

A CASE STUDY ON THE APPLE HILL GROWER'S ASSOCIATION:
AN AGRITOURISM AREA IN CAMINO, CA

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Christine Delfino

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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

TITLE: A Case Study on the Apple Hill Grower's Association: An Agritourism Area in Camino, CA

AUTHOR: Christine Delfino

DATE SUBMITTED: December 11, 2014

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Dr. Jerusha Greenwood
Associate Professor of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism
Management

COMMITTEE MEMBER: Dr. William Hendricks
Department Head and Professor of Recreation, Parks, and
Tourism Management

COMMITTEE MEMBER: Dr. Marianne McGarry Wolf
Department Head and Professor of Wine and Viticulture

ABSTRACT

A Case Study on the Apple Hill Grower's Association: An Agritourism Area in Camino, CA

Christine Delfino

The current research is a case study on the Apple Hill Grower's Association (AHGA). The purpose of this case study was to gain a full understanding of the AHGA with a focus on the economic and social motivations of the original farmers to bring tourism to the farm. A majority of the past research on agritourism involves quantitative studies that are survey based; this study gives qualitative research perspective based on focus groups and personal interviews. In addition, past research is focused on other states (i.e. Michigan, Missouri, Montana) and countries (i.e Italy and Australia). This case study adds research to the agritourism book of knowledge in California. The subjects for this study were chosen through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that involves choosing experts highly involved in the research at hand (Kraus & Allen, 1997). It was important to have subjects highly involved in the culture of the AHGA and that were directly involved in the initial decisions to start an agritourism business. Therefore, seven participants were hand selected that were directly related to the beginning of the AHGA. One focus group and six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the subjects of this study. The data from the focus group and interviews were analyzed through the qualitative analysis process of "grounded theory".

The steps to grounded theory include: raw text, research concerns, relevant text, repeating ideas, themes, theoretical constructs, and theoretical narrative (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Through this research, main themes emerged that were directly

related to the objectives of this study. These main themes are as follows: survival, involvement, feuds, politics, complacency, factors for success, female gender role, less regulations, education of farmers, and negative impacts. From these main themes, many sub themes surfaced. The most prevalent theme of this study was survival, more particularly survival in reference to pear decline. The objective of this study was to explore the motivations of the original farmers of the AHGA to engage their farms in agritourism. The main motivation was to save their farm from the pear decline disease.

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INTRODUCTION

The following case study used a focus group and multiple in-depth interviews to gain a full understanding of the Apple Hill Grower's Association (AHGA) in Camino, CA. The first chapter involves a brief background of the AHGA, the problem statement, objectives, and the significance of the study.

Background of Apple Hill Grower's Association

Over the last 50 years, the society and economy of the United States has changed drastically. With globalization, industrialization and the growth of urban lifestyle, rural communities have dropped considerably in numbers (Kim & McGehee, 2004). The farming lifestyle is not as common as in the 1960s, and the number of family farms continues to decrease. Farmers are finding it increasingly hard to make a living off their farms. The dire need to preserve the family farm has led farm families to explore alternative strategies to keep their farms afloat (Doyle & McGehee, 2002). One of these alternative strategies is the implementation of tourism to farm businesses, often referred to as agritourism. Agritourism is defined as "rural enterprises which incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component" (McGehee & Kim, 2004, p. 164).

Agritourism can be anything from a single farm to a grouping of individual family farms that become known as an agriculture area. The purpose of agritourism is to bring tourists from other communities to visit rural landscapes. These rural landscapes involve many different attractions, such as: farm animals, gardens, bake shops, and horseback

rides. The tourism brought to the farms creates a revenue stream that helps the farming community increase their profits.

The following case study is focused on the Apple Hill Grower's Association (AHGA), an agritourism association located in Camino, California, in El Dorado County in Northern California. The AHGA was started in 1964. Gene Bolster, a local grower; Dick Bethell, the county's pomology specialist and farm advisor; Edio Delfino, the county's agricultural commissioner; and Bob Tuck, a retired army officer, all united to form the Apple Hill Growers Association.

Over the last 50 years, the AHGA has grown from 16 ranches to over 50 ranches including fruit, vegetable, and Christmas tree farms, wineries, a micro brewery, and a spa (Sharp, Schautmayer, & Owens, 2008). High season of the AHGA typically runs from September through November and, for the tree farms, from the end of November through the Christmas holiday, some ranches stay open year-round. Owners of the AHGA ranches rely on the visitors to the area for the various activities and to purchase crops, baked goods, wine, and other items. Depending on the size of the ranch, visitors can range from a couple hundred to tens and hundreds of thousands during high season (Sharp, Schautmayer, & Owens, 2008).

The Case Study on the AHGA

The purpose of this study is to develop a complete history and understanding of the AHGA with a focus on the economic and social reasons why farmers decided to engage their farm in agritourism. The researcher conducted a focus group and multiple personal interviews with the original farmers in the region, the wives of the original farmers, and people highly connected to the deceased original farmers.

Grounded Theory, a method that involves the following steps: Raw Text, Research Concerns, Relevant Text, Repeating Ideas, Themes, Theoretical Constructs, and Theoretical Narrative (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003) was used as a conceptual foundation for the research. Both the researcher and Dr. Jerusha Greenwood analyzed and coded the data to ensure reliability of the study. Lastly, validity will be achieved through multiple strategies such as, triangulation, checking results with the subjects, recognizing personal biases, and including peer debriefing.

It is important to note that the researcher who conducted this study grew up in Camino, CA and is highly connected with the AHGA. She knows and has personal relationships with the subjects in the study. Because she is highly connected to the community, the subjects felt she was “one of their own” and were more prone to give their honest opinions and views. Additionally, there was no need to spend time developing this level of trust; the researcher was able to better focus on the process of achieving the purpose of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to gain a full understanding of the AHGA with a focus on the economic and social motivations of the original farmers in the region to bring tourism to the farm.

Objectives of Study

1. To record a more complete history of the AHGA.
2. To determine the initial motivations, both economic and social, of the original farmers to bring tourism to their farms.

3. To record the womens' perspective during the beginning of the AHGA and their views on bringing tourism to their farms.

Significance of Study

A majority of the research on agritourism is quantitative in nature. This study used qualitative methods to explore the views of farmers. Specifically, by conducting a case study, the farmers' opinions and views were more fully explored than is possible using quantitative methods.

In addition, research on California agritourism is limited. Most agritourism studies are focused on other states such as Michigan, Missouri, and Montana, or abroad in countries such as Italy and Australia. Because this study was conducted in California, it provides the perspective of California agritourism.

This study also provides the perspective of women in agritourism. There is a lack of research on the differences between female and male motivations for agritourism entrepreneurship. McGehee, Kim, and Jennings (2005) found that female motivations for entrepreneurship were different than males. This study illuminated the female perspective as well as the male perspective and added to the research on gender motivational differences related to agritourism.

Lastly, the results from this study provided a detailed explanation of the AHGA. Other agricultural areas will be able to use this study to compare characteristics and see if agritourism beneficial for the community. Because the entire agriculture industry is changing, this study will help many farming communities in finding alternative strategies to succeed by incorporating agritourism into their business.

II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Purpose of Study

The following explores and defines agritourism and how qualitative case study research is conducted. This study is focused on the motivations of farm families engaging their farm in agritourism entrepreneurship. This study's purpose is to discover whether these farm families are making their decisions based on economic or social reasons or a mixture of both. The following research also includes female and male differences in motivations and agritourism issues, problems, and factors for success. Lastly, this chapter explores qualitative research and case study methodology.

Defining Agritourism

Exploring the word agritourism and where it derives from, one finds that the prefix agri-derives from the Latin term ager (agri-gentitive), meaning 'field'. Tourism is a form of active recreation away from one's place of residence that is inspired by cognitive, recreational, and sport needs (Sznajder, Przeborska, & Scrimgeour, 2009). The combination of agri and tourism led to agritourism. The definition of agritourism is human tourist activity with a goal to familiarize oneself with farming activity the agricultural environment (Sznajder, et al., 2009).

Even though the term agritourism seems simple in definition, most of the research on it is vague. Much of the confusion comes from the many terms being lumped together with agritourism. For example: farm tourism, rural tourism, agrotourism, and farm-based tourism are all terms used interchangeably with agritourism. To better understand the

definition, the following table was created by Phillip, Hunter, and Blackstock (2010), to understand the term and its related labels:

Table 1
Overview of definitions used in the literature for agritourism and related labels

Term Used	Definition	Reference
Agritourism	1. “any practice developed on a working farm with the purpose of attracting visitors”	Barbieri and Mshenga (2008: 168)
	2. “a specific type of rural tourism in which the hosting house must be integrated into an agricultural estate, inhabited by the proprietor, allowing visitors to take part in agricultural or complementary activities on the property”	Marques (2006: 151)
	3. “rural enterprises which incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component”	McGehee (2007: 111) and McGehee, Kim, and Jennings (2007: 280)
	4. “tourism products which are directly connected with the agrarian environment, agrarian products or agrarian stays”	Sharpley and Sharpley (1997: 9)
	5. “activities of hospitality performed by agricultural entrepreneurs and their family members that must remain connected and complementary to farming activities”	Sonnino (2004: 286)
Agrotourism	1. “tourism activities which are undertaken in non-urban regions by individuals whose main employment is in the primary or secondary sector of the economy”	Iakovidou (1997: 44)
	2. “tourist activities of small-scale, family or co-operative in origin, being developed in rural areas by people employed in agriculture”	Kizos and Iosifides (2007: 63)
	3. “provision of touristic opportunities on working farms”	Wall (2000: 14)
Farm Tourism	1. “rural tourism conducted on working farms where the working environment forms part of the product from the perspective of the consumer”	Clarke (1999: 27)
	2. “tourist activity is closely intertwined with farm activities and often with the viability of the household economy”	Gladstone and Morris (2000: 93)

	<p>3. “to take tourists in and put them up on farms, involving them actively in farming life and production activities”</p> <p>4. “commercial tourism enterprises on working farms. This excludes bed and breakfast establishments, nature-based tourism and staged entertainment”</p> <p>5. “activities and services offered to commercial clients in a working farm environment for participation, observation or education”</p> <p>6. “a part of rural tourism, the location of the accommodation on a part-time or full-time farm being the distinguishing criterion.”</p> <p>7. “increasingly used to describe a range of activities. [which] may have little in common with the farm other than the farmer manages the land on which they take place”</p>	<p>Iakovidou (1997: 44)</p> <p>Ollenburg and Buckley (2007: 445)</p> <p>Ollenburg (2006: 52)</p> <p>Oppermann (1996: 88)</p> <p>Roberts and Hall (2001: 150)</p>
Farm Tourism	<p>1. “phenomenon of attracting people onto agricultural holdings”</p> <p>2. “an alternative farm enterprise”</p>	<p>Evans and Ilbery (1989: 257) Ilbery,</p> <p>Bowler, Clark, Crockett, and Shaw (1998: 355)</p>
Vacation Farms	<p>1. “incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component”</p>	<p>Weaver and Fennell (1997: 357)</p>

Source: Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock (2010). A typology for defining agritourism. *Tourism Management*, 31 (6) , 754-758. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.001

Although different in characteristics, the central idea of all these terms is the same: to bring tourists from other communities to experience a rural lifestyle.

Agritourism and its related labels are all “rural enterprises that incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component” (McGehee, 2007).

Agritourism businesses often offer bake shops, farm animals, gardens, pick-your-own produce, tractor and horse riding, and agriculture festivals (McGehee). Agritourism gives tourists a farm experience and allows them to genuinely experience life on the farm.

Motivations Behind Agritourism Development

As stated before, current research on agritourism is greatly focused on the economic and social benefits. The benefits and motivations for agritourism entrepreneurship fall in line with the theoretical framework originally introduced by Weber's formal and substantive rationality theory (McGehee & Kim, 2004). Agritourism research shows that farm families are engaging in agritourism entrepreneurship based on rational/formal reasons and/or substantive/social reasons. For easier interpretation, an example of a formal reason to engage in agritourism is economic motives, where as an example of a substantive reason is to educate the public about agriculture (Jagd, 2002).

Weberian Perspective Theory

Max Weber (1864-1920) is one of the founders of formal and substantive theory. Although much of his work is analyzed in the context of macroeconomic sociology, recent analysis has related his work to microeconomics and the development of modern rational business enterprise (Jagd, 2002). Weber's interpretation of the business enterprise is based on economic rationality, or when reasoning is behind the start of economic activity (Roth & Wittich, 1978). In Weber's opinion, the rationality behind economic activity can be formal or substantive. Formal rationality is related to impersonal quantitative calculation and complete risk assessment. Substantive rationality is related to social values, for example: status, egalitarian, or social justice (Gordon, 1998). Although these two rationalities are conflicting, often times they exist together; many times both rationalities are needed in the decision to engage in an economic enterprise.

Weber argued that there is always a tension between formal and substantive rationality in any business enterprise and it is important for entrepreneurs to recognize and accept this tension (McGehee & Kim, 2004). In general, successful business owners rarely make decisions based on one rationality. It is important to have a combination of formal and substantive rationalities to start a thriving business enterprise. Often times, entrepreneurs will have different and multiple motivations when starting a business; the combination of formal and substantive rationalities satisfy all people involved and balance the beginning of the enterprise. The mixture of the rationalities can also allow the business to satisfy multiple groups affected by the start of the business, such as: the surrounding community, the family involved, and other surrounding businesses.

Weber's Theory and Agritourism

The literature on agritourism development does suggest that there is a mix of economic (formal) and social (substantive) motivators (McGehee & Kim, 2004). As with any economic enterprise, there is a tension between the basic need for financial success and the need for the success of personal values. Agritourism entrepreneurs may also exercise formal rationality motivations, such as: offsetting falling income, supplementing a season of poor yield and little profit, or providing additional revenue (McGehee & Kim). Agritourism entrepreneurs may exercise substantive rationality, such as: educating the public about agriculture, sustaining their farm identities, and preserving the values of the family farm.

To identify the contributions that agritourism brings to farm businesses, it is first important to completely understand agritourism. This understanding helps assist future agritourism entrepreneurs with the appropriate rationale for starting their agritourism

endeavor (McGehee, 2007). By understanding what is motivating the development of agritourism, farm families can gain a better understanding of what tourism will bring to their farm and if their motivations are parallel with the motivations of other agritourism entrepreneurs.

Current Research on Weber's Perspective and Agritourism

As stated before, much of the literature on agritourism involves both formal and substantive motivations. In one study done on 164 agritourism farms in Missouri, Tew and Barbieri (2011) found that agritourism was started for accomplishing market and social goals. Agritourism entrepreneurs believed bringing tourism to their farms would increase revenues, pay off debts, and minimize financial risks. They also found that farmers in Missouri believed that agritourism could help educate the public about agriculture and increase their farm identity and integrity. Although farmers were motivated to start agritourism development for market benefits, they were particularly interested in the benefits of educating the public about agriculture. In general, the subjects believed that many consumers do not know where their food comes from and agritourism could help teach consumers about the agriculture industry and the farming lifestyle (Tew & Barbieri). In turn, this education encourages consumers to prioritize agriculture. Finally, Tew and Barbieri found that the motivations to start agritourism enterprises in Missouri were driven by both formal and substantive rationalities. Farmers were driven to start the enterprises for rational, economic reasons, but also for personal, social reasons.

Agritourism entrepreneurs in Montana were mainly motivated to start an agritourism business because of formal, economic reasons (Nickerson, Black, & McCool,

2001). They were focused on saving their family farms and increasing their profits. Although the main focus of starting agritourism entrepreneurship in Montana was economic, substantive motives also were part of the entrepreneurs' rationale. Examples of these substantive motives included educating the consumer, agritourism as a hobby and interest, companionship with visitors, fulfilling a need in the market, and utilizing resources on the farm (Nickerson, et al.). Entrepreneurs in Montana were substantively motivated to engage in agritourism to gain relationships, meet new people and socialize. Although this study found that farmers were primarily formally driven, it also found that farmers had underlying substantive motives for starting agritourism entrepreneurship.

In Western Australia, entrepreneurs were mainly driven to start their agritourism enterprises by two main motivations. The first was a substantive motivation to preserve the farming lifestyle. The farmers hoped their lifestyle would be strengthened and preserved (Getz & Carlsen, 2001). Many farmers believed that with the decline in commodity prices and increased urbanization, the agriculture industry would suffer. Without the agriculture industry, the farming lifestyle is obsolete. The second motivation for starting agritourism was the formal one of money and profits (Getz & Carlsen). As stated before, with the decline in the agriculture industry, farmers are seeing a decline in their revenues from their farms. With the addition of tourism to their farm, they hope to increase their profits and sustain their farm.

It is interesting to note that in a study of agritourism in Western Australia the authors also found a third and fourth motivation important to agritourism entrepreneurs, both being substantive (Getz & Carlsen, 2001). The third motivation to start an agritourism business was for stimulation. Agritourism entrepreneurs hoped that adding

tourism to their farm would bring them a new challenge and allow them to meet new people and make new relationships. The fourth motivation was independence. Owning a successful agritourism ranch would allow the farmers to be their own boss and give them more business independence (Getz & Carlsen). This study found that farmers had predominately substantive motives to start agritourism entrepreneurship; however, there also was underlying formal motivations present in the analysis. Again, there was a mix of both formal and substantive motives.

Lastly, McGehee and Kim (2004) found significantly different motivations behind agritourism entrepreneurship depending on characteristics of the farm families; these characteristics included: acres owned, dependence on farming operations, household income, and income percentage from farms and pick-your-own activities (McGehee & Kim, 2004). The motivations, both substantive and formal, to start an agritourism business differed substantially based on characteristics of the farm. It is important to note that although the motivations were different depending on the characteristics of the farm, there was still a mix between substantive and formal rationalities through all different characteristics of farms and farm families.

Gender and Agritourism Motivations

Current research also brings to light the difference between gender and agritourism entrepreneurship rationality. There has been very little support for relationships between agritourism motivations and demographics; the one exception is gender (McGehee, Kim & Jennings, 2005). There have been unique findings on the differences between motivations to start agritourism entrepreneurship between women and men. Agritourism enterprises are commonly the idea of the female head of the

household (O'Connor, 1995). Women are particularly interested in adding tourism to their farm for the substantive motivation of increased independence brought by the additional revenues. Often times, the value-added agritourism activities are performed and made by women on the farm and they are highly motivated to preserve these activities (O'Connor).

