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The Role of Agritourism Microentrepreneurship and Collective Action in Shaping Stewardship of Farmlands

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Abstract: Agritourism has been promoted primarily as a way to mitigate economic challenges faced by small-scale family farmers, but it may also foster land stewardship and promote agricultural literacy. There has been very little research on these relationships. We employed a primarily qualitative approach to assess how farmers' involvement in agritourism microentrepreneurship shapes their stewardship of small-scale farmlands in southeastern North Carolina. Furthermore, we examined how farmers' involvement in social structures, summarized in measures of collective action, supported or hindered this relationship. We find that reasons for participation in agritourism differed greatly between conventional farmers and alternative farmers. While both groups expressed a desire to reduce agricultural illiteracy among the public through agritourism, conventional farmers were motivated primarily by sociocultural reasons (e.g., community and youth development) while alternative farmers wanted to educate visitors about land stewardship and environmentally sustainable food production. Involvement in agritourism microentrepreneurship did not directly influence land stewardship by either group of farmers. Alternative farmers expressed that collective action was important in helping them promote land stewardship, but they felt restricted by sociocultural and geographic barriers preventing them from developing trust within their community. Conversely, conventional farmers reported deeper cultural roots in the community. Thus, participation in agritourism does not have a generalizable impact on farmers' land stewardship; instead, agritourism becomes a stage through which farmers try to demonstrate their pre-existing land ethics.

Keywords: agricultural literacy; ecoliteracy; self-determination; food; co-management



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1. Introduction

Agritourism, which is broadly characterized as tourism related activities on working farms where “agricultural activities are practiced” [1], is promoted as a way to sustain farm livelihoods. In particular, agritourism can contribute to the diversification of family farms [2–4]. Agritourism has also been found to affect cultural heritage and social identity [3], to foster recreational benefits to individuals and communities through multifunctionality [5], and to promote socio-economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability such as keeping farms in the family and practicing integrated pest management [6]. In this study, we examine the motivations of small-scale farmers for becoming involved in agritourism, the relationship between agritourism microentrepreneurship and stewardship of working agricultural lands, and how collective processes (e.g., involvement in cooperatives) facilitate this relationship.

We find that the motivations and forms of participation in agritourism vary widely across different types of agricultural producers. Agritourism includes a wide diversity of activities, including educational or interpretive, volunteer tourism or paid visits, or

seasonal activities such as pumpkin patches or hayrides [4]. Visits vary in length from a short tour (e.g., U-Pick fruits and vegetables, corn mazes) to longer farm stays. Most previous studies of this sector have relied on sample surveys of farmers who formally participate in agritourism and have used primarily closed-ended questions that do not fully capture the wide range of motivations, including both economic and non-economic factors and effects, for participating in agritourism. We capture this diversity with open-ended questions about motivations, relationship with land stewardship, and the moderating influence of collective action on that relationship.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Motivations towards Agriourism Microentrepreneurship

While somewhat under-researched, tourism microentrepreneurship is a growing trend that is based off of a principle that, with advancements in technology and freedom of human beings to make choices, nearly anyone in the world can create their own jobs through self-employment [7,8]. While individuals in less-developed tourism-dependent countries are often dependent on tourism microentrepreneurship to support their livelihoods (e.g., selling of handicrafts, homestays), the trend has grown rapidly in recent years in developed countries as well (e.g., AirBnB, People-First Tourism, Vayable). According to [8], microentrepreneurs find this business model appealing because of the income it provides, skills that are developed, or the flexibility and creativity they have while customers also enjoy these experiences for similar reasons (e.g., price, flexibility, ease of use, unique experiences, authenticity). Furthermore, microentrepreneurship may reduce poverty and provide opportunities for people from marginalized racial or ethnic communities, improve livelihoods, and provide opportunities for women who, particularly in rural settings, often work from home [9,10].

Agritourism microentrepreneurship, a relatively new term to describe tourism microentrepreneurship among small-scale farmers, has provided benefits such as women empowerment, social capital, and supplemental income to small-scale family farmers in the United States [11]. Examples of agritourism microentrepreneurship may include educational farm tours, farm stays, U-Pick fruit or vegetables, and petting farms. Additionally, farmers may prefer entrepreneurial involvement in agritourism because of its economic and non-economic benefits such as increased profits and exposure to their farm [6,12]. Other studies on agritourism have also shown that, because of the gain of skill development and income, many young people were staying in the community to become agritourism entrepreneurs rather than migrating to urban areas for employment [6,13]. Therefore, profits gained from agritourism may provide incentives for individuals to continue farming and, in effect, contribute to the conservation of small family farms. Furthermore, longer term, hands-on “authentic” interactions among tourists on working farms have the potential to supplement workload of farmers, although these are not as common in the United States as internationally [14].

The non-economic benefits of participating in agritourism (i.e., social, cultural, environmental) have been much less studied, particularly as related to how farmers use agritourism as a way to demonstrate stewardship of their working lands (e.g., to visitors), and how their involvement in agritourism may foster stewardship of these lands (e.g., through implementing environmentally-friendly practices). Ref. [15] found that, among rural coffee farmers in Guatemala, involvement in tourism microentrepreneurship and coffee farming jointly contributed to land stewardship, particularly when farmers participated in cooperatives. However, this relationship has not been assessed among rural farmers in more developed countries nor has it distinguished differences among farmers with distinct backgrounds or worldviews. Additionally, literature on agritourism in the United States has primarily consisted of quantitative studies relying on data from formally established agritourism programs rather than agritourism microentrepreneurs.

2.2. Tourism and Land Stewardship

Agritourism microentrepreneurship is just one mechanism to keep small-scale farmers in farming and promote stewardship of working lands. Many developed countries (e.g., Australia, England, Canada) also have voluntary “agri-environmental schemes”, which are programs designed to incentivize farmers to adopt environmentally sustainable techniques (e.g., reducing pesticides, protecting biodiversity) on the landscape. These neoliberal programs (e.g., Australia’s national ‘Landcare Program’, Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program in United States), which are used in over half of the European countries, compensate farmers for financial losses from implementing the most environmentally sustainable practices on their land [16]. However, programs such as these are argued by some to not be effective in ensuring long-term attitudinal changes towards the environment [17–19]. Conversely, [20] claim that intrinsic motivation is most effective in promoting pro-environmental behaviors. While tourists may provide monetary incentives for landowners to manage their land more sustainably, without a deeper connection to the land, conservation efforts may wane with fluctuations in tourism demand [15]. Ref. [21] framework of self-determination shows that, when people’s innate psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, relatedness) are nourished, they are more likely to demonstrate intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and an enhanced sense of well-being.

