

CHANGING LAND USE AND THE EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY-

A CASE STUDY OF THE CENTRAL SOUTHLAND AREA

Simpson, Julie (2000)

Changing Land Use and the Effects on
Community: A case study of the central
Southland area



Acknowledgement

This paper has been prepared as a component of the Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme, through Lincoln University. My thanks to the sponsors for their support of this programme and also to Lincoln University for the opportunity to attend this course.

I am deeply grateful to the interviewees and survey respondents who gave freely of their time and who readily gave honest answers to my questions. Without the input of these people, I would have had no ability to see into the workings of the Central Southland area.

Thanks also to John Fairweather for his guidance and Rachael Hoffman for her editing and advice.

A special thanks to my family. They have put up with the issues of the Central Southland area for most of 2000 and have allowed me to take time away to do what needed to be done.

Julie Simpson
"Strathaird"
R D
Dipton 9660
Southland

November 2000

1. Purpose of the Study	page 4
2. Scope of the Study	page 5
3. Central Southland District Overview	page 6
4. Changes in the Southland Area	page 7
4.1 Changes in the Community	
4.2 Changes in the Dairy Industry	
5. Dairy Farmer Experiences	page 9
5.1 Lack of Understanding	
5.2 Resentment	
5.3 Environmental Issues	
5.4 Issues involved in establishing the family in a new community	
6. Sheep Farmer Experiences	page 13
6.1 Lack of Understanding	
6.2 Resentment	
6.3 Environmental Issues	
7. Community and Local Government Responses	page 16
7.1 The Education Sector	
7.2 The Health, Welfare and Community Sectors	
7.3 Local Authority Responses	
8. Summary of the Issues	page 19
9. The Future for the Community of the Central Southland Area	page 20
10. Appendix I	page 24
11. Bibliography	page 25

1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the social impact of dairy conversions and the influx of non-Southlanders, to the Central Southland area.

There has been a significant change in land use in many areas of Southland and it is important to know if the “community” is functioning in appropriate manner – in other words, do individuals see themselves as part of the community and does the community deliver what they require?

Every person has an idea of what makes a “community”. According to the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary, “community” can be defined as, among other things, “...a body of persons leading a common life.”

Academics over time have studied the idea of community and have tried to further define what actually makes something a “community”, rather than a disparate group of individuals. Elias (1974) spoke of groups of people as being “socially interdependent through shared obligations”.

In the 1930’s, Somerset studied rural communities and spoke of community spirit coming from “interdependence between work, family and leisure” (Somerset, 1938; cited in Spoonley et al., 1990). Whichever definition one cares to use, the concept of a community requires individuals to have some interconnections and to identify with that group.

A sense of belonging to a community is important for individuals. It is important that individuals identify with a community so that:

- (i) Individuals will utilise community facilities;
- (ii) Individuals will have input and a sense of ownership to those community facilities and will participate in the planning and provision of services. This would ensure that they are appropriate to the needs of the individuals in the communities;
- (iii) Individuals will feel committed to the community and fight to maintain and improve facilities offered.

These issues become important when some level of community support or centre of interest is required to access central or local government funding.

2. Scope of the study

This study is based around detailed interviews with a range of farmers in the Central Southland area. For the purpose of the study “sheep farmers” were well-established sheep-farming families while the dairy farmers were a range of property owners, sharemilkers and employees. All the dairy farmers were born in areas other than Southland and had moved into the Central Southland area during the first wave of dairy farm conversions (1991-1993).

The ten interviews focussed on the changes in the Central Southland area in the past nine years. The interviews covered personal, family and business changes. Participants were asked how involved they were in the community.

Concurrent with the farmer interviews, a survey was sent to a range of local organizations (for example schools, community providers and local authorities) to gauge their perception of the changes in the Central Southland area in the past nine years. Multiple questionnaires were sent and received from different departments in the local authorities.

It was intended to examine the business community’s response to the increased dairy farms in the south, but it became quickly apparent that the transitions in this area have been relatively smooth. The business community has quickly responded to the changed requirements on their services and dairy farmers are generally happy with this community sector.

