

Article

Summer Farmers, Diversification and Rural Tourism—Challenges and Opportunities in the Wake of the Entrepreneurial Turn in Swedish Policies (1991–2019)

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Abstract: Since the 1990s Swedish authorities have increasingly treated summer farms as businesses, expecting them to generate profits like any other firm. However, in addition to being financially independent, summer farms are expected to provide a number of services, to help maintain biological heritage, provide beautiful landscapes for tourists, and much more. Summer farmers are also forced to co-exist with other local stakeholders that base their activities on the same resources, e.g., adventure and nature-based tourism, agriculture, and other businesses. All of this creates a number of entrepreneurial challenges but can also open new windows of opportunity. The response of summer farmers has been to diversify activities to cope with shrinking income and the seasonal character of their trade. Most new business strategies include tourism or increasing the number of cattle rationalizing animal husbandry. The strategies have partly been influenced by policies and partly by new market opportunities. Departing from a business, spatial and institutional contextual analysis we identified five main entrepreneurial strategies, three of which are related to rural tourism, one is related to increasing the animal herd and the fifth is a no-strategy, maintaining status quo. This article analyses the reality of summer farms from a business perspective. The main questions to be answered are: How have summer farmers responded to the entrepreneurial turn in regional development policies? Which are their main business challenges and opportunities?

Keywords: summer farms; diversification; rural entrepreneurship; rural tourism; biological heritage

1. Introduction

Following the severe financial crisis in Sweden at the beginning of the 1990s, a change in growth and regional development policies took place. The new direction focused on promoting the start of new businesses (generally denominated as entrepreneurship by the authorities) as one solution to many of the problems affecting the economy in general, and remote and rural areas in particular, such as, lack of employment and depopulation [1,2]. The roots of this change can be traced to a liberalization of previous economic policy that the newly elected conservative government had announced in its Government declaration in 1991 [3]. During the early 1990s, a number of measures were implemented to promote the creation of new businesses, but one measure was more significant than others in the rural context. The Industry and Technology Development Authority (Nutek) was commissioned by the government to design special programs to promote women's entrepreneurship, with a special emphasis on the creation of new businesses in rural contexts [4]. An important instrument used to concretize this policy at regional and rural level was the creation of Resource Centres for Women.

These centres became an important arena behind the development of new business in rural areas and many of the new firms had a partial or total focus on tourism [5].

Eventually, after Sweden became a member of the European Union in 1995, the regional development goal that had dominated regional policies during the second half of the 20th Century, e.g., equalization of economic conditions between urban and rural regions, was officially replaced by a focus on economic growth. In 2002, the parliament adopted a new legislation which corroborated the entrepreneurial turn through various policy changes [6] (p. 23).

Gradually the meaning of ‘the entrepreneurial turn’ found its way to summer farms and authorities started orienting summer farmers towards three business areas: (1) making animal husbandry more efficient through a subsidy that strived to increase the number of grazing animals on outlying land, mainly to achieve environmental goals. This was complemented with forest pasture subsidies [7] (pp. 107–115), (2) promoting the establishment of farm dairies that sold their produce to local people, but that above all played a key role in the development of rural tourism (from 1995 through the regional artisan food incubator Matora and from 2006 by the National Artisan Food Resource Centre Eldrimner), and (3) promoting rural tourism, especially after the decoupling reform in 2003, rural tourism has been supported both through subsidies, but above all by actively including summer farms in the tourism strategies and tourism marketing of rural municipalities [8,9].

In addition, summer farmers were influenced by the rural development policies that took form following the Swedish EU-membership and the decoupling reform adopted in 2003. There was a conviction that food elaboration would improve the possibility of creating jobs in rural areas and increase the interest for and raise the status of Swedish food from raw materials produced in Sweden. Moreover, diversification, especially towards rural tourism, was seen as a key for future growth in rural firms and farms [8]. The importance of rural tourism as a source of economic growth was corroborated by the government’s ‘New Culinary Country Program’ (2007–2013) and by the ‘National Food Strategy’ in 2017 [10,11].

Substantial changes in society started to pull rural businesses towards direct sales, diversification, rural tourism and much more, through an increased demand for local, ethical, healthy and environmental friendly food [12–16]. In sum, over time the expectations of society, e.g., the general public, such as tourists, local inhabitants, nature lovers and people who care for the preservation of different types of cultural heritage, as well as authorities at EU, national, regional and local level have changed and various policies have pushed summer farmers towards new environmental and economic goals. Today summer farms are expected to provide various types of services or achieve different goals, for example: They should continue to recreate the beautiful landscapes, running picturesque rural cafés and offer the possibility for “normal people” to pet farm animals and all other things appreciated by city dwellers who want to escape urban areas during their vacation. Further, they are expected to contribute to vibrant local communities by creating local work opportunities, or at least by self-employing the owners and improve the tax base of remote rural municipalities. Moreover, they are required to provide ecosystems services (by keeping animals that graze the specific mountainous landscapes) and maintain biological heritage, e.g., species and biotopes that tell about the historical land use in the area [7,17,18].

The Swedish summer farm system almost became extinct due to a century of intensified forestry, centralization, and structural rationalization in agriculture. Consequently, the experiences from this case could be seen as being of relevance for the safe-guarding of other cultural heritages in the form of traditional land use in other countries.

In previous research, summer farms have been studied from various perspectives related to their historical origin, their connection to culture, biological heritage, and agricultural policies [7,19,20]. However, the entrepreneurial perspective has until now been neglected. Moreover, there are no holistic evaluations of the combined policy areas that composed the entrepreneurial turn. The impact of the entrepreneurial turn has only partially been evaluated. During the 1990’s the main policy orientation had the intention of helping people to become self-employed, this has however not been evaluated in

the rural context. Further, already in 1994, supporting local firms through a “future oriented business support” and making special investments in women’s entrepreneurship in rural locations were added as two components of the new national strategy for regional development. Thus, it became clearly specified that public investments and support for businesses should be especially powerful in areas with a disadvantageous geographical position [10,11,21–23]. The entrepreneurial turn as a whole reflects a shift in various policy areas that share a common ground based on liberalization ideals. In the measures that concerned summer farms, some of the following actions were pointed out by authorities: starting new ventures, diversifying farm activities, adding tourism services and activities, and elaborating and selling farm produce. However, none of the mentioned measures, e.g., number of products sold (tons/value), number of tourists visiting farms, or number of farm nights sold have been measured neither in summer farms, nor in other farms [24,25].

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to highlight and problematize the challenges and opportunities for summer farmers implementing an entrepreneurial approach. The main questions to be answered are: How have summer farmers responded to the entrepreneurial shift in regional development policies? Which are their main business challenges and opportunities?