Another factor in land stewardship is through ecological literacy or “ecoliteracy” [22] argue that having the ability to tackle increasing global environmental challenges “depends entirely on publics who understand ecology, care about the environment, possess skills to assess environmental risk, and share a commitment to sustainability” (p. 1). Ref. [23] define ecological literacy as, “the ability to use ecological understanding, thinking, and habits of mind for living in, enjoying, and/or studying the environment” (p. 228). Similarly, agricultural literacy “includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes/beliefs about the field of agriculture similar to those in science, environmental education, and education for sustainable development” [24] (p. 102). Conversely, agricultural illiteracy is the “public’s inability, and perhaps unwillingness to understand how, where, and under what conditions our nation’s food is grown, distributed, and marketed” [25] (p. 34). The concepts of ecoliteracy and agricultural literacy have been applied in the environmental education literature; however, the question of how different *types* of farmers (e.g., conventional vs. alternative) define agricultural literacy is largely unexplored. Different types of farmers often have polarizing views towards which techniques and practices are best for their land or which techniques may be the most “environmentally friendly” or “sustainable”. Accordingly, we assessed ways in which farmers used agritourism microentrepreneurship to demonstrate land stewardship and reduce agricultural illiteracy and how these approaches differed among conventional and alternative farmers. We define alternative farmers as those farmers who predominately use alternative strategies promoted to be environmentally-friendly and that address broader social and ecological issues through a holistic approach to farming. Examples of alternative agriculture may include organic farming, integrated pest management, sustainable agriculture, permaculture or other approaches designed to preserve the health of the environment and people through a focus on preservation of soil and water specifically [26]. Conversely, we acknowledge that definitions of conventional farming vary greatly yet are prominent in the literature and that conventional and alternative farming may not always be defined as one or the other [27]. For purposes of this paper, we characterized participants as conventional farmers when they expressed their beliefs and approaches towards farming were primarily driven by a focus on profit (i.e., commodification) and higher yields such as using and supporting use of chemicals, confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs), and genetically-modified crops rather than expressing the more holistic, relational connection to the land through farming that was demonstrated by alternative farmers. We also use [28] definition of stewardship as exhibiting an ethic that:

Builds on existing internalized moral feelings and worldviews, has the potential to generalize to many of an individual's behaviors, and contributes to both personal and community senses of responsibility. (p. 38)

Similarly, others (e.g., [29,30]) argue that, without the creation of cultural and social capital that transform environmentally sustainable techniques into part of 'good farming' practices in conventional agriculture, neoliberal approaches to conservation will not endure. In effect, a deeper understanding of *why* different types of farmers (e.g., conventional or alternative) participate in agritourism microentrepreneurship is necessary as well as an assessment of how land management decisions are influenced by social and cultural capital (i.e., collective action processes). Accordingly, in the following section, we provide a background to how collective action has facilitated land stewardship and agricultural literacy, specifically in the contexts of small-scale agritourism microentrepreneurs.

2.3. Collective Action

Generally, the concept of collective action involves any action taken together by a group of people whose goal is to enhance their status and achieve a common objective [31]. In natural resource management, it involves the rethinking of top-down approaches to conservation by examining the potential for communities to sustainably manage their land and resources through collaborative organized processes [32]. As in the case of fair trade or certified products, collective management may be organized through cooperatives in which members agree to follow collectively-developed rules in order to ensure equity and sustainable natural resource management [15]. Self-governance, or the ability for communities or individuals to create, modify, and enforce rules and behavior internally, is a key construct to collective action. When locals are not provided the rights to manage their own resources but are forced to follow rules inflicted by outside parties, they are less likely to support conservation efforts [32].

Trust is also a key construct in collective action [32–34]. Once individuals gain trust in one another, through effective communication and "personal and social bonding processes", cooperative behavior towards conserving resources can eventually become the norm [34,35]. In England, [29] found that, while organic farmers were originally excluded from farming circles, the EU has seen a gradual transition of conventional farmers to organic farmers as social and cultural capital has strengthened. While 'good farming' has focused on "tidy fields, high yields, and high quality livestock" as indicators of economic capital, alternative strategies (e.g., agri-environmental schemes, farm diversification, organic farming) are increasingly valued as financially viable enterprises and are helping to re-create the 'rules of the game' [29] (p. 235). Ongoing communication improved trust, which led to a gradual change in the farmers' perceptions of 'good farming' practices to include more environmentally sustainable techniques.

In other examples, local change agents may be critical in initiating communication among disparate groups. In the case of People-First Tourism, "empowerment agents" work with their local communities to develop networks of tourism microentrepreneurs through collective processes that provide individuals the opportunity to self-regulate their natural resources and livelihood choices [7]. In this study, we consider three sub-constructs of collective action (i.e., self-governance, trust, communication) and their role in facilitating land stewardship of working lands among agritourism microentrepreneurs.

3. Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine how and why small-scale farmers are involved in agritourism microentrepreneurship, and to assess how they may use agritourism and collective action as a way to either demonstrate or foster an ethic of land stewardship and reduce agricultural illiteracy. We examined the following research questions through a primarily qualitative approach:

- (1) In what ways are small-scale farmers (e.g., conventional, alternative farmers) involved in agritourism microentrepreneurship and what factors motivated their involvement?

- (2) In what ways do small-scale farmers use agritourism microentrepreneurship to demonstrate land stewardship and/or promote agricultural literacy?
- (3) What is the role of collective action in facilitating or hindering these relationships?

4. Methods

In an effort to cross-validate results by using multiple methods, this study incorporates semi-structured in-depth interviews, free listing, and analysis of ethnographic field notes. The following sections describe the region where the study takes place and how theoretical constructs (e.g., land stewardship, agricultural literacy, collective action) were explored and analyzed.

4.1. Study Region

Referred to as the coastal plains of North Carolina, this study was conducted among landholders in five rural southeastern North Carolina counties: Johnston, Duplin, Lenoir, Wayne, and Sampson (see Figure 1). Although sources of agricultural revenue have changed through the years, agriculture continues to be a leading industry in North Carolina, particularly in this region. Since the mid-19th Century, North Carolina has been a leading producer of tobacco until people were forced to find other viable farming options after the last major tobacco companies left NC in the late 1980s [36]. Now the region's economy consists of primarily contracted conventional farming (e.g., Tyson Foods, Prestage Farms, Sanderson Farms, Butterball) and confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs), which make this region in North Carolina one of the country's leading producers of hogs, pigs, turkeys, and chickens. Sampson and Duplin counties specifically are two of the top national producers of hogs and pigs. Environmental and human health impacts associated with this have contributed to a 1997 moratorium on the construction of new industrial operations in these counties that continues today.

