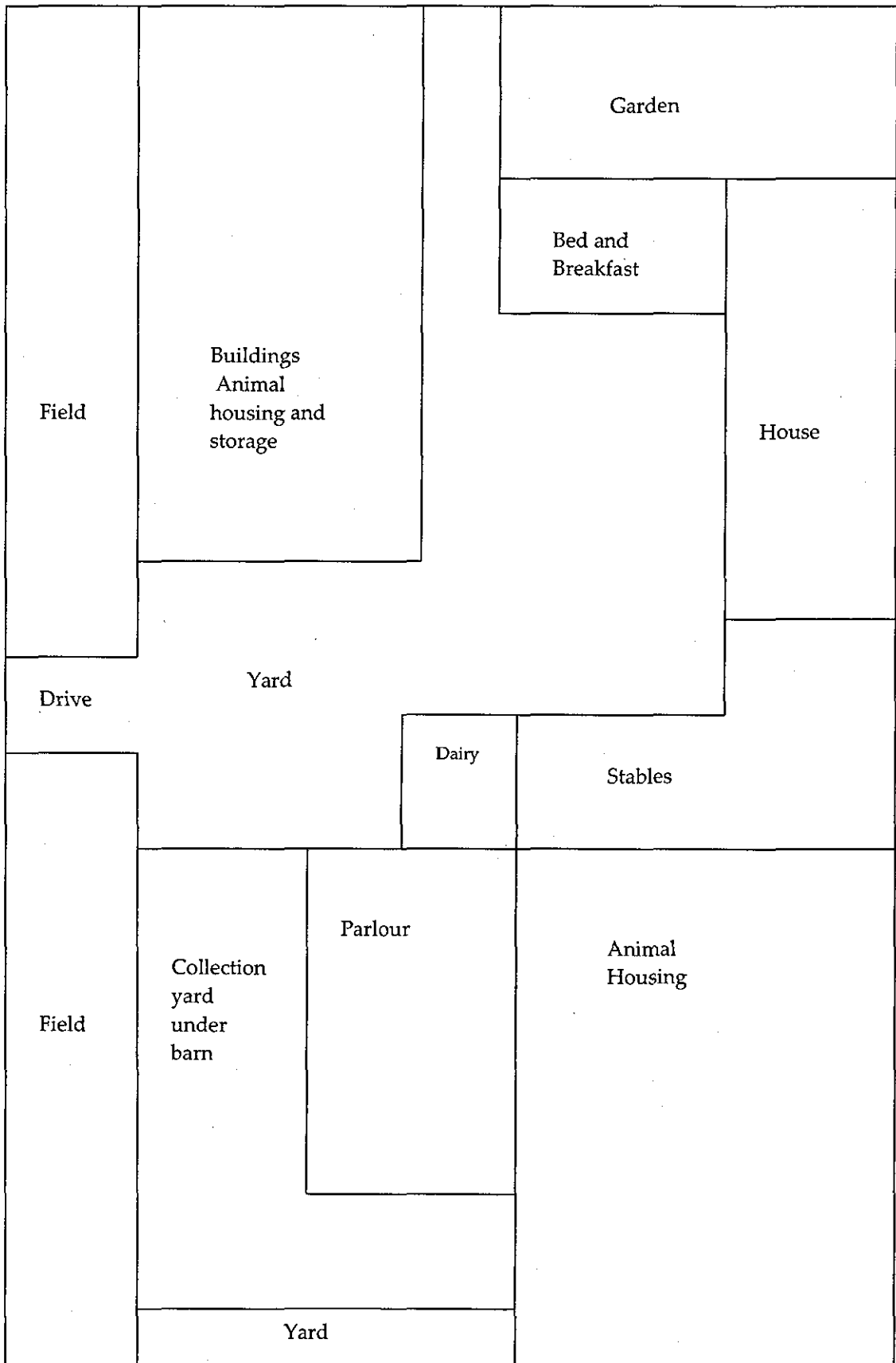
the lifestyle he has become accustomed to. Data were gathered by participant observation and an interview with the farmer.

9.2 The Case

The farm is situated off a busy lane, up a long straight drive, on the outskirts of a market town. The farm yard was clean and tidy. The old traditional brick buildings have been converted into B&B, and stables. All the buildings, yard and drive looked new. This could be explained by the strict cleaning and disinfecting regime of farms contaminated with FMD in 2001. Before the farmer could re-stock, there was a statutory nine month standstill period.

The interview was conducted at a large oval, wooden table in the dining room, which opened onto the kitchen. It was a very large room, stretching from the front to the back of the house. The kitchen had wooden cupboards and there was a large Rayburn in the middle of the far, sidewall. The farmer, James, wore a jumper and jeans; he was fair-haired, medium build, and quite tall. Caroline, his wife, had long, blonde hair and was tall and thin. She was wearing black trousers and a pale blue shirt.

Figure 7: Farm Layout – The Idealist (not to scale)



9.3 Family History

Both sides of James's family were farmers. The family have always been involved with farming and are distantly related to the family in Chapter Eight. James inherited the farm from his father, who previously inherited it from his father. His brother got two houses from the farm and still lives in one. He has no interest in farming. Three generations of the family have been farming at the premises, and James has been farming here for nearly 30 years. James wanted to buy back the cottages from his brother, to keep everything together (reflecting his idealist *habitus*), but realises this was not possible and is thankful he still has the farm.

9.4 Farm History under Family Management

The farm is now under third generation management. The farm is 250 acres, and the dairy herd currently stands at 110 Holstein Friesian dairy cows, producing 850,000 litres of milk a year. Maize is grown on the farm for winter feed. Any beef animals born on the farm are raised to maturity by James, rather than selling them as youngsters to beef finishing units (often run by former dairy farmers, who have moved into an alternative farming sector). A lady is employed to milk the cows, and contractors are used for specialist tasks, such as silaging, maize-sowing and harvesting, ploughing, spraying and hedge-cutting. Over the last five years, no additional land has been acquired.

The farm has diversified into two different areas: an environmental tree stewardship scheme, and tourism. Both were started before the FMD outbreak. The family decided to diversify into B&B, run by Caroline, to increase household income, but this move has brought problems. The B&B is now run as adult only premises. James found that children caused problems for the core farm business.

Before the FMD crisis, the farm offered livery; four stables were used and often in full occupancy.

"The B&B is now no children. We found that children were too much hassle and would run riot on the farm. The four stables we did-up to do livery, but we found that it was more hassle than it was worth".

After FMD in 2001, the buildings were used for storage, until the family were given permission to re-stock the farm. The original farm provided the main assets for the diversification activities, for example old brick buildings for the B&B and stables, and labour for both ventures.

9.5 The Farmer

James is 45 years old and has been involved with farming all his life. He has two children, Emily and Jessica, who both help on the farm. Emily is very interested in farming; even though she is under 16, she has expressed concerns about the amount of paperwork involved. Emily asks how to do things, taking an active interest in the farm. James would encourage her to continue the farm, if it is the lifestyle she wants. He does stress that it is her decision, and his children are under no pressure to continue the family business. His other daughter, Jessica is not interested in farming at all. James works hard, spending 70 to 80 hours on the farm each week. He finds it very hard to come in at night, sit down, and do paperwork. He finds it tiring, especially when it involves correcting mistakes the RPA has made in the work they have sent back. James has no formal qualifications, a lack of institutional education (*cultural capital*), although he did complete YTS day-release when he was younger. He learnt most of his farming skills and knowledge from his father. This has been from an early age and has become part of James's *habitus*. Farming has become a major influence, shaping his *habitus* and hence a large part of his life-world.

"My parents and grand-parents were farmers and I have always been involved in farming. I was chairman of my local JNFU club (affiliated to YFC). My brother on the other hand, has no interest in farming what so ever".

James is attached to the area where he lives and his 'roots' are important to him (reflecting his idealist *habitus* and *symbolic capital* levels). He also thinks the area is good for his business in terms of infrastructure.

"I love living in the area. I have noticed people from my school days have moved away, but eventually returned to their roots back here; even though people used to slate the place and could not wait to get away. I like living in the area, because it has links to good roads and has one of the best dairy markets in the country. People travel miles to come and see some of the best dairy cows for sale".

Farming provides James with his identity and place in society; farming is highly important to him and the person he is (see: Burton, 1998; Seabrook and Higgins, 1988). Farming gives James job autonomy and independence. He enjoys the job. He is emotionally attached to his job, seeing it as his calling (relating to *symbolic capital* and his idealist *habitus*). I asked James if he always wanted to farm, he replied:

"Yes. I think there was only one time I thought of being something else and that was a grain lorry driver. That was just a flash-in-the-pan and I haven't really considered doing anything else, except when we lost our herd to FMD in 2001. We, that's me and my wife, considered various alternatives. One involved moving to Canada and not farming. The only reason for going would have been the way of life for the children may have been better than here. That was the only reason we would have gone, if we thought that it far outweighed things over here".

James sees farming as the ideal way to raise a family, and the best way for his children to experience life (again action reflecting his idealist *habitus*). It allows him to be a part of his children's upbringing and watch them grow and develop. He wants his children to experience the life he had (to enhance their *cultural capital*). He believes that children should have contact with nature and country living (idealistic beliefs).

"My children and their happiness are the most important thing to me; watching them grow up, have a good lifestyle and a good childhood. It is what makes me get up in the early hours and spend 70/80 hours a week on the farm. So they can have a country lifestyle and experience some of the things I did when I was little. You know, being involved with cattle, other animals, having pets on the farm, seeing things grow and being involved in the farm are all important to me. I want the best for them. But doesn't every dad want the best for his children?"

Even though James would not want to do anything else, he views dairying as a varied job, comprising long hours, hard work, and requiring a certain discipline to maintain high standards. James believes that everything on the farm must work properly, and he dislikes untidy farms.

"I can't see myself doing anything else at the moment, even though it is a 24/7 job and hard work. I do spend 70-80 hours a week on the farm working either doing manual or paperwork. It requires discipline, and a discipline to keep things tidy and smart, not neglecting gates and buildings etc. I see places where they have stopped milk production and perhaps have a few suckler cows and the discipline has gone. There are gates not swinging and the place looks untidy. They don't actually have to get up, so they don't".

Farming allows James to live where he wants and continue the family legacy of farming. When asked why he likes farming, James comments:

"I couldn't live in the city. One day in the hustle and bustle is enough for me. I don't like the fight, getting stuck in traffic, the rat race and the problems of having to travel long distances to work. I wouldn't want to have to travel large distances to work. Working at home on the farm, I can see my kids before they go to school and see them when they get back. It allows me to watch them grow up. I think it's an ideal family way of life for a traditional family, and someone seeking a traditional way of life and family. The life of farming allows me to see my children grow up in an environment I love. They have that connection with nature, they learn about life and working for a living".

James likes the traditional way of life farming offers, and wants his children to have the same connection he had with nature (his behaviour reflects his idealist

habitus, closely linked to traditionalist social action). In this way, *natural capital* is important for James, it also enables his children to develop their *cultural capital*. The traditional way of life is highly symbolic of the family identity, and heavily related to the family tradition of farming. *Natural capital* enhances James's level of *symbolic capital*. Well maintained land and healthy animals show James as being a good farmer in the community. His farm thus reflects his identity (*symbolic capital*) in society.

James comments how motivations change over time, and how providing for his family drive him to work hard.

"My family motivates me. I don't know how people who have no family get up in the morning, milk the cows, do all of the work I do without a purpose. My purpose is my family and my kids. I would never force either of them into farming, but one is very keen and if she wants to farm, then I won't stop her. It is, and can be, a good life - even if you don't make vast amounts of money. My family's happiness and well-being are vital. So long as they are happy, then farming is for me and I will continue to farm".

James is highly committed to providing his family with an idealistic way of life (driven by his idealistic *habitus*). However, he is aware factors that motivate him now may change in the future.

"Motivation and goals do change over time. I like to have a business plan that coincides with my life plan. Motivation is difficult to pinpoint. I suppose it is my family and carrying on tradition. Although this reduces as you get older and wiser".

James acknowledges that, changes over time are an inevitable issue farmers have to contend with. The quote below demonstrates how his idealist *habitus* developed from an early age and how the farm holds symbolic importance to him. It is the family tradition and represents who he is and his identity (status in the *field*) in the farming community.

"For example, when I was younger, I didn't want the farm to be split up. I wanted to keep everything together, how it always has been. When you get older you see

that this cannot always be the case, and things have to change otherwise you get left behind."

James is concerned about the future, especially whether anyone in the family will take over the family business. Considering the tradition of the family, this is very important. He also talks about changing attitudes and changes in his reasons to farm.

"I suppose at my time of life, retirement and succession become an issue. The fact you may not be able to do what you would have done twenty years ago, for example, trying new things or having a change of career. Attitudes also change with age and the action of others around you, and also whether you have dependents to think about. My children are the driving force behind any decision I make and they always come first. I always do things for them. Like the farm, if one wants to carry on then I will start making changes. They can start working on the farm, be more involved, until they eventually take over".

Should his daughter wish to continue the farm business, James would want her to learn the family business and experience what it is like to be a farmer whilst he is still able to mentor her, before she fully took over the business. James' desire to keep the whole farm together reinforces my argument that he is an idealist and that *symbolic capital* (his farm) is highly important, representing his family's hard work and accumulation of *capital* over time.

Expanding on the role age plays in decision-making, James comments that he does not think he could re-stock the herd if FMD hit again.

"I don't think I could start again now if I lost everything, like we did four years ago. I don't think I have the ability or the faith in myself to do it all again. I sometimes don't know how I managed to start everything off and re-stock again. Age definitely affects your decisions and what you do".

When asked about leaving the industry James comments:

"Other people don't really have any reason to stop farming, apart from, attachment to the place and job stopping them from quitting or doing something else. The stigma attached with stopping is not as great now, as it was in the previous generation. Then it was frowned upon to stop, and people were seen as

quitters and weaker in the community. Quitting was seen as a weakness and inability to be a good farmer anymore. Now it doesn't really matter, I don't think, if you stop or if you diversify. Things can be changed if you really want them to and those that don't change are obviously quite happy with what they are doing. There are always other options out there. It just depends whether you really want to go for them or not. The older generation didn't want to have anything to do with diversification because it distracted away from the core activity of farming".

This indicates that James' *habitus* is open to new experiences and will adapt and evolve accordingly. However, in light of James' *habitus* favouring idealistic action, new experiences would be accepted provided they enhance idealistic social actions. For example, keeping the farm together and the family name on the land are both behaviours driven by his idealist *habitus*.

His comments also suggest that there are changing attitudes in the *field*. James sees the future of the industry comprising specialisation and intensification. He believes dairy farming will be located in those specific areas of the UK with good infrastructure, and other areas of the UK will lose dairy farming altogether.

"I can see dairy farming being lost in the South [of England] and in North Wales. They are able to do other things, such as sheep or arable farming. In this region, I can see dairy farming continuing, we have good access to processors and we are a close knit area with good transport links. For example, if you look at Northants then the nearest dairy market is nearly 100 miles to sell a dairy cow. Losing the local market would be bad for the area".

James would encourage someone to enter the industry and gain experience beforehand. In particular, they should experience what it is like to make a decision and live with the consequences. James believes that young people should have help in learning the managerial side of the farm business.

"Yes. I would encourage someone to go into farming, but they need to understand it requires a certain discipline to get up everyday and milk the cows. Also they need to be allowed a hand in the managerial aspects of the farm, in a relatively safe environment. They need to experience what it is really like to be a farmer. Be

involved with the decision-making and not be afraid to make mistakes, knowing how they can rectify them, or at least learn from them for the future”.

He talks about the emotional side of the job and the passion needed to work everyday, by those wishing to farm.

“They also need to be aware, it is an emotional job and you do become attached to the cows. You will have your favourites, and you will find it difficult when they are old and have to go. I feel sorry for those who want to go into farming and have fathers that are farmers but are not allowed a hand in the running of the place. They are under their dad’s thumb so to speak. They need to experience what it is like, so they can cope in a situation of crisis or change, rather than panic as some may do if they don’t have experience of making decisions and living with the consequences”.

James highlights the importance of being involved with the business as soon as possible, and learning from older generations and gaining experience. The farm business is a highly active learning environment (*cultural capital*). He reiterates what the farmers and sons in the previous two cases highlighted, that is: people must have the necessary capabilities (experience, knowledge, skills – *cultural capital*) to farm successfully.

The next section explores the business operations in more detail.

9.6 Business Operations

James points to planning for the future as a key aspect of business operations, to make sure the business evolves in the right direction. He believes having goals is important for the business, but also to make sure that business goals are in line with personal goals.

“You need to have a goal, otherwise you lose direction. You need a goal to have the commitment to carry on. You always need to consider the future and how you deal with problems that face you. You need to have a plan, it is crucial. If you don’t have a plan and don’t know where you want to go, or where you want to be

then you have no direction. If I didn't have a plan and the drive of my family, then I don't think I could get up everyday and do what I do. My family keeps me going. Things can happen which stop you following your plan, but you just do another one and get round the situation".

James talks about factors affecting farmers' decision-making and raises the point that, for each individual farmer, many factors affect how they make decisions.

"In relation to your study, we have too many factors affecting the individual farmer and his decision-making capabilities. This will then affect the strategy he chooses to take. It would be very difficult to say farmers with similar characteristics would do the same thing. We all have to overcome very different obstacles, such as shortage of labour, shortage of land, lack of finance and so on."

Caroline is involved with running the farm and solely responsible for the B&B. Her role confirms previous research into the multifunctional role women play in farm businesses by helping on the farm, running diversification activities and looking after the family and farmhouse (confirming: Danes and McTavish, 1977; Gasson, 1992; Gasson and Winter, 1992; Gasson and Errington, 1993).

"Caroline is very committed. We make decisions involving the family together, and I will discuss business decisions with her but, eventually, I make the final decision. She is involved in farming and helps with the paperwork and does the majority of it really. She will also help outside if I need it. She runs the B&B too. I would be lost without my wife and kids. I wouldn't be able to carry on, if I didn't have a purpose".

The extra income generated from diversification contributes to costs so that the children to be privately educated, which is very important to them. Although this seems to be quite a substantial amount of money from a B&B, I felt I was not in a position to further question the financials as the farmer had been very open in his account of FMD. James explains why he decided to diversify the farm business activities.

"It increases income to pay for school fees. I thought it was an opportunity to do something different. If you don't try, you never know whether it would/could work. I have to say, in hindsight, I'm not sure whether I would bother again. I think I would make more of environmental stewardship schemes; trees, having ponds and pits. I would avoid having to deal with the general public".

This passage highlights some of the problems faced by farmers in diversifying, mainly understanding their new role as service provider rather than farmer. These new skills (*cultural capital*) required by farmers must be highlighted by institutions encouraging farmers to diversify and start new business ventures; otherwise these activities will not be successful and hence drain farm resources.

"I have not had the best of experiences with the general public. I find them very demanding. They want to take over your property and don't really respect the fact it is a working environment. The B&B is now no children because they caused too many problems in my working environment. I did have four stables done up so people coming on holiday could bring their horse, because we have a few bridle paths around and some good horse riding country, but it didn't work out. We had a couple of people ask if they could keep their horse here, so we said yes. But then, they want to bring their kids, who want to play with your children's toys. You end up being like a creche for other peoples children, who do not have the same level of respect as your children, and you're not getting paid for it.

The experiences James describes could be a result of the skills he possesses, which are mainly related to farming and not the service industry (he may not have the *cultural capital* required to work in the service industry, lacking the institutional *cultural capital* required).

"They [public, especially children] are a hazard to your business. If anything goes wrong they sue you! So we stopped doing that; it affects your business and not in a good way. So you have to do things to counteract that. If that means stopping people keeping their horse on your land, so be it. The financial merits don't justify the hassle that goes with it. I have experienced many problems of working with the general public. I think it is definitely not worth the hassle of having to watch your back all the time. They treat you like a door mat, there as a service provider

of things you shouldn't be expected to provide. You lose your weekends because that is when people decide to come and stay. They are so demanding. On top of it, you have to find time to do your normal working hours on the farm. They also come in spring and summer when you are busy with calvings and silaging. I'm not sure if I would bother doing it again. But now we have started we need to carry it on and we make a bit of money, which pays for the girls' school fees".

James has found that other people (outsiders) do not respect his farm. As a result of his idealistic *habitus*, he may have entered these new ventures with 'rose tinted glasses on'. He may have seen them solely as a source of income and neglected to explore the impacts they would have on his farm business. Those encouraging diversification need to explain the pitfalls to farmers, as well as the benefits.

James would not consider doing any other type of farming, even organic. Organic farms in his eyes do not control the spread of weeds, such as thistles, docks and ragwort.

"Organic farming to me is an excuse to get more [money] for being a bad farmer, letting docks grow, thistles grow and getting more money for it, not cutting hedges every year and things like that, which I think is what a good farmer should be doing. They should be making sure the fields look nice, free from weeds. Some fields are in a right state and those with horses on look terrible, full of docks and weeds. I don't know how they get away with it! Land must be looked after properly and unfortunately that sometimes means using chemicals to remove weeds, otherwise land will resort to scrub land and if we have a dry summer we will get bush fires!"

This account also shows the diversity of the farming community is. This diversity creates problems when farmers have one body, the NFU, representing them. Arable farmers will have different ideas to dairy farmers and small dairy farmers will have different ideas to those with large operations. This heterogeneity is a problem for farmers, individually, as a group, and for their trade union.

James has recently changed milk buyer, and sees no transparency across the dairy supply chain, a point also raised by Mike and Ben in Chapter Seven.

"I sell my milk to Arla. I used to send it to the Co-op and tried to get discussion groups going. But they wouldn't even give me a list of the farmers who send milk to them. They thought I was going to start a revolt. It shouldn't be like that. We should be working together to do things and to promote milk and get a fair price. Not fighting one another, or appearing to fight one another. It is not helping the situation at all. There is a serious lack of trust between processors and farmers. It's very much an 'us and them' philosophy. Like I said before, I tried to get discussion groups going but the Co-op wouldn't give me the names and addresses of milk suppliers (farmers) for me to contact. They were very 'anti' me doing it. I found that really hard to take. All I wanted to do was set up discussion groups, so people could share experiences and knowledge to help one another, but it never got off the ground. I now send milk to Arla and they seem a bit better at the moment".

James was very keen to enhance his *social capital* through organising discussion groups with other farmers. James is open to sharing ideas and working practices, and admits that it was difficult. However, he feels that once you open up to people, it can become beneficial to him and his business (*social capital*). His efforts to organise meetings met resistance from his milk buyer, who saw them as a threat to their already high levels of power in the *field*. He believes this is a shame as farmers could learn a lot (increase their *cultural capital*) from each other and these activities could help strengthen their position in the *field*.

The quotes (above and below) highlight an important point for the farming community. *Social capital* is lacking, yet co-operative milk buying groups deny farmers the chance to embrace *social capital*. The passage emphasises the lack of trust, despite the fact that Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993) argue it is imperative for people to build trust in networks and embrace *social capital*.

"I went to an Arla day on mastitis. I thought it would be worthless, and that I knew all I needed to know. If not, I could see my vet. But I found it really

interesting. We had a seminar, then a farm walk and it opened my eyes to some of the things that can be done. It also allows you to see other farmers, if you don't get chance to go to the markets or see people in a social way. I came back with a different attitude towards them and once you get past the phase of not wanting to disclose information about your business, you can get a lot out of these discussion groups and organised gatherings".

The next section discusses the *field* in which the farm business operates.

9.7 *Field* and Rules of the Game

James comments on policy issues, (rules of the game). He talks about paperwork in detail, especially the additional work it creates:

"I suppose another factor to consider is the amount of red-tape and bureaucracy. DEFRA seem to be asking for duplicate information. For example, the survey they sent out to me, they should already have all of the information from IACS forms. I just wish there wasn't the paperwork there is now. I spend too much time doing paperwork and not enough time on my farm doing things I would like to do. I think it has got to reach a saturation point and it's almost there. I don't think they could possibly think of anything else that we need to write down!".

James is annoyed about the detail and repetition of providing information to regulatory groups. He finds it wastes time, providing the same information (paperwork) to different Government departments. James talks about how previous generations of farmers were allowed to do their job (that is to farm).

"They [older generation of farmers] were allowed to farm and farm well. They were able to do things we cannot possibly do now. Now it's all regulation and paperwork. We have tons of paperwork, for example I'm currently filling in a firearms form and the amount of paperwork that goes with it and the rules. It takes a good day or two to fill it out, get people to witness it, and I need photos. On top of this, I have to do my normal days work. Paperwork is more like an added chore that you don't like doing".

James also finds the information sent by the Government confusing and ambiguous, a point raised by those interviewed in Chapter Seven and Eight. This could highlight the fact that James lacks institutional *cultural capital*. However, it could also reflect on the Government and their lack of understanding about farming, and the level of institutional *cultural capital* in the target audience for the booklets they produce. Farmers are not lawyers and too many areas are left open to personal interpretation.

"It requires some thought and when you have to read a load of booklets and guidelines, which aren't really in plain English. The booklets DEFRA send out are so ambiguous, you don't really know what they are trying to tell you. Then DEFRA change one small thing and you get another booklet. It takes you longer, especially when you are tired. I don't like having to do it when I have already done a days work outside, doing my real job".

The farmers in the previous two chapters also talked about good and bad farmers, which James also discusses:

"I suppose a good farmer is one who looks after the land and his animals. I don't mean organically. I mean not letting it get covered in docks and thistles, keeping the hedges tidy and the animals in prime condition, not letting them look down. I always say you look after your animals as best you can. You should always do this. They are the key part of your business, along with the land. Therefore, a farmer who is good always looks after those aspects".

James does not understand why DEFRA should be telling farmers what to do. He believes that the land and animals are farmers' most important assets; therefore, they should be looked after properly.

"You don't need someone from DEFRA telling you how to do it and how it should be done...Cows are the most important asset of my business and it would be foolhardy of me not to look after them, which is why I find it hard to believe that some farmers don't look after their stock. Then they wonder why they are not getting yields and losing calves left right and centre. I don't need someone telling me how to look after my animals, when I know I'm doing a good job. If I need help, I will go to the right person, such as my vet".

James talks about public perception of farmers and the food industry, including the lack of milk product promotion. He thinks the Milk Development Council (MDC) has become misdirected.

"The MDC are not doing enough to promote milk. They spend time on easy stuff that vets and other organisations can tell you, or help you with. They are repeating stuff that isn't really adding value to your business, and we need someone to concentrate on promoting milk and dairy products. Vets can help with foot problems, mastitis and so on. We don't need another organisation researching that. We need the MDC to concentrate on promoting milk and dairy products. We pay for the MDC through a levy for promotion, so they should be promoting milk".

The promotion of milk and dairy products is important for the industry and farmers alike. James feels not enough is being done to ensure positive media promotion. James gave his time to promote agriculture and told me:

"I'm a member of the NFU, an active member as well. I have been part of talks and discussions held by NFU. I was also part of the team involved on an advisory basis for Alton Towers farm. I was only asked one question which was - Where are the toilets? No questions about farming or the animals. People said they weren't interested. They had gone to Alton Towers for the rides, not the farm. I was giving my time up and no one wanted to discuss things with me or ask me things. So why bother?"

James felt that people were not interested in farming, especially at a theme park.

Another problem in the *field* is the lack of new entrants to the industry, previously highlighted in the earlier Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. James commented on the issues surrounding succession (important for many farmers and a source of motivation to continue farming).

"Only two of my friends in farming have someone, either sons or daughters, who want to carry on the farm in the future. The rest don't have anyone, family or not, to carry on the business. This is sad and should be a cause for concern for policy makers. They need to address the issue of matching those retiring and giving up

farming, to those wanting to enter the industry, but cannot afford to buy a farm.

They should look at some rent to buy scheme or something similar”.

Since starting this research a Government initiative called ‘Fresh Start’ has been started in Cornwall, but it has been slow to be rolled out to the rest of the UK. The scheme aims to match farmers retiring with people who want to enter the industry.

James finds it upsetting (part of his idealistic *habitus*) that many farms will not be continued by the next generation as there is no-one willing to continue the family business. He does not have an identified successor but told me:

“One of my daughters is very keen and interested. My youngest, Emily talks about being a farmer and is interested in what I do. Even at 12, she is concerned about the paperwork and it can only get worse. That fact that the volume of it scares her, which is very astute for someone that age, means she has obviously thought about it in some detail, as to what she wants to do. She asks how to do things and takes great a interest in farming. If she wants to continue then I would not discourage her, if it is the lifestyle that she wants. It is her decision. I would encourage my daughter into farming, providing it is what she really wants. I wouldn’t put her off, but I would be honest about the work involved. Jessica, my eldest, is not interested at all. She doesn’t want to be a farmer or involved with farming”.

James would be very happy for his daughter to carry on the family business, a contrast with other interviewees, who do not see daughters as ‘natural’ successors of the business.

The next sections examine the forms of *capital* and their use in the farming business.

9.7.2 *Economic Capital*

James is aware of the lack of *economic capital* available to farmers. As a result, diversified his business activities, although now regrets his decision. He feels

there is a lack of information regarding the downsides of moving into another *field*, for example tourism. Different *fields* have different rules of the game and operate accordingly. These *fields* will also require distinctive levels of *capital*. James prefers to make a reasonable income and have a particular lifestyle in preference to huge amounts of money. This view reflects his idealist *habitus*.

"Money isn't the main driving force of what I do. So long as I make enough to be comfortable and provide what my family need, then that is enough for me. The lifestyle is the key. My motivations at the moment involve the future and my kids. Making sure they get a good start in life and have a great life. Profit alone is not the motivator anymore. It is the way of life and the fact my children have a nice environment to grow up in. They can play freely in a large garden and have fields to roam about in. As long as the family is comfortable, I will continue to farm and enjoy it".

James talks about the role retailers have in determining the price of food and hence the profits (*economic capital*) available to others in the *field*.

"In a supermarket, everything boils down to cost and making sure it's the cheapest possible and that is all the public is bothered about – cheap food. They don't care where it comes from. Farm shops and organic only took off, and will only survive, if the public think they are fashionable and they are helping a 'cause'. If it is acceptable to their class of people, and they think it is the right thing to do".

9.7.3 Cultural Capital

James advocates the process of learning from one's mistakes, seeing this as an ideal way to increase knowledge and skills related to the family business. James learnt how to run the business from his father, who had an open attitude to learning the family business. This highlights the importance of vocational training for the farming occupation.

"I was very lucky that my father allowed me to make decisions on the farm when he was still here. He allowed me to make mistakes but learn from them. That is the only way you become good at what you do. It is better to make mistakes at a

time when there are people around to help you, and have someone to ask for advice. Not when they are gone and you end up having to pay someone to help”.

James feels indebted to his father and thankful he was able to offer guidance, whilst letting him take over the farm. Each family generation has taught the next how to run the family business (see: Moores and Barratt, 2002). *Cultural capital* is transmitted from one generation to the next. James recognises the role his father played in teaching him to be a farmer.

“I thank my father for his encouragement and guidance in helping me to become the farmer I am today. He always helped me and let me make decisions”.

James finds it incredible that some fathers do not let their sons have a say in the running of the business.

“I feel sorry for sons who have very controlling fathers, who won’t let them have a go and won’t let them make decisions and learn from the outcome, whether it is good or bad. Sons who are ‘under the thumb’ will eventually end up loathing or hating their father for not letting them experiment and not giving them enough rope to play with, to do things. In the end, if they want to carry on the farm, they will be on their own eventually. So why doesn’t the father help them out, instead of criticising them, or not letting them do anything? I think it is fundamental to learn from your mistakes. I’m very grateful to my father, his approach to work and his ability to let me do things. He let me get on with things. I think it changes your whole outlook on the business”.

James also values education and has paid for his children to be privately educated through income generated from the B&B. This means that the children are exposed to an alternative level of institutional *cultural capital*, than those who are state educated. In the *field*, James believes the general public lacks understanding (*cultural capital*) when it comes to the food and farming industry. Food and farming are not a high priority in institutional education (although this is changing).

“The general public seriously lack education when it comes to food. They don’t know where it comes from and don’t really care, so long as it is cheap. In

supermarkets, all people go for is the cheapest thing. However, I went to the farm shop at Chatsworth and never once saw someone look at the price label and comment on the price. They just put things in their basket and paid for them”.

9.7.4 Social Capital

As with the farmers and sons interviewed in the previous cases (Chapter Seven and Eight), James was an active member of YFC and it was a large part of his life.

“Yes. I was a member of Uttoxeter JNFU (affiliated to YFC). I was the Chairman of the Uttoxeter club when they had the 50th anniversary dinner dance, 25 years ago. I went to the 75th anniversary this April and what a good night it was. We had a table with friends, who are now married. We all used to play sport for Uttoxeter YFC and now we play golf together. We haven’t lost touch over the years. I love YFC. I have spent many happy hours playing sport and doing competitions. I have been involved with YFC for a long time and made life long friends there, who I still see now”.

James is still in touch with the people he met at YFC, appreciating the importance of socialising away from the farm (*social capital*). When you live and work in the same place, socialising is good for farmers’ well-being.

“I think it is important to have an outside interest. I play golf with my old YFC friends. You need to have an interest outside farming, because that keeps you going and keeps you sane. It gets you off the farm, even if it is only for a few hours”.

YFC provided James with a valuable network of friends (*social capital*). James comments on the changing demographic make-up of YFC and suggests the organisation faces tough decisions on who it appeals to in the future. YFC reflects the changes in the social make-up of rural communities.

“YFC is changing and it is having to change. The numbers are much lower now, as people have other things they can do. They are not interested in stock judging anymore. They want to do other things, such as paint-balling and go-karting. YFC is probably finding it difficult to stick to its roots yet move with the times. It

cannot appeal to everyone and must therefore decide what it is. I can remember when numbers were 170 when I was chairman”.

He talks about the changing farming community. He comments on the reduction in *social capital* over the years. Trust is a major factor needed for successful networks and the promotion of *social capital* (see: Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993).

“It is changing all the time and getting weaker. There is no trust between people and people don’t help one another out anymore. They are each waiting for the other to give up, so they have the chance of some land to increase their holding. I suppose it is how society is: grab, grab, grab, and trying to knock out competitors, rather than standing as a force together to get things done”.

James feels there is an erosion of the farming community with fewer opportunities to share information, such as weekly cattle markets (a source of *social and cultural capital*). When asked what he thought about plans to close the local market he replied:

“I think it will be a real shame. It is one of the best places for selling dairy cows and we get good prices for our stock. It will be a shame, both financially and socially, if it closes”.

James reminisces nostalgically on his life in farming and idealises about it (reflecting his idealist *habitus*). These comments demonstrate that farmers had more *social capital* and worked together in years gone by. In the farming world today, James believes that encouraging farmers to be individualistic and enterprising has resulted in reductions of the level of *social capital* available for farmers, both individually and as a group.

“I can remember when we used to share machinery and help one another out when silaging and harvesting. Now we have contractors do it. If someone was short of something, there would be no quibbles as to whether you help out and you would not have a contract drawn up. Things would be done on a verbal agreement and you would trust the other person to honour it. No one has honour anymore – I can remember my grand-father giving Mr Brindles some land, 30 acres I think. It was because he lost a substantial amount of land to the land fill site and was finding it difficult to feed all his cows. So my grandfather said: ‘here you go have those 30 acres over there [to rent]’. No agreement in writing”.

James calls for more collusion and building of trust between farmers again, seeing this as a good way to strengthen their position in the *field* and get more out of their businesses.

"It was all done on trust and people worked together better. They were happier, I think. I suppose trust has gone in society; everyone is suspicious of other people's actions. We need to get back to farmers sharing things, helping one another out, rather than being against each other and waiting to shoot one another down and grab what they can from farm sales!"

