

Milking Anomie:  
Experiencing Food Safety on Canadian Dairy Farms

by

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Abstract

The developing discipline of Food Crime requires the analysis of food safety responsibility from a critical structural perspective. Analyzing the Canadian dairy industry, this project seeks to answer how the legal definition of food safety impacts the production practices of farmers, and where farmers place the burden of food safety responsibility, while partially testing institutional anomie theory. A legal discourse analysis of food safety law in Canada is performed to contextualize individual interviews with six active family-farmers in rural southern Ontario in order to determine how dairy farmers experience food safety legislation. As hypothesized, farmers experience food safety law through forms of disempowerment and alienation involving dairy production products, leading to a partial displacement of responsibility for safe food. The ideas of institutional anomie theory were insignificant or inconclusive for these case studies. More research is required to determine potential policy implications concerning the safety of Canadian food.

*Keywords: food safety, farmers, institutional anomie, alienation,  
Canadian dairy industry*

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this research project to the dairy cows across Canada, whose livelihoods largely encompass fulfilling anthropocentric goals. On behalf of humanity, I apologize for any and all injustice.

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I would like to acknowledge my open-minded thesis committee for their continuous effort, patience, and encouragement. Dr. Ron Hinch, my supervisor, thank you for not retiring early and passing on your knowledge and passion involving the critical analysis of Food Crime. Dr. Stephen Downing, my co-supervisor, thank you for your time and support which has drastically strengthened my theoretical framework and methods sections. A special thanks to Dr. Gail Lindsay for her participation in the oral defense and her thought-provoking questions.

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## Milking anomie: Experiencing food safety on Canadian dairy farms

Canadians are increasingly concerned with food safety. Due to the presence of a variety of food disease outbreaks, such as the Maple Leaf Foods listeriosis outbreak in 2008 (see Hatt & Hatt, 2011), the 2006 case of Bolthouse Farms carrot juice containing botulism toxins (see CBC, 2006), and Canada's largest recall concerning XL Foods beef products in 2012 (see The Huffington Post Canada, 2012), awareness of how food is produced and manufactured is a growing concern in the everyday lives of Canadians. This is also a global concern within the context of international food trade expansion, as research by the World Health Organization shows a worldwide increase in foodborne illnesses and emerging diseases linked to food production (WHO, 2013). World rankings place Canada second-last in the category of effective traceability of food, an important step in maintaining food safety (Food in Canada: Eat at your own risk, 2011). Individually, this level of concern is not surprising, as Nestle (2003) offers the reminder that the food industry is universally unique in the fact that everybody eats.

The milk industry across Canada is not exempt from the pressures of food safety. For example, on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) initiated a recall after at least one woman became sick. The recall stated that the two percent variety of Neilson Trutaste milk may have been contaminated with cleaning solution (CBC News, January 27 2012; The Star, January 27 2012). It is not necessarily only the CFIA that issues recall notices. Some recalls are issued by food companies themselves and made public by news media sources. For example, in August 2012, Agropur Division Natrel voluntarily recalled several of its Sealtest and Mac Milk products while saying only that the products did not meet quality standards (CBC News,

August 3 2012). In this case the public was informed that a problem existed, but the nature of that problem was concealed. Further, not all cases of food contamination or food products lacking ‘quality’ are brought to the public's attention at all. It is estimated that less than 0.5% of food-related gastroenteritis cases are actually reported in Canada every year (Food in Canada: Eat at your own risk, 2011). Therefore it is important to understand food safety both within and beyond the food recall process.

Simultaneously individuals significantly trust the food system, believing its products are safe (van Rijswijk & Frewer, 2008). This may be partially due to the perception of food harm as trivial, which is often considered a consumer issue rather than a serious crime (Croall, 2006). Together, the increasing food safety concerns and the continued confidence in the system, suggest that Canadians may be at risk of significant harm in a system where food production and consumption are covertly separated and sealed with a curtain of trust. The question becomes, given this rift, where does responsibility for safe food lie?

### **Current Inquiry**

Within the Canadian dairy industry, this analysis will start at the ‘beginning’ production stage – the farm, where milk originates. However, the dairy industry is significantly interconnected within the food system, due to being a fundamental ingredient in many food products including cheese, yogurt, milk powders, and ice-cream, as well its connections to other industries including, but not limited to, beef, veal, leather, gelatin, as well as an (often hidden) ingredient in a multitude of processed and packaged foods. Given the complexity and interconnectedness of the dairy industry, food safety

becomes a prominent concern, and provides significant justification for studying the food safety of milk products.

More specifically, this thesis will involve an analysis of the implications of Canadian dairy laws and regulations upon how dairy farmers produce milk and who they believe is responsible for the safety of milk. The study is driven by research questions which ask: How does the legal definition of food safety impact the production practices of dairy farmers? Consequently, who do dairy farmers see as those (most) responsible for ensuring food safety during the production of milk products?

These questions will be analyzed through both an exploratory (inductive) and theory-testing (deductive) model. Therefore, this thesis encompasses a form of abductive research, which encompasses creative inferencing coupled with double-checking via additional data (see Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Abduction effectively arose in reaction to the somewhat failure of grounded theory to construct new explanations as well as the limit of deductive reasoning to look beyond the consequences of hypotheses (see Timmermans & Tavory, 2012; Peirce, 1934). Prior to data collection and analysis, it is hypothesized that dairy farmers will experience food safety regulation as a disempowering feature that (further) forms an alienated relationship to both dairy production and the milk product. The decreasing control farmers experience within milk production, and their alienated state in the modern dairy environment, will lead farmers to not feel significantly responsible for (producing) milk, but they will deflect blame onto other elements of the dairy industry.

## Literature Review

Food safety responsibility discourse, within the modern neoliberal context, is predominately framed at the consumption level. This focus transcends social and health science academia, including research on food handlers' food safety knowledge (see Hislop & Shaw, 2009), consumers food handling practices in the home (see Nesbitt et al., 2009), and food labeling debates to ensure responsible consumption (see Tavernier, 2012). Food safety is the responsibility of consumers, determined by their rational decision-making practices. Responsibility for safe food is placed in the home, in the hands of consumers, with less concern for the origins of that food and the processes the food products take to reach those consumers.

However, when the production level of the system is analyzed, responsibility for safe food continues to be placed on specific actors within the production system. For example, Young et al. (2010) studied boiler-chicken producers' perceptions toward a provincial-implemented food safety program, to find a discrepancy between the practices of farmers and their knowledge of practices associated with (un)safe food production, which led many farmers to engage in practices that they did not know caused unsafe food. In examining the practices of small-scale farmers on their farms and at local farmer markets, Harrison et al. (2013) conclude that farmers need better training in order to limit the risk of food illness to consumers. Specifically in the dairy industry, researchers focus on how to improve food safety at the farm level (Valeeva, Meuwissen, Bergevoet, Lansink, & Huirne, 2005). Even on a global scale, food safety responsibility is not embraced systematically. For example, small-scale farmers in developing nations which export animal products are pushed to be properly trained in food safety practices as they

enter the global trade (Hall, Ehui, & Delgado, 2004). All these authors conclude by suggesting a solution involving some form of increasing farmer education. Food safety is an *individualized* concern within contemporary neoliberal discourse. However, the perspective of this thesis (along with Croall, 2013; Brisman, 2009), demands that food safety responsibility be problematized within a broader socio-political context.

In effect, the workings of the modern food system make it illogical to individualize food safety responsibility. As previously acknowledged, overall consumers trust the food system. However, this trust does not impact individual's consumption behaviour according to studies in both Europe and Canada (van Rijswijk & Frewer, 2008; Drescher, de Jonge, Goddard, & Herzfeld, 2012). The element of trust means there is a relationship of dependence between the food producers and the consumers. As a dependent system, modern agriculture must be studied as a whole, where the production-consumption relationship must be placed within the broader ideologies and methods of the food system. This becomes more important when considering evidence of farmers internalizing self-blame for food safety within neoliberal culture, as Halpin and Guilfoyle (2005) found with family-farmers in Australia. But even when food adulteration does occur by individuals' decisions and actions, there is a significant role for the culture surrounding those individuals which make many actors within the food industry forced to cheat (Croall, 2006; Hall & Farrall, 2013). These ideas make it illogical to hold individuals as purely responsible for food safety. Rather, as Hazel Croall (2013) argues, there is a need to understand food crime from a green criminological perspective, where the relationship between food and crime depends on the socio-political context.

Many studies have found that the processes of industrialization and neoliberalism have had a significant negative effect on agriculture. The dairy system specifically has largely been (re)organized into an agribusiness-oriented structure that has fabricated farm dependence, concentration, and agri-complexity, which all have implications for dairy farmers. While understanding that the modern dairy farmer is both a producer (selling milk to processors) and a consumer (purchasing quota, feed, veterinary drugs), White (2002) argues that farmers end up losing some control and authority through the connection of the producer role to consumer habits linked to agribusiness. Simultaneously, in their producer role, farmers face an increasingly concentrated industry, where only three milk processing companies (of the four hundred and fifty across Canada) are in charge of processing nearly eighty percent of the fluid milk (Canadian Dairy Information Centre, July 11, 2012). According to Marsden (1998) these capitalist agricultural systems are better classified as vertical, not horizontal, relationships – a change which necessitates the role of traceability systems in order to help maintain food safety standards within modern agri-complexity (Popper, 2007). However, due to this complexity of the agricultural industry, effective traceability is more difficult to create (Food in Canada: Eat at your own risk, 2011), especially since farmers are becoming just a small part of the entire food production system (Toews, 2008). Without effective traceability, including public scrutiny, farmers feel less pressure to produce safe products (White, 2002). Altogether, these processes of neoliberal agribusiness may be alienating farmers from their industries.

In particular, this loss of control has a significant impact on family-farmers. While somewhat similar to other small businesses, Ontario family-farms are highly dependent

on local communities for supplementary off-farm employment, as well as favourable governing political policies (Smithers & Johnson, 2004; Calus & Van Huylenbroeck, 2010). However, the persistence of local communities is also dependent on the survival of family-farms. As Smithers, Johnson, and Joseph (2004) found in their study of Ontario farming communities, the elimination of family-farms often resulted in those communities disappearing. In the overall picture, family-farms have become a relatively small element within the organization of the dairy industry (Roberts, 1996), but may be very important parts of modern society.

