

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NEW ZEALAND  
RURAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY STUDY GROUP SEMINAR

Edited by

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Views expressed in Agricultural Economics Research Unit Discussion  
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# CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE .. .. .	(i)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .. .. .	(iii)
SUMMARY .. .. .	(v)
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .. .. .	1
CHAPTER 2 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RURAL RESEARCH: AN OVERVIEW AND THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE by Ian Carter .. .. .	3
CHAPTER 3 ECONOMICS AND RURAL SOCIETY by Basil Sharp .. .. .	7
CHAPTER 4 PARTICIPANTS' CURRENT RESEARCH OR INTEREST IN RESEARCH .. .. .	17
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION: RESEARCH ISSUES AND DIRECTIONS .. .. .	23
APPENDIX 1 LIST OF REFERENCES CONTRIBUTED BY SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS .. .. .	27
APPENDIX 2 LIST OF PEOPLE INTERESTED IN THE SEMINAR BUT UNABLE TO ATTEND .. .. .	29
APPENDIX 3 PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR .. .. .	31



## PREFACE

On 3 July 1986, Lincoln College hosted a one day seminar for the New Zealand Economy and Society Study Group. The development of such a study group is an endeavour which complements the research activities of the Agricultural Economics Research Unit. Frequently, topics of research undertaken by the Unit have important social elements that require a sound theoretical and methodological base from which effective research can proceed. The study group is one way in which such research can be fostered. The Unit is pleased to be able to assist the study group by publishing the material and discussions of the recent seminar as an A.E.R.U. Discussion Paper.

J.G. Pryde  
Director



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editor is grateful for the financial assistance provided to the Study Group by the National Research Advisory Council. In particular, Robyn Grigg gave enthusiastic support to the idea of the seminar. Support for travel ensured that participants from all over New Zealand were able to attend. In addition, the editor is grateful for assistance provided by Lincoln College, both in the provision of facilities and in assistance for publishing the proceedings. Rupert Tipples gave collegial support to the organisation of the seminar, and Glen Greer kindly assisted in recording the seminar activities.



## SUMMARY

This Discussion Paper includes the contents of a one day seminar held at Lincoln College on 3 July 1986 for the first meeting of the New Zealand Rural Economy and Society Study Group. Included are two papers read by two invited speakers, an account of the discussions which occurred throughout the remainder of the day, and a record of those who attended the meeting. The general tenor and good attendance of the seminar suggests quite strongly that there is enthusiastic support for the Study Group. Participants expressed a need for a longer conference in future, and for a newsletter to keep participants informed of research activities. The results of the day's activity showed that there are many issues awaiting systematic research. In general, there was widespread support for the promotion of rural research in order to provide understanding, informed commentary, and effective policy for rural society.



## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The objective of this Discussion Paper is to record the events of the first New Zealand Rural Economy and Society Study Group meeting. To this end, the following material attempts to provide an accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting, and does not depart from this theme until the last chapter. At the end of the last chapter I suggest some directions for future activities.

Given the current changes in New Zealand primary production, attention to rural research is well justified. Any response to current changes must be made on the basis of a sound appreciation of rural society. Too often in the past our understanding of rural society has not matched our expertise in primary production. Sometimes also little recognition is given to the broader implications of many primary production policies and research or teaching endeavours.

The activities of a Rural Economy and Society Study Group can provide needed balance to the research ledger, and begin the task of systematically developing an improved understanding of rural society.

Readers of this Discussion Paper will not find definitive answers as to what the key rural issues are, nor precise specification on how to study them. Instead, the paper gives an introduction to these issues and it does this in two ways. First, the formal papers give solid pointers on how to undertake rural research by describing some of the important theoretical issues. In particular, study of both papers will go a long way to avoid remaking past mistakes. Study of New Zealand rural economy and society may be topical, but that does not mean that we cannot learn from past work in New Zealand and from overseas. Second, the records of the discussions demonstrate current perception of the important issues. Although many issues are presented there are themes to these issues, and they contain the seeds for many useful research projects. Generally then, this Discussion Paper can make an important contribution to the development of rural research in New Zealand and should be of value to both academics and activists, and others with an interest in rural society.



## CHAPTER 2

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RURAL RESEARCH: AN  
OVERVIEW AND THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE

by Ian Carter

I have been asked to talk about the Rural Economy and Society Study Group (RESSG) in Britain, and to identify any lessons that this body's history may have for us in New Zealand. This I am happy to do, but my acquaintance with RESSG was limited to its early days. In recent years it has blossomed - exploded might be a better word - so that conference meetings now count attendances in hundreds rather than the tens that were typical when I attended. Paradoxically, my contact with RESSG in its early, smaller days may make my experience rather more valuable in New Zealand, where we need to find ways of linking rather few people interested in rural social issues spread across great physical distances.

My understanding is that RESSG was born from the needs of a few postgraduate students in two British Universities. In the late 1970s Howard Newby taught urban sociology at Essex, but he had some postgraduates working on rural topics. At the Open University, Peter Hamilton, whose interests centred on sociological theory, was supervising a few postgraduates who had a geography background from Wye College in London University, but were converting to rural sociology. (The most significant of this latter group was Michael Winter, who now teaches sociology at Bath University.) The RESSG started as an informal occasional seminar series for these two groups of students.

From this it grew. Financial support came from the Social Science Research Council. The disciplinary base expanded to include rural planners, notably Philip Lowe from University College, London, who has done important work on interest group politics around British environmental legislation; and political scientists like Wyn Grant from Warwick who has used the notion of corporatism to unpack the politics of food production in Britain. Social anthropologists also climbed aboard.

