

**The Socioecological Lives of Small-Scale Organic Farmers and Farms:
An Exploration of Difference**

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Abstract

THE SOCIOECOLOGICAL LIVES OF SMALL-SCALE ORGANIC FARMERS AND FARMS: AN EXPLORATION OF DIFFERENCE

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Organic farming has often been described as a single unified entity. Further, this unified praxis is often discussed as an alternative approach to agriculture and as a particular social and environmental movement. There has been increasing acknowledgement in academia that there are many different organics, or versions, or knowledges of organic, but what this means to individual farmers and farms remains to be explored. This is the point of departure for this work. This is an interdisciplinary project situated at the intersection of human geography, cultural anthropology, and political science, informed by and engaged with actor-network theory and visual methodologies. My methods include ethnographic participant observation, interviews, and photovoice. For this project I visited 17 small-scale organic farms in southern British Columbia. My findings indicate that different ideas, opinions, and narratives of organic abound, but most importantly that reconciling difference and nostalgia amid vast change was an overwhelming theme for the farmers and farms in this project.

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Abbreviations

ANT	Actor-Network Theory
BC	British Columbia
BCAFM	British Columbia Association of Farmers Markets
BCARA	British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COABC	Certified Organic Association of British Columbia
COG	Canadian Organic Growers
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KLAS	Kootenay Local Agricultural Society
KOGS	Kootenay Organic Growers
LEOGA	Living Earth Organic Growers Association
NDP	New Democratic Party
OFIBC	Organic Farming Institute of British Columbia
PACS	Pacific Agriculture Certification Society
SOOPA	Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association
SVFA	Slocan Valley Farmers Association
UBC	University of British Columbia
UofS	University of Saskatchewan
VFM	Vancouver Farmers Markets
VO	Verification Officer
WWOOF	World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms

Introduction

If we accept that geographical knowledges throughout which commodity systems are imagined and acted upon from within are fragmentary, multiple, contradictory, and often downright hypocritical, then the power of a text which deals with these knowledges comes not from smoothing them out, but through juxtaposing and montaging them...so that audiences can work their way through them and, along the way, inject and make their own critical knowledges out of them. (Cook and Crang, 1996: 41, as quoted in Cook, 2004).

Sixty years have changed everything [...] This isn't what we meant. (Joan Dye Gussow, 2002)

Organic farming has often been described in academic literature, and more popularly, as a single unified entity. Further, this unified praxis is often discussed as an alternative approach to agriculture and as a particular social and environmental movement. However, it has been increasingly acknowledged in academia that there are many different organics, or versions, or knowledges of organic. This is not to say that organic is not an alternative approach to agriculture or a particular social and environmental movement, but what that praxis means to individual farmers and farms is worth exploring. As Goodman and Dupuis (2002) have suggested, this is not just a question of how food is grown, but how it is known.

Despite increasing acknowledgement of this difference within/of organic and further, despite the popularity and success of organic foods that has brought with it an often conflicted and contested sense of identity between organic as a socioecological movement on one hand, and “that of a rapidly and steadily growing industry on the other, with lines blurred between the two,” (Vos, 2007: 2) what some of these differences are as described by organic farmers and farms remains to be explored. This project seeks to fill

that gap. This work also seeks to move beyond the polarization of small-scale philosophically committed farmers and large-scale commercially minded growers by articulating the different ideas and practices of small-scale organic farmers in British Columbia.

Additionally expressed in the organic movement is, “an oppositional political praxis,” (Goodman, 1999: 32). While this project does not specifically detail or address the politics of the organic certification and other agrofood policies, or the political economy of the increasing industrialization and marketization of organic land, farm labour, and farm produce, it is located within these politics¹. This work is mainly concerned with the everyday socioecological lives of individual farmers and farms within/of /despite this political locality. Further, because organic is often described as an economic activity, a livelihood, a way of life, a movement, and an expression of social, environmental, and political values in local places, and global spaces all at once, this work is intended as a jumping point for future research that asks how organic can ameliorate our agro-food system and our nature-society relationship.

For this project I employed inductive qualitative ethnographic research methods to explore the socioecological lives of small-scale organic farmers in British Columbia. This thesis argues that organic agriculture can be understood as a continuum of different ideas and practices. Further this thesis argues that an articulation of specific differences can benefit a discussion of what organic and the organic movement are, and can further the discussion of how organic can ameliorate our agrofood system and our nature-society relationship. The project was driven by the notion that we needed to learn from organic

¹ For excellent works that explore and detail these see: Allen et al., 2003; Belasco, 2007; Goodman, 1999; Goodman and Dupuis, 2002; Guthman, 1998; Guthman, 2004; Mansfield, 2004; Tovey, 1997; Vos, 2000; Vos, 2007.

farmers and farms, what they do, and how and why they do it. Using participants' own words and photographs these practices, ideas, and narratives have been laid out, montaged and juxtaposed in this report.

Specifically, the following questions were asked: 1) Who is the organic farmer; what is their social, political, and environmental identity? 2) What is the organic farm; what is their social, political, and environmental identity? 3) What is the organic movement with respect to these farms and farmers? 4) What is organic with respect to these farms and farmers?

The goals of this project have been:

- To provide an answer to calls from the literature to discuss difference in organic by exploring the different socioecological ideas and practices of organic farmer and farm.
- To provide an answer to calls from the literature to use actor-network theory in alternative agrofood research. To bring together human and nonhuman, nature and society and to present farm and farm as individual creative and relational actors.
- To provide an answer to calls from the literature to use more in-depth and participatory methods in agrofood research that enable ethnographic stories to be told.
- To add to the limited amount of photovoice literature that explores rural livelihoods, life, and settings.

This report begins with a chapter briefly detailing the relevant literatures and approaches used throughout the project. Followed in Chapter 2, I detail the study areas I travelled to in British Columbia and why these areas were chosen, while Chapter 3

discusses methodology. Chapter 4 explores the project's first two questions: who is the organic farmer, and what is the organic farm through the presentation of the participants' own words and photographs. Chapter 5 addresses the project's second two questions: what is organic and the organic movement with respect to these farmers and farms, again by detailing patterns, themes, and differences using the participants' own words. Chapter 6 discusses these results and in the last chapter I conclude the project and suggest areas for further research.

Chapter 1: Literature and Approach

My approach to the subject matter in this thesis is intended to be interdisciplinary, particularly bringing together literature in human geography, cultural anthropology, and political science. This work is informed by a number of influential scholars and bodies of theory: David Harvey (1996), Anthony Cohen (1989), actor network as described primarily by David Goodman (1999), and visual methodologies. All of the aforementioned are not consistent theories or frameworks, but rather connect research of similar methodologies and interests. How they inform the interests and methodologies of this work is described below.

In the following pages I explore the socioecological ideas and practices of small-scale organic farmers in British Columbia. It is thus important for me to describe what is meant by socioecological. Socioecological is a term taken from Harvey (1996). This term aims to transcend the false dialectic, or antinomy, of society/nature. ‘Organic’ is often described as calling this dualism into question, as organic farming is characterized as both, “an economic activity, i.e. a livelihood and a way of life; an expression of social and environmental ethics; and an environmental social movement with political ramifications,” (Vos, 2007:6). In this work socioecological embodies the environmental-economic-political-and-otherwise-social lives of farmer, farm, and organic itself.²

1.1 Commonality and Militant Particularism

Organic farming is often described in academic literature and more popularly, as a single unified entity.³ Though, it has been increasingly recognized in academia that there are

² The hyphen is used here to symbolize that theses are not separate (i.e. an environmental life, an economic life, a political life, and a social life) but rather connected as one.

³ See anything written by Michael Pollen. With three books on food, farming, and organic on the New York Times bestsellers list, as well as his reviews on the jackets of numerous other books related to food and

many different ‘organics’, or versions of organic, emerging and existing simultaneously in different places in North America, and around the world.⁴ As Guthman (2004) notes:

In truth, it is impossible to divine a singular argument and meaning for organic agriculture. The unification of themes into an organic movement has not been without contradictions and exclusions, and many contemporary understandings of organic agriculture are not even complementary, (Guthman, 2004: 3).

However, Vos explains that organic is a continuum of knowledges, “any given expression of organic agriculture will demonstrate its own unique blend...[that] however varied they may be, do present a substantive set of common values,” (Vos, 2000: 252). Despite the thorough acknowledgement of this difference within/of organic what some of the differences in ideas and practices as described by organic farmers and farms remains to be asked. This work seeks to fill this gap.

To help explore this difference, a first point of departure is taken from Cohen (1989) an author who has discussed the polysemics of ‘symbols’ within a community—in this case organic—“the commonality which is found in community need not be a uniformity. It does not clone behavior or ideas, it is a commonality of *forms* (ways of behaving) whose content may vary considerably among its members,” (Cohen, 1989: 20) [author’s emphasis and parentheses]. James (1993) uses Cohen’s work to explore different discourses of organic in consumer-based public media in the UK. She notes that in a culture where ideas and attitudes are sold along with goods in the market it can’t be presumed that buying an organic good signifies, “buying into the environmentalist cause.” She reveals that there are other discourses in which organic food is located, “although the

organic farming, it is clear there is a mainstream audience for his writings. Other writers like Barbara Kingslover, Joel Salatin, Michael Ableman, Michael Smit, and himself, have become North American organic food ‘rock stars’ (See Petrusa, 2012).

⁴ Allen et al., 2003; James, 1993; Belasco, 2007; Guthman, 2004; Kaltoft, 1999, 2001; Mansfield, 2004; Stock, (2007); Vos, 2000.

consumption of organic food may symbolize a commitment to environmentalism, quite different meanings may be invoked,” (James, 1993: 205). Here, some differences within which organic agriculture is located will be explored.

Cohen’s work is of particular importance to this project, as with the increasing success and popularity of organic foods in the marketplace along with the federalization of certification standards, a conflicted and contradictory sense of the identity of organic is often described.⁵ However, this project aims to move beyond contestation and conflict. By articulating differences this project aims to move beyond the polarization of small-scale philosophically committed farmers and large-scale commercially minded growers. As Allen et al. (2003) suggest, to further understand the alternative socioecological ideas embedded in organic we are now required to look past their similarities and examine their differences. Kaltoft (1999) explores the different values of nature embedded in the practices of small-scale organic producers in Denmark. Though my project is related it is differentiated primarily by scale—Kaltoft’s study includes only six farms—and method—information was collected solely through interviews. Qazi and Selfa (2005) too examine the different politics and perceptions of alternative agriculture in Washington State —though of local agriculture, not organic agriculture. Further, Mansfield discusses the differences between a more ethical-based organic and a more scientific-based organic (inputs and outputs) in light of the debates surrounding the potential aquaculture organic certifications. Following Cohen, then, I argue that organic can be understood as a continuum composed of different ideas and practices. Further, that an understanding of

⁵ Organic certification standards became federal rule in 2009 in Canada, and 2002 in The United States. Additionally, in 2009 the Canadian organic market was valued at \$2 billion CDN, and in 2011 the US and global markets were valued at \$29 billion CDN and \$63 billion USD, respectfully (AAFC, 2011).

some of these differences can benefit my exploration of what organic and what the organic movement are.

Various authors have remarked that organic is “inevitably entangled with” Harvey’s (1996) concept of militant particularism and global ambition (Vos, 2007: 6).⁶ This concept embodies the idea that “locally generated and embedded movements, engaged in emancipatory or transformative political projects, are of necessity always confronted by challenges of translation and abstraction whenever they endeavor,” (ibid.) to reach beyond the place in which they are formed. “And here is the rub,” states Harvey:

The move from tangible solidarities understood as patterns of social life organized in affective and knowable communities to a more abstract set of conceptions that would have universal purchase involves a move from one level of abstraction—attached to place—to another level of abstraction capable of reaching out across space, (Harvey, 1996:33).

Organic farming provides an extremely fitting example of Harvey (1996) and Williams’s (1989) concept of militant particularism and global ambition. It is from the local character of organic farming and organic farming movements that the normative standards of organic were originally developed, but as an idea and movement with socioecological ramifications, organic farming reaches beyond its local contexts and is “always mixed with ideas and influences that have originated elsewhere,” (Vos, 2007: 7). It is located, and yet, simultaneously, “being networked (at times more of less cohesively) into a movement of (at least potentially) global importance,” Vos (2000: 252) [author’s parentheses]. Additionally, Allen et al. (2003) in their study of the definitions of food-system problems and solutions from alternative food initiatives in California suggest that most work thus far has explored the global ambitions shared by alternative food while leaving out the militant particularisms. And that, “there is now a need for a more explicit

⁶ This is an expansion of William’s (1989) concept of military particularism.

consideration of their differences” (Allen et. Al., 2003:62). My research seeks to fill this gap: what are the socioecological lives of organic farmers and farms?

There is continuum of organic attached to place but capable of reaching out across space. Within each exist differences. The differences of organic in place are worth exploring because of the emphasis that is placed on the ability of organic in space to ameliorate, even change the agro-food system, and nature-society relations. It is with these concepts, Cohen’s commonality not uniformity, and Harvey’s militant particularism, then, that I began to ask: what are the socioecological lives of organic farmers? What are the socioecological lives of organic farms? What is the organic movement and what is organic with respect to these farmers and farms?

1.2 Agency, Actor-Network Theory and Nature

Cohen and Harvey open the door for me to begin exploring the differences within organic. That said, it is with actor-network theory and photovoice—which is described in the next section—that I will examine these differences. Actor-network theory (ANT) is an emergent set of ideas and methodologies, rooted primarily in the works of Latour (1993) Callon (1986) and Law (Law and Hassard, 1999). Actor-networks are made up of human and non-human actors that are “co-produced performative identities” (Callon and Latour, 1992). In recent years there has been a significant reviewing by social theorists who argue that ideas of ‘agency’ are much too narrow. These ideas often define agency in terms of the human subject, and many of these ideas have, “tended to ignore the agency and materiality of nature, leading to the social and scientific construction of nature in human terms,” (Jones and Cloke, 2002: 50). I join the argument alongside Fitzsimmons and Goodman (1998) and Demeritt (1994) that ANT is able to provide a new metaphor,

“to imagine nature as both real material actor *and* socially constructed object without reducing it, ultimately, to a single pole of the nature/culture dualism” (Demeritt, 1994:163) [my emphasis].⁷ In this project I use ANT to view both farmer and farm as individuals asking not only who is the organic farmer, what is their socioecological life but also, what is the organic farm, what is their socioecological life? This idea was inspired by my time spent working on organic farms prior to this project. Most farmers often discussed the farm—as well as many different organisms on the farm—as their own individual entity with an active quality of which they, the farmer, are a part but is ultimately its own.

For my purposes here it is important to describe two aspects of ANT. First, as noted above, ANT has recognized the agency of non-human actors and that the natural and the social flow into one another. As Jones and Cloke (2002) note in their comprehensive research on the agency of trees, ANT does not argue that non-humans possess the particular capabilities of humans but that they do possess significant forms of active agency, which has usually been ignored or assumed to exist only in the human realm. In his seminal work with ANT Callon (1986) treats the scallops of St Brieuc Bay as active agents, rather than passive subjects the researchers and fisherman act around.

The second, and perhaps the key contribution of ANT, has been to reject the human/non-human, nature/society distinction so prominent in modern thought. Latour calls this the hybrid collective (Latour and Callon, 1995), and notes that agency should focus on the “production of nature-cultures” instead of the binary of external “things in themselves” and society as “men-among-themselves[sic]” (Latour, 1993: 106-107). This

⁷ Also see Fitzsimmons and Goodman (1998); Goodman (1999); Jones and Cloke (2002); Kaltoft (2001); Whatmore (2000).

too is argued by Harvey (1996) as he emphasizes that non-human actors should be seen as ‘active subjects’ in order for, “the artificial break between ‘society’ and ‘nature’ [to] be eroded, rendered porous, and eventually dissolved,” (Harvey, 1996:192). Agency in these networks is conceived as the collective capacity of humans and non-humans. Here agency is viewed as a relational effect spun between different interacting actors rather than as a solitary intent or act. Stemming from this idea of hybrid collectives is Latour’s notion of symmetry, which rejects categorical notions of nature and society. Additionally, the notion of symmetry refers to ‘a summing up of interactions’. There is no change of scale, no switching from the local to the global and back again, no “Big Society”, or environment *and* society. Rather, all is happening at the same time, on one flat plane. Further, Latour informs us that, “actor is not here to play the role of agency and network the role of society,” (Latour, 1999:19). This may seem initially to be at odds with Harvey’s militant particularism and global ambition described above but both exist on the same plane, simultaneously discursive, social and real extending through time and space (Fitzsimmons and Goodman, 1998). Further it is important for me to note in a project that asks what organic farmers and farms do, how, and why, that Latour states:

For us ANT was simply another way to be faithful to ethnomethodology: actors know what they do and we have to learn from them not only what they do, but how and why they do it [...] Far from being a theory of the social or even worse an explanation of what makes society exert pressure on actors, it always was, and this from its inception a very crude method to learn from the actors without imposing on them an *a priori* definition of their world-building capacities,” (Latour, 1999:20) [author’s emphasis].

Goodman and Fitzsimmons observe that organic farming calls into question this divisive ontology that keeps nature and society separate (Fitzsimmons and Goodman, 1998; Goodman, 1999). And Kaltoft (2001) notes that the nature-society relationship is a

central tenant and issue of organic farming and the organic movement. This work then answers Goodman's pointed call to bring ANT into agrofood studies:

The theoretical framework of agro-food studies, fettered by modernist ontology and epistemology, cannot respond fully to the new ethical and relational issues raised by environmentalist groups and urban food movements, understand their social resonance, nor grasp the biopolitics they engender, (Goodman, 1999: 25).

As this work seeks to fill the gap, noted by Goodman and others, to bring ANT into agrofood studies, the literature that I bring together here is primarily based in human geography—or the rethinking of human geography. The literature discussed in this section covers a variety of ideas on farming, farms, food production, production of place, and the agency of organic nonhumans. Goodman (1999) uses ANT to analyze food scares, agro-biotechnologies, and the contemporary debates surrounding, at the time, the proposed regulation of organic farming in the US. Together, Fitzsimmons and Goodman (1998) use ANT—again to dissolve the nature/society dualism, and to discuss how this materiality is to be conceptualized—to look at the agricultural history of corn in the US. While working with one of Latour's foundational ideas from *We Have Never Been Modern*, that nature and culture have never been separated, Kaltoft (2001) uses ANT to understand and describe the organic farming movement in terms of modernization. Because, she suggests, organic farming, the movement, and its ideology challenges the way sociological theory conceives of the nature-culture relationship. While it is easy to agree that a reconceptualization of nature-society and the relationship between nature and society is needed, it is much harder to try and do this, as even posing the issue as one of dissolving the dualism, “seems to still reproduce the dualism which we are seeking to resolve. If nature and society are active partners locked in an irreversible, continuing

process of mutual determination, how is the materiality of these conjoined natures to be theorized?" (Fitzsimons and Goodman, 1998:219; Murdoch, 1997). It is the suggestion of these authors, that ANT is a way, a new metaphorical tool (Demeritt, 1994) to avoid balancing on both poles at once (Haraway, 1991) and that food, especially organic farming and the organic farming movement is a good place to start since it is through food, that everyone around the globe has been most consistently and concretely connected with nature (Fitzsimmons and Goodman, 1998; Williams, 1980; Worster, 1990).

There are a number of ANT works that influenced the detailing and discussion of farmer and farm in this project. Callon (1986) writes on the agency of scallops in St. Brieuc Bay in France. The principle actors in this work are the scallops, three scientific researchers, and the scallop fisherman. While these are the actors to whom Callon gives the most discussion it is made clear that there are many other human and nonhuman actors: the French consumer, the tourists, the weather, the bay, the market, all interacting together. A single question—do the scallops in St. Brieuc Bay anchor themselves—establishes a whole series of actors all with identities and agencies, and all linked to each other. Cook (2004), though never mentioning ANT in his piece, explores the lives and inter-connected actions of papayas, farmers, importers, grocers, the international papaya market, and the papaya consumer. Both authors have done away with confining agency to only the social realm and describe humans and nonhumans as mutually determined.

These authors demonstrated how to write about human and organic⁸ nonhuman relationships, something that Jones and Cloke (2002) note has so far been less common in

⁸ Here organic refers to carbon-oxygen-hydrogen based lifeforms as opposed to having anything to do with organic farming.