Regardless of their dependence and size in comparison to the industry, family-farms are in a unique position which has allowed their survival. While family-farms are economically pressured by agribusiness demands, they maintain control of the biological growth stages of farming (Roberts, 1996). On one hand, Canadian dairy farmers are in control of their labour, but on the other hand, they are influenced by neoliberal agribusiness organization of an industry which limits farmer control (Toews, 2008). This partial level of agency has helped enable the persistence of family-farms across Canada, to the point where most dairy farms across the country continue to be family-owned (Muirhead & Campbell, 2012). Calus and Van Huylenbroeck (2010) argue this agency of family-farmers is connected to the inherent flexibility of their decisions to accept lower standards of living, dismiss a division between work and leisure, and the use of cheap, long, and hard farm labour. Thus dairy farmers in Canada are in a unique position, where they are in control and being controlled simultaneously, which Toews (2008) explains through labeling farmers as a 'petite-bourgeois' caught in an illusion of independence and control.

Therefore this thesis seeks to connect two main themes – the individualization of food safety responsibility and the illusion of control dairy farmers have over producing food – through a structural perspective of harm. Three recent studies have begun recognizing elements of this connection. Halpin and Guilfoyle (2005) utilized attribution theory to examine the extent which Australian farmers accept responsibility for the failure or success of farming within a political environment of individualism. The results of the survey questionnaire indicated that although the primary concerns of family-farmers were structural factors, the common response to situations were individual based reactions. Thus the individualized responsibility ideology is being internalized by farmers (Halpin & Guilfoyle, 2005). However, Hongming Cheng (2012) interviewed a variety of individuals involved in the food industry in China, from farmers to regulation officers, to find a general perception that the food system’s ‘cheapness propaganda’ is responsible for unsafe food due to an emphasis on profit maximization. In North America, Gabriela Pechlaner (2012) questioned the extent of corporate-driven organization of agricultural production and to what extent this impacts the level of control Canadian and American farmers have over production. Her results from interviews support her hypothesis that farmers and producers are experiencing reduced control over production through capitalist methods of ‘expropriationism’, or the dispossession of farmer control to agribusiness forms (Pechlaner, 2012).

This structure of mass cultural food ‘cheapness’ and agribusiness formations, combined with individualized responsibility, means that farmers experience a reduced level of power in producing (safe) food, while blaming themselves as responsible for that unsafe food. These ideas will be analyzed in regards to the Canadian dairy industry,

focusing on the legal entrenchment of the neoliberal-agribusiness context and its impact on dairy farmers' production habits and their feelings of food safety responsibility. It is important to reiterate that blame is not the purpose of this research. Rather, the focus on structure and culture moves away from blame to a goal of understanding individuals' experience of modern agriculture.

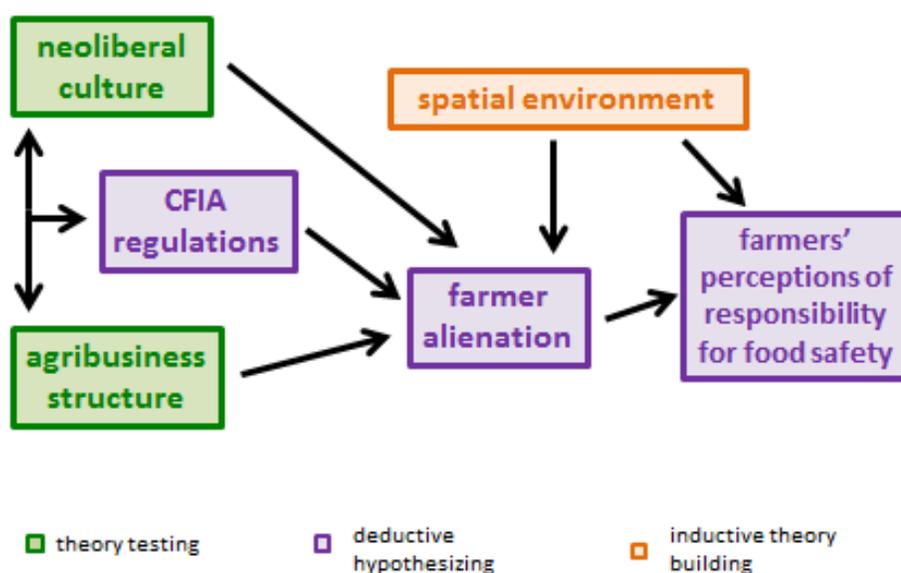
### **Theoretical Framework**

Food safety responsibility can be understood using a perspective built upon the ideas of Messner and Rosenfeld's (2001) institutional anomie theory integrated with Marxist perspectives (see Sims, 1997). The theoretical model includes two main independent 'variables' which simultaneously impact food safety regulation and dairy farmers' production processes: The modern neoliberal culture/ideology, and an agribusiness structured industry. The main dependent 'variable' is the dairy farmers' perception of food safety responsibility, which is impacted by farmer alienation caused by the neoliberal culture and agribusiness structure and influenced by the spatial environment. This theory is labeled the agricultural-anomie-alienation theoretical framework (*see Figure 1*).

Institutional anomie (IA) theory constructs a more complete explanation of crime by including an analysis of the structure of society, along with the American Dream culture as motivating social (criminal) behaviour (Maume & Lee, 2003). High levels of crime occur in modern capitalist societies due to a dominance of economic institutions over social institutions, where these social institutions are no longer able to regulate individual behaviour toward social values (or non-economic values), but have been devalued, accommodated to, and penetrated by economic thinking and now express the

same goals (Bernburg, 2002; Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008; Chamlin & Cochran, 1995; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2001; Rosenfeld & Messner, 1997). This structure is accompanied by the overarching drive for – often monetary – goals within the American Dream culture, which instigates a state of anomie where the means to reach such goals are governed only by efficient individual competition (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2001). The pressures of the American Dream culture and the institutional imbalance of advanced capitalist societies concurrently impact social behaviour and lead to higher levels of harm (Chamlin & Cochran, 2007; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2001; Passas & Agnew, 1997).

**Figure 1: The Agricultural-Anomie-Alienation Theoretical Framework**



In order to utilize Messner and Rosenfeld's (2001) theory to explain the social behaviour of family-farmers, these two key 'variables' are slightly redesigned in accordance with the context of Canadian dairy farms. First, the American Dream anomic culture is relabeled 'neoliberal culture' since the concept of the American Dream has limited and specific cultural meaning. The concept of a neoliberal culture extends the

analysis beyond that limitation to other societies and environments which embrace a similar culture of mass consumption amid capitalist values and practices (see Sims, 1997). Largely due to processes of globalization (see Kotz, 2002), regardless of the particular political initiation and maintenance of neoliberal policy, the culture of neoliberalism is regularly witnessed across the world and continually reproduced within cultural phenomena (Gilbert, 2013). Its definition, although contested, involves the shared beliefs, at an institutional level, that individual self-interest is the sole life force which is best achieved via competition (Hilgers, 2012; Gilbert, 2013). Similarly, Ventura (2012) argues that neoliberal culture encompasses the ideology of consumer choice as the focus of individual existence.

Such an understanding of neoliberalism overlaps with Messner and Rosenfeld's concept of the American Dream, defined as "an environment in which people are encouraged to adopt an 'anything goes' mentality in the pursuit of personal goals" (2001, p. 61). This individualism is conditioned through competition to the point where social norms are unable to regulate the goals, or means to reach those goals (Bernburg, 2002), and creates a state of anomie which pressures individuals to use illegitimate means regardless if that ensues criminal engagement (Passas & Agnew, 1997). The base of similar ideas (individualism, universalism, competition) as determining human behaviour justifies the consideration of a neoliberal culture as a broader explanation of the American Dream.

While one variable is generalized to extend beyond the American political environment, the second variable is redefined to a narrower understanding, as suited to dairy farmers as subjects of analysis. In this case, IA theory's institutional imbalance of

power is characterized through the increasing agribusiness structure of the dairy system, in comparison to the familial institution (re: family-farm). Although Messner and Rosenfeld include three noneconomic institutions in their theory (polity, education, and family) this analysis will emphasize the family because it ought to be a significant consideration in the lives of family-farmers, and it is considered the most resistant (of the three) to economic accommodation and penetration (see Messner & Rosenfeld, 2001), thus requiring in-depth study which qualitative methods can assess.

It can even be argued that the shift in the labour organization within agriculture to agribusiness formation *itself* exemplifies the dominance of economic institutions. For instance, the removal of state support (see Martin, 2010), deregulation (see Franklin, 1999), the importance of new technology in remaining efficient (see Toews, 2008), and the standardization of practices (see Smithers & Johnson, 2004) are values associated with monetary success at the expense of social values like supporting local farms, regulatory advocating for safe food production, tradition, and creativity, respectively. The current pressures of the economy construct what Griffith, Livesey, and Clayton (2010) define as a negative safety culture, where business values are prioritized over social values of safe food. Similarly, the value of safe food will be influential only if it affects product sales (Nestle, 2003).

Therefore this thesis seeks to both enhance and partially test IA theory. By studying the outcome as food-related harm, instead of violent crime, this thesis expands the potential explanatory power of IA theory. This has been accomplished by researchers studying a variety of different types of crimes, beyond instrumental crimes and economic-focused deviance, to property crime and violent crime, with varying levels of

success (for example see Chamlin & Cochran, 1995; Maume & Lee, 2003). It should be noted however, that food crimes are still very serious in nature, as the threat of bodily harm can be quite significant when involving food contamination, as exemplified in terrible cases such as Maple Leaf Foods where multiple people died (see Hatt & Hatt, 2011). Thus analyzing food crimes is not a large stretch from violent categorization, as exemplified by Cheng (2012), who successfully utilized and found support for IA theory while studying food crime in China.

Simultaneously, this thesis will try to respond to a criticism of IA theory by Jensen (2002), who argues that there is a lack of evidence of the American Dream values being embraced, particularly in the case of economic values overpowering family values. Jensen (2002) attempts to rectify this at a macro level through analyzing the importance associated with institutional values, but fails to understand exactly what those values are. Therefore this thesis aims to partially test (emphasizing the family) IA theory while improving its explanatory power through the use of qualitative micro-analytical research to better understand the definition and the extent of the socialization of these values.

Further, this thesis also seeks to enhance the explanatory power of IA theory by supplementing it with Marxist thought. Barbara Sims (1997) argues that the two theories can be readily integrated to enhance the overall level of explanation through addressing the capitalist context where inequalities arise. More central to this analysis is the concept of alienation, which according to Smith and Bohm (2008) contains anomie (re: Durkheim's [2004] normlessness) as one of its dimensions (see Seeman, 1959, for his alienation typology). However, anomie is rarely linked to alienation due to the radical ideas, such as issues of power, attached to the alienation concept, leaving anomie theories

to continue to reinforce mainstream criminology (Smith & Bohm, 2008). But both concepts did originate from a radical reaction to a social and historical context of self-interest motivated individuals desiring indefinite goals (Horton, 1964). Given this historical connection and the conceptual relation between the two terms, their coinciding inclusion in a theoretical framework is justified.

