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Chapter 7

The 'good farmer' in communities of practice

The basic tenet of the 'good farming' concept is that farmers produce, recognise and critique each other – and themselves – on the basis of symbols of good farming. While most farmers will seek to be recognised as 'good farmers' not all farmers achieve this status. There are a variety of reasons for this. A recent survey of farmers in Scotland, for example, found that 93% of respondents agreed with the statement "I strive to be a good farmer"[1]. The few that did not agree with the statement, largely did not see themselves as commercial farmers: they identified themselves as estate managers or hobby farmers. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, symbols of 'good farming' are remarkably consistent in some respects: uniform, weed-free fields have become a standard symbol for cereal producers; freedom from weeds indicates skilled use of pesticides; uniform fields indicate skill with planting machinery and soil maintenance. For livestock producers, skill is evident in the bodies of the livestock they produce, both in terms of conformation to breed standards and overall health. For most farmers, a tidy homestead features in symbols of good farming – good farmers are those with sufficient labour available to tidy their properties and invest in appropriate housing for their animals and equipment. However, within these definitions there are considerable regional variations. Gray (1998) and others have provided theoretical explanations and empirical evidence for the consubstantial nature of farming culture – co-development of farm household, land and the commodities they produce. In this chapter we go beyond the cultural capital formed in 'communities of place', to consider how it is developed in 'communities of practice': groups with shared practices and interests (e.g. Wenger, 1998). We do so by explicitly considering the relationship between cultural capital, knowledge and learning, and how the formation of good farming ideals is influenced both by relations between farmers, and between farmers, industry professionals and the general public.

[1] Unpublished finding from the 2013 CAP Intentions Survey conducted by the James Hutton Institute and Scottish Agricultural College, Scotland.

Being a 'good farmer' is about the prestige given by the possession of cultural capital, which is acknowledged as valid by others. It is thus about skills and knowing: knowing how to farm well and knowing the legitimate criteria for defining what is 'well'. This knowledge is given its legitimacy by farming peers. In the literature on farming, issues of knowledge are generally understood in cognitive terms, as the ability to apply new techniques and to understand the complexity of the world (e.g. of the interaction between ecological issues and farming practices). The complexities of farmer learning and knowledge are developed in a burgeoning literature on 'AKIS' (agricultural knowledge and innovation systems), which recognises the embeddedness of farmers in broad knowledge and learning networks, involving education, extension and research (Dockès *et al.,* 2011). However, knowledge in a broader sociological sense is more than skills, it is constitutive of how someone sees the world (see Carolan, 2006).

Issues of knowledge creation relate clearly to the cultural dimension of farming, but few connections have been explicitly made between the creation of new knowledge and the transformation of collective farmer identities (Forney, 2016). Bell (2004) insists on the relationship between new knowledge and new values in the emergence of individual farmer subjectivities. Within the 'good farmer' literature, the connection to Bourdieu's theoretical framework raises the question of knowledge: the socialisation processes than enables intergenerational transfer of cultural capital necessarily involves learning (Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). Use of Bourdieu's approach also recalls the collective definition of what is recognised as knowledge. Not just any type of knowledge or skill makes a farmer a 'good farmer' from the perspective of his or her colleagues. However, little is known about how and under which conditions new knowledge and practices receive collective symbolic valuation and start to change wider cultural definitions of farming (Forney, 2016).

To date, analyses of the 'good farmer' (from the Bourdieusian perspective) have focused on deeply engrained social norms (i.e. the pattern of classical socialisation from childhood, characteristic of family farms). Resultant symbols are developed through long-term farming practice, and thus reflect the specific characteristics of the farming system (e.g. livestock farmers will have somewhat different good farming ideals than arable crop farmers). Similarities are related to production, and linked to this, the financial viability of the business (e.g. different types of farmers value tidy farmsteads, healthy livestock of good conformation and even, weed-free crops). These symbols are visually evident (and can be critiqued by other

farmers on the basis of 'roadside farming'), representing skilled role performances. Using the concept of symbolic capital, apparent 'resistance to change' amongst farmers (e.g. in relation to afforestation – Burton, 2004, or agri-environmental measures – Burton *et al.,* 2008) is reinterpreted as resilient cultural capital – farmers gaining or retaining prestige from skilled role performance, evident in fields, livestock and farmstead. Engagement in activities such as agri-environmental schemes are thus resisted because the activities represent a loss of cultural capital – the financial rewards of scheme participation are insufficient to outweigh the social and cultural value of maintaining long-held standards of farming practice.

The 'good farming' standard is thus explicitly identified as a shared standard between all farmers in a locale: it is located within communities of place. There are two issues here: first, technological advances have dramatically increased farmers' access to other farms and farmers across geographical space. Farmers are no longer restricted to viewing the farms in their own locales. Second, the 'good' part of the good farming concept implies that some farmers achieve this standard more than others. The 'good farmer' identity thus has a social boundary making role. To adhere to the values of the 'good farmer' means to identify as a farmer (and often to be identified as one), as a member of a farm community, and of a professional group. This collective sharing of symbols and values of reference is essential in social dynamics described in the previous chapters. At the same time, this identification as a farmer (aiming at being a 'good farmer') is inevitably constructed in opposition to other categories of people. Beyond factual and descriptive aspects (e.g. to raise animals or cultivate land, to be registered as a professional farmer), the differences between farmers and others often draw on more general moral values that allow comparisons. As an example, hard work has been identified in several contexts as a fundamental value characterising farmers' identities. By valuing a dedication to work specific to them, farmers implicitly or explicitly build a moral distinction between them and others who supposedly do not work as hard. The 'good farmer' serves here as a mirroring tool. Narratives produced in its name about non-farmers can be understood above all as a reaffirmation of the belonging to a community of values and practices. This belonging dimension of the "good farmer" is perhaps more directly emphasised by theorisation of ethos and habitus that suppose an embodiment of social identities fundamental to social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984).

As seen in the previous chapters, other theoretical framings insist more on the role of the 'good farmer' reference in interaction between peers. The 'good farmer' understood as social, cultural and/or symbolic capital (e.g. Burton, 2012; Sutherland and Burton, 2011) helps us to understand action as a way to prove oneself in front of others who share the same frame of reference. This approach includes a sense of competition, where individuals aim at the best possible performance (while avoiding bad performances), to be not only 'good enough' farmers, but 'better' farmers than neighbours or acquaintances. A farmer who has proven him/herself to be 'better' than others, might become some sort of model for colleagues. A classic example would be a farmer who seems to implicitly initiate hay making in an area, with others waiting on him and trusting his decision. From this perspective, the negotiation of the criteria that constitute a 'good farmer' and their enactment is a social field of positioning, competition, or at least comparison, between individuals and/or subgroups. By extension, it helps to describe the dynamics of a structuration of the social field of farming, in its diversity.

