

# Multiple Job Holding in the Agriculture Sector

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## Abstract

New profiling based on the 2001 Census supports research in the 1990s which examined farm family pluriactivity in New Zealand, showing multiple job holding is a key strategy used by farm families to support their household and farm incomes. Moreover, a study of 60 farm people with multiple jobs in Ashburton District indicates that the motivation for farm women and men to work off the farm may be stronger than ever, despite relatively high levels of farm income in recent years. In addition to economic reasons, multiple job holding is driven by personal fulfilment, and the entrepreneurial ethos of farm families.

## Introduction

Research in the mid 1990s examined the importance of pluriactivity as an economic strategy commonly pursued by farm households. In their study of off-farm employment in three districts of the South Island, Taylor and McCrostie Little (1995) considered the character and dynamics of multiple job holding (MJH) amongst farm families, including its impact on the family members, individual workers, the farm business and the community. That research identified the importance of on-farm, non-agricultural enterprises to farm families, either due to the distance from labour markets making it relatively difficult for some to participate in off-farm employment, and as an expression of entrepreneurial creativity to run a business apart from the farm itself. Subsequently, Taylor et al. (1997) completed their research on alternative farm enterprises, confirming and extending the earlier evidence of pluriactivity, identified by Moran et al. (1989), Benediktsson et al. (1990) and Le Heron (1991).

The research showed multiple job holding has become an important source of income for farm families facing cyclical commodity prices, periodic rises in farm input prices

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and climatic events such as prolonged drought. Multiple job holding is also evident in the wider rural economy, including meat processing workers (Shirley, et al., 2001) and specifically-skilled, casual, mobile, workers such as shearers and ski instructors, some of whom work in more than one location internationally (Hunt, 1996). Indeed it reflects the general importance of non-standard work across society (de Bruin and Depuis, 2004).

This article reports results from a programme of research on multiple job holding in New Zealand, with agriculture one of the sectors examined. The research investigates multiple job holding in rural New Zealand using census data, and discusses the implications of multiple job holding by farmers and the possibility of changes in attitudes towards off farm work since the 1990's.

The research programme provides knowledge about the way individuals, families and communities are adapting to social and economic change through multiple job holding. The research began in 2001 and has two main objectives. The first objective is developing a profile of multiple job holding in New Zealand over recent years based initially on 2001 Census data for factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, work-force status and occupation, plus a detailed analysis of changes 1981 to 2001, and comparisons to other official statistics including the 1998/99 Time Use Survey and the quarterly Household Labour Force Survey. The second objective is identifying the factors which encourage or inhibit multiple job holding, and determining the impacts of multiple job holding on individuals, families and communities through a series of 180 in-depth interviews, with three sectors covered in a first round in 2003-4: farming, café and restaurant workers, and health professionals.

## **Profile of multiple job holding for rural areas and farmers**

This section provides results from the national profile of multiple job holding for rural areas and farmers, using data from the 2001 Census. The profile shows that a relatively high proportion of farmers hold multiple jobs, one of which includes their work on farm.

### ***Profiling multiple job holding from 2001 Census data***

Although census data covers the entire working population (1,727,271 in 2001), providing accuracy for detailed analysis and cross-tabulations, there are limitations due to the questions asked, including those about work. The central question for this research is "In the 7 days that ended on ..., did you have one job or more than one job?". While details are sought on the nature of the main job, no information is asked about the additional jobs (including unpaid work for a family business or farm). So if this work is not identified by farmers as their first job, it means the occupational and industry data (assembled on the basis of the first job) can understate multiple job holding for farm men or women for whom work on the farm is their second job.

A further limitation of the Census question arises if the additional job took place outside the period of a week. Other research (Taylor and McCrostie Little, 1995) shows that seasonal work is an important dimension of rural multiple job holding. So if this work is not taking place at the time of the Census the data further understates the multiple job holding of farmers.