McGehee, et al. (2005) analyzed the differences between male and female motivations for agritourism entrepreneurship. The main formal motivations of both males and females were increasing of profits and utilizing all resources. The main substantive motivations were educating the consumer, employment of family members, and observed success of other agritourism enterprises. Overall, males and females were similarly motivated; however, when analyzed more deeply, males had more economic motivations and women more social motivations (McGehee, et al.). Also, females and males had different meanings for the various motivations. For example: both males and females rated independence as a driving motivation; however, females thought of independence as “expense reducing” while males thought of independence as “income inducing.” Lastly, females in general were motivated more to start agritourism enterprises than formally and substantively (McGehee, et al.).

Issues and Challenges of Agritourism

Agritourism holds many benefits for members of the agriculture industry; however, there are also potential drawbacks including added stress to the farm, less privacy during peak tourism seasons, liability, regulatory and permit requirements, marketing, range of product quality, and the significant investment involved in starting an agritourism business (Sharply & Vass, 2006). When starting an agritourism ranch, there

is always added stress to the farm. Additional work is required to keep the land clean, safe, and ready for the public. This added responsibility could take focus from the primary farm operations and, in turn, cause the farm to suffer (Sharply & Vass). Also, the transition to a service business can be stressful and difficult for the farmers.

Agricultural values and tourism values often times differ and are sometimes incompatible. For example, Sharply and Vass (2006) found that farmers feel a loss of identity when transitioning into an agritourism business versus agritourism strengthening a farmer's identity. Farmers see themselves as creators of food and their successful ability to cultivate their land. With the addition of tourism to the farm, the fear is that farmers will lose their identity and their culture.

Adding tourism to a farm can also make it impossible to maintain privacy during peak tourism seasons for the owners of the farm, and the citizens of the area (Sharply & Vass, 2006). Local residents often complain about the added noise and traffic, trespassers, and events associated with agritourism, as well as agritourism activities altering the character of their community and commercializing their home (Keith, et al., 2003). The addition of thousands of strangers visiting during a particular season may make it impossible for the citizens of the agritourism area to maintain privacy and go about their normal lives. The added tourists cause change throughout a destination area and, often times, create tension between citizens living in the area and the owners of the agritourism businesses. The region can change completely during peak tourism times; citizens used to a quiet, country town often have to deal with thousands of tourists during a peak tourism season. Their town becomes something completely different than what they are used to.

In addition, tourists increase liability and regulatory issues for the farm and surrounding areas. By adding tourism to the farms, the liability for each agritourism business rises (Keith, et al., 2003). Going from minimal outside visitors to possibly thousands creates many different liabilities. Farmers are forced to increase their insurance coverage to protect themselves and their farm.

Adding tourism to the farm also requires dealing with many regulatory issues. Government agencies require that agritourism businesses obtain clearances, permits, and licenses (Keith, et al., 2003). Each farm owner in the process of adding tourism to their farm must meet certain conditions before they can start their business legally. For example, agriculture land may not be zoned for commercial use. The addition of tourism to a farm creates a commercial business and interferes with the zoning laws of agriculture land (Keith, et al.). Zoning is just one of many regulatory problems that agricultural entrepreneurs face and have to deal with when starting their new business venture.

Another issue agritourism operators face when starting their businesses is the ambiguity of rules and regulations. These policies can be overwhelming, and, in the opinion of some operators, unnecessary (Keith, et al., 2003). Many counties have never dealt with agritourism businesses and do not understand how an agritourism business works. Overall, farmers expressed the permit process to be overwhelming, confusing, and costly (Keith, et al.). In general, agritourism ventures are new and government agencies have to learn exactly what an agritourism business entails.

Another obstacle to starting an agritourism venture is marketing. Many farmers do not have the background or resources to market their agritourism business effectively (Sharpley & Vass, 2006). Although farmers are highly successful at their craft of

farming, marketing is, most of the time, completely foreign to them. Often times, farmers are not successful at achieving effective marketing plans.

Entrepreneurs also face problems regarding whether to market as a whole agritourism area or as individual businesses (Sharpley & Vass, 2006). Many successful agritourism areas find success in marketing as a whole destination, however, farming communities find it difficult to find the balance between working together or focusing primarily on their own business.

Agritourism areas also have to deal with a wide range of quality products and services being provided by farm tourism enterprises (Sharpley & Vass, 2006). Often times, each farm varies greatly in the products and services they provide. One farm may focus on farm activities, while another farm can focus more on valued added products, like baked goods, jams, and jellies. The problem that agritourism areas face is the wide range of the quality of products being offered (Sharpley & Vass). Some farm tourism businesses provide genuine agricultural products and give tourists the “farm experience”, while other farms might not provide the most genuine farm products and leave tourists feeling unsatisfied and disappointed. This can create mixed reviews about the agritourism area and affect all enterprises negatively.

Lastly, there is a financial investment involved in starting an agritourism business (Sharpley & Vass, 2006). Agriculture businesses may not realize there is a significant investment in preparing their farm for tourists. It is important to know that agritourism is not a correct fit for every farm or ranch. It is a special type of business that can be very successful with the right skills, resources, and desire to operate this type of business (Sharpley & Vass).

Factors of Agritourism Success

Agritourism requires particular features in order to succeed and flourish. The following factors are pivotal for agritourism to thrive: a complete tourism package, good leadership, support and participation from the local community, cooperation between farm tourism operators, cooperation between farms and local leadership, sufficient funds and strategic planning, and marketing strategies (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001).

Agritourism areas must create a complete tourism package to succeed. Wilson, et al. (2001), two focus groups were conducted in six communities in Illinois that had an agritourism business for 10 years or more. In these focus groups, one of the main factors for success that participants mentioned was creating a complete community tourism package. One focus group participant expressed that “to succeed a community has to be a destination rather than a place to stop off” (Wilson, et al., 2001, p. 134). Communities that have been successful at getting tourists to visit have created a tourism package involving the entire community, its surrounding areas, and local businesses (Wilson, et al.). A complete tourism package is important for the long-term success of agritourism areas.

In any entrepreneurial venture it is important to have good leadership. Many agritourism communities are successful when they are led by people who understand the importance of tourism to their farming towns and are enthusiastic about it (Wilson, et al., 2001). When local governments, community groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations (such as chamber of commerce and visitors bureaus) are all on the same

page about the addition of agritourism to their town, they will support and promote the agritourism area.

This leads to the importance of support from the local community. The community and their behaviors and attitudes affect the way that tourists are treated and their impressions about the community (Wilson et al., 2001). For example, if local businesses and employees are negative about tourism and towards tourists, the tourist will get a negative opinion about the community. Tourists can recognize when they are not wanted in a community or vice versa and this leads to them returning for a second time and whether their word-of-mouth recommendations are positive or negative. When tourists feel welcomed in a community, it increases the likelihood they will return and, therefore, increases the amount of tourism to the community and local businesses (Wilson, et al.).

Cooperation between farm operators is also highly important for agritourism success. In a study done on small farms in Michigan, Veeck, Che, and Veeck (2006) conducted focus groups in which participants expressed the importance of sharing information and working together as highly pivotal in an agritourism area's success. Agritourism producers strengthen their area through sharing information; they cooperate together and learn through each other's experiences. For example, in the Michigan study on agritourism, farmers shared information on suppliers (equipment needed for their bakery, cider mill facility, etc.) (Veeck, et al., 2006). Through sharing information and collaborating together, farmers helped each other succeed and become known as a popular destination.

Farmers in Michigan also found success through the referral of each other's farms (Veeck, et al., 2006). Agritourism businesses did not view each other as competitors; but rather, felt their competition was supermarkets and other entertainment food and leisure businesses (Veeck, et al.). Therefore, farmers in an agritourism area felt completely comfortable in referring tourists to other local farms for products their farm did not have available.

Lastly, farmers strengthen their agritourism area through purchasing products from each other's farms. Purchasing from neighboring farms helps keep everyone's farm in production and profitable (Veeck, et al., 2006). For small farms, it is less profitable to sell their products to large wholesalers. By selling their products to local, small, family farms, they not only are supporting their neighboring farms, but they are receiving a higher price for their product. By constant support and cooperation, farms become an agritourism area and a tourist destination.

Cooperation between local leadership and farmers is also critical to agritourism success. Focus group participants in Illinois stressed the importance of farm and local leadership relations (Wilson, et al., 2001). Where local leadership and farmers cooperated and worked together, problems were solved faster and growth occurred more rapidly. Although the importance of cooperation between farmers is critical, agritourism cannot be implemented without the cooperation between farmers and local leadership (Wilson, et al.). Growth of agritourism areas can be halted and shut down if there is not support and relationships created between the farmers and leaders of the community.

As with any business venture, it is always important to have sufficient funding and strategic planning before implementing a new business. Many agritourism

entrepreneurs named inadequate funding as their biggest obstacle for agritourism success (Wilson et al., 2001). Many times, farmers do not have proper funding to establish a new tourism venture on their own. In the past, farmers sought out funding from government agencies; however, government funding for tourism development has declined in recent years and farmers have not been able to get enough support to start their agritourism entrepreneurship (Wilson, et al.). Before implementing the new business, it is important for farmers to be realistic with their funding. If they do not have enough funds to start tourism development, it is important for them to look for alternative ventures to add value to their farms.

Strategic planning is also imperative for agritourism ventures to succeed. Planning the use of resources and funds is important because rural areas have limited funds and resources (Wilson, et al., 2001). Therefore, the community must plan for the addition of agritourism development in its overall economic strategy. Through proper planning of funding, infrastructure, and tourism development, the agritourism area will become prepared for the start of their venture.

Lastly, one of the most important factors for agritourism success is proper marketing. When it comes to marketing an agritourism area, farms have found it beneficial to collaborate in their marketing (Wilson, et al., 2001). Through marketing together versus individually, the farms become known as an agritourism area and a tourist destination. If individual farms come together to promote the region, it is easier for tourists to remember the area and to visit more frequently.

Qualitative Research

In general, agritourism research has been quantitative in nature. For many years, qualitative research had problems with validity because the studies involve much of the researcher's interpretations (Creswell, 2009). Through time, qualitative research has gained validity and, in fact, has contributed greatly to all spectrums of research by providing very different viewpoints than its counterpart, quantitative data.

Qualitative research is a way to explore and understand individuals or groups situations and problems. This type of research involves questions and procedures of data that are typically collected in the participant's setting. The researcher analyzes the findings through interpretations and general themes throughout data collection (Creswell, 2009). Examples of qualitative research studies are ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research, and narrative research.

The characteristics of data gathered using qualitative methods differ greatly from those collected using quantitative or mixed method approaches. Successful qualitative research involves the following characteristics: a natural setting, the researcher as a key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, participants' meanings, emergent design, theoretical lens, interpretive, and holistic account (Creswell, 2009). Similar to how the characteristics of qualitative research differ greatly from all other forms of analysis, the methods in qualitative research, differ greatly. The methods of qualitative research are observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2009).

It is important to note a common theme throughout all qualitative research is the importance of the researcher's role throughout the study. Although the researcher's role

is important in all types of studies, it is especially pivotal in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research involves many interpretations, mainly the researcher's. With these interpretations come personal biases, values, and backgrounds that get involved (Creswell). These characteristics of the researcher affect the data analysis process and shape the entire study. Although these interpretations can be seen as a limitation or bias, it can also provide a value to the study where a personal connection occurs between the subjects, the area being studied, and the researcher. Through these connections and personal interpretations, factors unfold throughout the data collection process that might not have occurred in a strictly statistical analysis. In addition, qualitative analysis allows for a wider range of possible answers to questions because of the open-ended nature of the method. While quantitative methods limit the number of possible responses by predicting only a few possible answers to questions.

Validity, reliability, and generalizability all play a large role in qualitative research and determine whether a qualitative study is substantial (Creswell, 2009). The researcher achieves validity of a study by thoroughly checking the legitimacy of findings and data. Also, validity is achieved through using multiple data collection strategies to convince the readers of the accuracy of findings. Reliability is achieved through the study being consistent with other projects in the same field of study (Creswell). In addition, reliability occurs through cross checking the data and having consistency with definitions and the entire data analysis process.

Although generalization is important for research, it is used in a limited way in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). Often times, qualitative research does not want to generalize finding to individuals, sites, or places outside those under study. A value of

qualitative research is the particularity of a specific site or subjects under study; however, generalizability is imperative in case study research with multiple cases (Creswell). In multiple case studies, if data collection is done properly, the data of one case can be generalized to additional cases in the study.

Case Studies

As with all qualitative research, case studies had to gain validity in research analysis. Rather than being seen as a research approach, they have been viewed as an evaluation technique (Henderson, 2006). However, through time, case studies, especially in social research, began to be seen as an extremely positive addition to research analysis. Case studies explain the “how” and “why” of issues within research and provide a type of data not always focused on (Henderson).

Case study is a term that involves some confusion and is used loosely. Although case studies can be both quantitative and qualitative, this study is a qualitative case study. Qualitative case studies are strategies where the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases rely on time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2009).

The main characteristic of a case study is that it is an intensive investigation of a particular unit (Henderson, 2006). It involves a detailed description of a group observed over a period of time. The researcher studies the background, current status, and characteristics of a unit or multiple units through interviewing, observation, and document analysis. According to Henderson, a more appropriate term for most case studies is “case histories”.

Case study data collection involves six main strategies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Henderson, 2006). Case study analysis involves in-depth studying of a unit such as an organization, person, or a specific group. Multiple case units, an individual unit, multiple sites, or a specific part of a site can be studied in case studies. Also, case studies can be done singularly on one site or on multiple different sites (Henderson). As stated above, with multiple case studies, it is important for the researcher to conduct the same, exact data collection at each site to allow the ability to compare the different sites in the case study analysis.

Drawbacks of case study analysis involve lack of rigor, sloppiness, and lack of generalization and comparisons (Henderson, 2006). In addition, case studies take a long time to complete and may result in long, extensive summaries. Positives of case study analysis involve alternative perspectives, display sufficient evidence, and engage the reader in an understanding of the case being studied (Henderson). Suitable case studies are complete, significant, involve multiple sources of evidence and document the entire data collection process of the case study.

Similar to other qualitative research, case study analysis involves examining, categorizing, tabulating, and recombining evidence (Henderson, 2006). A researcher using case studies is interested in both the uniqueness and commonality of the case and wants to analyze these differences and commonalities. Also similar to other forms of qualitative research, case study analysis uses pattern making and explanation building over a period of time (Henderson). Case studies may be presented either chronologically

or thematically. They might describe a sequenced process or identify the elements that explain what occurred during data analysis.

The researcher should combine descriptive, analytic, interpretive, and evaluation perspectives in the writing of the research (Henderson, 2006). The process for writing a case study should be ongoing and occur during the entire data collection and analysis process. The reader should be provided with a readable, descriptive picture of the unit or units being examined (Henderson). The reader should get a sense of all aspects of the case being studied, the patterns that developed, the situation that occurred, and all the information that was collected over time. Lastly, all the limitations and boundaries should be explained in a case study, along with evidence for conclusions made and that emerged.

Summary of Literature Review

Currently, there is a lack of research on agritourism and it is a subject not thoroughly understood. A reason for this is there are many terms used interchangeably with agritourism, such as: farm tourism, rural tourism, and agrotourism; however, they all have very similar meanings. A common definition used for agritourism is “rural enterprises that incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component” (McGehee & Kim, 2004, p. 164).

This study is focused on the initial motivations of farmers to involve their farm in agritourism. The benefits and motivations for agritourism entrepreneurship fall in line with the theoretical framework originally introduced by Weber’s formal and substantive rationality theory (McGehee & Kim, 2004). Examples of formal motivations include: offsetting falling income, supplementing a season of poor yield and little profit, or

providing additional revenue. And, examples of substantive motivations include: educating the public about agriculture, sustaining their farm identities, and preserving the values of the family farm. Throughout the research, most farmers had a mix of formal and substantive motives to engage in agritourism.

The research also shows a difference in motivations based on characteristics of the farm (McGehee & Kim, 2006). Farms had different motivations based on: acres owned, dependence on the farming operations, household income, and income percentage from the farms. The difference in the farms' characteristics changed the farmers' motives. A small farm has very different wants and needs than a large production farm.

Overall, past research did not find much difference in agritourism motivations based on demographics, with the one exception of gender. Females had different motivations to start agritourism enterprises than males (McGehee, et al., 2005). Males overall were more economically driven and females more socially driven. Also, females were more driven overall than men to start agritourism businesses.

Currently, a majority of agritourism research is quantitative. For many years, qualitative research had validity problems because it was based on the researcher's interpretations (Creswell, 2009). In recent years, qualitative research has gained validity and has provided different viewpoints to various subjects. Successful qualitative research involves the following characteristics: a natural setting, the researcher as a key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, participants' meanings, emergent design, theoretical lens, interpretive, and holistic account. The methods of qualitative research are: observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell).

As with all qualitative research, case studies also had to gain validity in research analysis. Rather than being seen as a research approach, case studies were more seen as an evaluation technique (Henderson, 2006). Qualitative case studies are strategies where the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases rely on time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2009). Case study data collection involves six main strategies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Henderson).

The following chapter is an in depth exploration of the methodology of this case study. It will give the reader an explanation of the study location, participants of the study, the data instrument used to collect data, and how the data were analyzed.

III

Methodology

Methods

The purpose of this case study on the AHGA is to gain a more complete understanding of agritourism with a focus on what economic and social motives drove the original farmers in the region to engage in agritourism. One way to gain this understanding is through conducting a focus group and multiple in-depth personal interviews with pivotal figures in the AHGA community.

The following chapter is an overview of the research methodology used in this study. First, the researcher describes the study locations and subjects being studied. Then, how the research was collected, the instrument used and procedures for data collection. Lastly, the researcher describes the data analysis process.

