

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTIGATION OF A SYSTEMS
MODEL OF FARM TOURISM IN VICTORIA**



by

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Jeffrey Norman Kidd

ABSTRACT

The marketing of farms for tourism and recreation purposes has been taking place for many years. Farmers have frequently sought to supplement their farm income through providing accommodation and recreation facilities to paying guests. This study concentrates on one state of Australia, Victoria, and has two main aims. The first aim is to develop a systems model of farm tourism that reveals the roles played by various stakeholders. The second aim is to examine farm tourism from a systems perspective, and to explore the attitudes of both farmers and guests to their experiences. In addition, the comments of local government authorities are also investigated.

The purpose of the study, in broad terms, is to develop a systems model of farm tourism in Victoria, Australia. In order to do this, the study reviews the literature and then examines the evolution and development of farm tourism in general, through a detailed analysis of the relationships between host farm operators and their visitors. It is hoped that the present study will shed some light on an industry which has been largely ignored by most writers and researchers in the different disciplines represented in this topic.

The research objectives are, firstly, to develop a systems model of farm tourism; secondly, to examine and describe the scope of farm tourism in Victoria, from the point of view of the farmer; thirdly, to describe the evaluation of the farm tourism experience by the guests who have visited farms in Victoria; and, finally, to

investigate the attitudes and involvement of local government bodies in Victoria to farm tourism.

Tourism in general is examined, as well as the relationship between agriculture and tourism, leading to a discussion of the definition of rural tourism. General trends in rural tourism are identified, and their relevance to farm tourism is explained. The definition of farm tourism is then covered, with commentary on the application of the characteristics of tourism to the farm tourism industry. Trends in farming are mentioned, which point to the importance of farm tourism as an alternative source of income for the farmer, and a useful form of diversification from farm operations, reducing dependence on one source of income. The concepts of leisure and recreation are also considered, and their relevance to farm tourism is identified.

The study is made up of four main parts. The first part is the development of a model of farm tourism. There is no model of farm tourism in Victoria in the literature and the model developed is therefore a contribution to knowledge. Parts of the model that is developed are examined in the study. This is followed by a study of farmers in Victoria comprising interviews with farmers or managers at 69 farms; a mail survey of 260 guests who had visited farms in Victoria; and a mail survey of 35 local government authorities in Victoria. Each of these separate studies provided useful information regarding farm tourism. The approach taken, collecting data from different sources, provided an insight into the farm tourism industry that would not have been possible if only one type of survey had been carried out.

The survey of farmers yielded information regarding the type of accommodation offered; the method of booking used; the expenditure on set-up costs; the year in which farm tourism began; the advertising expenditure; methods of advertising and promotion used; and the importance of tourism revenue in the total revenue that was earned by the farm. Farmers were also asked why they became involved in farm tourism, what activities were available on their farms; how tourism had affected farming operations; and what they considered to be the main reasons for their success in farm tourism.

The study of guests examined the impressions that guests had of the farm, prior to arrival and after arrival, and their overall satisfaction with the farm tourism experience. Other aspects of this part of the research involved investigation into the booking arrangements; guest involvement in activities on the farm; promotional impacts; the decision making process of the guest in choosing the farm; and a profile of the respondents.

The survey of local government authorities examined their attitudes to farm tourism in general, as well as the importance of farm tourism in regional economies and its social and economic effects; the number of enquiries received; their attitude to the future of farm tourism a source of revenue and employment; and their support for farm tourism. This section also examines support from the State government for farm tourism, as identified by local government authorities; hindrances to the growth of farm tourism and local government activities to assist farm tourism. The final section of the research study discusses the main findings that arise from the investigation of these aspects of the farm tourism industry.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This research project aims to develop a systems model of farm tourism, and to examine certain aspects of the model, namely, farmers, guests, and local authorities. This chapter provides a context for the analysis by discussing the setting in which farm tourism occurs, namely, as part of rural tourism. To set the scene, tourism is discussed, and the relationship between leisure, tourism and agriculture is explored. This is followed by a discussion of rural tourism, including its features and recent growth. This chapter then discusses the concept of a host farm, and farm tourism. Trends in farming relevant to the development of farm tourism are identified, as well as the phenomenon of 'off-farm' income and diversification. A brief discussion of land use, and training for farm tourism is covered, and a discussion of the relationships between leisure, recreation and farm tourism follows. The chapter ends with comments on the delimitations and limitations of the study, and its significance for the farm tourism sector and further research in the area.

Defining tourism

A tourist is defined as an individual who travels away from his or her usual place of residence for less than one year and for any purpose other than routine business commuting (Smith, 1990, p. 328). Another definition of a tourist is "Any person travelling more than 40 kilometres away from their normal place of residence, except

to commute to and from their usual place of work. This includes domestic and international travel, whether for business or pleasure” (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994b). Thus, one definition embodies length of time away from home and another uses distance away from home to define a tourist. Perusal of other sources indicates that there are a large number of ways to describe tourists and tourism, but most definitions of tourism share a range of common elements. Tourism is the temporary, short-term travel of non-residents, along transit routes to and from a destination, mainly for the purposes of leisure or recreation.

The Australian Government Committee Inquiry into Tourism defined tourism as including “all overnight and certain day trips undertaken by Australian residents and all visits to Australia by overseas residents of less than twelve months duration” (op.cit., p. 7). A tourist is therefore defined as either “a person who undertakes travel, for any reason, involving a stay away from his or her usual place of residence for at least one night; or a person who undertakes a pleasure trip involving a stay away from home for at least four hours during daylight, and involving a round distance of at least 50 km; however, for trips to national parks, state and forest reserves, museums, historical parks, animal parks or other man-made attractions, the distance limitation does not apply” (Australian Government Committee Inquiry into Tourism, 1987, p. 11).

For the purpose of this study this last definition is adequate, provided that the word “farms” is added to the list of attractions in the second part of the definition. Some visitors are day trippers who visit farms for tours, to see animals, or consume Devonshire teas – and the distance of 50 km may not always be relevant. The main

emphasis in this study is not day trippers, however, but rather tourists who stay for at least one night as described in the first part of the definition.

Trends in tourism

The collective demand for tourism in Australia is made up of inbound tourism and domestic tourism. Inbound tourism has been the major area of growth, and although Australia has enjoyed a price advantage over other countries, non-price factors have also made it a popular choice with overseas tourists, especially the perception of Australia as a safe destination. The tourism industry is expected to experience a boom over the next decade. Forecasts are that it will grow by 9 percent per annum and will generate export earnings of \$31 billion in 2005, with 8.8 million overseas tourists. The number of nights spent by guests at hotels, motels and guesthouses is expected to be 44 million in 2005 (Field, 1996). At the time the visits to farms were undertaken, Australia's top ten overseas markets were Japan, New Zealand, Britain, Germany, USA, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia (Australian Financial Review, 1992). These countries still provide large numbers of tourists to Australia according to the latest visitor arrival trends (March, 2000).

The size of the tourist market therefore augers well for farm tourism. Poon (1989) points to a new tourism emerging, which has positive advantages for the growth of farm tourism. The old tourism is basically mass tourism, highly standardised and rigidly packaged; whereas the new tourism is characterised by flexibility, segmentation and a need for tourists to have authentic tourism experiences. This suggests that rural tourism, and farm tourism in particular, would benefit from visitors

looking for a countryside experience. As far as domestic tourism is concerned, there is a growing trend toward shorter breaks. A study undertaken by KPMG Peat Marwick (1990) supported the view that there is a growing trend for holidays to be taken in smaller doses – long weekends, mid-week breaks and so on, largely due to pressures of work and availability of discretionary funds. The report goes on to point out that although resort and city areas are popular destinations, “indulgent” weekends may include quiet getaways to the countryside that would be of benefit to farm tourism operators. A more recent report (Collins, 1997) supports this finding, stating that Australians are taking shorter, more frequent trips within Australia rather than the long annual holidays of the past, and indicating “an explosion in yuppie weekenders”.

Rural and farm tourism

The types of agriculturally based leisure attractions have been combined in a model prepared by Cox and Fox (1991, p. 20) - refer Figure 1.1.

The definition arrived at by these authors is based on the suggestion that rural tourism implies a linkage between agriculture and tourism. The only “agriculturally based leisure attractions” that have been examined by researchers are those that fall under the heading of farm tourism, according to the authors.

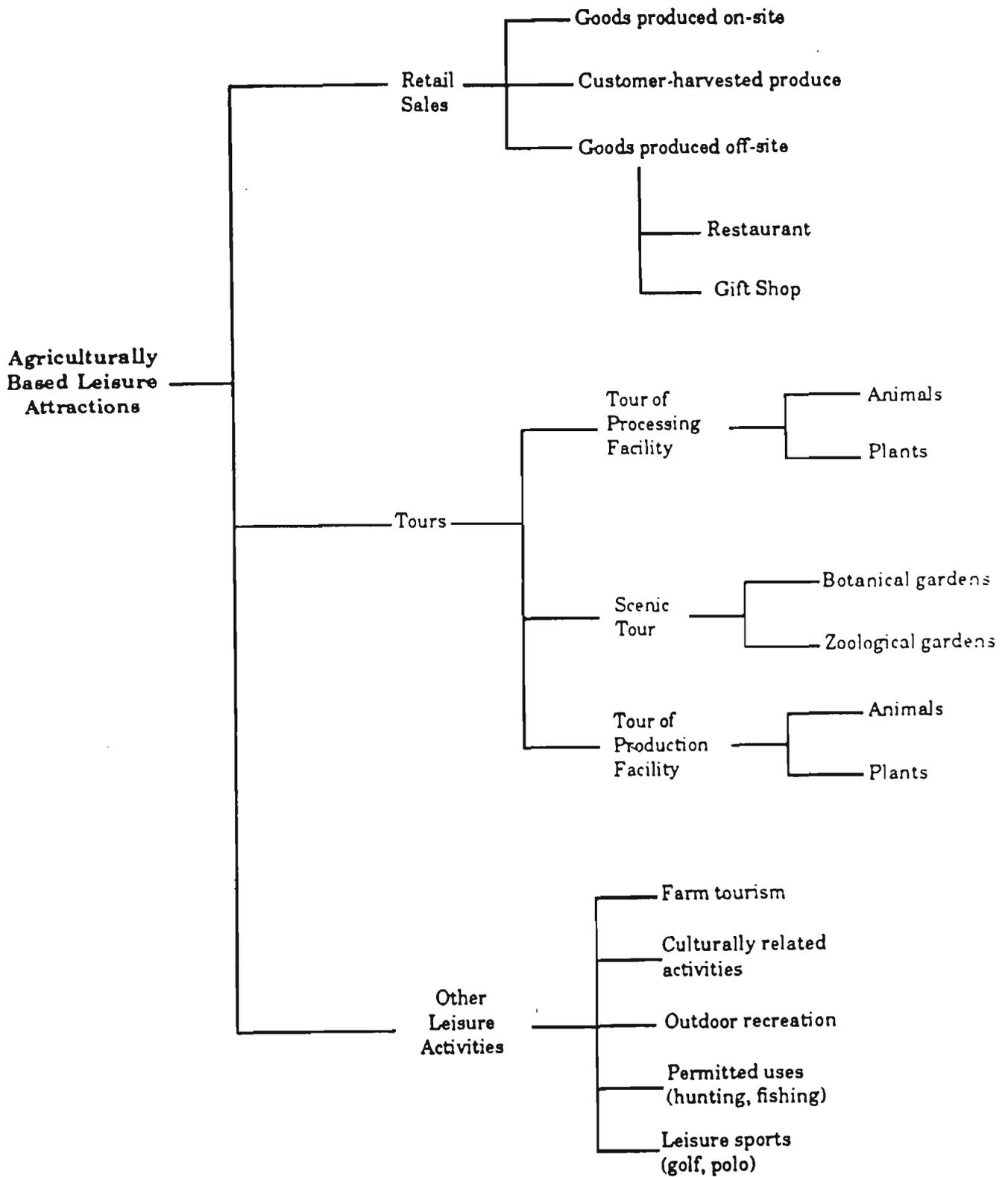
Their definition of an agriculturally based leisure attraction is “an enterprise that produces and/or processes plants or animals and which also strives to attract visitors to enjoy the agricultural attributes of the operation and its site, and/or to purchase agricultural products produced or obtained by the enterprise” (Bowen, Cox and Fox,

1991, p. 51). While this definition is adequate for agricultural products, it does not cover other products (for example, saddles or horse blankets) that might be sold by a farmer to farm tourists. Further discussion regarding the enterprises that comprise agriculturally based leisure attractions lead the authors to the conclusion that “because agriculture is closely linked to natural resources and rural areas, the distinction between agriculturally based attractions, rural tourism and ecotourism is not easily defined.” (Cox and Fox, 1991, p. 19). They considered that the term industrial tourism may also be relevant, because some tourists may wish to view, for example, a nut or coffee processing plant. Stevens (1988) commented that the development of industry tourism was particularly marked in rural areas and in regions with a traditional tourist base. None of the examples he presented are closely linked to farms, with the exception of a “leech farm” in Swansea.

For the purposes of the present study it is assumed that industrial tourism is not specifically farm tourism, even if some farms operate on a large scale, which could be likened to a manufacturing plant. Likewise, ecotourism may occur on farms, but the definition of ecotourism is not to be confused with farm tourism. Ecotourism may be defined as “travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both of the past and the present) found in these areas” (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1988, quoted in Richardson, 1993, p.8).

A more recent definition is that ecotourism is “ecologically sustainable tourism in natural areas that interpret local environments and cultures, furthers the tourists’

Figure 1.1 Types of agriculturally based leisure attractions



Source: Cox and Fox, 1991, p. 20.

understanding of them, fosters conservation and adds to the well-being of the local community” (Richardson, 1993, p.8). In a more recent text the author avoids a limiting definition of ecotourism, and describes it as more than adventure tourism, and hands-on learning, concentrating on a quality education experience, being respectful of the carrying capacity of a destination and seeking to be involved with and benefiting local people, among other things (Gilbert, 1997, pp. 2 – 4). It is clear that ecotourism and farm tourism do overlap, and certainly there is a role for agriculturally-based leisure attractions in both. As Bowen, Cox and Fox (1991) pointed out, bed-and-breakfasts and other rural activities may be considered to be agriculture-based because of their agrarian focus, even if the accommodation provided is not on a farm (p. 51).

The relevance of this description to the present study is that Farm and Country Tourism - Victoria Inc. lists rural retreats together with farms in their catalogue because the motivation to holiday at either is similar. These authors comment also that there is no clear separation between agriculture-based and resource-based attractions because agriculture is so closely linked to natural resources. Hence “tourism in and around a wilderness area may be considered agriculture-based if the tourist is accommodated on the farm or if the landscape must be maintained to preserve the ecological balance of the area” (ibid.).

There are various definitions of rural tourism, and the descriptions that are examined here are similar in their basic concepts, but are provided to illustrate the difficulty that has arisen in trying to specify an activity that has a wide range of motivations, customers, providers and outcomes. Even the definition of rural has a number of

variations. Different governments also define rural in different ways, based on population density and other factors, complicating the formation of a definition of rural tourism.

Lane (1994, p. 102) pointed out that “rural tourism is a multi-faceted activity that takes different shapes in different parts of the world”. Clarke noted that the OECD uses different operational definitions of rural areas. He also stated that “farm tourism, or agri-tourism, is sometimes mistaken for rural tourism. They are not, in fact, one and the same” (Clarke, 1999, p. 27). For the purpose of the present study, farm tourism is regarded as part of rural tourism, and not its equivalent.

It is useful for this study that many of the definitions involve the words “leisure” and “recreation” as it was stated elsewhere that this is a multi-disciplinary study, and it is false to isolate terms that are obviously so closely related. Tourism may be seen to be essentially a pleasure activity, representing a particular use of leisure and a particular form of recreation. Relating this pleasure seeking to the countryside results in a definition of what has been called “green tourism” which is the phenomenon of people away from their usual habitat in pursuit of leisure activities in the countryside, excluding such areas as the urbanised coast and ski resorts (Travis, 1987, pp. 354-356).

Gilbert and Tung (1990, p. 166) quoted both of the above and stated that the latter includes both recreation and travel, but fails to explain what constitutes a rural area. They felt that there is a tendency to associate green tourism only with the natural environment, and that this might therefore exclude an area affected by, for example,

mining, or even historic houses. They therefore defined rural tourism as a trip to, or overnight stay in, a countryside area that is either agricultural or natural and has a low density of population (Gilbert and Tung, 1990, p. 166). This definition can be used to embrace the concept of travel, without restricting its use to activity-based recreation, and it can be used to cover both day trips and overnight stays in the countryside, and both domestic and overseas visitors.

Rural tourism is defined in different ways. The World Tourism Organisation defined tourism as being either domestic, inbound or outbound (WTO, 2000, p. 13) all of which could include rural or farm tourism. An obvious dichotomy is urban tourism and rural tourism, the latter including farm tourism. Page and Getz (1997, p. 3) pointed out that rural tourism has suffered from a lack of theoretical analysis, resulting in a failure to accept its role, value and significance in the wider tourism studies context.

Rural tourism is thus also poorly defined, and tends to include a wide range of interest groups including economics, planning, anthropology, geography, sociology, and business studies (Page and Getz, 1997, p. 4). These aspects are addressed in the next chapter in which a model is developed.

Lewis (1998, p. 91) also described the popularity of rural tourism development which has led to growth in research on rural tourism in fields such as “recreation, rural sociology, business, public administration, geography and anthropology”. Terms that have been used to describe rural tourism activity include agritourism, farm tourism, rural tourism, soft tourism, alternative tourism and others (Keane, Briassoulis, and

van der Straaten, 1992). Dowling (1997, p. 10) defined all tourism as either mass tourism or alternative tourism, which then divides special interest or alternative tourism into categories such as cultural tourism, event tourism, or other tourism, the last of which includes farm tourism.

Rural tourism is a multi-faceted concept, covering a wide range of diverse activities that take place in a rural context. Farm tourism is only one aspect of rural tourism. Lane (1994) suggested that rural tourism needs to be defined to apply in particular situations rather than as a general definition, because urban or resort-based tourism also spills over into rural areas. In addition, the definitions of rural areas vary, and some tourism in rural areas may be urban in form, as for example, a leisure hotel development in a rural area. Different regions have also developed different forms of rural tourism. For example, farm-based holidays are more important in some regions than in others. Rural areas are also experiencing change, and the old distinctions between what is urban and what is rural become blurred in some cases.

Rural tourism includes farm-based holidays, but "also comprises special-interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and, in some areas, ethnic tourism" (Page and Getz, 1997, p. 8). Rural tourism should therefore be located in rural areas, be functionally rural (related to rural concepts such as nature and open spaces), be rural in scale both in terms of buildings and settlements (and therefore small-scale), be traditional in character, usually associated with local families, and be of many different kinds (Page and Getz, 1997, p. 9). All of these requirements are met by farm tourism.

Lane (1994, p. 16) also listed the following factors to be considered in a definition of rural tourism: holiday type; intensity of use; location; style of management; and degree of integration with the community. It appears then that “any workable definition of rural tourism needs to establish the parameters of the demand for, and supply of, the tourism experience and the extent to which it is undertaken in the continuum of rural to urban environment” (Page and Getz, 1997, p. 9).

In Australia, the Commonwealth Department of Tourism (1993a) defined rural Australia, before defining rural tourism. Rural Australia is defined as those geographic areas which exclude the Capital City Statistical Divisions and the Statistical Subdivisions which surround other urban centres whose populations exceed 100,000. This includes all other geographical regions, mainly hinterland, country and remote/outback areas. The figure below represents an attempt by the Commonwealth Department of Tourism to illustrate these spatial concepts in relation to a variety of special interest tourism activities which can take place in either rural or urban areas.

Figure 1.2 shows the variety of attractions or special interest tourism activities that appeal to different types of tourists. According to the discussion paper, “rural tourism can offer a specific type of destination with a variety of experiences, or it can cater for a cross-section of tourists within a given geographical location and/or across geographical zones. It is a multi-faceted activity that enables the tourist to capture and experience vignettes of rural life in natural surrounds” (op.cit., p. 3). The reference to special interest tourism indicates one of the ways that rural tourism is defined, in terms of being just one of a number of special interest tourism segments.

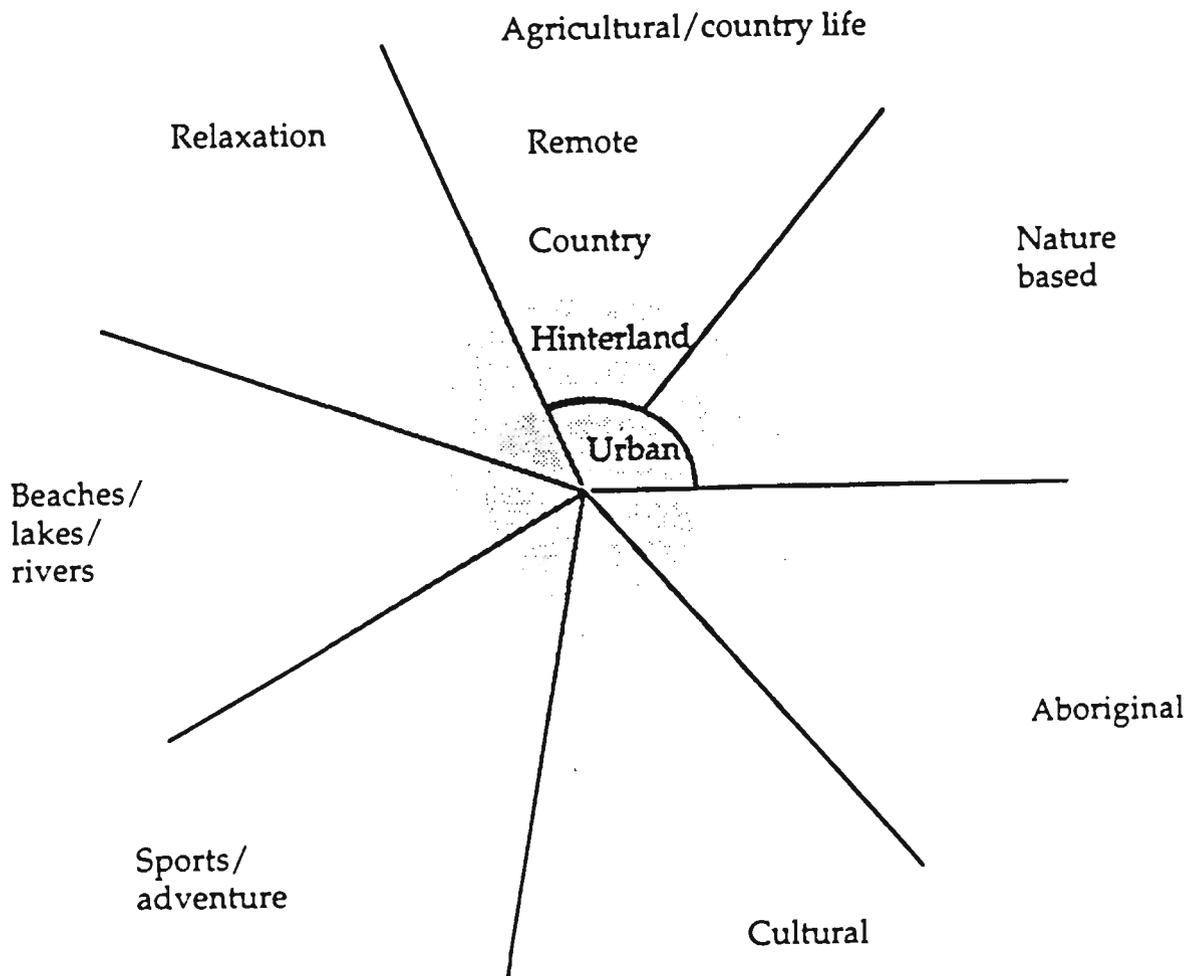
The definition of rural tourism for the purpose of this study is “ a multi-faceted activity that takes place in an environment outside an urbanised area and represents to the traveller the essence of country life” (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1993a, p. 2).

The criterion which was used in the development of this definition was basically the motivation of the tourist. This could involve the following activities in a rural setting: “general interest discovery holidays that may take the traveller to nature reserves or wilderness regions, hiking, rafting or abseiling, specialised study tours, holidays on farms or flying outback to deliver mail. Alternatively it could mean spending time at country events and festivals, travelling to heritage sites of cultural and social significance, or staying towns that are reminiscent of bygone days” (ibid.).

Farm tourism is therefore only a single part of the total rural tourism experience, although the discussion paper stated that the attraction of rural areas is heightened by the visitors’ desire to interact with the people, and to come into close contact with the host community, by participating in local activities and identifying closely with the people and their surroundings. This would likely be in the experience of farm tourism, particularly if the guests were overseas visitors staying in the homestead, rather than domestic visitors renting a self-contained cottage.

The National Rural Tourism Strategy published a year later (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994a, p.3) used a slightly shorter definition: “Rural tourism

Figure 1.2 Special interest tourism groups



Source: Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1993a, p. 3.

is a multi faceted activity that takes place in an environment outside heavily urbanised areas”. However, this shortened basic definition is then followed by some qualifying statements to the effect that it is an industry sector characterised by small scale

tourism businesses, set in areas where land use is dominated by agricultural pursuits, forestry or natural areas. Rural tourism can present to the traveller, the essence of country life. It would be unwise to define rural tourism too narrowly as it involves travellers' perceptions that they are experiencing the country, and this reinforces the concepts expressed by Poon (1989), referred to previously.

Trends in rural and farm tourism

A number of factors contribute to the fact that current tourism trends are generally favourable for rural tourism. These are briefly discussed, with applicability to the present study where relevant. The factors listed are from a paper prepared for the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1994), and include the trends such as an increase in leisure time, disposable income and a tendency to short breaks. The increased use of short breaks for holidays means more holidays of shorter duration, possibly at different destinations, but may restrict travel to farms which are "out of the way" as the tourist may not want to devote a large proportion of the short time available to travelling there and back. This may in turn favour farms closer to the city. One farmer visited in Victoria pointed out that his was the nearest farm to Melbourne where overseas tourists could see a large sheep farm in operation and watch activities such as sheep shearing. This preference for farms a short distance from a major centre combined with the fact that many overseas tourists devote only one or two nights to farm stays, means that proximity to a city may be a distinct advantage. In fact the Australian Bed and Breakfast Book stated that "A very popular situation for B & Bs (bed and breakfasts)... is within 1 – 2 hours drive of the main cities" (Thomas and Thomas, 1993, p. 3).

Higher levels of education are said to increase the likelihood of farm tourism participation i.e. “research shows that increasing levels of education correlate with increased interest in outdoor recreation ecotourism and special interest holidays” (ibid.). A farm holiday can satisfy all three of the holidays mentioned.

There is a rise in the popularity of ‘green’ issues which includes farm tourism. Farmers who stress ecotourism and environmental aspects of farming operations will attract tourists looking for these benefits while on holiday; nature-based tours can also be arranged on farms or by farmers. Many of the farms visited are adjacent to National Parks, and the availability of bush walks etc. virtually allow the farmer to promote the use of the National Park as part of the farm stay experience. Farms visited in this study which stress ecotourism include Kangarooobie, near Princetown and an example of one that stresses environmental aspects is Macropus Park at Kerang.

Consumers are exhibiting a growing interest in speciality food and beverages, which can feature ‘clean-green’ rural produce. A good example in Victoria would be Ontos which allows tourists to work their way on the farm in exchange for accommodation. In fact, there is an organisation (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) which caters specifically for farm visitors who wish to work on a farm and experience food grown organically. In return for help on the farm, the worker receives free board and lodging on the farm. The term refers to a working holiday, and the volunteers are expected to become involved in work on the farm property. In Ireland, for example,

smallholdings involved in this scheme include a goat farm (where work includes cheesemaking and milking), a dairy farm, and a vegetable grower (Harvey, 1992).

Rural tourism involves a greater appreciation of heritage, both built and natural.

Many farmers have deliberately preserved old and sometimes decaying buildings on their properties because of the historic value and interest to tourists. A farm such as Rockview in Western Australia, which features the Albert Facey Homestead, provides the heritage aspect, winning the heritage and cultural category of the Sir David Brand Awards for Tourism in 1990, and being a finalist in the local tourist attraction category.

This homestead opened as a tourist attraction in 1987, and since then the number of visitors to the homestead has “continued to soar, with more than 30,000 going there in the past 12 months” (The Weekend Australian, 1991). A farm such as the Kow Plains Homestead in the Mallee was first settled in 1859. A campaign is presently under way to restore the buildings, and is supported by Heritage Victoria, which has agreed to fund urgent repairs and maintenance work to the buildings once their future is guaranteed. The buildings are drop log constructions in various stages of collapse, that nevertheless are a tangible reminder of pastoral days.

Some farms, like the Kow Plains property noted above, or Gulf Station at Yarra Glen in Victoria, have their main attraction firmly based in heritage aspects. Gulf Station was settled in the late 1840s, and the buildings have now been restored, after the property was acquired by the State Government in 1976 and handed over to the care of the National Trust. According to the manager, Gulf Station is one of the most

significant timber buildings in Victoria, and possibly Australia. While there are other slab homesteads in Queensland, no other complex in the country is so early or so homogeneous. The buildings on show include the homestead (from the outside only), the dairy, kitchen, bakehouse, wash house and a variety of outbuildings, including the stables, slaughter shed, school house and shearing shed (all restored). The Gulf Station organises school tour programs where children can experience aspects of life on a nineteenth century farm by grinding wheat, baking bread or damper, and churning cream. Milking of cows is also allowed, and there are turkeys, guinea fowl, geese, sheep, calves, cows and pigs (Clark, 1994).

Other farms are not wholly set up as heritage tourism attractions, but nevertheless maintain certain outbuildings or other aspects of farm operation that may be of historical significance and therefore of interest to tourists. For example, Naringal at Wallinduc near Ballarat is a property settled before 1841 and is still owned by descendants of the same family. The family cemetery and replica of the original slab hut serve as a gentle reminder of the harsh pioneering days (Naringal farm brochure, 1991).

Rural and farm tourism helps consumers in the search for authenticity (Poon, 1989) in a material world which rural holidays can provide, assisted by dealings with friendly locals. In particular, many overseas visitors prefer to stay in the homestead and eat meals with the farmers, while being able to discuss Australia and farming in general. Examples of farms in the sample where this occurs are Glenisla and Dunbar.

Visitors to rural areas are often concerned with the need for peace and tranquillity, particularly as a stress reducer. This is self-evident in farm stays, but is perhaps more evident in those properties that are further away from regional centres, further away from their neighbours, not too close to the road, and where the tourist accommodation may be distant from the main homestead. Rural and farm tourism may benefit from the ageing of an active population, with the time, money and inclination to travel widely, often choosing rural holidays for health reasons, to discover non-urban experiences or to recapture youthful times spent in the country. This aspect is commented on elsewhere in this study. Similarly, there are trends towards more people becoming health conscious and seeking more active outdoor recreation.

In general, some of these trends may be seen as the emergence of REAL travel (rewarding, enriching, adventuresome and a learning experience) often linked with individualism (Read, 1980). There are also improvements in transport and communications (offset by the fact that distances in Australia can be formidable in terms of time and cost) and increasing participation by rural agencies such as those involved with national parks, arts and crafts, community welfare, economic development and transport, in encouraging and developing rural tourism. In some cases farmers reported a resistance on the part of the community to the introduction of farm tourism in an area, with the idea that increased visitation would “damage” the area or spoil the peaceful environment that farmers may have sought. In other cases, resistance was based on the popularity of an area causing some visitors to wish to own their part of it in the form of a weekender or hobby farm, which might in turn increase real estate prices (an advantage for those who wished to sell, but a disadvantage to those who did not, resulting in increased rates payments). In other cases, farmers

were supportive of rural tourism and participated in shire and council decisions by joining the management decision making process in order to maximise their personal advantage as a result of increased rural tourism.

In addition to the above trends identified in the OECD paper (OECD, 1994), Coates (1991) and Kusler (1992) provided further trends which it is suggested are “shaping the relationship between tourism and the natural environment” (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994a, p. 18). These include new demographic groups such as two-income households and baby boomers reaching the peak of their earning capacity, and increased exposure to new and remote places through the media. The difficulty here is that many tourists who are seeking peace and tranquillity in rural tourism may avoid visiting a place that they feel may have been so exposed in the media as to have attracted a large number of tourists. At the same time, potential customers cannot become aware of rural tourism attractions unless their existence is made known in some form of promotion, even through word of mouth, if advertising is felt to be inappropriate.

These recent trends are supported by suggestions made by Gilbert (1989), which were not identified as trends in rural tourism, but as emerging trends of the consumer. It can be seen that these are congruent with some of the trends discussed above; for example, Gilbert suggests that tourists have new objectives – different reasons for tourism, such as interaction with non-familiar cultures, or experiences rather than passive holidaying. This may refer to experiencing the heritage aspects of farm tourism, referred to above, which is a growing aspect of farm tourism.

The individual approach is also stressed, and rural tourism offers more choice and flexibility, as well as providing less lavish accommodation which is what some tourists are seeking. Gilbert (ibid.) saw a willingness on the part of the public to accept clean accommodation that is of a lower standard to that which they are used to. This allows farms to offer basic shelter in buildings which may otherwise have had to be extensively, and expensively, renovated. Shearers quarters and farm cottages often fall into this category. Visitors are not usually concerned with the standard of accommodation as long as it is congruent with their perception prior to commencing the holiday. It is only a problem if the standard of accommodation is exaggerated by the farmer, or if the visitor expects something different from what is being provided.

Other trends include a predilection for hedonism (pleasure for its own sake, or an awareness that leisure activity is a necessary part of life), and activity holidays – many farms offer activities both on and off the farm which may be attractive to this market segment seeking to become involved in a particular activity.

There is also an increase in tourism spending – this reinforces the idea that tourists now are more likely to take a number of short breaks, rather than one major holiday. In turn this suggest that a weekend away is less of a planned occasion and may be seen as less of a major financial expense, resulting in it being sought more often. A less obvious trend may be reduced materialism – this need reflects that discussed elsewhere in this study for spiritual values and communing with nature.

Tourism that is developed with the needs of the community and environment in mind on a long-term basis, may be regarded as sustainable tourism. This in turn will bring

about economic benefits (in the form of tourism expenditure, job creation, and the regional multiplier effect); environmental benefits (adding value to land that might otherwise have been used solely for agricultural purposes, and encouraging landholders to protect and preserve their properties through proper land management and conservation practices). Sustainable tourism will also provide social benefits such as a sense of community pride in an area; maintenance of, or increases in local populations; a reduction in the isolation felt by rural communities; enhancement of lifestyle of locals through the development of visitor facilities; increase in economic prosperity; as well as the maintenance and enhancement of the cultural attributes of a community, and the possibility of expenditure by visitors being used to maintain the environment. (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994a, pp. 5 – 8).

The multiplier effect referred to above has been found to be 2.44 for dollars spent on meals and alcoholic drinks; in other words, ‘every dollar spent by a visitor can be multiplied by 2.44 to calculate its total economic impact on the Victorian economy’ (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 1993, p. 21). The same source quotes the multiplier for transport as 2.14; and for accommodation 2.53. The multiplier effect was also found to have generated 86 jobs for every million dollars spent on meals and alcoholic drinks; 56 jobs for every million dollars spent on transport, and 95 jobs for every million dollars spent on accommodation (ibid).

In the United Kingdom, tourism related industries have provided a major source of employment growth for rural areas in recent years. The main increase is in the category “other tourist and short-stay accommodation” (which includes camping and caravan sites, holiday camps and miscellaneous accommodation). Townsend (1991)

pointed out that this appears to represent some diversification of the rural economic base, especially in the direction of female, part-time opportunities.

Features of farms

In a discussion of farm tourism it is necessary to consider how a farm is defined as there are various definitions of what constitutes a farm. At its most basic, a farm is defined as an area of land used for growing crops or raising animals. A farmer is one who farms – not necessarily for a living. A farm may thus be little more than a few fruit trees and a vegetable patch, or a full fledged farm property with thousands of sheep or cattle, basically a tract of land devoted to agriculture or the raising of livestock. Most city people would assume however that a farm is ‘large’ in area, and contains ‘many’ animals and/or crops. Farm and Country Tourism - Victoria Inc. had a similar dilemma, and opted to call certain properties in their association ‘rural retreats’ if they did not fit the normally accepted idea of a farm. The difference between a host farm and a rural retreat is that the host farm is a working, full time farm offering a variety of farm experiences, whereas the rural retreat offers limited farm experiences (Victorian Country Holidays, 1997).

The properties chosen for this study were mostly larger properties, as the intention was to examine properties that were operating as farms to generate income, and in addition pursued customers who were offered recreation and tourism facilities.

The total area of Australia is approximately 770 million hectares. Approximately 63 per cent (484 million hectares) is used for agriculture (1988/89), and 439.9 million of

this comprised native grassland used for extensive grazing of sheep and beef cattle (Ockwell, 1990). Despite being the smallest of the mainland states, Victoria is the “most intensely populated and farmed region of Australia and still produces an astonishing 23 percent of the nation’s total farming output” (Tribe, McLaughlin and Smith, 1987). Another source describes Victoria as the “most intensively farmed of all the states as measured by such indices as proportion under crop and developed pasture, the area of irrigated land and the quantity of fertilizer used”. (Connor and Smith, 1987, page 5). This provides plenty of opportunities for farm tourism, often within reasonable distances of more highly populated areas. Farm sizes after 1945 were reduced as large properties were broken up into smaller holdings. More recently however, farm sizes have grown and the number of individual farms has declined. (Milliken, 1992).

Despite these trends, the family farm still remains the key unit of production, most keeping cattle or sheep, and/or growing grains. This is expected even though there has for some time been a slow decline in the number of farmers in Victoria, and some expansion of corporate farming (Tribe, McLaughlin and Smith, 1987). Only some five per cent of farms were operated as public or private companies in 1987, and of the balance, 65 per cent of all holdings were family partnerships, and 30 per cent run by sole operators, most of which are also family farms. (Malcolm and Lloyd, 1987, p. 18).

In Victoria, some of the farmers visited were derisive of small farms which offered “farm holidays”, as they felt that these establishments were “playing at farming” and not “really” farms. At what size a property ceases to be in this category and becomes

a “real” farm is obviously very subjective in evaluation. The best way to define a farm as a “real” farm would be in the case of the farm providing a substantial part of the income of the farmer/owner from farming activities.

The average size of farms visited in Victoria for this study was 390 hectares. In a similar survey in the United States, the average size of farm was 521 hectares (Pizam and Pokela, 1980). More detail on Victorian farms will be found later in this study.

The concept of a host farm or vacation farm (the American term) is one that is difficult to define, as they range in size from less than one hectare to thousands of hectares, and the type of accommodation ranges from four star homestead accommodation, to converted shearers' quarters.

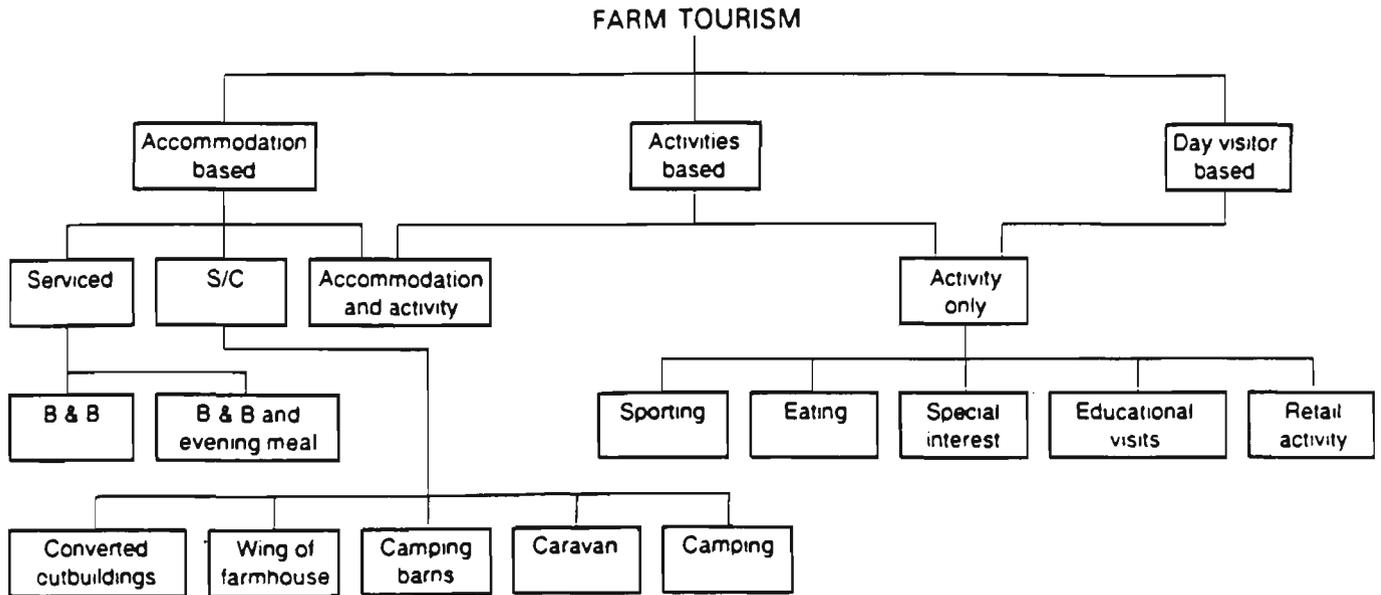
The diversity of host farms is both a strength and a weakness – it is a strength in that there is a wide choice for the potential customer and all tastes and activities can be catered for; but it is a weakness in that there is no way that farms in Australia can easily be classified into meaningful categories for farm tourism purposes. Farms are presently listed in accommodation guides – and often in their own brochures – as guest houses, bed and breakfast providers, cabins, cottages, holiday flats, holiday units, homesteads, and of course, host or holiday farms and rural retreats. This means that in each category, the farm facilities are being compared to, and rated with, other accommodation providers which are significantly different. In a way, host farms need their own category or categories of classification. Problems also arise in comparisons between various farm properties as each one is unique in terms of its location, surroundings, and many other characteristics. The words “host farm” and “farm stay”

are often used interchangeably, together with other terms such as “home-stay”. For the purposes of the present study, the definitions provided by Ogilvie (1989, pp. 5-7) are useful. Ogilvie defined a farm-stay as where guests stay on a farm with the family, usually in or near the homestead, becoming part of the family. Home-stay refers to staying in the private home of your hosts, whereas self-contained accommodation means that guests are independent and usually look after themselves, providing their own meals and food. The definition of farm tourism follows, and basically means the use of the farm for tourism and recreation purposes as opposed to agriculture.

One of the early definitions of farm tourism is that it is “ any tourist or creation enterprise on a working farm” (Dartington Amenity Research Trust, 1974, p. 3). Davies and Gilbert (1992) proposed a definition of farm tourism as “a form of rural tourism whereby paying guests can share in farming life either as staying guests or day visitors on working farms”. They also provide a useful figure that illustrates the various components of farm tourism under three headings (refer figure 1.3).

Hall (1991, p. 182) included the aspect of income generation by defining farm tourism as “active, working farms that supplement their primary agricultural function with some farm tourism business”. Inskip (1991) provided a similar definition to those already quoted, and adds that other forms of farm tourism are the provision of camping facilities, operating a farmhouse restaurant, selling farm products, and leasing fishing rights on a farm creek (p. 251).

Figure 1.3 Components of farm tourism



Source: Davies and Gilbert, 1992, p. 57.

It may be suggested that farm tourism is a subset or class of rural tourism. Denman and Denman (1990,1993) suggested that farm tourism is conducted on working farms where the working environment forms part of the product from the perspective of the consumer. Clarke (1999, p. 27) found that farm tourism is “wider in scope...it covers attractions, activities, and hospitality, plus mutually supportive combinations”.

Clarke (1996, p. 611) described early definitions of farm tourism as broad in scope, comprising all tourism or recreation enterprises located on working farms. Later definitions became more essentially demand-led, with the consumer recognising the farm environment as part of the product offering, reinforcing the comments by

Denman and Denman (1990,1993). Clarke (ibid.) suggested that the emphasis changed, subtly, from “tourism on farms” to “farm tourism”. This led to “accommodation on farms being classified as one form of tourism on farms (where the accommodation is divorced from the farm environment) or as farm tourism (where the farm environment is incorporated into the accommodation product)”. In this study, most farms would fall into the latter category.