The 'good farmer' approach was initially utilised to describe a rather homogeneous definition of performance and skills in farming. Decades of productivism led farmers' interpretations of the 'good farmer' to be formed in relation to criteria of economic success. This general framework was adapted and translated in farm communities in relation to local practices and contexts, and types of agricultural production (crops, animal husbandry, etc.). Overall, what was a successful farmer in the 20th Century and how to achieve this standard was largely unchallenged by farmers. Ensuing contestation has arisen from changes in public policies, primarily in relation to ongoing market deregulation and the increasing importance of environmental schemes, but also in relation to consumer concerns regarding farming practices. The consensual and normalised 'good farming' standard disappeared with the progressive abandonment of the post-World War II productivist model. The normalisation of alternatives such as organic farming, the growing importance of administrative skills to perform in a context of bureaucratisation of agricultural policies, and increasing economic pressures in relation to free-trade agreements similarly reduced the internal consistency of 'good farmer' ideals. These factors resulted in the emergence of diverging definitions of the 'good farmer' (Sutherland and Darnhofer, 2012). Symbols of the 'good farmer' not only changed (see Chapter 3), they diversified to reflect multiple and competing ways of being a farmer in a given time and space. In essence, the definition of the 'good farmer' – from a farmer's point of view – fragmented in a context where there was no singular way to succeed in agriculture.

The work of defining – or redefining, in a changing context – the criteria that make a 'good farmer' is not limited to farmers themselves. Other actors also participate in this cultural negotiation of the good farmer. Industry professionals, providing services or goods to farmers, also develop their categorisation of who is a 'good farmer' and why. Because of social proximity to the farming community, many of those actors share symbolic understandings of the dominant definition of the good farmer. This is notable in the case of people from farming families who did not take over the family farm, but have chosen a related profession (such as cheese maker, butcher, or agro-industry salesman). Often, they master specific skills that are valued and acknowledged by farmers in relation to a role of adviser or specialists in the AKIS. In addition, these actors generally circulate widely through the farming community, and with them information about what other farmers do. Their specific positions also contribute to legitimising their perspectives. Consequently, advisers, veterinarians, salesmen, and others, join farmers themselves in the constitution of specific communities of practice – groups who share a concern or passion, rather than a geographical space (Wenger, 1999) – where definitions of the 'good farmer' are discussed, enacted, and embodied, in dialogue with specific agricultural practices and the related processes of learning and knowledge creation.

In this chapter, we explore a set of examples where definitions of the 'good farmer' are contested, reformulated, diversified in specific communities of practice. This builds on the work in Chapter 3 on symbolic change but, in this case, we focus not on the symbols themselves but on the processes of social construction within farming communities. To explore this issue we first show how organic farmers contributed to reframe symbols of 'good farming' in England. Second, we consider the role of new entrants to farming in the rejuvenation of crofting culture in Scotland. Third, we look at the history of pedigree livestock farmers in Swiss dairy farming. Fourth, we consider recent research into how professionals in the agri-food sector – specifically veterinarians – understand and utilise their own standards of 'good farming' to determine what type of knowledge is legitimate and valuable. We then consider the role of the public in shaping expectations of 'good farming'. In doing so, we build a dialogue between three dimensions of the 'good farmer' concept: its embodiment in physical symbols; its embeddedness in specific locale and communities; its relation to the question of knowledge in agriculture.

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Organic farming and the fragmentation of good farming identity

Sutherland and Darnhofer (2012) identified several processes that underpin the negotiation of good farming symbols. They drew on an English dataset of 48 qualitative interviews with farmers in 'hotspots' and 'coldspots' of organic farm conversion in 2007 and 2008, to argue that conversion to organic farming involves renegotiation of locale-based standards of 'good farming'. The first process is the devaluation of current symbols. For the farmers in their study, the symbolic value of high yields was devalued through their disconnection from profitable farming, resulting from increasing pressure on production costs and product prices. Similarly, the new recognition of the connection between current practices of intensive agriculture and negative outcomes, such as a disease outbreak, or the pollution of waterways clearly unsettled classical symbols by showing publicly the darker side of former agricultural 'good practices'. The devaluation of traditional symbols of good farming in their study sites led to an openness to consider other farming options, particularly reducing input use (i.e. not organic farming *per se*), and also experimentation with other farming opportunities (such as diversification). In doing so, farmers enter different 'fields' with associated rules by which they must learn to play (e.g. how to market to new consumers, produce new products). The devaluation of existing symbols also leads to a period of reflexivity – active consideration of what they value about farming (i.e. farmers' personal and household goals). The habitus (disposition to act) is no longer unconscious but actively scrutinised. New rules of the game thus form a crucible in which new ideals can be developed and tested; farmers may choose to play in different fields, adapt to the changing rules of their current field, or both. In this process, new communities of practice are created, offering alternative definitions of what makes a good farmer.

Utilising the same dataset, Sutherland (2013) addressed how symbols can be different and contested within locales. Organic and conventional farmers held different standards, although there were similarities. For example, both included the environment: organic farmers prioritised a varied farming landscape, with multiple crops, over the monoculture favoured by conventional producers. Skilled role performance for organic farmers was the recognition of the value of diversity and particular techniques associated with organic farming, whereas the skills of conventional producers were in pest control. Both organic and conventional farmers characterised themselves as 'progressive'. Although there was some 'if it works for him that's

fine' discourse, the ideals conflicted – farmers who had not converted to organic production identified the loss of ability to treat livestock in a timely manner, or to control weeds effectively, as important barriers, some going so far as to quit farming rather than convert. In the words of 'Luke':

> I looked at organic before we gave up but now I wouldn't fancy it. I didn't like the fact that it seemed to me that you got penalised for treating a sick animal. I mean if your child had an ear infection you wouldn't hesitate to give them antibiotics if that was the right thing, but then if your cow had some kind of critical thing and you chose to use antibiotics you would get penalised through a lengthy spell where you couldn't sell the milk from that animal. And it seemed wrong to me. (Sutherland, 2013, pp. 437)

For Luke, good farming included a moral obligation to the welfare of his livestock, who he likened to members of his family. It was better to leave farming than to fail to farm to his ethical standards, that is, to be a bad farmer, according to the communities of place and practice to which he belonged. In contrast, organic farmers in the study reported their formation of new communities of practice, travelling outside of the region to learn techniques from other organic farmers and to participate in organic farming demonstrations. They also identified their customers as an important frame of reference. Direct marketing to consumers enrolled the perspectives of those consumers in the farmers' assessments of their practices. For 'Gary', "producing something that somebody wants" reinforced the value of his new organic farming practices.