ANT research; using language and phrases like “kiwi was ripping them off” (Cook, 2004:638) and “the scallops became dissidents” (Callon, 1986:220). Hunt (2010) demonstrates how ANT can work to give life to farms through farmer’s words and actions as she discusses how kiwi orchardists in New Zealand experience and talk about the active quality of their orchards, and Holloway (2002) discusses farmers relational and ethical understandings and conceptualizations of nature and place by exploring their relationships with the humans and nonhumans they encounter. These authors provided me an example of how I might explore farms as individuals through talking with farmers. My project is differentiated from these two as all farms in the project are organic. Additionally, Hunt (2010) explores only on-farm practices, behaviors, and habits, and Holloway (2002) focuses on the construction of relational and situated ethical identities, while I explore the different socioecological lives of farmer and farm.

The ideas and substance of ANT have been critically reviewed elsewhere, and while critiquing ANT goes beyond the scope of this paper there are important works and critiques that I have considered in this project.⁹ Of particular importance was Jones and Cloke (2002) and their exploration of the agency of trees that co-constitute places and cultures in relationship with human agency. They discuss the lives and actions of trees in four places in England: an orchard, a cemetery, a heritage trail, and a city square, and suggest that, “not only is there a need to move away from treating the human realm as separate, privileged and ontologically unique in terms of agency, but also that there is a

⁹ See particularly Haraway (1991, 1994); Law and Hassard (1999); Murdoch (1997); Thrift (2008); Whatmore (1999) Whatmore and Thorne (2000). Haraway deserves special mention here as her comprehensive work, like ANT, starts with trying to bring together, or acknowledge that they are not separate, human and nonhuman. However, for Haraway this is a much messier task, where agency opens up possibilities for discussing the relationality of human and nonhuman but where, “actors fit oddly at best” (1991:3) and where, “the mythic, textual, technical, political, organic, and economic dimensions implode [...] they collapse into each other in a knot of extraordinary density.” (1994: 63).

need to disaggregate the notion of agency itself,” (Jones and Cloke, 2002:54). They differentiate between three different forms of agency that are important in this piece: relational, transformative, and reflexive agency.

Relational agency is what ANT describes, the hybrid collective, the relational interacting hybrid that is human-nonhuman, nature-society; shaping and shaped by each other. Transformative agency is creative action; actions that disrupt, divert, and create (Harvey, 1996; Jones and Cloke, 2002). Harvey suggests that this action, “arises out of contradiction, [and] it follows that it can in principle be found anywhere and everywhere in the physical, biological and social world,” (Harvey, 1996:55). Whatmore (2002) too suggests the need to consider the creativity of actors, rather than the intentionality, which is a very social understanding of agency and action. Jones and Cloke (2002) provide this example: in the practice of planting trees to avoid desertification, it is human action and human actors that have enrolled trees and dedicated them to a particular end,

In line with ANT, it seems more appropriate to suggest that the agency is relational in that trees bring to the process skills which humans could not otherwise acquire and deploy [...] However, trees can of course, act autonomously, outside the confines and expectations of human actions. They frequently seed themselves; they grow in unexpected places and in unexpected forms. These actions, when remixed with the social, have what can only be described as creative transformative effects, (Jones and Cloke, 2002:57).

The key idea in transformative agency then, is to remember the individual creative action of nonhuman actors.

Additionally, Jones and Cloke (2002) describe reflexive agency. Reflexive agency is different from relational agency as it embodies what Mol (1999) and Whatmore and Thorne (2000) question of ANT, “are the crucial moments not those where ‘patients’ act as agent, but rather those where they (we) are defined, measured, observed, listened to, or

otherwise *enacted*,” (Mol, 1999:87) [authors’ emphasis]. Not only do actors act relationally, and transformatively, but they are also enacted by the other actors who surround them. This is an extremely important point for this project as the farms were discussed and seen through the farmers, photographs, and myself. As Ingold notes,

Farmers [in] the work that they do, in such activities as field clearance, fencing, planning, weeding, and so on, or in tending to their livestock, do not literally make plants and animals but rather establish the environmental conditions for their growth and development [...] Instead of thinking about plants or animals as part of the natural environment for human beings, we have to think of humans and their activities as part of the environment for plants and animals,” (Ingold, 1997 as quoted by Jones and Cloke, 2002: 68).

Given the literature explored above I present both farmer and farm as individuals. In order to present farmer and farm as individual, the patterns, themes, and differences discussed in conversation are presented primarily in the participant’s own words. The photovoice literature described in the following section further informs this style of presentation. Additionally, to set this work apart from that of Kaltoft (1999), Duram (2005), and Hunt (2010) and to best present organic as a *continuum* of differences, farmers and farms will not be typified. Rather, as noted above, the patterns, themes, and differences that arose in conversation have been categorized and presented.

1.3 Using Photography and Doing Participatory Research

One of the goals of my research was to contribute to organic and agrofood literature using more in-depth and participatory research methods.¹⁰ To do this, photovoice and photography as illustration were used. Both made photography an integral part of the research project, in data collection, data analysis and data presentation. The inspiration

¹⁰ This is a response to calls made by Cook et al. (2006); Goodman and Dupais (2002); Goodman (2003); Morris and Evans (2004); Philips (2003); Winter (2003, 2005).

for using photographs and photovoice throughout this project evolved from my time spent on farms prior to this project. While working on or walking throughout the farm, looking out the window, or at past photographs, farmers would point to some ‘thing’ and proceed to tell a story, to describe an event, to contextualize, talk about the what, how and why of that ‘thing’, of themselves. A story or conversation could start on one subject, and veer off on another, equally edifying; I wanted to somehow encapsulate this in a method in the project. Many researchers have also remarked on the capacity of photovoice to yield information that would otherwise have been difficult to ask about, or even information that had not been considered by the researchers. Moore et al. (2008) comment:

It was also felt that the use of photographs during the interview led to the expression of thoughts and comments that would not be accessed through answering the semi-structured interview questions alone [...] We did not specifically ask about historical or unique features of the environment but found that the photographs enabled us to access detailed local knowledge on these subjects, and others, which may have been missed by undertaking interviews alone, (Moore et al., 2008: 55-56).

Further, Sherren et al. (2010) note that in studies regarding environmental values/practices/perceptions it is important, though difficult, to avoid problems of face-validity: where the answer to a question is so evident that participants know to provide the best answer—or even if suitable questions can be asked. They suggest that photovoice is a method that can help to overcome these difficulties.

Photography has been used as a research method throughout a range of social science and humanities disciplines: anthropology, sociology and human, cultural, and urban geography, albeit differently (Rose, 2012). Photovoice is increasingly being adopted in geography as a participatory method (Kearns, 2010; Rose, 2012) and my

research continues in this vein; McIntyr (2003) uses photovoice as a participatory–action research method, while Harper (2002) comments on the participatory, and even collaborative (between participant and researcher) aspect of photo-elicitation. Additionally, photovoice research in rural studies is rare (Beilin, 2005; Sherren et al., 2010) and I hope to fill some of that gap with this project.¹¹

Photo-elicitation, the process whereby photographic images are used to stimulate and guide an interview, was first described by Collier (1967), while a more recent description and example can be seen in Harper (2001, 2002). The photographs used can be existing images—in Harper’s case, those taken by the researcher—much of visual anthropology, or those taken by research participants. Clark-Ibanez (2004) and Rose (2008) clearly distinguish between these different methods of photo-elicitation, Clark-Ibanez states that the participant-driven photographs provides an inductive research approach for gaining insight into the realms of participants. This is photovoice; the name taken from a seminal piece on photography as participatory research by McIntyr (2003).¹²

Photographs are bounded views of reality that provide a manageable entry point for discussing complex issues (Harper, 2002), especially when the participants capture the images themselves (Moore et al., 2008: 50). Moore et al. (2008) state that this self-directed photography, “can potentially expose their personal priorities –the ‘what’—and following up with interviews allows the basis of those perceptions—‘the why’—to be explored,” (Moore et al., 2008). This project then relied on the photographs taken by

¹¹ Much of this research takes place in urban settings cf. Bijoux and Meyers (2006); Clark-Ibanez (2004); Latham (2002); McIntyr (2003); Moore et al. (2008)

¹² Other authors refer to this as self-directed photography: Bijoux and Meyers; Moore et al. (2008); or just photo-elicitation that uses participant photographs: Beilin (2005); Rose (2008, 2012) and Sherren et al. (2010)

participants, but also the narrative that was provided by the discussion of the photographs, as is explained in full detail in the methods section.

The photovoice works that were influential to me in the development of this project were predominantly geography-based studies of land and ecosystem management. Balzquez researched community understandings and perceptions of ecosystem services in Costa Rica, and though Harper (2001) uses historical photographs for photo-elicitation not participant photographs, his book *Changing Works: Visions of Lost Agriculture* was influential because of his farmer/farm/farming focus. However, the most influential for this project were Beilin (2005), Sherren et al. (2010), and Moore et al. (2008). Beilin (2005) explores farmer-land-community relations and land management practices in southern Australia and asked the farmers in her study to photograph “significant landscapes.” This phrasing inspired my wording in asking farmers to “take 10 photographs of something that was significant to them with respect to them being on the farm.” Further, her emphasis on the participatory aspect of photovoice, the accessibility of photography, and the ability of the photograph to be both action and reflection, “to tell a particular story and to affirm a particular politic,” (Beilin, 2005:66) cemented to me the benefit of using this method in such a project. Sherren et al. (2010) also discussing land-management practices with farmers in Australia, though by triangulating photovoice with more quantitative-based methods, helped me realize that the photographs could not only be an active and reflexive method of data collection but also of analysis and presentation. Following Sherren et al. (2010), I have analyzed the contents of the photographs for the frequency at which certain ‘things’ have been captured in addition to analyzing the

common words used and sentiments evoked by participants while discussing the photographs.

Moore et al. (2008) explore environmental conditions and everyday perceptions in three major UK cities. Their work was particularly important to my project as it became clear to me as I read it that ANT and photovoice would work very well together and that through farmers words, actions and photographs (and my own) we could explore the agency, life, identity of the farms.¹³ They describe that, “context can be multi-faceted, as a photograph can have many different viewpoints—the taker, the viewer, and the taken—all have positions, interests and relationships,” (Moore et al., 2008:56). Here the work of Balog, though not traditionally academic, helped me to further realize how this could be done with my visual methods. In *Tree: A New Vision of the American Forest* Balog (2005), a photographic journalist, whose work revolves around exploring the relationship between humans and nature, shows trees as individuals, or the individuality of trees. Each tree was photographed numerous times from a multitude of angles—even whilst dangling on ropes meters in the air—and were shown in composite to try and show the life of the tree, the tree in life, the actions of the tree.

Discussed so far has been literature that helped me decide why and how to use photovoice as a method for data collection and analysis. However, it is of equal importance, as noted by Rose (2008, 2012) and Goin (2001) to discuss why/why not and/or how photographs might be presented in a report. Throughout my fieldwork I received permission to take photographs at all the farms I visited in addition to the participants taking their own photographs. There are two issues that I have taken into careful consideration given my decision to include photographs in the report. First, Rose

¹³ I have found no research so far that bring together these two theories of approach and method.

(2008, 2012) notes that in presenting photos one must ask whether or not the presentation of those photographs replicates, even if unintentionally, a power relation between researcher and participant. Taking this into consideration I decided that the only photographs presented in this report were taken by the participants and for the most part are explained using direct quotes from them. Second, Goin (2001) critiques that in research we tend to present photographs simply as fact, but, he warns, that photographs are more than just fact, they are fact and fiction, and truth, and emotion, they are lyrical, and yes, they are illustrational, but they are more than “principle, objective, and verifiable fact,” (Goin, 2003: pg). Harrison et al. (2004) seem to answer Goin’s critique by encouraging the reader to ‘read’ the book by, “charting a path based on the images alone [...] we would argue that the visual is more than the obvious what is seen,” (Harrison et al., 2004: xx). With these in mind I decided the only captions I would include in the report were the names of the participants who took a particular photo. This will insure that the photos are in some way connected to the text.

Given all of the literature explored above I argue that organic is a continuum of different ideas and practices and that an understanding of some of these differences will benefit a discussion of what organic and the organic movement are, and further the discussion of how organic can ameliorate our agrofood system and our nature-society relations. Using the ideas encompassed in ANT and photovoice and the questions asked at the outset of this project, farmer and farm are presented as different and individual actors, primarily presented with the participant’s own words and photographs. In this project, then, I present a brief snapshot, a peak, into the socioecological lives of organic

farmer and farm. Following in Chapter 2 I detail the study areas I travelled to in British Columbia and why these areas were chosen.

Chapter 2: Organic in British Columbia

There are a number of reasons why I chose to undertake this research in British Columbia.

First, to provide an example of and research on organic agriculture in Canada, and BC provides a great research example. From 2001-2005 the number of organic farms in BC increased at the highest rate of any province or territory in Canada so that by 2006 20% of the organic farms in Canada were in BC. This was second only to Ontario with 23% of the organic farms in Canada. However, the number of organic farms in BC amounted to 16.3% of all the farms in the province. This percentage was approximately 10% higher than any other province in Canada, with Ontario a far second at 6.8%.¹⁴

Second, the governance model and organic certification system runs differently and as such is more diverse in BC than it is in other provinces.¹⁵ British Columbia runs their own accreditation system as opposed to a provincial COG chapter, as in the other Canadian provinces. In BC the accrediting organization is the Certified Organic Association of British Columbia (COABC).

Last, but not least, I had initial contacts to speak with in BC. The previous summer I had worked on three organic farms in the province, and I also had contacts doing other jobs in the organic scene. This enabled me to start asking around about participants. I would not have had this starting point with potential participants in any other province.

¹⁴ Data from the 2006 Agricultural census was used to get these statistics. It may seem dated, however, the most recent Agricultural Census, 2011, was not published until May of 2012, after I had already begun this project. More importantly, reporting regulations were changed by Statistics Canada prior to the 2011 census. In 2006 a farmer was allowed to choose from three categories: organic but not certified, organic in transition, and certified organic; but in 2011 this was reduced to two categories: organic in transition, and certified organic. This change makes the two censuses incomparable. As is explained in section 2.3 below I included farmers that may not be certified, but self-identified as organic, thus I thought it the best fit to stick with the data from the 2006 Agricultural Census.

¹⁵ Quebec uses a similar governance model and certification system.

2.1 Study Areas

Originally the following BC regions were chosen for this project: the west Kootenays, the southern Okanagan, the lower Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island.¹⁶ British Columbia often gets broadly divided into the regions found in **Table 1**. Though these are broad and can be divided further still, these were the regions of BC considered by this project. The decision to visit the aforementioned areas was based on a review of the 2006 Agricultural Census, the Agricultural Land Reserve, and by mapping information from COABC on the location of organic farms, and from the BC Association of Farmers Markets—this information is found in **Table 1**—as well as particular historical and geographic differences between the regions.¹⁷

Table 1: Regional Comparison

REGION	NUMBER OF FARMS	NUMBER OF ORGANIC FARMS ¹⁸	PROPORTION OF ALR LAND	FARM RECEIPT PERCENTAGE	POPULATION	FARMERS MARKETS ¹⁹
North Coast	152	3	2.3	0.1	57 663	2
Nechako	886	6	2.6	2.05	39 352	11
Peace River	1729	16	32	5.24	64 411	
Caribou-Central	1781	13	31.4	4.24	154 454	
Vancouver Island and the West Coast	2855	151	2.6	6.17	727 422	23
Mainland and the Southern Coast (Fraser Valley)	5410	134	4.1	62.61	2 436 596	31
Thompson-Okanagan	5700	249	17	17.0	491 479	25
Kootenays	1349	32	8	2.60	142 110	10

¹⁶ Though as will be explained later in this section this decision changed throughout my time in the field.

¹⁷ To view a map of these regions and the locations they encompass see Appendix A Figure 1

¹⁸ These numbers are an approximation based on my mapping out the locations of all certified/transitional organic members listed on the COABC website. It is important to note that these numbers do not include non-certified organic growers, whereas the 2006 Agricultural Census does include non-certified farmers as organic. Further it is important to note that this data was taken in March, 2012 and the rest of the data is from 2006 (except the market information—see below).

¹⁹ These numbers are taken from the BC Association of Farmers Markets website. This information was taken in May 2012. It is also important to note that these markets do not cater only to farmers, but often other craft-workers, nor do they cater solely to organic farmers.

The Thompson-Okanagan was an obvious choice. The region has the most farms of any in the province, and the most organic farms (though not proportionally). Additionally, the Similkameen Valley—the southern-most area of the region on the Washington boarder—has more organic producers than any other area in BC, likely in Canada, with 60% of the farms in the area producing organically (BCO industry overview, 2007). The Lower Mainland has the second largest amount of farms, approximately 60% of the province's population, and access to a much wider array of markets and just generally more market access. Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands were chosen because proportionally they have the highest percentage of organic agriculture of any region at 5.2%, and approximately 18% of the population. Additionally, while having the smallest proportion of land dedicated to farming (53 765ha) of any of the eight regions, the region still brings in 6% of the province's farm receipts, and it's an island. The Kootenays rounded out the study areas as it has a relatively large proportion of organic farms and farmers markets for the population, and the longest consecutive running organic coop in the province²⁰.

Despite lacking a general history of BC agriculture, all four regions chosen do have a history of agriculture, with some of the earliest farms in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, and the Okanagan is historically the largest agricultural exporter (interprovincial and international) of any region in BC.²¹ Additionally, each region

²⁰ To view a map of the study areas, please see Appendix A, Figure 2.

²¹ See Demeritt (1996). Margaret A. Ormsby's two articles, "The History of Agriculture in British Columbia," *Scientific Agriculture* 20 (1939): 61-72, and her "Agricultural Development in British Columbia," *Agricultural History* 19 (1945): 11-20, are still the most recent all encompassing histories on agriculture in British Columbia. Further, there is a limited amount of literature published on organic farming (geographical, historical, anthropological, political) in Canada. Most research with a Canadian focus uses research on US organic, see, Egri (1993, 1997), Maxey (2006).

presents slightly different physical environments for growing. These are described in

Table 2.²²

Table 2: Growing Environments

REGION	
Vancouver Island and the West Coast	<p>Mild, moist climate. Suitable for long-season specialty crops including: kiwi, figs, and even bananas. Landscape also highly suitable for livestock, fishing and seafood harvesting.</p> <p><i>Frost-free days: 158-201</i> <i>Annual Precipitation: 873-2123mm</i> <i>Average Temperatures (Yearly): 9.7-14.1°C</i> <i>Total Hours of Bright Sunshine (Yearly): 2086.4</i></p>
Mainland and Southern Coast (Fraser Valley)	<p>Very wet climate; low-lying and prone to flooding. Highest frost-free days and rainfall of any region in the province. Suitable for a range of vegetables and berries.</p> <p><i>Frost-free days: 174-200</i> <i>Annual Precipitation: 921-1500mm</i> <i>Average Temperatures (Yearly): 10-14 °C</i> <i>Total Hours of Bright Sunshine (Yearly): 1928</i></p>
Thompson-Okanagan	<p>Mild climate, dry. Highest number of degree days over 18 °C make it ideal for fruit production. Rolling valleys make it highly suitable for orchards/vineyards and livestock.</p> <p><i>Frost-free days: 148-175</i> <i>Annual Precipitation: 257-534</i> <i>Average Temperatures (Yearly): Summer 12.6-26.7 °C; Winter -3.4- -7.8 °C</i> <i>Total Hours of Bright Sunshine (Yearly): 1954.4</i> <i>Residential Elevation Range: 340-1440m</i></p>
Kootenays	<p>Moderate climate, humid. Supports a wide range of crops: orchard fruit, cereals, vegetable, and berries. Elevation range is extreme; made up of intermittent valleys, land area per farm small.</p> <p><i>Frost-free Days: 110-160</i> <i>Annual Precipitation: 370-569mm</i> <i>Average Temperatures: Summer 12-27.7 °C; Winter -2.7- -5.1 °C</i> <i>Total Hours of Bright Sunshine (Yearly): 1854.8</i> <i>Residential Elevation Range: 430-1300m</i></p>

²² All information for this table was taken from BC Agricultural Education and Environment Canada's National Climate Data and Information Archive. This is a very brief description of some of the basic geographical and environmental differences between regions, for more information please contact me.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

I conducted my primary fieldwork for four and a half months, between April 18th and August 31st, 2012. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I had worked on three organic farms in BC the previous summer; these farmers were my initial contacts. They were contacted in early April to ask if they were interested in being participants, all said yes. Upon arriving in BC, I made contact with two previously known key informants: a coordinator at an organic farm coop in Richmond, and an apiculturist who lends out his bees to farmers in the Nelson area. These individuals helped me develop a list of farmers they thought might be interested in participating. This list was supplementary to the ‘population’ database I gathered as described in section 3.3. Participants were contacted approximately a month before a proposed farm visit.

