Consumer, Producer and State Relations within the Multiple Scales of the Eastern Ontario Egg Industry: Exposing Scalar Relations and Neoliberal Tensions

by

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Consumer, producer and state relations within the multiple scales of the eastern Ontario egg industry: Exposing scalar relations and neoliberal tensions

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Abstract

This research evaluates relationships between consumers, producers and the state within eastern Ontario’s multi-scalar egg industry. Comparative case studies of three producers, Burnbrae Farms, Reinink Family Farm and Covenant Farm, reveal distinctly scalar production, marketing, and communication practices within the industry. The findings challenge the dichotomy of large versus small scales, revealing mutually beneficial multi-scalar partnerships. The research also evaluates the power of consumers and the state in shaping the industry. Surveys of egg consumers reveal demand for alternative production. However, consumers face barriers to agency, including lack of knowledge and a tendency to outsource their ethics. Policy analysis reveals supply management, Canada’s alternative regulatory system, protects many consumer and producer interests by challenging conventional globalized agri-food production and protecting (to an extent) small-scale, alternative producers. However, international neoliberalization processes threaten Canada’s supply management systems. Therefore, the industry must evolve to enhance consumer and producer support for the system.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The conventional globalized agri-food system, defined by neoliberalism, is now widely associated with a diversity of ecological and socio-economic issues (Holt-Grimenez and Shattuck, 2011; Guthman, 2008; Liverman and Vilas, 2006). This research investigates the relationship between consumers, producers and the state within the multiple scales of Eastern Ontario’s egg industry, and examines the role of each party in resisting neoliberal processes and challenging conventional globalized agri-food production. The research found that all three parties share an interest in resisting neoliberalization and each plays a role in protecting supply management, the industry’s current alternative governance system. However, the research concludes that consumers, producers and the state must cooperate and communicate more effectively to resist international pressure to liberalize the egg industry.

This research fulfills three main objectives. First, it critically examines the relationship between consumers, producers and the state within Eastern Ontario’s egg industry, at differing scales of production. In particular, the research explores production practices and communication methods among consumers, producers and the state, drawing comparison between scales. Second, the research investigates ways in which the regulatory structure of Ontario’s egg industry constructs distinct scales of production, and identifies the effect of these scales on consumer-producer-state relationships. Finally, the research begins to elucidate the role of consumers, producers and the state in influencing alternative production practices and systems, and resisting neoliberalization across structured scales.
These objectives were approached using case study methodology and a mix of qualitative research methods. The research involved consumer surveys, comparative analysis of three producers of various scale, and policy analysis of the regulatory structure and policies of the Ontario egg industry. Analysis was embedded within critical food studies literature, an expanding body of academic work that critically analyzes agri-food systems, and food consumption geography, a relatively new and expanding field within human geography that seeks to evaluate food consumption trends.

1.1 Research Context

1.1.1 The Research Area – Eastern Ontario

This research is situated within Eastern Ontario, located in the south-eastern corner of the province of Ontario. In total, it comprises more than a dozen counties and several cities, the largest of which include Ottawa (with a population of over 800,000), Kingston (>110,000) and Peterborough (>74,000) (Andrée et al., 2013, p.1). Numerous alternative agri-food initiatives have developed within Eastern Ontario throughout the last decade, making it an ideal site within which to study multiple scales of agri-food production (Ibid).

1.1.2 The Canadian Egg Industry

Industrialized egg production in Canada occurs through a fragmented, multi-step process that involves the flow of eggs and egg production inputs through numerous facilities. The full spectrum of the Canadian egg industry spans from the breeding and hatching of egg-laying hens, to the grading and processing of eggs. This research targets only a small portion of the industry, exploring the production of shell eggs by primary producers and graders. For feasibility reasons,
the research does not address additional aspects of the egg industry, such as breeding, processing, or retailing.

Primary egg producers purchase chicks intended for egg production, referred to as pullets, from egg breeders. Alternatively, they may purchase ready-to-lay hens from pullet producers, who raise chicks from birth to maturity (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 1999). Hens must be moved from pullet facilities when they begin laying, at 17-19 weeks of age. While in production, they are traditionally kept in egg laying barns of various design, called layers.

In Canada, licensed egg graders grade all commercially-sold eggs to inspect for safety and quality (Egg Farmers of Canada, 2013). Grading involves examination of the interior quality, weight, cleanliness and shell construction of each egg. Canada Grade A, consumer grade eggs, must be clean, uncracked and contain no defects. Specifically, grading involves washing, weighing, inspecting and packing the eggs. Inspection occurs through a process of 'candling' in which eggs pass over a bright candling light on a conveyor belt system, making their internal contents, and any internal defects, visible. Canada Grade A eggs are then sorted by weight, into Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, and Small (Peewee) containers. All egg grading stations in Canada are registered and inspected by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in order to ensure eggs are handled and packed in a sanitary environment (Ibid). Ungraded eggs can only be sold to egg-grading stations, egg dealers, or directly from producers to consumers, not within commercial establishments (OMAFRA, 2013, Egg Grading, Distribution and Sales in Ontario, Regulatory requirement for eggs, para. 2). Egg producers may grade their own eggs if they have a registered grading station. However, many farmers sell their eggs to larger egg grading companies who then sell to wholesalers and retailers.
1.1.3 Trends within the Egg Industry

The economic success of egg products has relied on consumer perception of eggs as a healthy and safe food product. In the late twentieth century, eggs decreased in popularity as a result of emerging research that indicated they were higher in cholesterol than other protein sources (Cherubin, 2006, p. 10). However, recent studies have shown that eggs may not be as harmful to blood cholesterol levels as previously thought. In addition, eggs appeal to consumers as a carbohydrate-free food. The appeal of eggs has been bolstered by what Cherubin (2006) refers to as the 'designer egg' craze. Over the past two decades, a variety of speciality eggs have been developed, including eggs produced from free-range or vegetarian-fed chickens, or that come with value-added benefits such as Omega-3 fatty acids. Cherubin argues that value-added eggs do little to improve human health. However, Canadian egg producers in Canada have successfully marketed 'designer eggs', and demand for speciality eggs is steadily growing. These factors, taken together, have led to a recent resurgence in the popularity of eggs and egg products in Canada (Ibid).

However, the egg industry in Canada has suffered health scares and animal welfare scandals. Since the 1970s, incidence of salmonella within egg products has been increasing (Braden, 2006, p. 512). Concern for food safety and quality among consumers has risen accordingly. Recently, concern for the welfare of egg laying hens has also become prominent. Several animal welfare activist groups are dedicated to ensuring the welfare of farm animals and exposing cases of perceived abuse (Egg Industry, 2013; CCFA, 2013; PETA 2013). In 2013, the W5 documentary program produced by the Canadian television network CTV released a video obtained through undercover investigation that revealed production practices on an egg farm in Alberta (Stevens, 2013). Media and activist reactions labelled the conditions 'horrific' (Ibid).
Public reaction to the W5 report indicates that consumers are not satisfied with current industry practices, and highlights the gap between consumer demand and actual production practices being engaged in within Canada's egg industry.

1.1.4 Regulation of the Ontario Egg Industry

The production of eggs in Canada is regulated by supply management, a production and marketing system that matches production levels with consumer demand (OMAFRA, 2013, Supply Management Systems, Introduction, para. 2). The system was developed in response to boom and bust cycles in the 1950s that continuously forced producers into bankruptcy, in order to provide stability to the egg industry (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 1999). Supply management is achieved through the co-ordinated efforts of a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations, the most influential of whom include federal and provincial egg marketing boards and the CFIA (Ibid); see Appendix A: Overview of the Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure. The research found supply management effectively resists neoliberalization of the Canadian egg industry, by protecting the domestic market and supporting producers of all scale.

1.1.5 Contextualizing the Research Problem – Agri-food Systems and Neoliberalism

Canada’s supply-managed egg industry is faced with international pressure to reduce protectionist barriers and engage in freer trade. This pressure stems from hegemonic neoliberal ideology and governance in the international community. Hegemony refers to the consolidation of power leading to dominance that is perpetuated to the extent it becomes normalized. Hegemony is used within geography to refer to the way in which dominant social groups
establish and maintain a privileged position by representing their own interests as the interests of all people (Mayhew, 2015). Most commonly, hegemony is achieved through the cultural and political diffusion of ideology and practice supportive of the dominant group’s interests. The dominant group may produce and diffuse ways of thinking that support their interests, while subtly eliminating opposing views, thus encouraging members of non-dominant groups to consent to hegemonic structures. As a result, the social dominance of a single group becomes naturalized, and is consented to and supported by a diversity of groups and persons, including those for whom the hegemonic structure is restrictive (Ibid). For example, Peet (2002) highlights the multitude of ways in which neoliberal economic hegemony in South Africa is diffused, primarily through academic control of discourse supporting the neoliberal framework.

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, neoliberalism has become a hegemonic ideology associated with hegemonic structures and processes governing global agri-food systems. The term neoliberalism links broad economic changes of ‘globalization’ with the ideological and political practices of governance that have enabled such change (Kingfisher and Maskovsky, 2008, p. 116). The ‘neo’ refers to a period of liberalism linked to the economic theories of Adam Smith, who argued for unrestricted trade, increased competition and reduced government intervention (Liverman and Vilas, 2006, p. 329). Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd claimed that neoliberalism represents a triumph of the free market, ‘underpinned by a slimmed down version of the state’ (Cahill, 2011, p. 481). Broadly, neoliberalism can be conceptualized as a political economic approach that promotes free markets, which function through competitive individual decision making, as the most effective mechanism for allocating resources. Neoliberalism, while contested in diverse ways in various contexts, has dominated global agricultural systems of governance for the past several decades. Neoliberal policies are
disseminated and enforced by international governing organizations, such as the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund, and have resulted in freer trade within the international agri-food industry (Holt-Grimenez and Shattuck, 2011, p. 111).