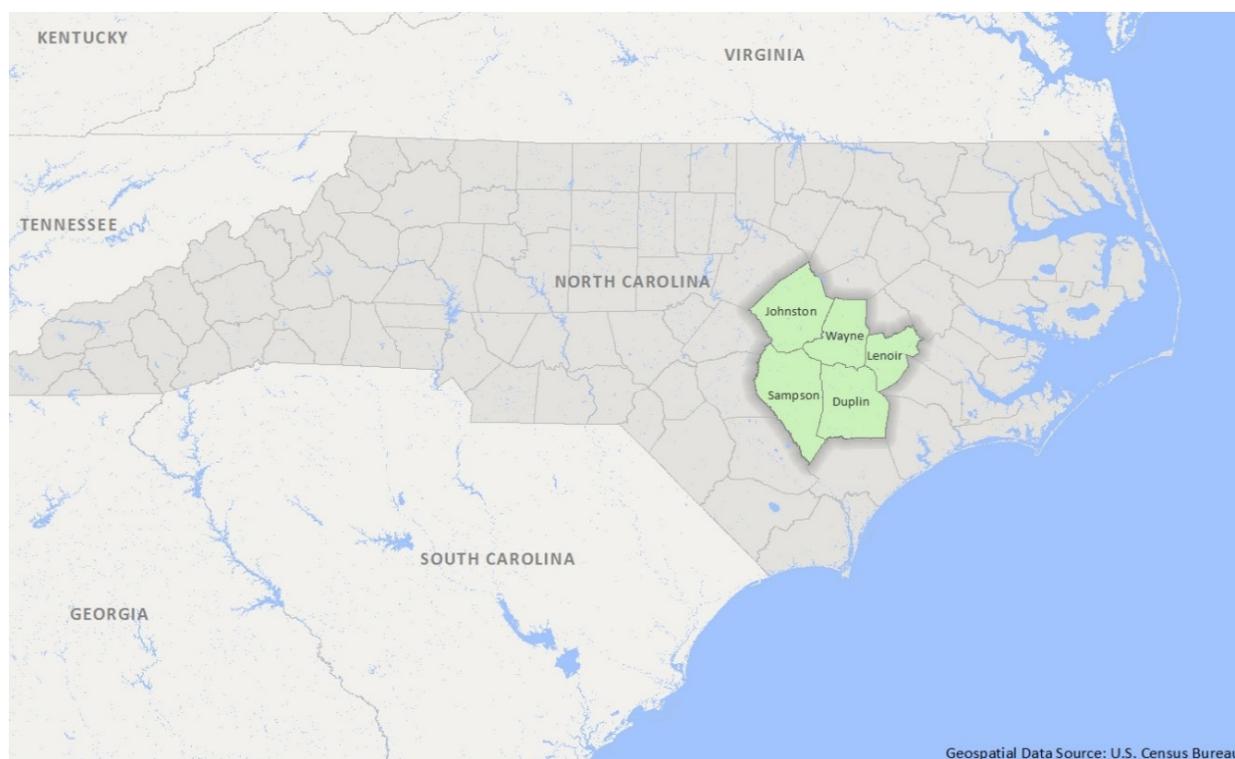


Figure 1. Coastal plains region of North Carolina (Geospatial data source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

Counties in this region also continue to be the epicenter of many social and environmental justice issues concerning the impacts of such large agribusinesses on the local

environment and people, particularly among minorities and migrants. For example, [37] found that air pollutants produced from industrial hog operations in North Carolina were disproportionately affecting residents of color (i.e., African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans). These challenges, often coupled with market fluctuations and environmental pressures (e.g., natural disasters, effects of climate change), have contributed to considerably high poverty rates among small-scale farmers and other residents in the region.

Additionally, while the nearby eastern seaboard has received substantial revenue from tourism, the coastal plains of North Carolina have not been a successful destination for tourism development. In an effort to tackle these challenges, some farmers have started to incorporate agritourism into their business plan as a way to diversify farm income, and many farmers have also joined cooperatives, organizations, or associations for support.

4.2. Sampling

Between November 2014 and March 2015, the primary author spent multiple consecutive days in the study area to gain a better understanding and build rapport with participants who self-identified as small-scale farmers involved in agritourism. Using purposive sampling, we defined participants in this study as agritourism microentrepreneurs, to include individuals involved in the ownership and management of small, and often informal, agritourism business in their farms (e.g., tour of farm leads to sale of vegetables). We aimed to select a “maximal variation” of participants [38] to determine if stewardship varied among different types of small-scale farmers participating in agritourism (e.g., conventional vs. alternative, African American vs. Caucasian).

Specifically, we began by contacting members of local agricultural cooperatives to assess if and how involvement in collective action processes supported or hindered land stewardship among agritourism entrepreneurs. For example, several participants were members of the Small Family Farms Sustainable Agriculture Cooperative (SFFC), a grassroots group of primarily non-White small-scale alternative agriculture farmers with a growing involvement in agritourism microentrepreneurship. All participants interviewed characterized themselves as involved in collective action through social networks, even if those networks were not formal cooperatives. Therefore, we provided participants an open-ended opportunity to define their involvement in collective action as part of the interview protocol and did not limit our sampling criteria to those involved in formal cooperatives. Additionally, we categorized participants by type of farmer (i.e., alternative, conventional, or mixed) based on definitions drawn from the literature.

Throughout the process of conducting semi-structured interviews and ethnographic field observations, the primary author wrote daily field notes and conceptualized emerging themes through frequent memoing and diagrams [39,40]. When themes were not clear among a diverse group of participants, contact with additional participants was made through chain referral sampling [41] in combination with recommendations from local community members with whom the primary author interacted with during time in the field (e.g., at community cultural events). Additionally, public online databases of agritourism entrepreneurs were consulted to identify other small-scale farmers in the region who had incorporated agritourism into their business models. When themes were emerging throughout the process, informal phone interviews were held to validate findings and field notes were reviewed regularly. After 14 in-depth semi-structured interviews, which were further supported by five informal phone interviews and daily field notes, no new themes were emerging and no new interviews were scheduled.

4.3. Instrument Development

Semi-structured interview protocols were developed consisting of primarily open-ended and free listing questions combined with probing to improve clarity and richness of the data. Comprehensive ethnographic field observations were also taken through memoing, journaling, and daily field notes to identify emerging themes [39,40].

To assess ways in which farmers were involved in agritourism microentrepreneurship and farming, participants were asked to list sources that made up their livelihood and which is the most important in their life. With probing from the interviewer, they also described characteristics of their farm (e.g., type of crops or livestock, management techniques, amount of land), which types of tourism activities they participate in, how they market their farm and sell products, and how long they had participated in these activities. This assessment was adapted from [42] tourism involvement index to the qualitative method and cultural context of this study. Collective action was examined through open-ended, semi-structured questions adapted from [32] work evaluating self-governance, trust, and communication.

Finally, we used a self-determination continuum to assess extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, or which factors influenced land stewardship among agritourism microentrepreneurs ([20,21,43]. Adapted from [44] study on community-based natural resource management among pastoral communities in Namibia and modified through extensive probing to the context of rural farmers in a developed country, participants first listed activities that they do on their land, and then they were asked if they do them because they have no choice to obtain approval/avoid guilt because they feel the activity to be important, or because they like to do it. Through this probing, participants gradually articulated the extent to which each land management activity was intrinsically vs. extrinsically motivated along a self-determination continuum. We also assessed reasons why and ways in which farmers used agritourism to demonstrate land stewardship through an analysis of participants' goal to reduce agricultural illiteracy (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitudes/beliefs about field of agriculture) through semi-structured interview questions and probing.