But the nexus between geography and sociology remained central. Hence the tone of Phil Lowe's recent Times Higher Education Review evaluation of the first year's numbers of the Journal of Rural Studies, edited by the geographer Paul Cloke, from Lampeter. Lowe argues that the JRS's published articles are full of good, valuable, detailed information; but they lack frameworks of argument through which to make

sense of that information. In a nutshell, what the RESSG has sought to do is to bridge that gap. In the years when I knew it the leading frameworks came from political sociology, and focussed on problems of agricultural production and of environmental management.

What is significant about all this is that it matches remarkably well where we are in New Zealand rural studies. In Trade, Growth and Anxiety (1978), Harvey Franklin noted New Zealanders' remarkable lack of interest in the rural sociology of their country. Rural sociology is just as marginal an academic enterprise in New Zealand as it ever has been in Britain, and with much less reason given the historical primacy of agricultural and pastoral products in our export accounts.

As in Britain, geographers have given us valuable detailed information. The best brief description of differences in farming systems that I know is in Chapter Six of Trade, Growth and Anxiety. We have a multitude of useful monographs and theses. But Lowe's criticism still holds: typically this work has no framework of argument to make the detail part of a larger - perhaps it would be better to say a different - picture. Consider the final report of the Northland Dairy Study (P. Maunier, W. Moran and G. Anderson, Dairy Farming and Land Use Change in Northland 1985). This report gives us invaluable information about the pattern of dairy farming in the north, and changes in the pattern over time. The key social institution in all this is the farm family. Yet the only reference to the academic literature on family farming is to an elderly article by Harvey Franklin. One yearns for the use of the burgeoning literature on family farming in the American 'new rural sociology' that was born of the mating of old-style American rural sociology with European peasant studies: an approach which also can be found in some RESSG work. It is not there in the New Zealand literature, and that absence hinders our understanding of social structures and processes in our rural sector.

There are some hopeful signs. Franklin's well-regarded work on European peasantries in the late 1960s ought to have infused New Zealand work, but it seems not so to have done. John Fairweather's Missouri doctoral dissertation on Land, State, and Agricultural Capitalism in New Zealand: a Study of Change from Estate to Small Farm Production (1982) uses recent American work to excellent effect. But I want to look at a third possible spring-heralding swallow: John Martin's chapter 'Development from Above: God Made the Country and Man the Town', in I. Shirley (ed.), Development Tracks (1982).

At one point in that chapter Martin proposes, in a historical discussion, that 'It is useful to consider the small rural town in New Zealand as the junction point of the

country and the centralised State' (p.102). That is absolutely right, and not only for the nineteenth century. If we are to follow the RESSG and so some political sociology of New Zealand agricultural production, then the small rural servicing town is an excellent (though not, note, the only) place to start our scrutiny.

But there is a problem. For reasons connected with his own background, Martin sketches in a structural Marxist approach to the state and tries to match it with Newby's Weberian model of on-farm relationships. These are incongruous bedfellows. One could argue just as easily for the value of Marxist approaches to farm productive relations, coming out of peasant studies, and a Weberian account of the state: corporatism is an obvious candidate. Two points flow from this. First, one needs a minimal consistency in theoretical approaches: other things being equal Weber:Weber or Marx:Marx makes a better match than Marx:Weber. Second, the criterion of which approach is best is not which is 'right', but which best helps us to understand what we want to understand: research should be driven from the topic rather than from notions of theoretical purity.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is a huge field for valuable social investigation of rural matters. The RESSG gives us some pointers. We need a sociology of agricultural production. Why, in the best account of interest group politics in New Zealand agriculture (R. Mulgan, Democracy and Power in New Zealand, 1984) are we left with no more than a demonstration of the formal symmetry between the structure of Federated Farmers and that of MAF? Why is the starting button not pressed, and the decision machine shown in action? The RESSG can help us find that button.

But it does not have all the answers. New Zealand is its own place, with specific features and particular problems. In Britain the RESSG was born, and remained, an academic arena. In New Zealand I would urge that any similar body should link interested academics, but should tie them much more firmly to a rural activist constituency. Academics should be not 'experts', but facilitators; people able and willing to put their skills at the disposal of those at the sharp end of the rural crisis. That means an unusually humble role for academics: but that is no bad thing.



## CHAPTER 3

### ECONOMICS AND RURAL SOCIETY

by Basil M.H. Sharp

My approach to economics and rural society involves three stages. First, I attempt to characterise the problem; which in the context of this seminar is the research challenge. I develop some basic concepts relating to rural society and then link these concepts to address the question: what do we need to know? Second, I present a very brief overview of the domain of economics and the insights gained from the application of economics to problems in New Zealand rural society. The overview is used to indicate what we know about rural society. In the final section I indicate the range of topics possible within a research programme that focuses on economics and rural society.

#### The Challenge

No doubt other scholars have defined what they mean by rural society and I am sure that the definitions will reflect disciplinary origins. I will treat society as consisting of social groups, where members of each social group have developed organised patterns of relationships through interaction with one another. The groupings I have in mind are quite general and would include a family unit, a family farm, clubs, cooperatives, a company, and a political party; the grouping will depend on the problem being studied. Organised patterns of relationships and group behaviour derive from the rules, formal or informal, adopted by members of the group. In modern society groups interact and patterns of inter-group relationships are evident. Therefore the set of relationships I have in mind is broad and can include, production and technology, markets and trade, property and legal obligations, attitudes to race and gender, and family ties; which in turn are taken to influence and be influenced by community culture, government policy, political activity, and decisions by organisations and firms. The patterns of relationships existing between and within social groups will change with time, as will the composition of the groups. The dynamics of behaviour will include cooperation (for example, the combining of resources for processing agricultural products) and conflict (a rural group and an urban group competing for scarce water).

