

AGROECOLOGY, Fall 2010  
November 17, 2010  
Lab: Interviewing farmers  
(*Jessica jumps in as desired*)

1. Overview of interviews
  - a. Why do them
  - b. Secondary goal is to begin a longer-term project of collecting oral histories for the use of future students as well as the general public
  - c. What they will consist of – contact farmers, go to farm, walk around property, find a quiet place to sit down and record an interview
2. Farmers are really interesting to talk to because they inhabit almost a hidden world
3. Play samples of previous interviews (Fall 2009)
  - a. Matt and John. Things to note:
    - i. Radio playing in background
    - ii. First answer very short
    - iii. Then it turns conversational – let him speak about history (that’s the most interesting thing!)
  - b. Meghan and Andy
    - i. A little stumbling at first
4. Let’s discuss basic interviewing do’s and don’t’s (see PPT)
5. Let’s focus in on what questions you might ask.
  - a. Students get theirs out, share with neighbor
  - b. Show master list on screen – scroll through
  - c. I go through (model) good ones, tricky ones
6. Let’s focus in on probably the most important aspect – making the process a conversation and not a formal, stiff interview.
  - a. The set of questions is just a guide. Return to it from time to time, but you should be looking the person in the eyes and just chatting with them.
  - b. Have a student or two practice on me, playing the role of the stiff farmer
  - c. What do you do when you get very short answers?
    - i. “Can you elaborate?”
    - ii. “Hmm, that’s interesting, it reminds me of....”
7. Possible metadata to collect (**Jessica**)