

Public Abstract

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Title:Aging on the Farm: Toward a Model of Passionate Place Attachment

The farm population is aging with 29% of principal farm operators over the age of 65. This is significant because farmers work past the age of retirement generally with diminished abilities. The purpose of this research was to discover how older farmers adjusted to changes in order to remain on the farm.

This qualitative, grounded theory study examined the lives and experiences of 23 farmers over 65 years old in seven counties in Missouri through interviews and photographs. It was found that there was an attachment to place, lifestyle, and work. Farming provided purpose, meaning, and passion in the lives of the participants.

The expressed feelings about attachment to their farm and attachment to their work led to a theoretical framework of Passionate Place Attachment. Passionate Place Attachment is the attachment to place with the added layer of passion for the work that occurs when home, work, and the individual exist in one location and merge into one identity. This has implications for family and caregivers of older farmers in understanding the significance of this attachment.