James believes *social capital* needs to be increased and revert back to the way things were, when people used to help one another out (again his social action reflects his idealist *habitus*). There needs to be more social cohesion in the farming community.

9.7.5 Symbolic Capital

James is highly attached to the lifestyle farming offers him, and is emotional about his job (idealistic). He has a high level of *symbolic capital*. FMD affected James financially and emotionally. He sees disease as a major threat to his business. James' desire to keep the farm as a whole reflects his idealist *habitus*.

"I guess that relates to the business, but I don't know what is going to happen when I retire. I guess when I retire and there is no one in my family to take it on, say, either my daughter or my daughter's husband then I don't know what will happen to it. I suppose it will have to be sold, which is a shame. I want to keep the farm together. It is where I grew up and it is where I learnt how to be a farmer from my father and I don't want to see it broken up or sold really. Once you have sold the farm, you will never get it back; especially in this day and age, when so many people are after them, who have a lot more money than most farmers".

James comments that many older farmers have no choice but to continue farming. The love of farming is a factor keeping these farmers farming. He recognises tenant farmers face tougher decisions when it comes to retiring.

"The older generation – I think they are stuck in what they are doing, especially if they can't afford to retire. They are less likely to do other things and have a different attitude to farming. They love doing it and don't want to do anything else; no amount of persuasion will change that. Some will only stop when they are carried out in their coffin, or their health deteriorates to such a point they can't manage. Those on a tenant farm have fewer options available to them, especially for early retirement. When they lose the farm, they have lost everything and don't have the financial funds to do anything else".

He suggests the older generation are emotionally attached to farming, inline with Leopold (1939) who asserts: "the farm is a portrait of the farmer". Older farmers love farming, and they tend to share James's idealist behaviour in wanting to keep the farm together. James stresses his emotional attachment to the land and the animals (symbolic of the farmer's identity and his position in society, as in Chapter Seven and Eight).

"I have enjoyed every minute of farming, well I suppose not every single minute, but I wouldn't have changed it. There is a certain amount of emotional attachment to farming and if the emotional attachment isn't there, then you are not a true farmer. You are attached to your animals and your land. They are part of you and you a part of them. It is like you own personal paradise, even if you go away, you miss it. When we had no animals for nine months, I missed them. It seemed very ghostly and quiet. There was definitely something missing from my life. It was a very weird experience I have to say".

The enjoyment of farming is highly important for James and he sees his farm as his 'paradise' (idealist *habitus*).

I would say that my job satisfaction is high on the agenda. I do love my job, most of the time. I can't say all the time, because obviously there are times when you do not like what you are doing and you wonder why you are doing it. But you get through those dark patches and come out still loving the job you do. I love the fact I can go walking across my fields, and it is like walking across my own little paradise island. There is no one else there and it is all mine. I know that I have looked after it and do look after it. I have grown things from the land I am walking across and that my cows are fit and well".

James is also highly romantic about his farm (collection of *capitals* across many generations, reflecting his idealist *habitus*) and what he does.

"My farm is like my own paradise island and it is somewhere that is mine. I can escape from things if I want to. I can walk over my fields and I'm completely on my own. There is no better feeling and it makes me laugh that these city slickers are trying to recreate that, with a bit of land and a couple of highland cattle. I think it is funny. I find it very funny that they, with all their money, are trying to be like impoverished farmers and live like we do. They just have no idea really!"

In all of these quotes it is evident that the emotional attachment to farming is paramount for James and his identity is highly intertwined with the farm – his land, animals and family tradition (*symbolic capital*). Farming is what makes him the person he is, and gives him a sense of belonging (identity) in the social world. James talks about the satisfaction he gets from seeing his cows grazing in the field and the grass he is growing. His farm is his paradise island, symbolic of what he works for (aspirations) and his dreams (*symbolic capital*). His life-world revolves around his farm and his family.

"I wouldn't want to do anything else at the moment. If the situation changes for the worse, then I may have to re-address my situation. Perhaps look at alternatives and re-assess what I'm doing and whether it is worth it. But at the moment I'm happy with my life and what I do, providing for my family".

However, it is not long since the family's life-world was turned upside down when their farm was struck by the FMD crisis in 2001. James talked emotionally about the experience of FMD.

"I lost my herd in the 2001 FMD crisis. It was such an emotional time for me and my family. It was heart wrenching and when you love your cows and are proud of them, having to see them shot and then buried on your land is soul destroying. I can remember being without my children for 12 days. They were sent off the premises, whilst the animals were killed. They didn't even have chance to say goodbye to their favourite cows. It was an emotional time when they returned. I still remember to this day when they walked back up the drive and we were reunited".

James illustrates the degree of emotion involved when he talks about his daughter and her actions after FMD.

"My youngest has a [toy] farm of her own and shortly after coming back she boxed all her cows up and put them under her bed. It wasn't until a few days later when we asked her what had happened to them and she said that they had all gone. Now that kind of thing hits you hard. I found it weird without the cows. They are as much a part of the family as the rest of us. It was nine months before we could re-stock, everywhere seemed so empty. FMD was one of the most emotional things I had to go through and I missed my children so much. Even though they were only away for a short period of time, I now want to spend as much time with them as possible. It is events like FMD that put things into perspective and you take stock of things and look at what is really important to you. To me, it was my family and my kids".

This is an emotional account, demonstrating the families love for the farm and the animals.

"I will continue to farm, as long as I think it is the best thing to do for my family and if my daughter wants to farm then I will support her".

Losing the farm would have been devastating for the family (emphasising the farmers' pursuit of idealist social action). James also explained to me that he and the family went away for three weeks to decide what they would do in the future.

"We went to Canada; that is me, my wife and children for 3 weeks to decide what we wanted to do for the future. We considered emigrating and would have done if we thought it was best for the children. But at the time we decided against it. It would have meant not farming, doing something completely different, so we thought it was best if we re-stocked and looked at starting the dairy herd again. We decided we wanted to be in the UK, on the family farm and continue farming. Canada would have been a lifestyle choice and a completely different way of life. It would have been nice for the children, there is such vast open space over there. It is incredible".

These accounts relate to the concept of *natural capital* and the impact it can have on business operations and its connection to the emotional aspects of farming.

The 'dark side' of *natural capital* can have on a profound effect on farmers' businesses. *Natural Capital* has the power to destroy the farm business and create a sense of crisis for the farmer and their family.

9.7.6 *Natural Capital*

Natural capital is very important for the farm business and is closely linked to *symbolic capital*. When asked about factors affecting his business, James discusses location and the land.

"We have quite good land which is a positive, as you can always want more land. The land in Staffordshire is good for dairy farming and is good for making milk. The grass is pretty good. Land really limits you as to what you can do. So the land really has a bearing on what options are available to you and how you farm".

James also refers to the uncontrollable factors, namely biological systems and natural phenomena that affect his business.

"However, there are many factors affecting what I can do and how I make decisions about what I choose to do with my farm. Many of these are uncontrollable – weather, disease and so on".

James stresses that potential milk related factors could affect his business:

"If there was some negative connotation to milk, such as it causes cancer, and people stop buying it because it is not healthy anymore. Or some disease like FMD. Those are the main factors - biological issues that we cannot control. Most other things we can have a say in. There is nothing you can do, absolutely nothing. To the farming industry importing disease would be the main factor".

James thinks that nature poses the biggest threat to his business. Those in powerful positions in the *field* (Government) need to understand the role of *natural capital*.

9.8 Discussion

According to RAT theory, James would have sold his farm or continued to find alternative sources of income using the assets (mainly buildings), when his herd

contracted FMD and compensation was paid for the animals he lost. RAT does not explain why James started the business again and re-stocked. Farming provides James with what an ideal life-world (according to his idealistic *habitus*) which he thinks is best for his family. He is highly independent and likes to be allowed to get on with the job himself. He also believes that working and living on the same premises is an advantage; time is not wasted travelling, and it allows him to watch his children grow up. James talks about the market operations and the effects of the dominant players (milk buyers, suppliers, retailers and Government) in the *field* as they protect their share of the market place. He tried to start discussions groups with the farmers who supplied the Co-op to encourage collective behaviour, but the milk buyer was against it. His views are shared by those interviewed in the traditionalist and rationalist cases.

James has had negative experiences of diversifying his business operations and has found dealing with the public difficult. James tried livery, offering people the chance to bring their horses on holiday with them when stopping at the B&B. However, he stopped this facility when he encountered factors that could become a risk for his business. James does not have a problem with his daughter continuing to farm, unlike previous cases where there appeared to be gender inequalities. Nevertheless, James is concerned about what is going to happen when he retires, as he does not have a definite successor. For James, identity as a good farmer is very important to him (relates to *symbolic capital*). In light of his idealist *habitus* the farm represents for him a 'paradise island'.

When evaluating the levels of *capital*, it was apparent that each form of *capital* is used in such a way that the farm remains in the hands of the family (idealist social action). For the idealist *habitus* the priority of *capitals* is as follows – *symbolic, natural, social, cultural and economic*.

Economic Capital

James wants to make a reasonable income, but the lifestyle farming offers him and his family is also important so these two goals need to work together. The business relies on milk price, even though some of the family income comes from the B&B. The farm is owned by James, which is the main asset for the family and business. The level of debt, if any, was not discussed. However, the farm is asset rich and it generates sufficient income for the family.

Cultural Capital

James highlights the emotions involved in the job. He also talks at length about the role YFC had in his upbringing, both as a way to learn and socialise with like-minded people (also mentioned by those interviewed in the traditionalist and rationalist cases). James talks about the need for a transition period so that the next generation can experience the business and have help at hand (mentor). James learnt most of his skills from his parents, especially his dad who trained him on the job. As previously mentioned, he is glad that his dad let him make decisions and learn on the job. James has created a successful business, even though he only has basic formal education. James completed YTS day-release, but has no other formal qualifications. He points to the issue of education (*cultural capital*) and passing on the necessary skills, both business and technical to the successor of the family business. James believes people in society lack *cultural capital* regarding farming and food production. James may have had a better experience with diversifying if he had acquired the necessary *cultural capital* for the service industry.

Social Capital

James sees socialising as very important and has made valuable networks from YFC. James talks about the importance of sharing information and using networks to get farmers to talk to one another. There is too much conflict

between farmers, and more importantly, between farmers and co-operative milk buyers, when more cohesion is desperately needed. James tried to use *social capital* to enhance his levels of *cultural capital* by going to these meetings and discussing best practices. Farmers used to go to the cattle market each week. This is especially important for farmers in peripheral areas, where they may only see the milkman and deliverymen. Going to markets was a way for farmers to get off the farm and see other farmers, have dinner in the café, and talk about the industry. James viewed cattle markets as an ideal way for farmers to socialise with fellow farmers in a natural setting. It is crucial for socialising to be connected to farming and not feel alien to farmers, by (say) holding an event in a large shopping centre.

Symbolic capital

The farm symbolically represents the family tradition and all the hard work, time, and money invested in it. The whole experience of FMD highlighted how emotionally attached farmers are to their work. James missed his animals and found it hard to cope without his cows. He even finds it hard to sell his old cows. *Symbolic capital* is very important for James. Thus, attachment is reflected in his desire to keep the farm together and continue farming. His behaviour is guided by his idealist *habitus*. In RAT, this action would be seen as non-rational. However, the farm is part of James' identity; it constitutes his life-world and he wants this to continue. He does not want the farm to belong to anyone else as this would mean the family name is removed from the land.

Natural Capital

The land and the dairy herd are highly important for James. They are his most valuable asset and, without them, he would not have a business. Without natural processes, farmers would not be able to farm. For this reason, *natural capital* needs to be considered in conjunction with Bourdieu's other forms of

capital. Good farmers are perceived as ones who look after the land and take care of their animals (*natural capital*). The farming community is its own self-regulatory body, but farmers are powerless to deal with bad farmers. Farmers like James would like to see the authorities do something about those that do not take care for their animals; he also finds it difficult to understand how farmers could let fields get in a poor cropping state.

9.9 Conclusion

This farmer is highly committed to the business, even after the traumatic experience of FMD in 2001. The life-world of farming is critical. James likes the job variation and the working environment farming offers. James participates in many activities organised by the NFU, and is happy to share information and knowledge with anyone who is interested. He also socialises outside farming with his old YFC friends.

The family have also entered into stewardship schemes and diversified into Bed and Breakfast (B&B). The farm has diversified in order to increase income, but still lacks higher levels of *economic capital*. James has a relatively good level of *social capital*, doing what he can to enable himself in social networks. His level of *cultural capital* is lower than that of some of the previous farmers interviewed. However, James is a capable farmer. His *symbolic capital* relates heavily to his idealistic *habitus*, he describes his farm as his own 'paradise island'. The future of the farm depends on whether his daughter decides to take on the farm and continue the family business.

Chapter Ten: The Value-Seeker

10.1 Reasons for Choosing the Case

This case is a good example of farm diversification. The farm's owners, the Hutchinson family, employ a manager, Phil to run their family farm. This case expands the theory (Huberman and Miles, 2002; Yin, 2003) by exploring a farm managed by a non-family member. It is one of three farms owned by the Hutchinsons. The farm diversified over 15 years ago and is a well-established business. The decision to diversify was not a recent decision, as a result of falling prices and incentives from Government, but because other organisations, including the Women's Institute (WI), were keen to view the cheese-making process.

This case contrasts (polar case: Glaser and Strauss, 1967) previous cases as the farm is run by a self-employed manager, not the family. The farm was one of the first to move into cheese-making on the premises, after mechanising the milking process. The cheese unit is now a profitable operation and run independently from the farm, with a healthy turnover and ability to cover all running costs. Only in the last couple of years have profits declined, as more farmers have entered the cheese-making market to make more money from milk production. The farm is also an educational experience (*cultural capital*) open to the public, where people can learn about the cows' lifecycle, milking processes, and cheese-making.

Data were gathered by participant observation and interviews with the farmer, his son and wife, along with a family friend who wanted to be interviewed.

On the basis of the interview, it can be argued that the farmer's *habitus* pursues Weber's value-orientated action. Weber (1920) describes value-orientated action as striving for a substantive goal, which in itself may not be rational, but is nonetheless pursued. An example would be seek to become the best at doing something. The farmer and his friend, who works for a corn merchant, can be described as value-seekers. Their *habitus* is based on action that pursues value-orientated yet rational action. For example, individuals who value education will pursue that in a rational way; by going on courses, buying knowledge and skills, and so on. These value-enhancing rational actions are guided by the *habitus*.

10.2 The Case

The farm is situated down a long shared drive, not far from a small village, although some distance from any main roads. Down the drive, on the left before the main farmyard, there was a stone yard in front of agricultural buildings used as a public car park. The farmyard was clean and tidy. On the right, as you enter the yard, stand the farm shop and tearoom. The farmhouse was on the left, facing the yard and tourist buildings. Behind the house, there were agricultural buildings and fields. In front of me and to the left, there were agricultural buildings housing the milking parlour, processing plant, cowsheds, feed store and visitor information centre.

All four interviews were carried out in the farmhouse kitchen. The large porch/lean-to housed two dogs, cupboards and an old sink. The house had a very 'lived in' feeling with wellies and overalls hanging on the wall beside the door leading to the kitchen. The kitchen was long and narrow. In front of me, there was a sink unit and kitchen cupboards, and on the right a small pantry. A window over the sink looked over the back garden and fields. To the left, there

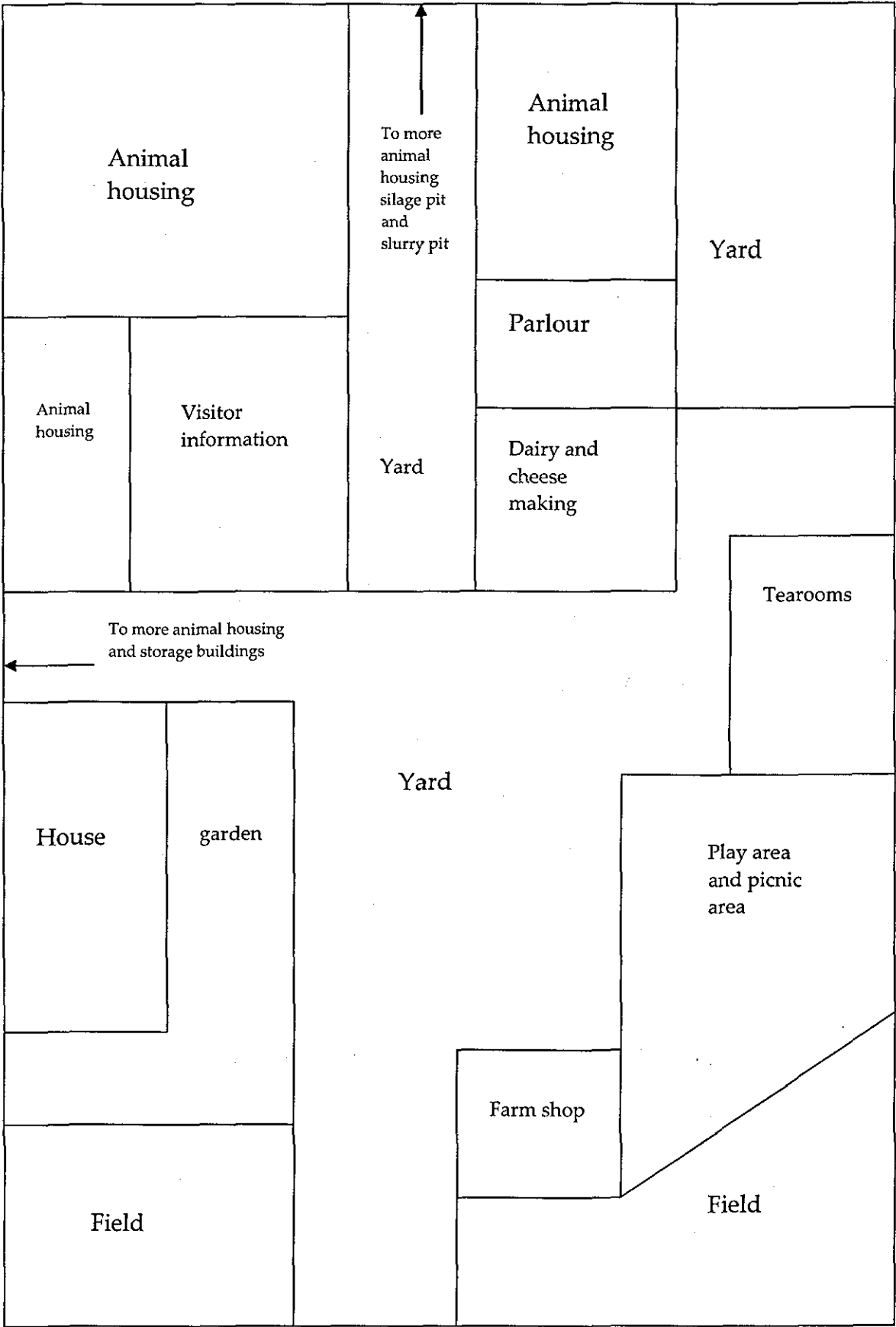
was a medium-sized pine kitchen table with four chairs. In the corner, an armchair was surrounded by magazines. The walls were covered in rosettes and photos of the prize-winning cattle. Trophies covered shelves on one of the walls.

The farmer, Phil greeted me wearing a baseball cap, which he wore for the whole interview, jeans, a shirt and jumper. He was a well built, fair-haired man who wore glasses. His wife, Kate, a jolly lady, wore a sweatshirt and trousers; she was smaller than her husband and had dark hair. Their son, Matt, had dark hair; he was slightly built and shorter than his father. He wore a t-shirt and tracksuit bottoms. Phil's friend, Scott, wore jeans and a shirt; he was tall and slightly built, with light brown hair.

10.3 Family History

The Hutchinson family (farm owners) have been involved with farming for four generations (over 120 years). They have farmed the same way for generations. However, the future generation is not interested in continuing the business as it currently operates. Their manager, Phil, has been involved with farming all his life, and his family have farmed for three generations as tenants on dairy farms. Before farming here at Lydner Dairies, Phil used to be a tenant dairy farmer near Blithbury.

Figure 8: Farm Layout – The Value-seeker (not to scale)



10.4 Farm History under Family Management

At Lydner Dairies, Phil is employed as a farm manager. The farm totals 400 acres. Cereals are grown on 150 acres of land and fed to the cows throughout the year. Phil likes a self-sufficient operation, where possible. Of the 400 acres, 200 acres are rented on two five-year leasing agreements, and Phil does not know whether he will be able to renew them once they expire. This depends on whether CAP reforms and SFP make it financially beneficial for the landlords to re-lease the land. Phil also owns some land himself, which is used by the farm. The farm is run as a partnership between Phil and his wife, Kate. Phil and Kate employ a full-time tractor driver and use contractors for silaging, hedge-cutting, cereal planting and harvesting. Phil and Kate do the remaining farm work.

The dairy herd stands at 150 pedigree Holstein Friesian cows. All herd replacements are home reared. The cattle are shown throughout the year at local and county shows. The farmer does not buy in animals, as he does not want to risk importing disease to a prize-winning herd. Showing cattle represents social action resulting from their value-seeking *habitus*. The herd has now been TB free for 6 months, an achievement in a TB hotspot area. The cows produce 1.25 million litres of milk in a year, primarily used to make cheese. Any excess milk is sold to Milk Link and, in return, Milk Link supply milk to Lydner Dairies when there is a shortfall.

The Hutchinson family decided to diversify into cheese production 15 years ago. In doing so, they amalgamated the dairy herd on one unit. They previously had a dairy herd on each of the three farms they owned. Production was centralised on Lydner Farm, where a few years later they set up the tourism side of the business. Phil and the Hutchinsons make more money than most farmers, as a result of making cheese. The tourism side now runs as a separate entity. It has taken over ten years to establish a reliable market. It is getting harder as more

people enter the cheese making market, which is becoming highly competitive. After some years, a tearoom and farm shop was added, selling the cheese and other local produce. The cheese is also sold to Tesco.

To be consistent with previous chapters the next section explores the farming family, therefore the farmer is the manager and it is his family that has been interviewed.

10.5 The Farmer

Phil is 54, and has always been involved with farming. He has two sons and a daughter, none of whom are interested in farming as a career in farming.

"None of them want to go into farming. They wouldn't really be guaranteed a secure future in farming. I'm only a manager and the position I have got would be very difficult to find in the UK. My sons are not interested in farming and neither of them live here anymore, so they don't tend to help out, only when they come here to visit. My daughter is not interested at all".

Phil works at least 80 hours a week, more when there is seasonal work to do such as harvesting, or high numbers of cows calving. Phil is a member of the NFU, and he attends meetings as a way to share information and meet fellow farmers (*social and cultural capital*). Phil has educational qualifications, both O-levels and A-levels, and a HND in Agriculture (*institutional cultural capital*). This is a relatively high level of education compared to some farmers previously interviewed.

Phil's interest in farming stemmed from his grand-father, and he has farmed all his life. Phil is passionate about his work, and loves farming (*symbolic capital*). Farming has helped shape his *habitus* and created his life-world.

"It was my grand-father that really got me hooked on farming. He used to farm and as a child I always used to go and help. My parents farmed on a tenanted

property and I continued my passion, well obsession, with farming. My wife says I have an obsession. I was interested, fanatical about farming from a very early age. I have always been involved with farming and I love it. I can't see myself being involved with any other industry. When, or if, I stop being a farmer, I will work as a relief-milker or have a job with some connection to the industry".

Job enjoyment is very important to Phil, helping him through the difficult times, which are often a result of nature (*natural capital*). He values the life farming offers him (action that reflects his Value-seeker *habitus*), and as such uses *capitals* available to him to maintain his farming way of life.

"I love every minute of it, even though sometimes you do wonder why you are doing it and why you bother. When you have a bad week, like I did last week, you think - hang on a minute why am I doing this? Well, I'm working outdoors and I'm working in the countryside. I live in a lovely place and there's nothing else I would rather be doing. Yes, it is hard work, but then most jobs are hard work and you're better off doing something you enjoy, than something you hate. I suppose I have a high level of job satisfaction. I love what I'm doing, so at least I don't go to work in the morning thinking 'God I hate my job' which would destroy me, I think. I don't know how people manage doing things when they are dreading going to work. I have enjoyed it and don't regret it. So farming has given me great satisfaction and I get more out of the fact my cows are good. I guess that's the pride and the competitive side coming out. We have a high profile farm and herd. So this increases job satisfaction. Especially, when you are showing cattle and you win - that is great".

Phil farms because he enjoys it. He is proud of his herd and his farm. He is emotionally attached to his cows and they represent the culmination of years of hard work and dedication to breeding high quality dairy cows (*symbolic capital*). Phil recognises that the job satisfaction and enjoyment in farming is being eroded. The changing rules of the game are challenging long-established *habitus* and introducing new ways of farming that farmers must adapt to.

"The enjoyment factor is definitely being reduced. You are being forced into a different way of life and a different way of running your business. The lifestyle

choice is the main reason you stayed in farming and why you didn't get an office job. So you see your children grow up, live in the place where you work and have a certain lifestyle. Which may seem antiquated to some, but we enjoy it".

Phil values the independence that farming offers him and the control he has over his daily work routines. As previously stated, Phil is a Value-seeker of the lifestyle farming offers him (his *habitus* leans towards action that is value, yet rationally-orientated). It is why he farms, and what he enjoys about it. Phil always wanted to farm, but he cannot pin-point why.

"Yes, I always wanted to be a farmer, from a very early age. I'm really not sure why. It is just one of those things you decide when you are little and I have pursued it ever since. I have never looked back. I didn't want to do anything else. I was obsessed from an early age. I thank my grand-father, he was the one who inspired me into farming as a career and my father also encouraged me. I was always involved with the farm and loved working outdoors with the animals. I couldn't see myself doing anything else. When I started my farming career the situation was much better than it is now. Where I work now, I'm the manager. Mr Hutchinson has taken the risk; he has put the capital into the diversification and the farm itself. I just run the place, but I have to achieve certain goals and make a profit out of the farm. Well, as much as I can in the present conditions. I'm responsible for the day-to-day running of the farm and making sure things work from year-to-year".

Phil loves the working environment that farming offers him (*symbolic capital*). He loves working with animals and being outside (see: Gasson, 1973; 1974b). Farming has become part of his *habitus*. Phil does not regret being a farmer, even though he faces challenges. His *habitus* values farming for the lifestyle it provides him with.

"I don't have any regrets. I love the lifestyle I have and the independence of being my own boss and being able to arrange my own life, rather than have someone else do it for me. I don't know what I would have done otherwise and I am now contemplating what I will do when the Hutchinson family stop farming. I will no longer have a job. I'm not working in an office, but there are a few alternatives

within the industry available to me. I can honestly say I have loved every minute of farming. Even the bad and difficult weeks, you get through them, you come out the other end, and you carry on with what you have always done. At the end of the day, it doesn't seem as bad as it was when you were having trouble".

Phil talks about three things that motivate him to continue farming: financial reasons (*economic capital*); love of the job; and the way of life it offers him and his family (*symbolic capital*).

"Three main things motivate me firstly, financial; I need a decent income for myself and my family. I'm lucky that I get paid a manager's wage. Unlike farm owners who aren't getting a decent wage. We haven't got the capital tied up. We own a few of the cows and some land but apart from that we don't have capital tied up in buildings and machinery and so on. We just work for the Hutchinsons. They are the ones that own everything. I get a free house with the job; well, I look on it as a free house and a very nice place to live. We own property, which we are currently renting out to cover the mortgage. This will be our retirement home when we have to leave here. Secondly, I love the job. Finally, the way of life it offers me and my family. I don't really want to do anything else. I could, but I choose not to. I love milking and breeding cows. I'm committed to farming, always have been and always will be. Even if I'm not farming, I will still have some cows and work in a related area".

Phil values working with cows and the job variation farming offers him (social action that his *habitus* prefers). He wants to work as a farmer and is not concerned about his lack of ownership of the farm and the animals. He does own some land and a few animals. Farming gives Phil a certain way of life and he has been able to see his children grow up. He likes being self-employed, but admits it can invade home life.

"I could work the business around my family and that is one key advantage of being self-employed. The work isn't 9-5 and the problem with that is it tends to invade other bits of family life. Like you will be doing work late at night in the kitchen and things like that. But it does mean you can watch your children grow up, watch them do things. I never missed a game of football that my sons' played.

It also helps you to get away from the farm now and again, which I think is very important. Both boys loved living on the farm and it was great. I saw them everyday and it was a very nice life for them, especially when they were younger. Farming is a way of life, but it is becoming harder for people to do it as a way of life. Unless they have made money elsewhere, like the city folk, who buy a farm to play at farming and do it as a hobby”.

Phil has seen a change in the role of the farmer’s wife over the years (see Gasson, 1998). This typifies the changing roles that family members have undergone in the search to find additional income for the farm household income.

“Yes, a lot of wives now have full-time jobs off the farm and are getting paid a better wage than their husband. They are also helping on the farm over weekends if they have to. My wife did more when we were farming at our previous premises. She did more paperwork; she isn’t as involved as she used to be, but still feeds the calves”.

10.6 The Son

Matt is in his late twenties. He lives in Staffordshire with his partner and works as a labourer and landscape gardener. He enjoyed growing up on the farm, but could not see a way to make money in farming.

“I have found it a good experience and have enjoyed being able to grow up in such an environment. I wouldn’t really have swapped it for anything else. You do get fed up at times, but generally it was a good childhood and we (me and my brother) loved every minute of it. My sister wasn’t interested at all. I would have done something related to farming, if I thought I could make some money. I wouldn’t say I was dedicated to it like my dad and I don’t think I could have done it for the foreseeable future”.

Matt does not feel dedicated to farming; it is not his calling (identity). No plans have been made for him to carry on the business when his father retires. The family do not own the farm so the *symbolic capital* is not there to pass onto the next generation.

"I couldn't get work farming, and I couldn't see myself directly related to the industry. I'm currently working for myself as a landscape gardener and construction worker, which I enjoy and get paid quite well for. There is not the money in farming to provide income for raising a family. You have to think about the money side of things. Even if you don't see your children as much as you might if you were working from home, say farming. Something has to give and you have to decide what is more important to you".

Matt pursued a different career because of the lack of jobs and opportunity in farming. Matt does not see himself being a farmer, completely the opposite of Ben (Chapter Seven) and Edward (Chapter Eight). When he was younger, Matt helped out on the farm.

"I used to help out and I had fun on the farm. It was an ideal way to grow up and I don't really regret anything. It was hard work, but my dad saw us grow up. He used to come and watch me play football for the local school. I only help out when I go to visit my parents. I do a bit of tractor work for my dad, so he finishes a bit earlier than usual".

When asked about his thoughts on farming he replied:

"Farming is a declining industry, which is becoming harder and harder to make a living from. It is impossible for young people to enter, unless their parents have made huge investments and planned for the future. I can't see many young people wanting to go into farming".

Matt sets out the difficulties young people experience in trying to enter the industry, with particular reference to the lack of *economic capital* available to start a business and provide income for a family. Matt enjoyed growing up on the farm and talks at length about the positive and negative experiences.

"Living in the countryside was a privilege, in a way, but also hard work. You had to drive to go anywhere, or rely on friends letting you stop at their house in town if you wanted to go out. Living in the countryside, like living in the town, has its advantages and disadvantages".

Matt appreciated the lifestyle of living on the farm. Nonetheless, he sometimes felt isolated when growing up, until he could drive and own a car. His

comments emphasise the feeling of social exclusion in the younger generation. There were certain amenities that were not available in the countryside, such as being able to walk to the shops, cinema and so on.

“Well, like I said before, you had to drive to get anywhere. Before I learnt to drive, you were reliant on your family, driving you to places for football and going out. There wasn’t really anything to do; you couldn’t just pop down to the shops if you needed something. But then you didn’t really have any neighbours and you had a certain freedom those in towns don’t have. I guess the fact you were involved with nature, you start to appreciate things like food and watching things grow, and seeing how milk is produced. You’re involved as a family and you see the work that needs to be done. You learn to value the family aspect of things and what it means to be part of a family. You are all involved in the business in some way or another”.

10.7 Farmer’s Wife

Kate is 53 and married into farming. She spends between 20 to 30 hours each week working on the farm, alongside emergency fostering. Like her husband, she has been involved in farming for many years and is also obsessed with farming and the life-world it offers.

“I married into farming and have loved every minute of it. I love cows and showing them. My husband says I’m obsessed and I say he is obsessed! I have been involved with farming for about 30 years. I married a farmer and have been highly involved with the industry ever since I met him. We both show cattle and that is part of our lives. I’m highly into the whole showing scene, going to as many as we can. We have done really well, as well”.

Kate enjoys farming, commenting it has been a great way of life for the family. However, she notes how farming is changing, with increases in regulation, challenging how they run their business.

J – “Is it something you always wanted to do?”

“Yes it is. It has given the family an ideal way of life to watch our children grow up. I think I would do it again. I can’t say what else I would rather have done.

I've enjoyed my life working and living on the farm, although it is becoming more time consuming, and increasingly more difficult, with increased regulation from the nanny state we seem to be living in".

J – "Would you do it again?"

"Yes. I can't think of anything that would make me change my mind. Ok, we've had hard times, but doesn't everyone at some point in their life. Along side my farming work, I have been able to do part-time fostering, which I have enjoyed. It is the best way for children, in my mind to grow up. They are involved in an environment of creation and nurturing, they learn to take responsibility and to look after things".

Kate is motivated by having prize winning cows. Showing cattle gives her job satisfaction (reflecting the social action her *habitus* prefers). Prize winning cattle are important (*symbolic capital*); they represent her identity and how she is portrayed in the farming community.

"I don't really know what motivates me. I guess it is the fact I love breeding prize winning cattle. I love my cows. I suppose that is what keeps me going; the breeding side of things and having the top performing cows in the region".

The next section details some responses from Phil's friend, Scott, who works in the farming industry for a corn merchant. He was at the house when I was conducting the interviews and wanted to talk to me.

10.8 Family Friend

Scott is middle-aged, tall and medium built. He is a close friend of Phil, and has always been involved in the farming industry. His father used to farm and, although he would have liked to have taken over the farm, succession rules in farming meant his older brother took over the tenancy. (This tends to happen in family business succession.) Scott had to find an alternative career because there was not enough money to provide income for two families.

"My father had a tenanted dairy farm and my older brother took it over. So I had to find something else to do. There wasn't the income or the capacity for two people and two families to make enough money. I couldn't get a farm because my brother took over the farm tenancy and there wasn't an opportunity for me to pursue farming. I used to work for Genus and I now work as a feed rep and enjoy working, as much as I can. I'm still involved with the industry and have made good friends from it, including Phil".

Scott regrets not being able to go into farming, but recognises that there was not enough money (*economic capital*). He rents a cottage next to a farm. He also considers that farming is an ideal way of life for children to grow up.

"I rent a cottage on a farm, which I'm lucky to be able to do. It means that my kids, who I don't see very often because I'm now divorced, can go down to the farm and watch. It is an ideal way for children to grow up and unless you leave that situation, you don't realise how lucky you are to see your children grow up and see them every day. I had a 9-5 job, which involved a lot of travelling. I didn't see my kids that much at all and I missed out on so much, even though I was on a good wage. It is a case of compromise and at the end of the day, money won for me. I do look back and think it may not have been the best choice".

Scott likes the life-world that farming can offer. Over time, Scott's *habitus* has developed (from being rationalist to a value-seeker). He now seeks a lifestyle and chooses to see his children more.

"I think it is an ideal environment for children to grow up in. I don't think farmers realise how lucky they are. Those that do are generally the younger generation, who have worked elsewhere and come back to farming. You see your family and working where you live, and you are on the premises all the time. It is still worth it to see your children every day. It is something I missed out on, and seriously regret. Those that go away and get a job in the city then come back, appreciate the lifestyle so much more. But against that, is the decline in incomes when they return, unless they are able to run other ventures from the farm to supplement their incomes".

