AGRIFOOD TOURISM, RURAL RESILIENCE, AND RECOVERY IN A POSTDISASTER CONTEXT: INSIGHTS AND EVIDENCE FROM KAIKŌURA-HURUNUI, NEW ZEALAND

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On November 14, 2016 an earthquake struck the rural districts of Kaikōura and Hurunui on New Zealand's South Island. The region—characterized by small dispersed communities, a local economy based on tourism and agriculture, and limited transportation connections—was severely impacted. Following the quake, road and rail networks essential to maintaining steady flows of goods, visitors, and services were extensively damaged, leaving agrifood producers with significant logistical challenges, resulting in reduced productivity and problematic market access. Regional tourism destinations also suffered with changes to the number, characteristics, and travel patterns of visitors. As the region recovers, there is renewed interest in the development and promotion of agrifood tourism and trails as a pathway for enhancing rural resilience, and a growing awareness of the importance of local networks. Drawing on empirical evidence and insights from a range of affected stakeholders, including food producers, tourism operators, and local government, we explore the significance of emerging agrifood tourism initiatives for fostering diversity, enhancing connectivity, and building resilience in the context of rural recovery. We highlight the motivation to diversify distribution channels for agrifood producers, and strengthen the region's tourism place identity. Enhancing product offerings and establishing better links between different destinations within the region are seen as essential. While such trends are common in rural regions globally, we suggest that stakeholders' shared experience with the earthquake and its aftermath has opened up new opportunities for regeneration and reimagination, and has influenced current agrifood tourism trajectories. In particular, additional funding for tourism recovery marketing and product development after the earthquake, and an emphasis on greater connectivity between the residents and communities through strengthening rural networks and building social capital within and between regions, is enabling more resilient and sustainable futures.

Key words: Agrifood tourism; Rural resilience; Postdisaster recovery; New Zealand

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Introduction

On November 14, 2016, a M7.8 earthquake struck North Canterbury, on New Zealand's South Island. The epicenter was a rural district, approximately 60 km to the south west and inland of the popular tourist destination of Kaikōura. The earthquake included the rupture of 21 faults across a span of approximately 180 km (Stevenson et al., 2017), caused widespread landslides (estimated between 80,000 and 100,000 separate slips), and resulted in uplift of the seabed by an average of 2 m along a stretch of the east coast of the South Island. While the region has experienced earthquakes before—including the Christchurch/Canterbury earthquake sequences in 2010/2011 and the 2013 Seddon earthquake, north of the district—this event was predominantly felt by rural communities. Road and rail access immediately stopped due to surface faulting, buckling, landslides, and damage to bridges. State Highway 1 (SH1)—the main South Island travel route and key connection for Kaikōura to the north and south—was closed, and would remain blocked north of the town for over a year, effectively stemming the flow of traffic through the township. Communications, electricity, water, and sewerage infrastructures were severely disrupted. Throughout the region there was significant damage to homes, businesses, farm facilities, and land, as well as stock losses and business interruption or reduced productivity (Stevenson et al., 2017). In a region reliant on the tourism, fishing, and agricultural sectors, the impact was immediate; thousands of tourists were stranded or faced substantial disruptions to their plans, and the collection, processing, and distribution of agricultural products—from sea and land—was compromised. Many businesses, and communities, faced an uncertain future with the interruption to critical infrastructure and lifelines.

For New Zealand, the earthquake prompted renewed calls for greater attention to the need to better understand, prepare for, and respond to hazard events at a regional level. While aspirations of a "resilient New Zealand" have underpinned government policy since the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act 2002, recent experience with earthquakes, floods, snowstorms, and wildfire have highlighted the country's continued exposure and sensitivity. Earthquakes and other perils not only have a human cost in terms of lives, livelihoods, and well-being, but have flow on effects for primary production and productivity, tourism, and capital investment. Exposure to environmental and georisks and hazards have significant implications for the country, whose trade-oriented agricultural economy is already sensitive to climate variability and extremes (Cradock-Henry, 2017; Kenny, 2011).

As the recovery process in North Canterbury continues, local stakeholders are engaging in a range of strategies to reduce risk and strengthen the resilience of their communities and regions (Cradock-Henry et al., 2018). Drawing on insights from disaster risk and resilience science, documentary analysis, and informant interviews, this article explores the potential of agrifood tourism, including trail networks, to foster rural resilience for businesses, communities, and regions as a whole. In rural communities throughout the world, agrifood tourism is providing the basis for regional economic development as tourists increasingly head "off the beaten track" in search of individualized, educative, personal, and "authentic" experiences. These experiences often incorporate local food, as they seek a "taste of place" (Bessière, 1998; Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016; Sidali, Kastenholtz & Bianchi, 2015; Sims, 2009; Timothy & Ron, 2013). While usually framed in terms of tourism development, or as an opportunity for producers to diversify income and distributions channels, we suggest that these agrifood tourism networks have the potential to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance rural resilience in multiple ways, particularly in postdisaster recovery contexts. By enhancing and diversifying product offerings, establishing linkages between communities and stakeholders, and predefining potential recovery pathways prior to a disaster, rural communities may be better placed to realize opportunities for building resilience and to foster the capability and capacity for improved responses to future emergencies.