3.1 Cycling

As mentioned above, I had originally proposed that I do this research while cycling across the province and it was important for me to reflect on how the method would add to and affect the research. Before leaving for my field research I had looked into other ways I might get around between farms. I thought about renting a car or traveling by bus and public transit, but in the end there were a number of reasons why I thought cycling across BC from farm to farm would enable and inform my research methods in a unique way.²³

First, it added a much needed flexibility to the research for both the participants and me. Though it was important that the research not be seen as casual, this adaptability was of great value. Dates of my arrival and departure, and the length of my stay were adjustable; I did not require anyone to pick me up or drop me off at a bus stop; if for

²³ For a map of my bike route, please see Appendix A, Figures 3-5.

whatever reason I felt unsafe I could leave right away; and I could visit more than one farm at once.²⁴ Second, as will be fully explained in the data collection section of this chapter, while I was visiting the farms I was also working on them and I found that telling participants that I was cycling across the province demonstrated that I was capable of doing farm work. Many participants initially wondered at my ability to do work on the farm and do the research. This came both out of concern for me; would I be able to get all the information I needed with everything going on; and a curiosity about the ability of a researcher to be physically able enough to do farm labour. Many participants noted that once I explained that I was cycling and how the research would work, these concerns and doubts were quelled. Finally, and perhaps most importantly given the type of research I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it, I noticed that my biking carried with it certain socioecological perspectives and practices of my own without my having to talk about them. I found that this made participants open to talking about their own without my having too much impact on the direction conversations.

3.2 Participant Recruitment

Participants were selected based on the criteria described below. Each farm I deemed a prospective participant was sent an initial email, or was spoken with over the phone, or in person.²⁵ I sent out emails to 40 farms, and spoke with 20 farms at various community activities about potentially being involved in the research.²⁶ All farms and farmers were chosen with the goal of obtaining a variation in the following categories. These categories

²⁴ For information on how this was done see section 3.4.4 of this chapter.

²⁵ The majority of participants were contacted a month before I proposed to visit them, and were contacted initially by email. Initial contact was only made in person or by phone if I had previously introduced myself to them, either at a farmer's market or through another participant.

²⁶ To see a copy of the information letter I sent to participants please see Appendix B Item 1. This was additional to the letters developed with the Research Ethics Board, which were shown at the outset of my farm-stays.

are based on those used by Julie Guthman (2004) in her examination of the conventionalization of organic farming in California, *Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Farming in California*, and my own additions.

- Location—all farms chosen were in one of the study areas discussed in the previous section: the West Kootenays, the Similkameen Valley, and the Lower Fraser Valley.
- Farm Size—all farms chosen had to be between 2-100 acres in size.²⁷
- Family Ownership—all farms chosen had to be family owned. If produce was sold to a non-family-owned business they were still included.
- Edible Food or Food Product—all farms produced food or an edible food product. Additionally farms were chosen to obtain the most variation in crops/products as possible.²⁸
- Sale—all farms had to sell a product. All methods of sale: farm gate, wholesale, packinghouse, farmers market or otherwise were sought after and included.
- Certification—farms chosen could be certified by a certification body or self-identify as organic. Unless only a portion of their farm is organic, then the farm must have a split certification. Farms that identified as or have additional certifications, such as biodynamic, heritage land, salmon safe, and nature conservancy certifications will also be included.

Further, farms were chosen to obtain the most variation possible. Differences that were not included in these categories were considered in my decision as well. As

²⁷ This criterion changed when I started looking for and initially contacting potential participants. In my proposal for this project I noted that I would look for farms that cultivated 10-300 acres of land. When I began to seek out participants it was clear that that was not going to happen. The number of organic farmers cultivating that much land in BC was quite low and those who do were more specialized operations and were not inclined to have a visitor that would get in the way.

²⁸ Though farms with non-edible crops as part of their operation were included. For example a number of the farms sold decorative flowers.

examples; two farms were for sale, one farm was a part of a cooperative, one farm was intergenerational though they were not family members, one was vegan as well as organic, another was a part of an Eco village, and one pair of farmers had converted from conventional to organic.

I got access to the above information as well as contact information for the farms through the following:

- Certified Association of British Columbia (COABC)—COABC is the organic accreditor for the province of BC. It is an umbrella association representing all organic certifying bodies in the province. Their website includes a database of all certified organic farmers in BC, their certifier, crops/products, and their contact information.
- Certification/Organization websites—I consulted the websites of certification bodies and other organic farming organizations to gather additional information and initial contacts.
- World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF)—I am a member of this organization and have previously worked on organic farms in BC through this program. The program connects organic farmers with individuals interested in working on and learning more about organic farming. Farmers post a farm profile on the WWOOF website and individual members respond to those profiles. Online profiles were great to see if farms fit my criteria and any farmer involved in the program was already expecting a farm stay.²⁹

²⁹ It is important for me to note that not all the participants in the project were WWOOF members. About half were and half were not.

- Farmers Markets—another way I met potential participants was at farmer’s markets.

I was often working a market during my farm stays and I would walk around and speak with other vendors and ask if they were interested. Additionally, while travelling on my bike I would consult the BC Association of Farmers Markets to see if I was travelling through or near anywhere with a farmers market.

- Previously know contacts and key informants—from June-August 2011 I spent time working on three organic farms in BC. These were the first farms I contacted to see if they would be interested in participating in the project.³⁰ Additionally, I have other contacts in the organic farming world in BC and I asked them if they might be able to recommend any farms based in my criteria and/or put me in contact with those farms.

- Other participants—based on my previous experience working on organic farms I was confident that participants would, without request give me the names of other farmers to check out or contact. It was discussed between my supervisors and me before I left that I would have to be careful as people often recommend like-minded individuals in snowball sampling situations. However, once my intention of obtaining difference was described, participants got it and recommended farms that they thought were different from them in this way or that way. Even recommending farmers that they had not spoken to for years because of disagreements about their differences. I would be given names to search out myself, given phone numbers to contact, or be introduced in person.

³⁰ All three farms had said yes, though I ended up cancelling my visit to two of them as they are on Vancouver Island.

3.2.1 Who is the Farmer?

Before the field process of the project began it was important to think about who was going to be the farmer. When initially asked this question, I said, “the owner.” However, my supervisors had a number of follow-up concerns, what if I get to the farm and the only people I end up getting to talk to are the owner’s son or daughter; what if the majority of the farm organization and work is done by a farm manager and not the owner; and what about farm workers or interns, are they farmers? It was discussed that the decision of who the farmer was might have to be assessed in the field, and that it might be a bit different at each farm. This was deemed acceptable for this study. But, if the son or daughter, or farm manager is so integral to the farm that they are the ones I am working with, should they not be considered a farmer?

It was a very important discussion to have, although as I embarked on the research I was quite lucky, as on all the farms I visited the owners were the primary organizers, labourers, and creators of the farms both in the field and elsewhere (ie: the market). These are the farmers in this study. However, there were other individuals on and off the farms that were involved in collective discussions with the farmers, and about the farms who added greatly to these collective discussions. I refer to these people as key actors and have taken some quotations from them.³¹

3.4 Data Collection

The field process of this research lasted four and half months, from April 18-August 31, 2012. Seventeen farms and 32 farmers participated in the project. I stayed at each farm for an average of one week to ten days.³² During the field process participant

³¹ This is explained in full in section 3.4.1.

³² There were some variations. These are discussed in section 3.5.4: Exceptions.

observation with informal interviews and collective discussions, photovoice, and semi-structured interviews were carried out.

3.4.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation occurred throughout my stays on the farms: in the fields, at the market and other events, in the home, and especially at mealtimes. During my stays I would work in the fields, go to market, and help prepare meals. My previous experience working on organic farms and in my own personal garden allowed me to participate with the perspective of someone who was not completely new to the various activities I took part in. I got to be involved in planting, preparing soil, turning compost, building irrigation systems and greenhouses, weeding, harvesting, processing, and selling. I worked with the farmers, with employees or interns, and occasionally by myself.

I went to every farm with a set of eleven fixed questions that I would ask the same way at every farm and a list of all the information I needed from each for the project.³³ At each farm I carried out participant observation and what I shall refer to as informal interviews every day over the course of the day. These informal interviews consisted of the eleven fixed questions and other prompting and clarification questions about the farmers' perceptions and practices, about their and the farm's history, about their future plans; we talked about what they did and why they had decided to do it. Each night I would write about the day and the conversations that were had.³⁴

Participant observation and this informal method of interviewing were critical to the completion of this project. It would not have happened otherwise. As one participant noted, I was visiting farms at the worst and the best time of the year; because everything

³³ To see these questions and my information list please see Appendix B Item 2.

³⁴ My ethnographic methods were primarily informed by Emerson et al., 2011.

was happening, if I had visited in the winter the farmers would have been less busy and it would have been easier to talk, but, “in the spring and summer is when all the action is going on and everything you [the researcher] want to talk about is on everyone’s mind.” This informal way of interviewing and writing every night allowed me to get the information I needed despite the busyness of a farm in the summer. The longer farm stays allowed for ample clarification on my part and for the participants to clarify with me. The following day I could go over anything again. I made sure to ask if I got the wording of our conversations right, or if the participants or I wanted to expand on a subject from a previous day that was easily done. Additionally, with the farm stays I was able to better understand and document the farm’s activities as I was participating in a lot of them myself.

It is important to note that many of these discussions happened with more than one person present. Some of these informal interviews were one-on-one but others involved more than one person; I refer to this as a collective discussion. Collective discussion occurred between multiple participants and me. Further, I would be involved in collective discussions with participants and other farmers: sometimes former or future participants, and sometimes farmers that were not participants in this study. Additionally, these collective discussions occurred between non-farmers: employees, interns, and family members. These collective discussions generated a great deal of dialogue and reflection that I have included in the project. Some of these non-participants/non-farmers, key actors, have quotations included in the report. All of these individuals are over 18 years of age.

3.4.2 Photovoice

Upon arriving at the farms the participants and I went over how things would work for the period of my stay. I would describe the research, the reasons I was interested in doing it, and how I saw it working. I detailed the information in the previous section and explained how photovoice worked. I asked the participants to, “take ten photographs of something that was significant to them with respect to them being at the farm.” I further noted that it could be anything; it didn’t have to be a picture of the farm or the landscape, it could be people, or animals, or things; it could literally be anything but they would have to explain why they wanted to include that photograph, why it was significant. I then left my camera in a central location for the remainder of the stay so the participants could grab it anytime they liked.

I also left it to the participants—if there was more than one farmer at each farm—to decide amongst themselves how the photographs would be divided, taken, and discussed. There was a pair of farmers that decided to divide the photos in half; she took five and he took five, and they also decided that they wanted to talk with me one-on-one about their photos and not as a group. The same happened at a farm of four farmers; each farmer took three photos (I decided to allow twelve because that divided evenly) and I spoke with them individually about their choices. At another farm the pair went around the farm together and took photographs and we discussed them as a group. At a couple of farms one farmer of two took the photographs while both joined me to discuss them.

The method of photovoice was invaluable to this project. Not only did this method serve as a catalyst to generate a wealth of discussion, stories, opinions, and ideas that I would not have otherwise heard but it also allowed participants to engage and be engaged—by me—as actual participants in the field process rather than respondents.

Many participants noted that photovoice was a really interesting and fun activity for them to do.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Preliminary interview questions and an information guide were developed prior to my first farm stay. Interview questions were designed to be very broad in order to generate a dialogue. The eleven fixed questions I asked at every farm were flexible in that they were not asked in any particular order, and that order differed at every farm, however, given the aim and approach to this study it was important to have some consistency. As such these questions were asked the same way using the same language at each farm. As intended these questions led to discussions in which I asked numerous other clarification and prompting questions which were not determined ahead of time and were not fixed.

As mentioned in section 2.4.1 these questions were asked at all manner of locations and times throughout the day, the results of which were written up by me every night. Additionally, at the beginning of my stay the participants and I would arrange a time to have a more formal interview. This usually took place on the second-to-last or last night. I left it up to the participants to decide how they would like this interview to be organized, whether they would like to do it together or whether they would like to have a one-to-one discussion with me. Some interviews took place in pairs while others were one-to-one and varied in time from one to two hours. During this interview we would go over the photographs that had been taken—described above—and the participants and I were able to add or clarify any information. I would prepare for the interviews by going over my notes from the stay, and my questions and information guide, as this was the time for me to fill in any missing information and

confirm direct quotations. Throughout this interview I recorded our discussions in writing in my notebook and, if the participants wished, I recorded audio with my iPad.

3.4.4 Exceptions

It is important for me to note exceptions to the methods described above. First, I did not end up going to Vancouver Island as I had originally planned and described in Chapter 2. By the time I had made my way across BC it was the end of August, I had been carrying out the field portion of my research for just over four months and I had reached a saturation point, in so far as the information needed for this project. Most importantly though, as I had been travelling through the province I was learning more and more about the different regions of BC and I decided that Vancouver Island, with respect to organic agriculture was such a particular case, even within the province, that it would be better not to include Vancouver and the Gulf Islands in this study. They could be a study entirely on their own.

Second, four out of seventeen farms did not participate in the photovoice methods, or at least did not complete them. Two of the farms did not want to participate at all, however, they did give me permission to take photographs. Additionally, two other farms had taken their photographs but on the night we were supposed to discuss the photos we were unable to due to unfortunate and unforeseen family accidents. I have the photographs taken from these participants but we did not discuss them.

Third, there are four farms—different from the above four farms—that participated by way of multiple farm visit rather than farm stays. For three of these farms multiple farm visits worked best purely because of my and their timing. The fourth farm did not want me to come for a farm stay as they were a more specialized operation and that would have meant more work for them, however, they still wanted to

participate. In all four cases the participants and I arranged times for multiple interviews. These interviews would usually take place during my off time at other farms; my bike allowed me to book and get to and from these interviews with ease. Though they were all arranged a little bit differently, in each case the interview time totalled six to eight hours and took place on two or three different days. One photograph was taken and discussed by the farmers at these farms. The fact that multiple visits were had allowed for a similar atmosphere and exchange of information as the farm stays. As was reflected upon in section 2.4.1 a key aspect of the study was the time spent at each farm; both the participants and me were able to reflect on things said or asked each day, re-ask questions, ask for clarification, and ask for elaboration. The multiple visits retained these important elements of the farm stays.

Chapter 4: Farm and Farmer

A multitude of information about individual farmers and farms has been condensed into six tables. Please see **Appendix C** for this information. I stress that viewing these tables prior to, or concurrently while reading the following chapter will make the discussion more comprehensive and engaging. This has been done due to the amount of information gathered on individual farmers and farms.

The following section deals with the photovoice portion of the project. The farmers decided what to photograph and were conscious that they would be asked to explain the significance of their photographs. Further, as Beilin (2006) notes, as both constructor and narrator of the images farmers were not bound to discuss only what was in the photo. As with Beilin (2006), Harper (2001), and Moore et al. (2008) the farmers lead the conversations that were had about their photographs while I was observer, recorder, and participant-questioner. As such, the information presented in this chapter primarily explores the project's first two questions: who is the organic farmer, and what is the organic farm. This chapter aims to present a snapshot of farmer and farm, what they do, and how and why they do it. Additionally, Harper (2001) and Beilin (2006) inform the method of presentation in this chapter: photographs and patterns from the analysis are described primarily using the participant's own words while I provide brief explanation and discussion.

To analyze the data from the photovoice exercise, photographs of common images in conjunction with common words used and sentiments evoked in conversation were grouped together. Following this analysis six patterns were noted: family and children, labour and people, efficiency and technology, wild spaces, whole farm perspectives, and firsts and possibilities. Within each pattern there were common themes:

more popular images, word uses, and sentiments, however, there were also differences: very different images, word uses, and sentiments noted by some farmers. The following six subheadings denote the patterns from the analysis and presented in each section are the themes and differences within each of those six patterns. The conversations had in light of the photographs also connected to other conversations had during my farm stays, at times participants noted, for example, “like we talked about on Wednesday.” As such, the data presented in this section is a combination of information from the photovoice exercise and from other conversations had throughout my stays on the farms.

4.1 Family and Children

“The reason, really for me being an organic farmer is my kids. It’s about their health; our



Photo 1: Sonia

health.” In answering my question, “How did you come to the farm?” Sonia gave a chronological reply about where she was and what she was doing prior to coming to HF Farm. Eventually she gave the above statement.

Family and children was the most common pattern in the photographs taken and was also a common topic of

conversation when participants answered the above question. The thematic sentiment discussed was that being a part of an organic farm provided physical, mental, and emotional health especially for children but also for oneself and the family as a whole.

Though there were differences within these conversations of family and children including discussions of the succession of the farm, and gender roles. All of these will be discussed in this section.

Sonia continued, “giving the kids good food; it’s medicine. Even though sometimes they don’t see it that way. [laughs] I knew it would be such a good way to raise kids because of how I was involved at Sam’s parent’s farm from such a young age.” In a separate conversation Sam echoed his partner, “taking a picture of the kids was very important. Because for Sonia and me both, having the kids and having a positive impact on this world through them is here on the farm.”

Justin and Karen had also made the decision to be on the farm in part because of their children. Separately they took almost the exact same photograph of their eldest child.

Here are their descriptions:

Justin: We had been here two weeks [pause] well actually, on the first day we came to talk with Joss and Daniel, Adam said, ‘why don’t we move today’. And, anyway, after two weeks Joss and I were walking with Adam right here and he said ‘I like it here Dad’. There was no prompting, and that was very important to us.



Photo 2: Justin; Karen

Karen: Being at a new place I don’t think I have roots here yet; no special tree or anything. Ask me in a year and maybe. But this one represents a few things—the wild environment that I want my kids to grow up in. I want this to be their playground: a pure environment. And this is why I am here.

Joss too wanted to include a photo of her family, “Family has always been very important to me. It’s just more brains and we make a lot of decisions around the table, together, and I like that. It is also where you get your emotional substance from.” This was a very interesting inclusion and related to conversations I had with many farmers about the future of the farm, and the future of farming generally, which often stemmed from conversations about family and farm. As one of the participants put it, “there’s

going to be a problem. That, though it is very complex, at it's simplest, my generation is getting old and it will get harder and harder for us to do the work, but your generation cannot afford the land." With the exception of one pair of farmers, all the farmers I spoke with, whenever they are done farming (if they are) they do not want to see the farm turned into a non-organic farm. However, that is not exactly something you can put in a realty agreement. As such, I encountered many different models that farmers were attempting with respect to farm succession. Joss's family photo then is so interesting because this is not her biological family.



Photo 3: Joss

Joss and Daniel have been farming together on TB Farm since 1974, and selling produce since 2001. They have been looking to slow down a little bit or maybe have particular areas of the farm they focus on, while having help with the farm as a whole. They have talked with their two children about farming, or maybe eventually taking over, but they are not interested. They certainly want TB Farm to stay an organic farm, after all, Joss has been helping the land turn into a farm since 1968, and for the past three seasons

Joss and Daniel have been trying out different forms of internships. This year though, Joss, Daniel, Dustin, and Karen are seeing if they might be able to work together on TB Farm. Justin and Karen had tried the year before to start up a small farm of their own, though they found it quite difficult for numerous reasons mostly related to money. Everyone decided that Justin and Karen would come and live on TB Farm from March 2012-March 2013 and that they would all work on the farm together and see how that worked.

A different example is of GV Farm, Andrew said, “it will be interesting to see what happens in the next few years. Shareholders are passing away and their children want to cash in their shares, or because they are getting older they could use the money. And the original farmers of the coop have gone now, this is the first year without either of them on the farm.” GV Farm is a land cooperative, shares are \$5000, and you must have a share to farm. The mortgage on the land has been paid off now, however, if shareholders want to cash in what does that mean for the future of GV Farm, as well as Andrew and the other farmers.