Scott highlights that there seems to be a trade off between *economic capital* and having a traditional family life (*symbolic capital*). It could be argued that for Scott

his past actions were torn between the rationalist *habitus* (having money) and the idealist *habitus* (following a way of life).

"It seems to be that you have to forego your income in order to see your children grow up. Most farm incomes are very low and it a case of - what do you? What is more important to you? - Your family or money for your family so they can have a certain standard of living. It is a very difficult thing to choose between the two. It's a trade-off between money or a particular lifestyle. You either watch your kids grow up, and your wife has to have a job, that pays much better than yours, or you quit and have an office job. I have been involved with the industry. I have seen the good and the bad side of farming. I have seen the long hours worked for little return. You get to see your kids, the problem is you may not have the money to give them things you want to".

J - "So you see it very much as a lifestyle thing then?"

"Yes I do. It is a lifestyle choice, much the same as these people who decide to be self-sufficient. Family life of farming is perfect for some people and not for others. It's a personal choice. To me, family is more important than anything else and perhaps I made the wrong decision. Who knows, hindsight is a wonderful thing. It is something you decide at the moment, then later down the line, realise maybe it wasn't the right decision".

The next section explores the business operations in more detail.

10.9 Business Operations

The farm business is run separately to the diversified activities. Phil and Kate run the farm business. The farm aims to be self-sufficient, growing corn to feed the cows. They both value this as a lifestyle choice, reflecting their value-seeker *habitus*. Phil values the opportunity to be self-sufficient and likes to feed his cows what he believes is better than manufactured feeds.

"We are self-sufficient in that we grow corn for our cows and we also grow food for ourselves. That is a lifestyle choice; we know exactly what we are feeding our cows and what they are eating. These feeds you just don't know what's in them. You look at BSE and what scientists think went into feed. You just can't believe it".

The decision to diversify was taken by the farm owners, when they centralised milk production on one farm.

"The farm has diversified. My boss decided to do it 15 years ago. He decided to have the dairy herd on one farm; they used to have three dairy herds on three separate farms. Mr Hutchinson started the cheese-making and tourism enterprises. We make more money than most from our milk, because we make cheese. It is getting harder now, as more farmers are making cheese. It is becoming highly competitive. The tourism side stands on its own two feet now, but it has taken 10-15 years to build up" (Phil).

"I'm not involved with the farm shop or anything else on the tourist side. That runs itself with its own manager, who deals with that side of things. We don't have to be directly involved with that. We do have people watching us work, especially milking the cows" (Kate).

The diversification side grew from other organisations wanting to see the process of cheese-making. The farm and the people who work on it share their knowledge on farming and cheese-making (*cultural capital*) with the general public (valuing education).

"It was a decision taken by my boss, as a way to make money from milk production. The tourism side grew out of the WI and other organisations wanting to come and see the process of cheese-making. They used to ring up to see if they could come and watch, because it is a hand made process. I don't really mind the public being here, they don't seem to affect us that much and I enjoy thinking that we are helping people learn things".

Kate is involved in the daily operations of the farm; she is responsible for rearing the calves. Her role focuses on the manual tasks of the business (confirming: Danes and McTavish, 1997; Gasson *et al.*, 1998; Gasson and Errington, 1993).

"I feed and clean out the calves morning and night. I also help with the paperwork. I'm involved with the daily activities of the farm and I'm consulted about any major decisions to be made. We're a partnership, we run the business as

a partnership: together. It's only fair I have a say in how things are run. I also do some work for the Holstein Society".

Kate, unlike some farmers' wives, makes sure she has a say in the business. She is a partner in the business; therefore, she has more say in how the business is run. Phil and Kate make decisions on the farm's direction, and also the routine work, such as getting cows back in calf. Other decisions, for instance harvesting, rely on the weather and have to be taken when the weather is right (depends on *natural capital*). Phil and his boss decide on the final strategy. As Phil told me:

"My wife and I jointly decide on strategies, as well as with the Hutchinson family. It is their farm and I'm the manager. I have to be accountable to them. We are jointly involved in the day-to-day running and have certain routines for getting cows back in calf, milking, feeding and so on. Routine is crucial for cows' productivity and we like to try and keep things constant for them. Harvesting and things like that will depend on the weather and the season, especially when we can do them. We have to plan for next year's crop a year in advance, which is hard".

Phil and Kate discuss matters relating to the business. However, Kate is more involved in the daily operations, rather than longer-term strategy (confirming previous work on wives' roles in farming businesses: Gasson, 1992; Gasson and Winter, 1992; Saugres, 2002). Kate talks about her role in the business.

"Yes, we talk about things together. My husband is involved with the day-to-day running and longer-term strategy pursuits. I don't know how I would class my involvement in strategy matters. I think that is more my husband and what the bosses want us to do with the farm and how it should be run. I'm involved with decision making for; showing cows, semen and things like that. We always discuss things and we discuss problems as well. I'm not involved with the diversification side of things at all. I just work on the farm".

The operations of the business are highly reliant on nature (*natural capital*), hence it is difficult to plan fully. Phil comments below on the issue that stem from the role of nature in farm businesses.

"We are currently having replacement problems with cows not calving at the right time, going over their due dates. Then we lost a couple of heifers to really bad calvings. So the herd isn't producing as much milk as it should be and no plans in

the world can help you account for that. Otherwise you would be well over your quota and producing far too much. We are having to buy in milk at the moment because it is high season for cheese with summer visitors. We are selling a lot of soft cheese as well, which doesn't have such a long shelf life. The milk goes for cheese-making, so we get more money for our milk than most producers. Most people will buy our cheese only because they have visited the farm".

These comments reinforce data from the previous chapters that there is a need to introduce *natural capital* as a form of *capital* in appraising family farm businesses.

Phil and Scott find it difficult to see any future opportunities in the industry predicting that farm numbers will reduce. Phil suggests that those leaving farming are likely to have high debt levels (affecting levels of *economic capital*), particularly those who have invested in new parlours and expanded their herds. He also notes how milk quota, one *field* restriction, is causing financial problems for many farmers who have chosen to expand:

"I mean people have invested huge sums of money into new parlours. There are huge borrowings for this and buying quota, which no other industry has to contend with. How many parked cars are there at Rover and they are not going to be sold, are they? Now that is utter waste. There should be quota on those sort of things [i.e. cars] as well, or compulsory recycling. Anyway, in five years time, I see in this parish there will probably only be one farm left producing milk, maybe three at the most. Ten years ago, it was 20, now there are six, one of these does cheese as well. There may not be any, if the last ten years are to go by. One guy has got 200 cows on a tenanted farm, but he is young. He is a workaholic and will stay in milk so long as he is solvent. But how long will that?"

Scott shares the concerns of many farmers and sees lack of *economic capital* as the main deterrent to people entering the industry.

"People won't be able to enter the industry. They won't be able to get the finance, never mind the farm, most will have been bought by rich people wanting to get out of tax payments. I think the future is bleak, unless something is done as an incentive for people to enter the industry. I think it all depends on the

Government's attitude towards agriculture and at the moment it is not a positive one. So the future is very bleak, which means all those working in businesses like mine are going to have problems because we will lose our jobs if there are no dairy herds".

Scott also highlights the vulnerability the industry has to changes in Government attitudes to agriculture.

In response to changes in the *field*, and in order to get a better price for his milk, Phil changed milk buyer (action pursued by Mike and Ben, Chapter Seven) and now sells any excess milk to Milk Link. Phil also faces an uncertain future, depending on what happens in the *field*.

"We moved from Dairy Crest to Milk Link in order to get an extra two pence per litre. The future of this farm is uncertain. It depends what the owner wants to do. Mr Hutchinson is nearing retirement age and I'm not sure if there is anyone in his family who would want to carry things on. It also depends on landlords renewing tenancy agreements, which are now a very dodgy business. CAP reforms and the SFP are based on land, rather than production based subsidies, which make things very complicated and messy. My future is uncertain. I don't know how long I will be working here, so I have to think about the future. I have thought about selling semen, relief milking, and doing bits at the local market on pedigree sales days. I don't think I will have one job. I think it will be a mixture of things, which will be a new challenge".

The next section explores the *field* in which the farm business operates in and investigates the views of those interviewed.

10.10 The *Field* and Rules of the Game

Over the years, Phil has seen increases in regulations (rules of the game), a change noted by all the farmers and children interviewed.

"There is more bureaucracy now. You have to be watching your back, because there is someone waiting to pounce on you for doing something wrong (it's the nanny state)".

In terms of recent changes in policy (rules), Phil does not envisage that CAP reforms will seriously affect the dairy business, although he may have to make some changes to the cereal side of the business. He is, however, unhappy about the lack of clarity and inefficient handling of changes by the authorities.

"I think CAP will affect us in terms of what we do crop wise. But as far as the dairy side goes, I don't think it will affect us that much. It may affect others who do not have an operation like ours, and may decide it is better to get paid for doing nothing, than working all the hours God sends. With SFP, you won't know how it affects you until things actually come into force. Then you may know what the modulation rates will be and how much other claw back rates will be. Government don't even know how much we are going to get in the first instance, let alone what modulation rates will be. So, in the end they have no idea what payments we are going to get, when we get them. We keep getting told a deadline to get forms to them and we're penalised if we are late. Then they [RPA] can't meet their deadlines. They are just putting off paying us. They should have sorted out problems before things went live and you can't keep blaming the computer system".

Phil comments on the Government's role (highlighted in previous cases), and the control they exert over the *field* (see: Fitzgerald, 2003; Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990).

"Government plays a large role in what we can and cannot do. Changes always seem to be for the worse, rather than the better. We cannot compete on a global market place. We are not on a level playing field with our competitors. I'm not sure what the Government are planning, but at the moment it certainly isn't positive for the farming industry".

Scott echoes Phil's thoughts.

"I suppose the main issues are the Government's role and the problems of increased paperwork, which all industries and businesses are having to deal with".

Scott also talks about the issues surrounding new entrants to the industry, pointing to the lack of *economic capital* that is exacerbated by high set-up costs. Phil talks about other dominant groups in the *field*, namely the role retailers play in the game:

"Supermarkets are a risk to my business, especially the diversification side. People buy our cheese as a one off purchase. They don't go and buy it in the supermarket, because they see other cheeses that aren't hand made and inferior to ours. They buy supermarket cheese because it is cheaper. Supermarkets have managed to drum into us that we need to buy cheap. It doesn't matter if it is bad for us, cheap is best and it doesn't matter about anything else, such as animal welfare. They are forcing a buying culture of cheap food; buy at low cost, financially low cost, but it costs you in other ways, such as your health".

Phil talks at length about the power supermarkets have not only in terms of pricing in the industry, but also on buyer behaviour. He believes standards in the UK are higher than other countries (different rules of the game), resulting in UK farmers finding it difficult to compete on a global playing field.

"The public think animals overseas are kept in conditions like they are here and don't really think about it when they go shopping. So there is no point in having high standards in this country, because people don't really care. They just want cheap and that is where, on food products, we can't compete. Supermarkets are screwing everyone and they will be responsible for a lot in the future".

Kate has similar views to her husband saying that:

"...the Government and the power of supermarkets are a concern, multinational corporations trying to take over the world".

Both Phil and Kate are concerned about the level of power (ability to control) in the hands of the dominant groups in the *field*, who are shaping and influencing the rules of the game.

The next sections examine the forms of *capital* and their use in the farming business.

10.10.1 *Economic Capital*

Economic capital is important for Phil. He wants to make enough money to provide a living for his family. Phil is paid a fixed wage for the work he does, so he does not have to struggle to cover production costs.

"Profit is important to me. It is what I need to make a living and provide for my family. I'm lucky I get paid a good wage to do what I do, more than many family farmers".

Phil points to the fact that *economic capital* is tied up in milk production, namely land, buildings, machinery, and animals. Most farms are asset rich but cash poor. Phil does not know how people manage, when borrowing huge sums of money (*economic capital*) to invest in the business. He believes, as did Ben in Chapter Seven, that there needs to be a realistic pricing structure in the industry. Otherwise, *natural capital* will be used for other purposes that are more financially rewarding (say cereals or bio-fuels).

"The cost of borrowing is going up, which is a worry for farmers who have borrowed huge sums of money to reinvest, because the milk price just doesn't justify the outlay. The future needs to have a basic minimum milk price, which covers production costs, including family labour. We need at least 20 pence per litre or people who have better land will start to do other things. For example, go into cereals or things like bio fuel for better money. However, good pasture land will be lost".

People who are spending large sums of money on new parlours and tanks are increasingly finding it difficult to meet debt repayments.

"You are losing money that would be making more in the bank and, even there, it wouldn't be making that much. I know at least four people who have gone out of milk – Millors, Stubblers, Brendons and Branners. A lot of people invested huge sums of money in 1995 when prices were good and things looked as though they were going to get better - spending £80-£100k on new tanks and parlours. They are now struggling to pay that off and finding they have too much capital tied up. They have decided to give up in order to clear debts, and have enough left over to do something else".

Kate finds the lack of *economic capital* available to farmers a big problem, especially when some are unable to cover their costs of production as a result of low milk prices.

"I think it is wrong producers are being crippled. We are lucky that we process our milk, so we get more for our milk than most. That helps us a lot financially. Some farmers are struggling to cover costs and don't have a wage themselves, but can't stop because they won't have anything for retirement. It's disgusting really".

Scott is also concerned about the lack of *economic capital* available to farmers, in return for their produce.

"I can see problems with fewer and fewer new entrants. They cannot afford the high set-up costs and the fact milk price could drop once SFP comes into force".

10.10.2 *Cultural Capital*

Both Phil and Kate are aware of the skills they need in order to be good farmers. Phil has a slightly higher level of education (institutional *cultural capital*) compared to farmers in the previous cases. Phil learnt how to be a farmer from his father and grand-father. The farm business including the tourist operation revolves around education (of children and adults alike), and showing people how milk is produced and the process of cheese-making. Phil and Kate are happy to share their knowledge with the general public and enjoy being able to show people how milk is produced.

10.10.3 *Social Capital*

Phil has a lot of farming contacts, both where he farms now and where he used to farm. Kate has a lot of interaction with other farmers, as she is highly involved with various local societies, such as the Holstein Society.

"Yes, I know a lot of farmers from this area and from other areas in Staffordshire...I read the Holstein Journal and the Farmer's Guardian" (Phil).

"I have my own network of friends through various societies and associations we are involved with. A few of my friends are from non-farming backgrounds, but most of them have been involved with farming" (Kate).

Both Phil and Kate have developed strong networks through showing their cattle and have been involved with the farming press, talking about their award winning cattle and the cheese side of the business. Unlike previous cases, YFC was not mentioned to the same extent.

10.10.4 *Symbolic Capital*

Phil is passionate about his dairy herd (mirroring previous cases, namely Chapter Nine). He is selective in his breeding programme and loves showing his cattle with his wife. Phil and Kate enjoy country living. Showing cattle is a major part of their life and who they are (identity, *symbolic capital*). The cattle representing *capital* accumulation (investment in: *economic, natural, social* and *cultural*), reflecting hard work and years of selective breeding.

"I love working in the countryside and I love going round shows, showing my cattle. I love the fact that I have prize cows and they are my breeding, genetics I have chosen. We are in the top 5% in the area now for our cows' milk yields. The cows and calves are doing really well at local shows. We have one heifer that just keeps winning" (Phil).

10.10.5 *Natural Capital*

Phil, Kate and Scott value the natural side of farming (reflecting their value-seeker *habitus*). The farm has a high profile herd and produces cheese in an environmentally friendly, sustainable way (there are few food miles). The level of *natural capital* and its uses are very important for Phil and his business. A fall in *natural capital* can seriously affect his supply of milk and ultimately his cash flow (*economic capital*).

"Things aren't going according to plan at the minute and that is the nature of farming. You are dealing with nature and things don't go according to plan. We

are having to buy in some milk, because my heifers are going longer than they should and are not calving at the right time, so I'm a bit short of milk. I lost a really good heifer in a bad calving last week, so there's another one down. The week before, I sent seven cows to cull because I knew I had these heifers calving, but they haven't yet and it makes such a difference to your milk production. It is a fine art trying to juggle removing the old cows, bringing in the new ones, and keeping a constant, level supply of milk. So I'm buying in 1,000 litres of milk a day for the cheese at the moment, which I didn't really want to be doing. It hits you financially. But there is nothing I can do about it, apart from try to manage the situation so impacts on the business are minimal".

Uncontrollable diseases are a major worry for farmers. TB is a substantial problem in Phil's parish.

"TB is a huge problem in our area and it seriously affects my business. I have only recently, in the last 6 months, become TB free. Having a TB herd makes life very difficult and imposes restrictions. Many people have it and we don't seem to be able to get rid of it".

Phil talked about the effects FMD had on his business and feels the events were poorly handled by the dominant players in the *field*.

"The FMD crisis didn't reach us. It never got across the River. But we were under movement restrictions, which was a big pain to us. It meant that we couldn't move our animals. We had heifers on another farm that were close to calving, it was such a hassle trying to obtain special licences to move them home. The FMD crisis was a complete shambles! I can't believe it got as far as it did. There was serious mis-management and we will never know how bad it was, nor the truth behind how it started".

Weather is also a major constraint on long-term plans and daily operations, which Phil has to manage as best he can.

"Weather is also a problem. It is a key determinant as to what we can do and when we can do it, for example silaging. It also affects milk productivity, in terms of grass quality, temperature for the cows in the summer and winter, and how the seasons go. The weather's so changeable. All these things affect your yields [grass, milk, crops]. Nature is hard to plan with. It is difficult to get your herd

replacements right. If cows go over a week in their pregnancy, it can put your milk levels right out. We are currently having that problem and are buying in milk to compensate for it”.

These quotes illustrate how farmers are reliant on the UK's unpredictable and uncontrollable nature. However, without the input of nature (*natural capital*) and the ability to work with it (*cultural capital*), farmers would not be able to produce food.

10.11 Discussion

The family business is owned by the Hutchinsons. The farmer (manager) has a reasonable level of *economic capital*, although the majority is tied up in assets. The diversification side of the business is financially stable and generates enough *economic capital* to cover costs and the farm business receives a better price for milk than other farmers. The farmer, Phil has a better level of personal *economic capital* as he is paid a wage. If this business was evaluated in relation to RAT, it would be described as more successful than some of the previous cases. However, the farm does not seek the single goal of profit maximisation. Instead, it is an educational provider, and has to make enough money to provide an income for Phil and the farm owners. The business is successful in terms of the knowledge-based service it provides, educating people on the processes of milk production and cheese-making.

The farmer's *habitus* pursues value-orientated action. For example, he values the feeling of satisfaction with showing his cattle, even though this is time-consuming. Providing an educational experience is highly valued and an ethos of the entire business, both for the farming and the diversification operations. The farmer wants a satisfactory income for the work he does and enjoys having the independence to run his own business; he can choose when and how he does

his work, depending on the natural cycle (weather, cows' biological cycles and so on). He particularly enjoys the outdoor lifestyle, working with animals, on the land, and he values the way of life farming offers him. Rules of the game were frequently mentioned, especially the issue of additional paperwork created from changes in policy over the years (highlighted in previous cases). Government policy has changed in recent years, increasing the need to fill in forms that are difficult to understand, a point raised by the majority of the farmers and family members interviewed. The recurring message from this case (and previous cases) is that Government and others control what happens in the *field*, hence power emerging as the core category (in line with Bourdieu's framework).

When evaluating the levels of *capital*, it was apparent that each form of *capital* is used in such a way that the farm provides something that is valuable, for example, educating the public on farming and cheese-making (value-seeker social action). For the value-seeker, each form of *capital* is valued for its own merits to pursue rational action.

Economic Capital

The level of *economic capital* for this farm household, as a collective social unit, receives a higher contribution from the farmer compared to the other cases. Phil receives a wage for his work, but lacks the assets possessed by farm-owners. Phil also comments on the changing roles for farmers' wives, as many are moving into employment off the farm, in order to bolster the household income. Kate also does some work for the local Holstein Society (additional income) and fosters children.

Cultural Capital

Both Phil and Kate have quite a high level of education (institutional *cultural capital*). Phil completed his 'O' and 'A' levels. A key part of the farm's operation

is geared towards educating other people about the process of dairy farming and making cheese. They are promoting dairy farming, in a way that is an excellent form of sharing knowledge and skills with the public to show how farming is important for food production. The whole farm is an environment for learning, both for the farming family and for the general public who visit.

Social Capital

Both Phil and Kate have good social networks where they are able to share information and interact with fellow farmers and people involved in the industry. In their working environment, Phil and Kate also have contact with the general public and share their farming knowledge with anyone who is interested.

Symbolic Capital

Phil loves his dairy herd (*symbolic capital*) and enjoys milking. He is passionate about farming. Phil appears to have high level of *symbolic capital* relating to his farm and his dairy herd, as well as the symbolic value of hard work and pride in one's work. *Symbolic capital* stems from the love for the job and dedication to work. Phil's life-world has been created around farming and his *habitus* has been shaped by his farming upbringing. Kate is also passionate about farming and her life-world revolves around the farm and showing cattle.

Farming offers Phil the chance to develop personally, giving a sense of value for hard work when he can see things grow and develop, as a result of his work. Throughout Phil's interview, I got the impression that, even though he does not own the farm, he is attached to it. His dairy herd is symbolic for him, perhaps even more so than the farm. He relishes having prize winning cattle demonstrating his hard work and breeding skills (*cultural capital*), as well as the investment of time and money (*economic capital*).

Natural Capital

Nature is a highly important factor in the farming world (*natural capital*). Phil, Kate and Scott value the natural side of farming. The farm has a high profile herd and produces cheese in an environmentally friendly way (there are few food miles). Phil tries to work with nature and adjust business operations accordingly.

He talked at length throughout the interview about the reliance on nature (*natural capital*) and how you cannot plan for everything. Phil does not own the majority of the land or animals. He finds that nature is often at the root of challenges the farm may have. Cows contract disease, calve too early or too late, which affects milk supplies and so on. But he also realises that it is the most important function on the farm and without *natural capital* he would not be farming.

10.12 Conclusion

The farm is in a strong position, with its own market for the milk it produces, although the farm relies on tourists for selling the cheese. Both the farmer and his wife have a reasonable level of *cultural capital*, and have good levels of *social capital* through networks as a result of showing their cattle. Phil does not have a successor, but this is not as paramount as he is only the manager of the business. Phil's future is uncertain as the next generation of the Hutchinson family is not interested in continuing the business as it stands.

Chapter Eleven: Discussion

The chapter summarises the main findings from the research, for the four cases detailed in the previous four chapter and includes the summary findings from the other six cases. It begins by highlighting the limitations of existing literature, before providing a discursive account of the findings, presented in the previous five chapters (Six to Ten). The chapter discusses the application of Bourdieu's theory of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* to my data and, in doing so, explains how the work contributes to knowledge. The chapter ends with a synopsis of why dairy farmers continue to farm.

11.1 Limitations of the Existing Literature

To address some of the limitations of the existing literature, the thesis used strands of social theory, with particular attention to the work of Pierre Bourdieu, in order to answer the central and related thesis questions:

1. Why do dairy farmers continue to farm? – the central question.
2. Does RAT tell the whole story? - discussed in Chapter Three.
3. Can Bourdieu's theory aid our understanding and suggest how farmers can regain some control in their industry? - developed and answered through the literature in Chapter Four and the data in Chapters Six to Ten.

Using the work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provided new insights into the problems facing the agricultural industry and hence dairy farmers. Bourdieu's work can be used as a theoretical tool to develop a picture of farmers' life-world and present solutions to the problems identified in the empirical study.

The analogy that Bourdieu's theory is akin to playing a game, allows for the formation of strategies which could ultimately change an individual's position in the *field*, for example: processing milk on the farm to make cheese (like the valuer case - Chapter Ten) can increase the farmer's share of the *economic capital* available, and advance his/her position (status) in the *field*. In using Bourdieu's work, I am able to concentrate on the issue of power and how *capital* possession, accumulation and generation can affect a person's position (status) in society and, indeed, the *field* they are operating in. This leads me to address the issues of how farmers can become more powerful in their business operations, and/or how can they engage in more efficient *capital* exchanges, for example selling their produce direct to the consumer.

In my literature search, I found studies that have applied only one aspect of Bourdieu's theories, for example, the *habitus* or a particular form of *capital* (say) *social capital*. This thesis contributes to the area of sociology by applying all of Bourdieu's theories and through applying it to an area where his work has rarely been used. The thesis also identifies where Bourdieu's theory of *capital* could be extended. The body of work presented by Bourdieu was not without ambiguity, as the following caveats illustrate. In each case, however, the power of Bourdieu's approach outweighs any potential difficulties in applying Bourdieu to farming. For example, a lack of clarity over how *fields* are defined, Bourdieu's theory provided me with concepts to explore the unique properties of agriculture, especially social, cultural and symbolic contributions, as well as the individualistic nature of family businesses and the farmer. Bourdieu also uses the concept of *habitus* interchangeably as 'something' that is inherent in individuals and groups. However, the notion of *habitus* provided me with a conceptual way to explore behavioural patterns across generations.

The problems with using Bourdieu's theory of *capital* is that excluding *economic capital*, *cultural*, *social* and *symbolic capital* are hard to define in terms of success based on non-monetary factors; whereas economic theory defines success as the generation of profit, which is measurable through the unit of money. However, Bourdieu's work enables me to show the importance of other forms of *capital* in assisting the business to increase levels of *economic capital*. For example, *social capital* is important because farmers and their families need to have good networks for selling produce, discussing best practices and so on. Nonetheless, it is difficult to quantify the monetary value of the contribution these networks make to *economic capital*.

Agricultural Literature

Agricultural research has focused on addressing the need to increase production and productivity, and hence increase economic returns. Hunt (1976) observed that British agricultural economists are not actively concerned with the farm household. Fifty years earlier, one of his predecessors had made the same point. Ashby (1925: 16) argued that: "it is strange that the most important of the living things on the farm, the farmers and their families, the workers and their families, and the conditions of economic and human success for them, have never been studied". More recently, Johnsen (2004: 430) points out: "family farming may have faded from academic discourse in recent years, but its dynamism suggests it deserves to be placed back at the forefront of rural studies' research agenda". The thesis addressed this limitation in the literature with a key contribution – my contention that the farm should be investigated as a collective social unit (previously argued in Chapter Five). In using Bourdieu, it is possible to assess the farm as a social institution made up of individuals, each with their own *habitus* and different levels of *capital*, that contribute to the success of the family farm business.

Family Business Literature

Succession is the ultimate test of success for the family business; this is a process that occurs over a long period of time, not as a single event (Gersick *et al.*, 1997). According to the family business literature, the farms in this study are successful, in the sense that they are passed on across generations and have managed to find a 'rare harmony' between family and business goals (Donnelley, 1964). Previous research has focused on how these two dimensions conflict, thus stifling entrepreneurial activities and creating succession issues (Goffee, 1995), rather than how the family and business systems can contribute to the other.

My use of Bourdieu's theoretical tools (*field*, *habitus* and *capital*) has addressed suggestions by Goffee (1995) that family business should be explored in terms of social and organisational features. My assertion that the farm is evaluated as a collective social unit made up of individuals, each playing a vital role in the organisation, is a case in point. Aldrich and Cliff (2003) suggest that the family and the business are inextricably intertwined – this research builds on their claims by suggesting that, through the possession and usage of *capital*, these systems are interconnected and interdependent.

Economic Theory – RAT

In assessing economic theory, it became clear that RAT ignores some of the essential elements for the family farm business to survive in the *field*. RAT also neglects non-economic reasons to continue farming, as argued in Chapter Three. For example, RAT neglects to take into account the rich learning environment, the social elements of farming, the symbolic importance of the family and the farm, not to mention the role of the natural world. Economic theory ignores the emotional element of making choices, stating that decisions are based purely on the rational pursuit of maximising profits. However, rational economic man needs perfect information in order to make rational choices, and this is rarely the

case in the real world (identified by: Chell, 2001; Gasson and Errington, 1993). Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* addresses these short-comings by suggesting that an individual's *habitus* ultimately determines how people behave in the *field*.

11.2 The Field

I found defining the *field* difficult. The *field* is characterised by a patterned set of practices in which competent action conforms to the set rules of the game. The *field* is a playground (or battlefield) in which agents endowed with a certain *field*-relevant *capital*, try to advance their position by playing the game (Bourdieu, 1986; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). In the case of this thesis, the *field* has been defined as the dairy industry and is affected by many competing factors, such as resources, market forces, pricing mechanisms, to name a few.

Applying Bourdieu's work to my data has highlighted many factors that affect the *field*. These include: Government intervention and policy (rules of the game), pricing mechanisms, balance of power across the supply chain, social changes and outsider perceptions of the *field*. These factors have been identified in previous works (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Grant, 1991; Howarth, 1990; Fitzgerald, 2003 to name a few). I believe this strengthens the applicability of Bourdieu's theory to the agricultural problem. Applying his work provides an alternative way of defining the situation.

The *field* is an important aspect in my analysis; it links the farmer and his family (through their business operations) to the external environment. Despite the individualistic nature of the cases and the types of social action identified in the four cases, the farmers were on the whole united in their perceptions about the *field* and the rules of the game. However, they pursued different strategies based on the social action their *habitus* leans towards, as demonstrated in the cases -

continuing as they are (Chapter Seven), diversifying business operations (Chapter Nine and Ten) or expanding and changes how the business operates (Chapter Eight). The *field* determines how the game should be played often presenting problems for farmers trying to run their businesses, as the rules of the game constantly change and lack clarity. For example, the Government has pursued a demand-based industry structure, seeking a market where farmers adjust supply in response to demand. However, the natural element of agriculture means it is not able to respond quickly to changes in supply. As a result, some of the farmers interviewed believe the Government does not understand their industry, especially the biological nature of food production (see: Fitzgerald, 2003; Francis, 1994).

Power in the *field* is achieved through *capital* retention and acquisition. Farmers have little control (power) over how the *field* operates, owing to the size of their business operations (often involving less than five people), and the fact that farmers often behave differently in response to changes (farmers are a heterogeneous group). These various responses are a result of their *habitus* even though farmers may be seen to follow similar courses of action owing to the social action they pursue, for example expanding, continuing as they are or diversifying, they may do it in a different way. Farmers and their families must be enterprising in order to play the game, and survive in the *field*. Farmers are active agents. However, until they regain some control in the *field*, they are, in a sense, constrained agents. The rules of the game are determined by other agents (Government, retailers, environmental lobby groups and so on). Dominant players (those who have access to and possess high levels of *capital* in the *field*), such as Government, banks and retailers, will ensure they retain their *capital* share. Over the years, there have been many radical changes to the industry, to which farmers have had to adjust (for historical developments see: Brook, 2003;

Bryant and Johnston, 1992; Errington, 1994; Haynes-Young and McNally, 2001; Hine and Houston, 1973; Marsden *et al.*, 1986).

"The biggest change I have seen since college is the change in subsidies policy from production led to environment led...We were production led, paid to produce more, and now it's completely turned on its head. Now, subsidies are based more on environmental schemes and the acreage farmed. On the milk side, definitely, the advent of milk quotas at the start of 1980s... and the demise of the MMB in the 1990s, came about as a result of the Government demanding it be split up for freer markets..." (Paul, Case 7).

These changes in rules of the game often conflict with previous ways of working and farmers' *habitus* and, as a result, disrupt working patterns and affect how farmers are able to play the game. These changes increase the complexity of playing the game efficiently. For example, farmers have to write things down, which they have previously done habitually (i.e. as a matter of habit, part of their *habitus*).

"The amount of paperwork distracts you from your original purpose and reasons for working, which is to farm and that means to produce something. Not write about what you are doing" (Son, Traditionalist-Chapter Seven).

The *habitus* could explain why farmers find it so difficult to document everything; many farmers do not like this area of the job, seeing it as a distraction from their 'real' job of farming.

"The enjoyment of farming has been removed by the Government's obsession with form filling" (Daniel, Case 9).

Another example is the changes in NVZ regulations. Farmers have had to alter work routines to find ways to store slurry and manure; the additional costs associated with NVZ reduce the *economic capital* farmers have to play the game. All farmers (regardless of their *habitus* types) were annoyed at the number and frequency of inspections, especially as each inspector asking for similar information. Farmers also complained that those inspecting their business do not understand the complexities or the 'principles' (an instinctive understanding of farming's natural element) and have lost sight of 'common sense'.

The farmers and their families interviewed felt the media tend to focus on disasters – BSE, FMD, etc. Adverse media reports contribute to their weakening position in society and hence a deterioration in consumer confidence. The farmers also felt that the industry does not positively promote itself, believing the NFU and MDC could do more. Many of the farmers interviewed felt that the NFU had lost its power. Bourdieu's theory would attribute this to changes in the rules of the game, which have ultimately undermined old sources of *capital* (and power) for farmers. Farmers may not be hapless victims per-se, but they are controlled and hence have limited options available to them when responding to change. Even though farmers have lost (some of) their power, family farms have been particularly resilient in times of economic crisis, and have shown they can be enterprising in ensuring the business continues by controlling costs, diversifying, expanding and so on.

"If you go to the head of the game yourself a little bit, try spreading your costs, which often means increasing production. The only economic way of increasing profit is to increase the price you charge for your goods. Well that is impossible. You can cut your costs... Or you can increase production and spread those costs..." (Steven, Case 2).

What the application of Bourdieu's theory of *field* has shown is that the *field* is complex; applying his work has contributed to the literature by stressing the need for farming organisations to help farmers play the game more effectively. Bourdieu's work allows me to evaluate the dairy industry on a par with that of playing a game. This has, in turn, brought to light the intensity (and complexity) of the rules with which farmers must comply, and also the high levels of changes that take place.

Using the game analogy has provided a new way to conceptualise the dairy industry. Bourdieu suggests that, in order to play the game effectively, players need to (as if they were in a casino) play (gamble) not only with 'black chips'

representing *economic capital*, but also with the 'blue chips' of *cultural capital*, and the 'red chips' of *social capital* (Alheit, 1996). Therefore, reliance upon RAT to investigate the dairy industry neglects all pieces of the game that are non-economic (social, cultural, symbolic and natural). These missing pieces help to explain why dairy farmers are still continuing to play the game (see: 11.5 for *capitals* discussion). Each farmer brings different levels of *capital* to the *field* and uses these *capitals* in differing ways to play the game: for example, the rationalist would utilise *economic capital* more through increasing debt levels to increase herd size and hence production levels; the idealist would seek to preserve *symbolic capital* through retaining the farm and reducing the risks associated with losing it. Each farmer will also respond to changes by following different course of action reflecting the types of *habitus* (traditionalist, rationalist, idealist and value-seeker).

Bourdieu's work elucidates, more so than ever, that farmers and industry bodies need to exert a greater influence over the rules of the game, or at least work together to overcome the challenges that stem from changes.

"The problem is, over the years the NFU has gone weak. As a Union, they have got very limited powers and are very fragmented" (Farmer, Rationalist - Chapter Eight).

Farmers' voices (regardless of the social action their *habitus* pursues) need to be considered, especially when new rules of the game are introduced. Involving farmers in negotiations prior to the implementation of changes may ultimately help acceptance. To encourage collective behaviour, industry bodies, particularly the NFU, need to find common grounds that unite all farmers; for example, milk price is a critical issue for dairy farmers and both the NFU and dairy farmers could lobby for (say) pricing structures. Industry organisations must build trust, and start to regain farmer co-operation, or at least compromise on matters they disagree on. Initiatives that are set up by the Government and

industry bodies (NFU, MDC and so on) must be promoted by industry, so that farmers are aware of the options available to them.