We begin the article with a review of resilience and its relationship to rural studies. The salient characteristics of resilience that have potential to inform and characterize postdisaster recovery efforts are discussed. This is followed by a case study from North Canterbury, where new agrifood

tourism opportunities are being proposed, in large part as a response to recent earthquakes.

Perspectives on Rural Resilience

Resilience science has been evolving steadily from its origins in ecology (Holling, 1973) and is now applied across diverse fields of research and practice (Berkes & Ross, 2013). In a risk management context, resilience is described as "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions" (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2009, p. 24). "Building resilience" to reduce risks is an organizing principle invoked by the UN to limit costs of emergency response, minimize human suffering, and mainstream climate change adaptation into development practice (Pain & Levine, 2012). From disaster risk and resilience studies, climate change impacts and implications research, to human–ecological systems more generally, resilience is a valuable analytical framework for studying the ability of systems to cope with challenges and change (Anderies et al., 2006; Duit et al., 2010; Tanner et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2004). Resilience thinking has been applied to such diverse subjects as evaluations of sustainability, transportation, security, ecological crises, and water resource systems (Berkes & Jolly, 2001; Chelleri et al., 2015; Cox et al., 2010; Folke et al., 2016; Wang & Blackmore, 2009).

In rural studies, resilience provides a suite of analytical methods and insights, including ideas of path dependencies and path creation as well as an alternative policy narrative for rural development practice (M. Scott, 2013, p. 597). These studies build on the recognition of rural space as having a communal identity, which is determined, sustained, enhanced, and reduced in certain ways. Rural regions present additional challenges for disaster risk management, emergency preparedness, and resilience building more generally. Populations are small and often dispersed over large areas; critical infrastructure and lifelines may pass through highly exposed areas, making them vulnerable to failure. The "hollowing out" of rural regions through depopulation, loss of services, and continued dependence on climate-, risk-, and market-sensitive primary industries has in places decreased capacity for responding to disasters. Understanding rural resilience—distinct in terms of spatial, social, and temporal scales (Franklin et al., Newton & McEntee, 2011; Kapucu et al., 2013)—can help inform a more dynamic perspective, with an explicit focus on people and their experience of and reactions to risks (Franklin et al., 2011; Pain & Levine, 2012).

A number of empirical studies have focused on and defined "community resilience," often studying rural and semirural communities as opposed to distinctly urban populations (e.g., Franklin et al., 2011). Community resilience is described as "the collective ability of a neighbourhood or geographically defined area to deal with stressors and efficiently resume the rhythms of daily life through cooperation following shocks" (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015, p. 255). For example, awareness of hazards and the ability to cope with them, positive expectations regarding the effectiveness of mitigation actions, communication of problems, empowerment and participation in community affairs, and trust are signposted as key attributes to enhance individuals' collective resilience (Paton, 2013; Thornley et al., 2015). Particularly important in this context are studies of resilient communities that emphasize the role of social connectivity, and the various relationships that *bind individuals and communities together*, which can be drawn on in particularly challenging times (Adger, 2000; Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Magis, 2010).

Community resilience can be best understood as both an *outcome* and a *process* that builds capacity from within (Franklin et al., 2011; Wilson, 2010). Resilience is fostered through, or is a function of, collective action; as individuals socialize to respond to challenges, they build on trusting relationships that have developed in the area over time. This allows a community to work, and solve problems, together (Adger, 2000; Aldrich, 2011; Cradock-Henry et al., 2017; Paton, 2013). In this process self-efficacy is strengthened, and problem-solving coping strategies reduce vulnerability (Miller et al., 1999; Paton et al., 2001), leading to an increased capacity to self-organize that helps realize resilience (Berkes & Ross, 2012). Thus, Aldrich and Meyer (2015) call for policy makers and planners

to look beyond investing in "hard" infrastructure improvements (e.g., roads, communications) for disaster preparation and response, to consider also the "softer" social initiatives that connect people to each other, deepen social relations, or create new social networks that strengthen community cohesion and trust.

In the context of rural resilience in New Zealand, it has been noted that there is tension between different aspects of centralized (local or national government) and community or stakeholder participation (Espiner & Becken, 2014; Mamula-Seadon & McLean, 2015). A balance must be struck between respecting local knowledge and ensuring "expert" research on resilience is put into practice (Mamula-Seadon & McLean, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2010; Skerratt, 2013). Imbalance between expert and lay knowledge can adversely affect rural regions' ability to recover and react (Glavovic et al., 2010; Jakes & Langer, 2012; Rouse et al., 2016). Ensuring good communication, promoting transparency in decision-making processes, and enhancing relationships with stakeholders can build resilience in these contexts (McManus et al., 2008). In particular, social initiatives that connect people to each other and strengthen social relations can have dividends for communities that are faced with, or have faced, disasters (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015).