Therefore, in regards to the hypotheses, farmers are in a unique and complicated situation. Canadian dairy farmers are “small producers, who are relatively independent in determining their own labour process” (p. 20), but this is actually a *false* sense of control over their personal production practices (Toews, 2008; see also Roberts, 1996). The alienation of dairy farmers from the dairy system (powerless in determining their production behaviour and decreased control in the safety of the end milk product) overpowers any minimal discretion they think they may possess in their daily farming activities. Alienation here is based on Marx’s concept of the objectification of labour, where the product (re: object) of labour has an independence from the worker to which the worker becomes a servant, as well as the work itself as forced and contrary to intrinsic nature (Marx, 1844). Dairy farmers are both alienated from their labour and the milk product. Note that the impact of ‘spatial environment’ was added to the agricultural-anomie-alienation theoretical model through inductive methods and will be discussed in the discussion section.

This means that dairy farmers do not want to create unsafe milk, but they are struggling in a competitive political economy that sometimes gives them no other choice but to perform unsafe milk production practices or produce unsafe milk. In line with IA theory, the anomic environment leaves farmers with goals of producing milk, but how

they produce that milk is regulated only by self-interest via producing milk in the most technically efficient means possible, thus by any means necessary (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2001). Together these understandings have important consequences on farmers' perceptions of food safety responsibility. If dairy farmers do not have sufficient control over the production of milk or the milk product, due to being pressured by neoliberal values in an agribusiness-structured system, then the farmers also do not have sufficient control over how safe that system and its products are. Here it is clear to see the importance of taking a systemic perspective within a critical theory, since otherwise the blame for (un)safe milk lies with fragments of the dairy industry without acknowledging the power relations within that system.

### **Methods**

This thesis employs two methods to analyze how Canadian food safety laws and regulations impact dairy farmers production practices and their perceptions of food safety responsibility. First, an analysis of the legal texts involved in Canadian dairy production was performed in order to contextualize the legal experience of dairy farmers, which includes an examination of how the legal texts are connected to the ideas of a neoliberal culture, construct or maintain the agribusiness structure, as well as how the law defines food safety and where it places responsibility for safe food. The analysis focuses on the *Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act* (1997), and all the laws and regulations which the CFIA administers and enforces (controlling for dairy production involvement) including the *Food and Drugs Act* (1985), the *Food and Drugs Regulations* (1978), the *Canada Agricultural Products Act* (1985), the *Dairy Product Regulations* (1979), the *Health of Animals Act* (1990), and the *Health of Animals Regulations* (1978). Attention also is

given to government-based websites concerning the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the *Canadian Dairy Commission Act* (1985) for the purposes of comparison, contrast, or detail.

The laws and regulations were electronically downloaded from the Government of Canada's Justice Laws website (<http://laws.justice.gc.ca>) throughout June 2013. Questions asked included: How is food safety defined and enforced, including the role of farmers? How are the ideas of responsibility portrayed within the regulations? Overall, to what extent does neoliberal ideology and agribusiness structure influence the legal regulations involving food safety? Such questions within this investigation are based on Phillips and Hardy's (2002) categorization of critical discourse analysis, where examination centers on how issues of contextual power, privilege, and (dis)advantage impact the legal texts. This is a crucial perspective for this thesis in particular, as it deals with issues of blame and control via responsibility, but also for Food Crime research in general, as there is a need to analyze the growing systemic ideologies and processes which connect the producer to the consumer. However the primary purpose of this method is to contextualize the legal environment of dairy farmers in Canada. In order to understand how dairy farmers legally experience food safety, it must first be understood how the law defines food safety.

The second method involved six semi-structured personal interviews with dairy farmers, which lasted 100 minutes on average. The decision to use semi-structured interviews was predominately justified by the subject matter and themes within the research questions. As Harvey-Jordan and Long (2001) argue, semi-structured interviews allow experiences and perceptions to be discovered. To study these perceptions and

experiences of farmers, this form of qualitative research enabled stories to be told however the participants desired to tell them. Allowing some openness within the interview structure was meant to limit the problematic use of more controlled questionnaires among a fairly heterogeneous group (see Barriball, 1994) of farmers with differing ages, farm histories, education, etc.

After attaining ethical clearance, initial contact to potential participants came through personal connections, and a list of active dairy farmers was constructed through 'snowballing' methods of communication. All nineteen were contacted through telephone while the six which followed through with the interviews maintained contact through email. All potential participants were sent details about the research and copies of consent forms prior to scheduling meeting times. While half of the respondents took advantage of the offer to assess their individual interview transcript prior to analysis, none suggested any changes. Pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis to protect the farmers' identities.

An important consideration concerning the availability of farmers to participate in the interviews was the research timing. Some farmers may have been excluded from analysis if they were heavily engaged in crop farming as well as dairy farming, since the interviews were set to take place during harvest season. Thus there are also concerns with the sample size since only six participants followed through with the interviews. Given the qualitative nature of the research, including non-random sampling and the selection of interviewees through personal connections, the findings cannot be generalized to family dairy farmers across Canada. However, as Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found,

thematic analysis can be reached as early as six interviews, thus the quantity of interviews is not entirely negative.

All farmers resided and farmed in a rural county in southern Ontario, and desired to have the interviews take place in their homes. Of the five which were currently in the process of integrating family members as partners or changing the farm ownership, four of them had these individuals on premise during the interviews and three desired to have them also take part in the interviews. All 'head-farmers' were male at varying stages of their careers, although one partner-to-be was female. The farms ranged from 250 to 450 acres, part of which accommodated between 80 and 200 cattle (a fraction of this number are used for milking at any given time). The participants all self-identified as family-farmers, where dairy farming was their primary employment. They owned at least part of the farm land, considered themselves as their own boss, including the majority of farmers employing hired labourers.

The focus of the interviews involved two main goals. First was a partial test of IA theory through examining the level of self-interest as a driving force for behaviour, as well as comparing discussions of business and family values (the family representing non-economic institutions to question the balance of institutional power). The second goal concerned answering the research questions of how the farmers experienced food safety laws and regulations, focusing on how that experience impacted their control in milk production behaviour, and who they felt was responsible for safe milk. Participants were also encouraged to speak about any issue they felt was important to the discussion, which helped determine their prioritized interests. After completion of the interviews, all

the participants were thankful for the opportunity to voice their opinion and all six have requested a copy of the final research project.

## **Results**

### **Legal Discourse**

Food safety laws and regulations involving the food recall process exhibit elements of both the neoliberal culture (American Dream) and an agribusiness structure (imbalance of institutional power toward economic dominance). More specifically, the comparison between business values and food safety values exemplifies both the *devaluation* of noneconomic functions and the *accommodation* of social values to economic values as outlined in IA theory. When the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) was created in 1997, none of the justifications for its creation included or emphasized food safety (CFIAA, 1997). Rather, the government created the CFIA in order to enhance food inspection efficiency, while minding its cost-effectiveness and promoting trade (CFIAA, 1997). Meanwhile, where food safety is concerned in all associated legal texts, it is discussed predominately in relation to its marketability. For example, a dairy product cannot be marketed unless meeting certain standards (CDPR, 1979) including pasteurization (FDR, 1978), and a diseased cow cannot be sold (HAA, 1990). Also, it is illegal for an individual to “label, package, treat, process, sell or advertise” a food in a deceptive way (FDA, 1985), and an individual cannot sell unsafe milk nor can a manufacturer purchase unsafe milk (FDR, 1978). The existence of unsafe milk is not devalued or illegal. Rather, the processes of monetary exchange involving unsafe milk are harmful or illegal. Further, it is not explained if ‘selling’ also refers also to the process of dairy farmers providing their milk to dairy processors, but if it does then

the institutional balance may shift to demonstrate the *penetration* of economic language across the dairy system, overriding attention to food safety.

Such a discourse exemplifies the idea that farmers lack control over the final milk *product* they are producing. However, farmers were a rare inclusion within the legal texts overall. The term ‘farmer’ was not explicitly utilized, leaving the role of the dairy farmer to be defined through the term ‘producer’. The majority of uses of the producer term were connected to ideas involving product marketability (see above) which is not a direct concern for dairy farmers in the provincial quota system organized through the Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) organization, since farmers do not sell product directly to consumers. Beyond ideas of selling, the only other areas in which farmer processes were discussed, involved dealing with food safety inspectors and farm property inspections. Overall, this suggests that the farmers’ behaviours are not directly controlled externally (re: legally).

This is in line with the neoliberal cultural understanding of self-interest as the sole motivation for individual conduct. The lack of legal conditions attached to the farmers’ practices allows them to use whatever means they deem most efficient to reach their goals (re: producing milk). However, there is a limit to the opportunities of self-interest, as also portrayed in the institutional imbalance. For example, there is a separation constructed between the farm business and the farmers’ household property. Regulations demand that living quarters lack direct access to farm operations (CDPR, 1979), and that during inspections, separate warrants are required for both the farm and the home (FDA, 1985; HAA, 1990; CAPA, 1985; CDCA, 1985). However, when an area is declared infected this separation is lost, as all land and buildings are included in the control zone

(HAA, 1990). Farmers control over the practice is also limited through an emphasis on animal tagging and traceability systems, especially evident in the *Health of Animals Regulations* (1978).

Thus the neoliberal culture and agribusiness structure are exhibited in food safety laws and regulations, to the extent that farmers have control over how they produce milk, but such self-interest is *conditioned* by forms of concern for food safety. When the level of food safety concern is lower than infection-declaration or recall-status, economic interests associated with dairy products' marketability dominate the legal discourse. There is the possibility that formal concerns for food safety act as a veil for economic concerns. For instance, there are possible negative financial consequences on the dairy industry if an unsafe product reaches a large enough audience. The industry must discard the contaminated product and the potential sales from that product, and perhaps also experience a decreased demand for such products from conscious consumers. However, as far as the legal content, farmers are able to pursue their self-interests in part, namely concerning dairy production but not the milk product, in an environment which emphasizes economic interests on the condition that social interests (re: safe food) remain outside CFIA-related enforcement.

Beyond the fact that food safety is not defined as a priority within the act which constructed the CFIA, it lacks a direct and formal definition with the legal texts. Different laws and regulations present partial understandings of food safety. For example, the *Canadian Dairy Products Regulations* (1979) emphasizes production methods by stating that the dairy product must be produced in a sanitary manner and be uncontaminated and edible. Meanwhile, the *Food and Drug Regulations* (1978) defines safe milk by focusing

on the milk product, emphasizing the need for pasteurization and no additives except vitamin D. The *Health of Animals Regulations* (1978) brings in ideas involving the animals, by defining food safety as a consequence of effective tagging and traceability systems of cows. The overall impression suggests that milk safety involves unadulterated milk that is produced in sanitary conditions and is not marketed in a deceptive manner.