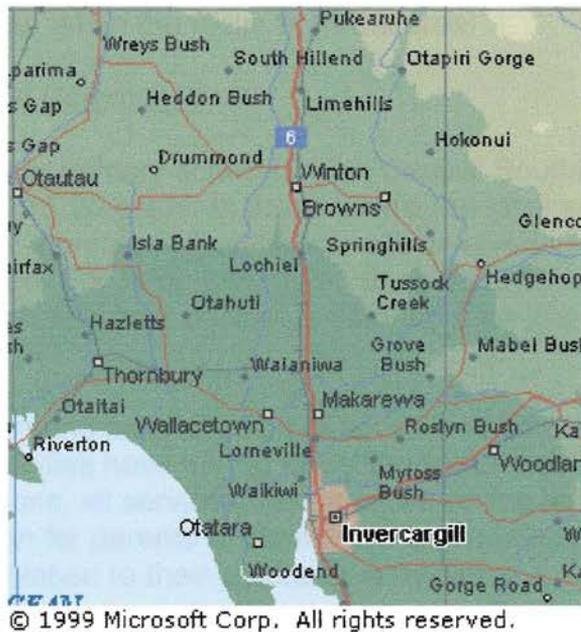
This case study is intended purely as an overview of the issues involved.

3. Central Southland District Overview

For the purposes of this study, the Central Southland area is defined as the areas to the north and west of Winton township, in the Southland province (see figure 1).

In particular the participants were concentrated around the Oreti Plains (eight kilometres north west of Winton), Heddon Bush, South Hillend and Limehills districts.

Figure 1: Central Southland Area



The Central Southland area is fertile easy country, ideally suited to a range of agricultural or horticultural industries. Although the predominant land use through the post war era has been sheep farming and cropping, the area once supported a number of cheese factories. There are a number of large-scale deer enterprises in the study area.

The Central Southland area has many community focuses. Full Primary schools (Y0-Y8) are located at Limehills, Oreti Plains and Heddon Bush. In addition, some children are bussed to primary school in Winton. Secondary schools are located in Winton for day pupils, and Invercargill or further afield for boarding facilities.

Community facilities vary within each area but generally the community heart is closely associated with the local school. For some people, churches also were an important contact and support group.

Business contacts were split evenly between Winton and Invercargill. Good freight and roading services exist.

4. Changes in the Central Southland Area

With a high dependence on traditional farming activities, the fortunes of the Central Southland area have been closely linked to economic viability of the agricultural sector. In common with most rural communities, there has been a decline in on-farm employment and a subsequent decline in the population base. There has been a centralisation of community facilities and services, to either Winton, Invercargill, or in some cases Dunedin.

With a loss of local services, there is an associated loss of a focal point for the community. The local shop, church or rugby club used to offer a meeting point for a wide variety of people and the closure of many of these meeting places has taken the focus from the area.

4.1 Changes in the Community

A number of smaller primary schools in the Central Southland area have closed in the past 15-20 years. In areas where the local schools have been amalgamated, the "community" area for those involved in the school may have been widened. For other parents on the border between two schools, it may mean that their school contact is different than that of their neighbours.

Improved transport and centralisation of sports and other interest clubs has meant that families have had to travel further to their activities. In previous generations, all services were centred on the local school or hall. It is not uncommon for parents to identify with six or more separate communities, in relation to their children's activities.

4.2 Changes in the Dairy Industry

Historically the dairy industry has played an important role in Southland's economy. Earlier last century, many farming families made their money out of the hard work of milking cows, and then, when they had made enough money, they were able to move on to "fat lamb" production, as it was then known.

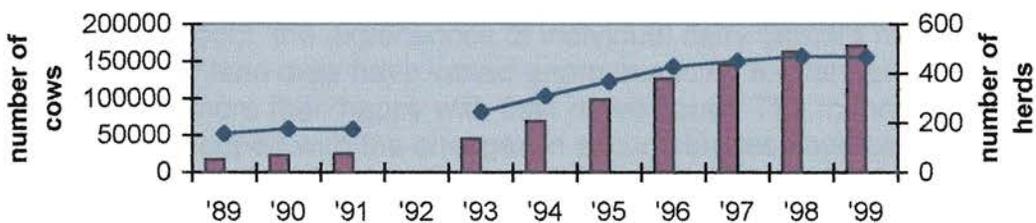
The wool boom of the early 1950's made dairy farming a poor financial alternative. Economies of scale in the processing industry, in addition to advances in transportation and refrigeration, left the smaller dairy factory unable to compete. The smaller factories closed and their suppliers either left the industry or joined the larger factory at Edendale.

In the 1928-29 season there were 61 individual cheese factories processing milk from herds in the Southland area. These factories had 2418 individual suppliers. The current dairy factory at Edendale now has 498 suppliers. (Cuff, 1998). There are a number of abandoned dairy factories over much of the Southland province. These buildings were previously the hub of the community, providing both employment and a social meeting place.

Following a recruitment drive by Southland dairy interests at the Mystery Creek National Field days in 1991, there has been an influx of new dairy farmers to the Southland area. They have rediscovered the dairy potential of the south and have been drawn by high animal productivity, few animal health problems, a favourable climate and relatively cheap dairy land.

