

Negotiating space and business in rural tourism

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ABSTRACT

As part of an increased focus on additional income in farm households, a wide range of small-scale tourism enterprises have developed in Norway the last decades. There is strong support through public measures for such establishments. However, challenges have been pinpointed. Selected cases of small-scale farm-based tourism in the region of Valdres are analyzed with reference to literature on commercial homes, lifestyle entrepreneurship and staging. The results indicate that businesses have a high level of awareness of staging, the issue of combining businesses, and how to manage a duality of space: private life and work life. Strategies for coping with these aspects range from separating space with the use of material structures to more attitudinal compartmentalization of space.

Keywords: staging, commercial home, lifestyle entrepreneurship, compartmentalization of space

INTRODUCTION

Policies and support mechanisms directed towards rural tourism are presented with increasing strength in a number of European countries as their primary industries are lagging behind in economic terms (Daugstad, 2008; Evans & Ilbery, 1989; Garrod, Wornell & Younell, 2005; Hjalager, 1996; Kneafsey, 2000). This focus can be seen as a deed of necessity for rural economies and an adaptation to a seemingly growing niche market for rural tourism. In broad terms, the popularity of the countryside lies in the non-urban character and perceptions of the improved quality of life which such surroundings represent (Cloke, 2003; Groote, Huigen & Haartsen 2000; Hall, 2009; Nilsson, 2002; Williams & Hall, 2000).

Farm tourism is a subset of rural tourism and is typically small-scale and locally rooted in terms of ownership and building on local traditions (Ilbery, Saxena and Kneafsey, 2007; Lynch, 2005; Nilsson, 2002). As claimed by Jennings and Stehlik (2009), farm-based tourism is a diversification strategy reflecting the adaptive capacity or resilience of farm-based livelihoods. The farm tourism product can be categorized as accommodation in a farm setting, farm attractions (demonstration of farming activities) and farm experiences (e.g. tourists' involvement in farm activities) (Davies & Gilbert, 1992; Jennings & Stehlik, 2009; Sharpley & Vass, 2006). Several studies have documented that it is the combination of farming and tourism that defines the tourism product: 'the farm lifestyle' is as important as the farm produce (Hall, Kirkpatrick & Mitchell, 2005; Nilsson, 2002). Conversely, other studies have documented tourism on farms or in rural settings as somewhat independent of farming activities; the countryside or agrarian-influenced landscape are more of a backdrop

(Carmichael & McClinchey, 2009; Fleischer & Tchetchik, 2005; MacDonald & Joliffe, 2003; Walford, 2001).

The choice for a farm household to diversify into tourism affects the farm as a working environment, influences individual roles in the household, and changes the farm from a private dwelling and work environment into a temporal (seasonal) public space (Brandth & Haugen, 2005; 2006; Fleischer & Tchetchik, 2005; Moscardo, 2009; Nilsson, 2002). Farm-based tourism represents a heterogeneous tourist space which is multi-purpose, with a range of people and actors and with blurred spatial and social boundaries (Edensor, 2001). The co-existence of spaces or spheres serving different functions is tied to the concept of commercial homes. Commercial homes are a type of accommodation offered in private homes, where hosts and the tourists interact and where 'home qualities' are vital to the product (Lynch, 2005; Lynch, McIntosh & Tucker, 2009).

Actors in small-scale tourism are often characterized as lifestyle entrepreneurs in the literature (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; Carmichael & McClinchey, 2009). A lifestyle entrepreneur is mainly concerned with maintaining a sufficient level of income in order to uphold a chosen lifestyle (Morrison, Rimmington & Williams, 1999). As pointed out by Lynch (2005), lifestyle entrepreneurship is tied to the concept of commercial homes in terms of the presence of a host and the sharing of private space with paying guests. Further, the terms commercial home and lifestyle entrepreneur have to do with how tourism activities are organized or arranged, or how tourism is 'staged', i.e. what is presented 'frontstage' and what constitutes 'backstage' (Edensor, 2001).

This article presents a case study from a rural inland region of Norway, Valdres. In Valdres there has been a renewed focus on the opportunities associated with tourism in the face of challenges to rural viability. A key asset for developing tourism as presented by different authorities in Valdres has been the tradition of transhumance or summer farming. Summer farming is an agro-pastoral practice adopted in farming systems with limited lowland areas but with abundant pastoral land in high-lying areas. In the summer farming system, animals are moved from the permanent farm to a secondary dwelling in a mountainous location where they graze primarily on common land and are tended by household members. Through this practice the agrarian land on the permanent farm can be used for cultivation and fodder production to provide for the animals during the long winter stabling period (Bryn & Daugstad, 2001). Running the summer farm has traditionally been the responsibility of women in the household.