Another issue for profiling multiple job holding from official statistics is the amount of casual employment taking place outside the formal economy, particularly in the rural economy. Multiple job holders may be reluctant to report cash income from casual employment for reasons related to tax, child support and welfare benefits (Averett, 2001).

Nonetheless, the 2001 Census data provide a useful baseline profile of the level and distribution of multiple job holding in rural New Zealand (Baines, et al. 2003). The baseline profile provides information on the demographic characteristics of the individuals involved, their geographic locations and other empirical guidance for the research.

#### ***Incidence of multiple job holding in rural areas***

Analysis of the 2001 Census found the average incidence of multiple job holding across the entire working population was 10.1%. This figure establishes multiple job holding as a significant element of New Zealand working life, setting a reference level for comparing multiple job holding rates across the working population.

Rural areas stand out for relatively high rates of multiple job holding, with an increase for each official statistical category from main urban area to rural area (Table 1).

**Table 1 Incidence of MJH for rural to urban statistical areas**

<b>Statistical category</b>	<b>Number of workers</b>	<b>Percent MJH</b>
Rural area	231636	20.2
Rural centre	34266	11.5
Minor urban area	130197	8.9
Secondary urban area	104355	8.6
Main urban area	1226301	7.9

Rates of multiple job holding are particularly high for rural statistical areas, with the highest rural areas and the district they are located in shown in Table 2. The pattern of high multiple job holding in these rural areas reflects the predominance of the agricultural sector in their workforces. It is noticeable that women typically record higher rates than men, in some cases 30-50% higher.

**Table 2 High incidences of MJH in rural areas**

Location	Number of workers			Percent MJH		
	All	Women	Men	All	Women	Men
Chatton (Gore District)	1017	435	582	28.7	31.5	27.1
Hinds (Ashburton District)	2079	870	1212	23.6	28.6	20.1
Pohonui-Porewa (Rangitikei District)	1497	648	849	22.2	26.5	18.9
Hurunui (Hurunui District)	1320	582	738	22.1	25.8	19.1
Kahutara (South Wairarapa)	2295	1044	1251	19.4	23.3	16.1
Clutha (Clutha District)	2712	1104	1608	19.2	23.6	16.1

***Incidence of multiple job holding by industrial classification occupational group***

Analysis of 2001 Census data by industry classification and occupational group shows agricultural sectors lead the incidence of multiple job holding (Table 3). As for rural areas generally, the multiple job holding rate in farming is consistently higher for women than men, while the opposite is true for the more urban-dominated industries.

**Table 3 Incidence of high rates of MJH by industrial classification**

Category	Number of workers			Percent MJH		
	All	Women	Men	All	Women	Men
Beef cattle farming	7500	2628	4869	25.3	29.8	22.8
Deer farming	1902	645	1257	24.9	29.9	22.5
Mixed and other livestock farming	7941	2853	5088	22.9	27.9	20.1
Sheep farming	26124	8199	17925	22.2	29.3	19
Cropping and other farming	3657	1101	2556	21.9	26.6	19.9
Central Govt Fire Service Administration	2007	195	1812	19.8	9.4	21
Live entertainment	1707	843	861	19.5	18.3	20.7
Horse farming and breeding	1131	558	570	18.7	22.2	15.3
Doctors, Group Practice Admin/Partnerships	9729	7584	2142	18.6	17.3	22.9
Authors, Music Composers, indep. Artists	2442	1116	1329	18.3	18.7	17.9
Physiotherapy Services	1626	1251	375	17.8	17.4	18.5
Veterinary Services	2907	2016	894	17.3	15.3	21.3
Fruit Growing	2754	1128	1626	17.3	19	16.1
Tertiary Education	24873	14145	10728	16.8	15.1	19
Residential property operators	2394	1158	1236	16.6	14.1	18.9
Dairy farming	35037	12108	22929	16.1	21	13.6

Analysis by farming-related occupational groups (Table 4) supports the findings from the analysis by industry sector, showing high incidences for the farmer occupational groups and also for women.