Tourism, Disasters, and Rural Resilience

Resilience is increasingly used as a theoretical framework in the literature on tourism and disaster (e.g. Becken, 2013; Biggs, 2011; Biggs et al., 2012; Espiner & Becken, 2014; Lew, 2014; Strickland-Munro et al., 2010). Much of this literature focuses on empirical case studies and the impacts of environmental and geohazard events on the tourism sector, tourism businesses, networks, and destinations (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Calgaro et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2016). Tourists have increasingly been drawn to remote places "off the beaten track" (Zurick, 1992), seeking adventures in highly dynamic, ecologically sensitive, and hazard prone environments, such as coastal or mountain destinations (Espiner et al., 2017). While inaccessibility and remoteness are often appealing for tourists, such peripherality means tourism-based rural communities are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters (Calgaro et al., 2014; Espiner & Becken, 2014).

The majority of tourism disaster research to date has focused on frameworks for assessing and managing response and recovery, including planning approaches (e.g., Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2004; N. Scott et al., 2008), marketing strategies (Armstrong & Ritchie, 2008; Walters & Mair, 2012; Walters et al., 2016), and knowledge management tactics (Orchiston & Higham, 2016). Many of these studies have found that the tourism industry is poorly prepared for disasters and slow to implement recovery initiatives (e.g., Becken & Hughey, 2013; Hystad & Keller, 2008; Prideaux et al., 2003). There are often limited levels of preparedness among tourism businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (Cioccio & Michael, 2007; Hystad & Keller, 2008; Orchiston, 2013). Recently, there have been calls for tourism disaster research to focus on mitigation of risks and preparation and readiness, rather than response and recovery (Ritchie, 2008; Wang & Ritchie, 2012). This aligns with a similar shift within disaster risk management (DRM) away from top down, command-and-control type approaches of emergency management agencies to a new tactic that emphasizes the need for a greater focus on building preparedness or readiness for potentially disastrous natural hazard events and reducing their impact, particularly through local collaborative action plans (Hughey & Becken, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2017).

The move towards resilience thinking is part of the general shift in focus towards preparedness and readiness, reducing underlying vulnerabilities and building adaptive capacities within communities (Mair et al., 2016, p. 15; see also N. Scott & Laws, 2005). Much of this emerging work views tourism destinations as coupled human and natural systems, or social–ecological systems (SES). As Becken (2013) stated, tourism is a "prime example of a SES, involving both societal (including economic) and natural resources, and their interactions" (p. 506). For example, Calgaro et al. (2014) used social–ecological systems, resilience, and vulnerability theory in their Destination Sustainability Framework not only to assess destination vulnerability and resilience, but also as a way to evaluate and enable resilience-building actions and initiatives.

As in other fields, there is growing recognition of the need to study systems in their entirety, and a need to consider the whole of community resilience and recovery, rather than focus exclusively on tourist flows, or tourism stakeholders, for example. The shift towards more integrated assessments of destination vulnerability and resilience draws attention to the importance of social networks, collaboration, and knowledge sharing (Ciocco & Michael, 2007; Mair et al., 2016). Key attributes of resilience identified by tourism researchers—including the ability to self-organize (Espiner & Becken, 2014) and the significance of diversification and community participation (Espiner et al., 2017)—are broadly accepted in the extensive literature on global and regional change where resilience has been widely applied. In tourism-specific examples, for instance, glacial recession of the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers on the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island has prompted operators to offer increased air access and to build new tracks to allow visitors to view the glaciers (Stewart et al., 2016). Similarly, by diversifying product offerings and target markets, tourism operators in Queenstown have found ways to be more resilient (Becken, 2013). However, there remain few studies focused on whole-of-community resilience in the context of disaster recovery (Sanders et al., 2015). There has been no research to date exploring the significance and potential of agrifood networks as tools for enhancing rural resilience in postdisaster settings.

Agrifood Tourism and Trails for Rural Resilience

Over the past two decades there has been increasing interest from policy makers, the tourism industry, food producers, and researchers in the potential of agrifood tourism as an instrument of regional regeneration and a pathway for enhancing rural resilience (e.g., Boyne et al., 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Regions have undergone major economic and social restructuring brought about by changing agricultural practices, technological innovations, job losses, and population decline (Hall, 2005). In this context, agrifood tourism offers the opportunity for a diversified economy (Hjalager & Richards, 2002) and a point of difference in "strengthening a region's identity, sustaining cultural heritage, contesting fears of global food homogenization and facilitating the regeneration of an area's sociocultural fabric" (Everett & Aitchison, 2008, p. 150; see also Bessière, 1998; Hall et al., 2003; Sidali et al., 2015; Sims, 2009).