Critical food studies scholars have identified a number of troubling effects resulting from the neoliberalization of agri-food systems. Guthman (2008) argues that in the United States neoliberalization of the agricultural sector has prompted land and water privatization, the dismantling of national-level food safety regulations, and the eradication of entitlement programs meant to combat hunger (p. 1171). Dibden et al. (2009) argue that neoliberal resistance is often based on concern for rural livelihoods and food security. Liverman and Vilas (2006) likewise explore how neoliberal policies in Mexico have made it difficult for small-scale farmers to survive (p. 349). Neoliberal opponents argue further that free trade policies threaten environmental sustainability (Guthman, 2008; Liverman and Vilas, 2006). Liverman and Vilas (2006) detail the environmental effects of neoliberal policies in Mexico, which have resulted in water depletion, overfishing, deforestation and the extensive use of fertilizers (p. 350; p. 354). In Canada, neoliberalism has similarly restructured the agri-food system (Winson, 1993) and brought about numerous challenges to food producers (Desmarais et al., 2011).

1.1.6 Scholarly Context and Contributions to the Literature

The relocalization of agricultural production represents one strategy through which to resist globalization of agri-food systems, by providing alternative means of food provisioning. The concept of scale is therefore integral to discussions of neoliberal globalization and resistance efforts. Geographers within critical food studies literature have sought to unveil the social construction of scales and the material effects popular conceptualizations of 'the local' and 'the
Critical food studies scholars have problematized localized resistance to neoliberalism, arguing that local food initiatives often rely on individual consumption choices to challenge conventional production systems (Guthman, 2008; Levkoe, 2011; Delind, 2011). The theorists argue that individualized approaches to resistance produce neoliberal subjectivities, by encouraging citizens to define themselves through consumption. Alternative local food initiatives therefore often support the neoliberal agenda of free markets, governed by individuals, rather than state regulation.

Food consumption geography likewise engages in debates regarding the role of consumers and the state in challenging neoliberal agri-food systems. Agency geographers argue that consumers have the power and responsibility to pursue change in agri-food systems through their individual choices (Jackson, 2010; Clarke et al., 2007). These geographers argue that individual choices amalgamate to pressure producers and the state to make regulatory and production changes. In contrast, structural geographers contend that individual choices do not have the power to alter the structure of neoliberal production systems and argue that state interference is necessary to produce effective change in conventional agri-food systems (Guthman, 2008; Hudson and Hudson, 2003; Sonnino, 2013).

This research contributes to structure-agency debates, arguing that consumers, producers and the state must all contribute to neoliberal resistance efforts. Participating consumers widely rejected conventional production and distribution systems and actively sought alternative, and often small-scale, producers. The majority of consumers associated small-scale producers with more ethical, healthful and nutritious products. However, consumers displayed limited knowledge of the egg industry and supply management. The supply management system protects
the domestic egg market from international competition and ensures producers of all scales receive a fair and consistent price for their product. Smaller-scale producers in this study argued that the system is most beneficial for large-scale producers, and reinforces large-scale production as hegemonic. However, participating producers of all scales supported supply management as an effective tool to resist neoliberalization of the egg industry. In contrast, consumers were skeptical and distrustful of the industry. Both producers and the state play a role in communicating production and industry information to consumers, however, the effectiveness of their efforts is questionable, given the low levels of consumer knowledge uncovered in this study. Widespread support for supply management will be necessary to develop unified resistance to international neoliberalization efforts. Therefore, greater communication among consumers, producers and the state is necessary to support neoliberal resistance in the Canadian egg industry.

### 1.2 Thesis Layout

This document is broken into nine chapters. The first three chapters, the introduction, conceptual framework and methodology, introduce and contextualize the research. The following five chapters present and analyze the results. Chapter 4 presents consumer findings, while Chapters 5-7 discuss producer case studies at various scales, with one chapter dedicated to each of the three cases. A final analysis chapter, Chapter 8, analyses state policies and industry structure. The main research findings and scholarly contributions are then outlined and summarized in a concluding chapter.
Chapter 2
Critical Food Studies Literature and the Construction of Agricultural Scales: Setting the Stage for Analysis of Consumer-Producer Relations within Eastern Ontario’s Egg Industry

2.0 Introduction

This research is guided by key concepts and ideas within critical food studies literature and the geography of food consumption. The concept of scale, in particular, is a critical component of this research and therefore requires a thorough analysis and clear definition. Different scales of agricultural production must be defined before they can be properly studied. The discourse of 'local food' has profound implications for agricultural production, particularly with regards to defining small scales of production. The concept of 'the local' must therefore be appropriately defined. Social and political movements and ideals, such as processes of neoliberalization and localization, also play a huge role in shaping scalar relationships within agriculture. The development of these movements and their implication for agricultural producers and consumers at all scales must therefore be analyzed. Finally, the role of the state in defining scale and supporting social and political movements is a vital component of this research and has only been partially articulated in the existing literature. A brief exploration of these topics will provide context and a knowledge base for this research.
2.1 The Concept of Scale in Geography

2.1.1 Scale and Political Ecology

Scale is a foundational concept within geography, but has been defined in a multitude of divergent ways throughout the discipline (Brown and Purcell, 2005, p. 609). Since the early 1990s, geographers have given increased attention to the development of a robust theoretical account of scale.

Political ecologists in particular have used ideas from the discipline of ecology to conceptualize scale (Neumann, 2009, p. 400; Sayre, 2005, p. 278; Manson, 2008, p. 781). Ecologists think of scale in terms of ‘grain’ and ‘extent’ (Sayre, 2005, p. 278). The term ‘grain’ refers to spatial resolution, while ‘extent’ refers to size and duration. Manson (2008) argues that human geographers ought to similarly distinguish between scale as extent and scale as level (p. 781). Sayre (2005) argues that human geographers often conflate and confuse these two meanings of scale (p. 278). As a result, scale is often employed hierarchically, limiting its utility as a critical tool (Neumann, 2009, p. 400). Scale has become associated with macro/micro binaries, particularly the global/local binary that conceptualizes the global as having causal power and the local as lacking agency (p. 399). Therefore, caution must be used to distinguish between scale as extent and scale as level.

Sayre argues further that the conflation of scale as extent and scale as level results from the failure of human geographers to distinguish between epistemological and ontological moments of scale (p. 278). He posits that scale is inherent in all observations and argues that choices regarding the scale of observation have epistemological importance (p. 280). However, some patterns and processes are observable only at certain scales and thereby form a kind of
'natural scale' (p. 281). This feature of scale he refers to as an 'ontological moment.' Ecologists are concerned with the extent of observation most appropriate for studying a certain process and are therefore primarily concerned with epistemological moments of scale (Neumann, 2009, p. 400). However, they also recognize scale as a characteristic of objective processes or levels of organization and therefore acknowledge ontological moments of scale as well.

Neumann (2009) argues that human geographers ought to likewise distinguish between epistemological and ontological moments of scale (p. 401). For example, he argues that cities and nations are levels of social organization, and the choice to study these levels represents an epistemological moment. Manson (2008) likewise refers to levels of organization as 'scales of observation', reflecting the choice inherent in the construction of these levels (p. 781). On the other hand, scales of extent are produced through distinct processes whose effects extend across a certain geographic area, and in ecology are referred to as 'natural scales,' or ontological moments of scale (Neumann, 2009, p. 400). However, Neumann argues that such ecologically-informed definitions of geographic scales do not adequately account for their social construction (p. 400). Social scientists define scale as being shaped by and existing within social and political processes – through a body of academic literature broadly referred to as politics of scale literature.

2.1.2 The Politics of Scale

The politics of scale literature is a cross-disciplinary body of work that has been in development since the 1980s. Political economists have primarily engaged in this type of analysis, recognizing that both scales of extent and scales of observation are constructed through socio-ecological processes (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003, p. 904). Brown and Purcell (2005) argue that three main theoretical principles have been established from the politics of scale literature (p. 609).
First, politics of scale scholars have established that scale is socially constructed through diverse mechanisms. Scale can never be considered an ontological reality, with inherent characteristics, but rather is constructed and negotiated through political struggle (Ibid). In keeping with this strand of thought, Smith and Kurtz (2003) trace how scale was negotiated and reconstructed by activist groups in New York City in the late 1990s when the local government threatened to sell off community garden land (p. 200). Community garden activists framed the struggle not solely as a threat against individual gardens, but also as an attack on a large city-wide gardening network, and formed both local and city-wide coalitions of activists in response (p. 202). Furthermore, the activists engaged in protests at key national sites and used the Internet as a tool to successfully foster extra-local support for their cause (p. 205). The NYC case highlights Smith's (1993) concept of “jumping scales” – in which groups at a disadvantage at one scale pursue their aims at a different scale (in Brown and Purcell, 2005, p. 610). The case study also exposes the power of social groups to negotiate the scale of political struggle. Therefore, politics of scale scholars have questioned the notion that the 'ontological moment' of scale constitutes a 'natural' scale, but rather argue that scales of extent are produced through social processes and movements.