In exploring the dairy industry as a *field* and using the game analogy my work has contributed to the current literature by suggesting that farmers need to have more influence over the rules of the game and there are too many competing rules and regulations. In using Bourdieu's theory of *field* and rules of the game, I can postulate that: if farmers are encouraged to be too rational they risk upsetting the values other people place on the countryside, for example creating a habitat for wildlife. However, if farmers are too traditional they appear old-fashioned in the modern business environment and risk getting left behind. Future policy (rules of the game) will demand a judicious blend of traditional values and modern business practices.

The next section discusses the findings generated with respect to the roles that each individual plays in the business. This aspect of the research is not directly a part of Bourdieu's theory but is strongly connected to his theory of *habitus*. In analysing the data, it became clear that the farm was not dependent on the farmer's *habitus* alone, but the *habitus* of other members of the family as well. This discovery confirmed, on methodological grounds, that the farm should be investigated as a collective social unit; this assertion was developed further when exploring the levels of *capitals* in the business.

11.3 Roles

The cases have illustrated the dynamic nature of farming and the variation in strategy between the individual businesses. It also shows how some are able to embrace *capital* accumulation, whilst others struggle for *capital* accumulation. This often stems from the constraints imposed on the individual business,

including location, age of farmer, ownership and so on (for example, tenant farmers face further challenges). Despite this, and the social action that farmers and their families pursue, they each have a role to complete for the business which does not vastly differ, they all must milk cows, look after animals and the land, complete paperwork and undertake the business aspects of running a farm, for instance monitoring cash flow.

The roles played by individuals (previously discussed in Chapter Six) reflect their *habitus*, which defines who they are as people and helps shape their understanding of how to conduct themselves in both the business and family setting. The roles played in the farm business affect its responsiveness to change and its resilience in times of crisis. Thus, the roles adopted by individuals influence the levels, distribution, and use of all forms of *capital* within the farm, for example the son may have a higher level of *cultural capital* but is unable to influence his father in the running of the business to (say) change work practices to save money. This collection of *capitals* possessed by family members is a major rationale for my contention that the farm should be treated as a collective social unit. Bourdieu's *habitus*, therefore, enabled me to develop the idea that farm businesses depend on more than one person and, as such, the behaviour of the farm unit derives from the collection of *habitus*es whereby each individual will have their own suggestions for running the business.

It was clear from the cases that each family member had a valuable role to play in contributing to farm household income, whether working on the farm, being involved in diversification activities, or employment elsewhere. In farms that had diversified, wives played an active role in the diversification activities (confirming: Carter, 2000; Gasson and Errington, 1993). All farmers interviewed regarded themselves as full-time farmers, despite any other business activities they may be undertaking. In each of the cases, the farmer was male, and their

spouses (wives) played varied roles, ranging from full involvement in the farm business, to having a full-time job outside of agriculture, or being a full-time housewife (confirming: Buchanen *et al.*, 1982; Danes and McTavish, 1997; Gasson 1998; Gasson and Errington, 1993). Just over half of the wives were fully involved in the business, completing manual tasks and the majority of paperwork. They also looked after the house, although daughters would often help.

"I feed and clean out the calves morning and night. I also help with the paperwork" (Wife, Value-seeker-Chapter Ten).

Many of the farmers' wives played a sub-ordinate role in the family business (confirming: Danes and Olson, 2003; Gasson, 1992; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Saugres, 2002; Pini, 2002; Whatmore, 1991). However, a few were fully involved in the business and included in strategic decision-making, suggesting that their contribution to the business was recognised and valued. This finding contradicts previous literature (cited above) on the role of the farmers wife.

"I'm involved with the daily activities of the farm and I'm consulted about any major decisions to be made. We're a partnership, we run the business as a partnership: together" (Wife, Value-seeker-Chapter Ten).

The role of children (sons and/or daughters) ranged from being fully involved in the business, through to not being involved at all. Those fully involved worked alongside their parents, and expected to take over the business in the future. Those not involved had, or were planning to have, alternative careers. Children played various roles in the business; many helped out their parents with work on the farm or in the house.

"I'm involved with the day-to-day running of the farm and the decisions made in order to make sure the farm runs smoothly. Decisions relating to greater aspects of the business are shared with my father, who ultimately has the last say" (Son, Traditionalist-Chapter Seven).

The majority of the farms employed additional staff, full or part-time, generally to milk the cows.

In exploring the farm as a collective social unit, it has been important to address the different roles individuals play in the business (previously identified by: Ashby, 1925, 1926; Curry *et al.*, 2002; Ondersteijn *et al.*, 2003). These varied roles can be a source of conflict (power struggles), especially between generations (see: Davies and Harveston, 2001); for instance, sons who are educated to a higher level than their fathers, but not allowed full control in decision-making, may find it difficult to implement new farming practices that go against their fathers' *habitus*.

"My son and I discuss the daily operations, sometimes we agree, other times we don't; but I guess that's always the case when you're working with family. It can be difficult. If you employ someone, you tell them what to do, they do it and there's no comeback. They just do it because they are being paid. Whereas when you are working with your son, it is difficult, because you both have a vested interest. He is thinking about the future and wants to demonstrate he can manage, and you want things to be ok now, and in the future" (Father, Rationalist-Case Three).

Applying Bourdieu's work helped me to identify these struggles (often between parent and child), and illuminated the idea of power struggles within the family business. This could be a fruitful area for investigation in future research.

The use of Bourdieu's concepts focused my attention on the individual and the levels of *capital* they contribute to the business; for example, family labour saves *economic capital* (i.e. reducing staff costs). The business offers an environment in which individuals can learn (skills, capabilities and knowledge); individuals are learning skills that could be an advantage to their future career. My data highlighted struggles within the family business, enabling me to demonstrate how the family and the business are intertwined, and hence contributing to the

family business literature, by exploring the family (farm) business in a way that does not aim to separate 'business' and 'family' into two separate systems. My work also showed that family members have valid roles that are vital to the success of the family farm business. The work contributes to the literature by suggesting that the farm business is investigated as a collective social unit.

The next section explores the findings in relation to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. *Habitus* affects how each individual acts, and how people in the family business work together, and influence one another. As previously stated, each family member has an important role to play, therefore their *habitus* and the levels of *capital* they bring to the business, are critical for its success in relation to both, economic (wealth) and non-economic (personal development, lifestyle, learning, passing on values and skills and so on) parameters.

11.4 *Habitus*

The *habitus* is defined as the accumulation of an individual's life experiences, encompassing certain ways of thinking, speaking, acting and reacting to situations. These factors consciously and subconsciously impact on an individual's ability to act in the present situation, forming a practical sense (feel for the game) for what they should do. The *habitus* provides individuals with a pre-determined perception of their location in the *field*, and how they should play the game.

Habitus determines players' behaviours in relation to the *field*, how behaviour is asserted and changed in response to playing the game (see: Bourdieu, 1985). *Habitus* helps to shape players' preferences within the *field*, and acknowledges that future experiences are shaped by past experiences (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The *habitus*, thus, provides farmers (or their spouses and children) with a

sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives. Farmers face unique challenges and no individual farmer would act in the same way as another, even if they were faced with the same set of factors (as pointed out by the farmer in Chapter Nine). Therefore, as a result of the individual nature of the *habitus*, it is difficult for industry bodies (the NFU) and Government policy-makers to ensure that farmers will respond and behave in the same way when changes are introduced.

Using Weber's (1920; 1978) social action typology allowed me to group farmers in terms of the types of social action suggested by their *habitus*. The farmers interviewed face the same problems in the *field*, but, as a result of their *habitus* they follow different strategies, identified in Chapter Six – traditionalist, rationalist, idealist and value-seeker, to tackle challenges (rules of the game) in different ways, reflected in their business operations. Although these four classifications may appear somewhat arbitrary, they have been developed from the farms' business operations and then classified in line with the work of Weber (1920; 1978).

To summarise, for the traditionalist *habitus* (Chapter Seven) seeking to preserve the 'eternal yesterday' becomes more important than seeking to maximise profits, therefore *capital* levels will be sought and utilised in order to maintain business operations as they are and preserve the family way of life. For the rationalist, *economic capital* is the most important. The rationalist (Chapter Eight) wants to make money, and business operations are geared towards achieving this goal. For the idealist (Chapter Nine), identity as a good farmer is very important (relates to *symbolic capital*). The idealist has a romantic 'love affair' with his/her farm. Therefore, *symbolic capital* becomes the most important *capital*. For the value-seeker, each form of *capital* is valued on its own merits and used to pursue rational action (Chapter Ten). For example, the family in question value

education and have introduced business operations that educate others, indirectly increasing *economic capital*. However, despite these different types of social action, each of the farmers interviewed wanted to continue farming and pass on the farm to the next generation. This could be explained by the fact that the four types of *habitus* overlap. Individuals will possess elements of each one, but their *habitus* will be swayed by one dominant type; for example, the traditionalist seeks to keep things as they are, as did the idealist.

"When I was younger, I didn't want the farm to be split up. I wanted to keep everything together, how it always has been" (farmer, Idealist-Chapter Eight).

From the farmers' narratives, the data showed how individual farmers *do* behave differently (confirming they are a heterogeneous group), even if they were in exactly the same situation and in possession of identical information. My data reveals, however, that behaviour follows patterns across generations (although further research needs to be conducted to validate this assertion). In every case in Chapters Seven to Ten, where sons have taken over from their fathers, they appear to behave in comparable ways, holding similar values with respect to farming.

"I also want to pass on the farm to my son and get him set up for the future, just like my dad helped me and my brothers, by being forward thinking and expanding, finding us all farms and encouraging us...I enjoy my work. It is my life, and I have ambition. I want to provide for my sons. I suppose I could be described as a workaholic. I'm a very hard working man... I enjoy farming. Basically I like to make money, which we have done in the past... I enjoy farming, working with cattle, seeing things grow" (Father, Rationalist-Chapter Seven).

"I enjoy working outdoors and with cattle, that is where my interest lies, in breeding cattle and looking at ways to strengthen the dairy herd" (Son, Rationalist-Chapter Seven).

These behavioural patterns could be explained using Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, which suggests that past behaviours and dispositions to act are passed across the family (Bourdieu, 1986; 1991). This relationship results in a process whereby an individual accumulates experiences, values and beliefs, over a lifetime. Parents pass on their values and attitudes towards the family business to their children. Previous work (Elder and Conger, 2000; Frustenberg, 2005) has acknowledged that being involved in the business from an early age results in the transfer of values and attitudes. Early childhood experiences shape the *habitus*, and they ultimately affect the type and level of *cultural capital* that will be accepted and accumulated over time. For instance, if the farmer sought to expand the business and did so successfully, then offspring would also have a desire to expand when they became the principal owner-manager (see: Chapter Eight). Therefore, social action types can be followed through the generations.

Skills and attitudes to work are passed on from generation to generation, with sons learning about the business from their father. Therefore, as Bourdieu (1984) suggests, the embodied *cultural capital* of previous generations functions as a 'game playing' advance. By providing children from the outset, the example of culture incarnated in familiar models, enabling the newcomer (child) to acquire the basic elements of the legitimate culture from the beginning, in the most unconscious and impalpable way, strengthening their position in the *field*. For example, the farmer in Chapter Eight secured his son a place at a highly prestigious farm in Cheshire where he knew the farm manager, had expertise in breeding dairy cows to produce high quality milk. The farmer believed this would be a valuable learning experience for his son.

Ways of working and dispositions shape the *habitus* from an early age, and these are passed on in the family setting; this 'shaping' explains why, in each of the cases, the sons and fathers interviewed hold similar views when it comes to

running the farm. Thus, the composition of the *habitus* depends on age and family circumstances. The concept of *habitus* needs further investigation to establish a more comprehensive picture (breakdown) of the components of farmers' *habitus*.

My findings suggest that a farmer's *habitus* is developed in decades of experiencing the life of farming. Hence, farmers' *habitus* are difficult to change; this explains why others in the *field* experience problems when trying to change farmers' behaviour. The *habitus* is developed and changed only in ways that conform to the *habitus*. For example, new rules will be readily accepted if they conform to the farmer's *habitus*. Children's *habitus* vary according to their connection to the family farm, for example those intending to continue the business behaved inline with their fathers' *habitus*, unlike those seeking alternative careers.

Although Bourdieu uses *habitus* as a concept that could refer to individuals or groups of people, my study suggests that *habitus* should be considered as something possessed by each individual. Furthermore, individuals will use their *habitus*, along with rules of the game and levels of *capital*, in order to influence other peoples' behaviour. As a consequence, the business direction of the farm (as a collective social unit) depends on the *habitus* of each family member. For example, the farmer's *habitus* will be predominant, but their adult children's *habitus*, if s/he is highly involved in the farm, will also affect any business outcome. Therefore, rather than saying the farm as a collective social unit has one *habitus*, it is more appropriate to suggest that it is a collection of *habitus*. Utilising Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* for analysing my data has highlighted the individuality of farmers and their families; as such, any changes to rules of the game will be met with various strategies. The heterogeneity of farmers ensures

that each will play the game individually, according to their *habitus* and the *capitals* they have at their disposal.

Thus, farmers' *habitus* reflect this individuality, making collective behaviour difficult unless common ground can be found; for example, in the case of dairy farmers, finding ways to increase milk price or reduce inspections. Owing to this heterogeneity the NFU is no longer able to represent all farmers hence there is a lack of cohesion between farmers both within the same sector and across sectors. As a result, the NFU has lost its power and its influence over policy. Another explanation for their heterogeneity could be an outcome from the changing role of farmers, as they no longer have the social identity as producer of food and farmers will, according to their *habitus* react to this change in various ways.

My application of Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* has enabled me to identify patterns of behaviour across the generations of the farming family. This contributes to the literature and could be an indicative way to predict the future behaviour of farming families.

The next section explores *capitals* that, when accumulated over time, give rise to power. Individuals (or groups) use power to further increase their *capital* share and influence other groups. Changes in power structures result in profits shifting from farmers to dominant groups (identified in past events by: Cochrane, 1979; Howarth, 1990; Le Heron, 2003). The latter control the market place to ensure they retain and accumulate *capitals*, thus weakening farmers' position in the *field*. I now move onto exploring Bourdieu's concepts of *capitals* in more detail in relation to my findings and how I developed the concept of *natural capital*, previously discussed in Chapter Six.

11.5 *Economic capital*

Bourdieu (1991) defines '*economic capital*' in the strict sense (material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property and so on). In this analysis, I use Bourdieu's view of *economic capital* – as money, commodities, means of material production and other material assets (Wacquant, 1996; Smart, 1993).

The analysis of the economic side of farming using a social theory (Pierre Bourdieu) has re-affirmed results found from work using economic theory. The economic issues facing farmers are well cited in the literature and the industry (previously discussed in Chapter Two). Farmers have faced financial pressures for a long time (Johnsen, 2004), increases in costs (Van der Ploeg, 2000), low milk prices (Colman and Harvey, 2003; Colman *et al.*, 2004; Curry *et al.*, 2002; RABDF, 2004), have resulted in low incomes for many farmers (DEFRA, 2002; Gasson *et al.*, 1998). Farmers also have the added pressure of increasing debts.

"The cost of borrowing is going up, which is a worry for farmers who have borrowed huge sums of money to reinvest. The milk price just doesn't justify the outlay, the future needs to have a basic minimum milk price, which covers production costs, including family labour" (Farmer, Valuer – Chapter Ten).

The lack of *economic capital* is a major factor as farmers need to cover costs of production, before they can re-invest in the business. These problems were identified by all types of farmers and succinctly put in the quote below:

"A lot of people have invested huge sums of money in 1995 when prices were good and things looked as though they were going to get better; spending £80-£100k on new tanks and parlours. They are now struggling to pay that off and finding they have too much capital tied up. They have decided to give up order to clear debts" (Farmer, Valuer – Chapter Ten).

The insufficient levels of *economic capital* available to farmers is no surprise, considering the arrangement of the *field* and the distribution of power. This confirms previous research that farmers have become the weakest link in the food supply chain (Curry *et al.*, 2002; Whatmore *et al.*, 1991). It also confirms that

farmers diversify activities to increase business income (Bryant, 1989; Carter, 1999, 2000; Fuller, 1990; Harrison, 1982; Shucksmith and Winter, 1990); in both Chapters Nine and Ten, farmers saw diversification as a way to increase income.

However, when farmers are encouraged to participate in diversification, in some of the cases it is apparent that the positive outcomes are often over emphasised by powerful groups (Government), without a great deal of consideration for the negative aspects. In essence, it is important to raise the farmer's awareness of the necessary portfolio of skills required when dealing with the public and providing a service. This requires a different set of skills, in addition to those learnt from previous generations and required for successful farming (relating to *cultural capital*).

Farmers and their families have sought to increase their *economic capital* in various ways, reducing costs, minimising inputs, diversifying, taking off-farm employment and so on. In most of my cases, one family member had a job external to farming to supplement incomes. This demonstrates farming families' tenacity to keep the family business for future generations. However, despite these efforts, farm businesses are struggling to retain *economic capital*; prices received for their products are reducing while costs, principally feed and energy are increasing. This was the case for all types of farmers. In seeking ways to regain their share of *economic capital*, some farmers have moved up or down the supply chain by, for example, using their milk to make cheese or sell products direct from the farm. As discussed above, farmers' efforts to regain their share of *economic capital* have not always met with success; the returns available might not be commensurate with the investment required.

Other players in the supply chain need to recognise that without farmers they would not have a product to manufacture or sell. From my investigations I

suggest that a profit-sharing (fair trade) initiative could be created to support those at the bottom of the supply chain. Retailers are prepared to undertake fair trade deals with farmers in developing countries, and these schemes would not be difficult to extend to farmers in the UK, ensuring farming families in this country are not living below the poverty line.

In assessing the appropriateness of applying RAT theory to farming, my study has emphasised the importance of considering alternative forms of *capital*. The multi-functional role of agriculture (Caskie *et al.*, 2000; Curry *et al.*, 2002; Hall *et al.*, 2004; Potter and Lobley, 2002) deserves to be assessed using multi-functional parameters. The research findings demonstrate that farmers have non-economic motives to work, despite the importance of *economic capital* as a base line to provide an income and potentially funds for re-investment. Gasson *et al.* (1998) argue that farmers do not behave rationally, suggesting they neither seek profit maximisation as an explicit goal nor do they have access to valuable information in order to act rationally. My findings show that many of the farmers and their families cited numerous reasons to farm, including: lifestyle; working outdoors and with animals; living in the countryside; and personal development and satisfaction.

"I'm not profit driven, enjoying my work is more important to me, so long as there is enough money in the job to have a comfortable living" (Son, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

Farming families follow long-term goals rather than short-term gains for the business, thereby promoting family solidarity. Business strategies do not necessarily seek to fulfil profit maximisation in the short-run. As stated above, however, each farm's income is maximised where possible, even though farmers' actions may not conform strictly to RAT. The interviewees believe that their actions are securing the farm for future generations which is, in many cases, their

ultimate goal. Even though many farmers (despite the type of social action their *habitus* follows) have been experiencing economic problems, they are committed to their businesses. The family work together as a collective social unit to generate income for the household, for example spouses often help by working on the farm or having employment elsewhere. Children also work on the farm to help reduce labour costs.

My work has contributed to the literature by showing that farmers are trying to increase levels of *economic capital* and despite their efforts these levels remain low compared to other players in the *field*.

The next section explores the data generated from the cases in relation to *cultural capital*. It also shows how my application of Bourdieu's theory has contributed to the literature.

11.6 The Learning Environment – *Cultural Capital*

To re-iterate, *cultural capital* refers to the long established dispositions including social and family norms, and knowledge and skills possessed by the individual, along with their cultural experiences (visiting museums, art galleries) and possessions (art, poetry books, artefacts).

Farming provides a good example of: "learning the family business" (Moore and Barratt, 2002), which provides family members with good levels of *cultural capital* in terms of skills and knowledge. Bourdieu's work enabled me to explore the link between the family and the business, specifically: where the family provides the skills and knowledge that is transferred to the next generation of workers; and where the family provides skilled labour at a lower cost than sourcing suitably qualified staff from outside the business. *Cultural capital* in

terms of objects and experiences are relatively low for farming families, for example they do not possess art works, go to the opera and so on. I judge it unlikely that such cultural experiences are necessary to increase farmers' level of *cultural capital* for business success. However, there are farming specific cultural objects (magazines – i.e. British Farmer and Grower, newspapers – i.e. Farmers Guardian, Books on animal husbandry and so on) and experiences (agricultural shows, cattle markets).

There are differences in institutional *cultural capital* (education, qualifications) between the generations and across the farms. For example, the rationalist and value-seeker were educated to a higher level than the idealist, and each of these were educated to a higher level than the traditionalist. This affects farmers' attitudes and goals, how they run their businesses and their openness to new experiences, such as the acceptance of new rules of the game. Education can also aid understanding and interpretation of new rules and regulations that many farmers found ambiguous and hard to comprehend.

"I suppose another factor to consider is the amount of red-tape and bureaucracy. DEFRA seem to be asking for duplicate information. It requires some thought and when you have to read a load of booklets and guidelines, which aren't really in plain English. The booklets DEFRA send out are so ambiguous. You don't really know what they are trying to tell you" (Farmer, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

Spouses and children interviewed often possessed a higher level of institutional *cultural capital* (education and qualifications) than the farmers.

As mentioned above, in farming there is a strong reliance on learning on the job from previous generations (Cope and Watts, 2000; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Moores and Barrett, 2002). Knowledge and experience is embedded in the previous generations' *habitus* and Bourdieu suggests that such knowledge provides a valuable game playing advantage for future generations. The family

business is the setting where children are allowed to put things they have learnt into practice. The level of children's *cultural capital* have depends on the learning environment, education levels and how involved they are with business decision-making. The farmers interviewed believed that future generations must learn on the job, and this was the case for the traditionalist, idealist, rationalist and value-seeker. Most skills are transferred in this way, through experience of working on the farm and learning from previous generations.

"It is one of the few areas where you see more than one generation of a family working towards the same goal. It is a way for parents to pass down skills and wisdom to their children, as well as material things (the farm and its asset)" (Partner, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

Farmers have to recognise the skills they possess and the importance of such skills for running the business successfully.

"When I was doing exams and work needed to be done on the farm, my dad would say that the farm work was more important. So I didn't leave with many qualifications. All jobs these days require you to be computer literate and work in an office, which is something I couldn't do. There are better and worse jobs out there, so the grass may not be greener in a different job... All my skills are connected to farming: breeding; milking; tractor driving. I like the variation of jobs, one day won't be the same as the next day. You've got milking, baling, ploughing, fencing, book work to do. You are your own boss, you can plan your days as you like, so long as you get the work done" (Son, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

In using Bourdieu's theory I have found that successful farming requires a wide breadth of knowledge and capabilities. As stated in the previous section, farming is a multi-skilled occupation (Ashby, 1925; Curry *et al.*, 2002; Gasson and Errington, 1993; Grant, 1991) that requires the farmer to undertake multiple roles (evident in each of the cases) from manager, to craftsman, initiator of new strategies and so on (Ondersteijn *et al.*, 2003).

University education can provide skills and knowledge on the technical and business aspects of farming (farm management, breeding, farming techniques and so on). However, the farmers stressed that the requirements for successful farming included: passion, discipline, commitment, determination to succeed, and consideration for the emotional element of the job. These factors were identified by each type of farmer. Moreover, the farmers emphasised the need for people wanting a farming career to have the chance to manage a farm business under supervision (mentor) before starting their own business.

"I would encourage someone to go into farming, but they need to understand, it requires a certain discipline, to get up everyday and milk the cows. Also they need to be allowed a hand in the managerial aspects of the farm, in a relatively safe environment. They need to experience what it is really like to be a farmer. Be involved with the decision-making and not be afraid to make mistakes, knowing how they can rectify them, or at least learn from them for the future" (Farmer, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

There is the issue that older farmers do not possess the *cultural capital* to understand the rules and regulations associated with paperwork.

"Old farmers can't cope with all the paperwork. They can't deal with it and don't get any help from the authorities to transition over to this new bureaucratic industry. They need help, especially when they are one man bands" (Farmer, Traditionalist Case).

This is an area that industry needs to consider and address in a practical manner. Those in powerful positions could assist by running courses or providing simple fact sheets. This could help farmers to improve their portfolio of skills and their capability to run their business in the highly competitive market.

Children commented that they were grateful to their parents for teaching them values, beliefs and how to farm. I would argue that mentoring is a major factor in transferring skills to the next generation. Mentoring systems are already used

in incubator centres for people starting their own businesses and similar centres could provide vital help for people entering farming. *Cultural capital* is a major factor in how the farm business is run and in determining whether it is a success or not. It is heavily related to *habitus*, which affects the type of social action farmers pursue.

"I was very lucky that my father allowed me to make decisions on the farm when he was still here. He allowed me to make mistakes but learn from them. That is the only way you become good at what you do. I feel sorry for those who want to go into farming and have fathers that are farmers but are not allowed a hand in the running of the place" (Farmer, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

There is a lack of institutional *cultural capital* specifically for food and farming. There are fewer agricultural colleges nowadays and there is a lack of education in schools regarding food production and farming. From my personal experience, farming is not promoted as an industry to work in, hence only those from farming families consider it as a career. It might be possible to offer apprentice-style funding to farming and offer schemes through YFC and the Learning Skills Council (LSC). YFC and NFU should also consider exploring Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP). This is an area that industry needs to consider and address in a practical manner.

My work contributes to the literature by suggesting the need to develop a mentoring system for the next generation of farmers, as well as considering KTPs. It has also highlighted the need to develop simple fact sheets explaining rule changes.

The next section explores the data generated from the cases in relation to *social capital*. It also confirms that my application of Bourdieu's work has contributed to the literature.

11.7 The Social Side of Farming – *Social Capital*

Bourdieu (1991) defines *social capital* as the actual or potential resources gained from social networks. *Social capital* amounts to the quality (or state) of being sociable, the instance of being sociable and the tendency to associate in (or form) social groups (Bourdieu, 1983, 1990, 1997; Lin, 2001). *Social capital* acts as a multiplier, enhancing the effects of *economic* and *cultural capital* (Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003). This form of *capital* can be enhanced by the perceived economic status of the actor, for instance lawyers and accountants would have higher levels of *social capital* (networks) than farmers.

In utilising Bourdieu's work I am able to conceptualise social networks as a *capital* resource and highlight how important these networks are to the farming community and individual farmers. *Social capital* thus refers to the long standing social relationships (networks) that farmers have created in both personal and business capacities. The farmers interviewed, on the whole, like to socialise and discuss farming matters with fellow farmers. Both the YFC and NFU were frequently cited as important social institutions for the industry. Most farmers reminisced about their YFC days and all younger generations reported how they made good friends from YFC.

"I have spent over 16 years in YFC, which became a major aspect of my social life.

I met my best friend, Duncan there and have met many people through the organisation. YFC was great: competitions and socials; weekly club meetings in the pub; as well as many county events for people to go out and meet new people involved with farming. Without YFC you would never see anyone" (Son, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

Children commented that they missed the social aspects experienced by urban counterparts who they believed had better access to activities such as bowling, cinema and ice-skating. However, they commented that YFC has been a great institution to make friends and contacts in the industry despite the type of social action their *habitus* pursues. This research has highlighted the important role

that YFC plays in the farming community, and the need to continue this institution for young farmers to socialise in what would otherwise be isolating circumstances. However, children aged 25 – 35 commented that there was no 'official' social institution for them; YFC caters for individuals aged up to 28 and Country Link tends to be for older people from their mid-30s upwards.

The family is a good source of 'closed' *social capital* (Bourdieu, 1986; Field, 2003; Johnston and Percy, 2003), as seen in the cases discussed in Chapters Seven to Ten.

"I like the social, well the community aspects of farming. You're part of a community and a larger family in a sense, even if it is slightly disjointed from the rest of the population, well society" (Brett, Case 3).

Elgar and Conger's (2000) research conducted on farm families suggested that couples working together with their children create high levels of *social capital*. This can be seen in the cases where families are closely connected and support one another. For example, if one member of the family is ill, the remaining members will do their work. It is in the family system rather than the business system, where cooperation is required and children are permitted, if not expected, to participate. This creates a sense of lasting obligations across the generations (Furstenberg, 2005), identified in the cases, particularly Chapter Eight – The Rationalist.

All the farmers and children stressed that opportunities for farmers to meet are decreasing, regardless of the social action their *habitus* pursues. Many said they had difficulty getting away from the farm, owing to their high work loads and fewer opportunities to socialise. As a consequence, reductions in *social capital* were frequently cited by farming families.

"Meetings kept me up to date with things and got me away from the farm for a while...For dairy we used to have three meetings a year, organised by the dairy buyer that collected the milk. They provided a time and place for farmers to meet

and to talk about matters concerning them. Over the last 12 months, these haven't been arranged. It was a good way to air your views and your concerns to those further down the supply chain. It also allowed us to talk about best practices and find out about people supplying us and where we could save money" (Farmer, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

If this continues, there could be a severe erosion of the rural community, namely the networks for farmers and their families. In many cases, a lack of *economic* and *cultural capital* prevents access to more valuable networks. This raises concerns over social exclusion and social isolation. The social aspects of farming are very important and affect the well-being of farmers and their families.

"Farming can be a very isolating life. Working and living in one spot and it can be quite isolated from people with no close by neighbours. It can be lonely and would not suit all personalities" (Melanie, Case 1).

The closure of local livestock markets has contributed to reductions in *social capital*. All the farmers interviewed commented that cattle markets enable farmers to socialise and build valuable networks. They could also exchange information on best practices and farming matters can be discussed, which could, in turn, positively affect *economic capital*. Farmers are also able to interact with the public forging connections with the wider local community (educating them – sharing *cultural capital*), for example: parents would take their small children round markets to see the animals before the FMD outbreak (pre-2001). If further markets are closed, farmers' *social capital* is greatly reduced.

"If my local market goes, it will be a great shame for all the farmers in this area. It will actually be disastrous" (Farmer, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

Cattle market closures have increased the feeling of social isolation of many peripheral farmers who only see deliverymen or inspectors. In extreme cases, social isolation could affect farmers' well-being, further weakening their position in the *field* and marginalising farmers as a group (Coleman, 1990). Farms play an important social role in rural areas, providing jobs (Martin *et al.*, 2002,

Kazakoplous and Gindarakous, 2003). Farms also support other rural businesses that are now in danger of being closed, for instance post offices, village shops and other services. These are important social institutions for isolated areas.

Meetings are often organised by groups who hold powerful positions in the *field* (such as Government), to inform farmers about current and future changes in rules of the game. This results in meetings being controlled by dominant groups and not focused towards the needs of farmers. These meetings end up resembling 'lecture' sessions and farmer concerns do not seem to be answered. I attended a number of such meetings in relation to the CAP reforms. The discussions were controlled by a panel of representatives from DEFRA, the NFU and in some cases the RSPB. There was little or no opportunity for farmers to express their concerns and discuss matters. Instead, 'organised' meetings could be used as consultations to the benefits of all parties. If all farmers were given the opportunity to be involved in devising rules of the game, new rules may be more acceptable. Participation can give people a sense of ownership and thus increase the acceptability of changes. The NFU could be responsible for developing these sessions. This may also alleviate the feeling of alienation felt by farmers towards many of the rules and changes in the *field* that have recently been implemented. It would also give farmers the chance to empower themselves by discussing their own ideas and talking about issues that affect them. Some institutions, such as the Rural Hub are trying a different approach, organising farm walks for farmers to demonstrate and discuss best practices.

My application of Bourdieu's work encapsulates the importance of rural community networks and their role as support networks for farming families (for example, YFC, Rural Hub, Rural Stress Network and so on). Traditional communities are being eroded with the influx of urban dwellers to rural areas, providing further barriers (especially inflated land prices) to farmers seeking

opportunities to expand. The farmers interviewed felt urban incomers de-harmonised the social balance of rural communities, complaining that incomers understand neither the nature of farming, nor the work involved. This was the case for all types of farmers. For instance, farmers will work on Sundays and long (anti-social) hours during the summer.

"The ones that move into the village and start complaining, that it is not quite how it should be; not how they imagined. They cause trouble; last year we got a bit of mud on the road, so I took a brush down (mechanical one operated by a tractor), and brushed it up. The women then complained that I had brushed it to the side of the road. (Paul, Case 7)

"The people who are moving into the countryside do nothing but complain, because their ideal of what it should be like is far removed from the reality of people who work in the countryside. We have to work everyday. We have to do work when we can, otherwise if we don't work on a bank holiday when the weather is fine, we could miss our harvest" (Daniel, Case 9).

The farming community could be described as socially inclusive by some people in society. However, it could be argued that this perception stems from farmers feeling marginalised from the rest of the social world. Changes in the rural community, notably the influx of incomers to rural areas discussed above, have, in some cases, caused farmers to become even more marginalised, by diluting their sense of community. Farmers need to address these areas of conflict, but this could prove difficult because of differences in culture and social position of the two groups.

From the data, there are signs that *social capital* available to farmers has been hampered. One example is the increasing lack of trust between farmers and milk buying co-operatives (successful *social capital* requires trust to work as a successful network/collaboration).

"I used to send it to the Co-op and tried to get discussion groups going. But they wouldn't even give me a list of the farmers who send milk to them. They thought I was going to start a revolt. It shouldn't be like that. We should be working together to do things and to promote milk and get a fair price. Not fighting one another, or appearing to fight one another. It is not helping the situation at all. There is a serious lack of trust between processors and farmers. It's very much an 'us and them' philosophy" (Farmers, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

The farmers' narratives show that, in many cases, trust has also been lost between farmers.

"There is no trust between people and people don't help one another out anymore. They are each waiting for the other to give up, so they have the chance of some land to increase their holding. I suppose it is how society is: grab, grab, grab, and trying to knock out competitors, rather than standing as a force together to get things done" (Farmers, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

In using Bourdieu's concept of *social capital*, my work has shown the importance of creating valuable networks and promoting trust in these networks. There is a need for collaborative behaviour between farmers and other people in rural communities in order to get farmers' voices heard. The social side of farming is crucial for farmers, especially those in peripheral areas. The need to meet fellow farmers and interact with people is very important for farmers' well-being; otherwise, as some farmers and their families previously pointed out, the job can feel isolating, leading to a feeling of social exclusion, discussed above. Farm walks and discussion days are a good idea, although organising suitable cover for absence can be difficult for farmers.

My work contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of *social capital* for farmers. I suggest that farmers need to socialise and, over the years, opportunities to do so have declined. My work has also brought to light the decline in trust between farmers and between farmers and milk buyers.

The next section explores the data generated from the cases in relation to *symbolic capital*.

11.8 Identity and Emotional Attachment – *Symbolic Capital*

Bourdieu (1991) defines *symbolic capital* as accumulated prestige or honour. It is a combination and accumulation of all other forms of *capital* including *natural capital*. *Symbolic capital* always fulfils ideological functions (Joppke, 1986).

In this thesis, *symbolic capital* refers to the accumulation of all other forms of *capital* providing the farmer with symbolic resources. "It is the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179), providing the individual with an identity and social position (status) in the *field*. Bourdieu defines a symbolic resource as any one or combination of *capital* in circulation: *economic*, *cultural* and *social*. These symbolic resources can themselves be utilised for economic gain, for example the farm could be sold (Bourdieu, 1991).

Farms are symbolic for farming families, which includes the land, the animals, the machinery and the farm house. The farm, especially the dairy herd symbolise years of hard work and family tradition in breeding lines and developing the business, using all other forms of *capital*. These *capitals* have either been owned (through retained earnings and profits) or borrowed usually through loans or using consultants to 'borrow' their expertise – *cultural capital*). *Symbolic capital* is important for farmers' individuality, independence (being one's own boss) and self-sufficiency.