Sutherland (2013) argued that the symbols characterising cultural capital in contemporary farming largely reflect necessity – weed free fields represent higher productivity and thus greater household income; healthy animals are more likely to reproduce and gain maximum value at auction sales. The higher value for organic products shifts this implicit metric – maximum value is achieved for standards of practice, rather than the quantity produced. The link between economic and cultural capital remains readily apparent, but the overt symbols of this relationship change. 'Good farmers' are successful farmers, who maintain a profitable farming enterprise, which extends to production of premium products. However, it was also clear that this connection, while direct, is not the only issue – farmers seek ideals to aspire to beyond the financial. Their discourse about farmers who are solely profit oriented is overtly

negative. 'Good farming' thus lies on a continuum between necessity and luxury. Formerly commercial farmers who opted to continue farming on a recreational or hobby basis thus identified their actions as a step towards luxury – the opportunity to engage in a valued activity without need for commercial gain.

New entrants and the formation of 'good crofter' identity

The participants in Sutherland and Darnhofer's (2012) study were largely long-term farmers who had inherited their farms. In this section we consider how farming symbols are formed by newcomers to agriculture. New entrants to farming by definition are not socialised into good farming norms, nor do they gain the skills to demonstrate skilled role performance as children. They also actively choose to enter the farming profession, rather than inheriting a farm; their definitions of 'good farming' can thus be expected to reflect the privilege they perceive of being able to farm.

New entrants are particularly interesting from the perspective of understanding differential farming norms: they need to play by the same 'rules of the game' as other farmers, if they are to gain income from agricultural markets and establish positive working relationships with their neighbours, but they do not have the family background or socialised experiences of incumbent farmers. This section presents findings from a study of new entrants to crofting (a legally protected form of small-scale farming in the highlands and islands of Scotland – Shucksmith and Rønningen, 2011). Interviews were conducted with 22 newcomers to crofting (including both successors and *ex novo* new entrants), and eight key informants in 2013/2014. The research more broadly looked at the formation of new knowledge networks (see Sutherland *et al.* 2017); study participant's definitions of 'good farming' are thus embedded within broader discussions of learning processes.

The findings of the Scottish new entrants' research are consistent with Gray's (1998) concept of consubstantiality – the interconnection between the farm family, livestock and land comprising the territory of the farm. Land quality in crofting areas is typically poor, but variable – new entrants thus clearly gauged their assessment of the quality of their own and others' production in relation to the capability of the land. Rather than absolute terms, standards of 'good crofting' identified by study participants are evaluated on the extent to which the land

is used to its 'full potential'. Land abandonment – relatively common in remote crofting areas - was viewed particularly negatively.

Similar to long-term farmers, new entrants based their assessments of the potential of land on historic performance. However, as they lack lived or family experience with past productivity levels, these standards were often based on photos of the area.

> Mike: I think personally just looking at pictures of the old crofts, how crofting was around here up until maybe 40-50 years ago when you look at the well managed crofts and hay growing, people taking hay off the crofts, I can't think of many crofts around about that I would like my croft to be like that in the future.
>
> Interviewer: Is that because a lot of them aren't used?
>
> Mike: Yeah! Basically yeah or used to their full potential I would say. Ours certainly isn't at the moment but I'd like it to be like that.

Rather than accept the status quo as the 'right' or 'good' way to manage the land, study participants opted for an historic vision – visual images from 50 years ago. Instead of learning from the dubious practices of their neighbours, they sought historical sources on which to base their visual appraisal. They thus embedded their farming practices in historical approaches, but in a different form than those of their neighbours who had inherited crofts. There is nostalgia in the assessment – becoming a crofter is often about joining a traditional way of life – which links to productivist views of how crofting land should be managed. The purpose of the croft as productive is primary in the assessment.

Study findings are thus also consistent with the importance of visible symbols and road-side farming practices (visual appraisal while driving through the countryside), that is, the idea that "if you look at their croft you'll know!" Remote landscapes can make this appraisal difficult:

> Alan: Its difficult on Skye, you don't really see, you don't really see other people's places, some people's farms we'd just love to see.

> Tom: We just know, we know of them and we watch their sale, their animals at sales and things, that's all, it's very much, very much second-hand information.

These respondents were describing how the mountainous terrain of Scotland's Isle of Skye made it difficult to view crofting practices from the roadside – croft housing and livestock are often located in remote areas, where there are few roads, or reasons to travel those roads. Whereas farmers in more central locations might drive past their neighbours' fields and farmsteads on a regular basis, this was not the case on Skye. Visual appraisal was thus more achievable at industry events, such as livestock auctions. Auctions in particular offer the opportunity not only to link farmers directly to their livestock, but to assess the economic value other farmers place on that livestock through the purchase price. Events like auctions also make it possible to assess the reputation of different farmers, on the basis of how their livestock are valued.

New entrants to crofting were also asked if there were established crofters who they seek to emulate. Responses were typically hybrid – no single croft or crofter was identified, but typically a combination – for example the animal husbandry skills of one, the soft fruit production skills of another, and the diversification activities of another.

> On the technical side on the sort of farming I do talk a lot with [farming couple] at [croft name] on vegetable production, on soft fruit production, there's a very good friend and colleague in Edinbane that I talk to. … and then there's [female crofter] who basically has taken, got into processing … [about] the whole processing, processing onsite.

In essence, the standards being set for new entrant crofts exceed the standards apparent in any single, existing croft. New crofters formed distinctive knowledge networks for each of their activities (Sutherland *et al.,* 2017), establishing links to differing communities of practice. Relative 'good crofting' status was assessed in relation to similar crofts – not only in terms of land quality, but in the scale of holding and types of diversification or other activities. Crofting has historically been pluriactive – historically, crofts were allocated to the workers on estates to enable self-provision. Crofts were never intended to provide a full-time income to the resident household. Off-croft income and diversification are thus accepted norms within

crofting communities. The symbols of a new 'good crofter' reflect perceived excellence in this set of endeavours.

