

Harvesting an understanding: Social networking site use and free-choice learning in agritourism

by

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Abstract

Agritourism is increasingly prevalent in Canadian society and affords individuals the opportunity to experience and learn about agriculture. Social networking sites can allow agritourism providers and consumers to engage outside of the agritourism context. This research used qualitative and quantitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews to understand how agritourism providers and consumers interact on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; why agritourism providers are using social networking sites in general; and if social networking sites can be used to facilitate free-choice learning. Customer Relationship Management and the Contextual Model of Learning were used as frameworks to better understand these interactions. The results and findings are discussed and confirm that agritourism providers believe educational opportunities can be fostered on social networking sites, but are primarily using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to promote connections between consumers and agritourism organizations.

Key words: Agritourism, social networking sites, free-choice learning

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List of Abbreviations

<i>CML</i>	<i>Contextual Model of Learning</i>
<i>CRM</i>	<i>Customer Relationship Management</i>
<i>CoRM</i>	<i>Community Relationship Management</i>
<i>DMOs</i>	<i>Destination Marketing Organizations</i>
<i>eWOM</i>	<i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i>
<i>FCL</i>	<i>Free-Choice Learning</i>
<i>SCRM</i>	<i>Social Customer Relationship Management</i>
<i>SNSs</i>	<i>Social Networking Sites</i>
<i>UGC</i>	<i>User Generated Content</i>

List of Copyright Materials

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Chapter One: Introduction

Canadian society is becoming increasingly urbanized and is transitioning from lifestyles centered on sustaining agricultural practices and knowledge, to a culture where understandings of agrarian practices are dissipating in urban communities (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; “Population, urban and rural”, 2011). Presently, farmers and agricultural organizations are encouraged by the government to explore other, non-traditional, ventures for generating economic revenue, and to provide an outlet for interested consumers to interact with agriculture (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Barbieri, 2013; Choo & Petrick, 2013; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). This has resulted in the proliferation of agricultural tourism, or agritourism, in Canada (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Barbieri, 2013; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Agritourism initially developed with economic intentions, and economic outcomes have been the focus of previous research in this context (Barbieri, 2013; Choo & Petrick, 2013; Choo & Petrick, 2014; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). However, Tew and Barbieri (2012) noted that awareness of agricultural values and practices are non-economic outcomes offered by agritourism. This suggests that agritourism can be a context to provide educational opportunities for consumers to engage with those involved in agricultural processes (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Gil Arroyo, Barbieri, & Rozier Rich, 2013; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). As a result of the rural-urban disconnect that has evolved within the past 50 years, the literature suggests that consumers are now interested in understanding agricultural practices (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Kline, Barbieri & LaPan, 2015). Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, and Beckendorff (2012) speculated that tourism providers will be increasingly required to measure their contribution to valuable learning experiences. Although it is acknowledged that agritourism involves an educational component and can reconnect consumers to farming and farm resources, there is a paucity of research

evaluating learning in these settings (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Further research is needed to understand the social benefits, such as engagement between providers and consumers, and the interpersonal interactions provided by agritourism that foster an increased consumer appreciation and understanding of agriculture (Choo & Petrick, 2013; Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Vogt, 2011).

Social networking sites (SNSs) are essential communication and marketing outlets for tourism development and agritourism organizations are currently utilizing SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to connect, disseminate information, and establish interpersonal relationships with their consumers (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Hajli & Lin, 2014). As well, consumers are using SNSs to connect with providers and search for information to develop skills for both personal and organizational development (Hajli & Lin, 2014; Vogt, 2011). It is important for providers in this tourism context to acknowledge how they are implementing the use of SNSs, and evaluate how they are interacting with consumers on these sites, because these social interactions affect provider-consumer relationships as well as the economic success of organizations (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Choo & Petrick, 2013; Vogt, 2011; Maecker, Barrot, & Becker, 2016). Additionally, SNSs and the afforded ability for provider and consumer interaction irrespective of geographical location, is a means to reduce the present rural-urban knowledge gap (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). These dynamic interaction sites are accessible from home or the community and SNS use is not limited by physical boundaries, which creates opportunities for knowledge to be disseminated to and between individuals (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Hajli, Bugshan, Lin, & Featherman, 2013; Woodcock, Green, & Starkey, 2011). Therefore, an understanding of agritourism providers' perceived outcomes of using SNSs, and an exploration of provider-consumer interactions on SNSs, are needed to

establish a foundation to comprehend how use of these sites can contribute to life-long learning about agriculture (Falk et al., 2012).

There is limited research exploring tourism education and learning through SNSs (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Hajli & Lin, 2014). However, it is suggested that “developing tourism education through e-learning strategies can be a strategic plan for this sector” (Hajli & Lin, 2014, p. 407). Through the use of SNSs, individuals have the ability to facilitate and consume authentic learning experiences (Russo et al., 2009). Studies have addressed the mandated use of social media in museums and higher-education settings, which are formal learning environments in contrast to agritourism (Charitonos, Blake, Scanlon, & Jones, 2012; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Forkosh-Baruch & Hershkovitz, 2012; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011; Liburd & Christensen, 2013; Russo, Watkins, & Groundwater-Smith, 2009). However, a greater percentage of our life-long learning takes place outside of formal institutions, and less structured contexts, such as agritourism, can contribute to individual knowledge gain (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011; Falk et al., 2012). Free-choice learning (FCL) emphasizes the role of the individual in seeking out knowledge, and this self-directed search of information on SNSs continues to increase in popularity (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011; Falk et al., 2012).

SNSs were explored in this research to attain an understanding of provider perceptions of using SNS in general, and for FCL in the agritourism context. Ballantyne and Packer (2011) suggested that to foster FCL, individuals need to be encouraged to reflect on experiences. The participatory nature of SNSs offers an outlet for agritourism providers and consumers to interact, produce, and consume agricultural content (Russo et al., 2009; Woodcock et al., 2011). Learning is an on-going process, and the use of SNSs can allow consumers to electively “process their experience both cognitively and affectively in order to develop new concepts, ideas, identities,

and actions that become part of their everyday lives” (Falk et al., 2012, p. 920). Through provider and consumer use of SNS, FCL in agritourism can help reconnect individuals to agrarian processes and manage provider-consumer relationships through fulfilling the desire to engage online and learn about agriculture (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Kline et al., 2015; Tew & Barbieri, 2012).

It is understood in the literature that individual’s direct connection to food production is no longer as prevalent as it has been in previous generations because of the shift to urban living (Ainley & Smale, 2010). City living has diminished the interactions, knowledge, and appreciation individuals have for the farming industry because people are now removed from the processes (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Kline et al., 2015). Individuals are expressing a desire to remain connected with these agrarian ways of life and an approach to maintain these ties can be through interacting with agritourism providers and agricultural content shared on SNSs (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Kline et al., 2015). Individuals are increasingly using the internet to gather information and specifically, as a digital native, the researcher personally acknowledges the level of influence the use of SNSs can have for fostering support of ideologies related to agriculture (Veinberg, 2015). The researcher admits that she uses SNSs as a means to connect with agrarian practices and further understand the processes involved in food production and the health, and economic implications of local consumption. Future generations are likely to continue to use technology and sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to search for content to attain knowledge and form opinions based on these online interactions (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011; Falk et al., 2012; Maecker et al., 2016; Woodcock et al., 2011). Food production, which is necessary to sustain us and our economy, can be experienced through agritourism (Choo & Petrick, 2013). If consumers are able

to negotiate information and understand the level of dedication required from the provider, those people directly involved with the agricultural practices, this can enhance awareness and knowledge of the complexity of the “farm to table” concept that is presently undervalued in modern society. Accumulating information on SNSs can reduce the uncertainty of agricultural practices and increase appreciation for agricultural and agritourism providers (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This awareness and appreciation generated through the use of SNSs can garner a rise in those who support agritourism providers both online, and offline, through the increased connections facilitated (Ang, 2011a; 2011b, Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, Maecker et al., 2016, Woodcock et al., 2011). This is important because this engagement is essential for agritourism providers to sustain their organizations and agrarian lifestyles (Choo & Petrick, 2013). Agritourism decreases the need for the outsourcing of food with direct value for the economy, and consumers, who look to agritourism to facilitate these waning opportunities to experience agriculture (Ainley & Smale, Klein et al., 2015). Therefore, understanding the ways that providers and consumers currently interact on SNSs, the nature of these interactions, and the ways in which FCL can be cultivated on these sites, is important for both providers and consumers, to enhance the body of knowledge and understand best practices for these socially mediated interactions (Choo & Petrick, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to understand how agritourism providers and their consumers use and interact on SNSs. Specifically, this research examined agritourism providers and consumers use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to gain insight into how these sites are

being used in general, and to explore how interactions on these sites can facilitate FCL opportunities.

Research questions. The research questions were inspired by Forkosh-Baruch and HersHKovitz's (2012) research, which examined the potential benefits of scholarly information sharing and higher-education institutions' implementation of social media practices. As well, the questions were informed by MacKay et al.'s (2014) research, which addressed the social media use of festival stakeholders pre, during, and post-festival. To advance our understanding of agritourism providers' and consumers' use of SNSs generally, and in relation to FCL, the following research questions were adopted to guide this study:

1. How are agritourism providers and their consumers interacting with social networking site content on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?
2. What is the nature of the social networking site content posted by agritourism providers and their consumers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?
3. What are the general outcomes agritourism providers perceive as a result of using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as sites for their organization?
4. What are the perceptions of agritourism providers with regards to using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for providing free-choice learning opportunities, and what outcomes do they believe result from disseminating agricultural knowledge using these sites?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter addresses the literature used to guide this research. Agriculture tourism, or agritourism, is explained using an existing typology. Social media, and its role in tourism and learning are reviewed, and the role of social media in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is overviewed to provide context. FCL is also explored in relation to tourism, CRM, social media, and the Contextual Model of Learning (CML).

Agritourism

Agritourism, a niche form of tourism, is increasingly becoming part of Canadian society (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Gil Arroyo et al., 2012). The prevalence of this type of tourism resulted from the need for agrarian producers to supplement existing revenue sources through tourism ventures (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Barbieri, 2013; Choo & Petrick, 2013; Kline et al., 2015; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). “Agritourism also provides benefits to tourists and consumers as a mechanism by which urbanite can enjoy nature and culture, learn about agriculture and purchase locally grown farm products” (Choo & Petrick, 2013, p. 772). Specifically, agritourism provides opportunities for interested individuals to interact with agriculture, and these agrarian contexts foster an understanding of where and how food is produced (Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Flanigan, Blackstock, & Hunter, 2014; Kline et al., 2015; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). The volume of people living in urban areas has increased, and contemporary society is less aware of agricultural practices as a result (Ainley & Smale, 2010). Tew and Barbieri (2012) suggested that by interacting with agritourism providers, those less connected with these processes can gain an understanding and appreciation for agriculture. This has implications for providers who wish to increase awareness of their practices with a hopes of generating further visits to their destination

(Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Maecker et al., 2016). As well, it has implications for urban consumers because these interactions can address the expressed consumer desire to reestablish connections with the rural way of living and understanding of food production processes (Kline et al., 2015).

Operationally defining agritourism has been difficult, and even with a multitude of definitions posited within the tourism literature, the term remains ambiguous (Barbieri, 2013; Flanigan et al., 2014; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Kenebayeva, 2014; Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Although the definition is unclear, agritourism is not rural tourism because “academic developments in the last decade have advanced to clearly separate ‘agritourism’ from ‘rural tourism’” (Gil Arroyo et al., 2013, p. 40). Phillip et al. (2010) reviewed definitions used in the literature to represent agritourism and suggested that the characteristics of what constituted the definition were inconsistently referenced in research studies. To address this ambiguity, Phillip et al.’s (2010) research outlined three discriminating features for establishing a definition that included whether or not the product involves a working farm, the nature of interaction between the producers and consumers, and the level of authenticity involved (Flanigan et al., 2014; Phillip et al., 2010). As well, recognizing agritourism as an increasingly important research area, Phillip et al. (2010) conducted a literature review to create a conceptual framework for explaining what agritourism encompasses. In their study, they conducted semi-structured interviews at 25 Scottish agritourism venues and incorporated perspectives of both providers and consumers (Phillip et al., 2010). Phillip et al. (2010) originally identified five types of agritourism: non-working farm agritourism; working farm, passive contact agritourism; working farm, indirect contact agritourism; working farm, direct contact, staged agritourism; and working farm, direct contact, authentic agritourism. Following this typology, and utilizing

questionnaires, Gil Arroyo et al. (2013) gained the perspectives of farmers, extension faculty, and residents in Missouri and North Carolina, USA to suggest a shared definition. Further, Flanigan et al. (2014) updated the conceptual framework originally provided by Phillip et al. (2010). Their research included a literature review, and also incorporated the perspectives of agritourism stakeholder's in their model, which resulted in the revised typology presented in Figure 1. Although this empirically tested typology was developed to provide consistency in the literature, agritourism remains fundamentally broad (Flanigan et al., 2014). As such, an intricate definition would need to be established to encompass the context dependent factors that influence how it is defined (Flanigan et al., 2014; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Phillip et al., 2010). To allow for consistency throughout this document, agritourism is defined as: "farming-related activities carried out on a working farm or other agricultural settings for entertainment or education purposes" (Gil Arroyo et al., 2013, p. 45).

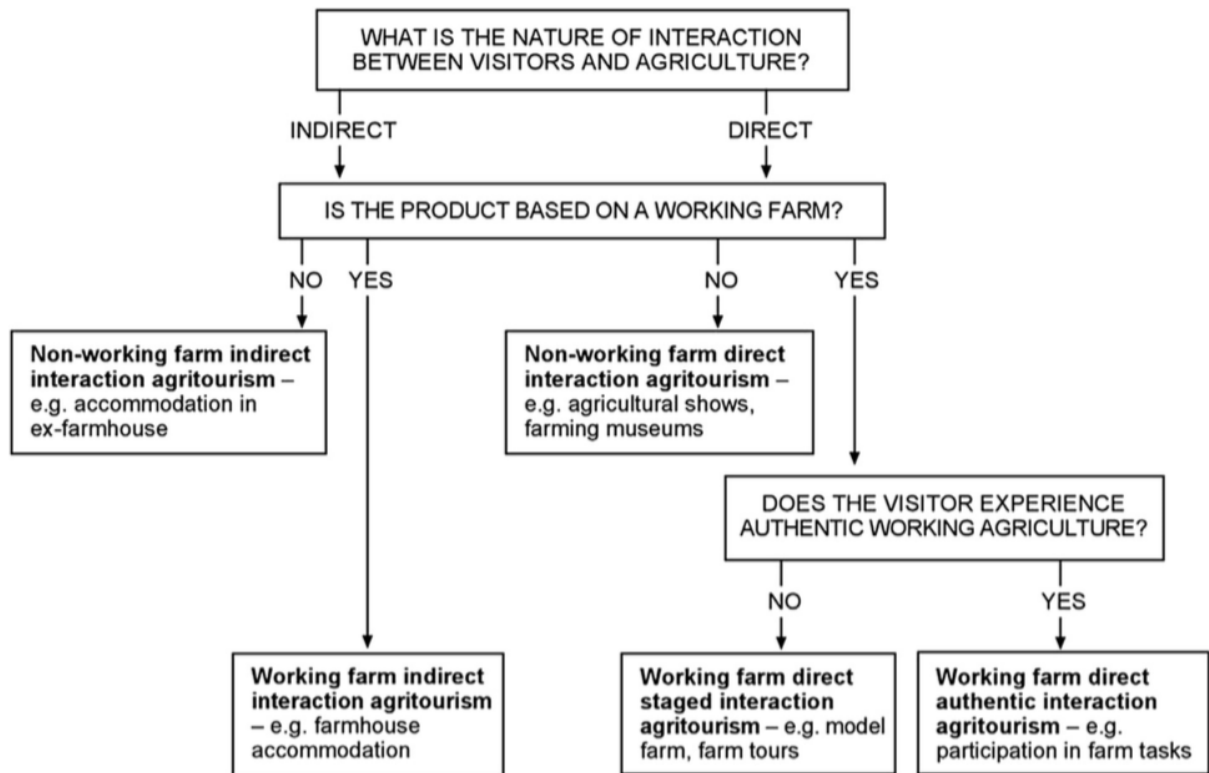


Figure 1. A revised typology for defining agritourism (Flanigan et al., 2014, p. 399) © Used with permission from Elsevier on March 8, 2016

The literature exploring agritourism is in its infancy (Kline et al., 2015). Currently, the majority of studies posit strategies for how economic gain can be harnessed for agritourism providers (Barbieri, 2013; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Kline et al., 2015; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Tew and Barbieri (2012) used questionnaires as a measurement instrument and examined 16 different benefits obtained as a result of agritourism from the perspectives of providers. It was found that capturing new customers was the top rated goal because it was not the agritourism activities themselves that were generating revenue, but the increased sales of products as a result of consumers on-site (Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Educating the public about agriculture, so providers could promote, and also preserve, their agrarian lifestyles, was also noted as a benefit (Tew & Barbieri, 2012).

Choo and Petrick (2013) utilized resource theory to examine the level of satisfaction achieved based on interactions between providers and consumers in agritourism settings. Choo and Petrick (2013) stated that “individuals satisfy personal needs through resource exchanges with others” (p. 773). These resources were separated in to six classes: love, status, information, money, goods, or services (Choo & Petrick, 2013). To organize these resources into categories, they were divided into particular resources or universal resources (Choo & Petrick, 2013). Particular resources “require personalized care, privacy of space, and repeated encounters” (Choo & Petrick, 2013, p. 773) but this attention is not required for universalistic resources. Choo and Petrick (2013) found that particular resources, which are more personalized, influenced satisfaction more than universal resources and this should be considered when planning the consumer experience. Further, building on their previous study, Choo and Petrick (2014) sought to understand how consumers’ on-site social interactions impacted their overall satisfaction, and their intention to return to the agritourism destination. Using social exchange

theory, the study observed the difference in satisfaction levels between interactions with the provider, but also incorporated the role of the interactions between consumer companions, other consumers, and local residents. Choo and Petrick (2014) identified that interactions with the agritourism providers “through love, money, and service exchange and those with companions through love and information exchange positively affected satisfaction with the farm visit” (p. 379). These studies by Choo and Petrick (2013; 2014) researched the connections between interactions and satisfaction levels and suggested that this understanding can help agritourism providers increase experience satisfaction and ensure repeat clientele for economic gain.

According to Flanigan et al. (2014) the literature involving agritourism is dominated by research from the provider (supply) perspective. However, agritourism studies are increasingly incorporating the consumer (demand) experience to address this absence (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Keneyeva, 2014). Flanigan et al. (2014) noted when they conducted their study that “there were no published studies of agritourism from both supply and demand perspectives” (p. 395). Kline et al. (2015) also reinforced the importance of incorporating both perspectives in future research. Therefore, this research will advance the literature through the incorporated provider and consumer SNS data in the analysis of research questions one and two.

Although the definition of agritourism and its offerings are inconsistent, there is the tendency for definitions to include education as part of the experience (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). However, there were no studies found that supported how educational opportunities are provided through these agritourism contexts, or through interactions with agritourism providers. Tew and Barbieri (2012) highlighted that there is a need for research to examine the non-economic benefits that

can be derived through agritourism. Understanding that social benefits can be attained through provider and consumer interactions, this research addressed agritourism provider's perceptions for using SNSs for provider and consumer engagement, and for using SNSs to foster learning experiences online (Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Kline et al., 2015).

Social Media

Since the introduction of Web 1.0, online culture has evolved from a producer-centered model towards a concept of co-creation where producers and consumers are involved in disseminating information, experiences, and knowledge, known as Web 2.0 (Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Leung, Law, van Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Web 2.0 “refers to the principles and practice of facilitating information sharing and social interaction by users generating, altering and uploading web-based content” (Liburd, 2012, p. 883). This facilitates sharing and allows individuals and organizations to collectively disseminate attention-grabbing information online (Hajli & Lin, 2014; Mason & Rennie, 2007). With these advancements, communications online have progressed and interactions can occur between producer-consumer, consumer-consumer, consumer-producer, many-to-one, one-to-many, one-to-one, and many-to-many (Ang, 2011b; Hays et al., 2013). Although the terms Web 2.0 and social media have been used interchangeably in the literature, for this thesis social media is defined as:

Activities, practices, and behaviours among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media. Conversational media are Web-based applications that make it possible to create and easily transmit content in the form of words, pictures, videos, and audios. (Safko & Brake, 2009, p. 6)

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) delineated social media into six different types: blogs, collaborative projects, SNSs, content communities, virtual social worlds, and virtual game worlds.

Specifically, this research explored agritourism providers and consumers use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which are classified as SNSs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). SNSs are applications which allow users to connect and share content online such as text, photos, and videos (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Organizations have adopted SNSs to further connect with their consumers and establish brand communities (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, Woodcock et al., 2011, Maecker et al., 2016). Using this SNS technology allows for large scale, immediate connections to occur, changing previous methods of communication and expanding the opportunities available to tourism providers (Hays et al., 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012).

Social media and tourism. Tourism organizations' adoption of social media has expanded the opportunities for real-time information sharing (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Hays et al., 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012; Leung et al., 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). In Schaffer's (2014) study, students and tourism organizations formed a mentorship pair where the students informed the industry on how to adequately use social media to increase revenue. Presently, studies primarily focused on SNSs as marketing tools and have outlined how travel decisions are influenced through consumption of online content (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou 2013; Hays et al., 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012; Kristensen, 2013; Leung et al., 2013; Schaffer, 2014; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Zehrer & Grabmüller, 2012). In the study by Hays et al. (2013) it was found that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are not using social media to its full capacity in terms of interactions with consumers. In the literature, it is most common for the use of social media within tourism to be examined from the producer's, or organization's perspective

(Hays et al., 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012). However, Munar and Jacobsen (2014) studied individual's motivations to share their tourism experiences. This study concluded that there are a high number of lurkers online, those who passively consume content without interacting. Similarly, Yoo and Gretzel (2011) addressed the concept of personality and how it influenced user generated content (UGC) with comparable findings that individuals prefer to be consumers of organizational information, rather than producers themselves. UGC is "usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users" (Kaplan & Haenlein, p. 61). Specifically, UGC needs to be published to a SNS publically accessible by others, be established through a creative effort, and should be created outside of professional routines and practices (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Through the use of social media, organizations can communicate a lot of information, some of which can be dismissed by others, so it is imperative that organizations are using SNSs appropriately (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012). The increasingly prevalent use of social media for interactions in tourism invites both new opportunities and challenges for the sector and continues to be a trend in tourism (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). There is a current lack of understanding on the range of uses of social media in the tourism context and more research is required because social media is expected to continue to be a part of tourism development (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Hajli & Lin, 2014; Hays et al., 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012; Leung et al., 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Customer Relationship Management and social media. CRM is "a cross-functional organizational process that focuses on establishing, maintaining, and enhancing long-term relationships with attractive customers" (Wang & Feng, 2012, p. 117). Wang and Feng (2012) outlined the antecedents of CRM as: customer orientation, customer centric organizational

system, and CRM technology. If organizations are able to observe established customer relationships and mediate them in favourable ways, they achieve competitive advantages over other destinations (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012; Wang & Feng, 2012). Tourism organizations have adopted CRM to facilitate engagement with consumers (Vogt, 2011). However, there is a lack of research regarding CRM in varied tourism contexts, such as agritourism, and more research is needed to advance understandings of the CRM in these settings (Vogt, 2011). CRM suggests that organizations are relying more on technology for exposure, and this research discusses agritourism providers' use of SNSs to gain insight into these interactions in tourism contexts.

Organizations utilize SNSs to “create value and set themselves apart from their competitors” (Ang, 2011b, p. 150). Following CRM strategies can enhance the capabilities of organizations to foster successful interactions with their consumers, and this is why organizational SNSs continue to proliferate (Ang, 2011b; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Maecker, Barrot, & Becker, 2016; Wang & Feng, 2012). CRM technology is part of the marketing strategy, and SNSs offer a platform for provider and consumer engagement to occur (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012). However, the use of social media allows for consumer-to-consumer communication as well, which differs but can add value for traditional CRM (Ang, 2011a; Wang & Feng, 2012; Woodcock et al., 2011). The acknowledgement of the importance of social media for CRM has been explored through Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) or Community Relationship Management (CoRM) (Ang, 2011a; Ang, 2011b; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011). CoRM recognized that consumers (the followers of SNSs) may not necessarily be pre-existing customers and argues for a strategy that understands one-to-one communications as well as many-to-many, instead of using SCRM which does not elaborate on these concepts (Ang, 2011a;

Ang, 2011b; Woodcock et al., 2011).

Consumers can freely voice their satisfaction and concerns on SNSs, and organizations are no longer in control of the content produced (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Maecker et al., 2016; Nguyen & Mutum, 2012; Woodcock et al., 2011).

Managing relationships and interactions with customers suggests that organizations must move from a traditional organization focus to a consumer focus (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Wang & Feng, 2012). Consumers will “interact with businesses if they believe it is to their benefit, feel they can trust the company and decide social media is the right channel to use to get the value they seek” (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 33). CRM and social media can have implications for consumer’s general decisions surrounding agritourism, and their opportunities for FCL.

Social media and learning. The concept of e-learning, which emerged from Web 1.0 technology, has evolved in to social learning to be consistent with the opportunities provided through social media (Hajli et al., 2013; Hajli & Lin, 2014; Russo et al., 2009). Analysis of social media content can provide beneficial insight for how individuals interact and learn through SNSs (Chen & Bryer, 2012). Social learning, “where individuals learn through social interaction in online communities through others” (Hajli et al., 2013, p. 856) has developed because of the ease of use of social media. This ease of use encourages interactions where individuals can learn new things through an enhanced learning environment (Hajli et al., 2013; Hajli & Lin, 2014). Currently, the majority of literature which explored social media and learning focused on the use of Web 2.0 to promote learning in higher education institutions or museum contexts, which are formal settings compared to agritourism contexts (Charitonos et al., 2012; Chen & Bryer, 2012; Forkosh-Baruch & HersHKovitz, 2012; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Junco et al., 2011; Liburd & Christensen, 2013; Russo et al., 2009). In a study by Charitonos et al. (2012) the use of

Twitter in a museum setting to foster learning was explored. This study is an example of how social media use was enforced, rather than elective, as students were mandated to interact on Twitter during their museum visit. Such interactivity through social media was found to increase student learning, which is consistent with other findings in the literature that highlighted the importance of interactions for learning enhancement (Charitonos et al., 2012; Forkosh-Baruch & HersHKovitz, 2012; Junco et al., 2010).

Individuals can connect and increase their knowledge by using SNSs through facilitated social connections, increased motivation of individuals to share information, and increased ability to receive informational support (Hajli & Lin, 2014). These sites are affordable, readily available, and do not require advanced technological knowledge to implement (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Hajli & Lin, 2014; Hays et al., 2013). SNSs, and the capabilities presented by these sites, are changing the way that individuals produce and consume knowledge and this in turn improves consumers' ability to learn (Chen & Bryer, 2012). It is suggested that organizations develop strategies for what they post and are cognizant of what type of interactions they are eliciting from their followers because these networks allow for communicative relationships to form, which can facilitate learning (Hajli & Lin, 2014; Hvass & Munar, 2012).

Similarly, the opportunity exists for organizations to share educational knowledge on social media. Individual's use of SNSs allows for continual exposure to new ideas, which places the focus on learning (Liburd & Christensen, 2013). Social media use continues to grow in formal and informal educational contexts and further research demonstrating how these interactions can support learning would be of value for this body of knowledge (Charitonos et al, 2012; Forkosh-Baruch & HersHKovitz, 2012; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Zehrer & Grabmüller, 2012). Chen and Bryer (2012) posited that the literature regarding pedagogies for

social media use is sparse, and highlighted that the assessment of learning in informal learning environments is difficult as a result. This research contributed to better understanding how provider and consumer interactions occur in general, and how these relationships can be managed to support learning opportunities.

Free-Choice Learning

FCL is “a term used to describe the learning that occurs when the learning is largely under the choice and control of the learner” (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011, p. 202). Conceptually, FCL does not position learning as a product, but recognizes learning as a process that takes place in leisure contexts and affords individuals the ability to seek out and interpret new information (Falk & Dierking, 2000; 2004). It has been posited that throughout an individual’s lifespan, only 3% of all learning occurs in a formalized learning environment (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011). Therefore, learning that occurs in leisure contexts that are less structured provide opportunities for life-long learning of value (Falk et al., 2012). This form of learning typically looks to connect individuals with the natural environment such as the experiences offered by agritourism, rendering this an appropriate context for this research (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011).

Free-choice learning and tourism. This thesis research builds on the work of Falk et al. (2012) with their suggestion that tourism providers need to understand how FCL occurs in leisure contexts, how to further incorporate learning experiences into these contexts, and also how to measure the levels of learning that occur in tourism settings. Learning is cumulative in nature, and it does not need to begin and end with an on-site experience, “but is influenced by both previous and subsequent experiences” (Falk et al., 2012, p. 919). It has been suggested that when tourism expectations are met, then learning will occur and these learning experiences need

to be reinforced (Falk & Dierking, 2004; Falk et al., 2012). Although numerous tourism organizations promote visitor learning as a benefit of their attraction, it is rare to receive an explanation of what this learning consists of and how it occurs (Falk et al., 2012). Current literature suggests that there is going to be an onus placed on tourism providers to be accountable for measuring the learning they provide, and providers will no longer be able to make unsubstantiated claims about their ability to disseminate educational information (Falk et al., 2012). As Falk et al. (2012) noted, it is important for the tourism sector to understand that education and entertainment can occur simultaneously, and social media is a tool to accomplish this.