4.4. Data Analysis

Fourteen interviews were audio recorded and lasted between 34 and 172 min (average: 89 min), but many farm visits lasted all or half of the day. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and then imported into MaxQDA 11 Qualitative Data Analysis Software. Data were then analyzed using a theory-driven approach where data were line-by-line coded as either semantic (verbally expressed meanings) or latent (underlying meanings; [38,45,46]). Field notes, memos, journal entries, and notes from informal phone interviews were also analyzed through coding to identify common themes which were shared with co-authors for analysis through insider peer debriefing to inform findings. Through the process of insider peer debriefing, co-authors met weekly to compare coding schemes and discuss themes [47]. To ensure trustworthiness, codes were frequently re-analyzed and integrated until authors reached an agreement in understanding relationships between cases beyond individual cases [38].

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Involvement in Agritourism Microentrepreneurship and Farming

Participants varied greatly in their level and type of involvement in agritourism as well as the type of farm they operated (see Table 1). For example, some participants stated they were in very early stages of diversifying their farm through agritourism (e.g., they had not yet received visitors) and others explained that visitors regularly came to pick produce from their farm but that they did not ask visitors to pay for the visit. Therefore, their absence from tourism websites, lack of participation in agritourism associations, and, in some cases, lack of a visit revenue model excluded several of them from participating in previous agritourism studies. Participants were also characterized by race/ethnicity, sex, age, and whether they identified as alternative, conventional, or mixed farmers based on a series of questions related to their farm practices (e.g., use of pesticides, opinion on CAFOs, certifications). A description of each of the 14 participants and how they described their involvement in agritourism and farming is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Description of participants.

	Pseudonym Race, Sex, Age, Type of Farmer	Involvement in Agritourism	Involvement in Farming
1	Emmanuel Black male, 71 (retired), alternative	Very informal; P1t ^a entrepreneur; no direct income from tourism.	Vegetables for consumption; no chemicals, no income from land directly.
2	John and Laura White couple, 50 & 49, mixed	Give occasional kids' tours and ~12 informal tours a year when people come to farm to purchase products; no income directly from tourism.	Angus beef, peaches, timber. 50% of income comes from land, rest comes from their family-run hardware store.
3	Jean White female, 63, (part time), conventional	Hopes to lead organized horse trail rides or a cheese-making course when retires; no current income from tourism.	Owns goats, sheep, horses, turkey, chickens, ponies; almost all income currently off-farm, but when retires next year will farm full-time.
4	Robert White male, 62 (retired), conventional	No longer has visitors for wine picking because not profitable and not in contract.	Vineyards, hog houses, Angus cattle, hay—all contracted agriculture.
5	Andy White male, 24, conventional	Sells U-Pick peas in summer and runs fruit stand; P1t ^a entrepreneur; tourism provides ~5% of income.	Manages 200-acre produce farm.
6	Luisa Hispanic female, 75 (retired), alternative	Sells products informally; developing more formal operation (e.g., P1t ^a); currently very little income is from tourism.	Runs 7-acre permaculture farm with plants and animals; ~25% of income comes from land.
7	George Black male, 69 (retired), mixed	Not currently involved in tourism, but interested.	Manages <10 acres of vegetables and has a few chickens, goats. <5% of income comes from land—participates for enjoyment.
8	Grant Coharie Indian male, 61, alternative	Helps run community garden through the tribal center; feels tourism important, but not a direct source of income.	Does not tend his land, which is family-owned., works full time off-farm.
9	Paul Coharie Indian male, 61 (retired), alternative	Developing river maintenance program to improve waterways for residents and tourists to recreate; no current income from tourism.	Has 12 acres in woodlands that keeps as conservation land—doesn't harvest timber.
10	Dorothy White female, 61 (retired), alternative	Has a farm stay on property, occasionally offers farm tours.	Owns a "Century Farm" where has sheep, a few cows, donkeys, and horses.
11	Susan White female, 48, conventional	Runs family-owned corn maze with seasonal activities. Rents animals to use for agritourism and coordinates with local businesses, which makes up ~ half of livelihood.	Has contract to manage hog nursery and leases land to brother-in-law for row crops.
12	Charlene White female, 54, alternative	Wants to set up farm to accommodate people with disabilities and have hands-on participation activities; currently no income from tourism.	New farm with cows, sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, laying hens, and vegetable garden—no chemicals. Sells to farmer's market and through CSA.
13	Zach White male, 22, conventional	Educational tours with local schools, rents barn out for weddings and events; rents animals for agritourism; not much income from tourism, but growing.	Contracted hog and turkey houses, cattle, row crops (corn, soy, wheat, cotton, hay)
14	Dennis Black male, 68 (retired), alternative	Occasionally teaches school groups and informal visitors; no income from tourism	Vegetables to sell at farmer's market; no chemicals, leases part of land to board horses; ~40 acres

^a P1t = People-First Tourism.

As illustrated in Figure 2, interestingly, we also found that minority farmers (i.e., African American, American Indian, Hispanic) tended to practice alternative agriculture (characterized as using more environmentally-friendly practices) more commonly than white participants, who tended to practice conventional agriculture, which [30] characterize as associated with greater degradation of natural resources and biodiversity. In addition, among agritourism microentrepreneurs we could recruit for this study, there was a lack of white males practicing in alternative agriculture, and a lack of minorities practicing conventional agriculture. Furthermore, since none of the non-white participants farmed as their sole source of income, and several were retired, they may be considered “lifestyle” farmers [48]. Ref. [48] claim that:

In general, the characteristics of these new owners include limited, if any, dependence on farm income, relatively high interest in environmental stewardship, small-scale farming operations, sub-commercial landholdings and a focus on land ownership for ‘lifestyle’ reasons. As is the case with full-time farmers, however, the motivations and practices of these landowners are diverse. (p. 317)

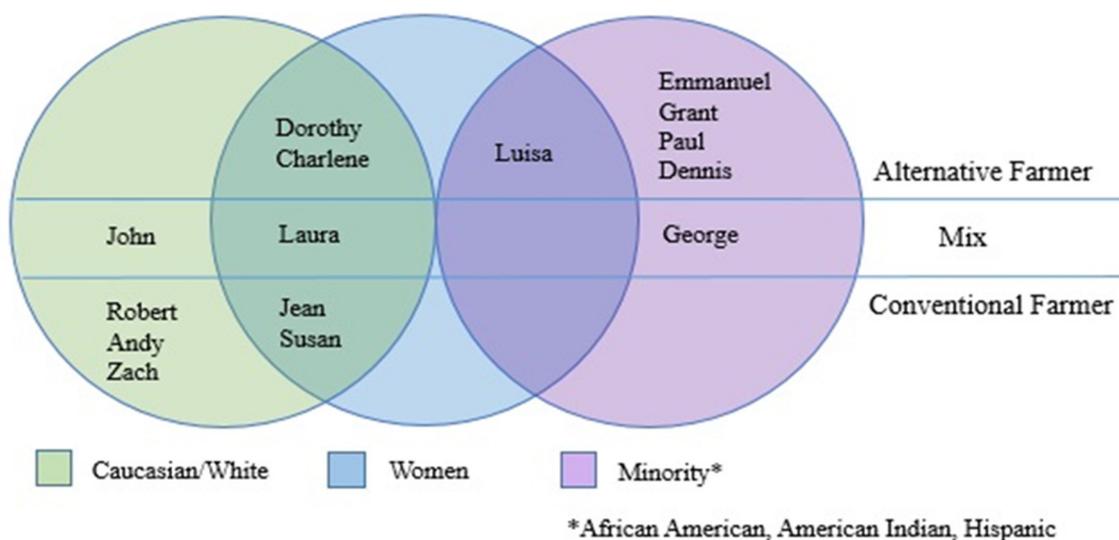


Figure 2. Type of involvement in agritourism microentrepreneurship by race and gender (pseudonyms used).