The definition of farm tourism that seems to be most appropriate for this study is the one proposed by Davies and Gilbert (1992) and already referred to above: “a form of rural tourism whereby paying guests can share in farming life either as staying guests or day visitors on working farms”.

Linking tourism to farm tourism

Henderson (1993, p. 3) listed nine important characteristics of tourism that are discussed below, with additional commentary relevant to farm tourism. Henderson’s first comment is that it is an industry of growing significance throughout the world. This has become evident through the course of this study, which began in 1991. More farms are becoming involved in tourism activities, and more research is being undertaken and published. It is also a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week industry, despite seasonal fluctuations. Obviously, weekends are more important for tourism, particularly short breaks, and many farmers who work off the farm during the week can use the weekends to generate additional income from tourism. Guests who stay in the homestead are on the premises overnight, while even those who are

accommodated elsewhere, such as in cottages or shearers' quarters, often make demands on the farmer early in the morning or late at night.

Tourism is labour intensive, with employment opportunities at all skill levels. A number of farmers employ locals on a casual basis, to come in and clean up after tourists have left, to do washing and ironing if required, or to cook. This creates additional employment in rural Australia and is one example of the multiplier effect of tourism expenditure. Tourism is also described as consisting of a predominance of small businesses, despite growing investment by large companies. As detailed elsewhere in this study, most farms are family businesses and therefore fall within the definition of small business.

Henderson (*ibid.*) pointed out that tourism relies on minimal direct financial assistance or regulation from government. Most farmers involved in farm tourism are not receiving any direct financial assistance for the tourism aspect of their business. Compared with many other industries there are relatively few barriers to entry. One of the characteristics of farm tourism is that it is such a flexible industry. Farmers can decide to enter or leave the industry overnight. Capital expenditure may not even be necessary if the farmer already owns the buildings that are converted from other uses to accommodating tourists.

Tourism is also a decentralised industry, capable of diversifying regional economics; most farms operate on a small level, and are geographically dispersed – this causes the economic effects of farm tourism to be widespread and in small amounts, rather than concentrated in a certain place or time frame in a large amount such as occurs

with special events. The effect of diversification is dealt with elsewhere in this study in more detail.

Tourism is a relatively low pollutant industry, which, if properly managed, can contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage (Henderson, 1993). The heritage aspects of farm tourism are dealt with elsewhere in this study. It is usually in the interests of the farmer to ensure that natural and cultural heritage is preserved wherever and whenever possible; one of the reasons why tourists visit farms is to experience these aspects of the environment. This is supported by Stevens (1991, p. 10) who commented on the issue of enhancing site presentation, specifically in reference to the interpretation of a heritage site or object by way of the art and technique of telling a story about it. Despite the fact that it is presently still under development, Stevens forecasts that “interpretation is likely to become the most important aspect of heritage attraction management in the next ten years, providing the essential bridge between the resource, its conservation, and the visitor” (ibid). This is well understood by those farms that are marketed as showing, for example, the old methods of farming, and daily life on a farm in years gone by.

Henderson (1993, p. 3) also stated that tourism is an important medium for educational and cultural exchange, promoting international understanding and goodwill. A number of farmers who accommodated international guests were invited to visit these visitors overseas, and consequently did so. In other cases, visitors who have become regulars metamorphose into extended family members of the farmer’s household, exchanging letters and cards over an extended period of time. All of this points to the possibility of promoting international understanding and goodwill.

Over a long period of time, farms have gradually become less profitable. At the same time, there has been a trend towards a reduction in the number of farms, and an increase in the size of farms. Other generalised trends that can be observed include the importance of more professional training for farm managers/owners, and a trend towards the growth of corporate farms at the expense of family farms. In the United Kingdom, three major trends are discernible: the intensification of farming, its increasing specialisation by farm and by area, and the increasing scale of farm operations (Parry, Hossell, and Wright, 1992, p. 9).

Ruthven (1996) found that primary industry in Australia had fallen from 53 percent of the nation's wealth creation in 1856 to around 23 percent in 1926 and 3 percent in 1996. His recommendations for change include "get big or get out", as the family farm can no longer provide a good living with annual revenue of \$200,000 a year.

Gruen (1990) stated that the number of agricultural establishments has stayed roughly constant at around 200,000 for twenty years; but from the late 1960s it has started to decline. This meant that in 1990 there were some 167,000 farms and the figure was continuing to decline. According to Ockwell (1990) farm ownership resides mainly with farm families, or family farms. In 1985-86 these constituted about 91 per cent of agricultural establishments, the remainder being public and private companies. In 1977-78 the percentage of farms accounted for by family ownership was 94 per cent. More recent references (Bolt, 1996; Stapleton, 1996) placed the number of farms at 120,000. Stapleton also provided statistics that number farms at 120,000. Of these, 80 percent are estimated to be in debt, with an average debt of \$133,000, and a total

debt of \$18 billion. It is further estimated that 30 farmers are leaving the land every week, with a 36 percent fall in income for wool growers, and a 70 percent fall in income for beef cattle growers (ibid.).

This is supported by Stevens (1995) who stated that small and medium-sized farms have failed to increase productivity over the past 17 years at a sufficient rate to maintain incomes, which has resulted in a continuing exodus of farmers, with numbers falling 1.9 percent each year. The result of all of this is that farmers must become more efficient at managing their farms, must obtain more training and advice, and generally improve their management skills. (D'Arcy, 1991, p.15; Ironside, 1993, p. 9). The deterioration of the family farm homestead compared with town and city dwellings in equivalent socio-economic groups has been identified by Hutchings (1992, p.16), and provides another good reason for diversification into farm tourism, as the renovations and maintenance for tourism purposes would be tax deductible. The deterioration in the condition of the homestead is said to contribute to the erosion of family members morale, and this trend is amplified by the lack of leisure time available to families (ibid.).

Diversification

The pressures referred to above have caused farmers to look outside the farm for additional income (Downie, 1990, p. 5). In some cases, wives who have qualifications as nurses or teachers are for the first time becoming the breadwinners on small farms (Richardson, 1992, p. 11). In the course of visiting farms for the purpose of this study it was sometimes necessary to interview farmers at their daytime

place of work, which was off the farm. In some cases both partners work off the farm during the week, and operate the farm in the evenings and on weekends. Clark (1991) commented on the changing nature of farm work in Britain and pointed out that farmers and their families are usually assumed to spend all their time, skill, and capital on food production, whereas this is not necessarily so. In the course of collecting data for this study this also became evident – apart from off farm work, some farmers also have other income, such as investments. In fact, Clark reported on Inland Revenue figures which show that only 11 percent of farmers are solely dependent on their income from self-employment in agriculture; three quarters also have some investment income and an eighth some income from another job.

These figures, from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, show that “nearly 40 percent of all the income for farmers comes from outside food production on their own farms – 19 percent from investments, 15 percent from other jobs, and 6 percent from pensions” (op.cit., p. 76). This is discussed in more detail in the section dealing with the analysis of the farm survey. In Australia, one reference suggests that approximately 30 percent of households in the Australian sheep industry had one member receiving off-farm income from wages or salary (Hawkins, 1987). In the United States, approximately 19 percent of rural Americans derive their livelihoods from activities associated with agriculture, and of those families remaining on farms, it is estimated that about 6 percent require outside incomes to survive. (Waters, 1992, p. 19). These trends can be summed up under one word: diversification, which is discussed further below.

It is surprising how few of the articles commenting on farm profitability and recommending various courses of action, actually espouse diversification. Those that do are usually talking in terms of crop A replacing crop B, rather than, for example, tourism supplementing or replacing certain aspects of agricultural activity. Coleman (1993, p. 14) pointed out that diversification involves income-generating enterprises, both on and off farm, but is speaking mainly of other agricultural activities, rather than tourism. Rivers (1977, pp. 137-138) suggested a number of areas for investigation when considering diversification, including writing, home typing, music tuition, printing, furniture removal, market stalls, catering, bed and breakfast, and renting land to campers and caravanners.

Lawrence (1987) also suggested tourism-related activities and value-added activities for farmers to pursue, such as packaging and selling tropical fruits to road travellers, but concluded that this type of activity is unlikely to be of financial help to farmers suffering difficulties. These marginal activities alone probably would not help, but in combination with a strongly marketed farm stay component, they can provide significant income for farmers. In Canada and the USA, diversification is encouraged to assist farms to become more profitable (or at least viable) and also because of its multiplier effect when bringing outsiders into rural communities. The Manitoba Government in Canada conducts workshops to help farmers become aware of the means of generating extra farm income, through farm tours, “u-pick” operations and bed and breakfasts, among other options (Manitoba Government News Release, 1996).

In the USA, similar workshops are also held. As an example, a state-wide series of Farm and Ranch Recreation workshops were held, sponsored by the Montana State University Extension Service, Travel Montana, and the Small Business Administration, among others (Geiger, 1996). The multiplier effect and its benefit in small communities is well recognised in the USA, and elsewhere.

In the UK, diversification has become official government policy. It is a byword in agricultural circles, and is encouraged by the government, in the form of grants that promote diversification, not only for capital projects, but also in the form of financial backing for feasibility studies and marketing. According to Oates (1990) the fastest growth areas are leisure and recreation. It should also be noted that in the UK the Farm Diversification Grant Scheme supports enterprises such as farm shops, craft workshops or tourist activities (Parry, Hossell and Wright, 1992, p. 10). It can therefore be clearly seen that diversification may be a significant factor in income generation for farmers, and that farm tourism may be part of the diversification.

Farm tourism and land use

A detailed discussion of land use is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is an important aspect of the decision making process a farmer is involved in when considering tourism and tourism-related investment or operation.

References to land use typically discuss the responsibility of farmers to maintain land in its original state with respect to conservation and long term value, and discuss the relationships between farmers, governments, and other interested parties as regards

landscape alterations and other major changes. Very little appears to be written about land use related to tourism, although one reference acknowledges that farmers are being presented with diversified markets demanding flexibility of response and new marketing skills (Munton, Lowe and Marsden, 1992 , p. 20). Another comments that “ in the majority of cases, there is neither environmental enhancement, through the switching of labour from production and attuning the management of the farm to the likely demands of tourists for a pleasant environment, nor, conversely, environmental destruction prompted by an injection of capital derived from tourist income” (Lowe, Ward and Munton, 1992, p. 47). It would be expected, though, in the light of comments elsewhere in this thesis, that it would not be in the farmers interest to carry out any degradation of landscape or farm environment, that might detract from the rural atmosphere sought by so many farm visitors. There would, however, be considerable benefit seen in improving the farm environment by, for example, planting trees, and generally showing a farm to be practising responsible conservation and land management, than in the opposite. From a tourism point of view, therefore, farmers would be more likely to improve their farms for visitors, than if there were no visitors. Molnar (1977, p. 233) investigated farm-based recreation in Victoria, in one of the earliest research papers on this topic, and came to the conclusion that “recreation on agricultural land in Australia is never likely to be as widespread as in Europe (where public access to private farms frequently has been viewed as an historical right)”. In terms of land use, Molnar commented that about 700,000 hectares of land in Victoria is classified as subeconomic and unused, beyond the shires close to Melbourne. In 1977 this represented nearly 8,000 holdings, suggesting “considerable scope for farm-based recreation even without building accommodation specifically for tourists” (Molnar, 1977, p. 237).

Professional skills in farm tourism

One of the main problems with farm management is the lack of basic business skills, as most farms are now the equivalent of small businesses, and the farm tourism operation adds another aspect to the business management of the farm. In fact, more than 60 per cent of farm-stays fail through a lack of business skills (Jones, 1997). It is therefore crucial for farmers to have access to training courses that will address these problems, and a number are available.

The Queensland Technical and Further Education Division (TAFE) offers courses for both farm-stay operators, and farm-stay employees, and the Queensland Government has earmarked \$42 million to develop rural tourism through training. These particular courses are believed to be the first in Australia devoted to farm tourism.

In some cases farmers enter farm tourism without any formal training whatsoever. Some of these are successful despite this lack of training, but it is obviously preferable, from the point of view of both the customer and the farmer, that the operation runs smoothly and profitably. Some of the organisations described in this study provide advice and assistance to new members in the form of a property inspection and booklets and/or brochures detailing some of the pitfalls and opportunities.

More recently the Business Studies Department of the South West College of TAFE in Warrnambool has begun offering a Certificate in Rural Office Practice. This

course, while not specifically aimed at tourism and/or hospitality operations, nevertheless recognises that efficient farms require business management and communication skills. The main benefits of the course are in the area of efficiency and effectiveness of people who maintain rural enterprise office records and carry out office procedures. Similar courses are run at other educational institutions. In terms of specific training for farm tourism, there are various courses run by the CAE and other institutions, offering advice on setting up bed and breakfast operations.

The author was invited to speak at a workshop in Yackandandah in rural Victoria on a similar topic (Kidd, 1994). While 20 to 30 participants were expected, the actual number attending was far greater, indicating a high level of interest in farm tourism. In the USA, the level of attention given to this type of training is greater, and more resources are available to farmers who are would-be tourist operators. For example, a recent workshop held in Montana was followed up with a 45 minute videotape available for sale, entitled *Fun on the Farm: Starting a Farm and Ranch Recreation Business* and a video of the proceedings of the workshop available to those who could not attend (Geiger, 1996).

Publications concerned primarily with training and advice for farmers or others considering the operation of bed and breakfast provision, or farm tourism, include “how-to” manuals (Tonge, 1988; Tonge and Myott, 1989). Top Notch Cottages runs an advertisement headed *How to start your own luxury B & B business*. They offer franchises, and supply cottages that are “located, designed and equipped to provide exactly what the Australian traveller wants” (Top Notch Cottages, 1997). The business provides training for cottage operators, as well as listing the property in

various directories, travel brochures and tourist guides, and a central booking service. The Australian Bed and Breakfast Book (Thomas, 1993) included a small booklet entitled *Bed and Breakfast – Hints for getting started* which covers type and location of house, standards, finance, regulations, advertising, and so on. There would appear to be scope for the provision of additional training for farm tourism operators in Australia.

Farm tourism as leisure time

A detailed discussion of the concepts of leisure and recreation is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is necessary to define the terms insofar as they are used to describe the behaviour of consumers, and in particular, farm tourists. In this study, leisure is regarded as the time available to consumers, and recreation as the activity or activities that are performed during leisure time. The term ‘leisure activities’ is also used.

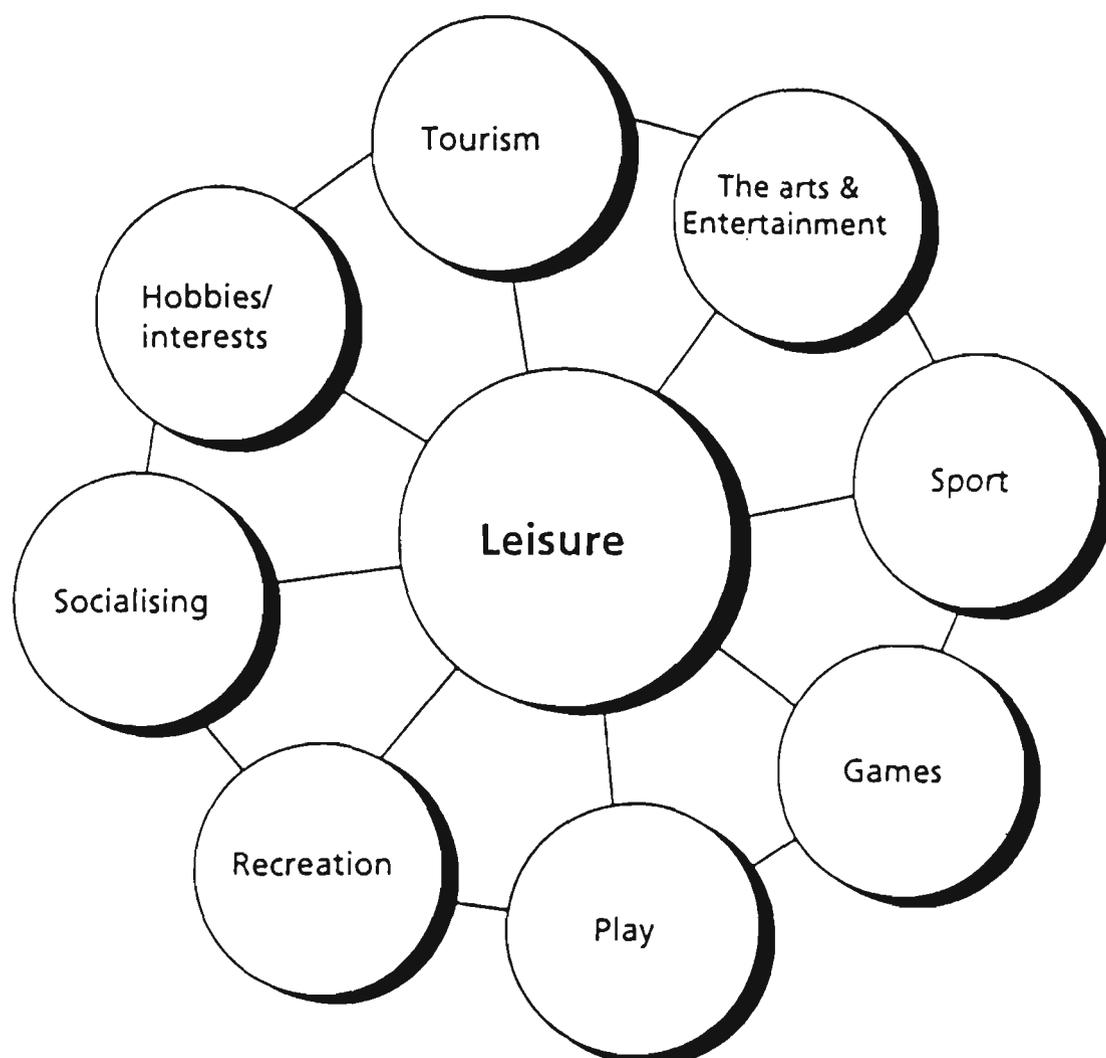
Leisure may be defined as “time free from obligations such as work, personal maintenance, housekeeping, parenting, and other nondiscretionary commitments” and recreation as “a pleasurable activity, which may be relatively sedentary, largely pursued for intrinsic motivation during leisure” (Smith, 1990, pp. 179 and 253, respectively). The difficulty with precisely defining these terms is compounded by the fact that all facets of the field of recreation, leisure and play are infested by our looseness of meaning in the terms presently being applied according to Arnold (1991). Lynch and Veal (1996, p. 16) commented that there are numerous definitions

of leisure in the literature, and that there are three dimensions of leisure that should be considered, namely time, activity, and attitudes. In this study the time aspect is the main emphasis in the definition used, stressing the time free from economic and domestic obligations. The authors described activities performed in leisure time (which are classed as recreation in this study) and Figure 1.4 shows how these are related.

In relation to farm tourism, the diagram shows that tourism and recreation are separated, as is socializing, the third most apposite term in respect of a farm visit. The farm tourist could naturally partake in all three of the aforementioned simultaneously. The aspect of attitudes was described by Lynch and Veal (1996, p. 22) in historical terms, evolving through eco-leisure in tribal societies, classical leisure in Classical Greece (500-300 BC), pre-modern leisure in that time preceding the industrial revolution, modern leisure (post-industrial revolution), and post-modern leisure in the post-modern era. The comparison of definitional components in the last two time periods is of interest, as it distinguishes between leisure based on residual time moving towards leisure time clearly marked as opposed to work time, whereas post-modern leisure has a more complex time structure, with work, leisure, and other time being fractured and fluid.

The change in attitudes should also be noted, as modern leisure attitudes saw leisure as rest and for work, for self-development and entertainment. In this period leisure developed as an institution and/or industry. In post-modern times, however, leisure is seen more as a component of lifestyle, reinforcing the fractured and fluid allocation of

Figure 1.4 Leisure Activities



Source: Lynch and Veal (1996, p. 16)

time referred to above. In general, the development of post-modern leisure “would see an end to the increasing demarcation and segregation of leisure from other aspects of life and the emergence of a pattern of life with some features in common with eco-leisure” (ibid., p. 24). As the time orientation of eco-leisure has no demarcation between work and leisure, this may be interpreted in modern times as the business person taking a full briefcase of work and a mobile telephone on holiday.

Leisure, therefore, may be defined in many different ways, and authors in the field acknowledge this (Smith, 1990, Bammel and Burrus-Bammel, 1992). For the purposes of the current study, the definition quoted above, which stresses the aspect of discretionary time, will suit the purpose of analysis of consumer behaviour.

Recreation, on the other hand, generally connotes activities, that can be specified.

The word 'recreation' stems from the Latin word *recreatio*, which means 'to refresh'.

In other words, recreation is a process that restores or recreates the individual. It has been stated that by far the most widespread definitions and the ones most acceptable to providers of recreation services are those that see recreation simply as those activities in which people participate during their leisure (Torkildsen, 1983) that refresh or restore.

In the same way as leisure, recreation has many meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. The definition given at the beginning of this section encompasses the broad spectrum of ideas that go to make up the concept of recreation. The "intrinsic motivation" referred to needs to be considered to include the idea of 're-creation' or rebirth. In other words, a person is rejuvenated and inspired by the recreational process, which allows a "re-birth" of thoughts, attitudes and ultimately behaviour. This part of the definition is inextricably linked to the reason why many people visit farms. The "return to earth" type of feeling often expressed in the literature (for example Middleton, 1982; Newby, 1980; Shoard, 1980) describes the city person feeling that the atmosphere of a rural holiday will de-stress him or her, and allow rest, relaxation and time to recoup the energy required to return to the "rat race", refreshed both physically and mentally. Another aspect is the idea that farming

is a more basic, more “pure” type of “honest labour” that is carried out in a bucolic paradise far removed from the city’s noise, pollution and crowded atmosphere. In the survey which was carried out on farm visitors, many expressed the wish to show their children this ideal that they carried in their minds (refer to the section on visitor evaluation).

Recreation is therefore not only a pleasurable activity, pursued for intrinsic motivation during leisure, but involves a psychological dimension, through which the individual is able to achieve psychological homeostasis – the regaining and maintenance of mental balance. This embodies the ideas of “harmony and accord between self and the environment” (Torkildsen, 1983, p. 149). With reference to farming, when people speak of “getting back to the land” they are in fact describing this psychological approach mentioned above. Contact with something “real” in an increasingly artificial and technology-oriented society gives farm visitors a glimpse of a simpler lifestyle that reinforces their fantasy of farming as an idyllic existence.

This is a fantasy in many respects, partly because of the financial difficulty many farmers are experiencing, referred to elsewhere in this study; and partly because many farms are no longer the simple businesses they previously were, but are becoming major industrial businesses in order to survive, growing larger and using larger machines and technology similar to production capabilities of large industrial factories. Recreation therefore needs this aspect embodied in its definition. Bammel and Burrus-Bammel (1992) comment that “perhaps our genetic makeup demands that we occasionally simulate.... the wilderness experience; after which we are glad to settle down to civilised pleasures” (p. 10). Farm visitors are thus able to use the farm

and its surroundings to “re-charge their batteries” and experience the re-creation possible by being close to nature and basic farming activities.

Summary of discussion

International tourism is a growth industry that brings a considerable amount of revenue to the areas which tourists visit. As part of general tourism, farm tourism provides benefits to both the tourism providers (farms) and to the local community of which they are a part.

Visitors traveling to farms and rural areas are seeking to satisfy a number of different needs, including relaxation, leisure and recreation. Rural tourism can provide a number of different experiences, including eco-tourism, adventure tourism, wilderness tourism, cultural tourism, sports tourism, recreational tourism and farm tourism, and some of these categories overlap with one another. Part of farm tourism is the experience gained from staying on the farm itself and participating in, or observing, various activities related to the running of the farm. Other experiences may include visiting nearby attractions, experiencing the Australian bush environment, and general appreciation of the environment, both built and natural. For example, old farm buildings are often of heritage and cultural interest.

Visits to farms and rural areas are often associated with the need for peace and tranquillity and for the purpose of rest and relaxation. Visiting farms is seen as a step “back to nature” for city dwellers, and as a means to allow their children to experience an environment completely different from a city or suburban lifestyle.

Tourism is associated with the multiplier effect whereby for every dollar spent by a tourist there is a factor by which this dollar may be multiplied in order to estimate its total economic impact on the economy of the State of Victoria.

Farm tourism thus has both financial and lifestyle benefits and is increasingly attractive as a form of vacation. Farmers have added the business of tourism to their diversified portfolios of sources of income, in order to increase the overall cash flow for the farm.

Purpose of the study and research objectives

The purpose of the study, in broad terms, is to develop a systems model of farm tourism in Victoria, Australia. In order to do this, the study reviews the literature and then examines the evolution and development of farm tourism in general, through a detailed analysis of the relationships between host farm operators and their visitors. It is hoped that the present study will shed some light on an industry which has been largely ignored by most writers and researchers in the different disciplines represented in this topic.

Other purposes of the study, and the development of the systems model, are to assist the policy and marketing needs of the various stakeholder groups; to address the problems of failed farm tourism operations; and to facilitate further growth of the emerging farm tourism industry sector by explicating the critical variables that contribute to the farm tourist's satisfaction.

The research objectives are, firstly, to develop a systems model of farm tourism; secondly, to examine and describe the scope of farm tourism in Victoria, from the point of view of the farmer; thirdly, to describe the evaluation of the farm tourism experience by the guests who have visited farms in Victoria; and, finally, to investigate the attitudes and involvement of local government bodies in Victoria to farm tourism.

The objective of creating a systems model is to ensure that all aspects of the farm tourism industry are brought together in a model that shows the various parts of the system and the relationships between them. The impacts of changes in parts of the system on other parts is also considered, as a systems model helps to show how all parts of a system are related in some way to all other parts of the system.

Important definitions

For the sake of clarity, following the discussion in this chapter, the definitions of the most important concepts are gathered together below:

Marketing – “A social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others” (Kotler et al, 2001, p.6).

Leisure – “Time free from obligations such as work, personal maintenance, housekeeping, parenting, and other nondiscretionary commitments” (Smith, 1990, p. 179).

Recreation – “A pleasurable activity, which may be relatively sedentary, largely pursued for intrinsic motivation during leisure” (Smith, 1990, p. 253).

Tourism – “All overnight and certain day trips undertaken by Australian residents and all visits to Australia by overseas residents of less than twelve months duration” (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994b, p.7).

Tourist – *“A person who undertakes travel, for any reason, involving a stay away from his or her usual residence for at least one night; or a person who undertakes a pleasure trip involving a stay away from home for at least four hours during daylight, and involving a round distance of at least 50 km; however, for trips to national parks, state and forest reserves, museums, historical parks, animal parks, farms, or other man-made attractions, the distance limitation does not apply”* (Adapted from the Australian Government Committee Inquiry into Tourism, 1987, p.11).

Rural tourism – *“A multi-faceted activity that takes place in an environment outside an urbanised area and represents to the traveller the essence of country life”* (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1993a, p.2).

Farm tourism – *“A form of rural tourism whereby paying guests can share in farming life either as staying guests or day visitors on working farms”* (Davies and Gilbert, 1992, p. 57).

Delimitations of the study

The study is based on farm tourism activities in the state of Victoria, Australia.

However, some comments on farm tourism in an international context are included.

These are secondary to the main purpose of the investigation and are thus superficial in nature. Nevertheless, it is hoped that they do provide an insight into the scope of farm tourism in an overall context. The study is therefore delimited to Victoria only.

It does not include all bed and breakfast providers, but only farms involved in providing tourist accommodation. The material collected was from farmers, tourists who had visited farms, and local government bodies.

Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of the study is the fact that it was conducted on a part-time basis over a period of eight years. This means that the research findings reported are

based on separate research studies that were carried out over this period. A second limitation of the study is the size of the sample of farms visited in Victoria.

During the farm study it was possible to visit sixty nine farms in Victoria for analysis. Despite enthusiastic support for the project from many organisations that were approached, financial assistance for more visits was not available, and this limited the size of the sample in Victoria, as well as making it impossible to carry out similar studies in other states in Australia. Further research would be indicated so that this study could be replicated in other states, to allow comparative analysis, as well as a longitudinal examination of trends in the farm tourism industry

Significance of the study

There is currently no comprehensive systems model of farm tourism and the factors involved. This study develops a comprehensive model that discusses all of the various factors that are relevant to the farm tourism experience. In addition, this study not only surveys farmers as well as farm visitors, but also examines the relationship of local government to farm tourism, and gives a brief overview of farm tourism in a number of other countries as well. At a conference of farm tourism and bed and breakfast operators (Kidd, 1993b) it became apparent that there is a demand for information of the type produced by the study. This would be to provide information to existing or potential farm tourism providers who do not have an appreciation of the industry on a statewide or country wide basis. Due to financial considerations, as mentioned above under limitations, it was only possible to conduct a limited survey of farms in Victoria. Informal requests were made at the conference mentioned above for

the author to visit South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania for the purpose of conducting a similar study.

Nevertheless, this study will provide a broad insight into the issues and problems that currently face the farm tourism industry in Victoria, and will provide a framework, through the development of a systems model, for consideration of the various factors involved in farm tourism. It is also hoped that the present study will provide the interest and impetus to allow further research to be undertaken on farm tourism in Australia, and in other countries.

The systems model will help to explain the various bodies involved in farm tourism, and their interrelationships. This will increase knowledge and awareness of the factors involved in farm tourism, which will aid in policy decisions, as well as aiding marketing and funding organisations such as host farms, host farm cooperatives, and government bodies involved in helping to finance and/or promote farm tourism. This may also assist in alleviating the problem of failed farm tourism operations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW OF FARM TOURISM

Introduction

This chapter examines the literature regarding farm tourism. The review is divided into two sections. In Section 1, the review examines the development of farm tourism in Australia. Understanding the evolution of farm tourism will help demonstrate key components of the industry sectors that in turn will help to define the model. The characteristics of farms and farm tourism in the different states are also briefly discussed. In Section 2, the literature is used to construct a systems model of farm tourism and examine the various parts of the model.

Section 1: Evolution of farm tourism in Australia

The Host Farms Association in Victoria was formed in 1977, but farm tourism was in operation for a considerable time before that (this organization is now called Farm and Country Tourism Victoria Incorporated). The entry of some farms in Victoria into the tourism industry was during the sixties; in fact, three of the farmers who were interviewed for the purpose of this study each stated that they were the first to enter tourism, and at that time were regarded with scepticism and some disdain by their colleagues. These same colleagues later saw the benefits that could accrue from farm tourism operations, and many became involved themselves.

Farm tourism in Australia is often said to have started at the farm “Brindabella”, near Canberra, in 1905 according to the Synapse Report (1992). This report of the proceedings of the Farm and Country Tourism Industry Workshop held in Canberra, was “to assist the development of a strong and viable farm and country tourism industry” (ibid.). At this time, however, farm tourism would have been novel as not many would have appreciated its benefits and purpose. It was only some sixty years later, when farmers were experiencing the combined effects of drought and the other factors mentioned in chapter 1 describing pressures on farmers, that farm tourism became a popular form of diversification to stimulate a cash flow that would be independent of the ebbs and flows of income from farming operations.

The Synapse Report (1992) was the outcome of a farm and country tourism industry workshop that was supported by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), the Farm and Country Tourism Industry, and Australian Airlines. The historical development identified by participants at the workshop indicated that there were few farms in Australia involved in tourism prior to 1960. By 1965, there were approximately 20 farms involved in hosting visitors, and this was increased in the seventies after a visit of farmers from the United States in 1972. By 1975, it is estimated that there were some 30 host farms in Victoria, and farmers were becoming increasingly interested in farm tourism due to poor commodity prices. In 1977 the Victorian Host Farm Association was formed, but by 1979 it is estimated that there were still only about 30 farms in the farm tourism industry in Victoria.

In 1980 the environment had started to change – there was “increasing awareness and growth of Regional Tourist Associations with local government support; greater ownership of four wheel drive vehicles, urban congestion and more and shorter holidays all contributing to more families taking rural holidays”(ibid, p.3). In 1980, the Western Australian Government convened a meeting of host farmers, and in 1984 the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) commenced inspections of host farm properties. In 1985, Geale produced a report on farm tourism for the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation (QTTC), and a Queensland documentary on farm tourism was shown on television in the USA. In 1987, the New South Wales and South Australian Host Farm Associations formed Australian Farm Tourism, now known as Australian Farm and Country Tourism (AFACT). A Queensland Association was formed in 1988, and the Victoria Host Farm Association began to accept rural retreats (properties which exhibited most of the characteristics of host farms, but were not actively involved in farming).

In 1989, Bowman was commissioned by the Australian Tourism Industry Association (ATIA), now known as the Tourism Council Australia (TCA), to produce a report on farm tourism, and by 1990 most state tourism bodies were involved in some way in farm and country tourism. A Western Australian Host Farm Association was also formed in 1990. More recently, there have been a number of conferences held on the topic of farm tourism, such as the Alternative Accommodation Conference in South Australia (1991), the Boutique Accommodation Conference in New South Wales (Kidd, 1993b), and the First National Convention of the Australian Bed and Breakfast Council (1996).

Synopsis of the literature

Similar references appear in many papers written on farm tourism, and some of these may be regarded as seminal research efforts on the topic. These are discussed below in chronological order, with brief comments where necessary. In most cases, the topic of the paper is dealt with elsewhere in this study and there is a more detailed consideration of each paper in the section relevant to its content. As discussed previously, in the section on the history of farm tourism, the concept of using farms for recreation and tourism is a well-established one. The research that has been done in this area, however, dates back to the nineteen sixties and seventies. Vogeler (1977) wrote a paper on farm and ranch vacationing in the North American countryside, with his main research interests being problems of the rural-urban interface. His research involved contacting a number of farms to investigate the extent of, and involvement in, farm tourism. His findings are discussed in detail in Chapter 4, as a comparison with the Australian findings.

Molnar (1977) wrote a chapter on farm-based recreation in Victoria in a book on leisure and recreation in Australia (Mercer, 1977). Her analysis concentrated on the use of land and the agricultural aspects of using farmland for recreation and tourism. Farmers on 21 farms were interviewed regarding residential recreation and many of her conclusions are still valid today. This is covered briefly in the section on land use.

Pizam and Pokela (1980) wrote a paper on the vacation farm as a new form of tourist destination, and their findings regarding farms are also discussed in Chapter 4. Deroi (1983) attended a symposium held in Marienhamn, Finland, which was held by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations). The summary and all the national papers were published as the Report of the Symposium on Agriculture and Tourism. Deroi's paper on farm tourism in Europe summarised the main findings for a number of European countries, and these are discussed where relevant in later chapters of this study. Frater (1983) wrote a paper on farm tourism in England, which appears to be much quoted in other research on farm tourism, as it describes the first major research to be undertaken on farm tourism in England.

In Australia, Fry (1984) conducted a study for the Rural and Allied Industries Council on Farm tourism in Western Australia. The results of his study are reported elsewhere in the present study for comparative purposes. The author also communicated personally with Fry, in order to obtain permission to use some of the same questions so that comparison of results would be more useful. In 1985, the QTTC published a report on farm tourism which was mainly concerned with using general customer characteristic profiles in order to arrive at a market segmentation categorisation of farm visitors.

In 1989, ATIA published a report on the development of farm and country holidays in Australia, which was an assessment of the potential for the accelerated development of

farm and country holidays in Australia. This report was mainly concerned with recommendations for the National and State Farm Host Associations, in terms of organisational structure and administration.

Pearce (1991) carried out research into farm tourism in New Zealand, conducting a social situation analysis that examined host-guest relationships by means of conversational interviews. Stokes (1991) investigated psychosocial, environmental, and economic factors relevant to farm tourism supply, and followed this in 1993 with a paper on supply side psychology in farm tourism.

More recently, apart from the author's own research (Kidd,1982a,1982b,1992, 1993a, 1993b,1994,1995,1998, 1999), Williams (1995) conducted a supply side examination of farm stay in Australia, the findings of which are discussed in Chapter 4. Research on farm tourism includes other papers, not listed above, which are more specific to individual countries, and these are referred to where relevant in other parts of the thesis. In some cases theses have also been written in the area of farm tourism (for example Carlin,1987; McClinchey, 1999; Younger, 1988).

Farm tourism in Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000) lists 146,371 farms in Australia (refer table 2.1). This differs slightly from figures quoted elsewhere, as under the ABS definition of establishment (farm), where two or more holdings (farms) in one local government area are operated under one management, the holdings are combined to form one

establishment. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 1, the trend is towards a smaller number of farms. Gruen (1990) states that the number of commercial agricultural establishments in Australia remained at approximately 200,000 for two decades. According to Gruen, the decline started in the late sixties. His estimate was 167,000 in 1990, and still declining.

Table 2.1 Number of farms in Australia

State/territory	Number of farms
New South Wales	43,654
Victoria	37,304
Queensland	30,698
South Australia	15,905
Western Australia	13,917
Tasmania	4,430
Northern Territory	367
Australian Capital Territory	96
Total	146,371

Source: www.abs.gov.au 7113 Agriculture, Australia (from table 2.1)

Ockwell (1990) points out that a large proportion of these farms are family farms which is consistent with the farm visits made as part of this study. In 1985 – 86, Ockwell

estimates that family farms accounted for at least 91 percent of agricultural establishments. This contrasts with at least 94 percent in 1977 – 78.

Farms which are not family farms are generally owned by public and private companies, and some of the private companies include family farms. Of the farms visited, one was owned by the National Trust (Mooramong at Skipton) which as far as can be determined, is the only working farm owned by this organisation. Melbourne Water owns farms but these do not usually offer accommodation, and were thus not included in this study (for example, the “museum” farm at Yarra Glen; Werribee Park Mansion and farm; and the farm which forms part of “The Briars” in Mount Martha).

Hawkins (1987) points out that it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics regarding the exact number of family farms as some have formed private companies (as mentioned above), in order to obtain tax relief and/or to ensure smoother transfer of assets from generation to generation.

Another estimate is that about 65 percent of all farm holdings are family partnerships, and that about 30 percent are run by sole operators. Most of the sole operators are also essentially family farms, and the remaining five per cent of farms, although operated as public or private companies, may also include family run farms. Thus family farms comprise over 95 percent of all farms (Malcolm and Lloyd, 1987).

As a measure of agricultural activity in Australia, Table 2.2 shows the number and percentage of establishments with agricultural activity in Australia, and Table 2.3 shows the number of farm businesses ranked by size of turnover.

Table 2.2 Establishments with agricultural activity, year ending 30 June 2000

State/territory	Number	Percent
New South Wales	43,654	29.8
Victoria	37,304	25.5
Queensland	30,698	21.0
South Australia	15,905	10.9
Western Australia	13,917	9.5
Tasmania	4,430	3.0
Northern Territory	367	0.2
ACT	96	0.1
Total	146,371	100

Source: www.abs.gov.au Agriculture - Characteristics of Australian farms (from table 16.4)

Pritchard (1996, p.3) gives some examples of farms in different states in Australia, pointing out that the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the expansion of farms into farm tourism. He notes that some have become professional in the way they market their properties and suggests that there is a “mini-boom” in this segment of the

tourism industry. Notable changes in the marketing of farms include details of farmstay properties available from outlets such as airline agents and travel agents databases, fax machines at farms to take reservations, and the acceptance of credit cards for payment.

Table 2.3 Farm business by size of turnover (1999-2000)

Turnover	Number of farms (000)	Total turnover (\$M)
Less than \$50,000	19.2	625.1
\$50,000 - \$99,999	18.7	1,488.4
\$100,000 - \$149,999	16.1	1,944.4
\$150,000 - \$199,999	11.7	2,138.9
\$200,000 - \$249,999	8.3	1,886.5
\$250,000 - \$299,999	5.5	1,528.5
\$300,000 and over	24.3	18,913.8
Total	103.8	28,525.6

Source: www.abs.gov.au Agriculture - Financial statistics of farm businesses (from table 16.9)

The choice of property is enormous, ranging from very large sheep or cattle stations in some states, down to small farms such as apple orchards, or rural retreats. It is not the purpose of this study to describe each property in detail, but in cases where a property is

notable, because of its size, character, renown, or some other factor, some details have been provided.

In terms of farms in Australia involved in tourism, there is no single catalogue for the whole of Australia; each state produces its own brochures or catalogues, usually provided by a state body or association. This is similar to the case in Canada and the United States.

AFACT (Australian Farm and Country Tourism) produces a brochure that lists 47 farms, which have been chosen for their suitability and attractiveness for the international market. This brochure does not list all host farms in Australia. AFACT is administered from Sydney, but bookings are routed through the Farm and Country Tourism Victoria Inc. office in Melbourne. The AFACT Product Guide (1994/95) lists 307 properties, all over Australia, rated from 1 star to 5 stars.

Australian Farmhost and Farm Holidays, a private organization founded in 1973, produced a manual of the top 200 international standard host farms in all Australian states. This organisation, founded by Neville Lowe, was originally a Farmhost Cultural Exchange Program that aimed to cater for visiting farm groups from the U.S.A. and Canada. There were over 1,000 selected working farms in Australia which participated in the program (Lowe, 1992, p.55).

In Victoria, there were 125 members of the Host Farms Association, when the farm visits were undertaken in the early nineties. Further investigation revealed that there were approximately another 125 farms involved in farm tourism. These additional properties were listed in the RACV Accommodation Guide or in newspapers produced by local tourist organizations; some provided brochures to tourist information centres, and some were members of other organisations that provided brochures or booklets, such as Inn-House Bed and Breakfast, or Australian Reservation Service (AUSRES). Some did not advertise at all but gained a reputation through word of mouth alone. In the case of Victoria, therefore, it would initially appear that there were only 125 farms, whereas in fact there were closer to 250. In the case of the other Australian states and territories listed below, the farms are those listed in basic catalogues, brochures or booklets provided, and would not include others listed elsewhere, as additional investigation has not been undertaken. What follows is a brief commentary on farm tourism in each state and territory in Australia.

Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

“Brindabella”, 60 kilometres from Canberra, has been operating since 1905 and is often named as the first host farm in Australia. In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) the Canberra Reservation Centre advises that there are “one or two” farms offering some form of farm tourism. One of these is Melrose Valley, a sheep station that offers day tours only. The farm was first settled in the 1860s and is typical of sheep farms in the

area. The tours are organised with a sheep shearing demonstration, followed by explanations of clip preparation and wool classing, and a sheep mustering.

New South Wales

There are 90 farms in New South Wales (NSW Farm and Country Holidays, 1996).

There are two farms worth mentioning because of unusual characteristics. "Gledswood" is advertised as a typical colonial farm, and is just one hour from Sydney. Some of the farm buildings date back to 1810 and were built by convicts, the main homestead being built between 1827 and 1855. The staff wear period costume, and guests may see farm activities firsthand, such as sheep dogs mustering, a flock of sheep, sheep being sheared, cows being milked, and damper being baked.

The 150 acres are set up for farm tours of the buildings and gardens and the farm can cater for up to 600 people in three large function rooms. Coach tours operate every day of the week, and there are direct coach pick-ups from most city hotels. The farm is open for tourist business seven days a week, and is a good example of a professionally developed and well marketed farm tourism product.

The Murray Bank Yabby Farm is another slightly unusual farm in that it is 16 acres of river frontage that is promoted for yabby fishing. In addition there are canoes for hire as well as barbecue facilities.

Northern Territory

There are six main properties in the Northern Territory involved in farm tourism. One, Bond Springs Station, is an outback cattle station which offers day tours only. The other four all offer accommodation, but one is in the form of camping facilities. Innesvale Station Homestays offers accommodation in a cottage on a 2,800 square kilometre operational cattle property. There is also a caravan site available, and guided tours, fishing and hunting are offered. The Daly River Mango Farm is a small farm involved in hay and seed production, cattle, mangoes and weather recording services. It was the site of one of the earliest settlements on the Daly River, built by the Jesuit Missionaries over 100 years ago. Camping grounds are available. The Mount Dare Homestead is the most northerly licensed hotel and tourist facility in this part of Australia. It was formerly a cattle station, but is now part of the National Park. Wollogorang Station at Tennant Creek also offers accommodation in six units.