Summer farming was for a long time a cornerstone of agriculture in much of Norway however the practice has been abandoned to a large extent following the modernization and restructuring of agriculture which started in the mid 19th century. In recent decades this restructuring has been increasingly lamented due to the loss of heritage and landscape values (Bryn, 2009; Daugstad, 2008). However, Valdres is one of the regions in the country where summer farming is still practiced.

The Valdres region serves as a highly relevant case study for the main question posed in this article: How do actors involved in summer farm tourism combine different economic businesses with private and professional life? More specifically, to what extent, and how, do summer farm tourism hosts reflect on the different spaces or scenes in which they operate? What mechanism do they have to handle or alternate between different spaces or spheres?

RURAL TOURISM: COMBINING BUSINESSES AND SPACE

The study region

The Valdres region is located in the interior of South Norway, in the county of Oppland. This is a mountainous area covering 5400 km² with the highest mountain peaks at c.1800 meters above sea level. The populated areas are located between 300 m a.s.l. and 700 m a.s.l. (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2007). The region of Valdres consists of six municipalities with a total population of 18,000. In common with many rural regions in Norway, the population has been decreasing in recent decades (Valdres natur- og kulturpark, 2008c). The only municipality with an increasing population is Øystre Slidre, which is a well-established tourist destination attracting visitors mainly during the winter season. In contrast to the national figures, primary industries still have a stronghold in Valdres. Some of the municipalities have as much as 20% of the workforce employed in primary industry (mainly agriculture) compared to the national figure of only three percent (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2007).

In response to the challenges facing the rural areas in Valdres, the Valdres Nature and Culture Park (Valdres natur- og kulturpark, VNC) was established in 2007 as a consortium for rural development formed by the six municipalities. Drawing on inspiration from French regional parks, VNC, is the first of its kind in Norway and aims to enhance value adding and viability in local communities.

Summer farming is highlighted as a key asset for VNC. Valdres has 250 summer farms still in operation, which make up approximately one-fifth of the national total (Daugstad & Lunnan, 2009). In 2007, on average 65% of the milk producers in the Valdres region used their summer farms for pasture and milk production (Valdres natur- og kulturpark, 2008d). Each permanent farm in the village has a summer farm consisting of a set of buildings with a dwelling house, cowshed, and a fenced meadow. These individual summer farms are clustered in groups as 'villages'. The summer farm villages are relatively accessible due to a fairly undulating landscape and relatively good mountain roads.

VNC aims at upholding and developing Valdres' position in summer farming on a national scale and highlights its value in an international context. The values upheld by active summer farming are biodiversity, environmentally sound milk and meat production, and aspects of recreation and identity (Valdres natur- og kulturpark, 2008a; 2008d).

A number of projects, development initiatives and specific measures directed towards summer farming are run by VNC. Presently, the major scheme targeting summer farms from VNC is the Farm and Summer Farm Tourism Project [*Gards- og stølsturismeprojektet*] which started

in 2006 and runs until 2011. It revolves around 26 businesses dealing with farm or summer farm tourism all of which are presented in a catalogue produced by the VNC (in Norwegian and English). Through this project, VNC aims to secure the level of activity around summer farm tourism in the region through increased products and actor involvement both from within the region and externally. Through this project, VNC aims at securing as well as increasing the level of activity in summer farm tourism, with more actors involved, new products, and more co-operation within summer farm tourism as well as with actors outside (Valdres Destinasjon, 2008).

Guiding concepts and approaches

The theoretical or conceptual platform for the Valdres' study draws on literature on commercial homes, lifestyle entrepreneurship, and staging. These concepts are strongly interrelated.

Lynch (2005, 534) defines commercial homes as 'types of accommodation where the tourists pay to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place with a host and/or family usually living upon the premises and with whom public space is, to a degree, shared'. With regard to home-based work or telework, which also implies a co-existence of private life and work-life space, Mirchandi (2000) points to the ambivalence in this type of spatial combination where it represents a possibility to adjust work life to family life while at the same time it represents a potentially stressful situation where the two spheres are incompatible. Mirchandi (2000) and Dart (2006) show that a key to success is to be able to maintain a separation between work activities and home activities, both in a physical (separate home office) and organizational (defined working hours and family time) manner. This compartmentalization of space can either take the form of physical structures or be temporal where the same space alternates between being private and public – in tourism this is regulated by opening hours (Lynch et al. 2009).