Study Location

Data were collected at seven different locations. The focus group was conducted at a local coffee shop called Apple Blossom Coffee Shop in Camino, California. This business is the only coffee shop in town and all four focus group participants go to the coffee shop regularly, making this the best location where all the participants will feel comfortable and at ease. The owner of the Apple Blossom Coffee Shop is very connected to the AHGA and agreed to allow the focus group to take place after hours to give the researcher and participants privacy.

The four in-depth interviews took place at each of the interviewees' houses. Because the interviews are meant to allow the participants to fully open up about the

AHGA, the researcher believed their personal homes would be the best venue to make them feel comfortable.

Participants in Study

The subjects for this study were chosen through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that involves choosing experts highly involved in the research at hand (Kraus & Allen, 1997). Because this research is a case study on a particular area or culture, it is important to have subjects highly involved in the culture that were directly involved in the initial decisions to start an agritourism business.

The focus group involved four male participants all highly connected to the AHGA and involved in the agriculture industry of El Dorado County where the association resides. The participants of the focus group involved a founder of the AHGA, original farmers of the association, and farmers highly involved in the beginning of the wine industry in the association.

The personal interviews involved one of the participants of the focus group. He is the last living founder of the AHGA and was able to give perspectives of why original farmers engaged their farm in the association. The second male personal interview was a gentleman who was an original farmer of the AHGA and his family has been farming in Camino, CA many years before the association was established.

The researcher also conducted interviews with two women highly connected to the AHGA. These two women were part of the AHGA when it first began and were part of the decisions to add agritourism to their farm. They both have consistently been connected to all facets of the AHGA and have seen it from the beginning.

The researcher wanted to get the perspective of women in regards to agritourism and the AHGA. As stated in the literature review, research has suggested that women engaged their farms in the AHGA for different reasons than their partner. The researcher wanted to tap in to the female perspective through these personal interviews.

Most of the subjects are in their late eighties/early seventies, with the exception of one participant, in his early fifties. They all have an agricultural background and are highly connected to not only the association, but also the community of Camino/El Dorado County. Each subject has served on multiple city, county, and even state boards. They are highly knowledgeable about the AHGA and the whole community in general.

Subject Contact

To contact the subjects for this study, the researcher first obtained the subjects personal phone numbers through her connections in the community (most of the numbers the researcher or her family knew before this study took place). Many of the subjects did not have personal email accounts; therefore, phone numbers were the best form of initial contact. After obtaining the numbers, the researcher contacted the subjects about the focus group and interviews and explained briefly the research and what would be asked of them. Then, the researcher personally met with each subject to find a time and that collectively worked for the research to take place.

Design of Instrument

One focus group and four semi-structured interviews were conducted with the subjects of this study. The researcher used a focus group as a form of data collection because it offers face-to-face interaction, as well as, allows subjects to learn from and build off one another. The researcher used semi-structured, in-depth interviews because

they offer face-to-face interaction, discover possible interconnections, and provide contextual background information (Henderson, 2006).

In a study done on farms in Michigan using agritourism, the researcher used focus groups to represent the diversity of Michigan's farming community; they felt focus groups were the best way to represent this diversity (Veeck, et al., 2006). Qualitative research was also used in Italy in a study where farmers involved customers with the raising of sheep on their farm. In turn, the farmers provided customers with food products from the sheep. A series of detailed interviews were used to get a more in depth explanation from subjects on exactly why they participated and their full opinions about the agritourism project (Holloway et al, 2006).

The California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo Human Subjects Committee, accepted the use of human subjects and procedures in this study. As required by the committee, the subjects were given a full explanation of the intentions of this research, how the research was going to take place, and the confidentiality of this study. Before the research took place, the subjects were asked to read and sign an informed consent form (Appendix D) and express any questions or concerns they had with the research about to take place. The research also was conducted in areas that all subjects agreed were places they felt comfortable (i.e. local coffee shop or personal home). The terms and language of the focus group/interview questions were completely explained to all subjects for consistent understanding. Lastly, the subjects were informed that the research would be audio-recorded by the Apple Iphone Application "Voice Pro" and the interviewer would be taking notes to fully capture the conversation and to remember key points during the focus group and interviews.

Focus Group/ Interview Questions

Both the focus group and interviews were designed to gain a full understanding of the AHGA and, more specifically, what drove farmers to engage their farm in agritourism. The focus group questions focused more on the history of the association as well as what motivated farmers to bring tourism to their farm. Questions like, “What was the state of agriculture in Camino in the late 50’s, early 60’s (prior to the starting of the AHGA)?”, helped paint a picture of the past, while the question, “What would you say were the main driving forces for farmers to engage in the AHGA?”, prompts subjects to explain their motivations to involve themselves in tourism. The full list of focus group questions is in Appendix A.

The interview questions were designed to gain more specific insight into the AHGA through the subjects most closely connected to it. During the male interviews, each interviewee was asked their personal connection to the association and why their particular family decided to become an AHGA farm (Appendix B). Female interviewees were asked what their personal connection to the AHGA as well as what role they played on their agritourism farm (Appendix C). The full list of both male and female interviews is in Appendix B and C.

Data Analysis

Before explaining the data analysis process, it is first important to acknowledge preconceptions and personal biases related to the study and eliminate them (Patton, 2002). The researcher in this study grew up in Camino, CA and her family owns an original AHGA farm. Her grandfather was one of the founders of the AHGA and both her grandparents were highly influential in the beginning of the association (they are both

being interviewed in this study). She grew up on an AHGA farm and has been part of the entire agricultural community of Camino, CA. In addition, the researcher has a relationship with all the subjects being studied in one way or another. Although the researcher would naturally have a bias towards her research, once the bias is acknowledged and recognized, it can strengthen the study. Her connection can be seen as an advantage for the fact the subjects will feel more at ease being questioned and more prone to open up honestly about the questions they are being asked.

After biases are recognized, the researcher analyzed the data through the qualitative analysis process of “grounded theory”. The steps to grounded theory include: Raw Text, Research Concerns, Relevant Text, Repeating Ideas, Themes, Theoretical Constructs, and Theoretical Narrative (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

A more descriptive explanation of the data analysis process is as follows:

1. The researcher began with audio data and then transcribes all the audio data into raw text.
2. The researcher then read through all of the raw text with the research concerns in mind and finds the relevant text. The raw text is cut down to the relevant text for more manageability.
3. Having selected the relevant text, the researcher finds similar words or phrases to express the same idea. These repeating ideas shed light on the research concerns.
4. At this point, the researcher looks for themes. “A theme is an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, pg 36)

5. After finding the themes, the researcher grouped them into larger, more abstract ideas. These ideas are called theoretical constructs.
6. Finally, the theoretical constructs began to create the theoretical narrative, which summarizes what is learned about the research concerns. “The narrative is the culminating step that bridges the researcher’s concerns and the participants’ subjective experience” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, pg 39).

In qualitative research, reliability indicates that the research is consistent across different researchers and different projects (Green et al, 2007). To ensure the findings of this study was consistent and reliable, the researcher had a professor at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo code the data independently (Dr. Jerusha Greenwood). Dr. Greenwood was completely experienced in this type of research and understood the qualitative data analysis process thoroughly. Both the researcher and Dr. Greenwood coded the data independently in the grounded theory process explained above. Following this, the coded data was crosschecked and the results were compared to see both coders agree on codes used for the same passages of text. This process of multiple coders is called interrater agreement (Creswell, 2009).

Validity in qualitative research is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoints of the researcher, the participants, and the readers of the study (Creswell, 2009). To achieve validity, the following strategies will be practiced:

1. The researcher triangulated the data through taking different data sources and converging them to create themes.

2. The findings of the final report were taken to the participants to see if they believed the findings are accurate.

3. As stated above, the personal biases of the researcher were recognized before conducting the study. Through accepting the researcher's personal biases, the study began honestly and openly.

4. The study also included peer debriefing. The study was reviewed in detail by the graduate student's advisor and committee members.

Through the methods of this study, the researcher is confident this case study properly represents the AHGA and all the participants involved. The data collection process of focus groups and personal interviews represented all facets of the research and the findings were detailed and in-depth. By analyzing the data with "grounded theory", the raw data was analyzed thoroughly and in multiple ways to guarantee proper analysis. Lastly, the researcher followed multiple steps to achieve reliability and validity of the study.

IV

RESULTS

Chapter four represents the results of this case study on the AHGA. After recording the focus groups and four personal interviews, 55 pages of text were transcribed from the recordings. Through this research, main themes arose that were directly related to the objectives of this study. These main themes are as follows: survival, involvement, feuds, politics, complacency, factors for success, female gender role, less regulations, education of farmers, and negative impacts. From these main themes, many sub themes surfaced. A diagram representing the relationship between the themes is represented in Appendix E. This next section will describe the participants of the study.

Description of Participants

The following is a brief description of the participants in this study. In order to understand the results of this research, it is important to have an understanding of who the interviewees. As mentioned in the Informed Consent Form (Appendix D), the participants' names are being used in this analysis.

Edio Delfino

Edio Delfino is 84 years old, lives in Camino, CA and is a Cal Poly San Luis Obispo graduate. He was Agricultural Commissioner of El Dorado County (where AHGA is located) for more than 30 years. He became Agricultural Commissioner in 1960 before the AHGA was formed and when the county was in agricultural despair because a disease had affected the pear production. He is one of the founding fathers of the AHGA and was

highly involved in all facets of its implementation and success. He is also the owner of one of the original AHGA farms, Kids Incorporated.

Dick Bush

Dick Bush is 80 years old, lives in Camino, CA and is a Stanford University graduate. Before buying a farm in Camino, CA and becoming part of the AHGA, Dick Bush was an engineer. He is the owner of the one of the first wineries opened in El Dorado County, Madrona, and has played a pivotal role in the success of the wine industry in El Dorado County.

Greg Boeger

Greg Boeger is 70 years old, lives in Camino, CA and is a UC Davis graduate. Greg Boeger is known to have led the charge for the wine industry in El Dorado County. Coming from Napa, CA, he wanted to be a “big fish in a small pond” and opened the first winery in El Dorado County. He owns Boeger Winery, which originated in 1972 and is now celebrating 42 years of success.

Dave Bolster

Dave Bolster is 56 years old, lives in Camino, CA and is a Chico State graduate. He has held many offices for the AHGA, including president in 1985. His father, Gene Bolster, was one of the founding fathers and the first president of the AHGA. Gene Bolster worked for NASA and graduated from MIT.

Gene Larsen

Gene Larsen is 84 years old and lives in Camino, CA. Gene owns one of the original farms in the Camino, CA area, Larsen Family Ranch. The Larsen family has been in

Camino since the late 1800's and owns a large part of the agricultural land in the area. They have been extremely involved in the AHGA.

Birdie Larsen

Birdie Larsen is 82 years old and lives in Camino, CA. She is married to Gene Larsen and has been an active participant in the development of the AHGA. Birdie deals with the business side of the Larsen farm and is also very involved in the AHGA.

Joan Delfino

Joan Delfino was 80 years old and lived in Camino, CA. She was married to Edio Delfino and was highly involved in not only the AHGA, but also the entire Camino, CA agricultural community. Joan was one of the forefront bakers during many AHGA events and owned one of the original bakeries in the association. It is important to note that Joan Delfino passed away during this study.

Emergent Themes

Throughout the focus groups and personal interviews, themes and subjects consistently emerged from the participants. The following is an in depth description of these themes that emerged during this study.

Survival

The first theme that was overwhelmingly prevalent throughout the research (both the focus group and interviews) was survival. It was clear that many of the original farmers involved their farms in the AHGA because of the mere fact they had to survive. The sub themes related to survival are pear decline and monoculture.

Pear Decline

Pear decline is mentioned multiple times by each participant in the study (Raw data of focus group and personal interviews is listed in Appendix F). Greg Boeger explained pear decline as “a parasilla that carries a virus that infects the pear trees. The virus affects the vascular system and makes it not be able to uptake nutrients and water.” Edio Delfino explained how pear decline affected El Dorado County specifically:

There were roughly 50,000 acres of producing Bartlett pears in El Dorado County. In the end of 1959, pear decline struck and it devastated the industry within 2 years. In 1959, the county had 62,000 tons of pears and 2 years later the county had 10,000. It was a disaster.

Pear decline affected the agriculture industry immensely. Edio Delfino mentioned that he saw pear trees that were “thrifty, producing trees in the morning and by evening were plagued and dead”. The entire agricultural community of El Dorado County was in despair.

Loss of Income

Participants mentioned that with this disaster of pear decline, farmers lost their cash flow and livelihoods. When Edio Delfino was asked, “What the state of agriculture was in the late 50’s and early 60’s?” he explained the following:

It was an absolute disaster. A large part of the economy was dependent on pears. The money made by the grower went from very successful to zero. We had a major cash flow problem. Not only were the farmers affected, but the pickers, pruners, harvesters, etc. All facets of farming were affected and desperate for some sort of cash flow.

Gene Larsen also mentioned the loss of income farmers endured during the 1960's. He mentioned "when pear decline hit, it was an immediate loss of income for farmers. They had to think of something fast or get out of farming all together."

Unity of Farmers

The participants from the focus group explained that because of the disaster with pear decline, farmers in the area were forced to work together for survival. Edio Delfino explained "If we didn't have the tragedy of pear decline, you never would have gotten the farmers together. They would have never worked with their competitors if it were not for the disaster."

Dave Bolster expanded on this point to say "I know my father would not have gotten involved with certain families if he were not worried about supporting his family. He had to get involved and band with all farmers in the area or he would have to sell the farm." Multiple participants mentioned they would have not have gotten involved with their competitors, but the disaster was so severe that they were forced to work together.

Monoculture

Throughout the research, this sub theme of monoculture comes up often. As mentioned by many participants in the study, a monoculture is "an agriculture area dependent on one crop." In El Dorado County, they were completely dependent on pears, which led to the loss of cash flow and jobs when pear decline hit. Edio Delfino stated "the problem was that El Dorado County was dependent on the mono crop of pears. A large part of the economy was dependent on those pears. When the decline hit, they had nothing else to stand on."

The participants explained that by depending completely on pears, the agriculture industry was immediately halted when the pear decline hit and farmers were forced to look for alternatives ways to keep their farms afloat.

Crop Diversity

During the focus group, the participants explained that a way this disaster could have been saved was through crop diversity. They all mentioned that in any farming community, it is important to have diversity. Therefore, if a disease does come to the area, there are other crops to sustain the farm until problems are fixed. Greg Boeger mentioned:

Pear decline struck in 1959, and immediately Edio Delfino and Dick Bethell went to UC Davis to setup six test blocks throughout the county for soil composition for wine grapes. Not only did the original farmers think of apples for the area, but they also wanted grapes for diversity. If a disease were to strike again, they would not want the same problem as they had before. They wanted to protect all of the prime farmland in El Dorado County.

During the research, the participants made it clear that crop diversity was highly important for the future of El Dorado County agriculture. Edio Delfino explains the current crop diversity:

Currently, we not only have apples, but we have wine grapes, Christmas trees, blueberries, cherries, olives, and many seasonal crops. If anything were to happen to the area again, we would have other crops to support our agriculture land.

Involvement

A main theme throughout the research was involvement. Whether through community involvement, legislative involvement, or media involvement, it became clear that the entire area was involved with the implementation and success of AHGA.

Community Involvement

During the focus group and interviews, the participants explained that the entire community was affected by pear decline. The community worked together to find a solution and formed the AHGA. Local farmers involved, local schools, and businesses became involved in forming the AHGA. Edio Delfino explained:

We were searching for any ideas to make it. We thought of everything and anything to somehow fix our problem and I will tell you, there were some crazy ideas. The great thing was that we had an open forum and we were really open to anything at the time. One of the first ideas was Oak Glen, which really led to the AHGA.

During these open forums, four main ideas surfaced throughout the research that the participants explained were highly instrumental in the success of the AHGA. They are described below.

Oak Glen

The idea of the AHGA owned from Oak Glen, another agritourism area in Southern. Edio Delfino explained:

After the decline hit, some of us farmers would meet after work a lot to think of ideas to fix the problem, Bob Tuck, Gene Bolster, Dick Bethell and myself. We would sit and brainstorm. One day an old guy that took care of Bob Tuck told us

about Oak Glen. Of course, we immediately jumped on that idea and it was not long before Gene Bolster and I headed down there.

The participants explained that Oak Glen gave the farmers the idea of agritourism and how bringing tourism to the farm could be very successful.

Smorgasbord

Other ideas came about as well. Dave Bolster explained the idea of the smorgasbord:

One of the first ideas that arose was the smorgasbord. Clarice Larsen thought of the idea. Many of the Apple Hill ladies baked and they invited people from all over to come visit the Camino, CA area for one day. They thought they would see maybe 1,000 people and they saw 4 to 5 thousand. The next year all the local schools and homes got involved and banded together to bake for the visitors. That second year they did it over two days, then the next year over two weekends and eventually it grew to multiple weekends and the entire fall season.

The smorgasbord idea was mentioned several times and was explained as the idea that led to the bakeries in the AHGA.

Golden Apple Trail

The Golden Apple Hill was an idea originated by Edio Delfino and Dick Bethell where they painted large, golden apples on Carson and North Canyon Road (the main roads in Camino). The participants explained how the trail led visitors to the farms in the AHGA.

Apple Hill Cavalry

The Apple Hill Cavalry was another idea originated by Dick Bethell and Edio Delfino the involved being part of the El Dorado County Wagon Train (an annual parade in the area). Edio Delfino explained it as follows:

The Apple Hill Cavalry was an idea that came up during one of our brainstorming meetings. A lot of farmers were involved in the idea and we all became part of the Wagon Train parade as a modern unit. We ended up having uniforms and up to seven donkeys marching. We tried any type of marketing. We were trying new ideas daily.

The participants explained that there was open forum during the start of the AHGA and everyone was very involved in the area. They really needed and wanted the AHGA to succeed and they would try anything to make that happen.

Legislative Involvement

Not only did the community involvement come up during the research, but the importance of the legislative involvement was highlighted. The AHGA was described as the “perfect storm.” Because of the need for survival, everyone was supportive and worked hard to address the problem with agriculture. Edio Delfino, Dave Bolster, and Greg Boeger mentioned throughout the research the importance of the legislative support. More specifically, they mentioned how the Board of Supervisors and Caltrans were both very supportive and worked in unison with the AHGA to succeed.