Another host farm in the Northern Territory is Bullo River Station, which has become well known through the books published by its owner/operator Sara Henderson who was chosen Bulletin-Qantas Businesswoman of the Year for 1990 (Henderson, 1992, p.18). Bullo River Station is a 200,000 hectare (1,627 square kilometres) cattle station which developed tourism facilities when Sara Henderson's husband died in 1986, leaving debts of \$500,000 (Fraser, 1994, p. 10). The station runs approximately 9,000 cattle and 100 horses and ranges from sea level to 930 feet, providing a variety of physical environments. Guests are invited to join in the day to day activities with station staff,

and these may include heli mustering, fencing, visiting cattle yards and bull catching. Guests can also enjoy fishing and photography, and may hunt dingoes, wild pigs, ducks and buffalo. A buffalo herd consisting of ten trophy bulls and a young herd of 50 head, has been established, and 10,000 acres of swamp land has been opened up as a section for hunting. The station experience costs \$300 (per person per day), the fishing option \$600, and the hunting and bull catching option approximately \$900, as heavy insurance is required for these activities (Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau, 1992).

The Northern Territory also contains smaller farms which are involved in tourism mainly in the form of day tours, such as the Frontier Camel Farm, and the Darwin Crocodile Farm. The Frontier Camel Farm features a camel museum and camel rides, (Central Australian Tourism Industry Association, 1992, p. 30) while the Darwin Crocodile Farm is Australia's first and largest crocodile farm with over 7,000 crocodiles. There is feeding every day at 2 p.m. and a tour and information session. Farm raised crocodile delicacies and gifts are available from the souvenir shop (Darwin Region Tourism Association, 1991, p. 28).

Queensland

The Queensland Host Farm Association produce a glossy brochure (1998) listing 54 farms with descriptions and some colour photographs. In 1995 there were 44 farms listed. Jones (1997, p. 54) estimates that there are "around 60 farm-stays" in Queensland.

Some of these, such as Lakeview Station, have only been operating since 1994, while others, such as Lorraine Station, have been involved in farm tourism since 1985.

Lorraine Station is one of the best known host farms in Queensland, and can cater for up to 200 people in renovated shearers quarters and 25 caravan sites. Day tours are also offered (Somes, 1994, p. 93).

Planet Downs is another professionally marketed farm that produces a large glossy brochure, and offers special packages with direct flights from Brisbane airport to Planet Downs airstrip. The price includes accommodation, all meals, activities and return airfare, and is \$1,640 for three nights, or \$1,990 for four nights (per person, twin share).

South Australia

The South Australian Host Farms Association lists 51 farms in their 1991 brochure. In 1995-1996, this became 40 farms and 141 bed and breakfast operators, in a brochure entitled "South Australian Bed and Breakfast/Farm and Country Holidays".

An unusual farm in South Australia is the Pheasant Farm which is actually the name of a restaurant, in which the pheasants bred on the farm are served (Keens, 1985).

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Country Accommodation Association lists 23 properties in their 1991 brochure. However, these include bed and breakfast providers and country retreats as well as farms. At the time of the study, farms offering tourism facilities in Tasmania were called Homehost properties, and were selected by Homehost Tasmania Pty Ltd and not Tourism Tasmania. Details of these properties were however listed in an accommodation guide “in the interests of the public” (Tasmanian Travelways, October – November 1991, p.5).

Most tourism brochures in Tasmania tend to combine farm stays with bed and breakfast operations, with the exception of Tasmania Country Retreats which lists 23 farms in its 1991 brochure. In 1996 the name was changed to Tasmania's Holiday Retreats, and the brochure listed 36 properties, some of which were farms. In 1998, the Bed and Breakfast and Boutique Accommodation of Tasmania brochure listed 119 properties (not all of which were farms). Heritage Tasmania offers farmstays and homestays in Tasmania and has about fifty properties around Tasmania (Miller, 1998).

Western Australia

The Western Australia Farm and Country Holidays Association lists 76 farms in their 1998/1999 brochure. In 1995 there were 59, and in 1991 there were 43. The West Australian Government has a fact sheet on farm and station tourism on the Internet,

which refers to farm and station tourism as a relatively new industry in rural Australia, identifies critical success factors, and explains how the government's New Industries Program can be of help to operators. The critical success factors identified include scenic and/or historical attractions on the property, a clear understanding of the target market segment aimed at, a clear understanding of the costs, and a willingness to become involved with networks and associations, as well as being involved in individual promotion.

The New Industries Program aims to assist farmers by increasing industry understanding of its present position and growth potential; pointing out the benefits of rural tourism in rural revitalisation; developing and strengthening networks; increasing the profile of rural tourism; introducing quality assurance and accreditation; improving the marketing and other skills of operators; and demonstrating the potential for farm tourism by "fast tracking" a regional case study (Farm and Station Tourism Fast Sheet, 1997).

Iannello (1995) describes a "station and wilderness park" called El Questro in Western Australia's Kimberley region, 2,000 km from Perth, which is now managed by the All Seasons hotel management group, and which received the Major Attraction Award for tourism excellence in 1995. This destination offers accommodation from the low end of the range (\$7.50 camper) to the upper end (the \$640 a night homestead tourist). In the peak season (June to August) there are 150 to 200 people a day visiting, and the market is made up of approximately 50 per cent overseas visitors.

Other notable properties in Western Australia include the Albert Facey Homestead (referred to earlier in the section on heritage tourism), Merribrook, and Balladong Farm, Western Australia's oldest inland farm founded in 1831. This farm features an impressive array of nineteenth century buildings which are in various stages of restoration, and the property has been set up as a "living museum". It is the oldest continually farmed property in Western Australia and is used to demonstrate the earliest and most basic farming techniques used in that state (Shire of York, 1992).

This concludes the discussion of farm tourism in states other than Victoria. Farm tourism in Victoria is not discussed in detail here, as later Chapters (4,5 and 6) describe the results of surveys of farmers, guests and local government authorities that were carried out in this state. However, a few words about Victoria are relevant in order to place it in context with the other states.

Victoria

Australia is the sixth largest country in the world, covering 7,682,300 square kilometres. This is about the same size as the mainland of the United States of America. Victoria is the smallest mainland state, with an area of 227,600 square kilometres, which makes up 3 percent of the land mass of Australia. It covers approximately the same area as Great Britain. In terms of topography, Victoria is the most diverse Australian state and features a wide spectrum of country, from near-desert regions in the north-west, to cool-temperate rainforests in the south-east (Armstrong, 1996, p.22). The state offers tourists

a wide choice of environment – ocean beaches, mountain ranges, deserts, forests, and volcanic plains. In addition, there are 30 national parks – more than 12 percent of the state is classified as national park. Farm tourism in Victoria is discussed in more detail in the consideration of the results of the surveys described in Chapters 4,5 and 6.

A summary of the estimates given of the number of farms involved in farm tourism in the various states and territories indicates how difficult it is to arrive at exact figures:

Victoria - 250 (estimate mid 1990s)

ACT (Australian Capital Territory) - 1 or 2 (estimate mid 1990s)

New South Wales - 90 (1996)

Northern Territory - 6 (estimate mid 1990s)

Queensland - 54 (1998); approx. 60 (1996); 44 (1995)

South Australia – 40 (1995/96); 51 (1991)

Tasmania – 23 (1991)

Western Australia – 76 (1998/99); 59 (1995); 43 (1991)

Farm tourism is thus spread through all the states and territories of Australia and indications are that the number of farms involved is increasing. There is also a wide diversity of different types of farms.

The brief description above of farm tourism activities in the various states and territories of Australia provides the context in which the model of farm tourism is now developed.

The next part of chapter 2 builds the systems model of farm tourism based on the various influences and factors that are listed below. Systems models that have been proposed by various authors are considered and the useful elements of the various models are then combined into a single model of farm tourism, in order to reflect the flows and influences of the farm tourism activity.

Section 2: A model of farm tourism

Butler and Clark (1992, p. 167) comment that the literature on rural tourism is sparse and there is a lack of conceptual models and theories. The references to tourism, that are mainly case studies, tend to focus on specific problems rather than taking a broader perspective, and this has resulted in a lack of theory and models that place rural tourism within a conceptual framework.

This section of the study develops a systems model of farm tourism, based on existing systems models and stakeholder models, combined with economic models. The various models are described below, to provide a backdrop to a more detailed analysis of farm tourism.

General systems theory was developed a number of years ago, with early writers in the field including Boulding (1956), von Bertalanffy (1968), Churchman (1968) and Ackoff (1971). Checkland (1985) described the origin and nature of systems thinking, and explained how conceptual models may be built using the systems approach. More recently, emphasis has been given to the manner in which systems theory may be used to

analyse systems with complex relationships (see for example, Checkland and Scholes, 1992). Others (Patton, 1990; Skyttner, 1996; Wilson, 1990) pursued similar themes, with the principles remaining the same.

A system may be considered to be a physical and/or a conceptual entity, which is composed of interrelated and interacting parts. It exists in an environment with which it interacts. Systems are used to describe many processes, ranging from the micro (an atom) to the macro (the universe). A system has a preferred state, and will attempt to revert to this preferred state if disturbed, a characteristic called homeostasis. For a business it is usually accepted that profitability is the preferred state. Parts of the system may in turn be systems themselves, and any particular system may be as large and complex or as small and limited as one chooses. To put it another way, systems can comprise a number of related sub-systems.

Most systems are adaptive and respond to changes in their environment. These changes in the environment may be termed conditions (which usually change slowly over a period of time) or contingencies (which are sudden sharp shocks to the system, and perhaps threaten the system's survival). In the case of farm tourism, seasonal variations in temperature may be termed conditions, as they are generally known beforehand and usually follow a prescribed pattern, although of course erratic temperature changes may occur within the general pattern. A contingency could be a fire that destroys the farm. As a result of contingencies, most organisations have emergency plans, such as insurance cover, to protect against unexpected disasters.

A general model of a system recognizes eight basic characteristics of a system: goals and purpose, inputs, outputs, boundaries, environment, components, interrelations and constraints (Eliason, 1990). In terms of farm tourism, the goals and purpose of the system are the provision by farm operators of recreation and hospitality facilities for guests. The geographical boundaries of the system considered in this thesis are the state borders of Victoria, Australia. The environment includes all those factors that are identified under various headings as having some effect on, or being affected by, farm tourism. The inputs to the farm tourism model are the farmers who provide the services that are being investigated in this study, and the resources they use to deliver the services, as well as the guests who make up the demand. The outputs are the services, and the guest experience that results from a visit to a farm. The components and their interrelationships and constraints, are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The concept of systems thinking attempts to ensure that all aspects of a problem or situation are considered, by identifying all parts of a system, as well as the relationships between them. In addition, it highlights the impact that a change in one part of the system will have on other parts. In other words a systems model highlights the various interdependencies, in that all parts of a system are related in some way to all other parts.

Obviously the term system has many and varied meanings, some of which tend to be contradictory and in conflict with one another (Patton, 1990). In the context of the present study, the systems approach is used in order to view the place of farm tourism in

its total environment, and to make some sense out of qualitative data. This helps to envisage how farm tourism is influenced by a number of environmental factors.

Applying the concept of systems thinking involves taking an holistic approach to the subject under investigation, in order to evaluate the parts of the system, and then to consider their interrelationships.

In this study, the farm tourism system is regarded as an open, adaptive system that is operated by human activity. The various actors, or units, of the system are participating in the delivery of the outcomes of farm tourism. An acting unit cannot be immune to the effects of its own participation in the system, nor to the participatory influences generated by other acting units.

Most systems involve two types of processing. The first kind of processing is regular, governed by rules and repetitive in form, such as a farmer submitting an annual income tax return, or milking cows daily. The second kind of processing is unexpected, irregular, and variant, such as the arrival of a busload of tourists that was not planned for, or a bushfire. This second kind of processing in the system stimulates change and initiates adaptation. Systems have to constantly adapt to survive, and a system needs access to information regarding its interaction with its environment in order to adapt. A system, therefore, embodies the concepts of openness together with some sort of communication and information flow with other parts of the system in order to survive.

Sub-systems within systems are often smaller organized activities that serve larger activity flows. The functional linking of subordinate parts to the operating whole is the process that defines what an actor is. Thus, any recognizable system is made up of components, each of which may be a functional system in its own right. Systems also differ from each other in degree of self-sufficiency, complexity, and adaptability.

The idea of using the systems approach to analyse an identified system is to take the view that the system is a series of interdependent units or systems whose existence depends on the nature of their relationships, and that everything is in some way related to everything else. This way of thinking suggests that investigation of reciprocal relationships will recognize that a change or alteration in one part of a system will result in a change or alteration in some other part of the system.

Conventional scientific thinking identifies fundamental parts and components of an organization, while systems thinking allows the overall pattern of relationships to be identified. The focus is not on the parts, but rather on the interrelationship between the parts. The basic premise of any system is, therefore, the concept of relatedness. Parts of the system are not in isolation.

Stakeholder theory

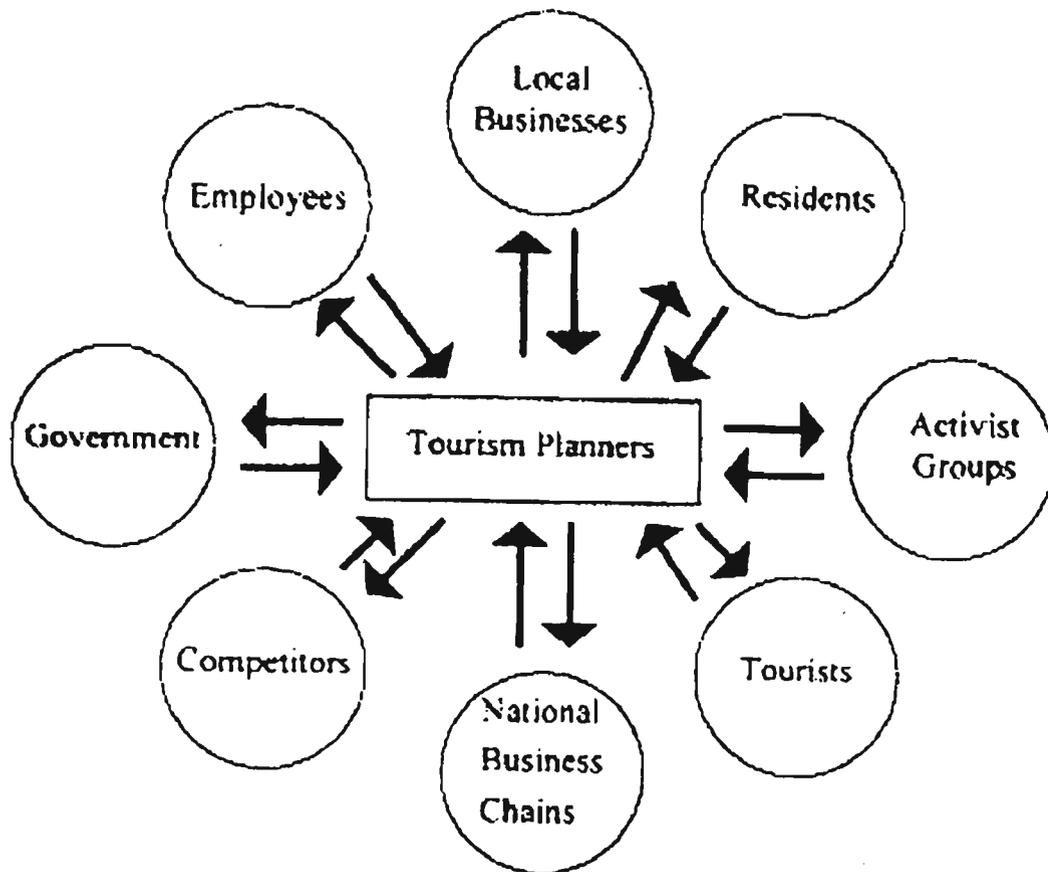
Another way of looking at the parties involved in a system is stakeholder theory, which has emerged as a derivative of systems thinking. The main idea in stakeholder theory is to

identify all parties who may have a stake or interest in the activities of the organisation or industry being studied. (Brenner and Cochran, 1991; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997; Rowley, 1997). Freeman “clearly and graphically modeled the concept of impacting actors on the firm and on whom the firm impacts” (Freeman, 1984, p.46). His definition of a stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s objectives”. He also identified the different types of effects that stakeholders would have on the firm (or that the firm would have on stakeholders) as economic, technological, social, political, and managerial. Key (1999) proposed that not only may stakeholder groups be identified, but that the linkages between them may also be identified.

A tourism planning model for managing stakeholders has been developed by Sautter and Leisen (1999). They discuss stakeholder theory in combination with relationship strategy and transaction strategy and propose market segmentation strategies designed to promote alignment of stakeholder orientations. Their tourism stakeholder map that is developed is a basic model, adapted from Freeman (1984) that shows some of the players in the tourism situation, namely, local businesses, residents, activist groups, tourists, national business chains, competitors, government, and employees (refer Figure 2.1).

The proponents of this model identified various stakeholder dyads that they examined, such as the government-resident dyad, the government-tourism business dyad, the resident-tourist dyad, the tourist-business dyad, and the business-resident dyad, and their paper discussed the encouragement of congruency of strategic orientation across dyads.

Figure 2.1 Tourism Stakeholder Map



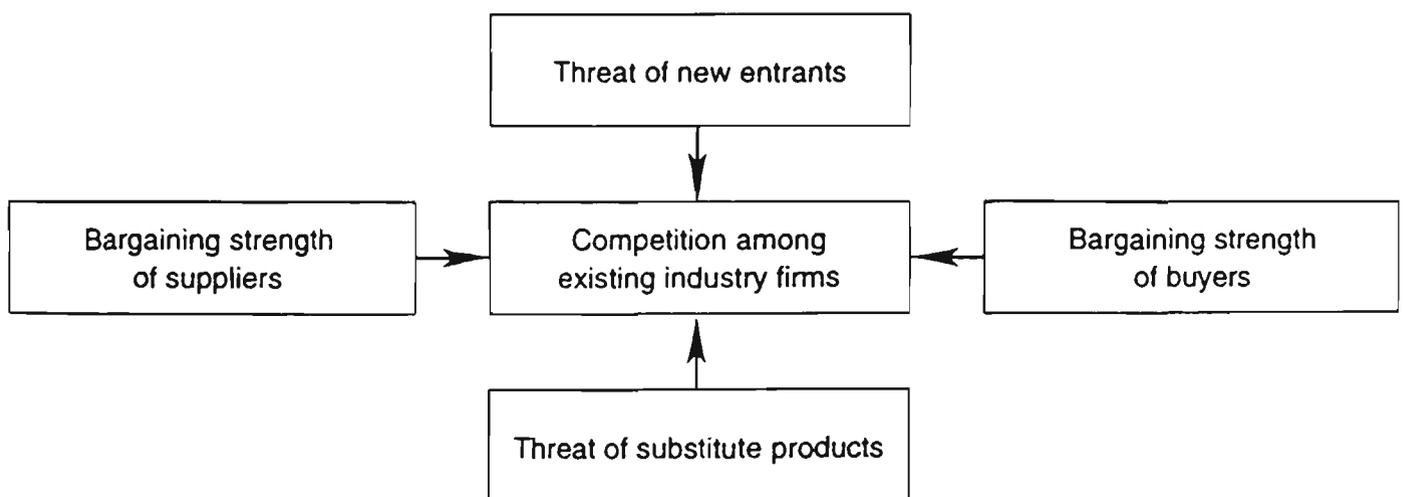
Source: Sautter and Leisen (1999, p. 4).

Their main thrust is to conceptualize how stakeholder theory as a normative planning tool may be used to promote collaboration among key players in the planning process. Some of these relationships are discussed below, where relevance to the farm tourism model may be shown. The model proposed by Sautter and Leisen (1999) is therefore of use in ensuring that all stakeholders have been included in a model of farm tourism.

Economic models

Other models that are of relevance to the proposed model are those developed by Porter (1985) and Walker, Boyd, and Larreche (1999). Porter (1985) proposed an industry analysis model, sometimes called the five forces model (refer Figure 2.2), which includes industry competitors, suppliers, buyers, substitutes, and potential entrants.

Figure 2.2 The major forces that determine industry competition



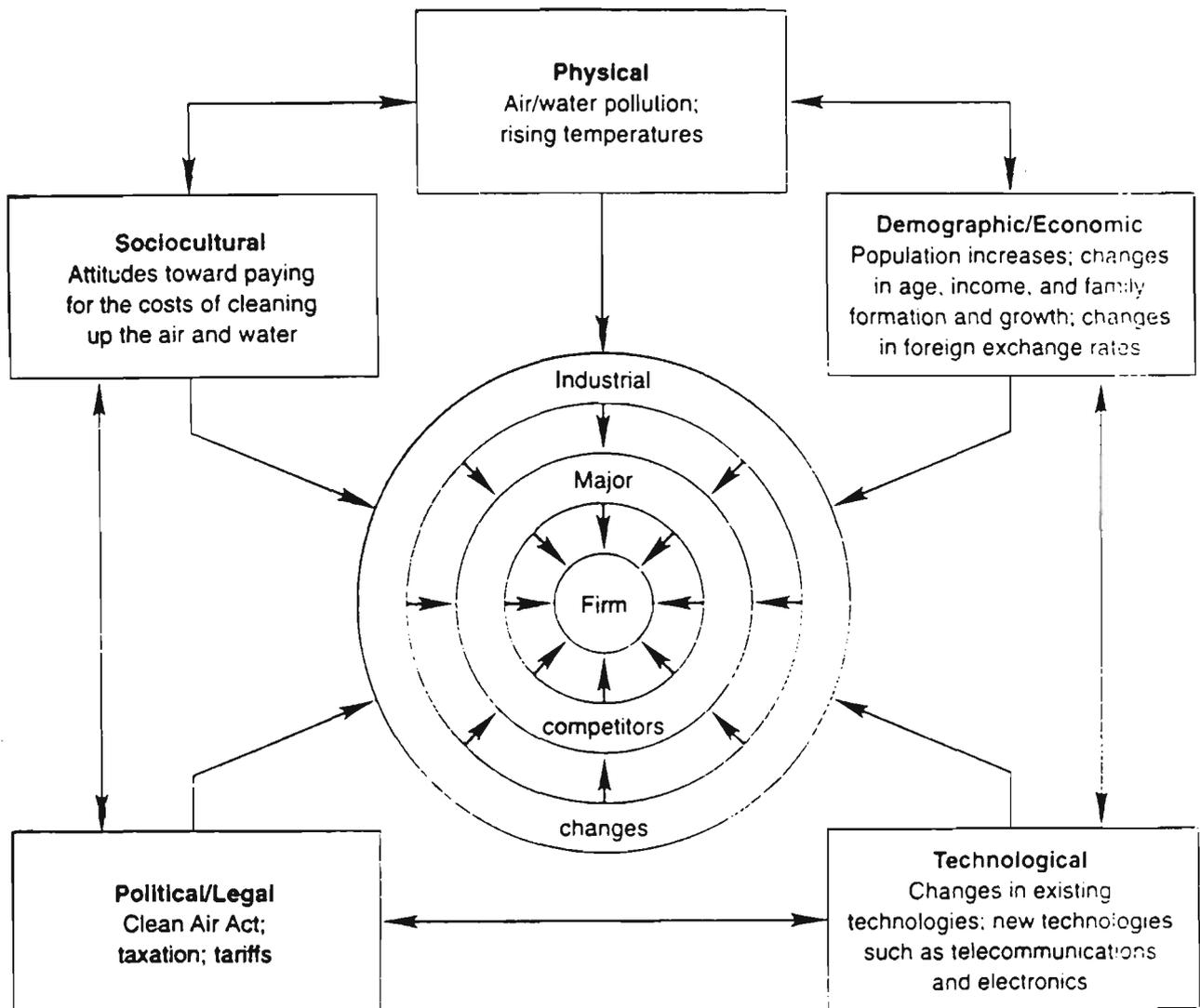
Source: Porter (1980, p.33)

The model proposed in this study includes input and output (farmers and services provided to guests) as most economic models do. In terms of Porter's (1985) model (see Figure 2.2), the proposed model covers industry (tourism, and in particular, rural tourism), competitors (such as hotels, motels, bed and breakfast operators, guest houses, caravan parks, tourist resorts, etc.), suppliers (including local community and local suppliers), buyers (guests), substitutes (basically supplied by industry competitors), and potential entrants (farmers presently not involved in farm tourism). Other influences include government and industry associations.

In their discussion of environmental influences on an organization, Walker, Boyd and Larreche (1999, p. 96) suggested seven parts of a macro-environmental model of the firm: physical, political/legal, technological, demographic, economic, sociocultural, and competitive. These models can be adapted for use in the model developed in the current study, combined with the basic economic model of input-output analysis. The parts of each model that are seen to be relevant are combined into a single model including all aspects of farm tourism as an activity.

In terms of the model proposed by Walker, Boyd and Larreche (1999), the model in this thesis covers physical influences, competitive influences, demographic and sociocultural influences (combined under one heading), economic influences, technological influences, and politico-legal influences. (Refer Figure 2.3)

Figure 2.3 Components of the Macroenvironment and Their Interaction



Source: Walker, Boyd and Larreche (1999)

The main concepts represented in these various models described above have been drawn together in an attempt to formulate a useful model of influences that affect farm tourism. Thus, the stakeholders identified by Sautter and Leisen (1999) have been incorporated under the different headings of the proposed model, and the relationships shown in the model proposed by Porter (1985) are considered in the discussion of the influences and

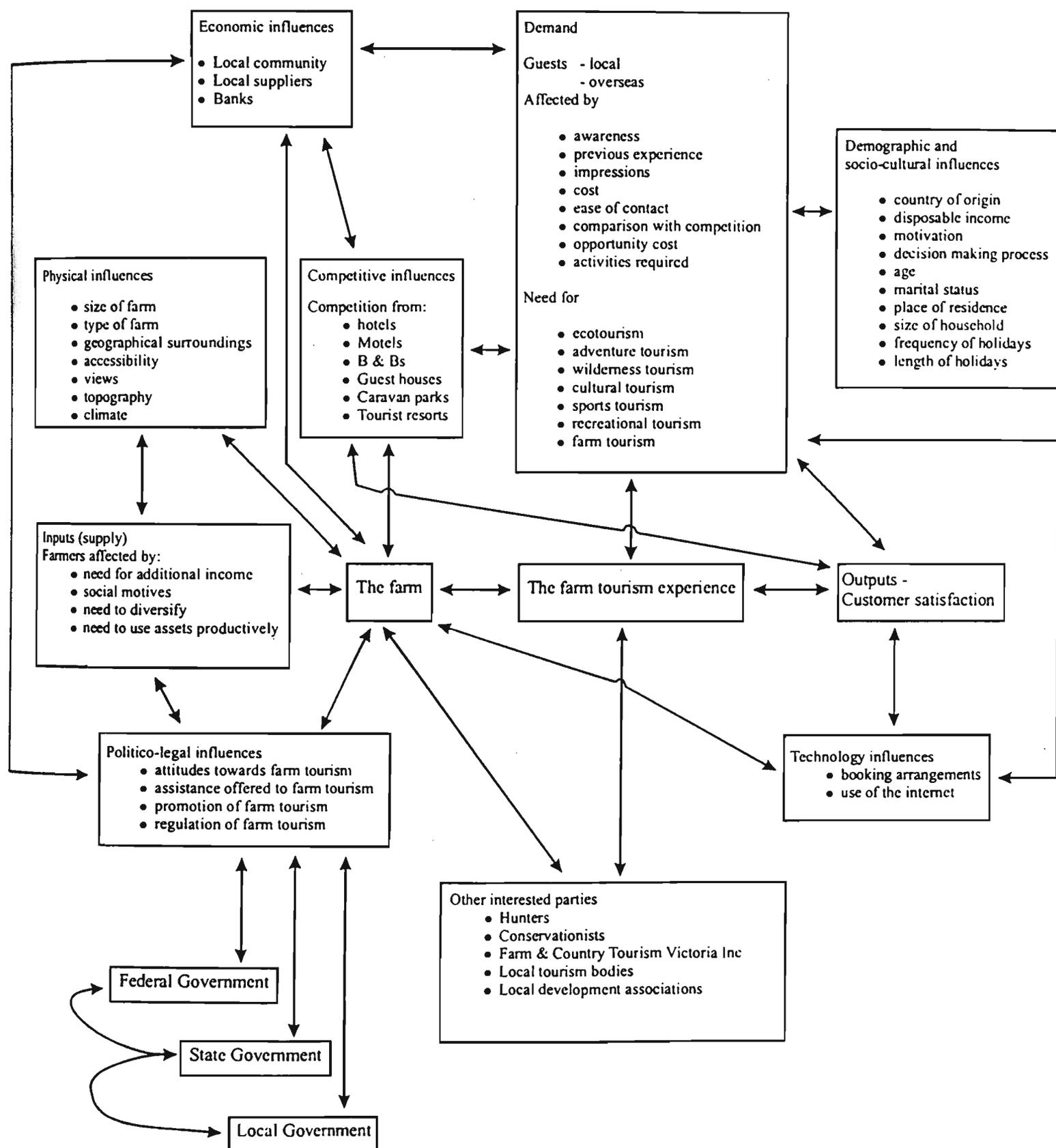
their interrelationships. Porter's model, however, specifically relates to competitive influences. These are included here, but are not the focal point of the study. Thus Porter's model has limited use in the creation of a farm tourism model. The main headings of the outer parts of the model proposed by Walker, Boyd and Larreche (1999) have been used in the construction of the model that appears below, but the inner part of the model, which relates to the corporation in general, has been replaced by details relevant to farm tourism operators.

Systems theory is a useful tool in the analysis of farm tourism, as the theoretical framework described earlier may be used to link these concepts to the phenomenon of farm tourism. The farm tourism sector is thus a physical and a conceptual entity, and is composed of interrelated and interacting parts (Boulding, 1956). The changes in the environment which may cause farmers to respond include a number of activities, such as those mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The main factors that have been identified that have relevance to farm tourism are those that can be grouped under the following headings: physical, competitive, demographic and socio-cultural, economic, technological and politico-legal influences; together with the inputs (supply) of farm tourism, which is composed mainly of farmers; and the output (demand) side of the model, which comprises the services provided to guests, and the experiences guests have when visiting farms.

The proposed model is therefore that shown in Figure 2.4 below.

Figure 2.4 A Systems Model of Farm Tourism



The various parts of the model are now discussed in detail below, and their particular influences in relation to farm tourism are identified. What is important about these various factors is that they are dynamic; in other words, they are constantly changing, at different and often at unpredictable rates. In addition, they generally cannot be controlled by the organisation, but they all affect the activities of the organisation, in one way or another. Following discussion of the various parts of the model, the interrelationships between them, as well as possible future interrelationships, are explored.

Physical influences

The main physical influences on farm tourism are topography and climate. The geographical situation of a farm may be a substantial factor in customer choice if it relates to an outstanding view or close proximity to other topographical factors, such as beaches, or mountains. Climate is largely beyond the control of the farmer but is obviously related to choice of area for farming.

Boulding (1985) referred to the physical environment as being an important element in determining the carrying capacity of the earth, and this leads to consideration of factors such as the use of solar energy, in helping to be more environmentally responsible.

Guests who visit farms may deliberately seek out those farms that use alternative sources of energy, or are actively involved in recycling, as measures of environmental responsibility. In some cases, environmental impacts of tourism are important considerations for guests and residents (Liu, Sheldon and Var, 1987).

Physical influences could include size of farm, type of farm, geographical surroundings, accessibility, views and proximity to other attractions. Remoteness and conditions such as the distance between farms and service centres may increase costs for farmers. For example, farmers may need to provide their own water and/or generate their own power. Other problems may be in the provision of staff accommodation, access improvements and general communication (Page and Getz, 1997).

The physical aspects of farm tourism also include the environmental impacts of conducting this type of tourism. The literature abounds with comments on the effects of farm tourism on the environment, usually warning that increased traffic flow will eventually destroy the solitude and country atmosphere that is sought in the first place. Concern has centred on the development of theme parks in rural environments, second homes, timeshare, conference centres, holiday villages, and designation of areas such as national parks as special places to visit (Bramwell, 1994; Gartner, 1987; Page and Getz, 1997).

Physical influences are related to the competitive influences in particular as better views, better location to countryside or other attractions, or better proximity to the reason for the holiday, such as the beach or the mountains, may make a destination more attractive.

Competitive influences

The competition for farms includes a wide range of businesses, including hotels, motels, bed and breakfast providers, guesthouses, caravan parks and tourist resorts. Guests may also choose to holiday in their own caravan or houseboat or go camping in their own tent, and they may also visit the homes of friends and/or relatives.

Porter (1985) identified the main aspects of the competitive situation in his five forces model (refer Figure 2.2). Potential entrants to an industry are affected by the barriers to entry, which include economics of scale (irrelevant in the case of farm tourism), product differentiation (very important) and capital requirements. In the case of capital, some farms use existing resources and require little capital expenditure, whereas others are involved in large projects costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Switching costs are seldom a barrier in farm tourism, as resources are often used for other purposes, sometimes on a temporary basis. Other barriers to entry are really not applicable to farm tourism, although government policy (in terms of permits and regulations) should be mentioned, as should entry-detering price (it may not be profitable at a certain price level) and experience (which is useful in any industry).

The suppliers and buyers in the industry model are represented by farmers and guests, respectively. Individual farmers will be powerful if they are few in number, there are no substitutes to the service provided by the farmers, the group's products are differentiated and/or there is a threat of forward integration. In terms of farm tourism, many farms are

involved, and there are many substitutes, which indicates a lack of power. On the other hand the farms are differentiated, which gives them some influence.

The buyers, or guests, have power if they comprise a large proportion of the farm's total income, which is not often so. There are low switching costs for buyers, and in general the factors in Porter's model do not apply to farm guests. They are powerful in terms of being able to easily switch to another supplier, or even postpone the purchase as it is a non-essential commodity.

Porter (1985) identified intense rivalry in an industry in the presence of certain factors. One of these factors is the existence of numerous or similar-sized competitors, which does apply to farm tourism. There is also slow industry growth, and the nature of competitors is diverse, both of which suggest intense rivalry. Balancing these factors are the aspects of high fixed costs (only applicable to a very few large tourist projects on farms), and high exit barriers that only apply to these large players.

Demographic and socio-cultural influences

Demographic influences include factors such as trends in the structure or composition of the population as a whole, the increase in older segments of the population, and changing levels and nature of employment. Socio-cultural influences include attitudes and behaviour, or changes and trends in general community attitudes and expectations. These

cover a wide range of influences that are dynamic and largely uncontrollable by the farmer.

In terms of the guest, these factors would include country of origin, disposable income, motivation, decision making process, age, marital status, place of residence, size of household, frequency of holidays and length of holidays.

These demographic, social and cultural influences have been investigated by a number of writers (for example Lankford and Howard, 1994, Milman and Pizam, 1988), and it has been found that the demographic and socio-cultural impacts of farm tourism are closely related to economic impacts. Thus, some writers have discussed the employment prospects for local residents as a result of farmers embracing tourism activities, and the impacts on local residents in terms of increased traffic in the area (Bouquet and Winter, 1987; Winter 1987; Mormont, 1987). Others have commented on the ability of tourism involvement to assist in diversification of the farmer's interests and income generation (Neate, 1987).

Kariel and Kariel (1982) researched socio-cultural impacts of farm tourism in the Austrian Alps, and concluded that the economy, society and landscape were interrelated in the rural environment. Their study also suggested that in terms of diversification, tourism would be more likely to generate income for the farm than agriculture, in the later stages of the diffusion of tourism to rural areas.

Economic influences

Economic influences include factors such as market conditions in general, interest rates or exchange rates. In terms of farm tourism, the benefits of tourists visiting areas in the country and spending money in these areas would seem to be beneficial to both farmers and local residents. Economic impact studies that investigate the effects of tourism are well documented (Archer and Cooper, 1994; Eadington and Redman, 1991; Frederick, 1993; Johnson and Brown, 1991; Kealy, 1991; Stynes and Stewart, 1993; Tooman, 1997).

Butler and Clark (1992) warn that rural tourism may not be the panacea for rural development (or lack of it), and that tourism should be regarded as a supplement to a thinning and diverse economy rather than the mainstay.

Investigations into farm tourism as a means of diversification have identified it as being used by small farms (Frater, 1982), as well as by larger farm businesses (Ilbery, 1991). Other studies have examined diversification into farm tourism and found that due to the limited return for small farmers and the constraints of planning legislation farm tourism is not that useful in dealing with the problem of low farm incomes (Maude and van Rest, 1985).

Research into farm tourism in an economic sense has identified that capital requirements are usually important, as well as the role of marketing, financial advice, and the need for external agents in establishing networks to develop farm tourism ventures.

Farmers often have their own farmer-based networks which are of use in farm tourism income generation. For example, in most areas a coach full of tourists may be unable to be accommodated on a single property. In this event, some farmers band together and allocate different tourists to different farms close by, in order to satisfy the accommodation requirements.

Technological influences

Technological influences include advances in technology, compatibility of new and old technologies, acceptance of new technology by consumers (or service providers) and radical changes that may come as a result of the adoption of new technology.

Probably the most relevant technological change in terms of farm tourism would be the availability of booking on the Internet. The phenomenon of the electronic visit and the promotion of tourism on the Internet has been documented (Caro and Prentice, 1998, Bentley, 1996, Hanna and Millar, 1998). Farm and Country Tourism Victoria Inc. (formerly the Host Farms Association) has a website through which details of farms may be accessed, and bookings may be made.

Technology may include problems of infrastructure - such as the provision of services such as roads, and the supply of electricity or water. Remoteness is seen as a benefit for many tourists, and increased ease of access may cause a larger traffic flow which will destroy this benefit. Local residents often do not appreciate additional traffic flow, but may be amenable to the supply of improved services.

Signposting and information centres rely increasingly on technology - as time passes, tourists will have quality information available in their vehicles in the form of navigation systems. Many already carry mobile phones for immediate contact.

Factors which influence farmers under this heading may be the basic infrastructure of road, electricity, water, waste disposal and telecommunications (Page and Getz, 1997, p. 24). These issues obviously affect rural planning for tourism development, and overlap with development that is not necessarily linked to an increase in tourists. Many writers have commented on the problems caused by outsiders changing the nature or character of an area through unwelcome developments (Byrne, Edmondson and Fahy, 1993; McCool and Martin, 1994; McDonald, 1987; Mormont, 1987; Vincent, 1987).

Inputs (supply) - farmers

The suppliers of rural tourism that compete with farm tourism operators may be seen in Table 2.4. below.

Table 2.4 Suppliers of rural tourism

- outfitting, guiding and rentals for hunting, fishing, horse trekking, safaris, nature study, boating, off-road vehicles and other outdoor recreation and adventures (but not dependent on intense facility developments)
 - fly-in services to remote areas; these are often called adventure and ecotourism enterprises
 - wilderness and ecotourism lodges; small-scale resorts; retreats (sometimes called alternative or specialist accommodation)
 - small roadside motels and related forms of accommodation
 - spas and health resorts emphasizing rural amenities
 - low-intensity campgrounds and self-catering operations; seasonal camps for organized groups
 - bed and breakfast and guest houses; small country inns and taverns; farm stays and visits
 - large estates with small-scale accommodation and outdoor activities
 - safari parks; game and fish farms; agricultural, silvicultural, fishing and other primary activities that sell to or host visitors; pick your-own produce establishments; resource-based educational tours
 - low-intensity downhill and cross-country skiing facilities
 - village and roadside retailing and hospitality services
 - festivals and special events in villages and nature parks
 - services provided by indigenous people and traditional cultures on reserves or traditional resource-use areas
 - interpretive and other rural heritage attractions
 - guided countryside tours (sightseeing and cultural themes)
 - community cooperatives
 - native communities which provide tourist services
 - nature parks with visitor services
-

Source : Page and Getz, 1997, p..16.

There are thus a large number of competitors for the tourist dollar, and the farm tourism product is a small part of the total market, albeit occupying a specialised niche for a particular type of customer. As discussed under activities later, farm guests have special needs and interests, and rural tourism suppliers must provide the experiences that these guests seek. For example, to be successful, rural tourism suppliers should have a small-

scale and functional relationship with open space and nature. Their heritage and tradition also make them rural, and they should be organic in structure (based on local resources and population), and traditional in design and character (Bramwell, 1993). Other specific requirements are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Outputs (demand) - the guest experience

The analysis of the demand for rural tourism is complicated by the fact that many visitors tend to visit both urban and rural destinations on a single trip, and research into the motives of farm tourists is limited (Page and Getz, 1997).

Opperman (1995) found that couples, groups of four and families were more likely to visit farms. He also found (Opperman, 1996) that although farm operators thought that a peaceful environment was the main benefit sought, often farm tourists were using the farm as a base and the farm environment was incidental.

Bramwell (1993) found that rural tourists appeared to be affluent and well educated, and likely to seek quality and spend above average amounts on holidays. Page and Getz (1997) discuss accessibility and spatial factors as an operational issue affecting the establishment and development of rural tourism businesses. They point out that modeling of the processes of spatial variations in the urban-rural travel continuum and the factors that explain them has been of considerable research interest for geographers.

Politico-legal influences

This category includes influences of local government, state government and federal government in Australia, as well as the influences of special interest groups in this category. The influences of government include attitudes towards farm tourism, assistance offered to farmers involved in farm tourism, promotion of farm tourism, and regulation of farm tourism.

Jenkins, Hall and Kearsley (1997) pointed out that Australian and New Zealand governments explicitly recognize that tourism creates jobs, and stimulates regional development, as well as assisting to diversify the regional economic base of the region involved. Even so, it has been reported that despite the increasing attention given to tourism in rural areas, little research has been carried out into policy-making processes and planning approaches (Hall and Jenkins, 1995; Jenkins, 1993; Jenkins, Hall and Kearsley, 1997; Pearce, 1989). This suggests that tourism policy could have a much greater impact in assisting local communities to play a role in policy-making and planning.

This planning could then assist in maintaining local characteristics and could also provide a competitive edge in marketing tourist destinations (Jenkins, Hall and Kearsley, 1997, p. 141). Empowerment of local communities in the tourism planning process in rural areas depends upon notions of self-help and community-based initiatives that help the local residents resist, or work with, government intervention. Herbert-Cheshire (2000) argued

that these empowering effects of self-help are frequently cited as its greatest virtue, but that it is not so much control as the added burden of responsibility that is being devolved to local people. In terms of the systems approach this aspect suggests that power swings to and fro between local residents and governments, and that the granting of power at local levels is because it suits governments to shift responsibility, rather than from a sense of giving locals more power.

The Country Tourism Victoria Council produced a booklet entitled *Why Should Local Government Invest in Tourism?* in order to stimulate rural tourism through the input from local government. This document outlined the ways in which tourism could benefit Australia, and listed the multiplier effect, employment opportunities, diversification, improved facilities for residents, and opportunities for business. Other benefits suggested were preservation of the environment and heritage, tourism as a catalyst for residential development, improved transport services, educational opportunities, and a broader social outlook through interaction with other people and cultures (Tonge, Myott and Enright, 1995).

Some local residents might embrace these benefits and rural tourism in general, but there are others who feel that tourism may threaten their solitude or tranquil way of life in the countryside, and that tourism development is not necessarily a benefit to the community (Allen et al, 1993; Allen, Long and Perdue, 1987; Huang and Stewart, 1996; Lankford, 1994). The aspects of rural tourism and farm tourism that are of relevance to this study

are affected in the main by local governments, which is why one of the surveys that is described later was directed at local government bodies.

Nevertheless, the State Government and Commonwealth Government are both players in the overall scheme of tourism and farm tourism, given that local government often responded with comments regarding how their job could be facilitated if the State Government assisted them more. According to Tonge, Myott and Enright (1995) the Victorian State Government is fully committed to developing tourism throughout Victoria. The State Government has therefore put in place a range of services and programs to provide management, leadership and direction at the state level to ensure future expansion and development of tourism in Victoria.