2. Summer Farms—A Background

Scandinavian summer farming is a form of transhumance pastoralism where summer grazing traditionally takes place in the vast outlying lands away from the homestead, at a distance that is far enough to motivate one or several summer farms for seasonal use. Summer farms (e.g., Figure 1) are like satellites to the homestead and are used to house the animals, process the milk into products that could be stored longer than ordinary milk before transporting them down to the homestead. The characteristic products from traditional summer farms are dairy products like different kinds of cheese, primost, brown cheese and soured milk. Summer farms also used to contribute to secure the supply of winter fodder as fodder produced around the homestead could be preserved for winter fodder when the animals grazed in the summer farm. Moreover, the meadows around summer farms were and still are harvested for winter fodder, i.e., hay, which is transported to the homestead, but traditionally also leaf hay and bark was harvested. Summer farms were and still are part of the reproduction strategies of farmers in which the use of the outlying lands allowed optimizing the number of animals that could be kept during the winter, and thus make it possible to increase the wealth of the farmers. During the 20th century when chemical fertilizers made it possible to increase the fodder production on fields and meadows closer to the homestead the use of summer farms was considered inefficient and at the same time the forestry sector became more and more important, which resulted in a conflict in land use. Furthermore, the import of fodder from other parts of the world made fodder production less attractive. From at least several tenth of thousands of summer farms at the turn of the century 1900, the number decreased to not more than a few hundred in the end of the 20th century [7,17,26]. Scandinavian summer farming has been defined by the Norwegian landscape historian Lars Reinton:

“Summer farming is when a farm (a winter homestead) keeps the animals on summer grazing at a place away from the farm where there are buildings and permanent staff, in order to benefit from grazing over larger areas. Most often, they also harvest hay and other fodder to save areas closer to the homestead, to create better pastures, and to be able to feed more animals during winter, as well as store more food to the homestead.” (Our translation [27], p. 2)

This definition focuses on seasonal settlements, grazing and harvest of winter fodder, but also a non-specified food production for humans. The rural historian Jesper Larsson has given a slightly different definition:

“A summer farm is a seasonal settlement for the summer months in order to use the grazing of the outlying lands and process milk into storable products. There were buildings for people, livestock, and milk management. The summer farm was a specialised female workplace and a closely linked functional part of the homestead and agricultural production there.” (Our translation [19], p. 12)



Figure 1. Brindberg summer farm in Dalarna. Photo: Håkan Tunón, 2008.

This definition gives more emphasis to the dairy production and the female workforce. Meanwhile, winter fodder and the production of animals for meat is more invisible. In another paper Larsson has described it as: “periodic settlements for the use of common pastures” [28].

Today, both the traditional knowledge and the rich biodiversity in the mountains are endangered by the implementation of agricultural practices, structure rationalization, urbanization and a changing world that have led to a number of different conflicts that go beyond the tragedy of the commons [7,17,26,29].

3. Methods and Sources

This article is based on the results of an applied development project financed by the Interreg Norway-Sweden program conducted between April 2016 and September 2019 (Interreg Sweden-Norway no. 20,200,961 “Biological Cultural Heritage as a Sustainable Value Creator”). The initial design of the project has its origins in previous Interreg-projects conducted by the authors (no. R30441-61-10, R30441-67-11, and R304-8922-13). The final reports from these projects contain relevant data and conclusions that were used to design this project. The main purpose of the project was to support farmers in the articulation of strategies to achieve long term economic resilience using biological heritage. Therefore, the entire project was based on community based participatory research (CBPR), a de-centred research design in which the involved community is also an active participant in the formulation of research questions, development of empirical work and elaboration of conclusions. CBPR employs an iterative approach and needs to be of use both for the researchers as well as the community [30]. CBPR aspires to offer the community control over the story that is being told, but the degree of democracy within a CBPR project can vary [31–33].

The first project activity was a workshop with summer farmers in which activities for the project were jointly defined and planned. The rest of the project was designed as a number of workshops and some follow-up business support individually. The project had two main orientations, one was

business development for summer farmers with focus on biological heritage and the second was the generation and mediation of knowledge about biological heritage and summer farming to society.

This article is based on the first activity, business development. This was pursued conducting workshops in which summer farmers, consultants and researchers worked together, in group and individually. A mix of well-established methods (such as business model canvas, service design thinking, and repertory grid) were used to develop a customized procedure for working with business model development [34]. We conducted four business development workshops (see Table 1). In the first workshop, researchers and summer farmers jointly identified general business challenges and project activities were planned. The following three workshops had an entrepreneurial focus and aimed at working to address general business challenges and opportunities as well as identifying business challenges and opportunities for participating summer farmers. Existing business models were identified and new business models and solutions were developed. After each workshop we conducted individual follow-up counselling to support farmers during the process of change. Individual business development counselling was conducted by the scholars together with business development experts. Workshops, counselling during the workshops and follow-up counselling were systematically documented in writing and through Business Model Canvas notes completed by the farmers. Farmers gave scholars informed consent to use the generated data in scientific articles. The number of participants in the workshops varied, and some summer farmers only participated in one or two workshops. In total, 36 summer farmers were reached by the project workshops (see Table 1).

Table 1. Project business development workshops that generated data in the project. Participants were summer farmers, other users of biological resources from outlying land, and scholars.

Date	Project Workshops	Number of Summer Farmers (Other Participants)
19–20 April 2017	WS-1. Östersund	13 (4)
28–30 November 2017	WS-2. Austkil	20 (6)
12–15 March 2018	WS-3. Oltjärn	13 (5)
27–29 November 2018	WS-4. Austkil	14 (3)

Furthermore, we also conducted 10 in-depth interviews with summer farmers from the provinces Jämtland and Dalarna (where the majority of currently active summer farms are located). Four of the informants also participated in the project workshops and six of them did not. Interviews were designed and analysed using phenomenography, a qualitative research method that helps the scholar to systematize the analysis of qualitative data following a systematic protocol and identify, meaning, nuances, differences and similarities in a dataset composed by interviews [35–37]. Phenomenography is an inductive method that provided structure in our project, at the same time that it allowed participants to identify important challenges and opportunities for summer farms today. Informants were interviewed under the general umbrella topic of business challenges and business opportunities. The analysis led to the identification of the following topics: Farming related issues (e.g., products, production, recipes, know-how, animals, and physical artefacts such as buildings and tools), business partnerships and relations (e.g., potential partners, organizations, customers and communication issues), institutional factors and authorities (rules and regulations and how these are implemented, specific policy areas for example predators and expectations from society in general), and finally, business challenges and opportunities (e.g., good and bad experiences, identified opportunities and business goals). In addition, a survey with short interviews composed by a number of closed and open-ended questions was conducted with 76 visitors at one summer farm (64 tourists and 12 volunteers). Results from consumer interviews were used to verify farmer's perceptions of challenges and opportunities and identify business challenges and opportunities that summer farmers were not aware of.

Moreover, the project researchers also participated in 12 additional workshops and formal meetings with open discussions with summer farmers, some were part of the communication strategy of the project, while others were organized by other stakeholders (see Table 2). These meetings and especially the summer farm parliaments (see Table 2) made it possible to collect data from 50–60 summer farmers, which represents half of the total population receiving summer farm subsidiaries.

Table 2. Project business development workshops that generated data in the project. Participants were summer farmers, other users of biological resources from outlying land, and scholars.

Date	Title Workshop/Meeting/etc.	Nr. of Participants	Type of Participants
12 June 2016	The values of summer farming, Orsa	Approx. 40	Summer farmers, nature conservationists
3 July 2016	Summer farm tour with Deutscher Verband für Landschaftspflege	7	Visit to summer farms together with a number of German landscape conservationists
23–24 September 2016	Fäbodriksdag ‘summer farmer parliament’, Ambjörby	Approx. 50	Summer farmers, scholars, etc.
16 February 2017	Summer farming as an intangible cultural heritage, Uppsala	10	Scholars and civil servants with interest and expertise in summer farming
31 March 2017	Workshop small-scale farmers’ associations, Örebro	9	Board representatives from five different small-scale farmers’ associations
16 September 2017	Fäbodriksdag ‘summer farmer parliament’, Ovanåker	Approx. 65	Summer farmers, local heritage associations, and interested public
19–20 April 2018	Norlandic cultural landscape, Östersund	96	Farmers, conservationists, scholars and civil servants with interest and expertise in summer farming
03–04 September 2018	Green cultural heritage: Jämtland	10	Summer farmers, other users of biological resources from outlying land, entrepreneurs, and scholars
25–26 October 2018	Green cultural heritage: Järvsö	Approx. 30	Summer farmers, other users of biological resources from outlying land, entrepreneurs, and scholars
9 March 2019	Conference with the board of the Summer farms’ association, Ovanåker	5	Summer farmers and scholars
14 September 2019	Fäbodriksdag, ‘summer farmer parliament’, Söderhamn	Approx. 50	Summer farmers, other users of biological resources from outlying land, and scholars

During the workshops, all input from participants throughout the process was written down, shared and discussed with the participants and they also shared their own business experiences with the rest of the group. Presentations were recorded by the researchers with permission from the farmers. After each workshop, researchers discussed results and summarized minutes for all participants. Moreover, during the outset of the project researchers have reflected on and acted to avoid potential ethical challenges when conducting CBPR [32,33]. Reflections have systematically been made directly after each workshop conducted. In this article, we have also anonymized summer farmers. We have their informed consent to use the data in scientific publications, and we have followed the instructions issued by the universities in which researchers are employed to comply with GDPR. Moreover, all sensitive data concerning specific summer farmers was left out.