As seen in Fig. 2, there has been a substantial increase in the number of dairy properties in Southland. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in both the number of cows being milked and the number of herds (see Appendix 1).

Figure 2: Number of cows and herds in the Southland area.



(as at June) Source: Livestock Improvement Dairy Statistics

Over the period of time shown in Fig. 2 the building industry has been hard pushed to keep up with the demand for shed and residential buildings. Over the period from 1993 to 1999, the Southland District Council has issued 259 building consents for new dairy sheds.

4.3 Changes in the Sheep Industry

The sheep farmers of the Central Southland area have felt like a population under siege in recent years. They have seen the physical appearance of the landscape change, as has the makeup of their neighbourhood.

In the period from June 1996 to June 1999, the sheep flock in Southland has declined by a total of 719,296 sheep (Agricultural Production Statistics, Statistics New Zealand). This fall was offset by the increase of 95,414 dairy cows. Changes in farm practices (for example, hogget lambing and increased deer farming) have contributed to some of this fall, as has the significant areas in the southern Southland area being planted in forestry.

5. Dairy Farmer Experiences

In general, the dairy farmers who came south in the initial wave of dairy farm conversions have been more than happy with their decision to move. As with any case of immigration, these new farmers have taken time to come to terms with their new environment and to feel that they are part of the community.

Researching this topic of the effects of immigration, it is of interest to note that these new Southlanders have gone through the same range of emotions as the Dutch immigrants to Southland in the early 1950's (van Uden, 1999) and the Pacific Island immigrants to the Auckland region in the 1960's (Naumann, 1990). They have all spoken of feeling confused, homesick and lonely. As these immigrants have established themselves in their communities these feelings have lessened, but there remains a feeling of being different from those in the rest of the community.

As you would expect, the experiences of individual dairy farmers moving to the Central Southland area have varied enormously. All the farmers spoken to were more than happy with their move south. The manner in which they have coped with the changes in circumstances have been ruled by their individual personalities, and their family and business situation.

5.1 Lack of Understanding

As is the experience of many immigrant populations, the dairy farmers interviewed have felt alienated from the surrounding community. Interviewees spoke of not fully understanding how their community "works". They have not felt fully part of the community. In particular they felt that the existing members of the community judged them harshly, without any understanding their different lifestyles and work patterns. They felt excluded from some activities of social contact, for example, golf and tennis, as these activities coincide with milking times.

The influx of dairy farmers has brought a new breed of people to the Southland area. They are highly motivated to succeed and have made a number of sacrifices to move south. Many would be viewed as "progressive and aggressive" (personal communication, 2000) and see these traits as the key to making advances both financially and personally.

These same traits have been hard for the generally conservative Southland sheep farmers to accommodate. A dairy farmer spoke of her aggressive approach regarding some problems in the community by saying "you create problems by confronting issues but you don't get anywhere by walking away" (personal communication, 2000). The writer would suggest that this is the complete opposite to the approach of the typical Southerner.

One of big attractions of the south has been the opportunity to purchase large-scale farms (either initially or in subsequent years). Many

interviewees mentioned that in their previous home province, they were unable to buy more land close to their existing dairy units and where previously they had been milking 250-300 cows, they have come south and are now milking 750-1000 cows. This has brought great opportunities but problems with higher debt levels, pressure on milking facilities, and a lack of skilled labour.

The stress to succeed was mentioned by a number of interviewees. Many dairy farmers are pushing themselves (and those around them) harder as they strive to make good their decision to move south. The dairy interviewees felt that many sheep farmers failed to understand the pressures that the dairy farmers were operating under.

Many of the dairy farmers have had to toughened up and have learnt not worry about what others thought. Interviewees spoke of "putting a shield" up in the presence of the neighbours, "not giving 100%" when involved in groups and "not letting people in" (personal communication, 2000). One dairy farmer stated that he was more than happy in Southland, but that she hadn't made any close friends in the six years they had been in the south.

The dairy farmers interviewed felt that the existing farmers had not tried to understand dairy farmers and their different work and social patterns. Dairy farmers interviewed decided that it was easier to stick with people like themselves and now tended to socialise with others of similar interests at a time, which was suitable to their lifestyle. This segregation is a cause of discomfort to the sheep farming community and has brought forward accusations of superiority or snobbery.

Sharemilkers spoken to felt that it was generally harder to break in to the local community in the south. In their experience they had felt part of any North Island community they had moved in to within a period of twelve months, whereas in Southland this did not happen.