Free-choice learning and social media. In order for FCL experiences to be fully embraced, providers should encourage individuals to reflect on their experiences (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011). This can be done through social media because of its interactive nature (Hays et al., 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012). Learning is inherently idiosyncratic and social media, through its ability to share information in multiple formats, lends itself to learning (Falk et al., 2012). As mentioned previously, literature involving social media and learning stems from studies in museum contexts and the capacity of social media to promote learning for students in formal settings (Charitonos et al., 2012; Falk & Dierking, 2004; Falk & Storksdieck, 2010; Russo et al., 2009). Agritourism contexts are less structured, and position education as part of the experience, but research involving these educational opportunities is non-existent. Agritourism offers on-site education, but the ability for this FCL to extend on SNSs is important for agritourism providers to understand. Specifically, Falk et al. (2012) noted that learning experiences need to further be incorporated in tourism contexts, and agritourism providers can use these SNSs to continue to share educational content to interested, online consumers (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011).

Contextual Model of Learning. The CML, a constructivist learning model, proposes a “model for thinking about learning that allows for systematic understanding and organization of complexity” (Falk & Dierking, 2004, p. 139), but does not imply a definition for classifying learning. The CML reinforces that varying contexts influence the who, what, where, when, why, and how of learning, and that the learning process is unique for individuals (Falk & Dierking, 2004). Learning is context specific and is situated within dynamic personal, sociocultural, and physical contexts (Falk & Dierking, 2004; Falk et al., 2012; Falk & Storsdieck, 2005). From their research at museums, Falk and Dierking (2004) proposed eight distinct characteristics that supported the contexts. The personal context included: motivation and expectations; prior knowledge, interests and beliefs; and choice and control. The characteristics of the physical context are: advance organizers and orientation; design; and reinforcing events and experiences outside the museum. The sociocultural context involves the characteristics: within-group sociocultural mediation and facilitated mediation by others (Falk & Dierking, 2004). To address the specific research questions of this thesis, the sociocultural context of learning was examined.

The sociocultural context. Falk and Dierking (2000) suggested that within the sociocultural context, humans are able to acquire knowledge through interactions with others and that learning includes a facilitated sociocultural component. Particularly, learning is simultaneously an individual experience interlinked within a larger group experience in society (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Falk and Dierking (2000) noted that the fundamental aspects of learning include perception, processing, and meaning making. Additionally, understanding that “the social world is a fundamental building block of learning” (Falk & Dierking, 2000, p.38) implies that the sociocultural context and learning are inseparable contexts. FCL, as offered

through social media, typically includes socially mediated learning and therefore the sociocultural context of the CML informed this research (Falk & Dierking, 2000).

This thesis builds on previous literature and contributes to the various bodies of knowledge. Collectively, the studies that explored agritourism, social media, and FCL provide a foundation to begin to understand how agritourism providers and their consumers can interact on SNSs, and how FCL can occur through the use of SNSs. Understanding social media use in tourism contexts and how CRM occurs through social media, provides insight as to why tourism providers such as those in agritourism, engage with consumers through these SNSs. As well, the CML provides knowledge about the sociocultural context to explore the socially mediated exchanges between providers and consumers that could allow for FCL opportunities on SNSs.

Chapter Three: Methods

In this chapter, the interpretive framework, methods, and methodology used are overviewed. As well, detailed descriptions are included to demonstrate how the following research questions were addressed:

1. How are agritourism providers and their consumers interacting with social networking site content on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?
2. What is the nature of the social networking site content posted by agritourism providers and their consumers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?
3. What are the general outcomes agritourism providers perceive as a result of using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as sites for their organization?
4. What are the perceptions of agritourism providers with regards to using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for providing free-choice learning opportunities, and what outcomes do they believe result from disseminating agricultural knowledge using these sites?

Interpretive Framework

This research followed the pragmatic interpretive framework. Creswell (2013) outlined that pragmatists are flexible in their commitment to philosophy and reality and that they are “‘free’ to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes” (Creswell, 2013, Chapter 2, Interpretive Frameworks, para. 15). Creswell (2013) noted that if a researcher utilizes this framework, then their focus is on addressing a particular problem, or set of questions. If a researcher adopts a pragmatic interpretive framework, depending on the questions, both qualitative and quantitative analysis approaches may be

required to answer the questions in their entirety (Creswell, 2013). The researcher adopted this worldview as the intent of this research was to focus on the practical implications of SNS use by agritourism providers (Creswell, 2013).

Methodology

The methodology used for this research was the case study approach. Research methodology can be understood as the strategy that informs the method and provides the rationalization for the ability of the method to answer the intended research questions (Crotty, 1998). For this mixed methods research, the methodology guided the interpretation of personal and interpersonal relationships between agritourism providers and their consumers across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). The multiple cases study methodology allowed for multiple organizations to be explored (Creswell, 2013). Five agritourism providers were included in the data collection, and each can be considered a case (Creswell, 2013). This methodological approach allowed for in-depth and current information to be synthesized for this thesis (Creswell, 2013).

Mixed Methods Research Approach

Mixed methods research is a “research paradigm that encourages the combined use of qualitative and quantitative research elements to answer complex questions” (Heyvaert, Maes, & Onghena, 2011, p. 659). This thesis is classified as primary level mixed methods research because it combined qualitative and quantitative data in a single study but the data was not combined for synthesis (Heyvaert et al., 2011). “The multiple paradigm stance claims that researchers can draw on more than one paradigm in their research” (Hall, 2013, p. 5) and this

thesis does such. Mixed methods research is widely debated in the literature because the qualitative and quantitative approaches, and their associated underpinnings, are historically believed to misalign (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Hall, 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). However, “with an openness to using multiple perspectives in research” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 17) the mixed methods approach aids the researcher’s ability to address the purpose of the research project. Using a mixed-methods approach aligned with the pragmatic perspective of the researcher because Creswell (2003) suggested that adopting this perspective means that the researcher uses whichever approaches, qualitative or quantitative, appropriate for answering the research questions.

The quantitative and qualitative data. With the dynamic nature of mixed methods research, researchers are “advised to ensure that they are clear about the question that they wish to address, and that they also formulate separate questions for the individual qualitative and quantitative segments” (van Griensven, Moore, & Hall, 2014, p. 369). “Quantitative data are numerical, so quantitative research methods are based on the generation and manipulation of numbers using statistical analysis” (van Griensven et al., 2014, p. 367). Research question one was explored using quantitative content analysis to provide a description of how providers and consumers are interacting on SNSs. However, research questions two through four utilized a qualitative approach. A qualitative paradigm facilitates an understanding using a “bottom up” (Creswell, 2013, Chapter 3, The Characteristics of Qualitative Research, para. 13) approach where concepts are driven by the researcher’s interpretation of the data. The qualitative inquiry process presented varying perspectives by incorporating direct quotes from individuals (Creswell, 2013). With the qualitative aspect of the mixed methods approach, multiple realities

were studied and these realities were observed in their natural setting without manipulation (Creswell, 2013).

Methods

Social media content analysis. Social media content analysis continues to gain widespread adoption as the surge of information available to researchers grows on these sites. Content analysis is becoming a favourable method for SNS posts as rich data is presented for analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Schwartz & Ungar, 2015). Content analysis is an observational process of “analy[z]ing written, verbal or visual communication messages” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 107). This unprompted and unobtrusive method can analyze SNS content by individual post, people, groups, or communities and is valuable for the social sciences (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Schwartz & Ungar, 2015). With the flexibility of social media content analysis, and through utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, this research attained a well-rounded analysis and representation of the SNS data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hays et al., 2013; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews. In addition to the social media content analysis, semi-structured interviews were used to include multiple perspectives and enhance comprehension (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Turner, 2010). Flexibility is an essential aspect of interviews and this method can be adapted on a case-to-case basis (Creswell, 2013; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Turner, 2010). During semi-structured interviews, “the person interviewed is more a participant in meaning making than a conduit from which information is retrieved” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). Using interviews as a method allowed for common

and uncommon understandings of agritourism providers to be discovered across the five cases involved (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Data Collection

The following section describes the agritourism providers and SNSs included in the data collection process. An overview of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram SNSs used in the data collection process for the content analysis is provided. The means by which posts and Tweets were captured are outlined as well and an overview of the semi-structured interview method used to collect data from agritourism providers is included.

Selection of agritourism providers. The revised typology for defining agritourism by Flanigan et al. (2014) outlined five distinct categories of agritourism providers. There are three constructs that segment each provider into the categories. Their delineation depends on whether the organization includes a working farm or not, what the nature of the contact is with agriculture at the location, and whether contact is staged or authentic (Phillip et al, 2010; Flanigan et al., 2014). The five definitional categories established by Flanigan et al. (2014) are non-working farm indirect interaction (NWFII), non-working farm direct interaction (NWFDI), working farm indirect interaction (WFII), working farm direct staged interaction (WFDSI), and working farm direct authentic interaction (WFDAI) agritourism. Following this typology, the researcher selected a provider which fit each category. The selection of five providers is justified by Creswell (2013) as most studies do not research more than five cases simultaneously.

Table 1

Categorizations and Social Networking Site Accounts

Type of agritourism	Agritourism provider	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Hashtag for Twitter and Instagram
Non-working farm indirect interaction (NWFII)	St. Norbert Farmers' Market Winnipeg, Manitoba	Yes St. Norbert Farmers Market	Yes @SNFarmersMarket	Yes @st_norbert_fm	#stnorbertfarmersmarket
Non-working farm direct interaction (NWFDI)	Harvest Moon Society Clearwater, Manitoba	Yes Harvest Moon Society	Yes @HarvestMoonSoc	No	#hmf2015
Working farm indirect interaction (WFII)	Deer Meadow Farms Winnipeg, Manitoba	Yes Deer Meadow Farms Corn Maze and Hobby Farm	Yes @deermeadowfarmz	Yes @deermeadowfarms	#deermeadowfarms
Working farm direct staged interaction (WFDSI)	Integrity Foods Riverton, Manitoba	Yes Integrity Food	No	No	#integrityfoods
Working farm direct authentic interaction (WFDAI)	Boonstra Farms Stonewall, Manitoba	Yes Boonstra Farms	Yes @BoonstraFarms	Yes @Boonstra_farms	#boonstrafarms

Description of agritourism providers. The following section provides descriptive details about the agritourism cases involved in this research.

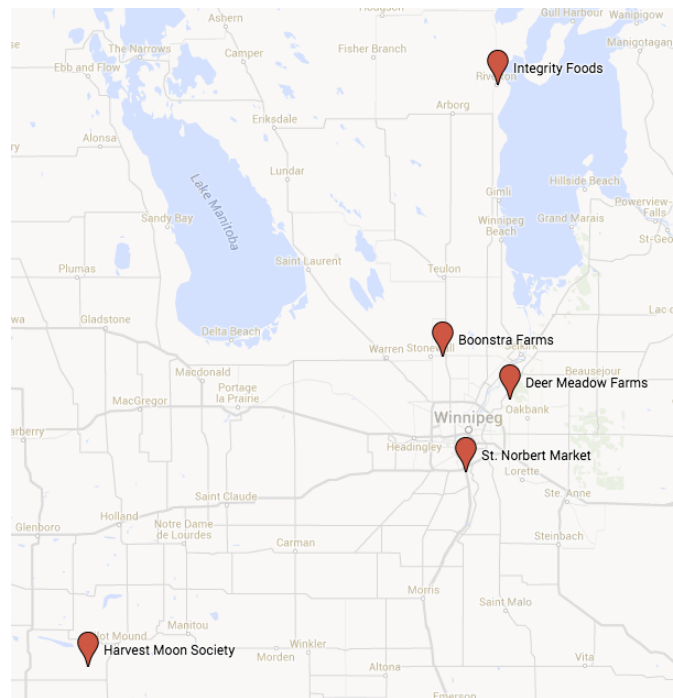


Figure 2. Agritourism providers. (Google Maps, 2016)

Boonstra Farms. Boonstra Farms is a strawberry and raspberry u-pick farm. “Boonstra Farms offers school tours, strawberry picking, and a wonderful corn maze throughout the seasons” (Boonstra Farms, 2016). This farm was established in 1988 and now includes 35 acres of u-pick strawberries, four acres of u-pick raspberries and a 10-acre corn maze in the Fall season (Boonstra Farms, 2016).

Deer Meadow Farms. Deer Meadow Farms is a corn maze and hobby farm. The farm offers numerous on-site activities which includes a corn maze, petting farm, pumpkin patch, wagon train ride, wild game preserve, Fort Frontier, concession stand, Tired Mountain, bale pyramid, and Farmer Golf (Deer Meadow Farms, 2016). Deer Meadow Farms hosts many school groups and educational tours but is also open to the public May through October.

St. Norbert Farmers' Market. St. Norbert Farmers' Market was established in 1988 and is "Manitoba's largest and best known farmers' market" (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, 2016). The market is a "not-for profit cooperative with 130 full time vendors" (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, 2016). The market operates Saturday's and Wednesday's May through October and then moves to a bi-weekly market throughout the winter months. The St. Norbert Farmers' Market motto is: "Where we make it, bake it, and grow it for YOU!" (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, 2016).

Integrity Foods. Integrity Foods is an organic bakery and hobby farm destination. This farm hosts Pizza Nights throughout June to September with their brick oven located on the farm that is the "heart and soul" (Integrity Foods, 2016) of their agritourism destination. Integrity Foods offers many activities as well on Pizza Night, and they encourage guests to interact with their farm animals, walk Judah's Trail, or lounge in their garden (Integrity Foods, 2016).

Harvest Moon Society. Harvest Moon Society's motto is "Healthy Land, Healthy Communities" (Harvest Moon Society, 2016). The organization holds educational workshops that provide 'hands on' experiences with agriculture and agricultural processes. In 2002, Harvest Moon Festival was established and "celebrates the harvest season and local food production, while providing an opportunity to link those from rural and urban communities" (Harvest Moon Society, 2016). This event is hosted annually by Harvest Moon Society. The Facebook and Twitter accounts of Harvest Moon Society are used to post particulars related to Harvest Moon Festival as well as Harvest Moon Society.

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This research used Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for data collection and each offered different opportunities for individuals to interact with organizations and other consumers to produce and consume content (Hvass & Munar,

2012). Facebook currently has 1.44 billion monthly active users with a mission to “give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected” (Facebook Newsroom, 2015). The agritourism providers in this research have created organization pages on Facebook where they can post content for their followers to view. Individuals become followers of the agritourism organization by ‘liking’ the page. As well, on these pages, there is a section dedicated to “visitor posts” where consumers can directly share content. Individuals can interact additionally by commenting, liking, or sharing content posted by both the providers and consumers.

Twitter is a microblog that engages individuals in interaction with 500 million Tweets posted daily (Junco et al., 2011; Ma, Sun, & Kong, 2013; “Twitter Usage”, 2015). On Twitter, individuals share text up to 140 characters in length, which may include photos or videos. Users can @username others to direct their attention to the information. For followers to ‘repost’ information on this site, the ‘retweet’ function is used as a verbatim share of the content (Hays et al., 2013). A quote Tweet is similar but includes text from the provider for example, as well as new content from the user who is re-sharing the Tweet. Also on this SNS, hashtags, text that is preceded by the # symbol, allows content that contains the identical hashtag to be searchable by other users (Ma et al., 2013).

The third SNS included in this research was Instagram. Throughout the peer-reviewed literature, studies involving Instagram data are marginal (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012; Wielenmann, Hillman, & Jungselius, 2013). Instagram is a social application that allows individuals to capture photos, manipulate their appearance, and share them with their own narratives and then other users can then ‘like’ or respond through commenting on this content (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012). Instagram is the newest emerged SNS of the three, which likely

explains the lack of research studies which include this site. As Instagram is a visual site it may also be absent from the literature because of difficulty with visual analysis of the large data sets produced.

Social networking site content data collection. Posts that occurred throughout July, August, and September 2015, were gathered from www.facebook.com, www.twitter.com, and www.instagram.com. The data collected across the SNSs were analyzed to address research question one and research question two. Posts and Tweets on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were collected by the researcher through copying and pasting from the SNS and inputting the appropriate data in to Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Further, posts that used a predetermined hashtag, which were agritourism provider specific on Twitter and Instagram, were included. Specifically, posts or Tweets made from the agritourism providers (supply) were explored. Additionally, this research incorporated the public, or consumer (demand) posts and Tweets, the dichotomy to provider posts, which is beneficial to the agritourism context because more research is needed that includes both supply and demand content (Flanigan et al., 2014; Kline et al., 2015). For this research, the term consumer is used to represent the individuals who shared UGC specifically with the agritourism providers or used hashtags related to the organization. Unlike Facebook, which allows direct posting to the agritourism page, Twitter and Instagram do not support this capability. To stay consistent across the SNSs and incorporate UGC that consumers are sharing, collecting hashtag data was the most appropriate means available to the researcher to explore UGC on Twitter and Instagram because posts or Tweets that directly mentioned the agritourism provider are not available to others outside the organization. If the researcher was certain that content associated with the hashtag did not relate to the agritourism cases of this research, it was excluded from the data collection. For example, the search for

#integrityfoods also generated results related to Ledgeview Gardens in Wisconsin, USA which were not relevant to this research. All relevant data were collected on a per post or Tweet basis and compiled in spreadsheets created by the researcher. Spreadsheets were separated by provider post content and visitor post content on Facebook. For Twitter, a spreadsheet was constructed for provider Tweets, retweets, and quote Tweets content. A separate spreadsheet for hashtag content on Twitter was created. On Instagram a similar format followed with a spreadsheet for provider specific content, and then hashtag content. The researcher was directly involved in creating the data sets and this allowed the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the SNS content (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Although the associated media included with the post was not captured as visuals, textual descriptions were included by the researcher in the data spreadsheets so that contexts of the textual posts or Tweets were not lost. The content collected and compiled from the SNSs of the agritourism providers is outlined below. In previous SNSs research, Gibbs and Dancs (2013) used a sample size of 1,166 Tweets, while MacKay et al. (2014) overviewed a sample of 817 Tweets, and Dann (2010) used 2,841 Tweets in their analysis. Seminal research involving SNSs used much larger sample sizes but research is now more focused on coding structures specifically related to context, and therefore the sample size for this research of 2,152 posts and Tweets was acceptable (Gibbs & Dancs, 2013).

Table 2

Data Collected from Facebook

Data origin	Data collected
Provider posts content	Post identification number Date of post Text of provider original post Researcher notes Description of media included with post Number of likes on original post Number of shares on original post Text of comments on the post Description of media included with the comments Number of likes on the comments Text of comment replies Description of media included with the comment replies Number of likes on the comment replies
Visitor posts content	Post identification number Date of post Text of visitor original post Researcher notes Description of media included with post Number of likes on original post Number of shares on original post Text of comments on the post Description of media included with the comments Number of likes on the comments Text of comment replies Description of media included with the comment replies Number of likes on the comment replies

Table 3

Data Collected from Twitter

Data origin	Data collected
Provider Tweets content	Post identification number Date of Tweet Text of provider original Tweet Description of media included with Tweet Researcher notes Text of quote Tweet Description of media included with quote Tweet Text of retweet Description of media included with retweet Number of retweets Number of likes Text of Tweet replies Description of media included with replies
Hashtag content	Post identification number Date of Tweet Text of original Tweet Description of media included with Tweet Researcher notes Text of quote Tweet Description of media included with quote Tweet Text of retweet Description of media included with retweet Number of retweets Number of likes Text of Tweet replies Description of media included with replies

Table 4

Data Collected from Instagram

Data origin	Data collected
Provider posts content	Post identification number Time stamp Description of media included with provider post Text of caption Researcher notes Number of likes Text of comments
Hashtag content	Post identification number Time stamp Description of media included with hashtag post Text of caption Researcher notes Number of likes Text of comments

Semi-structured interviews data collection. To gain an enhanced understanding of why agritourism providers are using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and how they perceive their ability to use these SNSs to foster FCL, semi-structured interviews were used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the individual who identified as the head of the social media dissemination for each of the five selected agritourism providers. The semi-structured interview method is “generally organi[z]ed around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). The interview guide (included in Appendix A) used for data collection was adapted and further refined based on Chen and Bryer’s (2012) research where they looked at how faculty used social media for formal learning. For this thesis, the interviews took place in semi-private locations selected at the discretion of the agritourism provider. The shortest interview duration was 34 minutes, with the longest interview lasting 58 minutes. The interviews averaged 46 minutes across the five cases.

It was important for the researcher to build a rapport with the participants so they were comfortable in the research situation, and in turn acted as a valuable source of data collection (Creswell, 2013; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Turner, 2010). An existing relationship between the researcher and sites was established prior to the interviews because the researcher was involved as a research assistant on another project involving the same organizations. Through her involvement as a research assistant, the researcher was able to observe each agritourism provider and understand its offerings before the interviews occurred for this project (Shenton, 2004). The interviews took place after September so the provider's understanding of the research did not alter their SNS activity during the SNS content data collection period.

For semi-structured interviews, it is important to use recording procedures that fit the interview context for one-on-one interviews (Creswell, 2013). The interviews with the providers were audio-recorded to ensure no pertinent information was missed by the researcher. Following the guidelines imposed by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, consent was obtained from participants prior to the interviews. A copy of this consent form is included in Appendix B. The interview conversations were audio-recorded using the Evernote recording application on an iPad. An iPhone recording device was also used as a precaution to reduce interviewer error in recording, and acted as a backup if corruption of an audio-file were to ensue.

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) outlined four steps for ethical interview data collection. Specifically, the risk of unanticipated harm should always be reduced. Secondly, protecting the interviewees information was of utmost importance, and complied with the provisions for confidentiality outlined in the consent form. However, permission was granted by all interviewees to use the name of their agritourism organization in relation to interview content. Thirdly, prior to the interview, the agritourism providers were well informed of the purpose and

research questions of this study. This ensured their familiarity and understanding of how the interview would progress. The last provision offered by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) to warrant ethical research is that the risk of exploitation must be reduced. The researcher understood and appropriately addressed this provision by outlining the content to be covered in the interviews and by explaining that voluntary withdrawal from the study was an option for participants at any point in the data collection period if they felt uncomfortable.

Following data collection, the interview audio files were uploaded to ExpressScribe transcription software on a password-protected computer. The interview audio files were transcribed verbatim by the researcher after the interviews so that participant observations could be added as comments in the transcriptions while they were top of mind. The researcher's immersion in the transcription process was valuable for the qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

Data Analysis

Content analysis is historically used by following a quantitative format (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Macnamara, 2005). More recently, however, the social sciences have utilized both quantitative and qualitative content analysis practices to address data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For the data analysis of this thesis both quantitative and qualitative content analysis models were followed. The use of these models is justified based on their ability to answer the four research questions, and ability to compare the results and findings with previous tourism studies that have used these approaches to data analysis (Dann, 2010; Gibbs & Dancs, 2013; Hays et al., 2013; MacKay et al., 2014).

For research question one, the researcher used quantitative content analysis to address

information such as volume of mentions, the reach of the media to the intended consumers, and the different frequencies of SNS interactions (Macnamara, 2005). Following Hays et al. (2013), “quantitative analysis was chosen to incorporate as much data and scope of social media activity as possible” (p. 214). As well, using a modified list of specific content analysis categories from Hays et al. (2013), quantitative data analysis practices were used to obtain statistics describing concepts specific to each SNS.

For the qualitative content analysis approach, which was used for research questions two, three, and four, the researcher immersed herself in the collected data and gradually reduced the interpreted ideas into categories (Creswell, 2013). Categories, analogous with “themes or codes are consistent phrases, expressions, or ideas that were common among research participants” (Turner, 2010, p. 12). As well, ‘categories’ was the term used in previous research by MacKay et al. (2014), that explored the nature of SNSs content in festival contexts, and their study is comparable to research question two of this thesis. To remain consistent in this document and build on previous research, the terms categories and subcategories are consistently used to address the results and findings interpreted from the data (Hays et al., 2013; MacKay et al., 2014). However, the categories and subcategories identified by the researcher are distinct to answering each research question.

Agritourism, SNSs, and FCL are not discussed as a collective in existing literature, so an inductive approach was best for the qualitative data analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Three main phases to inductive data analysis were followed as per Elo and Kyngäs (2008). This included first preparing the data, in this case, SNS content from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and the interview transcriptions. Secondly, organizing the content, followed by a report of the findings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Following an inductive approach

allowed concepts to be described in detail (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researcher became as familiar as possible with the data by reading through the content several times until an overall understanding of the information was obtained (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Figure 3 outlines the inductive approach used for data analysis of research questions two, three, and four. Following this model, the researcher remained “systematic and alert to the complexity of the task” (Burnard, 1991, p. 465) of the qualitative data analysis.

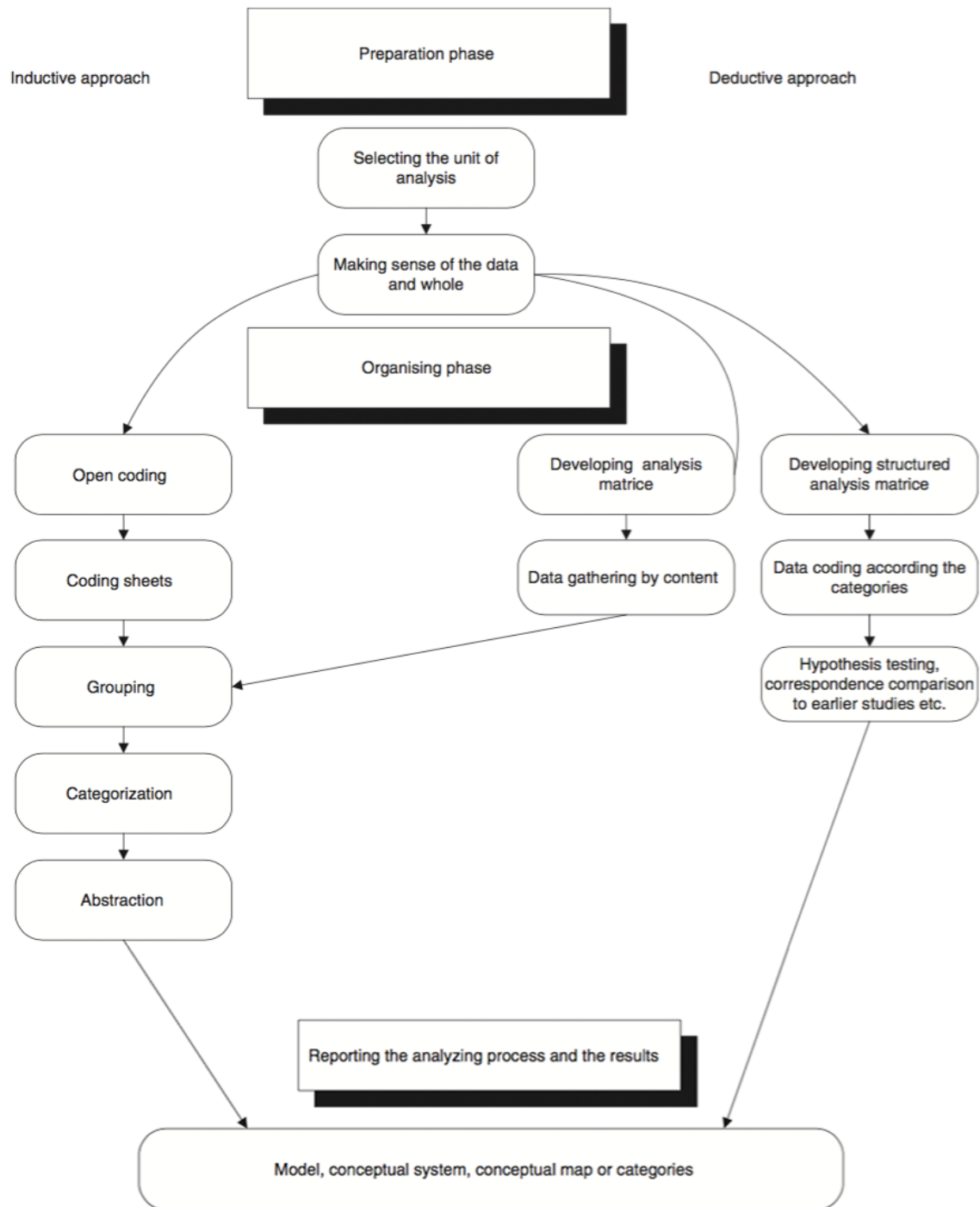


Figure 3. Preparation, organizing and resulting phases in the content analysis process (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 110) © Used with permission from John Wiley and Sons on March 9, 2016

Cleary et al. (2014) explained the analysis process as “a matter of finding order within chaos, making sense of massed information and condensing it -not simply imposing a template upon the material” (p. 712). The content analysis of this research did not progress in a linear fashion, and this unstructured method was appropriate for the qualitative approach because it allowed for complex and detailed analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). “Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). These similar, as well as dissimilar meanings were analyzed, and the categories discovered advanced knowledge regarding how agritourism providers and consumers utilize SNSs. “There are no simple guidelines for data analysis: each inquiry is distinctive, and the results depend on the skills, insights, analytic abilities and style of the investigator” (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008, p. 113). With this understanding, there were no measures of inter-rater reliability undertaken in this thesis. Inter-rater reliability was not measured as this approach is better suited for exclusively quantitative research (Morse, 1994 as cited in Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997). The individual perspective is deemed sufficient by most qualitative researchers as it is inherent in this approach that “different researchers would offer different equivocations” (Armstrong et al., 1997, p. 599). Using this method for data analysis is appropriate for this study as it is not the intention of this research to make generalizations, but rather to further describe how the agritourism cases and consumers are utilizing SNSs (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991).