Greg Boeger went even further to explain that, in part, the Agriculture Council and the Chamber of Commerce agriculture support influenced him to buy land in Camino and become part of the AHGA.

Media Involvement

Another sub theme of involvement was the media involvement. Because the issue was so severe, the media jumped on board to help fix the problem. Edio Delfino mentioned in the focus group that the AHGA worked directly with the news media and that helped market the association. Edio Delfino explained:

The local newspapers and television stations would run spots on the AHGA all the time. The women would go down and do cooking classes on the local television stations in Sacramento and the local newspapers would run stories on us all the time. Everyone was on board with getting the AHGA off the ground. Throughout the interviews, it really became apparent how important the community, legislative, and media support was during this time. The participants all mention that if it was not for the immense amount of involvement, the AHGA would not be as successful as it is today.

Feuds

A main theme throughout the research was feuds. Feuding between families in the AHGA and feuding between farmers and developers were both discussed often in the focus group and interviews.

Family Feuding

Each participant mentioned family feuds in the research. More specifically, they mention feuding with one particular family in the area. They all said that they would not have worked together with this particular family if it were not for the dire need to survive. Edio Delfino mentioned in the focus group that “we never in this world would have gotten these two families together if it was not for pear decline”. Dick Bush, goes

as far as to say he withheld from joining the AHGA for a while because of a particular family and the politics of the association in general.

I was slow to come into the association partly because of the politics and a particular family. I did not want to deal with politics while farming and I did not want to deal with fighting with families in my area.

Personal Beliefs and Views

An interesting subject that came up in the research was one that dealt with the addition of wineries into the AHGA. A prominent family involved in the AHGA from the beginning did not want wineries to become part of the association because of their religious views associated with alcohol. Eventually the family looked past their personal views in order to help the AHGA continue to succeed. Again, the participants made it clear that there was a dire need for the farmers to work together and they did so for the success of the AHGA.

Feuding With Developers

Another theme that arose from the interviews was the issue of feuding with developers in the area. After pear decline hit the area, farmers were worried they would lose their farms to developers. Edio Delfino mentioned during the focus group that “the farmers were worried their farms would dissolve into subdivisions and they would be subject to land chopping.”

It was prevalent in the research that farmers were worried about losing their land and El Dorado County becoming merely housing developments. Dave Bolster explained:

There was not just an issue with worrying about developers coming to the area; there was also the fear of farmers not making the financial decision to sell their

land off into small pieces. It was important to keep the integrity of farming in the area or land chopping would occur.

Dick Bush mentioned that a main reason he did not join the AHGA was because of his motivation to keep farming alive in California. He explained that he was troubled by the influence of developers and did not want the beautiful land of the Sierra Foothills to be broken up into small housing developments.

Gene Larsen mentioned in his interview that without the AHGA, the area would have a lot more development. He explained that two-thirds more of the area would have been developed into housing if it were not for the AHGA. Gene Larsen believes that the AHGA maintained the agricultural tradition of the area.

Politics

A main theme from the interviews and focus group was politics. All the participants discussed the struggle with the politics involved with implementing the AHGA, but also keeping the community agriculture base. Two main sub themes related to politics were mentioned throughout both the focus group and interviews: lobbying for farming and working with urban areas in the county.

Lobbying for Farming

During the research, the participants made it very clear that they had to lobby for farming since the implementation of the AHGA. They mentioned multiple times they had to implement laws in order to keep the integrity of their farms and the farming community of the AHGA. All the participants mentioned a crucial law that was placed that encouraged large acreage and farming practices. Greg Boeger explained:

One large issue during the implementations of the AHGA is the creating of the agricultural districts. We had a battle whether farms could be broken up into two to five acre parcels or to have a twenty acre minimum throughout the county. A lot of the farmers highly wanted there to be a twenty acre minimum to keep the integrity of the farms and to make it hard for developers to come in and create housing developments. But, it also did not give farmers the freedom to sell off their land in parcels. It again was a battle in the community, but was crucial in creating the farming community we still have today. The agricultural district had a minimum parcel size of twenty acres and created buffers and setbacks that houses had to be built 200 feet away from orchards, vineyards, etc.

Both Dick Bush and Edio Delfino mentioned that this act was very instrumental in keeping the farming community of the AHGA. They explained that it forced farms to stay above twenty acres.

Dave Bolster mentioned during the focus group the right to farm ordinance and how farmers in the area lobbied for this act to pass during the implementation of the AHGA. Dave Bolster explained that the right to farm ordinance gave farmers freedom to farm and citizens in the community could not complain about farming practices, for example, tractor noise, spraying, etc.

Working With Urban Areas

Another sub theme that emerged was how the AHGA has to work with urban areas in the community. The participants described that because these urban areas are more densely populated, they control the votes that occur in the county and some of these

votes are crucial to the future of the AHGA. A main subject that was talked about was water rates. Greg Boeger explained:

With the current drought, the urban areas in the county are not happy with their water rates and they immediately start to think that agriculture should be paying more for water. If water rates are raised for agriculture, the farms could not survive, but the urban areas control the vote. Therefore, farmers in the AHGA begin to lobby with the urban area citizens.

Although the farmers have to lobby for their votes, both Dave Bolster and Greg Boeger mentioned that although the urban areas have different mindsets, they are very “pro-agriculture” and believe in the AHGA. They both mentioned that the AHGA gets a lot of support from the surrounding urban areas and those citizens have contributed to the success of the AHGA through the years. They explained that it is not necessarily about fighting with the urban areas, but more about educating them about the AHGA and letting them know the importance of agriculture in the community.

Complacency

A main theme that came up throughout the research was complacency. When Edio Delfino was asked, “What issues do you see with the AHGA in the future?” He said, “complacency.” Two sub themes arose when talking about complacency: next generation involvement and loss of member participation.

Next Generation Involvement

Many participants in the focus group and interviews mentioned the challenge of passing their farms onto the next generation and whether their next generation even wants to be involved in farming. Dave Bolster explained:

Next generation involvement is highly important for the success of the AHGA.

And, if the next generation does not want to be involved, then good farmers have to be drawn to the area to take over working farms.

Dave Bolster gave an example of a local farm that the next generation did not want to be involved in and it was sold to the wrong people. He explained that the farm is not a working farm anymore and has fallen into despair.

Greg Boeger also mentioned that the area needs to start recruiting farmers to come to the area to farm. He explained:

Currently, the original farmers of the AHGA are starting to step down and, if the AHGA does not start finding the right people to take over farms in the area, there will be a large problem with the future of the AHGA. The challenge is going to be keeping the association unified. It is important to keep active and interested growers involved and to not allow farms to go into disrepair. It is important to get a continual source of good farmers if the family is not going to continue to farm.

Throughout the research, the participants expressed their fears of next generation involvement and the future of the AHGA. They explained that the success of the AHGA requires all farms in the area to be working farms because their success is driven by tourism.

Member Participation

Another sub theme that the participants brought up in the research was the lack of member participation. They all described that initially all farmers were highly involved with the AHGA. However, now that the association is successful, the involvement has started to diminish. Edio Delfino explained:

During the start of the AHGA, all members attended meetings. Now, you barely get twenty members at meetings. Involvement is key to the success of the association and without it, we start to lose against forces trying to develop our farms.

The participants explained that the AHGA has become a very successful area and it is important to have consistent involvement or the area will not continue to succeed. Dave Bolster mentioned that without involvement of the members, the AHGA does not come across as a unified unit and it is important to stay unified in order to keep the area agriculture based.

Factors for Success

Throughout the research, a theme came up about the factors for agritourism success. The participants made it very clear that the AHGA would not be as successful as it is today if it did not have certain characteristics. All participants mentioned that not all agriculture areas can be as successful with tourism and certain factors are needed in order flourish. Three main characteristics arose in both the focus group and personal interviews: the agritourism area has to be close to urban area, it has to be a beautiful area, and it has to have complimentary recreational activities.

Close to Urban Area

Although it was clearly mentioned above that the AHGA has to constantly work and lobby with the surrounding urban areas, it is clear that the AHGA would not be nearly as success if it was not for those large nearby urban areas (i.e. Sacramento, Bay Area, Nevada). Greg Boeger mentioned, “for agritourism success you need a close metropolitan area nearby to feed off of, you need a resource.”

Beautiful Area

The next factor brought up was that the agritourism area needs to be beautiful. Edio Delfino explained:

You need a beautiful area. We had some luck doing this with the area we were given right between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe. We could not have this success in an area such as the Imperial Valley. Because of our location, visitors naturally wanted to come.

The participants explained that tourists will not visit an area that does not give them something they are not used to seeing; they want to see a beautiful area.

Complimentary Recreational Activities

The third factor brought up in both the focus group and interviews was the agritourism area has to have complimentary recreational activities. Edio Delfino explained:

Because we have Tahoe right in our back yard and complimentary outdoor activities, such as hiking, fishing, etc. Then, agritourism fits right in here, the activities go hand-in-hand.

Both Greg Boeger and Edio Delfino mention that the surrounding activities help the tourism flourish. Visitors come to do all the outdoor activities in the area including visiting the farms.

Role of Women

When interviewing some of the original women from the beginning of the AHGA, interesting facts came up about their motivations to start an agritourism business, as well as, their role during the time.

When both Joan Delfino and Birdie Larsen were asked, “What is your personal connection to AHGA?” both participants expressed they were “the wife of one of the original farmers”. When asked “Why they wanted their farm to be part of the AHGA?” they both clarified it was because “their husband wanted to;” however, Birdie Larsen mentioned she was interested in “adding the tourism side to the farm” and Joan Delfino mentioned “she like the idea of talking with people every day.”

Lastly, it is important to note that Joan Delfino did express “women were not given enough credit in the beginning.” She mentioned that the women are a large part why the association succeeded and she believed there were never given quite the credit they deserved.

Regulation

A main theme that is mentioned multiple times throughout the research is the nature of regulations during the beginning of the AHGA. The participants explain that during the start of the AHGA, there were less regulations involved with starting businesses and associations. Edio Delfino mentioned:

The idea of the Smorgasbord came about and got very popular, we started delivering fruit to all the local homes and schools, they would bake the pies and we would come pick them up and sell them to the tourists. Could you imagine that now? The Health Department would never have it.

The participants explained that during the implementation of the AHGA, they did not have to deal with as many regulations; therefore, they had more freedom to try out any idea they thought of without much push back. Dave Bolster explained another example of how the farmers cleared their land for the visitors as “blowing up trees with dynamite.”

The participants explained that to clear their land to free up space for tourists, they would blow up their trees with dynamite, something that would never be allowed or practiced today.

Finally, the Golden Apple Trail led to a lot of success for the AHGA (the participants explained it helped visitors make their way through the farms). Edio Delfino explained:

Originally, we painted large, golden apples on the roads with normal paint. We even painted the apples up onto the onramp of Highway 50. We quickly learned this was not a good idea. The paint did not dry fast enough and gold paint was everywhere on the road, even all over Highway 50. Caltrans was not very happy, but we only got a “slap on the hand”.

The participants in the focus group mentioned they did not have to “jump through as many hoops” as they do now and that, in a way, helped them implement the AHGA.

Education of AHGA Farmers

Another theme that was mentioned frequently throughout the research was the education of the original farmers. Each of the participants of the focus group are highly educated and they believed this contributed to the success of the AHGA. Edio Delfino explained:

One of the most surprising things during the implementation of the AHGA was the talent and education of the participants. A large reason why we are as successful as we are today is because of that education and talent. Each founder was college educated and that was rare for the times.

Dave Bolster went on further to explain the education of the original farmers of the AHGA:

Bob Tuck was a retired math professor from West Point and my father, Gene Bolster, was a rocket scientist from MIT. Then you got Ed (Edio Delfino) from Cal Poly and Dick Bethel from Davis. It was a very talented group to say the least.

Throughout the focus groups and personal interviews, the participants made it very clear that a large reason the AHGA has seen the success it has is because the education of the original farmers and the foresight they had to start this association.

Negative Impacts

Although this was not a strong theme throughout the research, it was interesting and worth mentioning in this study. When participants were asked whether they see any negative impacts to the AHGA, initially most participants said “no.” When asked to explain further, the subject of “traffic” came up. Dick Bush expressed that the traffic is “horrendous, but it is a fine alternative to have traffic ten days a year versus the area being overrun with developers.” Dave Bolster even went as far to say “this area, Camino, would all be tract homes if it was not for Apple Hill.”

Summary of Results

This chapter explained the results of a case study on the Apple Hill Grower’s Association (AHGA). Throughout the focus group and personal interviews conducted, eleven main themes and multiple sub themes were found. One of the most pivotal themes was survival. Survival was consistently brought up by all the participants and they made it clear that the disaster of pear decline forced the farmers to work together and think of

alternative strategies for their farms. Pear decline affected the entire area because the area consisted of one crop, pears. The participants explained that a large issue with the area was it was a monoculture and, therefore, the pear decline disease affected the entire region.

Another main theme throughout the research was involvement and how it was important to the success of the AHGA. Because the area was trying to survive, the entire community worked together to make the AHGA succeed. The participants explained that with the community, legislative, and media involvement, the AHGA had a jumpstart to success and was able to grow at a fast rate.

The next main theme throughout the research was feuds and how it affected the beginning of the AHGA. Family feuding was a consistent theme throughout the focus groups and interviews. Participants explained that the farmers of the area would never have worked together if it were not for pear decline and the need to survive.

Politics was another emerging theme throughout the research. The participants explained that in order for an association to be successful, farmers have to lobby for farming. The participants mentioned that they consistently lobbied for their rights and stood up for farming in the area. In addition, the farmers had to work with surrounding urban areas and make sure that the urban areas saw the importance of the farming culture.

The next main theme was complacency. The original farmers were worried about the next generation and their lack of involvement with the AHGA. The participants explained that the next generation needs to involve themselves with the association in order to keep the area successful. In addition, the farmers explained the importance of current member participation.

Another main theme throughout the research was the original farmers' factors for success for the AHGA. The participants expressed that an agritourism area needs certain characteristics in order to succeed. In both the focus groups and personal interviews, the participants clarified that an agritourism area needs to be close to an urban area in order to have a significant amount of visitors. They also mentioned the area has to be a beautiful area that visitors would want to visit. And, lastly, the area has to have complimentary recreational activities that will draw tourists to the area.

Another emerging theme during the focus groups and interviews was the role of the women during the implementation of the AHGA. Both female participants expressed that they engaged in the association because "their husbands wanted to". And, their connection to the AHGA was they are "the wife of an original farmer". Joan Delfino also mentioned that women did not get enough credit for the implementation of the AHGA.

A theme that also came up during the focus groups was the education of the original farmers. Most of the original farmers were highly educated for the times and the participants explained this was a pivotal reason the association succeeded. Many of the original farmers have college degrees from competitive universities.

Lastly, the final emerging theme during the focus groups and interviews is negative impacts of the AHGA. Originally the participants explained that they felt there were no negative impacts of the association. However, after the participants were asked further, they did mention the negative impact of traffic and how residents had to deal with increased traffic during the peak fall season.

The following chapter is a discussion of the focus group and personal interview research. Chapter five will explain everything that was found in this study as well as connecting this research to the past findings on agritourism.

DISCUSSION

This case study sought to develop a history of the Apple Hill Grower's Association (AHGA), an agritourism area in Camino, CA. In addition to cataloging the AHGA's history, the purpose was to determine the initial motivations of the original farmers to engage their farm in the AHGA and the female's perspectives of that history.

A focus group and personal interviews were conducted and 77 pages of content were transcribed and analyzed. Eleven main themes and multiple sub themes were found during the analysis. The following chapter will explain the findings directly related to the objectives of the study, new findings, and recommendations for future research.

Motivation of Survival

An overwhelming theme that comes up consistently throughout the research on agritourism is survival. In this study, financial survival is the sole motivation for why farmers initially engage their farms in agritourism. However, the survival motivation involved both formal and substantive motivations.

According to Nickerson, et al. (2001) and Tew and Barbieri (2012), farmers are motivated to bring tourism to their farm to save their family farms and increase their profits. In the study done by Nickerson, Black and McCool in Montana, participants are motivated to save their family farm and increase their profits. Their farms were struggling and they needed alternative strategies to save their farms.

Similarly in the Tew and Barbieri study in Missouri, participants wanted to bring tourism to their farm to increase revenues, pay off debts, and minimize financial risks.

Although the AHGA farmers are forced to think of alternatives for their farms, (with the disease Pear Decline plaguing their farms) the theme stays the same: saving the farms and increasing profit margins. Without doing either of these things, they would have to sell their farms. As Gene Larsen says in his interview, “we had to think of something fast or get out of farming all together.” The participants made it very clear that agritourism saved the livelihood of their farms and allowed the Camino, CA area to stay the agricultural area it is today.

However, the farmers were also driven to increase their farm identity and integrity. In the study done by Getz and Carlsen (2001), the farmers hoped their lifestyle would be strengthened and preserved through agritourism. This driving factor of preserving the farming lifestyle consistently comes up throughout the research and definitely is prevalent in this study. Dick Bush mentions in the focus group that a large reason he joined the AHGA was because he is motivated to keep farming alive in California. He explains that he is troubled by the influence of developers and did not want the beautiful land of the Sierra Foothills to be broken up into small housing developments. Gene Larsen mentions in his interview that without the AHGA, the area would have a lot more development. He explains that two-thirds more of the area would have been developed into housing if it were not for the AHGA. Gene Larsen believes that the AHGA kept the area more agriculture based.

The original farmers of the AHGA were focused on saving their family farm for economic reasons; however, they also were driven to save their lifestyle. The participants of this study made it very clear that without bringing tourism to their farms, they would not have the agricultural lifestyle they currently have and the entire Camino area would

be more developed. The main difference between this case study and past research on agritourism is past studies did not have a factor forcing the farmers to engage in agritourism. Most of the research participants were mainly dealing with financially unsuccessful farms and that is why they engaged in agritourism. With the AHGA farmers were forced to think of alternative strategies because of pear decline.