**Table 4: Incidence of MJH by highest farming occupational groups**

Category	Number of workers			Percent MJH		
	All	Women	Men	All	Women	Men
Cattle farmer/farm worker	3609	1188	2421	24.5	28.7	22.4
Other livestock farmer/farm worker	2607	783	1821	24.2	28.8	22.3
Sheep farmer/farm worker	8493	2292	6201	22.7	29.5	20.2
Farm machinery operator/contractor	2961	174	2787	22.3	25.4	22
Crop and livestock farmer/farm worker	25917	8178	17739	21.2	27.6	18.3
Mixed livestock farmer/farm worker	4881	1350	3534	20.4	28.1	17.5
Field crop grower/related worker	1506	426	1083	19.8	22.7	18.6

***Influence of workforce status on multiple job holding by farmers***

The analysis also provided data on the incidence of multiple job holding in the larger farmer occupational groups for full-time workers and part-time workers by sex (Table 5). For females the incidence of multiple job holding in these sectors is higher for full-time than part-time workers. For males the incidence is higher for part-time workers in the beef and sheep sectors, but not for deer farming. It should be remembered here that these results are for individuals declaring farming as their main job. The results for those who have farming as their second job remains a major gap in the official statistics.

**Table 5: Incidence of high MJH by larger farming sectors & workforce status**

Category	Workforce status					
	F FT	F PT	F FT&PT	M FT	M PT	M FT&PT
Beef cattle farming	32.5	26.8	29.8	22.4	24.5	22.8
Sheep farming	30.5	27.9	29.5	< 20	23.3	< 20
Dairy cattle farming	21.4	20.2	21	< 20	21.2	< 20
Deer Farming	33	26.5	29.7	23	< 20	22.5
Grain growing	30.2	27.5	28.9	< 20	< 20	< 20
Sheep and beef cattle farming	29.9	27.1	28.7	< 20	21.3	< 20

Note: F = female, M = male, PT = part time, FT = full time.

### ***Other rural occupations***

Other rural occupations were examined for rates of multiple job holding, noting some of these people would have had farming as an (unstated) second job. For agricultural consultants, the overall rate was 26.5%. The highest rates are amongst agricultural consultants who are full-time, self employed, and females (28.9%) are more likely than males (25.6%) to hold more than one job in this category.

For the livestock buyer occupational group, the rate with more than one job is 28.3% and males make up 97% of the group. Similarly, the stock and station agents occupational group has 31.9% with more than one job and males make up 95% of this group. There are also relatively high multiple job holding rates indicated amongst groups such as self employed musterers, nursery growers and workers, and self employed grape growers and wine makers.

### **Motivations and effects of multiple job holding**

The article next examines some of the factors which encourage or inhibit multiple job holding by farmers, and impacts of multiple job holding on individuals, farm families and rural communities.

#### ***Method***

The analysis draws on a purposive sample of 60 farm men and women interviewed in the Ashburton District during 2003, identified through farm directories, local contacts and snow balling. The high rates of multiple job holding amongst farmers made it relatively easy to recruit individual for these interviews. The sex breakdown of respondents was 26 males (43%) and 34 females (57%).

The respondents came from a range of farm sizes, with 65% of them coming from properties between 100 and 400ha. Ninety-two percent of the people interviewed said that they were owners or part owners of the farming operations. A third indicated that they were the person most involved in operating the farm business. Allowing multiple responses, the farms of the respondents produced crops (42), sheep (34), beef (30), dairy (11), pigs (6), deer (5) and horticulture (2).

The principal definition of multiple job holding used in these interviews was paid or unpaid work for more than one employer or family business or farm in the course of the most recent week. Those who did not meet this criterion were screened out of the research. The interviews were based on a comprehensive schedule combining closed and open questions and took an hour to one and a half hours to complete.