Lifestyle entrepreneurs refers to persons who run a business or start an activity motivated more by an anticipated gain in life quality than in economic output (Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Lynch et al., 2009). It is claimed that a common characteristic of lifestyle entrepreneurs is that the traditional market ethos is of less significance while socializing with others and establish 'commercial friendships' are more important (Lynch et al., 2009; Price & Arnould, 1999). Further, lifestyle entrepreneurs' businesses are small scale, often family run, where the entrepreneur wants to control all aspects of their business and stresses the importance of local and often non-codified knowledge (Getz & Carlson, 2005; Johannison, 2005).

As a nuance to the mainstream view, Cederholm and Hultman (2010) argue that lifestyle entrepreneurs simultaneously reject and embrace a market ethos and highlight the co-production of intimacy between tourists and hosts. Altjevic and Doorne (2000) suggest that in order to understand lifestyle entrepreneurs it is more important to investigate their social and cultural values than their motivation for growth and development. According to Lynch et al. (2009) there is a lack of empirical studies investigating the actuality and realization of the desired lifestyle gain for the entrepreneurs. Related to this issue, Getz and Carlson (2005) call

for more studies regarding the family dimension in tourism enterprises. However, there are studies documenting clear lifestyle benefit within lifestyle entrepreneurship, for example as shown by Marcketti, Niehm and Fuloria (2006).

The tourism literature on commercial homes and lifestyle entrepreneurship tie into the concept of staging. As social beings in interaction with others, our appearance, practices and behavior can be seen as a staged dramaturgy where we perform and engage in ‘impression management’ wherein the exposed frontstage is different from the more private backstage (Edensor, 2000; Goffman, 1959; Cahill, 2004; Sharrock, Hughes & Martin, 2003). Separating the frontstage from the backstage can be done materially with physical barriers such as rooms in a building or fences in a courtyard. Alternatively the same space can be both frontstage and backstage depending on the time, where opening hours define a space as front or backstage (cf. compartmentalization of space). Balancing front and backstage can also be manifested in the tourism hosts’ behaviour, such as by what stories are told to tourists, and how hosts manage ‘a personal touch’ or a feeling of intimacy.

In this study the aim is to use empirical material from selected businesses within small-scale farm tourism in Norway in order to ascertain whether the concept of lifestyle entrepreneurs is relevant and useful for understanding this type of business, to explore how the combination of private and professional life is dealt with or performed, and to investigate how tourism providers relate to or stage (expose or protect) their private and professional life and the key assets they control. Hopefully, this will bring new insights to a growing industry sector in Norway – one that is filled with expectations but facing challenges relating to profitability, organization, competence, and host’s identity (Brandth & Haugen, 2005; Holmengen & Akselsen, 2005; Nilsson, 2002; Rønning, 2004).

Interview material

Persons involved with four businesses were subject to in-depth interviews in the period June–September 2008. The four businesses were chosen because they portray different examples of the summer farm-based tourism businesses in Valdres in terms of geographical location and type of activity. Common to all four was a certain number of years of experience in combining farming and tourism. The cases serve as an illustrative sample of small-scale entrepreneurs in rural tourism. A case study approach is, according to Yin (2009), well suited for an in-depth research approach to a social phenomenon where one seek explanations concerning ‘how’ and ‘why’ some phenomenon works.

For all four cases, interviews were held with the couple who ran the business. The division of labor in agriculture and tourism differed from either equal participation or the woman had the main responsibility while the man assisted. Three of the businesses had other sources of income than the farm and tourism business, while the fourth was based on income from farming and tourism only. Each couple was interviewed based on the assumption that even if one of the partners participated to a small degree in tourism activities, the tourism would have affected the whole household (e.g. through the organization of economic activities, social practices, and responsibilities) and the exposure of the private sphere to tourists including

members of the household who were not involved in tourism, such as children, although children were not included in the interviews.

The interviews were undertaken according to an interview guide structured around several main topics: the history or biography of the enterprise, reflections on roles and business, and issues related to performing and staging (practices, attitudes, experiences gained, etc). The interviews took place in the interviewees' homes at the permanent farm. In addition, all four summer farms where the tourism-related activities took place were visited where more informal conversations took place. The indoor interviews took two - two and a half hours, while the informal conversations lasted between two and four hours. In the case of two of the summer farms I was present at the same time as tourists and/or family members of the interviewees. I had short conversations with the tourists, while the conversations with the family members were longer (e.g. during a meal).

With the exception of the more informal talks, all interviews were taped and transcribed. The transcripts were subject to content analysis. The content analysis was not oriented towards quantitative patterns (frequency of words and concepts) but was intended to ascertain how topics were addressed (Thagaard, 2002; Tjora, 2009). For the informal interviews, notes were taken immediately after the visit ended and were used to 'thicken' the transcripts. In addition, the discussions with family members and partly with tourists on the spot also helped to inform the study, albeit in a less structured manner.