4. Entrepreneurship—A Conceptual Discussion

The entrepreneurial perspective has been central in the implementation of regional and local development during the last decades, as ‘entrepreneurial’ solutions have been favoured to meet various goals [2]. In fact, entrepreneurship was identified already by the late 1990s as a “substantiated answer to problems induced by agricultural adjustment” in Europe [38]. However, although this recipe for rural development has been implemented for at least two decades, the implications and consequences of such

policies, the institutional arrangements connected to the entrepreneurial shift, and the decision-making structures that they are surrounded by have not sufficiently been evaluated [13].

A lion's share of the discussion about entrepreneurs is connected to the Schumpeterian view about entrepreneurship and its role in economic development. Entrepreneurs have been said to represent different roles, as risk takers, as owners of the means of productions, as leaders, as bearers of a mission [39]. Joseph Schumpeter argued that entrepreneurship is tightly connected to the process of creative destruction, in which the constantly ongoing competition between new and old products, between new and old technologies, between new and old capital, takes place in the heart of companies. In short, entrepreneurs dare to apply new solutions, invest in new methods of production or transportation, producing new goods, and applying new forms of productive or industrial organizations [40] (pp. 65–71).

An important and current debate in business studies has developed the 'Schumpeterian legacy' by conceptualizing the process of entrepreneurship at micro/firm level. Some of the themes discussed are how and when entrepreneurial processes are triggered and how, why and when entrepreneurial decisions are made [41]. This school of thought argues that entrepreneurship can be triggered by the existence and exploitation of opportunities and by creatively and innovatively reacting and acting on threats and challenges. Some studies define entrepreneurial opportunities departing from how existing or new resources are allocated, re-allocated and/or combined in new ways, or from the presence of a new discovery that has been taken to the market, or from a creative perspective, which for example can entail solving current challenges, developing new business models or industrial organizations, or all and all finding new means and ends in a business [41,42]. However, the possibility of exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities is generally recognized to be context dependent [43–45].

Context is also seen as central to the study of rural entrepreneurship. Rural firms, in contrast to urban based firms, are exposed to so called peripheral contextual dynamics, e.g., a lack of agglomeration, sparse societal structures, limited local market, limited labour market (often leading to lack of competences), long distances to main markets, seasonal variations in economic activity, and much more [46,47].

Rural entrepreneurship studies are conducted within most social science disciplines. Rural entrepreneurship is explained in various ways (see for example [48–50], for example through the role of rural development policies, of institutional frames and the development of various governance models [46,51–53]. Korsgaard et al. [54] argue that to understand rural entrepreneurship we also need to understand the meaning of place and space. The spatial characteristics of a place differentiate rural entrepreneurship from other types of entrepreneurship. In a rural setting, lack of agglomeration, e.g., insufficient number of consumers, the absence of a qualified labour market and high transaction costs might be some of the negative consequences of rurality, at the same time, physical characteristics, for example scenery and landscapes, strong local networks and local support might create unique business opportunities for entrepreneurs [54].

A recent debate within entrepreneurial studies argues that to understand entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial responses it is necessary to problematize context [1,38,45,47,54]. The conceptualization can be approached by problematizing the spatial, social, institutional and cultural aspects of local communities and individual entrepreneurs [49]. Institutional characteristics can be interpreted as the formal and informal rules and regulations and how these are implemented and how these influence entrepreneurship [44] and not the least if and how institutional aspects might lead to path dependency [55] or help the entrepreneur to achieve its goals [40]. Spatial dynamics are important for several reasons. Market characteristics and the possibility of creating a profitable business is dependent on the degree of agglomeration, which also includes the potential success or failure when introducing innovations [56,57].

Social characteristics are often connected to the qualities of social capital. It can entail how social interaction, social ties and relations, the existence of trust or distrust value systems influences actions of individuals or groups of people within a social context. As such, social capital can be an enabling or disabling vehicle to entrepreneurship [38,47,56].

Due to the nature of summer farming, we argue that summer farmers are highly influenced by tradition, culture, identity and inherited practices [57] and their activities are both constrained and enabled by biological heritage [26].

By drawing on the frameworks proposed by Stathopoulou et al. [38] and Welter [45], we will first analyse summer farmers strategies and thereafter problematize and analyse contextual factors influencing entrepreneurship in summer farming, e.g., economic environment, through trade, infrastructure, business networks, and types of market; the physical environment, place and space, including characteristics of landscapes, nature, and the strong link to and role of biological heritage in summer farmers' decisions [26], etc.; social characteristics like social capital, networks, identity, and governance structures [38]. In order to get a better understanding of each of the categories, we discuss formal and informal institutions under the three categories, and in direct connection to each of the examples highlighted below.

5. Results

5.1. Economic Environment and Context

In 2016, the total population in Sweden consisted of approximately 250 summer farms distributed over central Sweden (Figure 2) and 120 of these have applied for the environmental subsidy 'Summer farm in use'. Thus, all known summer farms might not be active summer farms, and it is also known that, of the 50 known summer farms that elaborate dairy products, not all apply for subsidies. Because of the environmental and cultural services provided by summer farms, many of them obtain various types of subsidies and/or have constraints regarding what they could do in order to maintain the cultural value of buildings, et cetera. Many summer farms maintain various types of activities without grazing animals, for example offering tourism services and 47% of summer farmers are older than 58 years. Concerning the form of ownership, 21% conduct activities as a private person, 57% run activities as a Simple Firm (with unlimited liability), 2% have a limited liability company, 10% run the business as a group in some type of formal ownership form, 1% run the summer farm as a cooperative, and 1% is run by a public authority [58].

Summer farmers have strong opinions regarding environmental subsidies and the control system, and consequently many of them avoid applying for subsidies. Some argue that they feel badly treated by authorities, while others just want to be self-sufficient. There are also those that avoid applying for subsidies since they are connected to a five-year commitment and they aren't sure that they will be able to live up to that. This is confirmed both by previous studies [17,59] and by a study conducted in 2017 on behalf of the National Board of Agriculture [58]. In 2016 a little more than half of the summer farmers (120) had applied for the environmental subsidy 'summer farm in use' ('Fäbod i bruk'). Around 50 of the summer farms have formalized dairy production, but not all of them apply for subsidies [58]. Informants argue that subsidies often are delayed and that the application process can be quite bureaucratic. Sometimes they also need to restrict their economic activities to fulfil a public policy goal that limits their possibility of getting a higher income. For example, if they fertilize part of the meadows, they lose part or all of their subsidies, but in return they might get much more hay. Almost all summer farmers argue that economic margins are not that great. Therefore they "need to see their engagement as part of their lifestyle" and not a business venture.