I doubt that my characterisation of society will satisfy all needs, and I suspect that various labels will be attached to it. The test of any approach is the

contribution that it can make to knowledge. My emphasis is clearly on the set of relationships, existing or potential, that exist between and among people within society. This approach would lead an economist to study problems involving employer/employee tensions, conflict between groups competing for scarce resources or access to markets, conflicts within a group and its resolution, the emergence of new markets, the interaction of supply and demand, the contribution of agriculture to national growth, rural politics, women and rural enterprises, financial relationships between banks and farm enterprises, investment relationships between city dwellers and rural dwellers, and farmer cooperatives.

I have avoided the use of a geographical boundary in developing the notion of rural society. Modern society is characterised by relationships that transcend arbitrary geographical boundaries and if I restrict attention to social behaviour within these boundaries then many important relationships will not be studied. In my opinion, a spatial definition is most unsatisfactory whereas a definition emphasising relationships provides useful insights for research. Rural society is primarily a concept about relationships, the people just happen to live in rural areas. The relationships I have in mind transcend arbitrary geographic boundaries - groups in rural areas have relationships with groups in non-rural areas involving property, law, trade, and culture.

Social scientists will still have to confront the problem of delineating the social units for study; that is, breaking rural society down into units (say into farm units) for study. Social science will be concerned about the relationships that hold groups together and the factors that force them apart. The approach taken will depend on the problem being studied; we should not accept a priori definitions of what are researchable social units - why should we use the farm, the family, the township? Whether the set of relationships and the groups are treated as being determined endogenously or exogenously will depend on the problem context, in practice it will be a combination of both. The point that I wish to make is that both will change over time - as a consequence of government policy, new technology, international politics, cultural change, and so on. Social scientists are able to observe the consequences of change in terms of price, organisational structure, land use patterns, profits and migration. Provided we have the necessary theory we can improve our understanding of rural society as it exists within the complex of modern society and, if we feel so inclined, make statements about the impacts of change on the welfare of rural society.

Let me illustrate. We might be interested in how changes in the existing set of relations influence rural

society. For example, consider the implementation of a decision to deregulate the transport industry. We can propose specific relations between organisations that provide inputs to farms as a production unit and organisations that serve to facilitate trade. Theory can be used to examine the affects of a change in specific relationships - economics might suggest that transport prices will fall as a consequence of deregulation. We can also study the impact of the change on farm profits and community employment. Or, we might be interested in studying changes to the set of relationships. Witness the reorganisations occurring within the public sector, increased concentration in agricultural servicing, and new enterprises emerging in banking and telecommunications. The methodological implications for research into a change in specific relationships (such as deregulation) are quite different from change in the set of relationships (such as a new state owned enterprise). As an economist I am also interested in how these changes affect the welfare of social units. If government deregulates the transport industry, what impact will this have on the welfare of groups comprising rural society? How fast should policy be introduced, given that the welfare of people is affected? That is, I am concerned, unashamedly, with the "is" and the "ought". In logic I believe we can separate the two, but in matters of practical policy we cannot.

As I see it, the research challenge to economics is to be found in the existing and potential set of relationships that produce outcomes which can be observed and therefore involve scientific inquiry. The additional challenge is to provide estimates of the impact of change on the well-being of people that comprise rural society.

### Economics and Rural Society

Having identified the challenge I now present some of the insights that have been derived from economics. It is not possible to present a complete review of the New Zealand literature pertinent to economics and rural society. I have used a limited sample of the literature to bring the research needs into focus.

### **The Domain of Economics**

Rational, self interested decision-makers and social interaction as typified by market exchange are the two central concepts forming the intellectual core of neo-classical economics. It is the logic of these basic concepts that draws economists beyond the conventional areas of economic inquiry. For example, rational self-interested choice plays a role in many domains of life. It may have applicability when studying the activity of rural pressure

groups competing with urban pressure groups for scarce resources. Rational self-interested choice might be relevant when studying the negotiation of joint-venture arrangements. However, economics can hardly deny the influence of cultural, ethical and even irrational forces on what people want to buy and sell. These forces are customarily studied by psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists. The way in which people organise themselves, for example their dealings in the market, impinges upon issues considered by legal scholars and sociologists. And the normative status attached to competitive market outcomes involves ethics and moral philosophy.

Incursions by economists into other "disciplinary" areas opens up a vast array of important and exciting topics. In political science, topics include the design of optimal constitutions, stability of voting equilibria and the balance of power among pressure groups; in sociology, the behaviour of groups; in law, crime and its deterrence. To this list we must add a host of interdisciplinary topics such as optimal harvesting regimes for renewable natural resources, safe minimum standards for endangered species, the design of organisations, and the theory of institutions.

I do not think that it is possible to carve off a distinct territory for economics. Some have advanced the idea of economics being contiguous with, but separate from, other social disciplines. This is not a useful view because it promotes territorial behaviour within the social sciences which inevitably compromises the advancement of knowledge. What gives economics its invasive powers is that the analytical categories - such as, scarcity, cost, preferences, opportunity - find wide applicability. However, there is a price tag associated with the use of these concepts when studying contemporary change in rural society. Economists will have to become more aware of how constraining their tunnel vision is about the nature of people and their social interactions.