Results: balancing space

The results from the interviews are presented under three headings: Characterizing the businesses (the history of the enterprise, what they offered, who the tourists were, how the activity was organized, development in recent years); Identity and roles (perception of the role as farmer or tourism host, identification with roles); On stage or offstage – private and public spheres (reflections, mechanisms or practices related to staging). All businesses are small-scale with between 50 and 150 tourists per summer season and the income from tourism is modest (for most of them less than 10% of the total household income). The cases are given numbers to preserve the interviewees' anonymity.

Characterizing the businesses

In all businesses, at least one partner in each couple had agricultural education and none had formal training in tourism or the hospitality business. The youngest person was 35 years old and the oldest 60 years. The businesses' histories are presented as follows.

Summer farm one: The woman had grown up on the farm and had inherited it from her parents in 1991. She had always wanted to be a farmer. She was married with two children. Her husband worked as a carpenter and helped with maintenance work at the summer farm, but was not directly involved with tourists. The woman was employed full-time in farming. The couple's children stayed on the summer farm with her from mid-June to mid-September. She had continued with the same production system (goat farming) that her parents had used, but in addition had started to offer schoolchildren a one-day 'summer farm camp experience'

(chopping wood, taking care of the goats, cooking tasks, etc), based on an agreement with local schools. The schoolchildren visits ended in 2007 due to a change in public funding for this type of pedagogic activity.

In 2008 she joined the Farm and Summer Farm Tourism Project and offered ‘open summer farm’ on each Wednesday where she offered coffee and waffles for sale, demonstrated the making of brown cheese to tourists, and sold own produce for people to take home. The tourists could enjoy drinking coffee outside or in the cooking house where she also produced the cheese and sold other produce. The cooking house was a small newly erected building in the farmyard. She had pet rabbits in addition to her goats. She had a cabin for rent located in the farmyard just a few meters from the cooking house. The tourists were families with children or adults only, either as couples or in small groups, most of whom were Norwegians but some were foreigners.

Summer farm two: The woman at this summer farm had started running her brother’s summer farm (rented) in 1996. At that time she was living in another part of the country, but spent her summer at the summer farm together with her daughter. Cows were rented from another farmer. Tourism was not a part of the plan from the start and she sold the brown cheese she produced at the grocery shop in the village. However, tourists started to come and from 1999 she started to advertise the place as an ‘open summer farm’ for one day per week offering home-made traditional food. Tourists were served inside the dwelling house where she lived, or outside if the weather was good. She did not offer accommodation. At the time of the interview she had her own goats and a cow, and also kept horses, rabbits and a lamb to entertain visiting children. One week in early autumn each year schoolchildren came for a stay and took part in the different work tasks at the summer farm.

In 2006 she joined the Farm and Summer Farm Tourism Project. The tourists were Norwegians who mainly came from cabins in the region, while the foreign tourists were mostly German and Dutch. Nearly all came as families with children and/or grandparents. The season lasted seven weeks, and her daughter stayed with her while her husband, who had off-farm work, spent the evenings and weekends there. He was not much involved in the tourism activities, although he was present during the week when the schoolchildren came.

Summer farm three: The couple with an urban background bought a farm in Valdres in 1977. During the first years they practiced sheep farming but in 1988 they converted to goat farming. The first season at the summer farm was in 1989. The woman stayed at the summer farm for the whole of the summer season while her husband was there on the weekends and also when groups of tourist arrived and she needed help. The couple had two children who also spent the season at the summer farm until they started to take on summer jobs elsewhere. This summer farm was only 15 minutes drive from the biggest tourist resort in Valdres.

The farm’s involvement in tourism started in 1998 when the woman was asked by the tourist office at the resort if she could develop an attraction for tourists. She was a member of the Farm and Summer Farm Tourism Project from 2007. One day a week she offered tourists the

opportunity to watch the evening milking of her goats, and even try their hand at milking and taste the milk. In addition, she served home-made food, either outside if the weather allowed or in the dwelling house. In addition, the women held what she called an evening session indoors and this involved serving a more substantial meal and her telling the story of the summer farm, singing, or playing a Norwegian zither (*langeleik*). This was offered five days per week. She did not offer accommodation. The majority of the tourists were Norwegians, and there were also tourists from Sweden, Denmark, the UK, Germany, and The Netherlands. Her tourists included families with young children, adults who often had some attachment to summer farming – typically women who had run a summer farm as young girls.

Summer farm four: The couple ran the summer farm together, but the wife also had part-time off-farm work. They had taken over the farm in the village in 1979 from the man's parents who bought it a few years before. The woman had had some experience of farming during childhood, whereas her husband did not. At first they ran the farm without using a summer farm. In 1989 they decided to use the summer farm and started to erect the buildings necessary to do this (only a cabin on the summer farm at the time). From 1993 they moved up to the summer farm with the cows and from 1997 they started experimenting with cheese production (brown and white cheese).