In addition to expressing that the farm was important for the health of their children, farmers also noted the importance, for them, in having their children around. The following two photos and conversations demonstrate this. Kate took a photo of the farm’s trailer, which they drive full of produce back and forth from the Okanagan to Vancouver every weekend, and which displays a big family portrait. She noted, “Family is super important to Alex and me because one of the things we thought about was that neither one of us would have to have a job away from the kids. Not many people have a job that their kids can be involved in, it represents our partnership too; and how important

different partnerships are have been for us—whether it’s advertising or just letting people know what we believe in.”



Photo 4: Kate

While Jane and Colin also took a picture of their kids and initially expressed similar sentiments, the conversation went in a very different direction:

Jane: The big reason for wanting to farm was so that I could be with the kids most of the time.

Colin: Well, we never talked about it like that. We just talked about what needed to be done and who was going to be able to do it. I ended up doing more of the machinery but we have both done each other’s jobs.

Jane: For a while I was looking for work but Joel found a job first and it paid more than what I could find...

Colin: It has rotated. There have been times when Tam has worked and I have been at home.

Jane: We don’t have clear gender roles. It’s more about what has made sense in certain circumstances.



Photo 5: Jane and Colin

Colin: We live in a chaos model; we have talked about wanting to have clearer roles, but that’s never been what happened [laughs].

Conversations about family and farm also invited discussion about everyone's roles on and off the farm. At the outset of the field process I did not have a set question that addressed gender roles, or that asked about each person's role on the farm. However, at the first farm I visited the two farmers initiated a conversation about each other's roles on the farm as it was very important to them. Subsequently I began asking, "Do you discuss each other's roles on and off the farm? What are they?" AW Farm is an organic farm and nursery; the farm is primarily Evan's duty, while the nursery is Heather's, but they do certain things together, like the turkeys, and they give each other daily updates of what they have been doing on the farm. They discussed the importance of having a balance of working together, working apart, and communicating. They both have a different favourite spot on the farm, and though not included in the report, they each took a photo of their favourite spot noting that these check-ins with each other often happen while in these places. Evan noted that, "they can look out on their own and each other's work, and the work they have done together," and Heather noted that the changing of the way they look at the farm, going to their two favourite spots, was very important to talk about their roles and the farm's. Joss and Daniel also expressed the importance of having things that they do separately and things they do together, and respecting each other's roles and checking-in with each other on a regular basis. Though both of laughed that Joss is the farmer and Daniel is the helper. These sentiments, being aware of and talking about each other's roles, whether more defined like Evan and Heather or less so like Jane and Colin, were common at most farms where both partners were farming. This pattern continued at the four farms where one partner farmed and the other and the other was employed off-farm.

GP Farm, however, was quite different. The two farmers, and the three family employees (sons and daughter) roles were set, but there was hardly any communication between family members. When asked the question above they would detail their role but nothing else. I noticed as I worked with all of them separately that they did not talk to one other about their roles or the daily happenings on the farm. The most edifying example was on my second day Paul said, “if we don’t get funding next year for another barn—we need more goats—we are going to have to think about pulling out.” He then talked seriously about leaving the farm by the next couple of years. Two days later I was working with Clara who is in charge of the milking room and the barns. She talked with enthusiasm about one day taking over the farm, and mentioned that her parents had told her if anyone was going to take over the operation it would be her. I then asked Mary and got the same response, she and Paul had talked about Clara taking over the farm. She did not say anything about selling and I decided not to press the subject any further, but it was clear that roles and communication, and communication about each other’s roles was much different at this farm than at all the others.

4.2 Labour and People

Closely related to the pattern of family and children was the pattern of labour and people. The information in this section mainly addresses the question of how farmers and farms do what they do; presenting the intricate and different ways that come to be for both farmer and farm. The themes of these photographs and their subsequent conversations were: understanding your own capabilities, questioning what labour organization to use, and the amount of human labour involved in organic farming. Many

participants took photographs to talk about the other people involved in their farm. Here are two examples:



Photo 6: Kate

Kate and Alex run an apprenticeship program—usually running March through October. This year they have 6 apprentices “who are very important to the operation of the

Kate: There are multiple significances of this one. This is our farm team this year; all our apprentices this year. They are like sponges. And everyone is jumping for joy at a job well done. I really wanted a picture with everyone because it is such an important part of what we do.



Photo 7: Sonia

farm.” Sonia too, included a photo of people who worked on the farm: an apprentice and me.

It is important here to note the different organizations and forms of labour used on the farms. Labour varied greatly, and it was an important subject of conversation at all the farms. Two farms had no workers, nor were they seeking any, but most farms had either employees, seasonal employees, apprentices, WWOOFers, or some combination of all of these.³⁵ About half of the farms I visited would have WWOOFers at some point throughout the summer season. WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) connects organic farmers with individuals interested in working on and learning more about organic farming. It is an energy exchange program. In exchange for working a

³⁵ Please see Appendix C and Table 3 for a detailed description of the labour organization at each farm.

WWOOFer is given food and lodging. The program warns that WWOOFers should only work up to 5-6 hours/day, and suggests a minimum two-week stay. About half of the farms are a part of the WWOOF program, 9 out of 17, though the majority of these noted that they hardly use it anymore. While all of the farms that do not use the WWOOF program had at one point been a part of the program and have left for a variety of reasons.

Evan and Heather were new to the WWOOF program, and becoming a part of it “was a serious decision.” They signed up before the 2011 season and only took on one WWOOFer. They also have one part-time employee and occasionally contract specialized tradespeople: electric and construction. This season they have taken on one WWOOFer and they are thinking about taking on another part-time employee. Heather noted that they, “will probably not take on very many WWOOFers.” She and Evan had talked for months about whether or not the program was a type of free labour and how could they make sure that they did not treat it as such. Further, it was important to them to discuss and understand how much work they and the farm were capable of, “we should be able to do it ourselves and hire people as needed. If we find we are doing more than that then it is too much, too much for us, and for the land.”

It must be stressed again that WWOOFers are not labour in the traditional sense. While they provide labour and labour power to the farm they are not workers, the program is meant as a living and learning experience. One farm was hosting 4 WWOOFers at the time of my visit. At that point I had visited 14 farms for this project and had worked on 4 farms prior to the project; this amount of WWOOFers was uncommon. One of the other WWOOFers, who had been wwoofing in numerous

countries for the past 18 months, also expressed that this was unusual. I asked if it was common for them to host this many people at a time, following is that conversation:

Mary: Yes it is, we often have 4-5 people all year long.

Son 1: It would be crazy if we didn't. It would mean a lot more work for [other son and daughter].

Son 2: Well it would be a lot more work for me.

Mary: Yes, well we would just have to pay someone.

Daughter: But then we would have to pay them?

Mary: But in some ways that would be easier. We would train one person and they would come and do that job everyday.

Me: Why have you chosen to have WWOOFers?

Mary: I like having people in my home.

That was the end of the conversation. Paul, the other farmer, was present throughout the conversation but did not comment.

As above with Don and Heather discussing labour in relation to farmer and farm was also very important to Andrew. He took this photo of Cameron. She is employed by Andrew now, but has a long history working on



Photo 8: Andrew

the land that is GV Farm having worked for the farmer that preceded Andrew, and the farmers that owned the land before it became GV Farm. Cameron has worked on this land since 1992, “she is such an important person on the farm. It is these people, here and others on other farms—they are the heroes of farm production. They do all this work and you don’t have to motivate them, and they don’t do it for that much, though more here than in most places.” Cameron and her husband come to work for the day in addition to Andrew’s live-on-farm employees. Andrew stressed that these people are employees, not apprentices, “I strongly dislike the use of apprentices; they are only apprentices if they

are involved in *everything*.” Andrew would like to be able to teach, and maybe someday, but right now he feels there is too much work and learning that he must do first:

They are learning something, like how to weed effectively, and tie up plants, but they’re not learning how to build a resilient farm, or local economy, or to not rely on certain things to produce food. They are not learning how to breed seeds or animals, they are not even learning the books. I don’t run an apprenticeship.

Andrew, as Evan and Heather did, also stressed the importance of doing your own labour and also understanding how much you and the farm can do.

Having apprentices, though, was common. Kate and Alex run their own apprenticeship program and accept 4-8 people/year. Their apprentices are given individual tasks and fields to take care of over the course of the season. They have a monthly stipend and live on farm, and they take courses at the Organic Farming Institute of British Columbia. Others, Sam and Sonia, and Robert and Ruth took on apprentices from a program called SOIL: Canada’s Sustainable Farm Apprenticeship Program. There is no set program to follow in taking on SOIL apprentices. Sam and Sonia have taken on apprentices from this program for two years but do not think they will do it again, next year they think they will just go with full-time employees. Robert and Ruth feel the same way.

Other discussions on labour were about how much human labour is involved in organic farming. About half of ZB Farm’s 11-acre orchard is cherry orchard. This season 20 people were employed over 11 days to get the cherries off the trees. Cherries cannot be picked until they are absolutely ready and once they are they have to come off the tree, and with so much fruit you need pickers and sorters. You cannot sell them all fresh so other people are pitting and drying and freezing. This happens every year. This is the

only photograph Ruth took. She noted that she took it to represent all the people and all the care that goes into the cherry harvest every year.



Photo 9: Ruth

Sonia, too, in discussing how much work is involved noted, “when you go to market like we do you are selling under your name, the customer knows who are, and you want to be respectful to them in what you are providing, but you also hope that they are respectful of the work that you have put in.” Similarly, Jane noted, “if I could just figure out a way [pause] I guess what I would really like to know is how I could make 75 cents/hour instead of 25.” Other statements were more like humourous exasperations, but they carried the same sentiments, Joss saying, “if you never want to be bored, be a farmer,” Dave, talking about why he had come to the farm, “well, it’s idealic isn’t it. The ideal lifestyle would be to have an orchard barring all the realities of organic farming,” or Sam—and many others—saying, “weeding is everything!”

4.3 Efficiency and Technology

While this whole chapter deals with reporting on the participant-lead photovoice exercise this section in particular deals with a pattern that was brought up entirely by farmers, as opposed to resulting from any of my fixed questions: efficiency and technology. Many conversations that discussed and questioned how to organize labour and what labour to use, and what are the capabilities of farmer and farm—and what should they be—also evolved into conversations about efficiency and technology. Themes addressed in these discussions were what kind or how much technology and machinery to use, and what is efficiency or farming efficiently. Falling under the first theme Jane and Colin took this photo, and had this to say:

Jane: The wheel hoe is the most incredible invention for small farms ever made. Without the wheel hoe I would not be able to do what I do.

Colin: This just makes me think of your parents, on their hands and knees for years. And getting the tractor was kind of bitter-sweet. It was not quite what we wanted to create.

Jane: Yes but, if there could be another thing like the wheel hoe: appropriate technology for small farms—and it is so lacking, [Colin in background: so lacking]—mostly for harvest and washing. If there was a way to harvest and wash better that would be amazing.



Photo 10: Jane and Colin

Expressing similar sentiments of not wanting to use much machinery, but also being aware of the importance of technology in order to run a productive farm Andrew had this to say about the following picture:

Andrew: It is important for me because it is one of those things that costs a lot of money and can control a lot of the farm—gas, parts etc. It kind of reduces your self-sufficiency in this way, so I am always thinking about whether or not I could have a smaller tractor, and maybe no machinery. I think about having to give up some of my morals to grow more food, or even just as much as I do grow.



Photo 11: Andrew

Andrew talked about the importance for him to get used machinery and to learn about and recycle parts as much as possible. Greg noted this as well and took the following photo of his collection of used machinery.



Photo 12: Greg



Photo 13: Tori and Gord

In contrast, Tori talked about one day having a “man-powered farm.” It is a dream of hers to make CH Farm a farm that uses no machinery unless it is human powered, with the exception of the humidifiers and

temperature controls in their

mushroom rooms. Eric, her partner, and CH Farm’s other farmer, demonstrating difference not only between farms but also between farmers on the same farm, is not so sure. Like Andrew and Greg he feels that it is important to recognize the use of machinery but also how much machinery can take over your farm. he too said it was important to him to try and recycle used machines and parts as much as possible.

Throughout both the conversations about labour and about technology many of the farmers used the word efficiency, or the phrase farming efficiently, so I started to ask what they meant by that. Kate and Alex use the word efficient in many different conversations to define many different things. In describing her photograph below, Kate noted:



Photo 14: Kate

Kate: the new shop’s significance to me is efficiency. Being able to keep everything in one building instead of three. Getting things out of the field more efficiently than in the past. And the importance of proper food storage too.

Additionally, from a separate conversation:

Kate: [...] and I can take that information and learn about making the farm more efficient.

Me: what does making the farm more efficient mean?

Kate: Using land properly, maybe I am planting something too far apart, maybe there's a better way to grow something. If there is an easier and quicker way to do something I will adopt it. I don't know everything, not by any means.

Me: Using land properly?

Kate: Using land efficiently.

Me: Ok?

Kate: Making the most out of the land but at the same time building the soil.

From a separate conversation with Alex, after I had asked him, "what is organic to you?":

Alex: And there are other benefits other than just not using chemicals: it helps you keep track of your records more efficiently.

Me: More efficiently?

Alex: Dates are important, like we sold out last year, so we need to grow more of such and such this year. Ok, a good example is the cold storage building. It allows us to work less. We don't have to go back and forth between all these different places on the farm anymore. It allows us to go faster: that is what efficiency means working quicker, faster. Like when you go down a row, you bring something back. You don't want to do something twice; you want to do it once. Anytime you can cut something out and get the same thing out of it, you do. That is, I guess the state of the farm right now. We are trying to make it more efficient.

Similarly, though with a slightly different sentiment, I had the following conversation with Sam about farming efficiently:

Sam: I do have to remember, to go back to thinking about farming efficiently.

Me: What does farming efficiently mean?

Sam: Farming is, as far as a self-employed business goes [pause]. At the end of the day you try to be as productive as you can. You really think about how you spend your time, which jobs need to be done, and that you are never going to get them done in the time that you want [laughing]. I also feel that it is unfortunate that I have to think that way, or get myself thinking that way.

For the most part efficiency and farming efficiently evoked, or was related to conversations of labour and being able to make a livelihood on the farm. Jane though, who is a restoration ecologist when she is not farming, used the term ecological

efficiency. In a discussion with her and Colin they stressed the difficulty they feel of wanting to have things like a greater diversity of crops, with companion planting, and only on farm inputs that is a more ecologically efficient small farm with being a small farm that is productively efficient, that they can make a living on, “they are not necessarily opposite but they are hard to negotiate.”

4.4 Wild Spaces

The fourth pattern noted from the photovoice exercise was participants photographing and discussing the ‘wild spaces’ that surround the farm. The main theme in these conversations was to discuss the importance of these areas to them and to the farm.

Though why these areas were important differed. Jane took the following photo of the creek and swimming hole that runs through the farm and noted, “none of our other farms had any natural areas like this, and its just fun.” It’s fun because they swim in it. Jane worked last year at restoring the creek bank, taking out the blackberry bushes and replanting native plant life.



Photo 15: Jane and Colin

Additionally, Eve of MO Farm, and Tom and Emily of FF Farm all wanted to take a photograph of the wild spaces around their farms. MO Farm and FF Farm are neighbours and we discussed that taking a photo of the valley where both farms are would be the best way to capture what they wanted. These photographs were taken by me

but the decision was Eve, Tom and Emily's. The photos are arranged in composite to show the whole valley, farm spaces and wild spaces. Both farms have over 100 acres with only a small portion of that being used as farm-space. Both farms are part of the Land Conservancy, and Eve is the founder of the Land Conservancy. On the significance of the photos Eve said, "I find myself incredibly blessed to have found myself on land where I can use part of it for agriculture and still have untouched land. They are equally important, and they are important to each other." Separately, Tom echoed this, "the natural spaces on the farm, the parts we leave untouched are so important. They impact so much."



Evan and Heather of AW Farm took and discussed their photographs separately and they both took pictures of wild spaces. For both they symbolized not only philosophies that they hope they are bringing to their farming but also the lessons and

changes that have brought them and the farm to this point in their lives. Below are their photographs and subsequent conversations:



Photo 17: Evan



Photo 16: Heather

Evan: I took a picture of the bridge and the gate because they remind me of the two parts of my life. I was raised in Oakland and Berkley, CA, and Tucson, AZ; these are big cities, and like a city kid I thought that the job of farmers was to push back the forest, and make room to cultivate the land. When we [ex-wife] moved here and had the two dairy cows, I had started to cut back the trees to the fence-line, but one day we [kids] climbed up to the top of the bluff where you can look down on the entire valley. I could look directly down at the farm and instantly I could see that the only corridor of forest was where the creek was and it came into my mind that if I carried on the way that I was there would be no way for deer, bears, coyotes to get from the river to the mountains without being in the open and that didn't feel right, so I stopped. In 2001 I decided to build a path through this little bit of forest and build these bridges. I like the forest, it gives me a place to think, and I really needed that at this time. I also saw the bridge as a symbol of where I had been to where I am going. Because Heather wanted a nursery we needed something to help keep the deer out, so we put in a fence, but I wanted to make sure that there were gates—there are three. I wanted to make sure that there was something to connect me to the other part of my life and connect the land.

Heather: I love going over to the forest and I haven't gone much lately but we went for a walk this morning. All that wild and crazy stuff that grows on its own! I used to ask Don to go in and clean up all the ladder fuel but now I understand his hesitation to do so. I appreciate it very much; appreciate it as much as our farming practices on this side of the fence. There are so many wonderful things and this was in bloom this morning, so I suppose that is why I chose to take a picture of it. Everything that is over there I have over here, in a very different way, and I like both of them. Edges: knowing your edges. Bridges and gates. Trying to work with and understand nature's force. And the expansion and contraction of our agricultural practices and I think that these are all wrapped up in here for me.

An interesting theme related to the pattern of wild spaces was photographs of hands and earth.



Three participants took these photos and mentioned working the earth, working with earth, or the satisfaction and connection felt to earth by digging your hands in it. These descriptions evoked the importance of farmer to farm and farm to farmer and resembled the theme of family and children: physical, mental and emotional health.

4.5 Whole Farm

This section too addresses the socioecological life of farmer and farm, though as can be seen in the participant's quotations it begins to address the second two questions of the project: what organic and the organic movement are with respect to these farmers and farms. Related to the pattern of wild spaces and thinking about farm activities in relation to spaces that were not cultivated land was the pattern of taking photographs to discuss the 'whole farm'. The overall theme of these photographs and conversations was thinking of the farm as one whole integrated system. Though what participants thought of as the whole farm, and what made an integrated system varied. Following are photographs and conversations that demonstrate this variance. Andrew actually used the phrase, whole farm, and had this to say:

Andrew: This is one of the best pictures that I can take that is closest to capturing the whole farm. A good farm approach is a whole farm approach, I guess, is what they call it. That there are different parts of the farm and they all work together and though this farm doesn't, I think it could. I guess it is a biodynamic way; but minimizing the impacts and understanding how the different parts work together—it's not just the field, but the people, and the surrounding area as well.



Photo 18: Andrew

GV Farm is a land coop. Andrew and four others farm on GV Farm, and sell under three different names. GV Farm used to be a land coop and a business coop but that changed this season. However, as Andrew noted above it is important to him that the different areas of the farm and the different farmers still work together.



Photo 19: Kate

Kate's photo choice was very different and she did not use the term whole farm, but the sentiments were quite similar. She also noted that the farm is more that farmer's actions.

Kate: the significance of this picture is challenge and understanding. The bindweed is significantly bigger than the squash and this is challenging to deal with—weeding is so important as

an organic farmer [laughs]. But also understanding too, that the farm is more than just what you are planting and growing.

A very different ‘whole farm’ is CH Farm. CH Farm is a veganic organic farm. Tori and Eric have no animals nor do they use any animal products on their farm. No animals other than those that make the farm their home naturally and no animal manures or bone and blood meals, everything is green manure. Their whole farm perspective is quite different from others; companion planting and crop rotation are very important to them. They took this picture of the clover that is planted in segmented sections of their main field:



Photo 22: Tori and Eric

Tori: Nitrogen fixation is so important! This is something I really wanted to talk about with respect to vegan organic agriculture; why pile on nitrogen when you can just make sure that your crops are organized so you can get it from the air, thanks to these nitrogen nodules.