Actively constructing a new good crofting identity involved identifying and pursuing distinction through the symbols of success for the type of croft they were developing (e.g. a good crofter as a good horticulturalist, a good gardener, a good host, or a good stockperson). At the same time, there was an evident aim for distinction – feeling that other crofts have not been successful and wanting to make a mark (i.e. to not do what everyone else is doing). This ambition is somewhat divorced from pragmatic economics, reflecting the personal preferences, innovations and ideals of the new crofter:

> Interviewer: Is there anybody else out there that you kind of look at and go 'I would really like my croft to be like that some day?'
>
> Joan: Well it's actually a shame, there is a lot of unused crofts around, but I wouldn't say there's one that I think that's the way I want to be like theirs. I think I want to just establish my own take on the croft so my own personality, I have an idea in my head about how I want it to be so that's really what I'm working to is my own kind of ideas that I want and not really someone down the road. And certainly there are a lot of things that I want to try that I'm not seeing happening there so...
>
> Interviewer: So where have those ideas come from then?
>
> Joan: Well I've been subscribing to the Country Small Holding magazine for a number of years now so I get that through every month, so ideas in there, or I might be on the internet, I've got a couple of self-sufficiency books that I've bought you know just reading up and self-educating really. I've been on a few of the Scottish Agricultural College courses I'm a member of them, so just attending some courses and just getting a feel for that.

These ideals are based on a wide geographical range. It was not unusual for new entrant crofters to identify exemplar crofts from other regions of the UK or other countries (e.g. Switzerland, South Africa). Learning was frequently book and media based, in addition to practical

experience of 'learning by doing'. Many of the new entrants had experience of observing or working on smallholdings from other regions, and utilised these frames of reference, rather than the actions of their neighbours. Magazines and the internet were also sources of ideas: the new entrants in this study actively constructed communities of practice which often diverged widely from communities of place.

Embedded in these symbols were standards of crofting remarkably consistent with those of farmers in other good farming studies: that land should be worked, that crofting is active (hard work, time invested), and that crofting should be profitable. Respondents were freer in their criticisms of other crofters than was the case in interviews conducted with farmers (i.e. Sutherland's other studies). This may reflect the amount of land abandonment in the study site, particularly by elderly occupiers who are no longer able to work the land, but also young people who were primarily occupying the housing without making use of the land base. While locating themselves within the heritage of crofting, new entrants see themselves as modern:

> Anne: I don't really think there's any great forward-thinking crofters in the area… I think in my particular area there's only 3 and they're all traditional really. They keep sheep, and one of the guys is just, he's like in his late 70s or 80s, if you go to his house, his sheds it's like stepping into a time warp its absolutely fascinating. It really is fascinating and when he dies there's nobody that I know that is a traditional old school crofter anymore.
>
> Interviewer: Uh huh. It's interesting because the new generation is so different coming through.
>
> Anne: Yeah! Well this guy I mean he still speaks Gaelic and he's just...he's fascinating! But there's no...in my area I don't know of anyone diversifying, sort of going forward into modern, more modern thinking.

Contemporary new entrants to crofting in the study thus expressed a critique of more traditional approaches evident in their locales, drawing their ideals of good farming from communities of practice. Several respondents indicated that none of their neighbours could be considered 'good crofters' because their land was essentially abandoned. Even in cases where land was

being used, sole reliance on the traditional commodities of beef and sheep was unpopular. 'Contemporary' new entrants to crofting identified good farming as involving new commodities, consistent with their community of practice. At the same time, new entrants are seeking to ground their practices in visual images of practices from 50 years ago. Ideals are eclectic, justified in part by the pluriactive history of crofting, but also reflecting responses to contemporary 'rules of the game' for establishing financially viable smallholdings in remote areas.

Good farmers and good cows in the show ring

The 'good farmer' literature was initially developed in the context of crop farming: communities of place and practice where similar crops were produced. Therefore, the exploration of the physical and biological symbols of good farming that have been identified and analysed are mostly related to fields and their aesthetics in the production of 'tidy' landscapes. However, in farming cultures centred on livestock, such as dairy farming, the animal body has been similarly invested with symbolic values reflecting the quality of their owner and tender. Through the animal body, values and ideals are expressed and enacted, building a definition of a 'good breeder' that is shared among people involved in a same practice, but which may also be contested by individuals or groups defending other perspectives on farming and animals. As with 'roadside farming', and as mentioned in the previous section with the example of livestock auctions in Scotland, the visibility and exhibition of symbols here plays a central role in the building of farmers' reputations and identities as 'good farmers'.

Historically, there were many symbols associated with the bodies of animals that indicated good husbandry or good breeding. In terms of breeding, farmers looked for qualities of the animal that were believed (rightly or, as was often the case, wrongly) to indicate secondary qualities of the animal associated with either the ease of management or the quality/quantity of produce. For example at the end of the 18th Century in the UK, the form of the animal could indicate the disposition to fatten, a small head was a sign of easy birthing, while having small bones and a small proportion of offal were considered indications that the animal would provide a large quantity of meat (Sinclair, 1802). Slightly less credibly, the silkiness and elasticity of the skin was believed to indicate a tendency for the animal to "take on meat" as it

could be "more easily stretched out to receive any extraordinary quantity of flesh, than a thick or tough one" (Dickson, 1807; Sinclair, 1802, p. 406), while farmers were advised to avoid white animals by one of the key agricultural improvers of the time as, he believed, white was "a sign of degeneracy in all the animals of the creation" (Young, 1791). Other symbols indicted good or bad husbandry on the part of the farmer. For example, smooth skin (Clarke, 1781) and a lack of ticks (Collins, 1799) were indications the animal had been well cared for. On the other hand, "a belly more capacious than common" on weaning calves symbolised that the animals had been underfed (Batchelor, 1808).

Today breeding societies, shows, and pedigree livestock sales offer places and times where symbols of what make a good and healthy farm animal are staged and made explicit. As we will see however, the participation in such events has progressively become a specialised practice, limited to a specific community of breeders, at least in Switzerland. As travel has become more efficient, and technologies progressed (e.g. enabling tele-purchasing), shows and sales have shifted from being central to communities of place, to spaces where communities of practice can gather and exhibit their good farming credentials. Show animals in particular become physical embodiments of good farming prowess. Farmers make critical distinctions between 'working' livestock (those which perform well in commercial herds) and 'show' livestock (which perform well in show rings and at auction). The latter reflect the 'taste of luxury': characteristics typically reflect but do not identically mirror the symbols of efficient commercial production (e.g. show livestock may be high maintenance in that they require additional feed or grooming to achieve success).