However there is an important power relationship underlying this definition which must be considered. The CFIA, including the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, is only able to enforce issues relating to nutrition, health, or safety, while the administrative concerns lie with the Minister of Health and the *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA). This means that food safety concerns are not defined by the same actors which enforce food safety recalls, which may lead to consequences of miscommunication or rebellion against enforcing issues deemed insignificant to the enforcer. More importantly, the Minister of Health likely has different interests than the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. For example, the health department focuses on human subjects where food safety predominately becomes a concern as it relates to human consumption as a reaction to human digestive harm. This focus neglects other issues involving more proactive food safety issues like how food is produced, which has already been pointed out to be largely unregulated.

With the legal texts offering a vague definition of food safety, logically there is a similar lack of understanding of who is responsible for food safety. As food safety is emphasized through the marketability of food, it is suggested that direct responsibility for unsafe food would be associated with those who are selling that food, recalling that it is unclear whether farmers are defined as selling their product to dairy processing plants.

The CFIA website defines a food recall as a company's removal of an unsafe product from market (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, March 19 2012), where the blame is associated with the company. Meanwhile, the FDA (1985) stresses the importance of regulations in preventing consumer deception, yet neglects to suggest who is doing the deceiving. Considering that the food system is holistic, or perhaps that 'producer' is a type of antonym to 'consumer', it becomes logical to assume that consumers are deceived by producers. There is no mention of the possibility that producers can be the ones being deceived as well. But narrowing the blame to producers does little to understand food safety responsibility as there are a multitude of steps involved in dairy production. Whether the blame is on food companies or producers, the consumer is deemed as an innocent party – an idea which contrasts the findings in the literature review.

### **Farmer Interviews**

The results of the interviews were coded into four main themes. The first two themes concern the establishment of the level of support that IA theory can offer towards understanding the extent that the neoliberal culture and the agribusiness structure impact dairy farming on Canadian family farms. Namely, the first two themes originate from the theory-testing portion of this thesis. The first questions the extent of an anomic environment, while the second evaluates the power (im)balance between the values of the family and the farm. The final two themes respond to the research questions via deductive reasoning. The third theme analyzes how dairy farmers experience food safety regulation, while the final theme answers the question of food safety responsibility.

**Self-interest and control.** The participating dairy farmers were quick to express their feelings of control they had over their milk production practices. Morgan explained

the modern farm experience by asking “you have to decide who owns who - do you own the farm or does it own you?” The participants were very firm in their beliefs that they had significant control over milk production on their farms, where responses included ‘a lot of control’, ‘full control’, and ‘almost ultimate control’. All agreed when asked if they thought they were their own boss, while one suggested that this was the whole appeal of farming. When compared to the dairy processors, one farmer stated that the processors had some power in deciding to reject milk from particular farms and likely were involved in pressuring for a lower somatic cell count, but the majority of participants stated that the processors had no power over the running of their farms. When control was generalized to include off-farm environments, the farmers lost this sense of power. Casey commented “how much power do we have? Zero...The processors always say how much they want...we just have to supply them with a product they want”.

All of the farmers recognized the similarity between their production practices and how they are told to produce safe milk, but three questioned the ‘being told’ aspect, where one went as far as to explain a desire to produce safe milk regardless of any requirements. These findings are consistent to all six farmers responding that they did not feel alienated from the practice of dairy farming. Half of the farmers even believed they enforced their own practices. One farmer actually directly acknowledged the self-interest ideology within the neoliberal culture. When talking about the power relations with the dairy processors, Morgan stated “that’s a capitalist economy. You can’t complain about that, right? They’re looking somewhat after themselves first, and then secondary to keep us in business”. However, a common theme throughout the interviews was that dairy farmers do not purposely taint their own milk, nor do they want to create unsafe milk, and

the participants stressed that this desire was a significant motivation, along with or apart from industrial standards.

**Figure 2: Examples of Conditioned Control**

*“If you want to stay in the industry, you need to meet requirements. So you have some flexibility in how you meet those requirements, but they have to be met.” (Morgan)*

[Why don't you do anything to your milk before sending it?]

*“We can't. Not allowed. Huge penalties.” (Riley)*

[Do you ever think to yourself, ‘what would the industry want me to do’?]

*“We're usually told what the industry wants us to do.” (Jamie)*

[How much control do you feel that you have over producing milk on your own farm?]

*“Oh we have full control in terms of how we want to produce it, as long as we meet the laws and regulations... What we do here is alright, but we can only do as much as what they will allow us to do.” (Alex)*

The participants all agreed that they held a large amount of control over producing milk on their respective farms. However, as the quotes above exemplify, the farmers often conditioned these statements directly, or brought up a level of external determining factors which impact their agency in producing milk throughout other discussions. The farmers felt subdued by their environments yet simultaneously promoted their individual capacity to make their own decisions and perform their own practices on their farms.

Of the daily practices which they were currently doing, five of the farmers felt that they were required to do these practices, while two noted that they can do some things that are not required which are above and beyond, such as allowing the cows outside for exercise. Similarly, when asked how the dairy industry would define a good dairy farmer, two farmers felt this would involve the extent which the farmers followed the rules. For example, when questioned ‘so a good farmer would follow their rules?’ Alex replied “we haven't got much choice”. Some farmers acknowledged the possibility to override the forms of control, through both legal and illegal methods, but only to a certain extent. Alex continued, “do we cheat sometimes? Yes. I think we're all law breakers to some degree. But as far as the safety of food, we would never try to sell something that was illegal, or that was going to hurt somebody”. Along with these personal motivations, the majority of the farmers noted the overarching power of the law. To illustrate, Taylor said,

We're still responsible for the quality of milk that leaves the tank. I mean, regulations – they're still going to catch you if you don't, but I guess you could still make the decision to cut corners. Short term, if you want to. I mean that's going to catch up with you, because of the regulations that we do have.

On several occasions, farmers communicated that any hostility towards feeling not in control was due to poor communication with the industry. If there was any communication at all it was minimal. Some farmers were very frustrated with this, and when asked if they ever think to themselves 'what would the industry want me to do?' they expressed their lack of power in industry decision-making: "...We tend to find out rather quickly [Taylor]. Yeah, and that's not our choice. We're not even involved in that discussion [Morgan]. It's not a conversation that's ever had. Like even with this new programming, it was passed. And then farmers were told about it [Taylor]. That's the problem [Morgan]." Meanwhile, some farmers acknowledged they would hear a lot more from the industry if there was a farm-level quality issue. Of the discussions that did occur, they were defined as one-sided and aggressive by Jamie: "We have annual meetings and stuff like that where they go over stuff and [we] get an earful – on especially stuff they're trying to shove down our throat."

Thus when farmers were questioned directly about how much control they have over milk production, the levels were very high, but further discussion acknowledged a multitude of conditions and limited flexibility experienced by dairy farmers. However, when farmers were faced with the level of control they had over the milk product, their perceived power faded. When directly asked if they felt alienated from the milk product, three of the farmers noted some degree of separation. One farmer even nicknamed

pasteurized skim milk as ‘white water’. Milk had become detached from the farm and from those who produced it. For example, while all farmers agreed they had no choice in where their milk went, two of the farmers expressed interest in being able to go to a certain store or pick up a certain brand of milk and be able to declare it their product. Perhaps this exemplifies the desire farmers have to regain control of something they currently do not have. A recent policy change called the Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) program was especially attacked for creating disengagement between the farmers’ production practices and the final milk product. For instance Jamie explained how “we’re doing all this work and we’re not putting out a better product by doing this stuff,” while Morgan explained how “they’re fixing something that’s not broken and they’re not the ones incurring all the extra work and costs... it’s not any safer than it was before.”

**Economic prioritization.** The level of control farmers feel they have over milk production has an important connection to economic concerns. Even though five of the farmers felt required to do certain production practices, two of those justified doing these by if they desired to have a successful business or to stay in the industry. Further, while all six farmers believed these production practices were in line with how they are told to produce safe milk, three of them connected this link as being necessary in order to make money. Even though most farmers believed they were the most important step in the dairy industry (“nothing else would happen without it” [Jordan], and “without the dairy farmer there is no dairy industry” [Morgan]), farmers on average worked 70 hours per week and many of them or their family were involved in supplemental or off-farm employment. Although farmers felt important, they had to dedicate a lot of hard work and

time into farming in order to be successful. For example, one farm relied on the introduction of cash-cropping in order to financially support both primary farmers.

Yet overall, economic considerations were not prioritized throughout the discussions. When farmers were asked why they farm dairy cows, all of their reasons involved tradition or habit, with a desire to continue, while only one mentioned its profitability. Likewise, all farmers wanted a family member to take over their farm one day, but most conditioned their statements with an ‘if they want to’ concern. The reasons for this were not linked to economic concerns, where one farmer stressed that the decision to continue farming was in enjoyment not money, while Jamie prioritized family tradition: “The biggest thing is to continue the tradition that we have – like that’s the thing. It’s a business, but it’s much more than a business. And it’s part of the family, when you look back that far.” At some point during the interviews, half the farmers brought up the positive aspects of raising a family on a farm, including learning a good work ethic and having parents fairly accessible, but not because it is profitable. So even though the practice of milk production had very limited connection to economic values, milk as a product was somewhat more connected to monetary interests. For instance, when asked if they had any nicknames for milk, Alex replied “no, unless it’s bad milk” (suggesting that bad milk was not sellable), while Jamie recalled that his grandfather used to call it “liquid gold”. But overall the farmers did not connect their role as a farmer to business terms, and none of the farmers believed that society associated dairy farmers with economic-related values.

Economic values did not appear to penetrate the farmers’ family values. When asked what values their personal families held, none directly included or emphasized

economic-related values (but Casey mentioned “enjoy your job,” while another farmer believed general values were changing and pushed towards more economical efficient thinking). Yet the comparison between family values and business values was quite difficult for the farmers, largely because half of the farmers believed the two were not necessarily separable. Taylor suggested that “farming is not a job, farming is a lifestyle.” All the farmers agreed that their family values and business values were very similar and neither preceded the other in time or importance. When asked if they consider their farm a family-farm, all replied yes (defined by participants as a farm that is mainly operated or owned by family, who make the key decisions, where the farm has some element of heritage while acting as a principle source of employment and income for a number of family members). Within their definitions, some farmers made note of how a family-farm differed from a business-centered farm. For example, a family farm may include a farmer keeping his favourite cow even if her production is not as efficient as required, or the differences in how employees are treated, where Riley exemplified a family-farm through the relationship involving parents:

My dad still does what he’s able, and a family farm would make room for him. Make adjustments. But there are times when I will see him going away on a tractor and I just want him alive. And that there’s no way that makes good business. Like a business wouldn’t do that.