In contrast, Laura took these two pictures to talk about LL farm as a

integrated whole:



Photo 20: Laura



Photo 21: Laura

LL Farm was the only farm I visited that was certified biodynamic as well as certified organic and Laura talked about the, “importance of all of the organisms on the farm.” the chickens roam the vineyard, the sheep are brought in every once in a while to cut the grasses between the rows—no mowers—pigs clear new land when needed and at the end of each row there are roses and lavender to attract beneficial insects and bees. Though bees are not needed for grape pollination they help keep away undesired insects. They run a vineyard—and propagate grapes vines—a winery, and an organic compost business all on the same site and making sure that these are all integrated is very important to Laura and Marcus, her partner and the other farmer of LL Farm.

While these farmers discussed a whole farm in terms of spaces, farmer, farm, and other organisms all working together the most common way participants discussed the whole farm was in terms of on-farm and off-farm inputs and outputs. Most farmers talked of wanting to have a closed system of on-farm inputs and outputs: everything the farm needs the farm creates. However, talking about this was inevitably followed up by noting the impracticality of a wholly closed-system farm. For GP Farm, a goat dairy, as Paul notes, “we would need way more land if I wanted to make our own feed mix. I would like to do that, but it’s just not possible.” While Sam of HF Farm, expressed that he would eventually like to have some animals—sheep or cows—so that HF Farm can produce all the manure it needs, but that is not financially feasible right now. However, striving to make the majority of inputs on-farm was a common goal of the farmers in this project. Additionally, stemming from these conversations farmers often discussed what they thought of as different versions of organic, see section 5.1.2 and 5.2.3 for more information from these conversations.

4.6 Firsts and Possibilities

For this last pattern, though the photographs are very individual and different they are drawn together by the conversations I had with the participants about the photos. Many participants took photographs to tell a lifehistory of themselves and/or the farm. The overall theme was discussing firsts and possibilities. These photographs were taken to tell a story about the first time the farmer did or experienced something as well as to tell a story about what they hoped they would be able to accomplish with the farm. Though these stories too are quite individual the overall theme was of personal attachment to and inspiration in the farm.

Tori and Eric were beginning their fifth season farming during my visit, and it was the second year they were running a CSA. Though they talked often about how they wanted the farm to be solely a CSA farm that serves their community, both with food and education. They took this photo:



Photo 23: Tori and Eric

Tori: This is what we are trying to do. Last year was our first year doing a CSA, and this year we have more customers. Right now, our next goal is to be entirely a CSA farm with mushrooms and greens for the restaurants.
Eric: Serving the members of the community is really important; it is what we would like to be able to do.

Much of what was relaid by participants when discussing the photos in this pattern was a making a lifestyle decision, and how they and the farm had changed over the years. This is covered more in sections 5.2.3 and 5.3 but here Andrew discussed that he made the choice to grow certain crops and certain varieties of crops for reasons that were very important to him and to how he sees the farm:

Andrew: Because that corn is such a good example. It's just that people think food is something that you put in your mouth because you have to survive and hopefully it also tastes good. But it's more than that it is a medium, it's for health, it's cultural, it has a story. It's tied up with you. This corn was bred to give peasants who had been pushed off their land in Montana a food that was nourishing and easy to grow, and important to them historically and culturally. It can be power, a political statement. So I look at food as [pause], I would like to grow things like this corn and the garlic—and the chickens too—to sell but they are also more than just to eat and taste good, they also tell a story. And I would like to be able to show that.



Photo 24: Andrew

Lily, due to unfortunate circumstances only contributed one photograph to the project. At the end of my stay I asked her, “if she could include one photograph what would it be?” Similar to Andrew she replied that she wanted a photograph that would represent the possibility she saw for the farm, and for herself on the farm. She flipped through the photos I had taken and chose this one:



Photo 25: Lily

It is Lily’s first year on this farm, BM Farm, and though she has farmed for five years it is the first time she has farmed on her own land. The farm is full of possibilities. She also expressed some disappointment, things were not exactly what she had expected when she moved from

Calgary to the Okanagan six year ago, neither was she. The farm is a place ripe with growth, for both farmer and farm.

Many of the photos that Evan chose to take for the project had an element of lifehistory, his and the farm’s, but in taking and talking about the photograph below such insight was provided on the socioecological life of both Evan and AW Farm. Below is only a snippet of that conversation:

Evan: When [ex-wife] and I first moved here, with three kids, I had no skills, and we had to find a place with a house. The house had been built a Doukhobor family with lumber from old Japanese internment camps—there were lots by here, but that is a different story—and the house burnt down on Easter a few years after we moved here. Again, a different story. For years, especially when I lived here alone, I just lived with that foundation over there filled with ash and memories and I did not know what to do with it [...].

Here Evan recounted one of his last political efforts to stop hi-way construction through a 30-year-old blueberry farm.

Evan: I had organized 1000 people to physically try to stop construction. But I lost, and I had never lost something like this. I learnt that I was fallible and that I did not really understand this modern life. By this time the family was broke [from fighting] so we had a fundraiser by taking out all the blueberry plants and selling them. When we were finished I took the plants that were left and packed them in the back of my truck, and those are the bushes that are here. I think I am here because I lost, if I had won I might have carried on thinking that that was what I was supposed to do. So finally I filled it with dirt and covered it with landscape fabric. And one day I decided to try to grow blueberries in it, and then just like the bees and the blueberries were here so I had to start learning. When I was going to quit my job and I was thinking about what to grow, I realized that I only knew one thing that people will buy [laughs].



Photo 26: Evan

The information presented in this chapter primarily explored the project's first two questions: who is the organic farmer, and what is the organic farm. What are their socioecological lives—what do they do, how and why do they do it. This was embodied in the patterns of the chapter: family and children, labour and people, efficiency and technology, wild spaces, whole farm, and firsts and possibilities. What farmers and farms do, how, and why remains an aspect of the following chapter as well, though Chapter 5 primarily explores the project's second two questions: what is organic and what is the organic movement with respect to these farmers and farms.

Chapter 5: Organic and Organic Movement

This chapter deals primarily with the responses from the 11 fixed questions asked throughout my farm stays.³⁶ This chapter is divided into three main sections: everyday politic, organic and organic movement, and lifestyle. The sections are further divided into patterns. As with the previous section the patterns are common words used and sentiments evoked in conversation that have been grouped together. Analyzing common words and sentiments has been done to differentiate this project from Kaltoft (1999) and Hunt (2010) who have grouped and typified farmers (Kaltoft) and farms (Hunt). More importantly by grouping common words and sentiments instead of farmers and farms organic is presented as continuum of commonalities and differences rather than as rigidly defined categories. The following subheadings in this section denote the patterns from the analysis and presented in each section are the themes and differences within each of those patterns. As the previous chapter does, this chapter uses primarily participants words to detail and discuss these themes and differences. Additionally, consulting the six tables in **Appendix C** may benefit the reading of this chapter by providing a greater sense, or snapshot, of each farmer and farm.

5.1 Everyday Politic

5.1.1 Markets, Price, and Money

“You really have to consider supply and markets—what you can get to grow, how you can get to market, and can you sell that.” This was some advice that Daniel was giving to a pair of visiting farmers from the Gulf Islands. The couple were looking to move and were visiting farmers in certain mainland areas to talk with them about their operations and their land. Sam too expressed having to remember to be as productive as possible and

³⁶ Please see Appendix B Item 2 for a list of all of these questions.

to think about money and selling the farm's produce, because in, "farming, as far as self-employed business goes" these issues come with the job. The business of the farm, though discussed throughout my stays was primarily addressed in conversations following the questions: 3) Where and how do you sell your products? How do you decide your prices? 4) I hear people talk about market politics, what does that mean? Are there any times that you remember when market politics challenges what you want to do here or made the production and sale of your crops difficult? 5) What is your ideal market? Following analysis of these conversations, market politics, food price, and money were the three most discussed patterns. However, these conversations dealt with a wide variety of different themes: markets inhibiting or not inhibiting the farmer's intentions, how to price produce, and how monetary issues affected farms and farmers. The common themes as well as the differences will be detailed in this section.

The majority of farmers who participated in this project sold their farm's produce at farmer's markets, 9 out of 17, as such market organization and dynamics became a common topic for conversation.³⁷ Not all farmers markets operate the same way. There are vendors, and boards, and customers, and market managers, and board presidents and everyone has a different role in the operation of the market and those roles vary from market to market. Sometimes the board is entirely made up of vendors; sometimes no vendors are allowed to serve on the board. Sometimes the market manager decides which vendors can sell at the market; sometimes it's the board's decision. Some markets bring in more of a crowd than others in the same city, and seniority is usually the rule. Farmers thus had varying opinions on market organization and how it affected them.

³⁷ For detailed information on all farm's methods of sale see Appendix C Table 4.

The majority of farmers noted that they did not feel that the farmer's market had limited them, had made the sale of products difficult, or had inhibited their intentions. However, they often followed up saying that it could be different for other farmers, and different at different markets. Andrew notes, "I have not experienced it. Though I go to a smaller market. And especially at [city] market I am usually the only organic farmer there and the only farmer with my range of produce." Additionally, many followed up noting that how the market is organized is important, even if they did not feel limited. Sam divulged, "In [city] it is mostly vendors that are on the board and I suppose that I haven't had a problem with it because I agree with them. But if the farmers run the markets themselves you run too much of the risk that they will only look out for themselves; we do need to look out for the majority. We do need people that are members of the community, not just producers. And I do think that the market manager should have a bit more authority, but then the board needs to discuss what the market can do for the manager."

The majority of farmers, however, noted that sometimes they feel inhibited by the BCAFM's rule of "make, bake, or grow". All farmers markets in BC registered with BCAFM must only sell produce that has been homemade, homebaked, or grown by the vendor.³⁸ Additionally, the producer, in this case the farmer, must attend market. Many farmers stressed that they enjoy going to market, for Andrew choosing to sell at a market was, "very important to me. For me, markets mean community and that is why I chose to be a market farmer." However, occasionally farmers wished that they could spend the time going to and from the market on the farm, "would it be so bad if farmers could hire

³⁸ This follows for all markets registered with the BCFMA. Markets not registered must use a different name and not call themselves a farmer's market. In these cases they do not have to follow the 'make, bake, grow' rule.

staff to do that sometimes,” said Colin. Sam noted though, “I would want that person to know the farm, know the farm practices, they would have to learn everything in order to answer the questions I get.”

Market politics first came to my attention when I learned that two of the farms I had visited had strongly disagreed with the other’s behavior at a market the previous summer. They accused the other of price fixing/produce dumping. Further, I had noticed that the average price for specific goods varied from market to market. As such I began asking, “how do you decide your prices.” The following are four different responses:

Kate: We have a list of the wholesale prices that all of our produce goes for and we follow that. It is also important to know what the wholesale prices for conventional produce is. And then you have to factor in your expenses. All of them, including things like how much was the cost of gas to get to market. Everyone often forgets things like that.

Andrew: you mean how do I decide whether or not to change my prices?

Me: Ok, how do you decide that?

Andrew: Looking at last year’s numbers, sales and expenses, and this year’s, and figuring out whether or not I need to make more money and change my prices.

Tori: it usually comes up at a meeting [certification body board meeting] and then we talk about it before market: how everybody is doing this year, and what we are thinking.

Sam: I like to independently decide what my price is. It is important to understand the other prices that are out there: wholesale, retail, conventional, fruit stand. If there is anything I want to say about my pricing; there are so many factors that go into what I price at, but I set a limit at it, if that prices is unreasonable I wouldn’t feel good about that as a human being. If it goes against my values that strongly, there’s no way I am going to do it.

This was a common theme throughout price conversations: having prices line up with other values. As Evan expressed:

Evan: I am upset that my neighbours cannot buy the food that I grow; that there is this issue surrounding who can buy this food. My neighbours don't buy our potatoes they can't afford it. Another farmer up the way got a bit angry with me because I had sold them for under \$3/lb. But I don't want to sell them for \$3/lb just because you can in some places.

However, Evan went on to discuss the value placed on food noting that it could and should change. Similarly, Daniel, commenting on whether or not organic is only for certain classes of people, notes:

Daniel: Well, when we were young and without the means we have now we ate well. You eat well?

Me: Yes.

Daniel: We learnt how to do this. We shuffled things around.

Discussing how money affected farmers, their farming, and the farms was another common theme in these conversations. Farmers discussed land, making a livelihood through farming, loans and losing their consumer base. Alex and Kate cultivate 32 acres, they own some of it and they rent the rest. They told the story of how they came to buy their first plot of land from a retiring organic farmer and noted that, "we were so fortunate, if it wasn't for her we probably would not be here. At this point in our search for land we had gotten disappointed, we didn't think we were going to find anything we could afford." Differently, Joss, dodging the Vietnam draft with her then-husband in 1968 bought 47 acres for \$6500, though she says, "we still didn't have enough money to start farming. But I also felt that this place had such potential, I was just waiting for a time when I would be able to farm. Money was a big issue." Joss and Alex did not begin farming full-time and selling the farm's produce until 2001. Farmers too expressed difficulty getting funding for farming, or land. Paul disclosed, "if we don't get funding in the next year for another barn—we need more goats—we are going to have to think about pulling out. Farm Credit Canada still considers us a risk." A large amount of the content

of these conversations surrounded the future of farming and farm succession as discussed in section 4.1.1.

Lastly, farmers discussed losing their customer base. They talked about what they did, but others in the midst of experiencing loss, were not sure what to do. Almost 15 years ago now Emily and Tom were no longer able to sell large portions of the farm's fruit to the packinghouse. The packinghouse, dealing with internal issues, stopped buying as much fruit. Understanding that they would have to remake themselves Tom and Emily nearly doubled their cultivated land by planting grapes. They started selling wines and fruit wines. Today, this is primarily what supports them even though they still wholesale fruit, "three families can live off this farm—thanks a lot to the wine business," said Emily. Steve noted, "even though the wine is only 10% of the fruit we grow, the returns from the wine are about 80% of our income. And one is a staple and one is a luxury item. That to me speaks volumes about our society."

Laura and Marcus, however, are not sure what they are going to do. The other vineyard and winery in this project, LL Farm, lost 50% of its wholesale customers this year. Marcus said, "the only answer I can get from the stores is that the market has moved away of our price point. I had always intended to bring our price down when my costs went down, but now I can't do that." Farming as a self-employed business goes, as Sam succinctly put it, means that selling, market politics, and pricing are part of the socioecological life of both farmer and farm. Jane, Colin and OY Farm are a fitting example. Jane and Colin are also unsure what they are going to do about losing their consumer base, though they will likely move away from farming. I asked them why:

Jane: I think I know why. Well, there's two reasons one is that we've been making far less money here than in the Okanagan. In the Okanagan the

[city] farmers market was phenomenal, here we would have to do probably three different markets to do the same sales and that just becomes too much.

Me: You'd have to be in three markets to make the same?

Jane: Yes, we are making a third of what we made in [city]. Maybe we could do two, if they were the right market. But we can't get into the good ones. And we don't have the capacity to do three markets, so we only have a certain capacity for sales here. And then things don't grow as well. I think that if I had started here, and slowly learned what the farm and the land does well, and slowly built up a customer base here then in three years I could have been where I want to be here. But what we did was we built up our business in the Okanagan and had it at this place where we needed it to be, where we could make an income to live, and then moved it over here and expected it to be that same level. So that was hugely demoralizing, financially difficult, and forced Colin to work off farm full time. It was this cycle of me getting fed up with it because I was doing it by myself, and going nuts.

Colin: I've never heard you put it all together that way Jane.

Jane: No, [laughs] I do it all day long in my head.

Colin: We created a need, but we created this expectation and that really kills you.

Jane: But being here has opened up more opportunities. Colin was able to get back into software development much more easily because he's been offered jobs from people here and people who are friends. And you end up volunteering on all this interesting stuff here and learning all these new things so like, I ended up being involved in the storm water management plan for this place. And getting really excited about that idea, and it kind of ties into the restoration work I was doing before, the field of restoration. I could see a lot of overlap, and maybe some direction for growth and I am really passionate and excited about that, and that is what is triggering going back to school. And that would never have happened if I didn't move here.

5.1.2 Certification

Reflections on the organic certification were given throughout a variety of conversations, the subjects of which also varied greatly. However, the two patterns in conversation were farmer's feelings towards the certification process, and discussing more generally farmer's feelings towards the federalization of organic standards. The themes of conversations around the certification process were more clearly supportive or unsupportive. However, in conversations about the standards generally farmers gave

numerous different answers under themes of support for, disillusionment with, and calls for education about the certification standards.³⁹

5.1.2a Certification Process

Those farmers who supported the certification process noted that they felt that going through the process again every year helped them keep their own records. Both Kate and Alex in separate conversations noted the following:

Kate: It also helps keep us accountable for what we are doing: the paperwork. Writing what you did, what you are doing is so important for you too, for your own records, and I find that all the paperwork really helps to reminds me to write what I did on any given day.

Alex: It helps you to keep track of your records more efficiently. A good example would be cover crops; part of organic certifications is looking and checking on crop rotation and use of cover crops and that is important for building the soil. The inspector will come and say, ‘Where are your cover crops?’ It just really helps keep a farmer on track. Record keeping is one of the things that people hate the most and don’t do but it could be so useful for you.

Two other farmers felt similarly. Saying that the certification process helped them as a farmer to practice farming and also to be more aware of the goings on of the farm, Lily noted that she has learnt so much about soil chemistry and composition from the certification process. Additionally, Kate noted that most of the time she believes it helps keep other farmers in check, “there needs to be a guideline: a lot of people naturally take the easy way out [...] There are things too that I wish they [verification officers] would look at. Like our farm buildings, nobody has walked into our buildings other than the processing house. I worry that this doesn’t happen at other farms either.”

This was a common theme when discussing the certification process. As most farmers who were unsupportive of the process were not necessarily unsupportive of the

³⁹ For details on farm certifications see Appendix C, Table 5.

standards, they often felt that they did more than standards asked, but that the standards were important for other farmers. Liz expressed that, “for the first few years we just did it for ourselves and people would say, you know, ‘why don’t you certify’ and I would say that we are farmers first, I don’t know about all that paperwork it seems like such a hassle. But then people would respond that I could use it as a marketing tool. In the end though we did not certify until 2010.” This was further indicated by the large number of nicknames farmers gave to those that only followed a certain version of organic as provided by the certification standards: fuzzy organics, industrial organics, substitute organics, Big O, and organic in the head but not in the heart.

However, Paul was quite outspoken about his dislike of the certification process, “it is too much money. It is not worth it.” Other members of GP Farm also expressed that the certification was too expensive, Mary even exclaimed, “can you change the rules?” Until this farm, the 15th visit in the project, no other farmer had noted cost as why they were unsupportive of the certification process. Specifically, the farmers of GP Farm said that the cost to pay the verification officer (VO) every year was too much. Searching fee lists for the various certification bodies in BC, I noted that GP Farm was certified by the only certification body in BC that does not cover the costs of a VO visit. This was the best example of how the certification process varies and differs from VO to VO and farm to farm. This is not to say that there is no definitive certification process, rather, as one of the participants noted best, “every VO is different. Every VO picks on something different.”

5.1.2b Federalization of Organic Standards

While the certification process was discussed, the majority of the conversation that was had when I asked, “how do you feel about the organic certification,” discussed the

certification or the federalization of organic standards more generally. Though the majority of farmers I visited were disillusioned and very frustrated with the certification those in support said the following:

Kate: investing back into the industry is important. You need to contribute to it to keep it going, and if you don't keep it going there isn't going to be any money for developing the standards further or monitoring them.

Similarly, Dave talked of the importance of balancing rules and soul in organic, and said, this of the certification:

These are the rules that we need to operate. And basic business rules. The rules have their place: it is the structure that we provide to our customers in the proper way. The soul is what is going to drive people to join and volunteer. One of the main things that drives my thinking is that I want to see more land go organic, less chemicals in our water and less chemicals in our food.

With the similar sentiments, both Alex and Joss expressed the importance of being certified by a third party for both the farmer and the consumer. Joss noted that getting everything certified is very important to her. This was in reference to the rise of a new organization in her area called KLAS. KLAS offers a certification and label. KLAS “requires that food is grown only with products that have been approved by the BC and Canadian organic standards” but they are not an accredited certification body and inspections are done by other KLAS farmers:

Joss: We need to get it together. What is organic? Because there are things that are not. That was the way things were done 40 years ago; we already did that, we went through that and realized that it needed to change because of potential social pressures.