For this section, we draw on data collected in long term ethnographic fieldwork (including participant observation, semi-directive and informal interviews, and historical and contemporary document analyses) in the French speaking part of Switzerland, mostly between 2002 and 2010, in the context of a rapidly evolving dairy industry. The history of dairy farming offers a paradigmatic example of the evolution of the symbols of the good cow. During the 20th Century, the development at regional, national and international scales of technological and institutional tools for improving the quality of animals (such as herd books, standardised metrics of evaluation, shows and competitions), produced very strong symbols, shared widely in the 'modern' agriculture of the Global North. This does not mean however that the symbols and narratives of the good cow are all similar independently of context. Holloway (2005, pp.

883) has shown how diverse technical criteria of evaluation represent diverse types of "constitution of bodies embedded in specific nature – society", when comparing aesthetic and technical knowledge in cattle breeding in the UK.

Dairy cattle breeding has been an important part of farmers' pride and fame for many decades in Switzerland. Local breeding societies were created at the end of the 19th Century or just after. They have been crucial actors in the differentiation and consolidation of distinct breeds and in promoting emulation between breeders. They created new spaces and practices of institutionalised competition – such as yearly local and regional shows, where farmers could stage and perform their skills as breeders. They also produced new metrics for assessing animal bodies according to new standards of productivity and representations of the ideal cow. On this basis, the good cow embodies the good farmer's identity and secures it over time, first through the life of the individual animal, but also and primarily through the genes she will pass on to the next generation. Being a good breeder is then an identity that forms over time, and often generations of farmers.

In recent times, detailed representations of the ideal cow have evolved together with farming practices, and agricultural economics and politics. In this sense, the animal body is not only the physical symbol of the quality of the individual farmer, it also expresses an agricultural model. At the end of the 20th Century, this model was based on productivist values. As with tidy landscapes, or well-maintained and productive crofts, these breeding practices and values are translated into aesthetics. A good cow is also a 'beautiful' cow. Or better said, what makes a cow beautiful is the visible expression of her productive capacity. In Switzerland those criteria have been at the same time unified and specified for each breed, in relation to where they are farmed. The Swiss Simmental, a historical local breed, represents a diversified mountain agriculture, combining both meat and milk production qualities, associated to a robustness adapted to the rougher conditions of mountainous regions, while other breeds in other regions specialized univocally in dairy. The Friesian Holstein breed, a worldwide ambassador of high productivity dairy cattle, embodies a more intensive and specialised style of dairy farming. In some regions of Switzerland, this international breed has become a substitute for local breeds which have disappeared.

Breeding societies have been active players in those processes. They continue to exert influence through herd books where all the cows of every farmer member are registered, and their performance recorded: production, quality of the milk, fertility, and genealogy. In addition, experts visit farms assessing visually and measuring the morphology of the animals, following a standardised process of 'linear description'. Recently, gene technology has strengthened the potential for selection (Holloway and Morris, 2012). Genomic selection makes possible the genetic identification of specific characteristic and assessing the genetic fit with the 'breed type' and still increases the capacity of breeders to shape the animal body according to their objectives and representations of the good cow.

In parallel to these increasingly quantified and precise technologies of assessment, farmers can present their best cows in competitions. Interestingly, the ranking at those competitions traditionally depends on the decision of a single judge, who decides purely on the basis of visual evidence. Bodily conformation to the specificity of the breed is here the only official factor of selection and assessment. For dairy cows, good teats and mammary system are crucial elements. Size is not the main element, but good blood irrigation, practicality for milking, and a strong ligament for longevity are essential. Dairy cattle competitions therefore have specific ranking and prices related to teats. Other factors are also considered, such as the quality of the legs and a strong and straight spine for a good health, a wide rump for easy calving, etc. That this assessment is based exclusively on visual factors is somewhat surprising, notably because of the discordance between increasingly technologically mediated assessments used otherwise in the breeding societies (Holloway and Morris, 2012). The show-ring aesthetics draw on embodied knowledge about what makes a good productive cow. All the visual and aesthetic criteria have a rational explanation in terms of animal health and productivity, inspired by a productivist ideal of the animal. This said, differences between animals are subtle and only a trained eye can make appropriate distinctions. This is maybe where those competitions participate more fundamentally in the constitution of a collective identity: in the creation of shared skills in this 'skilled vision' of animal bodies (Grasseni, 2009), not only as breeder, but also as judges, and in the expression of a culture of animal farming.

Competitions are organised at multiple levels: local, regional (the Canton), and national, in accordance to the federal organisation of the societies (local societies are members of regional societies, themselves regrouped within a national federation). In the recent past (i.e. the end of

20th Century), every dairy farmer would participate in the local, and most in the regional competitions. The gatherings of those communities of place are unique opportunities to compare and situate one's performance as a breeder. They are also a special time for socialising. Farmers participate for recreational purposes also, identifying shows as a 'hobby', and for their personal enjoyment of seeing 'beautiful cows'. However, such competitions are also unique opportunities for marketing and promotional activities: showing the quality of your cows can increase their sale value. Performance in breeding is supposed to translate into income through animal sales, other farmers wanting to invest in good cattle and being ready to pay a good price for a genetically superior cow. Competitions are also show rooms for famous breeders and an arena were to prove yourself as a breeder. This fame will, in addition to the recognition and pride, result in income, even if the prizes won in the competitions are, at least in the Swiss context, symbolic (e.g. a decorated cow bell).

However, in recent years there are indications that what was a largely shared culture is becoming more and more specialised and reduced to a smaller number of participants, at least at the level of active participation. The decreasing number of farmers makes local competitions less significant and many local competitions have disappeared. Regional competitions remain accessible, but national competitions are often opened to international participants and the competition has reached levels that are unachievable for 'normal' good breeders. Indeed, some farmers have specialised in breeding and competition, forming a new, very competitive community of practice. What was an accessory activity to dairy farming has become a new business model where farm income might well come more from the selling of the cow's genetics (in the form of animals, sperm or embryo) than her milk. At the same time, commercial dairy farming in Switzerland has moved away from a classical productivist model where production would equal profitability. The double move of progressive market deregulation and greening of agricultural policies has dramatically changed the rules of the game and farming practices. Having to face increasing market pressures and production costs, standard dairy farmers have neither the time, the capacity, nor the economic interest to fight in this competition anymore. The most 'beautiful' cow according to show ring criteria is no longer necessarily the best cow, as profitability, the new master word in dairy farming, has become a complex matter where productivity is just one factor. In the making of the good cow in the Swiss dairy farming communities, a new rupture has appeared between the 'ideal cow' related to the practice of less and less accessible shows and competitions, and the 'pragmatic cow' on

farms, made of compromises and trade-offs between production costs, the farm business model, and a continuous struggle for profitability. While the aesthetics of the good cow initially developed as a symbol of good farming and economic success, there is a need now, in the farmers' words, to balance 'beauty' and 'economics'. In this process, the symbolic value of the animal's body, as incarnation of a productivist ideal, has lost a good part of its strength.