Trustworthiness for qualitative analysis. It is debated between natural and social scientists whether researchers that use qualitative methods can produce reports or documents that are trustworthy (Shenton, 2004). Guba (1981), in hopes of lessening the tension, proposed four

constructs to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research that contrast the constructs in quantitative research. These constructs are: credibility (not validity), transferability (not external validity), dependability (not reliability), and confirmability (not objectivity) (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). Following Shenton (2004), the researcher designed the qualitative aspects of this thesis to incorporate these strategies.

Credibility. Credibility, involves 14 distinct characteristics (Shenton, 2004). Table 5 has been created with the provisions offered by Shenton (2004) and overviewed based on the researcher's ability to meet the provisions.

Table 5

Credibility Checklist

Characteristics of credibility	Provisions
The adoption of research methods well established	✓
The development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organizations	✓
Random sampling	✓
Triangulation	✓
Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants	✓*
Iterative questioning	✓*
Negative case analysis	✓
Frequent debriefing sessions	✓
Peer scrutiny of the research project	✓
The researchers “reflective commentary”	✓
Background qualifications and experiences of the investigator	✓
Member checks	✓*
Thick description of the phenomena under scrutiny	✓
Examination of previous research findings	✓

* A ‘✓*’ indicates that the provision was met only for the semi-structured interviews

Triangulation can involve different forms aside from method triangulation and this research used triangulation via data sources as well as site triangulation (Creswell, 2013; Shenton, 2004).

Transferability. Shenton (2004) suggests that it is important to identify the boundaries of the research. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) stated that to ensure transferability, thick description of the

context, selection methods and characteristics of participants, and the data collection and analysis process is required for the qualitative research to be rendered transferable and this characteristic was met.

Dependability. Shenton (2004) argues that if qualitative research projects are deemed credible, then they can be classified as dependable. To ensure dependability, description of the research design, implementation of the data collection process, and an overall reflective appraisal of the completed study and design, is included in this document (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability. The final construct for ensuring trustworthiness is confirmability. It was essential that “the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). The researcher was reflexive and admitted potential predispositions that affected the overall research design (Shenton, 2004). The researcher ensured confirmability through maintaining an audit trail and memoing, as well as through using direct quotes from the data to elicit confirmability for the findings.

Analysis of research question one. The quantitative social media content analysis approach used by Hays et al. (2013) was followed to address research question one:

1. How are agritourism providers and their consumers interacting with social networking site content on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?

For the analysis of research question one, the captured posts and Tweets and their associated interactions were analyzed. The researcher adapted, further refined, and provided additions to the information from “Table 1. List of categories for the content analysis” (Hays et al., 2013, p. 216) for this research. The researcher included additional information specific to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram sites so that all the current ways in which agritourism

providers and their followers were currently posting and interacting with SNS content were included. Specifically, in order to delineate if a post was interactive or not the definition provided by Hays et al. (2013) was used. A “post that directly asked a question or requested some form of response” (p. 223) was considered interactive. If provider accounts were linked, meaning that the post was duplicated and shared across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, these posts were coded independently across the SNSs as this linking was believed to be done intentionally. If the agritourism providers’ themselves used the hashtag specific to their organization, this meant their posts or Tweets were collected and analyzed both in the provider section, and the hashtag section. The values associated with each of the categories were combined as descriptive statistics and are reported in the chapter that follows to summarize the various ways the five agritourism providers and consumers interact on SNSs.

Analysis of research question two. The model proposed by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) discussed above was used to analyze the following research question:

2. What is the nature of the social networking site content posted by agritourism providers and their consumers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?

The researcher used QSR NVivo for the analysis. A specific post or Tweet could be coded to multiple subcategories as they were not deemed mutually exclusive. The researcher proceeded in this manner instead of coding only sections of posts to subcategories because this way the researcher did not devoid the data of context, since coding separate statements could alter the meaning of what was expressed (Burnard, 1991). An inductive coding approach to determine the nature of SNS content specific to agritourism, without relying on previous tourism and SNS categories for analysis, was completed (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The analysis was completed in this fashion because there is no existing literature that supports that agritourism

SNSs are used in the same manner as other tourism contexts. This is dissimilar to Gibbs and Dancs' (2013) research where the primary category was coded from an existing framework, and then dispersed into subcategories. This thesis used the opposite approach to analysis, establishing specific subcategories to provide further insight to the nature of posts or Tweets. The researcher then proceeded by moving towards broad overarching categories (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This process allowed the researcher to interpret categories from the data, rather than following a predetermined framework (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The analysis occurred in this way because this research question necessitated an exploratory perspective to understand the nature of provider and consumer posts. Had the posts been reduced into too few categories initially, the analysis would represent broad findings instead of the detail that is included. Data analysis for qualitative research "involves our subjectivities: our personalities, our predispositions, our quirks" (Sipe & Ghiso, 2004, p. 483). This is acknowledged by the researcher and the coding sheets, included in Appendix C, provide a way for this subjectivity to be addressed. Coding sheets provide an understanding of how the researcher proceeded with the coding. Coding sheets were developed following the content analysis model of Elo and Kyngäs (2008) and were created independently for each SNS after the open coding process as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are distinct entities and should not be grouped together without reason (Hvass & Munar, 2012). However, the axial coding process revealed that the nature of provider and consumer content across the sites are comparable. Thus, one coding sheet is included to represent the categories and subcategories interpreted across the three sites which represented the data as a whole. Through analysis of the SNS content, posts were "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation" (Grbich, 2007, p. 21).

Analysis of research questions three and four. To address research questions three and

four, social media content analysis alone was not sufficient. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head of the SNS accounts for each agritourism provider, and the data collected were used to inform the following questions:

3. What are the general outcomes agritourism providers perceive as a result of using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as sites for their organization?
4. What are the perceptions of agritourism providers with regards to using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for providing free-choice learning opportunities, and what outcomes do they believe result from disseminating agricultural knowledge using these sites?

The interview guide used (Appendix A) began with general questions that encouraged participants to share critical information for the researcher to gain a better perspective of the agritourism provider in general, their social media use, and the educational opportunities at these agritourism destinations. This information also contributed to credibility as it provided the researcher with a general understanding of the participating organizations (Shenton, 2004). After the general questions, the questions that followed in the interview related directly to research questions three and four. The transcriptions from each agritourism provider interview were read thoroughly as “qualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and deep reflection on the emergent patterns of meanings of human experience” (Saldaña, 2009, p.10). When the researcher believed she understood the context and ideas presented, open coding was used to overview the data. Once all of the transcripts were open-coded, a comparison across providers occurred and the data was axial coded to further summarize the similarities and differences which existed in order to address the research questions. Using content analysis allowed the data

to be displayed as close to the original transcript dialogue as possible while still providing an analysis that summarized the data (Burnard, 1991).

QSR International NVivo 10 software. To assist in the data analysis for research questions two, three, and four, QSR International NVivo 10 Software was used. Using this software ensured that data analysis was structured and organized which facilitated a deeper understanding of the data for the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Burnard et al., 2008; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Although the technology allowed for different queries and automated searches, it was still the onus of the researcher to complete the synthesis through coding (Burnard et al., 2008; Creswell, 2013). Using NVivo 10 ensured that the researcher carefully mulled through the data instead of skimming through a hard copy document (Creswell, 2013). The inductive coding process allowed for categories, or ‘nodes’ as they are termed in NVivo, to be created. ‘Child nodes’, which acted as subcategories, were also established when different concepts and ideas were interpreted. These nodes were moved around freely as the data analysis occurred. Depending on the connections established between nodes and the data, categories were collapsed and redefined during the process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Throughout the data analysis, the researcher wrote interpretive memos and saved earlier versions of the project which act as an audit trail for how categories were developed and refined. Within NVivo 10, there are functions that allowed the researcher to keep memos for reflections, and “such self-reflections allow the researcher to trace ideas, understand their own thinking and develop further insights” (Cleary et al., 2014, p. 712). This “decision trail” (Sandelowski, 1986, p. 33) was essential for contributing to the trustworthiness of the study based on the commentary provided by the researcher (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). NVivo 10 software allowed categories and the rules for coding to be descriptively defined in the program. These categories were

described in NVivo 10 in the same manner as the definitions offered by the coding sheets (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). It is understood that a researcher may hold a particular bias towards the data in their project (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). However, for this thesis it was not the intention of the researcher to remove bias, but instead address it through reflexivity and transparency.

Overall, this chapter provided information related to the interpretive framework, the mixed methods research approach, and an overview of the data collection and analysis that contributed to answering the research questions. The social media content analysis method coupled with the semi-structured interviews advances the agritourism literature by including both quantitative and qualitative analysis which provided description of the multiple cases and the SNSs used.

Chapter Four: Results and Findings

Following a pragmatic framework, quantitative results and qualitative findings are presented based on the analysis required to answer the research questions in their entirety. An overview of general and specific SNSs information to add context for the results and findings of research question one, two, three, and four is provided in Appendix D.

Research Question One Results

Analysis of research question one addressed:

1. How are agritourism providers and their consumers interacting with social networking site content on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?

This section presents the results of the data collected from SNSs by following and adapting the quantitative content analysis categories and processes outlined by Hays et al. (2013). Research question one was addressed through an amalgamation of agritourism provider and consumer content across the five organizations. However, specific results for Boonstra Farms, Deer Meadow Farms, St. Norbert Farmers' Market, Integrity Foods, and Harvest Moon Society can be found in Appendix E.

Facebook. Categories for the Facebook analysis were adapted based on an initial coding of posts and the previous categories of Hays et al. (2013). Table 6 outlines the data analyzed for this SNS.

Table 6

Categories for the Analysis of Provider and Visitor Posts on Facebook

Data origin	Categories
Provider and visitor	Are there likes on the original posts?
Facebook posts	How many likes?
	Have the original posts been shared?
	How many shares?
	Are there tags in the posts?
	How many users?
	Are there hashtags in the posts?
	How many hashtags?
	Are there comments on the original posts?
	How many comments?
	Are there comment likes?
	How many comment likes?
	Are there comment replies?
	How many comment replies?
	Are there comment reply likes?
	How many comment reply likes?
	Is the post interactive?
	Does the post include other content?
	Does it include a link?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a Facebook album?*
	Does it include a video?
	Does it include shared content from another user?*
	Does it include a Facebook event?*
	Does the post request User Generated Content?
	Is it requesting photos?
	Is it requesting videos?
	Is it requesting audio?
	Do the comments on the post contain other content?
	Does it include a link?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?
	Do the comment replies contain other content?
	Does it include a link?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?

An ‘*’ indicates categories are not possible for visitor posts on Facebook

Provider Facebook posts. There were a total 283 provider posts, 540 comments, and 111 comment replies analyzed for the provider Facebook pages. Below, percent of posts (%) was

calculated in relation to the total number of posts per section.

Table 7

Provider Facebook Posts Results

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Likes	90.1	5655
Shares	24.0	914
Tags	0	0
Hashtags	3.2	9
Comments	43.5	540
Comment likes	35.6	257
Comment replies	20.6	110
Comment reply likes	29.1	45

Through the quantitative content analysis, the number of posts that were interactive were examined. Interactive posts “directly asked a question or requested some form of response” (Hays et al., 2013, p. 223). From the total 283 provider posts, 8.5% were interactive. As well, Facebook allows agritourism providers and consumers to share varied forms of content in posts. Table 8 describes the prevalence of content included in the original post made by agritourism providers, the comments, and the comment replies, on the agritourism provider posts. While no posts requested UGC, there were still comments and comment replies that contained links or photos.

Table 8

Content Included in Provider Facebook Posts

	Link		Photo		Video		Album		Shared content		Facebook event	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Provider Posts	10.1	21	60.0	120	1.4	3	1.9	4	19.3	40	7.7	16
Comments	0.6	3	1.1	6	0	0	X	X	X	X	X	X
Comment Replies	4.5	5	0	0	0	0	X	X	X	X	X	X

* An ‘X’ indicates that this content sharing feature is not available

Visitor Facebook posts. This section addresses the visitor Facebook post results which are posts shared to the agritourism provider Facebook pages by consumers. There were 234 visitor Facebook posts with 116 comments, and 46 comment replies. The frequency of provider and consumer engagement is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Visitor Facebook Posts Results

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total Number
Likes	35.0	580
Shares	11.5	54
Tags	0	0
Hashtags	4.3	51
Comments	27.4	116
Comment likes	57.8	70
Comment replies	39.7	46
Comment reply likes	43.5	20

None of the visitor Facebook posts requested UGC, but 86.8% of posts were interactive. There were fewer options available on Facebook for consumers to share content on the site in comparison to the options available to the agritourism providers. The options included links, photos, and videos and 41.0% of consumer posts shared content with the provider.

Table 10

Content Included in Visitor Facebook Posts

	Link		Photo		Video	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Visitor posts	3.4	8	35.9	84	0.4	1
Comments	0	0	0.9	1	0	0
Comment replies	2.2	1	2.2	1	0	0

Provider interaction on Facebook. Results specific to agritourism providers and their level of interaction and engagement were obtained. This section provides the results of provider

specific interactions on their own Facebook posts, as well as the visitor posts exchanged by consumers on their organization pages.

Provider interaction on provider Facebook posts. To analyze how agritourism providers interacted with their consumers on their own Facebook posts, the questions listed in Table 11 were addressed. The researcher believed that this would provide descriptive insight to the level of interaction agritourism providers are maintaining across their SNSs.

Table 11

Categories for Provider-Specific Interactions on Provider Posts

Origin	Categories
Provider posts	<p>Are there comments from the provider?</p> <p>How many comments from the provider?</p> <p>Do the provider comments contain other content?</p> <p>Does it include a link?</p> <p>Does it include a photo?</p> <p>Does it include a video?</p> <p>Are there comment likes from the provider?</p> <p>How many comment likes from the provider?</p> <p>Are there comment replies from the provider?</p> <p>How many comment replies?</p> <p>Do the provider's comment replies contain other content?</p> <p>Does it include a link?</p> <p>Does it include a photo?</p> <p>Does it include a video?</p> <p>Are there comment reply likes from the provider?</p> <p>How many comment reply likes from the provider?</p>

Comments, comment likes, comment replies, and comment reply likes, were calculated to gain an understanding of how providers were interacting with consumers across Facebook and the results are presented in Table 12. It was rare for provider comments to include other content such as links, photos, or videos, and this is presented in Table 13.

Table 12

Provider Interaction on Provider Facebook Posts

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Comments	5.0	27
Comment likes	18.0	97
Comment replies	35.5	39
Comment reply likes	11.8	13

Table 13

Content Shared by Provider on Provider Posts

	Link		Photo		Video	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Comments	0	0	0.7	4	0	0
Comment replies	4.5	5	0	0	0	0

Provider interaction on visitor Facebook posts. The interactions by agritourism providers on the Facebook posts of visitors were examined as well through the categories in Table 14.

Table 14

Categories for Provider-Specific Interactions on Visitor Posts

Data origin	Categories
Visitor posts	Are there likes on the visitor post by the provider?
	How many likes?
	Are there shares of the visitor post by the provider?
	How many visitor posts have been shared by the provider?
	Are there comments from the provider?
	How many provider comments?
	Do the provider comments contain other content?
	Does it include a link?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?
	Are there comment likes from the provider?
	How many comment likes from the provider?
	Are there comment replies from the provider?
	How many comment replies from the provider?
	Do the provider comment replies contain other content?
	Does it include a link?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?
	Are there comment reply likes from the provider?
	How many comment reply likes from the provider?

The cumulative number of likes, shares, comments, comment likes, comment replies, and comment reply likes completed by agritourism providers on visitor posts were analyzed and the results are included in Table 15. Further, whether the agritourism providers were interacting with the visitor Facebook posts through sharing content is examined in Table 16.

Table 15

Provider Interaction on Visitor Facebook Posts

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Likes	5.1	12
Shares	7.7	18
Comments	22.4	26
Comment likes	6.0	7
Comment replies	8.7	4
Comment reply likes	0	0

Table 16

Content Shared by Provider on Visitor Posts

	Link		Photo		Video	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Comments	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comment replies	0.9	1	0.9	1	0	0

Twitter. Twitter is a distinct SNS compared to Facebook. Hays et al.'s (2013) content analysis categories were modified for this thesis to address how agritourism providers and their followers interacted, and to acknowledge how consumers disseminated information related to the agritourism organizations through their use of hashtags.

Provider Tweets. Table 17 below presents the categories followed for analysis of agritourism provider Tweets.

Table 17

Categories for the Analysis of Provider Tweets

Data origin	Categories
Provider Tweets	Are there mentions in the original Tweet?
	How many users?
	Are there hashtags?
	How many hashtags?
	Is the Tweet a retweet?
	Is it a retweet because the organization was mentioned in the Tweet?
	Is it a retweet to share relevant information from another user?
	Is the Tweet a quote tweet?
	Are there likes on the provider Tweet?
	How many likes?
	Are there retweets on the provider Tweet?
	How many retweets?
	Are there replies to the Tweet?
	How many replies?
	Is the Tweet interactive?
	Does the Tweet, Retweet or quote Tweet include other content?
	Does it include a link?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?
	Does the Tweet request User Generated Content?
	Is it requesting photos?
	Is it requesting videos?
	Is it requesting audio?
	Do the Tweet replies contain other content?
	Does it include a link?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?

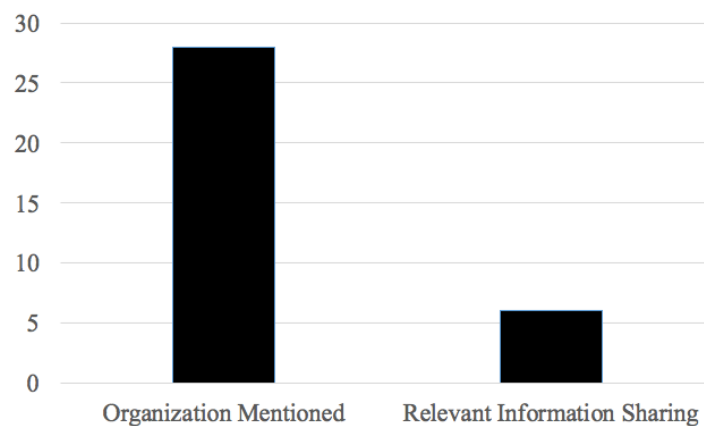
There were 217 provider original Tweets, 36 retweets, 15 quote Tweets and an associated 18 replies for provider Tweets on Twitter, and the ways in which agritourism providers shared content to their followers are presented.

Table 18

Provider Tweets Results

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Mentions	19.0	51
Hashtags	46.6	125
Retweets	13.4	36
Quote Tweets	5.6	15
Likes	49.6	312
Retweeted by followers	44.7	246
Replies	6.2	18

Following Hays et al. (2013) content analysis dichotomy for retweets, providers either retweeted content that contained the organization's hashtag, or because the Tweet contained information relevant to the provider.

*Figure 4. Reason for retweets by provider*

Twitter affords users the capability to append content to their Tweets. The prevalence of Tweets, retweets and quote Tweets that contained content during the July, August, and September data collection period were explored. In total, 11.7% of Tweets were interactive and no Tweets requested UGC.

Table 19

Content Included in Provider Tweets

	Link		Photo		Video	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Tweets	24.9	54	23.0	50	0.46	1
Retweets	0	0	72.2	26	0	0
Quote Tweets	6.7	1	0	0	0	0
Comment replies	0	0	5.6	1	0	0

Twitter hashtag content. The content analysis of Twitter posts included categories to analyze the number of mentions, hashtags, likes, retweets, or replies to the consumer Tweets.

Table 20

Categories for the Analysis of Hashtag Tweets

Data origin	Categories
Hashtag Tweets	Are there mentions in the original Tweet? How many users? How many hashtags? Are there likes on the hashtag Tweet? How many likes? Are there retweets on the hashtag Tweet? How many retweets? Are there replies to the Tweet? How many replies? Is the Tweet interactive? Does the Tweet include other content? Does it include a link? Does it include a photo? Does it include a video? Does the Tweet request User Generated Content? Is it requesting photos? Is it requesting videos? Is it requesting audio? Do the Tweet replies contain other content? Does it include a link? Does it include a photo? Does it include a video?

In total, there were 60 hashtag Tweets analyzed, two of which were interactive. Table 21 presents the frequency of hashtag Tweets in relation to the above categories.

Table 21

Hashtag Tweets Results

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Mentions	41.7	25
Hashtags	100	237
Likes	50.0	49
Retweets	15.0	11
Replies	0	0

Following the categories of analysis, there were no hashtag Tweets that requested UGC and no Tweet replies that contained other content.

Table 22

Content Included in Hashtag Tweets

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Link	40.0	24
Photo	36.7	22
Video	0	0

Provider interaction with consumers on Twitter. To identify how providers directly interacted with consumers, Table 23 includes the questions used for analysis. The categories below were created independently by the researcher based on Twitter interaction tools such as replies, likes, and retweets.

Table 23

Categories for Provider-Specific Interactions on Twitter

Data origin	Categories
Provider Tweets	Are there replies from the provider? How many provider replies? Do the provider replies contain other content? Does it include a link? Does it include a photo? Does it include a video?
Hashtag Tweets	Are there retweets from providers? How many retweets? Are there likes from the providers? How many likes? Are there replies from providers? How many provider replies? Do the provider replies contain other content? Does it include a link? Does it include a photo? Does it include a video?

The analysis demonstrated that agritourism providers did not respond to any of the 18 consumer replies on Twitter. Similarly, on hashtag Tweets, providers did not engage with consumers through liking or replying. However, providers retweeted 3.3% of the 60 hashtag Tweets.

Instagram. Provider Instagram posts were analyzed across the three providers who use this site. The hashtag posts that represented the specific agritourism organizations were analyzed as well.

Provider Instagram posts.

Table 24

Categories for the Analysis of Provider Posts on Instagram

Data origin	Categories
Provider posts	Are there tags in the post?
	How many users?
	Are there hashtags?
	How many hashtags?
	Is the post interactive?
	Is the post a repost from another user?
	Are there likes on the post?
	How many likes?
	Are there comments?
	How many comments?
	What content is included with the post?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?
	Does the post request User Generated Content?
	Is it requesting photos?
	Is it requesting videos?

Although individuals can post both photo or video content on Instagram, all of the 12 provider posts were photos. There were no interactive posts as defined by Hays et al.'s categories (2013), and no posts requested UGC. The results of provider and consumer interactions through comments, likes, hashtags, tags, and reposts are displayed in Table 25.

Table 25

Provider Instagram Posts Results

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Comments	41.7	7
Likes	91.7	108
Hashtags	33.3	4
Tags	0	0
Reposts	0	0

Instagram hashtag content. There were a total of 457 posts that used the hashtags specific to the five agritourism providers in this research. The categories used for analysis of the hashtag content are presented below.

Table 26

Categories for the Analysis of Hashtag Posts on Instagram

Data origin	Categories
Hashtag posts	Are there tags in the post?
	How many users?
	How many hashtags?
	Is the post interactive?
	Are there likes on the post?
	How many likes?
	Are there comments on the post?
	How many comments?
	What content is included with the post?
	Does it include a photo?
	Does it include a video?
	Does the post request User Generated Content?
	Is it requesting photos?
	Is it requesting videos?
	Is it requesting hashtag use?
	Is it requesting a repost?

As an overview of the content included with the hashtag posts, photos were included with 444 hashtag posts, and 13 hashtag posts included videos.

Table 27

Hashtag Instagram Posts Results

	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Comments	48.1	474
Likes	99.1	10 147
Hashtags	100	3554
Tags	15.5	94

It resulted that 3.1% of hashtag posts were interactive. As well, 2.2% of all posts requested UGC, with nine requesting the use of a particular hashtag, and one post requesting others to repost.

Provider interaction on Instagram. Similar to Facebook and Twitter above, provider specific interactions on Instagram were analyzed.

Table 28

Categories for Provider-Specific Interactions on Instagram

Data origin	Categories
Provider posts	Are there comments on the original post by the provider? How many comments?
Hashtag posts	Are there comments by the provider on the hashtag post? How many comments?

On Instagram, the main methods of interactions are commenting on or liking posted images. The researcher acknowledges that providers could potentially interact with consumer posts by liking content posted by others on Instagram. However, the data for this research was collected from www.instagram.com, and the usernames of those who like posts are unavailable to the public. Therefore, it is unknown whether agritourism providers are interacting with hashtag content by liking these posts on Instagram. With regards to the original provider content, the agritourism organizations using this site did not post any comments on their own posts regardless of consumer responses. As well, these providers did comment on the hashtags posts.

Overall, this section presented the quantitative results, which addressed how agritourism providers and their consumers are interacting with agritourism related content shared on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram sites.

Research Question Two Findings

Research question two used qualitative content analysis to analyze 2,152 posts and Tweets across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The posts and Tweets of agritourism providers and consumers were analyzed to answer:

2. What is the nature of the social networking site content posted by agritourism providers and their consumers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?

To address research question two, data were analyzed based on the following breakdown in Table 29.

Table 29

Content Included in Research Question Two Analysis

Social Networking Site	Data origin	Content coded
Facebook	Provider posts	Provider posts Comments on provider posts Comment replies on provider posts
	Visitor posts	Visitor posts Comments on visitor posts Comment replies on visitor posts
Twitter	Provider Tweets	Provider Tweets Retweets Quote Tweets Replies to provider Tweets
	Hashtag content	Hashtag content
Instagram	Provider posts	Provider posts Comments on provider posts
	Hashtag content	Hashtag content

For the hashtag content on Twitter and Instagram, the associated Tweet replies or post comments were not included in the analysis because the content analysis from research question one revealed that providers and consumers are not interacting through these means. Therefore,

including it in the analysis would not address the nature of provider and consumer Tweets or posts, but instead demonstrate the nature of interactions between consumers and their followers, which is beyond the scope of this research.

Overarching categories were determined by the researcher from an initial analysis of all posts or Tweets present, following Table 29 above. Using open coding, subcategories identified across the agritourism sites were condensed into overarching categories to form a well-rounded understanding based on the multiple agritourism cases observed. Following the content analysis process outlined by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), and using an inductive content analysis approach allowed the researcher to interpret 27 subcategories that were condensed to represent the data in seven overarching categories. The nature of the posts included: informational, enquiries, sentiment, solicitation, phatic, personal engagement and relations, and unclassifiable. The subcategories of each of these will be further discussed in detail as this is how the posts were coded because this examination of subcategories provides depth to the nature of the SNS content. The researcher acknowledges that there are spelling and grammatical errors in the quotations that follow, but these are direct quotes from posts or Tweets and therefore have not been altered.

Informational. Posts classified as informational were established using the following definition: Knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance (Dictionary.com, 2016) with the intent of the providers or consumers to disseminate awareness through a post or Tweet. There were seven subcategories associated with the informational posts category and they are described in detail below.

Admission, price, and purchase information. Admission, price, and purchase information was defined as a post or Tweet that contained information pertaining to admission, the price of a product or on-site experience, or a post or Tweet which provided information about

how to purchase an item, or methods of payment available. Information pertaining to admission was typically communicated as: “Goats are celebrating Canada Day! We're open 10am-6pm! \$7/admission today!” (DFPP1), “the Admission cost is \$10 for anybody 3 and up” (DFPR67), and “CONCERT TONIGHT! Come for pizza and then some great music by our Albertan friend, Jake Ian. Starts at 8:00 pm. Admission by donation” (IFPP7). The prices of products or on-site experiences were also included: “Raspberries are picked in small baskets, I think they would be about 2 lb and it's \$9 per basket. Strawberries are \$12 per basket” (BFPR166) and “‘medium’ Boquets for \$12 #StNorbertFarmersMarket #FarmerFlorist #FlowerFarmer #Local #Fresh #ManitobaGrown” (SIHP284) are examples. Different pricing strategies were also communicated to followers:

New pineapple, crochet 1/2, and destroyed black & blue denim shorts coming tomorrow!
Still buy 1 get 1 for ½ as well as for any air you buy, you can pick a clearance for free!
#stnorbert #stnorbertfarmersmarket #market #farmersmarket #winnipeg #manitoba
#canada #vsco #vscocam #socality #socalitywinnipeg #liveauthentic #pineapple
#pineappleshorts #handmade #levis #cutoffs (SIHP142)

Posts or Tweets related to prices of the on-site experience were: “The Bouncer is free, but there is a cost tot the pony rides. They are provided by Aurora Farm, and are approx. \$2 / ride” (SFPR1). Information about how to purchase certain products was also communicated: “Still 10 days to get your #hmf2015 tickets at early-bird prices. Order online at <http://harvestmoonfestival.ca/tickets.html>” (HTPT54), and “you can also get tickets at Organic Planet (WPG), Two Farm Kids (#bdnmb), and the Clearwater Country Market. Early bird price til Labour Day” (HTPT72), are examples. There were also informational posts and Tweets relayed that addressed the methods of payment available at the agritourism destination.

Specifically, “No they take debit as well” (BFPR57) and “\$12 u pick. \$18 pre picked. Debit accepted. Just there this morning, lots of big berries, did 6 pails in an hour” (BFPC19).

Animal knowledge. Animal knowledge was a subcategory of informational defined as: A post or Tweet that shared information related to animals with regards to their behaviours, opportunity for interaction, or general knowledge involving the physical aspects of animals and their agricultural use, or appearance. For example, agritourism providers shared information about the breed: “They are Fallow Deer...native to Europe and they have color variations from white to brown and spotted” (DFOR27). Informational posts or Tweets regarding animal physical appearances included: “Still in velvet for another week or so...” (DFPC115). The animal knowledge subcategory also presented information about animals on-site: “We are open 10-6 today! We have adorable babies in Bunnyville!” (DFPP123). As well, general knowledge about the animals included: “Five day old piglet. So cute. #stnorbertfarmersmarket #familytime #myson #cute #farmersmarket #farmanimals #Saturday #funday #ordinary” (SIHP457) as it shared information pertaining to animals at the agritourism destination.