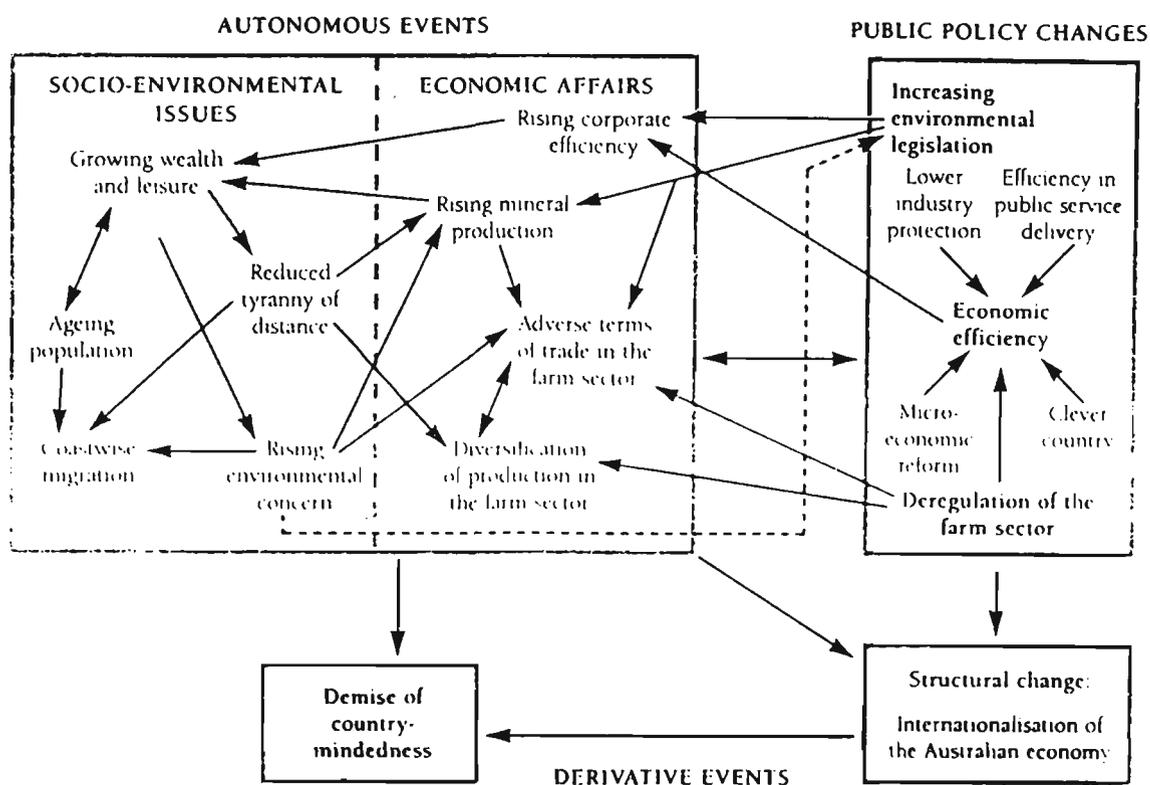
Tourism Victoria, through the support of the State Government, has implemented programs in research; industry, product and infrastructure development; wholesaling and travel agency network development; advertising and public relations; and international marketing. Other initiatives include media familiarisations, participation in holiday and travel shows, regional cooperative marketing, and visitor information service development. Local government authorities need to establish a close working relationship with the state tourism body in order to be aware of the various forms of assistance and advice available. Local tourism and marketing plans should also be compatible with plans made at the state level, to avoid duplication, or worse, a contradiction of effort. The above presumes that local authorities see tourism development as beneficial. The objectors to tourism development, mentioned above, are

not usually represented to any great extent in councils, as councils usually look for increases in employment and local service provision, in order to ensure re-election.

Commonwealth Government support for tourism recognizes the benefits that flow from increased tourism activity, and funding programs have been formulated to assist regional tourism, ecotourism, forest ecotourism, rural tourism, sites of national tourist significance, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism, as well as backpacker tourism, on a national basis.

Sorensen and Epps (1993) developed a model showing major events shaping rural Australia (refer Figure 2.5). This model is reproduced here as it helps to illustrate the interdependencies of the various factors in the systems model of rural tourism. This figure shows the principal events that have shaped rural Australia, and results from the interrelationship of factors affecting Australia's geographic, economic and social development. These factors include the spread and influence of multinational corporations, such as ownership of farms passing from families to corporate owners, and farms becoming larger for economic reasons. Other factors include technological developments referred to elsewhere in this chapter, such as advances in communications, agricultural production, manufacturing and transport. There has also been the creation of a new international division of labour; developments in energy sources and uses; diminishing power and control of the state (as power devolves to local communities, as described above); and growing environmental awareness and use of the countryside (Jenkins, 1997, p. 182).

Figure 2.5 Major events shaping rural Australia



Source: Sorensen and Epps, 1993.

Research in tourism and community development suggests that government plays an active role in the development process, as described above. However, Lewis (1998) conducted a study that did not support this and instead found that several of the tourism influentials verbalised contempt for the government and its involvement in tourism development. One government respondent even indicated that government should not

have a role in the tourism development process. The results of this study by Lewis seem at odds with most other reported research (Luloff et al, 1994).

Interrelationships of the various influences

In the analysis of most models, the separate parts of the model are isolated and discussed in turn, which is what is done above. However, all parts of a system are involved with and related to all other parts of a system, so a discussion of some examples of interrelationships is relevant. Some of the discussion that follows draws on aspects of the Synapse Report (1992).

Changes in the economy affect expenditure by consumers. Thus the imposition of a goods and services tax (GST) is new in Australia and its long term effects are yet to be observed. It may result in fewer guests or shorter stays in the farm tourism industry.

Weaver and Opperman (2000) pointed out that the most important factor associated with increased demand for tourism is the level of affluence in a country. In Australia, there has been an increase in household disposable income over the years following World War 2, and real disposable income has increased by more than three times between 1938 and 1990. More recently, disposable income levels seem to have stabilised, but at a level that augers well for tourism in general, and therefore farm tourism as well.

Rural depopulation is continuing in Australia along with difficulties in farms being viable, and the need for primary production to become more efficient. At the same time

as the rural population is decreasing, however, inbound tourism is increasing, and visits to farms may accordingly increase as well. It is hoped by farmers that awareness of farm tourism as a viable competitor to other forms of holiday and/or accommodation is being recognised by more and more consumers. Better promotion and increased use of new communications technologies will assist this to take place.

Discounting of air fares helps to offset the high costs of travelling to Australia from overseas. The entry of additional airlines, such as Impulse and Virgin Blue, may also help to keep prices of air travel down. This lowering of prices could in turn result in an increase in tourists from overseas. Other economic factors related to competitiveness and politico-legal influences include networking between farmers which may produce economic gains, and increase competitiveness by allowing larger groups to be catered for, by splitting guest visits over a number of farms. Politico-legal influences suggest an increase in regulations regarding health, liquor, transport and taxation, all of which may have negative effects on the profitability of farm tourism. There may be greater focus on rural land use planning and regulation, which may result in diversification into farm tourism becoming more difficult or less profitable. Present problems include farmers diverting time and energy to the tourism aspect of their businesses away from the agricultural functions of the farm. There is also the possibility that the profits from farm tourism are not channelled back into the agricultural business of the farm.

Current regulations differ between states, and these obviously affect the competitiveness of the farms in states where there are greater financial burdens in terms of permit costs or

legal compliance requirements. Other politico-legal influences affecting guests and competitiveness may relate to the increased danger of litigation as customers become more sophisticated, and brochures and other forms of promotion used by farm tourism operators need to be accurate in order to avoid difficulties with dissatisfied customers. Local government authorities see farm tourism as an asset only if tourists are drawn to an area, in which they may spend money, and hopefully promote to others on their return to their home cities. Dissatisfied tourists will produce the reverse effect, and farm tourism will not be allowed to continue unchecked if litigation becomes rife.

The politico-legal influences in this study are concentrated in an analysis of local governments, which are significant players in influencing tourism in rural Australia. In many rural areas, local government not only assists tourism financially by supporting tourist associations and information centres, but may also operate as a tourism provider in its own right (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994a). Local governments follow the guidelines set by State and Territory Governments, but still have significant autonomy in the planning and development decisions they make, and the ways in which they foster opportunities for economic growth.

Choices made by local governments will thus impact on the competitiveness of farms as tourism providers, and on the attractiveness, to the farmer, of entering the farm tourism industry. Relationships to physical influences can be seen through the provision of infrastructure, such as roads, and the regulation of land use zoning controls that may permit or disallow development in areas popular because of their location, specific views

or attractions. Assistance, or otherwise, with promotion of farm tourism may determine how successful farm tourism may become in a particular area.

Local government authorities are also expected to protect environmental and social concerns on behalf of their local community and to provide facilitation for the establishment of businesses. This latter aspect includes such detail as approval of infrastructure and local beautification works, such as streetscapes in rural towns, tourist circuits, shop fronts, town entrances and effective signposting (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994a). In some cases attitudes of local governments to tourism may not equate its importance with mining or agriculture, but as time passes, the benefits of tourism become more obvious and may be well appreciated. These benefits may be environmental, in the form of sustainable tourist development allowing an increase in the economic wellbeing of the community through the funds (both from the tourists and from other levels of government) that flow to an area with increased tourism, while at the same time limiting the negative effects that increases in tourist traffic flows may cause. Land that might otherwise have been used solely for agricultural purposes, may have value added by virtue of the fact that it may also be used for tourism income generation.

Social benefits for local government authorities include a sense of community pride where residents band together to promote an area or a town, increases in population due to increased chances of employment, a reduction in isolation and an enhancement of local facilities which may be enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. Tourism also provides a buffer against the variations in income experienced by rural areas due to seasonal

influences. Against these benefits have to be considered the increased traffic flow which may affect privacy, or the enjoyment of a tranquil rural solitude, cost burdens on councils to meet the needs of non-residents, site use conflicts, environmental degradation if development is not handled sensibly, and other peripheral effects such as increases in local prices, including rents, accommodation shortages, and possible increases in crime rates (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994a).

The technological aspects of farm tourism are closely related to the communication with guests and potential guests, and are therefore related to the competitive influences as well. Thus as competitors install better communication devices (such as fax machines, and web sites offering colour photographs of the property and booking facilities), so farmers will have to keep up with these trends in order to remain competitive. The advances in technology therefore make communication more efficient, but at the same time may involve the farmer in increased expenditure on equipment and facilities that may not show immediate benefit. Changes in transportation technology have reduced air fares, as mentioned earlier, which suggests that consumers may be more likely to holiday overseas than within Australia, and could thus reduce domestic demand for farm tourism. Balanced against this must be the relationship between the Australian dollar and other currencies, which may have a positive or negative influence on overseas travel, depending upon the direction of the fluctuations.

Demographic and socio-cultural influences are closely tied to the changes in the economy as the population ages and the proportion of older customers and potential customers

increases. Thus the increased number of people in older age groups may help to offset the downturn in the economy caused by the introduction of GST, or increases in interest rates. More discerning customers demand higher levels of service, and training of staff will become more important, with its associated costs. There may be more interest in ecological considerations and the environment, which may increase interest in farm tourism. Farms are naturally seen as environmentally friendly enterprises, and the adoption of alternative energy sources, such as solar power, and sustainable farming techniques which preserve the environment, may contribute to this image.

The physical aspect of climate and of a major climatic event (drought) is also closely tied to competitiveness and to the economic influences on farming, as water supply is an integral part of being able to survive in the countryside, and to take in guests who will increase the use of scarce resources. Use of precious water for city guests who may take long showers without realising the consequences, for example, may put these scarce resources under further strain.

In general terms, demographic factors such as reduced family size, population increase, urbanisation and increased life expectancy are all positive influences on the demand for tourism and farm tourism (Weaver and Opperman, 2000). Smaller families result in greater discretionary income, and greater discretionary time, along with increased opportunities for women in the work force. Increases in population, whether through domestic births or increased immigration, or both, provide larger numbers of potential customers for farm tourism. Urbanisation increases the consumer desire to experience

the countryside and to holiday away from the pressures of the cities and highly populated areas, which tends to favour farm tourism as a possible vacation choice. Increased life expectancy caused by a general increase in the standard of living along with advances in medical care, provides larger numbers of older Australians who are still healthy enough to pursue a wide variety of tourism activities.

Demographic and social factors therefore link closely with the guests (inputs/demand) side of the model, and some of the research questions asked were intended to discover how strongly the characteristics of guests were related to potential increases in demand for farm tourism.

Relationships between the various influences are exceedingly complex, and it is difficult to isolate parts of the farm tourism experience from others. In fact, the farm tourism experience may not be solely dependent on the farm itself, but may encompass all the experiences that guests are involved in when visiting the local town or attractions, or the rural area in general. All of these parts of the visit become connected in the memory of the guest, in order to determine future repeat visit behaviour, or otherwise.

Thus the customer satisfaction arising from the farm tourism experience is determined by the demand requirements of the guest and whether or not these have been met. Customer satisfaction is also related to the effective use of technology, and the influence of competitive providers. Use of the farm effectively precludes use of another provider at that time. Politico-legal influences indirectly affect the guest experience, but strongly

influence the farmer and the viability of the farm as a farm tourist operation. Politico-legal influences strongly affect competitors, and the economic situation. Demand is affected by the economy, and by the customer satisfaction of the previous visit, reflected in either repeat custom (or not), or word of mouth opinions of the customers expressed to other potential guests (positive or negative). Physical influences affect the farm and the farmer and the farm tourism experience, sometimes very strongly, as they may be the prime reason for the selection of a particular farm.

Demographic and sociocultural influences affect demand and guest characteristics and, in turn, the inputs from the guest side to the farm tourism experience. These aspects may also affect how the farmers approach activities such as advertising and promotion if they select certain market segments in preference to others (such as young married couples in preference to older families with children, for example). The farm is directly affected by the economy, by politico-legal influences, by the farmers, by physical influences, and by the competition. Politico-legal influences are relatively more important than aspects such as technology, as the farmer often has little control over the requirements of the various levels of government. It is for this reason that the influence of local government was chosen as one of the areas to research for this study. The other two areas of study relate to the main parts of the model around which the other influences revolve, namely, the farmers that provide farm tourism, and the guest experience that arises from a visit to a farm.

Summary of discussion

A review of the literature demonstrates that the farm tourism industry in Australia, and in Victoria, is alive and well. Many farmers have entered the farm tourism business, and organizations have been formed to look after the interests of groups of farmers involved in providing tourism. Farm tourism is active in all States and Territories of Australia, with the main activity being in New South Wales and Victoria.

The literature on farm tourism can also be examined through the 'prism' of a systems model which identifies the various stakeholders involved, as well as their relationships. The systems model constructed in this chapter identifies the various parts of the farm tourism industry, such as farmers, farms, customers, competition, demand, inputs (supply) and outputs (customer satisfaction). It also identifies the many outside influences that may affect these parts of the model, such as economic influences, competitive influences, demographic and sociocultural influences, politico-legal influences, and technological influences.

Application of the systems model of farm tourism to Victorian operations

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all parts of the model in detail as it includes too many variables and would require much more research to examine each part.

Therefore three main parts of the model were selected for further research in an effort to better understand their roles in influencing farm tourism in general. These three parts are firstly, the farmers and the farm itself as the provider of the guest experience; secondly, the actual guest experience and the characteristics of the guests; and finally, the influences of local government and the effects of these influences.

Arising from the literature review, particular questions were chosen as being of relevance when examining the operations of farm tourism.

In terms of the farms on which the farm tourism is offered, particular characteristics may be important, such as the size of farm, or distance from a major city. Other questions asked included what activities were offered on farms, and which were the most/least popular, how many visitors actually visited farms, what methods of reservation were used, and how much expenditure the farmer was committed to when becoming involved in farm tourism. Also investigated were how this expenditure was allocated, what methods of marketing and/or advertising farm tourism operators used, how farm tourism affected the agricultural or farming side of the enterprise, the motivation for farmers to become involved in farm tourism, and the characteristics of the guests who visited (as seen by the farmers).

In order to answer these questions, a survey of farms in Victoria involved in farm tourism was undertaken, to examine the supply side of the system. The survey was intended to ascertain the characteristics of the farms involved, and the types of activities offered to

guests. Questions in the survey also covered set-up costs and expenditure by the farmers, and the importance of tourism to the overall viability of the enterprise. Advertising and publicity was also investigated, and reasons for involvement in farm tourism were identified. The motivation of farmers for becoming involved in farm tourism was researched, and details were collected of the type of customer in terms of family characteristics, occupation and origin.

The research questions deemed relevant in the case of guests and their experiences included an investigation of guest impressions of the farm, before visiting, on arrival, and after the experience, how guests organised their bookings, what information guests had at the time of booking, and whether it was sufficient. In addition, other research questions investigated the activities that guests reported as being sought on the farm, how guests made the decision to visit a farm in terms of family influences, the characteristics of guests, and how frequently guests took holidays, and for what duration.

Answers to these questions would assist in understanding the motivation and characteristics of the farm tourism guest, thus assisting farms to cater for these guests more effectively and more profitably. A survey of guests who had visited farms was therefore undertaken, in order to examine the system from the output side in terms of the guest experiences. The areas of investigation here concentrated on evaluation of the experience, booking arrangements, form of accommodation usually used on holidays, and the relative importance of activities pursued by guests. Other aspects investigated were time spent on the farms, awareness of farms, ease of accessing information, and methods

of decision making used when choosing the particular farm. Personal details of respondents were also recorded, such as place of residence, marital status, size of household, age categories, and frequency and length of holidays. General comments on the farm tourism experience were also collected.

In terms of politico-legal influences, local government was chosen as the most relevant tier of government to examine. Research questions considered included how involved local governments were in farm tourism, what level of enquiries local governments received about farm tourism, the level of support that State Government offered to local governments, and the hindrances to the growth of farm tourism that could be seen by local government. Other questions asked related to the activities that were entered into by local governments to support farm tourism, the regulations involved, and the significant social and/or economic effects that local governments could foresee as arising out of farm tourism.

To answer these questions, a survey of local government authorities in Victoria was undertaken. This survey examined the relationship between local authorities and farm tourism. In this study, the survey of local authorities investigated the attitudes of local government bodies to farm tourism development and their roles therein. Questions asked covered the number of farm tourism enquiries received, what support for farm tourism was offered, what support the State Government offered, what hindrances to the growth of farm tourism were envisaged, and what specific activities were carried out to assist farm tourism. In addition, local authorities were asked about regulation of farm tourism,

the suitability of farm tourism as a growth area, and whether they had any general comments on farm tourism.

The results of these three surveys are reported in detail in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this study, in order to provide an elaboration of the influences discussed in this chapter.

Before that, however, chapter 3 describes the research methodology used in each of the surveys.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used in conducting the project. The research methods are first discussed, explaining the reasons for selection of the methods that were used in this study. The chapter then describes how the samples were chosen for the various surveys, the data analysis that was undertaken, and possible limitations of the methodology. As very little is known about farm tourism generally, the phenomenon needed to be examined first to determine how it developed and is used by visitors. Exploratory research was used in order to clarify the research needs of the study, and the study uses a positivist approach consisting of mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative. The positivist approach assumes a series of objective relationships among variables that can be isolated and are independently additive.

Research methods

This section draws mainly on the work of Veal (1992), Sekaran (1992) and Zikmund (1994). Research involves discovery of facts previously unknown, and the term covers a variety of activities. The purpose of research is to advance human knowledge through finding out and attempting to explain what is discovered. This

particular study involves mainly descriptive research (“finding out”) and exploratory research (“explaining”). Some evaluative research (“evaluation”) is also involved. According to Veal (1992, p. 2), “descriptive research is very common in the leisure and tourism area”. This descriptive research helps to monitor patterns of behaviour, and to provide details of market conditions. Further, descriptive research describes what is observed or reported, while exploratory research connects the causality relationships between the patterns of observed or reported data (Veal, 1992). Zikmund (1994, p.33) defines exploratory research as “initial research conducted to clarify and define the nature of a problem” and descriptive research is “research designed to describe characteristics of a population or a phenomenon”. Empirical research is “research which uses data to reach conclusions” while non-empirical research “results mainly from thinking, reading and contemplation” (Veal, 1992, pp. 21-22). Based on these descriptions, the research in this project is descriptive and exploratory in nature, and mainly empirical, as it reports on observations.

The current study also uses a positivist approach, which means “a framework of research....in which the researcher sees people as phenomena to be studied from the outside, with behaviour to be explained on the basis of facts and observations gathered by the researcher and theories and models developed by the researcher” (Veal, 1992, p.22). The interpretive model, on the other hand, “places more reliance on the people being studied to provide their own explanations of their situation or behaviour” (ibid). The current study also uses the interpretive approach in parts and is thus composed of mixed methods. In terms of other research definitions, the study is non-experimental (it merely observes rather than contriving situations), and collects both primary and secondary data. Data from the farms and other surveys is primary

data, while data such as that provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is secondary data.

The study also uses both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative parts relate to statistics such as the number of farms, or the dollar amount spent on advertising by farm tourism operators, whereas the qualitative parts relate to questions such as asking farmers why they became involved in farm tourism, or asking farm visitors whether they have any general comments to make on farm tourism. The term “qualitative” describes research methods and techniques that result in qualitative rather than quantitative information. In the case of the farm visits, some of the interviews took up to three hours as farmers provided a great deal of additional anecdotal evidence to back up their answers to questions, as well as often providing tours of the farm facilities. This additional material was rich in information that assisted in interpreting the other data that was collected.

Qualitative research is particularly useful in exploratory research as it allows the respondents to guide the researcher into areas that are more or less important relative to the topic being investigated. This does not mean that the respondents led the interviewer, but that they provided useful additional insights into the topics being researched. Most of the data collected was self-reported while some of it was collected from observation.

The main conclusion from the above is that the research was carried out in a variety of ways that suited the situations. Farmers, for example, stated that they would not have returned a mail questionnaire on farm tourism, but were happy to allow the researcher

to set up an interview time to call on them to ask questions face to face. The method of collecting data from the farm visitors and local government bodies was in each case by means of a mail survey, as that proved to be efficient for both those surveys, and calling on 260 visitors or 35 councils would have been time consuming and impractical.

As questionnaires were used in all three main surveys, these are briefly discussed below.

Questionnaires

The use of the questionnaire is widespread in leisure and tourism. According to Veal (1992, p.52) “questionnaire based surveys are probably the most common in leisure and tourism research, partly because the basic mechanics are relatively easily understood and mastered”. The questionnaire is also composed by the researcher in terms of the areas it is intended to investigate, and the results depend on the answers given by the respondents.

There may be problems with validity in questionnaire responses, as respondents sometimes exaggerate or understate. They may have difficulty recalling information or may try to please the interviewer (Veal, 1992, p. 146). Zikmund (1994) identifies response bias, deliberate falsification and unconscious representation as errors that may affect the results of survey research. It is considered that none of these factors would have had any effect on the results gathered from the surveys in this study. In the surveys in this study it was assumed that the respondents were telling the truth, as

there was no incentive to exaggerate or understate. Likewise the farm visitors appeared to be impartial in their evaluation of the farm tourism experience, as they were not individually identified and there was no reason for them to be untruthful. The responses from local; government bodies were similarly not expected to reflect any problems of validity.

In terms of the farm survey, the first farm visited served as a pilot study of the questionnaire, but only marginal changes were made as a result of the first visit. The actual questionnaires used for all three surveys are attached in the Appendices.

Sampling

The samples chosen for the surveys are explained later in more detail. In all cases the samples represent a reasonable representation of the population from which they were drawn. In the farm survey 67 of 125 farms were visited, being 53.6 percent, or just over half – this falls to 26.8 percent if the figure of 250 (discussed later in this chapter) is used. This sample was regarded as sufficient by various sources who were contacted for expert advice, including RIRDC (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation).

The guest survey included 260 visitors to farms, a reasonable size sample for SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) analysis, while the local government survey was basically a census of the population which resulted in 35 local government bodies that might have had an interest in farm tourism returning questionnaires (56.4 percent).

Methods of data analysis

The main method of data analysis used was SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This allowed totals, means and percentages to be calculated. Chi square analysis of some cross-tabulations that were prepared was also undertaken, but because of the small sample size breakdowns the results of this analysis was inconclusive.

Some of the qualitative data, such as guest responses, were collated in terms of subject matter, and many of these responses are reproduced verbatim in Chapter 5. Other qualitative analysis that was undertaken included use of the NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising) program. For example, the number of times the word “child” or “children” was included in respondent’s answers was analysed under the heading of “general comments on farm tourism” (there were found to be 125 mentions).

This chapter now explains the sources of data that were used to draw the samples for the three surveys, and how the samples were constructed. Some detail is provided as this may help later researchers who wish to research along similar lines. Finally, some comments on data analysis and possible limitations of the methodology are included.

Sources of data

The main sources of data used were published information available on farms and host farms in Victoria, as well as information available from farmers and local government and/or council information sources. Specific sources consulted include the Victorian Host Farms Association (now Farm and Country Tourism - Victoria Inc.) handbook, the RACV (Royal Automobile Club of Victoria) Accommodation Guide, as well as other publications listing bed and breakfasts and/or farms available for accommodation purposes. Farmers were asked about information they could provide on neighbouring properties, and local information centres were consulted. The information on farm visitors was provided by the Victorian Host Farms Association allowing their records to be accessed, and the list of councils in Victoria was obtained from the list of Victorian councils provided by the Municipal Association of Victoria. This chapter explains how the samples were selected for each of the main surveys and how they were conducted.

Survey of farms

The starting point of the creation of a list of farms involved in recreation and tourism activities in Victoria was the 1992 handbook of the Victorian Host Farms Association (now Farm and Country Tourism – Victoria Inc.) which listed 125 members in 1992.

The next stage was to examine the RACV Accommodation Guide, to discover farms that were listed in this publication but were not members of the Host Farms

Association. Initially only those classified as “Holiday Farms” were recorded, but on perusing the pages of the guide it soon became obvious that there were establishments which were farms but which were not listed as such. The definition of holiday farm was “accommodation which offers the guest the opportunity to observe or become involved in farm life on an operation rural property. The accommodation offers a wide variety of standard and service.” (RACV Accommodation Australia, 1992 Winter edition). Table 3.1 shows the other categories under which farms were listed.

Table 3.1 Categories of host farms

B & B	Bed and breakfast
GH	Guest house
COTG	Cottage
CHAL	Chalet
BUNK	Bunkhouse (communal facilities)
LODGE	Lodge (communal facilities)
HOL U	Holiday unit
FARM	Holiday farm

Source: RACV Accommodation Guide, Winter edition, 1992.

Some considerable time was then spent examining all pages of this guide, as in some cases the only clue to an accommodation provider being a farm was the wording “farming activities included” or similar, usually at the end of the listing.

The third stage of the collection of farm names was by perusal of the advertisements in “Royalauto”, the official members’ magazine of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria. Some farms advertised in the Royalauto were not listed in the Accommodation Guide, nor were they members of the Host Farm Association.

The fourth stage was to examine other publications that provided lists of farms available for tourism and recreation purposes, such as the Australian Bed and Breakfast Book (Thomas, 1992), and Homestay Eastern Australia (Ogilvie, 1991). In these publications farms are interspersed with other bed and breakfast operators.

In addition to the above sources of data used for sample selection, publications of organisations similar to the Host Farms Association were also consulted, such as Inn House Bed and Breakfast, Host Home Connection (Australian Designer Travel), and Ausres. These organisations included farms as members, along with other bed and breakfast, and similar operators. Lists of accommodation providers were also obtained from two organisations in Melbourne that provided booking services for farms on a commission basis, Agribusiness and Country Lane. These lists were not very useful, however, as the farms were not named and all bookings have to be made with the organisation, and not directly with the farm. The owners of these lists were not prepared to divulge the names of the farms on their lists, even when it was explained that this request was to ensure that a comprehensive list of all Victorian farms was to be compiled, and that it was not intended to bypass their organisations when booking, thus depriving them of commission. Another organisation called Houseguest listed over 200 homes and country properties throughout Australia, and works in close liaison with Australian Farmhost and Farm Holidays. Their list did

not refer to actual farms either, but identified the particular property by a reference number. Another source of information about farms involved in recreation and tourism activities was the tourist information offices at various places in Victoria, which were visited whenever the opportunity arose. When visiting farms in Gippsland, the Inverloch office was visited; when visiting farms in the Grampians (Gariwerd), the Stawell office was visited, and so on.

The final source of information was the farmers themselves – a question was included in the questionnaire asking if they knew of anyone else in their vicinity who was engaged in tourism or recreation provision.

Table 3.2 Membership of host farm associations and operating properties

State/territory	Members	Operating properties
New South Wales	Under 40	Approx. 500
Victoria	125	Approx. 500
Queensland	33	Approx. 80
South Australia	45	Approx. 80
Western Australia	Under 40	Approx. 100
Tasmania	25	Approx. 300
Northern Territory	NA	Approx. 15
Total	Approx. 300	Approx. 1,575

Source: Commonwealth Department of Tourism (1993a), “Rural Tourism”, Tourism Discussion Paper Number 1, Canberra.

All these sources provided another 125 farms to add to the 125 farms listed as members of the Host Farms Association, giving a total of 250. This contrasts with the figure given in Table 3.2, which was provided by the Commonwealth Department of Tourism as an estimate of the number of farms operating in this way in each state and territory.

The number of operating properties, totalling 1,575, is from a table prepared by Holsinger (1992) which in turn is based on "anecdotal data from state host farm associations, 1991". The estimates of the number of properties operating in tourism and recreation appear to be exaggerated when compared to the number identified by the author from the various sources listed above.

The present study is focussed on Victoria, and does not claim to cover other states and territories in detail. However, if the ratio of operating properties to members in Victoria (2 to 1) is taken as a guide, the actual number of operating properties may be far fewer, as shown in table 3.3.

The difficulty in arriving at the exact number of farms involved in tourism and recreation provision is the same problem experienced by the bed and breakfast industry in general. This is an informal industry. It is also a very "fluid" industry in that the number of operators is constantly changing, and those who are operating need not necessarily be operating on a continuous basis. The operation of bed and breakfast businesses, as well as farm stays, is dependent upon the decision of the operator which may easily change at short notice.

Once a motel is built people get to know where it is, and the motel will continue to operate as a motel 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through changes of ownership, until it is closed down, and/or knocked down. The operation of a host farm or a bed and breakfast is different. The business is often an additional source of income for someone whose main source of income comes from a farm, or a job off the farm working for someone else, or from investments, or all three. The degree of commitment is therefore variable.

Table 3.3. Estimate of operating properties based on ratio of 2 to 1 related to membership

State/territory	Members	Operating properties
New South Wales	Under 40	80
Australian Capital Territory	NA	NA
Victoria	125	250
Queensland	33	66
South Australia	45	90
Western Australia	Under 40	80
Tasmania	25	50
Northern Territory	NA	NA
Total	Approx. 300	Approx. 616

A person may decide overnight to open up his or her house to guests. There may be no capital expenditure required; the person may not bother to check with council whether there are any laws or regulations to which he or she must conform, and most

of the promotion is done through word of mouth. Many councils in fact are not concerned unless the number of guests exceeds a certain number, for example, four. Other operators may just as easily stop providing accommodation for tourists if, for example, the farm is very busy (such as at shearing time or harvesting) or if they would just like a break from hosting tourists. A change of ownership often means that the new owners have a different approach to tourism and recreation for outsiders, even though their approach to running the farm generally may be similar to that of their predecessors.

It is thus very difficult at any point in time to arrive at an exact figure for the number of farms involved. The bed and breakfast industry in general has the same problem. At a conference held in 1993 (Boutique Accommodation Conference, Katoomba, Blue Mountains, May 1993) it was stated by various persons attending that it was difficult to estimate the exact number of operators, for similar reasons. When rating and inspection is involved, another problem is that some operators may not wish to officially record their existence as it may be preferable for tax or other reasons to maintain a low profile. When contacting bed and breakfast operators in Sydney to make a booking, the author used a current publication and found that a number of the providers listed were no longer involved in the industry as the properties had changed hands after the listings had been published.

There is a great diversity of operators in host farms, as there is in bed and breakfast operations generally. This diversity is the greatest strength of the industry, as there is a wide choice of prices and different facilities for different types of customers to choose from. Unfortunately this diversity is also the greatest weakness of the

industry, as there is difficulty in maintaining standards and ensuring minimum levels of service and standards, even among members of an association. This means, for example, that a person visiting a host farm for the first time, may be unpleasantly surprised by the accommodation or lack of facilities at the farm they have chosen – this will then become their image of host farms, may put them off trying another host farm, and may cause other potential customers to be discouraged through negative word of mouth. A part of this is to do with communication, ensuring that customers know exactly what to expect beforehand, and this is dealt with in Chapter 5.

It was decided to visit as many as possible of the 250 farms identified as involved in farm tourism in Victoria. To give the selection a random flavour, but at the same time allow for economic considerations, such as distance between farms, or selection of farms in the same area, it was decided to travel to a different part of Victoria every week during the survey period. This would help to ensure that the sample would reduce possible bias towards mountain areas such as Mansfield, catering for ski enthusiasts, coastal areas such as Lakes Entrance, catering for beach enthusiasts, and so on. The sample was thus purposively selected, and partially used a snowball procedure. Some attempts were made to represent farms from across the state. This hopefully allowed for the survey of a representative cross section of different types of farms in different areas. Towards the end of the period allocated for visits to farms, which was approximately five months, relatively more visits were made in the East Gippsland area. This was mainly due to financial considerations as the funds allowed for the study were coming to an end, and this area was closer to home and more inexpensive to visit, not requiring overnight stays.

After an area was chosen (see Table 3.4. for list of areas), it was then attempted to make contact with the owner or farmer by telephone. This was often difficult and time-consuming. The sample would thus be biased towards those who were easier to contact, and secondly, willing to be interviewed. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of farms that were members of the Victorian Host Farm Association.

In the selection of farms from the list, there was also a bias towards those members who were more easily accessible, and more likely to be willing to be interviewed as an item about the research was published in the newsletter of the Host Farms Association. In terms of the size of farms, the larger farms were chosen first and the smaller farms and rural retreats were chosen only as last resorts, if the others were unavailable or unwilling. On some farms both partners worked full-time away from the property, and these were normally avoided. It is felt that this would not have affected the representativeness of the sample unduly.

Once the appointments were made (usually only two or three per day, due to the time taken to conduct the interview, and the traveling time involved) changes were sometimes unavoidable. This would be due to a death in the family, of the farmer, a requirement for the farmer to be off the farm at the proposed time of the interview, or an unexpected emergency on the farm at the scheduled time, such as stock discovered to be missing or ill.

In general, once the purpose of the interview was explained, most farmers were quite happy to host an interview, and only two of those approached, declined.

on Friday and cleaning up afterwards on Monday. Farm visits were therefore planned for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and in all 71 farms were visited.

Allowing for four that were not suitable to be included in the sample, a total of 67 completed questionnaires were completed, out of the estimated population of 250.

Those that were not suitable included one that was a caravan park rather than a farm, and three that were too busy at the time of the interview for successful completion of all sections of the questionnaire.

According to Sekaran (1992, p.253) the size of the sample should have been 148 (for a population of 240) or 152 (for a population of 250) but this was not possible to achieve given time and budgetary constraints. The visits made were funded by Victoria University during a period of study leave. A number of other organisations were approached for additional funding. However, although they were all supportive in their replies regarding the importance and usefulness of the research, none were able to contribute financially. The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) stated that they felt that the size of the sample was adequate.

Survey of farm visitors

A sample of farm visitors was obtained by spending a number of days going through the records of the Host Farms Association and noting the names and addresses of all visitors who had booked farm stays between March 1994 and July 1995. This yielded a total of 544 names, and a questionnaire was mailed to all these visitors on 31

October 1995. There was a 47.8 percent return, and 260 questionnaires were analysed for the purpose of this study.

Table 3.4. Farms visited for interview, by area of Victoria

Area	Number of farms	Percent
Melbourne	6	9.0
Gold Centre	11	16.4
North East region	13	19.4
South East (Gippsland)	6	9.0
South East (East Gippsland)	17	25.4
Grampians	5	7.4
West Coast	8	11.9
Wimmera	1	1.5
Total	67	100

The time allowed for the return of the questionnaires was three months. The method of a mail self-administered questionnaire was chosen because of its ability to gather extensive detail; ease of completion at the respondent's leisure; ability to retain confidentiality; and because there is a low cost per respondent. Mail surveys also have limitations, such as limited flexibility; the inability to clarify questions; poor response rate; and slow data collection (Kotler et al, 2001, p.173; Sekaran, 1992, p.220; Zikmund, 1994, pp. 205-212). However, in this case, the questions were self-

explanatory and needed no clarification, the response rate was reasonable, and the speed of response was acceptable.

The questionnaire was circulated with a covering letter which explained the purpose of the survey, together with a postage-paid return envelope.

For a mail survey the acceptable response rate varies in the literature on surveys.

One source states that as a rule of thumb, 50 percent can be considered adequate, 60 percent considered good and 70 percent very good, though it should be noted that this has no statistical basis (Babbie, 1990, p.182).

Survey of councils

In order to survey the attitudes of councils towards farm tourism, a questionnaire was sent to 62 councils in Victoria.

The guide "The New Victorian Councils" was purchased from the Municipal Association of Victoria and questionnaires were sent to all councils listed, with the exception of those that would obviously not be concerned with farm tourism as they covered inner-city areas or suburbs. A total of 35 councils returned completed questionnaires, giving a response rate of 56.4 percent.

As with the survey of farm visitors, a covering letter was included with the self-administered questionnaire, together with a reply-paid return envelope. The time allowed for return of the questionnaires was three months.

Data analysis

With regard to the research methodology of the mail surveys, it was assumed that the responses reflect the attitudes of the population from which the samples were drawn; that the questionnaires were accurately and truthfully completed by the respondents; that due consideration was given by the respondents in the completion of the questionnaires and that the respondents understood the questions and the terminology of the questionnaire.

Because of the small size of the samples in the farm survey ($N = 69$) and the local government survey ($N = 34$) it was not possible to carry out useful quantitative analysis of these samples. It was therefore decided to also generate qualitative data. According to Malhotra et al (1996) qualitative research is “unstructured, exploratory in nature, based on small samples, and may utilise popular qualitative techniques such asin-depth interviews..... that probe the respondents’ thoughts in detail” (p.51), its primary objective being “the provision of insights into and comprehension of the problem confronting the research” (p.85). Thus the findings regarding these two samples would necessarily be tentative in nature, requiring further research to validate them. The size of the sample for the visitor survey ($N = 260$) was more useful and can be used for more conclusive research following discussion of the findings. The results from the answers given by the respondents in this sample were analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program, to obtain frequencies, means and percentages. The chi square test was used to test cross-tabulations but in all cases there was a high percentage of cells which had counts less than 5, which

suggests that chi square is not a valid test in this context. Some analysis was also carried out using the NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising) program (Anderson, 1998).

The current study therefore uses qualitative and quantitative research to examine the farm tourism sector. The statistical analysis of the survey results is quantitative, and the discussion of the responses to many of the open questions falls under the heading of qualitative. The Commonwealth Department of Tourism (1993a, p.28) points out that qualitative research into rural tourism investigates what people want from rural tourism and examines the best means of satisfying those demands. The report recommends case studies of the overseas and domestic experience in the development of rural tourism, both successful and unsuccessful, as one of the possible areas for further investigation, which is exactly what is examined in part of the present study.

Collins (1984, p.340), writing about the qualitative sociology of tourism, reported in Cohen (1988, p.29), commented that “much of the best work in sociology has been carried out using qualitative methods and without statistical tests”.

Kelly (1991, p.407) stresses that leisure may be defined as a qualitative experience rather than designated time or activities. This is supported by Murphy (1974), and Neulinger (1974), and suggests that research data should attempt to include meaning, satisfaction, social definitions, and other elements of the quality of the leisure experience. Thus, qualitative research will recognise the “people” aspects of the research; be understood by those who are not technically proficient in quantitative analysis; and provide a richer exploration than one which is purely numerical.

Limitations of the methodology

The methodology was limited mainly by time and financial constraints. The farms that were visited were selected on a convenience basis and the number could not be increased as only 6 months was available to carry out the field work. It is also assumed that the sample is representative of the views of farmers in Victoria who are involved in tourism, notwithstanding the possible biases referred to previously. This was supported by discussion with statisticians, and a letter received from RIRDC (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation) stating that they felt that the sample was sufficiently large.

Due to possible sensitivity regarding financial position, no questions were asked of farmers regarding their actual (dollar) incomes from farming and/or tourism. Instead this question allowed percentages to be used in the answers.

The survey of farm visitors did not allow for the fact that many respondents had visited more than one farm, or one farm more than once. This was not a problem, however, as respondents limited their replies to a single experience.

The research is more descriptive than causal, and therefore aims to provide a basis for further research and a general overview of the farm tourism industry in Victoria, rather than trying to be prescriptive or conclusive.

While these limitations may have had some impact on the research results, it is suggested that they would be minimal and that the overall research methodology is valid.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF FARMS

This chapter discusses the results obtained from the survey conducted when visiting 67 farms throughout Victoria and focuses on farm features and farmer attitudes.

Characteristics of the farms

As shown by Table 1 the greatest proportion of farms fell into the category 0 – 500 hectares. Table 2 shows that, of these farms, over 40 per cent are 100 hectares or less. This compares with Pizam and Pokela (1980) whose sample of farms included 48 per cent of 121.5 hectares (i.e .300 acres) or less (refer Table 4.3). Their sample was 98 farms compared to the Victoria sample of 67 farms. Fry (1984) examined 31 rural properties that varied in size from 2 to 404,858 hectares, the larger properties (88,259 hectares upwards, with a mean of 180,661 hectares) being described as stations. Victorian farms would generally be smaller than properties in Western Australia so this is not a useful comparison.

Table 4.1. Size of farm: total sample

Hectares	Number	Percent
0 - 500	54	80.6
501 - 1,000	4	6.0
1,001 – 2,000	7	10.4
2,001 – 3,000	1	1.5
3,001 – 4,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.2. Size of farm: farms 500 hectares or less

Hectares	Number	Percent	Percent of total sample
0 - 100	27	50.0	40.3
101 - 200	10	18.5	15.0
201 - 300	9	16.7	13.4
301 - 400	6	11.1	8.9
401 - 500	2	3.7	3.0
Total	54	100	80.6

Table 4.3. Size of farm (USA study)

Hectares	Number	Percent
1 - 121.5	47	48.0
121.9 - 202.5	17	17.3
202.9 - 404.5	10	10.2
405.4 - 1,620	13	13.3
1,620.4+	11	11.2
Total	98	100

Source: Pizam and Pokela (1980)

Note: Converted from acres to hectares for comparison.

In terms of distance from Melbourne, approximately half the farms visited fall within 200 kilometres from the city (refer Table 4.4). This is important for overseas visitors especially, as they usually travel to capital cities and from there visit the farms.

Therefore the travelling time needs to be low, and preferably a maximum of two to three hours.

Table 4.4. Distance from Melbourne

Kilometres	Number	Percent
0 - 100 km	13	19.4
101 - 200 km	34	50.7
201 - 300 km	11	16.4
301 - 400 km	8	11.9
401 - 500 km	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Approximately one third of the farms (32.8 per cent) are cattle and sheep farms, with 16.4 per cent being sheep only, and 17.9 per cent cattle only. Dairy farms account for 6 per cent of the sample, while deer farms and horse ranches make up 3 per cent each. The other 20 per cent is made up of mixed farms, including those growing fruit and vegetables, and keeping goats (refer Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Type of farm

Type	Number	Percent
Sheep	11	16.4
Cattle	12	17.9
Cattle/sheep	22	32.8
Dairy	4	6.0
Deer	2	3.0
Horse ranch	2	3.0
Mixed/other	14	20.9
Total	67	100

Most of the farms (almost 70 per cent) can accommodate 10 or fewer guests, while 16.4 per cent are able to cater for over 20 guests at a time. These latter farms would usually include converted shearer's quarters or purpose-built facilities such as accommodation for school groups (Table 4.6). Pizam and Pokela (1980) found that the farms in their sample could accommodate between 3 and 40 guests at one time; 40 was in fact the maximum allowed for inclusion in the sample as properties with accommodation for more than 40 were regarded as tourist operators rather than farmers.