Supporting this claim, many participants expressed that they gave informal tours of their farm, but that they did so primarily for non-monetary reasons. For example, Luisa stated, “Most of it’s free. Some of it is paid . . . so, it’s not a big portion of what I do, it just happens to be something that’s very satisfying for me to share with other people”. Similarly, John and Laura stated, “we don’t charge for tours, we just do it strictly for educational purposes”. Some lifestyle farmers also gave products away for free. Emmanuel stated:

Well I mostly give mine away. I like to give mine to senior citizens and take it to them, the ones that are unable to come out. And I don’t take funds from them . . . I won’t take the money from them you know. I always felt this way . . . If I could help someone, you know. I don’t mind.

Conversely, conventional farmers expressed concerns about making sure that participating in agritourism activities was an efficient use of their time. For example, Robert, a white conventional farmer with hog houses, Angus cattle, and contracted muscadine grape vineyards for wine production, mentioned that he no longer offers U-Pick grapes to visitors because people wasted too many grapes eating them and dropping them on the ground, and he felt it was not worth the financial loss. He stated, “This [farm] is a money-making situation, not a hobby”. Similarly, Zach and Susan both mentioned that having small

groups was not worth the effort for the profit they would get and they preferred to do larger events and focus on offering agritourism seasonally during peak times.

Type of agritourism involvement among participants also ranged from passive (e.g., weddings and events, guest house rental) to more active involvement (e.g., school visits, feeding animals). Passive activities were less common and those who did have passive activities also had active agritourism activities, or activities that fell in the middle of the continuum (e.g., U-pick fruits and vegetables, hayrides, corn mazes). Charlene, a new (full time) alternative agriculture farmer, stated, “I’m not a big proponent of tourism people who stand and don’t do anything, I believe in ‘agro-participation’—this gives people more access and investment in the farm”. Similarly, Susan, a conventional farmer who also runs a thriving agritourism operation, mentioned new ideas she had on how to get children more involved in the farming experience, focusing on how they could also be economically invested in the land and learn business strategies that could help them in future careers:

Work ethics are a little bit different from what they were, (so) I thought, if I can get some kids involved and get some parents involved, grow some sweet corn, and do, like, little franchises, and call it ‘corn for kids’ . . . And they’d sell corn and it’d go in your college fund or something... and they can come help pull the corn. They could help, and this would be their little plot—we’d sell a plot to them and they could come and pull it. Now, how many kids these days had that opportunity?

Summarizing their involvement in agritourism microentrepreneurship and farming, farmer types varied in some important ways. In this study, farmers of color (i.e., African American, Native American, Hispanic) tended to practice alternative agriculture more commonly than white farmers and were also mostly lifestyle farmers who were either retired or dependent on off-farm income or savings to sustain their livelihood. Conversely, white farmers were mostly characterized as conventional farmers (although less so among white women). Therefore, participants practicing alternative agriculture relied less on revenues from agritourism and, instead, often gave away products or offered free tours while conventional farmers were more cognizant of ensuring time spent on agritourism was economically viable. Lastly, all participants tried to develop “active” activities over “passive” activities for visitors on the farm; however, reasons for this preference varied greatly.

5.2. Agritourism and Land Stewardship

We found involvement in agritourism to be related to land stewardship in a variety of ways. Land stewardship was highly influenced by both the type of farmer (e.g., conventional vs. alternative) as well as the social and cultural networks with which farmers identify. Therefore, while farmers involved in agritourism may demonstrate land stewardship, we found their values and worldviews to be the prominent factors influencing land stewardship. Participants that demonstrated an ethic of land stewardship often used agritourism as way to share their values with visitors by teaching them to be better stewards of the land (demonstrating intrinsic motivation). Conversely, other participants were involved in agritourism primarily for reasons separate from land stewardship (such as social or cultural reasons) and were primarily extrinsically motivated by economic incentives.

5.2.1. Demonstrating Land Stewardship through Agritourism

Participants were very concerned about earning income from their land in order to keep it economically viable and be able to pay taxes and fees; however, motivation to participate in agritourism microentrepreneurship and how their participation was related to land stewardship varied greatly among conventional and alternative farmers. Alternative farmers were intrinsically motivated to continue farming using alternative and more sustainable methods, and they sought extra income from agritourism so they could continue to be good stewards of their working lands. Alternative farmers, and minorities in particular, claimed that they could not compete with large agribusinesses in the region. They perceived that they would never be able to make a livable wage from small-scale

farming and needed to supplement their livelihoods with off-farm income or diversify their farm business model with agritourism. For example, Dorothy, who owns a small alternative farming operation, perceived that participating in agritourism was her only option to keep her farm financially viable while practicing the agriculture techniques she believes in:

Yes, for this county the alternative has been—go put your farm into a huge amount of debt and have confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs)—that’s what’s kept these farmers here on the farm—in addition to the direct payments from the government, and those direct payments now are gone—the tobacco buyout money is now gone. We had farmers in this county making well over 1 million dollars a year from the government payments alone, so now what’s left is simply the CAFOs. Ok, if you don’t want to go down that avenue . . . for whatever reason—if it’s strictly financial (you don’t want to put your farm in debt that much and you don’t want to be tied to a payment to pay off forever), if it’s strictly financial, then what is your option? There are lots of other reasons why you would not want to do a CAFO (animal welfare, lots of reasons)—but if it’s strictly financial, what is your option? I don’t know what your option is—I haven’t seen it.

Minority and alternative agriculture farmers in particular also perceived that it was much harder for them to get financial support from the government, either because government subsidies were reserved for large agricultural operations or because they felt they were not informed of opportunities to reduce economic costs on their farm. In addition, participants feared that a spike in taxes could prevent them from keeping their land. Dennis, a Black retired alternative farmer, explained:

Minorities, small farmers, they don’t get to benefit—taxes make all the difference, tax is how people lose their farm. People farm and still don’t get the tax benefit, they are still paying the same as the next door neighbor that got a lot—that’s the taxes that you are paying if you got 10 or 20 acres, you can’t pay it . . . you aren’t producing that much.

Therefore, some participants viewed agritourism microentrepreneurship as a way to diversify their farming income without changing their practices and, at the same time, market their business. Profits gained from agritourism microentrepreneurship, either directly (e.g., farm stay) or indirectly (e.g., visitors to the farm purchasing products), extrinsically motivated them as a way to support their intrinsic motivation to sustainably manage their land. Charlene, who is about two years into production on her alternative agricultural farm, explained:

I don’t care if I make any money or not. But you do have to have cash in order to pay the light bill . . . you can’t trade eggs to the light company, so you have to remain in the cash society a certain amount, but most farmers would say ‘my farm is a for-profit farm; I’m not a hobby farm’. And I’m like, well you can be more focused on process than profit and still not be a hobby farm. I mean, I don’t do anything else.