Good farming for agricultural industry professionals

The previous examples have focused on the diversity of the definitions of the 'good farmer' in relation to different farming communities of practice. However, as pointed to in the introduction to this chapter, some non-farming actors might also play a specific role in this process because of their liminal position, made of frequent professional interaction with farmers, but a clear non-farmer identity. Through their expression of 'expert' knowledge, industry professionals can reinforce or challenge farmers' conceptions of what it is to be 'good'.

Recent research related to biosecurity issues offers useful examples of interactions between veterinary services and farmers around the definition of good farming. Some research focuses on farmers' discourses and practices defining 'good farmer' identities in disease management, as for instance Naylor *et al.* (2018) who identify three good farming ideals in relation to biosecurity: livestock husbandry, being a good neighbour, and the good public-facing farmer. Research into the veterinary understanding of the 'good farmer' points more clearly to the interaction between vets and farmers regarding the definition of good farming. As an example, in her unpublished PhD thesis, Middelveld (2018) found that many Scottish farmers prefer to pro-actively treat for sheep scab, the disease at the centre of the research, when symptoms are first identified. Farmers had learned how to effectively treat their sheep and proceeded to do so without veterinary assistance. Farmers who responded in this way identified the skills involved in recognising sheep scab (i.e. skilled role performance) and the importance to them of preventing sheep suffering (i.e. through early treatment, similar to the perspective of Luke, earlier in this chapter). Thus, in this community of practice, early treatment was generally understood to be good farming. Interestingly, veterinarians also bought into this line of reasoning – selling the required medications over the counter without a vet visit to the farm. Although sheep scab is a notifiable disease, these vets do not notify the authorities, as

no sheep scab has been formally identified. The rationale provided is that the farmers are clearly managing the situation successfully. In other words, for veterinarians too, a 'good farmer' is capable of identifying sheep scab and treating it without veterinary assistance; they would only see a need to intervene if the scab went untreated, even if the current regulation would require them to report the disease immediately (i.e. before any treatment). In this case, vets and farmers apparently share similar definition of the 'good farmer' within the community of practice they constitute.

Middelveld's (2008) findings on sheep husbandry in Scotland contrast with those of Shortall *et al.* (2018) on another community of practice: dairy production in England. Shortall *et al.* (2018) found two conflicting 'good farmer' identities in relation to biosecurity, one based on farmers' husbandry skills and the other lodged in vets' scientific expertise. In her study, vets identified as good farmers those who invested substantively in veterinary services. These were also large-scale, commercial farmers who could afford these services. Vets were engaged to lead biosecurity and herd health programs, which included both treatment and prevention. In contrast, farmers who were not heavily reliant on veterinary expertise for biosecurity management prided themselves on their skilled role performance. From their perspective, being a 'good farmer' included the ability to diagnose disease through visual appraisal. While some vets appreciated the skilled role performance on which farmers prided themselves, others pointed out the limitations when dealing with disease which were in carrier state (i.e. transmissible but not visibly symptomatic). However, detection may be dependent on the abilities and experience of the farmer. In a separate study, Burton *et al.* (2012) observed that farmer's close and regular contact with dairy cows enabled them to observe minute and subtle deviations from normal wellbeing – explained as "you just sense something" or "you can just tell" – before symptoms of the condition fully emerge and are diagnosable. The conflict reflects valuation of different types of knowledge: tacit knowledge, gained by farmers through direct experience of caring for livestock, and the explicit, codified 'professional' knowledge of veterinarians learned through formal training.

The conflicting definitions of good farming also reflects a shift in veterinary models of practice from 'testing and treating' to 'predicting and preventing' (Sibly, 2010 in Shortall *et al.*, 2018). A change in veterinary standards of what it is to be a good vet was impacting on the way vets were characterising 'good farmers'. It also reflects intensification within the industry

and the changing farm practices that were associated (larger herds, with stock sourced from broader geographical distances) and the heightened biosecurity threats that result.

Both Middelveld (2018) and Shortall *et al.* (2018) raise the issue of stigma associated with livestock disease. Farmers are reluctant to discuss the incidence of disease, as this implies a failure to meet the good farming standard that includes the notion that 'only bad farmers get diseases' (Heffernan *et al.* 2008). Consequently, good farmers are those without disease, or those who 'prevent' it. In Middelveld's thesis, she found that farmers treating sheep scab in the early stages identified the treatment as 'preventative' – although the symptoms of sheep scab were clearly present, and used to justify treatment, farmers did not consider the sheep to have the mites. Incidence of sheep scab was thus non-existent to both the farmers and the veterinarians from whom they bought their supplies. In Shortall's research, farmers were reluctant to discuss biosecurity, or to address specific issues, in part because of the resultant loss of cultural capital. Indeed, purchase of livestock at auction, as argued in the previous sections, is a visible act of skilled role performance: the farmer demonstrates the ability to select quality animals and the economic ability to pay high prices. Biosecurity precautions which limit the introduction of live animals into the herd (relying instead on artificial insemination) thus represent losses of social and cultural capitals.

The good cow in public debates

The role of non-farmers in shaping the 'good farmer' is not limited to agricultural industry professionals. Consumers of various aspects of farming – such as the organic produce consumers described earlier – also play a role in communities of practice. In the Swiss context, animal bodies, and more specifically cattle horns have recently been at the centre of public debates. Swiss citizens voted in 2018 on a popular initiative[22] which proposed to direct specific payments to farmers who keep the horns on their livestock (cows and goats), through the agricultural policy system. This section presents an analysis of the debate that developed between different communities of interest, which includes farmers' community of practices, and other actors of the Swiss society (animal rights activists, politicians, and diverse

[2] 'Popular initiatives' are part of the Swiss democratic system. With them a group of actors (citizens, associations, groups…) can propose a modification of the law or a new law. First, they have to collect 100 000 signatures of Swiss citizens supporting the initiative. If they succeed, there is a national vote. If the vote is positive, the government has to include the new law and integrate it in its policies.

commentators). It builds on long-term ethnography among the Swiss dairy farmers and industry (as described above, in the section on the good cow) and draws more specifically on a non-exhaustive corpus documenting the debates in the Swiss medias in 2017-2018 (radio and TT programmes, newspapers, websites).