### **Some New Zealand Perspectives**

The high value attached to additional output early in the development of New Zealand resulted in large investments aimed at increasing physical output. Investment in farm development and land settlement resulted in large additions to aggregate product, particularly the products associated with pastoral systems of agriculture. Agencies of government were significant actors in the early development of New Zealand. Rural infrastructure - communication networks, water supply, electricity, community centres and education facilities - was developed. Research centres were established to advance knowledge of production relationships, the development of new technology and improved systems of management. Advisory services were

established to communicate the knowledge gained from research activity.

### **Production Systems**

Production economics provides formal theory for research into production systems. The boundaries used in production economics are usually an analytical convenience, such as a hectare of land, a stock unit, or some broader concept of a production unit comprising land, labour and capital. Attention is focused on physical relationships - for example, the technical relationships between units of land, fertiliser, water, labour and wheat. The research is interdisciplinary, particularly with respect to incorporating inputs from natural sciences.

Early emphasis was on the technology of production and research activity focused on ways to move along a production function, thereby increasing physical product. More recently, under conditions of scarcity and a relatively low value attached to the additional output of some products, there has been more emphasis placed on technique; where science and management combine to look for new input configurations that can produce a given level of output at lower cost. Social interactions, such as market exchange, have a very limited presence in economic analyses of agricultural production.

### **Farm Enterprise**

The economic theory of the firm provides the basic model for analysing farm enterprise. A number of refinements have been made to this basic model when applied to New Zealand farms. For example, it has been a long tradition to consider the farm as a social unit, particularly the family unit. Attributes of the family - composition, age, aspirations - have been incorporated into models of decision making. In New Zealand, many of the concepts and ideas of economics are to be found intertwined with the use of optimisation and simulation models. While assisting farm managers to understand the likely nature of the implications of decisions, optimisation methods assume behaviour rather than inquire about the underlying conditions producing observable patterns of behaviour. Quite often, we read "... this carrying capacity is attainable given favourable socio-economic conditions". What are these conditions? What might lead a farmer to adopt this technology?

Usually the social boundary of the farm enterprise is assumed to conform with the physical boundary. If the boundary is extended, a number of other important topics relating to our understanding of farm enterprise become

apparent. Consider the contemporary changes occurring in farm enterprise. Farmers are investing in "off-farm" opportunities, some are developing commercial recreation opportunities, and others are moving into aquaculture. New patterns of ownership are emerging. Large amounts of "urban" capital are flowing into the rural sector for the development of goat farming and horticulture. New financial arrangements are emerging, such as joint ventures which combine the financial resources of a limited number of actors and provide rules for sharing profits and losses. Considerable skill is required to negotiating a joint venture arrangement that suits the resources and the objectives of the farm enterprise. The shift away from "traditional" forms of production has led to pressures within the farm family. For example, shifts into horticulture have been initiated by women in many instances. Women have assumed management responsibilities for many of these initiatives.

### Regional

Input-output models have proved useful in examining the structural relationships between the rural sector and the regional economy. Numerous studies have examined the issue of interdependency in a rigorous way. Benefits captured by businesses and households within a region are shown to depend on regional economic structure, patterns of production, infrastructure, and links with the "rest-of-the-world". Observed flows of money, which reflect financial relationships, provide the data necessary for estimating the multipliers associated with regional development options.

The utility of input-output analysis, and its variants, to planners and decision-makers, cannot be denied. However, when used to make predictions about income and employment it must be remembered that the results of input-output analysis are based on historical structures; there is no reason to expect the past structures to exist in the future. The attraction of deriving numerical estimates has often been pursued at the expense of improving our understanding of the relationships within rural society. Why is it that a particular regional structure exists? Is it because of the natural resources, location, people, or the ability of local government to negotiate a cheap supply of capital for the development of infrastructure? Our knowledge of the underlying processes is incomplete, a shortcoming particularly relevant to understanding the dynamics of regions. Today, the very concept of a regional entity is being challenged, particularly in the context of regional planning.

## National

Economic growth is an important topic and economists in New Zealand have made significant contributions to our understanding of relationships between economic aggregates such as employment, national income, investment and prices, the implications of changes in government policy regarding protection and the freeing up of international trade. Much of the work examines the impact of central government decisions, tracing impacts to foreign exchange, inflation, changes in employment opportunities, competition for private sector funds, and so on. More research on the contribution that rural society makes to national economic growth is needed. What aspects of agriculture contribute and how might we value that contribution? We do not fully understand the costs of adjustment associated with change and how these costs are distributed among groups within rural society. What is the normative dimension of economic policy? Can we develop positive measures of equity? Positive measures of the distributional impacts of policy would greatly assist our understanding of the likely impacts of changing conditions.

Techniques for analysing the national benefits and costs of both government and non-government decisions have been developed and applied in New Zealand. Cost-benefit analysis is probably the most commonly used technique to examine the national benefits and costs of investment in land, water and forest development. More recently, cost-benefit analysis has been extended to incorporate risk, distributional impacts, and non-market values. However, it is difficult to find a comprehensive study. In part this is due to institutional rules which dictate what can be included in the analysis and how the consequences of a project are to be valued. The distributional impacts of change are not usually considered and the inherent uncertainties faced by people working and living within the rural sector remain largely unaccounted for.