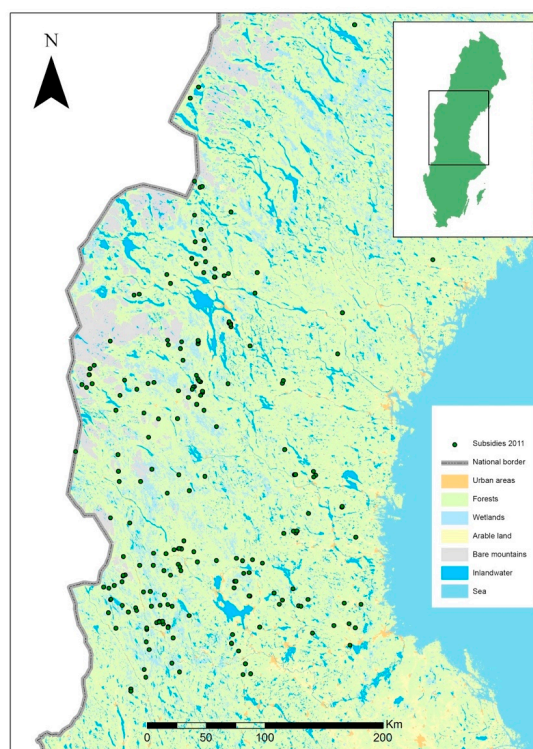


Figure 2. A map over the distribution of summer farms that received subsidies in 2011 according to the Swedish Board of Agriculture. Source: Elaborated by Swedish Biodiversity Centre (Sebastian Liahaugen) based on information from the National Board of Agriculture.

5.1.1. Entrepreneurial Strategies and Business Models

In the following section, we present a rough categorization of identified business models amongst informants. The total population has been estimated in two ways: 250 including all summer farms, and 120 if these are defined using the number of applications for ‘summer farm subsidies’. Using the first definition our respondents represent 17 percent of the total population and 35 percent if one uses the second. To increase validity and reliability we have compared our results with an inventory over summer farms made on behalf of the Swedish Board of Agriculture in 2017. The inventory was based on a survey answered by 125 informants, group interviews with additional 30 summer farmers and workshops with 56 participants. The inventory identified the following economic activities and many informants had more than one activity: (1) Sales of raw milk to others (6%), (2) elaboration and sales of dairy products (32%), (3) elaboration of meat products (32%), (4) Slaughter animals (39%), (5) tourism (38%), (6) environmental values financed through subsidies (64%), (7) handicraft (8%), and (8) breeding animals (34%). However, the economic activities are often combined, therefore dairy production or meat production might be combined with tourism [60] and there are as many combinations as there are summer farmers. The strategies presented below were identified through the interviews (12) and the completed business model canvases (30). These are consistent with data gathered at the summer farm parliaments and other meetings that generated data, as well as the 2017 inventory mentioned above [58]. Many farmers combine two or more strategies therefore it is difficult to present exact figures for each strategy.

Business as Usual

In the sample, four out of 36 informants (11%) have continued to conduct their activities as before. In the 2017 inventory this strategy is found in 15% of the answers [60]. In this category there are people who have not been able to invest in more animals or change their activities mainly due to their age. This is expressed in the following way: “there is no point in borrowing money and investing in new

sources of income”, and “I am too old and so are my consumers, they know me and they buy my products”. There is also another group who have been summer farmers just for a few years and where lifestyle was an important driving force to become a summer farmer, often defined as “the desire to live a tranquil life and take care of the animals” and “jumping off the squirrel wheel” with “no interest in making profits”. Thus, for farmers using this strategy, summer farming is part of a family reproduction strategy. The products are either sold on the homestead, or a local shop mainly to local people. Further, the produce might sometimes be sold or sometimes used in barter to fulfil needs that cannot be satisfied through the production of the farm.

Diversification through Tourism

In our sample, 23 (64%) of the respondents diversified dairy and/or meat production with tourism (Figure 3). Within this group there are a variety of strategies, from using the summer farm merely as a café with no traditional farming activities, or with a mix of tourism and traditional farming activities, e.g., taking care of animals, milking, curdling, making charcuteries, and baking, combined with running a café, selling traditional summer farm products, for example ‘summer farm platter’ (‘fäbodtallrik’) with flatbread, cheese, jam and charcuterie and other products which are less connected to traditional summer farm production, but that many people today relate to summer farms, such as ‘boiled coffee’ (‘kokkaffe’, often prepared on wooden stoves or over open fire), waffles and pastries, sometimes local and sometimes industrial. All summer farms in the sample sell traditional products to take home, for example cheese, butter, fermented milk (‘långmjölk’), and charcuteries. Additional products such as hand knitted socks and other crafts might also be sold. Some of the summer farmers also sell their products on markets which are held throughout the year.



Figure 3. ‘Voluntary’ entrance fee at Mittjasvallen summer farm in Hälsingland. Photo: Håkan Tunón, 2017.

A few of the summer farmers offer the possibility of sleeping over charging for the experience of “sleeping in a genuine summer farm environment”. Furthermore, some summer farms offer excursions together with the farmers in order to in a more relaxed way give the visitor a possibility to learn about the summer farm, the activities and the surroundings. Others arrange longer, a day or a week, summer farm courses for adults, where people pay for learning how to do traditional chores in the summer

farm. Many summer farmers charge a fee for such a course, while others receive this category of visitors as volunteer workers without salary. Volunteers get food and a place to sleep. There are also summer farm courses for children, curdling courses and many other activities which are held over the day. The summer farm may also be open as a “stage” for different cultural arrangements, like concerts, outdoor plays, and demonstrations of traditional handicraft.

Upscaling by Intensifying Dairy Production

From our sample, 12 of the respondents (33%) and 50 summer farmers in the total population (20%) have upscaled their dairy production by building an artisan dairy facility in their village to elaborate and sell products at a larger scale. Further, according to the 2017 inventory, an additional 6% sell raw milk to farm dairies [60]. For these farmers, the summer farm is still an important part of their economic equation, especially since the grazing in the summer farm is essential to have enough fodder for the animals all year around. The size of the herd can vary from 40 to 50 goats, they might have a mixed herd with a varying number of animals, or upscale with a couple of hundred goats. When upscaling, it is easier to concentrate on goats. Goats are cheaper than cows and informants claim that when the predators kill the goats, they leave the (more expensive) cows alone. But cows are also more of a challenge for predators, since they are bigger. In general, upscaling means that activities are organized in new ways. One of the farmers (with a large herd), for example, has the goats in the summer farm and the kids in the homestead. A majority of the kids are used for production of sausages. Another farmer with around 30 goats has the goats in the summer farm. In all cases, the milk is transported to the local dairy and the cheese is elaborated there. Rural tourism is an important component for farmers adopting this strategy.

Changing Focus—From Dairy to Meat

Six (17%) of the respondents in the sample and between 32–39% in the 2017 inventory [58] shifted from milk cattle, that require comprehensive daily care and not the least the daily milking and the elaboration of dairy products during the outset of the lactation period, to beef cattle that gives rise to much less work (cf. Figure 4). These informants have gained the growing demand for ‘food with a farmer’s face’, especially in the larger cities. This strategy is driven by several underlying causes. First of all, beef cattle require much less work than dairy cattle, as the only occasion in which products are elaborated is during the slaughter. However, an important incentive is growing demand. Perhaps the most discussed example is an informant who employed a salesperson that opened up contacts with consumers in Hammarby Sjöstad, a middle-class residential area in Stockholm. After establishing the new market, contacts with consumers have been kept through the homepage of the summer farmer. The informant has predetermined dates for meat deliveries and consumers can place their orders on-line. After the slaughter, the summer farmer delivers the meat in person at a parking lot in Hammarby Sjöstad. This procedure is repeated three or four times per year. Other summer farmers sell a smaller amount of meat to local consumers, but most of the meat is elaborated making sausages and smoked meat products, which are sold to restaurants, or at markets nearby either by themselves or through a sales agent. This is more according to historical traditions of summer farming since the surplus of animals were slaughtered when they returned to the homestead after the season of grazing, and consequently there was a need to develop different measures to preserve meat for later.



Figure 4. Beef cattle grazing on outlying land in Härjedalen. Photo: Håkan Tunón, 2016.