Farmers often talked about their cows and commented about the carefully selected genetic lines they had chosen over the years. This was important to all the farmers despite the type of social action their *habitus* leans towards. All the

farmers and their families were proud of their achievements. High standards and pride in their work were often cited by all farmers, especially wanting to be seen as good farmers in the farming community. Again, this was important for each type of farmer – traditionalist, rationalist, idealist and value-seeker.

“Cows are the most important asset of my business and it would be foolhardy of me not to look after them, which is why I find it hard to believe that some farmers don’t look after their stock” (Farmers, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

“I like my cows. I like having things to a high standard. I guess it is more a pride thing really, I don’t want someone saying I’m a bad farmer” (Farmer, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

The older generation have a level of pride (Anderson and Jack, 2000), and need to be seen as a good farmer in the community (*social/symbolic capital*). Being a good farmer symbolises his/her prestige (status) in the community (see: Bourdieu, 1977). The farm is also important for gaining power over other farmers in the *field* (confirming: Samuel, 2000). Likewise, a farmer’s status is measured in the size and production levels of the farm.

“Good farmers – you know whether you are good at your job and you pride yourself on that. Like I said before I have high, very high standards. My cows are what make me money, so I look after them. There is no point in maltreating them because at the end of the day it will cost you money. The farming community is very alert to good and bad farmers. Yet the authorities that be never seem to do anything with bad farmers” (Farmer, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

The family name on the land also appeared to be symbolic and something significantly important to the farm owner, especially for those who inherited farms and intend to pass on the business to their children. As Leopold (1939) states the farm is: “the farmer’s portrait of himself”. The farm is symbolic of the family (their place in society) and the work over many generations (accumulating *capitals*). The identity of the farmer and the farm are intertwined.

Farming is the farmer's identity in the social world, his/her mark of who s/he is and what s/he has done with his/her life. Although slightly more prevalent for the idealist, the symbolic importance of the farm was important for each type.

"I want to keep the farm together. It is where I grew up and it is where I learnt how to be a farmer from my father and I don't want to see it broken up or sold really. Once you have sold the farm, you will never get it back; especially in this day and age, when so many people are after them, who have a lot more money than most farmers" (Farmer, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

Identity is closely tied to a farmer's position in the farming community and the wider social world, symbolic of the farm and the family name – what the farmer represents to the rest of the world. The farm is also the home of the farming family and usually where s/he grew up. It was a major part of his/her *habitus* (learnt his/her values there, watched his/her father work and so on) and a generator of many memories. These factors strengthen emotional attachment and hence the farm becomes a very personal belonging (symbolic). The majority of the farmers commented that they were born and bred to be farmers (confirming: Villa, 1999). This implies that their identity as a person and their place in society was determined by their familial ties and their family tradition of farming. Many of the farmers interviewed stated that farming was 'in the blood' and that farming was an 'emotional job'. For them, if the emotional attachment was not there, you were not a proper farmer, another important finding of the research.

"There is a certain amount of emotional attachment to farming and if the emotional attachment isn't there, then you are not a true farmer. You are attached to your animals and your land. They are part of you and you a part of them. It is like your own personal paradise, even if you go away, you miss it. I lost my herd in the 2001 FMD crisis. It was such an emotional time for me and my family. It was heart wrenching and when you love your cows and are proud of them, having to see them shot and then buried on your land is soul destroying" (Farmers, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

The emotional side of farming links the natural elements of farming (*natural capital*) to *symbolic capital* and the way of life farming offers the family and farmer. The focus on the emotional side of the business suggests that farming is a vocation (a calling). *Symbolic capital* represents the emotional aspects of 'why farmers farm', which RAT theory neglects. The farm is the material reminder (asset) of the work the family has done (family tradition). As all farmers pointed out, despite their differences in the social action they pursued, you get attached to the land and animals, and you want to do your best for them.

"New entrants also need to be aware, it is an emotional job and you do become attached to the cows. You will have your favourites, and you will find it difficult when they are old and have to go". (Farmers, Idealist – Chapter Nine).

Farmers love their job, providing food to feed people. They perceive their role as provider of food and nurturer of fauna or flora as part of their identity.

In applying Bourdieu's work to my data, I can make a key contribution to why dairy farmers farm, namely: to pass on a viable business to the next generation. Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic capital* enabled me to conceptualise why this is so important. *Symbolic capital* is what farmers want to pass on to the next generation. It is the main reason why many farmers farm and identified as important by each type of farmer. It represents the history of the family for future generations. The farm is symbolic of the farmer's work and the work of previous generations of the family; it is their creation and accumulation of other forms of *capital* and it allows for personal empowerment and development. The farm as a symbolic representation of the family enables future generations to access all forms of *capital* stored in the family farm business.

Using Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic capital*, increases understanding of why the farm is so important for many farmers. However, their *symbolic capital* levels do not necessarily help them to retain or accumulate *capital* in the present game

playing *field*. Nevertheless, *symbolic capital* becomes the key driving force of why many farmers farm, that is: to pass on the farm as a store of *capital* to future generations. As such *symbolic capital* remains important for farmers, even though farmers are not able to strengthen their position in the current *field*.

Symbolic capital has not previously been linked to farmers' identity; the latter has previously only been associated with culture (Burton, 1998; Burton, 2004; Canadine, 1960). *Symbolic capital* also suggests that encapsulating the farm as something that is symbolic to the farmer begins to shed light on why succession and business continuation is so important for many. My work indicates that symbolic meaning for farmers and what their farm really means to them and their family needs to be investigated in more detail. For example, the historical development of the farm and whether the farm has changed in its symbolic relevance to the farmer. Also, it would be interesting to explore whether symbolic meaning is connected to the social action the farmers' *habitus* favours.

My work has contributed to the literature by beginning to explore the symbolic meaning of the farm to farming families. In analysing the data the symbolic meaning of the farm is the primary reason to continue farming.

The next section explores *natural capital* and suggests why it should be included in Bourdieu's theory of *capital*.

11.9 Nature – *Natural Capital*

After analysing the cases, I felt there was a justification for enhancing Bourdieu's concepts of *capital* in the case of farming by exploring the need for an additional *capital* – *Natural capital*. Nature is uncontrollable and impinges on farmers' businesses in different ways, for example biological disasters and weather

changes affect yields and grass quality. The reliance on nature, and the important role it plays, led me to incorporate the concept of '*natural capital*' in Bourdieu's theory of *capital*. *Natural capital* is not a substantive modification of *symbolic capital*, *symbolic capital* encompasses all other forms of *capital* including *natural capital*, which contributes a significant proportion of the *capitals* that make up *symbolic capital*.

Natural capital is not part of *economic capital* although it does use and generate *economic capital*. It is the 'living' element of objects – the breathing, growing, sensing, feeling and responsive to the living environment. The biological process involved, the 'natural' element (soil, microorganisms, climates, weather, disease) are not easily quantified in terms of *economic capital*. Cows are part of a cycle of life and cannot be pre-programmed to produce a specific output per hour (Francis, 1994). A key process for farmers to contend with. A robotic cow, however, could be pre-programmed to produce a certain amount each hour, but how would it produce milk having removed the biological process of reproduction, milk production and living? To assist an element of control over *natural capital* farmers can use *economic capital* and *cultural capital* to purchase vaccines for disease, higher quality feed and through their knowledge devise breeding programmes and feeding regimes that increase cows production. However, farmers still cannot fully predict or determine the levels each cow will produce each day nor how milk production will vary over a specific time span.

Biological cycles cannot be turned off, nor can the factors which affect them, for example, climate (say a hot summer, would ultimately affect milk yields on cows and to differing extents for individuals cows as they each react differently to increased temperatures) cannot be programmed or controlled to affect production levels. For example, if a machine in a car manufacturers can be pre-programmed to produce 'X' number of doors per hour and the operations

manager finds out that, by adjusting the location of the machine in relation to where the inputs are stored, he can increase the output of doors per hour, then he will move the machine. Farmers on the other hand cannot 'move' the location of their farm in order to maximise production according to micro-climatic effects.

In terms of daily production, cows need to be milked twice a day (sometimes three depending on the system in place) and this needs to be done every day. Other economic assets, such as a tractor can be 'turned off' when it is no longer required and restarted a few days later and it will perform the same as it did when you last used it. On the other hand, cows and grass need constant attention and care (food, water, routine maintenance), they cannot be 'switched off' unless they are killed. If this happens, then the farmer is back to square one and has to start the process of raising a calf and waiting two years before receiving any milk. For the reasons described above, living organisms need to be treated differently to other economic assets.

In this thesis, *natural capital* refers to the renewable ecosystem and resources (animals, grass and food production), and non-renewable systems, principally fossil fuels and minerals.

All of Bourdieu's forms of *capital* are used as a form of power; *social*, *cultural* and *symbolic capital* can ultimately enhance *economic capital*. For example, education can help develop business acumen and co-operation can make farmers (as a group) stronger. As with other forms of *capital*, *natural capital* can be used as a form of power, in terms of land and animals, which can be enhanced, this, in turn, can deliver greater economic returns. An obvious example is that cows with high milk yields would return more money than those with low yields. In a similar way, land is often seen in the farming community as a symbol of wealth (*symbolic capital*), so farmers who own more land would be seen as more

powerful than those who rent land. Fertile land can also be used as a resource to increase milk yields and hence secure further *economic capital*. Therefore, *natural capital* can be used as part of Bourdieu's social theory as farmers can use, manipulate, enhance and deplete *natural capital*.

Farmers cited that working outdoors and breeding cows (*symbolic capital*) were major reasons why they farm:

"I enjoy farming, working with cattle, seeing things grow" (Farmer, Rationalist – Chapter Eight).

Natural capital makes up a significant element of *symbolic capital*, farmers are highly attached to their land and animals. Despite their *habitus* and pursuit of different types of social action the farmers and some of the family members interviewed stated that the emotional attachment to land and animals defined one as being a true farmer. The emotional side of the job (*symbolic capital*) relates heavily to the natural element of farming, a finding that suggests that the social and natural worlds are connected. The farmers interviewed define good and bad farmers in relation to how they treat the land and animals. This focus on non-monetary purposes and aims is critical. Thus, *natural capital* is closely allied to levels of *symbolic capital* and the symbolic meaning of the farm to farming families. *Natural capital* becomes an important part of the farm business and the farmer relies on high levels of *natural capital* for his livelihood. Farmers identified 'principles' in farming which relate to the natural cycles, as described below:

"Well, the fact there is a time lag between having a calf and getting milk from that female calf. This can take up to a year and a half. If you are really unlucky that calf/cow can die before it even makes milk. You have lost a good cow that could have produced milk for you for a good few years. So, you're back to square one after a year and a half of caring for that cow, as well as the expenditure. You are working with nature and nothing is guaranteed" (Farmer, Traditionalist – Chapter Seven).

All types of social action (traditionalist, rationalist, idealist and value-seeker) are motivated by the pursuit of maintaining *natural capital*, which becomes a major element of *symbolic capital* and a reason why farmers continue to farm.

However, *natural capital* brings many benefits, but can also be a source of challenges for farmers, such as disease and adverse climate changes (droughts, floods). The farmers interviewed were concerned about bio-security levels in the UK and the effects of disease on their business. Recent BSE and FMD outbreaks have reduced consumer confidence and placed blame on farmers for events, they believe, that were beyond their control.

"TB is a huge problem in our area and it seriously affects my business. I have only recently, in the last 6 months, become TB free. Having a TB herd makes life very difficult and imposes restrictions. Many people have it and we don't seem to be able to get rid of it (Farmer, Valuer – Chapter Ten).

Many environmental issues are highly contentious and subject to debate by different stakeholders - environmental groups, animal welfare groups and so on. Farmers are struggling to compete with these agencies, because environmental lobby groups and animal charities have more power in the *field* and are thus able to influence policy and rules of the game.

Natural capital has not been explored in the SME literature or agricultural economics and rural sociology. In my judgement *natural capital* needs to be brought into focus as an imperative capital for empowering farmers. It is more pertinent to farming than any other industry. It should therefore be considered as equal status with Bourdieu's other forms of *capital*. *Natural capital* is highly important for farmers and it reflects the long-term planning and succession of farms. Depletion in *natural capital* poses future problems for farming, as climate change and rising global populations increase the competition for resources and food. The benefits farming provides for the natural environment needs to

explored in more detail, perhaps through the concept of using the farm as a collective natural unit (a system of storing, using and providing *natural capital*). This is an important area and could provide ways for farmers to regain control in their industry by gaining the respect of other players in the *field* for what farmers do to enhance the natural environment.

In spite of farmers pursuing different types of social action for each of the four types (traditionalist, rationalist, idealist and value-seeker), natural capital is highly important and a significant reason why they farm – working outdoors, working with animals. The natural element of farming provides a certain lifestyle which all the farmers interviewed want. My work stresses the important role nature plays in farming and the need to investigate the concept of *natural capital* in greater detail. The introduction of *natural capital* contributes to the different strands of the literature identified in section 11.1.

11.10 Conclusion

Using Bourdieu's work enabled me to address the problems facing the dairy farming community, and highlighted areas where family farms could regain a sense of power. Bourdieu emphasises that farmers do possess levels of *capital*, even though they may not have economic strength. Power struggles throughout the dairy supply chain have been highlighted using Bourdieu, especially the problems farmers face and their feeling of powerlessness. His theory focuses attention on the reduction of farmers' *capital* (*economic, cultural, social, and symbolic*). Bourdieu's work encouraged me to think about the natural elements of farming as a capital resource and led to the development of *natural capital*.

Family businesses have their own rules, and both the family and the business contribute to levels of *capital* for the individual and the business as a whole. Each

family member has an important role to play in the family business and pertinent to the success of the business and the family.

Using Bourdieu's work fitted well with the objectives of this research, which were primarily to discover why dairy farmers continued to farm and to address the identified shortcomings of RAT. Bourdieu's work became part of the inductive and deductive process of data collection and analysis. His interest in power was a major rationale for developing my idea of farmers' feeling of powerlessness. His work provided clues as to why farmers behave as they do and suggested areas where farmers could begin to regain some control in their *field* (see: Chapter Twelve). However, as previously mentioned, his work does lack clarity and this was especially prominent in my efforts to define the *field* and simplify a highly complex situation. The *field* was eventually defined as the dairy industry. Bourdieu's definition of *habitus* allows the concept to be applied to individuals or a group. To truly understand small business owners' business operations and their individuality means that their *habitus* should be considered as something that belongs to them and is influenced by other people who also have their own individual *habitus*. The merits of this thesis lie in the rich data generated from farmers' narratives and the concern for representing the 'real world' of farming and the challenges farmers are facing.

This thesis has demonstrated the importance of agriculture to the farming community and beyond, through the use of Bourdieu's forms of *capital*. *Social*, *cultural* and *symbolic capital* each represents a significant part of the farmers' life-world. In contributing to the family business literature, Bourdieu's conceptual framework has strengthened the notion that the business and family systems are inextricably linked. The work has shown that Bourdieu's theory can be used to assess family businesses and has developed interesting results. For instance, it is clear that the family and the business constantly provide, and use, the different

forms of *capital* in my study. However, more research needs to be conducted into the flow of capitals from the family to the business and vice versa. The work stands as a foundation for future research to appraise the levels of *capital* in family farm businesses and to focus on developing the concept of *habitus* in the farming world.

Farmers have been facing an economic crisis for a prolonged period and the economic side of farming has long been known and talked about. *Economic capital* lies with larger, more powerful groups, as retailers, Government and so on strengthen their position in the *field* and use power to retain levels of *capital* in their possession. Policy makers need to address the economic crisis facing farmers and the imbalance of power across the supply chain. The current formation of the *field* and rules of the game are not sustainable. Policy may also be more appropriate if it was disseminated in a local way. For example, specific local issues could be addressed depending on the factors facing farmers in that particular region. However, further work needs to be conducted into how local policy could take into consideration variations in farm type. The rules of the game have changed dramatically, resulting in farmers feeling they have lost their identity. As Burton (2004:11) says: "the problem with the introduction of changes is how policy makers do it without destroying the existing farming culture and losing an important part of the national identity. If changes are implemented too quickly and farmers see neither the economic nor social value of continuing farming, many farmers/farm families may not adapt, but simply choose to leave agriculture. Within one generation, decades or even centuries of experience, knowledge and local history could simply be lost".

Another key finding from the interview data is that individual farmers behave differently. However, behaviour patterns tend to cross generations, a fact that could be explained by the *habitus* and the process of passing on values and

attitudes between family generations (and also the types of social action the *habitus* follows). Therefore, in this process, behaviour relating to the family farm business operations is bound to be similar, owing to the fact that the father passing on his knowledge to his son, in the process of learning the family business.

Changes in the *field* and particularly rules of the game have meant that the types and levels of *cultural capital* farmers require to farm successfully have changed. Technical knowledge, alone, is not enough nowadays for the farmer to have a successful business. Farmers also need high levels of business acumen. The learning environment of the family business is an excellent way to pass on skills, tradition and values relating to the family and the business. There is a need to cherish what the older generation of farmers have to offer and recognise that they have a wealth of knowledge and skills, worthy of passing on to the next generation of farmers. Younger farmers who attend/ed university have higher levels of institutional *cultural capital* and are able to bring these skills to the family business. Nevertheless, older farmers stressed the need for children to gain experience of running their own business and have the opportunity to be mentored by older farmers. There is a danger that traditional skills will be lost and as time goes on farmers' knowledge will be lost, as professionals remove knowledge from farmers, if, for example, sexed-semen becomes a specialised product of breeding companies.

Despite differences in size, formation and ownership, each farm lacked *economic, social and cultural capital*. Capital expenditures are high, yet *capital* retention and accumulation is low for all forms of *capital*. It can be seen from my findings that farmers lack *social capital*, particularly the ability to access, let alone accumulate this form of *capital*. The lack of *capitals* was consistent across the different types of farmers. Over the years, the chances for farmers to network with one another

have reduced; dominant players in the *field* have managed to change rules of the game and control *capital* accumulation. There is a need for farmers to be able to socialise in their natural environment, where farmers can share information. These occasions have been reduced (partly owing to mechanisation, as farmers no longer help one another out with seasonal work). Levels of *social capital* within the farm business and family were on the whole good but. Outside the farm operations, these levels were reduced. Farmers were either actively involved with the NFU, or were very disillusioned with the organisation and no longer involved with it. The farmers pointed out (despite their *habitus* type) that they had fewer opportunities to meet; moreover, those wanting to have discussion meetings were prevented from doing so by milk buyer co-operatives. The reduction in opportunities for farmers to meet in natural settings (farms, cattle markets) has also resulted in farmers no longer 'talking shop' (discussing market prices, animal health matters) as previous generations have done in various settings. The rural community needs to rebuild itself and find ways to regain a sense of solidarity in the face of change.

Symbolic capital is highly important for many farmers and it relates to their identity in society. *Symbolic capital* gives farmers a sense of belonging in society, and it represents an integrated mix of all other forms of *capital* that have been accumulated by the family over many years. The emotional attachment to the job and the passion to do the job properly is a prerequisite of being a good farmer. The farm represents everything: knowledge, home, business, family tradition, identity (this is true despite their *habitus* type). It is the meaning of life for those people, a sense of belonging. *Symbolic capital* reflects the history of the family and what the farmer has managed to achieve in his/her lifetime. It is his/her contribution to the farms' (historical) family portrait and forms the identity for the family in the community and society.

Symbolic capital is the main reason why many farmers farm, so they can pass on a viable business pass on the next generation and is actively pursued by all types of farmers regardless of the social action their *habitus* pursues. It represents the history of the family for future generations. The farm is symbolic of the farmer's work and the work of previous generations of the family; it is the creation and accumulation of other forms of *symbolic capital* and it allows for personal empowerment and development.

As I progressed through data analysis, it became clear that I was having difficulty in placing agriculture's most powerful resource – nature – into Bourdieu's theory of *capital*. This led me to propose the addition of another form of *capital* – *natural capital*. In the case of farming and other communities (and businesses) reliant on nature, Bourdieu's analysis does not lend itself easily to accommodate nature, biological processes, climatic cycles and the environment. I felt it was necessary to add *natural capital* to Bourdieu's existing four generic form of *capital*. *Natural capital* is highly valued but it is also the source of crises. The farmers cited disease and natural disasters as major crises. Many of the farmers had experienced the FMD crisis.

If the *field* continues to operate as it is, there is a chance that family farming could disappear in the UK. This is a very real issue facing policy makers today, whether they choose to acknowledge it or not. With current resource constraints and rising global populations and food prices, policy makers should be encouraging farming, removing power from the retailer, and ensuring that farm gate prices are increased inline with increases in costs. If those working in agriculture leave, and there is no one willing to enter the industry, the UK population could, face famine in the future. Therefore, the next chapter provides suggests as to how farmers could regain some control in their industry.

Chapter 12: Conclusion

This chapter begins by restating the research questions; it then goes on to review the chapters in the thesis, addressing the developments in the research question and arguing for the approach taken to answer the question. The chapter details the major findings from the data and suggests how farmers could begin to regain some control in their *field*. It also suggests areas for future research. The chapter ends with a final thought.

12.1 The Questions

The thesis began by asking the question:

1. Why do dairy farmers continue to farm?

In undertaking the literature search, I decided that in order to answer this question I had to ask:

2. Does RAT tell the whole story in times of economic crisis?
(discussed in Chapter Three).

The economic challenges faced by farmers in the dairy industry have long been known. In trying to answer this question, it became clear that a more sociological approach was needed to find the answer (developed in Chapter Four). This led to the development of the question:

3. Can Bourdieu's theory aid our understanding and suggest how farmers could regain some control in their industry?

In answering this question, I wanted an insight into why farmers have a desire to farm, which RAT cannot explain.

12.2 Chapters Overview

Chapter One introduced the research. Chapter Two gave an insight into the complex world of farming, beginning with an overview of the agricultural industry, then exploring events that led to the current economic crisis in the industry, namely global price crashes and increased costs of production. The interaction of these factors led to a major financial crisis (Gasson *et al.*, 1998: iii). If there is no upturn in farming profitability soon, the next generation of farmers will not have the financial resources to invest in future food production and the environment.

Over the last decade, agriculture has seen a remarkable period of change, not only in market operations, but also in the perceived role of farmers. This role is also being called into question in the face of competing demands for (say) the provision of cheap food and environmentally-friendly production methods. There have also been marked changes in how farmers are able to conduct their businesses. For example, knowledge passed on from generation to generation is being threatened by advances in science.

The pressures on farmers today are perhaps greater than they have ever been. Small scale farmers are put at a disadvantage by the power of large organisations (whether retailers or equipment suppliers). Over the years, farmers have had to adapt to economic, social and political changes. At present, they are still faced with a range of natural (biological) challenges, at a time when technology is driving forward major structural changes in their industry. Chapter Two also addressed the small business and family business literature, before exploring the roles played by family members in the family farm business.

Chapter Three critically assessed RAT, suggesting it explains neither why family farm businesses continue, nor what motivates farmers. RAT assumes that

rational economic man, with perfect information at his disposal, will seek to maximise profits in the most efficient way. Using RAT as a way to evaluate family farm businesses would suggest that if farmers were in business purely for (rational) economic pursuits, many would be better off selling the farm and investing any proceeds elsewhere. In doing so, they would be able to make financial gains from minimum effort.

Chapter Three demonstrated that economic theory fails to consider the emotional side of family businesses, and the non-economic goals of both the family and the business. RAT ignores the role that social, cultural, symbolic and natural factors play in family farming. It also neglects the role of other family members, focusing solely on the role of the individual farmer (entrepreneur). An alternative approach was required, particularly in view of the multi-functional role agriculture plays in society. Therefore, can a sociologist's theory shed new light on why dairy farmers continue to farm?

Chapter Four established the appropriateness of Bourdieu's work to answer the research question. In applying Bourdieu's theory as an alternative to RAT, it becomes clear that there is more to farming than the pursuit of *economic capital*. Using Bourdieu allowed me to explore the role of *social*, *cultural* and *symbolic capital*.

Bourdieu's notion of *capital* includes: *economic* - money, commodities, means of material production, and other material assets (Wacquant, 1996; Smart, 1993); *cultural* - social and family norms, knowledge and skills possessed by the individual, along with their cultural experiences and possessions; *social* - the long standing social relationships and networks farmers have created, including individual and community (group) based networks; and, *symbolic* - the accumulation of all other forms of *capital*, providing the farmer with symbolic

resources. "*Symbolic capital* is the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179), providing the individual with an identity and social position (status) in the *field*. The *field* (dairy industry) is characterised by a patterned set of practices, in which competent action conforms to set rules of the game. The *field* is a playground (or battlefield) in which agents (players) endowed with a certain *field-relevant capital* try to advance their position by playing the game (Bourdieu, 1986; 1991; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003).

Chapter Five justifies the use of the methodological approach. Qualitative methods were seen as the best way to answer the question, and a feasible way for me to conduct the exploratory research. Using a qualitative mixed methods approach gave me a high degree of flexibility to tailor data collection and analysis for each case. Using grounded theory, in an ethnographically influenced qualitative case study, gave me a structured process to follow, assisting data collection (theoretical sampling) and analysis (constant comparison). Using two data collection tools, semi-structured interviews and participant observation, provided rich diverse data. The thesis contributes to knowledge on methodological grounds by suggesting that the farm needs to be investigated as a collective social unit.

After conducting the literature search and discovering the work of Pierre Bourdieu, the aim of the study focused on uncovering the working lives of farmers, and the resources they need in order to regain power in their business operations. My work aimed to enlighten those from outside the industry, as to the problems faced by farmers and the wider social and cultural settings that could enable farmers to become more successful (powerful).

Chapter Six described the initial findings, suggesting that, over the years, farmers' position in society and their power in the *field* have dramatically

decreased. Farmers are facing a prolonged economic crisis but also need to contend with challenges on multiple counts: social, cultural, symbolic and natural (environmental). Farmers and the farming community need to respond to *field* changes that have weakened their position and their ability to play the game. Farmers should seek, as individuals and as a group, to replenish levels of all forms of *capital* through different strategies.

Chapters Seven to Ten each detailed a case. The four cases were chosen to reflect an individual's characteristics, and were based on Weber's (1920) classification of social action. Firstly, Weber (1920, 1978) names traditional action, this traditionalist *habitus* is seen in Chapter Seven. Secondly, Weber also suggests there is purposeful or goal-oriented rational action, this economically rational *habitus* is demonstrated by the farmer in Chapter Eight. Thirdly, there is emotional or affective motivation action, this idealist *habitus* is depicted by the farmer in Chapter Nine. Finally, Weber (1920, 1978) proposes there is value-orientated rational action, whereby a goal is pursued although it may not be rational, this value-seeker *habitus* is displayed by the farmer in Chapter Ten. The social action preference of each farmer's *habitus* will determine his behaviour in response to changes in the *field*. However, the social action of the farm as a collective social unit depends on the *habitus* of the farmer, his/her spouses and children. In most cases, the farmer is the powerful figure in this small social collective unit and has the overriding say in what happens to the business.

Chapter Eleven showed how applying Bourdieu's work to my data has contributed to the existing literature and discussed the main research findings.

This conclusion chapter addresses the question of how farmers could regain some control in their industry. As a result of the exploratory nature of the research, the suggestions made in this chapter provide areas for future research.

Each of Bourdieu's theories (*field*, *habitus* and *capitals*) have the potential to be a thesis by itself, and my findings provide a foundation upon which more substantial focused work can evolve. In conducting future research, it would be worthwhile to incorporate sampling from different regions to explore (say) whether there are any regional differences in farmers' levels of *capitals* and how they play the game. Future research could also explore whether there are any other types of social action within the farming community and test the applicability of the types identified in the thesis to other regions and/or sectors of farming.

12.3 Contribution to Knowledge

Owing to the highly detailed and insightful nature of the research the data generated is case-specific reflecting the individualistic nature of each farm and the people involved in the business. The findings represent the thoughts and views of those interviewed at a specific point in time (shortly after the 2001 FMD outbreak, which could account for farmers feeling of crisis), and will inherently be biased based on individuals past experiences. I would not suggest that the findings from this research could be replicated, nor could they be used to suggest general findings from dairy farmers elsewhere in the country, or be used in the wider agricultural industry, as this would entail a different *field* (cereals, fruit) with new rules of the game and so on. Farmers from these wider fields would have a varied *habitus* constructed from different life experiences and would react to change differently.

The findings from the case studies are by no means intended to be used as a proposition to generate generalisations from, in order to apply to the wider farming community (see: Yin, 2003 for a more detailed analysis on generalisations of case studies). The data collected is representative only of the

farmers that have been interviewed. Indeed, the findings themselves from these farmers may not be replicable if they were to be interviewed today (2008), however what it does show is that small family businesses can be thought of as collections of *capital* and that each individual has a valued role to play in the running of the business. The work has also indicated that Bourdieu's theory of *capital* could be extended to include the biological aspects of farming (*natural capital*). This extension of theory is in line with Clive Seale's assertion that: "theoretical sampling has more to do with generating theories than with empirical generalisation" (Silverman, 2001: 251). What the work does show is that Bourdieu's theories can be applied to the context of dairy farming and can illuminate factors affecting farmers behaviour, as the data chapters and discussion demonstrated. Hence, the process that the work followed (using Bourdieu's work) is replicable but the data itself would not be.

The *Field*

The *field* (dairy industry) is characterised by a patterned set of practices in which competent action conforms to the set rules of the game. The *field* is a playground (or battlefield) in which agents endowed with a certain *field*-relevant *capital* try to advance their position by playing the game (Bourdieu, 1986; Iellatchitch *et al.*, 2003).

My application of Bourdieu's work shows that: the *field* is complex, highlighting the need for farming organisations to help farmers play the game more effectively. Using Bourdieu's theory of *field* has also enabled the dairy industry to be evaluated on a par with that of playing a game. This analogy, has in turn, brought to light the complexity of the rules farmers must comply with, and the high levels of changes taking place in the *field*.

Even though farmers have lost some of their power, family farms have been particularly resilient in times of economic crisis and have shown they can be enterprising in ensuring the business continues, adapting to changes in rules of the game through pursuing different strategies depending on the social action their *habitus* leans towards, so the rationalist pursues a strategy to increase profits, the traditionalist continues as they always have, the idealist seeks to preserve the farm as a whole and the value-seeker pursues a strategy that may not be rational in itself but is pursued, for example to become a leading educational centre on dairy farming. There may be other types 'out there'. My work adds to the existing literature by conceptualising the dairy industry as a *field*, to which players of the game bring and use different *capitals*. The players work their way through the *field* as a master chess player moves the pieces, to put him/her-self in a better position to continue playing the game. Farmers need reasonable levels of all forms of *capital* to remain in business and to play the game effectively in order to protect their levels of *capitals*.

My use of Bourdieu's theory identified implications for farming, such as the requirements to understand the rules of the game, to comply with these rules and still play the game effectively. The suggestions for policy are quite simple. Rules need to be clearly defined, in order for each player to effectively and efficiently play the game. Bureaucracy must be reduced; one on-farm inspection per year is ample, and this could reduce costs for both farmers and Government bodies. One inspector could cover all rule requirements, and could then disseminate their inspection results to all the governing bodies concerned.

Policy also needs to recognise that an 'over rational' pursuit of profit by farmers may upset other people in society (i.e. their values), for example a rise in factory farming techniques would be opposed by animal welfare groups. On the other hand, if farmers continue as they have done for years, with many of them caring

for their land and animals, this might not be economically feasible. In such circumstances, there is a need for policy to pursue a sustainable agricultural industry that blends traditional values (caring for the countryside) and modern business practices (accredited skills, management techniques and so on). This recommendation needs to be developed in future research, to explore whether it is possible to marry traditional farming practices with modern business practices. At present farmers are left with somewhat of an identity crisis - producer of cheap food or carer for the countryside but producing food which costs more?

Industry bodies also need to do more to help farmers regain levels of *capital* in order to help them become more efficient in their business operations. The NFU could actively promote collective social behaviour and positive self-image.

To regain power in the *field*, farmers and industry bodies need to exert greater influence on the rules of the game, or, at least, work together to overcome challenges that stem from rule changes. Rules need to be clearly defined, in order for each player to play the game effectively and efficiently.

Roles

Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *capital* brought to light the need to consider the power struggles inherent within the family farm business, and the important roles each individual plays in determining the success of the family and the business. Each family member has an important role to play. Their *habitus* and the levels of *capital* they bring to the business, both economic (wealth) and non-economic (personal development, lifestyle, learning, passing on values and skills and so on) parameters, are critical for business success. The farm is not just dependent on the farmer's *habitus*, but the *habitus* of other members of the family. This emphasised the suggestion made in the methodology chapter that the farm should be investigated as a collective social unit. This assertion is an area for

future research. Future research could also investigate conflicts in the family farm business, using the family farm business as the defined *field*.

The *habitus*

The *habitus* is defined as the accumulation of the farmer's life experiences, encompassing certain ways of thinking, speaking, acting and reacting to situations. These factors consciously and subconsciously impact on the farmer's ability to act in the present situation, forming a practical sense (feel for the game) for what they should do. The *habitus* provides farmers with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives. The *habitus* provides farmers with a pre-determined perception of their location in the *field* and how they should play the game.

The *habitus* of farmers has been developed over decades of experiencing the life of farming. The *habitus* is developed and changed only in ways that conform to its historical composition. Thus, farmers' *habitus* are difficult to change; this is a key reason why others in the *field* experience problems in trying to get farmers to change their behaviour. The *habitus* of farmers appears to have a preference for the particular types of social action described by Weber (1920). This affects the strategic direction of the farm: continuing as it always had done (traditionalist-Chapter Seven); expansion (rationalist-Chapter Eight); taking necessary action to keep the farm together (idealist-Chapter Nine); and diversification as an educational tool (valuer-Chapter Ten). Children's' *habitus* vary according to their connection to the family farm, with those highly involved in the business following their fathers' preferences for social action. However, despite these different types of social action all the farmers interviewed wanted to farm and continue doing so, they all wanted to be seen as good farmers and to pass on the business to the next generation.

As previously stated in Chapter Six these four types may not be representative of the farming community, there may be other types 'out there' they merely reflect the data collected on the farmers I have interviewed. There is scope to investigate whether any types are gender specific and in light of all my farmers being male, whether female farmers behave differently to their male counterparts.

Future research could focus on my premise that farming families follow historical patterns of behaviour as a predictor of farmer behaviour (now and future). Future research could also explore the components of farmers' *habitus* in more detail. Work could also investigate the factors that are most likely to influence farmers' *habitus*, such as education, life experiences and so on.

Economic Capital

I used Bourdieu's view of *economic capital* – money, commodities, means of material production and other material assets (Wacquant, 1996; Smart, 1993). Applying Bourdieu's work has shown that *economic capital* can be enhanced by other forms of *capital*. The economic side of farming has been well cited in the literature, but there are areas that could receive further attention.

To regain some control in their *field*, farmers need to look at new ideas to increase profits and hence their levels of *economic capital*. Although how farmers do this will depend on their *habitus* and the social action it prefers. Future research could explore how these different types of social action affect how economic capital is used to pursue farmers chosen strategy. Future research could also explore the innovation levels of farms (see: *cultural capital* section) or renewable energy, for example reducing energy costs through using renewable energy sources or recycling water (see: *natural capital* section).

Further work needs to investigate the true costs of production and develop an appropriate accounting tool to calculate family labour costs. Further research on the economic struggles in farming needs to focus attention on the problems of rural poverty and the effects it has on the rural community, especially in light of the Government's targets to eradicate child poverty.