## An Assessment

Economics has made a significant contribution to understanding production relationships, farm decision-making, regional development, and New Zealand agriculture within the context of the national and world economy. I have no doubt that the information derived from research has improved the quality of decision-making at all levels. We make progress by criticism and I have one major criticism that is pertinent to economics and its approach to rural society. There has been a tendency for the research effort to react to exigencies of the day rather than follow lines of inquiry. This tendency may be the product of constrained research resources, but it appears that we are not developing lines of inquiry at the fundamental level. I could find little evidence of theory being developed in New

Zealand that is relevant to contemporary rural phenomena. If my observation is correct, this shortcoming will force the economist to follow reactive lines of research and encourage research that is technique driven; it will also limit our ability to conceptualise new and innovative approaches to rural problems. Too little attention is given to theory and problem analysis, a shortcoming that will become evident as new problems become apparent in the rural sector.

### Towards a Research Programme

The relations that have characterised rural communities in New Zealand are changing. Government policy is leading this change with its goal of freeing up markets and its move toward a neutral role in markets. This change in policy is significant to our focus on rural society because it will result in a broadening of relationships linking agriculture and industry. Both will compete for limited capital and natural resources. The nature of the relationships will change. New organisational structures are emerging, such as joint-ventures, limited liability companies and farmer-owned processing cooperatives. There may be a dramatic shift away from traditional systems of agriculture to those that are tailored to specific markets. Regional differences in comparative advantage will become more apparent, which in turn will be reflected in land use patterns, incomes, employment, infrastructure, community services and rural welfare.

If we focus a research programme on changes occurring in rural society then an array of research topics, as rich and as diverse as any economist could wish for, becomes apparent. Consider:

1. The area of institutional obsolescence; the structure, functioning and performance of new institutional arrangements.
2. The alternative patterns of ownership, cooperation, and organisation that are possible.
3. The implications of introducing new technology into rural areas.
4. Comparing the notion of physical adaptability with social and economic adaptability.
5. The ingredients of new flexible farming systems.
6. Changing work patterns, pressures to diversify, part-time work.

7. New arrangements for negotiating change in rural society.
8. Deriving measures of regional comparative advantage.
9. The notion of stability in the rural sector. What are the thresholds?
10. Positive measures of equity or justice.
11. Basic concepts relating to rural society, its structure, the attributes that serve to distinguish it from urban society.
12. The nature of the relations that exist between rural and non-rural society.
13. The family farm in the free market economy.

However, before we attempt these, or any other topics dear to our hearts, I suggest that we:

1. Clarify the basic concepts relating to rural society. For example, we will diminish the value of our research if we rely on arbitrary boundaries for defining the domain of our activity. Good economics will have to become good anthropology, sociology, political science, and psychology.
2. If economists find the lure of expanding their domain of inquiry irresistible - and I hope they do - then they will have to become aware of how constraining their tunnel vision is about the nature of people and their social interactions.
3. If a hypothesis fails in any area of application we should not beat a hasty retreat. The correct scientific response is an aggressive attempt to produce a better theory. When physicists were confronted with radioactive decay, a phenomena that does not conform to the principle of the conservation of mass, they did not limit their inquiry to those processes for which mass was conserved, they aggressively sought a better theory. So too must economists if their theory is found wanting. Such are the rules of the game.



## CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANTS' CURRENT RESEARCH OR  
INTEREST IN RESEARCH

The following chapter includes a list of the seminar participants and their institutional affiliation. The short notes also include their observations about rural research and statements about their research interests or other relevant research.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Robyn Grigg    | (Social Science Section of N.R.A.C., farmer)<br>- lack of status (existence) of social science research in M.A.F., D.S.I.R., etc.<br>- regrets that decline of farming sector makes sector more noticeable.<br>- need social science research for lobbying. |
| Bruce Jamieson | (University of Canterbury - Psychology, N.R.A.C.)<br>- job attitudes, characteristics and expectations of professionals. Urban and industrial bias.   |
| Garth Cant     | (University of Canterbury - Geography)<br>- Studies in Rural Change publication series allows academics to put research findings in readable form for rural people and for rural people to float their own ideas.   |
| John Pryde     | (Lincoln College - A.E.R.U.)<br>- surveys - investment and wide range of topics.<br>- some sociological and demographic data.<br>- leadership training for rural sector.<br>- stresses diversity and complexity of farming and rural society.               |
| Roger Juchau   | (Lincoln College - Finance)<br>- research into N.Z. and Australian corporations primarily.<br>- looking at 'how farmers perform as managers'.<br>- quantification of farm management activities to aid in tailoring education to needs.                     |

- Peter Clough (Massey University - CAPS)
- representing CAP and Dept. Ag. Econ.
  - market orientated research - policies and processes.
  - land-use issues and resource economics. The latter two impinge on social issues.
  - would like to quantify the changes occurring in the agricultural sector but at present have no funds.
- Michael Abrahamson (Lincoln College - CRM)
- with N. Taylor study of rural crisis - exact nature not known yet.
- Alan McRae (Massey University - Agriculture and Horticulture)
- systems analysis - information requirements.
  - teaches farm management.
  - concern with curriculum.
- Dana Glendining (Wairarapa - rural activist and government advisor)
- rural community development - main interest.
  - employment of women.
  - role of women in agriculture.
  - retraining needs of people displaced from agriculture.
  - rural womens' health.
- Rod St Hill (Lincoln College - Agricultural Economics and Marketing)
- orthodox economist.
  - provision of information to society on costs and benefits of policies.
- John Martin (University of Canterbury - Sociology)
- wage labour, past and present in rural sector.
  - nature, composition and conflict in work force.
  - development of rural trade unions.
  - labour and horticulture.
- Rupert Tipples (Lincoln College - Horticulture)
- labour management teaching.
  - building a picture of sociology of horticulture - historical and contemporary.
  - changing nature of horticultural work.