However, as with the certification process, the majority of farmers, though certified, were disillusioned with the certification, though for many different reasons. Justin, who is a first year farmer, and farming with Joss said, “it seems silly to get,” of the

certification. Evan noted that he understands that a certification is important when the customer cannot meet the farmer, but that's not the kind of farm he wants to run, so he is not certified. While Emily, touching on what Evan felt, noted that the certification is important for her and Tom to sell the farm's produce, but she is very frustrated by the certification:

Emily: The certifications, how can you really control all of those things? It is suffocating the organic grower, and we are trying to do something good here. It takes away from the energy we need to grow organically, naturally, whatever. Within it there are different levels of growing organically, so you can have four different people with four different ideas all in one room. The principles of growing clean food have been lost. The simplicity that used to be a part of the organic industry is gone, now it is so complicated. And we are supposed to pass this down to our children?

Eve, a founding member of two certification bodies, expressed similar sentiments:

I remember when certifications started to change: I don't like the Canadian standards. We did it in a rush and did it poorly for commerce reasons. I recognize the need for something but [...] it had nothing to do with assuring the public and everything to do with commerce. The first standards we wrote for SOOPA were so small, they were working principles, a working paper of ideas and tools to apply as we can; it was only six pages long.

Sam of HF Farm and his father Robert of ZB Farm often talk about pulling out of the certification. For Sam, "they don't mean the same things they used to anymore", but he struggles with leaving them behind, because of how important they were to him, and to his parents, also founding members of a certification body. However, his father Robert expresses more anger, "the point is that organic agriculture *was* in fundamental opposition to the creed saying, hang on the environment is not over there we are a part of the environment. But look at us now; we look just like the other bastards. Organic has joined the general." However, Ruth, ZB Farm's other farmer, feels differently and expresses a number of the sentiments that have been brought up in this section: the

certification being important for others, the importance, now, of the certification for selling the farm's products.

Ruth: I some how think that it is good to have these certifications because some people will do good, but some people are not and it makes them more cautious. For myself, I feel that it does not do anything for me. But it is for us to sell because we don't keep everything. I would prefer that all of our customers could come to talk with us but that is not the way it is.

The third theme discussed in conversations about the organic certification was one of education, especially of consumers, regarding the way the standards are written. From a conversation with Andrew:

Me: How do you feel about the organic certification?

Andrew: I think that most people think that the standards are *very* standard and set but they are a bit loosey-goosey.

Andrew then brought out the certification binder to help him explain that the standards are written, "you should do this, but if you can't, you can do this, and they go on like that." Having people understand this, and that there are thus different organic practices under the standards was important to Andrew. This was important to Tom too, "it is as big as all the different views of all the different people involved, and everyone has a different idea of what it means to them. I am comfortable with the federal decision, but at the same time it is important that people understand that." Additionally, in a separate conversation with Andrew he noted that he would like to see different organic labels. This was in light of current debates in the COABC to develop organic standards for aquaculture. Andrew expressed, "organic was originally about soil, having organic aquaculture is not the same. I understand people wanting to have and to know if aquaculturists are using organic inputs, but that is not organic agriculture." Andrew took this further and noted that food grown in large-scale hothouse operations use hardly any

soil, “their inputs are organic, but there is not much soil and those inputs do not come from on-site.” He believes that there should be another organic label to help consumers understand that.

In addition to the organic standards, education of, with, or through organic and organic farming was a large theme throughout conversations of what organic and the organic movement are and will be detailed further section 5.2. Farmer’s opinions of the certification process and the federalization of organic standards varied greatly, with a few farmers expressing that organic is the certification, that the certification is the organic industry. While others sarcastically scoffed, “that’s what the standards are for, right?” However, the majority of farmers expressed that organic to them is more than the certification, and expressed a variety of other feelings on this theme: that the certification is important for other farmers who are not as knowledgeable or as cautious and particularly larger-scale operations, that different versions of organic are written into the standards, that organic has always been as many different things as the different people involved but the certification has taken away what the principles of organic used to be about.

5.2 Organic and Organic Movement?

This section deals primarily with responses to the questions: 1) What is organic to you? 2) Do you feel a part of or associated with an organic movement? Or how do you feel about the labeling of an organic movement? Following analysis of these conversations, it was clear that the two questions and the words—organic and organic movement—were so inter-related in those conversations that to separate them in the report would be confusing. As such, they are both addressed in this section. Though a vast array of

reflections and opinions were expressed three patterns were when addressing these questions: local, young and small farmers, education, and re-evaluation and nostalgia amid vast change. The following subheadings in this section denote the patterns from the analysis and presented in each section are the themes and differences within each of those patterns.

5.2.1 Local, Young, and Small

When asked what the organic movement was to them, a few farmers responded that local farmers and local farming was the new wave of the organic movement. Similar responses were given noting a young farmers movement or a small farming movement. Below are some of these expressions:

James: The local movement has more of a future than organic.

Me: What do you mean by that?

James: Organic certifications, *the rules*, are too much. Some of them are ridiculous. And because organic has become so bureaucratic, whereas local is not, that is why I think it has more of a future.

Sonia: I feel more a part of a young farmer's movement than I do an organic movement.



Photo 27: Jane and Colin

Sonia then talked about the connection she felt to the other young farmers in her area while also noting that she knows her husband feels differently, that the organic movement is still very important to him. The majority of the farmers that talked of a local, young, or small movement were a part of a younger generation of farmers,

between 32-45 years of age. Jane and Colin, who are both

in their thirties managed to discuss local, young, small, and the organic movement all in one conversation, while discussing one of their photographs:

Jane: I really like the other organic farmers; especially the young farmers. They are just really great! This club that you feel proud to belong to, like I don't think that accountants feel that way when they meet each other, thinking, 'hey, we should hang out'.

Colin: You just want to say, let's go for a beer after market—though you never do because you don't have the time, I guess. Sometimes you feel like your experience is more representative than it is [laughs]. It feels like farming is changing. I mean, it seems like people are coming back to the land.

Me: Back to the land?

Colin: It means a lot of things: feelings and state of mind. Maybe it's a guilt thing. Maybe it's wanting to be involved in being more connected to natural things. Though, if anything I have been feeling a little despondent about trying to do this kind of work. I don't know. It seems like all the farmers we are encountering are having the same issues we are. I guess I find myself asking, I'm fraught: is small farming important? If it is important for some reason then maybe there would be support but I don't know. If we get together in 30 years is there going to be a lot of small farms and small farmers around?

Jane: There is a small farm movement and movement in large-scale organics. I think that small farming was a part of organic but the small farmers can no longer take advantage of that market.

Colin: So what has happened now is the local movement, which I think is the next wave of the organic movement.

Additionally, the majority of farmers discussed the importance of local to them and to their farming intentions⁴⁰. However, what local was varied greatly amongst farmers, some discussed local only in terms of selling and consumers, and for some local was a confusing amount of things. James expressed that local was the future, not organic, and gave this response:

James: To us it is Harrop-Procter. Well it depends a bit on what we are selling. Okay, maybe between Nelson and Kaslo. People do come from farther away to get the honey, and we do sell it at the Coop in Nelson.

Me: What about buying?

⁴⁰ Related to conversations about the importance of local many farmers discussed the importance of community as well: community in general, social activities, what are social and community activities, the community of organic, and what is the community of organic. Following analysis of these conversations it was clear that this was an area for further research and it is discussed further in the conclusion. Please see Table 6 in Appendix C for some of the information gathered.

Despite many prompts and being re-asked on multiple occasions James never answered this question. Differently, this was a discussion with Alex:

Alex: I spoke on a panel about food sovereignty for the farmer's union.

Me: What is food sovereignty?

Alex: Buy local, know your farmer, stay away from GMO.

Me: What does local mean?

Alex: It means from BC, following the season, supporting local farmers in BC.

Most farmers defined local initially as a geographical area or distance, but as conversations went on it was clear that other factors were important as well. Dave pronounced that at BL Farm's corresponding market in Calgary, "we sell all local stuff." However, on being prompted about an order of pineapples I was aware of he replied, "local means as close as possible. Our mandate in Calgary is local first, worldwide selection." Jay, one of the family employees at GP Farm expressed, "I guess by local I mean the Fraser Valley, and then BC, and then Canada." Though, again after being prompted that Washington and even California was closer than Ontario, Jay noted that, "yes, it is more than distance. It is supporting your local economy. I would rather support another Canadian industry than the American economy." Differently though on the same sentiment, Andrew expressed that local implies a geographical boundary but, "we have a manmade boundary: the US border. I can't sell food there. If it wasn't a different country than yes I would like to, but as it is I can't sell food there."

5.2.2 Education

While the farmers above referred to a local, young, or small farm movement two other farmers referred to an education movement upon being asked, "what is the organic movement to you?" Here are their responses:

Kate: I look at it more as an educational movement. People are learning more about what they are putting into their bodies. I think it will be really

interesting to see the next generation—my kids—who are being educated about these things now. I wonder what choices they will make when they go out on their own, I wonder how much of this information they are going to retain. It's more of an education thing that is happening.

Alex: I don't want to say there's an organic movement. My theory is that there is a food education movement. There's more knowledge coming from the consumer. This is how food used to be grown and people as they get more educated are changing their minds. I would say it is more a change in education and knowledge from the consumer—I mean look at the change in demand for organic that we have seen in the last 10 years.

Alex and Kate also refer to KF Farm as an educational farm and when they pull out of farming they hope to be able to play more of an educational role, hosting people and running programs about growing, storing, preserving and preparing food.

However, there were many other ways education and organic came up in discussion. Many farmers talked, as in section 4.1.1, about teaching their children, while Robert and Eve remarked on the things they were privy to learning about on their, respective, parents' farms. Four farmers discussed in detail how they had learnt on and from the farm about nature, farming, and oneself. Evan noted that, "bees are a window into the natural world, as I learn about them—and I can't get enough—I learn more about different natural processes." He and Heather made the conscious decision to call themselves gardeners not farmers as they felt, "that this helps us recognize that we are always learning about the land; I've only grown 30 potato crops. We are constantly learning."

The most common way education came up with respect to being organic, however, was with farms expressing the hope of being an example. This was often discussed with farmers in response to the question: what is organic to you, but also: how did you come to

the farm. Being an example of a different lifestyle for future farmers, urban gardeners, attentive consumers, for whomever:

Robert: It used to be that the measure of organic was a worm in the apple and blemish on the peach. We are a part of the environment. That is the measure of organic: functioning within an environment. People—organic farmers—manipulate the environment and make money because the consumers believe that we are the ones acting consciously. No it is a problem that involves us; we cannot leave it like that. People need examples and in the beginning we thought that we could be one of those examples.

One of Daniel's photographs, and the subsequent conversation, embodied the many different hopes for organic and education:

Daniel: This is the competition [laughs]. I laugh but, in all seriousness, this is what farms like this one compete against in *so* many ways. Improving the economic situation on this farm, and others like it. North Americans have gotten used to inexpensive food for such a long time without having to consider the real costs let alone the environmental costs. That is something that makes it so hard to farm places like this, and this is just representative of that.

This year, we will probably raise 900 meat birds, maybe more because Justin is here; at least a tonne of raspberries; half a tonne of beef; 300lbs of pork—give or take; and 1 tonne of apples. I think that would be enough for 5-6 families our size [4 adults, 2 children] for the year. I would not pretend in anyway that it is a viable commercial option—it works for us because of our situation. But it is my hope that places like this can be a model for consumer expectations and others can try on a small scale what can be experimented with and maybe be one day invested on a larger scale. Other benefits are people thinking about growing things at home, in whatever small space they have, and for people of your generation to learn about different lifestyle options: how you want to live, how you want to get food. So that we can help create some kind of sustainability. And it goes further, I mean how do we create jobs that do not lead to more environmental damage? Can your generation spend money on things like gardening? If it is possible for small farms to inspire people to have gardens or think about some of the other things we have been talking about then that's [trailed off]. These kinds of lifestyles are a part of the future in North American societies. People need something to do.



Photo 28: Daniel

Education was an important aspect of organic for the majority of farmers and farms in the project, though education on, with, or through a great variety of topics. Some farmers referred to a food education movement as opposed to an organic movement, some farmers referred to the farm as an educational farm, many others ran free growing and food education programs off the farm, while other farmers called for consumer education of the organic standards as noted in the previous section. However, being an example of a different lifestyle that embodied their values, which varied from personal health to sustainability among many others, was what education through organic meant for the majority of farmers in this project. This is detailed further in section 5.3

5.2.3 Nostalgia and Change

The overwhelming theme when discussing what is organic and what is the organic movement was nostalgia and change though conversations again varied greatly. Most

farmers expressed that they have been trying to answer those same questions, trying to reconcile what organic was to them and what it could be now to them and others amid vast change. This is a conversation between three of the farmers at TB Farm:

Justin: Is it still moving [laughs].

Joss: Yes, I feel associated with it.

Justin: I guess you probably thought that people in the same place would have the same ideas.

Me: No, absolutely not; that is the whole point of what I am doing really.

Alex?

Daniel: Well, yes and no. I am skeptical of movements or things that we label movements.

Me: Why is that?

Daniel: Well, it is often that someone then becomes a leader, or there is someone that thinks they should be the leader of a movement, and then this becomes the more important thing rather than what the ideas are.

Two other farmers shared Daniel's worry at labeling anything a movement, Evan, "I feel that once we label something a movement, there is this overwhelming need to classify everything as one big group, especially in academia," and specifically the labeling of the organic movement:

Ruth: I think that to make movie stars out of some of these people in organics is ridiculous. It is important to know that they are not. It is mostly [pause] we could all change for the better if we communicate openly to each other.

An additional two farmers expressed sentiments similar to Justin's. Ben, when asked how he felt about the organic movement, replied, "the organic movement isn't a movement anymore; it's the organic industry." While Ben was critical of this Dave too saw organic as an industry, however, felt quite differently about it:

Dave: The organic movement; environmentalism. That is the emotional driver of the industry. I think that we are very fortunate to have an emotional driver of the industry. These people, organic farmers, really want to make a positive impact in their world. It is interesting, many of the older ones were anti-establishment but now the ethos is, what can we build, how can we alter the establishment.

Many farmers were quite nostalgic. This can be seen too in section 5.1.2. These responses often conveyed sadness or frustration. Here are two examples:

Ruth: It is a little bit complicated for me now, in the past I did feel associated with other organic growers, especially organic orchardists. I think that some people among us didn't really believe in the organic approach but in IPM instead of really trying to bring together an environment.⁴¹ Perfection with no blemishes is not perfection to me. For me organic orchardists changed the rules, but these so called organic orchardists are not organic by my standards. But I think that we all have our own understanding. I am only sad when people don't understand that or don't think about the other things that others think about.

Robert: The feebleness of organic agriculture—it has joined the general. In relation to being a part of the environment it's insidious—generally the views, or the current views, of organic agriculture by organic producers have really not changed from conventionals—all they really had to do was substitute. Substitute farming. The use of materials that parallel conventional are widespread. The next, the penultimate, will be an organic GMO! But it originally began with a promise.

Many of the younger farmers too were nostalgic, albeit in a different way, and expressed thanks for the work of others done in the past:

Andrew: Sometimes I feel that I am capitalizing on this word, or concept of organic. I mean, twenty-plus years ago when these ideas were being standardized and people were growing and selling organically without the market that I have; they were the pioneers, and organic standards are not the same now as they were then.

Lily too expressed these sentiments, but also expressed that others are not respectful of this work, "I think there are a lot of people riding on the organic movement."

After making the point above, Daniel and Justin left the conversation and Joss noted, "yes, I still feel associated with it personally, but as it was to me when I was

⁴¹ IPM (Integrated pest Management) is an environmental and biological management system and research program. It is a common set of controls and methods used by organic in Canada and the United States for the management of pests and beneficials. The series of methods and controls vary greatly from farm to farm and there are not organic standards dealing with the use of IPM in either Canada or the US. It is supported by the COABC, though caused a great deal of controversy in the region where Ruth is from in the 1980s.

younger, not as it is now. Those ideas are still with me.” Amongst all of this discussion of old and new, and of nostalgia and change there was an overall theme of questioning how to reconcile the two. Joss continued, “but we need to get it together. What is organic?”

Sam expressed very similar sentiments despite being from a younger generation:

I guess I feel associated with it, yes. But I feel associated with it as I think it should be, and it isn't so much anymore. I remember what it was to my parents, it was so important to them, and I feel associated with that. But I know that it can't be that way anymore, the world is different.

5.3 Lifestyle

Following analysis particularly of the responses to: 1) What is organic to you? 2) Do you feel a part of or associated with an organic movement? Or how do you feel about the labeling of an organic movement? 3) How did you come to the farm, the overwhelming theme discussed by farmers with respect to organic farming and being on the farm was lifestyle. To the majority of the farmers in this study organic meant lifestyle; the farm provides to them a particular lifestyle. However, there were farmers who did not discuss organic as a lifestyle. Further what organic as lifestyle meant differed from farmer to farmer, farm to farm, and even from farmer to farmer on a particular farm as can be seen in many of the quotes above. Initially beginning with phrases like, “we were back-to-the-landers,” “oh, yeah, we were hippies for sure,” “we wanted to live a more rural lifestyle,” and “it was a about choosing a lifestyle,” many in depth conversations were had about what organic as lifestyle meant to those who felt this way. Here are some excerpts from those conversations:

Laura: No, No. For me the certification wasn't a big deal it was about a lifestyle. And I would do it even if there weren't an organic certification, or body or association. For me it's a lifestyle.

Sam: I feel so strongly about it I can't see another way that I would be living my life. When I was first thinking about what to do, you know, after

university, it was the only thing that I could think of that was in line with my values.

Joss: Well, being organic seems to be a bit of a social, environmental, and political statement in and of its self doesn't?

However, for some organic meant entirely different things. Upon being asked "what is organic to you?" Dave replied, "for me the consumer is always right. The consumer wants a clean product to feed their family, for their personal health—in my experience people start doing it when they have kids." Similarly, Paul, who switched from conventional goat raising to organic said, "the plus is the market for organic, but buying this place the main appeal was the processing house, not that it was organic, and if I knew what I know now then, I wouldn't have bought the place [...] and as the demand for organic is growing you start to get more producers and the price goes down." His partner, Mary, replied that, "health, caring about what you eat and where your food comes from. For me its about chemicals [...]" And, I mean, no one is getting into this for the money," she continued to say that consumers buy their milk because it is a healthier product; because it doesn't have chemicals in it. However, on being asked why they did not eat any of their own dairy produce she replied, "it is too expensive."

Additionally, Lily and Ben noted that though they had sought a lifestyle with organic farming it was different than what they had expected, but in the end noted that that is what making, or choosing a lifestyle is. Ben expressed that when he first moved to the Okanagan he wanted to be a ground crop farmer but he changed his mind:

I mean, you see how much work that is. Look at [names], I decided that I didn't want to do that. Slowly I got into poultry, and we planted a small orchard. I am getting more serious about it this year. But one of the reasons we came here was for the kids, I didn't want to be so busy.

Lily noted, as did Ben, that in experiencing things she had not expected she had learned more about herself and what she wanted her lifestyle on the farm to be, “I wanted a more rural lifestyle and I had been working at an organic grocery store, and I didn’t want that, and when I came into this valley it just felt amazing. But its like I am waiting, still for something to change.” On being asked what she meant by that she discussed the community of organic farmers around her and feeling a bit despondent, “you know, there are organic farmers that don’t buy organic food at all,” and her needing to make more changes to make that lifestyle she saw in organic.

Also compelling were the changes in life and lifestyle that each farmer and farm had experienced. Many of the responses to the questions about organic and farm were life stories: together farm and farmer had been and had tried out different things at different times in their lives. AW Farm started as a raw milk enterprise. KF Farm grew from 14 acres to 32 acres of cultivation. ML Farm started as a vineyard, while LL Farm used to be a gravel pit. Farms had had other lives under other farmers and the farmers in this project have lived various lives and tried out various productive enterprises during their time on the farms.