Environment and weather condition. The environment and weather condition subcategory include posts or Tweets that gave information related to the physical condition of the agritourism site, the environment in general or provided information about the local weather. With regards to the physical condition of the agritourism site or the environment in general, content included: “The Farm is OPEN Labor Day (today) from 10am-6pm! There's mud everywhere so bring boots or wait til it's dry. Load your phone with a QR code scanner or NFC TAP App if you plan on doing the maze...and bring bug spray!” (DFPP145) or “closed for the day! Too much wet stuff for now. Try again tomorrow” (DFPP61). It was common for information about the local weather to be shared across the SNSs. “No rain here, we are open for

strawberries and raspberries today!” (BFPP164), “vendors are wrapping it up early for the first time in many many years....hail, torrential rain, and wind. A big thank you to all the great market visitors for coming out!” (SFPP65) and “it's grey outside but surprisingly nice so far. .Visit us today 8 am to 3 pm” (STPT40), are examples.

Event and experience information. Posts or Tweets that provided information about an event related to the agritourism provider or a specific experience that was being offered, is what defined content as belonging to this subcategory. Examples included: “Great turn out at the #July1stBallTournament in Clearwater! Sadly, the home team lost in the final. #BetterThanBeingRainedOut” (HTPT1), “visit a farm on your drive home from the Harvest Moon festival, cuz Sept 20th is #OpenFarmDay! #MBAg @MBGovAg <http://ow.ly/RNOOp>” (HTPT70) and “Village Green will teach you how to English Country dance today at 1 at the market!” (STPT47).

General information. This subcategory included posts or Tweets that contained agritourism site-specific information that did not fit in to the other informational subcategories. “International Visitors to the farm this year from China, Luxembourg, England, and Dubai! How cool is that? No corn mazes in Dubai apparently” (DFPP39) and “students were given opportunity to photograph our farm and this is some of their work on a class field trip” (DFPP178) are posts that represent the general information subcategory.

Product availability or product knowledge. Posts and Tweets of the product availability or product knowledge nature were prevalent across the SNSs. These included posts or Tweets that contained information about particular agriculture products and their availability, products related to the agritourism organization, or shared product specific knowledge that described and informed consumers of potential product uses. In regard to products and their availability,

examples were: “We're open today until 6! We still have lots of beautiful berries 🍓” (BFPP5), and “crisp cucumbers, fingerling carrots, new potatoes and Manitoba maple syrup! All available at <http://ow.ly/PDENB> . Orders close today!!!” (HTPT8). As well, information about when products were available was communicated: “Mmmmm...corn chowder time! Today at the market 8 am to 3 pm” (SFPP172), and “farm is OPEN today from 10am-8pm! Lots of animals to see and touch. Concession stand has ice cream, freezies, chips, cold drinks, hot dogs & smokies. Farm store has jam, syrup, honey and hand made soaps” (DFPP18). For informing consumers of potential consumption or use, content included examples such as: “Harvesting and drying the bounty of plants with medicinal properties in the Harvest Moon gardens to make some skin-healing salves!” (HFPP18) and “campers at the New Moon Kids Camp got groovy this week making tie-dye shirts! The home-made natural dyes were all made from plants in the Harvest Moon gardens” (HFPP25).

Schedules and hours information. Content in this subcategory included posts or Tweets that made reference to the schedule of events occurring in relation to the agritourism organization, the hour's attractions were offered, or information regarding hours of operation. For information regarding hours of operation content included: “Open Monday 8am-8pm for strawberries 🍓” (BFPP12) and “we're MOOOOOre than happy to tell you...We're OPEN today from 10am-8pm!!!” (DFPP7). For the schedule of events occurring, examples in this subcategory were: “So excited to have Dan Frechette and Laurel Thomsen back in town. Live at the market Saturday 10 am to noon!” (SFPP14) and:

Pizza Night - last weekend of the season. Come on by! Weather will be great. Friday and Saturday - 5:00 to 9:00. Closing the season with Open Farm Day on Sunday. We are open 1:00 - 6:00. Pizza available and some harvest soup. (IFPP13)

Enquiries. Content in the enquiries category included posts or Tweets with a “request for information” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) in question format with the purpose of engaging providers or consumers to ideally elicit a response to the query. There were six subcategories interpreted which are explored in detail below.

Admission, price, and purchase enquiries. A post or Tweet that asked for information pertaining to admission, the price of a product or on-site experience, or which requested information about how to purchase an item, or methods of payment available in question format, were included in this subcategory. Questions about admission included: “Does the petting zoo have an admission cost?” (BFCP104). With regards to the price of a product: “What is your price for u pick strawberries?”, and for an experience offered on-site: “Is there a cost associated with the bouncer and pony rides? Thx” (SFPC1), are examples. For enquiries regarding the method of payment available on-site coded content included: “Hello! Just wondering if you are cash only, or if you’re set up to take credit/debit? Thanks ☺” (BFCP6)

Animal information enquiries. For the animal information enquiry subcategory, posts or Tweets that requested information related to animal behaviours, opportunities for interaction, or general knowledge involving the physical aspects of animals for their agricultural use, or appearance in question format, were included. In regards to animal behaviours, queries such as “Why do baby animals need colostrum? Find out by playing Harvest Moon Trivia! <http://ow.ly/P6Z3C> #LocalFood #FarmWisdom #WinPrizes” (HTPT2) were coded. For animal availability for interaction examples included: “Hi there- do you have pigs/piglets?” (DFCP17). Queries in regards to animal appearances or general information about animals occurred as well. Specifically, “why are they two different colours or is it cause one is a girl and one is a boy” (DFPC26) and “what breed is this?” (DFPC72) were examples.

Conversational or engagement enquiries. Posts or Tweets that included a statement in question format that looked to engage with the provider or consumer but did not seek information other than a conversational or opinion based response, were coded as a conversational or engagement enquiry. “You excited for @thebroslandreth to play #hmf2015? We sure are! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Lgy4u0owPY>” (HTPT20) and “where has the summer gone? Setting up for our last Wednesday market of the season, 11 am to 3 pm. Our outdoor market is still open Saturdays until October, and then our winter market goes inside bi-weekly all winter long!” (SFPP58) are examples of this nature.

General enquiries. Posts or Tweets that contained agritourism site-specific enquiries, that did not fit in to the other enquiries subcategories, were coded as general enquiries. For example, queries included questions about the accessibility of the agritourism destination: “This looks fabulous!! Would my daughter's wheelchair be able to navigate the labrinth?” (DFPC133). As well: “How does someone apply to become a vendor” (SFPC48) is another example of content included in this subcategory.

Product availability or product knowledge enquiries. This subcategory included posts or Tweets containing questions about particular agriculture products, products related to the agritourism organization, or product specific knowledge that described and informed of potential consumption or uses. For this subcategory, enquiries included: “Is the lady that make those wonderful dot cookies at the market this year? What about the bannock guy? Looked for them today. Thanks” (SFPC4), and “really hoping to find fresh honeycomb this weekend. The website says Phil's Honey has it, but I don't know if I can ever recall seeing it there. Does anyone know if it might be available?” (SFPC99).

Schedule and hours enquiries. Posts or Tweets in question format that asked for information regarding the schedule of events occurring in relation to the agritourism organization, the hours they were offering certain attractions, or information regarding hours of operation, were coded as schedule and hours enquiries. “Are you guys open tomorrow?” (BFPC29) and “can you tell me if you're open next weekend?” (DFPC73) were common as examples of consumers seeking information related to the agritourism destination’s hours of operation. The SNSs were also used by consumers to enquire whether content received from other sources was accurate: “I looked in your site it says open Monday 8 to 8 but others say your close due to rain. Can you pls reply to this and let me know if you will be open?” (BFPC46).

Sentiment. “An attitude, thought, or judgment prompted by feeling” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) that involved responsive opinion sharing related to posts, Tweets, events, or experiences, was the definition established by the researcher for sentiment. There were four subcategories included: acknowledgement, accolades, appreciation, and displeasure.

Acknowledgements. Posts or Tweets that expressed responses to content shared with a reaction noting the individual had attained an understanding of the content, or expressed an opinion, were included in this subcategory. Positive acknowledgements often included: “Pretty picture” (BFPC23), or “beautiful!” (DFPC23). Expressed opinions examples included: “We are a hardy lot!” (SFPC63) and “that is great news! So happy for you!!” (DFPC50).

Accolades. Posts or Tweets with an announcement of “award or expression of praise” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) towards products, providers or consumers, or an experience, were classified in the accolades subcategory. Examples included: “The surprise highlight for me today was to see Dan Frechette. What a great performance!” (SFPC37). Providers also received accolades from their consumers: “You have posted some great pics recently! I enjoy my 'virtual

tours' of DMFCM&HF! Way to go! ☺” (DFPC119) and “.@HarvestMoonSoc is once again putting on a freaking fantastic festival. Great music and beautiful people. #hmf2015” (HTHP149). Accolades towards products were expressed as well. For example, “Thank you Boonstra Farms!! Your berries are to die for!! SO GOOD this year” (BFCP31).

Appreciation. Posts or Tweets that expressed a “feeling of being grateful for something” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) including an experience, providers or consumers, or quality of a product, were coded to this subcategory. Appreciation for experiences was expressed through posts or Tweets like the following:

I took my kids to your farm on saturday. I was a little nervous as I was by myself and my youngest is quite young, but everyone was very kind and helpful! My kids and I had a blast picking strawberries, and at the kids zone and ended our trip with an ice cream. Special thanks to the one young girl who looked after my little girl on the train ride. So thanks all! ☺ (BFCP15)

Providers expressed appreciation for their consumers: “Vendors are wrapping it up early for the first time in many many years....hail, torrential rain, and wind. A big thank you to all the great market visitors for coming out!” (SFPP65), while consumers also posted content demonstrating appreciation towards providers: “I made some delicious scones today, with berries from your farm. Thank you!!” (BFCP72).

Displeasure. Posts or Tweets that contained sentiments of displeasure were rare. However, they did occur and represent the uncommon findings. Content in this subcategory included: “W The strawberries are way over priced. Connery's charges \$14.00 for a four litre basket of prepicked Berries” (SFPC19) and “your ad says open Sundays! We kept today open

just for picking only to find out that you're closed! False advertising??? So disappointed”
(BFPC48)

Solicitation. Posts or Tweets coded as solicitation in nature had a purpose of communicating ideas that elicited a physical or social reaction from others. The researcher followed this definition which resulted in five subcategories: encouraged experience, general request, purchase or registration encouragement, request for interaction, and visit invitation.

Encouraged experiences. Posts or Tweets that urged providers or consumers to take action and become involved with an offered experience or event were coded as encouraged experiences. Examples included: “Thinking about getting into sustainable #grassfed beef? Don't miss this regenerative grazing course coming to MB!” (HTPP14) and:

We have some market photo contest winners, and some beautiful photos to show for it. Not all winning photos are posted, because Facebook only accepts certain formats, but here are a few of the winners. Be sure to enter for August, September and October, and you can win market prizes, too!! (SFPP54)

General request. The general request subcategory included posts or Tweets that requested providers or consumers to engage with an action that did not fit the other solicitation subcategories because of its agritourism site-specific relation. “Can u please send me information for birthdays please?” (DFPC155) and the following, are examples of this nature:

Hey guys! My ride fell through and so I was wondering if anyone was heading up tomorrow (Saturday) at any point during the day and had a spare seat in their car I would greatly appreciate it, I would supply gas money and treats of your choice. Thanks!
(HFCP10)

Purchase or registration encouragement. To code content to this subcategory, the following definition was used by the researcher: a post or Tweet that included a call to action where the provider or consumer was prompted to purchase a product or register for an experience or event. Posts that encouraged a consumer to purchase a product included:

Looking for a way to get sustainably produced local meats, grains and veggies into your life? Order from www.harvestmoonfood.ca today, and have your groceries delivered directly from our farms to your neighbourhood next Wednesday! It's that easy! ***This month we have Manitoba Maple Syrup!*** (HFPP9)

Consumers were also encouraged to purchase products related to the agritourism organization.

Examples included: “Tickets are on sale for the 14th perennial Harvest Moon Festival! Get yours today! #hmf2015” (HFPP16) and “so excited to be hosting this Sept. 10 event in partnership with Food Matters Manitoba. Mark your calendars, and order your tickets online now!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/870809016300398/>” (SFPP42). Also, posts or Tweets of this nature encouraged individuals to register for experiences: “Last year's New Moon Kids Camp was so much fun! This year, we have exciting new activities planned, lots of outdoor time to play and explore, and healthy homemade snacks and lunches! Register today at: newmoon@harvestmoonsociety.org” (HFPP3).

Request for interaction. Content coded in the request for interaction subcategory were interpreted as posts or Tweets that prompted a response from providers or consumers in which they would interact with SNS content by liking, sharing, posting, or viewing content; or a post or Tweet that elicited a personal interaction with the provider or consumer. “DonaMADE Cookies and Sweaters for your DOGWILL be there tomorrow! Come on by and say hi!” (SFCP42) is an example of content that requested in-person interaction. Posts or Tweets in this subcategory that

pined for interaction on SNSs included: “Wanna know what's going on at Harvest Moon these days? Follow our Intern's Blog: <http://harvestmooninternship2015.tumblr.com>” (HFPP5), and “one can never have enough snack ideas on hand so why not give these Apple Pizzas loaded with Fauxnola a try 🍎! Head over to our Facebook page and check out the recipe (link in profile!) 🙏” (SIHP426). There were also instances where providers requested the help of their followers to promote their agritourism destination: “Hi Everyone! We have worked tirelessly over the past 2 months to make your farm experience the best possible! Please help spread the word and 'share' us with your friends and family! Thanx” (DFPP206).

Visit invitation. Posts or Tweets that encouraged a consumer or provider to visit the agritourism destination or another specific location, were coded as visit invitation. Examples were: “OPEN Tues-Sat from 10-6 and Wed open 'til 8! Concession stand has ice cream, hotdogs, smokies and more. Farm store has jams, syrup, honey & eggs. Come visit us soon!” (DFPP29) and “wow, a stunningly warm fall market day...be sure to visit us today. We're here from 8 am to 3 pm” (SFPP193).

Phatic. The phatic category consisted of five subcategories: caption and description, experience statement, general statement, greeting statement, and personal statement. Phatic posts or Tweets did not communicate attitudes of sentiment or contain information, but served a purpose to establish sociability (adapted from MacKay et al., 2014).

Caption and description. Posts or Tweets of the caption and description nature contained statements related to appended media content. These statements did not elaborate further but included a textual quip that described the included photo or video. “Vanilla Bag-O-Dots#stnorbertfarmersmarket” (SIHP42), “🐐

#bling #summervibes #chillin#stnorbertfarmersmarket #explore204#vscocam” (SIHP56), and “The Boys of Summer – 2015” (DFPP34) are examples.

Experience statement. For the experience statement subcategory, posts or Tweets that included a phatic expression of an experience that did not include information or express sentiment to the providers or consumers, were coded. Examples comprised of statements such as: “We saw it when we were there this morning” (DFPC189), “will be there !!” (BFPC62) and “we hiked to Gull Harbour and had dinner there ☺ walked back in the dark at midnight ☺” (IFPC7).

General statement. The general statement subcategory included posts or Tweets with general expressions that did not fit within the other phatic subcategories. “I hope it's not the elder Friesens who took this picture....that's too high up! Lol” (IFPC2) and “we're back with bells on!” (STPP45) were coded as such.

Greeting statement. Posts or Tweets that contained salutations to the general public or to providers to convey sociability but did not include a sentiment, were coded as greeting statements. Salutations to the general public included: “Happy Canada Day Everyone! We will be at St. Norbert Farmers’ Market from 11-9 all day long- come nosh on some goodies- there is also live entertainment and fire works –it’s going to be a dandy! #lovelocal #theGreatestCountryInTheWorls” (SFCP2). Whereas greetings to providers resembled: “Good morning Boonstra farm! We are planning to go there today however google maps and my GPS can't find your location. We're from Wpg” (BFPC52).

Personal statement. For the personal statement subcategory, posts or Tweets that included expressions or statements specific to the individual sharing the content, were coded. “I love a good storm!” (SFPC83) and “laughing so hard my face hurt was exactly what I needed

this weekend. And boy, did Harvest Moon deliver. 🌕🌕🌕 #hmf2015” (HIHP71) are examples of content of this nature.

Personal engagement and relations. Posts or Tweets that connected with a user to draw their attention to the content by simply including their @username, or for self-serving purposes such as experience planning or general banter that did not elicit responses from the providers or general consumers, were coded to this category. Examples that included plainly, “@username” (SFPC79) were common specifically on Facebook and Instagram. Self-serving posts included: “@username if you go tomorrow...it would be so nice if I came back on Sunday with one of these in my fridge. Just sayin.” (SFCC30) and “@username we should get a bunch of people together and do this. It would be a great family event” (DFPC85).

Unclassifiable. Posts or Tweets that contained unknown characters, words, or references, were coded to this category. Examples included: “*” (DFPC195), “Sarap” (BFPC98), and “Ł” (SFPC116).

Overall, this section provided detail related to the categories and subcategories that were specific to research question two based on the qualitative analysis of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posts and Tweets.

Research Question Three Findings

To address research question three, the researcher utilized qualitative content analysis guided by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) to analyze the semi-structured interviews conducted with staff who were identified as responsible for the social media dissemination for each agritourism provider. Research question three was as follows:

3. What are the general outcomes agritourism providers perceive as a result of using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as sites for their organization?

This section shares the common and uncommon findings across agritourism providers with regards to their perceptions of using SNSs in general. Through open and axial coding, the researcher identified one overarching category which represented the reason providers are using SNSs. This was accompanied by two subcategories. Each category and subcategory had their own benefits and drawbacks.

Table 30

Outcome of Using Social Networking Sites in General

	Benefit	Drawback
Development of a consumer network	Expansive reach of social media	Site adoption negotiations

Table 31

Development of a Consumer Network Subcategories

Subcategories	Benefits	Drawbacks
Information dissemination	Year-round involvement and exposure Instantaneous sharing Promotional capabilities Sharing and linking capabilities between sites and organizations	Accessibility to device or service Monetary investment required Difficulty in deciphering appropriate information
Provider and consumer interaction	Engagement across demographics Positive encouragement and interest in agritourism organization Analytics of consumer interactions	Time required to manage public demands and expectations Potential negative feedback Privacy concerns

Development of a consumer network. Development of a consumer network, was

identified by the researcher as the overall outcome that agritourism providers perceived of using SNSs and the benefit and drawback of this category are discussed below.

Benefit.

Expansive reach of social media. By using SNSs providers identified that they can reach a large population of consumers who follow these sites. St. Norbert Farmers' Market supports this saying, "you could reach anybody you wanted to reach" (personal communication, December 7, 2016). The expansive reach of SNSs allows agritourism providers to ensure visitors are aware of opportunities available at their destinations. Specifically, Boonstra Farms stated, "I don't know, it just seems like, it's a really good way to reach people. Like large amounts of people. And reach them quickly" (personal communication, November 19, 2015). Boonstra Farms also elaborated, "Um, because we need to bring in so many people it's ah, like it's a U-Pick so we're very public dependent. We need to be able to reach as many people as possible" (personal communication, November 19, 2015).

Deer Meadow Farms furthered this idea beyond the use of their personal agritourism organization pages to discuss the reach posts have when other individuals post as well. Deer Meadow Farms encourages their staff to post pictures to their personal SNSs to bring awareness to an expanded network, potentially even those who do not directly follow Deer Meadow Farms on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

So that's something that um, well it shows up wherever, whatever newsfeeds. And so actually that started with one of the older lady's who's in our concession stand. She post on something, and uh, going we should do this. Our whole staff should be doing that. All day. You've got two minutes, a bit of a lull, take a picture of the pumpkin patch. Take a

picture of somebody from the corn maze... And that helps right. Cause you don't know all those different networks, where it goes. (personal communication, November 18, 2015)

This notion of the reach of social media was summarized well by the St. Norbert Farmers' Market:

Like there's so many people out there, between Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, you've got a huge number of people that are looking for information through those resources and so you know that if you let people know you're there, they will find you and follow you. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Drawback.

Site adoption negotiations. Staying current with the newest SNS trends was a concern for agritourism providers. Facebook was identified as the site first adopted across all organizations, and then providers potentially established a presence on Twitter, and Instagram as well.

Agritourism providers are forced to negotiate which sites can achieve the greatest return for their organization:

Yeah. Twitter I'm just, I don't know, I just can't see how Twitter can get going for us. I don't, I don't have lots of followers, whatever. I haven't spent the time there. Instagram, my daughter set that account up. I almost never use it. Maybe we, and maybe we should. I don't know. To me I don't know, I don't know, you know, it's kind of like I got started on the one and I'm good there. You know. And maybe I should expand, I mean I use Twitter but it's just not a regular thing. (Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Providers noted that different demographics use different SNSs. Depending on the demographics the agritourism providers are trying to attract, they can use different SNSs.

Well demographic is a big one. And I, I think that one thing is really to be aware of as an organization using social media is, where the users are going. So, um, user groups age. And, and, young people get on something new. At a pretty, pretty quick basis. You can't do all of them. So you have to choose what looks like the strongest thing coming up the pipe. And so um, you know, Facebook was initially gotten' on to quite a number of years ago because Facebook was very big at that time. And there was always that awareness that all the young people aren't really on Facebook. They're on Twitter. Took me a long while to get on Twitter, because it takes me, you know, we all have to learn these new things too in the midst of things. ...And so I got us in to Twitter to get us younger, but as I got in to Twitter I was also, there were other things that were coming up, like, Instagram, and uh, Four Square?...Does that sound right? Like there were a number of them kind of all coming up the pipe the same time. And the one that seem to be getting the biggest following was Instagram. And that's why I went with Instagram. Because I can't be on all of them. (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Information dissemination. Agritourism providers identified that using SNSs for sharing and disseminating content with a consumer network was an outcome of their SNS use, which included benefits and drawbacks.

Benefits.

Year-round involvement and exposure. Agritourism organizations in Manitoba typically offer on-site experiences seasonally from May to October, and an outcome identified by providers through their SNS use was the ability to share information with the public on a year-round basis:

Everything we post is seen right there, uh we can use it all year. Um, instead of like having a, there's no point in having a paper advertising for strawberry picking throughout the winter whereas we can post recipes and be like hey, have a good Christmas everybody. (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015)

Boonstra Farms and Harvest Moon Society shared similar sentiments for staying top of mind to consumers: "My involvement throughout the winter is just keeping up with social media, posting things to make sure people still remember that we're, we're alive and we're out there" (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015). Harvest Moon Society reiterated this concept: "And just, to kind of, um, yeah. Keep us on other people's radar. People that have chosen to like us" (personal communication, November 20, 2015) and "um, I guess also to keep people thinking of us" (personal communication, November 20, 2015) in the off-season.

Instantaneous sharing capabilities. Providers appreciated the instantaneous, information dissemination outcomes available through SNSs. The ability to update consumers as required was a perceived benefit:

As well as we can get, it's weather dependent, we can get picked out if there's crowds and stuff, so we need something to be able to update, that shows those updates instantly. So if people when they're coming out to the farm can look it up and be like 'oh they're closed today'. Because it started raining. Um, other advertisements like the radio and stuff, just isn't quick enough for that. (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015)

'In the moment' information dissemination capabilities were discussed by the agritourism providers: "We can update things and it's posted right then and there" (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015) and "so that if people are on their smartphones at the

Festival they can get um very up to date information” (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015). St. Norbert Farmers’ Market further validated the value of instantaneous sharing:

So when you post something, if people want to know something that’s going on. It’s, it’s, there are people are often checking their social media throughout the day, and so you get a very, a very quick way to kind of get information out to people. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Using SNSs has not replaced other traditional media outlets, but SNSs advantages were acknowledged:

Now I do the updates on our, on our website. But at that time I had to have someone else do them. So by the time you have a thing happen and process it through a website designer it takes too much time so, Facebook was a very nice, it was quick. (St. Norbert Farmers’ Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

As well, the providers suggested that there is a difference in the instantaneous information dissemination capabilities of each SNS: “I think just that instantaneous element of Twitter um, is good for those kind of messages. Whereas Facebook I think lingers a bit longer, it’s more, almost more static” (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20 2015).

Promotional capabilities. The promotional capabilities afforded through providers use of SNSs were seen as a favourable outcome. Opportunities to not only promote the agritourism destination on-site experience, but products of the agritourism organization were explored. Deer Meadow Farms adopted social media with the primary intention of using it for promotion: “Yeah, other people were using it for business and we just thought that would be a, Facebook’s a

good thing to promote your business. So that's how we started with that" (personal communication, November 18, 2015). Since initiating the use of SNSs, agritourism destinations have noticed an increase in visitors: "it just allows us to like uh grow the people that are like, looking in to us. So like since we've gotten' Facebook the amount of people we get on the farm has increased hugely" (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015). SNSs also allow consumers the ability to be involved in promoting the agritourism destination:

I think it's just as valuable how other people promote us using Facebook. It's they come, they're having pizza with their friends, and then they right on the farm, they're sending their photos and their Facebook posts to their friends. (Integrity Foods, personal communication, December 4, 2015)

The most regarded promotional ability by agritourism providers was the capability of SNSs to provide awareness and exposure to on-site experiences offered: "Because more people are able to see that we're a farm and that we're open and the things that we do on the farm" (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015). This was supported by Deer Meadow Farms:

I think it's exposure, you know. Facebook for example, people hook up on to your page and they see a news feed you know, whether its advertising, um, whether it's somebody liking something, sharing something, um. That all goes a long way. Cause it's, it's kind of an extension of the word of mouth I think. Word of mouth advertising is you tell your friend. Well Facebook is a way that they use word of mouth. You know. It's an extension of people who like, like the farm. (personal communication, November 18, 2015)

The promotional capabilities of SNSs also permit agritourism providers to showcase available products. Integrity Foods stated, "I should also mention that when we have a new pizza coming

out, then we definitely promote on Facebook” (personal communication, December 4, 2015).

Opportunities for creative promotion on SNSs were also recognized:

Um, if we’re having a special event of any kind, um, if there’s something uh, food wise that’s new to the market, like this year I tried really hard to change the banner on Facebook every time a new vegetable came in to play... Like I did peas, and I did beans and I did squash. And you know, I strawberries. I kept changing that to sort of remind. Because people are often looking for those fresh new things coming in so. Just being a little more aware of, trying to get that food thing out there. (St. Norbert Farmers’ Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Sharing and linking capabilities between sites and organizations. Although not expressed by all providers, a perceived outcome resulting from information dissemination was the ability to link and share content between Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and to share information curated from other organizations “that have similar visions” (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015). This was viewed as a beneficial outcome as it generates further awareness of organizational ideologies:

I guess also there’s the element of like sharing and linking. Like you, you, Facebook is one site that has pages for pretty much everything you like. And everything you want to see. Right? If you, you could find it if you wanted to. Instead of going to a website which is just, one site for one particular organization. So, um, the ease of like linking to another similar organization and then them linking to you and, sort of sharing your stories and events back and forth can bring people who are interested in one area, to find about you, that they maybe haven’t before. (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The ability to link between SNSs was identified by Harvest Moon Society stating, “if I’m going to make a social media post I’ll do it on Facebook and then I’ll do it on Twitter and they’ll be very similar. And it’ll just be an efficient way to catch those two communities” (personal communication, November 20, 2015). However, there is thought and negotiation that goes in to using linking as a method for communication:

Like, some people just want to go tick tick tick and it goes to all of them. But I find on Facebook I tend to do lengthier things, like give more information. Twitter of course you’re limited to this very small number, and Instagram is even almost smaller it’s like a picture and a little description right. So, although it’s nice to think of, of, linking them all up so that it eliminates work, I think it’s also important to recognize that the different platforms operate in different ways. And you want to take the best advantage of each one of those for your organization. (St. Norbert Farmers’ Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Drawbacks. Drawbacks were not as commonly discussed throughout the semi-structured interviews in comparison to the benefits. The drawbacks of using SNSs to disseminate information are discussed below to provide a well-rounded representation of the data.

Accessibility to device or service. Although instantaneous sharing was highlighted as a beneficial outcome of utilizing SNSs, there were difficulties that compromised this ability. Boonstra Farms noted, “Well coming from a farm it is, like it’s dependent on cell service. I know we don’t always have cell service” (personal communication, November 19, 2015). As well, this drawback was also discussed by Harvest Moon Society:

Also a probably major limitation to how we use our social media is that I don’t have a smartphone, nor do I want one, um, so it just, it does take me longer if I want to post a

photo to take it with a digital camera, transfer it to a computer, reduce the size, upload it to the social media platform and then post it. As opposed to like the instantaneous thing you can do with a smartphone. (personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Monetary investment required. Throughout the interviews, provider's discussed the monetary investment now required to gain a broader reach on SNSs. Initially, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram sites were adopted by the providers as free, innovative ways to interact with their consumer network. However, to have the same reach for information dissemination as before, providers have to invest in these sites. This was a perceived drawback of using SNSs that affects provider's ability to have an expansive reach within their consumer network. St. Norbert Farmers' Market summarized this below:

Um, well we're a non-profit cooperative, so um, we don't actually have a lot of funds for things like advertising and promotion. So um initially I got us on Facebook because it's, it, was, for at that time, you could reach anybody you wanted to reach. Who, like, anybody who was following you for free. Like now it's gotten' so that you really need to kick some money in to really get a broader reach. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Difficulty in deciphering appropriate information. Another drawback identified was the difficulty associated with deciphering the overload of content and information available for providers to share with consumers on SNSs. Although the flexibility to share opinions is valuable for agritourism providers, drawbacks arise in keeping the message appropriate to the organization, for example:

Um, I think that two concerns that I would say is that it's very important to keep your message clean and clear. Uh, don't your personal, like it's you know, you're sitting there, everyone's doing this stuff very fast right. So you have to keep it focused on the business

at hand. Not your own personal business, and your own politics and your own political interests. Like you've got to keep it appropriate to the place that you're representing. So it's, I think that's one thing that I often see um, other organiza..., like other places, like often I'll go on some site and I'll go what is that doing there! Like, it will be somebody's personal opinion about something. (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Provider and consumer interaction. With the development of a consumer network, an outcome perceived by providers across the five agritourism cases was the ability to connect and interact with their consumers. In turn, this also offered their consumers a way to reach out to the providers. These interactions have both benefits and drawbacks which are discussed below.