Agrifood producers facing pressures to diversify their production and distribution strategies and networks in an increasingly "global countryside" (Woods, 2007) are paying more attention to the specificity of place and more "localized and locally-identified production" (Overton & Murray, 2011, p. 63; see also Everett & Slocum, 2013). The benefits from participating in agrifood networks and tourism include the diversification of income streams. This can take the form of developing farm-based tourism experiences or producing artisanal and boutique agrifood goods for sale at local outlets, including specialty food stores, farmers markets, or the farm gate or cellar door. Such activities generally provide opportunities for greater returns to the producer, due to a shorter supply chain, and may enable them greater control of their personal brand story, as providing a food or wine experience to visitors can be an important outlet for small producers to speak passionately about what they do and to act as ambassadors for their industry and region (Bessière, 1998; Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Sidali et al., 2015; Sims, 2009).

Agrifood tourism is also increasingly evident in the strategic plans of national and regional governments, and in the marketing and tactical activities of regional tourism organizations (RTOs). This form of tourism is particularly appealing as a policy intervention in rural contexts, representing an opportunity to develop mutually beneficial links between two important sectors for many regional economies (Eastham, 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Hall, 2005). At a regional level, agrifood tourism provides opportunities to strengthen and sustain local food networks, which encourages diversified production and agricultural practices and supports local businesses "through backward linkages in food supply-chain partnerships" (Everett & Slocum, 2013, p. 789; see also Boyne et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2015; Sims, 2009). Through "buy local" campaigns, economic leakage can also be reduced (Ibery & Maye, 2005; Sidali et al., 2015). In this way reciprocal benefits exist for both tourism and farming sectors: "local foodstuffs enhance and strengthen the tourism product while tourists

and visitors provide a market for these products" during, and ideally beyond, their visits (Boyne et al., 2003, p. 134).

At a regional scale, agrifood tourism has the potential to not only strengthen the regional economy, but to stimulate social regeneration, social networks, and ultimately, community resilience (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). The development and promotion of agrifood tourism can instill community pride in local heritage, traditions, and ways of life, and a sense of place can be reaffirmed for tourists and locals alike (Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016; Hall, 2005; Sidali et al., 2015; Timothy & Boyd, 2014). At the same time, agrifood tourism requires stakeholders along the value chain to collaborate and coordinate activities. These networks can take many forms in the reconnection of "the consumer to the farmer" (Everett & Slocum, 2013, p. 793). They may involve establishing partnerships between individual producers, or between producers and restaurants, tour operators, and retail outlets (Green & Dougherty, 2008). The need to develop strong local networks for knowledge sharing and support (both financial and practical) is frequently highlighted in the literature (Boyne et al., 2003; Corigliano, 2002; Hall, 2005).

One way to strengthen the connections within the agrifood supply chain to the tourism sector is through agrifood trails or routes (Corigliano, 2002; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Meyer-Cech, 2003; Sims, 2009; Timothy & Boyd, 2014; Timothy & Ron, 2013). These trails generally contain a number of nodes, or key sites, and attractions for tourists, which are connected thematically through signage, icons, or emblems. Trail nodes may occupy a range of positions in the supply chain, from places of production (e.g., farms, vineyards), to manufacturing and processing plants (wineries, factories), and various types of sales outlets, from a farm gate or cellar door, to a cooperatively run specialty store or restaurants (Sims, 2009). Traditionally, these routes or trails have been represented in brochures or maps, but increasingly they are being promoted to tourists via websites and apps.

A challenge of agrifood trails, and agritourism in general, is the need to collaborate both between and *across* the tourism and primary and food sector (Andersson et al., 2017; Everett & Slocum, 2013; Hall et al., 2003). While tourism actors and food producers may share a goal of creating a regional reputation for local food products, and of sharing food experiences with tourists, their needs and priorities differ considerably (Andersson et al., 2017). For example, many farmers and small-scale food producers are dissatisfied with the returns they get for their produce from the hospitality sector and restaurant trade (Everett & Slocum, 2013; Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016; Green & Dougherty, 2008), while the latter voice concerns about the high cost of buying locally and the lack of consistent supply from local food producers (Boesen et al., 2017; Everett & Slocum, 2013; Lee et al., 2015). The challenges, however, provide opportunities also for what is a potential strength of these networks, as noted by Hall (2005):

> For rural regions the greatest benefits in the establishment of networks are . . . the development of intersectoral linkages and networks between firms that had previously seen themselves as having little in common. By encouraging such relations, new product and service innovations are developed as well as the generation of new social economic and intangible capital that can lead to improved regional competitive advantage and resilience. (p. 161)

In the current context we argue that agrifood tourism and trails provide multiple potential pathways to enhance rural resilience and serve a valuable function in terms of postdisaster recovery and enhancing preparedness for future events. As well as providing opportunities for enhanced and diversified tourism offerings, thereby broadening markets, trails can provide an opportunity to strengthen communication and knowledge sharing and enhance social capital between trail members. In this way, agrifood trail development contributes to enhancing the "soft" infrastructure of communities so crucial for building social connectivity, community capacity, and other attributes of community resilience (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Boyne et al., 2003; Maclean et al., 2014; Magis, 2010; Matarrita-Cascante & Trejos, 2013).