A second, related insight recognizes scale as characterized by dialectical fixity and fluidity. Since scales are socially produced through political struggle, and political struggle is an ongoing process, then scalar arrangements are likewise fluid and constantly renegotiated (p. 609). However, even among scholars who recognize the fluidity of scale, few argue it is total (p. 610). Brown and Purcell (2005), among others, recognize the tendency for scalar arrangements to be routinized into hegemonic structures for enduring periods of time. Scales thereby become associated with particular characteristics and processes that come to be conceived of as inherent. These scalar arrangements form levels, or hierarchies, of organization. The restructuring of scale
through fluid processes therefore occurs within fixed hegemonic and hierarchical scalar arrangements. This view accounts for the social construction of 'epistemological moments' of scale, by explaining how scales of organization come to be formed through social and political processes.

Finally, politics of scale theorists explore scale as a relational concept (Ibid). All scales are embedded within (or made up of) other scales. For example, the municipal scale is embedded within the provincial and national scales, while the national scale in turn consists of various smaller scales. Brenner (2001) argues, therefore, that in order to truly analyze scale, different scales must be discussed in relation to one another (in Brown and Purcell, 2005, p. 610). He suggests that the most accurate way to conceive of scale is through a 'plural connotation', in which analysis focuses on the changing interrelationships between scales (Ibid).

2.2 Conceptualizations of ‘The Global’ Scale and Neoliberalism within Critical Food Literature

2.2.1 Global Scale Agricultural Production

Scale has been conceptualized in diverse ways within food studies literature. In particular, critical food studies scholars have noted a scalar shift away from the nation state as the hegemonic scale of state authority to reorganization at both local and global scales.

The global scale has been conceived of through a variety of methods. Global commodity chain (GCC) analysis is one method through which the extension of production processes throughout the globe has been conceptualized. The commodity chain approach involves tracing the network of labour and production processes associated with commodities (Challies, 2008, p. 380). The GCC approach is concerned both with the spatial distribution and organization of
production practices. Thus, this approach is capable of revealing complex divisions of labour within globalized industries and serves to raise awareness about production practices to which consumers are not generally exposed (p. 384).

The global value chain approach (GVC) is closely associated with GCC analysis. It traces and describes the full range of production activities associated with commodities. However, the global value chain approach differs in that it provides a method to explain changes in the governance of commodity chains over time and therefore enables examination of the interplay of tactics within evolving institutional frameworks (Oro and Pritchard, 2011, p. 711). GCC and GVC approaches provide valuable insights into production processes; however, they have been critiqued as paying insufficient attention to the complexities of consumption and being overly focused on large-scale processes (Challies, 2008, p. 382).

Food regime analysis represents an additional method through which the globalized nature of agri-food production has been explored. Friedmann (1987) first introduced the approach as a method of explaining production and consumption relations within the global economy. Friedmann defines food regimes as “rule-governed structure[s] of production and consumption of food on a world scale” (Friedmann, 1993, p. 30-31). Friedmann and McMichael (1989) use food regime analysis to outline the evolution of global agricultural processes, and to describe the effect these processes have on the global political economy. The authors identify the first food regime as occurring in the mid-late 1800s, defined by the European colonial system through which settler states exported wheat and meat to Europe and imported European manufactured goods, labour and capital in return.

Food regime analysis involves historical analysis of spatial relations within the political economy of evolving international food systems (McMichael, 2009, p.141). McMichael (2009)
argues that agriculture has historically played an important role in national and global economic development and capital accumulation (p. 140). The first food regime was key to the creation of national economies governed by independent settler states, by fostering international trade and the accumulation of capital in colonial settlements. McMichael explains, therefore, that food regime analysis “underlines the agri-food dimensions of geo-politics” (Ibid). Holt-Grimenez and Shattuck (2011) explain food regime analysis as combining elements of political economy, political ecology and historical analysis to identify and assess food regimes as they have developed over time (p. 110).

Holt-Grimenez and Shattuck argue that the current food regime is characterized by neoliberal capitalist expansion (p. 111). International treaties (through international free trade agreements) enable policies supporting free markets. The World Trade Organization’s (WTO’s) Agreement on Agriculture restricts the rights of sovereign states to regulate food and agriculture. Similarly, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), enforced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in developing nations, have broken down tariffs and dismantled national governance of food production in the global South (p. 111). Canada recently signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement in which it agreed to open its protected dairy market to increased international trade by reducing tariffs (Global Affairs Canada, 2015). These trends are considered part of the neoliberal agenda.

2.2.2 Food Regime Analysis and Neoliberalization

Food regime analysis posits an overarching theory of neoliberal agri-food governance. However, Dibden et al. (2009) argue that neoliberalism is not a monolithic enterprise, but rather is both regionally and situationally variable (p. 301). Likewise, Brenner et al. (2010) argue that it is more helpful to discuss neoliberalism as a set of processes, referred to as ‘neoliberalization’,
rather than as a static ideology. They argue that neoliberalization can be best understood as constituting a pattern of related activities with divergent effects on distinct places (p. 330). Neoliberalization processes include regulatory and societal changes that promote free market systems through increased competition and reduced government intervention. These processes are underpinned by a belief that resources are most efficiently allocated through individual decision-making. The state still plays an important role within the neoliberal framework. However, that role is not to oversee or regulate markets, but rather to ensure their free functioning.

Brenner et al. (2009) argue neoliberalization processes have developed unevenly across contexts (p. 331). Didben et al. (2009) likewise reveal local resistance has altered neoliberalization processes within particular spaces in Europe and Australia. The authors argue neoliberal ideology and processes have been heavily modified in Europe due to countervailing discourse and social and political pressure to protect agricultural markets (p. 301). They argue recent agricultural movements, such as organics and fair trade, have arisen in opposition to neoliberalization, as an unintended side-effect of neoliberal processes. Therefore, neoliberal ideology and neoliberalization processes frame current global agri-food systems but have had divergent affects in various contexts. It follows that neoliberalization can be best studied situationally, taking into consideration the spatial and scalar particularities of each case.

2.3 Small- and Mid-Scale Agriculture and Conceptions of ‘the Local’ within Critical Food Studies Literature

Increasing recognition of the spatial unevenness of neoliberalization has led geographers to shift their analysis from global- and national-scale processes to the study of specific local places and smaller scales of production. Small-scale agriculture is often viewed as dichotomous and
preferable to global-scale processes (Dupuis and Goodman, 2005, p. 359). The local food movement has arisen as a social and political project to re-embed agricultural processes in local places.¹ Small-scale and local agriculture have become conceptually linked as providing an alternative to the large-scale, agri-business model of agricultural production.

Small-scale agriculture can properly be defined as a scale of extent, as it is constituted by a set of processes and defined by their geographical reach. More specifically, small-scale agriculture consists of practices and processes that extend across 'small' or short distances. Similarly, the most common definition of local food posits that it refers to food produced and consumed within the same geographic region (Mount, 2012, p. 108). Local food systems have therefore become associated with small-scale agriculture.

2.3.1 Problematizing Local Food

Small-scale local food systems are often viewed as preferable to global-scale food systems (Dupuis and Goodman, 2005, p. 359). Food activists, in particular, have made connections between the localization of food systems and the promotion of social justice and environmental sustainability. Sonnino (2013) summarizes the shift towards localization practices, citing three main arguments that underlie the assumption that local food systems represent a sustainable solution to problems associated with the industrialized agri-food system (p. 2).

First, local production is often deemed to be more environmentally friendly because of the reduced distance food must travel to reach the consumer, translating into a smaller carbon footprint. Second, it is assumed that local food chains are more socially embedded and therefore

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¹ The local food movement is ill-defined in the literature. It is outside the scope of this research to attempt to define or defend it as a movement. The term is simply used to represent the diversity of discussions and practices surrounding local food production and provision that have accelerated in the last decade.
serve to re-establish relationships of trust between food producers and consumers. And third, local food is often considered to be fresher and therefore more nutritious than globally produced food (Ibid). Localization has thereby become viewed by alternative food systems proponents as a solution to problems associated with the globalized agricultural system. However, this assumption has been questioned within critical food studies literature in recent years (Hinrichs, 2003; Dupuis and Goodman, 2005; Guthman, 2008; Winter, 2003)

Critiques of localization efforts have pointed out that local food systems are not necessarily ecologically sustainable or socially just (Sonnino, 2013; Winter, 2003; Hinrichs, 2003; Delind, 2011). Sonnino (2013) points out that growing food locally in certain areas requires enormous inputs and can generate devastating environmental costs (p. 4). Likewise, Winter (2003) reveals that local food is not necessarily produced through 'alternative' methods (p. 25). He shows that many supporters of local food systems show no preference for alternatively-produced products. The production of food through conventional methods will have adverse ecological impacts regardless of distributional distance.

Hinrichs and Allen (2008) argue along the same vein that local food systems are not necessarily more socially just than the conventional, globalized system. Local is technically a spatial qualifier, but distances recognized as local may prove inconsistent (Hinrichs and Allen, 2008, p. 14). Delind (2011) argues that large agri-businesses increasingly set the popular limits for what is considered local (p. 278). On the one hand, cooptation of local discourses by agri-business can lead to degradation of the values heralded by local food activists. For example, Wal-Mart's attempt to wed the ambiance of farmers’ markets with low pricing proved to be damaging to small individual producers (Chicagoist 2009 in Delind, 2011, p. 277). On the other hand, setting limits on what can legitimately be considered local cuisine can lead to the exclusion of cultural dishes that may not fit within this strict definition of 'local' but may nevertheless be
culturally significant to particular localities (p. 278). Therefore, the boundaries set by local agri-food movements can be exclusionary.