They received approval from the food safety authorities to sell their products from the summer farms in 2003. However, tourists did not just buy and leave, but were informed about the summer farm and the cheese making if interested, and could look inside the cheese making room, and even watch if brown cheese was being made. The couple did not offer any accommodation or serve food, and the buildings which the tourists could see were the ones used for cheese making and, if possible, the cowshed. The tourists were Norwegians who mainly came from cabins in the region, while the foreign tourists were mainly German and Dutch. In addition to selling directly from the summer farm the couple delivered produce to a shop located on the road leading into Valdres which specialized in selling farm produce from the region.

Identity and roles

How did the actors see themselves in terms of work-life identity? What were their thoughts about the roles they had adopted or were supposed to fill as respectively farmers and tourism providers? How did they reflect over their children's and other family members' roles?

The woman on summer farm one thought that being a tourist host was interesting and fun, but in order for this to work and be a positive activity careful planning was essential. If tourists showed up unexpectedly and it was necessary to drive down to the village to purchase items this incurred expenses, such as car fuel, which absorbed the profits.

The woman insisted on being a farmer, a farmer that received tourists as guests: 'I cannot be anything else than a farmer. It's who I am. If I had to take an off-farm job I would just be a farmer with an extra job'. She saw herself as 'a missionary of farming' in the sense that especially young people and children are extremely distanced from farming and resource-use

systems such as those used at the summer farm. Trying to change the attitude of young people was very motivating to her.

The husband did not wish to be a tourist host. He had a farming background but, according to his wife, 'not the traditional way with the use of a summer farm so it is not in his blood'. She was comfortable with running the summer farm alone, and her husband helped in busy periods and also kept everything functioning (buildings, tools, etc.). The couple agreed that the tourism part of their work life did not warrant two people to be at the summer farm. If only three tourists showed up during the course of a day it was a waste of time for both of them to be there. The husband was also responsible for hay harvesting at the main farm, in addition to running his own carpentry business. To expand with sales and tourism at the summer farm was a deliberate choice in order to make use of spare time and supplement their income. For the woman to drive down to the village after milking in the morning and then drive back up in the afternoon after work would have been costly and stressful.

The couple's sons (12 and 13 years old) stayed the whole season at the summer farm, where they helped out with practical chores. When a family with children visited, the boys took the initiative of entertaining the children and showing them around. This was very much appreciated by the parents and encouraged them to stay longer, which was good for business. The woman did not think that her sons were bothered by the tourist activity in any negative way.

For the woman on summer farm two, the motivation behind summer farming was not out of necessity as such, as she was renting her brother's summer farm and renting cows from another farmer. The motivation was to have a pleasant summer holiday with her daughter. The tourism activity developed gradually. The woman's attitude towards tourism changed from indifference and slight negativity to being positive: 'It started with more and more people coming and they expected to taste something. I did not have the time to take care of them and felt that they disturbed me. I wanted them to just buy their cheese and leave. But they wanted more out of it'. Deciding to start with one open day made her mentally prepared to attend to visitors on that day. Since people also showed up other weekdays she made it a rule to finish all work tasks and clean the house by midday, given that the house was also the space where tourists were entertained. The door to the bedroom was always left open, which meant that all clothes and personal items had to be tidied away in a suitcase under the bed.

Since the woman processed milk, everything needed to be clean for hygiene reasons and tourists would have noticed if the place was unclean or untidy. However, in the absence of electricity or tap water the effort to keep the place in order proved challenging. Tourists in the form of people the village were especially critical about everything being clean and the woman said 'it is a wide open stage where everything shows'. She also mentioned that her friends as well as many of the tourists had commented that she was brave for exposing her life in such a way. Her daughter had a small room in another building, where she kept her books and personal items. This small private space was very important to her daughter.

The woman deliberately presented herself as a farmer and saw herself as an ambassador of farming. She wanted to show others that it is possible to run such a summer farm and milk cows by hand with no electricity. Her own fascination for summer farming as a system, where everything is based on the premises set by nature and the animals, was also something she wanted her tourists to learn about.

The woman had learned to assess her tourists to get an idea of who they were and what they sought and she considered this to be a skill in itself. Some visitors had never experienced anything like a summer farm and they did not know how to venture around it or where it was safe to go. Others were quite knowledgeable about processing milk and she was able to learn something new through discussions with them. To reach out to the 'ignorant visitors' as well as the 'milk connoisseurs' was equally important to her and gave her a good feeling of making a difference to people.