She went on to demonstrate how agritourism could help her market her business in order to gain the income she needed to continue to run the farm: “I’m going to be dropping off CSA baskets at a gift shop in Wilmington where there’ll be really high visibility there and a lot of those people will want to come to the farm”. So, while she was still in the early stages of developing her farm, she was actively exploring ideas of how to incorporate farm visits as a way to generate income. Charlene, along with other alternative farmers, understands the steep financial investment in developing a farm without subsidies, but expressed how they felt it was extremely important to farm the land sustainably rather than using other methods that may bring in higher profits.

5.2.2. Reducing Agricultural Illiteracy through Agritourism

Another prominent theme that emerged is farmers' motivation to participate in agritourism as a way to reconnect people with farms, farmers, and agricultural life—or, to reduce agricultural illiteracy [25]. In an effort to reduce this phenomenon, participants viewed agritourism as a way to educate the public about agriculture, about where food comes from, and about the passion farmers have for their land and for agriculture. However, motivations to reduce agricultural illiteracy tended to differ among conventional and alternative farmers.

Dorothy explained, "We have to lure people from the city to come to the farm to establish a connection to the farm, to buy into the farm, to allow the farm to feel like it's their own, and I benefit from that financially and they benefit from that for various reasons—to know first-hand their farmer. You know, so that's my vision for this farm". Zach, a white 22-year-old conventional farmer, also described his visions for agritourism on his farm:

We try to educate them about agriculture because a lot of kids these days have no clue where their meat or corn or anything comes from, so we try to help them understand that farmers are very important because it seems like nowadays people don't care if you're a farmer or not, so we're trying to get the word out so younger generations, when they grow up, they can be a little more active and give us more respect than some people do. Some people couldn't care less as long as they can go to the store and buy it, because they think it's grown there basically. So we try to do that.

In this quote, Zach reflects on some of the key themes that were prominent among participants: (1) education about agriculture and food sources, (2) education about respecting farmers, and (3) obligation to teach future generations. These elements together, participants perceived, could help reduce agricultural illiteracy among the public and increase knowledge and respect for farmers and rural life.

However, while both groups of farmers (i.e., conventional and alternative) emphasized a desire to reduce agricultural illiteracy among the public through education, their reasons behind having this goal often varied. Namely, farmers practicing alternative agriculture tended to focus their educational efforts on teaching about healthy eating and about using environmentally sustainable practices (e.g., not using chemicals or planting genetically modified seeds). Grant, a Coharie tribal member who helps run a community garden at the tribal center, stated, "I want to help people be aware that they need to change their thinking to eating healthier and living better and not having to suffer with all these diseases that we can't find cures for". This concern demonstrated his intrinsic motivation to improve the health of his community by using environmentally-friendly techniques on the land. Grant also explained how, while the community gardens were designed to support the Coharie people and improve health among the tribe, eventually the garden received media attention and became a tourism destination in Sampson County revealing indirect benefits of reducing agricultural illiteracy through agritourism. Following these motives, many of the farmers practicing alternative agriculture took pride in being able to provide customers with fresh, healthy products that visitors could see were produced locally. John and Laura, who sell humane-certified Angus beef directly to customers explained:

There's a movement of people that are concerned about what they're eating and where it comes from. And so that's where our niche is. You can come out here to the farm. You can see where these cows are being raised, how they're being raised. Heck, you could even pick one out if you wanted to. And that'd be the one you get. And you could see how they're finished and see that they're treated humanely and that they're free range. They're not pent up in small pens and fed a bunch of garbage.

Conversely, conventional farmers associated their involvement with agritourism as a "family-oriented" effort and expressed the need to reduce agricultural illiteracy for

primarily social and cultural reasons rather than for environmental reasons. For example, participants often stated they viewed agritourism as a way to either instill a work ethic and business skills in their own children (by helping with the family business), or to educate other children and strengthen rural communities by providing activities for families. Susan stated, “What drives me is I, as a mother, I’m creating things, or I’m creating a place, events that I would like to bring my family to”. Furthermore, she explained how her family started agritourism as a response to a lack of “family friendly” activities to do in the community: She said:

We actually started the maze, because as far as for families, there wasn’t much to do in Sampson County. Um, young kids—and there wasn’t anything like this, like the fall festival maze. And so, we just keep adding events to our site. I mean, families are looking for something to do.

Reflecting on these observations, we also found a different level of transparency among alternative farmers and conventional farmers. Namely, conventional farmers generally structured their farm into “front and back stages” [49], inviting visitors only to a section of their farm specifically designed to be tourist-ready. In these farm front-stages, the conventional farmers provided authentic hands-on experiences (e.g., harvesting produce) and also more “staged” experiences (e.g., petting zoos, hay rides). Ref. [50] suggest that, “Staged agritourism refers to activities through which visitors experience agricultural operations but through staged scenarios and predetermined tours” (p. 41); however, both types of experiences can be designed for educational or entertainment purposes. For example, Susan and Zach explained that they would not take visitors to see their animal production (e.g., hogs produced in CAFOs) but instead preferred to “rent” pet farm animals from neighbors during agritourism events (e.g., goats, pigs, ponies) so children could pet the animals and they wouldn’t have to house them the whole year. While this type of agritourism may still serve the purpose of re-connecting people with the land, ironically, “front stage” agritourism on some of the conventional farms was providing a misrepresentation of “where food comes from” and instead provided a staged representation of farms more commonly characterized to be considered alternative. To compound the challenge of any critical examination of this finding, we observed that conventional farmers justify this practice due to their need to protect the health of their livestock, and due to a perceived need to use large-scale agriculture to feed a growing world population.

In summary, while both groups of participants expressed a desire to reduce agricultural illiteracy among the public by providing educational opportunities that reconnect people with the farm and rural life, conventional and alternative farmers differed in their levels of transparency about food production (i.e., front vs. back stage authenticity) and in their motivation to do so. While conventional farmers used agritourism to provide opportunities to strengthen families and communities, they did not directly strive to teach an ethic of land stewardship. Conversely, alternative farmers used agritourism to educate visitors about environmentally sustainable farming practices and the importance of eating healthy, locally-produced food and to educate visitors about land stewardship.

5.3. *Involvement in Collective Action*

Through an investigation of participants’ involvement in collective action, we found that individuals’ land stewardship was highly associated with farmers’ social and cultural groups. For instance, participants stated various ways that other groups and individuals had influenced their land management decisions (e.g., regular communication with other farmers in the region to exchange information, resources, and knowledge about farming practices). Some of the participants were very involved in cooperatives or other organizations (e.g., agricultural or agritourism associations) and, through these collective processes, they communicated regularly with other farmers, extension and academic professionals, non-profits, and specialty associations. However, participants chose to collaborate for

different reasons, and barriers that prevented successful collaboration on land management differed among types of farmers.