Hinrichs and Allen (2008) argue further that Buy Local campaigns often run counter to international social justice efforts (p. 14). The authors state that the industrialized agri-food system comprises vulnerable workers for whom we should also care, and they assert:

The inward turn by American consumers to local food runs the risk of deflecting their attention from the continuing need to secure better working conditions and livelihoods, for example, for farmworkers toiling in the vast produce fields and orchards of California, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, all of which have been sources of fresh produce now to be bought “locally.” Thus, a strategic focus on “selective patronage” of local food producers could have the unintended effect of harming – or at the least, not helping – vulnerable food and agricultural workers in distant places, at the same time that it seeks to protect and support “local” agriculture (Ibid).

Hinrichs (2003) articulates the concept of 'defensive localism' to describe the construction of barriers between localities that serve to exclude 'outsiders' (p. 37). A politics of defensive localization serves to defend and protect 'the local' through resistance to external forces and the articulation of common interests and homogeneity within the local scale.

Homogenization of the goals and concerns of individuals within the 'local scale' has led to a disregard for internal difference in addition to the exclusion of outsiders. Levkoe (2011) uses Harvey's (1996) concept of 'militant particularisms' to theorize the danger that inequality will be perpetuated within localities (p. 697). Militant particularisms refers to politics that originate in a particular context and that serve to preserve the status quo through exclusion. Hinrichs (2003) argues that local communities may have histories of inequality and social exclusion and cautions that while spatial proximity may foster trust and respect between individuals, this is not always the case (p. 36). Hinrichs and Kremer (2002) show that the local food movement lacks diversity (in Dupuis and Goodman, 2005, p. 362). Proponents are generally White, middle-class consumers, indicative that exclusionary boundaries have developed (Ibid).
2.3.2 Distinguishing Local Food from Small-Scale Agriculture

Valiente-Neighbours (2012) argues that local food ought to be defined to include varied geographic extents, and as such cannot be conceptualized as a geographic scale. He argues, similarly to Hinrichs and Kremer, that homogenized definitions of local food systems often do not incorporate the food choices and practices of people with “translocal subjectivities,” who view themselves as residents of multiple localities (p. 531). His study of Filipino immigrants in San Diego found that local food can be conceptualized in diverse ways: first, as geography-based (e.g., extent based); second, as community-based; and third, as identity-based (535).

Geography-based definitions of local food are most commonly employed in agri-food literature. According to this conceptualization, local food is not imported but rather grown and purchased in the same region. The term 'local' is therefore used as a geographic container. However, different participants in local food systems define the geographic reach of ‘local foods’ differently. Thus, local food could be nationally, regionally, state or provincially bound depending on how and by whom it is defined (p. 536).

Valiente-Neighbours study of Filipino migrants found that many immigrants view local food as 'community-based', defined by the community rather than by political or geographic barriers (p. 537). According to this definition, local food should reflect the characteristics of the local community. For example, the proximity of San Diego to Mexico, coupled with the high population of Mexican immigrants within the city, might mean that produce grown in Mexico should be considered local, in contrast to many 'geographic proximity' definitions of the local that see local food as bounded by city, state, or national borders. Community-based localism asserts a definition of local based on the characteristics of residents within a geographical space. The term 'community’ is socially constructed, messy and complex, just as is the term 'local'.
Nevertheless, Valiente-Neighbours argues that localists must open up the conversation to include people with different scalar references to develop a more realistic and heterogeneous definition of local food (Ibid).

A final definition of local food expressed in the Valiente-Neighbours study was the view of local food as identity based. According to this view, localism is inward looking to both the body and mind and is lived in daily food practices, such as tending to the garden, shopping and preparing foods. The 'local' is therefore an embodiment of people's cultural background and food-related practices. In the case of immigration, immigrants may still associate 'local food' with food from their native countries and therefore have durable connections to translocal foodsheds (Ibid). Valiente-Neighbours embeds his discussion in Delind's (2006) theory of the body as a local scale. She argues that localization efforts ought to shift from an instrumental approach to one that is more sensual and spiritual, so that the 'local' “starts to 'be' us and define us wherever we are” (Delind, 2006, p. 142-143 in Valiente-Neighbours, 2012, p. 538). Valiente-Neighbours extends Delind's arguments to immigrants and argues that “their bodies carry with them food-tastes developed and experienced in their previous homeland, and they do not inevitably shed them in their new location” (p. 538).

Defining the local according to geographic extent is therefore problematic in that it requires the construction of barriers – whether those barriers are constructed around nations, regions, cities or any other geographic area. Attempts to define local as a scale have also led to debates and disagreements over its appropriate geographic extent. Failure to determinately define local as a scale of extent has led to ambiguity in use of the term, which has caused misunderstandings, fetishization, the development of consumer distrust and corporate co-optation. Furthermore, Delind (2011) indicates that while many small-scale producers in North America participate in local food systems and market their products as local, 'local food' is not
produced or marketed by small-scale producers alone. Additionally, some small-scale producers sell to large, non-local markets (p. 278). Therefore 'local' food is not inherently small-scale.

2.3.3 The Potential for Scaling Up the Local Food Movement

Increasingly, critical food studies scholars argue that in order for the local food movement to more effectively challenge conventional agricultural systems, local food entities must scale up from small-scale agricultural practices, to engage with more (and larger) consumers and producers (Mount, 2012; Nost 2014; Beckie et al. 2012). Mount (2012) argues that in order to scale up local food systems, the idea that local food is inherently tied to small-scale production must first be rejected. Popular definitions of localization hold that the value of local food, translated into a premium, stems primarily from the type of 'direct exchange' that is only possible at smaller scales of production (p. 108). Therefore 'local' production, according to this definition, requires the elimination of intermediaries between consumers and producers. However, the capacity for farmers and producers to eliminate intermediaries depends on their geographical proximity to consumers and whether the goods they are producing require processing.

Eliminating intermediaries can also be inefficient and time-consuming as farmers are forced to take over any further processing and distribution activities themselves. Many small-scale farms are involved in the production of livestock and commodity crops where processing is a necessary component of production. In order to access the local premium, these farms would have to become part of a vertically-integrated value chain, an option made difficult as most processing, distribution and retailing has succumbed to efficiencies of scale and concentration (p. 109). Therefore, it is generally true that the production of local foods, defined by direct exchange, is most easily achieved by the small-scale farming of fresh products that do not require processing.

Direct exchange has been presented as a key feature in the alternative identity of local
food systems. Mount argues that in order for local food systems to be perceived as legitimate by consumers, they must avoid the appearance of becoming that which they seek to replace (p. 112). An alternative identity cannot be achieved simply through the marketing of niche products, as these can be copied by large agri-businesses. Rather, Mount argues that local food systems must stake out spaces and features that cannot be replicated in conventional food systems. Direct exchange between consumers and producers is the most obvious method of maintaining unique bonds that form an alternative identity (Ibid). However, Mount identifies several issues with relying on direct exchange as the distinguishing feature of local food systems.

Mount argues, similarly to Hinrichs (2003), that the presence of social interaction in a direct exchange does not mean the ideals of trust or connection, presented as inherent in local food systems, have been achieved (Hinrichs, 2003, p. 36; Mount, 2012, p. 113). Mount explains that most local food entities require only limited interaction between consumers and producers (p. 112). Nost's (2014) study of community-supported agriculture (CSA) supports this claim. CSAs are a type of local food system that require consumers to share some of the risk of agricultural production. However, Nost's research found that CSA members rarely engage in extended interaction with producers beyond the pick up or delivery of their products (Nost, 2014, p. 153). Mount distinguishes between actual and assumed trust and argues that actual trust requires thick, developed relationships, which cannot be created through the limited interaction between consumers and producers that occurs through most local food entities. He argues that the act of direct exchange often plays a merely symbolic role for consumers seeking an alternative system. The potential for interaction or embeddedness is sometimes enough to deliver added value, however, it does not create the same intangible qualities as an active direct exchange. In its symbolic role, direct exchange provides an opportunity for disengagement and fetishization as it can be easily replicated within conventional food systems (Ibid). Mount (2012)
therefore questions whether interaction in a direct exchange will inevitably lead to reconnection between consumers and producers (p. 110). Predominant portrayals of local food systems suggest a straightforward return to a simpler, more authentic food system. However, Mount argues that in reality reconnection requires more than the physical meeting of consumers and producers.

Furthermore, defining local food on a single value, of direct exchange, is challenged by research highlighting the hybridity of practices and values within local food systems. Nost's (2014) study of three different CSAs in the United States Midwest indicates the hybridity of local food systems (p. 152). He found that each CSA operated and defined 'the local' in different ways. A few of the CSAs grew and sold only their own produce, keeping their production chain as short as possible and ensuring that their customers had exact knowledge of where and how their food was grown (p. 158-9). Others purchased produce from nearby farms when their crops failed, ensuring that the expectations of consumers regarding the quantity of food were fulfilled. However, Nost argues that neither CSA model is better nor more local than the other, as those who sourced from nearby farms actually helped foster growth in the local economy and were able to sustain a higher number of customers (p. 155). Therefore, in order to govern and ensure long-term stability in local food systems, the complexity and tensions within these systems must be recognized and balanced.