Other Forms of Specialization or Diversification

There is another group of summer farmers that developed the most diversified strategy and the summer farm activities are combined with other types of economic activities, for example doing all sorts of day jobs, like working in local nursing homes, selling their labour to other farmers or forestry companies, running other types of agricultural activities, just to mention a few examples. In the sample these represent 14% of the respondents ($n = 5$). However, in one of the cases, the family has tried to attract tourists to the summer farm, but the summer farm is situated so far from all roads that it was not possible to continue these efforts. They have also tried to establish a dairy in the village, but they soon realized that they could not work double shifts to keep the dairy running and that the amount of capital needed was higher than that calculated in the beginning. They were forced to shut down the dairy and they reduced the summer farm activities by reducing the number of cows. The only product sold at this moment is ‘Christmas cheese’ (‘julost’, sold in advance. It is produced in the summer and gets ripe during the autumn in the cheese cellar. The cheese is delivered to the customers just before Christmas. However, the main income for this family comes from other agricultural activities and by work done outside of the farm.

Another informant has a summer farm that is located around a half hour’s walk from the nearest road. This summer farm is located near a hiking trail; therefore a few tourists might pass each day. Not enough for a café, but there is always a thermos with fresh coffee, bread, cheese, cookies and milk for self-service where hikers can supply themselves with coffee and pay by putting money in a basket. The farm also offers summer farm courses for tourists and a couple of courses are sold each summer. The income from tourism activities is fairly modest, so the farmer also sells the summer farm produce in her home village during the autumn and she sells her labour both to the municipality and to other local firms. There is always a need for the farmer to do work tasks in order to be able to continue taking care of the goats. For farmers using this strategy the summer farm offers the opportunity to increase the amount of winter fodder, but even if economic activities in the summer farm are much less dependent on tourism, farmers still have to rely on income from the few hikers passing by and from outsiders who want to learn about summer farming. Many of these farmers sell the dairy products that they produce on the homestead either on the farm, or on markets (either by selling themselves or through market traders. Thus, indirectly this strategy is also dependent on tourism or at least on outsiders.

At least three of the strategies mentioned above are dependent on tourism. Moreover, they are also important for many other firms in a small town or a municipality, including other firms selling tourism

services, but also food stores, restaurants, gas stations and all types of other stores and businesses. For example, many municipalities promote the summer farms in their tourism brochures without charging the farmers and articles on the local press often have their pictures on the cover. Thus, summer farms are a symbol for the image that municipalities want to communicate to tourists and outsiders.

5.1.2. Institutions

One of the main challenges for transforming summer farming into regular businesses is the question of ownership. Grazing at summer farms is generally conducted on lands that are subjected to access according to customary rights, but with the decrease of the summer farms the knowledge and the acceptance of the traditional governance system has decreased as well. The summer farmers very seldom own the land where they graze. The same land is available to other stakeholders, for example tourism firms, hunters, people fishing in the lakes and rivers, hikers and the general public, and many summer farms have been turned into summer cottages. The acceptance of finding grazing animals in the vicinity of their summer houses is sometimes not seen with kind eyes by some tourists. In academia this type of shared resources is often referred to as common pool resources (CPR) [61].

All informants claim that, in most cases, and especially when the various activities are conducted by local stakeholders, it is possible to reach local and informal agreements on how to use the shared resources and areas. In fact, such local agreements often include mutual benefit. For example, one summer farmer has cabins to let and serves meals to the hunting and fishing tourists who buy their experience tourism activity through a local tourism entrepreneur. Some tourism operators include a bus-stop at a summer farm as part of their offer and the summer farm can sell coffee, pastries and cheese. Thus, local tourism creates a positive spill-over effect on summer farms. But this is also applicable the other way, as summer farmers reproduce landscapes and offer services that are important for tourism firms. In previous research it is argued that the creation of local institutions is important for solving conflicts related to the use of CPR [28,61]. Our results show that, in most cases, mutual benefit is an important driver to resolve or avoid conflicts, but infected situations might appear, especially when one of the stakeholders is an outsider. Several of the informants argue that conflicts arise with groups of hunters or other tourists who feel disturbed by the presence of summer farmers and their animals. A complicating factor in this case is that common resources can be used for multiple purposes.

The question of ownership involves many dimensions that have been neglected in previous research. The 2017 summer farm inventory concluded that 42% of the total population of summer farmers are the sole owner of their summer farm, while 29% own the summer farm together with somebody else. In 21% of the summer farms is leased by one person, while 8% of the total population involves two or more people leasing the summer farm together [58]. In our sample, seven of the informants do not own the summer farm. They rent the summer farm from either a village, a municipality or from a private farm. However, there are also cases involving intergenerational leasing arrangements between current summer farmers and their parents.

Having to rent the summer farm decreases the potential income for the summer farmer as the rent needs to be paid and the environmental subsidies are generally being paid to the land owner, but it also limits investments. For example, three of the informants rent their summer farm from a village or municipality. These informants claimed that using a diesel unit could enable some degree of mechanisation and ease the work. One decided not to buy it because the contract was on a yearly basis which increased the financial risk connected to the investment. In the second example the fact that the summer farm is rented disqualified the owner from getting possible financial support from the Rural Development Program. Consequently, the farmer could not afford the investment. In a third case, the farmer rented the farm from the municipality. For several years the summer farmer and her seasonal employee had to freeze in the old dwelling house. The coldness caused severe pain in her body, therefore she decided to pay for the construction of a small, simple, but insulated house for her, the staff and the incoming volunteers. She paid for the material and her husband built it

during his vacation. Unfortunately, when her lease expired, she was not financially compensated for the investment.

When the summer farm is owned by the parents and run by their adult children, there are benefits as well as potential sources of conflict. In one of the cases the economic risk of employing seasonal staff is carried by the parent and the farmer compensates the parent just for the amount of labour used in running the summer farm. This is clearly an arrangement that solves problems for both generations involved. In another case, the parents share their summer farm with their daughter, however, the parents have decided to remain involved in all activities. This arrangement results in a summer farm characterized by two activities based on two totally different philosophies, e.g., one that includes an old-fashion family subsistence strategy and the other that involves the separation of family from the business by establishing a small-scale farm dairy. The involved strategies often collide, creating conflicts between the people involved.

Finally, when discussing the entrepreneurial turn, it is impossible to avoid mentioning a case that became emblematic for understanding the impact of the entrepreneurial turn on summer farms, it is the case of Karl-Tövåsens summer farm (Figure 5). This farm was not part of the sample, although this case is well-known at national level, therefore it is necessary to include it. In January 2010, a new law forced all cash handling companies, for example shops, restaurants, and petrol stations, to use certified cash registers in order to decrease tax avoidance. The cash registers are connected to a special, on-line register where information about all transactions can be retrieved by the tax authorities. To operate an approved cash register, it is necessary to have access to electricity and internet access. If the company does not fulfil the requirements of the law, the company might be forced to pay a control fee of €916 (converted nominal value April 2020).



Figure 5. Karl-Tövåsens summer farm in Dalarna as a site for a music event, the cow and goat horn blowers' festival. Photo: Håkan Tunón, 2016.

In 2015 the National Tax Authority had declined the application to exempt Karl-Tövåsens summer farm from the authorized cash register demand. The reasons for applying for the exemption were several, for instance, the turnover is limited, there is no electricity, and often no 4G network. This case created national attention since it put the unreasonableness in measuring summer farming with the

same log as other economic activities. The owner of Karl-Tövåsens summer farm appealed to House of Appeals (Kammarrätten) and finally won against the National Tax Authority [60].