This integration of farm and family values was viewed positively overall. More specifically, the majority of farmers believed their farm businesses were positively influenced by the family-farm status of their farm, due to the importance placed on relationships, employment security, and that family members tend to be more involved

and concerned while putting in more hours. Interestingly, all farmers expressed that they do not spend as much time with their families as they desired, yet when asked how much family time involved work or farm-related issues, all the farmers noted significant proportions ranging from a lot to ‘just about every minute’ or 24 hours a day. It was unclear if there simply was not enough family time, or if the prioritization of farm business interests had decreased a certain type of quality family time.

**Legal experience and production.** In general, the farmers had very little knowledge of food safety laws and regulations, or an understanding of the food recall process and the CFIA. Yet they maintained a negative view of the laws, especially critical about not understanding why the laws were made. Morgan argued that

It’s driven from the wrong side of the industry for sure. And there’s – and dairy farmers aren’t going, ‘man, I wish we had some rules because Joe over there up the road is really ruining our reputation’...You keep adding these burdens – everybody already knows dairying has lots of its own troubles and seven days a week, etc., but who’s thinking about ‘I wonder what we can do to add to that?’

Others were a bit more passive, such as Alex who said “until you understand [the laws], then you accept them and then you learn to agree.” But there was a significant level of frustration over some legal policies in particular, such as the CQM program. There is a type of controlled conflict between the law maker and the farmer receiving those laws. For example, in reaction to some food safety laws, Morgan argued that “you see stuff that you just know the guy has never seen the back end of a cow or spent a day with the dairy farmer.” Further, farmers did not associate their own definitions of safe milk to legal

terms, other than some indirect mention of pasteurization and being above standardized levels. There were some similarities between their own definitions and how farmers thought the law defined safe milk, but there were additional characteristics within their personal definitions, including healthy cows and the element of taste. But overall the farmers believed that *the legal definition impacted* their milk production practices, noting that they had to abide the standards, but *the laws and regulations did not impact* their production practices. This difference may be conflicted by the fact that the majority of the farmers believed it was important that they had to want to produce safe milk themselves, outside any legal control. For example, Casey stated that “we are made to produce a safe food, but I truly believe that it has to be your decision,” while another farmer explained how he was only able to answer many of the interview questions by thinking about producing a good product, not thinking about following legal standards.

When the discussion moved to food recalls specifically, the farmers continued to convey that they had limited understanding and experience. Overall they defined a food recall as occurring when a food was substandard or had something wrong with it, but Riley said that a food recall was “an indicator that the system, by and large, works.” The purpose of a food recall, according to farmers, was to fix a quality problem, maintain the safety of food, and protect consumers’ health, safety, and confidence. However none of the farmers had personally experienced a food recall, but they believed the potential impact would be devastating throughout the dairy industry, including personal fines, the closure of farms, a decrease in the quantity of milk in the system, and a possible decrease in the level of consumption. Two of the farmers noted that they did not believe a recall would ever happen where the problem originated on the farm due to the vast amount of

testing and checkpoints milk must pass through before commercially sold. But all agreed that more recalls do not necessarily mean milk is less safe. Rather, farmers argued it meant “they’re watching it all the time” (Casey), “we’re doing our jobs as a keeper of food safety” (Alex), or even the complete opposite where “more recalls mean a safer product” (Sam) or that “recalls ensure safety” (Taylor).

**Responsibility for food safety.** Overall, farmers believed that the level of control they have over milk production correlates to having responsibility for producing that milk safely. When asked who else was responsible for safe milk production, all the farmers answered ‘everyone’. However, the structure of the industry, through the segregation of stages, gave most farmers the perception that they were only responsible for the safety of milk within the farming stage (*see Figure 3: Segregation of Responsibility*). Further, farmers often blamed the processor for unsafe milk, justified by arguing that the milk coming off the farm is tested at great lengths:

Probably a lot of it with this [unsafe milk] would be the processor because they’re the responsible – to make sure that the quality coming out of that plant or whatever, does meet those [standards]. Cause we have to meet it at our end of things, they have to meet it at their end of things. (Casey)

**Figure 3: Segregation of Responsibility**

*“Once it’s picked up it’s out of our hands.” (Riley)*

*“Once it’s literally out of the tank it’s not ours [Jordan]. Once it goes into that truck it’s completely out of our control. Completely [Jamie].”*

*“We’re responsible for our part. Once they start handling it, then the responsibility changes.” (Sidney)*

*“What happens to the raw product is our responsibility. As far as the rest of it, we’re pretty limited in what we can do.” (Jamie)*

*“I feel very responsible because it starts on our farm, right?” (Morgan)*

These quotes showcase the segregation of blame for (un)safe milk products as perceived by the participants. Although all the farmers felt significantly responsible for safe milk production, they only held onto this level of responsibility when they were in control of that process or product. Control was strongly correlated to physical ownership or presence on the local farm. When asked about food safety responsibility in general, the participants agreed that the entire dairy system was responsible, but the segregation and individualization occurred when the discussions concerned the farming level of

Responsibility was frequently connected to the quantity of testing procedures, which enabled the participants to evade potential blame: “In today’s testing I just can’t see that it’s going to get to the consumer level” (Morgan).

When thinking about the industry as a whole, all the farmers said that the industry made them feel ‘very responsible’. However, half the farmers felt the industry blamed dairy farmers for (un)safe milk. Yet the majority of farmers did not perceive that consumers directly make them feel responsible for producing safe milk (Alex went as far to say “it’s not my problem, because there’s so much that can happen from here to the consumer”). Half of the farmers linked this response to the lack of education or awareness which the general consumer has of the realities of modern dairy farming. Multiple farmers brought up the idea that they felt responsible for, or felt it was part of their job, to educate the public and instill consumer confidence in dairy products. For example, Jamie acknowledged

“that’s part of our job now, whether we like it or not...Because they’re so far removed from the farm anymore.” Simultaneously, dairy farmers linked their feelings of importance to responsibility for milk production in general. The following conversation exemplifies this idea:

People could still come straight to the farm and get milk. They can do without the processor. You can’t do without the dairy farmer. All the retail and all the processing, that can fall away and you could still have a dairy industry [Morgan]. I also think that also gives us a unique responsibility too though. Because we are at the start of that, so it’s our responsibility to make sure that the product that’s coming out of our farm is clean and safe for consumption [Taylor].

Specifically during a food recall, half of farmers felt that everyone would be held responsible while two were more specific (Morgan said the “source of the problem” would be responsible, while Casey said “if it’s a recall it’d be processor”). When farmers were asked how they would feel if they were held responsible for a food recall, all of them replied with a negative descriptor (terrible or awful) but four of them qualified their answer with the assumption that they were actually guilty. For example, “I’d feel very – like if it was legitimate I would feel very badly” (Sidney), or “Like shit. If you’ve been proven to it” (Jamie), or “I’d feel awful. Like if it was our fault, that’d be horrible. That is my worst nightmare” (Taylor)! When asked if being or feeling responsible was their decision, the farmers replied yes, although most conditioned their statements with limited responsibility (re: only for the raw product).

The following two questions were asked to be responded with the first thing that came to the farmers' minds. First, they were asked who is responsible for safe milk, and the majority replied 'everyone', while two said it was the dairy farmer. Second, they were asked who is responsible for unsafe milk, and the answers drastically varied: Two farmers responded with 'everybody', one farmer with "the dairy farmer", one farmer suggesting not the farmer ("we can never produce unsafe milk – wouldn't want to" [Riley]), and two farmers suggesting that it depends on the situation.

### **Discussion**

This thesis is centered on connecting the two themes of food safety individualization of responsibility and the illusion of control over food production by dairy farmers. This relationship, for a group of six Ontario dairy farmers, was determined by analyzing how family-farmers experience the legal structure of food safety. Overall, the legal texts exemplified some (limited) qualities and consequences of the neoliberal culture and agribusiness structure, but food safety laws and regulations were not perceived by the participants as influential in their dairy production livelihoods. In essence, at the local level (re: on the farm), the participants felt substantial control and individualized food safety responsibility, sometimes suggesting self-blame and other times deflecting the blame onto other areas of the dairy industry (re: processors). On a more structural level (re: farm is just part of the industry), farmers felt limited in their agency and therefore felt that food safety responsibility is systemically placed.

The discourse analysis of the food safety laws and regulations found that the independent variables within the agricultural-anomie-alienation theoretical framework are only partially exemplified within the legal texts concerning food safety on Canadian

dairy farms. The legal analysis revealed a degree of institutional imbalance, where economic interests dominated the values of food safety. Namely, unsafe milk is only a problem when the product becomes involved in commercial or monetary exchange. This exemplifies the devaluation of noneconomic roles of milk. Within this economic focus, responsibility for safe food within the laws and regulations is understood through the prevention of consumer deception. The use of the term ‘consumer’ suggests that food harm is done by producers selling that harmful product. The *existence* of unsafe milk being produced is not an issue included within the legal texts. The law only becomes concerned with the economic realm of the dairy system.

The extent of the neoliberal culture within the legal texts is exemplified by disproportionality. The significant absence of regulatory control over dairy farmers’ production *practices* suggest that farmers are able to achieve their goals in any way they desire, only limited when food safety concerns reach a certain level. However, the emphasis on the marketability of milk *products*, within the legal texts, limits dairy farmers’ ability to determine the composition and characteristics of the product they produce. Thus the law limits the achievement of economic goals according to the farmers’ self-interests. Farmers are legally able to adopt an ‘anything goes mentality’ to produce milk, as long as that product meets other legal standards. Thus the legal texts suggest that dairy production *behaviour* of farmers is (sufficiently) controlled through the definition of milk *product* composition.

However, because the participants had limited knowledge and understanding of the CFIA and the laws and regulations governing food safety, the power of ‘food safety regulations’ as influencing dairy farmers production practices is minimal. This does not

mean that the participants were not influenced by some elements of the neoliberal culture and the agribusiness structure, but that they did not perceive the food safety laws as directly impacting their selves or their production practices. There is the potential that the participants were not aware of the impact food safety laws had on their daily production habits, but the farmers made it clear that they did not perceive their experiences to be significantly governed by the laws and regulations. This is not substantially surprising, given these legal acts and regulations govern the dairy industry at a federal level. As hinted to by some participants, the provincial laws or the rules of the provincial milk marketing board (Dairy Farmers of Ontario) may be significantly more influential than the federal legal texts.