Local food systems not only function in diverse ways but are also defined by hybrid values, as participants are motivated by diverse priorities to question and seek an alternative to the conventional food system (p. 113). Some are concerned with environmental impacts of the system, others with the safety and quality of food products and others with the local economy or personal finances. In regards to all of these priorities, the legitimacy of alternative systems, and their identity as alternative, arise as key components of the value created by local food systems.
However, attempts to further refine this definition of local food systems, by identifying a universal value that enhances the exchange of local goods, denies the hybridity of priorities and values that motivate participation in local food systems, and must instead rely on reductionist assumptions about the nature of exchange and level of engagement of participants (Ibid).

Perception of hybridity within agricultural systems may harm the perceived identity of any system presented as an alternative, and incite the wrath of consumer scepticism (p. 111). Mount argues, however, that hybridity within alternative systems can be positive, enabling a more adaptive and reflexive localism and a defense against the local trap (p. 112). Focusing on reconnection as the cornerstone of small-scale local food systems implies that legitimacy is inherent in these systems because supply chains are shorter. However, as has been noted above, problems and inconsistencies can arise from having too fixed a definition of the local.

Feagan (2007) likewise argues that in defining 'the local' geographers must be cognisant of the context and circumstances attributed to individual places (p. 15). Furthermore, he states that the relational nature of scales means 'the local' is nested in diverse ways within larger scales. Therefore, a sense of local place must be developed that is open and permeable rather than defensive and fixed.

Mount (2012) presents the concept of enhanced exchange as a more appropriate concept to define local food systems (p. 113). Participants in local food systems expect that exchanges through these systems will be enhanced to satisfy their diverse priorities. Different consumers measure the value and legitimacy of these systems in various ways, according to their priorities. Therefore, the success of these systems cannot be assessed by a single factor, such as direct exchange. Instead, Mount states that: “the concept of enhanced exchange captures the diversity of intangible qualities delivered to local food consumers, as well as the diversity of priorities
through which they determine value and commensurate compensation” (p. 115). In other words, not all exchanges in local food systems achieve the ideal of a 'direct exchange', but all exchanges are expected to be enhanced in some way, accounting for the local premium (p. 114). How these exchanges are enhanced is contextual, depending on the priorities and expectations of specific producers and consumers. Enhanced exchange is a flexible feature and is therefore deliverable by various scales of production, freeing local food systems from the assumption of small-scale production.

2.3.4 Potential Mechanisms for Scaling Up Local Food

Mount (2012) and Beckie et al. (2012) present mid-scale agricultural systems as a potential mechanism through which to scale up local food initiatives. Mid-scale agricultural systems are defined by a distributional extent that is less extensive than large-scale producers but more extensive than small-scale systems. Mount (2012) states that many mid-scale producers farm through conventional methods and then sell to large-scale markets (p. 108). However, designed in particular ways, mid-scale systems hold the potential to widen the reach of the local food movement.

Mount presents regional food hubs as a promising mid-scale agricultural system design that shows the potential of reflexive governance in scaling up small-scale local food systems (p. 117). These systems involve bringing together producers and consumers within a particular region, often through use of the Internet. Regional food hubs have been gaining popularity in recent years as they have the potential to deliver the benefits of both scale efficiencies and enhanced exchange. Regional food hubs offer the promise of an alternative identity and added value. They therefore require closer scrutiny in critical food studies literature (Ibid).

Beckie et al. (2012) similarly explore clustering as a mechanism for scaling up small-
scale local food systems. The concept of clustering refers to the geographic concentration and economic connectivity of multiple independent initiatives (Beckie et al., 2012, p. 333). The authors argue that scalar challenges can be responded to through the development of both vertical and horizontal innovations and linkages within market clusters (p. 335). Vertical linkages can lead to infrastructure development and the expansion of alternative systems into additional markets. Horizontal initiatives, such as producer co-operatives, increase marketing reach and expand the influence of local food systems. Therefore, the authors conclude that various clustering techniques can form part of an overall strategy for advancing local food networks.

Small-scale farmers stand to gain many advantages from clustering techniques, including marketing advantages, knowledge and resource sharing opportunities and linkages to other networks, leading to market expansion (p. 337). Clustering provides an opportunity for alternative networks to grow without requiring the small- and mid-scale producers of which they are comprised to expand or change their production practices. Therefore, Beckie et al. argue that clustering provides a method of scaling up alternative food systems, such as LFS, while avoiding their incorporation into the conventional food system (p. 333). The authenticity of alternative food initiatives is not threatened, nor is their capacity to address social and environmental issues associated with agri-business.

2.4 Food Consumption Geography and Social Movement Theory: The Role of the State and the Individual in Promoting Change in the Agricultural System

2.4.1 Structure-Agency Debates

Mid-scale local food systems governed through a reflexive approach that respects the diversity and hybridity of alternative food initiatives seem to be viable alternatives to the neoliberal
globalized food system. However, scholars differ on how best to achieve such alternatives and properly challenge the conventional agri-business model of production. Debates within food consumption geography identify two main strands of argumentation among geographers regarding social and political change.

Food consumption geography is a relatively new and expanding field within human geography that seeks to evaluate consumption trends (Goss, 2004). Two main strands of argumentation have dominated this geographic sub-field. Structural geographers, such as Hudson and Hudson (2003), Guthman (2008), and Sonnino (2013), argue that structural change, rather than change in individual consumer choices, is necessary to challenge conventional production systems. Structural geographers argue that consumer choices are limited in important ways by the economic and social structures within which they are embedded. Marxist geographers, such as Ian Hudson and Mark Hudson (2003), employ the theory of commodity fetishism to expose the limitations on autonomous choice posed by the invisibility of production practices. Hudson and Hudson argue that consumers often lack valid knowledge of production practices. Therefore, even those who are willing and able to support alternative production practices are unable to make fully-informed choices.

Guthman (2008) likewise cautions against the devolution of regulatory power to scales inconsistent with the scale of problems being addressed. She claims individual choices are insufficient to address the large-scale issues associated with industrial agriculture (Guthman, 2008, p. 1177). Robin (2006) argues similarly that shifting the responsibility for social reform from the state and manufacturers to individuals will not result in productive changes, particularly when consumers are unable to make informed choices due to the invisibility of production practices.
Sonnino (2013) argues that the state is in a better position to promote social and economic change (p. 5). Scholars within the politics of scale literature posit that scalar structures can become temporarily fixed and hegemonic. The state can therefore be viewed as a scalar institution that wields enormous power in terms of setting public policy, regulating and developing markets, and encouraging consumption trends. Sonnino posits that in democratic societies the state has a “general mandate to promote the collective good” (Ibid). Its role in designing and implementing food systems is unique due to the enormous economic power of the public purse which can create and support marginalized food markets (p. 4).

Morgan and Sonnino (2008) demonstrate the capacity of the state to promote change within the agricultural system (cited in Sonnino, 2013, p. 5). They highlight the efforts of local governments in particular to embed ideas of social justice and environmental sustainability in the food system. Sonnino (2013) presents East Ayrshire, a poor rural county in Scotland, as an example (p. 5). The East Ayrshire Council re-designed the school meal service program in the area through local sourcing and partnership with local producers, with the goal of attacking many of the area's most prominent health, ecological and economic concerns. By 2011, 70% of the ingredients used in the meal program were local and 90% considered fresh and unprocessed (Ibid). East Ayrshire's school meal reform offers impressive testimony to the role government can play in supporting and developing alternative food systems.

In contrast, agency geographers, such as Jackson (2010), argue that individual consumers hold the most power in defining the agricultural system. Jackson states that consumers possess the agency to challenge and redefine production. He critiques the simplicity of Marxist thinkers in trying to unveil commodity fetishism, arguing that they fail to acknowledge the considerable agency possessed by consumers (in Goss, 2004, p. 373). Clarke et al. (2007) present consumer agency as an ethical and political obligation. The authors state that consumers ought “to
recognize themselves as bearing certain types of global obligation by virtue of their privileged position as consumers” (p. 233).

Social movement theory likewise makes space for food choices to become political by focusing on the body as a site of resistance (p. 481). Starr (2010) argues that localization can be most appropriately understood as a social movement (p. 482). According to Starr, social movements exist when a collection of people share an identity and effectively develop a sense of ‘we.’ Social movements are defined by both collective and individual actions that contribute to a shared goal (Ibid). Local consumers and producers, though motivated by diverse values, share the goal of localization and contribute to that goal through their individual consumption choices and farming practices.

According to social movement theorists, the body is the site at which social transformation must begin, as individuals engage in alternative lifestyles through everyday choices. Contemporary social movement theory finds politics in social activities and emphasizes the identity, culture and meaning of conflicts submerged in social networks (p. 480). This theory posits that people make meaning through their actions and accounts for the political meaning consumers and producers may create when they make shopping or farming decisions.