Alternative farmers, all of whom were women and/or minorities, expressed greater interest in being involved in small grassroots cooperatives (e.g., women's groups, Small Family Farm Cooperative) than conventional farmers. Cooperative members explained that meeting regularly helped them learn about new alternative farming techniques and share knowledge about programs designed to help small-scale, minority, or alternative farmers. Additionally, alternative farmers explained how being members of a cooperative provided social opportunities, which were particularly important among some informants who did not have family in the region or felt hesitant or excluded from communicating with neighbors.

However, while cooperative members expressed overall benefits of collaboration, they often felt restricted by geographic barriers. For example, Luisa stated, "I can't collaborate with others, because they're too far away. And when I do—let's say that I do get involved? What happens is that I'm thinking about everything I need to do here (on the farm) while I'm over there".

Dorothy and Charlene both expressed that they could benefit from being involved in a cooperative or organized group with a specific focus on women farmers. Charlene reported that being both a woman farmer and a newcomer to the region prevented local people from taking her seriously, which made some aspects of her work difficult. Charlene then explains how other women may disagree, but that she perceives that they likely do not experience the same kind of discrimination if they have a husband or grew up in the area, "It's like one of those invisible things that you have to build all these relationships but in another time and place you would just be born into them".

Supporting Charlene's comments, and the difficulty of communicating in some agricultural communities, [29] also found that farmers' longevity in the community (and wealth gained) helped them earn the social and cultural capital needed to effectively collaborate with other farmers. Ref. [51] points out that alternative farmers tend to find it difficult to be accepted into established social circles that nurture Western symbols of 'good farming' that focus more on financial and economic elements (e.g., high yields). Similarly, our analysis suggests that social exclusion may make alternative farmers fear showcasing agricultural practices that collide with land management practices advocated by conventional farmers. Some participants mentioned that people may be "scared" to be active advocates for sustainable land stewardship and that some are even reluctant to participate in agritourism. Minority participants in particular (e.g., African Americans, American Indians, and women) felt hesitant to participate in community meetings about land tenure, or to boast that they have agricultural land because of deep-rooted fears that they could lose their rights to the land. Dennis explains:

If you have been taught, and it's a generational thing, that certain things you don't do . . . it's there for you, but you are scared to go really see what's there for you . . . you basically mentally block yourself from stepping out of your zone, and that's what it is for a lot of people... especially for small, minority farmers. My dad couldn't do that, I can't do that. And it's more prevalent than people think.

Thus, while collective action has purportedly exposed some farmers to new business and land management ideas or helped support them to learn new techniques or skills, deep-rooted cultural values, social networks and discrimination interact to significantly curtail communication between alternative and conventional farmers and their support institutions. Alternative farmers appear to be most affected by this process, as many appear resigned with carving a simple livelihood without wanting to bring too much attention to themselves for fear of retaliations.

Trust also emerged as a key factor when assessing who to collaborate with and where to get useful information regarding land management. Participants from each group identified different people or organizations that they trusted. Table 2 below displays organizations or

individuals who were most frequently mentioned among each group when participants were asked who they regularly communicate with about land management decisions.

Table 2. Sources of trust among conventional and alternative agricultural farmers.

		Conventional Farmers	Alternative Farmers
Trust	Groups	Agribusiness groups/associations Extension agents Agritourism associations	Small, grassroots organized collectives Non-profits Agritourism associations
	Individuals	Family, neighbors, friends, community, other conventional farmers	Minorities and women trust each other
Lack of Trust		Government Environmental activists	People in community Extension agents Agribusiness associations

These findings indicate that participants trust groups and individuals that support their intrinsic beliefs and goals towards land stewardship. While this is not surprising, these findings revealed barriers that could limit communication between groups with polarized values and worldviews, which could also hinder a collective ethic of land stewardship and community involvement in agritourism. For example, as an extension of dialogue on reducing agricultural illiteracy among the public, most participants revealed their polarized beliefs on the most appropriate way to “feed the world”. John and Laura expressed the importance of practicing environmentally sustainable techniques on their land but felt it was a privilege that they were able to eat local food and live a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, they were very supportive of large-scale agriculture in the community and agribusinesses receiving government subsidies because they expressed that conventional agriculture is necessary to feed a growing population. Similarly, Robert and Jean took pride in being able to have a small-scale farm, but acknowledged that large-scale agribusinesses were a necessity. Robert stated:

As far as supplying the food value and the food needed for the world, no, you can't do it on open range . . . you have to have a confinement system where the nutrients, the environment, the conditions that they live are in our control.

Additionally, conventional farmers expressed that small-scale alternative agriculture was “more like a hobby instead of an enterprise” since this type of farming lacked market value and the capability to produce high yields necessary to feed a growing population. For example, while Jean cares for animals on her small farm, she said, “Do I want to do organic? No, I don't believe in organic. It's fine if people like it, but I'm perfectly happy using commercial fertilizer and Seven Dust (a pesticide) and actually getting a harvest occasionally”. Regarding animals, Jean also stated, “People do not understand. It's the only way we can feed people. And it's better for the animals. It's better for the workers. It's better for the environment”. Other conventional farmers, such as Andy and Zach, expressed similar views and communicated that following organic practices was not realistic or “worth the effort” versus the profit and productivity from using “chemicals, fertilizers, and growth enhancements” (Zach).

Conversely, all of the alternative farmers stated that it was not necessary to rely on practices that they perceived were damaging to the health of people and the environment (e.g., use of genetically modified seeds, CAFOs, chemicals) in order to feed the world. Instead, they perceived these practices to be unsustainable, inequitable, and focused more on profits for corporations and “people in power”. Charlene stated:

Okay, they can take \$10 million and give it to somebody else and figure out how to grow chickens outside just as efficiently as they do in those houses . . . And that's really a waste. It's like living next to a giant pesticide plant for no

reason other than greed (laughs). You know, all these companies that say we have to have these chemicals to make a living—we have to do this we have to do that—they could just as easily produce another product that's natural and not destructive to the ecosystem.

Therefore, our analysis revealed that participants have very polarized worldviews and values, which, as previously reported by [28], explains why they have opposing views on how to manage farmland. Conventional farmers perceive the practices they do on their land as the most effective and they support large agribusinesses solutions to “feed the world”. Alternative farmers, on the other hand, perceive agribusiness as “killing the world” and express that humans should be better stewards of the environment. These divergent views lead to each group viewing the other as naïve, “ignorant”, or “uninformed”, and they undermine any efforts to build consensus on goals towards a collective land stewardship.

6. Conclusions

This study examined how and why small-scale farmers are involved in agritourism microentrepreneurship, and how their involvement in agritourism relates to their stewardship of working agricultural lands and efforts to reduce agricultural illiteracy. Furthermore, we identified ways in which farmers' involvement in collective action supported or hindered these relationships. We found important differences between types of farmers interviewed in this study (e.g., ethnic minorities and women vs. white male; conventional vs. alternative) in terms of how they described their motivations to be involved in agritourism microentrepreneurship, and in how collective processes influenced their land stewardship. We did not find that involvement in agritourism influenced farmers' stewardship of their agricultural land. Instead, farmers with different worldviews, agricultural practices, and land management views participate in agritourism in markedly different ways, and they used agritourism as a tool to educate visitors about their views.