Interestingly the policy initiative was led by an individual farmer and opposed by most of the farming organisations. This situation reflects the diversity of farming practices in the Swiss context. While a few breeds are generally kept with horns, notably in the mountain areas, most dairy cows (90%) – and generally the most productive among them – are dehorned as calves. Animal welfare regulations have become stricter in order to limit animal suffering and farmers have to take a course in order to be authorised to dehorn their calves themselves. Alternatively, dehorning can be done by veterinarians. The current practice accepts implicitly that horns are an inert and decorative attribute that can be suppressed without consequence, and that it is right to do so to avoid the risk of injuries for animals and humans. As a farmer, also a member of the National Parliament, said in a radio interview:

> Even if the cows are docile, they can hurt us by moving their head, wanting to give a cuddle, with their horns, unwillingly. Also, don't forget that they hurt one another. The cow always wants to show who's the queen of the herd… Finally, with this system [dehorning], they are as lively, but without hurting one each other... with as much pleasure of living in their free stall, with or without horns. I personally don't see any difference in behaviours…[3]

However, the idea that the horns are useful part of the animal body is defended by animal welfare organisations and minority groups of farmers. In the same radio programme, a biodynamic female farmer contests the idea horns make no difference. In her argument, she defends another agricultural model, "with herds that are not too big and cows who know us[44]".

[3] Original in French: "Même si les vaches sont dociles, elles peuvent nous blesser en tournant la tête, en voulant nous faire un petit câlin, avec sa corne, sans le faire exprès. Et puis, sans oublier les blessures qu'elles se font entre elles. La vache veut toujours montrer laquelle est la reine du troupeau… Finalement, avec ce système, elles sont tout aussi vives, mais sans se blesser, avec autant de plaisir à vivre dans leur stabulation, avec ou sans cornes. Je ne vois pas de différence de comportement, personnellement." Radio interview RTS 1, La Matinale, 03.10.2018 [https://www.rts.ch/play/radio/la-matinale/audio/le-monde-agricole-partage-devant-linitiative-pour-les-vaches-a-cornes?id=9889306]

[4] Original in French : "Nous, on est de l'idée d'avoir des troupeaux pas trop grands et des vaches qui nous connaissent", Radio interview RTS 1, La Matinale, 03.10.2018 [https://www.rts.ch/play/radio/la-matinale/audio/le-monde-agricole-partage-devant-linitiative-pour-les-vaches-a-cornes?id=9889306]

The debate thus juxtaposed different agricultural practices related to the different farming communities. However, for the president of *Prométerre*, a regional farmers' organisation[5], as for many farmers, this controversy on the horns was first of all an illustration of emotional opinions of citizen-consumers being more and more disconnected from the practical realities of farming and the pragmatic constraints of agriculture. Interestingly, the supporters of the initiative also criticised on their website the incoherence between the images of the Swiss agriculture and its reality:

> Both the postcard Switzerland and the idyllic advertising full with horned animals pretend to us [sic]. In Switzerland there are only about 10% horn-bearing cows left.[6]

However, the promoters of the initiative also refer to very concrete aspects to justify their claim: keeping horned cows requires more space per animal in the stable and this results in higher costs that their initiative want to compensate for through state direct payments. Money was also central in some arguments of opponents. For instance, the head of the largest farmers' union (the Swiss Farmer Union) warned that if citizens voted in these new subsidies for horns, they would have to be paid from additional public money and not taken from the current agricultural budget, which would mean from the pocket of other farmers[7]. However, the union did not give any voting recommendation, a decision that reflected the divergence within the farming communities in relation to opposite practices and interests.

A more symbolic reading of this debate, however, can easily point to the importance of the 'naturalness' of the cow in the debate on agriculture and farmed animals. On the one hand, horned cows are associated with representations of an extensive, mountain, diversified pasture-based animal farming systems. This minority agricultural practice and the horned cows offer an iconic image of traditional alpine agriculture, strongly attached to the Swiss national identity, as well documented by research, notably in the context of the 700th anniversary of the country in 1991 (Berthoud, Crettaz *et al.*, 1991). It also represents a type of agriculture that can be seen as particularly respectful of nature and animals. Therefore, advertising and marketing campaigns picturing cows in the Swiss media, for a non-farmer, urban dweller audience,

[5] RTS 1, 25.11.2018, special news programme on the result of the votes
[6] English version of the website: https://hornkuh.ch/en/horn-cow-initiative/

typically show horned cows. A perfect example is the iconic and very popular cow *Lovely*, who appears in most of the marketing campaigns[8] led by *Swissmilk*, the national federation of dairy farmers. *Lovely* proudly wears her beautiful horns while promoting the goodness of milk, but she is – obviously to any farmer – from the Holstein breed, a very productive breed that is systematically dehorned in most of the commercial farming world. From a farmers' perspective, Lovely is a marketing fake. However, in this kind of marketing imaginary, as well as in the "postcard Switzerland" mentioned in the initiative's website, horns act as a double symbol, both of traditional agriculture and national identity, and, with a more modern tone, of animal welfare and sustainable agriculture.

On the other side of the value chain, dehorned cattle represent the reality of the huge majority of intensive and semi-intensive dairy farms in Switzerland. As shown earlier in this chapter, the body of the cow in dairy farming has developed a symbolic value based on its productive function. The good cow's body is disciplined, tamed and productive. From this perspective, horns have few positive values. Instead, they are represented as dangerous to humans and other cows. Horns symbolise the wild part of the animal, its capacity to harm and therefore to resist human control. In this sense, horns oppose the ideal of a controlled nature that has been identified as central in farmers' representation of tidiness in landscape (Burton, 2012), and that has been clearly illustrated for Switzerland by the work of Miéville-Ott (Droz and Miéville-Ott, 2001; Miéville-Ott, 2003): nature as a force to control in the farm environment. As weeds in fields or pine regrowth in a mountain pasture, horns are symbolically out of place in the productive body of the dairy cow [7].