In the case of summer farm three, the couple's ideology was to be able to run the summer farm in a way that made it possible for one of them to stay there permanently throughout the season and not use fuel and time to drive back and forth. In this case, the woman did not want to be a 'turbo milkmaid': 'We are farmers. I will not change my identity. I think that tourism in the mountain areas like this started with farmers. I will not change and invest to be a tourist host'. That said, she participated in a course offered by VNC to become a 'Valdres host' – a course aimed at providing a knowledge base about Valdres, for example regarding the local history, flora and fauna, as well as more business-related topics – and gained some useful information about marketing.

It was extremely important to the woman to communicate to the tourists what summer farming was, why she was there, and how farming as such was important for rural areas in keeping the villages viable and maintaining the cultural landscape. She was worried about the pasture lands, meadows and trails in the area becoming invaded by bushes and trees because the grazing was no longer sufficient to keep the landscape open as it used to be.

Even if there was economic motivation for becoming involved in tourism, the woman at summer farm three claimed that she would have continued there, regardless. The motivation to communicate was stronger than the economic motivation.

The woman took great pleasure in staying at the summer farm, and it was important for her life quality. Her two daughters, who were aged three years and seven years during the first season at the summer farm, were not happy about the situation and just wanted their 'normal life' in the village. By the second summer, their attitude had changed entirely, as they had worked out what summer farming involved and thereafter they longed for the summer farm stay each year.

For the couple at summer farm four, the motivation for summer farming was personal interest, including developing a way of farming suitable for small farms unable to compete in an industrial market. For small farms in a mountainous area it made sense to use the outfields

and to produce high-quality milk on mountain pastures. Consequently, shifting the production in the summer months from the permanent farms to the summer farms was a deliberate economic strategy to survive. Even if the driving force was economic motivation, the couple at summer farm four stressed that if that was the only motivation they would have chosen another way to earn extra income. Running a summer farm is labor-intensive and other jobs could have given the couple more output per hour. Thus, in terms of extra income, it was important that any activity they engaged in had to be interesting.

The couple definitely defined themselves as farmers: 'We are not really in the tourism business; we just want the tourists as customers'. They made a point of informing their tourists about summer farming and milk processing. First-time visitors were always given a tour around the place and some information. This was done as a business strategy in the hope of securing loyal customers but also 'because it is needed'. People in general have become distanced from food production, resource use and farming. Besides, communicating with tourists was experienced as rewarding.

The couple's children had stayed on the summer farm each season from the start. Their now grown-up son was keen on running the farm in the future. He had worked in summer farming in France and had also been trained in cheese making.

On stage or offstage – private and public spheres

How did the summer farmers arrange their working day and their whereabouts at the summer farm in order to keep a private life and keep the farm partly open and accessible to tourists? What measures were taken to adhere to different sets of production requirements in farming and food production and at the same time maintain a hospitable environment for tourists?

The woman at summer farm one based her approach on the idea that 'simple is best'. One example illustrating her point concerned a middle-aged couple passing through the area asking on short notice over the phone whether she could serve dinner. She had little time to prepare and had to make use of whatever was at hand, yet she was able to provide a simple but very traditional meal which the visitors appreciated. For example, the dessert was something that the woman visitor had not tasted since she was a child and it made the visit very special.

In discussing staging, the woman farmer again insisted that she was a farmer and that was what tourists should be told. She wore her working clothes and never dreamt of using a special costume because she believed the tourists would have thought they had come to a museum. She also reflected on the infrastructure provided. In the previous summer (2007) she had prepared a bird's-eye view map of the summer farm to give to tourists upon their arrival. The map carried explanations as to what the different buildings were used for, so that people could look around unescorted: 'I have thought about also putting up signs pointing in the direction of the swing, for example, but I fear that it will change this place to be more artificial and like an amusement park'.

Staging was a concept the woman at summer farm one could relate to in the sense of planning and designing what she offered to tourists depending on who they were. If an elderly couple came, they would probably prefer to buy their coffee, sit outside to drink it, and then leave. However, if visitors came with children, she knew that the children would want to run around and consequently the farm gates needed to be secured to prevent the hens, dogs and goats from escaping and running amok.

There was a distinct physical border between the private and public sphere at this summer farm. For instance, the dwelling house was kept private. This was necessary not only because the woman and the children lived there for three months each year but also because the husband was not particularly keen on tourism and when present he would have felt uncomfortable if he did not have anywhere private to retreat to.

The woman who ran summer farm two stated the following:

After twelve in the morning I feel that I start with something different, I am not a private person any longer, I am a public person. I am more relaxed about this role now than I used to be, I know the tourists want to feel that they enter my private home. When I give something of myself they become very happy. Something has happened up here [she pointed to her head] in recent years. It's like I am able to draw an invisible border for myself, to be more professional and give something of *me* without compromising my personal life.