Participants were deeply concerned with the public's agricultural illiteracy but varied in reasoning. Alternative farmers were highly motivated to participate in agritourism because they desired to educate visitors about land stewardship, healthy eating, and environmentally sustainable production techniques (e.g., composting, intercropping). Most alternative farmers were also 'lifestyle' farmers [48] and were generally retired, non-white or women, and had off-farm income or savings. Consistent with findings previously reported by [50], alternative farmers viewed agritourism as a way to make their farm economically viable; however, they seldom charged fees for agritourism activities, indicating that most additional revenue came from indirect tourism benefits. Instead, they used agritourism as an outlet to showcase their farm and earn income through the direct sales of farm products to visitors. Conversely, while conventional farmers were also intrinsically motivated to reduce agricultural illiteracy by providing sociocultural opportunities to the community (e.g., family-friendly community activities, educational programs designed to learn about the struggles of rural life), they also considered agritourism an important part of their revenue model and charged fees for visits.

Agritourism microentrepreneurs were also highly motivated by non-economic factors. Extending [6] work on assessing the sustainability of agritourism farms, we found that participants articulated important sociocultural (e.g., instilling work ethic in children) and environmental (e.g., educating about permaculture) reasons for their involvement in agritourism microentrepreneurship. These findings contrast with previous quantitative/large sample size studies that found that economic motivations for agritourism entrepreneurship are most important (e.g., [4,14]). Therefore, we speculate that the relative importance of competing motivations is likely to differ between various types of farmers and contexts, and suggest that additional research is needed to bring insight into this question.

Lastly, this study revealed that there are complex factors undermining the potential role of collective action to foster land stewardship. Specifically, ethnic minorities, women, and alternative agriculture farmers in our study felt disconnected and distrustful of conventional farmers and formal agricultural and agritourism support organizations. As a

result, they hesitated to advocate for their personal land stewardship views in fear of retaliation. In contrast, conventional farmers viewed others as hobby farmers who did not really contribute to feed the world, and discussed their land management views only with other like-minded farmers and support organizations. This division stifles the flow of trusted information about appropriate agricultural and agritourism practices, which reaffirms previous assertions of the difficulty in transcending conventional 'good farming' ideals centered on financial symbols of production [30,51]. The lack of trust observed between conventional and alternative farming factions (i.e., including the farmers and select support organizations and associations aligned with one or the other group) is a strong indicator that the broader group will not be able to work towards a collective ethic of land stewardship [32]. As suggested by [29], there is a need to involve individuals with distinct worldviews in integrated networks so that they can gradually and jointly redefine approaches that are economically viable and also demonstrate stewardship for the long-term sustainable management of working lands.

7. Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

This qualitative study has provided important implications into how and why different types of farmers choose to participate in agritourism microentrepreneurship, and how their involvement relates to their land stewardship and reducing agricultural illiteracy. This study revealed that ethnic minorities, women, and alternative agriculture farmers especially use agritourism microentrepreneurship as a way to increase the value of their land and become more competitive in markets driven by conventional farming, but they are limited by barriers that prevent them from forming networks with other farmers and institutions in their communities. Local government and non-profit programs should increase their efforts to encourage the participation of underserved minority farmers in both agritourism and in forming agricultural cooperatives and grassroots groups to mitigate these barriers in the communities where they live. While this study found important relationships between agritourism microentrepreneurs and land stewardship, several of the participants interviewed were in early stages of agritourism development and had gained minimal revenue from tourism enterprises thus far. Future research may want to better characterize different stages of tourism development and/or follow up with participants to see if they were successful in meeting their economic (e.g., supplemental income through tourism) and non-economic (e.g., reducing agricultural illiteracy among tourists) goals and how more developed tourism operations may affect land stewardship.

This study has also revealed that agritourism research could benefit by differentiating between different types of farmers. We found important distinctions in why different types of farmers both chose to participate in agritourism and in the types of agritourism they developed; however, these findings towards specific groups were limited to the small sample size deemed necessary for this qualitative study, and more research would be useful to identify similar themes among a larger sample size. Acknowledging these differences (e.g., between conventional and alternative farmers) may help governmental or non-governmental organizations find businesses that better align with their objectives when facilitating the development of agritourism enterprises. Furthermore, classifying different types of agritourism businesses can help networking groups and associations (e.g., agritourism associations) recognize which groups they need to reach out to about membership or resources that could help farmers develop their businesses. For example, in this study, we found it particularly difficult to contact smaller-scale agritourism enterprises in early stages of development. By acknowledging agritourism microentrepreneurs as a growing population, marketing from agritourism associations could focus on better ways to integrate them into already established networks.

Similarly, more agritourism research should focus on certain groups of microentrepreneurs that typically have lacked presence in the literature. For example, while lifestyle farmers tend to be more involved in alternative agriculture and environmentally sustainable practices [48], few studies exist on lifestyle farmers participating in agritourism.

Based on the relationship between lifestyle farmers and land stewardship, we argue that agritourism is a viable, yet underutilized way for lifestyle farmers to both reduce agricultural illiteracy and educate visitors about stewardship. Additionally, while studies have explored gender in agritourism (e.g., [11,52,53]), few have considered differences between ethnic minorities. In effect, there may be important relationships between ethnic minorities and their involvement in agritourism that have been overlooked by not focusing on race as a variable. Acknowledging different types of farmers would also be useful when investigating land stewardship since the ethnic minorities in this study also tended to be lifestyle farmers. Future studies on agritourism (e.g., large sample surveys) should focus on including a full range of farmer types and how to classify them, specifically including farmers who offer more informal agritourism microentrepreneurship activities (e.g., farm tours) and distinguish between conventional and alternative farmers, and different ethnic groups. This approach would allow researchers to assess whether patterns observed among participants in this study may be generalizable to broader populations of agritourism entrepreneurs. Similarly, in order to better understand reasons why small-scale farmers may choose not to participate in agritourism, and to identify if there are negative associations with agritourism, future studies may also include farmers who have chosen not to participate in agritourism and compare the two groups.

Since participants expressed agritourism as a way to reduce agricultural illiteracy among visitors, future research should investigate the extent to which visitors have gained knowledge and awareness from participating in agritourism activities to gain a more holistic understanding of its benefits [54]. Participants in this study presented many objectives they had towards what they would like their visitors to gain from visits (e.g., work ethic, stewardship); therefore, future research should include visitors to assess if agritourism entrepreneurs are reaching their goals.

Lastly, collective action is limited by traditional worldviews that are developed, encouraged, and supported by deep set social norms. These social norms inhibit communication between different types of farmers, and lead to imbalance of farmers' access to resources and support services. Future research should focus on how to incorporate strategies to erode these barriers and increase opportunities for farmers to communicate, share resources, and eventually build trusting relationships across factions. While this study demonstrated similar goals among participants to reduce agricultural illiteracy among the public, further communication and collaboration towards agritourism development could help reduce polarizing views and stereotypes to find common ground and work towards the formation of a collective approach to land stewardship.

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