5.2 Resentment

The dairy farmers who have come south and converted sheep land to dairy in the last nine years have felt a great deal of resentment. Some dairy farmer interviewees saw this as jealousy at the dairy farmers having the money and options to move forward with their lives. Others felt that this resentment stemmed from sadness that their community was changing and that things will never be the same again.

There have been heated times in the Central Southland area. Of particular concern to a number of the interviewees, has been that the conflict has overflowed to the children. There have been some harsh arguments and bullying at the schools. After a period of time, this was dealt with but there remain resentments that the children had to be the innocent victims of this prejudice.

Dairy farmers have felt the effects of the “tall poppy” syndrome. One interviewee mentioned that it took a lot of money to convert a sheep unit to dairy and that the neighbours around them have been uncomfortable with the money they were able to spend. These neighbours seem to take no account of the debt level involved. They have felt that many sheep farmers were jealous of their success.

A major area of resentment is that these dairy farmers have come in and “bought up our land” (personal communication 2000). The dairy farmers could counter this by saying that no one had been forced to sell and that they had all been “willing” sellers.

This influx of money to the Central Southland land market has given farmers options to sell uneconomic sheep farming units and in many cases retire with more money than would otherwise be expected.

In areas where the local primary school role may be marginal, there has been pressure to send children to the local school. This has not always been suitable for the dairy farming family. One sharemilking family interviewed spoke of such pressure but in the end chose a school out of their immediate area. This option offered more stability for their children, when they may shift a number of times over their child’s school lifetime.

5.3 Environmental Issues

Dairy farmers have encountered much bad-press from sheep farmers over a perception that they are in south to “make money at all costs”.

There have been accusations that dairy farmers are creating problems with pugging of soils, discharge of effluent and water quality. Dairy farmers counter this by saying that they are proactive in many respects and that sheep farmers should do likewise.

Many dairy farmer interviews made it known that they were in Southland to farm for themselves and for future generations. Some farmers spoke of themselves as being “caretakers of the land”(personal communication 2000).

In some regards, the dairy farmers are feeling picked on and feel that they are subject to a different set of rules than those applied to other land-use groups. They feel that too much blame is pointed at them for some problems with water nitrate levels.

5.4 Issues involved in establishing the family in a new community

The immigrant dairy farmers generally had no family ties to the Southland area (although it was not uncommon for family members to follow in subsequent years).

Many of the dairy-farming women stated how hard they had found coming into a new community. In many ways the move south posed different problems for the men who were preoccupied with the physical side of the dairy conversion (not to be minimised in those early days when the businesses in the south did not understand the particular requirements of the conversion unit) but it was the women who were responsible for settling the children in to schools, dealing with homesickness and isolation, and finding out where and how to access local services. This was difficult for some women without the family support they were used to in northern centres.

Like anyone who has moved away from the family centre, the new dairy farmers have missed family support, contact and outings. All families spoken to closely identified with their northern roots (and took particular care to keep contact with that area), but saw themselves as residents of the Southland area and in Southland for the long term. For the children of these families, there was a clear pattern whereby the younger these children moved south, the closer connected to Southland they became. This is only to be expected.

Many farmers stated that if they didn't live in the south, they would not necessarily live in their previous farming area. The Canterbury area was another popular choice for residence.

6. Sheep Experiences Farmer

The traditional sheep and cropping farmers studied for this paper were from long established farming families. For the purpose of this study, the “sheep farmer” was defined as one who derived the majority of his or her income from sheep, although other classes of stock, cropping or alternative income may be important to the overall profitability of the enterprise.

Many sheep farmers have felt undermined by being told that there is a more profitable way to farm “their” land and they have resorted to the old adage that the best line of defence is attack. They have had to deal with the changes to their surroundings and have had to reassess the future for themselves, their family and the community as a whole.

Some farming families have found it difficult to come to terms with these huge changes in their community. In the past, these were the farms, which traditionally passed from father to son. It is not unknown for farms to be held in that way for four generations.

Lower sheep farm returns have meant that these farmers have not been able to compete with the higher prices paid by dairy farmers for land in the Central Southland area. With the arrival of the North Island dairy farmers, land suitable for conversion has increased in price. In the mid-1980’s land that would have been suitable for dairy conversion would have sold for around \$1000 per acre. This same land would easily sell for around \$3500 per acre at the height of the conversion boom.

6.1 Lack of Understanding

Sheep farmers interviewed have struggled to understand the new dairy farmers. In an area in which all the neighbours have historically done the same job and produced similar products, some sheep farmers have found it difficult to understand and relate to the daily and yearly work patterns of their new neighbours.