**Types of jobs and hours of work**

Respondents identified a wide range of work undertaken in addition to farming (Table 6). Most (46) indicated their main job was the same as their main occupation. For the other 14, their occupation was the same as their second job and for nine of these this was farming. Twenty five of the respondents who reported that their second job was a farmer or farm worker were women, and 19 were men.

**Table 6: Main occupation, main job and other jobs of respondents**

Type of job	Main occupation	Main job	Second job	Third Job
Farmer/farm worker	19	12	44	4
Teacher, tutor	9	9	4	1
Management/accounts	6	8	2	1
Admin/PA/secretarial	4	4	2	
Director	1	2	1	6
Nurse	4	4	2	
Other health sector	3	2	1	
Driver/transport	3	3	1	
Sales/retail	2	4		
Contractor	3	3		
IT related	1	3		
Councillor		1	1	
Agriculture related	1	3		
Other	4	2		
Not specified			2	
Total	60	60	60	12

Over three-fifths (63%) of respondents worked thirty hours or more in their main job during the most recent working week. Half (48%) worked less than 10 hours in their second job, and 11 of the 12 respondents with three jobs worked less than 10 hours in their third job. The average number of hours respondents worked were 36.8 for the main job, 10.1 for the second, and 4.2 for the third. The average time they worked for all their jobs during that week was 47.7 hours. A fifth of the respondents worked less than the full-time equivalent of 30 hours that week, while 35% worked for more than 59 hours.

At least two-thirds of respondents (65%) usually worked for five or more days per week in their main jobs. Only 30% of respondents reported that they usually worked for five days or more in their second job, while a third (33%) did so for less than five days. Some indicated that the number of days they worked in their additional job varied according to the demand for their labour.

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To obtain a broader picture beyond the “last week” definition, respondents were asked about additional jobs they had over the past month and the past year. Other jobs in the past month included bookkeeper (3), trustee (2), director, repairs and maintenance of investment property, cosmetic sales representative, safari guide and colour sorter. For the past year, respondents were asked more broadly whether they undertook any paid or unpaid current work that they considered to be “a job” that they had not previously mentioned. Forty-two of them described a broad range of activities which they considered to be “a job” (Table 7).

Voluntary work for schools, sports clubs, community organisations and churches comprised almost two-thirds (62%) of activities undertaken by the 42 respondents in the previous year that they defined as a “job”. These findings illustrate that multiple job holders in rural areas make a significant contribution to the social capital of their communities in addition to their paid work.

**Table 7: Other activities over the last year self-defined as a “job”**

Activity	Number of responses
Officer/volunteer of schools (e.g. BOT, PTA, fund raising etc)	12
Officer/volunteer of churches	10
Officer/committee member/volunteer of community organisations	9
Paid job /contract work	8
Officer/coach/volunteer of sports clubs	6
Office/committee member of farming organisations (e.g. FF, A&P)	4
Directorships - paid & unpaid	4
Unpaid work for family members, friends & neighbours	3
Care giver for parents & other extended family members	3

Note: others were Professional training & education 2, Craft sales 2, Home stay for Asian students 2, Decorating house 1

Forty-nine respondents also commented on other activities they spent a lot of time on (other than “jobs”). These activities included household work (37 respondents) and childcare (33 respondents). Here again, respondents (30) identified voluntary work, sports and other leisure activities they undertake.

They also described how they manage to balance these activities with their work responsibilities. While one respondent remarked that the lifestyle “*all seems to fall into place*”, another, acknowledging high stress levels, stated “[*We*] both agree it is not living”. Others noted achieving a balance between their work and personal/family lives was an ongoing issue: “[*I*] can’t do everything”. Several mentioned that they needed to organise and plan ahead to achieve balance in their lives.