A number of these farmers also expressed that understanding, and continually (re)learning that humans are a part of the environment was a part of their organic lifestyle, and that the farm was the place that helped them do that. Many of the quotes in the sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 are indicative of this. These sentiments are illustrated too in sections 4.1.4 and 4.1.5. Here is another example:

Ruth: For me organic is wholeness—in respect to every species. You cannot separate; you must pay attention to all aspects as organic. For me it is something even more than that too [pause] consciousness, a way of life. Food is not the only part of it, but education of not only growing food but

also relating to nature as best you can. For me nature is mother—when I use a rake I think of combing the hair of mother earth. I believe that I was born from here, and that I will return to the ground.

However, Paul expressed a very different sentiment asserting that he should be getting something from *his* land:

Me: How did you come to the farm?

Paul: We wanted land that gave back. You know, people buy houses and land and then they sit on them and someday they might be worth more, but they might not because of things like what is going on now. And so I wanted land that gave back to me.

So despite organic as lifestyle being an overwhelming theme that too varied greatly, for some farmers and farms it was about education, as in the previous section. Though for Paul owning rural land that gave back to him was a part of his chosen lifestyle, not organic, that was happenstance. While for Dave, who put BL Farm up for sale during my stay, being a part of “the organic industry” was important to him, though not necessarily as an organic farmer. Alex and Kate too, noted that they had lucked out in finding KF Farm, and if they hadn’t they might not be organic farmers, but they would certainly be involved in organic in some way. Whereas Ruth noted that she would not accept even billions of dollars to leave ZB Farm and stop what she is doing there.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This project aimed to present both farmer and farm as individual, asking what is the socioecological life of organic farmer and farm. Additionally, it asked what are organic and the organic movement with respect to these farmers and farms. ANT and photovoice allowed me to explore and present the responses to these questions using participant's own words and photographs. In the above chapters a brief snapshot of the socioecological lives of different organic farmers and farms were presented. Further, farmers and farms have not been typified. Rather, the patterns, themes, and differences that arose in conversation regarding their socioecological lives and their opinions on organic were categorized. This was done to argue that organic is a continuum of different ideas and practices.

As I have presented, differences abound. The six tables in **Appendix C** point out an array of different practices from farmer to farmer and farm to farm: produce for sale, labour, years farming, employment and income, certifications, and changes over time. A number of other practices and their differences were not included due to the scope of this project: tomato tying methods, composting methods, cover crops, crop rotations, energy uses, and irrigation methods to name a few. Further, in Chapters 4 and 5 a range of different ideas, opinions, and narratives even from farmer to farmer on the same farm were presented.

The photovoice exercise presented in Chapter 4 pointed out six patterns that were discussed regarding the intricate, relational, transformative, and reflexive socioecological lives of farmer and farm: family and children, labour and people, efficiency and technology, wild spaces, whole farm perspectives, and firsts and possibilities. The

majority of farmers in this project discussed the importance to them of family and children. The main thematic sentiment discussed was that being a part of an organic farm provided physical, mental, and emotional health, especially for children but also for oneself and the family as a whole. Though some farmers expressed that farming allowed them to be close to their children, and share their work with their kids. While for others it was not specifically the organic farm that was important to their family. Rather, they wanted to bring up their children rurally, preferably on a farm, to teach responsibility. The second and third common patterns of the photovoice exercise: labour and people, and efficiency and technology, were also common topics of discussion throughout my farm stays. Though these conversations varied greatly, the following themes were observed: understanding your own capabilities, understanding the farm's capabilities, questioning what labour organization to use, the amount of human labour involved in organic farming, what kind or how much technology to use, what machinery is appropriate, and finally, what efficiency or farming efficiently is.

The fourth and fifth patterns: wild spaces, and whole farm, are expressions of both the importance of areas that surround the farm and the farm as a whole—and that these are not separate either. It is these patterns in particular that demonstrated that the majority of the farmers, though not all, in this project implicitly accept what ANT seeks to make explicit: the relational, transformative, and reflexive socioecological lives of human and non-human. In other words, the agency of farmer and farm in the assemblage of 'things' that make up an organic farm. Edifying examples of this are Evan and Heather's photos, numbers 16 and 17. These two photographs are great examples of the reflexive agency of both farm, farmer, and of the spaces outside of the farm. The farm is

farm to the farmer, while the farmer is farmer to farm. Each space is enacted by the other as farmer, non-farm space, farm-space, edges, and wild space, but connected. Kate's photo, number 19, is exemplary of transformative agency. The picture shows bindweed overtaking a butternut squash: the farm is more than the farmer's actions, more than what the farmer plants. Rather, the farm too is a creative actor. Additionally, many of the patterns discussed in Chapter 4 encompass relational agency: the collective, interacting hybrid. Farm being shaped by farmer, and farmer being shaped by farm. This can be seen in patterns one, two, and three: the interaction between family and farm, farm and labour and labour and farmer, farm and technology and technology and farmer. This can be seen too in the sixth pattern: firsts and possibilities. Many participants took photographs to tell a lifeshistory about themselves and/or the farm. Though these stories were very individual, the relational agency of farmer and farm to live or attain a certain lifestyle was most often expressed.

In Chapter 5 a large range of different reflections on the organic certification, on the organic movement, and on organic were presented. With respect to the certification and the federalization of the organic standards the majority of farmers in this project felt that for them, organic was more than the standards, but that the third party certification was needed for selling the farm's produce. However, a vast array of different opinions was noted. A few farmers defined organic as the certification, or the organic industry. To another farmer the organic certification provided a new market in which to sell. Some expressed that the standards are insufficient, and that the certification has confused what organic used to be about. Three farmers expressed that they might not re-certify, while

others expressed that the standards need to be clarified and/or re-written to better inform consumers.

With respect to the organic movement and organic, the overwhelming themes expressed by the participants in this study were of reconciliation, education, and lifestyle. A number of farmers expressed that they do not feel a part of an organic movement but rather a local, young, or small farm movement. Though the majority of farmers expressed a longing to reconcile what organic and the organic movement was—or, for the younger generation what they believe it was—with a world that has changed. However, there was a range of different ideas discussed within this theme as well. For one farmer the organic movement was the emotional driver of the organic industry; it was a business tool, while another reflected upon this negatively, saying, “the organic movement isn’t a movement anymore, it’s the organic industry.” Another farmer expressed that organic was no longer alternative and that he will continue to practice farming how he has always practiced but will resign from any further involvement in organic. Education and lifestyle were the most compelling connotations given to organic. Education as organic, or organic as education, meant a variety of different things to the farmers in this project. Some farmers disliked the term organic movement and preferred to refer to a food education movement. Some farmers expressed their hopes for consumer education of the organic standards. Many discussed teaching their children through the farm, while others discussed the socioecological education they had received from the farm. However, being an example was the most common discussion had with respect to organic and education. Many farmers expressed that they hope to be an example of an alternative lifestyle, not just an example of alternative agriculture. Some farmers expressed despondency: that they were

no longer sure if anyone was looking for an alternative lifestyle, or that organic is no longer an alternative. While others noted that hopefully people would emulate at least parts of their lifestyle: that they might buy organic food or have a small garden. Some talked mainly of being an example of healthy food with less chemicals, while others noted that they had chosen their lifestyle as it embodied a social, environmental, and political statement.

This project was mainly concerned with the everyday socioecological lives of individual farmers and farms within/of/despite the broader political locality of organic. It did not specifically detail or address the politics of the organic certification and other agrofood policies, or the political economy of the increasing industrialization and marketization of organic. Rather, it was located within this politic. However, the implications of this project concern both the everyday socioecological lives of farmer and farm, and these broader global ambitions and politics. As Vos (2007) noted re-envisioning organic, and agriculture generally, “occurs on the ground through work, through socially organized relations, and practices of production,” (Vos, 2000:253). How will/can the everyday socioecological lives of small-scale organic farmers effect this politic, and how will/can they be affected by this politic? As was hinted at in the opening of this report by Gussow (2002), “the worry is that organic farming might be transformed into something else, something much more amenable to the already existing conventional agrofood system, and still be called organic, effectively deleting the social, political, and philosophical content from the term,” (Vos, 2000: 253). But it is already something else. It is already a continuum of many different somethings.

Common words and sentiments were typified, as opposed to farmers and farms, to illustrate this. Instead of grouping farmers and farms into categories like: the good farmer, the productivist farmer, the modern farmer, the back-to-the-land farmer, or the wild farm, the biodynamic farm, and the passive farm—as done in Kaltoft (1999), Hunt (2010), Stock (2007), and Burton (2004)—the words and sentiments of farmers were typified to demonstrate that there are not strict categories of organic farmer and farm. Rather, a continuum of different ideas and practices are used by farmers, and enacted and acted on by farms, to become their versions of organic. Ironically, at the end it is important to note that this project may have only heard from group of farmers along this continuum—the more philosophically minded farmers. However, there were still different ideas and practices of organic within this grouping: no one farmer or farm was *only* back-to-the-land or *only* productivist.

For the famers and farms in this project organic may—mostly—represent an alternative lifestyle that embodies Harvey’s (1996) term socioecological, and make implicit what the concept of ANT seeks to explain. However, for others organic may—mostly—be the legal definition contained within the federal rule, or a market in which to sell. The movement, industry, farmers, and farms now find themselves in a situation of great flux, even, of paradox. The questions and contestation around the organic—as some participants noted—presents an opportunity to reconcile and re-envision: what do we want organic to look like? Can, could, or should certifications change to reflect the practices, ideas, and opinions of these small-scale producers? As small-scale farmers discuss not renewing their certification are the standards increasingly only for large-scale operations? Is small-scale organic agriculture still viable? How can it be sustained? Will

farmers that are unhappy with the certification continue with it? Should there be multiple organic labels? What of emerging grassroots initiatives offering different communities and labels? How could standardizing the words ‘natural’ and ‘local’ effect organic, organic farmers, and organic farms? And lastly, can, and how can organic ameliorate our agrofood industry and our nature-society relationship amid vast change?

6.1 Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

The goals of this project were primarily theoretical and methodological and enabled the data collection, analysis, and presentation. In this project I used ANT to present both farmer and farm as individuals. This was inspired by the literature and by my time spent working on organic farms prior to this project. ANT allowed me to use a certain set of language throughout the report that gave both farmer and farm agency, and presented them as relational, transformative, and reflexive agents: yes, farms act and are enacted in asking what is organic. Additionally, at its most foundational, ANT allowed me to ask farmers, and as such farms, what they do, and how and why they do it. Photovoice was integral to the project as it is a participant-run form of data collection. For a project that asks what organic farmers and farms do, how and why, photovoice was fundamental for farmers to demonstrate and articulate their feelings, ideas, opinions, and prowess.

Photovoice gave me the data, and ANT the language to present a report primarily using the participant’s own words, which was essential for responding to the questions and goals of the project.

Conclusion

This project presented organic as a continuum of different ideas and practices, specifically through a brief snapshot of the socioecological ideas and practices of organic farmers and farms as well as their opinions and feelings towards organic and the organic movement. The goals of the project: to present a snapshot of the socioecological lives and ideas, and to present an in-depth participatory work that explored and noted these practices, ideas, and narratives using participants' own words were accomplished. Additionally, ANT and photovoice, and the methods used, primarily cycling and farm visits, were integral to the project. The majority of farmers in this project implicitly accepted what ANT seeks to make explicit: the agency of non-humans and themselves as the assemblage of things that make up the farm, including, for most, the surrounding area as well. Through photovoice six patterns were discussed regarding the intricate, relational, transformative, and reflexive socioecological lives of farmer and farm: family and children, labour and people, efficiency and technology, wild spaces, whole farm, and firsts and possibilities. With respect to the organic movement and organic, the overwhelming patterns expressed by the participants in this project were of reconciliation, education, and lifestyle—all of which encompassed a vast array of difference.

Limitations

Two limitations must be noted. First, four out of seventeen farms did not participate in the photovoice methods, or at least did not complete them. Two farms declined to participate, however, they did give me permission to take photographs. Two other farms had taken their photographs but on the night we were supposed to discuss the photos we

were unable to due to unfortunate and unforeseen family accidents. This was corrected as much as possible by aligning the photographs that had not been described with conversations had over the course of my farm stay. This was possible, uniquely to this project, as participants often discussed the photographs they would take despite not having taken them yet. Second, four out of seventeen farms did not participate through a farm stay. This was overcome as much as possible by arranging multiple farm visits. Though they were all arranged a bit differently, in each case the interview time totalled six to eight hours and took place on two or three different days. One photograph was taken and discussed by the farmers at these farms. The fact that multiple visits were had allowed for a similar atmosphere and exchange of information as the farm stays; both the participants and me were able to reflect on things said or asked each day, re-ask questions, ask for clarification, and ask for elaboration. The multiple visits retained these important elements of the farm stays.

Further Research

I have argued that organic is a continuum of differences. Additionally, I have argued that an articulation of some these differences, as is presented in this report, can benefit a discussion of what organic and the organic movement are, and can further a discussion of how organic can ameliorate our agrofood system and our nature-society relationship. This is the point of departure at the end of this project. A number of additional studies should be done using this research as its starting point. First, it would be very interesting to perform and juxtapose this study in different areas of British Columbia, particularly Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, as well as in different provinces across Canada and areas across the United States. Second, it would be very interesting given that all

farmers in this study strongly contrasted themselves from larger-scale organic farmers to perform the study as is with larger-scale organic farmers and farms.

Additionally, the importance of community was a common topic of conversation: community in general, being an organic farmer for your community, social activities, what are social and community activities, the importance of an organic community, and what/who is the organic community? I had hoped to include this information in this project, however, as the research went on it was clear that there were many other questions to be asked with respect to the importance of community that were beyond the scope of this project. Further research with respect to the organic standards is also needed. It is clear from this research, and many others, that producers feel that the certification has changed organic in a vast number of ways, and not often for the better. However, what that means for the certification moving forward remains to be asked: can or could policies change to reflect the practices, ideas, and opinions of these producers, should there be multiple organic labels, what of emerging initiatives offering different labels, how could standardizing the words ‘natural’ and ‘local’ effect organic and organic farmers, as small farmers discuss not renewing their certification are the standards increasingly only for large-scale operations?

Most importantly though, this research was intended as a jumping off point for future research that discusses what organic and the organic movement are and how they can ameliorate our agrofood system and our nature-society relationship. This was an overwhelming theme for the farmers in this study as well: reconciling difference, change, and nostalgia, asking what organic was to them and what it could be now to them and others amid vast change.

Appendix A

Figure 1: British Columbia Regional Map



Figure 2: Map of Study Areas

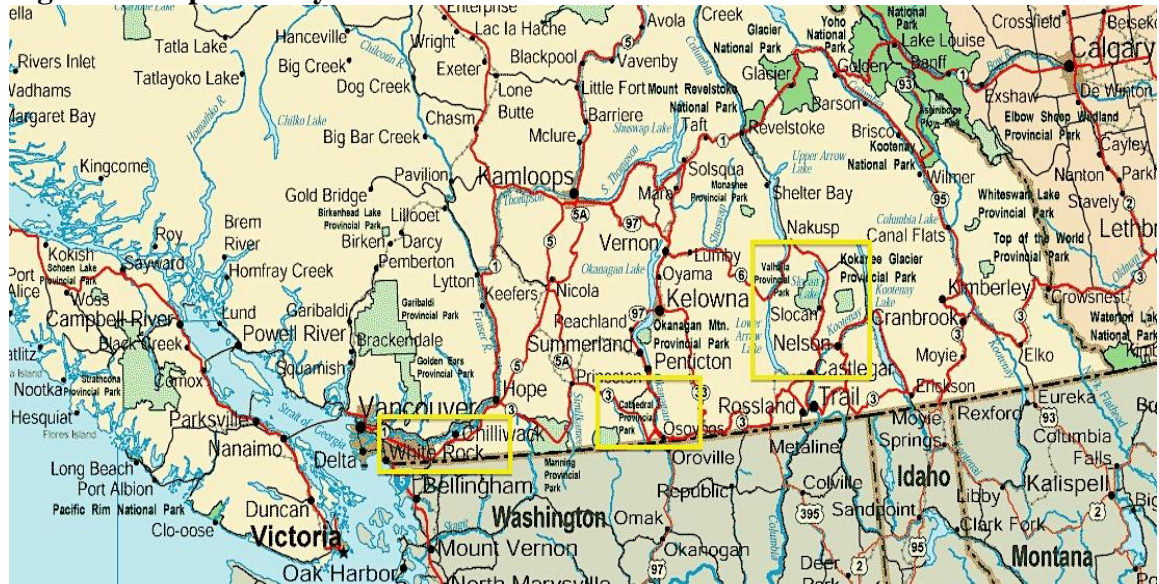


Figure 3: Kootenay Region

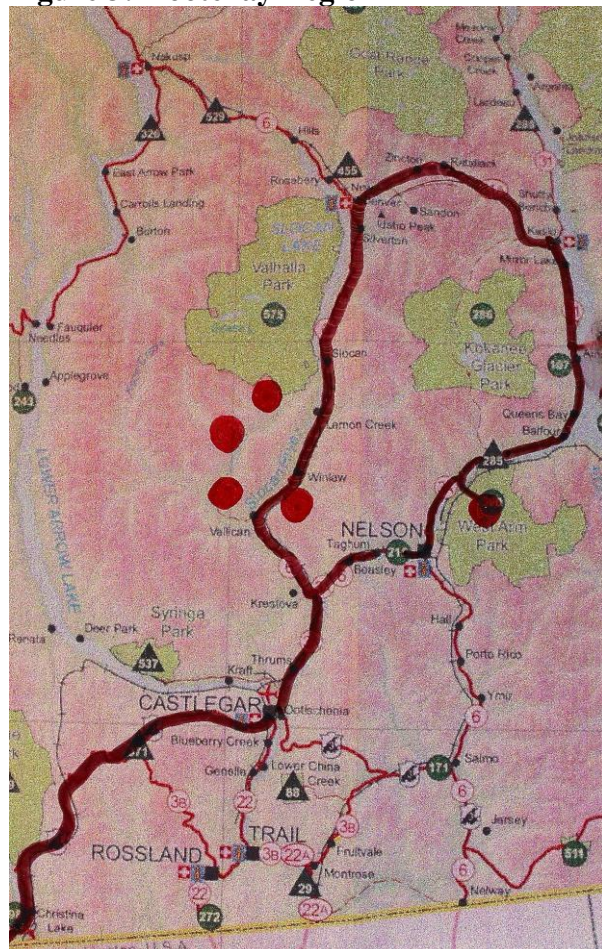


Figure 4: Southern Okanagan Region

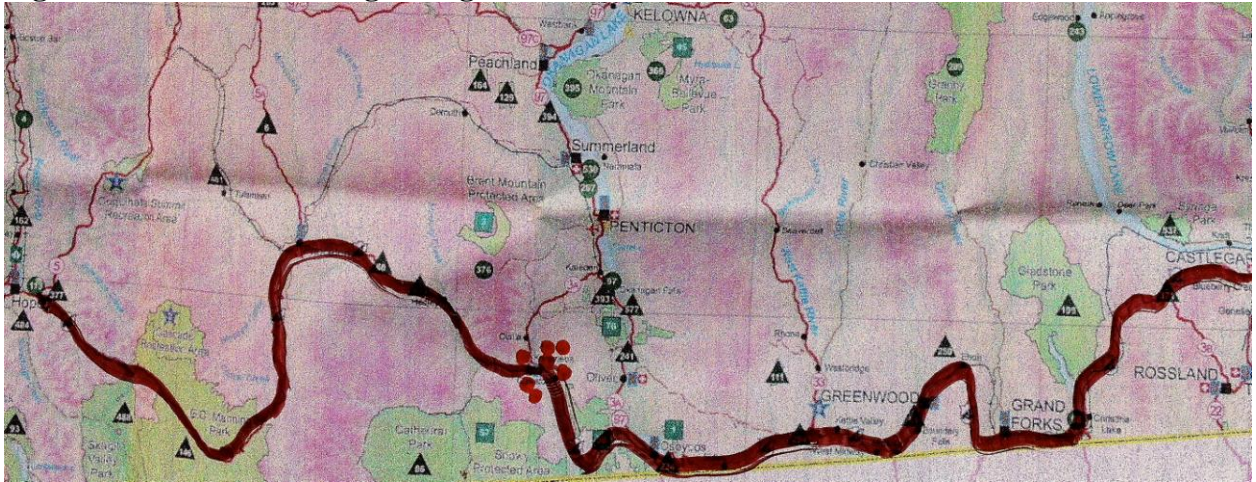
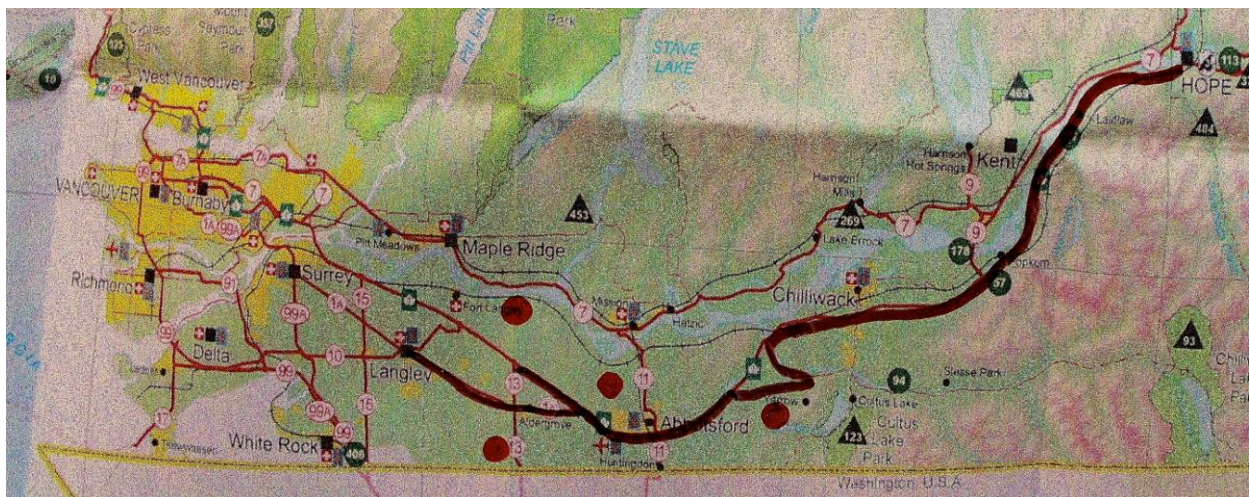


Figure 5: Lower Fraser Valley Region



Appendix B

Item 1: Information Letter Sent to Farms

My name is Alyssa Hubert I am a graduate student from the University of Guelph, Ontario. For the summer and my thesis research I have decided to bike across British Columbia to talk with organic farmers about their social and environmental perceptions and practices. This research brings together many of my experiences and interests in and out of school. I spent last summer wwoof-ing around the lower mainland and Vancouver Island and I am very excited to once again have the chance to visit organic farms and talk with organic farmers.