The initiative for subsidising cows' horns and was rejected by 54.7 % of the voting population on the 25th of November 2018. However, the public debate illustrates how specific definitions of the 'good farmer' can be discussed and contested in broader fora, pressing farmers and their representative to explain and justify what they do on their farms. Doing so they make more explicit the symbolic dimension of farming practices. This vote might not have influenced directly how Swiss dairy farmers form an ideal of the cow's body as a symbol of a good farmer,

[7] This has not always have been the case. Horn was historically an important material in manufacturing where it could be used as a rudimentary plastic to make objects such as snuff boxes, buttons, combs, knife handles, and powder horns. Thus, as was the case with other agricultural products observed in Chapter 3, the value of a cow was, at some point in history, not solely based on food production but also on its ability to provide other materials of value.

but it has nevertheless contributed to shape the wider social and cultural frame in which such farming cultures have to express themselves, and not only on the specific question of horns and animal welfare in farming, but also on the role of agricultural policies and regulations in the shaping of the Swiss agriculture.

Good farming, learning and the identification of 'bad farmers'

The divergent 'good farming standards' presented in this chapter demonstrate the negotiated and situated nature of cultural capital production. New knowledge and skills develop in dialogue with the particular needs and challenges met in a specific community of practice. With them, new symbolic expressions of skills and performance take shape, while older symbols slowly become obsolete. Although symbols of good farming inevitably reflect the land base of the farm to some degree, cultural capital can – and is arguably increasingly – be disconnected from specific farms and influenced by broader sectoral trends and networks of farm household members. Farmers are not limited to visual observation of their neighbours' fields or sales at local auction marts, which are arguably decreasing in importance as sites of cultural production. Farmers have access to images and direct observation of farms and auctions in other countries and on-line. They also have access to scientific knowledge, through the expertise of agricultural sector professionals, and their own formal education. Similarly, non-farming actors engage in the discussion of 'good farming', directly through their involvement in the agricultural sector, or indirectly in public debates. Despite their role as the physical embodiment of cultural values, symbols are always contested, discussed, challenged, perhaps more intensely at present, reflecting the changing structure of agriculture, brought about in part by low and fluctuating economic returns from farming.

The chapter thus raises the question of how knowledge and learning feature in good farming constructs. To date, analyses of good farming have steered clear of the extensive literature on learning, focusing instead on socialisation processes. Social science has a variety of contested concepts for understanding knowledge and learning, but distinctions between tacit (implicit) and codified (explicit) knowledge (traced back to Polanyi, 1958) are generally recognised. In essence, implicit knowledge or 'know how' is acquired through practice and experience – the skilled role performance characteristic of 'good farmers' – and is not necessarily related to cognitive learning (Curry and Kirwan, 2014 – also see Chapter 3). Farmers may be able to

perform a skill (e.g. identifying a sick animal) without being able to explain how they do it, much like it would be challenging for most people to explain how to ride a bicycle. Explicit or codified knowledge is more 'scientific' or factual – easily reported and documented. Cultural capital, and the ability to appreciate it, includes both forms. Tacit knowledge is essential as an embodiment of specific skills and competences that are often learned through practice and inherited unconsciously in the collaboration with parents or colleagues. However, the importance of scientific knowledge is also evident in agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS), where formal education, extension services and specialists of different types play key roles. Moreover, competing expertise, as explicit knowledge, emanating from non-agricultural actors becomes important when an issue is publicly debated in diverse fora. Formal and codified knowledge impacts therefore on the progressive changes and re-negotiation of farming symbols – the data on dairy cattle productivity, contemporary thinking on biosecurity management, the prices for organic products and the role of horns. The shift in the 'rules of the game' from those of husbandry to business management suggests a shift in the type of skills and competences that are needed to succeed in farming, creating new types of cultural capital, which threatens existing cultural capital, engendering an apparent resistance by long-term farmers and those unwilling – or financially unable – to professionalise at the speed of farming technology development.

The changing nature of symbols thus raises the issue of 'bad farmers' – how farmers who do not achieve the status of good farmers view themselves, and their neighbours. This definition is implicit rather than explicit in the good farming literature. Evidence of 'bad farming' (e.g. dead stock left in fields) is visibly apparent to neighbours and subject to sanction. In Sutherland and Darnhofer's (2012) example of the development of an organic community in England, the question of who is a 'bad farmer' highlights divergences and potential conflict and competition between specific communities of practice: 'good practice' in treating sick livestock is contested. In relation to the development of new entrant crofter identity, newcomers actively reject the typical approaches to crofting in their locales, drawing instead on both historic images and examples from other regions and countries to formulate individualised, hybrid good crofting standards. For Swiss dairy farmers, the tensions between the ideal cow and the practical pressures on profitability open the debate on who is actually the good breeder: the one with the most beautiful cow, or the one who best balances the symbolic need for beauty with pragmatic herd management. In the research on veterinarian perspectives on good farming,

farmer understanding of bad farming – leaving livestock untreated while diagnosis is officially verified – is supported by vets in Middelveld's (2018) study but challenged in Shortall *et al.* (2018). In the latter, 'bad farming' is understood as non-conformity to the changing standards of veterinary practice. Finally, the public debate and the intervention of non-farmers in the debate about what is a 'good farmer' in relation to keeping or removing the horns of the cows introduces new arguments and capitals in the dialog between two farming communities.

The tug of war between farmers invested in different forms of cultural capital and knowledge demonstrates the influence of changing profitability on farming culture. Success in the show ring, sales of organic produce and establishment of a new farm are all marks of distinction linked to financial profitability. The fragmented nature of contemporary good farming ideals reflects the challenges of achieving economic success – efficient production and strong husbandry skills are no longer enough. 'Bad farming' practices may directly and indirectly reflect the financial challenges of the farming sector – economies of scale leaving little time to develop or employ husbandry skills, mis-informed practices undertaken in the name of 'organics' to achieve premium prices. Sanctions against bad farmers are not limited to reputational damage; Sutherland and Burton (2011) found that farmers in their study would not share expensive equipment with neighbouring farmers who are not deemed to be 'good farmers'. Farmers who did not appear to take care of their own farms well could not be trusted (in Bourdieusian terms, a loss of cultural capital directly leading to a loss of social capital). Communities of place thus become self-reinforcing, as social capital can reinforce – or not – the cultural capital valued by local community members. In contrast, communities of practice offer greater flexibility for the development and promotion of new good farming ideals.

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