To understand and gain insight into the links between local food networks and tourism and its potential for enhancing rural resilience in North Canterbury, key informant interviews ($n =$ 19) were conducted with diverse stakeholders including four representatives from the two local

authorities (Hurunui District Council and Kaikōura District Council), five representatives from three RTOs (Destination Kaikoura, Hurunui Tourism, Christchurch, NZ), a manager from a regional business incubator, and nine food, wine, and beer producers. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Two researchers were present for the majority of the interviews, and they worked independently on the transcriptions initially to identify key themes, based around content areas. Themes were then discussed, revised, and refined collaboratively with the whole research team to ensure credibility of the results, thereby offering a high level of investigator triangulation (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989).

Interview data were supplemented by analysis of the numerous publications from national and local government agencies in the aftermath of the 2016 Kaikōura-Hurunui earthquake sequence, including situation reports, assessments of the emergency response, recovery strategies, and tourism plans. A close reading of media reports on the response and recovery strategy in the region, and attendance at industry workshops, provided further understanding of the issues facing the region. Participant observation by the whole research team in the region, including visiting food and wine outlets, a local farmers' market, and a wine and food festival, provided additional insights into the product base of the region.

North Canterbury Case Study

Context

For the purpose of this case study, North Canterbury refers to Kaikōura and Hurunui districts, a predominantly rural area beginning approximately 50 km north of Christchurch, the South Island's largest city.[1] Hurunui District covers an area of nearly 9,000 km^2 and had a population of 11,529 at the time of the last census 2013, an increase of 10% over the previous census in 2006. The increase may be explained in part by displacement of residents from the Christchurch/Canterbury earthquakes of 2010/2011 (Wilson & Simmons, 2017). The landscape of the district is diverse, including significant areas of farmland, viticulture, and alpine terrain. While Hurunui District contains 106 km of coastline,

the nature of its topography means that the majority of its residents are located inland dispersed among small townships, most of which function primarily as rural support centers. The exception is Hanmer Springs, a thermal resort town particularly important as a domestic tourist destination and as a location for second-home ownership. Hurunui is predominantly agricultural; one third of employees (36.8%) work in the agricultural sector, which includes beef, sheep, and dairy farming, as well as viticulture. The second highest industry by employee numbers is the accommodation and food sector, reflecting the importance of Hanmer Springs as a destination, although the district as a whole plays a significant role in serving the many visitors who travel through the region.

Kaikōura District stretches from south of the Haumuri Bluffs to a point just north of the settlement of Kekerengu. The Inland Kaikōura Ranges and Pacific Ocean form the western and eastern boundaries. "Where the mountains meet the sea" is an apt description of the district. At just over 2,000 km^2, it is the smallest district in New Zealand by area and rating base. The district had a usually resident population of 3,552, with two thirds of the population residing in the township of Kaikōura (2013 census). The importance of tourism is apparent; 25.5% of the population were employed in the accommodation and food sector, with another 15.3% employed in retail at the time of the last census. By comparison, only 12.1% of the population were employed in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector, with approximately 1% being employed in the significant, though relatively small, crayfish and seafood industry. Over the 7 years since the previous census, Kaikōura district had experienced a small drop in residents, despite the district's reputation as a destination for marine wildlife tourism.

Agrifood Destination: North Canterbury

North Canterbury has been promoting itself as an agrifood destination to some extent for the past two decades. The wine industry, initially located entirely in the Waipara Valley area of Hurunui district, has hosted visitors at cellar doors in the region since the 1990s, and the Kaikōura coast has long been renowned for its seafood, particularly crayfish (Kaikōura is Māori for "crayfish meal"). Since 2007, a regional food and wine trail guide has been

operating—a collaboration between a local business development agency (Enterprise North Canterbury) and regional tourism associations. The guide's objective is to showcase food and wine producers, hospitality outlets, and restaurants in the region, and visitors are encouraged to "Experience the local flavours . . . take time to explore, enjoy the tranquillity of the countryside and meet our passionate locals" (http://www.edsworldwines.ch/shop/pdf/uploaded/ Weinregion_Food_Wine_Trail_Waipara_Valley_North_Canterbury_Neuseeland.pdf). It is not surprising, given the general appeal of wine tourism and visibility of the industry in this region, that wineries feature strongly in this trail, but the majority of entries are cafés or restaurants. While the seafood industry of Kaikōura and the farmlands of Hurunui are highlighted in the text of the brochure (http://www.edsworldwines.ch/shop/pdf/uploaded/ Weinregion_Food_Wine_Trail_Waipara_Valley_North_Canterbury_Neuseeland.pdf), the absence of seafood producers in the brochure's listings is notable, as is the lack of visibility of the beef, lamb, and dairy products grown in the region. Inclusion in the trail—on the website and in the printed brochure—has been limited to businesses meeting specific criteria around production or use of local agrifood items and, as is often the case with these types of trails, is subject to a membership fee. This fee requirement has constrained some of the smallest agrifood enterprises from involvement (personal communication, local food producer), a finding supported by Fusté-Forné and Berno (2016), whose interviews with stallholders at farmers markets in Canterbury revealed that the cost of belonging to trails such as these were prohibitive for microbusinesses. This observation is supported in our interviews with key stakeholders, who felt that while the trail was a worthwhile concept, the inclusion of a number of cafés with little commitment to local food (but who could pay the membership fee) but exclusion of some of the most renowned food products, including artisanal producers, meant it did not accurately represent the regional foodscape of North Canterbury (Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016). As one café owner included in the trail explained:

> I never felt we offered enough. We're a daytime café . . . we weren't organic, we weren't focused on organics, we like to when we can but there

are price points around that, and also access to produce.