Benefits.

Engagement across demographics. Through their use of SNSs, an outcome discussed by the agritourism providers was their ability to communicate with varied demographics. Providers felt it was difficult to maintain a presence where the target markets are and suggested that if they are able to stay relevant to their intended market the engagement level between providers and consumers can be enhanced. Boonstra Farms noted:

There's more like, we can reach different age groups too. Like there's a lot of like, we get a lot of older people that come out to the farm. Because they like strawberry picking and they're on Facebook whereas they're not on Twitter all the time either. (personal communication, November 19, 2015)

This understanding of interacting with the intended audience was also shared by Harvest Moon Society:

Um, we've been using Facebook more, so and I think it's a, it's a better way to engage with people, or people will sort of respond or comment a little bit. They're more likely to respond or comment um, on Facebook then on a website I think, on a blog. Um, so yeah.

It's, it's a useful tool. (personal communication, November 20, 2015)

The ability for engagement across different demographics was recognized as an outcome of being involved with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram simultaneously. St. Norbert Farmers' Market summarized this understanding:

Facebook, uh, met our demographic in a lot of ways. Because um, although Facebook started out as a young platform, it's now become, I would say more of a middle-aged platform. Young people are doing other things for the most part, except I think young people still check in, they don't post as much as they would at one time. Um, so it was meeting sort of a center section of our demographic. I always thought Facebook was really for the middle-aged, Twitter for the young people, and Instagram for the, for the, you know, sort of younger and twenties kind of thing. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Positive engagement and generated agritourism site interest. The consumer network established by the agritourism organizations was identified to allow positive engagement with consumers. Consumers' interest in the on-site agritourism experiences was also recognized by providers. Through queries from consumers, agritourism providers are able to field questions from potential or actual visitors. Boonstra Farms discussed this interaction with consumers: "Um, it also allowed us, people to interact with us as well as opposed to like a Facebook ad, or a paper ad, they can't really reply to us... Type of thing. We get feedback from customers through it" (personal communication, November 19, 2015). This was echoed by Integrity Foods: "To make connection with people... Yeah, definitely. Let them know what we're doing. And let them

respond or if they have questions to ask us you know, we can get those answers to them”

(personal communication, December 4, 2015). Harvest Moon Society also discussed the positive engagement outcomes of using SNSs:

Um, yeah I think what is most beneficial about it is that a lot of our audience uses Facebook and then so they're, they've already liked us without us asking them to like us... They're already sort of interested and tuned in, and so we're just posting and then um, getting positive feedback from them that way. (personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Across the semi-structured interviews, it was found that providers receive queries which suggest a visit intention from consumers. St. Norbert Farmers' Market further explored these interactions with their consumers and suggested that an outcome of using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram simultaneously allowed for different types of engagement to occur:

There'll be questions about, 'are you open?' 'do you have strawberries today?' that, those kinds of questions will pop up on Facebook. Twitter tends to be uh, more um, I find that it's more that I'll post something, somebody will retweet it, um, or I'll see somebody mentioning something about the market. It's almost always something about something going on right now, and I'll just retweet whatever they Tweeted. So a lot of retweeting that goes on in terms of, of the market. So the interaction there doesn't tend to be quite so much. There's, it's rare to kind of get a conversation going on Twitter. Whereas on Facebook there will be a lot of interaction between different people and different comments. So that's much more common in Facebook than in, in Twitter or Instagram. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Acquiring the positive messages that consumers shared in relation to their agritourism experience was a beneficial outcome identified. These sites allow for a cultivation of positive

experiences to be shared by consumers, which in turn allows other followers to view these experiences. “Like we have a lot of people posting like ‘look at the jam we made today’ or ‘we had a great time at Boonstra Farms, thanks guys’. Stuff like that. Which is good.” (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015) and “we get a lot of just generic statements of like ‘oh that looks cool’ or ‘that looks like fun’ or um, just sort of positive comments I guess” (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015) are examples of this.

An outcome of using SNSs for positive engagement was the providers’ ability to express appreciation to their valued customers. Providers recognized the influence that sharing these positive comments can have for their agritourism organizations:

You know they, then they leave a message, ‘oh that was absolutely the best pizza I’ve ever had’ and we say oh great, come again. You know, just welcoming them. And thanking them for their post. Because others can read it and be influenced. (Integrity Foods, personal communication, December 4, 2015)

St. Norbert Farmers’ Market shared similar sentiments for this outcome:

Um I think it’s really important, like one thing I try to remember to do, is to, um, be thankful for the people that come to the market. Because we have wonderful supporters, um, I try to take the time to say thanks for coming out. Like especially if it’s been a bad weather day, or uh, you know something like that. So often we’ll just do a little back and forth of various people will say ‘oh it was great to come out’ or whatever ‘I don’t know how you guys put up with the horrible weather on a day like that’ or um. Um, you know so there’s that kind of interaction that goes on. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Analytics of consumer interaction. In comparison to traditional media methods such as newspaper advertisements, the agritourism providers perceived the ability to monitor the reach of their producer to consumer messages as an advantage. St. Norbert Farmers' Market explained:

Mostly I go in to the social media, like in Facebook for example, you can go in and read the, read the um, they, they give you an evaluation on how...many hits do you have, how many times it's shared. The analytics, yeah exactly. We also have a 2000 member e-mail list that we send out to. That's MailChain. And they also have an analytics thing you can see, how many times was it opened, you know, that kind of thing. With um, with paid Facebook, um, you know, it's how far of reach should I get? So I'm definitely looking at those numbers. If I see a post that's got really low numbers and it's something that I really want to get out, then I'll put some money in to it, to push that thing along a little bit. (personal interaction, December 7, 2015)

With newspaper advertisements it is difficult for providers to monitor who is interacting with that content, but on SNSs they can obtain a detailed view of this information.

Like or, thirty thousand people reached, and like eleven thousand views. And all it is is a fifteen second grunt, and it's like crazy! Well that's incredible. I think there was another one when um, there was another one that was similar, had like, this crazy off the chart number of views. And I'm going wow, that's like crazy. You know. And people are sharing. And I don't even how, and I, I of course you have to pay to get it in to the thing and so it shows up in the, in the newsfeed, it's a view. But if they click on it and watch it, you know, it's it's, it registers differently. So you've got the views, and then you've got the actual number. So the actual number is still over ten thousand. Its like, that's a lot...You know, on that one, that one little thing. In the space, in the space of a week! So

that means people are watching it, so what is it telling. There's things that it tells me.

(Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Drawbacks. Three drawbacks presented by the agritourism providers throughout the semi-structured interviews as a result of producer and consumer interactions on SNSs were: the amount of time required to manage public demands and expectations, the potential for negative feedback from consumers, and privacy concerns regarding interactions on SNSs.

Time required to manage public demands and expectations. The time required to manage public demands and public expectations was a negative outcome discussed by all of the agritourism providers involved in the research. For each organization, the individual in charge of managing the SNSs also had other job requirements. Harvest Moon Society mentioned:

We don't have someone specifically to do communications um, to spend time on that. So, you can go from having a flurry of activity on social media and then having none, and people sort of wondering what you're up to I guess. (personal communication, 2015)

Similar sentiments were shared by the St. Norbert Farmers Market:

The other thing I think is that uh, that's a bit hard especially with an organization like ours that is a non-profit, all of our staff is part-time, I'm even part-time...is that people expect you to be on there all the time. So, if they want to know something, they think they can take, take the question of somebody 24/7, you know, waiting to answer it right. So people will sometimes put something on Facebook like, I don't know, an hour in to the market saying 'is such and such happening' or something like that and it will be like I'm not on Facebook 24/7 and we don't have staff to be on those social media sites all the time. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

These examples suggested that being able to consistently reply and interact with consumers can be a challenge. St. Norbert Farmers' Market elaborated on these challenges stating, "people's expectations are very high of how quick the response should be. And sometimes depending on the organization, I would think most non-profits and smaller businesses, just cannot respond in that kind of quick time frame" (personal communication, December 7, 2015). Juggling the requirements of operating the on-site experience as well as the online interactions is a difficult venture and this is expressed by the following quote:

People demand that we answer them all the time and we don't always have the time to go through all of like their e-mails and Facebook posts and stuff that we get, just because it's so demanding during the day. So I guess yeah, everybody is 'answer us, why aren't you answering us?' and stuff like that. (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015)

Privacy concerns. The notion of compromised privacy was considered drawback which results from using SNSs. Integrity Foods noted, "Well sometimes we're a little concerned, we see a lot of cameras moving around the farm, um, and you know we have no idea what they're all videotaping or just photos, or whatever" (personal communication, December 4, 2015). This agritourism destination is conscious of the interactions they have with individuals on-site and online in terms of respecting their visitor's privacy:

Well and sometimes you know, if there's cameras there are photos of other people there and, and uh, just not because intentional. Like that's just because there are lots of people around right? And you never know. Someone maybe wouldn't want to have their photo...Put on Facebook if they're sending it to their friends or whatever. So for us ourselves, we try to be careful about posting a lot of pictures of people...Because we don't

know how they may feel about it. (Integrity Foods, personal communication, December 4, 2015)

Potential negative feedback. Through producer and consumer interaction the opportunity for positive messages to be shared between stakeholders was identified. However, SNSs are also avenues for displeased consumers to express their concerns. “Um, and then it, it also gives people freedom to I guess criticize you pretty openly” (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015) and “people are allowed to voice their opinions on it as well. So we do have some, some feedback that’s, that’s negative” (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015) are quotes shared by agritourism providers that expressed this concern. Constructive criticisms were acknowledged to be beneficial by providers, however certain interactions permitted through SNSs are less favourable.

Some of them is, you know, you have some misunderstandings, city people. You know, we had some lady who, it was about three years ago ‘oh a goat jumped on my kid’ and ‘we’d never go back there’ and you know. It can have some negative feedback I suppose. Um, that, that’s not really constructive. (Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Deer Meadow Farms elaborated that uninformed consumers can share information to these sites and having their followers view and internalize these opinions can have adverse effects for the agritourism organizations.

So the negative stuff can follow you around um, and hang around longer than you would like it to. You know. So. Uh on the other hand the positives can do so much more for you. You know, and if you pay attention to some of the negative feedback, you know if there are legitimate things that’s, uh, that’s a whole other thing. But you know, being a

country people, there's people who you know, there was one guy actually who was on a Google plus thing that we, we have. You, you got our goats had patches on their head. They were bald. You know, and he's making comments like this. Like 'there's something wrong with your animals.' Trying to insinuate that they weren't looked after and cared for. That was just ridiculous. And that's just an ignorant person. You know. I'm bald. There's nothing wrong with me. You know what I mean. So, yeah it's just silly stuff like that. (Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Through answering research question three, the outcomes that agritourism providers perceived resulted from SNS use in general were explored. This analysis identified that there is one primary outcome providers perceive of using SNSs: the development of a consumer network. This consumer network further affords information dissemination and producer and consumer interactions, each with associated benefits and drawbacks.

Research Question Four Findings

The final research question asked:

4. What are the perceptions of agritourism providers with regards to using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for providing free-choice learning opportunities, and what outcomes do they believe result from disseminating agricultural knowledge using these sites?

Following the qualitative content analysis process outlined by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) allowed the researcher to analyze the perceptions and outcomes of the five agritourism providers

regarding SNSs and FCL. These findings are discussed below and the subcategories incorporate direct participant quotes to ensure confirmability, a construct of trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

Perceptions. With regards to provider perceptions for using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for providing FCL opportunities, Table 32 presents the perceived capabilities and drawbacks.

Table 32

Provider Perceptions of Using Social Networking Sites for Free-Choice Learning

Capabilities	Drawbacks
Benefits for agritourism providers	Importance of ‘hands on’ experience
Important to educate consumers	Traditional priorities for social media
Address consumer interest for free-choice learning opportunities	

Capabilities.

Benefits for agritourism providers. Agritourism providers believed that using SNSs to disseminate FCL information can benefit their organization. Boonstra Farms stated “now that we’ve built it up enough, and that we have like so many people on it [SNSs], that would be something that would be beneficial to us as well” (personal communication, November 19, 2015). These benefits were communicated throughout the interviews by providers as they perceived that the more information about agriculture they are able to share with their visitors, the more their name is circulated to the public. It is perceived that this awareness will elicit further interactions on SNSs, or have the potential to influence an on-site visit:

So social media has that opportunity if you use it. You know, the way um, say we would. Posting different things that have some kind of educational value. Um again there’s different levels of that. But. It comes down to who’s using it. Because free-choice you learn it on your own time, look at it on your own time. You’re Google-ing it. You’re whatever.

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So. Facilitates free-choice. You can learn by watching the social media. If the social media directs you to an agritourism site, then social media is doing its job in promoting agritourism and people go to an agritourism site they experience, they learn, so yeah.

(Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

As well, this was supported by Boonstra Farms:

Um, just because everybody is surrounded by social media every day, so. Uh to include that [FCL] in it, would be beneficial to both people and the business... Yeah um, especially us because we do, like a large part of our business is education so if we start posting educational stuff online, then I think parents will see it and be like 'wow, it is an educational place. Let's send our kids here' type of thing. Or it will bring in new like, a new insight to our farm. Whereas a lot people think we're just a strawberry farm. But we're not. We do other things as well. (personal communication, November 19, 2015)

Important to educate consumers. A shared understanding by providers was the importance of educating consumers. SNSs allow providers to interact with consumers and disseminate educational information.

It's important. Yeah, especially because I'm an Aggie so I really like, I feel like everybody needs to be educated on agriculture and where their food comes from. I definitely see working like with kids and people every day and stuff on the farm that there is a lack of education in, in agriculture and where food comes from. (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015)

Through repeated exposure to agricultural information and through associating these experiences, it was believed that individuals would gain an appreciation for where and how their food is being produced. This concept was explored by Deer Meadow Farms:

To me it's when you're exposed to a bunch of experiences, you know, that, see those positive experiences connect you then to your food source. Farmers are important. The farm is important. Rural land is important. What people do with the land is important. And as you get older, they understand those ethical concepts. We shouldn't just bulldoze family farms, or shouldn't let this, corporate. I don't think large corporations should run everything. But I understand the family farm, it's hard to sustain. Cause you know, government regulations keep upping the bar. You got to keep doing this, doing this. So small producers disappear. Why? Cause of overregulation. So then, nobody grows their own anymore. And if you do, you're a rebel or a, you know, one of those kind of people. A granola muncher. (personal communication, November 18, 2015)

St. Norbert Farmers' Market highlighted the role that agritourism organizations have in educating consumers:

Um, I think that the, if I were going to make a comment about learning it's important to remember that we're all learning all the time. And so, you know, there's, we have some very interesting ideas in our culture about learning and education about only learning in school about, schools being the main resource for learning. Schools are great, I'm not complaining about schools, but there's huge educational opportunities out there in our everyday lives. And when you have a resource like something like the Farmers' Market or I'm sure the other agritourism places that you're looking at, to have that opportunity to interact with the people who are actually doing it, is huge. (personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Address consumer interest for free-choice learning opportunities. The agritourism providers perceived that through using SNSs they could address their consumers' expressed

desire for learning opportunities. Integrity Foods noted: “Well if Integrity Foods was not about education, I wouldn’t be in it. Because education is very important to me. Uh we have these people come with keen interests and where a better place to learn?” (personal communication, December 4, 2015). Harvest Moon Society summarized this:

Um, I, well I, again it comes back to that um, the linking the urban and rural populations. Um, in Manitoba a lot of our decisions are made provincially in Winnipeg, um, and a lot of people who’ve grown up in Winnipeg don’t fully understand rural issues... That are, that go beyond food production, but that are um, largely related to the agriculture and food production. Um, I think throughout North America people are becoming more and more interested in food and where their food comes from. And eating healthy and um, reducing the footprint of their food production. Um, so that there is an appetite for that type of information and so to be able to provide a venue where people can find that um, can learn whether it’s permaculture, whether um, it’s you know pork production um, they can sort of have that. (personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Drawbacks. Although the positive capabilities for using SNSs to disseminate FCL information were outlined above, agritourism providers also perceived that “social media is probably limited in its ability to really teach people about agriculture” (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015). These drawbacks interpreted from the data included the importance of ‘hands on’ experiences, and the agritourism provider’s traditional priorities for SNSs.

Importance of ‘hands on’ experience. The importance of coupling the information provided through SNSs with a ‘hands on’ experience was discussed by all providers. Harvest Moon Society explained:

Um, there's, there's always an emphasis on 'hands on' um, you know, you could go on your own and look up and read things um, in the internet or in a library about a topic, but to really have a demonstration where you get to participate um, it it's it's a different kind of learning when you're learning with your body, then when you're just, you know, consuming information. (personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Deer Meadow Farms elaborated on how online experiences contrast in-person experiences:

It's 'hands on'. You know. They see it, they touch it. They experience it. Different than reading it in a book. Watching a video. Having to deal with a, you know, little calf and be in a pen and a goat that's come around and nibbling on you, and interacting with you, and. You know, it's like, you get to do something and that you can't do on a page or on a video. It's, real life. (personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Providers ultimately want to increase visitor traffic to their destination and encourage face-to-face FCL opportunities. A quote from the interview with Integrity Foods summarized this:

I wouldn't want to use it as my only means. Especially if I have opportunity to bring people to my farm. I would rather educate them on the farm, than through social media...Because I think it's much more engaging. And they'll learn much better because it becomes an experience. Whereas by social media, it's not an experience. And people learn by experience. (personal communication, December 4, 2015)

Traditional priorities for social media. Another drawback of using SNSs to disseminate FCL information was that it interfered with traditional priorities agritourism providers have outlined for their SNS use. Agritourism providers have primarily adopted SNSs to generate awareness of their organizations. Boonstra Farms mentioned: "just letting people know that we're open and reminding them that Boonstra Farms is a place and they should go and check it

out. That’s mainly what we use our social media for” (personal communication, November 19, 2015). This expression was common across providers and the notion of traditional priorities for SNSs was presented:

If anybody says ‘oh I just, I’m in it [social media] for pure educational purposes’ I think that’s a bit of crock. You know. I mean if you have a business, a farm business where you’re charging admission to come see the petting zoo and do whatever else, my competitors, it’s always economic. Economic will always be in the background. (Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Outcomes. The five agritourism providers believed the overarching outcome with regards to using SNSs for FCL was the ability to instantaneously share content that exposed others to agriculture. This category was comprised of subcategories that included the positive and negative outcomes that result from sharing agricultural knowledge on SNSs.

Table 33

Instantaneous Awareness and Exposure to Agriculture Outcomes

Positive outcomes	Negatives outcomes
Disseminate agricultural facts across demographics	Time constraints for curating and disseminating free-choice learning information
Post-season and off-site interaction with consumers	
Correct misconceptions and falsehoods	

Positive outcomes.

Disseminate agricultural facts. An outcome of agritourism providers use of SNSs is their ability to disseminate agricultural information. Deer Meadow Farms suggested:

I’d say you could learn some fact stuff. Factoids. You know, there’s factual information. You know I don’t, I don’t pump out a lot of crap. You know, if I post something it’s, you

know, usually to me it's factual or fact based. (personal communication, November 18, 2015)

With the interactive potential of using SNSs, consumers are able to gain an inside look at the agricultural processes and practices employed by the agritourism providers:

But I think it is a good, good way to convey learning I know we definitely put stuff like, 'oh we're taking the straw off our plants today' and 'oh we're planting today and this is what our planter looks like'. So like indirectly people can see and be like 'oh that's how strawberry farming is working' and stuff and 'oh I didn't know that.' (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015)

SNSs allow agritourism providers to reach different demographics for knowledge sharing and creation as they share information and "make it accessible to like kids age as well as adults" (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015). Deer Meadow Farms mentioned:

Like for example on social media one of the big things in the spring I had some video of the little ones nursing, uh you talk about free-choice, kids get to see you know, an animal who just gave birth. (personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Agritourism providers also recognized their ability to link with other organizations to share facts:

I guess through the sharing function um, other websites that have maybe um, sort of curated a learning program on their website or have a lot of information um, that would be educational and sort of linking to that, you can't go in to too much detail um, on social media so to sort of use that as a platform to show people where they can find that information. (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

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The functions on Facebook and Twitter specifically for sharing information offer a valued outcome for providers and their information dissemination capabilities:

Well I think that there's the sharing aspect, so, almost all social media uh, has that element of sharing to it. So, for example if I post something that's got an educational element to it, and it gets shared around by, I, you know, often I'll post something and see share, share, share all these different shares right. So it is an opportunity for education to be shared to people. I also think because in North America we're very disconnected to agriculture, everywhere in North America. And, so farmers' markets are by their nature an opportunity to re-engage with the agriculture system. Um, and, so that educational opportunity gets spread around with social media. So that's why I think it's extremely valuable. (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Post-season and off-site interaction with consumers. SNSs allow providers the post-season and off-site ability to share content. This was acknowledged by Boonstra Farms: "Um, in general I think it can be used to especially during off-seasons and stuff to post activities and stuff or for people that are on Facebook to participate in as a good way of learning (personal communication, November 19, 2015). Agritourism destinations typically operate seasonally in Manitoba, and there are seasonal experiences that are not presented at the on-site destinations.

An outcome of SNS use is that these seasonal occurrences can be demonstrated:

Well I think we can put on little bits of information um. For example, in spring, what spring activities are we doing that are farm related. Okay, it's sheering time. So people get the message, alright. These animals don't want to walk around with their big coats all summer, just like I don't. Right? So they're going to take their coats off. That's an educational piece. Well when it's spring time they cut. And another one that could definitely happen is that

we inform people what we're harvesting when. Because in the Superstore people have access to all veggies year-round. In the garden, we do not. We don't have veggies happening all at the same time. So that's very much an educational opportunity as well. You can't have carrots in June. Because they haven't grown yet. You harvest those in August or September or October. (Integrity Foods, personal communication, December 4, 2015)

Even without the face-to-face contact offered by the on-site experience, SNSs can elicit interactions between providers and consumers to relay FCL material:

Yeah. I mean we have our chicken coops and you know, we tell them where to get feed. Where do you get your water, your waterer? Where do you find stuff? People are used to Walmart. They don't carry anything for chickens. So we help source all that stuff out here. But on Facebook if I find a you know, I mean there's, I get all kinds of questions and I just message them back. You know, on all kinds of different things. I mean if they're legitimate farmers, they already know all that stuff. But if they're people moving to the country and they want to try stuff and, a lot of times that's who we get. And ask me questions. (Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Agritourism providers suggested that this post-visit interaction can work to peak consumer interest in agriculture.

Um, and again peaking interest through a photo um, or you know a one-liner that you know, really hits home to people and then um, they want to go find more information about that, or, take a course. And really sort of jump right into that subject. (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015)

Boonstra Farms recognized that “everybody’s on, yeah like kids and stuff are always on social media. So it’s a good way to, to reach them or get their attention a little bit” (personal communication, November 19, 2015). Providers use of SNSs has the outcome off-season learning opportunities which “provide[s] people with information or resources they might not have found otherwise” (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015).

Correct misconceptions and falsehoods. An emphasized outcome was the ability of providers to correct misconceptions and falsehoods. SNSs allow individuals to produce uncensored and unverified content, and individuals could post something that is detrimental to consumer’s understandings of agriculture. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are sites which agritourism providers use to correct those who are misinformed.

Um, people put the posts on social media like the Belgian Blue, the double muscled, the double muscled, you know those ones, they show them? They shave them to show the muscling...Belgian Blue, it’s a beef breed. So people post stuff on social media, ‘these are genetically modified cattle’ ‘oh this is horrible’ and it’s like, you are so dumb! This breed has been around since the 1950’s before genetic engineering. It’s a mutation and they have like a double muscle group...And what they do, is they shave the hair off so you see the muscling. So it looks gross. It looks like a body builder all cut, and you know. And it’s just, it’s a well-muscled animal. And uh, so they post all of this crap, and uh about genetic engineering or whatever and GMO this and GMO animals and, that drives me nuts. So I use social media to correct all of that. Say that’s not whatever. I know what I’m talking about. But you get people who don’t. And that’s the dangerous part of social media. (Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Boonstra Farms echoed these concerns and believed that sharing knowledge for FCL opportunities on SNSs can offer an informed perspective to their consumers:

Food is something we eat every single day. And not very many people actually know where our food comes from. Or the amount of work that goes in to it. They just take it for granted type of thing. Whereas there is actually a ton of work that goes in to things like strawberry farming for example. We'll spend like weeks at a time pulling weeds by hand out of a strawberry field, just to get a good crop for the year. Yeah. There's just a lot that goes to in. And people don't, don't see that. Or, understand. (personal communication, November 18, 2015)

Negative outcomes.

Time constraints for curating and disseminating free-choice learning information.

Providers noted that a barrier to providing FCL opportunities was the amount of time required to curate and disseminate the information. As well, providers are also tasked with maintaining the interactions that occur around these posts. Although positive outcomes associated with this form of information dissemination on SNSs are understood by all interviewed, there are other commitments that require their attention. "Just because social media kind of directly falls upon me and I haven't been able to, spend as much time on it as I would like to build it up. Just because I'm in school as well" (Boonstra Farms, personal communication, November 19, 2015) and "there's definitely a lack of time. And it's, it's a big thing right, so it takes a lot of management" (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015) are statements by providers that explored the time constraints of using SNSs for FCL.

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Agritourism providers do desire to curate more content for FCL to educate their consumers and followers but the time required to sift through content, or produce content is overwhelming:

Um, I think it would be great to, if there was more time to kind of research, you know things to put on on Facebook and uh mostly Facebook because Twitter and Instagram are so, so short. You know they're little things. But um, it's mostly I would say staff time, is the biggest limitation in terms of you know, finding things that are appropriate, that actually work, you know that fit our model and fit our market. Um, it's just sometimes I just don't have enough time to go and do that kind of research. So it's really a time factor. (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

St. Norbert Farmers' Market stated their concerns about disseminating information from other resources that are politically acceptable for their mission and vision as an organization. St. Norbert Farmers' Market is in an interesting position as an agritourism organization as they represent multiple vendors in the agriculture sector, each with their own ideologies regarding agricultural practices and products. There is an overwhelming amount of content produced on SNSs, and it can be time consuming to decipher content and remain neutral in your messaging.

I would say that there's tons of material out there. It's because there's so much of the material is, um, you have to first check does it fit my, our organization, uh, is it, you know, does it uh, does it have issues around it like sometimes I'll see a great post but it will be by um, an organization that really doesn't work for me to post that on our website and it might be for the non-GMO sector is posting this thing. Well it's a nice sentiment about agriculture, but, we have lots of GMO crops in Manitoba. Like we can't pretend that they aren't here. And that, you know. So I can't post that on our, I don't feel like I can post it

on our Facebook page because it's making a political statement so. Really it's having time to kind of weed out all the stuff that doesn't quite fit. (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015)

Integrity Foods acknowledged that their contribution to FCL content on SNSs could be improved, but that time restricts their role in this:

Well I think simply because of time restrictions. Yeah. But you know, even just having looked at this information for the interview, it really made me think. We are, we're just not capturing all that we could. Or creating all that we could for people to experience our farm. (personal communication, December 4, 2015)

Through research question four, the researcher addressed the perceptions of providers for using SNSs to facilitate FCL opportunities. As well, the categories and subcategories interpreted by the researcher as outcomes were overviewed to demonstrate the positive and negative ramifications interpreted of educating consumers about agricultural products and practices by using SNSs.

Overall, this chapter used both quantitative and qualitative content analysis to present the results and findings. It is not the intent of these findings to be generalized because the purpose of this research was to use an exploratory approach to gain an understanding of the five agritourism cases involved in the research. The results and findings presented provided an overview of how agritourism providers and consumers are interacting on SNSs; the nature of those interactions; why in general agritourism providers are using SNSs; and agritourism provider's perceptions, and the outcomes, of using these sites for FCL.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The previous chapter revealed the results and findings obtained through mixed methods analysis, which provided answers for the research questions of this thesis. The discussion that follows connects these results and findings to existing literature. Specifically, this chapter discusses the results and findings in relation to Customer Relationship Management (CRM), social media, free-choice learning (FCL), and the Contextual Model of Learning (CML) to provide a reflective appraisal which adds depth to the analysis (Shenton, 2004).

Research Question One

The researcher used quantitative content analysis to explore how agritourism providers and their consumers interacted with each other, as well as with social media content published to three SNSs.

Provider and consumer use of SNSs provides an outlet for interaction and engagement, and allows a community of followers who support these agritourism organizations to form (Maecker et al., 2016; Sashi, 2012; Woodcock et al., 2011). The results of research question one identified that providers are not encouraging interaction with, or amongst their consumers, even though connectivity is a main asset of SNSs (Hvass & Munar, 2012). Overall, most provider posts, regardless of the site, were not interactive following Hays et al.'s (2013) definition of interactive. These results are comparable to the research by Hays et al. (2013) where the majority of DMO Facebook and Twitter posts were not interactive. However, this is contradictory to research that demonstrated that Twitter is a conversation affording site (Danns, 2010; Gibbs & Dancs, 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012). For this research it was fundamental to address how agritourism providers and their consumers are interacting with each other through SNSs to

provide insight for the ways FCL could potentially be attained through these sites.