Unity of Farmers

Throughout the research the theme of whether farmers should work together or privately comes up consistently. In the study done by Sharpley & Vass (2006), participants debate whether farms should market as a whole agritourism area or as individual businesses. Many successful agritourism areas find success in marketing as an entire destination, however, farming communities find it difficult to find the balance between working together or focusing primarily on their own business.

Veeek, et al. (2006) conducted focus groups with farmers in Michigan. The participants express the importance of sharing information and working together as highly pivotal in an agritourism area's success. The participants feel cooperation between farm operators is important for agritourism and is needed in order to become a tourism destination.

The participants in this study are successful by working together and marketing as a destination. However, without the disaster of pear decline, the participants state they would have never worked together. Edio Delfino explains, "If we didn't have the tragedy of pear decline, you never would have gotten the farmers together. They would have never worked with their competitors if it were not for the disaster." Dave Bolster went as far as to say "I know my father would not have gotten involved with certain families if he

were not worried about supporting his family. He had to get involved and band with all farmers in the area or he would have had to sell the farm.”

Although the participants mention they were forced to work together, they did make it clear that without each farm working together, they would not have been as successful as they are today and they might not have been able to save the agricultural area. Agritourism areas do benefit from marketing together as a destination rather than individual farms.

Involvement

Another theme consistent throughout the research is the importance of involvement. Both in previous research and this case study, participants express that community involvement is needed for agritourism success. The community and their behaviors and attitudes affect the way that tourists are treated and their impressions about the community (Wilson et al., 2001). Without the support of the community, the agritourism area cannot fully succeed.

Community involvement is one of the reasons the farming community of Camino, CA was saved. When pear decline set in, the entire community banded together to find a solution to this problem. Local schools and businesses all banded together to support the association. Community support is a large reason the AHGA is a success.

Legislative involvement is another theme that consistently came up throughout the research. Focus group participants in Illinois stressed the importance of farm and local leadership relations (Wilson, et al., 2001). Where local leadership and farmers cooperate and work together, problems are solved faster and growth occurs more rapidly. The participants express that when local governments, community groups, businesses,

and non-profit organizations (such as chamber of commerce and visitors bureaus) are all on the same page, they will support and promote the agritourism area in a more effective way.

The participants in this study also note the importance of legislative involvement. Edio Delfino, Dave Bolster, and Greg Boeger mention throughout the focus group the importance of the legislative support. More specifically, they mention how the Board of Supervisors and Caltrans were both very supportive and worked in unison with the AHGA to succeed.

It is also important to note that media involvement has been expressed as pivotal to the AHGA success. The participants in this study express its importance. Edio Delfino explains “local newspapers and television stations would run spots on the AHGA all the time to support the area.” The participants mention that the AHGA worked directly with the news and media to promote the area and it is highly important to the association’s success.

Factors for Success

In the study by Wilson, et al. (2001), the main factors for success that participants mention is creating a complete community tourism package. Participants express that “to succeed a community has to be a destination rather than a place to stop off” (Wilson, et al., 2001, p. 134). In this case study on the AHGA, participants also express the importance of this. Edio Delfino explains, “an agritourism area needs to be close to an urban area, a beautiful area, and have complimentary recreational activities.” The participants express that they are fortunate because Camino, CA has all of these

characteristics needed to be a tourist destination and it has led to immense success the AHGA has seen in the last 50 years.

Role of Women

During the interviews with Birdie Larsen and Joan Delfino, they both express why they wanted their farms to join the AHGA. Both women mention it was “because of their husbands” and because they wanted to “talk with people every day.” In a study done by O’Connor (1995), participants express that the idea of agritourism enterprises was the female head of household’s idea. In the O’Connor study, women were particularly interested in adding tourism to their farm for the substantive motivation of increased independence brought by the additional revenues. In this study on the AHGA, the women are more driven because of the connection to their husband, but also because there were interested in the social aspect of adding tourism to their farm.

In addition, Joan Delfino made a point to note that the women did not get enough credit during the beginning of the AHGA. She made it clear that the women played pivotal roles in the success of association and she did not feel they ever received the proper credit.

Regulation

A subject that kept coming up throughout the study is regulation. The participants express that a lot of their success is because they did not have to deal with many regulations. Therefore, they had more freedom to try out any idea they thought of without much resistance. For example, Edio Delfino explains that the idea of the Smorgasbord would never have happened today because “the Health Department would never have it.”

However, that was the pivotal idea that set off the success of the AHGA. With fewer regulations, they were able to try out more ideas.

Previous research explains that regulations are a large hurdle that farmers have to deal with and “by adding tourism to their farms, the liability for each agritourism business rises” (Keith et al., 2003). Adding tourism to a farm increases regulatory issues; Government agencies require clearances, permits, and licenses. Often times, this hinders farmers to engage in agritourism out of mere rules and regulations that they do not want to deal with.

The AHGA did not have to deal with a lot of these regulations during the beginning of their association. The participants express this as an advantage to the success of their businesses and the ability to add tourism to their farms.

Negative Impacts

The research on agritourism does make note of some drawbacks associated with bringing tourism to farming communities. In the Sharpley and Vass (2006) study, participants explain them as less privacy, added stress, and significant financial investment. Residents often complain about the added noise and traffic, trespassers, and events associated with agritourism, as well as agritourism activities altering the character of their community and commercializing their home (Keith, et al., 2003).

When the participants of the AHGA were asked about negative impacts, the only drawback they voiced was traffic during peak tourism season. The participants express it was “horrendous”. However, they do express that this drawback is completely outweighed by the benefits of the AHGA and how it has financially saved their farms.

New Findings

Through this case study on the AHGA, some recurring themes do come up during the focus group and personal interviews that are important to note and are not currently found in the research on agritourism. One in particular is feuding, or more specifically, family feuding. Each participant throughout the focus group and many of the personal interviews mentions the subject of feuding with other farmers in the area. Dick Bush went as far as to say he withheld from joining the AHGA because of a particular family and the politics involved in the association. And, Edio Delfino explains, “these families would have never worked together if it were not for pear decline.” He expresses that the disaster of pear decline forced them to work together; if it were not for that, the farmers would have never created the association.

The subject of personal beliefs also comes up in the discussion. A family highly involved in the beginning of the AHGA had religious views that conflicted with alcohol consumption. When the association is interested in adding wineries to the membership, this family disagreed. This caused conflict and a subject that required a lot of discussion. In the end, the family looked past their personal beliefs, for the benefit of the association.

Another interesting theme that came up consistently during the focus groups and interviews was complacency. The subject of complacency seems to be the largest fear among the original farmers, both of next generation and current member complacency. Dave Bolster explains, “next generation involvement is highly important for the success of the AHGA.” If the next generation does not take over their family farms, there is the chance of the farm going into despair. Greg Boeger also mentions that if the next generation does not want to take over the farm, then the area needs to recruit the right

farmers to come to the area. All of the participants explain that quality farmers are crucial to the success of the AHGA and, as the original farmers retire from farming, this is an important subject for the association currently.

Conclusions and Limitations

Throughout this entire study, a main theme of survival consistently arises, more particularly survival in reference to pear decline. The objective of this study is to explore the motivations of the original farmers of the AHGA to engage their farms in agritourism. The main motivation is to save their farm from the pear decline disease. The original farmers wanted to keep their land and maintain their lifestyle, as well as, continue to make a living off of their farm. The idea of the AHGA made it possible to save their farm and in such a time of despair, they all came together to bring tourism to their area.

Another objective is to find a complete history of the AHGA. Throughout this focus groups and personal interviews, the emerging themes begin to explain the history of the AHGA. These include the themes of the unity of farmers, involvement, female gender role, factors for success, less regulations, negative impacts, feuding, and complacency. Through these themes, a history has been recorded and understood.

Lastly, the research sought to find the female perspective during the beginning of the AHGA. Both participants express that they wanted to be part of the AHGA because their husbands did and they wanted to bring tourism to their farm because they looked forward to talking with the visitors. However, one of the participants did make it clear that they felt women were not given the credit they deserved for the success of the association.

During this study, the main limitations involve a small subject group and the age of the subjects. Because the AHGA started in the 1960's, there are not many original farmers still alive and it is important to get the original farmer's views. Three of the original founding fathers of the AHGA have passed in previous years. Also, there is the issue of subjects passing during the research. As previously mentioned, Joan Delfino passed away shortly after her personal interview. She also was very sick during the interview and it could have affected her opinions.

Despite these limitations, the subject group did contain all of the surviving original farmers and the study was still able to find a completely history of the AHGA as well as the original farmers motivations for engaging their farm in agritourism.

Recommendations and Implications for Further Research

This purpose of this study is to find the objectives of why farmers engage their farms in agritourism and this particular group has been highly influenced by the pear decline disease. Because of this huge crisis, farmers were forced to work together and start the AHGA. A study done on a group of farmers not affected by a crop disease would be interesting and give a different perspective to agritourism research. In addition, a larger subject group would give more insight to all of the farmers' views and dive deeper into the original motivations.

Also, additional research on the female's perspective in relation to agritourism could be very insightful. This study is limited by only having two female participants and could not get a complete role of women during the start of the AHGA. A study done that focuses specifically on the role of women in agritourism would be very interesting and give an alternative perspective to the current research.

Lastly, more qualitative research in general on successful agritourism areas is needed. Because of the constant change in California agriculture, it is important to bring more light to the option of agritourism and the possibility of it saving farms. With more research on the option of tourism, the farming community will become more comfortable with the subject and more inclined to think of it as an option for their farms.

The main implication that can be found through this study is the subject of monoculture and crop diversity. Clearly, pear decline destroyed the pear industry in El Dorado County and all participants expressed that crop diversity would have saved the industry without the implementation of the AHGA. In the focus groups and interviews, participants state that they would not want the AHGA to solely be apples. The crop diversity in the area (apples, Christmas trees, blueberries, cherries, olives, grapes, etc.) gives the original farmers ease and strengthens the agriculture area as a whole. The history of the AHGA and the importance of crop diversity can be learned by the entire agricultural industry.

In addition, another implication is the female's perspective on agritourism and their role of women in the agriculture industry as a whole. Through this research, it leads one to think about how the agriculture industry is primarily run and influenced by men. Both women in this study mention how their husbands influenced them to bring tourism to their farm, but also how they felt they did not get enough credit for the success of the association. They felt they need to make it clear that the women had a role in the success of agriculture in their community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

AHGA Case Study Focus Group Questions

1. What was the state of agriculture in Camino in the late 50's, early 60's (prior to the starting of the AHGA)?
2. How did the idea of the association originate?
3. What would you say were the main driving forces for farmers to engage in the AHGA?
4. What would you say were the main problems/issues with the implementation of the AHGA?
5. How many farms were part of the original AHGA?
6. How many farms are part of the AHGA now?
7. When did wineries come in to the AHGA?
8. How did the wineries affect the AHGA?
9. How do you think the association benefited the farming community of Camino, CA?
10. How do you think the AHGA negatively affected the farming community of Camino, CA?
11. What problems do you see in the association now?
12. Do you foresee any issues with the association in the future?
13. Is the AHGA now how you imagined it in the 60's?
14. Where do you see the AHGA 20 years from now?
15. Do you think agritourism could work in any farming community?
16. What are the main characteristics needed from a community for agritourism to succeed?

Appendix B

A Case Study on the AHGA Male Interview Questions

1. What is your personal connection to the AHGA?
2. What would you say was the main reason your family engaged your farm in agritourism?
3. What would you say was one of the main hurdles to engaging your farm in agritourism?
4. How do you think the AHGA helped the agricultural community of Camino, CA?

Appendix C

A Case Study on the AHGA Female Interview Questions

1. What is your personal connection to the AHGA?
2. In your own words, please give me a brief history of the AHGA and how it started.
3. What was your role at your ranch?
4. What would you say was the main role of women in the AHGA in general?
5. Were you for your farm becoming part of the AHGA?

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN a Case Study on the Apple Hill Grower's Association: An Agritourism Area in Camino, CA

A case study on the history of agritourism in the Apple Hill Grower's Association (AHGA) is being conducted by Christine Delfino, a graduate student in the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Christine Delfino is working with her faculty advisor, Dr. Jerusha Greenwood. Her graduate committee includes, Dr. Marianne Wolf and Dr. William Hendricks. The purpose of this study is to develop a more complete understanding of the AHGA with a focus on why farmers decided to engage their farm in agritourism.

You are being asked to take part in this study by participating in a focus group and/or a personal interview. The focus group involves five of the original farmers (or their decedents) in the AHGA. Your participation will take approximately one to two hours and will consist of an in depth conversation with your peers about the subject of the AHGA. You are not required in any way to participate in this research and can discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You also do not have to answer any questions you choose not to answer.

There are no risks anticipated with participation in this research.

The focus group sessions will be audio recorded. This research is non-confidential; and your name will be cited along with the focus group or interview comments you made in reports of this research. The recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet until the completion of the thesis and then destroyed. Although we will not single out any one person's opinions or perceptions, your conversations are going to be listened to by the researchers of this study. If this is a problem, you may opt out at any time without penalty.

Potential benefits associated with this study include developing an oral history of the AHGA, a subject not thoroughly studied. Through a case study on the AHGA, a successful agritourism area, one can truly understand the activity and how it affects farming communities.

Contact Christine Delfino at (530) 409-7215, or Dr. Jerusha Greenwood (805) 756-2050 if you have any questions during this study or for information on the results of this study. If you have concerns about how this study is being conducted, you may contact Dr. Steve Davis, Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at (805) 756-2752, sdavis@calpoly.edu, or Dr. Dean Wendt, Interim Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, at (805) 756-1508, dwendt@calpoly.edu

If you agree to participate in this study as explained above, please indicate your agreement by signing below. Please keep one of the copies for your records and return the other copy to Christine Delfino before the start of the focus group or interview session. Thank you for your time and your participation in this study.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix E

Outline of Emerging Themes

- Survival
 - Pear Decline
 - Loss of Income
 - Unity of Farmers
 - Monoculture
 - Diversity
- Involvement
 - Community Involvement
 - Oak Glen
 - Smorgasbord
 - Golden Apple Trail
 - Apple Hill Calvary
 - Legislative Involvement
 - Media Involvement
- Feuds
 - Family Feuding
 - Personal Beliefs and Views
 - Feuding with Developers
- Politics
 - Lobbying for Farming
 - Working with Urban Areas
- Complacency
 - Next Generation Involvement
 - Member Participation
- Factors for Success
 - Close to Urban Area
 - Beautiful Area
 - Complimentary Recreational Activities
- Role of Women
- Education of Farmers
- Negative Impacts

APPENDIX F

Focus Group Content

Christine: The first part pertains to the Apple Hill Grower's Association and then we go into the wineries and agriculture as a whole. So, what was the state of agriculture in Camino in late 50s early 60s?

Edio: It was an absolute disaster. Our economy was dependent on pears. The money made by the grower went from very successful to zero. We had a major cash flow problem. Not only were the farmers affected, but the pickers, pruners, harvesters, etc. All facets of farming were affected and desperate for some sort of cash flow.

Christine: And a disaster because of ...

Edio: What is was is that this was a mono crop here ... The only crop we had actually was pears...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: And a large part of the county economy was on those pears...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: And it went from being very thrifty to zero... In fact, the money made by the grower went to zero...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: But all his expenses stayed still stayed there.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: So we had a hell of a cash flow problem.

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: And we were scrambling. That's why we came up with a lot of ideas ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: We got the whole community involved with us.

Christine: Yeah, cause they were in shock.

Edio: And because the disaster ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: We had the support of the legislature ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: And the newspapers and the Board of Supervisors...

Edio: We had just a little bit of everything and as I was telling you we did stuff then that did if we did it now ...

Edio: They'd have us in jail.

Christine: Yeah (Laughs).

Edio: One thing was the (Laughs) golden apple trail.

Edio: We said we needed to paint the Apple Hill route. Carson Road, North Canyon and we didn't get approval from anybody. (Laughs).

Edio: We went and bought regular paint and it was not fast drying road paint. We then painted these great big imprints of the Apple through all of the Apple Hill roads. (Laughs).

Edio: And by the time the paint dried the road was yellow... (Laughs).

Edio: Now, could you visualize some group of farmers going out and doing that now? They'd be in jail?

Christine: Yeah (Laughs).

Edio: Oh yeah.

Edio: The whole thing just dried up.

Christine: So pickers, pruners...

Edio: All yeah...

Christine: And that was because, I know this story, but for the research purposes, that was because pear decline came in right and ...

Edio: Yeah the pear decline. What happened was ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: I saw trees that were thrifty trees in the morning and they were dead that evening and I saw whole orchards that were like that in 60' and the pear decline hit in 59'...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: There were thrifty orchards in the spring that were not harvested that that fall.

Christine: That's crazy and it just happened not to effect grapes and apples?

Greg: Well what it is, was a parasilla ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Greg: An insect ...

Christine: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

Greg: That carried this virus that ...

Greg: infected the trees and then that virus affected the vascular system so to speak...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Of the tree so it couldn't uptake nutrients and water

Christine: Okay.

Greg: And it caused what they call pear decline...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: So that was it and in the county, I think Ed would reaffirm this, there were roughly 5,000 acres of producing Bartlett pears ...

Edio: Yeah.

Greg: In the county including the Camino region...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Greg: And the and in 1959, this disease struck and it just just devastated the industry within 2 years.

Edio: In 1959, they had ah 62,000 tons of pears ...

Edio: Produced in the county...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: 2 years later they had 10,000.

Christine: Oh my gosh

Edio: It was such a disaster...

Edio: That we were searching for other ideas to make it.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Of course we came up with all kinds of ideas....anything was an option.

Edio: I told you about our Apple Calvary

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Well that was just one attempt.

Edio: The other was the, the smorgasbord.

Christine: Yes, the smorgasbord. I've heard you tell this story before and I'm sure that Dave has his side to how the idea of Apple Hill originate? I remember you told me back in the day like you guys were all sitting ...

Dave: From drinking.

Christine: Yeah (Laughs).