Table 4.6. Number of guests who can be accommodated at one time

Guests	Number of farms	Percent
0 - 5	13	19.4
6 - 10	27	40.3
11 - 15	10	14.9
16 - 20	6	8.9
Over 20	11	16.4
Total	67	100

Table 4.7. Number of full-time workers

Workers	Number of farms	Percent
0	14	20.9
1	16	23.9
2	28	41.8
3	3	4.5
4	3	4.5
5	2	3.0
6	0	0
7	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.8. Number of part-time workers

Workers	Number of farms	Percent
0	30	44.8
1	10	14.9
2	19	28.4
3	1	1.5
4	3	4.5
6	2	3.0
8	1	1.5
15	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show the number of full-time and part-time workers employed on the farms. Over 20 per cent of farms reported no full-time workers, as most of these would be operated by the farmer and his or her family, which the respondents did not list as employed workers. Again, only those with large facilities would employ full-time additional workers, with one farm in the sample employing 7, and two employing 5. These would be exceptions, however. Many farms employ part-time assistants to come in and clean the accommodation after guests have left, or sometimes to provide meals or assistance in catering for guests. At one extreme 44.8 per cent of farms reported that they employed no part-time workers, while at the other extreme, one farm responded that they employed 8 part-time workers. It is unlikely, however, that all these workers would be employed simultaneously. Rather, they would be rostered on for certain days of the week or be available at certain times only.

An American study reported that “vacation farms averaged 2.44 full-time workers (including family members) and 3.02 part-time workers” (Pizam and Pokela, 1980, page 207).

Many visitors to farms are attracted by the activities that are offered, and Table 4.9 shows the activities that are available (in the first column) as well as which of these are the most popular (second column). These results are from the estimates of the farmers (in terms of popularity), and the responses from farm visitors are discussed elsewhere, in the section on the visitor survey.

Table 4.9. Availability and Popularity of Farm Activities

Question: Which of the following activities are available on your farm? (first listing) -
Most popular (second listing)

Activity	Percent available	Percent most popular
Farm walks	80.6	16.4
Bird watching	94	3
Swimming	56.7	9
Bushwalking	71.6	19.4
Watching farming	67.2	16.4
Observing animals	73.1	16.4
Farm tours	59.7	11.9
Being with young animals	59.7	17.9
Fishing	67.2	9
Assisting mustering	59.7	1.5
Mushrooming	89.6	-
Horse riding	28.4	10.4
Doing farm work	55.2	9
Canoeing	26.9	1.5
Yabbying	65.7	4.5
Collecting/picking farm produce	52.2	3
Tennis	44.8	7.5
Boating	35.8	-
Fossicking for gemstones	25.4	1.5
Cricket	34.3	1.5
Trampoline	13.4	-
Shooting/hunting	16.4	-
Water-skiing	13.4	-
Trail bike riding	17.9	-
Four wheel drive motoring	19.4	-
Golf	40.3	1.5

Although many activities are reportedly available, it can be seen that the most popular are activities such as bushwalking (19.4 per cent), walking, watching farming or observing animals (16.4 per cent each) rather than playing sport or becoming involved in actual farm work. It should also be noted that although 28.4 per cent of the sample offered horse riding, and 13.4 per cent offered the use of a trampoline, most farms do not offer these activities as they are the ones most likely to cause injury and/or insurance claims. Shooting and hunting is also offered at 16.4 per cent of farms in the sample, but many farms banned shooting and hunting, and would not accept guests who wished to participate in these activities.

Pizam and Pokela (1980) found that the most popular non-farming activity was hiking (the equivalent to bushwalking), which 93.3 per cent of the respondents listed as an activity both on and off the farm. Other popular activities reported were swimming (89.1 percent), fishing (84 percent), and riding (79.8 percent), followed by bird-watching (83.8 percent), swimming (80.6 percent), bushwalking (77.4 percent), watching farming (70.9 percent), and observing animals (70.9 percent). As with the present study, Fry found that sporting activities and working on the farm were less popular activities. Pizam and Pokela, however, found that guests reported liking being able to help care for animals (65 percent of their sample of 119 farms) and assisting with haying (43.8 percent).

In terms of accommodation, Table 4.10 shows that approximately 43 percent of the sample offered accommodation in the homestead, while 65 per cent offered self contained accommodation. Anecdotal evidence gathered while interviewing farmers indicated that the homestead type of accommodation is usually favoured by overseas

visitors, who wish to see the “real Australia” and talk to the farmer and his or her family.

On the other hand, many domestic visitors prefer the self-contained accommodation because they travel by car, take their own food (and sometimes bedding as well), and often use the farm as a base for visiting other tourist attractions, rather than always being closely interested in the farming activities aspect of the visit. For example, visitors to the Mansfield region might use the farm as a base of skiing; in the Lakes Entrance area, the farm stay may be the point from which access to the beaches is obtained; while in the Daylesford area, the hot springs may actually be the main attraction.

Table 4.10. Type of accommodation on farms

Accommodation	Percent
Farm homestead – share with family	43.3
Farm homestead – self contained	65.7
Holiday units	10.4
Cottage/chalet	47.8
Renovated farm buildings	3.0
Workers/shearers quarters	7.5
Bunkhouse	4.5
Caravan	25.4
Caravan sites	7.5
Camping sites	34.3

The distinction between holiday units and cottages or chalets is a subjective one, depending upon the farmer's own description or attitude toward the type of accommodation offered.

Only a small percentage (3 percent) offered accommodation in renovated farm buildings, while 7.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent described the accommodation as workers/shearers quarters, or bunkhouse, respectively. However, it should be borne in mind that although this is a small percentage, the type of accommodation described as shearers quarters could provide a number of beds, whereas the homestead or cottage may only provide a relatively small number of beds.

Accommodation described as bunkhouse or shearers quarters is usually used by school groups, or other types of groups (refer to Table 4.46 later in this section).

Some farms provided camping sites for caravans, and some for tents, and some of those said that they would not charge for camping. However, there would be a fee if electricity, water and/or toilet facilities were required.

Dinner was often provided (59.7 per cent) as in dinner, bed and breakfast. Breakfast was provided by 67.2 per cent, while 58.2 per cent stated that they would provide lunch (this latter would often be in the form of sandwiches to take away, rather than as a sit-down meal). Rates would vary according to whether guests wanted meals or not, and this would normally have to be stated in advance.

In cases where visitors were required to bring their own food usually the accommodation provided would be a cottage, away from the main homestead, (64.2 percent). Cooking utensils, crockery/cutlery and blankets are usually provided, but sometimes guests can obtain a discount by providing their own linen and or towels (44.8 percent).

Table 4.11 shows the number of visitors in 1991, the year before the survey was carried out. 17 farms (25.4 percent of the sample) reported no visitors at all in 1991, and there were a number of reasons for this. For example, the farm did not offer accommodation in 1991 because they had only become involved in farm tourism in 1992, or had been renting a cottage or other accommodation on a full-time arrangement rather than for casual visitors in 1991. In one case, the farmer had died, and his wife was operating the farm and was away from the farmhouse for extended periods. As she had no answering machine installed on the telephone, it was extremely difficult to contact her, so potential guests would give up and make bookings elsewhere.

Table 4.11. Number of visitors in 1991

Visitors	Number of farms	Percent
0	17	25.4
1 - 100	27	40.3
101 - 200	8	11.9
201 - 300	5	7.5
301 - 400	2	3.0
401 - 500	2	3.0
Over 500	6	8.9
Total	67	100

The majority of visitors fall into the category 1 – 100 (40.3 percent) but some farms reported visitors totalling between 301 and 400 (2 farms), 401 to 500 (2 farms), and 6 farms reported over 500 visitors.

Farmers who rent out small cottages or rooms in their homes usually do not have the large numbers that purpose-built facilities can cater for, such as school groups. One farmer had erected 16 cabins which could accommodate six to eight guests in each, and has a permit to erect another 14, so it can be seen that large numbers of guests can be accommodated on certain properties. In this particular case, the cabins were usually booked ahead, sometimes as much as 12 months, with a deposit paid, and the occupancy would be close to 100 percent.

Repeat customers make up a large percentage of visitors for many farms. Over 40 percent reported that 1 – 25 percent of their visitors were repeats, while 7.5 percent (5 farms) reported repeat customers as 76 – 100 percent of their visitors (Table 4.12). In many cases, as mentioned elsewhere in this study, the guests and the farmers form a relationship which becomes an ongoing factor in the repeat visits of the customers. Another study found that approximately half (46.85 percent) of the guests were repeat guests (Pizam and Pokela, 1980).

Table 4.12. Estimated percentage repeat customers

Percent repeat customers	Number of farms	Percent
0	17	25.4
1 - 25%	29	43.3
26 - 50%	12	17.9
51 - 75%	4	6
76 - 100%	5	7.5
Total	67	100

When questioned about methods of obtaining booking, 89.6 percent stated that their bookings were direct; in other words, guests telephoned or faxed them direct in order to make a reservation (Table 4.13). 80.6 percent obtained booking through the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV), and 62.7 percent through the Host Farms Association (HFA). However, when questioned as to how the potential visitors obtained their telephone number or contact details, most responded that they would have seen these details in the HFA catalogue. Therefore the percentage of 62.7 percent allocated to booking through the HFA would have to be considered in the light of this comment. Others used agents such as Agribusiness or Country Lane.

Table 4.13. Method of reservation

(Question: How are bookings made for your farm?)

Method	Percent
Direct	89.6
RACV	80.6
HFA	62.7
Travel agents	19.4
Agribusiness	29.9
Country Lane	23.9
Host Home Connection (Australian Designer Travel)	23.9
Other	13.4

Australian booking services and/or associations are many and varied. Probably the best known are Agribusiness, At Home Down Under, AUSRES (Australian Reservation Service), Bed and Breakfast Australia Pty. Ltd., Country Lane Farm Holidays, and Houseguest.

Agribusiness is a booking service run from Melbourne. Farms are listed by description and country area, but are not named. Direct booking is not possible as all telephone communication must be with Agribusiness. At Home Down Under is a booking agent in Sydney that offers friendly and inexpensive accommodation in private homes (not only farms). AUSRES (Australian Reservation Service) is a

computerised tourism reservation system run from Melbourne, which can handle electronically up to 15,000 tourism products from suppliers, ranging from five star hotels through to bed and breakfasts and farm holidays. Tourism operators pay a small annual fee to be listed on the database, and AUSRES charges a commission for taking bookings from either the public or from travel agents. The properties include “Bed and Breakfast Homesteads, Inns, Guest Houses, Rural Retreats, Farms and Cottages in Cities, Country Towns and Rural Communities.” (Australian Reservation Service brochure, 1992/1993). Bed and Breakfast Australia Pty. Ltd. is an agent offering homestays in all major cities and in many rural areas. Country Lane Farm Holidays is a booking agent based in Melbourne that lists farms but does not provide names of farms, or direct telephone numbers. Houseguest is a booking agent in Dural, New South Wales, representing over 200 private homes and country properties throughout Australia. Suburbs/areas and descriptions of properties are available, again, without names of farms or direct telephone numbers.

It is significant to note that 25.4 percent (17 farms) commenced farm tourism in 1991 or 1992 (Table 4.14). If this study could be replicated, it would show whether this trend was continuing or not. Certainly, anecdotal evidence would indicate that there are more farms involved in tourism than there were a few years ago, and certainly more bed and breakfasts in operation. Of the farms which commenced operations before 1975, three claimed to be the “first” to be involved in farm tourism, which seems to have had its origins in Victoria around 1969.

Table 4.14 Year in which farm tourism commenced

Year	Number of farms	Percent
1991/1992	17	25.4
1985 - 1990	29	43.3
1980 - 1984	5	7.5
1975 - 1979	11	16.4
Before 1975	5	7.5
	67	100

Table 4.15 and those following, up to Table 4.24, give details of the set-up costs and estimated expenditure that farmers were involved in before being able to commence business. Table 4.15 shows that 10 percent of farmers spent \$1,000 or less, and these would include those who were able to rent out a room in their homes, which was already furnished and provided with fittings and bedding of sufficient quality to avoid additional expenditure. The average amount spent by the 67 farms in the sample is \$45,680, but if we ignore the two highest figures, \$392,000 and \$607,000, which are exceptional, the average drops to \$30,031. These two very high expenditure figures relate to buildings specifically designed to accommodate tourists in large numbers, and are the borderline cases that start to become defined as a tourist operator who happens to have a farm, rather than a farmer who happens to also be a tourist operator.

Table 4.15 Expenditure (Total set up costs)

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0 - \$1,000	7	10.4
\$1,001 - \$5,000	19	28.3
\$5,001 - \$10,000	15	22.4
\$10,001 - \$50,000	12	17.9
\$50,001 - \$100,000	4	5.9
\$100,001 - \$200,000	7	10.4
\$200,001 - \$300,000	1	1.5
\$300,001 - \$400,000	1	1.5
\$400,001 - \$500,000	-	-
\$500,001 - \$600,000	-	-
\$600,001 - \$700,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Expenditure on household effects (Table 4.16.) shows that over 73 percent of farms spent \$3,000 or less in this category. In addition, approximately 20 percent spent nothing, and twenty percent spent \$1,000 or less. Renovation and/or maintenance of existing accommodation (Table 4.17) also amounted to zero in a high percentage of cases (44.8 percent). Only 5 farms (7.5 percent) spent over \$20,000 in this category of expenditure.

Table 4.16 Estimated expenditure on household effects

Expenditure	Number	Percent
0	13	19.4
1 - \$1,000	13	19.4
\$1,001 - \$2,000	10	14.9
\$2,001 - \$3,000	13	19.4
\$3,001 - \$4,000	0	0
\$4,001 - \$5,000	3	4.5
\$5,001 - \$6,000	2	3.0
\$6,001 - \$7,000	1	1.5
\$7,001 - \$8,000	3	4.5
\$8,001 - \$9,000	0	0
\$9,001 - \$10,000	5	7.5
Over \$10,000	4	6.0
Total	67	100

Table 4.17 Estimated Expenditure on Renovation or Maintenance of Existing Accommodation

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	30	44.8
\$1 - \$10,000	26	38.8
\$10,001 - \$20,000	6	8.9
Over \$20,000	5	7.5
Total	67	100

Some farmers purchased additional buildings (for example, a weatherboard house) which were then transported onto the property. Table 4.18 shows that only 2 of the samples were involved in expenditure of \$40,000 and \$50,000 in this regard, while 64 farms (95.5 percent) did not spend anything in this respect.

Table 4. 18 Estimated Expenditure on Purchase of Additional Building for Accommodation

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	64	95.5
\$500	1	1.5
\$40,000	1	1.5
\$50,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

The larger operations are required to provide toilets, ablution blocks, and so on, and Table 4.19 shows that some spent large sums under this category. The majority (59 farms or 88 percent) were not involved in expenditure under this heading.

One farm spent \$10,000 on preparing caravan and/or camping sites (Table 4.20) but the majority (66 farms or 98.5 percent) did not spend anything in this category.

Table 4.19 Estimated Expenditure on Erection of Units, Ablution Blocks, Chalets or similar)

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	59	88.0
\$30,000	1	1.5
\$45,000	1	1.5
\$50,000	2	3.0
\$60,000	1	1.5
\$90,000	1	1.5
\$300,000	1	1.5
\$320,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.20 Estimated Expenditure on Construction of Caravan Park/Tent Camping Sites

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	66	98.5
\$10,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.21 Estimated Expenditure on Purchase of Horses/Saddles etc.

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	60	89.5
\$175	1	1.5
\$400	1	1.5
\$1,000	1	1.5
\$2,000	1	1.5
\$5,000	1	1.5
\$33,000	1	1.5
\$50,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.21 shows that 7 farms (10.5 percent) spent money on horses, saddles and riding equipment, while 60 farms (89.5 percent) were not involved in this expenditure. Ten farms (15 percent) were required to spend between \$200 and \$6,000 on the erection of additional fences and/or gates (usually to keep tourists away from livestock and vice versa), while 57 farms (85 percent) were not (Table 4.22). Construction of additional roads was required by 15 farms (22.4 percent of the sample) while 52 farms (77.6 percent) were adequately served (Table 4.23). Farmers in four wheel drive vehicles often drive all over their farms without the need for roads, but visitors cars are not suitable for this treatment, and neither are visitors (who are predominantly city dwellers) capable of or used to driving across fields or up and down hills without a clearly defined road or track. The construction of roads, and their subsequent maintenance, often in the form of truckloads of gravel being spread

over them from time to time, can be a significant expense for farmers. “Other” items of expenditure in set-up costs (for example, water tank installations) were not reported by 40 farms (59.7 percent of the sample) while at the other extreme, 4 farms (6 percent) reported expenditure of over \$20,000 under this heading (Table 4.24).

Table 4.22. Estimated Expenditure on Erection of Additional Fences/Gates

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	57	85.0
200	1	1.5
300	1	1.5
500	3	4.5
700	1	1.5
1,000	2	3.0
3,000	1	1.5
6,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.23 Estimated Expenditure on Construction of Additional Roads

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	52	77.6
100	1	1.5
300	1	1.5
500	3	4.5
800	1	1.5
1,000	4	6.0
1,500	1	1.5
2,000	1	1.5
3,000	1	1.5
5,000	1	1.5
16,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.24 Estimated Expenditure on Other Items

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0	40	59.7
1 - 5,000	19	28.3
5,001 - 10,000	0	0
10,001 - 15,000	1	1.5
15,001 - 20,000	3	4.5
Over 20,000	4	6.0
Total	67	100

Farmers were asked to estimate the percentage of their time that they spent on farm tourism activities compared to their farm activities. Some farmers (12 farms or 17.9 percent) reported that they spent no time on tourism activities, or that the amount of time would be negligible (Table 4.25). This would probably account for the time spent in answering a telephone call regarding a reservation, handing the cottage keys to the visitors (and collecting them when they left) as well as collecting payment for the farm stay. These farmers responded with a zero response as they felt that the time involved in these tourism activities would not really affect the time spent on their farm activities – rather it would probably reduce their leisure time slightly. Even those who did not have visitors would sometimes spend time under the tourism heading as they might be involved in painting or maintaining the tourist accommodation. A large number (30 farms or 44.8 percent) reported that 76 – 100 percent of their time was devoted to farm tourism activities. As explained above, this applies to those who host large groups, especially school groups, where legal and safety requirements call for close supervision, or those who host guests, especially overseas guests, in the homestead and become companions and tour guides to their guests while they are visiting.

Table 4.25 Estimate of Percentage of time spent on farm tourism activities compared to other farm activities

Estimate of time	Number of farms	Percent
0	12	17.9
10 - 25%	5	7.5
26 - 50%	12	17.9
51 - 75%	8	11.9
76 - 100%	30	44.8
Total	67	100

The estimated extra cost of farm tourism to the farm's yearly running costs was estimated to be zero or negligible by 37 farms (55.2 percent). This question did not include subscriptions to organisations such as the HFA, or advertising expenditure, which is dealt with separately. 14 farms (20.9 percent) estimated their extra yearly running costs at \$500 or less, while 11 farms (16.4 percent) reported an estimate of \$501 to \$2,000, and 5 farms (7.5 percent) estimated over \$2,000 per annum (Table 4.26).

Table 4.26 Estimated Extra Cost of Farm Tourism to the Farm's Yearly Running Costs

Extra cost	Number of farms	Percent
0	37	55.2
1 - 500	14	20.9
501 - 1,000	6	8.9
1,001 - 1,500	2	3.0
1,501 - 2,000	3	4.5
Over 2,000	5	7.5
Total	67	100

Farmers were asked what percentage of their revenue was derived from tourism, as opposed to revenue from the activities of the farm itself. The actual income in dollars was not asked, as it was felt that many would be unwilling to disclose this, and that the answers would be few and far between. It was also felt that such a question

would be invading the privacy of the respondents, and that as the survey was not designed as a financial or accounting survey instrument, percentages would be sufficient to give an idea of the importance of tourism. However, some respondents pointed out that there were other options in the answer, such as income from investments or superannuation, which were not asked. The results of this question must therefore be interpreted in the light of these comments. In fact one farmer stated that his farm ran at a loss (as it was a hobby farm), the tourism side of it ran at a loss (as it was conducted for personal and social reasons and not for monetary gain), but that he had sufficient income from other sources to offset these expenses. (This would be an exception to most farmers involved in tourism).

Almost two thirds of the farms reported that their percentage revenue from farm tourism was 15 percent or less (59.6 percent), while 16.4 percent reported the tourism revenue as between 16 and 35 percent. 9.0 percent reported it between 36 and 50 percent, and 6.0 percent reported it between 51 and 70 percent. Only 9.0 percent reported income from farm tourism between 71 and 100 percent of their income, but of these, 5 farms (7.5 percent) reported it as 100 percent of their income (Table 4.27). The average is 29.5 percent, but if the 5 responses of 100 percent are omitted, the average drops to 22.2 percent. Pizam and Pokela (1980) actually excluded from their study farms that claimed such a large percentage of their income came from tourism, as they defined them as tourism operators and not as farmers.

Table 4.27 Percentage revenue from farm tourism

Percentage revenue	Number of farms	Percent	HFA survey (Percent)
0 - 15%	40	59.6	36
16 - 35%	11	16.4	40
36 - 50%	6	9.0	12
51 - 70%	4	6.0	7
71 - 100%	6	9.0	3
total	67	100	100

The Host Farms Association conducted a mail survey of their members in 1992 and obtained the results shown for comparison in Table 4.27. There is not much similarity between the two tables, except that the lower two categories occupy the highest percentage of farms in both cases (the size of the HFA sample was 42).

Table 4.28 Stated importance of farm tourism to the enterprise

Importance	Number of farms	Percent
Couldn't do without it	14	20.9
Significantly raises the standard of living	13	19.4
Of minor importance	23	34.3
Not important	6	9.0
Makes a loss	1	1.5
Null response	10	14.9
Total	67	100

13 farms (19.4 percent) stated that the farm tourism income “significantly raises their standard of living”. 23 farms (34.3 percent) described the income from farm tourism as “of minor importance” or “not important”. One farm (1.5 percent of the sample) made a loss on conducting farm tourism, but this was because the tourism was mainly for personal and social reasons, and not for economic purposes.

In conjunction with the above question, farmers were asked whether they were interested in enlarging the farm visit enterprise. 4.3 percent stated that they were, but when questioned further, did not mean expansion of facilities such as more beds or new buildings, but rather an increased flow of customers to increase the occupancy rate.

Word of mouth was reported as one of the most important methods of publicity or marketing, with over 88 percent of respondents identifying it as important (Table 4.29). A similar result was obtained for the RACV Accommodation Guide (89.6 percent), making these two methods the only two with results in the eighty percent range.

Brochures and leaflets rated next most important (79.1 percent) with HFA guide and signs on premises being rated equally (70.1 percent). As far as signs on premises are concerned, it is interesting to note that some farmers gained almost all their business from signs by the roadside, whereas others felt that they gained very little custom through their signs. Victorian tourist bodies rated 67.2 percent, and cooperative marketing with other farmers 65.7 percent. The only other method of publicity/marketing that rated above 50 percent was the Royal Melbourne Show at 59.7 percent, this being a joint effort of a stand staffed by volunteers of the HFA.

Table 4.29 Methods of publicity/marketing

Method	Number of farms	Percent
Word of mouth	59	88.1
Posters/stickers	7	10.4
Brochures/leaflets	53	79.1
Newspapers	30	44.8
Radio	7	10.4
Television	4	6.0
Agricultural journals	6	9.0
Travel bureau	17	25.4
Victorian tourist bodies	45	67.2
Cooperative marketing	44	65.7
RACV guide	60	89.6
HFA guide	47	70.1
Agribusiness	22	32.8
Country Lane	16	23.9
Host Home Connection	13	19.4
Signs on premises	47	70.1
Yellow Pages	7	10.4
Direct mail	16	23.9
Personal sales calls	6	9.0
Sponsorships	2	3.0
Newsletter	9	13.4
Familiarisations	13	19.4
Journalists/trade	23	34.3
Special events	15	22.4
Contests/competitions	31	46.3
Trade shows	15	22.4
Royal Melbourne Show	40	59.7
Shopping centre promos	33	49.3
Video	6	9.0
Free gifts	10	14.9
Telephone marketing	3	4.5
Endorsements	4	6.0
Other	1	1.5

Annual advertising expenditure ranged from zero to \$7,000, with an average expenditure of \$1,468.73 (table 4.30). A large percentage (68.6 percent) of farms spent \$1,000 or less on advertising, while only 10.4 percent spent more than \$3,000.

Table 4.31 shows the breakdown for those who spent \$1,000 or less, and 15.2 percent of this category spent between \$401 and \$500. The other large categories were 0 - \$100 (45.6 percent) and \$101 to \$200 (13.0 percent). In some cases advertising amounted to printing some brochures or leaflets, sometimes very cheaply.

Table 4.30 Annual Advertising Expenditure

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0 - \$1,000	46	68.6
\$1,001 - \$2,000	10	14.9
\$2,001 - \$3,000	4	5.9
\$3,001 - \$4,000	-	-
\$4,001 - \$5,000	3	4.4
\$5,001 - \$6,000	2	3.0
\$6,001 - \$7,000	1	1.5
Over \$7,000	1	1.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.31 Advertising expenditure (Category 0 - \$1, 000)

Expenditure	Number of farms	Percent
0 - \$100	21	45.6
\$101 - \$200	6	13.0
\$201 - \$300	2	4.3
\$301 - \$400	3	6.5
\$401 - \$500	7	15.2
\$501 - \$600	2	4.3
\$601 - \$700	2	4.3
\$701 - \$800	1	2.2
\$801 - \$900	-	-
\$901 - \$1,000	2	4.3
Total	46	100

It is interesting to compare the results regarding advertising with the results found by Pizam and Pokela (1980). They found that “the primary means of advertising is through guidebooks (62.7 percent) and promotional material from associations”. They also reported that “in the average year, 30.2 percent of the respondents spent less than \$100 on advertising; 22.4 percent spent \$100 to \$200; 12.9 percent spent \$300 to \$499; and 21.6 percent spent over \$500” (page 207).

The main problem caused by farm tourism was lack of time to spend on the farm, which was reported by 23.9 percent of respondents (table 4.32). Invasion of privacy

was also reported by 17.9 percent but this was qualified by the comment that they expected to lose a certain amount of privacy by becoming involved in farm tourism. 17.9 percent reported damage to farm property, building or equipment. These were mainly confined to a small number of cases where visitors had behaved badly, for example by taking a farm vehicle and using it without permission. Other problems were not a major deterrent to hosting visitors, but rather something to be expected by allowing strangers, often not acquainted with farming procedures and customs, to use farm premises.

Insurance claims as a result of serious problems caused by farm tourism were reported by 6.0 percent, but again these were notable exceptions. For example, in one case a school group arrived by bus and one small girl fell while disembarking from the bus and broke her elbow. Because this happened on farm premises, the farmer was covered by insurance. In another case a guest had interfered with the pelmet in a cottage, which then fell onto the head of the next guest who attempted to close the curtains. Properties offering horse riding usually had the biggest insurance policies, as a result of the likelihood of injury being much greater.

Table 4.32 Effect of farm tourism on farming

Problem	Number of farms	Percent
Lack of time to spend on the farm	16	23.9
Reduced capital for the farm	4	6.0
Reduced space from buildings	-	-
Lowered farm production	2	3.0
Reduced interest in farming	4	6.0
Invasion of privacy	12	17.9
Loss of original rural attractions such as lifestyle, seclusion	4	6.0
Damage to farm property, buildings or equipment	12	17.9
Nuisance to animals	9	13.4
Littering/untidiness	8	11.9
Gates left open	11	16.4
Insurance claims	4	6.0

When asked for the reasons why they were involved in farm tourism, 76.1 percent of the sample stated that they were seeking to obtain extra income (Table 4.33). A number (35.8 percent) used farm tourism to get over a drought or lean times, and more often than not, continued to operate tourism aspects of the farm when other conditions improved. Some farmers (32.8 percent) saw tourism as a future major investment, and in some cases expected to wind down farm activities in favour of tourism. In other cases increasing tourism income was seen as a way to increase investment in the farming side of operations. Respondents were able to answer more than one category for reason in their answer, and 67.2 percent stated that they felt that meeting people was a reason for becoming involved in farm tourism. Usually this was an ancillary reason, linked to the provision of extra income. 46.3 percent gave “spare capital to use” as a reason but by this did not mean cash, but rather the fact that they had an asset, such as a cottage or other building, which could be used to generate income. An extra interest was stated by 56.7 percent, but again this subordinate to the generation of extra income reason, rather than in place of it. Some additional responses were given under the heading of “other”, and these were as follows: to give people an appreciation of the rural community and farming life (4 responses); diversification (4 responses); to improve children’s social skills/give children contact with city children (2 responses); provides a change in lifestyle (2 responses); and feel the need to share view/scenery/surroundings/house/farm with others (3 responses).

Table 4.33 Reasons for involvement in farm tourism

(Question : What are the main reasons why you are involved in farm tourism?)

Reason	Number of farms	Percent
Extra income	51	76.1
To get over lean times	24	35.8
Future major investment	22	32.8
Meeting people	45	67.2
Spare capital to use	31	46.3
An extra interest	38	56.7
Other	15	22.4

Lynch (1994) conducted a survey of bed and breakfast operators to determine their motivation and his results are listed in Table 4.34. Frater (1983) and Fry (1984) also asked similar questions of farm operators, and their results are listed in Table 4.35, together with Lynch's results, and the results from the present study.

Table 4.34 Summary of responses to attitude questions on motivations (bed and breakfast operators)

Response	Percent
Aim: meet people	83
Aim: make money	68
BB as a hobby	37
BB as a business	62
Money is extra cash	50
Money is essential	65

Source: Lynch (1994)

The variations in the results from the different studies may be in part because they are fairly small samples, and also because the samples are taken from differing populations in very different geographical areas.

Table 4.35 Motivation for becoming involved in farm tourism/bed and breakfast

Motivation	Frater (1983) N = 200	Fry (1984) N = 31	Kidd (1992) N = 67	Lynch (1994) N = 41
Extra income	35%	67%	78%	50%
To get over lean times	20%	N/A	36%	N/A
Future major investment	N/A	N/A	33%	N/A
Meeting people	25%	50%	67%	83%
Spare capital or assets to use	16%	N/A	46%	N/A
An extra interest/hobby	N/A	50%	57%	37%
Other	N/A	N/A	27%	N/A

Notes: N/A indicates “not available”; Frater’s study appeared to be mutually exclusive in the recording of the answers, whereas the studies by Fry, Kidd and Lynch were not mutually exclusive, as respondents could answer more than one category; and Lynch’s study relates to bed and breakfast operators, who are not necessarily all farmers.

The final table in this section (Table 4.36) relates to the reason given by the farmer for his or her success in farm tourism. The highest percentage (82.1 percent) stated that the personality of the operator was most important, but nearby attractions came a close second (80.6 percent), confirming comments made by others that the farm is often chosen as a base from which to visit attractions in the nearby district. Type of farm did not rate as highly (52.2 percent) and many farmers in fact stated that they did not feel it was of the utmost importance.

Table 4.36. Success in farm tourism

Reason	Number of farms	Percent
Personality of operator	55	82.1
Nearby attractions	54	80.6
Location of the farm	53	79.1
Type of accommodation	48	71.6
Surroundings	45	67.2
Type of farm	35	52.2
Other	24	35.8

Characteristics of farm guests

Tables 4.37 to 4.47 relate to estimates given by farmers of the type of guests that visit farms. 28 farms (41.8 percent) do not have singles, while 34 farms (5.7 percent) state

that between 1 and 25% of their guests are singles. Four farms (6 percent) estimate singles to be between 26 and 50 percent of their guests, while only 1 farm (1.5 percent) stated that singles were between 51 and 75 percent of their guests. No farms estimated that more than 75 percent of their guests were singles (Table 4.37).

Table 4.37 Estimate of percentage of guests who are singles

Percentage	Number of farms	Percent
0	28	41.8
1 - 25%	34	50.7
26 - 50%	4	6.0
51 - 75%	1	1.5
76 - 100%	-	-
Total	67	100

27 farms (40.3 percent) estimated couples to be 1 to 25 percent of their guests, while 14 farms (20.9 percent) estimated couples to be between 26 and 50 percent of their guests (table 4.38). 20 farms (29.8 percent) estimated that families with young children (Under 12) made up between 26 and 50 percent of their guest. Only 8 farms (11.9 percent) estimated these families made up between 76 to 100 percent of their guest (Table 4.39).

Table 4.38 Estimate of percentage of guests who are couples

Percentage couples	Number of farms	Percent
0	9	13.4
1 - 25%	27	40.3
26 - 50%	14	20.9
51 - 75%	5	7.5
76 - 100%	12	17.9
Total	67	100

Table 4.39 Estimate of percentage of guests who are families with young children (under 12)

Percentage (children U12)	Number of farms	Percent
0	9	13.4
1 - 25%	17	25.4
26 - 50%	20	29.8
51 - 75%	13	19.4
76 - 100%	8	11.9
Total	67	100

With regard to guests who are families with older children (over 12), 37 farms (55.2 percent) estimated that none of their guests fell into this category. 16 farms (23.9 percent) estimated that 1 to 25 percent of their guests were in this category, while 12

farms (17.9 percent) estimated that between 26 and 50 percent of their guests fell into this category (Table 4.40).

Table 4.40 Estimate of percentage of guests who are families with older children (over 12)

Percentage (children O12)	Number of farms	Percent
0	37	55.2
1 - 25%	16	23.9
26 - 50%	12	17.9
51 - 75%	1	1.5
76 - 100%	1	1.5
Total	67	100

When asked about groups visiting their properties, 37 farms (55.2 percent) replied in the negative. 20 farms (29.8 percent) responded that groups were estimated to make up 1 to 25 percent of their guests. 5 farms (7.5 percent) estimated 76 to 100 percent of their visitors to be groups – these would be mainly the properties with facilities for large numbers of guests (Table 4.41). 59 farms (88 percent) estimated that city dwellers made up 76 to 100 percent of their guests and only 4 farms (6 percent) answered this question with a zero response (Table 4.42).

Table 4.41 Estimate of percentage of guests who are groups

Percentage groups	Number of farms	Percent
0	37	55.2
1 - 25%	20	29.8
26 - 50%	2	3.0
51 - 75%	3	4.5
76 - 100%	5	7.5
Total	67	100

Table 4.42 Estimate of percentage of guests who are city dwellers

Percentage city dwellers	Number of farms	Percent
0	4	6.0
1 - 25%	1	1.5
26 - 50%	1	1.5
51 - 75%	2	3.0
76 - 100%	59	88.0
Total	67	100

Professional people also rated highly in the estimates of customer breakdown; 34 farms (50.7 percent) estimated that 76 to 100 percent of their guests were professional people (Table 4.43). It is interesting to note that Pizam and Pokela (1980, p. 207) reported that “guests were predominantly adult (62.2 percent), city-dwellers (89.62

percent), employed as professionals (44.86 percent), or as business men or women (42.23 percent)".

Table 4.43 Estimate of percentage of guests who are professional people

Percentage professional	Number of farms	Percent
0	6	9.0
1 - 25%	6	9.0
26 - 50%	12	17.9
51 - 75%	9	13.4
76 - 100%	34	50.7
Total	67	100

37 farms (55.2 percent) estimated that their guests from within Victoria made up 76 to 100 percent of the total (Table 4.44) while 44 farms (65.7 percent) estimated that interstate guests made up 1 to 25 percent of their visitors (Table 4.45). No farms estimated interstate visitors to be higher than 50 percent of their visitors, while 17 farms (25.4 percent) estimated that they had no interstate visitors. Overseas visitors made up between 1 and 25 percent of all visitors, according to 33 farms (49.2 percent) while 16 farms (23.9 percent) estimated that they had no overseas visitors (Table 4.46).

Table 4.44 Estimate of percentage of guests who are from within Victoria

Percentage from Victoria	Number of farms	Percent
0	6	9.0
1 - 25%	9	13.4
26 - 50%	11	16.4
51 - 75%	4	6.0
76 - 100%	37	55.2
Total	67	100

Table 4.45. Estimate of percentage of guests who are from other states in Australia

Percentage interstate	Number of farms	Percent
0	17	25.4
1 - 25%	44	65.7
26 - 50%	6	9.0
51 - 75%	-	-
76 - 100%	-	-
Total	67	100

Table 4.46 Estimate of percentage of guests who are from overseas

Percentage overseas	Number of farms	Percent
0	16	23.9
1 - 25%	33	49.2
26 - 50%	10	14.9
51 - 75%	4	6.0
76 - 100%	4	6.0
Total	67	100

Table 4.47 shows the groups that visit farm properties. Aside from “other”, which included a wide diversity of groups, the largest category was disabled adults and/or children (28.4 percent of farms). Next largest groups reported were religious organisations and corporate groups (each 19.4 percent).

Table 4.47 Groups which have visited farm properties

Groups	Number of farms	Percent
Kinder/pre-school	3	4.5
Primary school	9	13.4
Secondary school	8	11.9
Post-secondary	8	11.9
Senior citizens	10	14.9
Lions/Apex/Rotary	5	7.5
Religious organisations	13	19.4
Cubs/scouts/brownies	6	9.0
Disabled adults/children	19	28.4
Corporate groups	13	19.4
Coach tours	10	14.9
Other	30	44.8

Reliability of results

The results from the survey of farms were subjected to statistical analysis, but as was expected, the size of the sample was too small for any firm conclusions to be reached. The chi square results from a number of cross-tabulations showed that in all cases, there was a high percentage of cells which had counts less than 5, which suggests that chi square is not a valid test in the context of this study. It was not expected that these tables would yield much data due to the small size of the sample, but the analysis provided some interesting indicative findings. A discussion of the major findings of this chapter appears in Chapter 7.

Summary of discussion

Farm features

Most farms in the sample were found to be up to 50 hectares in size, and approximately half the farms visited fell within 200 kilometres from the city. Almost one third (32.8 percent) were cattle and sheep farms. Most of the farms (almost 70 percent) can accommodate 10 or fewer guests, while 16.4 percent are able to cater for over 20 guests at a time. The latter were often purpose-built facilities for school groups or similar.

Over 20 percent of farms reported no full-time workers, while many employed part-time workers for cleaning or catering.

Visitor features

Many visitors are attracted to farms because of activities offered, and the most popular activity is bushwalking (19.4 percent), walking, watching farming or observing animals, rather than playing sport or becoming involved in actual farm work. Other studies examined found similar results.

Farmer practices

In terms of accommodation, approximately 43 percent of the sample offered accommodation in the homestead, while 65 percent offered self contained accommodation. Overseas visitors tend to prefer homestead accommodation, while domestic tourists often opt for self contained accommodation, and the latter tend to use the farm as a base for other activities such as sporting activities or sightseeing.

Dinner was provided in 59.7 percent of cases, while breakfast was provided by 67.2 percent, and 58.2 percent stated that they would provide lunch, usually in take-away form. Cooking utensils, crockery/cutlery and blankets were usually provided.

The majority of visitors in a year fell into the category 1-100 (40.3 percent) but some farms reported more, and 6 farms reported over 500 visitors, usually those taking school groups or similar. A large number of these visitors are repeat customers.

In terms of bookings, 89.6 percent received direct bookings, and 62.7 percent reported bookings through the host farm association to which they belonged. 25.4 percent of the farms in the sample commenced farm tourism in 1991 or 1992. Set-up costs varied, and 10 percent of farmers spent \$1,000 or less in setting up for visitors. The average was \$30,031, if the two highest reported expenditures were ignored. These were \$392,000 and \$607,000, which were exceptionally high, and reflect borderline

cases of farmers being better defined as tourist operators. 73 percent of farms spent less than \$3,000 on household effects in set-up costs.

Most farmers did not need to purchase additional buildings, or renovate existing accommodation facilities, and most did not need to erect units, ablution blocks, chalets or similar buildings. Only one farm in the sample was involved in expenditure for the construction of caravan park or tent camping sites, and spent \$10,000 in this regard. Most farms (89.5 percent) were not involved in expenditure on horses or saddles etc. for tourism purposes, and most farms (85 percent) did not find it necessary to erect additional fences and/or gates to keep tourists away from livestock (and vice versa). 59.7 percent of farms did not report expenditure under the heading of "other" which included water tank installations, while 4 farms reported expenditure of over \$20,000 under this heading.

The percentage of time spent on tourism activities compared to farm activities varied. 44.8 percent of farms reported that between 76 and 100 percent of their time was devoted to farm tourism activities. The estimated cost of farm tourism to the farm's yearly running costs was estimated to be zero or negligible by 55.2 percent of farms in the sample. Almost two thirds reported that their percentage revenue from farm tourism was 15 percent or less (59.6 percent), while 34.3 percent reported that the income from farm tourism was of minor importance.

Most farms (88 percent) indicated that word of mouth was one of the most important means of promotion. Other highly ranked methods of promotion were brochures and leaflets, Victorian tourist bodies, and cooperative marketing with other farmers.

Advertising expenditure ranged from zero to \$7,000, with an average expenditure of approximately \$1,500.

Regarding problems caused by farm tourism, 23.9 percent of respondents mentioned lack of time to spend on the farm as the most important problem. 76.1 percent of the farmers stated that they were seeking to obtain extra income by becoming involved in farm tourism, and 67.2 percent stated that they felt that meeting people was a reason for becoming involved in farm tourism. 82.1 percent felt that the main reason for success in farm tourism was the personality of the farm tourism operator.

A high proportion of visitors were found to be families with parents aged 31-50 and children under 1, who were professionals and city dwellers, mainly residing in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

These findings describe the current state of farm tourism in terms of farmer attitudes, expenditure, and other important aspects of setting up and promoting a farm tourism enterprise.

CHAPTER 5

GUEST RESPONSES AND EXPERIENCES

Discussion of guest responses and experiences

This chapter outlines the results obtained from the mail survey of 260 people who had visited farms for recreation and tourism.

Farm visitors were asked a number of questions relating to their experience with farm tourism. As related elsewhere, some of the respondents had visited more than one farm, and the questionnaire did not allow for this. However, these respondents answered for the farm they had visited most recently and this did not affect the answers in any way, as only one experience was described. The questions allowed for both quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses.

Evaluation of the farm on arrival

These answers are summarised below, with the percentages given for the various responses. The detailed results are given in the tables in the chapter which outline the breakdown of totals for each answer. In the case of open-ended answers, some of the comments have been included in this chapter to show the sort of reasoning behind the answers chosen by the various respondents.

Respondents were first asked whether the farm was what they expected on arrival or better or worse than expected. As shown in Table 5.1, 44.6 percent found the farm to be exactly what they expected. 40.8 percent considered it to be better than they expected, while only 14.6 percent reported that it was worse than they expected. In other words, 85.4 percent of respondents were favourably impressed with the farm on arrival.

Table 5.1 Impressions on arrival at the farm

Response	Frequency	Percent
Exactly what you expected	116	44.6
Better than you expected	106	40.8
Worse than you expected	38	14.6
Total	260	100

Those who rated the farm better or worse than expected were then asked why they had made this evaluation, with an open-ended question which yielded a number of different responses. Some of the comments made by those who rated the farm better than expected are shown below:

The host and hostess were so friendly. On our arrival they showed us around our accommodation and the surrounds and visited us for afternoon tea.

Comfort of the accommodation eg. wood chopped, size of accommodation, friendliness of farmer family. Views from accommodation.

Much bigger – more rooms, better appointed and the warm greeting of the hostess may us very welcome.

More animals than we expected, exclusive play facilities for children. We had the freedom to fish, walk and enjoy the property and also light a campfire.

Better because the hosts had obviously put a lot of effort into making our stay a relaxed and enjoyable one. The personal touches were what stood out the most as additional features of the place.

Yes, newly painted, cosy good fashionable bedding – real effort had been made to make the cottage restful and comfortable.

The location was much more beautiful than written and verbal descriptions had indicated.

The farm was very tidy which is unusual. The fire was lit in the house when we arrived which made it very cosy.

Lovely setting and very tranquil lots of trees and cottages well spaced, fire wood at house ready.

Lots of equipment for children to use more space than expected lovely house larger than expected.

Nice quiet peaceful setting amongst trees and fields – cattle coming up to the doorway.