I am writing as I would love to come and visit you and your farm, help out in any way you need, talk with you and learn from you. I am able to stay for 5-10 days, and what seems to be working best is a one-week stay at farms. I have my own tent if that works best, and because I am biking around the province there is no need to pick me up anywhere; I can come right to you.

Here is a bit more about the research:

The overall aim of my study is to explore the socio-ecological perceptions and practices of small-sale organic farmers in British Columbia. I believe that exploring the socio-ecological perspectives and practices of organic farmers is significant for two reasons. First, especially in academia, there is a tendency to think of ‘organics’ and organic farmers as a single unifying entity that provides a critique of and an alternative to the conventional perceptions of nature-society relations and the agrofood system, however, social and ecological issues take on different perceptions to different people such that on a whole these issues can be seen to encompass quite literally everything. Second, in asking about organic farmers’ socio-ecological perspectives and practices we can further explore the significance that has been attached to organic farming and the organic farming movement for proposing alternative nature-society relations and alternative agrofood systems. This study acknowledges that different people have different socio-ecological perceptions, including organic producers, and that more research must be done to explore and discuss these different perspectives and their resulting practices on and off the farm in order for the organic movement to constructively inform new alternative nature-society relations and agrofood systems.

Here is a bit more about me:

I am currently biking across the province, this is something I have been interested in doing for while now, and I am really glad to be able to combine it with my school work. I am very interested organic agriculture, being outside and learning about the processes that are involved in getting our food from the ground and onto the table, which is something I have been exploring over the last year through the wwoofing program in BC, to a coffee farm in Costa Rica, and in my own personal garden. I have a lot of cooking and baking experience, having worked as both a baker and cook in assorted restaurants over the years, and would love to share recipes and am very interested in learning more about plants, growing plants, and plant systems. I am very capable of working by myself and working with simple instructions if that is what is required. I also really love working

with people and learning from others. Other fun things I like are being outdoors and being active; hiking, biking, camping, doing yoga, running, and climbing.

I hope that you are doing wonderfully and that I get to talk with you soon.
Many thanks,
Alyssa

Item 2: Fixed Questions

Fixed Questions

- 1) How did you come to the farm?
- 2) Do you discuss each other's roles on and off the farm? What are they?
- 3) Where and how do you sell your products? How do you decide your prices?
- 4) I hear people talk about market politics, what does that mean? Are there any times that you remember when market politics challenges what you want to do here or made the production and sale of your crops difficult?
- 5) What is your ideal market?
- 6) Who did you vote for in the previous provincial and federal elections?
- 7) How do you feel about organic certifications?
- 8) What social activities, or groups are you a part of, formal and informal?
- 9) How do you feel about the community around you? How do you feel about the community of organic farmers around you?
- 10) Do you feel a part of or associated with an organic movement? Or how do you feel about the labeling of an organic movement?
- 11) What is organic to you?

Appendix C

Table 1: Farm

Farm	Farm Size Acres (Part of Production)	Farm Age (with the current farmers)	Crops/Products For Sale
AW	2	5 years	Garlic, potatoes, squashes, pumpkin, blueberries, turkeys, chickens, lavender. Organic nursery business too.
EB	5	19 years	Potatoes, corn, squashes, garlic, carrots, honey. Only selling honey this year and potatoes for seed. The field got blight: it will be fallow this year.
CH	5	5 years	Shiitake and oyster mushrooms, lettuce greens, kales, garlic, onions, beets, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, zucchini, squashes, beans, radishes, green beans, potatoes
WA	2	7 years	Blueberries, honey, garlic. Saw mill too.
TB	10	12 years	Raspberries, raspberry juice and preserves, poultry, eggs, cattle, pigs, lettuce greens, onions, garlic, squash, swiss chard, tomatoes, kales, herbs, apple juice, peppers, zucchini, melons, cucumbers. Poultry abattoir on farm.
HF	10	5 years	Eggs, lettuce greens, kales, raspberries, tomatoes, garlic, onions, potatoes, squashes, zucchini, herbs, eggplant, broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, strawberries, green beans, carrots, swiss chard, melons, peas, cabbage, beets, radishes, peppers, cucumbers, leeks, fennel
KF	32	11 years	Peaches, apricots, nectarines, apples, cherries, plums, table grapes, strawberries, kales, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, squash, beets, kohlrabi, peas, swiss chard, garlic, onions, leeks, herbs, green beans, lettuce greens, zucchini, melons, tomatoes, cucumbers, collards, peppers, eggplant, parsnips, rutabaga, celery, eggs, jams, juices, dried fruit, dried vegetables, salsa, pasta/pizza sauce, pickles, apple cider vinegar, lip balm and salves. Processing house on farm.
BM	2	1 year	Garlic, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce greens, kales, swiss chard, peppers, herbs, broccoli, cauliflower, boc choy, peas, green beans, squashes, zucchini, beets, swiss chard, kales
BL (farm)	10	7 years	Apricots, plums, nectarines, peaches, apples

for sale)			
BO	4; +/-1000 birds	4 years	Poultry, eggs, turkeys, peaches, nectarines. Uses mobile abattoir.
ZB	11	40 years	Cherries, apricots, peaches, plums, apples, tomatoes, herbs, sheep, jams, preserves, salsa, honey, frozen fruit, dried fruit. Processing house on farm.
ML		42 years	Cucumbers, tomatoes, herbs, squash
FF	28	31 years	Wine grapes, peaches, apricots, cherries, apples, pears, plums, fruit wine, wine. Winery on farm.
GP	15; +/-175 goats	6.5 years	Goat's milk, cheeses, yogurt. Processing house on farm.
GV	5	6 years	Raspberries, blackberries, rhubarb, blueberries, beets, carrots, onions, garlic, corn, lettuce greens, eggs, kales, swiss chard, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, squash, cabbage, cauliflower, leeks, herbs, potatoes, fennel, green beans, collards
OY	2	2 years	Potatoes, garlic, onions, kales, swiss chard, fennel, squash, zucchini, beets, lettuce greens, flowers.
LL (farm for sale)	35	16 years	Wine grapes, blackberries, pigs, sheep, wine, port. Winery on farm. Run compost business too.

Table 2: Farmer

Farm	Farmers	Farmer Age	Time Farming		
			<i>Together, on this particular farm, selling produce</i>	<i>Together, on this particular farm, no sale</i>	<i>Farming on other farms</i>
AW	Evan, Heather	64; 62	5 years	None. However, Evan ran a raw milk business for 3 years in the early 70s and began farming again in 2001.	None
EB	Greg, Anita	60s	20 years	20 years	None
CH	Tori, Eric	32	5 years	None	None

WA	James	64	7 years	31 years	None
TB	Joss, Daniel, Justin, Karen	63; 63; 32; 32	12 years	Joss and Alex: 26 years off and on. Joss farmed for 6 years by herself. Justin and Karen: None	Joss and Alex: None Justin and Karen: 1 year
HF	Sam, Sonia	40; 35	5 years	None	Sam grew up on an organic farm. Both Sam and Sonia worked his parent's farm as well as an additional 5 acre plot of rented land for 12 years prior to coming to this plot
KF	Kate, Alex	37; 37	11 years	None	Alex: None Kate grew up on an organic farm
BM	Lily	32	1 st year	None	Farming for 5 years another farm.
BL	Dave	45	7 years	None	None
BO	Ben	Mid thirties		None	None
ZB	Robert, Ruth	73, 65	40 years	None	Robert grew up on his family's farm. Ruth: none.
ML	Eve	60s	42 years		Grew up on her family's farm in Australia.
FF	Tom, Emily	Late fifties-early sixties	31 years	4 years	None
GP	Paul, Mary	50	6.5 years	None	For 13 years Paul and Mary raised conventional goats.
GV	Andrew	33	6 years	None	None
OY	Jane, Colin	30; 33	2 years	None	Jane and Colin farmed for a 6 years prior to coming to this farm, on two other farms. Jane also grew up on an organic farm.
LL	Laura, Marcus	Late fifties	16 years	4 Years. Note: vines	Marcus: None

				take 4 years to be productive.	Laura grew up farming in Paraguay.
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Table 3: Labour

Farm	Organization of Non-Farmer Labour
AW	2 part-time employees for spring and summer season; 1 employee for select jobs; very occasionally takes on WWOOFers
EB	Son helps out; usually 1 WWOOFer/summer
CH	1 apprentice, occasionally takes on WWOOFers
WA	Usually 1-2 WWOOFers/summer.
TB	Currently 4 people working on the farm. Justin and Karen are there in a kind of internship/learning capacity. Joss and Daniel have tried other forms of live-on learning/labour organization.
HF	Two part-time employees for summer season; 2 apprentices; occasionally takes on WWOOFers
KF	6 apprentices; occasionally takes on WWOOFers, approximately 30 market volunteers in the city
BM	None.
BL	3 full-time summer employees; 1 farm manager full-time year-round.
BO	None. However, employs mobile abattoir operator on slaughter days.
ZB	Between 10-20 seasonal employees each year for cherry harvest. Two of their sons help with the remainder of the harvesting.
ML	1 farm manager, very occasionally takes on WWOOFers
FF	Between 4-8 employees depending on the time of year. Son and daughter and their respective partners employed.
GP	3 sons and 1 daughter are paid employees; 4-5 WWOOFers all year round.
GV	2 full-time live-on employees; 1 part-time live-on employee; 2 employees for summer season
OY	None.
LL	Son and daughter are full-time employees throughout the summer; part-time the rest of the year. 1 part-time employee at store; 1 part-time employee in winery; employ between 10-20 people during harvest season; occasionally take WWOOFers.

Table 4: Certification

Farm	Certification
AW	Not certified organic. Certified with KLAS.
EB	Yes, KOGS.
CH	Yes, KOGS.
WA	Not certified organic. Certified with KLAS.
TB	Yes, KOGS.
HF	Yes, SOOPA; Environmental Farm Plan.
KF	Yes, PACS; Environmental Farm Plan; Salmon Safe.
BM	1-year transition, PACS.
BL	Yes, PACS.
BO	Yes, SOOPA.
ZB	Yes, SOOPA and BCARA.
ML	YES, LEOGA. Conservancy Partner
FF	Yes, PACS. Conservancy Partner
GP	Yes, PACS.
GV	Yes, BCARA.
OY	Yes, BCARA.
LL	Yes, PACS; Environmental Farm Plan; Salmon Safe; Stewardship Partner; Biodynamic

Table 5: Sale and Income

Farm	Method of Sale	Employment/Other Income
AW	Farm-gate, Pre-order, wholesale direct to coop bakery, U-pick blueberries	AW is also an organic nursery: non-edible plants, shrubs, and trees. Prior to starting to build up the farm and nursery Evan worked various jobs as a logger and then in provincial politics eventually becoming BC minister of agriculture for four years. Heather worked as a visual artist, art teacher, and assistant professor and administrator of a university visual arts program.
EB	Farm-gate, wholesale direct to local grocers	EB was also a nursery for bedding plants, though they sold the business last year. Both Greg and Anita were teachers before coming out to the farm in 1972. Unable to make a living farming Greg went back to teaching from 1980-2003. Anita ran the nursery, which they started in 1979.
CH	Wholesale to 3 restaurants, two farmer's markets, CSA	Both Tori and Eric were in and out of service jobs before coming to the farm with Tori working mostly in restaurants and Eric ran a painting business. Tori continues to work in restaurants and in the winter Eric continues with the painting business.
WA	U-pick blueberries, farm-gate, wholesale direct to coop grocery	James worked for the ministry of external affairs then for the local police department until 2001, and his wife worked as school secretary until 2003. They are also the owners of a sawmill, which is on the same land as the farm.
TB	Farm-gate, pre-order, 1 farmer's market	Both Joss and Alex worked as RNs. Joss is retired though Daniel still does consulting work for the Ministry of Health and is an adjunct professor at UBC. Justin and Karen are taking the year to try and farm.
HF	1 Farmer's market (maybe 2), occasionally wholesale direct to local grocers and restaurants, winter CSA	The farm is the sole source of income for Sam and Sonia.
KF	4 farmer's markets, CSA	Both Alex and Kate were working in the restaurant industry before they bought the farm. Since the start the farm has been their sole source of income.
BM	1 farmer's market, CSA	Lily farms and her partner works full-time off-farm.
BL	Fruit stand, grocer partner in Edmonton and Calgary	Dave farms for 3 months of the year. Both he and his partner, Liz, run the farm corresponding grocer, BL Market in Calgary and Edmonton throughout the year.
BO	1 farmer's market, honours-system farm-gate, pre-order	Ben farms full-time and his partner works full-time off-farm.

ZB	Wholesale direct to grocers	Since their arrival 40 years ago, the farm has been both Robert and Ruth's sole job and income.
ML	Farm-gate, wholesale to distributors	Eve farmed full-time, though now she is mostly retired from farming.
FF	Off-farm store, fruit wholesale to packing house, wine wholesale direct to liqueur stores provincially, inter-provincially, and internationally	The farm and winery are the main sources of income for Emily and Tom. Emily does sell her art, and for 5 years in the 90s they owned a health food store in town. Selling wine did not start until 2004.
GP	Off-farm store, wholesale direct to 5+ grocers and to 1 distributor (that goes to Vancouver Island), 3 farmer's markets	Paul has always worked while farming, carrying various jobs: milk deliveries, construction, grainery.
GV	3 farmer's markets, CSA	None.
OY	1 farmer's market, member CSA	Currently Jane farms full-time and Colin works full-time off-farm, however, this has varied throughout their farming career.
LL	Off-farm store, wholesale direct to liqueur stores and restaurants provincially	LL comprises of three businesses: the vineyards, the winery, and an organic compost business these are the sole sources of income for Laura and Marcus.

Table 6: Social Involvement

Farm	Voting		Social Involvement
	Federal	Provincial	
AW	Evan and Heather: NDP	Evan and Heather: NDP	Evan and Heather: free gardening/growing workshops from the farm every other Sunday over the course of the summer; u-pick blueberries, trout fishing neighbourhood bbq at the end of the summer; host and visitor at many potlucks and community music events; were involved in many different groups at different times. Evan: member of NDP, former BC Minister of Agriculture, continues to make speeches for NDP functions when asked, board of credit union cooperative, member of community cemetery, member of KLAS. Heather: various art community outreach program, including Canadian Native Community art show for the Vancouver Olympics; garden tour;
EB	Greg: Green Anita: doesn't remember	Greg and Anita: NDP	Greg and Anita: WWOOF; SVFA; watershed society. Greg: community band Anita: Slocan Valley threads guild
CH	Tori and Eric: Green	Tori and Eric: NDP	Tori and Eric: CSA-day, Our Community Futures, SVFA Tori: KOG board member, COABC board member

WA	Declined	Declined	Dave: Forest stewardship society, KLAS, our community forest, BC honey producers association, plays in the town poker game every other week, WWOOF
TB	Joss is an American citizen Daniel: NDP Justin, Karen: Did not ask	Joss is an American citizen Daniel: NDP Justin, Karen: Did not ask	Joss and Daniel: cofounders of Bangladesh Health Project, community cemetery society, founding members of Kootenay coop, helped start community school, hosts and visitors at many community potlucks; were involved in many different groups at different times. Joss: COABC board; KOG chair of the board and on certification review board, SVFA, rural alternative resource technology society Daniel: director of cemetery society, director of legacy society, seniors housing society, director of the Canadian Association of Nursing
HF	Sam: NDP Sonia: Doesn't remember	Sam: NDP Sonia: NDP	Sam and Sonia: started local soccer league and continues to coach, WWOOF Sam: Penticton Farmer's Market Board, director of SOOPA
KF	Kate and Alex: NDP	Kate and Alex: NDP	Kate and Alex: apprenticeship program, WWOOF, field to plate festival, steering committee for apprenticeship program at UBC farm Kate: board of COABC, board of PACs, Similkameen Valley Planning Society Alex: chair of OFIBC, testified at House of Commons "Growing Forward" event, vice chair of VFM, member of vendor advisory committee for VFM, volunteer firefighter, Community Planning Committee
BM	Lily: NDP	Lily: NDP	Lily: secretary of Penticton farmer's market
BL	Dave: NDP	Dave: PC (Votes in Alberta)	Dave: director of PACS, member of Canadian organic trade association, member of Canadian health food association, participant/informant in tree breeding project at UofS "Eden Project", member of Canadian youth business foundation
BO	Declined	Declined	Ben: board member Penticton farmer's market
ZB	Declined	Declined	Founding members of SOOPA
ML	Eve: NDP	Eve: NDP	Eve: Grist Mill Society, Osoyoos desert society, Cawston Hall society, Rivers day—organizes BC's river's day in Similkameen, founding member of SOOPA, Similkameen environmental education society (7-8 years—no defunct), Friends of the Similkameen—lose group that get together when something comes up, Sm. Naturals Club—no defunct, ran 19 year, Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance, runs the meadow lark festival, founded conservancy partner program and member, board of LEOGA, COABC board, chair of COABC standard committee, Inter Pares—CIDA + Inter Pares + Deccan development society: Farmers and Activists: The South Asia / Canada Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture
FF	Tom and Emily:	Tom and Emily:	

	NDP	NDP	
GP	Paul: Conservative Mary: Doesn't remember	Paul and Mary: Conservative	Paul and Mary: 4H Club, Church
GV	Does not vote	Does not vote	Andrew: BCARA certification board, Slow Food, Farm Folk City Folk, lots of other small community groups particularly surround food education issues.
OY	Did not ask	Did not ask	Jane and Colin: live in Yarrow EcoVillage and belong of various boards and committees that are a part of the EcoVillage
LL	Laura and Marcus: NDP	Laura and Marcus: Liberal	Laura and Marcus: various food festivals Marcus: COABC board, PACS board

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