Overall, the research found that multiple job holding helped personal relationships, friendships and involvement in ongoing education, and hindered care or support of other family members, housework, health and fitness or involvement in organised sport, entertainment or leisure, and involvement in community activities. Some spoke about the positive features of enjoyment, diversity, stimulation, freedom of choice and flexibility from holding multiple jobs. The remainder mentioned negative effects including tiredness, rural isolation, increased stress levels and little opportunity for time off. *"[It's] the hours that kill you really"* said a spray contractor and farmer working 70 hours per week. *"The lifestyle is more of a life sentence than a lifestyle"* commented an art teacher and farmer working 62 hours per week. *"I don't think I'm a boring person to live with or be with, but perhaps I'm too busy for family and friends sometimes. I miss them,"* noted a primary teacher, farmer and company director working 65 hours per week.

In relation to the impacts of multiple job holding on the rural community, respondents noted that there is a reduced pool of volunteers available in rural areas. Voluntary organisations are struggling and often run by older people and multiple job holding doesn't help. For example, one respondent had to relinquish her sporting activities when she took an extra job, while another belonged to 13 different committees before a return to the paid workforce in addition to farming meant she had to resign from them.

### ***Multiple job holding by farmers is longer term***

The research shows that multiple job holding amongst farmers is more a long-term feature of farm households than supposed by observers in the aftermath of the 1980s "farm crisis". Forty nine respondents (82%) indicated they had held more than one job beyond the previous year. Two fifths of the 49 respondents had been multiple job holders for 10 years or more and the average time they had held more than one job was 8.5 years. Moreover, their experience of multiple job holding showed a third (37%) had held three or four jobs at a time for a period of their working life.

Just under half (47%) of respondents had held their main job and 62% their second job for at least 10 years. The average length of time respondents had worked in these jobs were 10.4 years for the main job, 13.6 years for the second, and 10.8 years for the third (Table 8).

**Table 8: Years worked by respondents in their main and other jobs**

Years	Main job		Second job		Third job	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Less than 1	5	8.3	6	10	1	8.3
1-4	14	23.3	6	10	1	8.3
5-9	13	21.7	11	18.3	2	16.7
10-19	21	35	16	26.7	6	50
20-29	3	5	14	23.3	2	16.7
30-39	1	1.7	3	5		
40 & over	3	5	2	3.3		
not specified (1)			2	3.3		
Total	60	100	60	99.9	12	100

Note: (1) The two respondents who did not state the length of time they had worked in their second job had not been employed in that activity during their most recent working week.

Further analysis by sex and age showed 62% of the men had spent ten years and over in their main jobs compared with 35% of the women. However, 68% of the women were employed in their second job for ten years and more compared to 46% of the men. This contrast between the main and second jobs can be explained by many of the women having a main job in a career outside the agricultural sector (e.g teacher, nurse) that complemented their work on farm (their second job).

Another question confirmed the longer-term nature of multiple job holding. Over half the respondents (54%) expected to remain multiple job holders for more than three years, and a third (33%) until they retire. Further analysis by sex and age showed younger respondents of both sexes expected to be multiple job holders for the medium and long terms.

### ***Reasons for multiple job holding by farmers***

While in the 1980s and early 1990s farm men and women appear to have moved into multiple job holding largely because they had to, this research shows that the reasons are now more complex. The respondents indicated they hold multiple jobs by choice rather than necessity. When asked a closed question about their reasons for having more than one job, two-thirds of respondents (67%) said that it was because they wanted to, while just over a quarter (27%) acknowledged that there were elements of choice and necessity that influenced them to do so. Only 3% said they held more than one job simply because they had to.