Lovely area, fantastic views. Setting was good, privacy from the neighbours. Furnishing good and ample, bedroom good. Kitchen appliances, utensils and crockery more than ample.

Those visitors who rated the farm worse than expected made comments such as the following:

This was advertised as a working farm and while I knew it didn't have "pet" hobby farm animals for children I did expect to see paddocks with cows and sheep. We walked considerable distance over the property with the children and only saw a few sheep in the distance. Also had been told it was a 4 bedroom was a 3 bedroom one off an outside verandah was the only one with single beds. This caused problems with all children being 7 or under, especially for night trips to the toilet.

The owner of the farm and his obnoxious son were there the first night and then left. The manager did a reasonable job given limited resources. The holiday was short on farm "personality".

There was no one waiting to greet us, we knocked several times and walked around for several minutes before anyone came.

The farm house was not in a good condition and the surrounding area was overgrown with lots of mice and we were told to be cautious of snakes.

The hosts had arrived home from holiday 10 minutes prior to my arrival – booking was accepted by one of the children. Didn't really feel welcome as they argued among themselves about the booking, not in front of me fortunately. Farm animals were not readily accessible.

Worse is too strong a word – but found it difficult to work out relationship to house – expected a little more inclusion in to the farm life. Location far more isolated than expected.

When they said it was 'rustic' we didn't realise how rustic. It was old, cold and dirty.

*Expected more of a working farm.
Farm we visited appeared to be a hobby farm.*

The couple who live on the farm were quite odd. The 'farm' was very small and somewhat neglected, bedroom very small.

Husband had been drinking, wife not there, accommodation not ready even though it was 8 p.m.

I had expected access to the homestead garden as indicated by the advertising brochures. However the only time we visited the garden was on a guided tour by the owner.

It did not have the entertainment I was led to expect for my child.

Poor condition outside house very muddy with nothing much for children to do.

It was not as secluded from the house as was indicated, for the price paid the cottage was not as luxurious as it was made out to be.

Many of these comments relate to a lack of clear communication between farm host and customer – the customer often states that the facility does not live up to expectations. The farmer sometimes creates an image in the customer's mind which is too far removed from the real situation for customers to forgive the exaggeration.

Some customers were upset as they felt that the farmer was “too prepared” for the visit, as the following comment indicates:

Too neat and manicured. Didn't look like a real farm.

Evaluation of the quality of accommodation

The visitors were also asked to rate their impressions of the quality of accommodation. In this case 48.5 percent stated that the quality of the accommodation was exactly what they expected. 39.2 percent rated the quality of accommodation better than they expected, while only 12.3 percent rated it worse than expected. Thus, 87.7 percent of respondents were favourably impressed by the quality of the accommodation (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Impressions of the quality of accommodation

Response	Frequency	Percent
Exactly what you expected	126	48.5
Better than you expected	102	39.2
Worse than you expected	32	12.3
Total	260	100

Some of those who were impressed by the quality of accommodation gave the following comments:

It was much larger than expected – The family had also left a home-made chocolate cake and cookies to make us feel at home. Lovely thought. They also gave us freshly baked bread in the morning – wonderful.

Wonderful accommodation, clean, spacious comfortable, good fixtures, furniture and facilities.

House area and bathrooms large enough to accommodate 10 of us comfortably. Help from host great. Home away from home atmosphere. All facilities in the kitchen etc. were provided.

Facilities and house amenities were very good. En suite – plenty of clean towels etc (we had a puppy) well catered for.

Did not expect such a wonderful collection of ready split wood to be on hand for wood stove and open fire. Cold and continuous rain for a week meant that these were going continuously and were the only heating. Luckily we enjoy fires and wood stove cooking.

Also there was information about the district supplied by the hosts. The owners were pleased to talk about their farm and the animals there. It was like staying with friends or family.

The visitors who felt that the quality of the accommodation was worse than they expected justified their answers with comments such as the following:

The accommodation itself was fine – large comfortable house. Although I expected to have to bring all food etc. I was surprised that there wasn't even a jug of milk (on a dairy farm) a tea bag or even a cake of soap and subsequently had to get back in car, drive 10km to get such necessities.

Accommodation was much more basic than expected. Our requests had not been implemented, although we were told over the phone that they would be.

Smaller than expected, with sufficient amenity and appointment. Safety concerns: Pot belly stove (only practicable heating) had no safety heating. Stools were only form of table/bench seating –uncomfortable for one week and dangerous for children.

In some cases these comments were particularly critical of the quality of the accommodation, as the following two examples indicate:

Old, bed bugs, no hot water pressure, very cold at night.

It was far more cramped than the advertisement led to believe.

Evaluation of the overall experience

The third question in this format was asked in respect to the overall experience on the farm. 37.7 percent rated the experience to be exactly what they expected; 48.1 percent thought it was better than they expected; while only 14.2 percent rated the overall experience worse than they expected. Therefore 85.8 percent of farm visitors were favourably impressed with the overall experience of farm tourism (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Impressions of overall experience

Response	Frequency	Percent
Exactly what you expected	98	37.7
Better than you expected	125	48.1
Worse than you expected	37	14.2
Total	260	100

Those who rated the overall experience worse than expected made comments such as the following:

It was a lovely weekend but I wanted the children to get some experience of the farm animals, not to pat but how they really exist. It was more like a country club – which was lovely for the adults, and the children had a good time but we were all disappointed that we didn't see the animals we had expected.

Advertised TV was getting repaired. It was school holidays, raining and we had 4 children. Replacement TV was a necessity. Driveway very

muddy. Two cars got bogged. Took 2 hours to get the cars out. The owners were not at home that day.

There was little to do. Feeding the animals twice a day involved emptying bucket of chaff into feed troughs and took about 15 minutes. Breakfast was supplied, but had to be eaten by no later than 8 am, not much of a sleep in. A bit intrusive in fact.

Our weekend away was dampened by the fact that our "hearty country breakfast" wasn't sufficient for us on both mornings especially since we didn't indulge at all. Our other disappointment was that we didn't have enough hot water for the spa in the evening after only having quick showers in the morning. We did write a letter stating our disappointment.

The manager was doing her job, the owner didn't care and it showed.

From an adult point of view our experience was great – relaxing etc. However I expected more activities available for my four teenage children who really became very bored.

They were very busy and did not have enough time for us – when we left they were out.

No detergent to wash dishes, owners whining about host farm, electric fence left on around house when they said they would turn it off.

Farmer had little interest in showing us the farm, despite us having young children and having expressed an interest.

I didn't feel comfortable in the house.

Many of the complaints centred around the lack of interest shown to visitors by the hosts, while those visitors who were impressed by the experience, often attributed it to the time taken by the hosts to show them around the farm or to entertain their children. The expectation of a farm holiday for many guests is that the farmer will devote time to the visitor, and when this is not forthcoming, the experience becomes less enjoyable.

Farm visitors who rated the overall experience better than they expected gave the following reasons for their answers:

Most enjoyable, the host and hostess went out of their way to accommodate the children, eg. horse riding and interaction with the farm.

Host family warm and friendly – time out to talk and explain things about the farm especially to our young son.

The couple who ran the farm were very hospitable and our children had the run of the place. It was wet but we still learned a lot about dairy farming and enjoyed ourselves.

Hosts were very friendly and accommodating. They spent quite a bit of time with us and took us around the farm.

Hostess provided tour of the farm and gave time to our children. Hostess provided exquisite evening meal and breakfast.

Our host spent lots of time with the family and went out of his way with the children.

Fantastic - they fitted everything around us and accommodated the wishes of the children all the time.

Extremely hospitable hosts that made us very welcome and included us and the children in the farm activities.

It was a wonderful experience particularly for the children, who were involved in many small scale activities – feeding chickens, collecting eggs, picking vegies etc.

Very friendly host and delicious home made bread for first day's breakfast. We felt very welcome to wander anywhere and if the kids didn't show up for animal feeding, they were invited so we knew we were really welcome.

The farmer was excellent- especially with our young sons he let them help feed, ride on the back of the ute – all participation – exactly what we wanted. The farm had two dogs – very friendly ones – because of those friendly dogs our boys are no longer afraid of all dogs.

The people were so friendly it felt that we were visiting friends. However we still had plenty of privacy.

Children thoroughly enjoyed the farm experience, the availability of bush land on the property was also appreciated. The farm family were delightful – every ready to offer assistance, but also not intrusive.

Our 7 year son – would return at anytime – after being there for one day – I was so relaxed. I felt it had been a week – I loved it my husband enjoyed helping with the feeding of the animals – Our 16 year old was a little bored.

Booking arrangements and return visits.

When asked if they would return for another stay, 64.6 percent answered in the affirmative, 21.9 percent answered that they would not, while 13.5 percent were unsure (Table 5.4.)

Table 5.4 Likelihood of a return visit to the same farm in the future

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	168	64.6
No	57	21.9
Not sure	35	13.5
Total	260	100

This question was extended into another, which asked whether they would visit a different farm in the future. Table 5.5. shows the results, which give a very favourable 96.2 percent answering in the affirmative. Only 0.4 percent said no, and 3.5 percent were unsure. The experience at one farm therefore does not seem to put people off visiting another (if that experience was originally negative). On the other hand, perhaps the visitors prefer to visit different farms for the sake of variety, and that is why only 64.6 percent answered that they would visit the same farm again. There was no open-ended answer allowed for in the replies to these questions, and

further research would be required to ascertain the exact reasons for the answers given.

Table 5.5 Likelihood of visiting a different farm in the future

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	250	96.2
No	1	0.4
Not sure	9	3.5
Total	260	100

In light of requests from the Host Farms Association (HFA), to measure the effectiveness of their communications, respondents were asked whether they had sufficient information to make a decision at the time of booking (Table 5.6).

Obviously those people who had visited a farm previously would be likely to answer this question in the affirmative. Replies indicated that 75.8 percent felt that they had sufficient information at the time of booking; 14.2 percent did not feel that they had sufficient information; and 10.0 percent were unsure.

Table 5.6 Sufficiency of information available at time of booking

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	197	75.8
No	37	14.2
Not sure	26	10.0
Total	260	100

This question was then asked with respect to a future booking – “in terms of the information that you now have with regards to host farms, would you feel confident about making a booking in the future?” The results are shown in Table 5.7. Of the 260 respondents, 83.1 percent felt confident about a future booking while only 4.6 percent answered in the negative, and 12.3 percent were unsure.

Table 5.7 Confidence in making a future booking

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	216	83.1
No	12	4.6
Not sure	32	12.3
Total	260	100

The answers to these questions are closely related to the quality of the communication that occurs between the booking agent (or farmer) and the prospective visitor. Those

guests who were left in no doubt about the form of the accommodation and/or the remoteness or convenience in respect to other dwellings or shops, were more likely to report positively on their experiences.

Respondents were also asked what form of accommodation they usually used on holidays, and the results are shown in Table 5.8. Of the various forms of accommodation listed, 20.8 percent chose a hotel; 31.3 percent a motel; 30.9 percent a host farm; 8.5 percent a bed and breakfast (other than a farm); 23.9 percent reported staying with friends and relatives; 20.1 percent chose a caravan park; 15.1 percent chose camping; and 19.7 percent responded “other”. The “other” category provided answers that were widely dispersed, mostly single responses, with the highest number of the 51 responses being 5 (holiday unit, and self-contained unit, respectively).

What is important about Table 5.8 is that only 8.5 percent of respondents answered that they would usually stay in a bed and breakfast form of accommodation. This indicates that the choice of farm is a deliberate choice for a farm rather than as a variation of a bed and breakfast provider.

Table 5.8 Form of accommodation usually used on holidays

Form of accommodation	Frequency	Percent
Hotel	54	20.8
Motel	81	31.3
Host farm	80	30.9
Bed and breakfast (other than a farm)	22	8.5
Friends and relatives	62	23.9
Caravan park	52	20.1
Camping	39	15.1
Other	51	19.7

Note: Percentages do not total 100 as respondents could choose more than one category.

Activities on the farm

Farm activities are those which are usually part of the daily life on a farm. According to Ogilvie (1989, pp.5 – 7), they may include “shearing the wool from sheep, treating sheep and cattle for various internal and external parasites, mustering, droving and inspecting sheep and cattle, repair and construction of fences and other farm improvements, taking stock to and from the markets, ploughing, sowing and harvesting, feeding stock with grain and hay in dry times and a multitude of other activities.”

A number of those most likely to be offered by various farms were listed on the questionnaire mailed to visitors. The office of the HFA was interested in the results of this question, as they needed some feedback on how well these activities were actually managed in terms of visitors on the farms.

The farm visitors were asked whether they were able to experience or take part in the activities advertised during their farm stay. Table 5.9 shows that 62.3 percent reported that they were able to, while 12.7 percent felt that they had been unable to do so. 24.2 percent had been able to take part in some of the activities that were advertised. These responses reinforce the importance of communication, and of only promising what can be offered. Disappointed customers will not return for a second visit, and, worse still, the experience may translate into a negative attitude towards all farm tourism, with the resultant negative word of mouth preventing other potential customers from sampling this form of tourism.

Table 5.9 Opportunity to experience or take part in activities

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	162	62.3
No	33	12.7
Partly	63	24.2
Missing responses	2	0.8
Total	260	100

Respondents were asked to comment briefly on their answers to this question, in order to ascertain why they had given a particular response. Some of the answers given were the following:

We checked the cattle, learnt about canola – fed the geese, chooks, counted the goslings born each morning – saw the new calves – even went to the sheep sale in Warracknabeal.

Feeding cows, driving and riding on tractor. Best of all a calf was born whilst we were there – can't beat that!

The time and consideration spent on families staying was great. Nothing was too much trouble.

Horse riding, farm walks, feeding out hay, checking calving stock.

Children were each given a horse ride, collected eggs and kept some! We watched milking and we helped feed the calves.

Farmer involved children in feeding animals, collecting eggs and took all of us on a tour of the farm informing us of the history and general running of the farm.

We stayed for 2 nights and were the only guests at the farm. The host was happy to take us on his feeding round both mornings and to give our son a ride on the pony.

Experienced rounding up cattle! Saw difficult birth of calf assisted by the farmer, my child had plenty of pony rides. Collected eggs from the chicken.

In most of these cases, the experience of actually becoming involved in the day to day activities of the farm provides the main impetus for the favourable comments:

We were not staying on a working farm but we were taken to one close by. The children enjoyed the drive on the tractor, feeding the cows etc., riding the horses.

The children love farm life and rounding up sheep with the dogs made their day. Milking cows and feeding calves.

We were able to go walking, feed animals, swim in the dam, go to the cookie factory, ride on the boats and ride on the tractors. There were lots of other fun-filled activities as well.

Our teenager loved to feed animals, hop on a tractor or ride a four wheel drive to check stock etc., this was available and we all enjoyed getting an insight into the host's life on a property.

We fed the horses, chicken, cows etc., morning and night. The children had pony rides every day. They collected the eggs and organised the feed for the horses and cows.

We milked the cows every day, rode the motorbike most days, put the cows into the paddock after milking. We basically helped with whatever the farmer was doing on each day.

Lambing and calving season so children were involved in this – very enjoyable for city dwellers. Son also took eldest out rabbit shooting which he thoroughly enjoyed.

A range of great activities for our family eg., tractor rides, bike riding, collecting eggs, mushrooming, fishing, feeding animals etc.

My 12 year old daughter accompanies me and we (she) took part in many farm activities directly and indirectly, feeding the animals (cows, chickens) gathering eggs, nature walks, fishing.

The above responses indicate that these farm visitors expected the farm to be the main source of entertainment during the holiday, and were not merely using the farm as a base to visit other attractions in the area.

The 12.7 percent of visitors who did not experience activities that were advertised (or expected farm activities even if they were not advertised), together with the 24.2 percent who only experienced activities partly, were less impressed with the way they were treated, and some of their comments appear below:

None advertised really, except for bushwalk and native animals advertised as handy to Wilson's Promontory – it's miles away.

The children would have liked more involvement but the activities were restricted to collecting eggs and feeding the cattle once.

Again the brochure implied that it was a working farm with a large number of animals. We saw almost none. Access to the platypus viewing in the creek was not viable.

The horse riding couldn't happen when it suited us. There were no other activities advertised and none took place.

The only activity was feeding the animals! Not a lot to choose from.

My two children really enjoyed staying on a dairy farm and taking part in the activities. I was brought up on a dairy farm and they wanted to do some of the things I told them I'd done when I was young.

Owners were not that children friendly, were polite but did not volunteer much assistance.

It was advertised there were farm activities but while we were there nothing was mentioned of anything of that nature.

Lack of inclusion in the farm activities and sense of sharing main disappointment. Owners friendly but mainly occupied elsewhere.

We felt we were led to believe that several activities would be available to us and our children on the farm, but the activities consisted of 5 minute displays, we were disappointed and were left wondering what to do with ourselves and therefore needed to travel to the town and district more than we planned to and became expensive.

We took our children on a farm holiday to show them how farmers work. Unfortunately we didn't see milking of cows, feeding of chickens or anything terribly interesting for the children.

Not all visitors appreciate that farm activities cannot always be laid on to order, as they depend on seasons or particular weather.

Comments on this aspect of farm activities were in the form of the following:

The owners said it was the wrong season although it stated farm activities in the book.

No the host did not seem interested in us, because it was as they said “off season” on the farm.

Twelve visitors (4.6 percent) stated that they were not particularly concerned about the lack of activities as they were not visiting the farm for this reason, but rather to have a relaxing holiday away from the pressures of the city:

We did an initial tour of the farm the day we arrived. After that we settled into a relaxed frame of mind and didn't have the inclination or energy to participate in any other farm activities.

We used the pool, spa, sauna, and table tennis table. We actually went there to do nothing.

We chose not to.

But we go purely for relaxation.

No activities advertised, not a working farm. Was what we wanted – just needed to do our own things, enjoy the country, isolation and walk.

There was an option to take part in daily farm activities – however we chose not to.

Just relaxed – didn't get up to much.

None advertised and were not wishing to take part in any. We were only looking for quiet self contained accommodation.

Not of interest to us.

Lots of bushwalking from farm but did not participate in farm activities as not interested.

Did not want to.

The farm visitors were asked to rate the importance of various activities that were available to them when staying on a farm, and the results are shown in Table 5.10.

The respondents were asked to rate the importance of a number of activities on a scale

of 1 to 5, and the results shown in Table 5.10 are for the extremes of the scale (“not important” and “very important”).

Table 5.10 Importance of activities when staying on a farm

Activity	Not important	Percent	Very important	Percent
Farm walks	15	5.8	92	35.5
Bird watching	81	32.0	14	5.5
Swimming	59	23.0	29	11.3
Bushwalking	16	6.2	64	24.7
Farm tours	16	6.3	94	36.9
Watching farming	30	11.6	90	34.9
Watching animals	16	6.2	129	50.0
Farm work	42	16.4	59	23.0
Fishing	108	42.0	19	7.4
Horse riding	61	23.7	34	13.2
Shooting and/or hunting	227	88.3	5	1.9

Note: Percentages do not total 100 as respondents could choose more than one category.

From Table 5.10 it can be seen that shooting/hunting is not much sought after by farm visitors as 88.3 percent rated it as not important, while only 1.9 percent rated it as very important. Anecdotal evidence collected during interviews with farmers suggests that most farmers involved in farm tourism appear to be conservation-minded, and are not keen to allow any shooting or hunting on their properties. There

are, of course, exceptions, and some farmers offer to pluck birds that are shot, and cook game for guests to eat, but these are in the minority in Victoria. This contrasts markedly with Namibia (Shackley, 1993), where guests are involved mainly with trophy hunting and safaris, and this form of tourism is therefore better described as safari tourism, rather than farm tourism.

The most important activity rated by farm visitors was watching animals; 50.0 percent rated this as very important, while only 6.2 percent rated it as not important. In order, the most popular activities reported were watching animals (50.0 percent), farm tours (36.9 percent), farm walks (35.5 percent), and watching farming (34.9 percent). All these activities are closely related to the farm itself and the day to day operations of the farmer. Bushwalking came next, with 24.7 percent of respondents saying that it was very important, followed by farm work (23.0 percent), horse riding (13.2 percent), swimming (11.3 percent), fishing (17.4 percent), bird watching (5.5 percent), and shooting/hunting (1.9 percent) (refer to table 5.11). Farm work is not as popular as watching farming, which is to be expected for most visitors coming from the city. Those seeking horse riding often go to establishments specifically offering this activity, and in fact many farmers do not offer horse riding as the insurance cover required for guests involved in this activity is prohibitive unless the farm specialises in horses and horse riding. It is also interesting to note that fishing is not high on the list of popular activities named. This is not because fishing is unpopular, but rather because most farm visitors are not seeking this activity when they visit a farm. Table 5.11 also shows the rating of these activities by the farmers who were asked what the most popular activities on their farms were (Chapter 4). Watching animals is rated first by both guests and farmers. Farmers then rate fishing, above farm tours, which

indicates that farmers expect guests to want to fish more than they actually do.

Shooting/hunting is also rated much higher by farmers than by guests.

Table 5.11 Farm visitor activities rated in order of popularity

Activity	Guests - % reporting the activity as very important ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 (position in brackets)	Farmer's rating of popularity of activities - % (position in brackets)
Watching animals	50.0 (1)	73.1 (1)
Farm tours	36.9 (2)	59.7 (3)
Farm walks	35.5 (3)	16.4 (7)
Watching farming	34.9 (4)	16.4 (7)
Bushwalking	24.7 (5)	19.4 (6)
Farm work	23.0 (6)	55.2 (4)
Horse riding	13.2 (7)	28.4 (5)
Swimming	11.3 (8)	9.0 (8)
Fishing	7.4 (9)	67.2 (2)
Bird watching	5.5 (10)	3.0 (9)
Shooting/hunting	1.9 (11)	16.4 (7)

The activities pursued on the farm relate to a question regarding time spent on and off the farm, which was included to gauge the extent that respondents remained on the farm during the day (to observe or be involved in farm activities, etc.); or to use the farm as a base for exploring the immediate district, for example. Table 5.12 shows a summary of the results. The table shows that 38.0 percent of the sample spent

between 26 and 50 percent of their time on the farm, 24.2 percent spent between 76 and 100 percent; 23.7 percent spent between 51 and 75 percent; and 14.2 percent spent 25 percent or less of their time on the farm. Perusal of the original data shows that the largest responses are clustered around the midpoint of the percentage range, with 41.1 percent occurring between 40 percent and 60 percent.

Table 5.12 Time spent on the farm during the day

Percent time spent on the farm	Frequency	Percent
0 - 25%	36	14.2
26 - 50%	96	38.0
51 - 75%	60	23.7
76 - 100%	61	24.2
Total	253	100

Kidd, King and Whitelaw (2003) analysed the schedule of eleven activities that were identified by respondents who were asked to indicate the importance of each activity in the context of the wider holiday experience (refer Table 5.11.) A reliability assessment, using Cronbach's Alpha, achieved an acceptable score of 0.7386, which confirmed the merit of the list of eleven activities as a measurement of the various activities associated directly and/or indirectly, with farmstay.

Using Principal Components Analysis to identify the underlying dimensions and a K-means clustering algorithm, respondents were grouped around their preferred activity clusters. It was found that three principal components accounted for 62 percent of the

variance. The largest group (n = 115) reported a preference for passive recreation activities such as walking and bird watching. These activities may be undertaken in a range of rural or bush settings and are not confined to farmstay holidays. The second group (n = 79), were focused around farm-related activities. The most salient element was identified as “watching farming”. The third and smallest of the three components (n = 54) was focused around active recreation in the bush, notably fishing and horse-riding. In terms of both the practical implementations for the farm tourism sector and the opportunities for future research, these findings provide a preliminary indication of how farmstay visitors may be formulated into groupings. It would be useful to undertake follow-up research to ascertain the extent to which such activity –based groupings would be viable and effective as target markets.

Table 5.13 Activity-based Segments

Activity-based Grouping	Number	Percent
Passive recreation	115	44.2
Farm-related activities	79	30.4
Active recreation	54	20.8
Missing respondents	12	4.6
Totals	260	100

Source: Kidd, King and Whitelaw (2003), p. 34.

A Manova analysis of the clusters confirmed the presence of three significantly homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings ($f = 116.2$, $df = 6$, $sig. = 0.000$). These are shown in Table 5.14 below.

Table 5.14 Derived Principal Components and their Constituent Variables

	Passive recreation component	Farm-related activities component	Active recreation component
Variance explained	31.65%	16.12%	13.87%
Grouping 1			
Watching farming	0.924	0.031	0.022
Watching animals	0.886	0.094	0.009
Farm tours	0.858	0.078	0.1
Farm work	0.793	-0.045	0.172
Grouping 2			
Bushwalking	-0.071	0.818	0.062
Farm walks	0.383	0.726	-0.136
Bird watching	-0.034	0.703	0.154
Grouping 3			
Fishing	0.119	0.117	0.791
Horse-riding	0.285	0.028	0.0619
Shooting/hunting	-0.136	-0.164	0.594
Swimming	0.05	0.275	0.487

Source: Kidd, King and Whitelaw (2003), p.35.

From the visitor perspective, a farmstay is viewed as a “bundle of activities”, with the most prominent activity groupings seemingly associated with passive recreation, rather than with specific farming-related activities. This finding warrants further investigation. Are there any significant differences between the three groups for example on the basis of behavioural and attitudinal dimensions such as information seeking, accommodation preferences, time spent on and off the farm, satisfaction with their farmstay and likely future farmstay behaviour? This aspect is referred to again in Chapter 7, under the heading of possible future research directions suggested by the findings of the study.

Farm activities : comparisons with other studies.

There are some similarities between the findings of the current study and other studies researching participation in, and/or popularity of, various farm activities. However, each study produces slightly different results. This could be due to the fact that different countries have climatic or other factors, such as cultural aspects, which may make certain activities more popular. In addition the various studies referred to were carried out at different points in time, over approximately a twenty year period, and consumer behaviour and tastes change with time. The form and wording of the questions in the different studies also varies. Another factor could be the type of farm which is prevalent in a particular area, as this could have a bearing on activities. Two studies in Australia are commented on below, followed by some comments on similar research in Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In Australia, Frencham (1991, p.57) found that walking for pleasure had the highest participation rate in a study of recreation and tourist behaviours of rural residents and travellers, but these activities were not specifically related to farm tourism rates in various activities. Fry (1984, p.19) found the activities shown in Table 5.15 to be popular in his study in Western Australia.

Table 5.15 Farm visitor activity rated in order of popularity (Western Australia)

Activity	Frequency of mention (N = 31)
Farm walks	27
Bird watching	26
Swimming	25
Bushwalking	24
Watching farming	22
Observing animals	22
Farm tours	20
Being with young animals	18
Fishing	14
Assisting mustering	12
Mushrooming	12
Horse riding	11
Doing farm work	11

Source: Adapted from Fry (1984, p.19)

Comparison of the results in Table 5.15 with Table 5.11 shows that results for farm walks, bushwalking, watching farming, watching animals, and farm tours are all similar.

In the United States, Betz, Perdue and Alcorn (1991, p. 62) reported on a sample of 5,956 with a response rate of 55 percent which showed the main purpose of a trip by out-of-state visitors to rural areas was for outdoor recreation, sightseeing, or to attend festivals. Table 5.16 summarises their results. They also found the most popular activities for rural residents were walking, driving for pleasure, viewing scenery, bicycling, and freshwater fishing (ibid.).

Table 5.16 Main purpose of trip to rural area (USA)

Purpose	Percent
Visiting an historic site	61
Visiting a beach	60
Visiting a scenic area	60
Visiting a museum	34
Visiting family/friends	25

Source: Betz, Perdue and Alcorn (1991, p. 62)

In Canada, Weaver and Fennell (1997, p.359) reported Saskatchewan farm visitor activities in detail, finding that there were no specific activities more popular than others, but many with more or less equal participation rates.

Opperman (1995, p.65), examining German hosts and guests, did not list activities as such, but investigated the travel motives of guests, which obviously translate into certain activities. The results from Opperman's study are shown in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17 Guests' Travel Motives (Germany)

Motive	Host percent	Guest percent
Nature/environment	27.07	30.23
Time at leisure	19.71	10.92
Excursions	11.34	10.18
Comfort with destination	8.28	5.38
Inexpensive destination	7.64	5.54
Host-guest interaction	7.44	8.42
Education	7.38	8.39
Health reasons	6.63	6.41
Sports activities	3.23	3.45
Creativity	1.06	0.56
Calm relaxing environment	0.24	10.53

Source: Opperman (1995, p. 65)

It is interesting to note that out of eleven travel motives in Opperman's study, the responses of hosts and guests varied significantly in only two, "time for leisure" and "calm relaxing environment". Opperman states that "the data did not allow for further

investigation of this discrepancy, but it may represent a communication problem” (ibid.), given that guests seemed to choose general motives for going on holidays over those related specifically to a farm environment.

In the United Kingdom, Frater (1983, p.177) reported that tourist's expectations of a farm holiday are mainly for peace and quiet (42 percent); followed by a friendly reception (33 percent); other (which included change from routine, good food, old farmhouse, good walking area, and flexibility to do as one pleases) which rated 12 percent; involvement with farming activities (7 percent); and to spend time with the farmer and his family (6 percent).

In the United States, Pizam and Pokela (1980, p.206) found helping care for animals to be the most popular guest activity, reported by 65 percent of their sample (N = 119 farms). Assisting with haying was the next most popular activity (43.8 percent).

The most popular non-farming activities reported were hiking (93.3 percent); swimming (89.1 percent); and horse riding (79.8 percent).

Vogeler's earlier study of farm and ranch vacationing in the United States (1977, p.299) found that farm and ranch vacationers engaged in few formal activities. Some of the activities reported as popular by Vogeler are horse riding, hiking, swimming, cookouts, farm chores, and fishing, but only about half the vacationers in his sample (N = 597) participated in activities, and these were mainly children. In addition, the percentage in any one activity was less than twenty. Vogeler concludes that “a satisfying rural vacation experience is not defined by participation in specific

activities, but rather by a holistic encounter with the lifestyles of rural Americans” (ibid).

Awareness of information about host farms

Awareness of farm tourism was measured by asking respondents how they had first heard about host farms, and these results are shown in Table 5.18

Table 5.18 Awareness of host farms

Method	Frequency	Percent
Word of mouth	102	39.2
RACV Accommodation guide	28	10.8
RACV Royalauto magazine	24	9.2
HFA (Host Farms Association) guide	91	35.0
Agribusiness advertisement	8	3.1
Australian Designer Travel advertisement	1	0.4
Signs on premises	6	2.3
Yellow Pages	3	1.2
Royal Melbourne Show stand	23	8.8
Other	40	15.4

Note: 1. RACV = Royal Automobile Club of Victoria

2. Percentages do not total 100 as respondents could choose more than one category

The importance of word of mouth is easily seen as this is the highest response, at 39.2 percent. The importance of the HFA (Host Farms Association) guide is also shown, with a response of 35.0 percent. Other responses are much less important, with the RACV guide being rated at 10.8 percent; the RACV Royalauto magazine at 9.2 percent; the Royal Melbourne Show stand at 8.8 percent; Agribusiness advertisement at 3.1 percent; signs on premises at 2.3 percent; the Yellow Pages at 1.2 percent; and Australian Designer Travel at 0.4 percent. Of the 260 responses 42 responded to “other” and this included a wide diversity of answers, mostly single responses. The highest frequency was 4 responses (“can’t remember”).

Respondents were asked how easy they found it to access information on host farms, and the answers are shown in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19 Ease in accessing information on host farms (5 point scale)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very easy (1)	134	51.5
(2)	61	23.5
(3)	44	16.9
(4)	16	6.2
Very difficult (5)	4	1.5
Missing response	1	0.4
Total	260	100

A high percentage (51.5 percent) found it “very easy” on a five point scale ranging from “very easy” to “very difficult”. Only 4 responses (1.5 percent) rated this as “very difficult”. The respondents who answered this question by marking 4 or 5 on the five point scale were asked to explain why they had done so. Answers under this heading included the following:

I had to call host farms several times to get the information. The booking was made through host farms and that was the problem – next time I would book with the farm direct.

Not advertised as much as other forms of accommodation. Need to be aware of host farms to actually think of them as an option.

I rang the farm where I saw the sign and they weren't suitable and didn't offer any information about contacting other farms. Sometime later – my sister told me about the association.

I had to phone a number of arrange for a catalogue to be sent to me but I needed to make a booking fairly urgently so I was guided by the girl on the phone and from a faxed document.

I had difficulty in contacting the number for further information regarding accommodation and availability.

Consumer decision making when choosing a farm holiday

Table 5.20 shows the influence involved in making the final choice to stay on the farm. In the wording of the question, respondents were asked “in making your choice to stay on the farm, whose influence was MAINLY involved in making the final decision”. It can be seen from Table 5.20 that most decisions (44.2 percent) were made by male and female partner together, in a joint decision. This choice far outweighed the other choices, which were male and female partners together with children reported as 21.5 percent; female partner 17.3 percent; single person 10.4 percent; child/children 3.5 percent; and male partner 3.1 percent.

Table 5.20 Influence on the final decision regarding choice of farm

Response	Frequency	Percent
Single person	27	10.4
Male partner	8	3.1
Female partner	45	17.3
Male and female partner together (joint decision)	115	44.2
Child/children	9	3.5
Male and female partners and child/children together (joint decision)	56	21.5
Total	260	100

This confirms the trend toward more joint decision making identified by various other studies. One of the earliest studies on the family decision process (Davis and Rigaux, 1974) found that different products and services were more likely to be purchased, or decided upon, by husband or wife respectively. The choice of vacation was found to fall into the joint decision making category. Other studies (Kenkel, 1961; Sharp and Mott, 1956; Cunningham and Green, 1974; Qualls, 1982; Neal, Quester and Hawkins, 1999, p. 14.12) also found that joint decision making was more likely for holiday choice, the incidence being 66 percent or over, compared with husband or wife deciding alone. Mattingly and Partners (1993, p.26) found female partner involvement in the purchasing process to be 93 percent in the groundwork stage, 93 percent in the shortlist stage, and 92 percent in the decision stage, which suggests involvement throughout the decision making process.

Putnam and Davidson (1987, p. 16) examined the decision making process in the same format of categories proposed by Davis and Rigaux (1974). They found that the choice of vacation still fell in the joint category. This is supported by Nichols and Snepenger (1988, p. 3) who found that 66 percent of families in their sample (N = 1,753) employed a joint decision making mode. Reviewing research by Sharp and Mott (1956), Blood (1960), and Myers and Moncrief (1978), they conclude that “across four decades, joint decision making by the husband and wife remains the predominant form of vacation decision making” (Nichols and Snepenger, 1988, p. 6). Gilbert (1991, p. 92) foresees “an inevitable increase in joint decision making between husband and wife within the family”, and comments that “the influence of children in family decision making has not received the attention from researchers that it deserves” (ibid.) Assael (1987) states that parents are initially responsible for a child’s consumer behaviour, but the child eventually becomes a dominant force in certain purchasing decisions, such as a holiday. The present study confirms the importance of the child in the decision making process, which is to be expected with farm tourism as the holiday to the farm is often mainly for the benefit of the child. This may be contrasted with the opinion of Fodness (1992, p.9) however, who found that children had little influence in the overall vacation decision making process, and that joint decision making was more prevalent where there are no children. However, Thornton, Shaw and Williams (1997) found that children influenced the behaviour of tourist parties either through their physical needs or through their ability to communicate with parents. Their results suggested that there was a need for theories sensitive to the influence of group decision making and the ability of children to influence group behaviour.

Personal details of respondents

Personal details of the respondents were gathered by questions asked at the end of the questionnaire, on place of residence, marital status, size of household, and age. In addition the number of holidays per year, and their duration, was also included.

Table 5.21 shows the normal place of residence for the 260 people in the sample.

Table 5.21 Normal place of residence

Response	Frequency	Percent
Melbourne: Northern suburbs	31	11.9
Melbourne: Eastern suburbs	116	44.6
Melbourne: Western suburbs	25	9.6
Melbourne: Southern suburbs	67	25.8
Geelong	4	1.5
Country Victoria	6	2.3
Interstate	5	1.9
Overseas	1	0.4
Missing responses	5	1.9
Total	260	100

A large proportion (44.6 percent) were from the eastern suburbs, traditionally Melbourne's higher socioeconomic areas. The southern suburbs provided 25.8

percent of the sample, while 11.9 came from the northern suburbs, and 9.6 percent from the western suburbs. 2.3 percent were from country Victoria, and 1.5 percent from Geelong (Victoria's second largest city). Only 1.9 percent were from interstate, and 0.4 percent from overseas.

Marital status of the sample is shown in Table 5.22, from which it may be seen that 72.3 percent of the sample consists of married couples with children up to the age of 16 years, which makes up the largest proportion of farm visitors. The other categories are all much smaller, being single (unmarried, divorced, widowed) 10.8 percent; married with children over 16 years 8.5 percent; and married with no children 6.9 percent.

Table 5.22 Marital status

Response	Frequency	Percent
Single (unmarried, divorced, widowed)	28	10.8
Married – no children	18	6.9
Married – children 0 – 16 years	188	72.3
Married – children over 16 years	22	8.5
Missing responses	4	1.5
Total	260	100

Table 5.23 Size of household

Response	Frequency	Percent
One person	10	3.8
Two persons	39	15.0
Three persons	33	12.7
Four persons	108	41.5
Five or more persons	68	26.2
Missing responses	2	0.8
Total	260	100

Table 5.23 shows the size of household, with the highest response at four persons (41.5 percent); followed by five or more persons (26.2 percent); two persons (15.0 percent); three persons (12.7 percent); and one person (3.8 percent).

The age distribution is shown in Table 5.24. The largest category of farm tourism visitors in this sample is those aged between 31 and 40 years (60.8 percent); followed by those aged 41 to 50 (23.1 percent); 21 to 30 (7.3 percent); 51 to 60 (5.8 percent); and over 60 years (1.9 percent). This indicates that parents of children under 16 (from Table 5.16) who are between 31 and 40, make up the bulk of the sample. The ages of the parents and children are obviously correlated, to make this the most likely group to target for farm tourism. Older people appear to be less interested in farm tourism, as do those aged 21 to 30.

Table 5.24 Age categories

Response	Frequency	Percent
21 - 30 years	19	7.3
31 - 40 years	158	60.8
41 - 50 years	60	23.1
51 - 60 years	15	5.8
Over 60 years	5	1.9
Missing responses	3	1.2
Total	260	100

In this respect, Fodness (1992, p.9) refers to the concept of the family life cycle, which is not dealt with here in detail, but has been comprehensively covered in the literature (For example: Wells and Gubar, 1966; Reynolds and Wells, 1977; Stampfl, 1978; Wagner and Hanna, 1983; and Schiffman et al, 1997). The concept of the family life cycle is that families pass through a series of chronological stages which may be related to unique combinations of socioeconomic and/or demographic variables. Various versions of the family life cycle are proposed, the variables most often used being age, marital status, employment status, and age of the youngest child. Fodness (1992, p.11) reports that specific studies on the relationship between vacation decision making and the family life cycle are very limited, but finds that “the proportion of joint decision making does not appear to vary systematically across the family life cycle stages”. In terms of age, Fodness also comments (p.10) that “prior tourism research has reported that middle-aged couples are more likely to make joint

vacation decisions than either younger or older couples”, referencing Filiatrault and Ritchie, 1980; Erickson, Yancey and Erickson, 1979; Myers and Moncrief, 1978; Davis and Rigaux, 1974; Scanzoni, 1977; and Komarovsky, 1961. This supports the comments made earlier regarding decision making.

Frequency and length of holidays

The respondents indicated that they mostly take a holiday once or twice a year (61.9 percent). 31.2 percent take a holiday three or four times a year; while only 6.2 percent go away more than four times. Despite reports that people are taking more frequent and shorter holidays it seems that this does not hold for the sample in this study (Table 5.25). Table 5.26 gives the results for the number of nights spent away on each holiday, and this shows that 61.2 percent of the sample stay away for more than four nights on each holiday; 28.1 percent spend three or four nights away; and 9.6 percent spend one or two nights away.

Table 5.25 Annual frequency of holidays

Response	Frequency	Percent
Once or twice	161	61.9
Three or four times	81	31.2
More than four times	16	6.2
Missing responses	2	0.8
Total	260	100

Table 5.26 Number of nights spent away from home on each holiday

Response	Frequency	Percent
One or two	25	9.6
Three or four	73	28.1
More than four	159	61.2
Missing responses	3	1.2
Total	260	100

General comments on farm tourism

A question was included asking for “any other comments” on farm tourism, and some of these comments are reproduced below, with commentary.

A small number of respondents criticised the lack of an accurate system for grading the various types of farm. This led to expectations not being met, and poor public relations for the host farm industry, as one bad experience can turn customers away from farms as a possible option when seeking holiday accommodation. Some of these comments appear below:

I have only been to one host farm, however I believe the RACV rating was wrong. This makes me feel unsure about how to choose another host farm.

With the one bad experience we felt the star rating system and price signal let us down. The accommodation was far below the other farms despite being more expensive and having same 3 stars, or more than others we'd stayed in. However since the others have all been so good we have continued to use them though trying to get other information as well.

We used to go away to motels until we discovered Host Farms. We now take breaks at host farms to relax but still stay in hotels/motels when travelling interstate. If host farms had a strict grading system it would make it easier to know what to take to a new host farm. We have a dog and like to take him with us. This is not really catered for very well.

The variety in farm holidays is proportional to the variety in levels of satisfaction. They're a bit of an adventure really, in that you don't really know what you're going to get. We've been on two farm holidays. The first was better than expected. The second not as good as expected. I believe the HFA should seek feedback after each holiday. I chose this farm because it was the only HFA farm which accepted the kids trail bikes.

We have stayed at a host farm twice. First at a farm in Toora. We had a terrific experience. Unfortunately this farm is no longer in the host farm system. We then stayed on a farm in Bambra, where we had a terrible experience, and believed that the farm had been misleadingly advertised. We subsequently alerted the Host Farm Association of our experience.

While the farms I refer to above were great, we have been to one where the information was inadequate and the standard much lower than indicated in brochure. This has reduced our confidence in the accuracy of the star system which the host farms operate.

This was our fourth visit to a host farm property. We have stayed twice at one, once at the other and they were great. This last one was a big disappointment. Based on the rating and description in the HFA of Vic. Booklet, they were pretty much the same, but in reality they were worlds apart. We would have gone back to the property we have already visited twice but decided it would be good to see another part of Victoria, well we did that because there was nothing to do on the farm! The host accommodation was very close to the owners home, only 5 metres away! And so you didn't feel as though you had too much privacy. Every time you went out the stones on the path crunched and let everyone know you were going somewhere. Before this last experience I would have recommended farm holidays to others, but I would not be so confident to do so any more.

1) Farm tourism operators should try and achieve a uniform and standard rating description of facilities, accommodation and activities (rating 1 – 5 etc.) 2) farm may make available details of related activities within the district (interesting walks or drives, local sport etc.) 3) We have been on 4 farm holidays (and again at Christmas) they are the best kept secret of all time and usually inexpensive (great value). 4) presenting the farm 'as is' with no frills is important.

We have stayed on two different farms this year – a dairy farm which we have visited twice and a sheep and cattle farm. The comments on this questionnaire relate to the dairy farm which was excellent. The sheep and

cattle farm was very disappointing on the terms of both accommodation offered and farm activities.

Breakfasts vary from massive farm breakfasts to a single egg and bread left in holiday cabin.

Other visitors felt that more detail could be provided regarding each farm and the possible activities available for various age groups:

Would be better if an indication was given of those farms that were particularly suited to families with young children, those with older children, those without etc. While the farm we chose was lovely and would have been great for an adults only weekend, there were several things that made it difficult with young children and they didn't get to see any farm activity happening at all which disappointed them.

Catalogue didn't really detail activities provided by the farms, eg. suitability for children, activities provided to interest children. Although the contact lady (by phone) was most accommodating and checked suitability of farms and availability. She was very helpful in our inquiries. The farm we went to was very enjoyable and the children gained a lot of learning from the experience. The farmer was very friendly, helpful and enthusiastic.