Edio: We were meeting after work ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And, there was 4 of us that met. Dave's father (Gene Bolster) and Dick Bethell, Bob Tuck and myself...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And would we just brainstorm ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: We were constantly doing that and that's how we finally came up with the idea. There was an old guy who had taken care of Bob Tuck's house ... We were searching for any ideas to make it. We thought of everything and anything to somehow fix our problem and I will tell you, there were some crazy ideas. The great thing was that we had an open forum and we were really open to anything at the time. One of the first ideas was Oak Glen, which really led to Apple Hill.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: He said, "You know in Southern California there's a place called Oak Glen where they have ranch marketing ..."

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And of course we immediately jumped on that and it wasn't very long after that that Dave's father and I went down there...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And saw it.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And we still have the footage?

Dave: I found them I found the home movies ...

Christine: Really?

Edio: Is the film still good?

Dave: Yep.

Edio: Good.

Dave: Yeah you guys were a lot younger back then. (Laughs).

Christine: I gotta see that, that's for sure.

Edio: But anyway, by then we were so frustrated ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: That we thought this is the way to go and we did.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: But again with farmers ...

Edio: If we didn't have the tragedy of pear decline you never would of gotten them together. You think you'd get Family A and Family B together under ... (Laughs).

Edio: One roof. (Laughs).

Edio: They would have never done it if it wasn't for the disaster.

Christine: Uh-huh (Negative).

Edio: So we had a lot, a lot of luck too.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: I think it was a combination of the pear disaster and apples being the only outlet.

Dave: My dad in the early late 50s or early 60s he sent a crop to PFGA...

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: For them to process and market and, and the result was he would get a bill for \$500 for processing the crop.

Dave: That's not a big leader... (Laughs).

Edio: Well that's the tragedy of having a mono crop...

Christine: Mm.

Edio: For for an area.

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: I would hate to see the county become really dependent on grapes...

Christine: Yeah you want diversity.

Edio: I think that you need to have the flexibility.

Edio: But the most surprising thing was the talent they have with the growers...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: It was fantastic.

Christine: Yeah we were talking about that yesterday. What are the odds you guys had such educational people in your group? They all happened to move up here you, Mr. Bethell, your father

Dave: Bob Tuck was a retired math professor from West Point and my father, Gene Bolster, was a rocket scientist from MIT. Then you got Ed (Edio Delfino) from Cal Poly and Dick Bethel from Davis. It was a very talented group to say the least.

Christine: Wow (Laughs).

Edio: Now Dave's family planted all blueberries mostly blueberries.

Dave: Well no, back then. You mean back in the day?

Edio: Oh, no it was apples.

Dave: Oh, it was all apples yeah no, we didn't plant blueberries until 88'.

Christine: Okay and then Mr. Bolster your father was one of the founding fathers in ...

Dave: My father was Mr. Bolster.

Christine: Oh yeah yeah yeah Dave, Dave, Dave ah my father taught me to say Mr. Bolster. (Laughs).

Dave: He taught you well.

Dave: My father was a rocket scientist.

Dave: No, he was Com Tech Engineering Degree and a Masters in Engineering

Dave: He was a rocket guy.

Dave: We had all apples.

Christine: Okay he came up during the apples.

Dave: My grandparents, grandfather bought the property in 51'...

Christine: Okay.

Dave: And ah, they started planting back then. They bought it from Mr. A. Edio's favorite developer, Mr. A, right in the middle of Apple Hill.

Edio: Harness track.

Dave: Ed likes to tell the stories of planting back in the day with ah dynamite sticks.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: And ah, Mr. A came up Mr. A he was this was probably 10 years ago he was like 93...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Dave: And he came up and ah introduced himself said, "I planted all these apple trees with your grandfather in 1951, 52..."

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: Back in the day, we just put a stick of dynamite in the ground and boom there's your planting hole...

Greg Boeger: This is what you used to have to take after meeting with Mr. B (Laughs).

Dave: Nah, it was something stronger than that. (Laughs).

Edio: Shot of whiskey. (Laughs).

Christine: Okay.

Edio: But the thing was, we created so many ideas for Apple Hill...we would always brainstorm

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: As I was talking about all kinds of ideas ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: God we had so many crazy ideas. Like you know with the smorgasbord...

Christine: Smorgasbord.

Edio: I thought that was crazy you know. (Laughs).

Greg: Mrs. A.

Edio: Yeah that was Mrs. A.

Christine: Yeah Nanny talks about that in the interview my mom did that Mrs. A came up with that and was how the bakeries originated right? Cause you would start doing that and then it went from ...

Dave: Yeah, one of the first ideas that arose was the smorgasbord. Mrs. A did think of the idea. Many of the Apple Hill ladies baked and they invited people from all over to come visit the Camino area for one day.

Dave: They thought they would see maybe 1,000 people and they saw 4 to 5 thousand. The next year all the local schools and homes got involved and banded together to bake for the visitors. That second year they did it over two days, then the next year over two weekends and eventually it grew to multiple weekends and the entire fall season.

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: So all of Apple Hill ladies baked...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: For one day ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And we had thought we was get maybe 1,000 people and I think we got 4 or 5,000 and so the next year

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: They really baked (Laughs) ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And my wife blew up 2 stoves. 2 electric stoves.... blew them up...(Laughs).

Edio: They were not designed to bake 12 hours a day.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And what would happen they would swell up and then sure enough...(Laughs).

Edio: When it happened to the second one, we put in a gas stove...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Then what they did after the second year

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: They went to all the ladies shops.

Christine: Oooh.

Dave: And Camino school.

Edio: And Camino school.

Dave: Could you imagine that today?

Christine: No (Laughs).

Edio: And we delivered the fruit and the produce and the ladies baked at home...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And we took it all back ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And sold it to the tourists. It was a heck of bargain that you can't beat now.

Christine: And you can't do any of it now.

Dave: They said that out of 780,000 tourists that visit Apple Hill, the average person spends \$25 bucks.

Christine: What would say were the main problems issues with the implementation of Apple Hill did you have do you remember anything and going like "Oh this is just not going to work".

Edio: Oh God we had (Laughs).

Dave: We sucked. (Laughs).

Dick: Handle the traffic.

Edio: The thing that we had was our Board was completely, supportive of us ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And we used my office and Dick's office...(ag commission of el dorado county)

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: As a contact for the public...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Greg: Board you mean Board of Supervisors.

Edio: Board of Supervisors.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And we worked directly with the news media and anyone that wanted information....

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Our offices had a lot of that ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Which is contrary to,

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: This kind of government...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: They were always thinking, what they heck are they doing down there?

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: A problem that was the big deal was money...

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: Money is everything.

Edio: Yeah.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: I know we had a big dogfight about the signs...

Edio: Yeah (Laughs).

Christine: Yeah, and what did anyone push back like I, I don't really know if I've ever heard , but, like I know the Family B were here way before Apple Hill...

Edio: They came onboard.

Christine: They came on board okay so everyone pretty much ...

Edio: Family A came onboard.

Christine: Yeah

Edio: because they were all starving!

Christine: Yeah okay

Christine: Yeah, yeah so.

Edio: If you want to get their attention, you naturally had it!

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: It was just a matter of self-interest...

Edio: We never in this world, would have gotten them together (Family B and Family A) without pear decline.

Christine: Yeah that was the main key and how many farms were part of the original Apple Hill Growers Association?

Edio: 16.

Christine: And then now it's 55...

Edio: Well, it gained momentum fast, especially after everyone saw us having success.

Dave: Do you have a trash bag?

Christine: Yes.

Dave: Okay.

Christine: Do you need a trash...

Dave: No the Apple Hill trash bag

Christine: Oooh oh oh..

Dave: There's one somewhere.

Christine: Yeah...

Edio: Yeah I got one.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: Cause, I don't know if it represented all the growers, but each location had a dot.

Christine: Oh really.

Dave: A little square.

Christine: Oh, you got one.

Christine: Okay so I'll look at that and then now what's the count I don't even is it 55?

Dave: It goes up and down ...

Christine: Oh.

Dave: It's around a little over 50.

Christine: Okay.

Christine: So then, when did the wineries come in were you the first winery?

Greg: Well Dick and I we'll kind of

Dick: I think I'm sure you were we were slow to come in partly because of the ...

Greg: Yeah.

Dick: Politics and the domination of ... (Laughs).

Dick: Of Mr. B

Christine: Oh.

Dick: Mr. B turned me off enough that I didn't become part of Apple Hill for awhile.

Christine: Oh really.

Greg: We were the first ...

Dick: Yeah.

Dick: You got involved and we held back.

Greg: Yeah.

Christine: And when did grapes come into ...

Greg: Well let me give you a little background...

Christine: Yeah a little background.

Greg: And Dick can feed in ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Historically the wine industry was prevalent in El Dorado County ...

Christine: Okay.

Greg: Prior to the turn of the century of the 1900...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Ah, there were 2300 acres of grapes because of the mining population and there were 60 wineries in the county...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Greg: During prohibition subsequently the declining populations and prohibition pretty much put the wine industry out of business by the 1930s or probably only 30 or 40 acres of vineyard left...

Christine: Wow.

Greg: Pears then came in ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Greg: And they became the predominant force until 1959 when pear decline struck. Ah, so when that happened, your grandfather came in and Dick Bethell and they started deciding okay this what the agriculture industry needs up here. Not only Apple Hill was

one element out of it, but the other thing is to protect all the 5,000 acres of the good prime farmland that was in the county...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: And how do you best do that. well do you find another crop if pears are having difficulty, find something else. So, they got in conjunction with the Davis University California and setup 6 test blocks throughout the county and your grandpa's ...

Greg: Place being one of them and throughout the county and then they took tests off of that to the university. made test wine and said, "It's it looks really great" they put an article in the Sacramento Bee in 1967, which when I was going to Davis I happened to pick that up and read it. And it put a seed in my mind. It said it hosts great potential in the in El Dorado County for growing grapes. So when I graduated in 68' and got a job with the Department of Ag in Sacramento doing grape crush report. it always was in the back of my mind was this idea of starting my own vineyard I had the family winery in Napa County and ...

Christine: Yes.

Greg: The Community Winery, but my cousins operated that they wanted me to come in with them, but not in the winery only in the vineyard as an investment and I said ah want to do my own...(Laughs).

Greg: So I said well what do I want to do I love the Sierra's I love the hiking the ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Mountains and everything and ah I've always been inclined my Aunt has a ranch down in Rescue ...

Christine: Oh, okay.

Greg: I always came up to a cattle ranch so I was inclined to come up here. so I came up in 71' and met with Dick and Ed.

Christine: Uh-huh (Affirmative) (Laughs).

Greg: And that they just, they just kind of took me by the arm and said okay this is what we need to do. introduced me took me all over the county ...

Christine: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

Greg: Looking for various places to buy. I mean once I came up here they didn't let go of me.

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: And then I had the Ag Council and the Chamber of Commerce at the same time supporting this sort of thing and sending...

Christine: Okay.

Greg: Me letters and so finally, the long short of it is I did find this ranch ...

Christine: Yes.

Greg: The Fossati Ranch, which historically was a vineyard and winery...

Christine: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

Greg: Bought that in 1972...

Christine: Okay

Greg: And Dick Bethell said well yeah if it's growing apples and pears it's got to be good for grapes. So that's how I got started. now there was one little winery already started Gold Hill Winery down in Gold Hill...

Christine: Okay.

Greg: Owned by Mr. C he was a German schoolteacher and...

Christine: Oh, okay.

Greg: And he was just getting up and going his vineyard was in fact he had one of those little experimental blocks there from Davis...

Christine: Oh.

Greg: And he had 5 acres of his own vineyard I came up went out to meet him and after maybe about a couple hours discussion he says Greg do you want to take over this place I'm getting divorced from my wife and, and ...(Laughs).

Greg: They would just have all kinds of troubles and he said I'm fed up with it you want to take it over I said, "Sure". He said, "All I need is can I have a room in the back of the winery?" I said, "Fine". So, he was very instrumental in turning me over his vineyard so I immediately the year I came in 72' I had a vineyard I had wine I had a production I had wine tanks made...

Greg: And delivered there so I had a jump start as like Dick will tell you he had to plant the vineyard then....

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Build his winery and ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: It took a step up now at the same time 72' that I came here and I'll turn it over to Dick...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: He was looking at land at the same

Christine: Really...

Greg: Time...

Christine: Oh.

Dick: Yeah.

Greg: Coincidentally and as when we had bought our place he and his wife came over sat on the front porch of Fossati old home and drank mint juleps and said, "Well what, what are we gonna do?"(Laughs).

Greg: I think he was asking you know what you know that explain what he was looking for and so from then on, we kinda just went ...

Christine: Started.

Greg: Went together and ...

Christine: Okay.

Greg: Well Dick why don't you tell your story.

Dick: Well it was again it was the influence of your grandfather and Dick Bethell...

Christine: Mm-hmm.

Dick: Talking to them, part of my motivation was that I was um troubled by the influence of the developers and breaking up the small...

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: Farms into ranchettes and things of that sort and I saw this as a viable alternative.

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: It was popular in the press I think Time Magazine had articles and so forth ...

Christine: Wow.

Dick: So the idea of owning a vineyard seemed kind of romantic you know...

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: That, but I looked at the data and it looked like either grapes or Christmas trees ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Dick: Could work up here financially ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Dick: And um grapes caught my fancy and Christmas trees did not, but it was at that same time it was in 72' that ...

Christine: Wow.

Dick: Talking with both of them...

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: That I became interested and um made plans for it we just we bought our property in late 72' planted and

Christine: Oh so it's almost side-by-side.

Dick: And 73' and ... yeah the vineyards are very close.

Greg: The vineyards were...

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: We didn't plan on a winery initially.

Christine: Okay.

Dick: We were just going to grow grapes as a part-time...

Christine: Okay.

Dick: And it could have been part-time.

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: But um the problem was the market.

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: So we decided to create a market for our grapes by putting in a winery.

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: And um.

Edio: Yeah and also a very critical thing that Dick Bethell did is that when we had the test plots plans he talked Mr. D was it that ...

Greg: Mr. D

Edio: Um after, we had the test plots going ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: To take those grapes and make wine at the Department of Enology ...

Christine: Okay.

Edio: And then run a blind wine tasting with ...

Christine: Okay.

Edio: With that wine, ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And we came out with a very good cup that's where we got these guys attention.

Christine: Yes.

Dick: That influenced my thinking frankly ...

Dick: They had proved the concept ...

Dick: You might say.

Edio: To get that tasting with El Dorado County ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Against the entire state ...

Christine: Like Napa ...

Edio: I mean it was a great move.

Christine: Yeah, and also yeah the influence both of you. And I know...

Dave: So much for the Apple Hill politics, I remember my dad telling me the story of Mr. B trying on getting you...

Dave: removed as a member.

Christine: Oh really.

Dave: And even the newer wineries. I was president I forget who had applied Mr. B there, "God damit this isn't grape hill its Apple Hill".

Christine: And then the Larson's had a problem with him too.

Greg: There were 2 issues going on ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: This was about 19 early as 70' maybe 75' or 76' when a couple of things had to happen for us to get ah incorporated they had to change the Apple Hill boundaries...

Christine: Oh yeah I remember ...

Greg: Move it closer to Placer to incorporate my ranch.

Edio: You know the thing is Dick and I said, "We just have to draw another map" so... (Laughs).

Edio: We drew another map.

Greg: But the other thing is we had overcome 2 other obstacles and those were the old time farmers the Family B maybe probably because I don't want to get into religion and politics ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: But because they were Seventh Day Adventist, they had some concern about ...

Christine: Oh yeah.

Greg: Philosophically or religiously about letting us in and the Family A on the other hand just as Ed said they wanted to be the top (Laughs) the top dog with pears and apples ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: And all that and did not want the competition probably from grapes.

Christine: Yeah

Greg: However um reality set in in fact I think the Family B you know realized well you know this possible could ...

Christine: Help us.

Greg: Help out...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: The idea was to get more diversity ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Within to have a more of a year round season...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Wineries could be open year round and bring customers up that way the the rest of the fruit crops could expand as well there would always be something up there for customers. So throughout the Apple Hill's um progress they have tried to diversify to add more crops. Dave with blueberries and all these...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Things to get to get a year round interest so and now apple blossom activities that kind of stuff...

Christine: Okay yeah.

Greg: To bring ah year round ah business to the.

Edio: You know how the Family B and the Family A have really evolved. The Family A are still a thorn in our side ...

Christine: I know hasn't changed...

Edio: And the Family B have really evolved to get it....

Christine: Yeah they get it yeah.

Greg: Yeah right.

Edio: Also, another thing to is, that we realize that our Farm Bureau during this time (60's) was ineffective.

Christine: Oh yeah.

Edio: So we were able to go through the Chamber of Commerce. We had a Manager with the name of Mr. E and we developed the Head Council.

Christine: Oh, okay.

Edio: As a spokesman for the growers.

Christine: Okay.

Edio: And that is how it functioned for many years. Now of course the Farm Bureau is a pretty active member.

Christine: Yeah back then.

Edio: But at that time, they were not.

Christine: And then what would you say was the benefit I mean it's pretty self-explanatory, but for your wineries to be part of Apple Hill did you ever think not to be part and just separate.

Greg: Well the immediate thing when we bought the ranch ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: We did not even realize the, the, that Apple Hill was practical there it was kind of a side and not even realizing it...

Christine: Yes.

Greg: Until suddenly you open the taste room and there are 1,000 of cars...

Christine: Yeah. (Laughs).

Greg: So it slowly became ...

Greg: Obviously what a benefit...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: That draw to bring the public up to our region and our wineries to expose them to this new product we added to wines growing up here. So it was absolutely critical, but I think it was not a thing that it was driving us to do it just was there and it's suddenly it became obvious that we need to participate and, and help it grow and it was a ...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Mutually beneficial union I'd say.

Christine: Yeah yes, you felt it helped your winery.

Greg: Oh absolutely I mean it was beneficial in all ways not just to help our winery to help, help the whole, wine industry and all.

Christine: Yeah.

Christine: And I know um that you (Dick) mentioned that you had a harder time because of politics coming into Apple Hill yeah.

Dick: A hard time in terms of it's influence...

Christine: It's influence ...

Dick: On me ...

Christine: On you okay...

Dick: Yeah, yeah.

Christine: But eventually you just saw the benefit yeah.