In order to expand on *economic capital* as a generator of other *capitals*, further work needs to be conducted in the dairy sector and other sectors of agriculture. There is a need to address *economic capital's* role in purchasing other forms of *capital* and its relation to the creation of power in the *field*.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital was defined as the long-established dispositions possessed by the individual, including social and family norms, knowledge and skills, along with the individual's cultural experiences and possessions. The capabilities required to farm successfully are changing, and farmers can no longer rely on their technical expertise alone. Farmers must have a reasonably good knowledge of business management. The younger generation have more opportunities to learn the 'business side', through college or university. Farmers acceptance of new practices and knowledge depends on their *habitus* and the social action it pursues, for example the traditionalist may reject new practices that conflict with their traditional stance of farming, whereas the rationalist may pursue cultural capital purely for the reason to increase profits. Farmers also need technical skills in order to be successful, which are often passed on across generations. The level of *cultural capital* farmers possess is vital to the success of the family farm business, and how responsive it is to change.

Applying Bourdieu's concept of *cultural capital* has emphasised the historical element of farming skills. Many farmers possess decades of farming experience

and knowledge; these traditional skills need to be recognised by policy makers. Policy makers and industry bodies need to consider how they may provide ways to transfer new skills that are required as a result of the changes taking place in the *field*, for example promoting self-image, marketing and so on. My use of Bourdieu's work confirmed that farming is a highly skilled occupation (see: Ashby, 1925; Gasson *et al.*, 1998; Curry *et al.*, 2002), and the importance of 'learning the family business' (see: Moores and Barratt, 2002).

To help farmers regain control in the *field*, they need to increase their levels of *cultural capital*, not only in terms of skills, but more importantly in terms of expanding their external cultural experiences. Enhancing levels of *cultural capital* would enable farmers to play the game more effectively. For instance, courses on business management may provide skills that enhance the business (such as improving cash flow); such courses could be offered through YFC for younger farmers, or the NFU for the older generation. The YFC could, in conjunction with the Learning Skills Council (LSC), become a skills portal for young farmers. YFC should consider how it could offer apprenticeship style training and mentoring services. My research revealed that experience of farming at different premises and countries was a valuable learning experience.

All farmers interviewed suggested that it was imperative for future farmers to experience running a farm business, especially under the supervision of older farmers who could provide a wealth of knowledge. Mentoring services could help young farmers gain valuable experience. This approach could also solve older farmers' labour shortages by allowing youngsters to work for them in return for knowledge on running a farm business that provides them with a game playing advantage. An educational programme could even be offered through some form of agricultural Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP); this is an area for YFC and NFU to consider exploring.

Organisations such as the NFU could provide basic, clearly defined, educational material on management skills, such as cost control or dealing with suppliers and buyers. Such material would help farmers play the game more effectively. This could help farmers to improve their portfolio of skills and their capability to run their business in today's highly competitive market. However, any initiative needs to be addressed in a practical manner. Farmers and industry bodies need to lobby for clearer guidelines (specifically related to rules), and policy needs to be amalgamated into one document to avoid confusion between SFP regulations, environmental regulations and other business laws.

Conducting a skills audit may help farmers to realise that they actually have a high level of knowledge and transferable skills that comprise their *cultural capital*. It could also identify areas where farmers could improve *cultural capital* with a view to improving business operations.

Further work needs to be conducted into how farmers learn on the job, and the importance of 'learning the family business', particularly when farmers need business and technical skills in order to be successful. Investigating the innovation levels in farms (previously suggested) and the daily problems farmers face would provide other players in the *field* with a better understanding of the multitude of issues faced by farmers and the typical decisions they have to make.

Social Capital

Social capital refers to the long standing social relationships and networks that farmers have created, both individual and community (group) based networks. It became apparent from the interviews that *social capital* has dramatically decreased over the years, as buyers and suppliers in the *field* have become more

powerful. In the Government's pursuit of creating an independent, enterprising agricultural industry, farmers have become more independent. In doing so, farmers have less desire to work together as they did in the past, when, for example, helping one another out during busy harvest times, reduced costs. In some instances, decreases in *social capital* have resulted in isolation and a feeling of powerlessness in the *field* as long standing social networks have been dismantled.

In the past, levels of *social capital* were much better. Unions and the MMBs supported farmers, and more people were from farming backgrounds and worked together. There were also better relations between farmers and the milk buyer (at the time the MMBs). MMBs were in a much stronger bargaining position. Opportunities for farmers to meet and exchange information in their own environment have also decreased. Closure of cattle markets and a reduction in industry organised meetings have dismantled many farming networks, a trend exacerbated by severe reductions in farmer numbers over the years. *Social capital* has an important role to play in farmers' mental well-being, particularly reducing the feeling of social isolation. Despite the type of social action farmers pursue both they and their families felt that socialising was important in an otherwise quite isolating job.

In order to help farmers regain control in their *field* farmers need to collaborate with one another again and strive to restore social networks (such as working with fellow farmers) in order to strengthen their position in the *field*, individually and as a group. When lobbying for change, farmers must behave as a collective social group. Farmers need to overcome the fear of sharing information and use it to their advantage. Farmers need to support farming organisations (local young farmers clubs or the local rural hub) and other institutions that support

their networks. This would mean, for instance, supporting local markets or finding new social networks, perhaps through direct selling.

Further work needs to be conducted into the social importance of market towns, not only for farmers, but for the multi-functional role markets offer the wider local community; for example, markets generate *social capital* and a learning environment away from the family business (*cultural capital*). *Social capital* is particularly important in peripheral areas in preventing social isolation for rural dwellers. Work needs to be conducted into the effects of social isolation in peripheral areas of the UK and also whether it affects their well-being, especially the elderly and young people. Future research could also focus on the links between social isolation and rural poverty. Another interesting research topic would be to investigate social tensions in the rural community and to explore what could be done to resolve community tensions, as the farmers interviewed feel displaced by new incomers to rural areas.

Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital refers to the accumulation of all other forms of *capital*, including *natural capital*, providing the farmer with symbolic resources. "It is the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name" (Bourdieu, 1977: 179), providing the individual with an identity, and social position (status) in the *field*. Finally, *symbolic capital* is highly important to many farmers, and is connected to the emotional attachment many farmers have with their farms (the family home, animals, land and so on).

Symbolic capital explains why many farmers continue to farm – to pass the farm business on to the next generation, which was important to all four types of farmers even though they chose different ways to achieve this. *Symbolic capital* represents everything the farmer works for, and encompasses what each

generation can pass onto the next through business succession. In essence, it is the accumulation of *capital* over the generations. The farm represents who the farmer is. It is his mark (brush stroke) in the family's history (portrait) and his status (identity) in the farming community and wider social world. However, increasingly, many farmers have no identified successor and in many cases the family farm will have to be sold. This is a soul destroying prospect for the farmer concerned, as they are selling their home, their business, and essentially their identity in society.

To enhance levels of *symbolic capital*, industry bodies could assist by promoting 'positive mental attitudes' towards farming and farmers, as well as encouraging positive self image amongst the farming community. As previously mentioned the farmers' role is being questioned and policy needs to decide what role they want farmers to perform. This could help farmers rediscover their role (identity) in the *field*, and need to celebrate what they do for society.

Further work needs to be conducted into the symbolic importance of farms. The levels of all forms of *capital* accumulated over time and their contribution to the symbolic importance of the farm to farmers and their families should be examined. It would be interesting to see whether *symbolic capital* levels are connected to patterns of behaviour over time, for example: do rationalist farmers seek to increase *economic capital* more than other forms of *capital* and strengthen their *symbolic capital* by having new machinery and state of the art milking facilities, expanding their dairy herds and so on. Work could focus on the emotional attachment farmers have to the land and animals, and how this ultimately affects commercial decisions. It would be worthwhile to investigate the idea of farmer identity in relation to rural identity. How does emotion affect what farmers do in their daily lives, and business decisions they make?

Although *symbolic capital* can provide an insight into why farmers farm, in looking at the farm as a collective social unit and the different forms of *capital* needed for success, it would be advisable for future research to develop practical *capital* assessment frameworks to identify areas where levels of each form of *capital* can be increased. This could provide a valuable tool for farmers, industry representative and consultancy groups. These frameworks should be developed using a collaboration of farmers, industry representatives (NFU, YFC, MDC and policy-makers) and academics specialised in the area of farm management.

Natural Capital

In analysing the data and applying Bourdieu's theory, it became clear that for dairy farming there was one important form of *capital* missing – *natural capital*. This form of *capital* has been investigated in the biological sciences, but has not received attention in (small) business management.

Natural capital refers to the renewable ecosystem and resources (animals, grass and food production) and non-renewable systems, for instance fossil fuels and minerals. If natural factors become more volatile and hostile then, in the not too distant future, farmers could face a natural crisis. Farmers face a number of serious natural risks ranging from the 'greenhouse effect', to the destruction of rainforests and pollution of the oceans (Giddens, 1990). Those in powerful positions (policy-makers) need to enhance their own *cultural capital*, in terms of how *natural capital* is produced (grass for cows to eat, cows for milk and so on), in the context of farming and how farmers use and rely on *natural capital*. This may help policy-makers understand the challenges farmers face on a daily basis and the affects rule changes may have on business operations.

The 'natural' element of farming is a significant factor in why many farmers continue to farm, and makes up a large proportion of the capital mix in *symbolic*

capital. Despite pursuing different strategies in their business operations as a result of their *habitus* preferring different types of social action.

To regain power in the *field*, farmers (and their industry) need to actively promote the beneficial role farming plays in the natural world, for example, by cutting road side hedges, maintaining ditches, grass-verges and grassland, maintaining wildlife habitats and so on.

The concept of *natural capital* must be explored in greater detail, especially in light of climate change and pressure on global resources. Studies have not been widely conducted on this concept in the developed world, nor have they concentrated on farming. Farming provides a unique environment to explore the roles (and connections) of the social and natural worlds. Further work needs to be conducted into the importance of the 'natural' element of farming and the role it plays alongside Bourdieu's forms of *capital*.

Further research needs to be conducted into assisting farmers to develop sustainable systems, yet retain high levels of food production. Further research could focus on the use of *natural capital* and how farming systems can be made increasingly renewable, for example: exploring practical ways for farmers to ensure they recycle natural resources, such as using solar panels or reed beds for slurry management. These could enhance farmers' power by reducing costs (thus increasing *economic capital*) and retaining their share of the available *natural capital*. Further studies could also explore the emotional attachment farmers have to their businesses in more detail and the role this plays in shaping their industry, including their attachment to the land and animals.

12.4 A Final Thought

Bourdieu's work demonstrates that successful family businesses need to have good levels of all forms of *capital*; these levels of *capital* come from the individuals that are involved in the family business.

In drawing a final thought for future research, and in seeing how useful Bourdieu's theory has been in providing insights into how family farm businesses operate, further detailed research into each form of *capital* is necessary and how different types of farmers use capitals to follow their chosen social action. This should include: assessing how each *capital* relates to one another, and the family and the business to build a self-assessment *capital* framework for appraising family farm businesses, thus highlighting their strengths and areas where they need to improve their position in the *field*. This would begin to build a more detailed picture of family dairy farming. (As a result, further suggestions could be made as to where policy could assist farmers to strengthen their position in the *field* and strategies farmers could pursue)- remove. Using Bourdieu's work could be extended to other family businesses in the agricultural sector and beyond, to provide insights into how they operate. Bourdieu's work could provide a useful framework for assessing family firms' non-economic contributions.

To conclude, family farming is an important institution, not only for providing a living for many rural families, but providing a social network and learning environment. Family farming as a collective social unit needs more power to survive in the *field*. Those in powerful positions should be concerned about their survival and be prepared to assist farmers with the challenges they face, especially in the current global situation of increasing population, food shortages, and economic and environmental pressures.

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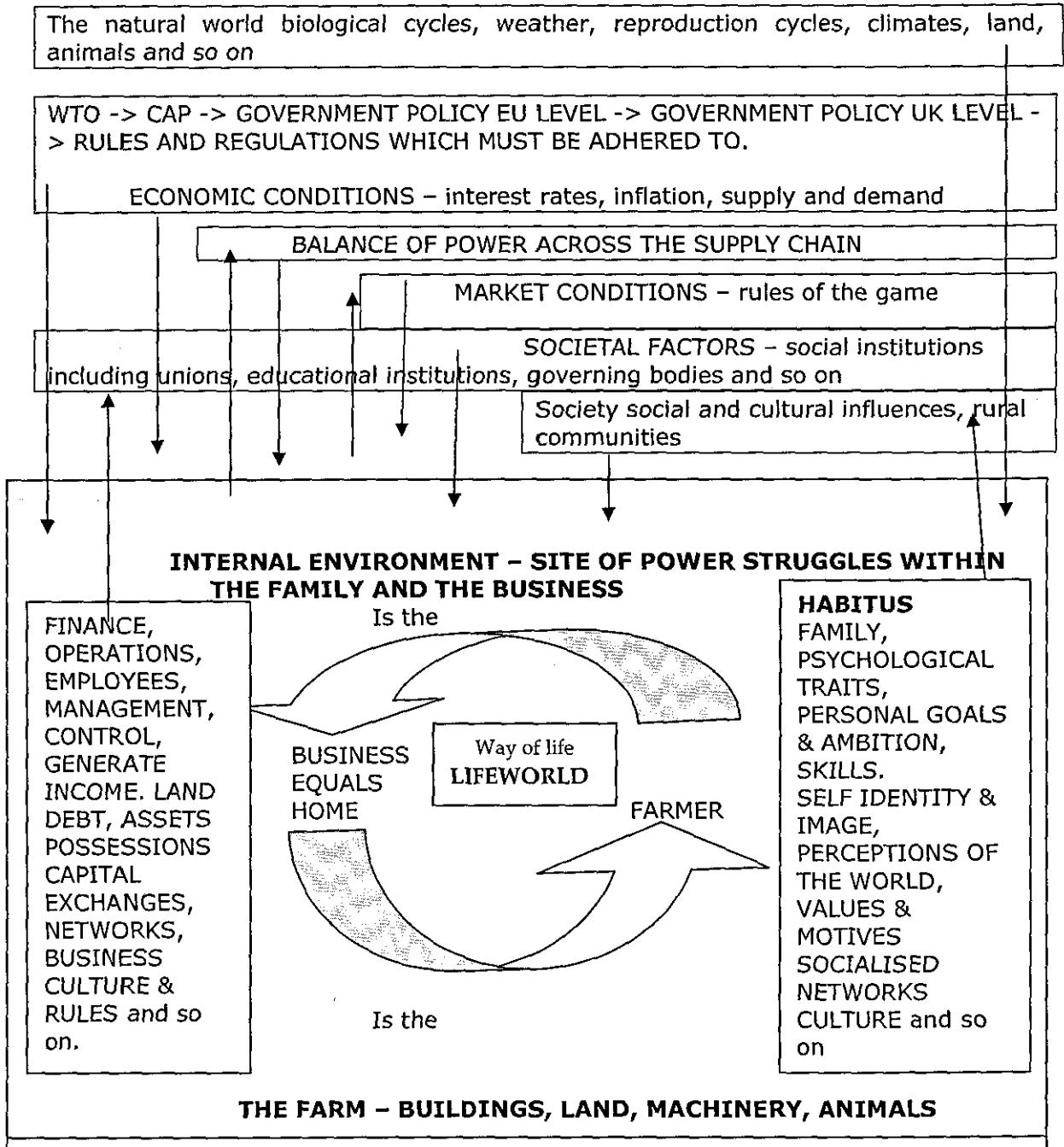
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Appendix A - The life-world of family dairy farmers

The figure shows a simplified version of the complexities surrounding the life-world of dairy farmers.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT - SITE OF POWER STRUGGLES IN THE FIELD (DAIRY INDUSTRY)



The arrows represent *capital* exchanges between the internal and external environment. Within each environment institutions and groups will also take part in *capital* exchanges. Power struggles will be present as each institution aims to maintain its share of the available *capital*. For example,

across the supply chain, suppliers and buyers will retain their positions by increasing the cost of inputs (suppliers) and decreasing the price paid for milk (buyers). This ensures that external bodies maximise their share of the available *economic capital* and retain power over individual farming businesses. Bourdieu's forms of *capital* fit into the diagram well, especially between the internal and external environment as *capital* is exchanged between these two systems on both formal (money paid for goods) and informal (chat with a fellow farmer on how to reduce costs) *capital* exchange mechanisms. The diagram provides endless possibilities for *capital* exchange whether *economic, social, cultural* or *symbolic*. The diagram also allows for the introduction of 'natural capital' an additional *capital* to those proposed by Bourdieu, yet one that is extremely important to farm businesses.

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

In order to obtain standard information for each farm/individual (across each case) a small pre-interview pro-forma (Appendix C) was developed to collect demographic information and basic business information. All people interviewed were contacted via telephone to see if they would be willing to participate and were chosen for theoretical reasons. For example, I knew prior to contacting them whether they had diversified, expanded, or had remained consistent in their business operations over the years. For each person interviewed, I wanted to know what their connection to farming was, and how long they and their family had been in the industry. I also wanted to know, what it was that made them stay in farming, their economic motivations, how they socialised and their thoughts on the industry. I had a separate interview schedule for farmers, spouses and siblings, as well as others involved in the industry.

Interview guide

Name	Location	Time
------	----------	------

Brief introduction into my research and the aims of the research

The questions below were devised in order to assess the following:

1. Historical content – length of time family have been in farming at the current farm premises
2. Interviewee characteristics
3. Why the farmer/wife/children farm
4. Roles in the family business including skills they had (business operations/working environment)
5. Strategy and decision making (business operations)
6. External influences
7. Social side to farming

Over time the interview schedule for the farmer progressed into the following:

Brief family history

Is family important to you?

How long have your family farmed?

History of the farm

Involvement with farming: Is it what they always wanted to do?

What else would they do if not farming?

Why farm? Probe for skills Strategies in place? / business operations / role in the business

What do you like about farming/ good aspects?

What do you dislike/bad aspects?

What do you enjoy?

What prevents you from doing what you want to do with your business?

What do you do in a typical days work? (routines of work)

How do you socialise?

Farming community Outside farming

Any outside assistance? NFU DEFRA Consultants

These areas were then refined down to questions for the farmer, spouse, siblings, farm workers and people involved in the industry.

Farmer

Family Tree (historical context)

1. How long has your family been in farming?
2. How long have you been in farming and why? (is it a family tradition)
3. Do you know why you chose farming as a career / occupation?
4. Is it something that you always wanted to do?

Why farm

1. What motivates you to get up and work every day?
2. Do you enjoy the lifestyle of living in the countryside?
3. Would you do it again, do you have any regrets?
4. Would you consider doing anything else, if so, what?
5. What job satisfaction level does farming give you? OR Do you enjoy your work?
6. What motivates you to stay in farming?
7. Why have you not left and found another profession?
8. Why did you go into farming in the first place?

9. Have you always been involved with farming, and if not, why did you decide to go into the occupation?
10. Would you describe it as an occupation or as a profession?
11. Do you think that farming is a good occupation (lifestyle) for bringing a family up in and does it have positive effects of the family values etc?
12. Is profit important to you?
13. Would you say you were happy in your job?

Roles in the family business

1. How do you cope with living and working in the same place?
2. What do you do on the farm?
3. What is your role?
4. How do you feel about the paperwork involved?
5. What qualifications have you got?
6. How did you learn the ropes?

Strategies and decision making

1. Do you have strategies in place besides the statutory contingency plans?
2. Do you have a business plan, mission statement, goals?
3. Do you have specific strategies to achieve certain goals?
4. What made you reach the decision to diversify your activities?
5. Who decides on the direction of the business?

External influences (SWOT)

1. How will CAP reforms affect your business?
2. What do you think are the biggest threats to the industry? And to your business?
3. Has your view of farming changed over the life of your career?
4. What opportunities do you see for the future of your business and the industry as a whole?
5. What are the good and bad aspects of farming?

Social side of farming

1. Do you have a social network?
2. Values – good/ bad farmer?
3. Do you socialise for personal reasons?
4. Do you socialise for business reasons?
5. Do you socialise outside of farming?
6. Do you feel part of a community?

Farmer's Wife

Family history

Need to know family tree, prior involvement in farming, or did they marry into it?

1. How did you get into farming?
2. How long have you been involved in farming?
3. Is it something you always wanted to do?
4. Would you do it again?
5. Were your family involved with farming?

Role

1. Do you class yourself as a farmer's wife?
2. Are you involved with the business?
3. What is your role in the business?
4. If you work on the farm, what do you do and how many hours do you work?
5. If not are you involved with any forms of diversification?
6. Do you class yourself as a farmer's wife?
7. Are you satisfied with your role/work?
8. How/where did you learn the skills needed for the family business?

Strategy and decision making

1. How involved in the running of the business are you, are you involved with strategy and decision making?
2. Are you involved with the day to day running – paperwork?
3. Are you consulted on decision making and strategy matters?

Why farm

1. What motivates you?
2. Do you enjoy the lifestyle, if so, why, if not, why?
3. What motivates you to stay in farming?
4. What made you choose farming as a career? Did you have a choice?

Social side of farming

1. Do you have your own farming social network or is it mainly through your husband?
2. Do you socialise outside of farming?
3. If you diversify do you network in any circles related to that activity?
4. Do you socialise for personal reason?
5. Do you socialise for business reasons?
6. Do you feel part of a community?

External influences (SWOT)

1. How do you perceive that role of farmer's wife?
2. What do you think other people's opinion is of farmer's wives?
3. What are your views on the industry?
4. How will CAP reforms affect your business?
5. What do you think are the biggest threats to the industry? And to your business?
6. Has your view of farming changed over the life of your career?
7. What opportunities do you see for the future of your business and the industry as a whole?
8. What are the good and bad aspects of farming?

Questions for children / offspring

If siblings don't work on the farm anymore or have an alternative career relevant questions were asked.

Why farm

1. Are you interested in farming?
2. Did you do anything on the farm when you were younger do you still help out on the farm now?
3. What do you think about the lifestyle of farming and living in the countryside?
4. What are the main advantages and disadvantages?
5. Have you found growing up on the farm a good / bad experience?
6. Do you see yourself in the industry in the future or do you plan to do something else?
7. How did you reach this decision?
8. What are your thoughts about farming?
9. Do you want to be a farmer if so/not why?
10. Is there anything stopping you becoming a farmer?

Roles in the family business

1. What do you do on the farm?
2. What is your role?
3. How do you feel about the paperwork involved?
4. What qualifications have you got?
5. How did you learn the ropes?
6. How do you cope with living and working in the same place?
7. What do you do in a day?
8. How many hours do you work on the farm?

Strategies and decision making

1. Do you have strategies in place besides the statutory contingency plans?
2. Do you have a business plan, mission statement, goals?
3. Do you have specific strategies to achieve certain goals?
4. What made you reach the decision to diversify your activities?

Social side of farming

1. Do you have a social network?
2. Values – good/ bad farmer?
3. Do you socialise for personal reasons?
4. Do you socialise for business reasons?
5. Do you socialise outside of farming?
6. Do you feel part of a community?

Questions for farm workers

Why farming

1. Why did you choose to come into the agricultural industry?
2. Do you think you will do this for the rest of your life?
3. Do you enjoy it?
4. Do you get job satisfaction from what you do?
5. Why have you not got your own farm?
6. What would you do if you weren't doing this?
7. Will you continue in the dairy sector for the foreseeable future?

Role

1. How many hours do you spend farming?
2. Have you got other employment as well?
3. What do you see as the biggest threat to your job?
4. What is your role?

External influences (SWOT)

1. What do you see as the biggest threat to the industry?
2. What are your views on farming and how the industry is portrayed to young people?
3. Would you encourage someone to enter the industry?
4. How will CAP reforms affect your business?
5. What do you think are the biggest threats to the industry? And to your business?
6. Has your view of farming changed over the life of your career?

7. What opportunities do you see for the future of your business and the industry as a whole?
8. What are the good and bad aspects of farming?

Social side

1. Do you socialise outside of farming?
2. Do you have networks?
3. Do you feel part of a community?

Please note that questions would be tailored according to each interview conducted and variations are likely.

Appendix C: Pre-Interview pro-forma

Pre-Interview Pro-forma

1. The questions seek to investigate the basic information regarding you and your farm.
2. Please answer all appropriate questions. If a question is not applicable please ignore it.
3. The questions should be answered by the farm owner or spouse on their behalf.

Please be aware that any information that may be used in publications will be treated in a confidential manner. There will be no mention of individual names or individual farm names.

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this research then please tick this box ☐

If you would be prepared to be involved with future research connected to this study please tick this box ☐

Section A Your details

Name

Male ☐ Female ☐

Age please tick appropriate box

25 and under ☐ 26 – 35 ☐ 36 – 45 ☐
 46 – 55 ☐ 56 – 65 ☐ or over ☐

Occupation

Marital Status

Parent's occupation:

Mother Father

Are you an NFU member? please tick appropriate box

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have any formal education qualifications? please tick appropriate box

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what are they?

Have you always lived in Staffordshire? *please tick appropriate box*

Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, did you move back specifically to farm? Yes ☐ No ☐

Which of the following best describes your route into farming? *please tick appropriate box*

I inherited the farm from my family ☐

I bought the farm from my family ☐

I bought the farm as a going concern ☐

I started the farm myself ☐

Section B The Farm Business

Farm Address
.....
.....

How long have you been farming at these premises?

How long have you been involved with farming?

What is the structure of your farm business? *please tick appropriate box*

Limited Company ☐ Sole trader ☐ Partnership ☐

Other (please specify)

How many acres do you farm?

Is the land (please tick appropriate box)

Wholly owned ☐ Mainly tenanted ☐

Mainly owned ☐ Wholly tenanted ☐

Have you acquired any additional land over the last 5 years? *please tick appropriate box* Yes ☐ No ☐

How many cows do you milk?

What breed are they?

How many litres of milk do you produce each year?

How many hours do you spend on the farm each week?

Is the farm VAT registered? *please tick appropriate box* Yes ☐ No ☐

How many people work on the farm?

How many of these are family members?

Do you use farm contractors? *please tick appropriate box* Yes ☐

If yes, what for

Section C Diversification

Have you participated in any forms of diversification both on and off the farm? *please tick appropriate box*

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what activities have you diversified into (please include any employment off farm for yourself or your spouse)

You

.....

Your spouse

.....

What were the main reasons for diversifying your activities?

1

2

3

Did the farm business help to set up the new businesses with: *please tick appropriate box*

Capital

Premises

Staff

Equipment

Prior management expertise

Other (please specify)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. This will enable us to have a productive discussion when we meet for the interview.

If you have any comments, please feel free to write them down below:

Appendix D: Example Memo

Below details an example memo from my data analysis phase, a memo merely acts as a brainstorm and a collection of thoughts written down to guide the generation of themes, codes and categories.

Why farm - depends on:

Goals and motivations of the farmer.

Requires family support and commitment can't do it on his/her own.

Reasonably good predictor of behaviour and factors that change this behaviour are age, education, life experiences.

Below lists some of the features of the categories that eventually emerged from the data.

CATEGORY Field and relates to power.

External influences – relates to rules of the game

Government, Government policy, market, supermarkets, public perception,

The field:-

External influences mainly the Government role they affect – social policy (family, employment, benefits, pensions, health care etc), monetary policy (inflation, interest rates, costs, import and exports balance of payments etc.). Market operations control, for example monopolies etc. taxation. EU Government policy, UK Government policy. Organisation – WTO, suppliers, customers Society as a whole – buyer preferences, behaviour, culture, opportunities for new products etc.

Family is affected by Government – family, society, culture, education etc.

Lifecycle stage of the farmer depends what stage family is at and how important that is for the business – affects strategies chosen. Generation influence, for instance succession.

Government has too much control of the individuals' life through laws and regulation. Even if they don't control the business they can control the family life in a certain way. The control is either direct or indirect. > Relates to power and control over others in the field. Dominant groups have the highest levels of capital. Control – can buy control in a sense. Affected by field issues especially policy – affects rules of the game. Rules of the game:- Power – control – through policies rules and regulations. Legislation. Make money – more money from powerful organisations. Other field issues:- reasons to farm. Non-economic goals:- Succession, profit, prestige, way of life, age, location, education, skills, market, field, rules of the game, policy, Government, private institutions, social institutions, pluriactivity, family characteristics, farmer characteristics.

Independence, personal development, succession, prestige pride.

RULES OF THE GAME – heavily influenced by powerful groups (power). Land Biology – GM control away from the farmer. External powers – market conditions. Rules and regulations links to temporality. Control what farmers are able to do with their businesses.

Core category power – control code. Category concept elaborated so it represents a real world phenomenon. Concepts labels given to discrete phenomena produced by open coding.

CATEGORY - IDENTITY

Family hence farmer identity Socially constructed code (see: Strauss, 1987). Label employing analysis own terminology (In vivo code – derive from language of the people) Farming – symbolic of family ID Farmed all life / all known / parents farmed / grand parents farmed etc. Family tradition Features = pass on across generations succession important That gives the farmer his place in rural community and in the wider society belonging to a group (diverse group)

Ownership Symbolic for the farmer – *symbolic capital*

Want children to carry on with the business Life-world - want children to have the same life-world Family main reason they are farming – highly important to them Diversification seen as dilution of farmer identity in some eyes

Codes and categories split into

- Business characteristics

Age, size of farm, who works there, ownership, succession, acreage, quota yields, resources, workers

- Farmer individual characteristics

Age, gender, education, social aspects

- Field characteristics

Rules of the game (links them together)

Each has its own struggle for power and capital shares

How do each of these characteristics relate to capitals and the field.

Farming – family identity their tradition.

Relates to literature: family business, personal identity, culture,

Effects of the Habitus

Sons acts in a similar fashion to their fathers – see case 1,2,3. and other cases not done in detail.

Strong correlation between generations attitudes and values = passed on across the generations in forming the individuals habitus. Also affects the business decisions which are made and what direction the business takes. Changed by – education of child and work experience – without these sons are almost clone of parent can affect DM and responses to external factors.

NATURE – NATURAL CAPITAL

Nature – biology, environmental capital, location, climate, experiments with breeding

Symbolism of *Natural capital* – cows, yields, experiment with breeding, land management, land type, location.

MONEY – ECONOMIC CAPITAL

Reasonable income – need money to buy goods, services etc. and money to re-invest. *Economic capital* – debt etc. Finance. Financial control Capital expenditure. Costs. Prices. Profits. Price for products. Economic reasoning Reasonable income – relates to power root of all other capitals

No money to invest and re-invest in the business Finance links to family decision depend on the availability of capital and what the family perceive as important and the best way for the business to proceed.

SOCIALITY – SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social aspects – networking, meetings, friends, family, YFC, NFU, socialise off-farm, cattle markets.

Social capital – networks, meetings, friends, family, socialise on the farm

Themes

TEMPORALITY

Affects biological aspects of the business, Age of the farmer, Lifecycle of farmer family

What farming used to be like – history of farming, Increase red tape and regulations over time

Increase pressures, Decrease price and increase costs over the years Increase in debt and costs of debt, Business changes over time, Changes over time eroding the power farmers have

Increase control by other institutions – rules and regulations by Government.

<u>Economic capital</u>	<u>Social capital</u>
Money, profits	social group/class
Buy goods	social networks
POWER	
<u>Cultural capital</u>	<u>Symbolic capital</u>
skills, knowledge	Within the farming community
cultural upbringing (cultured)	Good/bad farmers
(upper class sense – galleries etc)	Major part of identity
Life experiences	status, place in society
<u>Natural capital</u>	
Weather, land, animals	
Disease, natural disasters	
In essence - Mother nature	

Appendix E: Interview Transcripts

The following are a selection of the transcripts including an example of a farmer.

Interview with Mike - Farmer

Lengthly interview conducted on Wednesday 27th April 2005 at Mike's house (separate to the farm house where the son was interviewed). 9.30pm ish Over 65 (not retired still works full time on the farm). No formal qualifications.

J- How long have you been farming?

Mike - Both my parents were farmers and my grand-parents were farmers. I have always farmed in Staffordshire and have always been at Black Flats Farm. I don't have any formal qualifications and farming is all I have known. I am not a member of the NFU. I don't think they are very good for farmers, they are only interested in selling insurance and other financial products rather than representing farmer needs.

J - Do you think they could do more?

Mike - Yes they could do a lot more to promote farming to the public that's what we [other farmers] pay our [their] subscription for. Not for them to make money doing other things. We need someone to fight for us in Government not to just agree with things that are not farmer orientated.

J-How did you get into farming?

Mike – I bought the farm from my dad and I have built it up since then. I have never entered into any diversification but I'm planning to use the entry level stewardship for the SFP scheme.

I was born and bred into farming and have always lived on a farm it is my only interest and at my time of life, I have no other options available to me. I can't see myself doing anything else and you can't teach an old dog new tricks there is no point in me retraining to do something else.

J – Does money motive you?

Mike - Money does motivate me but I enjoy what I do although in recent years the paperwork is becoming a bit beyond a joke, I could spend far too much time doing paper work, which my partner does and it takes her a long time as well as Ben. If I wanted to do paperwork I would get an office job. To me it is a way of life, I have always lived on a farm and I have always farmed. I do not know any other life. I farm to the best standard possible, I take a pride in what I do and enjoy rearing animals and hope that I keep them in the best condition possible and I do not like people mistreating them. I remember selling some bull calves to someone in the area and one day I went round to his premises to see if he wanted to buy some more and he was burying ones that had died and he was forever going to the vets for medicines because his husbandry was so poor, after that I refused to sell any more to him. When I have a perfectly good bull calf why sell it to someone who is going to let it die. I may as well have had it shot and collected by the Knacker man to stop it suffering at some point in its future life.

J – So animal welfare is a key issue for you?

Mike – Yes it is. These animals are what pay my bills therefore they need to be looked after in a good way and should not be allowed to suffer. Any good farmer looks after his animals because he knows that this is where his income comes from. We don't need someone else to tell us that and create extra paperwork just to clarify it. High standards are the key to my business and I want people who work for me to work to high husbandry standards as well. My son realises that I want high standards; it is a case of pride in the farming community, you don't want to be seen as a bad farmer you want to be seen as a good farmer it also helps when selling your animals as people will appreciate it if they have been looked after properly. I concentrate on creating a high standard of genetics in my herd that produce good calves that I rear on as replacements for the dairy herd, I need to make money out of milk so my cows are important to me as they are how I make money. That is why they should be looked after properly without them we wouldn't have a business.

J – Is that what you like about farming?

Mike – I like my cows, I like having things to a high standard. I guess it's more a pride thing really. I don't want someone saying I'm a bad farmer.

J – What strategic decision have you recently made?

Mike - I am moving my milk to supply Arla, I have handed in my notice to the Birmingham co-op. But I'm moving for a better milk price as we are worried that the Dairy Farmers of Great Britain (DFGB) will take over the co-op and reduce the milk price significantly. If we keep a level production, say only differ by 10% either way (up or down) we get a bonus and if we produce a certain butterfat we get a bonus instead of being penalised by the co-op. I had to use 64,000 litres of quota, so I wasn't penalised for my butter fat content. Also if we keep above 3100 litres a day we also get a bonus. I know people who supply Fauld which is now Dairy Farmers of Great Britain and they are struggling due to the low milk price and the dealing with the company.

J - Do you have a long term strategy?

Mike - No, not a long term financial strategy. I want to pass my farm onto my son but my main strategic decisions revolve around my animals improving housing the genetics of the herd so that milk yield per cow and longevity of the cow improves. The welfare and standards of my cows is the most important thing to me. I have not used sexed semen or any other biotechnological advances and I don't intend to. We don't have a computer all the paperwork is done manually Sally helps with the paperwork. We do however milk report and that is the only vaguely computer related thing we do. We jointly, that's me and Ben, take the decision although Ben needs to become more involved as I reach the stage where I want to take a back seat and eventually retire. Paperwork puts pressure on the rest of the farm work it means that other things have to be left so that paperwork can be done. So odd jobs are left until they are absolutely desperate because Ben's time is lost keeping track of paperwork. We are forced into doing it because it now relates to the income that you are going to get.

J - In what way?