- Clare Simpson (Lincoln College - Parks and Recreation)
- media and possible socialisation effects on womens' sporting participation.
- Marg Gilling (University of Waikato - Sociology)
- parenting and family studies.
  - having shifted to Waikato awareness of changes in agricultural sector.
- Hillary Blake (MAF - Economics Division)
- economists give advice to government which has profound social ramifications. Interest in examining these ramifications and heightening the awareness of economists to the social impacts of advice.
- Doug Galwey (MAF - Advisory Services Division)
- information systems for decision-making and monitoring.
  - seeking ideas for incorporating equity considerations into monitoring systems.
- Jim Davison (Department of Statistics - Auckland)
- definitional problems in farming survey.
- Bruce Cameron (Lincoln College Council, Farmer)
- cooperatives.
  - resource allocation
  - interaction between rural and urban society.
- Barry MacDonald (Massey University - History)
- absence of teaching material on agriculture and rural history in N.Z. a concern.
  - would like to develop post-graduate interest in the area to address historical perspective from any discipline.
  - rural archive of dairy industry development.
- Tom Brooking (Otago University - History)
- publications on N.Z. agricultural history.
  - new course on rural N.Z. society in comparison with other societies.
  - land reform.

- Neville Bennett (University of Canterbury - History)
- history of Japan - main interest.
  - S.E. Asian history led to world systems analysis approach to analysing relationship between Japanese and N.Z. and integration of N.Z.'s resources into Japanese economy.
- D. Thompson (Massey University - History)
- teaches N.Z. history - struck by urban bias.
  - develop rural history teaching.
- O. Grigg (Vice President NCFF, farmer)
- Irrigation Development in Amuri and Canterbury as a whole.
  - agriculture's place in the N.Z. economy.
  - rural support groups - involvement with setting up.
- Ian Carter (University of Auckland - Sociology)
- interdisciplinary research based but action-oriented.
  - worked in rural areas.
  - teaches courses with content relevant to agricultural society.
  - research - experience of trying to get rural society into MAF.
  - use of image of "Rural N.Z.".
  - wider interest in the political sociology of agriculture.
- Rod Plank (Lincoln College - Farm Management)
- farmer decision making.
  - rural/urban income comparisons.
- Alastair McArthur (Lincoln College - Agricultural Economics and Marketing)
- risks and uncertainty of agriculture.
  - decision theory approach.
- Ron Sandrey (Lincoln College - Agricultural Economics and Marketing)
- teaches development and recreation economics.
  - research - broad spectrum.
  - concerned with equity.
- M. Dominey (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, 12504 - Anthropology)
- symbolic, interpretive, linguistic anthropology and gender.
  - diversity in rural women.
  - hopes to conduct a study on this subject in North Canterbury.

- Hugh Barr (Social Science Section of NRAC, DSIR)
- systems analysis with interest in marketing rather than production.
- Jenny Simpson (Taranaki dairy farmer diversifying into deer and goats, NRAC)
- Maori land, fishing rights.
  - rationalisation of local government.
  - womens' involvement in political and other decision making.
- Patricia Maunier (MAF - Economics Division)
- aim to broaden the outlook of MAF regarding social issues.
  - main concern is lack of basic information on which policy should be formed.
  - lack of agreement on 'useful research' between academics and policy makers.
- Heather Little (County Councillor, Hawarden, NRAC, Planning Council)
- rural activist with particular concern for rural depopulation.
  - land use advisory Council, local government committee.
  - 'a rural voice in the national arena'.
  - studied rural sociology in a number of countries and writes about her experience.
- Basil Sharp (Lincoln College - C.R.M.)
- lecturer in economics.
  - interest in social science and concerned about lack of theoretic basis for empirical work.
  - current interest in structural change, corporatisation.
- Gerald Frengley (Lincoln College - Farm Management)
- interest in farmer response to economic and other variables, and to new management skills.
- John Fairweather (Lincoln College - A.E.R.U.)
- sociology of agriculture research, including: changes in New Zealand farm structure (farm organisation and national level), agriculture and national development, rural and regional development, historical changes, related industries and marketing.
  - interest in developing theory and providing data which improve understanding of New Zealand agriculture.



## CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSION: RESEARCH ISSUES AND DIRECTIONS

The second half of the one day seminar focused on rural research issues. The overall format included a brief introduction to the topic of research issues, organised group discussions of research issues, reporting back to the seminar participants, and finally, a discussion of the group's findings. The objective was to provide an opportunity for the expression of ideas about important topics for research on New Zealand rural economy and society.

In the introduction to the afternoon sessions on research I raised four general questions with the view of preparing seminar participants for group discussion. The four general questions were:

1. What is it we are studying? Is there one phenomenon; how do we define it; and are there divisions within this phenomenon?
2. How do we go about studying this phenomenon? Will any method do; does the phenomenon dictate the method?
3. Why are we studying this phenomenon? Is there a theoretical puzzle, a puzzling datum, a methodological issue? Is there a practical reason? Who benefits?
4. What is the best sequence of research? What gets studied first, can the priorities cut across disciplines?

In addition, I noted that we should be wary of overemphasising "rural" because this might turn attention away from its connections to the remainder of society. Finally, the concepts of 'farming sector', 'agricultural sector', 'rural sector' and 'rural community' (Rural Change, N.Z. Planning Council, 1982) were presented as a possibly useful contribution to the group discussions which were to follow.