Dick: And it was actually our, our son probably ...

Christine: Oh.

Dick: I think he's been much more he may have been even the first to ah get us involved with Apple Hill.

Christine: Okay he saw it.

Dick: Yeah.

Edio: He was once the President.

Christine: Yeah I am yeah my mom told me yeah. So then um how do you think the association and you guys have been talking about this anyway, but how has it benefited this. Maybe the top 3 benefited the agricultural community here in general like do you think it would be here if it wasn't for the association or do, you think we'd still be agriculture if it wasn't for Apple ...

Edio: We would not be agriculture.

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: I think it was in in incredibly important bridge...

Christine: Yeah.

Dick: Between pears and now the broader industry I think the grapes is ah grapes are not as in the wine industry are not probably as dependent on Apple Hill.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: All you have to do is look at the Camino Hills sub-division...

Dick: Right.

Christine: Right exactly.

Dave: Used to be Rock Ranch

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: My dad leased that in the late 60s early 70s....

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: And we ...

Christine: And now it's all houses.

Dave: And now, it's Camino Hills.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: The whole thing would be Camino Hills.

Christine: Yeah...

Dave: Ya know.

Christine: So it's made us what we are.

Christine: Yeah and I asked you this yesterday and I know what your opinion is on it, but do you think there has been any negative effects of Apple Hill on the area.

Dick: Traffic. (Laughs). Horrendous, but it is a fine alternative to have traffic ten days a year versus the area being overrun with developers.

Dave: This area, Camino, would all be tract homes if it was not for Apple Hill.

Christine: Traffic

Edio: Yeah.

Christine: Traffic.

Greg: That's all.

Dave: That's it.

Edio: But the thing with that traffic ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: And we need to keep bringing this up. That the traffic is horrendous, but it happens on the weekends...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: And it's usually 5 or 6 weekends...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: For the year and the people living here during the week have the entire area.

Christine: And what's the alternative to that yeah.

Edio: And they can leave the go to work and not be in traffic until Cameron Park.

Christine: Yeah exactly.

Edio: So if they give some thought to this ...

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: They would tolerate the 5 or 6 weekends.

Christine: To live in the beautiful yeah.

Dave: That's what I tell the critics you got 10 days out of the year when you got lousy traffic or you can go to El Dorado Hills and live that kind of life.

Christine: And live that...

Edio: And, that argument 95% of the time works.

Christine: What problems do you see in the Apple Hill Growers Association? What are your fears for the association?

Edio: Complacency.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: It happened.

Christine: I know, I know but for the for my paper purposes ...

Dave: The President's failed their job.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: It's just that simple for 9 years those 2 President's failed right the buck stops at him or them or her and, and I'll tell ya they failed and it's costing us 10s of 1,000's of dollars.

Christine: And what we're talking about is keeping our name pure or ...

Greg: Not losing the trademark.

Christine: Not losing the trademark.

Dave: But he started up the losing our association name and paying all this money on penalties for not doing our taxes.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: As Ed said complacency when I was President in from 84' through it was 5 or 6 years 84' through 89'...

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: It was I don't know 1 out of every 2 names we had corum a membership corum.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: And so finally after 2 years I said to the group let's just do meetings every other month and that's why we do meetings every other month.

Christine: Yeah yeah.

Dave: Ah it's, it's you know participation is still a challenge.

Edio: During the start of the AHGA, all members attended meetings. Now, you barely get twenty members at meetings. Involvement is key to the success of the association and without it, we start to lose against forces trying to develop our farms.

Christine: Would of happen yeah.

Dave: Absolutely right in fact we're removing 2 of the Vismans are being removed.

Christine: Yeah I know.

Dave: That's a vote the membership ...

Dave: The members have to go and vote but I'm going to strongly advise this in reference to ethics....

Christine: So, do you for see any issues in the future? What issues do you foresee?

Greg: You know there's water issues, there's zoning issues. One big battle we had that hasn't been touched upon was creating agricultural districts throughout the county. And this was sort of a template for why, it was kind of the ground zero for the battle on whether we're gonna be to 2-5 acres parcels or 20 acre minimum and again this was lead by Ed and Dick.....

Dick: I was heavily involved in the politics on trying to keep larger acreage and that...

Greg: And so that was another element that really didn't get discussed here, but it was creating this agricultural district that did 3 things: it put minimum parcel sizes 20 acres,

buffers and setbacks were created so that if someone wanted to build a house it had to be so far back about 200 feet away...

Greg: A 200-foot setbacks and buffer zones you couldn't parcel smaller than 10 acres next to an orchard...

Christine: Okay.

Greg: So those factors came in and that was template throughout the county in about 7 districts, but we had a real basic battle. Especially again, I don't you know if you want to get this in but, but the Family A are the old time growers who wanted, like any farmer, the ability to have all the flexibility in the world...

Greg: If I need to sell off a little bit of land to pay taxes or do something, I want to create a 2 acre parcel and sell it off. Well that's fine for a little while, but ultimately that just feeds on itself. And then you have the conflict, which your grandfather brings up, when you start getting residences. Then they begin complaining and have sway over the farming activities. So, that was really critical that we did that. To not only keep the integrity not only of Apple Hill, but throughout the county.

Dick: That was the ordinance that defined some of the things that you could do and eliminated some of the battles I think ...

Greg: Right. There also was a right to farm ordinance too that was concurrent with this that stipulated that people could not complain about farming practices...

Edio: Normal farming practices: tractor noise, spraying, etc.

Christine: Oh, oh okay.

Dave: If you don't want to hear a sprayer at 5 in the morning then don't move up here. (Laughs).

Greg: And now they have to give disclosures on real estate that you are moving next door to a farm.

Dave: Mr. F was a big 1-acre component.

Dave: Choose and pull Christmas trees.

Greg: There's always individuals that push the limit...

Greg: We would bring in Christmas trees, drill holes in the ground, and stick them in the ground...(Laughs).

Greg: Choose and pull.(Laughs).

Edio: But you know Christine, this the whole thing evolved, planning for Apple Hill, it evolved 40-years.

Christine: Yes, yeah.

Edio: I mean at least 40 to finally be resolved. You know the 20 acre minimum? When I first started, we were fighting like hell for 10 acres.

Edio: And as a matter of fact, we got in with 10 acres first and then got went to 20 of them.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: 1984 my first meeting as President I was like 25-years old, you know a kid, my first meeting as President. And, the association voted to endorse the 20-acre minimum because the area plan was coming to a vote and the Family A and Mr. E had a shit fit so they all showed up in force at my first meeting

Dave: I'm like, oh God, what a brawl.

Christine: You're like ah, oh man.

Dick: The politics that I was talking about, the influence of the Family A....

Dave: And Mr. F was at the meeting and he told the Family A well if you're a shitty farmer you need to sell off little pieces of land to make up for it. That night Mr. G went by and blew a hole in the side of his barn with a shot gun. (Laughs).

Edio: They did.

Dave: He blew the rainbow on their mural. That's why there is a Band-Aid on the on the side...

Christine: Oh yeah that ...

Dave: They really did that.

Edio: Yeah.

Christine: That's hilarious, well not hilarious that's terrible.

Christine: So politics are huge in agricultural tourism

Greg: Well particularly when you have a people who are not community minded and let their self-interests over rule everything. I think that's basically, what it is...

Edio: Yeah, yeah selfishness.

Christine: And you guys have a problem now I know this isn't my mom talks to me about this that El Dorado Hills is in our county correct...

Greg: Yeah.

Christine: So it's a battle between us as agricultural community verses them, that's obviously the opposite.

Greg: Well it's, it's not quite as simple as that.

Dick: Well it's the water.

Christine: Yeah the water.

Greg: It's a water issue. I don't think it really comes into play until we have a drought like this...

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: And then it comes to the ...

Greg: A struggle because of their rates are gonna go up and then they finally look around and say well why is agriculture paying so much less for water. I would say that in general the public is very favorable to agriculture...

Christine: Yeah okay.

Greg: Including Cameron Park, even more so Cameron Park, El Dorado Hills is a little bit more associated with folks in Sacramento their mindset, but we have a lot of club members down there. So I think in general either they don't think about it too much or they generally favorably disposed, but there's always a core group of little activists down there that are vocal that are trying to kick up this ...

Greg: Anti-Ag thing and that's the one.

Edio: But we received a lot of support from El Dorado Hills in the past.

Christine: Yeah.

Christine: Yeah over the years.

Dave: Well they loved it here Christine. It is just a problem with the drought.

Dave: Well and the irony is that the development community down there is actually very pro-Ag cause we are their Napa.

Christine: Exactly yeah.

Dave: And we are a good marketing tool for them to ...

Greg: Yeah they've been very supportive in helping getting our candidates elected, but there's areas where we all agree. The thing is, yes their supportive, and we can work together, but ultimately when they get all the developments down there, then you got this huge mass of population...

Greg: Which then that population may not be for us, so you know...

Greg: It changes all the time, so it's complicated.

Christine: Yeah (Laughs).

Greg: So you then have to get to that massive public down there and get them ...

Greg: Invoked with the agricultural benefit.

Dave: The value of us...

Christine: Yeah, yeah, yeah...

Dave: You got to get into their minds.

Christine: Yeah exactly.

Greg: Yeah, but that's getting into the long-term politics with that...

Christine: Yeah, so where do you see the association in 20-years from now?

Dave: Well you as the President.

Robyn: That's gonna be 5-years.

Dave: You know and actually that is one of the challenges is getting the next generation involved.

Dave: Because for instance the Family C (a local ranch) children don't want to take over the ranch.

Dave: I just talked to him the other day about it he said "it is going to be a huge problem"

Dave: He's 87 you know.

Greg: Well the crucial thing is, if there is not another generation to continue, then you need good Ag realtors in the area to find those ...

Greg: Kind of people that will be drawn to that sort of thing and bring in new blood. Because well Dick and I were new blood, we weren't always farmers...

Christine: Yeah, yeah, and yeah.

Greg: And so it's not the ...

Edio: You come from farming background though.

Greg: Well I did, but

Dick: I didn't.

Greg: But Dick didn't.

Christine: What is your background ...?

Dick: Metallurgy.

Greg: Engineering type.

Greg: No, I had farming on both sides of my family the Boeger's and the Niccolini's but...

Dave: These guys are different, think of Motherlode and think of Honey Bear that's all you got to think of (2 local ranches without the next generation to take over).

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: The wrong people took over and drove those ranches, one a beautiful ranch, into the ground ...

Dave: So the next generation is a big thing.

Dave: It's WHO takes them over...

Dave: Christine just for the record um Mr. Bush has a PhD from Stanford.

Christine: Why is everyone so smart up here?!(Laughs).

Dave: The point is, Motherlode, once a beautiful ranch, and they drove it to the ground now its on it's second or third owner.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: So the Family C beautiful ranch that produces a lot of apples to all over Apple Hill

Dave: Apple Hill depends on Family C Ranch and it is critical whoever takes that over is a good farmer. It would be a huge blow to the hill if those apples went down hill.

Christine: Yeah, yeah.

Edio: Also, there is a strong movement in the State and in the Country really about farming, small farming...

Edio: And so the idea of getting people up here who really love the land and want to farm, that's not too farfetched I don't think.

Christine: No.

Dave: In the article in the San Francisco Chronicle on Apple Hill about the leaders and the beneficiaries of the whole farm to fork and the whole food movement.

Christine: Which is a huge movement yeah.

Dave: We are gonna benefit for a long time from that.

Christine: Yeah, Cal Poly is really big on Farm to Fork and all that. So, do you think Apple Hill or an area like this, where you bring tourism to your farms, can work in any farming community?

Greg: Well, you have to have a metropolitan area that is nearby that you feed off of, you need a resource....

Edio: You need a beautiful area...

Christine: Beautiful area.

Edio: You know this is some of the luck we had in doing this.

Christine: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

Edio: I mean you know it would be it'd be difficult to do Apple Hill in the Imperial Valley.

Christine: Yeah, no, no, no.

Dave: You, can still be successful though individually I, I went back to Michigan in the late 90s we had the Apple Hill Cider research project with the FDA and we did a road show all over the country. And we went to Michigan and we toured the farm markets some of the major farm market is in Michigan...

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: And their spread all over they don't have a central unit.

Christine: My research had a lot of Michigan...

Dave: Yeah you know New York, Ohio, back east and where the farm market business started. You know you see some major farm market business that don't have any other business 10 miles around them where they thrive and succeed but their...

Christine: Probably something like Hooverville.

Dave: Well no because their larger entities then that. There's a guy I met, he's about a hour and a half south of Chicago in Illinois and he's got like a 700 acre farm and they do everything under the sun they have obviously they have the bake shop, deli, they have convention center...

Christine: Wow.

Dave: They have a winery they have a distillery, they bring in from Chicago during the fall harvest season from Labor through first of November they have 5-600 school kids per day going through

Dave: Six days a week.

Christine: We need that on the Mill Site.

Dave: Yeah it's an incredible operation so you have some of these big farm market operations in the North spread out...

Greg: Probably still depends on some either urban core or it's on a vacation trail. I think of the Cherries along Lake Michigan and some of those things where people come up for vacation and they you get tourism coming naturally.

Dave: You got to admit Christine, we are between Sacramento and Tahoe. We are lucky.

Christine: We're pretty lucky.

Dave: I think one of the obvious attractions of Apple Hill is we have local media support. (Laughs) Mr. H from the Sacramento Bee raked you guys over the coals one year...

Dave: He said your driveway was like a prop rental out of a Burt Reynolds movie, remember that when he use to do reviews and Apple Hill make chops and barbs.

Dave: He said the, Kids Inc driveway is like a prop out of a Burt Reynolds move.” But he described Apple Hill as a giant outdoor agricultural theme park where people go from one attraction to the next...

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: One farm to one winery to the next and that’s, that’s a pretty decent description.

Edio: And it is because each farm has their own thing you can go to...

Christine: Yeah it’s all different.

Edio: You can spend the entire day and get a new experience.

Christine: Yeah and so this is the last question is and it’s mostly for all the original farmers, but is Apple Hill how you imagined it when you first established it?

Edio: Even in are wildest dreams no.

Christine: (Laughs) no.

Dave: Your wildest dreams...

Edio: Yeah.

Dave: And Ed probably had some wild ones too. (Laughs).

Edio: Nanny had to deal with dad getting a stove that was already 70 years old, but she made her magic work with what you gave her.

Christine: That’s part of it.

Edio: It’s horrible, horrible crud their making now compared to what we had...

Edio: That Vietnam stove is I venture to say is still going strong. 48 pies at a time.

Edio: We have a brand new one down below you know.

Christine: Oh...

Edio: In case you wear that one out.

Christine: (Laughs).

Greg: The challenge is going to be to keeping it unified and not let it fly apart like these kind of things that are happening now. And if they keep active and interested in growers coming and not to have these ranches start ...

Greg: Peeling off and going into disrepair. we've got to have viable operators and people who are committed to this so I think that's the challenge is getting, you know a continual source of good farmers if the family is not going to continue to farm it.

Dave: I see that as such a big problem ...

Christine: Yeah o yeah.

Edio: We might need to be some more aggressive and get board involvement in recruiting potential farmers from Davis and Cal Poly and Fresno State.

Greg: Yeah it is not sure thing to have the next generation take over. Dick and I are fortunate that we have our family continuing at least for the next generation.

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Yeah so, so that's good, but, but if in between if things start breaking up it's not good for the existing ones ...

Christine: Exactly.

Greg: You need the whole unit together to make it. You don't want people driving up and see abandoned blank orchards and

Dick: What an important thing is going to be maintain the economics of agriculture too. If land prices get too high and there is not a commensurate market then what's to attract somebody to come in and buy a large parcel and keep it in agriculture and then they're going to begin thinking about alternatives.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: Well I think obviously one of the key aspects is the marketing part, but not only you know the Apple Hill marketing part of it to generate visitors to buy our products, but also wholesale side. You know we got Mr. I he's the leader of the Whole Foods Program, he's working with Mr. J and couple other growers. But there is no one to take over the whole sale side after him.

Dave: That's a key part of it because you know the acres of apples is you know has actually probably declined from the past.

Edio: Oh yes it's declining.

Dave: You know it went up and it's declined because the wholesale program is gone away.

Christine: Yeah.

Dave: But that's a real key as well for you to keep any volume of apples in the ground is having a whole sale side and someone to be able to market them.

Edio: Well its lucky that Mr. I finally came to his senses on the juicing the apples and he's now offering the growers something they can now live with for juicing their apples.

Christine: Yeah.

Greg: Otherwise, he'd lose it.

Edio: Well he was getting crazy over there with \$40 a ton or \$30 a ton...

Greg: Yeah.

Greg: The other things of politics of water is we stay on top of that economically. And we watch the rates for April for the water.....

Greg: What we've been fighting for because if water becomes overpriced then no one's going to be able to grow.

Christine: Exactly yeah.

Dave: One more thing that gets overlooked with the start of Apple Hill. We were very fortunate that we had the train that started here in Apple Hill. We had a tourist railroad start...

Christine: Oh.

Dave: In Camino the same year in 1964, we got lucky that all of a sudden you had a major tourist attraction that was starting up the same time Apple Hill did.

Christine: Yeah wow.

Dave: But that helped a lot and a narrow gauge railroad you know is a big draw.

Christine: Yeah you guys were pretty lucky.

Edio: Yeah well yeah, but then we killed it.

Christine: (Laughs).

Dave: Yeah Mr. J killed it.

Edio: Yep

Christine: Awe well (Laughs).

Greg: How did he kill it?

Edio: Well he was Planning Director and he lived up here...

Greg: Yes.

Edio: And he didn't want a train going by his front yard.