However, critical food studies theorists have argued that movements, such as the local food movement, that emphasize individual consumption have served to reinforce neoliberal ideology and practice (Guthman 2008, Levkoe 2011, Johnston 2008). The majority of alternative food initiatives (AFIs) function under the assumption that individual choices around what to eat will result in a trickle-down effect and overall improvements in larger-scale agri-food systems (Levkoe, 2011, p. 691). Under this assumption, eating and buying food becomes a political end in and of itself. However, Levkoe (2011) argues that: “without being part of a broader political
strategy, this strategy is consistent with a culture of individualism and increasing consumerism” (p. 695). Guthman (2008) argues similarly that AFIs that promote individualized 'food action' serve to create consumer subjects (p. 1177). Johnston (2008) exposes the limitations of consumer subjectivities through her empirical observations at alternative food stores in Toronto. She argues that a stronger sense of citizenship, rather than consumerism, is necessary to address the social justice and ecological issues associated with food production (Johnston, 2008, p. 263). Delind (2011) similarly argues that emphasis on consumer demand by AFIs fosters the idea that an individuals' primary responsibility is to consume, which feeds neoliberal discourse and deflects attention from issues of social justice (p. 276).

Harris (2009) contends that structural theories that read neoliberal logics into alternative agri-food initiatives limit our ability to recognize the new political openings these initiatives offer, and serve to re-enforce the hegemony of neoliberal discourse (p. 55). He argues that neoliberalism instils particular ideas about citizenship and subjectivity in order to produce neoliberal forms of governmentality (p. 57). The term governmentality links government to modes of thought and is therefore closely tied to the development of discourse through which power is exercised (p. 59). By engaging with neoliberal discourse as an analytic category, scholars also serve to enact and reinforce the power of that discourse (60). Harris argues that scholars should instead seek to destabilise the hegemonic story of neoliberalisation. He argues that in reading for difference rather than dominance within alternative agri-food movements, a mode of thought can be cultivated that operates outside the discursive bounds of neoliberalism. From this perspective, the narrative that localised agri-food systems reproduce neoliberal subjectivities becomes only one of several possible readings of their role in society (Ibid). This approach will be methodologically useful in the research on consumer-producer relations within Eastern Ontario's egg industry as it enables diverse readings of neoliberalization within the
2.4.2 Moving Beyond Structure-Agency Debates

Brenner's (2001) concept of 'plural connotation' is useful in understanding the role of both individuals and the state in promoting social, political and economic change in the agricultural sector (p. 610). McCarthy (2005) argues that scales are inherently relational and that only issues that arise from relationships among multiple scales are truly about scale (p. 750). He states that politics about scales “are often very much about politics among scales” (Ibid). The individual and the state represent two different scales of organization. Multi-scalar analysis can therefore be utilized to generate a better understanding of how alternative agricultural systems are formed.

Social movement theory can also be employed to traverse the tricky terrain of structure-agency debates. Melucci (1989) identifies both collective and individual aspects of social movements (in Starr, 2010, p. 482). Collective identity involves making connections between individuals and “making emotional investments which enable individuals to recognize themselves in each other” (Melucci, 1989, 35 in Starr, 2010, p. 482). As Sonnino (2013) asserts, collective action can be best achieved through the coordination of the state.

However, Melucci (1989) argues that a collective identity is not enough for social movements to succeed (cited in Starr, 2010, p. 482). He argues that action has meaning primarily for the individual. In other words, he recognizes that people make decisions primarily for personal reasons. Therefore, the development of an individual identity, linked to the collective, is necessary for the growth and effectiveness of social movements. The notion of ‘identity’ is often understood in geography through the lens of ‘performativity’ (Nelson, 1999; Lahiri, 2003; Schurr, 2013; van Blerk, 2011). Judith Butler (1990) elaborated the theory to explain ways in which individuals establish gender and sexual identifications (in Nelson, 1999, p. 331). Butler
argued men and women perform their gender through action, and learn to perform specific, gendered social practices that become routinized so as to appear natural (p. 331-332). Therefore, she argues individuals establish their identity through personal actions that are heavily influenced by social structure. Geographers have applied the theory to diverse cases. Lahiri (2003) exposes the appropriated performative practices of migrants, while Schurr (2013) explores the performative strategies of women Ecuadorian politicians, and van Blerk (2011) analyses the multiple, fragmented identities performed by commercial sex workers in Ethiopia.

In terms of the local food movement, producers and consumers can both be understood to perform actions in response to social structure, by opposing dominant agri-food structures and economic ideology. Through these performances they create individual identities of ‘alternativeness,’ remade each time they engage in local farming or local consumption. Therefore, when producers enter alternative markets, they establish new identities through performance. Consumers similarly build alternative identities when they shop for alternative products. This identity, should they take pride in it, may feed their decision to remain a part of alternative, local food systems. Melucci (1989) argues that individual actions can therefore build networks of activity and a collective identity, which may in turn ultimately shift society's functioning (cited in Starr, 2010, p. 482). Therefore, both the state and individuals can play an important role in addressing issues within the agricultural system.

2.5 Contributions to the Literature

This research, on the relationship between consumers, producers and the state within Eastern Ontario's egg industry, fits well within critical food studies discussions of scale. It seeks to understand the construction of, and interaction between, different scales of production. This research explores scales of activity in relation to one another and questions the ways in which
these scales are constructed and defined. This research also seeks to identify the practices and processes tied to, and used to construct, specific scales of production. In particular, it explores how the interactions between consumers and producers differ between scales of production.

This research also engages with and critiques neoliberal discourses. It takes into account the situatedness of neoliberal practice in seeking to identify context-specific expressions of neoliberal ideology. The research exposes how neoliberal ideology and practice shape the power relations surrounding agricultural production and consumption, and analyzes the role of consumers, producers and the state in resisting neoliberalization.

This research likewise explores how discourse of ‘the local’ impacts consumers, and differently-scaled producers. This research seeks to distinguish localization from small-scale agriculture, yet remains cognisant of the ways in which local food discourse and practices have become enmeshed within small-scale agricultural systems. It explores how local food is defined and developed within the Ontario egg industry.

Finally, this research assesses the role of both the state and the individual in shaping all scales of agricultural production. The tension between structural and agency geographers within food consumption geography is a key focus of this research. This research explores the relationship between the individual and the state, as scales of organization, and seeks to articulate the specific role of each in creating change in the agriculture system.
Chapter 3
Research Approach and Design

3.0 Introduction

This research uses case study methodology and multiple methods of data collection to investigate producer cases and to explore consumer and state perspectives. Producer cases were investigated through interviews, site visits and qualitative coding and analysis of their marketing materials. Consumers were studied through surveys, while the state was analysed through policy analysis. This chapter provides both an explanation and justification for the chosen research approach and methods, and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the research design.

3.1 Methodology: The Qualitative Case Study

3.1.1 Key Features of Case Study Methodology

Case studies involve in-depth analysis of phenomena within a single instance or small number of instances. Gerring (2004) defines case study research as the “intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (342 quoted in Baxter, 2010, p. 81). Important philosophical assumptions define case study methodology, distinguishing it as a research approach, rather than a method of data collection (Baxter, 2010, p. 82). Specifically, case study research implies the belief that an in-depth understanding of one manifestation of a phenomenon is valuable on its own. Baxter (2010) argues that the in-depth knowledge cultivated through case study research can be used to solve concrete problems associated with specific cases (p. 82). Additionally, exploring the nuances and contextual influences involved in particular cases can contribute to an overall understanding of the phenomenon being studied (p.
Qualitative case studies involve intensive research of a single unit of analysis and are concerned with depth, rather than breadth, as indicated by the term N = 1. In statistical terminology N refers to population size, the entire group about which conclusions can be drawn, while n refers to the sample group, the subset of the population actually being studied (p. 85). In order to engage in statistical analysis, researchers must study select members of the population from a wide array of communities. In contrast, case studies analyze one community intensively to reveal and explore the interaction between various components within a single case (Ibid). N = 1 therefore expresses a core principle in case study research, namely a concern for the context associated with individual cases.

The limited breadth of case study research, and the resultant lack of generalization, has been a source of critique for the methodology (Tellis, 1997, para. 7). However, Tellis (1997) provides a helpful distinction between statistical generalization and analytical generalizability. He argues that qualitative researchers are not concerned with statistical generalizability, which requires a wide breadth of applicability (para. 8). Rather, qualitative researchers are generally concerned with the credibility, or analytical generalizability, of their results. Tellis argues that analytical generalization can be achieved through the careful selection of cases and the development of theories that are neither too abstract nor too specific to the cases being studied. Therefore, case study methodology allows for transferability, findings which apply to cases external to the research.

This research is concerned with depth, rather than breadth. It focuses on understanding the impact of consumer demand and state regulations in specific cases. However, transferability was enhanced through the selection of cases, depth of analysis, and quality of research (Tellis,
1997, para. 8). I took care to ensure that the theories being tested were neither too specific, so as to limit transferability, nor too broad, so as to limit the depth of knowledge cultivated.

3.1.2 Why the Case Study?

Yin (2003) argues that case study design is useful in investigating the 'how' or 'why' of a situation or phenomenon. This research attempts to understand the contexts within which consumers, producers and the state relate to each other and resist neoliberalization. This research also reveals 'why' there are often failures in effective communication between consumers, producers and the state. Therefore, case study methodology proved a highly appropriate approach for this research.

3.1.3 Choice of Cases

Baxter and Jack (2008) insist on the importance of choosing appropriate units of analysis (p. 546). The authors argue that cases must be chosen that allow the researcher to answer their research question. This research aims to develop theory regarding the relationship between consumers, producers and the state in the Eastern Ontario egg industry, across three different scales of production. Therefore, three farms were studied, each operating in a typical fashion given their scale of production.