Mike - Mid term review has affected what we do. We now have to have set-a-side for the maize that we grow, which we didn't do before SFP. I think that the current CAP reforms and SFP is a back door to the nationalisation of farms you own a farm but you are told what to do and told what you can and cannot do but you are never given any advice or shown what to do. For example, dairy hygiene criticise what you do but they do not show you exactly what you should do themselves. Is nationalisation of farms a good idea??????? Look what happened in Russia. Do we need people in Whitehall telling us what we can do when they don't understand the first thing about the principles of farming.

J - What do you mean by principles?

Mike - Well the fact that there is a time lag between having a calf and getting milk from that female calf. This can take up to a year and a half, if you are really unlucky that calf/cow can die before it even makes milk so then you have lost a good cow that could have produced milk for you for a

good few years, so your back to square one after a year and a half of looking after and caring for the cow as well as the expenditure. Also you are working with nature and nothing is guaranteed. They don't understand cycles, nor the fact of cropping grass and the fact that the weather seriously affects that and the quality of your grass, which in turn, affects yields its all a cycle, one year can be good another bad. But you just never know you have to deal with it when it crops up you can't plan for things like that.

J – Ok, thanks back to policy..

Mike – Well we have all these inspections now because of all this extra paperwork we have and this is because of CAP, and animal welfare as well as other things like dairy hygiene and animal movements records (BCMS). Most of the people inspecting farmers don't know what farming is they probably have never seen a cow before they got the job, let alone how to look after one properly. They want people to do things that are a certain way and that every farm should do the same and produce homogenous food for a society that is quickly losing its taste buds (McDonalds). So we are standardising food and losing the changes in taste and there are many varieties of crops that have been lost through GM and we will never get them back. I can see that rules and regulations they create a: comply or get out regime; if you don't comply then you can't sell your produce and you can't get any more SFP makes this even more the case with not link to subsidies and you only get payment for keeping your land in good agricultural condition. They [Government] are forcing you out with paperwork.

J – What about you will you stop?

Mike - Farming is my life and I will carry on until I can't do it anymore. I don't want to know about the paperwork if it wasn't for Sally helping I would bury my head in the sand so to speak I don't understand most of it and I don't want to it is not my job to do paper work I was born to farm not do paperwork. If I wanted to do paperwork I would get a job in an office somewhere.

J – What about changes in the industry?

Mike – in the war years, and post-war years there was a reliance on the farmer to feed the nation after food shortages, farmers worked the land hard to provide food for the nation. Now there is more peace which is not a bad thing farmers are not relied on as much, food is used by countries as bargaining power and as a means of global trade. They use food to trade things and barter with other countries. Global markets are also used as a mechanism to crash prices for certain products. These practices have bad effects on developing countries. The Global economy may not be good for national economies. The Labour Government is treating the farmer like the Thatcher Government treated the miner, the only difference is the miners got good redundancy pay-outs whereas farmers will end up with nothing because they are self-employed.

J – And this affects?

Mike – Well, therefore they are not able to get any money apart from the state pension when they finish which is why many cannot afford to leave the industry. Those that rent property will not be able to afford anywhere else. To me pay-packets for farmers and workers equals money in income tax which goes directly back to the Government and helps the economy. If farmers are forced out we won't have a food industry. So farming - the Government sees it can manage without the industry but what happens if we get to the stage where there is global war and Britain is not self-sufficient in food??? What will happen then we are being told that the world population is rising, especially in developing countries yet we are importing food from these countries and taking away their produce so that we can have cheap food and they end up starving – Is this fair? Is this sustainable agriculture is this globally moral? – I don't think so. Farmers of the UK could supply the UK with indigenous foods.

J – Why do you think people are leaving?

Mike - People are going out of milk for two reasons –

1. Labour they cannot find labour and people to milk, finding a good herdperson is a complete nightmare people don't want to work hard or they won't come up to your standards because it is not their business.
2. Rules and regulation, hygiene tests, etc, etc. 7 days a week, I could get an inspection every day of the week there's that many. You have inspector after inspector telling you what to do how you should be doing things you need to spend money on this that and the other (what money I may add if I had enough money to spend on these items doesn't she think I would have corrected the problem by now?????.....)

I don't think it is the milk price in itself, unless it drops to such a low point that we cannot possible survive from it. I do think it would become an influential part of whether we leave or not.

Anyway back to inspectors I mean, why can't they have people inspecting farmers who have either been farmers and dam good ones who know what they are talking about and who are sympathetic to our problems and offer guidance as to how we could get help and support to change things rather than young arrogant people who think they know best but don't understand farming.

J – Moving onto a different area - Do you socialise outside of farming?

Mike – Well maybe not outside the industry, I went to YFC back in the good old days it was a great social event and we used to do competitions and have speakers and I found it very useful to meet people and go to dances and get off the farm for a while. I also went to local farming discussion groups which I found were very useful as a way for local farmers to get together and discuss problems and solutions. I also went to the Staffordshire Grass Land Society and was in the top

three best farms all the time I was a member. I even came first once! They used to have speakers talking about different things and what we should be doing on our farms. Most of it used to go over my head and I always thought about what they said and wondered how they could possibly advise you when they don't know your farm or your cows.

J – Did you enjoy going to these meetings?

Mike – Yes I guess I did. It kept me up to date with things and got me away from the farm for a while.

J- What about advice for your business did they help you make/reach decisions about your business?

Mike - Advisors are not always right I remember when one told someone to reduce his stock when milk quotas came in and then when he couldn't meet his quota he had to buy them back at a premium price because good cows were at a shortage. For dairy we used to have three meetings a year organised by the dairy that collected the milk. They used to provide a time and place for farmers to meet and to talk about matters concerning them, but over the last 12 months these haven't been arranged. You can air your views and your concerns to those further down the supply chain. It also allowed us to talk about best practices and find out about people supplying us and could we save money switching or did someone provide a better service. I am a member of farmers for action although I am not sure what good they are doing us. I am not a member of the NFU I don't think they do anything for us except sell us insurance at a price higher than other providers. The organisation is not to my mind farmer friendly and doesn't do much to promote farmers in a good light. Which is why I don't waste money on the expensive subscriptions for no or little return. Because I wasn't a member they wouldn't even send me a publication that was not by them but the agricultural wages board I eventually got one from my accountant and the wages board themselves.

J – What about the social side of farming?

Mike - BSE and FMD – post these crises trade auctions have been lost which were a central hub of the rural community and economy all other forms of trading came from livestock auctions (I think). It was the worst thing that could happen for a rural area – the trade has been moved farmers have been forced to find new outlets to sell animals and the whole social atmosphere of a market and a chance to see people has gone. If my local market goes it will be a great shame for all the farmers in this area. It will actually be disastrous the market isn't like it used to be at one time you couldn't park they had a street market as well the town would be a hub of people. Now there are few farmers going to the auction and the market is almost dead. Many other local markets have been shut.

[The market has now been shut when I am analysing these]

They are supposed to be relocating the cattle market but I can't see it happening. Why would Shaws pay that money out for an industry that is declining?

J – What alternative do you think there is? What could farmers do?

Mike - I paid £10k into Anelka the milk co-op that went wrong, William Griffins sold it very well and a lot of people lost a lot of money I know one man who lost £200k. I still don't know why it happened. I only invested because I thought that if things went bad with the co-op then I could sell my milk to Anelka if I couldn't sell it anywhere else I didn't really do it for financial gain more a safety net for the future and an outlet for my produce. Looking back now I would much rather put that money into buying and funding a cattle market. If all farmers put some money in we would have an outlet to sell our produce and even the chance to reconnect with the public. But people won't do it and the organisation behind it and all the paperwork I couldn't manage to do that and paying someone could be very expensive. Buying the site would be the most expensive because on the outskirts of towns the land is at a premium price because of the house building market.

J – What do you think the public thinks about farmers?

Mike - FMD was a bad thing for the farming community not only in terms of loss of earnings increased regulation, which is still in place now and we don't need it, it affects our business and our cash flow. People blamed us for disrupting things. It wasn't our fault they also only saw bad farmers on the telly like the one where the outbreak started, if systems had been working properly then he should never have been allowed to be keeping animals if he had already been reported etc, etc. The Government had been warned about these things and that disease may be on the brink but they didn't do anything. FMD highlighted the restrictions needed on the imports of meat and foods. It needs to be in place otherwise we will end up with another disease outbreak. Bio security of the Government is so lapse yet they expect farmers and others in the food chain to do so much. How can farmers be accountable when borders are so easily penetrated?

J – Is there anything else?

Mike – Well It is like the right to roam thing I don't really mind people walking in the countryside but they will become like voluntary inspectors on the farmer reporting anything, any little discrepancy to the authorities when they are actually on my property and they wouldn't like me trampling over their garden then reporting them for something I saw through the window????.....would they????????? For example, I had staffs County Council round because someone had complained a gate was locked – I know it wasn't locked because we never lock gates. Anyway after being showed which gate it was, bailer twine (like string) was the culprit, not a lock as the person had so observantly reported..... I said to the CC guy that if people can climb over

styles surely they can climb over gates??????? Anyway we are now having a style put in because he wanted me to latch the gate and I said I wouldn't because it is easy for a latch not to catch and I don't want my animals getting out. Besides why should I have to pay for facilities for people to walk across my land and I don't get any financial reward for it?????

J – What about farmers' perceptions of themselves?

Mike – Well we can see both good and bad farmers. Good farmers – you know whether you are good at your job and you pride yourself on that, like I said before I have high, very high standards my cows are what make me money so I look after them there is no point in maltreating them because at the end of the day it will cost you money in the long run. The farming community is very alert to good and bad farmers yet the authorities that be never really seem to do anything with the bad ones they seem to let them keep on farming and penalise everyone instead of concentrating on those that are bad and give the good ones a break. You sometimes feel like a naughty school child.

J – Do you think there is a Future for farming in the UK?

Mike - Yes there is a future, but I am concerned about the lack of new entrants into the industry and the lack of those being encouraged in education to go into farming. I don't think there are enough farmer's sons prepared to carry on either and the only people who have enough money to buy a farm are those rich city slickers who don't want to farm. If people are lucky enough to have no borrowings and own their farm then they are in a better position to carry on. Tenants also have no reason to stay after the initial 5 years, many can only re- rent on a yearly basis so how are you supposed to keep up with regulation costs and plan year-by-year. Installing a new parlour, for example, will take years to repay. The good days have gone for milk and I don't think they will return the future will be tough and will be very much survival of the fittest, unless there is a global war in which case farmers may be seen as more important once again if food shortages are experienced again. Also farms will get bigger there is no future for the small holding unless it is someone who is rich and is just playing at farming and not doing it for any other reason than a hobby. County council holdings are sold. The house is sold and the land is offered to adjoining farms they are worth more this way then selling as a complete farm. You work your life on the holding 7 days a week perhaps have to sell your original house or borrow money to pay for the deposit and then the rent and at the end of the day when you have to leave you have nothing and probably don't have enough money for a new house, especially in the current house price market so what do you do??? You probably can't live off the state pension and if you didn't make provision yourself you are basically stuck so do you continue and die on the farm because you

have no other option or what I don't see what else these people can do. It is very sad, especially when they have worked so hard.

J – What do you see as the biggest threats to the industry?

Mike - My milk relief man has left and I cannot find anyone to replace him. I think people don't have the same affinity with the business if it isn't theirs. They don't really care about what they are doing and that is a key element in farming is you have to care what you do in order to be a good farmer. Input costs are increasing fertiliser has gone up from £95 tonne to £150 tonne but there are no alternatives apart from organic manure and you are restricted as to how much you can spread??? I used to get £160 for Friesian bulls calves now they aren't even worth £20 and the semen can cost up to £50 and you may have to serve a cow more than once so you are at a loss straight away! When the MMBs were in place we got 24p per litre it is never going to be that good again. Then there's the free market tied to prices, the minimum wage is also a problem we can't compete with other industries on costs fronts because the agricultural wages board sets wages higher than all other industries. And then we have to accept what ever price people say they will give for our produce. There is not the normal costs plus margin in this business, everyone else can dictate how much we have to pay we cannot bargain and say no we won't pay that other wise we wouldn't get supplies. Drugs are a good example vets make a large amount of money from drugs they can be bought direct for 33% less than from your vet but you need a prescription from your vet to get them and they aren't going to sign it for you are they? When they are making 33% profit on these drugs. Then my local vet tells me it subsidises call out fees! But people can say to us no we won't pay you that for your milk this is what you are going to get and you have to take it otherwise you end up with no buyer. I work 5.30am til 11pm each day and I don't get anything like the wages other people doing these hours would get.

J – What could be done to improve things?

Mike – Well..... The best invention would be the five day cow!

J – What about succession?

Mike - Those that farm and finish and their sons don't want to continue then the farm is sold, but generally not for farming purposes. This is a shame that there is no one to take on these farms. Generally it is not farmers buying up these farms because they cannot afford it is people from outside the rural community and this is not really a good thing unless these people understand what the countryside is about it is not about ideals and it doesn't not look beautiful all the time it may not be the idealistic dream they had, you get power cuts you will get muck on the road there will be a certain amount of inconvenience you will get noise all hours and farmers try to get their crops in it is inevitable. Then these people complain and you get tensions in what was a happy

community. I think the future will be nationalised farms whereby they are primarily there for the public to wander over land and do what they want. Though I'm not sure how this will be policed.

J – Do you think this is affecting farmers' way of life?

Mike – Yes, Farming is becoming less of a way of life and more an aggressive industry, which requires business ruthlessness and strategy to continually have contingency plans etc, etc. Old farmers can't cope with all the paperwork they can't deal with it and don't get any help from the authorities to transition to this over bureaucratic industry. They need help, especially when they are one people bands. SFP affects decisions that are made all policy affects what we can do with our business, for example we now have to have set-a-side to comply with SFP. Round London city people are buying land and inflating land prices beyond the scope of the farmer who cannot get the capital to pay for this land as they cannot justify it to their bank manager. County Council holdings are another example, they sell the farmhouse, then sell the barns for conversion £300k, £200k and you still have the land left! Barn conversions are another interesting point, only rich people can afford them, it's not as though it is going to help young people in rural areas get housing. Why shouldn't they be entitled to live where they have grown up if they want to?

All walks of life are getting too complicated and too much interference from the nanny state and too much stress for people. It is starting to show that society is breaking down no respect for people etc. etc. there are no values people don't seem to have values beyond being selfish and making loads of money, this seems to be the only thing that matters, having everything at a low price but what price does this have on people. It is not just farmers in this country that are working for nothing, it's farmers across the globe and that's only the agricultural industry. What about the people working in sweat shops? It's all about slave labour so that we can have a lot and not have to pay much for it, is this morally right?

Appendix F: Themes Codes and Categories table

The main themes identified from the ten cases have been identified and are detailed in the table below alongside the codes and categories generated from the data.

Table 3: Themes from the 10 cases

Theme	Code	Category	Said by	Case
Power (field issue) Affects capital distribution and relates to the	Dominant groups	Power	Amy	1
	organisations		Melanie	1
	institutions	Became the core	David	1
	Supermarkets	category	Chris	1
	Government		Steven	2
	Lack of power	(includes control	Brett	3

field Affects acceptable forms of behaviour and acceptable levels of education, culture and so on	Power of others Control	category)	Pete Ben Mike Sally John James Paul Scott Kate Phil David Karl	3 4 4 4 5 6 7 8 8 8 9 10
Community conflict Affects <i>social</i> <i>capital</i> Urban versus rural	Conflict Tension differing opinion Between farmers In rural communities Dilution of community	Tensions Relates to <i>social capital</i> and the field	Amy Steven Mike Sally Paul Daniel	1 2 4 4 7 9
Finance	Costs Income Profit money price investment capital debt buy good/services provider asset rich – cash poor	Finance <i>Economic capital</i>	Amy Melanie David Chris Steven Brett Ben Mike Sally John James Paul Scott Matt Kate Phil Jen Maggie Daniel Karl	1 1 1 1 2 3 4 4 4 5 6 7 8 8 8 8 9 9 9 10
Nature Relates to the emotional aspects of farming – attachment and symbolic elements Also relates to locality which	Disease Weather Animals Land Seasons Biology Sustainable system Bio-system minerals water soil land and location – affects levels	Nature <i>Natural capital</i>	Amy Melanie David Chris Steven Pete Ben Mike Sally John Edward James Paul	1 1 1 1 2 3 3 4 4 5 5 6

affects the levels of <i>natural capital</i>			Phil Kate Jen Daniel Karl	7 8 8 9 9 10
Identity Relates to emotional attachment Symbolic of who the farmer is	Born to farm Family tradition Farming all know Ownership Always done Symbolic – good bad farmers	Identity <i>Symbolic capital</i>	Amy Melanie David Chris Steven Pete Brett Ben Mike Sally John James Paul Kate Phil Jen Maggie Daniel Karl	1 1 1 1 2 3 3 4 4 4 5 6 7 8 8 9 9 9 9 10
Temporality Relates to habitus Relates to rules, roles and the field	Changes Age Time – past present future History What used to happen Affect how the fields are constructed Changes in rules	Temporality	Amy Melanie David Chris Steven Pete Brett Ben Mike Sally John Edward James Paul Kate Phil Jen Maggie Daniel Karl	1 1 1 1 2 3 3 4 4 4 5 5 6 7 8 8 9 9 9 9 10
Succession Relates to gender roles Relates to <i>symbolic capital</i>	Transition period Natural successors Reason to farm why farm	Succession	David Pete Brett Mike John James	1 3 3 4 5 6

and identity			Paul Scott Phil Karl	7 8 8 10
Work for themselves Relates to power and power struggles within the business as well as in the field	Independence Job autonomy Being own boss choices	Control (relates to power code)	Amy Steven Ben Mike Sally John James Paul Scott Kate Phil Maggie Daniel	1 2 4 4 4 5 6 7 8 8 8 9 9
Social Affects <i>social capital</i>	Isolation Inclusion Exclusion Socialise Ridicule Community Networks Relationships Society Social institutions – YFC Individualism a problem Friends Trust – lack of trust Collective behaviour	Sociality <i>Social capital</i>	Amy Melanie David Chris Steven Pete Brett Ben Mike Sally John Edward James Paul Matt Kate Phil Maggie Daniel Karl	1 1 1 1 2 3 3 4 4 4 5 5 6 7 8 8 8 9 9 10
Job Business operations Relates to roles Nature	Long hours Risks Hard work Physical Mental work Habits Outdoor work Working with nature Outdoor work Learning environment Standards Resources Home/work	Working environment (relates to the field)	Amy Melanie David Chris Pete Brett Ben Mike Sally John James Paul Scott Phil	1 1 1 1 3 3 4 4 4 5 6 7 8 8

	Planning diversified leisure time technology decision making labour		Matt Kate Jen Maggie Daniel Karl	8 8 9 9 9 10
Lifestyle	Way of life Lifestyles Culture What people are seeking Work outdoors Self-sufficiency Cultural artefacts, culture of the group	Lifestyle (culture?) Relates to <i>cultural capital</i>	Amy Melanie David Chris Steven Brett Pete Ben Mike Sally John James Scott Matt Kate Phil Jen Maggie Daniel Karl	1 1 1 1 2 3 3 4 4 4 5 6 8 8 8 8 9 9 9 10
Emotion Connection between the social and natural world Symbolic meaning	Love the job Attachment to land and animals – cows Passionate Love job Ownership Came back after career change Passion Pride High standards Miss animals Obsession Farm as a whole	Emotion Emotional attachment (relates to identity) <i>Symbolic capital</i>	Amy Chris Steven Brett Pete Ben Mike Sally John Edward James Phil Kate Jen Maggie Daniel Karl	1 1 2 3 3 4 4 4 5 5 6 8 8 9 9 9 10
Roles Relates to working environment Family and business roles	Farmer Wife Siblings Workers Gender Decisions Strategy Role in business	Roles Gender roles (Relates to power in the business)	Amy Melanie Chris Steven Pete Brett Ben Mike	1 1 1 2 3 3 4 4

	Jack of all trades		Sally John Edward Julie Paul Scott Kate Phil Maggie Karl	4 5 5 5 7 8 8 8 9 10
Rules (field issue)	Legislation Inspections Policy paperwork	Rules (Relates to the field – rules of the game and power)	Amy Melanie David Chris Pete Brett Ben Mike Sally John James Paul Scott Kate Phil Maggie Daniel	1 1 1 1 3 3 4 4 4 5 6 7 8 8 8 9 9
Perceptions Field issues	Public Farmer Media influenced Good versus bad	Perceptions Differences Different expectations Field issues	David Steven Ben Mike John Paul Daniel Karl	1 2 4 4 5 7 9 10
	Education Lack outsider understanding Esp. of principles Skills Industry promotion	Understanding <i>Cultural capital</i>	Amy Melanie David Steven Pete Brett Mike Sally John James Paul Phil	1 1 1 2 3 3 4 4 5 6 7 8
	Conflict Life Chores Tradition	Family Source of <i>cultural capital</i>	Amy Melanie David Chris	1 1 1 1

	Differences Generational differences History		Steven Pete Brett John Edward James Paul Scott Matt Kate Phil Jen Maggie Daniel Karl	2 3 3 5 5 6 7 8 8 8 8 9 9 9 10
	Determination Commitment Focused Motivated Respect Discipline Freedom Hard work Respect dedication	Values Part of <i>cultural capital</i> and the established habitus	Amy Brett John James Paul Matt Kate Phil Jen Maggie Daniel	1 3 5 6 7 8 8 8 9 9 9
Relates to <i>cultural capital</i>	Skilled Job Highly Specialised Knowledge Technical and business skills learning	Skills <i>Cultural capital</i>	Amy Chris Brett Mike Ben John Edward James Paul Matt Phil Jen Daniel	1 1 3 4 4 5 5 6 7 8 8 9 9
	Job satisfaction Enjoy work Working with animals Breeding Challenge Personal development Love job	Satisfaction	Amy David Chris Brett John Edward James Paul Kate Phil Maggie Daniel	1 1 1 3 5 5 6 7 8 8 9 9

			Karl	10
location	Location of the farm Type of land, soil, grass type Rented versus owned Provides opportunity crime	Locality <i>Natural capital</i>	Melanie Chris Steven Pete Brett Ben Sally James Paul Kate Phil Maggie Daniel Karl	1 1 2 3 3 4 4 6 7 8 8 9 9 10
	Policy Market operations	Changes (issues in the field)	Steven Pete Brett Mike Sally Ben John James Paul Scott Phil Daniel Karl	2 3 3 4 4 4 5 6 7 8 8 9 10
Field issues	Finding right staff	Labour capabilities <i>Cultural capital</i>	Steven Daniel	2 9
		pressures	Steven John	2 5
	Farming principles	Principles Relates to <i>natural capital</i>	Mike John James	4 5 6
Field issue		Competition Field issues	Mike Phil Kate	4 8 8
		support	James	6
	Lack of opportunities to enter industry Lack of new entrants	Opportunity Field issues	Matt Kate Daniel	8 8 9

Appendix G Themes, Codes and Categories Table for each case discussed in detail

Quote numbering relates to the number given to quotes on the transcript that was used for data analysis. Table containing themes, codes and categories identified from case 4AR, traditionalist, Chapter 7.

Theme	Code	Category	Said by	Quote
Power (field issue) Affects capital distribution and relates to the field	Dominant groups organisations institutions Supermarkets Government	Power Became the core category	Ben Mike Sally	2,4,11,14,2325 ,27,30,3133,37 ,39,40,44,49.
Community conflict Affects <i>social capital</i>	Conflict Tension differing opinion Between farmers In rural communities Dilution of community	Tensions	Mike Sally	27,42,45
Finance	Costs Income Profit money price investment capital debt buy good/services provider asset rich – cash poor	Finance	Ben Mike Sally	3,4,19,20,2728 ,29,30,31,33,3 4,35,40,44,45, 46,50
Identity	Born to farm Family tradition Farming all know Ownership Always done Symbolic – good bad farmers	Identity	Ben Mike Sally	1,6,10,27,3335 ,39,42,45,47
Nature	Disease Weather Animals Land Seasons	Nature	Ben Mike Sally	5,10,18,24, 37,39,41,44,46 ,50

	Biology Sustainable system			
Temporality Relates to <i>habitus</i>	Changes Age Time – past present future History What used to happen	Temporality	Ben Mike Sally	2,4,7,8,11, 17,41
Succession Relates to gender roles	Transition period Natural successors	Succession	Mike	18
Work for themselves	Independence Job autonomy Being own boss choices	Control	Ben Mike Sally	11,14,22,23,25 ,38
Social Affects <i>social capital</i>	Isolation Inclusion Exclusion Socialise Ridicule Community Networks Relationships Society Social institutions – YFC Individualism a problem Friends	Social	Ben Mike Sally	5,26,31,32 33,36,37,41,43 ,47,48,49,50,5 1
Job Business operations Relates to roles Nature	Long hours Risks Hard work Physical Mental work Habits Outdoor work Working with nature Outdoor work Learning environment Standards Resources Home/work Planning diversified leisure time technology	Working environment	Ben Mike Sally	7,10,13,14,16, 20,21,22, 23,25,28,30,40 ,41,42,47

	decision making labour			
Lifestyle	Way of life Lifestyles Culture What people are seeking Work outdoors Self-sufficiency	Lifestyle (culture?)	Ben Mike Sally	9,26,28,32, 42,44,45,46,47 ,48,49,50
Emotion Connection between the social and natural world Symbolic meaning	Love the job Attachment to land and animals - cows Passionate Love job Ownership Came back after career change Passion Pride High standards Miss animals Obsession Farm as a whole	Emotion Emotional attachment (relates to identity)	Ben Mike Sally	5,6,34,35,39 41,42,43,44,46
Roles Relates to working environment Family and business roles	Farmer Wife Siblings Workers Gender Decisions Strategy Role in business Jack of all trades	Roles Gender roles	Ben Mike Sally	12,15,16
Rules (field issue)	Legislation Inspections Policy paperwork	Rules	Ben Mike Sally	2,7,25,26,27,38 ,40,44
	Public Farmer Media influenced Good versus bad	Perceptions Differences Different expectations	Ben Mike	26,36,37,38,42 ,47
	Education Lack outsider understanding Esp. of principles Skills Industry promotion	Understanding	Mike Sally	24,25,36,37,38 ,51
Relates to <i>cultural capital</i>	Skilled Job	Skills	Mike Ben	6,9,32,45,48 49,51

	Highly Specialised Knowledge Technical and business skills learning			
location	Location of the farm Type of land, soil, grass type Rented vs owned. Provides opportunity crime	Locality	Ben Sally	14,41
	Policy Market operations	Changes	Mike Sally Ben	2,4,6
	Farming principles	Principles	Mike	24
Field issue		Competition	Mike	6,29

Table containing themes, codes and categories identified from the case DP5, rationalist Chapter 8.

Theme	Code	Category	Said by	Quote
Power (field issue) Affects capital distribution and relates to the field	Dominant groups organisations institutions Supermarkets Government	Power Became the core category	John	3,24,25,26,30,39
Finance	Costs Income Profit money price investment capital debt buy goods/services provider asset rich – cash poor	Finance	John Edward	10,12,15,20, 28,29,30,31, 36
Identity	Born to farm Family tradition Farming all know Ownership Always done Symbolic – good bad farmers	Identity	John Edward	1,2,12,13,23
Nature	Disease	Nature	John	11,12,13,16,

	Weather Animals Land Seasons Biology Sustainable system		Edward	17,26,27,36
Temporality Relates to habitus	Changes Age Time – past present future History What used to happen	Temporality	John Edward	4,9,14
Succession Relates to gender roles	Transition period Natural successors	Succession	John	6,7,8,13,18
Work for themselves	Independence Job autonomy Being own boss choices	Control	John Edward	19,20
Social Affects <i>social capital</i>	Isolation Inclusion Exclusion Socialise Ridicule Community Networks Relationships Society Social institutions – YFC Individualism a problem Friends	Social	John Edward	13,33,34,35, 36,37
Job Business operations Relates to roles Nature	Long hours Risks Hard work Physical Mental work Habits Outdoor work Working with nature Outdoor work Learning environment Standards Resources Home/work	Working environment	John Edward	3,4,11,12,13, 14,16,19,20,21 25

	Planning diversified leisure time technology decision making labour			
Lifestyle	Way of life Lifestyles Culture What people are seeking Work outdoors Self-sufficiency	Lifestyle (culture?)	John Edward	13,19,35,37
Emotion Connection between the social and natural world Symbolic meaning	Love the job Attachment to land and animals – cows Passionate Love job Ownership Came back after career change Passion Pride High standards Miss animals Obsession Farm as a whole	Emotion Emotional attachment (relates to identity)	John Edward	2,16,27
Roles Relates to working environment Family and business roles	Farmer Wife Siblings Workers Gender Decisions Strategy Role in business Jack of all trades	Roles Gender roles	John Edward	13,19,21
Rules (field issue)	Legislation Inspections Policy paperwork	Rules	John	3,6,14,19,20, 21,24,25,30, 36
	Public Farmer Media influenced Good versus bad	Perceptions Differences Different expectations	John	26,38
	Education Lack outsider understanding Esp. of principles Skills Industry	Understanding	John	38,39

	promotion			
	Conflict Life Chores Tradition Differences Generational differences History	Family	John Edward	1,6,7
	Determination Commitment Focused Motivated Respect Discipline Freedom Hard work Respect dedication	Values	John	2,10
Relates to <i>cultural capital</i>	Skilled Job Highly Specialised Knowledge Technical and business skills learning	Skills	John Edward	12,13,16,21, 28,31,32
	Job satisfaction Enjoy work Working with animals Breeding Challenge Personal development Love job	Satisfaction	John Edward	2,6,10,12,16, 17,28,34
location	Location of the farm Type of land, soil, grass type Rented versus owned. Provides opportunity crime	Locality	John	9,21
	Policy Market operations	Changes	John	3,14,20,21,24,
		pressures	John	6,7,20,21
	Farming principles	Principles	John	16

Table containing themes, codes and categories identified from the case CW6, the idealist Chapter 9.

Theme	Code	Category	Said by	Quote
Power (field issue) Affects capital distribution and relates to the field	Dominant groups organisations institutions Supermarkets Government	Power Became the core category	James	13, 16, 21, 29, 32
Finance	Costs Income Profit money price investment capital debt buy goods/services provider asset rich – cash poor	Finance	James	13, 15, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31
Identity	Born to farm Family tradition Farming all know Ownership Always done Symbolic – good bad farmers	Identity	James	4,10,22,25,34,35
Nature	Disease Weather Animals Land Seasons Biology Sustainable system	Nature	James	3,6,8,14,19,20,22, 35,36
Temporality Relates to habitus	Changes Age Time – past present future History What used to happen	Temporality	James	7,8,9,10,25
Succession Relates to gender roles	Transition period Natural successors	Succession	James	8,15,16,20
Work for themselves	Independence Job autonomy	Control	James	11,15,17,22, 24

	Being own boss choices			
Social Affects <i>social capital</i>	Isolation Inclusion Exclusion Socialise Ridicule Community Networks Relationships Society Social institutions – YFC Individualism a problem Friends	Social	James	2,13,24,29,30,31, 32,33
Job Business operations Relates to roles Nature	Long hours Risks Hard work Physical Mental work Habits Outdoor work Working with nature Outdoor work Learning environment Standards Resources Home/work Planning diversified leisure time technology decision making labour	Working environment	James	1,3,4,6,11,12,13, 14,17,21, 34
Lifestyle	Way of life Lifestyles Culture What people are seeking Work outdoors Self-sufficiency	Lifestyle (culture?)	James	2,3,6,13,19,2634
Emotion Connection between the social and natural world Symbolic	Love the job Attachment to land and animals – cows Passionate Love job Ownership	Emotion Emotional attachment (relates to identity)	James	10,14,25,34, 36

meaning	Came back after career change Passion Pride High standards Miss animals Obsession Farm as a whole			
Rules (field issue)	Legislation Inspections Policy paperwork	Rules	James	21,22
	Education Lack outsider understanding <i>Esp. of principles</i> Skills Industry promotion	Understanding	James	13,17,23,24, 27,31
	Conflict Life Chores Tradition Differences Generational <i>differences</i> History	Family	James	2,3,5,6,7,8,11,19, 26,35
	Determination Commitment Focused Motivated Respect Discipline Freedom Hard work Respect dedication	Values	James	4,6,33,34
Relates to <i>cultural capital</i>	Skilled Job Highly Specialised Knowledge Technical and business skills learning	Skills	James	5,6,15,17,31
	Job satisfaction Enjoy work Working with animals Breeding Challenge	Satisfaction	James	25,34,35

	Personal development Love job			
location	Location of the farm Type of land, soil, grass type Rented versus owned. Provides opportunity crime	Locality	James	2,13,14,18,34
	Policy Market operations	Changes	James	9,13,36
	Farming principles	Principles	James	22
		support	James	5,33
Roles Relates to working environment Family and business roles	Farmer Wife Siblings Workers Gender Decisions Strategy Role in business Jack of all trades	Roles Gender roles	James	5,12,15

Table containing themes, codes and categories identified from the case RS8, the valuer, Chapter 10.