Despite the reticence about the existing trail, this business owner, and many other stakeholders around the district, expressed strong support for an invigorated strategy for North Canterbury based around the fresh food, artisanal produce, and beer and wine being produced in the region.

This enthusiasm for strengthening and diversifying of the reputation of North Canterbury as an agrifood producer and food tourism destination is apparent in a range of initiatives being developed at the current time. Some of these initiatives are being developed at the level of individual businesses. For example, in the Waipara Valley and surrounding area a number of wineries are developing food options at their cellar doors or creating additional wine experiences to entice the visitor, including vineyard walks and winery tours. The region's emergent craft beer industry is also expanding, with a new beer festival launched in Kaikōura in 2017, and with two local brewers expanding operations. At a regional level, Hurunui District Council is in the process of redeveloping its tourism strategy, emphasizing food and wine tourism. The area's wineries are also developing a tourism and events strategy, rebranding the Waipara Valley as the North Canterbury Wine Region, with implications for tourism marketing. Furthermore, there are a number of collaborative projects between the RTOs, District Councils, and community trusts seeking to link the region through self-driving or cycle touring routes (e.g., Alpine Pacific Touring Route, Hurunui Heartland Cycle Trail). For example, the Alpine Pacific Touring Route, launched in March 2018, presents a number of itinerary options, including one based exclusively on food and wine experiences, and is a direct result of postearthquake recovery efforts. These and other emergent initiatives reflect the window of opportunity in postdisaster settings, to regenerate, recreate, and reimagine previous conditions and to realize new opportunities (Brundiers & Eakin, 2018).

Agrifood Tourism Initiatives as Resilience and Recovery

As outlined above, the renewed focus on regional branding of North Canterbury as an agrifood destination, and the development of new and diverse tourism

products, can be viewed as a direct consequence of recent hazard events. While the potential of North Canterbury as an agrifood destination has been recognized for some time, the earthquake catalyzed new ways of working together, established a greater sense of regional identity—including its unique food identity—renewed a sense of cooperation, and created opportunities for shared understanding of common challenges during the recovery process.

The November 14, 2016 M7.8 earthquake struck just after midnight. The epicenter was located in rural North Canterbury; however, the impacts were widespread due to the 12 m of combined horizontal and vertical ground displacement. Buildings as far north as the capital city Wellington—200 km away—were damaged, along with local infrastructure and lifelines including road, rail, telecommunications, and electricity.

The township of Kaikōura was particularly badly affected. The earthquake stuck at the beginning of peak visitor season—the start of summer in the Southern Hemisphere. Hundreds of landslides north and south of town cut off road access, stranding tourists and placing additional demand on local services. For 13 months following the earthquake, SH1—the main road connecting Kaikōura to the rest of the South Island—was closed for repairs, forcing traffic via an inland route (SH 70), which was frequently subject to closures and had limited operating hours. The inland route impeded traffic flows, added travel times and costs for freight, diverted visitors away from other attractions and small service communities reliant on through-traffic, and affected collection, processing, and distribution of agricultural products including milk, meat, and wine.

Since the Christchurch/Canterbury earthquakes during 2010/2011, Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism (now Christchurch NZ) has pursued a regional dispersal strategy—including into North Canterbury. Following the November 2016 earthquake, the central government through the Ministry for Business, Innovation, and Employment invested NZ$1 million to promote and market Kaikōura (NZ$650,000) and Hurunui Districts (NZ$350,000). The funding was used to employ marketing staff, develop new marketing initiatives, and cultivate new tourism products. In particular, a significant proportion of the funding earmarked for Hurunui was spent developing the Alpine Pacific Touring Route proposition, a rebranding and reimaging of a preexisting trail that had "fizzled out" due to lack of coordination and focus. An informant closely associated with the touring route explained the fundamental significance of the earthquake and its impact in catalyzing changes in perceptions and promoting a willingness among stakeholders to engage in new ways of thinking about the proposition:

I think the maturity of revisiting or relaunching APT with wine tourism, with small towns, and a lot more capability than we ever had when this thing was first started, you've got a genuine tourism route. And certainly coming out of the Kaikōura earthquake—I hesitate to call it a disaster, I mean it was an event—but coming out of the back of that you have everyone wanting to work a little bit harder on this and it is off and launched.