First, Burnbrae Farms is a large agricultural company with multiple locations across North America. It is exemplary of production operations at the level of corporate agri-business. Second, Reinink Family Farms is a successful egg production business that sells product regionally, both through direct marketing at farmers’ markets, as well as (indirectly) through sales to Burnbrae Farms. The Reinink's profess a dedication to ethical, alternative production and publicly distance themselves from Burnbrae Farms. Reinink Family Farms is therefore exemplary of mid-scale farming operations, developing effective strategies for scaling up while
attempting to remain loyal to the core values of their consumer base. Finally, Covenant Farm is a small farm located outside of Ottawa, Ontario. Covenant Farm operates a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative that enables the farm to circumvent policy barriers preventing small-scale farmers from selling eggs directly to consumers. Covenant Farm therefore represents small-scale egg producers in Ontario, struggling to succeed in an industry that favours large-scale producers. The selection of typical cases across different scales enhances the transferability of the research conclusions and aids in meeting the research objectives (Tellis, 1997, para. 8).

Baxter and Jack (2008) caution that case study researchers must limit the scope of their research to ensure both an in-depth analysis and efficient completion of the project (p. 546). The risk of attempting to answer questions that are too broad is particularly relevant to graduate students working on short deadlines. In order to mitigate the risk of choosing an overly broad topic, Baxter and Jack suggest placing boundaries on the cases being studied. The authors suggest several means through which to bind a case: by time and place, by time and activity, or by definition and context.

The selected cases in this research were bound by time, place and activity. First, all cases were studied within the same block of time, from September 2014 to October 2015. Second, the cases all originate from Eastern Ontario, binding the research to a geographic region. Finally, the cases all consist of egg farming operations and are therefore all involved in the same activity. The variation in scale between the different cases means that their context differs, however the research is sufficiently bound by place, time and activity so as not to be overly broad.

3.1.4 Multiple Case Study: An Instrumental Approach

Baxter and Jack (2008) state that specific research objectives should determine the type of case study chosen (p. 547). This research engaged in a multiple case study using an instrumental
approach. In investigating multiple cases, this research draws comparison between contexts. In comparing the cases, this research develops an understanding of how the relationship between consumers, producers and the state is manifested at different scales (Baxter, 2010, p. 93). Therefore, this research generates a greater breadth of understanding than could be accomplished through a single case study.

The cases were analyzed using an instrumental approach. Instrumental case studies are used to develop insights that help refine theory (Baxter & Jack, 2010, p. 549). The context of each case and the activities engaged in at each farm were scrutinized, in order to develop a greater understanding of consumer-producer-state relations and develop theory about how to strengthen these relationships.

### 3.1.5 Data Collection

Data for this research was collected through a variety of techniques, including interviews, site tours, surveys, and the qualitative analysis of online marketing, packaging materials and government documents. This approach provided a comprehensive data set, enabled thorough interpretation, and provided the basis for a developed perspective of each case. However, Baxter and Jack (2008) caution that the use of multiple sources of data can raise a risk of collecting overwhelming amounts of information (p. 554). This risk can be mitigated through use of computerized databases. This research employed the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo in order to organize and track data and improve the reliability and feasibility of the research.

### 3.2 Methods

The research was achieved through the application of various methods of data collection. Surveys enabled the collection of data on consumer demand. Interviews and site tours explored
producer practices and perspectives. Qualitative analysis of marketing materials revealed producer communication techniques and mechanisms. Finally, policy analysis explored the role of the state in consumer-producer relations within the Eastern Ontario egg industry. Triangulated data collection ensured that a great depth of information was gathered.

3.2.1 Surveys: Consumer Data

Consumer data was collected through surveys; refer to Appendix B: Consumer Survey. A mixed-mode distribution approach was utilized, with a portion of the surveys conducted in person and the rest facilitated over the Internet. Two groups of consumers are of interest to this research, conventional egg consumers who shop at traditional grocery stores, and consumers who shop at alternative venues. Farmers’ markets provided access to consumers with special interests, while conventional consumers were accessed at traditional grocery stores. Survey responses were solicited from farmers’ market attendees as they shopped, and from conventional consumers as they entered or exited the grocery store. The survey was kept short, requiring only 5 minutes to complete, so as not to deter busy shoppers from participating. However, response rates for in-person surveys were low, with only 8 of the 65 surveyed consumers surveyed in person.

Accessing alternative egg consumers proved to be especially difficult. More consumers at farmers’ markets agreed to be surveyed than at conventional stores. However, many of these consumers, 5 out of 6, did not purchase eggs alternatively due to their limited availability and therefore, for the purposes of this research, were labelled ‘conventional consumers’.

Low and uneven response rates were partially overcome by administering surveys through the web, in fact 57 of the 65 surveyed consumers were accessed online. Alternative consumers were targeted by distributing the survey link through alternative food networks. The survey was advertised in the Ottawa Farmers’ Market newsletter and emailed to their contact list.
The survey was posted on FluidSurveys on September 26, 2014 and data was collected over a one-month period – until October 26, 2014.

The survey sought to establish a general understanding of the variety of concerns for egg consumers. This segment of the research did not seek to achieve statistical representation. However, theoretical saturation was achieved with more than 12 completed surveys within each consumer group. In fact, the research included 43 surveys from conventional consumers and 22 from alternative consumers; enough to generate sufficient data on a wide range of consumers.

The questionnaire was designed to gain understanding of how consumers make purchasing decisions, access information, communicate their demands to producers and relate to the state, within the Eastern Ontario egg industry; refer to Appendix B: Consumer Survey. The first section of the survey asked consumers about their consumption habits; the second about how they access information about eggs and the egg industry. The third and final section asked consumers about their perception of the Ontario egg industry, in order to gain insight about the role of the state in egg industry relations. The questionnaire accurately gained the information required to meet the research goals.

3.2.2 Interviews: Producer Data

Interviewing is a qualitative method of data collection that can be used to gain information about events, opinions and experiences (Dunn, 2010, p. 102). Interviews were conducted with each producer to discuss their practices, and to explore their relationships with both consumers and the state. Interviews served two main purposes in this research. Dunn argues that interviews can be used to fill gaps in knowledge that other methods are unable to bridge. First, in this research, interviews were used in conjunction with other methods to provide additional data that could not be obtained through the analysis of marketing materials or site visits alone. Second, Dunn states
that interviews can be used to investigate complex behaviours and motivations. Interviews proved essential to this research, in understanding how producers are affected by consumer demand and government policies, which can best be understood through their own words and explanations.

**Interview Design**

This research used semi-structured interviews, interviews that are content-based, and structured around ideas and topics rather than strict questions (p. 110). The interviews were therefore organized around ordered but flexible questioning, based on interview schedules. Interview schedules consist of pre-determined lists of carefully worded questions developed to prepare for interviews; refer to research instrument in Appendix C: Interview Schedule and Sample Questions for Producer Interviews (p. 104). They provide researchers with confidence in asking questions and are particularly useful for first-time interviewers who have not yet cultivated the skills required to develop questions in situ or who may lose confidence if their questions are misunderstood. However, Dunn (2010) argues that there are risks in using interview schedules since pre-determined questions may sound insincere or out of place (p. 105). Ensuring flexibility in the interviews mitigated these risks. Throughout the interviews, questions were rephrased, reordered and sometimes discarded, as deemed necessary. Participant feedback ensured flexibility and reactivity in the research design. Interviewees were asked to provide feedback regarding the interview design, questions and content, and research protocols were adapted where necessary.

**Preliminary Communications**

Interview participants were first contacted through email. Burnbrae Farms was contacted through
personal connections I developed while employed by the company several years ago. My personal connection to Burnbrae Farms, and any potential biases, will be further discussed later in the chapter. Reinink Family Farm and Covenant Farm were contacted through publicly available contact information. After the participants agreed to be interviewed they were sent a Letter of Introduction under the official Carleton University letterhead in order to add legitimacy to the request (p. 115). The letter re-articulated facts discussed in primary communications and described the interview process.

*The Interview*

Respondents were provided critical details about the study and were required to give informed consent before the interviews began. Respondents were asked about any confidentiality concerns or other issues they may have regarding the research. None of the respondents expressed any concerns. At the conclusion of the interview, respondents were provided with the interviewer's contact information for follow-up communications. The Letter of Introduction also contained contact details for the research supervisor and the head of Carleton’s Research Ethics Board.

*Recording Techniques*

The interviews were recorded using a combination of audio-recording and note-taking techniques. Audio recordings allow for greater attentiveness and engagement with respondents. Note-taking was used as a backup when audio-recording was inappropriate, such as when interviewing during site tours, where noise prevented proper recordings. Note-taking was also used to capture a record of non-verbal data. Therefore, a combination of audio recording and note-taking was used to provide a robust record of the data.
Interviewees

Three respondents were interviewed from Burnbrae Farms. The primary interview was conducted with a high-level Burnbrae Farms executive. However, tours of the layer barns and grading station were conducted by lower-level employees who also agreed to speak on record. The tour guides were not interviewed according to the prescribed structure used for other cases. Instead, unstructured interviews allowed for supplemental data to be collected about Burnbrae Farms' production practices. One respondent was interviewed for Reinink Family Farms and one for Covenant Farm. Both were farmers at their respective farms and had a high level of knowledge about all aspects of their respective farm's operations.