In contrast, the husband did not benefit from tourism in the same way as his wife. For him, staying at the summer farm was hard work and not a holiday. The couple reflected on staging and authenticity thus:

Interviewer: When I visited your summer farm this summer everything was open and 'on stage'. How do you feel about that?

Man: I think it is tiresome. You need to keep it tidy and ... It is, of course, a myth that you create and uphold.

Woman: What myth?

Man: What the summer farm is – it is an idyllic image the tourists want and that's what they get. You do not want too much modern stuff inside the house, nothing to contrast with the old style.

Woman: But that's because the house has a value in itself, an intrinsic value. The house sets its own premises.

Man: But we are creating a 'special world' up there.

Woman: Yes, we create a special world because I like it, not because of the tourists. That was how it started, I did it for my own sake and then it turned out that others – tourists – liked it as well.

Man: But we are telling a story here, we adapt it to what we feel the tourists want. It is a glimpse of a 'special world', it is not how the world really is.

Woman: Well it is not our fault that this summer farm happens to confirm the image of a romantic idyll, it's just the way it looks up here.

Man: But to be mean, it is fair to say that the image and imaginations are more important than the cheese.

Woman: It is communicating the history which is the backbone of the experience, I agree. We tell a story, but the story is true!

What the woman at summer farm three experienced to be of special importance for the tourists was to ‘get close to farming’ or actually access a farming system. Particularly for foreigners it was very special to be able to enter a Norwegian home. The building that tourists were taken to was also the house in which the woman farmer lived. All of the space within was available to them, and while the door to her bedroom was kept closed it was not locked. She did not mind if people looked inside, although in practice few did.

Regarding staging, the woman said that in general receiving guests involved some staging for everyone, it was not only a phenomenon of tourism. Her tourism activity was staged in the sense that everything was planned, the food prepared, the table set, she greeted tourists at the gate, and once indoors she informed them about the place. Sometimes when people had left and she closed the gate she felt that that she was offstage. It was not a feeling of ‘finally, they left!’, but more a sense of needing to unwind and get the adrenaline out of her system. It was ‘a kick’ to have tourists, as she needed to be on her toes, attentive and focussed also on gaining something for herself – a feeling of satisfaction and that she had been able to ‘reach them’.

During the daytime, the woman wore her normal working clothes (overalls, etc.), but in the evenings she put on her local costume: ‘Then I get to use it and it adds to the atmosphere. And when wearing it I can also tell people about the traditional costumes in this area’.

At summer farm four, two zones were ‘off limit’ for tourists: the production and storage room used for white cheese (tourists could only look through the doorway, but not enter) and the dwelling house where the family lived. The ‘no entrance’ policy regarding the room used for white cheese production was to ensure hygiene and to conform with regulations stipulated by the health authorities. The reason for keeping the dwelling house off limits to tourists was to help preserve life as a ‘normal family’, where the children and relatives could visit. This could not be combined with the opening hours for paying guests.

The couple explained their business strategy as presenting themselves as just what they were: farmers in the busiest period of the year:

Man: We are not really commercial. If we have a strategy at all regarding this issue it is deliberately *not* to be commercial.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Man: You don’t necessarily have to put on a big smile for each tourist coming to buy food. Some play a role when they have tourists, we don’t. Of course, we are deliberate in making sure everything is clean – no muck in the road, we have clean clothes but they are our normal outfit.

Woman: To dress up in a national costume would be totally far-fetched.

Interviewer: So there is no deliberate staging involved?

Man: They get to see things the way they are.

Woman: There is not much to see and we are fully occupied with the animals and the milk processing so when tourists enter we try to make the best of it.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The businesses studied fit well with Edensor's (2001) description of heterogeneous and multi-purpose tourist spaces with blurred spatial and social boundaries. All businesses can be seen as illustrating commercial homes but to a different degree. One offered accommodation, two offered special experiences for schoolchildren, and two had only day tourists. However, basic aspects of the commercial home were present in all cases, such as the role of a host and the private home also providing 'a homely feeling' for tourists and, as a consequence, the issue of compartmentalization of space.

The study shows that all actors were deliberate in their role as hosts even if they still kept their main work-life identity in their role as farmers. This was also the situation for the two businesses that became involved in tourism 'by accident', in the sense that running a summer farm in combination with tourism was not the original intention but when tourists showed up the involvement in tourism developed naturally.

For all businesses there was an awareness of spatial division. However, for some this took the form of more material compartmentalization of space such as the use of separate buildings or rooms for tourists or tight hooks on the entrances to fenced-off animals, which clearly signalled 'no entry'. In contrast, other summer farms allowed more full and open access, and relied on a kind of mental compartmentalization of space. The latter regulated what was communicated to the tourists: personal accounts about life on the summer farm could be presented without being too private and 'telling them about the awful row I had with my husband last night', according to one of the women.