In settled areas such as the Central Southland area, residents have had trouble understanding the lot of the dairy farm sharemilker. They have viewed these residents as purely short-term residents. In an area where a man is often referred to by his familial lineage (i.e. the identity of his grandfather), these new individuals have been harder to identify with.

Dairy farmers in general were seen as short-term residents who were here to “make money, not friends” (personal communication, 2000). Some sheep farmers criticised their dairy-farming neighbours for not placing a priority on their houses and gardens and for not undertaking farm beautification schemes.

Many interviewees (from both sides) mentioned that the sheep farmers have not had to go out of their way to meet and make welcome these new

dairy farmers, as they already have the networks of friends and support in the community. The new dairy farmers have not been needed to complete any deficit in their social contacts. In a time when all members of the community have increased time pressures, one interviewee admitted that she had not got to know any dairy farmers socially. In addition she admitted that she had not taken any measures to remedy this situation. This statement was by no means an apology; it was just a fact that life was too pressured to make time to meet new people.

However inconsistencies were apparent when those same sheep farmers would bemoan the changes in their local area and say that “it’s important to know the people at your back door – we have lost the sense of community because we don’t know people the way we used to” (personal communication, 2000).

A huge area of concern for many sheep farmers is the practice of parents leaving their children unsupervised while the parents were milking. Although they admitted that this probably happens all over the country, it is a new phenomenon in the south.

6.2 Resentment

One of the biggest changes in the Central Southland area has been the increase in land values. This has brought about huge resentment from some established sheep farmers as it has put out of their reach, any plans of expanding their existing productive unit. In other cases, the plan for future farm succession to the next generation has been compromised, as the children cannot compete with the lucrative money offered by farmers wishing to convert their land to dairy farming. In a number of cases, new dairy farmers were resented by their neighbours before they stepped foot on their newly converted dairy properties.

The sadness at lost opportunities is not universal. The rise in the price of land suitable for dairy conversions (and run off properties) has meant that some farmers have been able to sell smaller or uneconomic units and move further from the plains to a larger, productive farms. In many cases these properties have had potential for large production gains.

These farmers now believe that the North Island dairy farmers have given them a chance to do something that they would not have otherwise been able to do. Unfortunately, these farmers are in a minority.

For other sheep farmers in the Central Southland area, dairy farm expansion has given them options in the area of leasing land, dairy grazing and selling stock food.

Interviewees with connections to the local school have found it hard to come to terms with the changes in their school. They felt that (particularly in the early conversion days), that “their school” had been subject to great change over which they had no control.

There are resentments that the timetabling of community activities such as school trips or picnics has had to be altered to suit the dairy farmers. Since the sheep farmers are often willing and able to stop work and attend school functions, the sheep farmers have felt imposed upon.

Sheep farmers have raised concerns over the ownership structure of many dairy farms in the South. They were concerned that corporate or equity partnership ownership would mean that dairy farming families would stay in the community for a shorter term, and that they would not become established in the social network of the area. In addition, they were concerned that only a small proportion of the profits made on these Southland farms would remain in the Southland area.

6.3 Environmental Issues

The sheep farmers have been quick to point the finger at dairy farmers for all manner of environmental concerns. Of particular concern is the discharge of effluent and subsequent runoff into waterways. It has been argued that the heavier clay soils of the Southland Plains cannot absorb the high levels effluent and this, in conjunction with the millions of field tiles laid in the ground, have made for rapid runoff and pollution of waterways.

Sheep farmers also hold concerns over the damage done to soils with some large herds on wet winter soils. To counter this, the lighter riverbank properties have been targeted for winter runoff land and there have been issues involving the use of actual riverbeds to winter stock. Environment Southland has become more vigilant and is actively enforcing the protection of such waterways. Many residents are concerned that they have taken some time to take action.

Although dairy farmers often fence off their waterways, many sheep farmers are concerned that not a big enough area is fenced off to maintain creek margins. Many sheep farmers do not fence off waterways, but they would argue that sheep do not cause near the level of damage. The increasing number of deer in the Southland area is also of concern with regard to soils and waterways.

7. Community and Local Government Responses

Survey forms were sent to thirty selected community groups with interests in Central Southland area.

A response rate of over 70% was achieved.

7.1 The Education Sector

To many members of the community, the biggest effects of the new dairy conversions have been felt in the education sector. All the dairy farmer interviewees have had children at local schools.

Generally the education sector (from the pre-school to secondary level) has viewed the influx of the dairy farmers as a positive addition to their population base. They mentioned that these new parents have brought a diversity of cultures and experiences to the school as well as a well-developed business sense. They have challenged the standards set by the schools and made the communities examine how, when and why they organise themselves.