5.1.3. Conflicting Implementation of Regulations

One of the challenges for summer farms, but also for all small-scale food artisans, is that while legislation is developed at a national level and is supposed to be the same for all, its compliance is controlled at a municipal level. In the end, how the law is implemented is a question handled by the individual food inspector. Thus, the implementation and rigidity in the compliance with the law can be quite different between municipalities [57]. All informants argue that they at some point have experienced a negative response from the municipal food inspectors. Especially when tourism started to increase and when the sales of artisan food from summer farms started to get attention by the end of the 1990s several of the informants argued that they experienced that the municipality became more interested in their activities, at the same time the food inspectors demanded that the summer farm must have “municipal water from a tap”, a tiled dairy room and use technical solutions that require electricity. Needless to say, for many summer farmers this is a utopia, or as was expressed by a summer farmer in Dalarna, “we could just as well go home and close down the farm”.

Informants argue that over time their situation has improved. On the one hand, many municipal food inspectors have been replaced due to retirements. Incoming inspectors are not influenced by old practices that were developed to industrialize the food industry during the 20th Century. Thus, they are not influenced by informal institutions developed over time. Moreover, summer farmers have, together with other food artisans, managed to change at least a part of the institutional frame that governs their economic activities. With the help of the National Centre for Artisan Food, Eldrimner food artisans in general have since 2006 worked to develop standardized national industry rules that can help both the food artisans and the municipal food inspectors in how to interpret and implement hygiene regulations. In 2013, the National Food Authority adopted National Industry Regulation for Summer Farms [62].

In the new rules, it is stated that control should be based on what summer farms do and how they can avoid sanitary and health risks, instead of forcing them to copy large automatized industrial facilities [57,59].

In spite of the progress there is still a lot to be done to overcome the gap between summer farms and local authorities. For example, in October 2019, the municipality of Krokombodarna formally reported a summer farmer to the police after a meeting of the Municipal Building and Environment Committee, when they decided to close down economic activities at the summer farm Myhrbodarna (Figure 6), a well-known summer farm that was declared of national interest for biodiversity and heritage by several national authorities. However, this is a complex conflict. Myhrbodarna had an old permit for food elaboration which had been forgotten by the municipality. In the summer of 2019, the food inspector discovered that Myhrbodarna lacked an updated permit. Therefore, he required that Myhrbodarna register at the municipality to undergo official food control procedures (which can include quality of water, the elaboration facility, the outline of the café and much more). So, the small-scale café that used to be very popular during the summers, risks having seen its last summer. The summer farm is otherwise ranked as the most popular tourist site in the municipality. But while the summer farmer wanted the municipality to define what they are going to require from her in terms of investments and change before she registers her firm, since she has already done about 50 seasons she is a bit reluctant to make huge investments. The municipality requires that the summer farm is registered (which entails a high cost) before they can say which demands the municipality will impose on the farm. This catch-22 conflict has of course many nuances and at least two sides, but it illustrates a built-in conflict between centralization and small-scale production [63,64].



Figure 6. Myhrbodarna in Jämtland. Photo: Håkan Tunón, 2013.

To sum up, running a summer farm means that farmers need to be flexible and have the ability to simultaneously work with many things at the same time, which includes many different tasks that not necessarily create the economic values that enable the summer farmer to earn a living, but that are necessary within the frame of the subsistence strategy of the summer farmer. One summer farmer sums this up in the following way:

“Yes, that’s the economy then, you should have money for it. Because you can dream as much as you want, then you have to realize that you have to have the money for it too. To preserve (food and fodder, writer’s note) and a little stuff, pick things, you always have food. But you still have to pay the bills”.

Another farmer refers to multitasking and combining activities:

“Yes, it depends. Because if you live like me, or like us then, you have the opportunity to be a seasoner too, because you are in the mountain world. So, you can stand in the ski lift ... then you get a fixed salary there, in the lift. But it is not always you do it, but it is extra time. It depends on what you have”.

Several of the farmers also refer to the possibility of getting subsidies:

“Yes, these EU-subsidies for summer farms are good. It’s hunky dory!”; and “there you have, EU-subsidies are paid per animal unit and ... there is more support ... then it is a bit for the fields and for biodiversity”.

Thus, as the business environment for summer farms requires that farmers implement multiple strategies that entail conducting many types of economic activities, and that might include working outside the farm during parts of the year, and many of the farms use available subsidies to make their businesses go around. Concerning business institutions, these are sometimes unclear and risk raising economic risks and uncertainty. On the one hand, there is an official desire that summer farms continue to exist and that they offer various types of social, natural and economic services, but formal rules and regulations and their implementation still collide from time to time. However, summer farms are not only passively affected by institutions, the development of the Industry Regulations for Summer Farms indicates that they are also actively influencing institutions around them and they try to change them to their favour.

5.2. Social Context and Environment

5.2.1. Organizations and Formal Networks

Summer farmers are organized through various organizations. At national level, there is Förbundet Svensk Fäbodkultur och utmarksbruk (FSF) that represents the summer farmers towards the government at national level and internationally. For example, they act as the official referral body when the government sends out important documents for a referral round. During the last 30 years, some of the more important strategic issues have been and are the subsidies for summer farmers in the recurring rural development programs (CAP) (See, for example, [65]), the national policy on large carnivores which is quite important as summer farm animals co-exist with predators in the forests [17,29] problems caused by terrain driving [66], biodiversity issues and much more). At the regional level, there are also five regional organizations through which summer farmers are represented, Gävleborgs fäbodförening, Dalarnas Fäbodbrukarförening, Värmlands Säterbrukarförening (VSBF), Föreningen Värmlands Säterkultur and Jämtland/Härjedalen Fäbodliv & Utmarksbruk. These are independent organizations, but are co-operating under the FSF in national issues. As summer farms are a minority within the total population of farmers, having a national organization is essential also for solving business problems. The national farmers' association Lantbrukarnas riksförbund (LRF) is generally seen by the summer farmers as an organisation for the large scale, industrial farming. However, some summer farmers are members also of that organisation.

One of the activities organized under the FSF is to arrange network meetings to identify ideas that can help increase summer farmers income and to communicate the values embedded in summer farming in order to attract new young people to become summer farmers. Some concrete opportunities identified to develop current business models include charging entrance fees, or charging tourists for showing them around. The latter is something that most tourists today take for granted and tourists often expect that summer farms are opened whenever they happen to show up and that the summer farmers should be willing to show them around and tell them about summer farming. This is commented by one summer farmer in the following way: "tourists are just disturbing, they come and they want me to give them my time, but I have hundreds of other things to do". Some summer farms actually have collection boxes, but they are always placed in secluded places and tourists do not necessarily see them, or do not understand how important their contribution actually is. One farmer (who is an exception), made an experiment by placing a big sign right at the entrance where he told people that their contribution was important, asking them to send a contribution of approximately €2 electronically (through the mobile phone). Before, the collection box got €20–30 every year, now the electronic collection box gets around €2000 per summer.

Other ideas include arranging self-service, developing community supported agriculture and selling shares of the summer farm and arranging with fixed opening hours to avoid a constant drop in that makes daily work more difficult [67].

The national and regional organizations are also important in business matters. A good example of the key role played by the regional and national organizations can be illustrated through an ongoing conflict that involves all summer farms and two industrial food firms, namely Melkers Chark AB in Falun and Leksands Knäckebröd AB and word 'fäbod', which is Swedish for summer farm. In 1981, Melkers Chark AB protected the word 'fäbod' under the trademark protection law. At that time, the number of summer farms was at an all-time low and people generally perceived it as a historical phenomenon and the Swedish Patent Office had no problem approving the application. Melkers renewed the protection of the word in 1998 and under the same year Leksands knäckebröd AB protected the word 'fäbodknäcke', which in Swedish means 'flatbread made on a summer farm'. This was unnoticed until 2010, when the demand for local and artisan food started to increase and 10 summer farmers from three provinces came together and invested in producing 'summer farm ice cream' ('fäbodglass'). The ice cream was marketed through the marketing organization 'Food in Härjedalen' (Mat i Härjedalen). They received a letter from Melkers Chark AB in which the company

threatened to take Mat i Härjedalen to court if they continued using the word 'fäbod'. Mat i Härjedalen closed down as they did not have the funding for financing a legal process against Melkers Chark AB, and one of the summer farmers who is also a member of the National Farmers' Association (LRF), contacted one of their tax consultants to get advice on how to handle the problem. He comments on this issue in the following way:

"so, I called LRF, their tax ... He is responsible for tax issues, and so I said that now I have ended up in this situation ... He answered: yes, we'll have a meeting here and I will call you back, he said. He phoned, and then he said that this is a matter of principles and fundamentally important for such small-scale entrepreneurs as you and for summer farmers in general. We will pursue this issue legally regardless of the outcome you will not have to pay for any legal costs".