Another interviewee involved in disbursement of the funding concurred:

What's come out of it is that we've had the money to do the marketing. People are thinking outside the square and businesses are popping up now. There's a changing business model.

This "thinking outside the square" is also apparent in the reconsideration of regional identity. In discussions about the future role of agrifood in North Canterbury tourism experiences, key stakeholders stressed the need to better utilize local food networks and incorporate the range and diversity of agrifood produced in the region, from commodity items to specialized artisanal products. For example, a representative of a tourism organization based in Hanmer Springs commented on the lack of visibility for local produce in local restaurants, particularly beef and lamb, partly due to the perceived cost of local meat products (cf. Everett & Slocum, 2013; Lee et al., 2015). This was echoed in comments from Kaikōura. As one business owner said:

we need to come together more and be pushing it more with the restaurants about using the local products.

In Kaikōura there was also discussion regarding the absence of local seafood from menus, with a range of suggestions about how local seafood could feature more prominently in the positioning of the town. As one café owner explained:

I would love to see a reinventing of something around food and beverage that focuses more purely on seafood. . . . I think there is great potential . . . we've got the coastal environment we could tie that in with some wonderful seafood, you know, that could be our point of difference.

Another Kaikōura stakeholder discussed the appeal of buying fresh fish straight of the boats down at the wharf—something that had been available in the past but due to compliance issues and costs was not a current possibility.

In all of these discussions, there was an emphasis on the need for food experiences in the region to genuinely reflect local culture and local food provenance. This was summarized best by one café owner who said:

Whatever you do in that space has to be credible, and it has to be authentic, and it has to be meaningful. It has to deliver something, rather than just be lip service. . . . I think it is those things that stand out for tourists or the visitor.

A food and wine producer similarly reflected on the opportunities to tell stories of the relationship between food and the people who have lived in the region over history: from indigenous stories of food trails used by Māori who passed through the region to stories of more recent settler heritage. In this way, experiencing local food and wine and other beverages at their point of production, while hearing the stories and traditions of the land, is a way of becoming a part of a place, by symbolically, and literally, consuming it (Bessière, 1998; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Sidali et al., 2015; Sims, 2009).

These reflections on a sense of place and history, coupled with a growing awareness of the significance of social connectivity between individuals, businesses, and communities, was raised repeatedly in interviews. While informants discussed the importance of diversification of distribution channels and tourism products, there was a strong sense that the creation of a local food network, supported by tourism activities, was an opportunity to connect different groups in the community in the postearthquake environment. A recurring theme in the interview data was the strengthening of personal relationships within the wider region as a result of the earthquakes. In North Canterbury, the

2016 earthquakes added to the cumulative stress of 3 years of drought in the region. For farmers, financial resources were already strained, productivity was down due to feed shortages, and the earthquake only exacerbated these issues. Problems with market access, a rise in transportation costs, and repairs to farm infrastructure (fences, tracks, buildings) all had an adverse effect on households (Stevenson et al., 2017). In Kaikōura district—where there is a perceived disconnect between the urban and remote rural populations—greater focus on promoting agrifoods through trails, festivals, or farmer's markets might strengthen the bonds between communities and aid in recovery. As one council employee explained:

Food brings rural and tourism together which is really important, because all the other tourism is mainly based around the sea and the harbour and everything else, so it is a way that our rural community can actually contribute (see also Cradock-Henry et al., 2018).

A number of respondents spoke of the way events surrounding the earthquake had brought together North Canterbury's dispersed townships and communities. The shared experience with adversity helped provide a touchpoint for renewed communication and strengthening networks. In particular, the reliance on the inland road—the only transport link between Kaikōura and the south—was critical to fostering relationships between tourism businesses in Hanmer Springs and Kaikōura. As one tourism marketing stakeholder explained:

everyone seems to have a connection now that is like a neighbour. . . . You are all going through the same process at the same time.

Based in Hanmer Springs, she spoke of driving to Kaikōura after the 2016 earthquake to see how the community was coping and offer them material and emotional support. Similarly, a food producer in Amberley spoke of organizing a food relief mission, which involved packing an inflatable dinghy with food and making a challenging journey around the coastline to get fresh produce to Kaikōura. This experience strengthened her existing relationships with food producers in the coastal town and has led

to further discussions about how the two regions might continue to work more closely together.

Within Kaikōura, large enterprises with the financial resilience to absorb the earthquake's impacts empathized with their smaller, more vulnerable counterparts. As one business operator explained, there was a new appreciation for the local tourism ecosystem and of the symbiotic relationships between operators. She said:

> before the earthquake many of the hospitality and retail businesses did not consider themselves part of tourism—now they know they are part of tourism, and realise how important the industry is.

At the same time, a larger tourism operator developed greater appreciation for the smaller retail businesses:

> We were heartbroken through the earthquakes to think of some of our really unique small businesses here having to face closure. What we really agreed on was that the visitor experience is made up of so many facets. It's not just about going on a tour to see wildlife, it's about what they can find up the main street that takes their interest. It's about the customer experience like in the quirky little shop . . . and so for us to think that some of that thread, or weaving, of the tourist experience was going to be compromised by closure was really concerning for us. And it has made us all realise that everyone has a voice, everyone has a part to play and that makes up the whole unique participation.

