Short title: Barriers to adaptability in a changing world: the case of dairy/livestock farming

Convenors:

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Objectives:

In this call for a Discussant Workshop we address the issues of the emotional factors contributing to the ability to adapt to a changing environment within farming communities.

In the European context farmers have experienced many extrinsic threats to their way of life in recent years: the removal of the EU quota system, new aggressive competitors from countries such as the USA and China, climate change and more strident consumer demands for ethical and sustainable farming practices. These are providing difficult challenges for communities that have had long periods of relative stability and little need to examine the way they work.

Previous research has examined how farmers' assumptions, which are embedded into their individual and collective identity, affects behaviour and mitigates against change. The breaking down of assumptions and beliefs to be replaced by new ones is a demanding process, which makes the adoption of new ways emotionally taxing. We are interested in examining the emotional factors that influence the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, wether these are positive (happiness with the potential benefits of any change) or negative (fear of being able to cope in a new environment).

We are hoping to build a community of researchers who are working in this broad area, to discuss key theoretical concerns, learn about potential new methodologies and approaches, with the ultimate aim of writing joint papers and building future international research and practice collaborations.

**Topic**

Our topic focuses on the emotional factors involved in barriers to adaptation in the livestock farming industries, particularly where this refers to the adoption of more sustainable, “green” or ethical practices. Within this topic we can identify a number of sub-themes, such as:

1. The emotions involved in the challenges to notions of rural identity ( Holloway, Catney, Stockdale and Nelson, R, 2021) and to assumptions embedded in the farmer’s view of themselves and their work caused by a changing environment. In some cases this is bound up with notions of masculinity and being the ‘keeper’ of the land This example of bounded thinking can act to limit openness to new views of the farmer’s role and expected behaviour (Driver, 2018; Visser et al., 2018) especially if combined with attachment to old ways and a fear of the new.
2. Barriers to innovation in rural communities (Snijders and Rieple, 2020)

. The role of organisation silence in resistance to changing animal welfare policies and practices (Snijders, Rieple and Boyle, 2020 and 2021).