The outcome of this particular problem is still uncertain, but a single summer farmer could never raise the resources needed to pursue this kind of process. In this case, the formal network through the farmer's membership in LRF helped mobilize the resources needed to address this problem.

5.2.2. Informal and Personal Networks—Two Examples

Summer farmers are also dependent on their local networks, without which it would be impossible to run a summer farm. Normally the personal networks of the summer farmers are kept together by the common interest of locally maintaining the phenomena of summer farming and the cultural and biological heritage connected to summer farming. Some additional common interests, mixed with the previous, is promoting rural development and 'keeping the local community alive'. As the networks of each informant are quite different, we will exemplify the nature of these local networks through two examples. We will not use the names of the summer farms, instead we will call them SF1 and SF2.

SF1 is owned by the municipality and leased to summer farmers, normally for several years. In 2017, we were able to study how the summer farm works by observing how activities are conducted and how problems are solved. The activities conducted in 2017 were traditional animal husbandry and production of dairy products, in addition they had a farm café, courses for children (life on a farm in past times), courses for adults (curdling, summer farming), rented out rooms (for self-service), sales of handicraft (for example knitted socks and gloves), theatre and poetry evenings, and much more. In addition, as the summer farm is owned by the municipality, they were obliged to open the gate at noon every day and receive visitors the entire day. However, often visitors could come already at 10AM and hang around after closing hours. The permanent summer staff was composed of the lease holder who worked full-time during the entire summer and two part time employees, there was also supposed to be a person that took care of the café, but that person did not turn up the summer of 2017. In addition, it was necessary to receive volunteers since the employed staff was not sufficient and consequently there were between 4 and 6 people working every day. They started working at the crack of dawn and kept on going until late in the evening. Therefore, when it was necessary for an extra hand, the lease holder phoned people at the Local Heritage Organization ('hembygdsföreningen') who had a pool of volunteers that took turns helping out with various tasks, for example running errands and whenever needed help out when there is a shortage of staff. The Local Heritage Organization is practically and officially responsible for the culturally valuable buildings at the summer farm and does most maintenance on them and the traditional fences. In addition, as the summer farmer only leased the summer farm, she did not own the animals, therefore she borrowed the cows from one local farmer and the goats from another. The farmers kept the animal subsidies in order to finance the winter fodder, but the summer farmer could use the milk for free. Moreover, dairy production is quite modest, especially at the beginning of the season, therefore the café sold cheese from the goat farmer (who also has a farm dairy). The summer farmer also bought charcuteries and jam from other local food producers and some pastries. The knitted handicraft was produced by a couple of local women. The theatre and poetry evenings were organized by external organizations and at each occasion the

summer farmer has the opportunity to sell a lot of food. The lease holder concluded that it is very difficult to make a profit.

SF2 is run by the family that owns the farm and is located right by the entrance to a national park. The family owns its own animals and runs a café and the adult daughter has a farm dairy. They are open for tourists and they also rent out cottages for people who want to stay over. The County Administrative Board ('länsstyrelsen') built and maintained the road that goes to the national park and they built a visitor centre, a large parking lot and installed toilets for the public. This benefits the summer farm as it makes the farm accessible for tourists. In addition, the father in the family has a part time employment as a game warden. The café sells pastries baked by a villager who gets milk in exchange for baking, they also sell sausages made by a relatively small county charcuterie. Furthermore, they barter other kinds of goods and services with local people in exchange for milk or dairy products, i.e., a traditional way of living in this rural region.

In both cases the networks are driven by different interests that keep the network together. In SF1 the people involved in the network of the summer farmer claimed that they wanted to contribute to the preservation of summer farming since it is part of the local culture and one of the economic activities that in all times has contributed to reproduce the landscape that makes the area appealing. Shared values and common goals hold the network together by jointly working for the preservation of the biological and cultural heritage which is maintained by summer farming. The shared values create social ties and relations that enable economic activities and entrepreneurship in summer farming. While in SF2 the network is part of the reproduction strategy embodied in the exchange of products, a barter economy. Moreover, in SF2 the location of the farm makes the summer farmers the gatekeepers of the national park, they help out taking care of the park, the visitor centre and the parking lot and they get paid for it. At the same time, 'länsstyrelsen' can make the national park accessible and meet the state's legally determined nature goals without having to recruit outsiders, which probably would have been much more costly. A living summer farm is also a local cultural aspect that appeals to the visitors. SF2 has a mix of activities which enables the family to earn a living. There is probably a good opportunity to make a profit because of the location of the summer farm, but in this case the family has not fully exploited the possibilities to make a profit because for this family (as for many others), summer farming is a lifestyle, not a business. It is difficult to create a conceptual change in the minds of the farmers.

5.3. Spatial Aspects, Geography and Physical Context

5.3.1. Peripherality

The nature and location of summer farms makes them peripheral for conducting businesses. Historically, it was necessary to use the possibility of bringing animals to pastures located far from the homestead and from the village as part of the reproduction strategy of the farmers [19]. Further, many summer farmers still claim that the grazing at their homestead and in their villages are not enough to feed a sufficient number of animals. However, this also means that summer farms often are located far from public roads, or at least far from villages and towns. In Sweden, peripheral areas are defined as: "Areas that have more than 45 min driving distance to the nearest urban area" [68].

In practice, the socio-geographical definition can be translated into the fact that when there is a road to the summer farm, it most often requires that visitors and potential tourists plan to visit the summer farm, it is more seldom that a summer farm is located in a place that makes many people making unplanned visits while passing on their way to another destination. Thus, living out of income generated by drop-in tourism is quite difficult. One example is Långbuan (also called Långbodarna). This summer farm is owned by an association and a summer farmer leased the summer farm during 20 years (until 2008–2009). She retired when she no longer could manage the summer farm because of the hard work it entails. Around 2010 a new summer farmer started leasing the farm, but she worked with municipal local health service during most of the year. Thus, the summer farm was first and

foremost a summer activity for her and the focus was on running a café. The summer farm had a few borrowed animals and the lease holder could produce a few kilos of cheese (in total), but the business was mainly based on selling waffles with jam and whipped cream and coffee. This particular farm is quite interesting as it is located by a main road, described as “the culturally rich summer farm road from Persåsen to Börtnan” [69], thus many tourists drive through the area during the summer. In spite of its location, it was impossible to make the summer café profitable enough to keep it open. Therefore, the café was closed down after the summer of 2014. It therefore seems the diversification strategies mentioned above are necessary to cope with the impact of peripherality of the business aspects of summer farms.

5.3.2. Large Carnivores

Summer farms are located in areas where the presence of large carnivores is something that they have to live with. Bears, wolves, lynx and other predators constitute a constant threat to all domestic and wild animals. Large carnivores affect all economic activities and not only summer farms, but for entrepreneurs who have to “make magic to make businesses go around” it is quite frustrating when their animals are killed by carnivores (Figure 7). One of the informants illustrates her fear through the story of one of her former colleagues whose animals were killed in carnivore attacks twice. The person in question was interviewed in June 2012 in a project preceding our project. On that occasion she told the interviewer that she rented her summer farm in a location in Jämtland, but as many of her animals were killed in carnivore attacks, she moved and started renting at another location. In 2015, her animals were attacked again and all her animals were killed. She then decided to give up summer farming because she could not stand the pain of losing her animals.