However, the transition time was turbulent for some schools with the existing parents and schools struggling to understand the different requirements of these families.

As far as school roles are concerned, this influx of dairy farming families has been a two edged sword. Their arrival has meant that the school roles have been maintained (or increased) in some smaller primary schools, but have also brought instability, which was hitherto unknown. Respondents wrote of the changed nature of their school with a more 'transient nature of the pupils'. This was mentioned both as a factor of instability for the whole school and also that it often was concern for children with delayed educational progress. Many school have implemented programmes to target these children. The increase in the number of mid-year enrolments has been a learning process for the local schools.

The biggest barrier for families to become fully involved in the life of the local school has been the very nature of their jobs. Busy times, for example, calving, and milking times, have meant that parents are not always able to attend school functions or outings. Many schools have tried to change the schedules of such events, but in the end it is very difficult to please the diverse range of parents involved in a school (especially in the town schools which have children from a wide range of backgrounds).

The schools feel that they have made changes to accommodate the present range of children to their schools, and, although the dairy farmers have been a big influence to the population, they have an obligation to all their parents and children.

With Board of Trustee elections scheduled for early 2001, many in the education sector are concerned that the dairy farmers will not be well represented on the nomination list. The relatively short duration of the sharemilkers contract was seen as a barrier to their nominations. However, as dairy farmers reside all over New Zealand, there must be a solution to this problem.

It is the author's view that the dairy farming community will become more involved in the running of the schools when they feel more comfortable in their environment. No one can be expected to put him or herself forward for community service when they are new to a district and have high levels of physical and financial stress. It is hoped that in time (hopefully this next round of elections) that the dairy farming community will feel able to put forward a higher number of candidates.

7.2 The Health, Welfare and Community Sector

Respondents in the health sector reported an increase in their workload. In order to ensure continuity of care, more time was now being allocated to chasing up those members of the dairy community who were moving residence often. This is more of an issue with dairy farm employees.

Welfare organizations backed up the views of the dairy farmers themselves, in saying that many of the families who have moved south, have found the transition difficult without family support. Like anyone else, these families have found it hard to admit when they are not coping, and have battled on under difficult circumstances.

To many groups in the Central Southland area, the arrival of the North Island dairy farmers has been of interest but of little impact. A number of local groups surveyed admitted that they have done little to accommodate the new dairy farming families. They all mentioned that anyone was welcome to join their groups. They had little or no dairy farmer input in their organization. These same groups could be no barriers to the dairy farmers becoming involved in their groups.

7.3 Local Authority Sector

As there has always been a dairy industry in the Southland area, the biggest effect on the local authorities has been an increase in pressure on their services.

The local authorities have had an increased number of consents for milking sheds and residential building. In addition there has been a rise in the demand for consents for gravel and rock extraction, and for effluent discharge and water rights. There has been increased activity in the building trade as traditional sheep farmers have moved off their farms and built new retirement residences and buildings. The expansion at the Edendale Dairy Factory has also involved the Council's consents

departments. These high levels of activity have supported Southland's building industry at a time when other economic conditions have been less than favourable.

As with any new group of people to an area, the new dairy farmers have had to learn the rules and regulations, which pertain to the Southland area. For the local authorities, they have had an obligation to make the farmers aware of these, and both Environment Southland and the Southland District Council have recognised the need to examine the delivery of their information. This has included targeting alternative publications, changing meeting times and promoting the Internet and email to negate distance and time limitations.

Like all businesses, the local authorities will have to remain flexible in order to cope with the demands placed on them by the dairy industry. The anticipated removal of the moratorium on dairy conversions later in 2000 can be expected to create a further increase in consent applications.

8. Summary of the Issues

The change to large-scale dairy farming in the Central Southland area has brought huge changes to the physical and social makeup of the districts concerned. There has been an influx of new residents to the area who have brought with them a new way of farming and have challenged many of the foundations that Central Southland's agricultural industry has been built on. These new people would by admission consider themselves as "aggressive and progressive", and these are the very traits which some of the traditional sheep farmers have had trouble dealing with.

There is a sadness in the sheep farming industry that theirs is not currently the most profitable way of farming, and also that the choice to stay sheep farming may mean that farm succession may not proceed as planned.

With few exceptions, the dairy and sheep farmers interviewed failed to understand the perspective of the other side. There is very much a "them and us" mentality and a lack of understanding of the each other's work and family situation. In some cases, each side had little respect for the other.