Nonetheless, economic reasons predominated for holding multiple jobs and there are implications for farm household finances and farm finances. Asked about their reasons for having more than job over time, the most frequently cited reasons (31) were the need for extra or regular income. *“Money”, “financial reasons”* and *“income”* were keywords frequently used by respondents. As one remarked, the extra money from a second job *“got us through the hot patches”*, and another, *“I want to get ahead, [it’s] easier while you are young and fit”*. While several explained that income from the farm was insufficient to sustain their standard of living. Those who explained they had another job for lifestyle reasons either wanted to broaden their interests by having a non farming occupation, or had purchased a farm so they could enjoy a rural lifestyle. Others saw their non-farm job enabled them to continue or develop a career, *“I just love my teaching”* and provided a social outlet, *“I’d go nuts if I was at home all day”*.

Respondents were asked to indicate how their other jobs contributed to their farm business or household, and it is evident this contribution is complex. More than anything else, the income from additional jobs was used to maintain the household’s lifestyle or to pay for extras to enhance that lifestyle. By comparison, its contribution to farm finances and farm succession was seen as relatively minor. Only 11 respondents indicated that their other job was essential for the farm finances, and another two noted that their other jobs had contributed to that purpose in the past. Respondents who indicated that their additional income was *“very important”* explained it in terms of the contribution the non-farm job(s) made to ensuring economic survival, *“Keeps us floating”*, *“Without it we’d be on the dole”*, and *“[The] farm is not making enough to sustain our lifestyle as we live at the moment”*. The income helped them achieve financial goals (e.g. repayment of debt and saving for retirement and other purposes) and provided cash for essential household expenditure. Respondents who rated their income as *“important”* considered that it provided money for less essential items of household expenditure, *“We eat out, which we never did before.”*, and reduced the need to draw funds from the farm. The remainder, who felt their income was of lesser importance to the household, were more dependent on the farm for their livelihood. They were more likely to describe the contribution of their income as providing luxury items, *“play money”*, *“icing on the cake”*, rather than necessary for the household’s survival.

Asked for their views about what leads to multiple job holding in the farming sector, respondents identified a range of factors. Although economic factors predominated, personal and social factors were also significant. Many spoke of a need to broaden their outlook, the interest and challenge of farming, or an opportunity to use their skills in another occupation, for *“plain self satisfaction, self worth”*. Others considered that women in particular worked off farm to have social contact with other people: *“Good for farm wives to get off farm for social factor”*. A wide range of individual benefits identified included social contact with other people, personal growth and stimulation, a sense of satisfaction and self-worth, *“To be a valued member of society and feeling I have something to contribute”*, flexibility in hours of work, financial independence and a balanced lifestyle.

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For some people these benefits were the result of a deliberate choice to have more than one job, but for others they were the outcome of other motivations: a woman who valued her contacts with a wide range of people observed “[/] don’t consciously go out and get more than one job”.

The general view was that employment was relatively easy to find in the Mid Canterbury area. Fifty-seven percent of respondents considered it was very easy or easy to obtain work in their main job and only 22% thought it was difficult or very difficult. Comments made by respondents indicated that generally there were plenty of jobs available for nurses and care givers, “*In rural areas they are desperate for registered staff*”, teachers and early childhood workers, rural bankers, spray applicators and farm workers. Those who said it was difficult or very difficult to find work in their non-farming job explained it in terms of their age, lack of experience, or the very specialist nature of the occupation. Eight women married to farmers observed that this relationship was the crucial factor in their having a job on a farm. As one remarked, “*all you have to do is marry a farmer - it comes with the territory*”.

Over four-fifths of respondents said that changes at their place of work in the farming sector had affected their jobs. The introduction of new technology in the form of tractors, machinery, animal health and breeding practices, irrigation systems, improved seed varieties, and the use of computers for production and administration has reduced the amount of physical labour required on farms. There has been a general trend for permanent farm workers to be replaced by casual and contract labour. Many respondents also mentioned that their farm had either modified its production system (e.g. by growing more specialised crops, leasing land for dairy grazing) or converted to another system (e.g. from sheep to mixed cropping). Respondents also noted the influence of increased government regulation and associated paper work, and external economic factors, on changes at their workplaces.