Based on her own earthquake experience, this informant suggested that any future agrifood trail brochure should include all food producers in the region, with larger operators subsidizing the membership fees of the smallest producers, thereby overcoming one of the limitations of this type of trail (Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016). While this may seem commercially naive, there is evidence that it is already occurring in the funding arrangements for the Alpine Pacific Touring Route, with one large operator admitting they had disproportionately funded the website development on the basis that:

> we are all for seeing Kaikōura recover; it's not just about [our business], it's about Kaikōura.

Among the stakeholders we interviewed in North Canterbury there appears to be a widely shared attitude of inclusiveness. As one interviewee said:

> Well we've been through this, we can do anything. Nothing's impossible. We've proven that we can actually survive this, we've learnt a lot of stuff about ourselves, about each other, and about the community.

It is this attitude that has seen the establishment of new networks or the strengthening of existing networks—between communities, between tourism operators, between food and wine producers—and which is resulting in a growing impetus for an agrifood tourism network:

> It is about fostering relationships . . . it is about networking business-to-business.

As one wine stakeholder summarized:

> Would it all have come together without the earthquake? Probably, but the earthquake gave it an impetus, and more funding, and strengthened our community's reliance on each other—coming together to help each other. . .

Over the past 2 years a range of individual initiatives and regional strategy documents have highlighted the potential of agrifood experiences to enhance tourists' experience and the branding of the North Canterbury region's towns and districts. At the same time, the earthquake has resulted in a recognition that "we're all in this together," resulting in businesses and organizations working more closely together both within and between communities.

Conclusions

While agriculture, food, and wine tourism have been a part of the regional economy of North Canterbury for some time, the postearthquake recovery reinvigorated efforts at consolidating and promoting regional agrifood initiatives. The legacy of investment in a regional food guide and an established regional wine industry in the Waipara Valley has provided a strong foundation and a basis for tourism and community stakeholders to realize this "window of opportunity" (Kingdon, 2003). The preferred alternatives for regional economic development were already in place; the earthquake and recovery effort have helped to channel the focus and energy of affected businesses, local government, industry, and community members. With financial support from

the central government, tourism industry stakeholders have capitalized on embryonic networks, goodwill, and a new sense of regional identity and shared purpose to develop a strategy bringing together diverse producers and product offerings.

It is our argument that the current focus on agrifood tourism in North Canterbury not only has strategic importance for regional economic development, but also has benefits for rural resilience more generally. By enhancing existing product offerings and creating new ones, new markets and distribution channels for local agrifood products are developed. In particular, by focusing greater attention on local outlets, producers reduce their vulnerability to future natural hazard events that may disrupt access to markets via road closures or increased freight charges. At the same time, these new agrifood products help strengthen regional provenance and enhance Kaikōura-Hurunui's reputaton as a food destination for consumers, and they also offer a more nuanced and richer sense of regional identity for residents. In developing agrifood tourism, new linkages are established between communities, and between different interest groups within communities. For over a year, stretches of state highway were closed, forcing traffic inland. With the reopening of the state highway, however, coastal and inland communities are anxious that their renewed connection continue. Reviving and refreshing the Alpine Pacific Touring Route, providing a mix of product offerings to visitors, and sharing the costs of promoting the region more widely is helping forge and maintain new linkages between communities and businesses.

Disasters can become catastrophes when households, communities, or societies fail to successfully adapt to a challenge (Diamond, 2011). Resilient societies are ones that are able to reflexively consider the sources of vulnerability and bring resources to bear to mitigate the threat (Goldstein, 2008). Disasters can become focusing events that open windows of opportunity and lead to change (Brundiers & Eakin, 2018; Cradock-Henry et al., 2018; Farley et al., 2007). By mobilizing resources, bringing together different stakeholders, and leveraging existing expertise, capability, and capacity, North Canterbury residents and communities are building connectivity within the region. Through the initiatives we have highlighted, they are actively contributing to more resilient and sustainable futures, capitalizing on existing strengths, identifying new opportunities, and looking ahead with a shared sense of responsibility and opportunity.

For other agrifood destinations, the value of diversification extends beyond the economic benefits and has implications for resilience. Fostering connections between enterprises can help develop new markets and tourism offerings, but it also builds social capital and enhances collaboration and cooperation—which can be of value prior to, and following, an emergency. By predefining potential recovery pathways prior to natural hazard events, rural communities may be better placed to realize opportunities for building resilience and to foster the capability and capacity for improved responses to future emergencies.

Note

[1] Arguably the Waimakariri District and Selwyn District could be defined as part of North Canterbury also, but these districts abut the metropolitan Christchurch City Council, and both contain townships that act as dormitory suburbs for the city. Given the focus of the article on rural resilience, it has been decided to exclude these districts from analysis.

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