In many of the interview situations both sheep and dairy farmers tended to use generalisations regarding the other side. Of course, not all dairy farmers leave their children alone while the parents are milking, or are inconsiderate when driving stock, and similarly, not all sheep farmers are "woolly headed morons" who are slow to adopt technology and happy to make a low return on their capital. There is a lack of understanding on both sides and it appears the time for understanding may have passed. The two groups have entrenched themselves in their segregated groups.

Although it does not appear that dairy farmers are very involved in community organizations in the Central Southland area, the dairy farmers themselves have found that they are well able to access those services which they require. The fact that some groups in the Central Southland do not have any dairy farmers involved is not of concern, but rather may mean that they may not be in an area of interest to the dairy farmers. An alternative reason may be that many dairy farmers may not have the discretionary time available to become involved community groups.

In general, the dairy farming families interviewed have become involved in those groups which they have wished to join. Some have shown a readiness to become involved in groups, especially those that involve their children.

9. The Future for the Communities of the Central Southland Area

Southland has been built by successive waves of immigration. The recent influx of dairy farmers from outside the province should be viewed as simply another chapter in the province's history.

If a "community" can be seen as a dynamic and ever changing entity, then the Central Southland communities will naturally change as the people change also. It is a challenge to the members of the Central Southland communities to change with the new environment and to make the community deliver what each individual requires.

It is likely that the community's view of 'community' will be evolving under these pressures of change.

It is important that all community members acknowledge that change is inevitable and that we as a society must ride with the changes and make the best of the situation.

Although some Southlanders see the spread of dairy as a tragedy, land will continue to be sold to the dairy industry by willing sellers. This will bring new people to the communities and it is up to individuals to make the most of it. It will bring diversity to the communities as well as business opportunities.

In times of increased financial, physical and travel pressures. It is the "extras" which are the first to be dispensed with. In bygone days there was time to interact with neighbours. Now, there is little time or need to do so. It is the writer's experience that many families are likely to have greater connections to others who live 30-40kms away, than they will with their next-door neighbours. This is not peculiar to the Central Southland area.

There is little doubt that in the Central Southland area, as in all sectors of society, the 80:20 rule applies. It has been estimated that in most of life's situations, 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. If this has been the case in the past, there is certainly nothing happening in the Central Southland area which will have changed that. There are some people who will always organise and get "stuck-in" and there are others who will be carried along.

For community organizations to function in the future in the Central Southland area, these groups will need to clearly specify what is required of new members. In addition, the people who do not get involved will have to accept that they have no right to criticise or complain when things don't go as they would wish.

The fact that some of these new residents will not be of long-term duration will have to be addressed by the existing communities. Sharemilkers and dairy farm employees may not be in the community for a long period of

time, but it is the role of these people and the community to ensure that they have the services and support which they require.

For the providers of some welfare and health services, this may mean a change in the delivery of service, or changes in the way that continuity of care is approached.

In terms of education, schools will need to continue to address the needs of each child for the period of time, for which they are in their care. For some mobile families, the choice not to send their child to the local school may be unpopular, but it is in the end their right to do so.

The local school will remain pivotal in the communities they serve. They offer a meeting place for all sectors of the community and an avenue for new residents to source information about their community. The local school newsletter is an easy way for new people to be introduced and for existing residents to keep track of the comings and goings in the area. Many school newsletters are available to the wider community.

The Southland District Council has identified community development as important to the future of the province. Their role in identifying and assisting in the planning and funding of local community initiatives will remain important as rural communities lose common meeting places (for example schools, rugby clubs and shops).

In its role as a provider of local amenities, the Southland District Council will need to ensure that it is delivering what is required to the area. The members of the Central Southland area must be encouraged and assisted to apply for funding from sources such as the Community Sports Fund from the Hilary Commission and The Creative Communities Fund from Creative New Zealand. There are Community Development Officers currently employed by the Southland District Council for this purpose.

The local authorities, in their regulatory role, must be seen to be fair to all sectors of the community. In particular, Environment Southland will need to be seen to look across all land-use groups and apply the rules in a consistent manner.

The existing Community Development Board (CDA), committee system could be extended in the Central Southland area, to not only include further communities, but also extend the brief of each committee. With representation from a variety of individuals, the CDA is well placed to identify the needs of the community in which they serve. Given appropriate support, the CDA could become a focus for community.

The Southland District Council has played an important role in the facilitation of community meetings to address issues of a local concern. Their independence in issues can be seen as their greatest asset in this field.