Agritourism providers are also engaging minimally with consumers through their SNSs content, aside from the original messages they share. This was also found in Hays et al.'s (2013) research involving DMOs and their audience. In the semi-structured interviews, the agritourism providers suggested that producer and consumer interaction was an outcome of the developed consumer networks, the collective group of individuals who consume the content providers share on SNSs. These individuals have either liked the organization's Facebook page, or are followers on Twitter and Instagram, and have done so to remain connected to these organizations for further interaction (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). However, from the content analysis it is suggested that interaction between providers and consumers is not always happening when opportunities exist, because providers are not following up on these interactions. "SNSs could greatly increase the weak ties one could form and maintain, because the technology is well-suited to maintaining such ties cheaply and easily" (Ellison et al., 2007, p. 1146). However, providers are missing out on opportunities to engage their visitors and establish ties because they are not interacting with consumer content.

The minimal presence of interactive provider posts, and the lack of provider interaction on consumer content, can be addressed through CRM. The results suggested that agritourism providers are using their SNSs in a way that is firm focused (Wang & Feng, 2012). This means that providers are currently generating content they believe to be important for their organization and using SNSs as if they were the same as other marketing media, where providers disseminate the information outwards, but do not receive further engagement. Agritourism providers need to appreciate that SNSs are not only mediums to broadcast one-way messages for one-to-one communications, but if used appropriately SNSs have functionalities that can enhance

relationships and value if provider and consumer interactions occur (Ang, 2011b; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). CRM and social media literature explain that focus needs to shift from the organization, to the consumer, and that the role of the organization on SNSs should be to create experiences and dialogue between the provider and the consumers (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Specifically, it should become “less about pushing messages out to consumers within a static relationship, and more about the brand being part of the dynamic conversation, listening, serving relevant content/experiences to earn the trust of consumers” (Woodcock et al., 2011, p. 51). Consumers are involved in these SNSs because they wish to connect, converse, create and collaborate with others (Ang, 2011b). These results are important for agritourism providers because if they shift their strategy to being consumer focused and maintaining these relationships, they will be able to foster a competitive advantage through their CRM capabilities (Wang & Feng, 2012; Woodcock et al., 2011).

The results of research question one demonstrated the potential for providers to use SNSs to foster relationships not only between the consumers and the provider, but also through consumers sharing information with other users (Ang 2011a; 2011b; Hvass & Munar, 2012). A benefit of these interactions is that individuals are connecting to form communities around shared interests, regardless of their geographical location, with a common appreciation for the agritourism organization (Ellison et al., 2007; Hajli et al., 2013; Woodcock et al., 2011). Cultivating this consumer network is imperative for agritourism providers as electronic word of mouth (eWOM) affects the nature of interactions, consumers potential visit intentions, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction (Wang & Feng, 2012). These eWOM exchanges can be monitored by agritourism providers on SNSs (Ang, 2011a; Leung et al., 2013). The interactions consumers observe from visitor posts and comments on organization sites resemble word of

mouth references. These references are used by consumers to gain a sense of community and negotiate their intention to visit the agritourism destination (Ang, 2011a; Hays et al., 2013; Maecker et al., 2016). Monitoring interactions with consumers is essential for agritourism providers because it is “argued that individuals’ participation in online communities may influence their offline life in general” (Hajli & Lin, 2014, p. 407). Maintaining relationships with consumers is important for CRM and social media because “consumers are increasingly using social media to gain recommendations, reviews and opinions from friends, family, experts and the collective social community” (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 34), which influence their relationships with the organizations. The results demonstrated that providers are not requesting UGC from their consumers. Providers can harness the control consumers have in disseminating information to these consumer networks, and request that individuals share their agritourism experiences online (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Encouraging consumers to share content, beyond communicating through text alone, can allow individuals to view “unprecedentedly up-to-date and diversified formats of information” (Leung et al., 2013, p. 9). “As the boundaries between promotional communication and word of mouth become blurred, several scholars claim that we are on the verge of a communication paradigm shift” (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, p. 331). Although it may be unsettling for providers to allow the consumers to share their opinions freely, it will drive sales through eWOM because consumers rely on other consumers as trusted sources (Ang, 2011a; Woodcock et al., 2011).

Research Question Two

Research question two examined the nature of SNS content posted by providers and consumers related to the agritourism organizations. Using qualitative content analysis 2,152 original posts, Tweets, and responses were coded. The researcher independently identified seven

categories through inductive content analysis: informational, enquiries, sentiment, solicitation, phatic, personal engagement and relations, and unclassifiable. Since this was an exploratory project, the researcher believed it was imperative to include subcategories to further describe the nature of agritourism interactions and the outcomes produced (Barbieri, 2013; Choo & Petrick, 2013; 2014; Tew & Barbeiri, 2012). Although no existing framework was followed for coding, the findings are similar to previous research.

In the literature there are numerous studies which utilized content analysis to overview SNSs in tourism contexts (Dann, 2010; Gibbs & Dancs, 2013, Hays et al., 2013; Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2007; MacKay et al., 2014). This study incorporated the consumer and provider perspectives simultaneously across SNSs to understand the nature of posted content. Further, how social media is used in agritourism contexts is not discussed in the literature. However, agritourism is a proliferating tourism context with ubiquitous uptake of SNSs to engage with consumers. Increasingly individuals are exposed to agricultural practices and processes through SNSs (Ainley & Smale, 2010; Ang, 2011b; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Maecker et al., 2016; Wang & Feng, 2012). Following the traditional CRM framework implies that organizations thoroughly know who the consumers are, however, the relationships on SNSs for these agritourism research cases, do not allow for this intimacy (Ang, 2011a). A review of SNS interactions not only provides insight regarding agritourism providers' use of these sites, but can "derive a better understanding of the characteristics of consumers who use specific social media applications" (Leung et al., 2013, p. 15). The nature of these social exchanges are important to explore for the agritourism sector because SNSs allow providers a platform to assess consumer needs and desires, which directly impact service experiences (Choo & Petrick, 2013).

Research by MacKay et al. (2014) that examined Twitter use pre, during, and post-festivals established categories that built on existing research from Dann (2010), Gibbs and Dances (2013), and Hays et al. (2013). MacKay et al. (2014) used a deductive approach and the categories followed were: conversational, promotional, informational, status, phatic, and unclassifiable (MacKay et al., 2014). Informational, phatic and unclassifiable were identified in this study; however, further agritourism specific categories were also revealed in this thesis and included: enquiries, sentiment, solicitation, and personal engagement and relations. The categories and subcategories identified in this thesis add further insight to tourism literature regarding SNSs in the agritourism context. Understanding the agritourism specific nature of interactions between providers and consumers can allow providers to establish customer-centric innovation techniques and enhance the level of engagement between followers and their organizations on SNSs (Woodcock et al., 2011).

The informational category included the subcategories: admission, price, and purchase information; animal knowledge; environment and weather condition; event and experience information; general information; product availability or product knowledge; and schedule and hours information. This category is relevant since “tourism is an ‘information-intensive industry’” (Hays et al., 2013, p. 212). Understanding the subcategories provides insight to the type of information shared between providers and consumers and it is important for organizations to enhance customer orientation, and disseminate information appropriate to customer needs (Hays et al., 2013; Wang & Feng, 2012). In relation to existing literature, the product availability or product knowledge subcategory, is supported by Leung et al. (2013) who suggest “social media are more effective in equipping travelers with more comprehensive knowledge on a tourism product or destination than other information sources” (p. 8).

Specifically, consumers negotiate the information gained through following SNSs and the associated interactions on these sites, to form an opinion of the agritourism services offered (Maecker et al., 2016). Consumers are pragmatic, and through acknowledging the particular informational subcategories “companies need to design experiences that deliver tangible value in return for customers’ time, attention, endorsement and data” (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 30) that they seek and share.

Leung et al. (2013) reviewed how SNSs are used in tourism and suggested that these sites act as meaningful catalysts for individuals to assess an organization. Through enquiries consumers acquire extensive information that they use to negotiate their visit, or their online engagement (Leung et al., 2013). Typically, as presented by the informational subcategories above, consumers are requesting information that will impact their experience with the agritourism provider. It can be detrimental to agritourism provider’s success on SNSs if these posts go unanswered. This is because consumers gather information through enquiries on SNSs that suggests a response is required from agritourism providers (Maecker et al., 2016). The nature of these interactions can be personalized for the consumer to obtain the answers surrounding admission, price, and purchase enquiries, animal information enquiries, conversational or engagement enquiries, general enquiries, product availability and product knowledge enquiries, or schedule and hours enquiries (Woodcock et al., 2011). Organizations who respond will obtain optimal consumer relations and the potential to increase on-site revenue specifically because agritourists desire social interactions to attain information (Choo & Petrick, 2013; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Wang & Feng, 2012).

The sentiment category involved provider to consumer acknowledgements, accolades, appreciation, and displeasure. Sentiment has been explored in other social media studies, but it is

the subcategories that are important to understand in the agritourism context because SNSs can be used to observe consumer loyalty and satisfaction (Hays et al., 2013; Wang & Feng, 2012). The addition of the sentiment category should be considered for future tourism research to further discern the attitudes, thoughts, and judgements of providers and consumers (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Consumers who interact with organizations on SNSs are considered profitable in that they “are more easily retained, and are more likely to upgrade their customer relationship” (Maecker et al., 2016, p. 149). Monitoring these sentimental interactions is valuable for providers because they can determine what is valued or not by their consumers in relation to products and on-site experiences (Ang, 2011a). As well, sharing sentimental content that demonstrates appreciation for consumers for example, can maintain these customer connections (Ang, 2011a; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

The personal engagement and relations category of this research is similar to the conversational category of MacKay et al. (2014), however in this research the engagement between users was not always in question format and often did not specifically prompt for a response. It was common for consumer posts to fit within this category, as individuals planned experiences and shared information with their own followers by simply posting ‘@username’ in the comments for example. Understanding the capabilities afforded by CRM and social media strategies, this personal engagement and relations category is important for agritourism providers. Specifically, providers should observe and appreciate these interactions, because it represents consumer-to-consumer relationships on SNSs that encourage other individuals to support the organization or not (Ang, 2011a; Wang & Feng, 2012; Woodcock et al., 2011). As well, these conversations are important to observe because individuals are more likely to buy a product or participate in an experience after interacting with the online community (Ang, 2011a).

The premise of social media involves sharing and interaction and the findings in this research demonstrate the nature of interactions, and advance frameworks for understanding SNSs and tourism, while supporting the findings of previous research (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Research Question Three

Research question three explored the general outcomes that agritourism providers perceive of using SNSs for their organization. The individuals associated with the five agritourism providers who identified as in charge of the SNSs participated in semi-structured interviews. All providers suggested that the primary outcome of using SNSs was the development of an online consumer network, the collective of followers who they share content with. Particularly, agritourism providers in this research believed that a developed consumer network is a major outcome for establishing awareness for their organization and for interacting with consumers. A benefit of this developed community is the expansive reach social media has for information dissemination to consumers (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Organizations adopt SNSs because an application of these sites is the ability to amplify buzz and visibility for the agritourism destination, while managing consumer relationships (Ang, 2011a). From the interview data, two subcategories were identified within the broader developed network category: information dissemination, and producer and consumer interaction. With each outcome, there were associated benefits and drawbacks perceived by the interview participants and these findings will be further discussed in this section.

Hays et al. (2013) support the importance of understanding zeitgeist: “the general intellectual, moral and cultural climate of an era” (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Organizations’ use of SNSs to engage and share information with their consumers is a phenomena of the current era and important for developing and maintaining these networks (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Heller Baird

& Parasnis, 2011, Maecker et al., 2016). However, the dynamic shift of SNS adoption by the general public is a drawback associated with using social media as this technology elicits not only new opportunities, but also challenges for the tourism sector (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Gretzel, Fesenmaier, Formica, & O’Leary, 2006). This is a concern because consumers are spreading their use across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram amongst other SNSs, and new SNSs are constantly emerging with different communication capabilities (Hays et al., 2013). Staying in touch with the current trends of social media places strain on agritourism providers because once they have adhered to the use of one SNS, they are potentially prompted by user communities to become invested in new sites as a result of technological changes (Gretzel et al., 2006). These transitions impact CRM and social media as organizations feel pressured to be involved on these SNSs (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Gretzel et al. (2006) noted that individuals have concerns with finding the time to seek out and understand how to use the new and emerging technology for communicating with the public. This was true for the providers interviewed as many initially adopted Facebook and were then compelled to potentially adopt Twitter, and even Instagram. Agritourism providers need to evaluate their ability to interact effectively with consumers across these SNSs and determine which SNSs are best to maintain consumer relationships because it is difficult for organizations to be “multi-tasking on a large variety of platforms, trying to retain a certain level of activity throughout the year” (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, 339). This range of site adoption is perceived as a drawback because it is difficult for providers to maintain their accounts and as St. Norbert Farmers’ Market stated, providers “can’t be on all of them” (personal communication, December 7, 2015). If agritourism providers admit they cannot maintain interaction and engagement on all SNSs, then this can influence their decision to use one primary

site, such as Facebook for example, because active participation on all SNSs is not feasible (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Information dissemination was another outcome afforded through the agritourism provider's use of these sites. The benefits identified in this research included: year-round involvement and exposure; instantaneous sharing; promotional capabilities; and sharing and linking capabilities between sites and organizations. These information dissemination benefits highlight the firm focus of providers. Agritourism destinations, specifically in Manitoba, are limited in their ability to host visitors on-site outside of their May to October operation because of the winter climate. Using SNSs benefits these organizations as communication and relationships between providers and consumers can extend throughout the off-season to maintain these ties (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Focusing on CRM should not just be an in-season, on-site priority for agritourism providers. The opportunity for providers to further this consumer focus is essential for the organizations because they "will have the ability to understand the mood, find new sales leads, respond faster to customer needs and maybe even anticipate needs by listening into their conversations and taking action" (Woodcock et al., 2011, p. 54) on an annual basis. SNSs can allow providers to sustain and reinforce their consumer relationships year-round by encouraging information exchanges (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012).

Instantaneous sharing capabilities on SNSs were acknowledged as a beneficial outcome by providers. This means that pertinent information relating to consumer experiences can become readily available on SNSs. With this instantaneous information sharing ability, providers can connect with consumers in a more relevant and timelier manner than ever before (Woodcock et al., 2011, p. 64). MacKay et al. (2014) highlighted promotional capabilities afforded through using SNSs. Tourism as an industry involves many stakeholders and implementing effective

marketing to generate awareness of the organization can be a challenge (Gretzel et al., 2006). SNSs have a broad reach and agritourism providers perceived the promotional capabilities of such sites as a beneficial outcome of their SNS use. However, CRM and technology have implications for promotion strategies that providers must be conscious of. Through established relationships on SNSs, providers are privy to more knowledge and interactions with their consumers than before (Maecker et al., 2016). From such relations and conversations on SNSs, providers can identify who the favoured consumers are and tailor marketing on an individual basis (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012). CRM positions marketing as an approach to target key customers, those who are most profitable (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Maecker et al., 2016; Nguyen & Mutum, 2012). Although this targeted promotion can be beneficial for providers if managed effectively, a critique offered by Nguyen and Mutum (2012) known as the CRM Paradox needs to be addressed. The instantaneous sharing capabilities of SNS allow providers to attain, and also share information on a one-to-one basis with consumers (Woodcock et al., 2011). Consumers have different desires and SNS can be used for promotion in distinct ways to address and reach out in personalized manners to profitable consumers (Maecker et al., 2016; Nguyen & Mutum, 2012). “However, recent research have shown that such favoritism and differential treatment of customers may cause perceptions of unfairness, resulting in buyers opting out of relationships, spreading negative information, or engaging in misbehavior that may damage the firm (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012, p. 410). Specifically, if consumers feel they have been exploited based on the information they share with providers, this can have adverse effects for organizations based on the misuse of the instantaneously available information, which can compromise consumers trust (Nguyen & Mutum, 2012). Consumers themselves are active participants in promotion and consumers experience feedback “may influence organizational image and consumer behavior far

more than any other tools in the promotional mix” (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, p. 334). This CRM Paradox provides insight that although favourable promotional interactions can result from CRM, SNSs, and these instantaneous sharing capabilities, providers must be aware of how they are managing and manipulating the organization-consumer relationships and knowledge exchanges for marketing (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Maecker et al., 2016; Nguyen & Mutum, 2012).

From previous research involving DMOs, Gretzel et al. (2006) concluded that organizations are not capitalizing on the knowledge exchange capabilities that can be harnessed through social media. Specifically, to enhance consumer value, agritourism providers need to continually utilize “the benefits of open participation, minimal publishing threshold, dialogue, community, networking, and rapid viral spread of content via a wide range of feedback and linking systems” (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, p. 334) afforded through linking with SNSs and other organization’s content. The agritourism cases in this research recognized the sharing and linking capabilities between sites and organizations as a positive outcome. Although finding appropriate organizations to link with requires dedication on the provider’s behalf, if used appropriately resources can be pooled and further information dissemination regarding agriculture, and tourism-specific information sharing, can occur (Gretzel et al., 2006).

For information dissemination there were also perceived drawbacks. These drawbacks included: accessibility to a device or service, the monetary investment potentially required for SNS exposure, and the difficulty associated with deciphering appropriate information to disseminate. The adoption and use of technology has been associated with a reduction in financial expenses for organizations and tourism contexts (MacKay et al., 2014; Woodcock et al., 2011). However, as policies change for SNSs, organizations are now required to make a

monetary investment to ensure the exposure of their posts. Gretzel et al. (2006) outlined that DMOs face competition from other companies. This is not dissimilar to the agritourism organizations as they are competing with other organizations, and UGC, to ensure their posts are noticed. Organizations are using SNSs because “it should lead to increased sales (through increased awareness and engagement) and decreased costs” (Woodcock et al., 2011, p. 54). The monetary investment now required was a perceived drawback specifically acknowledged by the St. Norbert Farmers’ Market (personal communication, December 7, 2015), a not for profit organization. This investment has ramifications for their social media use as they are potentially forced to relegate available funding not intended for SNSs in order to have content visible to maintain these established consumer networks (Woodcock et al., 2011).

Producer and consumer interaction was the second subcategory and the associated benefits of this outcome included: provider and consumer engagement across demographics, positive encouragement and interest in the agritourism organizations, and the benefit of the Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram analytic overviews available to providers. Positive encouragement and interest in the agritourism organization was a valued result perceived of using SNSs. The results from research question one, similar to DMOs in the Gibbs and Dancs (2013) research, confirmed that agritourism providers are using these sites to share information that is firm focused, rather than to create interactive posts. Specifically, this follows SCRM strategies for one-to-many communications, but does not suggest that providers see value in the many-to-many communications, such as interactions amongst consumers explored in CoRM (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Woodcock et al., 2011). However, sentiments from consumers are still being expressed, as demonstrated through the previously explored nature of the content, which relay positive experiences with the agritourism organization. This suggests that consumers want

to engage with organizations and establish these bonds (Woodcock et al., 2011). Providers also recognized that through the established consumer network, further interest was generated around their agritourism organization. This is a beneficial outcome as content shared between providers and consumers can be viewed by others on these sites and can encourage experiences or product consumption which is the primary reason agritourism providers are using SNSs (Hays et al., 2013; Maecker et al., 2016).

Although the producer and consumer interactions presented beneficial outcomes, there are drawbacks associated with managing these relationships on SNSs. The drawbacks perceived by the agritourism providers included: the time required to manage public demands and expectations, the potential for negative feedback, and privacy concerns. “Customers who engage in social media interaction are more easily retained and are more likely to upgrade their customer relationships but have more service requests” (Maecker et al., 2016, p. 149). Managing these service requests was a similar drawback that was included in Gretzel et al.’s (2006) research as they noted:

In addition, the “24/7” quality of the Internet has important implications for information accessibility in general. If content is available all the time, users begin expecting the same from communication, feedback, and other services provided by the DMO, whether online or in the real world. (p. 122)

Similar to the issues faced by DMOs, the agritourism providers admittedly struggle to provide feedback and manage consumers’ needs due to other demands and a lack of resources (Gretzel et al., 2006). Consumers’ SNSs activity is not restricted to typical business hours and this results in an overload of demands placed on providers. These time constraints to respond or create new content, influences consumer perceptions and experiences with the agritourism provider (Choo &

Petrick, 2013; Woodcock et al., 2011). This drawback for managing consumer relationships has been expressed in other tourism contexts as well. Gyimóthy and Larson (2015) described strategies used to mitigate this drawback in previous tourism research, known as customer insourcing, to delegate tasks that traditionally are assumed by providers. Specifically, consumer evangelists, enthusiastic consumers who have a preexisting relationships with the organizations, are selected by providers to produce and monitor content on SNSs using their personal time and resources, which removes the onus from the organization (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Although this could potentially benefit the providers and aid in time required to manage public demands and perceptions, future research should examine this approach as it requires effort on the organizations behalf to identify these consumers on SNSs. As well, there could be issues with how to appropriately compensate these individuals, creating additional drawbacks for providers to manage (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015).

The potential for negative feedback about agritourism providers to be shared by consumers on SNSs was an outcome of concern. The findings of research question two identified that displeasure towards agritourism providers was expressed, although not frequently. In the Hays et al. (2013) research “interviewees suggested that organi[z]ations are often less comfortable with consumers voicing their opinions, criticisms and ideas” (p. 221). The findings of this research confirm this from the agritourism provider’s perspective. Consumers use of SNSs have transferred what used to be isolated concerns or complaints from a “private to public phenomenon” (Maecker et al., 2016, p. 135). The negative content shared can be viewed by other consumers and can influence their judgment of the agritourism provider with associated detrimental outcomes (Maecker et al., 2016). This opportunity for negative feedback is sometimes why organizations are hesitant to shift to a consumer focused paradigm (Maecker et

al., 2016). Agritourism providers use of SNSs allows for social care, which involves providing adequate customer service through social media (Maecker et al., 2016). Maecker et al. (2016) acknowledge that “companies that take appropriate remedial actions in a timely manner show that they are sensitive to customer concerns” (p. 136). Instead of perceiving these online consumer criticisms as a drawback, agritourism providers can appropriately manage the concerns in a constructive fashion and harness this feedback to create change to improve consumer experiences through social care (Maecker et al., 2016).

Privacy concerns were an identified drawback of using SNSs, which echoed previous research by tourism organizations (Gretzel et al., 2006). This was interpreted as a drawback because it places additional responsibilities on providers to ensure they are not crossing boundaries when sharing information, such as photos that may identify consumers. Privacy concerns are not just important to address from the provider’s perspective, but as well from the consumer’s perspective. Heller Baird and Parasnis (2011) found the top reason consumers are not engaging on SNSs with organizations is privacy concerns. When agritourism providers are curating information it is essential that they use appropriate discretion. Gretzel et al.’s (2006) research supported this as they found that consumers are increasingly valuing their privacy. Privacy concerns will impact the ability of organizations to generate interest in SNS engagement and can also effect the level of trust between providers and consumers. Being transparent and trustworthy are fundamental to CRM technology and must be kept top of mind for agritourism providers and their use of SNSs (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Hvass & Munar, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Overall this section has tied the perceived outcomes of using SNSs and their associated benefits and drawbacks that were interpreted from the semi-structured interviews with existing

literature involving CRM, social media, and tourism. Although the findings of this thesis are not generalizable across all contexts, they provide useful insight that can be considered in a range of tourism settings and provides the foundation for future research to explore the positives and negatives associated with organizations general use of SNSs.

Research Question Four

Research questions one, two, and three of this thesis provided a general understanding of how SNSs are being used by the five agritourism providers, and their consumers. This general understanding was essential to create a foundation for this context, as literature involving agritourism and social media is currently nonexistent. Research question four explored the perceptions of agritourism providers for using SNSs to provide FCL opportunities. As well to fulfill the purpose of this research, this question allowed the researcher to interpret the outcomes agritourism providers believe result from disseminating agriculture knowledge on these sites.

Agritourism providers perceived both benefits and drawbacks of using SNSs to facilitate FCL about agricultural processes and practices. The benefits included: perceived benefits for agritourism providers, importance of educating consumers, and the use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to address consumers interest for FCL opportunities. “In this era of social media, the Internet has evolved from a broadcasting medium to a participatory platform which allows people to become the “media” themselves for collaborating and sharing information” (Leung et al., 2013, p. 3-4). The agritourism providers believed that using SNSs and interacting with their consumers can facilitate a better understanding of their agritourism organization, and the agricultural process and practices they employ because interactions on SNSs allow for the coproduction of knowledge (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Benefits of using social media are both social and psychological, and agritourism providers perceived that through using SNSs for FCL

it could provide benefits for themselves, and their consumers (MacKay et al., 2014).

In general, farmers diversify into tourism services for significant and steady retail sales of farming products, but opportunities for educating agritourists and consumers about the farming and farming re-sources and offering entertainment/recreation services are useful side benefits of these activities. (Choo & Petrick, 2014, p. 373)

During the semi-structured interviews the agritourism providers suggested that if they provided FCL opportunities on SNSs, this could increase organization on-site activity for those who are seeking such experiences.

Falk et al. (2012) postulated that tourism providers will increasingly be accountable for measuring the learning capabilities of their destination, and using SNSs could potentially aid in this. The agritourism providers interviewed currently have no clear strategies in place for disseminating information on SNSs although their perceptions of how SNSs should be used follow CRM and social media strategies. As noted in the Literature Review chapter, the definition of agritourism is ambiguous, but it is typically defined to include education and learning opportunities (Choo & Petrick, 2013; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). All providers involved in this research stated the importance of educating consumers about agricultural processes and practices. With the developed consumer network on SNSs, providers can tailor their messages and extend the learning past the on-site experience. Using SNSs to educate can work to expose consumers to agrarian lifestyles, foster awareness and create a connection with these organizations (Tew & Barbieri, 2012). The agritourism providers in this research believed that they could address consumer interest for FCL through using SNSs. The interactions afforded through the use of SNSs, can provide FCL opportunities for consumers, as interaction enhances learning (Forkosh-Baruch & HersHKovitz, 2012; Junco et al., 2011; Zehrer

& Grabmüller, 2012). Similar to CRM, where “consumers can engage at a level to suit themselves; on a peripheral level or at a level that involves more interaction with the brand” (Woodcock et al., 2011, p. 53), individuals have choice and control over their FCL endeavors (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) suggested that individuals who use SNSs “have the desire to actively engage and to become both producers and consumers of information” (p. 166). In the interviews, agritourism providers elaborated that consumers are keen to learn (Integrity Foods, personal communication, December 4, 2015) and that individuals are becoming increasingly interested in how their food is produced (Harvest Moon Society, personal communication, November 20, 2015). It is perceived by the providers that if SNSs content is tailored specifically to FCL, then it can be used to connect the rural-urban divide. As well, if content educates or provides insight, it can have an effect on increased visitation and sales, and advocacy for the organization (Woodcock et al., 2011).

Drawbacks to using SNSs for providing FCL opportunities were interpreted. The drawbacks perceived by the agritourism providers included the importance of ‘hands-on’ experiences to learn about agriculture, and the fact that traditional uses of SNSs for marketing can trump FCL information dissemination. The suggestion that in person learning is potentially superior, rather than online facilitated learning, is confirmed in the literature by Kenebayeva (2014) who stated “a distinctive feature of agritourism consists in its main dimension- experience, which implies direct participation in rural activities in combination with a learning process” (p. 29). This drawback of using SNSs was undisputed by all providers as they perceived the importance of being an active consumer and being directly involved in the on-site experiences offered for FCL to occur.

Although benefits associated with using SNSs to relay FCL information were noted, traditional marketing priorities for SNSs (to increase on-site traffic) are often favoured. These findings are similar to research involving DMOs conducted by Hays et al. (2013) that suggested that marketing is the most prominent reason tourism organizations are sharing content on SNSs. If agritourism providers continuously focused on FCL material for their consumers, they believe this would interfere with traditional marketing priorities which are to ultimately enhance consumer relationships with the intention of increased organizational prosperity (Woodcock et al., 2011). However, by “sharing each other’s competences and resources, value can be created for the customer (in the form of unique, personalized offerings) and for the firm (organizational learning and user-driven innovation)” (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, p. 334). Specifically, providers acknowledge that FCL opportunities are desired by consumers and this focus on consumer wants, for FCL material, can create engagement value for the agritourism organizations which influences customer retention and value, without disseminating promotional material (Maecker et al., 2016).

Research question four also revealed the positive and negative outcomes that the agritourism providers suggested result through using SNSs for FCL. The positive outcomes were the ability to disseminate agricultural facts across demographics, the afforded post-season and off-site interaction with consumers to increase awareness, and the power to correct misconceptions and falsehoods. Disseminating agricultural facts to elicit FCL opportunities on SNSs is a tactic supported by Hajli and Lin (2014) who recognized that SNSs can be an outlet for consumers to acquire educational information. This is a positive outcome since tourism providers can use SNSs to relay a broad range of agricultural, or site-specific information (Hays et al., 2013). These concepts can be shared from other organizations, and Facebook and Twitter in

particular have functions that make sharing content with other consumers quite manageable.