During the interviews the issue of staging was introduced by me, as an interviewer, accompanied by a short explanation of how the concept was used in the tourism literature. All persons interviewed instantly and without hesitation related to the concept – even the couple whose main focus was on cheese production reflected on being 'on stage' or not.

Performing on stage as a tourist host or communicator does not always mean that one can control the type of audience – the audience can be locals and one's neighbors. This aspect was addressed by one of the women when she referred to her fellow villagers visiting the summer farm. On such occasions, she was kept on her toes more than ever because she felt that she was 'under surveillance' and if things were not tidy and clean she would have felt embarrassed.

With one exception, the hosts in this study did not change into special clothes or costumes when dealing with tourists. This again refers to their primary role as farmers and food producers, meaning that they were clean and presentable but not dressed-up in any way. This also ties in with reflections on avoiding making an 'amusement park' for tourists. Further, the actors wanted to present a version of present-day farming and not a rosy romantic idyll.

However, Daugstad (2008) show that the picturesque idyll is strongly represented in this line of tourism in Norway. In a study on 'farmstay' tourism in Australia, Jennings and Stehlik (2009) found different representations of farm life and farm homes, one being the farmstay experience represented as family life and a 'naturalistic' farm life with no private space off limit to the guests. This representation has its parallel in the Valdres material.

Does the concept of lifestyle entrepreneur explain the actors studied in Valdres? Even if some of them were more business-minded in their agrarian production (especially the cheese producers at summer farm four) than others, there seems to have been clear emphasis placed more on outcomes than economy. The tourism activity provided them with 'something more' in the sense that it felt rewarding to be able to communicate with people and provide a good experience for tourists. Further, the 'missionaries of farming' can also be placed within the frame of lifestyle gain. What has been claimed in the literature about lifestyle entrepreneurs lacking a market ethos can be nuanced with reference to the cases studied. They were deliberately 'cost-effective' within the context of summer farming – developing a product on site in their spare time and they have developed skills in assessing their tourists.

The actors studied were in many ways marginal within the marginal, meaning that agriculture in Norway is a shrinking sector and the strong state subsidies put into agriculture are being questioned. Furthermore, within the increasingly marginalized group of farmers there is an even more marginal group which still run their summer farms. As suggested by Villa and Daugstad (2007) in a study of Norwegian summer farmers and what motivates them to continue, if one has deliberately entered or chosen to uphold an agrarian 'minority practice' such as summer farming, one has moved away from economic output as the original main motivator and is instead driven by gains other than profit. Carmichael and McClinchey (2009) and Cederholm and Hultman (2010) address the mutual benefit that hosts and tourists gain from social interaction, hosts exchange ideas with their tourists and gain new insights. In the studied cases, this is demonstrated by the 'milk connoisseur' tourists.

The need for lifestyle entrepreneurship research focusing on what type of lifestyle the commercial home hosts actually achieves, and further, how the family or household as such is affected by the activity (for example including how children perceive the lifestyle in their home when it partly functions as a commercial home), has been pointed out (Getz & Carlson, 2005; Lynch 2005). In this article, the actors who had been running their enterprise for a number of years must have been fairly satisfied with their lifestyle gain, otherwise they would have opted to withdraw their involvement in the tourism activities. Two of them also explicitly stated that they would have kept up the activity even if they did not earn anything because they found it personally rewarding in other ways. When it comes to children's perceptions, as asked for by Lynch, there are both positive and negative accounts.

In conclusion, the focus of the Valdres study has been to illuminate how actors involved in summer farm tourism combine different economic businesses with private and professional life. More specifically, I wanted to gain insight into the extent to which, and how, summer farm tourism hosts reflected on the different spaces or scenes in which they operated, and

what mechanisms they had to handle or alternate between different spaces or spheres. The material has revealed that they were first and foremost farmers – that was their work-life identity. They did not have any wish to expand their tourism activities, but wanted to have first-hand contact with tourists and found that relating to them had positive outcomes through being able to communicate their lifestyle and practices and being ‘ambassadors of farming’. All of those who operated summer farms were able to relate to the idea of staging. They had strategies to deal with the overlapping spaces of tourism and private life through adopting a physical compartmentalization of space, a temporal compartmentalization, or a mental or attitudinal strategy. These findings would be relevant for advisory and funding bodies working within the field of rural tourism since they provide indications of the issue of size (deliberate choice not to grow), the lifestyle gain as motivation, and the type of experience based knowledge and competence found within such enterprises as exemplified in the Valdres study.

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