Interview with Edio Delfino

- Christine: So what's your personal connection to Apple Hill?
- Edio: I am one of the founding fathers of Apple Hill.
- Christine: What would you say was the main reason your families put your farm into Apple Hill?
- Edio: We got involved with this establishing Apple Hill and we naturally became part of it. I wanted our farm to be part of it.
- Christine: Yeah, and did you have any worries about that?
- Edio: Oh yeah!
- Edio: (Laughs)
- Edio: At that time we thought we were going to lose our whole industry. We had a mono crop. We only had one crop!
- Christine: Did you ever think like is this going to work?
- Edio: Well yeah and we were worried that we were just going to dissolve into another subdivision, land chopping.
- Christine: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah. So what would you say was one of the main hurdles for Apple Hill to become successful or bringing tourism to your farm, what was one of the main problems you had with that?
- Edio: The main problem was to develop a cash flow so the farmers could survive.
- Christine: Yeah, that was like just figuring out how to find that, yeah.
- Edio: Yeah, I mean all of a sudden they had working operations and all of a sudden, the cost is still there but no income because of the pear decline.
- Christine: Did you have a problem with getting everyone on board?
- Edio: Oh, hell yeah!

Edio: The only reason, that we were ever able to get it going, was that the problem was so severe - If we didn't have the tragedy of pear decline, you never would have gotten the farmers together. They would have never worked with their competitors if it were not for the disaster

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Everyone was aware -

Edio: That we the community was in deep trouble and we needed to do something!

Edio: And we needed to get together and do it.

Christine: Yeah , exactly.

Edio: If we didn't have that then this probably would have never worked. Because farmers are very conservation and independent. They are not going to get together.

Christine: Yeah exactly. I know I was talking to my teacher how she's very fascinated with apple hill and um, she said it's so unusual that competitors all work together and I was like yeah-

Edio: That's right.

Christine: That's unusual , yeah.

Edio: They realized that the problem was so severe, -

Edio: That they said we have to jump on board and get going. We've got to do something. They were desperate.

Christine: Okay, and then this is kind of self explanatory but how do you think apple hill helped the agricultural community of Camino, CA?

Edio: It stabilized it.

Christine: Did you every think it would be - my mom told me a statistic that last season you saw 750,000 people, did you ever think it would be that big?

Edio: Oh no.

Edio: But we had characteristics that other areas do not have.

Edio: First you have a beautiful area.

Edio: Very, very important.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Two, we're close to a large population.

Edio: Three, we had other comparable industries in recreation.

Edio: So it's compatible.

Christine: Yeah . and by recreation do you mean like Tahoe?

Edio: Oh, Tahoe, and all of our nature. Like Sly Park and our natural resources.

Christine: Yeah. So it kind of went hand in hand.

Edio: If the area looked like the Imperial Valley, it wouldn't work. You wouldn't want to go down there!

Christine: No, it's not beautiful. Yeah.

Edio: No .

Christine: And then this is the last one. Do you think in any way that apple hill has negatively impacted the area at all?

Edio: No. I don't

Christine: Apple Hill started with that, Smörgåsbord idea.

Edio: Yeah.

Christine: Was that like the first event you guys did?

Edio: No, no.

Edio: It was one of them.

Edio: We tried everything.

Christine: Yeah, I'm sure. (laughs)

Edio: Yeah. (laughs) Well, we had the Apple Hill cavalry.

Christine: I haven't heard of that. What's that? The Apple Hill cavalry?

Edio: Never heard of it?

Edio: No, you must of.

Christine: No, tell me.

Edio: Well you know we have wagon train?

Christine: I know the wagon train, yeah.

Edio: So, Dick Bethell and I decided we should have an Apple Hill cavalry.

Christine: Oh, okay.

Edio: I had two donkeys and, and Dick had three and we formed this cavalry.

Edio: We had a lot of farmers involved and we became part of the Wagon Train parade.

Edio: ... as a modern unit.

Christine: Oh, okay, yeah.

Edio: And, the donkeys had the rank as Sergeant Benny and Corporal McAlvin.

Edio: And we had a good-looking gal (laughing) as our commander. (laughs)

Edio: And our uniforms ... You never heard of this?

Christine: Uh-uh! I never heard of this. No one told me this.

Edio: Our uniforms were, were Levi pants-

Edio: ... with the yellow stripe up the side. And red shirts and black caps.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: So they put us in with the other modern groups.

Edio: And we went out and collected the donkeys. We didn't know anything about the donkeys, (laughs) whether they, would kick or-

Edio: Be mean or-

Christine: Yeah, yeah (laughs).

Edio: And we got 'em to march. We'd have about seven or ten to twelve donkeys. So we entered into the parade.

Edio: And there were precision marching horses, you know?

Edio: And the donkeys, hell, some of 'em were wild sons of bitches. (laughs)

Edio: So, the started fighting with the horses and the horses were kicking the shit out of the donkeys.

Christine: Oh, no.

Edio: And, so, the next year-

Edio: ... we got in. They put us on the end of the parade, right before the pooper scooper.

Christine: Oh, no. (laughs) That's cool though. So, you always tried these marketing techniques?

Edio: Yes, we did daily. We tried anything to get people to notice us.

Christine: Yeah. That's a good idea.

Edio: But the Smörgåsbord. The thing that I was really impressed with was the talent we had within the membership of the-

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: The hidden talent.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And, we were able to develop brain storming meetings.

Edio: ... where everyone threw out any idea.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And, and no one poo-pooed any idea

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And, the Smörgåsbord was idea was thought of during one of these meetings. And, I thought, "Man, you know," ...

Edio: ... that's a crumby idea.

Christine: Yeah (laughs).

Christine: Yeah, Nanny said you thought you'd see a certain amount of people and, a ton of people came. Right?

Edio: Well, the first year we had one day.

Edio: We thought, well, maybe we'd get a thousand people.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Well, shit. We got, like, five thousand.

Christine: Oh my gosh.

Edio: So the, (laughing) the next year, we went two days.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And the gals (wives) did all the cooking-

Edio: And, well, your Nanny blew up two stoves.

Christine: Oh, no. (laughs)

Edio: She was using electric stoves and they blew up because they were not made to run for twelve hours a day.

Edio: And the electric ones will just melt. But anyway, so the second year we had two days ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: ... and the gals just worked like dogs.

Edio: And, we had fifteen thousand people.

Christine: Oh my gosh.

Edio: So, then they went out to PTAs and the women's groups and had them bake for us.

Christine: Oh, okay, okay.

Edio: We gave them the cooking material and they would bake it all for us.

Edio: Well, can you visualize doing that now?

Christine: No.

Edio: With everybody cooking in their homes?

Christine: No, no, no.

Edio: The Health Department would have a fit!

Christine: Fit! I know.

Edio: And that when on, then we went to two weekends. And then we went to three, four, then the weekdays....etc.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And finally we got so big that they started the individual bakeries.

Christine: Oh, wow. And then, how would you market it?

Edio: You know, Apple Hill is kinda special because it was the perfect storm ...

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: ... everyone was supportive.

Christine: Yes.

Edio: The Board of Supervisors was.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: The legislature was, Caltran was. The newspapers.

Christine: Why were they all?

Edio: Well, because the agriculture had such a bad disease and, like I said, we all wanted to fix it. It was a disaster.

Christine: And when you moved up here, was the disease just starting?

Edio: Yeah.

Christine: You became agricultural commissioner in what year?

Edio: Sixty. And, the disease hit in fifty-nine. I came in in the thick of it.

Edio: But, it was good, because the whole county was supportive.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: I will give you another example. The Golden Apple Trail.

Christine: Oh, yeah. I've heard about that.

Edio: We decided we'd paint these giant golden apples on the road.

Christine: Oh, okay.

Edio: You know, throughout the whole road.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: Up North Canyon and Carson.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: And we didn't ask permission to anybody. (laughs) Uh, no!

Edio: And, on the first year we used regular paint!

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: That didn't dry for five hours.

Christine: Oh, no!

Edio: The roads were a mess and had yellow paint all over them!

Christine: Oh, no.

Edio: Nowadays they'd have you in jail.

Christine: Oh, no. That's a nightmare.

Edio: Yeah.

Edio: We had paint going up onto the freeway!

Christine: (laughs) You just did it?

Edio: Yeah! (laughs) And no one ever said anything.

Edio: Nowadays, God they'd, you'd be in prison!

Christine: (laughs) I think that is a good point you made. You had all this talent. That's so rare, especially in the sixties. You went to Cal Poly, Dick Bethell was from Davis.

Edio: Yeah.

Christine: And you had all these local farmers and Nanny happened to be a great baker and all these people- and it just worked out. That's rare.

Edio: Well, yeah.

Christine: Yeah, that's awesome. So you were the ag commissioner and Dick Bethell was....?

Edio: The farm advisor.

Christine: Farm advisor, okay, okay. That is a crazy story. I bet you never thought it'd be like this.

Edio: We had a lot of luck.

Christine: Yeah.

Edio: A lot of luck, along with the talent.

Gene Larsen Interview

Christine: How are you doing today?

Gene Larsen: Well, I'm doing pretty good.

Christine: Good.

Christine: So I wanted to just ask you about five questions.

Gene Larsen: Sure.

Christine: And a little background is I'm doing my thesis on Apple Hill.

Gene Larsen: Oh.

Christine: I'm asking some farmers about it. The first question is what is your personal connection to the Apple Hill Grower's Association or Camino, California in general?

Gene Larsen: The personal connection is that I own the Larsen Apple Barn for a number of years. Actually, it was a partnership with my father.

Christine: Okay.

Gene Larsen: In that business. Of course, we grew up there. I'm fourth generation on the property, or some of the property.

Christine: And you guys were there, but way before Apple Hill, right? You were there...

Gene Larsen: Right.

Christine: You've owned the land there for quite a while.

Gene Larsen: The family's owned land there since 1860.

Christine: Oh, wow. But you were one of the original farmers of Apple Hill though? One of the original ranches?

Gene Larsen: That is true, however, it was my dad and two uncles who were first part of Apple Hill. They had the apple barn and were really involved when it was originally formed.

Christine: Oh, okay.

Gene Larsen: I was farming, but I wasn't part of the organization when it originally formed.

Christine: Okay. Do you know the main reason that your family engaged your farm in Apple Hill? Why didn't they just stay farmers? Why did they decide to bring tourism to their farm?

Gene Larsen: In the early '60s, it was mainly pears in our county up until that time. And then when the decline hit on the pears, it was necessary to either sell the land and get out of farming or do something a little different. However, they had raised apples there a number of years before that, but it wasn't the major crop.

Christine: Oh, okay. So they did it for a need because of the pear decline?

Gene Larsen: It was necessary. It was Apple Hill, or the ranch marketing, that allowed us to stay in farming. when pear decline hit, it was an immediate loss of income for farmers. They had to think of something fast or get out of farming all together

Christine: Okay. What would you say was one of the main hurdles back then of bringing tourists to your farm?

Gene Larsen: The thing then was to find a way to bring them there, and it was through publicity. And actually, by using another area which was Oak Glen, Southern California as an example. There were people who came up from down in that area that had seen what they'd done down and said, "This may work in our area."

Christine: Yeah, which is awesome. How do you think the Apple Hill Grower's Association helped the agricultural community of Camino?

Gene Larsen: I think Apple Hill is what's kept the area in agriculture. If it wasn't for Apple Hill, there would have been a lot more of development. But see, probably two-thirds or more of the area would have been developed into housing and that type of thing because it was easy land to developed.

Christine: Yeah, sure. Yeah. Do you think Apple Hill has negatively impacted the area at all?

Gene Larsen: No, I don't believe so. It has brought a lot of people in. People have bought property and stayed. I don't know if you can call that necessarily a negative impact.

Christine: Yeah, and just so I remember properly, your family has, you said, since 1860 your family's been there and been farmers there.

Gene Larsen: Right.

Christine: So they've seen a lot of changes in Camino, California, with pears, and then Apple Hill, and even with the grapes coming in.

Gene Larsen: Well, even before there was any fruit. Basically, when they arrived there it was mainly a place to establish a place to clear some land and raise some feed for their livestock, 'cause it wasn't fruit in the original.

Christine: Okay. I know though that, especially now with Lynn Larsen being president, you guys are very involved with Apple Hill. And you have how many acres currently?

Gene Larsen: Combined there's I guess close to 200.

Christine: Oh wow, okay. So you're definitely one of the bigger farms. Well, that's the only questions I have today, but I was hoping I could talk to Mrs. Larsen. Is she there by any chance?

Gene Larsen: Sure.

Christine: Thank you so much.

Birdie Larsen Interview

- Birdie Larsen: Hello?
- Christine: Hi, Mrs. Larsen. This is Christine Delfino. I wanted to ask you a couple questions about Apple Hill for my research, if you don't mind.
- Birdie Larsen: Okay. No, I don't.
- Christine: It's just five questions, it'll be really quick. What is your personal connection to Apple Hill?
- Birdie Larsen: I'm married to Gene Larsen and he wanted our farm to be part of Apple Hill. I was also interested in adding tourism to our farm.
- Christine: And you guys have a farm?
- Birdie Larsen: Yeah. We've been married 63 years. It'll be 64 in September.
- Christine: Oh wow. So you've been there since the beginning.
- Birdie Larsen: Well, yes of Apple Hill. I was not raised up there.
- Christine: Oh, okay. Where were you raised?
- Birdie Larsen: I was born in Kansas.
- Christine: Oh, wow.
- Birdie Larsen: And we moved to Los Angeles in the '30s, and then we were down there. My mother really did not like the big city, and we had some friends who had been in Placerville. We stopped, and she liked it there. My dad got a job.
- Christine: How cool.
- Birdie Larsen: I went away to school because I had gone to a boarding school from Los Angeles. So when they moved up there, I went back to Arizona where I was going to school until I graduated.
- Christine: Oh, wow.
- Birdie Larsen: And then I came up. Anyway, one of the local boys that I had dated a time or two. He didn't have a car, but my husband did.

Christine: Laughs

Birdie Larsen: So he brought him up to see me and came back without him.

Christine: How funny is that?

Birdie Larsen: Our two boys were born there. The youngest one was born on North Canyon (Camino) at home.

Christine Delfi: Oh my gosh. Really?

Birdie Larsen: I always was a tomboy or loved the outdoors.

Christine: What was your role at your Apple Hill ranch when it started?

Birdie Larsen: We got involved in the barn and helped up there before we were involved, but after we really got involved. And then one uncle passed away, and the other one wanted to retire, so we took over his ranch, and that involved us in the barn.

So I did the sales and my youngest brother-in-law, who just passed away this last August, ran the other end of the shed. The fruit, getting it and packing it.

Christine: Did you have anything to do with the bakery?

Birdie Larsen: No, never did. My mother-in-law started the bakery. She ran it 11 years. And then my youngest brother was married and his wife took over the bakery. She ran it 18 years. And then we had to hire someone to do the bakery, one year. Then my son, he's a dentist in town, he's running the barn now. He volunteered his wife for ten years. We sold it to them before the ten years is up, so she'll be there longer than ten years.

Christine: Oh, wow.

Birdie Larsen: She still runs it. And her daughter is living there now, too.

Christine: Oh perfect.

Birdie Larsen: So, someday, she'll probably be the boss and run it, too.

Christine: That's good. What would you say was the main role in Apple Hill when it first started? The first couple years?

Birdie Larsen: We basically were the ones who would get the picnics together. And we were the ones that supported our husbands with whatever needed to be done.

Christine: Yeah, exactly, yeah. And were you an advocate for your farm becoming part of Apple Hill?

Birdie Larsen: Oh yeah. I think they were all involved, because of the pears going out, it was not a good scene.

Christine: Yeah, exactly, so you had to do something. And this is the last question. Through the years, do you think Apple Hill has positively effected Camino in general? Do you think it's been a positive thing?

Birdie Larsen: I think it's been a very positive thing to keep agriculture in El Dorado County.

Christine: Yeah, exactly, exactly. And do you think there's been any negative effects or just positive?

Birdie Larsen: Well, the traffic is something I would call a negative.

Christine: Yeah, everyone says the traffic.

Birdie Larsen: But, you know, I walk a lot. I was walking with a lady and she says, "I agree with this. We should stop coming. Keep it rural." So I said, "Well, I don't think any farmers have ever felt that they had the right to tell somebody else what to do with their land." And I said, "Well, you know there is a really simple solution to that?" And she says, "Yes? What?" And I said, "Well, if you buy the land, and you don't sell it, nobody's going to be there."

Christine: Yeah, exactly. (laughs)

Birdie Larsen: So, if you want to tell somebody else what to do with your land, there's a problem.

Christine: Yeah, exactly. Well, awesome. Thank you guys so much for talking with me. I'm doing my thesis at Cal Poly on Apple Hill.

Birdie Larsen: Oh really?

Christine: Yeah, so you guys will be in there. I talked to all the original farmers, so I'm excited. I'll make sure to send it to you guys when I'm done.

Birdie Larsen: Okay. Appreciate that.

Christine: Yeah, well thank you guys. Have fun in Hawaii and I'll see you around real soon, okay?

Birdie Larsen: Okay we will see you soon. Bye now.

Christine: Bye Mrs. Larsen. Well, tell Mr. Larsen I said bye, too. Thank you

Joan Delfino Interview

- Joan Delfino: Hi Christine.
- Christine: Hi Nanny. How are you? I wanted to ask you a couple questions about Apple Hill for my research.
- Joan Delfino: Sounds good.
- Christine: What is your personal connection to Apple Hill?
- Joan Delfino: I'm married to Edio Delfino, an original founder of Apple Hill, and he was determined for the success of Apple Hill. I also was interested in talking with people everyday.
- Christine: That sounds nice. (Laughs) What was your role at your Apple Hill ranch when it started?
- Joan Delfino: Well, I was the baker and cook. I was one of the first bakeries on the hill and very involved in the smorgasbord idea with Mrs. A.
- Christine: That's awesome. Perfect.
- Christine: Yeah, exactly, yeah. And were you an advocate for your farm becoming part of Apple Hill?
- Joan Delfino: Of course. We were in despair because of pear decline and needed to think of something.
- Joan Delfino: However, I do want to note that the women were not given quite enough credit. We were very involved in Apple Hill and did all the cooking! It is important to mention that.
- Christine: Yeah, exactly, so you had to do something. And this is the last question. Through the years, do you think Apple Hill has positively effected Camino in general? Do you think it's been a positive thing?
- Joan Delfino: I think it saved agriculture in Camino. It was completely a positive thing and it was a great way of life.
- Christine: Do you think there's been any negative effects or just positive?
- Joan Delfino: No. I believe just positive.

Christine: Thanks Nanny.