Environment Southland has recently proposed a "Dairy Summit" to examine the economic, environmental and social impact of the increase in dairy farming on the province. Environment Southland views the timing of this summit as important, as there is currently a moratorium on new dairy farms. This is good time to assess the state of play before a new wave of dairy conversions come on stream.

At the beginning of this paper the goal was to establish if individuals identified with a community so that:

- (i) Individuals will utilise community facilities;
- (ii) Individuals will have input and a sense of ownership to those community facilities;
- (iii) Individuals will feel committed to the community and fight to maintain and improve the facilities offered

It is the author's observation that the people in the Central Southland generally have this connection and a sense of "community".

Individuals are finding, and using the facilities they require. They are able to show commitment to maintaining or improving any services or facilities under threat.

However, an area of concern is that the many of the new dairy farming families are not taking on positions of responsibility in the organizations which serve the Central Southland area. There is a fear that if they are not involved, these groups will be organised to suit the existing sheep farmers and others in the community. If dairy farmers do not get involved in the organization of these groups, then others can only organise the group, as they are best able. These organizations will then have a limited ability to adapt to dairy farmer needs.

In other areas of New Zealand, the issues of changing land use (and the subsequent effects on the existing community) are of great importance. The large areas of new forestry in the southern Southland Districts are of particular concern and the people in that area are currently dealing with the issues involved. Whereby the Central Southland area is dealing with an influx of new and different people, the southern Southlanders are facing massive depopulation and an associated loss of services. Their problems and the solutions will be different than that of the Central Southland area.

Inevitably, the moratorium on new dairy farms will be lifted in the Southland area. The province will then see a new wave of dairy farmers moving into areas that have previously been dominated by sheep farmers. This time around it will not necessarily be "outsiders" who are going dairy farming.

It is a common belief that the Southland real estate market is being driven by North Island dairy farmers, or by overseas investors, but in reality, 60-70% of the dairy farm sales are to locals (Farmnews, 2000). In addition there are a number of sheep farmers waiting to convert their existing properties to dairying.

No doubt these conversions will bring a number of new people to the province and this will bring a new round of adjustments to other communities.

After all is said and done, the individuals of the Central Southland area will never get anywhere in this world unless they can gain some respect for each other. Both sides of the debate have more in common than not, and it is the areas of commonality which they should focus on. They have a tremendous amount to gain from each other.

Essentially, the opposing sides are both using their capital and talents to make financial and personal gains for themselves and their families. Both sides have to acknowledge that just because someone makes a different choice, it does not necessarily make one right and the other is necessarily wrong.

The future for the Central Southland area will be different than in the past but as long as the "community" delivered what individuals require from it, (and people recognise that each individual may have different needs), there should be no reason why the Central Southland area will not continue to be great place to farm and to live.

10. Appendix 1

Number of Cows in the Southland Region

(as at June)

1989	17,245
1990	22,978
1991	25,332
1992	N/a
1993	45,108
1994	69,142
1995	98,027
1996	126,245
1997	144,872
1998	162,369
1999	170,323

Source: Livestock Improvement Dairy Statistics

Number of Herds in the Southland Area

(as at June)

1989	156
1990	177
1991	175
1992	N/a
1993	246
1994	309
1995	367
1996	429
1997	452
1998	471
1999	467

Source: Livestock Improvement Dairy Statistics

11. Bibliography

- Agriculture New Zealand, Woodward Clyde Ltd, Geoff Butcher & Associates. (1997). *Impacts of Dairy Conversions in the Taupo District*. MAF Policy Technical Paper 97/9.
- Baird, T (2000) *Farmnews* Edition No 62, 16 September 2000 . Invercargill: Farmnews Newspaper Partnership.
- Cuff, M. (1998). *Edendale. Heart of Dairying in the South. Historical Account of the Edendale Dairy Factory*. South Island Dairy Co-operative Limited.
- Elias, N (1974). *Towards a Theory of Communities*. In C Bell and H Newby (Eds) *The Sociology of Communities*. London: Frank Cass
- Houghton, R and King, A and Piper R (1996). *Land Use and Community in Southland Region*. MAF Policy Technical Paper 97/6.
- Levett, A and Pomeroy, A. (1997). *Managing Social Transformation in Rural New Zealand. Proceedings of UNESCO/MAF Seminar*. MAF Policy Technical Paper 97/20.
- Naumann, R. (1990) *The Tauwiwi. The Later Immigrants*. Auckland: New House Publishers Limited.
- Spoonley, P and Pearson, D and Shirley, I. (Eds). 1990. *Community*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Van Uden, L. (1999). *Journeys of Hope. Post World War II Dutch Settlement in the South of New Zealand*. Invercargill: Dutch Club Invercargill Incorporated