Respondents were asked to identify changes in their personal and family circumstances that affected their decisions to hold more than one job. The influence of the family life cycle is clearly evident as shown by the high frequency of responses such as starting a family, starting a long-term relationship/getting married, children’s education and planning for retirement. Further analysis of these responses by sex and age (Table 9) reveals that changing a place of residence, starting a family, commencing a long term relationship or marriage, children’s education and other family finances were more influential factors in the decisions of women in holding their current jobs than was the case for men. Men were more likely than women to be influenced by tertiary study or obtaining new qualifications when they made their decisions to take multiple jobs. However, there seemed to be no difference between the two sexes with respect to the influence of home ownership, mortgage or planning for retirement on their decisions.

**Table 9: Effect of changes in personal or family circumstances on decisions to hold multiple jobs by sex and age of respondents**

Personal and family circumstances	Male			Female		
	No.	age range	average age	No.	age range	average age
Change in place where I live	9	39-65	47.4	16	36-58	43.8
Starting a family	8	38-56	41.8	13	31-64	41.2
Starting a long-term relationship/getting married	2	38-41	39.5	16	31-64	43.8
Children's education	3	39-44	42	15	36-57	46.1
Home ownership/mortgage	8	32-56	42.1	9	36-53	44
Other family finances	3	39-41	40.3	13	31-58	45.6
Tertiary study/getting new qualifications	9	33-65	43	5	36-50	42
Planning for retirement	6	32-52	41.8	5	42-61	49.6
Total respondents (60)	26	32-65	46.3	34	31-64	44.1

In comments about the personal and family circumstances that influenced them to hold multiple jobs, one woman recalled the criticism she received from farming neighbours when she returned to nursing some 20 years before, and added that nowadays working off the farm is the accepted norm and they seek her advice on health matters. Other women spoke of returning to a previous occupation, changing from part-time to full-time work, or quitting their off-farm jobs as they juggled their careers with their family commitments.

## Discussion

The findings from the 2001 Census and interviews show multiple job holding is a feature of farming life. Multiple job holding by farm men and women appears more established as a long-term feature of farm households than suggested by observers in the aftermath of the 1980s "farm crisis". The New Zealand research confirms and extends the international evidence of farm pluriactivity, including the impacts of rural restructuring, successive climatic events and commodity price cycles. The research contributes to critical reviews of family farming and sustainable farming by rural sociologists, reflecting an emerging orientation towards ecological and global perspectives, and applied, multi-disciplinary research (Fuller, 1990).

Farm families have diversified their sources of income from the core farm business operation to include off-farm employment and alternative enterprises (Benediktsson, et al., 1990; Fairweather and Gilmore, 1992; Le Heron, 1991; Rhodes and Journeaux,

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1995). This pluriactivity helps maintain farm household incomes, defends farm equity and provides greater opportunity for retirement and family succession (Taylor and McCrostie Little, 1995; Taylor et al., 1997). Benediktsson et al. (1990) argued off farm work has been a feature of rural occupations since pioneer times. Le Heron (1991) recognised, however, that a trend to greater off farm income is part of a general societal trend towards dual incomes, casualisation of work, and individualisation. It is probable farmers are moving closer to urban society in their social and economic aspirations. For example, several farm women mentioned working to pay for the education of their children, or to develop their full potential, as primary motivations for having an extra job and source of income. However, the high levels of multiple job holding and the long hours worked suggest that multiple job holding may have reached sustainable limits as an adaptive strategy for managing the risks inherent in farming, and increasing farm household income.

Both earlier research (Taylor and McCrostie Little, 1995; Taylor et al., 1997) and the new interview data show there are gender differences in farm household labour and multiple job holding. However, farm women, especially those involved in “doing the books”, appear to have an increasing role in financial planning and decision making (McCrostie Little and Taylor, 1998). Furthermore, in addition to their reproductive and farm roles, and other employment, farm women continue to make an important input to community life. The 2001 Census data show while men and women are heavily involved in multiple job holding, generally women are more involved than men. The non-farm employment of farm men is dominated by work in the agricultural sector including agricultural contracting and truck driving. For farm women, occupations in education, health and administration predominate.