Each group was asked to consider recommendations for research, research practices, basic data needed by researchers, and general comments on directions of rural research.

### 5.1 Short Summary of Each Group's Report

#### Group 1:

- 1) Changing patterns of landownership, production, labour.
- 2) Importance of primary industry.
- 3) Activists/Academics

#### Group 2:

- 1) Limited resources, therefore practical research.
- 2) Lack of interpretation of base data.
- 3) Potential in a group.
- 4) Academic/activist division.

#### Group 3:

- 1) Flexible definition of 'rural'.
- 2) Responsibilities - theory, information, policy.
- 3) Credibility.
- 4) Funding - problems and changes.
- 5) Capital flow and consequences.
- 6) User pays consequences for rural society.
- 7) What is unique in New Zealand rural society.
- 8) Base data or questions first?

#### Groups 4 and 6:

- 1) Theoretical versus practical problems drive research.
- 2) Economist/sociologist approach.
- 3) Wider view than farms - equity approach.
- 4) Rural crisis - government policy.
- 5) Basic data issue, changes being made, lack of demand.
- 6) Marketability; results, resources.

#### Group 5:

- 1) Response to rapid change - overview needed.
- 2) Funding.
- 3) Relevance to policy, decision making
  - monitoring, medical, schools, etc.
  - qualitative data.
- 4) Rural history - assess advances.
- 5) Maori land issue, women, local community.
- 6) Spiritual dimension.
- 7) Remove barriers between academic/activist.

### 5.2 Content Analysis of Group Reports

The group reports can be analysed into five general topics, and this analysis gives a clear indication of the present research issues as seen by the seminar participants. The four topics are: approaches, rural society itself, theory and application, and data.

Under approaches, it is considered important to avoid making strong distinctions between activists and academics. Similarly, it is thought wise to avoid distinctions between

sociology and agricultural economics by means of recognition and acceptance of respective disciplines. In general, it is thought that there is potential in working as a group of people drawing from a wide range of disciplines.

Concerning rural society, emphasis is on the importance of a broad and flexible view, including more than just the farm. Some participants emphasise equity issues and the importance of primary industry. Another view recognises the unique aspects of New Zealand rural society.

Theory and application includes a variety of topics. One issue concerns the limited resources available for research and the related need to be practical or do research which is readily marketable. Allied to the limited amount of research is the issue of collecting base data or working on key questions first. Related to this topic is the issue of whether theory or practical problems drive research, and the separate responsibilities of theory, information and policy. Finally, it was noted that any research should be relevant to policy and decision-making.

With respect to available data it was noted that some changes to official collections are being made and that there is a paucity of interpretation of available data.

### 5.3 Brief General Conclusions

After the group reports were presented and a general discussion of these reports completed, an attempt was made to draw up an agenda for future research. However, the brevity with which important issues had been discussed meant that most seminar participants needed more time to discuss the issues before attempting to resolve them. The idea of a longer conference covering similar topics was warmly received. Most participants accepted all of the research issues presented as pertinent and supported the idea of continued Rural Economy and Society Study Group meetings. In addition, participants considered that a newsletter would be useful to keep up with current rural research.

The results of the first meeting of the New Zealand Rural Economy and Society Study Group suggest that there is a small but significant number of people concerned to foster rural research in New Zealand. Both activists and academics can see value in research, and both groups can see ways of working together to achieve the common objective of promoting research. The one day seminar did not produce a specific list of critical research priorities because more time is needed to carefully develop these ideas. To this end, a two day conference is being planned for early in 1987. In the meantime, it is important that the genuine interest in rural research, as demonstrated by the seminar, be fostered by promoting the idea of a New Zealand Rural

Economy and Society Study Group. The future will indicate whether there is a significant number of people with rural research interests that can generate the critical mass needed to sustain a long-term interest in the NZRESSG.

In this conclusion it seems appropriate to finish with a proposal for a list of objectives for a NZRESSG. Such objectives could include one or more of the following:

1. To promote the concept of a NZRESSG.
2. To provide an opportunity for communication among researchers working with rural topics, and to generate awareness of current research.
3. To discuss theoretical approaches and methodological issues relating to the study of rural economy and society.
4. To provide an opportunity for rural people to guide and influence the direction of research.
5. To promote rural economic and social research to academics, planners, and agricultural scientists.
6. To develop strategies for improving rural research.

## APPENDIX 1

## LIST OF REFERENCES CONTRIBUTED BY SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

The following reference list contains some items relevant to rural research which were contributed by seminar participants. Included are those items which do not have wide circulation, and excluded are those items which are affiliated with an organisation which publishes regularly or which distributes a list of publications.

- Bell, C. (N.D.) The Working Unemployed. (A study of the social effects of PEP schemes in the Hokianga district of Northland.) Masters thesis in progress, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland.
- Bell, C. (N.D.) Rural Poverty in New Zealand. Ph.D. thesis in progress. Department of Sociology, University of Auckland.
- Bennet, Neville R. (1985) "New Zealand and Japan: Growing Dependency". Journal of International Relations (Sophia University, Tokyo) 16 January: 45-62.
- Carter, I. (1986) "Most Important Industry: How the New Zealand State got Interested in Rural Women". New Zealand Journal of History 20: 27-43.
- Carter, I. (N.D.) "A Tailed Graft: Rural Sociology in New Zealand". Rural Sociology (under review).
- Clark, D.M. (1979) Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction Among N.Z. Farmers, Farm Workers and Agricultural Students. M.A. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury.
- Diack, G.J. (1984) The Expectancy-Valence Theory and the Motivation of Farmers and Farm Workers. M.A. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury.
- Glendining, D. (1975-81) T.R.E.C. - Towards Rural Equality of Citizenship. Newsletter about rural social issues.
- Glendining, D. (1978) Why Did They Leave Eketahuna?
- Glendining, D. (1978) "Rural Women". WEA - Trade Union Postal Education Service.