Evidence of the devaluation of social values (re: food safety and personal family values) and their accommodation to and penetration by economic values, was very limited. Beyond one farmer valuing ‘enjoying your job’, none of the participants included economic ideas when asked to declare their family values. Throughout the interviews the majority of the participants emphasized the value they placed on work ethic and being successful, but these ideas were not strictly related to either the farm business or the family. Thus this thesis cannot respond to Jensen’s (2002) critique of IA theory, as evidence of the socialization of economic values was inconclusive.

Due to the intimate connection between the farmers’ families and businesses, it is incredibly difficult to identify specific interests or values associated with each separate institution. The participants themselves were either unable to dissociate one from the other, or found attempts to do so very challenging. None were able to say that either the values of the business or the family took precedence in time or importance. Thus the

connection between the institutions is symbolic of a penetrative level, but the participants' at-length discussions of the importance of food safety, and the lack of economic concerns within family values, means that largely social values are not devalued and have not been overridden by economic-based interests.

The accommodation of social values to business values shows the most evidence for IA theory's institutional economic prioritization. Similar to the idea of penetration, the participants felt a significant amount of family time involved farm-related discussions or practices. However, the farmers expressed that they experienced a lack of desired family time. Therefore, for the participants, spending time with their families often meant that such time was based around farm or business issues, suggesting that the business is intruding on family life, or that the family routine is accommodating to the farm routine. Whether this exemplifies partial support to IA theory is not necessarily clear. There are important questions to consider when analyzing family farming businesses. Perhaps the geographical closeness or physical connection between the farm and the family home impacts the mental relationship between the farm and the family. The relationship between the two is even explained in the 'family-farm' title of which all the participants were happy to define themselves. The 'farming is a lifestyle' idea shows that the farm is not just defined through business concerns and labour, but other elements of non-economic institutions are significantly involved. Thus is it not clear that the values of economic institutions are valued *above* the values of non-economic institutions, only that the interests of the farm sometimes intrudes on family life.

Similarly, evidence is also partial concerning the second factor – the emphasis and persistence of the neoliberal culture as adapted from IA theory. The self-interest

motivations of neoliberalism were significantly experienced by the farmers through their ability to have control over their farm and how they were able to produce milk. However such power was conditioned by adherence to specific rules within the dairy system.

Although the participants primarily perceived that they had limitless means to reach their personal goals relating to milk production, their statements were continually restricted by secondary thoughts concerning larger institutions. These included the legal regulations governing some of their behaviour, the economy stipulating the need to sell product and be profitable, and the dairy industry having a variety of rules, checks, and balances which constructed various requirements. There was a strong perception of self-control over milk production behaviours but ultimately through limited means.

There was a form of tug-and-pull that the farmers described regarding their level of control within milk production. While realizing to some extent the structural governance placed on their farming livelihoods, several farmers explained ways in which they returned (some) control to their own decisions and practices. This was shown through examples of ways the farmers acted apart from the law, such as redefining safe milk beyond the ideas of pasteurization and low bacteria levels, where safe milk must be tasty and come from happy cows that have access to outside pasture. The most important way the farmers held control was through their internal motivation to produce safe milk. The participants clearly established that they do not purposefully taint their own milk. This agency needs to be considered in future research.

Overall, the broader environment was not experienced by the participants as enabling individual desires, but the individual farm-level atmosphere was perceived as conceptually anomic. These findings support Toews' (2008) understanding of Canadian

dairy farmers as caught in an illusion of control. The concept of alienation can help understand this illusion. As already suggested, the participants had a very weak understanding and connection to the actual legal texts concerning food safety. The participants did not believe that the laws and regulations impact their production practices, yet the farmers continually maintained a form of awareness about the laws and regulations impacting their production practices *at a theoretical level* through abiding standards. There is an idea of something controlling their behaviour, of which they are not fully aware, understand, or acknowledge. Also recall that the participants did not perceive there to be a separation between themselves and their milk production behaviours, but half the participants had some level of disconnect between themselves and the milk product. There is a lack of connection between the farmers' labour and the product of their labour, a connection which Marx (1844) originally acknowledged as being concealed within the political economy system.

This is shown by both the product and labour, individually, being somewhat independent from the farmer, but this independence is not directly perceived by the participants. The object of labour, the final milk product, is independent from the farmers (they are not allowed to do anything to it after it leaves the cow besides cooling, not containing antibiotics, with a specific butterfat ratio, etc.) and the farmers have become a type of servant to producing that product in such a way. This is true for both the commercially available processed milk and the raw milk on the farm. Simultaneously, the labour to produce this product is restricted through the composition of the product being produced, thus the labour itself also becomes controlled and somewhat alienated from the farmer. However, the participants did not extensively acknowledge this relationship

between their labour and the product they produce, yet they all perceived their labour as voluntary.

This idea appears to be mostly driven through structural mechanisms, namely the production stages of the dairy industry. The labour was their own – producing milk was a mix of decisions and practices which they controlled, because they owned the cows. More importantly, they *desired* to own and care for the cows. This corresponds to Robert's (1996) finding that control is maintained through connection to the biological stages of food production. However, the product was not *only* theirs – it was a symbol for success and money for them, while a symbol of nutrition for consumers. Farmers associated more control over what they were able to physically manipulate.

This factor of 'space' (*see spatial environment in Figure 1*) and the impact of biological or physical control on feelings of power may involve an understanding of class consciousness. Although it is logical to state that farmers live according to their own decisions (power) due to the fact that they largely continue to control much of the biological aspects of farming (Roberts, 1996), this tie to the land may restrict farmers to a livelihood within the structures involving the means of production. For example, Walsh (2012) found that when rural communities in the U.S. compared themselves to states, governments, and corporations, individuals within the rural communities felt powerless and alienated, largely because these controlling organizations were out-of-touch with the values of their communities. There is a clear division between farm labour and the work involved in governing farming processes. While half of the participants acknowledged some level of discrepancy with the regulators, Morgan stressed that the law makers were

completely independent from the physicality of the farm – “you see some regulations that you just know for sure that this guy has never seen the back end of a cow.”

Thus at some level, which only some of the farmers acknowledged, the laws still impact the biological growing stages and the farming practices connected to place. The connections farmers have to controlling local production suggest that dairy farmers believe their physical connections to the land and the cows authorize power to them in producing milk. Tandon (2010) explains this phenomenon as farmers increasingly becoming the ‘rural landless’ where they live on the land but lack decisive power in what is grown and for whom, resulting in an emotional divorce from the land. The consequence of this subordination results in farmers being the weakest element in the food industry (Buccirossi, Marette, & Shiavina, 2002).

This structural division between labour and product, within alienated relationships, also has a key effect on feelings of responsibility for the milk product. The segregation of responsibility established that participants felt responsible for safe milk production while the (raw) product was under their care on their farm, but somewhat removed themselves from responsibility when the product was controlled by other stages in the dairy industry. This was justified by the excessive amount of testing of the product within traceability arrangements throughout the system. Therefore feelings of power and control (neoliberal culture) were not the only factor impacting the partial deflection of blame. There are also important considerations of some characteristics of the agribusiness structure (traceability testing procedures).

These findings do not necessarily mean that forms of IA theory are not applicable to understanding dairy family-farmers in Canada. IA theory is based on macro-level

understandings of systemic ideologies and structures. The qualitative nature of this research attempted to measure this ideology and structure through individual interviews, a process with potential problems. For instance, the participants simply may not be aware or want to acknowledge the existence and consequences of those issues. Some researchers have suggested that using micro methods to study macro concepts may potentially limit the understanding of the data to alternative interpretations outside the theory (Weick, 1995; Morgan, 1997). Other researchers have found that the structure of a theory can also enable connections which would not have been known from simple inductive methods (MacFarlane & O'Reilly-de Brún, 2012). The theory-testing nature of this thesis meant that the analysis likely suffered elements of blindness to ideologies beyond the agricultural-anomie-alienation theoretical framework. This is a limitation which needs to be addressed in future research involving food safety responsibility on Canadian dairy farms. However, utilizing an abductive approach, which embraces rather than ignores the theoretical positionality of the researcher (see Timmermans & Tavory, 2012), enabled the addition of new ideas, such as the impact of the 'spatial environment'.

Further, being a family-farm is very important to the image of the participants, and this image was constructed through comparison to non-family or factory farms, which are very economic and business-oriented. The anomic individualistic culture is also connected to this comparison-identification, where choice and control are considered a key part of family-farming, while factory farms offer a structured chain of command, void of creativity. It becomes logical for anyone to define their role according to what is desirable (see the concept of social desirability in Denzin, 1989) and for many of the

participants, it is the opportunity to have self-control and be creative which drove them to farm and what makes continuing farming an attractive option.

Overall, the results show that the neoliberal culture and the consequences of an agribusiness structure (re: economic values) have not significantly penetrated dairy farming at the family-farm level, according to the perceptions of these participants. Future research should try to understand *how* and *why* family dairy-farmers in Canada are resisting these structural pressures. Further integration of IA theory with Marxist perspectives would help further enhance the ability to understand food crimes from an institutional anomic framework. In particular, an in-depth analysis of the degree of class consciousness which impacts dairy farmers would be helpful in understanding their experience of control and food safety responsibility within the Canadian dairy industry. One farming family outlined their suggestion:

We should be focusing on better relationships between the producer, the CFIA, the health unit, and the DFO. Like specific to the dairy industry, so that all the people that are involved in all that, in the entire circle of production, are part of the solution. One person doesn't have that specific job – [Taylor]. Or one department [Morgan]. Or one of those particular groups. It should be someone from all of those, able to brainstorm an ideal solution [Taylor]...

### **Conclusion**

This thesis offers findings that suggest the understanding of food safety responsibility as outlined in the agricultural-anomie-alienation theoretical framework partially explains the legal discourse, but largely does not explain the individual

perceptions and experiences of Canadian dairy farmers. The self-interest motivations of the neoliberal culture and the economic prioritization of the agribusiness structure were only partially experienced by the participants and had limited implications on their milk production practices. There is some evidence of alienated relationships between the farmers and their labour (indirectly) and the milk product (directly), which led to the participants deflecting some blame for food safety, yet continued to individualize food safety responsibility. However, regardless of the legal structure suggesting that milk production habits are controlled through standardized requirements of the milk product, the participants persistently reasoned that they produce dairy according to their own interests – that is, farmers perceive that they are without a doubt, milking anomie.