The research shows there is an important relationship between the non-farm work of farm women, the family life cycle and farm development. Women noted how they had developed, and in some cases redeveloped, their careers outside farming, citing examples of re-entering the workforce in various ways, including voluntary work, relief teaching and part-time work. They emphasised how they were using their qualifications, benefiting from their social contact outside the farm and strengthening their personal development. Many then clearly develop professional careers and some attain management levels. Fewer farm men take a career path off the farm, and generally these are males with tertiary qualifications. Despite their careers, however, women continue to work on their farms. These findings are consistent with overseas studies. Shortall (1992:438-439) found that women considered their off-farm employment provided a means to increase their independence, raise their status, and give them a sense of personal identity.

There is a complex relationship between off-farm income and farm finances. Off-farm income used by the household allows farm income to be ploughed back into the farm. So both should be considered as components of total income and expenditure by a farm family. Multiple job holding is a flexible mechanism that helps farm families adjust to

changes in the economic environment and minimises the impact of downturns in farm income (Weersink et al., 1998).

While in the 1980s and early 1990s farm men and women appear to have moved into multiple jobs largely because they had to, this new research shows that the reasons are now more complex. After a period of significant debt on some farms, Taylor and McCrostie Little (1995) found for nearly two thirds of the off-farm employment households interviewed back then, the additional income was either very important or important to their farm finances. The respondents in 2003 hold multiple jobs more by choice than necessity. They identified a broad range of personal, social and economic factors behind their jobs, and although economic factors predominated, personal and social factors were also significant. Whatever the financial position of farming, multiple job holding is now a feature of the rural scene.

There have been considerable changes in farming community attitudes to non-farm employment since the farm "crisis" of the mid to late 1980s. Before then both men and women met resistance to working off their farm. By the 1980s it was regarded as acceptable to work to "save" the farm, and for younger farm couples with high debt loading it was the only feasible option to maintain household incomes (Taylor and McCrostie Little, 1995). Today, multiple job holding is widely accepted, no matter the reasons for it, with those interviewed noting the support there now is in the farming community.

## Conclusions

National statistics combined with in-depth analysis based on personal interviews has built on previous research to provide a picture of changes in the patterns of work amongst farm men and women. The interviews provided some understanding of the dynamics of multiple job holding for individuals, households and communities. Mid Canterbury has a range of farm sizes and types, with an emphasis on cropping, however, the findings from interviews in one district should be treated with caution in terms of national representativeness.

While off-farm work may no longer be driven by the need to sustain farm income, the need many women have for non-farm work may be stronger than ever. Urban and rural society are no longer distinct social contexts, as telecommunications, mass media, improved road networks and modern transportation have all reduced the distinctions between town and country lifestyles. Farming is increasingly seen as a business that needs expert management as well as basic farming knowledge, differing little structurally from many urban based businesses with an export or market component (McCrostie Little and Taylor, 1997). Universally women today expect to continue their careers throughout their family lives – its no different for women on the land (McCrostie Little and Taylor, 1998). Nor was the continued careers of farm women deemed remarkable by the farm community in 2003. Continuing their farm work has not dissuaded women from non-farm careers.

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With acceptance of the normality of pluriactivity by farm businesses and households, the research focus falls on the extent and type of non-farm jobs, and the types and styles of non-farm businesses, rather than the overriding necessity to provide secondary income for survival. Of particular interest is the interdependence of the core farm business, and personal, family and community life for multiple job holders. Key questions remain, including the effect of emerging, less gendered farm business management structures on the employment options of women, and comparing the type and amount of work by men and women over family and farm development cycles.

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