The socially mediated learning afforded through SNSs can be extended to the post-season and can allow off-site education (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Although providers prefer to educate consumers through on-site, ‘hands on’ experiences, these concepts should be continuously reaffirmed for the new knowledge to be integrated into consumer’s understanding of agriculture (Falk & Dierking, 2004; Falk et al., 2012). MacKay et al. (2014) postulated that “communicating with attendees post visit, using social media, has been noted as a valuable opportunity for organizations to maintain contact and to encourage visitors to continue processing their on-site experience cognitively and affectively” (p. 615). Through using SNSs providers are able to share seasonal information, about off-season animal care (Integrity Foods, personal communication, December 4, 2015) for example that are not typically available during the operating season, or accessible to the public because of safety concerns (Deer Meadow Farms, personal communication, November 18, 2015). This off-season and post-visit interaction is an outcome associated with the use of SNSs which was believed by the providers to peak interest in agriculture, which can afford FCL to be accumulated through providing access to content.

As well, correcting misconceptions and falsehoods was an outcome identified by providers that resulted from using SNSs to share FCL material. Agritourism providers acknowledge that on SNSs “much of the available content is user-generated and includes peer-to-peer communication and, as such, information shared about products and services is no longer controlled or generated solely by the business” (Schaffer, 2014, p. 2). This can have detrimental impacts for tourism organizations and their consumer’s ability to become educated on agricultural processes and practices if misinformation is communicated. If providers use SNSs to facilitate FCL they suggested an outcome is their ability to control the content, and gear

information towards learning that is applicable to their values and ideologies. However, this further demonstrates that agritourism providers are not embracing the paradigm shift from being firm focused to consumer focused which was previously discussed. With a consumer focus, SNSs could be used for community consolidation, where consumers control the content to collectively contribute to this education as a strategy for enhanced FCL value that will in turn benefit the organizations (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015).

A drawback of using SNSs to facilitate FCL are the time constraints that restrict provider's capacity to curate and disseminate agricultural knowledge. Interview participants identified that there is a shortage of staff time to dedicate to the general use of SNSs, so being tasked with providing content that is educational, can be daunting. Gretzel et al. (2006) discussed the numerous stakeholders involved in tourism and how this results in different interests and perspectives that providers must address. This is a challenge for agritourism providers as they have to make sure the content they share on SNSs is relevant and appropriate for their organization and their consumers. This relevance is important for providers to be aware of, especially cases such as the St. Norbert Farmers' Market, since they represent varying agricultural ideals. Namely, they support organic and also non-organic farmers for example (St. Norbert Farmers' Market, personal communication, December 7, 2015). Although typically used as a marketing strategy, "The 3Cs" of digital value cocreation suggested by Gyimóthy and Larson (2015) could be applied to enhance FCL. This involves customer insourcing, crowdsourcing, and community consolidation strategies to alleviate the organization responsibilities and focus (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Customer insourcing would include the recruitment of consumer evangelists for example, to help curate FCL content (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). The second 'C', crowdsourcing, would require moderate control by providers and

would elicit the help of followers to understand what FCL information and experiences they desire (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Specifically, it can be difficult for providers to understand what level of educational content is appropriate for their followers FCL needs. Since learning is an individual experience comprised of interactions with other social features, using crowd sourcing applications afforded through SNSs would benefit providers and consumers (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). The least amount of provider involvement would be required for community consolidation, where the agritourism providers encourage UGC to be shared by consumers that promotes agriculture awareness, knowledge dissemination, and engagement (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Collectively, there is potential for “The 3Cs” to alleviate these time constraints for curating information and enhance FCL practices and outcomes for providers and consumers (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015).

This discussion of research question four has addressed the perceptions and outcomes associated with agritourism providers’ use of SNSs to facilitate learning, in relation to existing literature involving the CML, CRM, and social media. These discussed findings further support that “effective tourism education is a process of socially based, active co-construction of contextualized knowledge, with the aid of multimedia teaching strategies that foster active learning” (Leung et al., 2013, p. 15).

Customer Relationship Management and Social Media in Agritourism

The discussion of research question one, two, three, and four combined existing research and literature to explore CRM and social media strategies in relation to the results and findings of this thesis. Although there were both benefits and potential difficulties identified which were associated with using this approach to managing current and future organization-consumer relations, a further critique can be offered of CRM based on this research conducted in the

agritourism context that suggests inefficiencies in the model.

Agritourism itself is a relatively new endeavor and providers are currently negotiating how to best use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to suit their organizations. The findings highlighted that agritourism providers experience difficulties with negotiating SNS use, even before CRM applications can be considered. However, as Jayachandran, Sharma, Kaufman, and Raman (2005) state, firms are utilizing technology to “discriminate between profitable and unprofitable customers, provide customized service, and obtain greater customer retention” (p.177). Although there are overlying principles that can be adapted from CRM and social media for the agritourism context, the results and findings specific to the agritourism providers and consumers use of SNSs revealed that there can be difficulties associated with effective implementation.

Particularly, a shift from firm focused, to consumer focused is suggested in the literature and in the previous discussion of the research questions, but further research involving CRM and social media needs address the specific, practical ways that this can be implemented for organizations as their knowledge of how to successfully utilize social media techniques may not be as developed as CRM and social media literature suggests. The specific guidelines for attaining such value may not be transferable to all contexts, particularly from large, multi-national corporations to small scale family run organizations. For the agritourism research cases in this thesis, their use of SNS is conducted on a much smaller scale than large brand marketing organizations, such as Starbucks for example, which was the company described in Woodcock et al. (2011). Through the semi-structured interviews, it was identified that the agritourism providers in this research do not have the established marketing departments, the monetary means, or technological experience to understand and successfully implement the myriad of

approaches offered by CRM and social media. As well, the time required to manage public demands and expectations and to curate content for the SNSs was a drawback that was perceived by all providers and effected their use of social media. CRM and social media strategies need to further recognize the firm specific factors, such as organization size or established SNS presence, that impact provider's conscious adoption of such marketing strategies. Presently, agritourism organizations are not unlike other companies that are "largely left to experiment with their social application implementations" (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014, p. 1201). This critique suggests that CRM and social media strategies need to be tailored to offer individualized and specific strategies to fit different organizational use of this marketing technology in a way that offers the best value for the agritourism provider for example, and is set out in a way that is manageable and applicable for their consumers.

Overall, this chapter has incorporated existing tourism studies, CRM and social media strategies, CML, and FCL understandings to discuss the results and findings of this thesis to provide further insight for providers and consumers with regards to their use of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in the agritourism context.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In this thesis, an understanding of the ability for producers and consumers to interact on SNSs was gained, and the nature of the content posted by agritourism providers and consumers were established. In addition to the quantitative and qualitative social media content analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the general reasons agritourism providers have adopted SNSs for their organizations. As well, an overview of agritourism provider's perceptions and believed outcomes of using SNSs for FCL were provided. Following a pragmatic interpretive framework, this research addressed how SNSs, and the interactions facilitated on these sites, can promote connections between providers and consumers, be used for CRM, and foster learning about agriculture in Manitoba (Ang, 2011a; 2011b, Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Woodcock et al., 2011). Limitations, implications, and areas of future research are discussed in this chapter.

Limitations

Despite the efforts of the researcher to mitigate limitations, they still exist within this thesis. SNSs continue to change and since data collection in 2016, Facebook has included more features for possible provider and consumer interactions. Aside from the standard like for a post, individuals can now interact with love, thankful, haha, wow, sad, and angry responses. These further interaction opportunities are not captured in research question one because they were not functional at the time of data collection. These features present new ways for consumers and providers to interact with content on SNSs. As well, on Twitter and Instagram sites individuals could be interacting with the agritourism provider by directly tagging the organization. However, these interactions are not accessible to anyone outside the agritourism organization and therefore

the researcher did not include these in the analysis for research question one and question two.

This means that the nature of SNS interactions between consumers, directed towards providers, could potentially include additional posts not discussed in this research.

In the research study conducted by MacKay et al. (2014), the researchers were able to identify who SNSs posts were created by. Specifically, they identified whether the post was from the festival, a festival partner, an attendee (general public), other individual, or a combination of the above (MacKay et al., 2014). However, due to confidentiality requirements enforced by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, this detailed data could not be collected and so a simple provider and consumer classification was used.

Additionally, Hvass and Munar (2012) suggested that the analysis of text content of SNS posts could be strengthened through an analysis of the accompanying picture, video, or sound. This media content provides “complementary insight in to people’s thoughts and concerns” (Schwartz & Ungar, 2015, p. 91) as a result of these social interactions. The SNSs observed in this research afforded individuals the ability to include text, imagery, and video content with their posts. Due to the lack in ability of NVivo to powerfully code images, an analysis of the content, aside from text, for research question two did not occur and this could be viewed as a potential limitation of this research.

For the semi-structured interviews, social desirability bias could be considered a limitation. This bias stems from research participants responding with what they believe to be desired answers to interview questions (Fisher, 1993). This is a limitation that occurs throughout self-report measures of data collection in the social sciences (Fisher, 1993). However, the social desirability effect was mitigated by the researcher during the semi-structured interviews. Participants were explicitly told that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and

agritourism providers were encouraged to voice their honest opinions (see Appendix A: Interview Guide).

Recommendations

Qualitative and quantitative content analysis provided an overview of the five providers' use of SNSs, as well as consumer interactions on these sites. Through these forms of data collection and analysis, an understanding of the successful ways that agritourism providers and their consumers are interacting on SNSs was afforded. However, guided by CRM strategies for social media, and the CML, this research identified that there is potential for improvement in how SNSs are used to facilitate relationships. This section will provide recommendations based on existing literature and "The 3Cs" of digital value cocreation offered for social media in a tourism context to diminish perceived drawbacks and enhance best practices (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015).

Not all of the agritourism organizations studied are using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram sites. For example, Integrity Foods only operates a Facebook page for their destination. It could be suggested that providers who are not monopolizing a variety of SNSs are missing out on opportunities to engage with the consumers who only use the other SNSs. Except, in this research, the providers who did have accounts on the other SNSs, were least active on Twitter and Instagram and did not readily interact or engage with their consumers on these sites aside from disseminating few firm focused messages (Wang & Feng, 2012). However, during the semi-structured interviews, the agritourism providers unanimously stated that time constraints and other job related responsibilities restricted their use of SNSs in general, and for FCL in particular. As some agritourism providers are prolific in their adoption of SNSs, it is recommended that they look to services that will help manage and enhance their interactions

with consumers. For Twitter specifically, “services such as HootSuite.com and Tweetdeck.com help users manage profiles across different social media platforms” (Gibbs & Dancs, 2013, p. 3). This is one recommendation to mitigate the time constraints faced by providers if they elect to use multiple SNSs because, as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated, if you are going use these sites, it is essential to be active. If agritourism providers are not able to maintain these SNSs then it is appropriate that they do not use them. As Gyimóthy and Larson (2015) suggested, adopting Facebook as a primary SNSs is a widely accepted strategy for organizations. If agritourism providers cannot effectively use their SNSs to manage customer relations across various SNSs, then it is recommended that they should only capitalize on the one site that is most appropriate for their organization and consumers (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The social media content analysis revealed that providers are not regularly interacting with their consumers. For example, there were numerous consumer posts that enquired for information for experience enhancement reasons, but these posts sometimes went unanswered. Ang (2011a) suggested that a best practice example would be to respond to all comments within 24 hours. As well, “negative comments were followed up with solutions to the problems, while positive comments were rewarded” (Ang, 2011a, p. 35). This could work to mediate the effects of expressed displeasure, while also encouraging positive comments. It is recommended that agritourism providers strive to respond to their consumers in a timely fashion.

Consumers and other agricultural stakeholders can be a good source of content through customer insourcing (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). St. Norbert Farmers’ Market suggested that they provide the unique opportunity for individuals to interact with multiple vendors pursuing many different agriculture avenues, for example (personal communication, December 7, 2015). To eliminate the onus placed on the agritourism providers to continuously engage with and

respond to consumers, it is suggested that SNS account takeovers occur. A SNS account takeover is when an outside individual assumes control of the SNS and then disseminates content and replies to consumer enquiries. Gyimóthy and Larson (2015) support this recommendation and state “ambassadors, tweetamigos, and guest bloggers are effective distributors of information that has a more personal and experiential character” (p. 342). This would allow for varied perspectives to be shared and would also provide consumers the prolonged opportunity to interact with the organizations. This method replicates the role of consumer evangelists, to ensure engagement and interaction is abundantly occurring on SNSs to enhance consumer relationships (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). However, it is acknowledged that this recommendation requires further study as there may be limitations which arise as a result of such takeovers in the agritourism context that were not identified through this thesis.

Another recommendation for providers to ease the constraint involved in curating information to disseminate on SNSs would be to look to the consumers for content. As identified through CRM and social media strategies, “companies can take advantage of this dynamic by designing social media programs with the explicit goal of touching customers emotionally and motivating them to share their experiences with others” (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 35). In Gibbs and Dancs’ (2013) research, an “interesting pattern of use identified was the retweeting of pictures by followers while they are at the destination” (p. 10). Gibbs and Dancs (2013) suggested that this promotes the organization and simultaneously demonstrates the destination through the eyes of the consumer. According to Heller Baird and Parasnis (2011), content continually needs to be fresh and relevant. It is recommended that agritourism providers “provide incentives for people to share content with friends to capitalize on the viral benefits a community

platform offers” (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 36). This research identified visitor posts on Facebook, as well as hashtag content on Twitter and Instagram. This UGC is readily available for providers to interact with through the share function on Facebook, or retweet on Twitter. Although it is understood that sorting through this UGC will be the provider’s duty, and there is a lot of content on these sites, it is recommended that this be incorporated in to their SNS use. These functions enabled through SNSs were not capitalized on by the providers but can work to foster awareness for their agritourism organization (Ang, 2011a, 2011b; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011).

Further, providers should consider that in “any type of social interaction people have the desire to control the impressions other people form of them” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 62). It is recommended that agritourism providers be cognizant of this if they wish to encourage educational interactions. Specifically, consumers may want to seek out agricultural knowledge but are ashamed of looking uneducated, resulting in more passive consumers than interactors (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Maecker et al., 2016). With this understanding, it is recommended that community consolidation techniques are used where providers “facilitate and stimulate dialogue” (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, p. 347) amongst the community to create the socially mediated context required for FCL (Falk & Dierking, 2000). However, learning is an individualized experience because consumers possess different levels of agricultural comprehension (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Findings from the semi-structured interviews suggested that the providers struggle to curate content that is educational and relevant for their organization. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that, “the first step is to listen to your customers. Find out what they would like to hear, what they would like to talk about; what they might find interesting, enjoyable, and valuable” (p. 66) and this same idea can be used for FCL

content. Through crowdsourcing, the FCL content that consumers desire can be acknowledged (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). It is recommended that providers reach out to their consumers to gain perspective on what type of content will fill their FCL needs, and then the content can be tailored based on this appreciation. Engaging consumers to find out what they want will increase advocacy and affinity for the agritourism organizations (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). One way to attain this crowdsourced information on SNSs is through encouraging the use of hashtags. Hashtags offer the ability for content to be organized and collected on SNSs for providers and consumers to view (Ma, et al., 2013). It is suggested that providers establish unique hashtags and then employ crowdsourcing techniques. This would allow similar content to be grouped and providers could ascertain a collective understanding of consumer thoughts in an organized fashion (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Overall, it is recommended that the “traditional model of managing the customer relationship needs to adapt to the reality that the customer is now in control” (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 36). If providers internalize these strategic recommendations, they can achieve greater success on SNSs. These recommendations provide insight for how the agritourism context can better employ SNS practices in general and for FCL, suggesting mutual benefit for providers and consumers (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Maecker et al., 2016).

Implications

This research has varied implications as it brought together previously unconnected literature and research areas. Aggregating and advancing the understanding of SNSs, agritourism, and FCL is of benefit for agritourism providers, consumers, and those involved in similar contexts. This is because the results and findings support the social and educational outcomes provided in these settings, a needed contribution to the existing body of knowledge

(Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Through incorporating both the supply and demand perspectives simultaneously, namely the agritourism providers and the consumers, this elicited a valued understanding of the interactions that surround agritourism (Flanigan et al., 2014). Heller Baird and Parasnis (2011) “believe that for many companies, social media will become the gateway, if not the primary, communications channel to connect with customers” (p. 36) and this research adds perspective for the agritourism context. This research also provides benchmarking opportunities (Gibbs & Dancs, 2013). Particularly, future research that explores agritourism contexts and social media will require “performance measures and benchmarking ideologies” (Gretzel et al., 2006, p. 125) which future studies can compare with the results and findings of this thesis.

This research has implications for SNS use in general. The results addressed the range of ways that individuals can interact on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram through the categories followed for the quantitative content analysis. These categories are transferable outside the context of agritourism and can be further harnessed to understand interactions on these sites. These results and findings advance knowledge since there is a paucity of research regarding the comprehension of the range of SNS uses (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Hays et al., 2013; Hvass & Munar, 2012; Leung et al., 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). As well, through identifying the specific categories and subcategories for the nature of interactions, providers can understand these interactions and work to develop a customer-centric organizational system that allows the agritourism organizations to “initiate customer information sharing, overcome functional barriers, devote to such customer-centered actions as customer relationship retention and upgrading” (Wang & Feng, 2012, p. 119). Using CRM and social media to evaluate the results and findings of this research not only adds insight for the agritourism context to utilize these

strategies, but also highlighted that “customers and organizations now increasingly *coproduce* information, knowledge, and experiences” (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015, p. 331). This is important for agritourism providers because in this era developing their CRM capabilities is imperative (Wang & Feng, 2012). Not all agritourism providers will know how to successfully manage SNS interactions from a CRM perspective and this knowledge will allow providers to gain a tailored, competitive edge in the tourism context (Ang, 2011a; Wang & Feng, 2012).

As well, participating in the semi-structured interviews offered the chance for the five agritourism providers to actively reflect on their SNS use. Ang (2011b) suggested that operating social media can be a challenge and “many organi[z]ations are still struggling to understand how it can be effectively implemented” (p. 151). Therefore, it is important for providers to step back and reflect on current practices and become prepared for what will be required of tourism organizations in the future (Gretzel et al., 2006; Hvass & Munar, 2012). “The success of social media efforts are often extremely difficult to gauge” (Hays et al., 2013, p. 232) and this is potentially why the agritourism providers do not currently use evaluative measures to understand the effectiveness of their SNS use (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). The findings and results of this thesis allow providers to “carefully consider how they can create a social media experience that is unique to their brand, offers customer value and exploits the power of the social community” (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, p. 36). This research elicited more insight for provider’s general use of SNSs, and how they can advance their capability for supporting the FCL of their consumers. Since online communities and their interactions can offer social support this “will lead the industry in co-creating value with consumers” (Hajli & Lin, 2014, p. 412) through understandings gained of the ubiquitous technology use in tourism (Gretzel et al., 2006).

The implications stated for providers, are equally beneficial for consumers. As providers

refine their SNS practices, there is potential for an increased diversity of content to be disseminated and providers may then take a more active role in addressing consumer enquiries. This research has the potential to effect the way providers use SNSs to better serve their personal needs and the needs of the consumer networks (Ang, 2011a, 2011b; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, Maecker et al., 2016; Woodcock et al., 2011). Addressing the educational opportunities that can be facilitated on these sites is important for agritourism providers because consumers will increasingly seek FCL information through the use of SNSs (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011; Falk et al., 2012). An appreciation of the perceived outcomes from using SNSs are essential for exploring how these opportunities for learning are possible, or can be enhanced for consumer value (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). How providers use SNSs in general and for FCL impacts consumer's decision to engage with the agritourism organizations, because consumers have primary choice and control over where and how they search for content (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011). This research can support successful practices for tourism development and has contributed to knowledge surrounding agritourism, social media, and the use of SNSs to elicit FCL in a leisure context, which are valued research areas for both scholars and practitioners (Gibbs & Dancs, 2013; Falk et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2013).

Future Research

This research provided seminal insight for how SNSs are generally used by agritourism providers and consumers, and how these sites can be used to support FCL in an agritourism context. This thesis was exploratory in nature, and there is the potential for future studies to build on the results and findings. Since the literature is still forming the foundation regarding increased technological changes and how the adoption of SNSs will impact the tourism industry, more

research is required (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Hays et al., 2013; Maecker et al., 2016).

The researcher collected SNS data during the agritourism operating season capturing posts from July, August, and September. It is believed that SNSs can facilitate off-season interactions with consumers, but this concept was not able to be confirmed or disputed through this research (Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015). Future studies could address the SNS interactions between providers and consumers in the off-season and compare them in nature to in-season results and findings of this research. This would be beneficial to the sector “given companies’ intention to expand customer relationships and to increase customer revenues” (Maecker et al., 2016, p. 135) on an annual basis.

Future research could combine research questions one and two of this study. Accumulating comprehensive knowledge of the interactions present, in association with the nature of the content, could better equip agritourism providers to increase relations with their consumers. Future research could provide information as to the nature of posts that are receiving the most interaction, potentially in the form of likes and comments depending on the sites analyzed. Although it is not the intention of the categories established through research question two that described the nature of the content posted to be generalizable, these could be applied to other agritourism cases to determine the “robustness of the different category definitions” (Dann, 2010, p. 12) for this tourism context.

This thesis used qualitative social media content analysis for research question two, and semi-structured interviews for research questions three and four. Instead of using qualitative content analysis, future research could use Netnography, which is the “ethnographic study of cultures and communities exclusively mediated in online environments” (Miley & Read, 2012, p. 707). This future netnographic research could explore SNS interactions to incorporate deeper

qualitative insight. Further, the semi-structured interviews were conducted independently with the agritourism providers, and future research could incorporate focus groups for providers where they could discuss their perceptions and believed outcomes of using SNSs to facilitate FCL (Gretzel et al., 2006). Specifically, using conversation analysis, which inherently analyzes social interactions based on an understanding of language, could lead to new ideas being explored through analysis of the dialogue shared between tourism providers in the agritourism context (Steensen, 2013). To further explore this research topic, future research that uses additional analysis approaches could ensure that providers are harnessing the appropriate strategic, analytical, and operational tools to enhance consumer and provider relationships (Ang, 2011a; Gretzel et al., 2006).

Gibbs and Dancs (2013) suggested that value could be added to the literature by conducting research involving SNSs which is user focused. It is recommended that the perceptions of consumers for using SNSs to interact with agritourism providers should explicitly be addressed because consumers are not homogenous and place different values on the agritourism brand, with different levels of engagement (Woodcock et al., 2011). Understanding CRM, future research that looks to address consumer identities on SNSs would be beneficial to the sector (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Wang & Feng, 2012). Following the same critique Ang (2011b) published of SCRM, ambiguity of who the consumers are that interact with agritourism providers on SNSs, still exists. Specifically, it is not known whether the consumer content included in this research is from existing customers of the agritourism organization (those who have already had an on-site experience), individuals who solely interact with these providers on SNSs through engagement on their pages or hashtag use, or if the consumers are other agricultural stakeholders as the research questions did not require this distinction. Future research that looks to delineate

the particular identities of those that follow and share UGC on SNSs related to agritourism could help agritourism providers understand who the ‘consumers’ are and how this effects interaction and consumption of content (Gibbs & Dance, 2013).

The literature also demonstrates that on SNSs, there are lurkers (Ang, 2011a; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Woodcock et al., 2011). Lurkers are consumers who passively consume content without further interaction or response (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). This has been identified as the “most common role in online communities” (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014, p. 48). Ang (2011a) suggested that the number of those who contribute on SNSs is a relatively small percentage of actual users. Future research which seeks to understand the lurkers perspective and their general SNS use patterns could provide insight and contribute to the body of knowledge to improve CRM and social media engagement (Ang, 2011a; 2011b, Gretzel et al., 2006; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, Maecker et al, 2016; Woodcock et al., 2011). As explored through CRM, SNSs, and Gyimóthy and Larson’s (2015) “The 3Cs” in this research, “superior customer-relating capabilities result from the organizational culture that considers customers’ need a priority, the organization system that promotes customer relationship building and the information technology (IT) that enables customer information acquisitions and analysis” (Wang & Feng, 2012, p. 118). Therefore, the outcomes that consumers independently believe result from using SNSs in general, and for FCL should be further explored. The opportunity to facilitate FCL information is recognized by agritourism providers and it is recommended that future research is conducted to understand how these interactions can be improved (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Maecker et al., 2016; Woodcock et al., 2011). This would provide valuable insight for the agritourism context as organizations are still uncertain how to use their SNSs effectively in general, and for FCL (Ang, 2011a).

Conclusion

This research has confirmed that managing and manipulating SNS content to elicit the greatest potential for providers and consumers is not a simple process (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). However, it was suggested from the semi-structured interviews with agritourism providers that the use of SNSs can result in numerous benefits for agritourism organizations (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011, Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, Maecker et al., 2016). This research contributes to the literature as it advances the understanding of the non-economic gains, such as the social interactions and the afforded FCL opportunities that can benefit both providers and consumers through using SNSs in the agritourism context (Tew & Barbieri, 2012). “Tourism has changed in fundamental ways, and new developments in technology and society are expected to continuously redefine what the future of tourism will or can be” (Gretzel et al., 2006, p. 118). With the pervasive adoption of social media technology, understanding the myriad of possibilities for providers and consumers to interact, share, and observe content on these sites is important for organizations (Ang, 2011a; 2011b). The use of SNSs can reduce ambiguity and increase the transparency of agricultural organizations, working to connect the rural-urban divide (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Through these socially mediated interactions, providers and consumers can engage to maintain a social community focused on the destination and foster a mindfulness of agricultural practices. The results and findings of the four research questions in this thesis addressed how and why agritourism providers interact with their consumers on SNSs. Further, the purpose was to explore how Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram sites are being used in general by agritourism providers and their consumers and if FCL opportunities can be afforded through this use. Although drawbacks of using these sites were identified, SNSs have been observed as an effective tool to

connect and encourage interactions between individuals and foster an appreciation for agrarian lifestyles in Manitoba (Ang, 2011a; 2011b; Gyimóthy & Larson, 2015; Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Maecker et al., 2016; Woodcock et al., 2011).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

[Rapport building before interview so participant is comfortable]

[Go over informed consent and collect the completed form]

Overview of information.

All set to go? Ok. So some housekeeping things before we start. I really appreciate you taking the time to meet with me today to discuss free-choice learning, social media, and agritourism. I just want to let you know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions that follow so please feel free to voice your honest opinion. As we have already gone over the informed consent form you understand that the information you share will remain confidential. This means that I will not share any identifying information from this interview with anyone else. Please remember that since I am audio recording this interview it is important that you speak clearly. Before we continue with the interview, did you have any questions or comments?

Introductory questions.

First I would like to get to know a little more about your role with [agritourism provider].

- How did you initially become involved with [agritourism provider]?
- How long have you been involved with this organization?
- What is your position with [agritourism provider]?
 - What are the roles associated with this position?
- Could you describe a typical work-day at [agritourism provider]?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your position with [agritourism provider]?
- For this research we suggest that your [agritourism provider] can be categorized as [insert typology characteristics here], is this accurate?

Key questions.

As you know, the purpose of this research study is to understand how agritourism providers can contribute to free-choice learning about agricultural products and practices from social networking site accounts. The research questions of this project are:

1. What are the characteristics of the social networking site content posted by agritourism providers and their followers?
2. To what extent do agritourism providers and their followers interact on social networking sites?
3. What role do agritourism providers have in facilitating free-choice learning through social networking site content?

Social media.

So now we are first going to talk generally about social media.

- How did [agritourism provider] first become involved with social media?
 - When did you become involved?
- What forms of social media are you currently using?
- Why does [agritourism provider] use social media?

- What benefits do you perceive of using social networking sites in general?
- What concerns do you perceive of using social networking sites in general?
- Is there one form of social media that you engage with most frequently?
 - What is the particular reason that this consumes your primary social media use?
 - Is there are particular feature of it that makes it different from other social media?
 - Could you describe what you like about this form of social media?
 - Could you describe what you dislike about this form of social media?
- What does [agritourism provider] typically share on social media?
 - Does the content differ between social networking sites?
- Could you tell me about the interactions you have with your followers on social media?
 - How do these compare on Facebook?
 - How do these compare on Twitter?
 - How do these compare on Instagram?
- Have you used any evaluative measures to understand how the public perceives the social media of [agritourism provider]?

Learning.

With agritourism, there is typically an educational component involved. Here is the definition of agritourism used in this research “[f]arming-related activities carried out on a working farm or other agricultural settings for entertainment or education purposes” (Gil Arroyo et al., 2013, p. 45).

- Could you explain if this definition of agritourism fits your site?
- Does [agritourism provider] offer educational opportunities for visitors?
 - If yes, what do these look like?
 - How would you describe this learning?
 - What would you consider to be a valuable learning experience at [agritourism provider]?
 - If no, how come?
- Do you think there is the potential for visitors to learn about food production and practices at your site?
 - If yes, through what experiences?
 - Are these learning opportunities a priority for [agritourism provider]?
 - If no, why not?
- Is there anything else you would like to add about agritourism and education?

Social media and free-choice learning.

- How do you think that social networking sites can facilitate learning about agriculture and food production?
 - What type of learning opportunities do you suggest are available on social media for learning about agriculture?
 - How could these interactions be improved?
 - If [agritourism provider] does not thing social networking sites can facilitate learning, why is this so?
- Does [agritourism provider] look to educate their social media followers?
 - If yes, what do you feel your role is in this process?
 - What strategies are in place for this?

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE USE AND FREE-CHOICE LEARNING IN AGRITOURISM

- If no, how come this has not been considered?
- Do you see any impacts of using social networking site on follower's learning outcomes?
 - If yes, could you explain?
 - If no, why do you suggest this is?

Concluding questions.

- Do you have any suggestions regarding the issue of using social media for educational purposes?
- Were there any other comments you would like to make about your agritourism site?
 - Were there any other comments you would like to make about social media in general?
 - Were there any other comments you would like to make about learning in general?
 - Were there any other comments you would like to make about the ability of social media to facilitate free-choice learning about agriculture?