In some of the comments made previously, the lack of appreciation of the farm environment by the visitor was mentioned as a reason for misunderstanding and dissatisfaction. However, the farmer also needs to understand the motivation and requirements of the farm visitor, most of whom come from a city environment:

Instructions on getting to host farm not always clear especially for city folk not used to looking for crooked tree or farm shed or old farm machinery to locate turnoffs.

A thoroughly enjoyable holiday had by all only one reservation/having lived in city all our lives we were not comfortable not having a key to lock the doors both during the day when visiting local points of interest and especially at night.

In certain cases the comments showed an obvious lack of common sense exhibited by the hosts, and certainly a low standard of basic service provision:

Both farm houses we stayed in were freezing cold when we arrived (winter visits). As we had told the hosts when we would be arriving and had stuck to that time we were surprised no heating had been turned on. Subsequently our 4-5 hours in both places were remembered for being very cold.

The couple we stayed with included us too much in their family affairs – they spoke openly about marital problems which we were not interested in.

Some comments were made regarding the way in which host farms are promoted and the fact that they seem to be a “well kept secret” until discovered by many potential visitors:

The concept of farm tourism is wonderful and the people are generally very warm. There should be more marketing of farm tourism – particularly through schools so parents can take kids there. Many people have little or no idea what farm tourism is about. The brochure system should be radically streamlined or contracted out.

One respondent summed up the importance of the relationship between host and visitor by suggesting that the interaction contributes substantially to the overall experience, and that it is worth ensuring that you are “compatible” with your host prior to embarking on the holiday:

We have had only one host farm stay but would highly recommend it and will do it again ourselves next year. Very much a personal business, if you get along with the host. Always hard to know what to expect because each is so individual – a chat with the host beforehand is a good idea.

Finally, many of the visitors considered the farm experience to be an unqualified success and made comments such as the following:

I have spent 4 holidays on host farms in the last 18 months and leave for another in a week. We find that the experience is always enjoyable. The type of accommodation is always superior to staying in a motel. Our adult family members who leave Melbourne to share our holidays are also very impressed by the care that the hosts have taken to ensure a happy and relaxed stay. In all we have stayed at 3 different farms, all excellent in

their different ways. I found it more satisfactory to deal directly to make bookings rather than dealing with a third party. These places deserve to be more well known.

We found host farms an excellent holiday. Very safe for young children, no crowds and friendly people who do not intrude. Have tried 2 places – one we have been 3 times and once to the other and we will try more in the future. Our children are presently 2 and 7 and it is ideal and stress free. Have recommended to others with young families.

Have been on several farm holidays. Some have been very positive and gone out of way to make you welcome and able to look around the farm. We prefer farm stays at present as we have young children – we usually holiday with one other family – it offers cheap accommodation, is private, is self-catering and plenty of room in house and property. We also like touring the scenic spots of the area.

It's a wonderful and preferable alternative to motels because each farm accommodation's different and the people you meet are always friendly (who own the farm property) and helpful and care about making your stay enjoyable. However they also give you privacy and fit in with your needs as their guest. You can learn about the local area by being in a country environment, each farm with its own characteristics, also from talking to the farm hosts.

It was very exciting and interesting to find out how people live on a farm.

Very enjoyable experience. The family I was with had a great time especially the kids.

We think it is a wonderful way to holiday as it is much cheaper than hotels. Our children have more things to enjoy and involve themselves in and it is an opportunity to be involved in a different environment.

Farm holidays are fantastic for children – the accommodation is very separate so you don't have to worry about noise kids love the freedom to run around and the open environment. They are a great change from the city! The hosts have always been exceptionally friendly and helpful and good with kids. We try to do at least two per year usually weekends – and we have always intended to return however there is always a new place to visit. They are great family accommodation.

We have now had two such holidays. They were both thoroughly enjoyable.

We've had 5 farm holidays and stayed on 4 different farms. Three had lovely accommodation and one left a bit to be desired. However even that one was fun because the scenery was great. The best 2 holidays were the last two (I based the questionnaire on the most recent). They were both delightful little cottages and the stays were memorable because of the effort

both hosts made to include us in the farming activities. Little touches, flowers, pretty soaps and towels, cushions, nice crockery made the difference, not to mention fresh eggs and fabulous home made bread and jam.

Really enjoyed our farm visits. We like to try different ones each time. The children have a great time. I'm impressed with host farm brochure and personnel in office are so very helpful and full of information and advice.

Farm holidays are relatively inexpensive but enjoyable holidays – especially for children. Most children who live in cities get little opportunity to experience a farm so I feel farm holidays are very important for city children to see and experience something different.

Marvellous experience – would only take motel accommodation if forced to. The variety of holiday accommodation now available to us add to holiday experience. Keen next time to share a farm holiday with another family and host farms make this very possible – a very economical way for 6 people to have a wonderful holiday. My children range from 3 – 16 years and a farm holiday satisfies their wide and varied interests.

Excellent for spending time together as a family. We had a great time exploring during the day, the children had more freedom than was safely allowed at home and at night we played games together and talked about our days activities and planned next day.

I have made several bookings in the past years with host farming and using the host book as the only guide. Found it difficult to make contact with farm family – much more successful to deal with host farm agent – she was very helpful, knew the houses and very familiar with the areas – asked relevant questions eg. How old are your children? She gave us great advice and it was sincere honest advice – I'd greatly recommend host farm holidays – recommend that you make a booking with another compatible family – get a large house and have more fun.

We have stayed on several host farms and have loved them, we average staying at two farms a year. They are a wonderful place for children to experience as they are safe and interesting. City kids experience different things. The hosts we have met have been delightful. We have enjoyed seeing different areas of Victoria.

As a family with 3 young children we have had 2 host farm holidays and we have found them to be a perfect country holiday for us. We chose the farm which has activities for the children as well as the accommodation with kitchen, bathroom facilities etc. We intend to plan our next holiday on a host farm.

In the responses to this part of the study, there were 125 references to children, and many of the respondents commented on the suitability (or otherwise) of farm visits for young children, reinforcing the comments made earlier regarding the age group to whom farm tourism is best directed. It is interesting to note that some respondents prefer to deal direct with the farm when making a booking, while others recommend using a booking agent. While further research would have to be undertaken to investigate why this is so, it could be because those contacting the farms are experienced host farm visitors, and know what to expect and when and how to contact the farm; while those using a booking agent may be first time host farm visitors.

Significance of results

The data was analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program to analyse the quantitative aspects, and some use was made of the NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising) program in order to examine in detail some of the qualitative responses. In addition to the totals and percentages which are mostly reported in the chapter above, some cross tabulations were carried out to investigate relationships between various variables. Some of the relationships investigated that produced interesting results were the following:

- form of accommodation with marital status
- form of accommodation with age
- form of accommodation with holiday frequency
- form of accommodation with number of nights away

- awareness of host farms with place of residence
- awareness of host farms with age

With two exceptions, no statistically significant relationships were indicated by the application of the chi-square test, to all of the above. The two exceptions were form of accommodation with holiday frequency, and form of accommodation with nights away. It was found that there was a relationship between staying with friends and relatives (form of accommodation) and frequency of taking a holiday (chi square = .032) and it was found that there was a relationship between staying with friends and relatives, and number of nights spent away from home on each holiday (chi square = .024). Both of these results are obvious when one considers the reduced cost of a holiday when staying with friends and relatives. Each cross tabulation is briefly discussed below.

Form of accommodation with marital status

When asked about the form of accommodation usually used on holidays, single respondents chose friends and relatives as their highest choice (53.6 percent), followed by hotel (28.6 percent), and bed and breakfast (28.6 percent). Least popular with single people was caravan park (7.1 percent). For those married couples without children, camping (33.3 percent) and motel (33.3 percent) were the highest ranked, with friend and relatives the lowest (11.1 percent). Married couples with children up to 16 years gave host farm the highest rating (31.0 percent), closely followed by motel (30.5 percent). Least favoured was bed and breakfast (4.3 percent). Married couples with children over 16 years gave host farm the highest rating (50.0 percent), followed

by motel (40.9 percent). Least popular with this category was camping (9.1 percent). Thus we may conclude that of the sample, married couples with children are the most likely to use host farms. However, statistical analysis did not reveal any significant relationship between these two variables.

Form of accommodation with age

Respondents aged 21 to 30 favoured staying with friends and relatives (47.4 percent), with host farm being the least popular. (5.3 percent). Those aged 31 to 40 chose host farm as their highest choice (33.8 percent), with bed and breakfast their lowest choice (6.4 percent). In the 41 to 50 age group, motel was rated highly (41.7 percent), with bed and breakfast the lowest choice (3.3 percent). Those 51 to 60 chose host farm (46.7 percent) above motel (40.0 percent), with their least preferred choice being camping (no response). Respondents over 60 gave their highest rating to four choices, all equal at 40.0 percent; these were host farm, friends and relatives, caravan park and other. The lowest choice for this category was hotel (no response). Statistical analysis showed no significant relationship between these variables.

Form of accommodation with holiday frequency

Those respondents taking a holiday once or twice a year favoured staying in a motel (38.1 percent), with bed and breakfast being the least preferred (7.5 percent). Respondents taking a holiday three or four times a year favoured host farm (27.2 percent) most highly, and bed and breakfast lowest (9.9 percent). People who went on holiday more than four times a year chose host farm and hotel equally (both 50.0

percent), with their lowest choice being caravan park (6.3 percent). Statistical analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between staying with friends and relatives, and frequency of taking a holiday (chi square = .032).

Form of accommodation with number of nights away

In terms of number of nights away from home, those staying away one or two nights favoured host farm and motel equally (both 37.5 percent), with lowest choices being other (4.2 percent) and camping (8.3 percent). Those staying away three or four nights gave the highest rating to motel (35.6 percent), just over host farm (34.2 percent) with least favoured being bed and breakfast (9.6 percent). Respondents who reported staying away from home more than four nights on each holiday preferred motel (28.3 percent), and host farm (27.7 percent), with bed and breakfast (7.5 percent) being the lowest. Statistical analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between staying with friends and relatives, and number of nights spent away from home on each holiday (chi square = .024).

Perhaps the most surprising result is that bed and breakfast is rated so low in many cases, given that bed and breakfast is the most similar form of accommodation to host farm on the list. It possible that host farm may have had an inflated response, given that respondents knew that the survey was to do with farm tourism, than it might otherwise have received. Also, the respondents were chosen for their characteristic of having actually visited a host farm.

Awareness of host farms with place of residence

The cross tabulation of place of residence against awareness of host farms, did not show any significant differences. In the sample, people in the Northern and Eastern suburbs first heard about host farms from the HFA (33.3 percent and 38.8 percent, respectively). Respondents in the Western and Southern suburbs reported word of mouth as the most important source of information (40.0 percent and 56.7 percent, respectively). Respondents from Geelong mentioned the RACV Accommodation guide (50 percent), and the HFA (50 percent). Respondents from country Victoria nominated signs on premises, word of mouth, RACV Royalauto magazine, and HFA (33.3 percent each). Interstate visitors nominated other (60 percent), word of mouth and HFA (20 percent each), while overseas visitors reported word of mouth (100 percent).

Awareness of host farms with age

Respondents 21 to 30 nominated other as highest (36.8 percent), followed by word of mouth (31.6 percent). Those 31 to 40 reported word of mouth (40.8 percent) and HFA (37.6 percent). Respondents 41 to 50 gave word of mouth as highest option (35.0 percent), followed by HFA (31.7 percent). Those 51 to 60 also nominated word of mouth (46.7 percent), followed by HFA (40.0 percent); while respondents over 60 gave similar results of word of mouth (40.0 percent), and HFA (40.0 percent).

Summary of discussion

This chapter describes the responses received from a mail survey of 260 farm visitors. A detailed discussion of the major findings is provided in Chapter 7 (Conclusion).

The replies showed that a large majority of the visitors were impressed by the farm on arrival, were satisfied with the quality of accommodation, and would return for a visit to the same farm or another farm. Those who were not favourably impressed appear to have had a communication problem with the farm tourism provider, as their expectations were not met by the actual experience.

Most customers (75.8 percent) were able to make a booking with sufficient information, and more were confident about making a booking in the future (83.1 percent). A number of visitors were specifically seeking a farm stay destination (30.9 percent) in contrast with only 8.5 percent who were seeking a bed and breakfast destination.

Only 62.3 percent of visitors reported that they were able to participate in activities that were advertised to be available during their farm stay. Some problems exist here, partly due to communication between the farm tourism provider and the customer.

Activities that are promised are expected, and, if unavailable, cause customer dissatisfaction. Most of the activities that were rated of high importance by the guests related to farming and farm activities such as farm walks, farm tours, watching farming and watching animals. Fifty percent of respondents rated watching animals

as the most important activity. More specifically, both guests (50.0 percent) and farmers (73.1 percent) rate watching animals as the most popular activity, although more farmers rate it highly. Farmers also rate farm tours as popular (59.7 percent) whereas only 36.9 percent of guests rate farm tours as popular. Guests are also not as keen on farm work (rated number 6 by 23.0 percent of guests) as farmers think they are (rated number 4 by 55.2 percent of farmers). In addition 67.2 percent of farmers rated fishing as popular, whereas the result for guests was only 7.4 percent. Shooting and hunting was rated by 16.4 percent of farmers as popular, but only 1.9 percent of guests rated it as popular. There are therefore differences in the evaluation of activities in terms of popularity as rated by farmers and guests.

Visitors spent varying amounts of time on the farm during the day, with the highest number of responses clustered around the midpoint of the percentage range, with 41.1 percent occurring between 40 percent and 60 percent. Word of mouth was found to be very important in making potential guests aware of host farms. Over half of the respondents in the sample said that they found it "very easy" to access information about host farms.

Most decisions (44.2 percent) regarding the choice of farm as a holiday destination were made by a male and female partner together, in a joint decision. This result confirms similar findings in other studies.

The visitors in the sample were mainly from Melbourne's Eastern suburbs (44.6 percent), traditionally higher socioeconomic areas. 72.3 percent consisted of married couples with children up to the age of 16 years, and the largest group (41.5 percent)

came from households of four persons. Parents of children under 16 who were between 31 and 40 made up the biggest part of the sample (60.8 percent).

It is possible to divide the respondents into three groupings based on activity preference, and this may be of use in further studies identifying segments for target market purposes. Other results were that 61.9 percent of respondents take holidays only once or twice a year, and 61.2 percent spent more than four nights away on each holiday. It was also found that there was a relationship between staying with friends and relatives, and frequency of taking a holiday (chi square = .032) and it was found that there was a relationship between staying with friends and relatives, and number of nights spent away from home on each holiday (chi square = .024).

CHAPTER 6

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN FARM TOURISM

Introduction

This chapter discusses the involvement of local government in Victoria toward the idea of farm tourism in general. In most cases, local government and the local population are receptive to the idea of farm tourism, seeing it as bringing tourists (and increased local expenditure) to their area. In relatively few cases, local residents are negatively disposed towards tourism and prefer to remain isolated from the tourist trade.

The importance of tourism in local economies in the rural sector has been identified by the Commonwealth Department of Tourism (1993c, p.5). Local shires and councils provide a wide range of the infrastructure required for tourism, such as roads; parking; landscaping; signage; rest rooms; camping grounds; barbecue and picnic facilities, lookouts; and water, sewerage, and waste disposal services. In many cases specialised local tourist officers have been appointed, visitor information centres have been established, and local and regional tourist associations have been formed. It is suggested that “while many local government authorities have been successful in developing the tourism potential of their areas, many do not have the resources to either plan or provide for tourism growth” (ibid). The Department of Tourism recommended that there had to be good quality tourism infrastructure in a local area if visitors were to be attracted. The infrastructure and attractions, once established, will give rise to the demand for private sector accommodation which will follow “as a

natural consequence”. The Department pointed out that this will “lead to a wide range of indirect benefits throughout the community that will assist in the diversification of the local economy”, and in broader terms, the provision of tourism infrastructure is seen as increasing employment in the short term, “while also contributing to sustainable employment growth in the longer term” (ibid).

In another report (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994, pp.39-41) the Department comments that while many local government authorities have taken it upon themselves to become involved with the tourism cause, some are still coming to terms with the vision of tourism as a viable economic alternative to other rural-based industries such as mining and agriculture. This means that some local government authorities do not appreciate the potential benefits of rural tourism, nor do they see it as a sector deserving active promotion.

Tonge and Associates (1995) produced a booklet entitled “*Why should Local Government Invest in Tourism?*” which pointed out the benefits of tourism to local government. These benefits include the multiplier effect employment opportunities, diversification, improved facilities for residents, opportunities for business, and preservation of the environment and heritage. Tourism may also provide local government with a catalyst for residential development, and may result in improved transport services, educational opportunities and a broader social outlook (op.cit., p.8). This document was distributed to all Chief Commissioners, Commissioners and Chief Executive Officers in regional local governments, and was produced in response to the increasing demand by local government for tourism advice. Country Victoria Tourism hopes that this guide will “reinforce cooperation between regional

tourism associations and local government which, in turn, will lead to stronger and better developed tourism products and services” (Country Victoria Tourism, 1995, p.9.)

Fry (1984, pp. 41–45) reported on positive responses from his survey of 61 of 107 shires in Western Australia. Seven reported that farm or station tourism had a social or economic impact on the district, and nine had commenced activities to assist the industry. Most of the respondents felt positively disposed towards the development of farm tourism in their local area, and 75 percent were prepared to assist farm tourism in their area, given sufficient financial resources.

In the present study, the specific questions and the answers that resulted from the survey of local government bodies are detailed below, with comments. (Wording which could identify the local government area has been removed or amended, to preserve the confidentiality of the survey).

Farm tourism involvement in the local government area

The first question asked how many farms were presently involved in bed and breakfast accommodation, farm holidays, or attractions for day visitors only, to the knowledge of local government officials.

The replies are summarised in Table 6.1, which shows that most councils reported that there were between 1 and 10 enterprises under the three headings.

Table 6.1 Tourism enterprises in local government areas in Victoria

Number of farms	Bed and breakfast	Farm holidays	Day visitors
0	8	16	15
1 - 10	21	16	17
11 - 20	3	3	1
21 - 30	2	3	2
31 - 40	0	0	0
41 - 50	1	0	0
Total	35	35	35

Table 6.2 shows the number of enquiries received by the local government body in the last twelve months, in connection with farm holidays. Although 18 respondents denied receiving any enquiries, it is interesting to note that enquiries run into the hundreds, and in one area were estimated to be between 501 and 600. This suggests that farm tourism is fairly well known in the general population as a phenomenon, but those enquiring for details from local councils are presumably unaware of other sources of information on host farms, or even of the existence of the Host Farms Association. Thus some liaison and communication between the Host Farms Association and local government bodies would enable potential customers to be pointed in the right direction.

Table 6.2 Number of enquiries received regarding farm holidays

Number of enquiries received by local government	Responses
0	18
1 - 100	11
101 - 200	3
201 - 300	1
301 - 400	0
401 - 500	0
501 - 600	1
“frequent”	1
Total	35

The next question asked whether farm tourism had any economic or social impact in the district, and 20 respondents (57.1 percent) answered in the affirmative, indicating that these local government bodies were aware of the possible effects of tourism.

Three respondents were not enthusiastic about the value of farm tourism, describing it as “small” or “minor”:

Minor impact/low numbers involved in industry.

It must be having some effect, but at this time it is a small proportion of the accommodation industry in the area.

At present it is not a significant part of the tourist industry in this area. It will probably increase in the next few years but with 49 motels, 13 caravan

parks and 50+ blocks of holiday flats the farm holiday sector is not a major economic force.

Five noted that the industry was presently small but would grow in the future:

Minor but possibly growing.

Small – but targeted for growth.

Growing interest in this form of tourism.

A small but growing impact.

Very little as it has not been promoted but there is huge potential.

Two local government authorities recognised the importance of farm tourism in terms of allowing farmers to diversify away from weak agricultural performance into generation of off-farm income:

This is providing a version of off farm income where all members of the family are engaged in income generation. New dollars from tourists have a multiplier effect on local economy.

The shire is predominantly a wool grazing area and currently the market for wool is weak. Therefore, many properties are turning to diversifying their product. Hence bed and breakfast and/or host farms. This allows property owners to stay on their land.

The remainder were enthusiastic about the benefits of farm tourism. Some made general comments about the impact of tourist expenditure in the local area:

Farm stays are becoming increasingly popular for visitors staying within our municipality. Farm stays in conjunction with bed and breakfasts are continuing to increase in numbers which increases the number of accommodation establishments and therefore increases tourism dollars.

Value adds to the tourist's experience of rural areas. Apart from the scenic drives through the countryside, farm tourism (not including wineries) provides tourists with a reason to visit the rural hinterland.

The farm holiday facilities all have an impact on the economy of the shire.

It is perceived as being a means of value adding to primary production. Value adding is given a high priority in the corporate plan. The shire is also developing a tourism strategy.

Visitation to our attractions is stable – expenditure is important.

Specific tourist numbers were quoted by two respondents, who indicated the annual benefit from tourism in their areas:

The area is based on farm tourism. Estimated 5,000 visitors per annum from this product.

(Named) Farm is a development project serving 28,000 paying customers and over 14,000 community service users each year. Community service programs include Riding for the Disabled, employment training programs and the provision of a special teaching unit.

It is significant that those respondents who saw farm tourism having an economic or social impact commented on the “value adding” benefit to farmers and an increase in accommodation facilities bringing increased tourism dollars to the community through the multiplier effect.

Support for farm tourism by local government

With one exception, all respondents answered that they support farm tourism in principle, and 30 (85.7 percent) stated that they were involved in activities to assist the industry.

The provision of information, advice or assistance was mentioned by 12 respondents (34 percent), and 11 (31 percent) mentioned promotion, while 7 (20 percent)

commented on the formation of some sort of tourism body. Two respondents referred to “fast-track” approvals.

Those who were most supportive of farm tourism made comments that outlined specific activities relating to this form of tourist accommodation:

The City of (named) has provided other councils and organisations with information and advice on how to establish a community farm.

The host farm has participated in TV advertising campaigns which were initiated by the former Shire of (named).

Providing information through visitors' information centre. Organising farm tours for visiting deputations with specific interests.

Purchase and availability of “How to Establish a Farm Tourism Project” (Rob Tonge) part of reference library for regional and local tourism association.

Through our tourism bodies established within the shire we actively promote this style of accommodation. Various initiatives include coordinating seminars and education workshops, etc.

Allowing uses such as B & B to be as of right in certain circumstances. Supporting applications through the planning approval process. Consistent tourist attraction signage on major routes.

Others made comments that they supported tourism in general (and presumably farm tourism would be supported under the broad heading of all tourism). This support is usually in the form of provision of visitor information centres in order to facilitate tourist use of the area:

Provision of tourism information centres. Provision of booking service for accommodation. Fast tracking permits.. Active tourism promotion of the Region.

Fund a tourist information centre which provides free information to visitors to Victoria and free promotion for tourist businesses within the Centre.

The shire supports tourism to the tune of \$250,000 per annum.

We provide opportunity of exposure through brochures and Visitor Guide Books of the region.

The development of an accommodation booking service, a tourism resource library, the development of a peak regional tourism body, new brochures and the development of an interpretive historical tour of the area are all shire related initiatives which will advantageously affect the industry.

Auspicing and facilitating tourism development, operator associations. Seeking funding for strategic planning. Seeking funding for backpacker development.

Nine replies (25.7 percent) indicated that the local government authority was in the process of developing structures and strategies that would be of assistance to tourism operators:

A new planning zone scheme has made this option more available.

Brochure production/tourism board/infrastructure.

Will investigate possibility of developing and maintaining register.

Recently formed tourism development task force reviewing sustainable ecotourism opportunities.

We are waiting on the result of a tourism audit which will look at all ways of attracting people to the area.

New tourism development structure presently being formulated. These activities will be part of a development review once organisational structure is in place.

Has been identified as part of Shire Corporate Plan – strategies will be put in place to encourage this activity.

Formation of a tourism management body to represent all interests in the Shire.

Formation of tourism advisory group, appointment of manager economic development to assist with enterprises, development of tourism strategy plan, marking and signage.

When asked how much potential there is for farm tourism in the local government area, one respondent (2.8 percent) replied that there was none. 25.7 percent estimated that there was “a little”, and 68.6 percent estimated that there was “a lot” (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Potential for farm tourism in the local government area

Potential	Responses	Percent
None	1	2.8
A little	9	25.7
A lot	24	68.6
Don't know	1	2.8
Total	35	100

Support from State Government for farm tourism

Many local government areas are constrained by lack of funds in respect of what activities they can become involved in to support local enterprise. Respondents were asked what could be done by the State Government to build up the farm tourism industry, and made a number of interesting and diverse comments.

The main comment made under this heading was a request for assistance with promotion of funding from the State Government (17 mentions – 48.6 percent) while two respondents stated that assistance with signage would be helpful.

There were five replies which implied criticism of the promotion of Melbourne at the expense of country Victoria, and comments which indicated that farm tourism would benefit from additional promotion:

Promotion through Tourism Victoria instead of just concentrating on Melbourne.

Information and research. Marketing and promotional support. Tourism Victoria should be more willing and open minded to areas outside of the identified strategic regions that are working and expanding tourist facilities.

To reconsider the artificial boundaries of the tourism jigsaw as presided over by Tourism Victoria. These boundaries tend to create local politics – destroys local harmony.

Tourism Victoria could turn more attention to country Victoria away from Melbourne. CVTC (Country Victoria Tourism Council) needs to develop strategy to help “farmers” become involved in tourism operations.

Promote the concept of regional travel experiences out of Melbourne. Encourage inbound tour operations to access this market. Promote rural life as part of general tourism promotion.

Four comments were made regarding general increases in funding:

Increase funding to regional bodies.

Support through Vic Tourism.

Education. Promotion. Encouragement.

Promotion, feasibility studies.

Four respondents indicated that low interest loans or grants should be made available to support farm tourism:

Making available funding (grants or low interest loans) to primary producers to provide adequate facilities to tourists.

More awareness and increase funding to this type of venture – low interest loans to set up.

Encourage local councils to promote farm tourism by providing grants that can be used for project research and development.

Don't know, apart from paying for advertising campaign and providing low cost loans to farmers to set up accommodation of their farms.

The ideas of accreditation and training were mentioned by a number of respondents.

Seven respondents mentioned accreditation or standardisation:

Industry accreditation. Commitment to regional tourist membership by operations.

Assistance with training. Accreditation. Development of standards. Small

Business development. Marketing incentives. Publicity and promotion.

Promotion and accreditation.

Promote as central idea in "Real Australia" tourism. Standardise regulations about accommodation.

Provision of guidelines for people interested in getting into this area.

Greater tourism emphasis on this area of the state. Employment/funding schemes. A rating on the establishments so a good reputation is maintained. If anyone on a property feels they can rent a room, the concept of farm stays will fail as there will not be a standard to follow. Training is essential – customer service quality.

Development of best practice and the initiation of accreditation will help develop a long term sustainable industry.

Four respondents made a number of different comments, with the theme of training appearing in all of them. This was also expressed as assistance with development workshops or funding for consultants, as well as the fostering of networks. Two of these respondents also commented on funding for signage:

Rural tourism incentive schemes, on-going networking opportunities. Visitor information centre support state wide. Exclusive trade show opportunities for rural tourism. Greater exposure internationally. Greater assistance to local governments to assist those entering rural tourism especially for those experiencing rural difficulties.

Work with Tourism Victoria, Host Farms of Australia and the Victorian Farmers Federation to run product development workshops through campaign regions throughout Victoria, then assist in the cross regional farm trails brochures linking Victoria.

Fund signage that enables tourists to find the farms. Promote farm tourism in national and international markets. Produce or provide funding for maps and brochures at local level. Foster networks of farms/B & B's/farm industries to develop new products. Support visitor information centres.

Funding for signage. Through Tourism Victoria or CVTC (Country Victoria Tourism Council) provide funds for say 3 consultants to work for 12 months setting up these farm tourism projects. These consultants could advise farmers how to go about setting up, running and marketing other businesses.

Three respondents commented on the role of host farm associations in promoting farms, two apparently being unaware of the existence of the Host Farm Association directory of farms:

Farm holidays need to be promoted as an alternative holiday experience as in bed and breakfast. Host farm associations are important in specialised promotion of the group.

Help the farm stays, form an association and produce a single marketing directory to promote their type of holiday activity.

Dedicated farm holiday guide.

One comment indicated that the funding should come from the Federal Government, rather than the State Government which was in the question:

I don't know that it is a State Government issue – probably more appropriate for the Federal Government to earmark some of its tourism related funding.

Finally, one respondent seemed to feel that it would be better if government did not become involved in farm tourism:

Leave it alone!

Hindrances to the growth of farm tourism

Nearly all respondents answered this question, and commented on hindrances to the growth of farm tourism, with diverse answers. However, certain themes were raised more than once. These are shown in Table 6.4 with the number of times mentioned in brackets.

Table 6.4 Hindrances to the growth of farm tourism

Comment	Number of mentions
Lack of awareness/knowledge/expertise/organisation of farms	10
Lack of funds for promotion	7
Seasonality	5
Conflict with regulations/planning schemes	4
Distance from cities	2
Resistance by locals	2

The greatest number of responses was related to a lack of awareness of the potential of tourism in income generation. Some of these related to lack of training, lack of planning and lack of coordination of various interest groups:

Lack of awareness of farm tourism opportunities within the rural community.

Lack of awareness of tourism potential. Lack of marketing understanding. No coordinated approach between similar operators.

Lack of knowledge and marketing.

Growth in real terms requires planning of directions. At the moment there is a proliferation of small tourism operations (especially B & B's) which often don't survive. This gives the industry a bad name, can create an over supply/glut, and wipes out peoples savings. Need planning and awareness.

Internal perception – shire and residents have not traditionally seen themselves as tourism destination or recognised closeness to major markets.

Accommodation standards. Lack of information on opportunities and requirements. Lack of coordination of tourist interest groups (soon to be rectified).

Low level of expertise. Low level of training to set up and run such a business. Little general awareness of attractions in the area.

Awareness of opportunities associated with tourism by landlords and preference for 'status quo'.

Signage and road quality. Lack of recognition of tourism as a viable added income to farms. Lack of networks to stimulate farm tourism development. Poor maps of local area. No package developers/promoters in area.

Lack of organisation by farmers. Lack of understanding of potential. No marketing skills.

Lack of understanding of the capital requirements in setting up a farm tourism project was seen to be a problem, and lack of funds to promote farm tourism was mentioned as a related issue:

Effects of recession still evident.

Capital funding – commercial return on investment.

I imagine it's the belief that substantial investment is required to bring establishments up to standard.

Lack of quality programs. Lack of financial resources for the regional tourist associations to sponsor new host farms.

Not a traditional activity. Therefore no previous marketing or established clientele at this time.

Lack of incentive. Not a huge amount of total area – small acreage developments 1 – 10 acres. Competition from the immediate surroundings – more rural areas.

Pressures from residential development in urban fringe.

Small operators do not or are not able to spend money for promotion. Too many feel they only need to provide a brochure and the tourists will come.

Four respondents commented on difficulties with issues such as planning requirements. However, in those areas that actively supported farm tourism, these problems were rarely encountered:

Conflict with planning and health regulations.

Green wedge. Environmental problems.

Existing planning schemes place some restriction of accommodation and farm sales activity – i.e. product can only be sold if produced on the farm.

Current economic climate. High land costs. Planning controls which allow frivolous objections.

The effect of seasonality on the climate and farm activities was a concern for some respondents:

Fruit industry is primarily seasonal. Lack of staff or personnel to escort visitors around farms.

Isolation. Low profile of the area as a tourist destination. Seasonal discrepancies i.e. dry summers/very wet winters.

Climate – very dry, dust storms, water shortages. Environment.

Surplus of accommodation in off peak times.

Difficult to sustain all year round with farming activities.

Two respondents commented that distance was a hindrance to farm tourism, presumably being from local government areas particularly far from cities.

Anecdotal evidence from some farmers, however, indicated that certain guests liked the idea of being physically far away from metropolitan areas; but in general distance probably does deter visitors. The influence of distance was not specifically investigated in this study:

Distance. Lack of public transport.

Transport to the region. Distance from major cities.

Finally, there were three replies which indicated that the respondents held a fairly limited view of farm tourism and thus were unaware of its potential. One of these comments assumed that only small farms could become involved in farm tourism:

A lot of farms are now so much bigger and there seems little time to promote tourism. There was a time on small farms where bed and breakfast plus farm activities for guests would almost equal income from farm. But it wasn't done much, and now that there is more interest, the small farm set up is no longer there.

Another repeated the hindrance of distance, previously mentioned, but seemed to hold a specific view of what a host farm should look like:

There do not exist any significant historic mansions overlooking lush green valleys or raging rivers. Also the distance of this area from the arrival point of tourists.

The last comment in this section appeared to consider bus loads of tourists to be preferable to individuals or groups who would “disrupt” the farm:

The development of a sustainable tourism product of consistent quality. Bus tours, prebooked prepaid would be great. FIT (free independent travellers) tend to disrupt the working farm. Local tourism associations could nominate farms and opening times on a rotational basis. Farm experiences could be packaged, with tea rooms and accommodation to make the interruption economically viable.

Local government activities to assist farm tourism

Local governments were asked a question that stated “given sufficient financial resources, what could your shire/city council do to assist farm tourism?”

Many diverse answers were again provided by respondents. Recurring comments are listed in Table 6.5, with the number of times mentioned. By far the most numerous replies were those relating to advertising, marketing or promotion. There were seventeen respondents who identified these as the most important activities by which farm tourism could be assisted. Scattered through these comments are requests for more signage, and visitor information centres, as shown below.

Table 6.5 Actions by which local government bodies could assist farm tourism

Comments	Number of responses
Advertising/promotion/marketing	17
Planning/market research	5
Signage	5
Information/information centre	2
Training	2
Total	31

These comments included the following:

Assist in marketing, promotion.

Tourism advertising – brochures. Road signs to farms..

Encourage greater tourism opportunities. Develop bike trails.

Advertising regional primary producers and products in Australia and overseas.

Signage and promotion. Develop the ecotourism aspects of farmstays.

Promotion – trails networks. Signage. Changes to planning scheme.

Promotion work, facilitation for joint developments, sponsorship of training programs such as Aussie Host, etc.

Promote natural assets. Assist packaging and networking.

Directional signage. Promotional campaign. Brochures and explanatory notes on obtaining approvals.

Promote tourism. Offer assistance to providers of such a service to get started. Set up farms that can be run by shire.

Marketing/promotion. Training programs and network development. Signage. Guides.

A greater role in promotional activities. Form a committee within the shire representing rural tourism to develop greater awareness.

Assist in information, guidance, etc. Brochure production and advertising. Maps, etc.

Run a visitor information centre. Promote farm tourism to agricultural industry. Develop farm tourism packages. Promote the shires farm tourism to target markets.

Contribute to the production of farm holidays brochures and include in group advertising opportunities with other operator groups.

Facilitate and assist on marketing consultation. Information services support. Signage. Integration into cultural and tourism marketing.

Advertising of this productive farming area would perhaps encourage visitors to spend a few days in the area rather than just passing through.

Interesting comments listed above are the suggestion that farms should be set up to be run by the shire, and the idea that ecotourism aspects of farmstays should be developed.

Suggestions that were more specific than general promotion included some that recommended links between different groups such as farms and bus companies, and the idea of “touring routes” for presold tourism packages:

Facilitate links between farm tourism operators and other tourism operators i.e. bus companies, entertainment facilities etc. Financial resources would mainly be used for marketing.

Development of touring routes. Linking of markets via market research and development. Presold packaging of touring through farm holidays.

Support through local tourism group.

Organise and market tours. Provide a bus to transport visitors to various properties.

Need to coordinate other activities while people are staying in the area.

General comments on support for tourism in general, with a “flow-on” effect for farm tourism, included the following:

We assist tourism in general. Specific proposals to assist this sector would be treated on merit within the context of an overall strategy.

Develop a strategy for sustainable development. Implement appropriate structure to oversee this.

Market research. Product development. Employment of tourism officer.

Reduce the “red tape”.

Back any investor/entrepreneur who is prepared to stick their neck out.

Training was again mentioned as important, with two respondents suggesting seminars or workshops which would fit in with an overall strategic plan:

Develop seminars to fully inform business operators (prospective) combined with development and strategic planning advice and the provision of educational resources including case studies on best and worst practice in terms of development.

Work with the existing Regional Tourism Association to ascertain level and priority of interest amongst ratepayers and if positive facilitate and strategic planning workshop with interested parties, in line with the agreed overall tourism development business plan.

Regulations and suitability of area for growth in farm tourism

Of the local government bodies surveyed, 23 (65.7 percent) replied that they had regulations that were sufficient to cope with an expansion of farm tourism. Three did not reply (8.6 percent), while 9 (25.7 percent) answered that they did not have

sufficient regulations. Those who replied in the negative made the following comments to explain their answers:

The shire is currently reviewing its rural planning scheme to take into account the range of interest in rural areas, including farm tourism. It has appointed consultants (name) to prepare an integrated strategy plan to address these issues.

There are no regulations.

Planning regulations are to be revamped following amalgamation.

Permit would be required.

Not seen as separate to rest of tourism industry to warrant specific regulations. Face normal statutory and planning regulations.

Presently hampered by the fact that Shire is operating under five different planning schemes from pre-existing municipalities. This issue will be considered in the establishment of a single scheme in 1996.

The subject has not been activated as yet.

Planning restrictions would hinder rapid expansion. Impact on existing road structures.

As mentioned in the answers to other questions in the survey, difficulties with the planning schemes and regulations in different areas were given as difficulties in coping with an expansion in farm tourism.

A large majority (88.6 percent) of the sample felt that their area was suitable for the growth of farm tourism, while 8.5 percent answered in the negative, and 2.8 percent did not answer.

Those who answered positively were then asked whether they could foresee any significant social and/or economic effects from farm tourism growth in their area, and made a number of diverse comments.

A number of significant social and/or economic effects were identified by the respondents, and these are shown in Table 6.6. Only those that were mentioned more than once were recorded, and the table shows that value adding for the farmer was the most often mentioned response. This means that farmers need to benefit by being able to diversify and supplement their declining farm incomes with tourism revenue. Other responses mainly related to improvements in local economies as a result of increased tourism spending, resulting in investment opportunities, increased local employment, and greater awareness of the area, and of agriculture generally, by tourists.

Table 6.6 Significant social and/or economic effects from farm tourism

Social and/or economic effects	Number of responses
Value adding for farmer/additional (alternative) source of income	10
Investment opportunities	6
Improved local economies	5
Greater awareness of area by tourists	5
Increased employment	4
Greater awareness of importance of agriculture by tourists	2
Total	32

The main response related to the benefit for farmers in being able to diversify and supplement their declining farm income with tourism revenue:

Yes, add consistency to farm revenues. Add extra product to tourism attractions. Help define region as agricultural and tourism base.

Help maintain viability of smaller holdings. Assist in revitalisation of shopping. Provide employment. Help in establishment and development of other tourism related activities and enterprises.

It would be seen mainly as an additional secondary form of income.

Replacement of diminishing return from traditional farming. Increase in employment opportunities. Broadening of range of options to package the shire as a tourism destination.

Improved viability for farms. Broader attraction base for tourism. More interest from international travellers.

Development of alternative incomes for farm based communities.

Value adding. More work from home opportunities and increase local employment opportunities. Improve economics of small towns.

Boosting farm income may encourage farmers to stay on the land – and slow down splitting up of farms into small acreage development.

Provide alternative income for farming community. Increased employment opportunities.

Greater awareness of the area as a farm tourism destination. Further opportunities for properties to diversify. Strengthen relationships among properties.

Some respondents commented on the aspect of “hostile” members of the community who may be opposed to development and over commercialisation, which could result in the loss of the attraction of the area as a peaceful “rural escape”:

With proximity to Melbourne and other key population centres and the pooriness of the soil in some areas, farm tourism could grow and embrace historic/gold tourism. This can help to bring about the awareness to the “socially aware” market sector of the depth of diversity of attractions,

equating to repeat visits and thus higher yield – but can also help develop an appreciation for tourism amongst some previously hostile elements of the community.

May become too commercial. Local residents may object.

Increasing the length of stay of tourists. Support of rural communities. Increasing popularity of hobby farming and setting up “copycat” enterprises to the extent that the rural charm of the area may be degraded by “commercialisation”.

A few were pessimistic about the possible social and/or economic benefits that might flow from farm tourism as they did not foresee much potential for growth:

Related economic benefit to commerce. Farmers don't seem interested in tourism in this region. We haven't had any enquiries for assistance or advice – very little effect anticipated.

The growth in farm holidays is currently small. However, as the international market increases the category will grow.

Growth is not likely to be significant.

The employment aspect was seen as most important by two respondents, one of whom also alluded to the retention of young people in country areas as a result of increased employment:

Higher employment.

Increased employment, retaining youth in area.

Finally, six respondents were very enthusiastic about farm tourism creating social and economic benefits for their particular local government area:

Farm tourism would give us a product that could be marketed internationally, given that transport links could be developed to cater for the backpacker market. It would give the farmer an opportunity to value add his/her operations. The potential to develop a network of farmstays

and associated experiences to be marketed as a trial is in line with current state and national government initiatives.

Yes. Significant positive effects on diversity of product available. Therefore, greater marketing impact resulting in increase in visitation, economic impact, cultural development.

The most areas most likely are dairying and the saleyards – it will make people more aware of the importance of the agricultural sector.

Besides potential conflict between growing residential subdivisions and farms, farm tourism would be compatible with our tourism strategy (i.e. increasing varieties of accommodation leading to increasing overnight stays). Positive economic effect. It would also contribute to a positive perception in the minds of tourists.

Figures indicate that Victorians are doing more interstate travel and “different” holidays that offer family type entertainment and value for money would be an advantage.

Shire is eminently suited – many farms with variety of agricultural activity. Good sites for accommodation. Close proximity to major attractions such as alpine areas, mountain rivers.

General comments on farm tourism

Finally, local government bodies were asked for any further comments they had on farm tourism.

General comments on farm tourism were most favourable and three mentions were made of the fact that it is a growing market. Three respondents pointed out that quality needed to be ensured and maintained, and two respondents felt that the distance of their shire from the major population areas tended to make the growth of farm tourism unlikely.

The comments regarding growth were qualified by reference to infrastructure and awareness of the potential of tourism:

I believe it to be a growth market but it needs to be developed by ensuring product is of high quality – i.e. farms are well run, good service, cultural awareness, etc.

A very fast growing industry that needs attention including infrastructure, training, standards, etc., to keep it growing and make it a success.

Currently rural tourism is slowly developing. However, the shire is only now realising the potential of this area and is working towards strengthening this product.

Comments on quality highlighted the fact that some accommodation is inferior and certain developments which are not viable sometimes proceed. This can reflect upon other participants in the industry:

Like all ventures into business, the emphasis should be on planning; knowing the market; planning to capture it in a magnitude able to service business budgetary goals. Unfortunately this is not always the case and developments do take place that are ill advised as advice is not always forthcoming in a user friendly format. It therefore is the role of ecotourism development officers, regional tourism bodies and state and federal authorities (including education) to develop these resources for the community.

Need to bring up the standard and promotion of the poorer accommodation business.

The concept is good, but success will be heavily dependent on (1) location (2) attractiveness of the farm itself (3) level of variety of “hands on” farm activities on offer.

As far as distance was concerned, one respondent suggested package tours to entice tourists into country areas:

The distance from Melbourne makes it difficult to attract tourists to the area. They tend to participate in day trips from Melbourne to places like Healesville or Daylesford.

Difficult to attract tourists this far from metropolitan cities. Need to package tours to entice them into the country area.

Finally, some general comments included the statements that the tourism or economic development officer in one case was very keen to encourage new forms of income for farmers, and in another case would have ensured that a farm tourism operator continued operating :

The creation of 'farm shop' concept would create interesting day tourist business. Provide extra outlets for local food products.

Farm tourism has limited appeal to the general public.

Yes – currently our farmers graze and do very little growing or value adding. I am extremely keen to encourage new “on farm” incomes for our local farm based communities.

It may offer a viable alternative to old farming practices in the area.

A farm tourism operator closed prior to the establishment of the Economic Development office. We would have worked with them to prevent this from happening.

Summary of discussion

The results of the survey of local government show a generally positive attitude to farm tourism and to the development of farm tourism.