Figure 7. The Swedish mountain cow Sara killed and partly eaten by wolves. To the small-scale farmer an animal is not just animal, it is an individual. Photo: Hans Lind, 2012.

Large carnivores share the space with the domestic animals, which causes financial losses for farmers and stress for the animals. The state is not insensitive to this problem and the issue is monitored by the Wildlife Damage Centre at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Moreover, the

predator policy is constantly under review. However, this is an area in which the interests of summer farmers collide with other interests. One study concluded that some of the owners of domesticated animals could consider moving to areas where the predation risk is lower, but in most cases moving is not an option. Moreover, the risk of losing animals is imminent as summer farm animals are free ranging which makes them more prone to carnivore attacks [70].

Large carnivores also force farmers to spend lots of time looking for their animals when they have been scared by carnivores. This might also cause insomnia amongst concerned summer farmers who have difficulties to sleep due to this problem [17]. Informants claim that the state compensates farmers financially for the loss of animals, however, when an animal is killed production of dairy products decreases and it might take a long time to replace an animal. Moreover, predators cause stress at a personal level for both farmers and animals.

5.3.3. Biodiversity and Conservation

Conservation of nature and cultural heritage is another source of discord with regional authorities. One of the informants claims that the discourse about the conservation of nature and cultural heritage as a priority for the entire nation sounds good, but in practice, priority is always given to resorts, alpine centres, wind farms, and other infrastructure investments in the community. On paper, the national and the regional goal is that the historical and biological values on grazing forests and meadows should be preserved and strengthened. Grazing the commons helps maintain an attractive landscape that is appreciated not the least by tourists. It helps to reproduce a cultural heritage. It produces ecosystem services creating a habitat for a large number of plants and insects. The grazing rights on commons carry the expectation that these services will be provided by the farmers as compensation for free access to pastures. But according to one informant, cows need tranquillity when grazing, which is impossible to achieve amidst all tourists. This constitutes a problem for summer farms located near tourist facilities. One of the informants concludes that summer farm life is not suited for today's society, and he sometimes feels that his lifestyle does not fit in the public debate.

There are several different environmental subsidies in order to maintain the natural and cultural values of the summer farms. The most central one is 'summer farm in use' ('fäbod i bruk') subsidies that can be given to a farmer with a summer farm with at least one traditional building and a previous history with summer farming. It is only allowed as a seasonal farm and grazing should occur not earlier than 1 May or later than 31 October. Furthermore, it should be approved as a summer farm by the County Administrative Board and have at least 6 hectare of grazing ground and with more than 1.2 animal units of grazing [71]. This is a five-year commitment, and if farmers for some reason won't fulfil their commitments, they might have to return also previous years subsidies. This is a common reason, especially among elderly farmers, to avoid applying for the subsidies. There is also a relevant subsidy for keeping local breeds of domestic animals of which some are traditional at summer farms. It is based on the number of animal units held [72]. There are also additional subsidies for management of particular habitats like hay harvest on meadows and if traditional methods are being used, like scythe [73]. The common opinion of the summer farmers we've been in contact with is that there are a lot of administration, controls and worries connected with them. The official statistics on the number of summer farms is taken from the number of summer farms that have subsidies (Figure 2).

In recent years, authorities started recognizing that it is difficult to design policies for summer farms and that there is a lack of understanding of what a summer farm is. On the one hand, it was recognized that all the policy goals that meet within the frame of a summer farm, for example environmental support, summer farm support, rural development, rural cohesion, biodiversity, and maintaining culture bearing traditions and cultural heritage are difficult to combine and secondly it was concluded that public authorities in general have a fragmented understanding about summer farming, therefore it is necessary to outline a 'Summer Farm Manual and to create a 'National Council for Summer Farm Affaires' [74]. Whether the insight has been translated into real action is difficult to

evaluate because it is a proposal that would start to be applied from the rural program 2014–2020 and that particular program has not yet been completed.

5.3.4. Climate Change

An important contemporary issue for the society as a whole is climate change and its impact on cultural heritage is internationally highlighted by for instance Shirvani Dastgerdi and co-workers [75]. In the region of Sweden where the majority of the active summer farms still remain, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute has predicted climate change that the temperature and rainfall will increase and the vegetation season will be prolonged. Depending on the altitude of the summer farm the average summer temperature is predicted to rise from 10–12 °C to 14–16 °C (RCP 4.5) and rainfall by 20–28% by the end of this century. The vegetation season in western Jämtland county is likely to increase from <140–150 days to 150–170 days, and from 150–170 to 180–210 days in Dalarna county [76,77]. The season for possible summer farming will thus be prolonged and the vegetation growth increased. Therefore, it could be concluded that the conditions for summer farming can potentially be improved, but in order to maintain the grazed landscape and the related biological heritage an increased grazing pressure will be needed in order to mitigate the landscape change due to climate change. However, the development with an increasing number of summer farms for tourism purposes is likely to lead to a decreasing number of grazing animals.

6. Conclusions

Summer farming is a historical phenomenon with cultural and biological values. As a result of the entrepreneurial turn, summer farmers have developed five main strategies to stay in business, three of which are related to rural tourism, one that focuses on increasing production by increasing the number of animals at the summer farm, and the last that includes taking extra work on the side means a minimum of changes from before. Apart from this a large number of the remaining summer farms have today also changed into private summer cottages, sometimes with grazing animals and sometimes not.

The analysis shows that, in spite of the efforts made by most summer farmers to become more commercial, farms are exposed to several challenges and it is not always possible to make a profit. But summer farmers are not passive, many of them respond actively to challenges resulting from the entrepreneurial turn, for example adopting industry guidelines for food elaboration and fighting against improper authority demands and unfair competition shows that summer farmers become organized and influence and change institutional settings to be able to conduct their activities as businesses. Perhaps the most important conclusion is that there is a contradiction in running a summer farm as a business on commercial terms, since summer farming means running a farm for 2–3 months in the summer, often in a remote area, which is rather labour intensive. Furthermore, the farms, chores and food production are to a large proportion more of a cultural heritage than a competitive business. Animals need to be fed and taken care of all year and the farmer and the animals need to survive the other 9–10 months of the year. Further, when comparing what summer farmers do to survive today, with the definitions of what summer farming is, we conclude that the meaning of summer farming is changing. Today, many summer farms have turned into summer farm cafés where some still do many of the things connected to summer farming while others just run a café at the site, thus, rural tourism is an important source of income and essential for the long-term survival of summer farming. Some summer farmers have shifted their focus to produce meat instead of traditional dairy products, but this requires that activities are upscaled by increasing the number of animals. Consequently, the term summer farm can mean a lot more than what is included in the academic definitions of a traditional summer farm, as mentioned in the beginning of this text. This also means that summer farming in the eyes of the public is generally considered to be more of a cultural thing than an agricultural business. Due to the nature of summer farming, we argue that summer farmers are highly influenced

by tradition, culture, identity, and inherited practices [62] and that their business activities are both constrained and enabled by biological heritage [26].

An additional conclusion is that summer farmers provide services to rural tourists, not only by offering an activity and the possibility of having a snack and coffee, but also because they help reproducing the open cultural landscape, which is typical of summer farms, they help maintaining the historical buildings that are part of the landscape, and they keep animals, often landraces. All of this is highly appreciated by tourists and it also creates a positive spill-over on other tourism ventures that sell trips, hotel accommodation and activities to tourists in the neighbourhood. The societal value of summer farming is probably higher than the profit that the summer farmers can make from businesses on a free market. This article contributes in a small way towards opening up the discussion regarding the impact of the entrepreneurial turn on artisanal farming systems with high cultural and natural values. We believe that this is beneficial to European and Swedish policy development and can enrich the academic discussion.

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