Again, thank you so much for your participation. It has been helpful to gain your insight on how social media can contribute to free-choice learning about agricultural products and practices from social networking site accounts of agritourism provider's insight. Take care.

Appendix B: Participant Informed Consent Form



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Participant Informed Consent Form

*Note: Following the Faculty of Graduate Studies guidelines personal information has been omitted from this form

Research Project Title

Free-choice learning and agritourism: Social media interactions and potential learning about agriculture

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to understand how social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram of agritourism providers can increase agricultural learning. The interview data collected will be used to supplement a social media content analysis that will overview the public social networking sites of your agritourism site. The semi-structured interviews and the analysis of posts on your social media sites will address the following questions: What are the characteristics of the social networking site content posted by agritourism providers and their followers?”, “To what extent do agritourism providers and their followers interact on social networking sites?” and “What role do agritourism providers have in facilitating free-choice learning through social networking site content?”.

Research Procedures

Interviews will be used as the research instrument. This instrument will not pose any risk to you. The interview will be audio recorded using an iPad recording device. Participants for the in-person open-ended interviews will be five adults (individuals over the age of 18) who are

involved with the social media dissemination for their specific agritourism site. The interview is expected to take approximately 1 hour in length. After the interview, a copy of the transcription will be sent to you for member checking that should take approximately 30 minutes in length. This means that your total involvement with this study would be approximately 1 hour 30 minutes in length.

Risks and Benefits

The risks for you are minimal, and no more than what one might encounter in daily life. You should also be aware that should you feel uncomfortable in the interview situation you are free to withdraw from the study by stating that they would no longer to participate. The benefits for you include the opportunity to reflect on your own social media usage and the associated learning implications it has for agriculture and agritourism providers in general. The knowledge gained from these interviews can help stakeholders improve their social media relations and this may be viewed as a benefit of participation.

Anonymity, Confidentiality and Destruction of Data

Qualitative data will be collected from you about social media and the facilitated learning opportunities. Since I will know participants by name, all identifying characteristics of individuals will be removed from the interview transcriptions and replaced with pseudonyms so that they do not contain any identifying information. The audio-recorded interview files will be removed from the iPad recording device immediately after the interview and transferred to an encrypted USB drive. I will be the only individual who has access to the raw interview data. I will have access to the files and personal identifying information about participants (contact information) will be stored separately from data in another locked filing cabinet and numbers will be used to connect participants with their contact information. Information entered into computers will be stored in password-protected files on password-protected computers. My advisor, Christine Van Winkle, will have access to the transcriptions once all identifying information has been removed from the document. The data will be destroyed by October 2016. I may potentially submit the results to a journal or use them in a presentation where the subject matter can provide knowledge and insight. While your personal identifying information will not be released, it is possible that individuals may be able to identify you as the interview respondent based on your position within this organization. With your consent, the name of your agritourism site will be contained in written reports of this research and where quotes are used pseudonyms will replace individual names and potential usernames. It is estimated that the Master's Thesis will be completed by October 2016. Once the full study has been completed transcriptions will be deleted and the device will be wiped clean. Consent forms will be destroyed by being submitted to the "Shred It" container in the Health Leisure and Human Performance Research Institute in room 314 Max Bell Center at the University of Manitoba. This is the company used by the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management to destroy all confidential records and data.

Compensation and Participation

You will not receive any compensation for your participation.

Dissemination and Debriefing

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The results of this study will be used to complete my Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management Master of Arts thesis. You will be sent a summary of the results by post or e-mail and the summary will not contain any identifying information. I may potentially submit the results to a journal or use them in a presentation where the subject matter can provide knowledge and insight. No personal identifying information will be contained in written reports of this research and where quotes are used pseudonyms will replace individual names or user names.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding your participation in the research project and agree to participate as a participant. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher, sponsors or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact the above named person or Margaret Bowman at the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122 or margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participants Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher Signature _____ Date _____

☐ Yes, I give permission for this research project to release the name of _____ (insert agritourism provider here) and the related data as a result of the semi-structured interviews.

Providers Signature _____ Date _____

☐ No, I do not give permission for this research project to release the name of the agritourism site in relation to the semi-structured interview information.

Appendix C: Categories and Subcategories Coding Sheets

Categories Coding Sheet

Categories	Definition	Subcategories
Informational	“Knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance” (Dictionary.com, 2016) with the intent of the providers or consumers to disseminate awareness through the post or Tweet.	Admission, price and purchase information Animal knowledge Environment and weather condition Event and experience information General information Product availability or product knowledge Schedule and hours information
Enquiries	A “request for information” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) in question format with the purpose of engaging providers or consumers and ideally eliciting a response to the query.	Admission, price and purchase enquiry Animal information enquiry Conversational or engagement enquiry General enquiry Product availability or product knowledge enquiry Schedule and hours enquiry
Sentiment	“An attitude, thought, or judgment prompted by feeling” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016) that involves responsive opinion sharing that relates to a post, Tweet, event, or experience.	Acknowledgement Accolades Appreciation Displeasure
Solicitation	“To approach with a request or plea” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016) with the purpose of communicating an idea that elicits a physical or social reaction by the provider or consumer.	Encouraged experience General request Purchase or registration encouragement Request for interaction Visit invitation
Phatic	Statements made which do not communicate attitudes of sentiment or contain information, but serve a purpose to establish sociability (Adapted from MacKay et al., 2014, p. 613).	Caption and description Experience statement General statement Greeting statement Personal statement
Personal engagement and relations	A post or Tweet that connects with a user to draw their attention to the content by simply including their @username or for self-serving purposes such as experience planning or general banter that does not elicit a response from the provider or general consumers.	
Unclassifiable	Posts or Tweets that contain unknown characters or are not able to be classified by the above definitions.	

Informational Subcategories Coding Sheet

Category	Subcategories	Definition	Example
Informational	Admission, price, and purchase Information	A post or Tweet that contains information pertaining to admission, the price of a product or on-site experience, or which provides information about how to purchase an item, or methods of payment available.	“\$12 u pick. \$18 pre picked. Debit accepted. Just there this morning, lots of big berries, did 6 pails in an hour.” (BFPPC19)
	Animal knowledge	A post or Tweet that shares information related to animals with regards to their behaviours, opportunities for interaction, or general knowledge involving the physical aspects of animals for their agricultural use, or appearance.	“They are Fallow Deer...native to Europe and they have color variations from white to brown and spotted.” (DFPR27)
	Environment and weather condition	A post or Tweet that gives information related to the physical condition of the agritourism site, the environment in general or gives information about the local weather.	“Vendors are wrapping it up early for the first time in many many years....hail, torrential rain, and wind. A big thank you to all the great market visitors for coming out!” (SFPP65)
	Event and experience information	A post or Tweet that provides information about an event related to the agritourism provider or a specific experience that is being offered.	“The intergenerational wood and soap carving workshop is filling up fast! Reserve your spot today!” (HFPP23)
	General information	A post or Tweet that includes agritourism site-specific information that does not fit in to the other Informational subcategories.	“We only know one day at a time as picking is weather and crowd dependent, as soon as we know for sure times and days we post it” (BFPPC114)
	Product availability or product knowledge	A post or Tweet that contains information about particular agriculture products and their availability, or products related to the agritourism organization, or shares product specific knowledge that describes and informs consumers of potential consumption or use.	“So many freshly made choices for breakfast and lunch at the market ... visit Barb's Kitchen for empanadas and perogies; find springrolls at JT Springrolls, and the Farm Berger at Spenst Brothers. Like it spicy? Look for samosas and butter chicken. And then there are waffles and cookies and cakes, and so much more ... yum!” (SFPP18)
	Schedule and Hours Information	A post or Tweet that makes references to the schedule of events occurring in relation to the agritourism organization or the hour's attractions are offered, or information regarding hours of operation.	“Open for strawberry picking tomorrow from 8am-8pm. We will have prepicked around 10am 🍓” (BFPP24)

Enquiries Subcategories Coding Sheet

Category	Subcategories	Definition	Example
Enquiries	Admission, price, and purchase enquiry	A post or Tweet that queries for information pertaining to admission, the price of a product or on-site experience, or which requests information about how to purchase an item or which methods of payment are available, in question format.	“Does the petting zoo have an admission cost?” (BFCP104)
	Animal information enquiry	A post or Tweet that queries for information related to animals with regards to their behaviours, opportunities for interaction, or general knowledge involving the physical aspects of animals for their agricultural use, or appearance, in question format.	“What breed is this?” (DFPC72)
	Conversational or engagement enquiry	A post or Tweet that includes a statement in question format that looks to engage with the provider or consumer but is not seeking information other than a conversational or opinion based response.	“What a weekend, eh?! Remember, leave no trace! Pitch in and pick it up! Don't be a slob dudes & dudettes! #hmf2015” (HTPP134)
	General enquiry	A post that includes an agritourism site-specific enquiry that does not fit in to the other Enquiries subcategories.	“what kind of spray do you use? or do you have an organic option?” (BFCP9)
	Product availability or product knowledge enquiry	A post or Tweet that contains queries for information about particular agriculture products, or products related to the agritourism organization, or requests product specific knowledge that describes and informs of potential consumption or use.	“Are the small pickling onions available yet?” (SFCP76)
	Schedule and hours enquiry	A post or Tweet in question format that queries for information regarding the schedule of events occurring in relation to the agritourism organization or the hours they will be offering certain attractions, or information regarding hours of operation.	“R U guys open on saturday, july 24? If you guys open what time do you open? Thank you!” (BFCP233)

Sentiment Subcategories Coding Sheet

Category	Subcategories	Definition	Example
Sentiment	Acknowledgement	A post or Tweet that expresses a response to content shared by a provider or consumer with a reaction noting the individual has attained an understanding of the content, or an expression that offers an opinion.	“WOW! That looks SO AWESOME! a-MAZE-ing no less! ☺” (DFPC139)
	Accolades	A post or Tweet with an announcement of “award or expression of praise” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) towards a product, provider or consumer, or an experience.	“.@HarvestMoonSoc is once again putting on a freaking fantastic festival. Great music and beautiful people. #hmf2015” (HTHP149)
	Appreciation	A post or Tweet that expresses a “feeling of being grateful for something” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) such as an experience, providers or consumers, or quality of a product.	“Farmers’ Feast 2015! Every year, we partner with the excellent local food security organization Food Matters Manitoba, for an annual fundraiser that supports local food initiatives. Last night’s sold out event was beautiful and delicious. A big thank you to all the chefs, farmers, volunteers, supporters, and friends who helped make it such a success!” (SFPP168)
	Displeasure	A post or Tweet that contains a “feeling of unhappiness or annoyance” (Merriam-Webster, 2016) towards a provider, product or experience.	“Your ad says open Sundays! We kept today open just for picking only to find out that you’re closed! False advertising???” So disappointed.” (BFPC48)

Solicitation Subcategories Coding Sheet

Category	Subcategories	Definition	Example
Solicitation	Encouraged experience	A post or Tweet that urges a provider or consumer to take action and become involved with an offered experience or event.	“This week-end only we celebrate our 6th Anniversary and we’re cooking up some goodness! Don’t miss this!!! Experience the country! Taste the country! Take it home with you!” (DFPP64)
	General request	A post or Tweet that requests a provider or consumer to engage with an action that does not fit in to the other Solicitation subcategories because of its agritourism site-specific relation.	“can you please give the recipe that was on ctv morning live. thank you” (BFCP23)
	Purchase or registration encouragement	A post or Tweet that includes a call to action where the provider or consumer is prompted to purchase a product or register for an experience or event.	“The line-up is here for the 14th perennial Harvest Moon Festival. We hope you’re as excited as we are. Tickets are on sale now. Get ‘em while the gettin’s good!” (HFPP14)
	Request for interaction	A post or Tweet that prompts for a response from a provider or consumer in which they will interact with social networking site content by liking, sharing, posting or viewing content, or elicits personal interaction with the provider or consumer.	“We’re working to make HM Festival is a safer space. If you do not feel safe please talk to an organizer or security staff #hmf2015” (HTPP102)
	Visit invitation	A post or Tweet that encourages a consumer or provider to visit the agritourism organization or another specific location.	“We’re all set up and ready to go at the St.Norbert Farmer’s Market! Come visit us and pick up a bouquet!! #FlowerFarmer #FarmerFlorist #Local #Fresh #WinnipegFlowers #WinnipegWedding #OriginMatters #StNorbertFarmersMarket” (SIHP106)

Phatic Subcategories Coding Sheet

Category	Subcategories	Definitions	Examples
Phatic	Caption and description	A post or Tweet with at statement that relates to included media content that does not elaborate further than to include a textual quip describing the content.	“Our temporary garden table centerpiece!” (IFPP5)
	Experience statement	A post of Tweet that includes a phatic expression of an experience that does not include information or express sentiment to the providers or consumers.	“We had a wonderful day at the farm and our children LOVED it. It's the only farm experience like it near Winnipeg and I hope to visit again with my children as its such an educational and fun time for the kids. Thank you to the friendly and helpful staff for making our trip so good.” (DFCP16)
	General statement	A post or Tweet that includes a general expression that does not fit within the other Phatic subcategories.	“A good Friday to you all! Here is a long awaited garden photo for your eyes to feast on. Harvest is around the bend!” (IFPP11)
	Greeting statement	A post or Tweet that contains a salutation to the general public or to the provider to convey sociability but does not include information or a statement of sentiment.	“Happy Canada Day Everyone! We will be at St. Norbert Farmers' Market from 11-9 all day long- come nosh on some goodies- there is also live entertainment and fire works- it's going to be a dandy! #lovelocal#theGreatestCountryInTheWorlds” (SFCP2)
	Personal statement	A post or Tweet that includes an expression which is specific to the individual sharing the content.	“How long does strawberry season usually last? We are unable to come and pick until we are back from holidays July 15th ☹️” (BFCP5)

Appendix D: General Social Networking Site Information and Results*Inaugural Social Networking Site Posts*

Agritourism providers	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Boonstra Farms	March 2011	July 2012	January 2015
Deer Meadow Farms	February 2010	August 2010	August 2014
St. Norbert Farmers' Market	March 2011	May 2012	June 2015
Integrity Foods	October 2011	X	X
Harvest Moon Society	July 2010	August 2012	X

*An 'X' indicates that the agritourism provider does not have an account

Number of Followers at Point of Data Collection

Agritourism providers	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Boonstra Farms	3486	403	196
Deer Meadow Farms	3094	45	91
St. Norbert Farmers' Market	12031	1593	575
Integrity Foods	639	X	X
Harvest Moon Society	2323	564	X

*An 'X' indicates that the agritourism provider does not have an account

Facebook Provider Posts Totals

Agritourism providers	Original posts	Comments	Comment replies
Boonstra Farms	49	239	29
Deer Meadow Farms	117	111	51
St. Norbert Farmers' Market	60	162	30
Integrity Foods	7	13	1
Harvest Moon Society	50	15	0
Total	283	540	111

Facebook Visitor Posts Totals

Agritourism providers	Original post	Comments	Comment replies
Boonstra Farms	106	30	9
Deer Meadow Farms	38	8	6
St. Norbert Farmers' Market	70	62	30
Integrity Foods	7	5	0
Harvest Moon Society	13	11	1
Total	234	116	46

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Total Tweets by Agritourism Providers

Agritourism providers	Original Tweets	Retweets	Quote Tweets	Replies
Boonstra Farms	34	2	0	8
Deer Meadow Farms	1	0	0	0
St. Norbert Farmers' Market	42	20	5	10
Integrity Foods	X	X	X	X
Harvest Moon Society	140	14	10	0
Total	217	36	15	18

*An 'X' indicates that the agritourism provider does not have an account

Total Instagram Posts by Agritourism Providers

Agritourism providers	Original post	Comments
Boonstra Farms	4	3
Deer Meadow Farms	1	0
St. Norbert Farmers' Market	7	4
Integrity Foods	X	X
Harvest Moon Society	X	X
Total	12	7

*An 'X' indicates that the agritourism provider does not have an account

Total Hashtag Posts on Twitter and Instagram

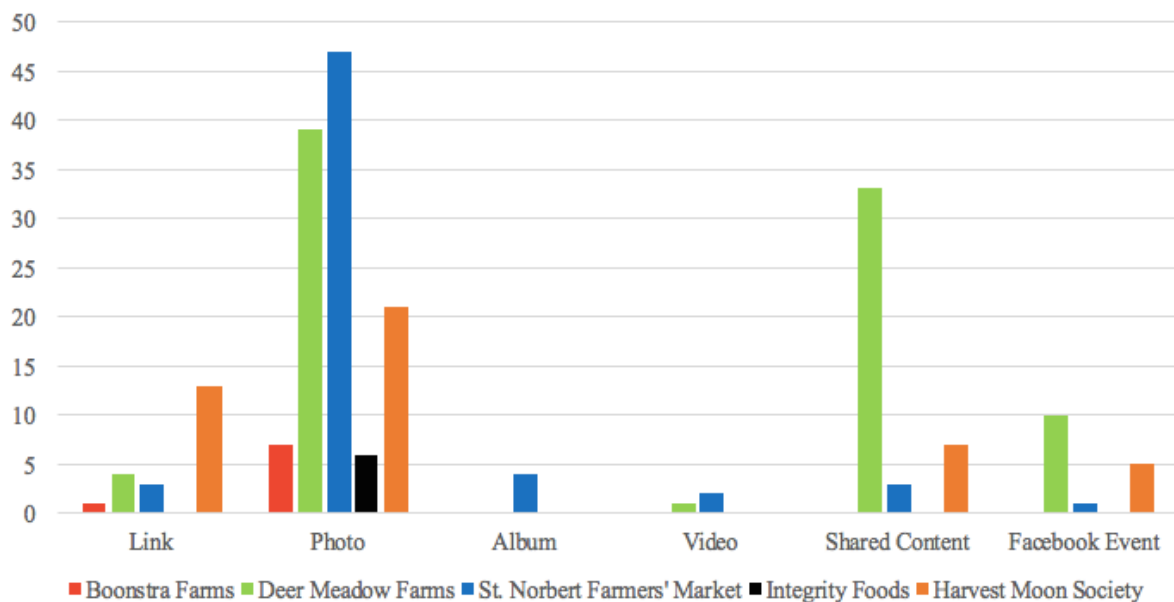
Hashtag	Twitter	Instagram
#boonstrafarms	6	75
#deermeadowfarms	2	3
#stnorbertfarmersmarket	15	289
#integrityfoods	6	5
#hmf2015	31	85
Total	60	457

Appendix E: Agritourism Provider Specific Results

Agritourism provider specific Facebook results.

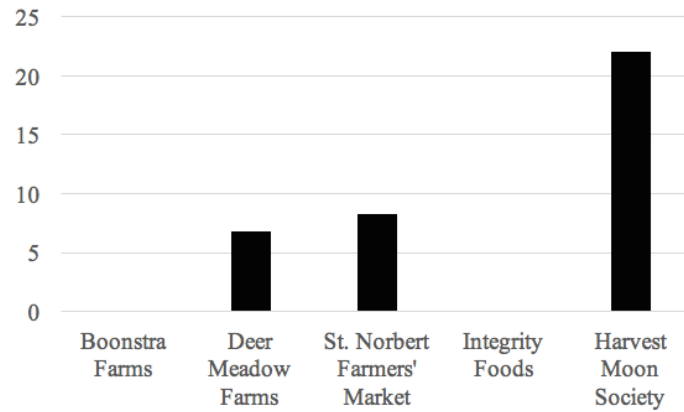
Facebook Provider Posts Results (Provider Specific)

	Boonstra Farms		Deer Meadow Farms		St. Norbert Farmers' Market		Integrity Foods		Harvest Moon Society	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total Number
Likes	100.0	1060	82.9	1523	100.0	2544	85.7	100	86.0	428
Shares	8.2	120	13.7	100	33.3	594	42.9	4	50.0	96
Tags	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hashtags	2.0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.0	8
Comments	77.6	239	33.3	111	51.7	162	71.4	13	20.0	15
Comment likes	27.2	84	61.3	79	29.6	84	57.1	5	33.3	5
Comment replies	12.1	29	45.9	51	18.5	30	0	0	0	0s
Comment reply likes	20.1	7	27.5	18	40.0	13	0	0	0	0



Content included with provider original posts

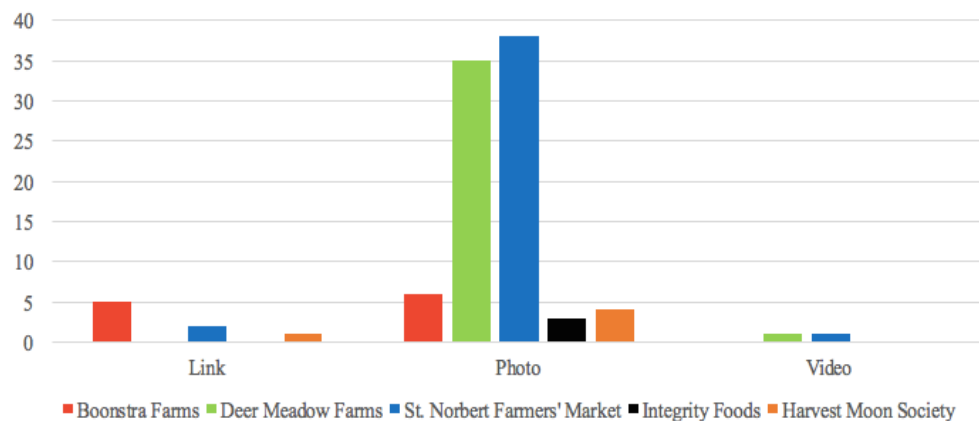
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Percentage of interactive provider posts

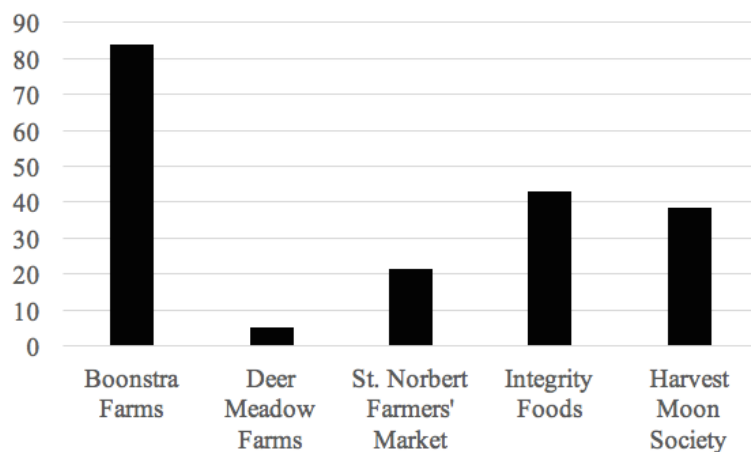
Facebook Visitor Posts Results (Provider Specific)

	Boonstra Farms		Deer Meadow Farms		St. Norbert Farmers' Market		Integrity Foods		Harvest Moon Society	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Likes	15.1	80	50.0	78	58.6	351	28.6	9	30.8	62
Shares	0	0	55.3	28	4.3	3	0	0	23.1	23
Tags	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hashtags	0	0	0	0	12.9	51	0	0	0	0
Comments	17.9	30	15.8	8	42.9	62	42.9	5	46.2	11
Comment likes	53.3	17	37.5	3	67.7	44	0	0	54.5	6
Comment replies	30.0	9	75.0	6	48.4	30	0	0	9.1	1
Comment reply likes	33.3	3	16.7	1	53.3	18	0	0	0	0



Content included with visitor posts

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE USE AND FREE-CHOICE LEARNING IN AGRITOURISM



Percent of interactive visitor Facebook posts

Provider Interaction on Provider Facebook Posts (Provider Specific)

	Boonstra Farms		Deer Meadow Farms		St. Norbert Farmers' Market		Integrity Foods		Harvest Moon Society	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Comments	2.5	6	13.5	15	1.9	3	7.7	1	13.3	2
Comment like	2.5	6	57.7	64	25.0	21	15.4	2	80.0	4
Comment replies	31.0	9	41.2	21	30.0	9	0	0	0	0
Comment reply likes	0	0	19.6	10	23.1	3	0	0	0	0

Provider Interaction on Visitor Facebook posts (Provider Specific)

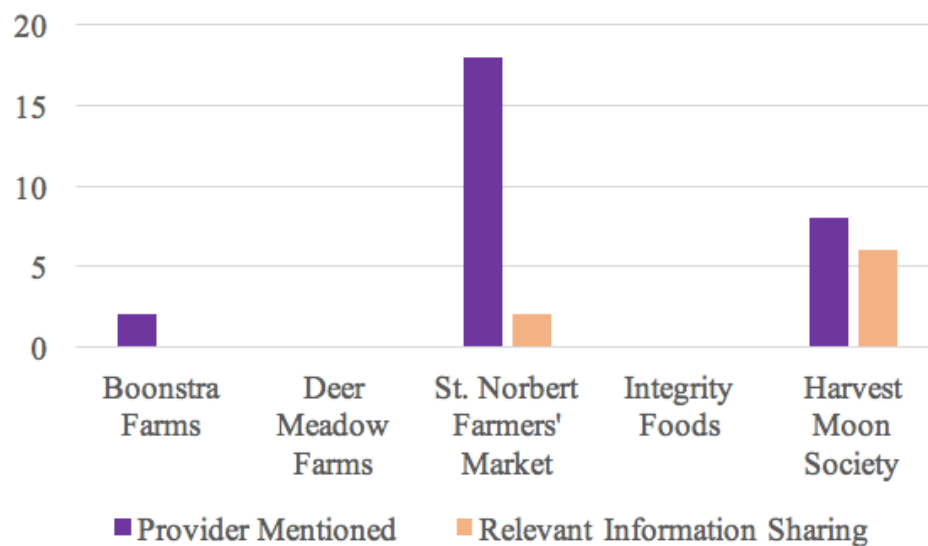
	Boonstra Farms		Deer Meadow Farms		St. Norbert Farmers' Market		Integrity Foods		Harvest Moon Society	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total Number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Likes	9.4		2.6		0		0		7.7	1
Shares	0		47.4		0		0		0	0
Comments	43.3		25.0		8.1		80.0		18.2	2
Comment likes	3.3		100		0		0		27.3	3
Comment replies	0		66.7		0		0		0	0
Comment reply likes	0		0		0		0		0	0

Agritourism organization specific Twitter results.

Provider Tweets Results (Provider Specific)

	Boonstra Farms		Deer Meadow Farms		St. Norbert Farmers' Market		Integrity Foods		Harvest Moon Society	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Mentions	2.8	1	0	0	21.4	17	X	X	20.1	33
Hashtags	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	X	68.8	125
Retweets	5.6	2	0	0	30.0	20	X	X	9.1	14
Quote Tweet	0	0	0	0	7.5	5	X	X	6.5	10
Likes	25.0	20	0	0	73.0	175	X	X	45.5	117
Retweeted by followers	13.9	7	0	0	64.2	137	X	X	44.2	102
Replies	16.7	8	0	0	15.0	10	X	X	0	0

*An 'X' indicates that the agritourism provider does not have an account



Reason for number of retweets by provider

Content Included in Provider Tweets (T), retweets (RT) and quote Tweets (QT)

	Boonstra Farms			Deer Meadow Farms			St. Norbert Farmers' Market			Integrity Foods			Harvest Moon Society		
	T	RT	QT	T	RT	QT	T	RT	QT	T	RT	QT	T	RT	QT
Link	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	X	X	54	0	0
Photo	2	2	0	1	0	0	30	17	4	X	X	X	17	7	7
Video	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	X	X	X	0	0	0

*An 'X' indicates that the agritourism provider does not have an account

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Hashtag Tweets Results (Provider Specific)

	#boonstrafarms		#deermeadowfarms		#stnorbertfarmersmarket		#integrityfoods		#hmf2015	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Mentions	0	0	0	0	13.3	2	50.0	3	61.3	20
Hashtags	100	23	100	6	100	54	100	8	100	146
Likes	33.3	2	50	1	33.3	7	16.7	1	67.8	38
Retweets	0	0	0	0	20.0	3	0	0	19.4	8
Replies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Content Included in Hashtag Tweets (Organization Specific)

	Link	Photo	Video
#boonstrafarms	6	0	0
#deermeadowfarms	2	0	0
#stnorbertfarmersmarket	14	1	0
#integrityfoods	2	2	0
#hmf2015	0	19	0

Agritourism organization specific Instagram results.

Provider Instagram Posts Results (Provider Specific)

	Boonstra Farms		Deer Meadow Farms		St. Norbert Farmers' Market		Integrity Foods		Harvest Moon Society	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Comments	50.0	3	0	0	42.9	4	X	X	X	X
Likes	100	43	100	6	85.7	59	X	X	X	X
Hashtags	25.0	1	0	0	14.3	3	X	X	X	X

*An 'X' indicates that the agritourism provider does not have an account

Hashtag Instagram Post Results (Provider Specific)

	Boonstra Farms		Deer Meadow Farms		St. Norbert Farmers' Market		Integrity Foods		Harvest Moon Society	
	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number	Percent of posts with (%)	Total number
Tags	10.7	9	33.3	1	15.9	65	0	0	18.8	19
Comments	26.7	40	100	12	46.9	349	80.0	7	40.0	66
Likes	94.7	960	100	133	99.7	6728	100	90	100	2236
Hashtags	100	326	100	21	100	2920	100	21	100	266

Content Included in Hashtag Instagram Posts (Provider Specific)

	#boonstrafarms	#deermeadowfarms	#stnorbertfarmersmarket	#integrityfoods	#hmf2015
Photo	72	3	286	4	79
Video	3	0	3	1	6