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## Appendix A

## Research Ethics Board Approval



RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES

Date: July 10, 2013

To: Allison Gray (PI), Ron Hinch (Supervisor)

From: Bill Goodman, REB Chair

REB File #: 12-118

Project Title: Milking anomie: Experiencing food safety responsibility on Canadian dairy farms

DECISION: APPROVED

START DATE: July 10, 2013

EXPIRY: July 10, 2014

The University of Ontario, Institute of Technology Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the above research proposal. This application has been reviewed to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and the UOIT Research Ethics Policy and Procedures.

Please note that the (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB.

Always quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.

Please familiarize yourself with the following forms as they may become of use to you.

- **Change Request Form:** any changes or modifications (i.e. adding a Co-PI or a change in methodology) must be approved by the REB through the completion of a change request form before implemented.
- **Adverse or unexpected Events Form:** events must be reported to the REB within 72 hours after the event occurred with an indication of how these events affect (in the view of the Principal Investigator) the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol. (I.e. un-anticipated or un-mitigated physical, social or psychological harm to a participant).
- **Research Project Completion Form:** must be completed when the research study has completed.
- **Renewal Request Form:** any project that exceeds the original approval period must receive approval by the REB through the completion of a Renewal Request Form before the expiry date has passed.

All Forms can be found at <http://research.uoit.ca/faculty/policies-procedures-forms.php>.

REB Chair Dr. Bill Goodman, FBIT <a href="mailto:bill.goodman@uoit.ca">bill.goodman@uoit.ca</a>	Ethics and Compliance Officer <a href="mailto:compliance@uoit.ca">compliance@uoit.ca</a>
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University of Ontario, Institute of Technology  
2000 Simcoe Street North, Oshawa ON, L1H 7K4  
PHONE: (905) 721-8668, ext. 3693

## Appendix B

## Participant Invitation Poster



2000 Geneva Street North, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7M4 | 1-905-721-8668 | [www.uoit.ca](http://www.uoit.ca)

## ARE YOU A CURRENT DAIRY FARMER?

### DO YOU CARE ABOUT THE SAFETY OF MILK PRODUCTS IN CANADA?

#### THEN I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!

Participants are needed to take part in a research project seeking to understand how dairy farmers experience food safety definitions and regulations in their daily farming activities.

To be involved you must be actively farming dairy cattle and selling your product to domestic processing companies. Eligible participants must consider themselves as family-farmers. Throughout the research study, the identity of your person, family, farm, or region in which you farm will be completely confidential.

Participants will be required to attend a one-on-one interview lasting approximately 1.5 hours. Upon completion of an individual interview, participants will be invited to attend the group interview lasting approximately 2 hours, where refreshments will be provided.

DATES: 15<sup>TH</sup> July 2013 – 15<sup>TH</sup> October 2013

LOCATION: flexible and scheduled on individual basis



**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: ALLISON GRAY

EMAIL: [ALLISON.GRAY@UOIT.CA](mailto:ALLISON.GRAY@UOIT.CA)

PHONE: (928)-289-5441

THIS RESEARCH STUDY HAS ETHICS APPROVAL (REFERENCE #12-118) FROM UOIT'S RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD (REB). FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RESEARCH ETHICS PLEASE CONTACT REB ADMINISTRATION AT [COMPLIANCE@UOIT.CA](mailto:COMPLIANCE@UOIT.CA) OR (905)-721-8668 EXT 3693.

## Appendix C

## Participant Consent Form

Page 1 of 3

**INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

*Milking Anomie: Experiencing food safety responsibility on Canadian dairy farms  
July 15<sup>th</sup> – October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013*

**INFORMATION**

Research Ethics Board: Study reviewed and received ethics clearance (file#12-118)

Contact: Administration/Compliance Officer ([compliance@uoit.ca](mailto:compliance@uoit.ca) or (905)721-8668 x3883)

Principal Investigator: Allison Gray

- graduate student in the Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities
- contact: [Allison.Gray@uoit.ca](mailto:Allison.Gray@uoit.ca)

Research Supervisor: Ron Hinch

- professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities
- contact: [Ron.Hinch@uoit.ca](mailto:Ron.Hinch@uoit.ca) or (905)721-8668 x3810

**THE STUDY**

Purpose: To understand how family dairy farmers experience food safety regulations and the food recall processes in Canada, including opinions of safe food responsibility within the dairy industry.

Potential risks: Psychological stress from recalling events involving unsafe milk recalls which may have had negative implications on your farming livelihood. There are social risks that may result from your self-disclosure of interview content to an employer, other farmers, or community members.

To manage these risks, the principal investigator will remind you of your right to refuse to respond to any or all questions or to withdraw from the interview at any time. All information involving yourself, your family, your farm, and your community will be kept fully confidential to minimize the risks involved. Should you withdraw, all information will be deleted from any documents involved, including contact information.

Potential benefits: This understanding may benefit farmers as a group by helping change policy concerning the practices of safe milk production. Broader potential benefits include encouraging the dairy production system to supply safe milk to maintain healthy consumers.

Confidentiality: The principal investigator will ensure the confidentiality of the data and its storage. All forms, letters, emails, tape recordings, notes, transcripts, and any other information will be stored without personal identifiers to you, your family, farm, or farming community. Only the principal investigator will transcribe the interviews, and all information will be stored indefinitely without identifiers in the secure possession of the principal investigator, who is the only person with access to the data.

Publication: The results of the interviews will be used in a graduate thesis project filed as public knowledge electronically and inter-library. The principal investigator aims to publish these results in a Canadian academic journal. The data may be used in secondary projects and publications by only the principal investigator for similar purposes as this project.

**PARTICIPANT'S ROLE**

*Your participation in the interview is voluntary. Refusing to participate or discontinuing participation at any time during the research process is acceptable without penalty or loss to you or the research data and results. Once your data is transcribed and aggregated anonymously, you can no longer remove your input from the study.*

Duration: Interviews will take place from July 15<sup>th</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup> 2013. This time frame may be extended if you choose to read-over your transcripts (may extend your involvement to October 31st, 2013).

Procedures: First, the interview stage will involve face-to-face meetings with the personal investigator. This stage involves the principal investigator asking several questions to which you may respond. These interviews will be audio recorded in order to ensure accurate reporting. You are free to withdraw from this interview at any time. The second and final stage is the debriefing stage, which signals the end of the research process. You will be formally thanked for your participation and invited to read-over your individual transcript and make any desired changes. You are also able to have the final written thesis sent to you through email or post upon its completion at your request.

Secondary Use of Data: You have the opportunity to allow your opinions to be used in secondary studies. These studies will be led by the principal investigator and pursue either a more detailed analysis of the current research questions, or a comparative analysis between the individual and group interview data. The principal investigator will contact you with any clarifications during the current project's research time period (July 15<sup>th</sup> - October 15<sup>th</sup> 2013).

**CONSENT**

I understand that my participation in this research involves an individual interview conducted at a place and time convenient to me, which will last approximately 1.5 hours of my time.

I understand that my participation in this project is completely voluntary and that I am free to decline to participate, without consequences, at any time prior to or at any point during the interview. I am also able to ask questions about the research at any time.

I understand that my interview may be audio recorded, but all information provided during the interview will be kept confidential by being transcribed and stored securely without identifiers.

I understand that there are no significant risks involved in my participation in this project that are beyond the risks experienced in everyday life.

I understand that I will be sent a copy of my individual interview transcript, if I request it, in order to review and edit my statements. Any changes will be modified on all research documents, including the final project.

I do not waive any normal legal rights or recourse.

I understand that I should keep a copy of this consent form for my own records.



	I wish to review my interview transcript and make any desired changes.
	I agree to be quoted directly via a made-up name or pseudonym (my identity will remain confidential and my personal name or other identifying factors will not be stated on any research or published documents).
	I wish to be sent a final copy of the research thesis (email or post).
	I agree that the researcher may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

*By signing this form, you are accepting an invitation to participate in this research study as outlined above. Your signature signifies that you have read and understood the information provided, and have indicated your free and informed consent to research participation.*

Participant name (please print):

---

Signature:

---

Date:

---

Principal Investigator's Signature:

---

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Allison Gray ([Allison.Gray@uoiit.ca](mailto:Allison.Gray@uoiit.ca)) or Mon Hinch ([Mon.Hinch@uoiit.ca](mailto:Mon.Hinch@uoiit.ca)) or (905) 721-8888 x3890. This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Ontario Institute of Technology Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about this study (reference #12-118), you may contact a Compliance Officer ([compliance@uoiit.ca](mailto:compliance@uoiit.ca) or 905-721-8888 x3893).

## Appendix D

### Interview Guide

#### **DAIRY FARMER INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

*This document is to be treated as a guide. Therefore, although the quantity of questions appears overwhelming, problems in keeping with the duration estimation and limiting interview fatigue are not foreseen.*

**INTRODUCTION:** Welcome! Thank you for participating in this interview. The information and life experiences you share with me will help create an understanding of dairy farming responsibilities and safe food. Not only will the outcome of this research advance public knowledge about Canadian food production experiences, but it may also help provide information to assist in better policy planning, which in turn will create and maintain safe and healthy individuals!

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** The main purpose of this study is to initiate an understanding of how family dairy farmers experience food safety regulations and food recall processes. Within this understanding, a responsibility theme will be targeted, particularly to understand farmers' perceptions of food safety responsibility within the dairy industry.

**PRIVACY:** The identity of the participants, including names, farm names, farm addresses, and any other private or personal information will remain anonymous throughout the study. This means that the participants, farms, and the region will only be known by the principal investigator and the participants. All publications of information about the study, including newspaper advertisements, focus group invitations, interview notes, and the final project itself, will use pseudo names and keep the identification of the region unknown.

**METHOD:** This interview will be one to two hours in length, and will be tape recorded. Participants in these personal interviews will be invited to a focus group interview to take place after the completion of the personal interviews. After the research is complete, participants will have the option to be emailed or post-mailed transcripts of their personal interviews in order to check that their ideas and perceptions were appropriately and correctly represented during the interview. Any changes the participants wish to make will be formally made. Final copies of the research project will be available to the participants upon request.

**ROLE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** My purpose is to lead conversation regarding various themes to answer my research questions, which ask: How does the legal definition and enforcement of food safety, through the food recall process, impact the production practices of dairy farmers? Consequently, who do dairy farmers see as those (most) responsible for ensuring food safety during the production of food products? My intentions are purely to listen and record the perceptions and ideas of farmers, and organize their personal thoughts into categories of responses. Here I pursue a neutral role, where I communicate on behalf of the participants.

**ROLE OF PARTICIPANT:** The participants are included in the research conversations freely upon their own will. They are voluntarily encouraged to engage in discussion in a truthful manner, to communicate their opinions about the questions asked. Participants can refuse to answer any or all questions, leave the study at any time, and may ask to have any or all data about them removed. All of this can occur at any point in the study, from invitation to post-interview.