Local government authorities appreciate the fact that farm tourism brings income to their local area, and that this results in an increase in local business turnover, and in some cases brings about additional employment. Most local government authorities

have a positive attitude towards assisting the development of farm tourism, tempered by reality in the form of insufficient funding to be able to assist in every promotional endeavour by every individual host farm.

A high percentage (65.8 percent) of local government authorities consider that there is "a lot" of potential for farm tourism in their local area, and many have ideas as to how the State Government could assist them in nurturing this growing industry, mainly in the form of additional funds for promotional purposes. Some hindrances to the growth of farm tourism were identified, but on the whole local government authorities were able to provide a number of suggestions as to how farm tourism development might be assisted. General comments on farm tourism also indicated support for the concept in principle.

Assistance in the development of better planning approval processes was mentioned by a number of councils, as was the provision of funding for advertising and promotion. The latter was usually expressed as being contingent on the funding from State or Federal government being increased. The provision of signage (or funding for signage) was also a requirement for better promotion of host farms by councils.

A point also made was that "increased participation in farm tourism should be controlled to ensure that a quality product presented; otherwise all farmers involved in farm tourism could be adversely affected". "Over-development" and "over-commercialization" were seen as negative side-effects.

Given the positive approach indicated by most respondents it is to be hoped that farm tourism will benefit from streamlined planning procedures, and hopefully from the injection of some funding into promotion and advertising.

There is a need for all local government authorities to recognize tourism as an important contributor to the local economy, and to pursue activities which flow from this acceptance and recognition. These activities include the identification of best practice studies for tourism development, and cooperation with farm tourism providers in respect of planning, zoning, environmental and social impact issues that affect decision making.

Specific actions that may be taken by local government to support tourism have been identified by the Commonwealth Government (National Rural Tourism Strategy, Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994, pp. 39-41) and include the following:

- the flexible regulation of development and land use zoning controls that will assist tourism projects to be accommodated;
- the identification of the tourism strengths of an area which may make it attractive to certain customer segments, such as special interest groups which in turn will impact on the local area planning and decision making;
- consulting with the local community, the private sector, and other government bodies with regards to planning, development, and promotion of tourism in local areas;
- preparing local area tourism plans and strategies that take into account the factors mentioned above; and

- generally assisting the promotion of tourism through support for local tourist associations and information centres (summarized from the above report).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the conclusions that may be drawn from this study. The study comprises an investigation into the phenomenon of farm tourism, which is a subject not dealt with in great detail in the literature of the disciplines of business studies, marketing, tourism, and recreation. Farm tourism has been in existence for many years, and in many countries, but very little research has been carried out into its operations. It is a small part of overall tourism activity, but is growing.

The study's research objectives are, firstly, to develop a systems model of farm tourism; secondly, to examine and describe the scope of farm tourism in Victoria, from the point of view of the farmer; thirdly, to describe the evaluation of the farm tourism experience by the guests who have visited farms in Victoria; and, finally, to investigate the attitudes and involvement of local government bodies in Victoria to farm tourism.

The chapter summarises the main points regarding rural and farm tourism in Australia, the development of a systems model, and the major findings with regard to the three surveys undertaken: the survey of farms, the survey of guest responses and attitudes, and the survey of local government bodies.

Tourism - general trends and issues

Tourism brings substantial revenue to Australia, and rural tourism assists in some of this revenue being directed into areas other than cities, for the benefit of the rural population. Farm tourism is a small part of tourism, but is growing in popularity, and in its capability of attracting income to rural areas.

Trends in rural tourism identified by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1994) indicate that tourists in the future will have increased leisure time, increased disposable income, and a tendency to take short breaks. When these factors are combined with others such as higher levels of education, a rise in the popularity of “green” issues, a growing interest in specialty food and beverages, and a greater appreciation of heritage, it may be seen that farm tourism is able to satisfy a number of these needs for the tourist of the future. The other requirements that these tourists will have include a search for authenticity in a material world, the need for peace and tranquillity, and health consciousness, leading to more active outdoor recreation. The emergence of a more active older population also provides an impetus for the expansion of the farm tourism industry.

The benefits of rural tourism, to both the farm tourism provider and the local community, may be summarised as economic benefits, environmental benefits, and social benefits (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994, pp. 5-8). Farmers face an increasingly complex environment in which to maintain profitable farming operations. Drought, floods and other climatic conditions, combined with the trend towards increasing the size of farms, with the resultant reduction in number, have

made it difficult for many farmers to retain viable farming operations. A large proportion of farms are small businesses, operated by families. Farm tourism is therefore a useful method of diversification that has assisted the cash flow of farmers, and in some cases, allowed the farm to be retained as the income from farm tourism was crucial to the profitability of the farm.

Training for farm tourism is now available for both farm-stay operators and farm-stay employees, at various Colleges of TAFE, as well as the CAE (Council for Adult Education), and is also provided by the private sector.

Farm tourism in Australia

Farm tourism has existed for many years in Europe. In Australia the earliest mentions of farms offering regular accommodation for tourism and recreational purposes are around the turn of the century. In Victoria, serious farm tourism started in the late fifties and early sixties, receiving a boost in 1977 by the formation of the Host Farms Association, and recent developments indicate a substantial increase in the number of rural bed and breakfast providers and farms becoming involved in tourism operations.

Today farm tourism is in operation in at least 26 countries of the world, apart from Australia, and that in countries such as Austria, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, it is a significant industry.

Farm tourism in Australia is a small industry of some 1,500 to 2,000 farms but is growing in importance. Victoria and New South Wales are estimated to contain the

largest number of farms involved in tourism operations. This means up to 500 farms in each of these two states, as estimated by the Commonwealth Department of Tourism (1993). However, the industry, although small, is thriving, and there are many customers who repeat the experience of staying on a farm, thus indicating that there is a high degree of customer satisfaction.

Development of a systems model

This study applied systems theory to the structure and operations of farm tourism in Victoria. Stakeholder theory was also examined, and various systems models were considered. The factors relevant to farm tourism were identified and a systems model of farm tourism in Victoria was developed. The rest of the study examined three aspects of that model, namely farmers, guests, and local government in more detail in order to discover more about each of these factors in respect to farm tourism.

The model identified the farm tourism experience emanating from the farm itself, and from input from farmers and other influences, resulting in customer satisfaction for visitors. This basic input-output model was then used as a basic framework to which was added other influences to indicate the relationships between the various stakeholders in farm tourism.

Economic influences and competitive influences are related most clearly to the farm and to guest demand for the visitor experience, while physical influences largely impact upon the farm and farmers. Demographic and sociocultural influences affect the demand and the type of guests who visit the farm, and their various needs for

different types of tourism and recreation. Politico-legal influences from Federal, State and local government affect the farm and the farmer, as well as the competition and, indirectly, visitor demand. Technological influences involve the farm and its procedures, including marketing and promotion, and impact upon customer satisfaction. Other interested parties shown in the model include stakeholders such as hunters and conservationists.

The model therefore draws together these various stakeholders and shows their interrelationships by means of arrows that diagram the main lines of influence.

Survey 1. Survey of farms: general

A sample of 69 farms provided data for the findings detailed in chapter 4. The author spent a number of weeks visiting these farms and interviewing the farm owners or managers about their customers and marketing methods, travelling almost 12,000 kilometres around Victoria.

A number of different sources were used to compile a list of farms, from which a sample was drawn. The estimates of the author regarding the number of farms involved in farm tourism in Victoria differ from the official estimates, and the reasons for the differences are discussed. This part of the study was undertaken to become familiar with the actual operators and their properties, and to visit as many as possible during the time available. A mail questionnaire would not have produced the detail that was collected by physically travelling to each property. In fact, many

respondents indicated to the author that they would not have returned a mail survey questionnaire. The survey provided for both quantitative and qualitative responses.

Survey of farms: major findings

Major findings from the survey of farms were that the majority of farms in the sample commenced farm tourism operations in 1991 or 1992, although farm tourism has been offered for many years. This indicates that the last ten years have provided the greatest growth in the number of farm tourism providers.

In setting up for farm tourism, the average total amount spent is \$30,031 if we ignore some farms in the sample (4.5 percent) that spent large amounts in setting up purpose-built facilities to provide accommodation for large groups. Over 73 percent of farms spent \$3,000 or less in expenditure on household effects in setting up for farm tourism, and only a few (12 percent) needed to erect units, ablution blocks or chalets. Only 1.5 percent of the sample spent money on the construction of caravan parks or tent camping sites.

Most farms (89.5 percent) were not involved in expenditure on horses, saddles, etc., because they did not offer horse riding, or already possessed the necessary animals and equipment. Most farms (85 percent) did not need to spend money on the erection of additional fences or gates. Additional roads were also constructed by a minority of farms (22.4 percent).

In terms of time spent on farm tourism activities, 17.9 percent reported that they spent no time on tourism activities, or that the amount of time would be negligible.

However, 44.8 percent of farmers reported that 76-100 percent of their time was devoted to farm tourism activities. These farmers were often associated with large groups of tourists.

Almost two thirds of the farms reported that the percentage revenue from farm tourism was 15 percent or less (59.6 percent), while 16.4 percent reported the tourism revenue between 16 and 35 percent. In a number of cases (20.9 percent) farmers answered "couldn't do without it" when responding to a question regarding the importance of farm tourism to the enterprise. Another 19.4 percent stated that farm tourism income "significantly raised" their standard of living, while 34.3 percent described this income as "of minor importance".

In the marketing and publicity of farm tourism, word of mouth was reported as one of the most important methods, with over 88 percent of respondents identifying it as important. The Accommodation Guide of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria was also rated highly (89.6 percent), making these two promotional methods the only two with results in the eighty percent range. Close behind were brochures and leaflets (79.1 percent), with the guide of the Host Farms Association and signs on premises being rated equally by 70.1 percent.

Advertising expenditure was shown to be \$1,000 or less for 68.6 percent of farms, and 15.2 percent of this category spent between \$401 and \$500. Only 6 percent of farms reported insurance claims as a result of serious problems caused by farm tourism.

The effect of farm tourism on farming was investigated, and 23.9 percent of farmers reported that farm tourism activities caused them to have less time to spend on farming activities. However, 76.1 percent stated that they were involved in farm tourism in order to obtain extra income, so the time spent on farming activities was necessarily curtailed in order to generate financial reward. A further 35.8 percent used farm tourism income "to get over lean times" and 32.8 percent saw farm tourism expenditure as a "major future investment".

Success in farm tourism was attributed to "the personality of the operator" in 82.1 percent of cases, and to "nearby attractions" in 80.6 percent of cases. Location of the farm (79.1 percent) and type of accommodation (71.6 percent) were other important considerations that rated highly.

No farmers estimated that more than 75 percent of their guests were singles, and 40.3 percent of farmers estimated couples to be between 26 and 50 percent of their guests. Many farms were visited by families and children, but 55.2 percent of farms stated that none of their guests were families with older children (over 12), as younger children are usually taken on farm stays.

Most farms (55.2 percent) did not accommodate groups, and 88 percent of farmers estimated that between 76 and 100 percent of their visitors were city dwellers. It was also estimated by 50.7 percent of farmers that between 76 and 100 percent of their visitors were in professional occupations. Over half (55.2 percent) estimated between 76 and 100 percent of their guests were from Victoria, while 65.7 percent estimated

that interstate guests made up 25 percent or less of their visitors, with a lesser figure (49.2 percent) for overseas guests.

These findings are expanded upon and evaluated below.

Survey of farms: customer categories

Market segmentation involves the identification and classification of specific markets or groups of buyers (segments) that are characterised by different needs or behaviour, and therefore might require separate products or marketing mixes, and is one of the basic concepts of marketing (Adapted from Kotler et al, 1998, p. 297 and Bateson, 1989, p. 399). Two main segments of the farm tourism market were identified, namely domestic and overseas customers. Domestic customers tended to prefer cottages or similar accommodation, whereas overseas customers preferred to stay in the homestead with the farmer and the family.

Other characteristics of segments identified by farmers as important were professional people, and people residing in Victoria, which is to be expected. Significant groups which visited farms included disabled adults and children, as well as corporate groups and religious organisations.

Market segmentation has not been a main focus of this study, but host farm operators would do well to study the segment that they are attracting, or hope to attract, before making decisions on promotion of the farm. The procedure of first identifying the type of customer, and then making the decisions regarding promotion and other

marketing activities, is well documented in the literature (Kotler et al, 1998, p. 294; Lundberg, 1990, p. 155; Lovelock, 1996, p. 165; Bateson, 1989, p. 399; among others) and a number of tourism specific segmentation studies have been conducted (see for example Morrison, Hsieh and O'Leary, 1994; Mills, Couturier, and Snepenger, 1986; Fesenmaier and Johnson, 1989; Uysal and McDonald, 1989; Davis, Allen and Cosenza, 1988). A detailed segmentation study is beyond the scope of the present study, but it is obvious that research needs to be undertaken into how prospective customers behave before making decisions that involve marketing expenditure.

Survey of farms: booking practices and accommodation facilities

Bookings were made through a variety of methods, with a large proportion being direct reservations. In some cases the operators constructed a purpose-built facility costing many thousands of dollars, whereas other farmers made use of existing buildings on their properties, such as old shearers' quarters, or even more simply, rooms in their own homes.

Survey of farms: promotional activities

A large proportion of those visited had been involved in farm tourism for a relatively short time, and many spent very little on advertising and promotion: almost 70 percent of the sample spent one thousand dollars or less in a year on this aspect of their business. Methods of marketing and promotion were very diverse, and the techniques that were successful for some farms were not necessarily successful for others. The

percentages of revenue earned from farming and tourism varied a great deal as well, with some farms earning most of their revenue from tourism, while others actually made a loss with their tourism operations. Some farmers openly stated that they would have had to sell their farms if they had not received the revenue that was provided by tourism, and overall over 40 percent of the sample stated that they could not do without tourism revenue, or that their standard of living was significantly raised by it.

The reasons for becoming involved in tourism were often to raise income during particularly difficult periods, such as droughts, or lean times generally, but once they were successful many farmers maintained the tourism part of their operation as a lucrative diversification venture.

Survey 2. Guest responses and attitudes: major findings

The resources of the Host Farms Association were used to compile a list of previous guests of host farms, and these guests were then sent a questionnaire by mail. The response to the mail survey yielded 260 usable questionnaires, the detailed results of which are described in Chapter 5.

The guests were on the whole (85.4 percent) favourably impressed with the farm on arrival, and 87.7 percent were favourably impressed by the quality of accommodation. In addition 85.8 percent were favourably impressed with the overall experience of farm tourism. In most cases the problem that arose to cause a negative impression of either the farm, the quality of accommodation, or the overall farm tourism experience,

related to a problem in communication. Some guests had formed an image in their minds, and this was not fulfilled when they confronted the actual situation. This can be related to the model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, p.44) which examines determinants of perceived service quality and identifies a number of gaps between expectations and perceptions concerning service quality. Thus the gap between customer's expectations and the marketer's perceptions can be eliminated through proper market research to ascertain exactly what service attributes the customer considers important. The gap between service delivery and external communications is another that is relevant in respect of farm tourism – for example, the gap between what appears in a brochure and what is actually offered or takes place on the farm once the guest has arrived.

It is, however, heartening for the host farm industry to see the large percentage of guests who are favourably impressed. Many favourable responses referred to aspects such as the quality of the accommodation; the location, setting, and atmosphere of the farm; and the friendliness and helpfulness of the hosts. This led to a majority of respondents (64.6 percent) indicating that they would be happy to return to the same farm for a visit in the future. An even higher percentage (96.2 percent) indicated that they would visit a different farm in the future. It is suggested that this does not necessarily mean that the guests were disappointed (because this would have shown up in the previous questions regarding customer satisfaction), but that they would like some variety in farm visits. However, this aspect was not formally investigated and further research would need to be done to confirm that this is indeed the case.

Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the farm tourism experience including the quality of the accommodation. As noted above, 250 of the 260 respondents would be prepared to visit another farm. Of the ten remaining respondents only nine were unsure and one would not visit. The findings indicate a high degree of ongoing interest in farmstays as a concept but less loyalty to the individual farm property. In some respects the lack of loyalty to individual farms is surprising. Smaller farms in particular might be expected to provide opportunities for intense interactions between the provider and the visitor, thereby enhancing the prospect of a return visit.

In summary, it was found that farmstay visitors' preferences have no significant relationship with source of information used, use of other accommodation type, impressions of the farmstay or future farmstay behaviour. Nor were any significant relationships evident between either information sources or use of other accommodation types and impressions of the farmstay behaviour. The only issue that was identified with having a significant relationship with potential future farmstays was the first impression made by the farmer and the farm on visitors. Those farms that made a positive first impression were more likely to attract repeat business than those that did not. Reassurance about and provision of quality experiences may have a greater capacity to influence future use than selling the benefits of farm tourism.

Guest responses: booking arrangements

Communication, or lack of communication, is again evident in the attitudes of customers to booking arrangements – a majority of customers felt that they had

sufficient information at the time of booking (75.8 percent), while 83.1 percent felt confident about making a future booking.

Awareness of the existence of host farms was obtained by word of mouth in 39.2 percent of cases, while 35 percent of respondents named the HFA (Host Farms Association) guide as their source of information. Over half (51.5 percent) found it very easy to access information on host farms. Only 4 responses (.5 percent) found this "very difficult".

Guest responses: preferred form of accommodation

When asked about form of accommodation used on holidays, the most frequent responses were motel (31.3 percent), and host farm (30.9 percent). The most surprising result from this question, as mentioned in chapter 5, is the low response to bed and breakfast (other than a farm), which rated only 8.5 percent. This indicates that the particular market segment being surveyed were deliberately choosing a farm rather than a bed and breakfast provider. In other words, many chose a farm holiday since it is viewed as offering a distinctive form of accommodation.

Guest responses: guest involvement in activities

Farmstay visitors appear to view host farms as providing a range of activities to which they attach varying levels of importance. Some are associated directly with the farm as a provider and others are associated with the destination area more generally. It is

important for the farm tourism sector generally to have an understanding of the relationship between farm and destination attractions.

The activities that guests became involved in included mostly those related to the farm and farming activities, and 62.3 percent of guests were able to experience or take part in these activities. Perhaps this is an area that could be examined by farmers, and/or the Host Farms Association, to ensure that they do not mislead guests into expecting all activities to be available on every holiday. Those activities that are intermittent, or seasonal, should be tagged as such to warn guests that they should expect certain activities at certain times only. The activities chosen, and the comments made, indicate that most guests expect the farm to be the main source of entertainment during the holiday, and in most cases are not merely using the farm accommodation as a base from which to visit other attractions in the immediate area.

A large share of respondents were married, aged between 31 and 40, with children under 16. These findings could benefit from further investigation. Was disappointment in lack of involvement in activities highest amongst particular types of visitors looking for particular types of experience or was it a reflection of the various styles of service and presentation at different farm properties?

The most important activities named were watching animals (50 percent), farm tours (36.9 percent), farm walks (35.5 percent), and watching farming (34.9 percent). The most important activity not directly related to the farm itself was bushwalking (24.7 percent). There are some differences in the way farmers and guests rate the popularity of certain activities. Farmers rate watching animals more highly than

guests, and farmers also rate farm tours as popular, whereas fewer guests rate it as popular. Guests also rated farm work lower than farmers, and farmers rated fishing highly (67.2 percent) whereas only 7.4 percent of guests rated it as very important. Shooting and/or hunting was rated by 16.4 percent of farmers as very important, but only 1.9 percent of guests rated it as very important. Comparisons between the findings of the current study and other studies researching participation in, and/or popularity of, various farm activities, revealed similarities in visitors' evaluations.

Time spent on the farm varied but 41.1 percent of responses occurred between 40 percent and 60 percent, with 38 percent of respondents indicating that they spent between 26 and 50 percent of their time on the farm.

The guests may be divided into three clusters or groupings based on their choice of or predisposition towards certain activities. These three groupings are those interested in passive recreation, those interested in farm-related activities, and those interested in active recreation, respectively. These groupings may provide a preliminary indication for the farm tourism sector of the major segments that need to be accommodated.

They may provide a guide to whether collaboration between farms and other destinations is likely to be helpful and productive.

The prospects available to farm tourism providers for actively targeting the various activity-based market segments outlined in Chapter 5 are worthy of further investigation. It would be useful to know the forms of target marketing, information and service provision that would work best for the target audiences. The present study has provided a preliminary profile of farmstay guests and an activity-based

segmentation. However considerable work is needed to gain a proper understanding of the factors underlying the farmstay experience. Can specific packages be prepared which would respond to the needs of different consumer groups? How can farms find an appropriate balance between providing an “authentic” and spontaneous experience and a managed and professional service encounter? The present study has provided a starting point for the further exploration of some of these issues.

Guest responses: promotional methods

Word of mouth and the guide of the Host Farms Association were found to be the main ways in which guests heard about host farms. Specifically, when asked how easily they were able to access information on host farms, only about half of the sample responded with the “very easy” answer. These last two results would appear to indicate that more communication between the Host Farms Association and the general public is required, but it may be due to lack of funding that this communication is restricted. One avenue that could be explored is that of communicating with local government bodies, which report receiving hundreds of enquiries about host farms. Farm and agricultural related distribution and communication channels were therefore quite important in providing information about farmstays. This indicates that the sector is reliant on distribution channels which extend beyond the established travel outlets such as retailers and wholesalers.

Guest responses: decision making process

Decisions regarding farm choice as a holiday destination were made in most cases (44.2 percent) by male and female partner together, followed by 21.5 percent of decisions being made as a joint decision between male and female partners and child or children. This finding confirms the trend towards more joint decision making identified by other studies.

Guest responses: profile of visitors

Most of the sample were based in Melbourne (91.9 percent), with 44.6 percent residing in the eastern suburbs, traditionally the area with higher socioeconomic status. A large percentage of respondents (72.3 percent) were married, and the household most represented was one with four persons (41.5 percent). A preponderance of respondents in the 31-40 year age group (60.8 percent), followed by those aged 41 to 50 (23.1 percent), indicates that, as would be expected, younger people with children are more likely to seek farm holidays than other age groups. Older people appear to be less interested in farm tourism, as do those aged 21 to 30.

Respondents indicated that they mostly took a holiday once or twice a year (61.9 percent), while 31.2 percent took a holiday three or four times a year. 61.2 percent of the sample indicated that they stayed away for four or more nights on each holiday, while 28.1 percent spent three or four nights away.

General comments on farm tourism produced a number of respondents who criticized the lack of an accurate system for grading the various types of farm, so that they would know what standards to expect. This led to expectations not being met, and poor public relations for the host farm industry, as a bad experience can turn customers away from farms as a possible option when seeking holiday accommodation. Some visitors wanted more detail regarding each farm, and the possible activities available for various age groups, while other comments showed that some farmers lacked the understanding of the basic requirements of service provision. Fortunately these were only a small number of the sample.

Recurring themes included comments on how farm tourism could help to combat stress and help one to relax. The suitability of a farm stay for children was also mentioned by a number of guests.

Survey 3. Attitudes of local government bodies: major findings

Rural tourism in general, and farm tourism in particular, brings a number of benefits to country areas, mainly centred around the spending of money and the resultant increase in local business, and, in some cases, employment.

Most local governments appreciate this and have a positive attitude towards assisting the development of farm tourism operations. This enthusiasm is tempered by reality in the form of insufficient funding to assist in advertising and otherwise promoting the individual host farms.

Major findings from the survey of local government involvement in farm tourism found that in most cases, local government and the local population are receptive to the idea of farm tourism, seeing it as bringing tourists and increased expenditure to their local area.

Most councils reported that there were a number of enquiries received in connection with farm holidays. Enquiries reported usually ran into the hundreds, and in one area were estimated to be between 501 and 600. This suggests that some communication between farm tourism operators and local government bodies would assist in increasing farm visitor numbers.

Regarding the economic or social impact that farm tourism might have in the district, 57.1 percent of local government respondents replied in the affirmative, and some noted that they expected this to be greater in the future. Respondents who saw farm tourism having an economic or social impact commented on the "value adding" benefit to farmers and an increase in accommodation facilities bringing increased tourism dollars to the community through the multiplier effect.

The provision of information, advice or assistance to farm tourism operators was mentioned by 34 percent of local government respondents, while 31 percent mentioned assistance with promotional activities. In general, tourism was supported, and farm tourism, as part of tourism, would also be supported.

The local government authorities reported that they were in the process of developing structures and strategies that would be of assistance to tourism operators (25.7

percent). In fact, 68.6 percent estimated that there was "a lot" of potential for farm tourism in their local government area.

A number of respondents (48.6 percent) pointed out that assistance with promotion would require funding from the State Government. Other topics of concern were the promotion of Melbourne at the expense of country Victoria, the provision of low interest loans or grants to support farm tourism, the idea of better accreditation of farms, and training of farm tourism providers. Hindrances to the growth of farm tourism were seen as mainly a lack of awareness (28.6 percent), and lack of funds for promotion (20 percent). Other issues that were identified as possibly hindering farm tourism development were seasonality, conflicts with regulations and planning schemes, the distance from cities that tourists would need to travel to get to the farm, and in some cases, resistance by locals.

The most important action identified as being of assistance to farm tourism was "advertising/promotion/marketing" (48.6 percent). 65.7 percent of local government respondents felt that they had regulations in place that were sufficient to cope with an expansion of farm tourism, and 88.6 percent felt that their area was suitable for the growth of farm tourism. The most significant effect that farm tourism would deliver was seen to be the benefit for farmers in being able to diversify and supplement their declining farm income with tourism revenue (mentioned by 28.6 percent of respondents).

In general, local government authorities were favourably disposed towards farm tourism and saw it as a growing source of income for both farmers and local government areas.

Concluding comments

The study examines an area of tourism that has been neglected to a certain extent by researchers, and helps to convey some of the characteristics of the industry.

The thesis develops a systems model of farm tourism in Victoria which is the first such model to be presented, and as such involves seminal research into the analysis of farm tourism as a phenomenon.

The key findings are summarized below:

- There are approximately 1,575 farm tourism operators in Australia, and approximately 500 in Victoria.
- There are a number of stakeholders in the farm tourism industry and these may be represented by a model showing their relationships.
- Many farms were set up as farm tourism providers for the first time as recently as 1991.
- The average amount spent in setting up was \$30,031.
- Almost half of the farmers reported that 76-100 percent of their time was devoted to tourism activities.

- One in five farmers (20.9 percent) "couldn't do without" the revenue from farm tourism.
- 88 percent of farmers regarded word of mouth as the most important method of promotion of farm tourism.
- Over two thirds (68.6 percent) of farm tourism providers spent \$1,000 or less on advertising annually.
- Only 6 percent of farms reported insurance claims as a result of serious problems caused by farm tourism.
- Success in farm tourism activities was attributed mainly to the "personality of the operator" (82.1 percent) and to "nearby attractions" (80.6 percent).
- A high proportion of farm stay visitors were found to be families aged 31-50 with children under 16, who were professionals and city dwellers, who resided in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.
- Over eighty percent of guests (85.4 percent) were favourably impressed with the farm on arrival, and 87.7 percent were favourably impressed by the quality of accommodation. 85.8 percent were favourably impressed with the overall experience of farm tourism.
- Almost all (96.2 percent) visitors surveyed stated that they would visit the same farm again or stay at another farm.
- Only 8.5 percent of respondents stated that they sought a bed and breakfast provider as preferred accommodation, whereas 30.9 percent were specifically seeking a farm stay.
- More than a third (37.7 percent) of farm visitors were unable to experience or take part in activities advertised by the farm.

- The most important activities named were watching animals (50 percent), farm tours (36.9 percent), farm walks (35.5 percent), and watching farming (34.9 percent). The most important activity named not directly related to the farm itself was bushwalking (24.7 percent).
- Local government authorities on the whole were found to be supportive of farm tourism, but felt that the State Government could allocate more funding to country Victoria for promotional purposes.
- Local government authorities stated that they received hundreds of enquiries about farm tourism from prospective visitors.
- 88.6 percent of local government authorities felt that their area was suitable for the growth of farm tourism.

The study shows farm tourism to be a vibrant and growing sector of the tourism industry, which will develop further over time. There has been a significant increase in this type of tourism over the last twenty years, and it may be expected to grow in the future. It also points the way for further research to be carried out into the phenomenon of farm tourism, as the analysis of this type of tourism covers other disciplines such as land use and land management as well as the financing and efficiency of farming operations.

Farm tourism has thus evolved, and is still evolving, from a small number of farms to a more sophisticated bed and breakfast type of industry that is technologically advanced to the stage of being able to take bookings over the Internet. Many farms have web sites where guests may take a virtual tour of the farm prior to expressing an interest in making a reservation. Future development is likely to involve more

cooperation among farms and bed and breakfast providers to work together in order to be able to influence the other stakeholders in the system that may assist them in the provision of finance, promotion, and other assistance. For example, local government bodies are sometimes approached by potential customers asking about farm tourism providers in a particular area. Liaison between farm tourism providers and local government bodies could ensure that enquiries are dealt with effectively.

The systems model that was developed in this study may serve as a starting point for other researchers to develop further. Detailed analysis of parts of the model not covered in the present study may provide further insights into the farm tourism industry, and further research may also focus on the relationships in the workings of the model, as well as attempt to quantify the nature of the interrelationships that are depicted in the systems model.

The results that are presented here may have direct implications for policy decisions made by farm tourism operators or local government bodies, as well as affecting funding and/or marketing strategies. For example, average set-up costs of \$30,000 indicate that the industry may be entered fairly economically, with a number of farms reporting lower outlay than this. Farmers becoming involved in farm tourism will need to understand that the venture will involve a substantial part of their lives, and cannot simply be left to function on its own.

Revenue may be increased (in some cases substantially) by becoming involved in farm tourism. The choice then becomes whether to gradually move towards an enterprise which is largely tourism-funded, with the farm operations being continued

mainly for the benefit of the tourists; or to use the cash flow generated by the diversification into tourism to fund further expansion of the farming activities.

Much of the promotion of farm tourism is done by word of mouth, but some investment in membership of a cooperative organisation is usually beneficial. In addition the farmer who becomes involved in farm tourism needs to remember that much of the success in farm tourism was attributed to the personality of the operator (over 82 percent), and secondly to nearby attractions (over 80 percent), by respondents in this study. Thus the farmer who lacks the motivation or interest to interact with guests, or whose farm is not located near any other attractions, may find it more difficult to operate a successful farm tourism business, unless the farm itself makes up for the shortfall in other experiences demanded by the visitor.

The main market for farm tourism is made up of families aged 31-50 with children under 16, as would be expected. To a lesser extent, couples (young or old) are a secondary market, more likely to be interested in the farm as a bed and breakfast provider, rather than as a working farm where guests are interested in participating in, or observing, farming activities.

Local government bodies are generally positively disposed towards the development of farm tourism, and presumably are well aware of the multiplier effect that results when tourists visit regional and country areas. Perhaps more could be done to stimulate farm tourism through the provision of short courses or seminars /workshops for potential farm tourism operators who could then make better informed decisions regarding whether to become involved in farm tourism or not.

Streamlined planning procedures, avoiding over-development or over-commercialisation of an area, could assist potential operators to become involved in farm tourism. More farmers involved in farm tourism would mean increased competition and more choice for the consumer, and would benefit the industry as a whole. In particular, local government bodies should be flexible in regulating land use and development to assist farm tourism projects to be accommodated; they may assist in identifying tourism strengths of an area (which make it attractive to certain customer segments); they may consult more with the various stakeholders, and they may prepare local area tourism plans and strategies that generally assist the promotion of farm tourism through support for local associations and information centres (adapted from the National Rural Tourism Strategy, Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1994, pp. 39-41).

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire for farmers/farm managers

PARTICULARS

quest1

Date:

Farm/business name:

Location:

Nearest town:

Postal address:

Telephone number:

Farm size:.....hectares

Distance from Melbourne by road:.....kilometres

Type of farm:

Beef cattle	1	Deer	7
Dairy farm	2	Grazing	8
Horse stud	3	Fruit/veg	9
Sheep farm	4	Cereals	10
Pigs	5	Mixed	11
Agistment	6	Hobby	12

Other (please state): 13.....

Do you offer: Accommodation 1

Day visits 2

Number of guests who can be accommodated at one time.....

Number of full-time workers

Number of part-time workers

ACTIVITIES

quest2

Which of the following activities are available on your farm?

		(Most popular)
Farm walks	1	1
Bird watching	2	2
Swimming	3	3
Bushwalking	4	4
Watching farming	5	5
Observing animals	6	6
Farm tours	7	7
Being with young animals	8	8
Fishing	9	9
Assisting mustering	10	10
Mushrooming	11	11
Horse riding	12	12
Doing farm work	13	13
Canoeing	14	14
Yabbying/marroning	15	15
Collecting/picking farm produce	16	16
Tennis	17	17
Boating	18	18
Fossicking for gemstones	19	19
Cricket	20	20
Trampoline	21	21
Shooting/hunting	22	22
Water-skiing	23	23
Trail bike riding	24	24
Four wheel drive motoring	25	25
Golf	26	26

Other (please state).....

ACCOMMODATION

quest3

Farm homestead	- share with family	1
	- self-contained	2
Holiday units		3
Cottage/chalet		4
Renovated farm buildings		5
Workers/shearers quarters		6
Bunkhouse		7
Caravan		8
Caravan sites		9
Camping sites		10

Meals provided:

Breakfast	1	Lunch	2	Dinner	3
-----------	---	-------	---	--------	---

Visitors are required to bring:

Food	1	Blankets	4
Cooking utensils	2	Linen/towels	5
Crockery/cutlery	3		

Number of visitors in 1991 (approximately):.....

Percentage repeat visitors in 1991(approx).....%

Number of nights (in 1991) visitors were on premises.....
(approximately)

Busiest month/s of the year for tourism:

Jan	1	May	5	Sep	9
Feb	2	Jun	6	Oct	10
Mar	3	Jul	7	Nov	11
Apr	4	Aug	8	Dec	12

BOOKING

quest4

How are bookings made for your farm?

- Direct 1
- RACV 2
- HFA 3
- Travel agents 4
- Agribusiness 5
- Country Lane 6
- Host Home Connection 7
(Australian Designer Travel)
- Other (please state) 8

ECONOMICS

In what year did you begin farm tourism?

Have you spent money on the following, and if so, approximately how much?

- 1 Purchase of household effects
(e.g. linen/blankets/mattresses etc.) \$...
- 2 Renovation/maintenance of existing accommodation \$...
- 3 Purchase of additional buildings for accommodation \$...
- 4 Erection of units/ablution blocks/chalets or similar \$...
- 5 Construction of caravan park/tent camping sites \$...
- 6 Purchase of horses/saddles/etc. \$...
- 7 Erection of additional fences/gates \$...
- 8 Construction of additional roads \$...
- 9 Other (please state).....

In an average year what percentage of the family's time would be spent on the farm tourism aspect of the farm compared to the other farm activities?

Farm tourism% Other activities%

PUBLICITY/MARKETING

quest6

Which of the following forms of publicity/marketing do you use?

Word of mouth	1
Posters/stickers	2
Brochures/leaflets	3
Newspapers	4
Radio	5
Television	6
Agricultural journals	7
Travel bureau	8
Victorian tourist bodies	9
Cooperative marketing with other farmers	10
RACV guide	11
HFA guide	12
Agribusiness	13
Country Lane	14
Host Home Connection (Australian Designer Travel)	15
Signs on premises	16
Yellow pages	17
Direct mail	18
Personal sales calls	19
Sponsorships	20
Newsletter	21
Familiarisations	22
Journalists/trade	23
Special events	24

PUBLICITY/MARKETING (continued)

quest7

Contests/competitions	25
Trade shows	26
Royal Melbourne Show	27
Shopping centre promotions	28
Video	29
Free gifts	30
Telephone marketing to new or existing customers	31
Endorsements	32
Other	33

If other, please give details:.....

Approximately how much did you spend on advertising and promotion in 1991?
 \$.....

How frequently do you advertise?

- Once a year or less 1
- More frequently 2

If more frequently, give details:

.....

EFFECT ON FARMING

quest 8

Has farm tourism caused any of the following problems:

- Lack of time to spend on the farm 1
- Reduced capital for the farm 2
- Reduced space from buildings 3
- Lowered farm production 4
- Reduced interest in farming 5
- Invasion of privacy 6
- Loss of original rural attractions such as
life style, seclusion 7
- Damage to farm property/buildings/equipment 8
- Nuisance to animals 9
- Littering/untidiness 10
- Gates left open 11
- Insurance claims 12

What are the main reasons why you are involved in farm tourism?

- Extra income 1
- To get over drought/lean times 2
- Future major investment 3
- Meeting people 4
- Spare capital to use 5
- An extra interest 6
- Other 7

If other, please give details:.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

CUSTOMERS

quest9

What percentage of your guests would be:

- Singles 1%
- Couples 2%
- Families with young children (under 12) 3%
- Families with older children (over 12) 4%
- Groups 5%
- City dwellers 6%
- Professional people 7%
- From within Victoria 8%
- From other states in Australia 9%
- From overseas 10%

If GROUPS mentioned, which of the following have visited your property?

- School groups - kindergarten/pre-school 1
- primary school 2
- secondary school 3
- post-secondary 4
- Other groups - senior citizens 5
- Lions/Apex/Rotary 6
- religious organisations 7
- cubs/scouts/brownies/guides/rovers 8
- deaf/disturbed/disabled adults/children 9
- corporate groups 10
- coach tours 11
- other groups 12

If other please give details:.....
.....
.....
.....

SUCCESS

quest10

What would you say is the main reason for your success in farm tourism?

- Location of the farm 1
- Surroundings 2
- Nearby attractions 3
- Personality of operator 4
- Type of accommodation 5
- Type of farm 6
- Other 7

If other, please give details:.....

PROBE for details of attributes for differentiation
 (USP/SCA)

strengths/particular benefits

market segments/targets

.....

Ask about other host farms nearby.....

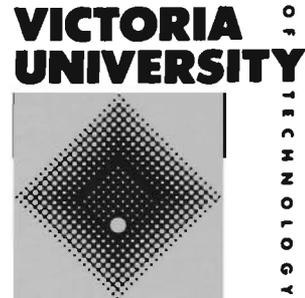
Ask for copy of latest brochure

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for farm guests

Victoria University of Technology
Ballarat Road Telephone
Footscray (03) 9688 4000
PO Box 14428 Facsimile
MMC (03) 9689 4069
Melbourne
Victoria 3000
Australia

Footscray Campus
Department of
Hospitality &
Tourism
Management
Telephone
(03) 9688 4430
Facsimile
(03) 9688 4931



15 October 1995

Dear host farm visitor,

I am conducting research into farm tourism in Victoria. The results of this project will assist farm tourism operators to provide better products and services for you, their customer.

Please take the few minutes that will be required to fill in the enclosed questionnaire, and return it in the reply paid envelope. (No postage stamp is required.)

Please note that there is no way that your name or address can be identified from the questionnaire results - the information collected is collectively analysed.

Your cooperation is much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Jeffrey N. Kidd
Senior Lecturer in Marketing

1. When you arrived at the farm, was it

Exactly what
you expected
1

Better than
you expected
2

Worse than
you expected
3

If better or worse, in what way?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Would you rate the quality of the accommodation

Exactly what
you expected
1

Better than
you expected
2

Worse than
you expected
3

If better or worse, in what way?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Would you rate your overall experience

Exactly what
you expected
1

Better than
you expected
2

Worse than
you expected
3

If better or worse, in what way?

.....
.....
.....
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4. Would you return to the farm you visited for another stay?

Yes 1

No 2

Not sure 3

5. Would you visit a different farm some time in the future?

Yes 1

No 2

Not sure 3

6. Did you feel that you had enough information to make a decision at the time of booking?

Yes 1

No 2

Not sure 3

7. In terms of the information that you now have with regards to host farms, would you feel confident about making a booking in the future?

Yes 1

No 2

Not sure 3

8. What form of accommodation do you USUALLY use on holidays?

- Hotel 1
- Motel 2
- Host farm 3
- Bed and breakfast (other than a farm) 4
- Friends and relatives 5
- Caravan park 6
- Camping 7
- Other (please state).....8

9. During your farm stay, did you have the opportunity to experience or take part in the activities advertised?

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Partly 3

Please comment briefly on your answer:

.....

10. How important are the following activities to you when staying on a farm?

Not important.....Very important

- | | | | | | | |
|-------|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10.1 | Farm walks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.2 | Bird watching | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.3 | Swimming | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.4 | Bushwalking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.5 | Farm tours | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.6 | Watching farming | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.7 | Watching animals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.8 | Farm work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.9 | Fishing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.10 | Horse riding | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.11 | Shooting/hunting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. How did you first hear about host farms?

Word of mouth (e.g. from friends/relatives)	1
RACV Accommodation guide	2
RACV Royalauto magazine	3
HFA (Host Farms Association) Guide	4
Agribusiness advertisement	5
Country Lane advertisement	6
Australian Designer Travel advertisement	7
AUSRES (Australian Reservation Service) advertisement	8
Signs on premises (e.g. on the roadside)	9
Yellow pages	10
Royal Melbourne Show stand	11
Other (please state).....	12

12. How easy did you find it to access information on host farms?

Very easy.....Very difficult

1 2 3 4 5

If you answered 4 or 5 above, please explain why?

.....

13. In making your choice to stay on the farm, whose influence was MAINLY involved in making the final decision?

Single person	1
Male partner	2
Female partner	3
Male and female partner together (joint decision)	4
Child/children	5
Male and female partners and child/children together (joint decision)	6

14. During your holiday, how much time during the day would you estimate you spent ON THE FARM itself as opposed to OFF THE FARM (for example, touring the immediate district)?

Percentage time spent ON the farm %

Percentage time spent OFF the farm %

Thank you for answering these questions. The last few questions relate to your personal details.

15. What is your normal place of residence?

Melbourne: Northern suburbs	1
Melbourne: Eastern suburbs	2
Melbourne: Western suburbs	3
Melbourne: Southern suburbs	4
Geelong	5
Country Victoria	6
Interstate	7
Overseas	8

16. Which of these categories best describes your marital status?

Single (unmarried,divorced,widowed)	1
Married - no children	2
Married - children 0-16 years	3
Married - children over 16	4

17. What is the size of your household?

One person	1
Two persons	2
Three persons	3
Four persons	4
Five or more persons	5

Appendix 3

Questionnaire for councils

Victoria University of Technology

Ballarat Road Telephone
Footscray (03) 9688 4000

PO Box 14428 Facsimile
MMC (03) 9689 4069
Melbourne
Victoria 3000
Australia

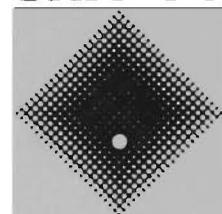
Footscray Campus

Department of
Hospitality &
Tourism
Management

Telephone
(03) 9688 4430

Facsimile
(03) 9688 4931

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**



OF
TECHNOLOGY

15 October 1995

Dear Chief Executive Officer,

I am conducting research into farm tourism in Victoria. The results of this project will be incorporated into a thesis on this topic.

Please take the few minutes that will be required to fill in the enclosed questionnaire, and return it in the reply paid envelope. (No postage stamp is required).

Your cooperation is much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Kidd'.

Jeffrey N. Kidd
Senior Lecturer in Marketing

VICTORIAN SHIRE AND CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Shire/City of.....

1. How many farms (that you know of) are presently involved in the following enterprises in your area?

<u>Enterprise</u>	<u>Number of farms involved</u>
Bed and breakfast accommodation
Farm holidays
Attractions for <u>day</u> visitors only

2. Approximately how many enquiries did your shire/city council receive in the last twelve months from people who were interested in farm holidays?

Number of enquiries.....

3. Does farm tourism presently have any economic or social impact in your district? YES/NO

If YES, please give details:

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4. Does your shire/city council support farm tourism in principle? YES/NO

If NO, please give reasons:

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If YES, is your shire/city council involved in any activities to assist the industry? YES/NO

If YES, please give details:

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10. Do you think your area is suitable for the growth of farm tourism?
YES/NO

If YES, can you foresee any significant social and/or economic effects from farm tourism growth in your area?

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11. Do you have any further comments on farm tourism at all?

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Please put the completed questionnaire into the reply paid envelope and post it. No postage stamp is required.

Thank you for your cooperation.