Theme	Code	Category	Said by	Quote
Power (field issue) Affects capital distribution and relates to the field	Dominant groups organisations institutions Supermarkets Government	Power Became the core category	Scott Kate Phil	2,9,22,23,24, 25,26,27,28, 29,34
Finance	Costs Income Profit money price investment capital debt buy goods/services provider asset rich – cash poor	Finance	Scott Matt Kate Phil	5,11,13,14,17,19, 20,21,22, 24,27,32,34, 39

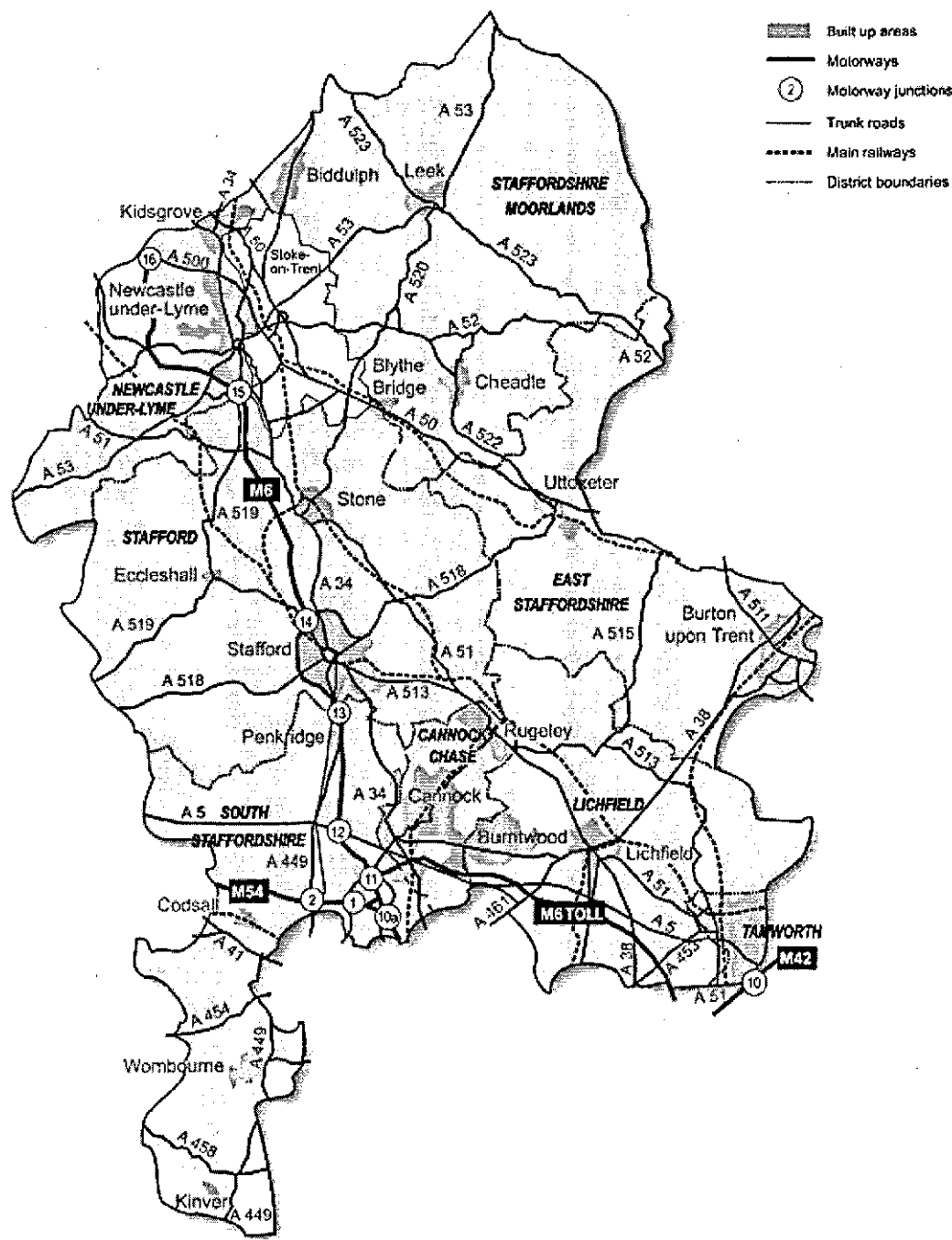
Identity	Born to farm Family tradition Farming all know Ownership Always done Symbolic – good bad farmers	Identity	Kate Phil	1,3,5,8,10
Nature	Disease Weather Animals Land Seasons Biology Sustainable system	Nature	Phil Kate	4,10,15,19,20, 29,30,31,39
Temporality Relates to habitus	Changes Age Time – past present future History What used to happen	Temporality	Kate Phil	1,3,9,20,21,22
Succession Relates to gender roles	Transition period Natural successors	Succession	Scott Phil	6,14,39
Work for themselves	Independence Job autonomy Being own boss choices	Control	Scott Kate Phil	4,19
Social Affects <i>social capital</i>	Isolation Inclusion Exclusion Socialise Ridicule Community Networks Relationships Society Social institutions – YFC Individualism a problem Friends	Social	Matt Kate Phil	18,27,36
Job Business operations Relates to roles Nature	Long hours Risks Hard work Physical Mental work Habits Outdoor work	Working environment	Scott Phil Matt Kate	2,3,4,9,11,12,15, 16,17,19, 37,38

	Working with nature Outdoor work Learning environment Standards Resources Home/work Planning diversified leisure time technology decision making labour			
Lifestyle	Way of life Lifestyles Culture What people are seeking Work outdoors Self-sufficiency	Lifestyle (culture?)	Scott Matt Kate Phil	2,4,5,8,11,14,15, 36,37,38, 39
Emotion Connection between the social and natural world Symbolic meaning	Love the job Attachment to land and animals – cows Passionate Love job Ownership Came back after career change Passion Pride High standards Miss animals Obsession Farm as a whole	Emotion Emotional attachment (relates to identity)	Phil Kate	2,4,8,10,36,39
Roles Relates to working environment Family and business roles	Farmer Wife Siblings Workers Gender Decisions Strategy Role in business Jack of all trades	Roles Gender roles	Scott Kate Phil	3,7,9,16
Rules (field issue)	Legislation Inspections Policy paperwork	Rules	Scott Kate Phil	2,9,22,23,24, 26,27
	Education Lack outsider	Understanding	Phil	18,27

	understanding Esp. of principles Skills Industry promotion			
	Conflict Life Chores Tradition Differences Generational differences History	Family	Scott Matt Kate Phil	1,3,5,9,11,12,14, 36,39
	Determination Commitment Focused Motivated Respect Discipline Freedom Hard work Respect dedication	Values	Matt Kate Phil	1,2,3
Relates to <i>cultural capital</i>	Skilled Job Highly Specialised Knowledge Technical and business skills learning	Skills	Matt Phil	18
	Job satisfaction Enjoy work Working with animals Breeding Challenge Personal development Love job	Satisfaction	Kate Phil	2
location	Location of the farm Type of land, soil, grass type Rented versus owned. Provides opportunity crime	Locality	Kate Phil	2
	Policy Market	Changes	Scott Phil	2,16,21,22

	operations			
Field issue		Competition	Phil, Kate	17
	Lack of opportunities to enter industry Lack of new entrants	opportunity	Matt Kate	11,12,13,21

Appendix H: Map of Staffordshire



Sampling region

I have contacts in these regions and feel that they represent a good cross section of dairy farmers. Staffordshire currently has 870 milk producers. My sample represents roughly 2% of the Staffordshire producers. Staffordshire is the county where I have the most farming contacts. Staffordshire is where I grew up on our dairy farm. It is easier to get contacts where you already know people. It is where I am able to relate better as farming is different in each region with regards to soil type micro climates etc, etc. Being able to access people to interview is the hardest thing especially with farmers and family businesses. They are often reluctant to share information with other people because they see it as an invasion of their private life because the business and home life are so inter-related. Becoming a member of Staffordshire young farmers helped me gain a wider contact base to the one I already had from friends and family in the farming community and those who knew friends and family. It is much easier to get access and they seem to be more willing to talk to you as an insider. It was also easier in terms of travelling and time issues I am doing this on my own I do not have a team of people to help me so time is essential and I don't need to be spending hours each day travelling to and from interviews when I could be spending the time doing more productive things. Keeping costs down, especially with rising petrol prices.

Appendix I: Case descriptions, findings and evaluations

The following provides the reader with more information on each of the cases, illustrating the different forms of *capital* that are important in running a family business. It applies and builds on, the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who identified four generic forms of capital: *economic*, *social*, *cultural* and *symbolic* (previously discussed in Chapter 4). The cases show how family farm businesses use different forms of *capital* when pursuing their goals. These forms of *capital* connect the business to the external environment (field) through different forms of exchange (buying and selling); as well as linking family and business through *capital* contributions to one another.

Each case is structured as follows; as theoretical sampling was used reasoning as to why the case was chosen is explained first. A brief insight into the family roles in the business and why these people choose to farm is given. I then give a brief synopsis of the different forms of *capital* used. The emergent themes, codes and categories that developed from the cases are shown in Appendix F.

Case 1

Case one was chosen because it is my parent's family farm business, which I have worked on for many years. This case provided an opportunity to experience exactly what it is like to live on a

family farm. It was an ideal way to be part of the life-world I am researching. Working in, and researching the same environment provides rich insights into the life of family dairy farmers and should be a good foundation upon which to select further cases. Two family members from the same generation run the farm. The two partners (brothers), one partner's wife and daughter were interviewed. It also shows where *natural capital* is important for each business.

The two brothers; Chris, and David (who also has a full-time job) run the farm as a partnership. David's wife, Melanie and daughter Amy also help out. Each family member works seven days-a-week and rarely takes time off. On average, they each work (on and off farm) 70 hours per week. The family also employ two casual staff; one for milking the cows, and one to help with daily activities. The family farm a total of 220 acres, the family owns 90 acres and the rest are rented.

The dairy herd stands at 110 Holstein Friesian cows. The dairy herd produces 950,000 litres of milk per year. The farmers operate a closed herd system. They have not bought any animals in since the 1960s, when the farm lost its herd to the foot and mouth outbreak. Having a closed herd means the farmers know the breeding of each cow, and reduces the risk of importing disease. Chris is currently trying to revert back to Friesian bloodlines, as he is finding the Holstein strain are getting too large. Contractors are employed to do specialist work; such as spraying, hedge cutting and silaging. The farm has not diversified.

David is responsible for the financial side of the business, while Chris is accountable for the daily operations of the farm. Melanie is responsible for the majority of the paperwork and feeds the calves. Amy helps out when she is needed. When asked why they farm the brothers response is simply because they always have. Both brothers enjoy farming it is all they have known. Melanie married into farming, so farms because her husband does, however she enjoys living in the country. Amy was born into farming and shares her fathers view, but says she is emotionally attached to it and the lifestyle. Chris, David and Amy's *habitus* has been composed around farming; farming is the family tradition.

From the data, it can be summarised that Chris lacks formal institutional education (*cultural capital*). He has acquired his farming skills by learning on the job from his father, and through his own experiences (*cultural capital*). He has seen his opportunities to socialise reduced over the years (*social capital*). For example, the local cattle market has closed, where he was able to socialise with farmers (*social capital*). He now feels isolated and does not leave the farm as much as he used to (raising issues over social isolation/exclusion). Chris notes the lack of *economic capital* available to farmers. Chris talks about how the weather dictates what he can do some days, affecting his work routines and business productivity. The reliance on weather adds to the uncertainty of production

levels. Farming is a main provider of; and consumer of; *natural capital* (not part of Bourdieu's theory).

David also lacks formal institutional education (*cultural capital*). He gained his farming skills through working on the job. David is able to socialise with people outside of agriculture (he has access to a wider choice of networks, in his off-farm job he also deals with professionals – *social capital*). David comments on the changing composition of the local community as 'outsiders' buy properties that come onto the market; financially out of the reach of young, local people. He believes these changes have also removed the harmony that once existed in the community (reducing *social capital*). David also notes the lack of *economic capital* available to farmers.

Melanie has a higher level of institutional *cultural capital* having gone to the local grammar school. She does feel socially isolated, leaving the farm mainly to do domestic chores, such as shopping (lack of *social capital*). She discusses the lack of *economic capital*; and the need to increase farmers' share of the available profits in the supply chain, to reinvest money into the business to update facilities and so on. Melanie also comments on the power struggles within the family, created by conflicts over business decisions.

Amy has the highest level of *cultural capital* having completed a degree and now studying for a post-graduate qualification. She comments on the low *economic capital* available to farmers, suggesting this was a major reason coupled with long hours; that the industry was finding it hard to attract young people. Like her father, Amy commented on changes in rural communities, and the fact that she would not be able to afford a house in her own community. Amy also has a good social network both farming and non-farming (*social capital*).

The farm as a whole lacks all forms of *capital* including owned *natural capital* (land). Melanie plays a sub-ordinate role in the business (manual and paperwork) she is not involved in decision-making. Each individual also lacks a variety of forms of *capital*. It is a tradition-based farm where family members have learnt skills and values from their parents and extended family (*cultural capital*). The lack of *economic capital* is evident as machinery and equipment are repaired rather than replaced. This reduces the efficiency of the farm and adds another job to the farmers' work routines.

Case 2

I chose this case because it is another family farm currently with two generations involved full-time the farmer Steven, his wife Jess and his mother who helps out occasionally. The family have farmed at the premises for 45 years. They have three daughters ranging from eleven to seventeen,

who do help with chores, although not fully committed to farming. None have been identified as suitable successors.

The farmer faces slightly different challenges to those faced in case one, mainly as a result of their location on higher ground. This reduces the productivity (quality) of the grass and makes the land sensitive to extremes in weather (*natural capital*). For example, in sustained periods of rain the ground becomes bog like. The case follows on nicely from case one and is run in a similar way. The farm is 220 acres and the milking herd (115 cows) are comparable to case one, however more land is farmer owned. In each case, there are only daughters in the next generation to take over the farm. Therefore, it provides the opportunity to see whether there are any similarities or differences between the two family businesses operate.

Steven is the main decision-maker in the business. He has no long-term strategy, but does want a reasonable income for the family (*economic capital*). Jess, is actively involved in the farm business; she milks the cows, along with doing the majority of the paperwork. They actively share the roles in the business. Contractors have recently been employed for silaging, hedge cutting and other specialist work in order to reduce idle machinery on the farm. Location is a factor in what Steven is able to do with his farm and he chooses conventional farming techniques, which best suits the land type of his farm (*natural capital*). No land has been acquired over the last five years. The farm has not diversified and Steven does not intend to do so, believing it is best to stick at what you know, and do it well. From the data it can be summarised that Steven and Jess farm because they both like working with cows and enjoys their job. Both Steven and Jess are passionate about what they do; they are committed to farming and cannot imagine themselves doing anything else. They enjoy the autonomy of their work, being their own boss and having the independence of running their own business. Steven does comment that he would find it difficult to work for someone else, and it would take time adjusting to being an employee.

Steven and Jess have three children; one is just starting university, the middle daughter is just starting A-Levels, and the youngest has just gone to high school (*cultural capital*). Steven learnt many of his skills on the job and only finished basic institutional education (*cultural capital*). He comments that other people are better educated than he is. He uses a nutritionist, and recently employed consultants to help with business direction, though these are expensive. The industry also has to look to foreign workers to fill the labour gap. He also comments on the lack of necessary skills and experience amongst younger people, as fewer attend agricultural colleges. Steven comments there are fewer agricultural colleges. He has a high level of *social capital*, attending many meetings, exposed to a large amount of social exchange. He is vice-chairman of the local NFU branch and is highly involved with YFC, acting as a mentor for local clubs (*social*

capital). Steven also talks about the economic side of farming commenting that increasing production is not really the answer to the economic crisis; seen by many as the only way to achieve economies of scale. *Economic capital* lies with other organisations and there is no money for farmers to re-invest in their businesses. Steven talks about his farm and his passion for the job, his farm symbolically represents what he works for and what his family represents. He talks about "my farm" and "if it is your farm it means more to you". There is an emotional attachment to farming and he talks avidly about being passionate for the job in order to do it properly. Pride and doing a good job are important to him (*symbolic capital*).

Jess has a similar level of institutional *cultural capital* to her husband. She does the majority of the paperwork and her role extends to milking the cows. Jess gained her farming knowledge from on-the-job learning and YTS day-release. Jess goes to industry meetings and socialises with fellow farmers. She and her husband attend the local and county agricultural shows. Jess also comments on the lack of *economic capital* for farmers. The case is similar to case one and lacks a variety of forms of *capital*. The farmer does appear to have a better social network and makes more use of these networks than the farmers use in case one. The main problem Steven has relates to the land type of the farmland - *natural capital*. The farmer also lacks capital: *economic* (high expenditure with two dwellings); *cultural* (institutional capital) and a higher level of *social capital* (professional networks). The farm also has a good level of *symbolic capital* being attached to the land and his animals.

Case 3

This case is another good example of a family farm. It is entirely a family enterprise with all members committed to the future of the partnership and the business. Unlike the previous cases, it is a tenanted property. This case was chosen to look at whether there are any similarities, as well differences from a mainly owner-managed farm to those that are tenant-managed.

The case shows how people from the older and younger generation are committed to the future of dairy farming in the UK, and have a common goal to keep the business going. This case differs from previous ones; having an identified successor, who is working on the farm and committed to securing the future of the family business. In the previous cases, the farmers did not have an identified successor, each having daughters who had not been identified as successors for various reasons. Two generations are involved in the business. The family are planning to expand the buildings (pending proprietor approval) and hope to take on a new Duchy tenant farm in the future. The dairy herd stands at 166 cows and the family farm 300 acres in total, of which, some is used to grow maize for winter fodder. The farmer, Pete and his son, Brett are involved in all

aspects of the farm business, though Pete has the overriding say on decisions made and is involved with all the manual work. Cassey, Pete's wife just helps out with the paperwork. Contractors are used for specialist work such as silaging, harvesting and so on. The farm has not diversified, though Cassey does have a full-time job running her own florists shop. Pete farms because he wants a business for his son to carry on. He has considered giving up, but does not know what else he would rather do. Brett farms because it offers him independence and the chance to live where he works. He currently has a flat, a few miles away from the farm. He wants the opportunity to watch a family grow up. Succession is important for Brett and he would like to think that if he had kids, they would want to farm.

Pete has been involved with farming all his life. He comments on the lack of *economic capital*, believing expanding is the only way to increase their share of available *economic capital*. He wants a reasonable income for his family, not the chance to make millions. Pete reads relevant industry publications as a way to increase his knowledge (*cultural capital*) and keep up-to-date with any changes in rules of the game. He has a lower level of *cultural capital* than his son, but sees working on the farm all his life as valuable experience (*cultural capital*, shaping his *habitus*). He has a good social network with the NFU, and is involved with the local agricultural society. These networks are used as a way to share information and engage in social interaction (*social capital*). He sees hard work and high standards as very important. He takes a pride in his job, and breeding good quality cows (*symbolic capital*). Brett has been involved with farming all his life, commenting how farming offers a specific life-world that he wants to be part of. He comments that farming can be isolated and found YFC as a way to make friends with farmers and non-farmers alike, increasing his *social capital*. Brett has attained level 4 farm management and a HGV licence (higher level of *cultural capital* than his father has). He emphasises the point that dairying is highly skilled (high level of *cultural capital*). He also reads industry publications to keep up-to-date on industry changes. Brett commented on the lack of *economic capital* and states he cannot raise the finance needed to buy a farm. Price and cost pressures are also an area for concern (*economic capital*). Location is an issue for him, as is renting. Brett wants to be seen as a good farmer in the community (*symbolic capital*). He thinks the culture of farming is good. The recent CAP reforms have also increased the amount of paperwork.

Cassey helps on the farm, but also runs her own florists business and enjoys the independence it offers her (she has her own social network – *social capital*). She does the computer work for the farm, but tends not help out with any of the manual work, unless it is an emergency. She thinks that *economic capital* is hard to come by in all walks of life but appreciates that farming seems to suffer more than some other small businesses.

This case is different from the previous two cases as the farmer is a tenant this also poses problems as the family do not own their farm property. This raises additional problems, if they want to alter the farm, for example update buildings and so on, they have to seek landlord approval first. They also face the same issues as farmer-owned properties.

Case 4

Case four is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. This case represents another family farm similar to case one and two. I would categorise this as a traditional family dairy farm. The people involved know no other life apart from farming. They also grow maize used to feed the cows during the winter months. The farm has been in the family for decades; now into the 4th generation, with 3rd generation members still involved. The farm has not participated in diversification. There are no plans to expand the farm or herd size providing the family continue to make a reasonable living. The business is in the fortunate position of not being in debt. The farmer, his partner and son were interviewed. The farm is 200 acres with a dairy herd of 150. The business is run as a father and son operation with one full-time worker. Mike worked on the farm from a very early age and took on more responsibility as he grew older. Mike has the overriding say on business decisions. Ben, his son concentrates on the day-to-day running of the business and also has a say in the decision making. Farm contractors are used for silaging, spraying, sowing grass seed and hedge cutting. Mike farms because he has done all his life, and cannot see himself doing anything else. He comments he was born and bred into farming (his identity – *symbolic capital*). Mike enjoys his work; but he wants a reasonable income. Mike and Ben have known nothing else but farming, each want to continue the family tradition of dairy farming. Ben farms because his father assumed he would go into farming and farm work came before schoolwork. He cannot see himself doing anything else and enjoys working outside. He likes the life farming offers, especially working with animals. He also is not computer literate, and sees this as a major constraint to doing another job. Sally farms because her partner is involved with farming, she does not do any manual work, but helps out a lot with the paperwork.

Mike sees that the breeding side of the job is highly skilled (high level of *cultural capital*). He attends a lot of meetings to share knowledge and also to meet fellow farmers (using social networks as a way to increase *social and cultural capital*). Cattle markets were also a good way to do this (*social capital*). He comments that there are problems finding staff, especially those with the right skills. Mike is not in the NFU, but was a YFC member when he was young. Money motivates Mike, but there is a lack of *economic capital* for farmers. Mike has very high standards and wants to be seen as a good farmer in the farming community (*symbolic capital*).

Ben has few formal qualifications from school (lack of institutional *cultural capital*). He has learnt how to farm from his father and completed YTS day-release (*cultural capital*). Farming needs to have financial viability and Ben believes consolidation is the way to achieve this. He believes expansion is not the answer, the farm is not in debt and neither Mike, nor Ben plan to put the business into a position of debt. Ben has a good level of *social capital*, mainly from his YFC days. Sally has a full-time job working for social security (higher level of *cultural capital* than her partner). She has good networks and relationships with other institutions involved in farming, for example Government agencies like the RPA. She also comments on the lack of *economic capital* available for farmers; and the increasing costs, with economic power lies with other dominant groups. Sally also believes that power has gone to the heads of those inspecting farmers. Knowing they have far more power, are reluctant to help farmers, instead penalising them for doing things wrong. Sally enjoys the lifeworld of farming, even though she married into it. She suggests changes in policy (rules of the game) are creating conflicts and issues for the farmers lifeworld, for example the change in subsidies to production led to environmentally led. Farmers have historically worked to produce food to feed the nation. It can be summarised from the data that *economic capital* lies with other groups, and farmers share and powers have decreased. *Cultural capital* also lies with other dominant groups. Both father and son share similar views on the direction of the business and the problems that farming faces. They are risk averse and will not jeopardise the future of the family business in pursuit of growth.

Case 5

This case is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. The main reason for choosing the case was all the traditional brick buildings had been sold to fund a new dairy unit as part of a herd expansion strategy. The new unit (one building) contains everything under one roof, another reason for choosing the case. As in previous cases all family members contribute to the business and work together in response to changes in market conditions. The farmers in the cases examined so far could not really be described as risk-taking on this scale, in order to secure the future of the family business. This case also shows the farmer (John) strengthening the core dairy businesses rather than trying to diversify activities.

The farm totals 170 acres and the dairy herd now (in 2005) stands at 240 milking cows and all replacements are home reared. It is a family run farm with two people employed to share milking responsibilities. Contractors are used for all activities requiring specialist machinery, for example; silaging, slurry spreading, and hedge cutting. John and his son Edward have been involved with

farming all their lives. They work together sharing all business responsibilities; including decision-making, however, John has the final say on decisions.

John farms because it is his life. He enjoys working with cattle, gaining a sense of achievement from breeding high quality cows. He is proud of his herd. He comments that farming is 'in the blood' on his grandparents' side (*symbolic capital*). He wants to provide for his family and pass the business on to his son, who wants to carry on the business. John also likes to make money. Edward farms because it is what he has always wanted to do and he is interested in breeding cattle and genetics. Edward enjoys farming and the independence of having your own business.

John has a relatively high level of *cultural capital*, having a NCA he also likes to experiment with breeding. John used advisors when he expanded the herd (*cultural capital*). He also shares his knowledge with young people on the YTS programme. John is proud of his achievement; both his herd, and the new unit. John has taken a huge economic gamble putting him in a position of high debt. John has a good level of *social capital* through the networks he made from YFC in his younger days and now NFU. He finds cattle markets good places for farmers to meet up and discuss the market and general affairs.

Edward has a higher level of (institutional) *cultural capital* having travelled for a year; he has also attained a BSc in agriculture, and worked on Grosvenor Farms for over a year. He does the majority of the paperwork and makes business decisions on the farm. Edward is allowed to learn from his mistakes with his father on hand to help out. He has a good social network from university, YFC and people he has met whilst working and travelling (*social capital*).

John's wife Julie is a self-employed book-keeper. She does the financial books for the farm business and this is her only involvement. She has her own networks (*social capital*) through her business and is not interested in farming. She has a higher level of *cultural capital* than her husband and networks with professionals (higher level of *social capital*). She enjoys the independence of owning her own business. The family are heavily in debt and highly dependent on the milk price, as a result of the volume they produce, and the income required to service their debt. They severely lack *economic capital*. Both the farmer and his son are committed to the business and have good levels of *cultural capital* and a good social network (*social capital*).

Case 6

Case Six is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. This is another family farm. The farm is run as a husband and wife team with one employee, a girl who milks the cows. The family have two young children both girls. This case is slightly different because the farmer had to re-start the dairy herd, after losing all their livestock in the 2001 Foot and Mouth (FMD) crisis. The farmer had nine

months of having no animals on the farm. Only one generation of the family is involved in the family business. The family re-stocked the dairy herd and still farm today. Contractors carry out specialist work and the farmer has recently changed his milk buyer. James is the main decision maker in the business. His wife, Caroline runs the B&B and helps on the farm doing both manual and paperwork. They employ one full-time lady who milks the cows.

James farms because he loves where he lives and couldn't live in the city. He also likes not having to travel to work. He believes it is a good environment to raise children in. Money is not the main driving force behind his decision to farm; he just wants a reasonable income to provide for his family. Farming is a way of life and is important to him and the life it offers his family, especially after experiencing time not farming. James comments farming is an emotional job (*symbolic capital*). James does not have a high level of *cultural capital*, he only completed YTS day-release after leaving school at the age of 16. He learnt all he knows from his father. To increase his knowledge, James takes part in discussion groups for the NFU and will use experts if he thinks they will contribute to his business (*cultural and social capital*). He thinks it will be a shame financially and socially, if the cattle market is closed. Diversification has brought in extra income for the family in light of decreasing levels of *economic capital* available for farmers. James is also concerned by the fact older farmers cannot afford to retire. *Social capital* is important for James, YFC provided him with opportunities to meet people and socialise. Disease is a major concern for James (*negative natural capital*).

The farmer is committed to dairy farming having suffered the loss of his herd to the FMD crisis. The farm has diversified in order to increase income, but they still lack higher levels of *economic capital*. James has done what he can to enable himself in social networks (*social capital*) but he lacks institutional *cultural capital*. He has a high level of *symbolic capital*.

Case 7

The case was chosen purely for the scale of the operation. The case is a family run business, even though family involvement is only through a managerial capacity. The farm is run in a different way to the previous cases, and therefore explores a contrasting case, in terms of how the business is operated. I wanted to include a different type of operation to the normal family farm. The business operation is large scale in comparison to some of the other farm businesses. Two brothers are involved with the business from one generation; Paul's role is to find ways to reach the business goals, and his brother Jim deals with all the environmental stewardship schemes and the like. Neither of their wives are involved with the business. There are two holdings; one for the dairy operations, and one for arable operations. Nine people are employed on the farm. The

business has diversified into property investment, and has sold land for development. The farm has been expanded a lot in recent years and they have specialised production on each farm one arable and one dairy. The dairy side of the business has just installed a new rotary parlour and cow numbers have increased over the last couple of years.

Paul is not involved in the day-to-day running of the business. He does not do the manual work unless he has to. He manages the farm, focusing his attention on the direction of the business. He has a more defined role than other farmers; he manages the business rather than being involved with all the roles, as is the case in small business operations. The farmer is more entrepreneurial than other farmers I have interviewed. Paul is profit motivated, it is the main reason why he farms (*economic capital*). The farm also provides resources for other business ventures. He does not carry on purely for his children to take on the business; but he believes that at least one of his sons will want to carry on with the family farm business.

Paul has a high level of *cultural capital* with a HND in agriculture. Education is very important to him. He pays for a nutritionist and a consultant. He is an NFU member (networks with farmers and relevant professionals – *social capital*); he doesn't network with family members. He also has friends from non-farming backgrounds (*social capital*). *Economic capital* and profit are very important to Paul. He sells milk direct to Muller and receives a better price for his milk. He has also diversified in order to spread the risk across a larger business portfolio. Paul feels that there is an emotional attachment to the job (*symbolic capital*). Though *economic capital* is more important.

The farm is large compared to previous cases. The farmer is business orientated and the farm has diversified into other operations. The farm has a greater share of the *economic capital* available to farmers, especially through subsidies owing to the scale of the operations. The farmer has a reasonable level of *cultural capital* but does not utilise social networks (*social capital*) as much as previous farmers interviewed. The farmer also has a lot more leisure time having 12 weeks holiday throughout the year.

Case 8

This case is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10. This case is a good example of how a farm has diversified, and how the farm business owning family, the Hutchinson's have a farm manager to run the family farm. The farmer, Phil is a paid manager and lives in the farmhouse. It is one of three farms owned by the same family. The farm diversified 15 years ago into cheese making on the farm, because other institutions requested to watch the process. The tourist side grew from farm tours to a shop and tearoom. The tourist side of the business is run independently to the farm and has it's own manager. Phil and his wife Kate are responsible for the farm operations and

discuss the daily operations of the farm. Phil has the overall say on decisions and liaises with the Hutchinsons. Phil is responsible for the strategy side and discusses this with his boss. Kate is responsible for the calves and daily business operations. Along with farming, Kate also does emergency fostering.

Phil farms because he loves farming and cannot see himself doing anything else; he also wants to make a satisfactory income. He likes being his own boss and having the independence of running his own business. He likes being able to organise his working day (job autonomy). He also likes achieving his personal objectives and goals. He likes working outdoors and loves where he lives; essentially he enjoys the farming way of life. Kate farms because she enjoys the life and loves working with cows. Both Kate and Phil show cattle and are highly competitive. Kate loves breeding prize winning cattle and having top performing cows. Matt, Phil's son decided not to go into farming because he could not get the work and comments on the lack of opportunities there are to enter agriculture. He loved the lifestyle of working on the farm but, had to find employment elsewhere. Phil's friend, Scott grew up on his family tenant farm, but was unable to carry on the farm business as succession fell to his elder brother. He was unable to secure his own tenancy to carry on farming and now works as a feed rep. He liked the life farming offered, suggesting it is a lifestyle trade off with money.

Phil does not think he is as well educated as other people (lack of institutional *cultural capital*), but he has learnt everything he knows from his father and grandfather. He is a member of the NFU, and goes to many shows and meets people (*social capital*). He comments how *economic capital* is low for farmers and that they are lucky to process their own milk to produce cheese. Profit is important to him commenting he is lucky not to be in a position of debt; as those that borrow money must find it difficult to make repayments. Disease is an issue for him, and he comments how farming is highly weather dependent. Farming relies on nature, which is unpredictable making advance yearly planning difficult (*natural capital*). Phil has a high level of pride for his work, especially his dairy herd and prize winning cattle (*symbolic* – prestige in the community etc.). He also strives to do his job properly.

Kate has a good social network through showing cattle, and her involvement with different societies; including the local Holstein Society (*social capital*). She also has friends both within and outside the industry. She acknowledges the business is lucky financially getting paid more for its milk, by processing it on site for cheese and comments on the struggles for *economic capital*. She has enjoyed the life-world farming offers seeing it as a good way of life. She loves showing cattle and competing (*symbolic capital*). Matt left school at 16 and trained in landscape gardening and construction (*cultural capital*). He has many friends from school and YFC (*social capital*). He

comments on the lack of *economic capital* as the main reasons for leaving the industry, as well as the lack of opportunity to enter the industry. Scott has a high level of *social capital* through his job visiting many farmers as a rep. He also earns more money doing this job than he would if he farmed. He left school at 16 and has few formal qualifications (*cultural capital*).

This is a profitable enterprise, which has taken 15 years to establish the tourism side of the business. The farmer is lucky in that he manages the farm and is paid a good wage to do so. Phil does not have the economic worries that farmers in previous cases have. He has good social networks (*social capital*) and has learnt his skills and knowledge from his family and learning on the job (*cultural capital*).

Case 9

I chose the case as the farm is trying to survive on the outskirts of a city and therefore faces different challenges to those located in the countryside. It is also a tenanted property. As an edge of city farm, it has problems of fly tipping, increased crime, arsonists, joy-riders in fields and also extra pollution being right next to the motorway. The farmer has to take extra precautions with valuable items especially; machinery, tools, fertiliser, seeds and so on. All machinery has to be out of sight and locked away. More time has to be spent checking animals to make sure people haven't left gates open. There is an issue of extra litter and problems with the public using the lanes as a short cut to work and school.

One generation of the family is involved with the farm business, the farmer, Daniel. He is planning to scale down the dairy side of the operations and concentrate on growing cereals. He employs three people to work on the farm. Daniel is the main decision-maker and plans on a daily basis. Profit is important to him but so is family life. Maggie, his wife no longer does any manual work on the farm and only helps out with paperwork when needed. She has her own career (needed to bolster the household income – *economic capital*) and is currently working towards a PhD (high level of institutional *cultural capital*). Maggie enjoyed working on the farm but found the manual labour hard work. She comments on the dedication required to get up every morning to feed animals and so on, but also says it was a good life for the family.

Daniel farms because it is all he knows. His family have been involved with farming for generations and he enjoys it. It was what he always wanted to do. He likes running his own business, and being his own boss means he has independence and job autonomy. Daniel comments on the life farming can offer the family and he thought this was the best way to raise his children.

Daniel does not regard himself as having a high level of education commenting that he only completed YTS day-release (lack of institutional *cultural capital*). He learnt most of his farming skills from his father, older brothers and working for other farmers before he was able to secure a tenant farm. He left school as soon as he could, to work on farms and gain experience. He has a good level of *social capital*. As the regional chairman of the NFU he attends a lot of meeting organised by various different institutions. He talks about pride in rearing good quality stock (*symbolic capital* of being a good farmer). He also comments on farming's dependency on the weather and issues of disease (*natural capital*). Daniel has concerns over the lack of *economic capital* available to farmers, with decreasing prices and increasing costs.

Maggie has a high level of institutional *cultural capital* to Daniel, having a full-time job outside of farming and working towards a PhD. Her income contributes to the household income and pays for items they could not afford if they relied on income from farming. She has a social network outside farming mainly with professionals in her workplace (different level of *social capital*). She also believes that the amount of *economic capital* available to farmers is too low, especially as costs increase and prices decrease.

Jen, his daughter and Tom, his son are both professionals in different career fields. Jen is a GP (high level of *cultural capital* and access to higher levels of *social capital*). She would have liked to enter farming, but chose a professional career; in order to obtain a higher level of income (*economic capital*). She misses farming and the life it offers, but is grateful that her father stills farms; so her children can visit to see the animals and how food is produced first hand. Jen comments on the level of emotional attachment in farming and comments how she still feels tied to it, and misses the lifestyle (*symbolic capital*). She enjoys visiting her dad's farm with her young children when she can. Tom is an electrical engineer (high level of *cultural capital* and access to higher levels of *social capital*). He has travelled a lot; working in Canada, Australia, London and now New Zealand. He enjoyed growing up on the farm, but wanted to pursue a career in engineering. He also could not find the capital needed to start farming (lack of *economic capital*).

The dairy operation in this case is small, milking only 85 cows. The farmer is planning to stop milk production. The farm lacks *economic capital* and is again a tenant farm. Daniel has a good level of *social capital* attending meetings and is highly involved with the NFU. He lacks institutional *cultural capital* and gained most of his knowledge from experience and the family.

Case 10

The case was chosen because the farmer is the Deputy Chairman of the Staffordshire branch of the NFU. He has been involved with farming all his life and has a positive outlook on his business and the industry. He does not have an identified successor but wants to expand the business.

It is a large family farm mixed farm (arable and dairy). Six people work on the farm; only two are family members, Karl, and his father. They are planning to further increase the dairy herd and all replacements are home reared. Karl does not have an identified successor. His wife is not involved with the family business; she looks after the home and the children.

Karl has always farmed and does not know why he chose farming as a career saying it was not a conscious decision. It was something he always wanted to do. Karl is responsible for the dairy side of the business, and the daily operations. He also discusses the long-term strategies with his father. Staff are employed to milk the cows and help with the manual and mechanical work.

Karl has a high level of institutional education (*cultural capital*), having a private education. He also travelled in the UK and America working on farms as he travelled. He has a HND in agriculture. Karl takes advice from his bank manager, accountant and milk-minder. He wants a reasonable income, but also needs money to invest in the business (*economic capital*). He has a high level of *social capital*, being the deputy NFU chairman of Staffordshire. He is also involved with Staffordshire Agricultural Society as well as having friends and family in and outside the industry (*social capital*). He uses the MDC for various sources of information. Karl takes pride in his work, and likes the family tradition of farming (*symbolic capital*). The weather is a factor affecting what can be done. Disease is an issue for Karl, especially TB (*natural capital*).

The farmer has good levels of *cultural capital* from his life experiences he also had private education (seen as a higher level of institutional *cultural capital*). The farm is a large operation and in a better financial position than some of the previous cases (*economic capital*). The farmer has a relatively good social network (*social capital*).