- Glendining, D. (1978) "Tuturumuri Road Show - Community Politics, Small and Rural". Continuing Education.
- Glendining, D. (1979) "A Place in the Country". People and Planning. December.
- Glendining, D. (1980) "Rural Women 1975-1980 - a mid-Decade Assessment". Committee on Women.
- Glendining, D. (1981) "The Rural Retort". Broadsheet, October.
- Glendining, D. (ed.) (1983) Here I Stand. (The experiences of women who stood in the 1980 local body elections.)
- Glendining, D. (ed.) (1986) Women in the Country. (Written portraits of about forty rural women from pioneers to the present.)
- Juchau, R. (1986) "Farm Accounting in a Changing Environment". The Accountants' Journal, May: 58-63.
- Loveridge, A. (N.D.) Hired Farm Labour in New Zealand. Masters thesis in progress, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland.
- North, H.B. (1979) The Impact of Job Characteristics on Worker Attitudes in the New Zealand Meat Freezing Industry. M.A. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury.
- Radford, C. (N.D.) Hired Farm Labour in New Zealand. M.A. Thesis in progress, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland.
- Siger, M. (N.D.) Dependency or Independent Development: The Case of Gisborne. M.A. Thesis in progress, Department of Sociology, University of Auckland.
- St Hill, R. (1986) "Some Aspects of Modelling Agricultural Lending by Trading Banks in New Zealand". Paper presented at the Australian Agricultural Economics Society Annual Conference, Canberra, February.
- St Hill, R. and Clemes, M. (1985) "More-Market: The Best Message for Agriculture?" The Agricultural Economist 6(1).
- St Hill, R. and Clemes, M. (1985) "Some Reservations About Labour's More Market". National Business Review, July 29.

## APPENDIX 2

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERESTED IN THE SEMINAR  
BUT UNABLE TO ATTEND

Trish Berbera, M.A.F., Invercargill.  
 Warren Moran, Geography, University of Auckland.  
 Rob Stevenson, M.A.F., Morrinsville.  
 John Wood, Agricultural Economics, Lincoln College.  
 Roberta Hill, Ilam Research Centre, D.S.I.R., Christchurch.  
 Harry Broad, Federated Farmers, Wellington.  
 John Mitchell, Nelson.  
 Mary Watson, Wellington.  
 Barbro Guard, WEA, Christchurch.  
 Geoffrey Cole, Valuation Department, Wellington.  
 Dr Michael Roche, Department of Geography, Massey University.  
 Professor J.T. Ward, Economics, University of Waikato.  
 Evelyn Stokes, University of Waikato, Hamilton.  
 Pat Devlin, Parks and Recreation, Lincoln College.  
 Dave Simmons, Parks and Recreation, Lincoln College.  
 Alan Taylor, Parks and Recreation, Lincoln College.  
 Kevin O'Connor, CRM, Lincoln College.  
 John Hayward, CRM, Lincoln College.  
 Graham Tate, RDEC, Lincoln College.  
 Simon Swaffield, Landscape, Lincoln College.  
 John Greer, Advisory Services Division, MAF, Lincoln.  
 Richard Willis, Geography, University of Canterbury.  
 Anton Meister, Agricultural Economics and Farm Management,  
     Massey University.  
 Richard Kenneway, Political Science, University of Canterbury.  
 Jenny Shipley, Darfield.  
 Robin Johnston, Centre for Agricultural Policy, Massey  
     University.  
 Bruce Ross, Principal, Lincoln College.  
 Robert Anderson, Faculty of Agricultural and Horticultural  
     Science, Massey University.



## APPENDIX 3

## PROPOSED NEW ZEALAND RURAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY STUDY GROUP

## One Day Seminar

Lincoln College, Wednesday, 2 July 1986

(N.B. Change of Date)

In Conjunction with National Research Advisory Council

Seminar Theme: "What research has been done, what is  
being done, what needs to be done."

## PROGRAMME

- 9.00 Registration
- 9.30 Welcome, general introduction, statement of objectives.  
John Fairweather, AERU, Lincoln College
- 9.45 "Recent Developments in Rural Research: An Overview, and the NZ Experience."  
Professor Ian Carter, Sociology Department, University of Auckland
- 10.15 Questions and Discussion
- 10.30 *Tea Break*
- 10.45 "Economics and Rural Society"  
Basil Sharp, Centre for Resource Management, University of Canterbury
- 11.15 Questions and Discussion
- 11.30 "Research Around the Country."  
All participants give a two minute presentation of their current research or interest in research.  
Chair: Robin Grigg, NRAC
- 12.30 *Lunch*
- 1.30 Chair, Bruce Jamieson, Psychology Department University of Canterbury and NRAC  
"Some Possible Research Issues and Directions"  
John Fairweather, AERU, Lincoln College
- 1.45 Participants' discussion of research issues  
Organised group discussions followed by group reports and general discussion.
- 3.00 *Tea Break*
- 3.15 Preparation of Research Issues Statement  
Decisions regarding future activity
- 4.30 Close