### LEADING OR OPEN QUESTIONS (BY THEME)

**BACKGROUND:** (answers historical information; will follow with 'why/why not' questions or 'explain' statements where and when applicable)

- 1) Why do you farm?
  - a. Why do you farm dairy cows?
- 2) Did you grow up on a dairy farm?
- 3) Tell me the characteristics of the community in which you farm.
  - a. Politics?
  - b. Economy?
- 4) Tell me the characteristics of your farm.
  - a. How much land do you use?
  - b. How many cows do you have?
- 5) Do you drink milk and/or consume milk products?
  - a. If YES: How much?
    - i. Only milk from your farm?
    - ii. Do you buy commercial milk as well?
    - iii. Raw milk?
  - b. If NO: Reasons?
    - i. For how long?
- 6) Does your family drink milk and/or consume milk products?
  - a. Milk from your farm?
  - b. Commercial milk?
  - c. Raw milk?
- 7) How long have you been producing milk?
- 8) How much time do you spend working on farm-related activities?
  - a. Has this amount of time changed during your farming career?
    - i. More or less in past? Present?
    - ii. Predictions for the future?
- 9) Do you want to continue dairy farming?
- 10) If I say "the dairy industry" how would you define this term?
- 11) Can you explain how the dairy industry works (from farm to consumer)?
  - a. What are the fundamental stages associated with dairy production?
  - b. Where does farming fit into this process (earlier or later)?

**FAMILY-FARMING VALUES:** (discusses relevance of institutional anomic theory and role of the family compared to the role of the economy/business; will follow with 'why/why not' questions or 'explain' statements where and when applicable)

- 1) Do you have children?
  - a. Do you want them (or other family members) to continue farming?
    - i. Do you want them to take over your farm upon retirement?
    - ii. Are any of them planning to currently do so?
      1. IF NO: what are you children doing outside the farm?
- 2) What level of education do you have?
  - a. Did you attend school in order to benefit your farm/business?

- i. What degree? Where (location)?
      - ii. What type of values did your education stress?
    - b. What impact did your family (family values) have on attending school?
    - c. IF YES children taking over farm: what level of education do they have?
      - i. Did they attend school in order to benefit the farm/business?
        - 1. What degree? Where (location)?
        - 2. Did you push them to attend school?
- 3) Do you own your land (owner-occupied)?
- a. If YES: Did you inherit the land/farm from family?
    - i. How many generations?
  - b. If NO: Who do you rent from, or who do you farm for (large agricultural farm)?  
(Are you a tenant-farmer, or an employee of a larger agricultural farm?)
- 4) Does dairy farming create a level of financial stress?
- a. To what extent?
  - b. Has it always? When?
- 5) Do you farm other animals besides dairy cattle?
- a. Do you want to?
- 6) Is farming dairy cows your primary employment?
- a. Is there any other household income?
    - i. What type of employment?
- 7) What is your family's role in, or on, the farm?
- a. Who does what?
- 8) Do you consider your farm a family-farm?
- a. How would you define a family-farm?
  - b. Do you employ hired labourers?
  - c. Does the fact that it is a family-farm inhibit or benefit the financial aspect of farming?
    - i. How?
- 9) What are some basic or fundamental values your personal family hold? (Name the top three most important family values of your household.)
- a. Do you think these values are constant across dairy farmers on family-farms?
    - i. Do these values change across families?
    - ii. Across time?
  - b. Do you think these values are the same as family-farmers which produce other agricultural products?
  - c. Do you think family-farm household values are different from the values of non-farming households?
- 10) Do you spend as much time with your family as you would like?
- a. Quality time?
- 11) How much family time involves work or farm-related activities or discussions?
- a. Has this changed over time (re: years, generations, etc.)?
- 12) Do you have any nicknames for "milk" during personal consumption?
- a. How do you refer to it when, for example, it is in a glass on your kitchen table?
- 13) Is separation between work and family something you value?
- a. Do you want this separation?
  - b. Do you have this separation?

- i. To what extent?
- 14) Is there a difference between the milk produced on your farm and the milk sold in stores?
  - a. Does this impact you and your family's consumption habits?
- 15) Is there a difference between the milk produced on different farms in *(name of region)*?
  - a. What makes the milk you produce so similar?
    - i. So different or distinct?

**FARMING IN AGRIBUSINESS STRUCTURE:** (discusses the relevance of the agribusiness structure or organization and its impact on farmers including ideas of power and control; will follow with 'why/why not' questions or 'explain' statements where and when applicable)

- 1) What is your role as a farmer?
  - a. What is your role as a dairy farmer?
    - i. Is the role of a dairy farmer unique?
    - ii. Is the role of a dairy farmer different from other farmer roles? How?
  - b. Do you feel it is a flexible role?
- 2) What values do you think are associated with dairy farmers (by society)?
  - a. Which values would the industry associate with a good dairy farmer?
    - i. A bad dairy farmer?
- 3) What must you do to be a farmer in Ontario?
- 4) Tell me about your conversations with the dairy industry – who initiates them?
  - a. Are they serious or professional? To what extent?
  - b. How do 'they' talk about milk (re: names, titles, definitions, etc.)?
  - c. During these conversations, how do 'you' refer to milk?
- 5) Where (or to whom) do you send your milk?
  - a. Do you send your milk to the same place/people every time?
- 6) How do you sell your milk (do you add or enhance your milk before selling/sending)?
  - a. Is it raw?
  - b. Why do you do this?
- 7) Are you able to sell your milk directly to consumers?
  - a. Do you want to?
- 8) Do you have a choice in how (or to whom) to sell the milk you produce?
  - a. Do you wish you could choose?
  - b. Who decides where your milk goes?
- 9) Tell me about your relationship to the dairy processor(s).
  - a. Who makes decisions?
- 10) How much power do you feel you have in relation to the processor(s)?
  - i. Concerning milk production?
  - ii. Concerning running your farm (as a business)?
- 11) Tell me three decisions or practices involved in everyday dairy farming. How do you decide or do these?
  - a. Are you required to decide/do these?
    - i. If YES: What would you do differently if you were free to choose your farming decisions and habits?
    - ii. If NO: Why do you do them (re: economic, habit, etc.)?
  - b. Who/what enforces these?

**FOOD RECALLS AND FOOD SAFETY:** (discusses the relation of the food recall process to personal and general ideas of food safety; will follow with 'why/why not' questions or 'explain' statements where and when applicable)

- 1) What do you know about food recalls and the food recall process in Canada?
- 2) How do you define a food recall?
  - a. What is its aim or purpose?
- 3) How does a food recall occur?
  - a. What steps are taken to recall a foodproduct (for example, fluid milk)?
- 4) Who is in charge of food recalls?
  - a. What do you know about the Canadian Food Inspection Agency?
- 5) Have you personally experienced a food recall(s)?
  - a. How? When? Who?
  - b. If YES: What are the implications of food recalls on dairy farmers?
  - c. If NO: What do you think might be the implications of food recalls on dairy farmers?
  - d. What (do you think) is the impact on others (re: manufacturers, the industry, consumers)?
- 6) How do food recalls influence the safety of milk (as a product)?
  - a. Do more recalls mean a less safe product?
- 7) Do you make decisions and undergo practices during milk production to avoid a recall of milk products in general?
  - a. What about specifically (milk products from your farm)?
- 8) How do you define safe milk?
  - a. Is a safe milk product caused by safe production?
    - i. Can safe milk be produced in an unsafe environment?
    - ii. Can unsafe milk be produced in a safe environment?
- 9) How does the law define safe milk?
- 10) Does this definition impact how safe milk is produced?
  - a. What rules must you adhere to?
    - i. Do you agree with them?
    - ii. Are they reasonable (re: time, financially, etc.)?
- 11) What other factors influence how you produce safe milk?
  - a. Examples?
- 12) How does your production relate (differ, compare, contrast) to how you are told to produce safe milk?
- 13) Do the regulations or laws benefit or interfere with your production of safe milk?

**ALIENATION:** (discusses the level of connectedness of farmers to the production system and the product itself, through ideas of power and control, by returning and connecting conversations and discussions; will follow with 'why/why not' questions or 'explain' statements where and when applicable)

- 1) How much control do you feel you have over producing milk on your own farm?
  - a. Do other dairy farmers experience the same level of control in (name of region)?
    - i. If NO: Why is there a difference (financial, social, etc.)?
- 2) Would you say you are your own boss?

- 3) Do you think the industry perceives you as independent? How?
  - a. Do you think your farm is an independent business (from industry)?
- 4) Does the family-farm status of your farm interfere with the level of power or control you feel you have in producing milk?
- 5) How do the values of your family relate to the values of the business side of the farm?
  - a. Are there similarities or differences?
- 6) When you make decisions or perform practices relating to producing milk, do you ever feel these decisions or practices are not your own?
  - a. Do you ever think 'what would the industry want me to do'?
- 7) Do you feel alienated or divorced from the practice of dairy farming?
- 8) Do you feel alienated or divorced from the actual milk product (the final dairy product that people consume)?
  - a. How does this relate back to my question about desiring to sell your own milk?

**RESPONSIBILITY:** (examines how the previous discussions relate to farmers' perceptions of responsibility for safe milk production and safe milk product; will follow with 'why/why not' questions or 'explain' statements where and when applicable)

- 1) How do you think these feelings of power/control relate to levels of responsibility for safe food?
- 2) Do you feel responsible for producing safe food?
  - a. How responsible (re: disproportionately)?
  - b. Is this responsibility your decision?
    - i. If NO: Whose?
- 3) Is anyone else responsible for safe food production? Who?
- 4) Specifically, who/what determines who is responsible for safe food production?
- 5) Who do you think the industry would determine as responsible for producing safe food (the industry, the farmers, other, etc.)?
- 6) How responsible does the industry make you feel?
- 7) How responsible do customers make you feel?
- 8) During the food recall process, where is responsibility for safe food placed?
  - a. How (inspection practices or laws)?
- 9) (Recap) If YES has experienced food recall(s): Were you held responsible for (sa)safe milk production during the food recall process?
  - a. By whom?
  - b. If not, who was 'blamed'?
  - c. Did you want to be held responsible?
- 10) (Recap) If NO has not experienced food recall(s): How would you feel if you were held responsible for (ua)unsafe milk production?
- 11) (Double check) Who is responsible for safe milk?
- 12) (Double check) Who is responsible for unsafe milk?
  - a. Is there a difference between responsibilities for safe milk versus unsafe milk?
- 13) Is there anything else you want to tell me about milk safety and farming?