3.2.3 Qualitative Analysis of Producer Data

The research studied each producer’s publicity and marketing materials through qualitative coding and analysis, in order to explore ways in which producers of various scales present themselves to consumers. Producer interviews were likewise analysed through qualitative coding and description.

Materials

Appropriate marketing and publicity materials were selected by exploring the online and packaging materials used by each producer and highlighting those used most often. These included web pages, labels, articles, and social media posts, studied during a ten-month time period, from March-December 2015.

Organization and Analysis

The publicity and marketing texts, as well as interview transcripts, were coded to facilitate
analysis. Coding is a process through which researchers structure and interpret qualitative data. The texts were coded in a two-fold process, first for structure, then for interpretation (Waitt, 2010, p. 233). The data was initially coded through content analysis, a qualitative form of descriptive coding. Instances of key themes, such as small-scale family farming or ethics, were coded and organized under two main categories, marketing and information sharing (p. 232). The texts were then coded analytically to provide insight into the particular themes of interest to the research, such as local discourse (p. 233). Analysis of the texts also involved identifying inconsistencies, contradictions and ambiguities.

3.2.4 Site Visits/Observation: Producer Data

The Value of Observation

The data derived from interviews and the qualitative analysis of marketing materials was supplemented with observational research in the form of site visits. Kearns (2010) argues that one of the main functions of observational research is to serve as complementary evidence to the data collected from more structured collection methods (p. 242). The additional information derived from site visits was used to add value and provide a descriptive complement to other more controlled research methods.

Observation techniques can help understand the spontaneity of everyday life within particular spatial and temporal contexts (Ibid). A common justification for observational research is based on the concern that the presence of the researcher in more structured settings can alter the behaviour or dispositions of participants (p. 246). Observation instead creates the potential to capture more natural interactions and responses. Li (2008) likewise argues that observation is the only field method that allows researchers to observe what people do rather than what they say.
they do and was therefore useful in comparing producer discourse and actual production practices. Li claims observation has the potential to uncover highly contextualized data that is particularly useful for research that is context-focused (p. 101). In fact, she states that observation methods “ontologically and epistemologically underpin human quests for understanding multiple realities of life in context.” In the context of this research, site visits produced data that was then compared and evaluated against the formal claims of respondents in the interview sessions. Observational data was also analyzed in comparison to the discourses engaged in by companies in media publications and marketing materials.

**Observational Methods**

A mix of controlled and uncontrolled observation was used throughout the visits to produce relevant data while remaining open to unpredictable sources of knowledge (Kearns, 2010, p. 243). Formal tours of the farms, other than Reinink Family Farms, were arranged to ensure access to relevant production spaces. However, throughout these tours observations were not restricted to prescribed phenomena, instead a broad range of factors were observed, including sights, smells and sounds.

**Access**

Kearns (2010) argues that access poses a fundamental challenge to many observational researchers (p. 250). My personal connections with Burnbrae Farms helped me gain access to their facilities. Burnbrae provided extensive tours of their egg layers and grading plant at their headquarters in Lyn, Ontario. Covenant Farm also provided tours of their farm and extensive information about their practices. In contrast, Reinink Family Farms refused to provide site tours of their facilities due to time constraints. Therefore, I was unable to collect observational data for
a mid-scale farm. However, the multiple sources of data collection used in this research ensured adequate information about their farm was gathered from other sources.

3.2.5 Public Policy Analysis: State Data

Defining Public Policy Analysis

Public policy refers to the laws and regulations created and enforced by government that regulate the economy and social interactions (Kerr and Seymour, 2010, p. 5). The purpose of public policy analysis is to analyze and compare different institutional arrangements in order to assess the best mix of legislative rules and private arrangements to ensure economic and social stability. Therefore, it involves assessing the way social transactions are ordered and evaluating the role of the government in defining and organizing social and economic interactions (Ibid). This research seeks to understand the regulatory framework within which egg production occurs in Ontario and to evaluate the role of the state in impacting consumer-producer relationships. Public policy analysis was therefore adopted to reach these goals.

Approach to Public Policy Analysis

Public policy analysis is a multi-faceted field of research. Approaches to policy analysis vary according to the goals held by individual policy analysts. Thissen and Walker (2013) distinguish between ex-ante, as is, and ex-post policy analysis (p. 3). Ex-ante policy analysis is the study of policy with the intent of supporting actors in the policy development process. As is analysis involves the study of existing policies, while ex-post policy analysis involves the study of the effects of policies after their implementation, and is sometimes referred to as policy evaluation (Ibid). This research primarily involves as is policy analysis. It seeks to highlight the existing policies that shape the regulatory framework of Eastern Ontario’s egg industry. The research also
involves aspects of ex-post policy analysis, by assessing the effect egg industry related policies have on producers and consumers within the industry.

**Public Policy Analysis Methods: Coding, Describing and Analyzing**

Policy documents were first coded in the same two-fold process as producer publicity materials: first for structure and then for interpretation. Content analysis enabled the identification of thematic elements and critical regulatory details within and among documents. Each document was described and evaluated for its role in shaping the egg industry’s regulatory framework. The regulatory framework was then described, based on analysis of individual policies, and analysed as a whole for its impact on consumer-producer relations within the industry.

**Document Selection**

Relevant policies were selected by exploring the wide breadth of government bodies and regulations affecting the Ontario egg industry and identifying those that have the most impact on consumers and producers based on their responses to the survey or interview questions.

### 3.3 Ethical Considerations

#### 3.3.1 Confidentiality, Anonymity and Consent

Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed for all respondents. However, the research identifies each producer’s workplace and profession (e.g. farmer, executive), limiting the extent to which their identity is concealed. The research does not identify their exact position in the business and uses pseudonyms in presenting results. Each of the farms granted permission to include the location and name of their company in the research and individual producers were made aware of any professional risks their involvement might pose before they agreed to
participate. Consumers were guaranteed complete anonymity and confidentiality. The consumer survey did not require respondents to include their name, age, gender, or contact information and respondents are not directly referred to in the research.

Original transcripts of the interviews were kept secure, on a personal, password protected laptop, so as not to risk dissemination (p. 129). The consumer survey was posted on FluidSurveys for a limited amount of time, from September 26 to October 26, 2014. According to the website's privacy policy, they do not have ownership over any of the survey data collected. After an appropriate number of surveys had been completed, the survey data was exported onto a private password protected laptop and deleted from the server.

Informed consent forms were distributed to interviewees to ensure consent was secured and that respondents were made aware of the circumstances to which they were agreeing. Producer participants were given a month after their interview was conducted to withdraw their consent and be removed from the research. None of the producers chose to withdraw.

The survey likewise included an explanation of the research and promised respondents confidentiality and anonymity. Respondents had the right to leave and discard the survey at any time. Discarded and incomplete surveys were not used in the research. Submission of the surveys, either in person or electronically, was considered an act of consent. Respondents could not withdraw their consent after submission as all responses were anonymous and individual survey responses could not be tracked. Information on consent and withdrawal was provided to respondents before they began answering the questionnaire; refer to Appendix B: Consumer Survey. The entire protocol for the components of the research that involved human participants was cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board.
3.3.2 Statement of Positionality

Throughout this research project, I acknowledged my positionality and subjectivity in order to negotiate power dynamics. Dowling (2010) states that a researcher can be viewed as either an insider, someone familiar to their informants in many respects, or an outsider, someone who differs substantially (p. 36). However, Miraftab (2004) argues that researchers are rarely fully insiders or outsiders. In the three research cases, I was neither fully an insider nor completely an outsider. I have limited knowledge of agricultural production and therefore I am in many respects an outsider to the research community, particularly in the context of Reinink Family Farms and Covenant Farm, with whom I have had no previous contact. However, I am also an insider to an extent, in that I have supported alternative food consumption practices in the past and have some knowledge of the Ontario egg industry.

In the case of Burnbrae Farms, my personal experience with the company positions me as an insider. I worked at Burnbrae Farms for three consecutive summers from 2010-2012, as a student intern. I worked at the office headquarters in Lyn, performing administrative support. I was able to use the rapport I had previously established with company executives, and the background knowledge I possessed about the company, to inform this research project. In particular, my previous relationships enabled fast and easy access to the farm. However, I am not fully an insider to the company. It had been two years since my employment when I approached the company with this research project. Additionally, during my employment at Burnbrae Farms, I worked within the office and did not have access to the egg layers or grading plant. Therefore, I was unfamiliar with the aspects of Burnbrae's operations with which my research was most concerned.

Power dynamics had to be renegotiated during interviews and site tours at Burnbrae
Farms. In my previous experience within the social context of Burnbrae Farms, I was in a position of inferiority to the employees I interviewed and observed for this research. However, some of these power dynamics were mitigated by my new status as an academic researcher and my request to interview and receive tours from employees I had never met.

In advance of the research I was also aware that I might feel pressure to provide a favourable analysis of Burnbrae’s operations so as not to destroy the professional contacts and relationships I had previously established. A specific point of professional vulnerability arose out of my reliance on Burnbrae executives for a favourable reference in future job searches. However, these risks were mitigated by career advances during my research that alleviated my reliance on Burnbrae Farms for references. I found instead that my experience at Burnbrae Farms offset preconceived notions I had acquired of large-scale agri-businesses as deceitful and unethical. My positive associations with Burnbrae Farms balanced negative assumptions I held about agri-businesses, producing a less biased analysis.

Power imbalances arose in other aspects of the research as well. Ballamingie and Johnson (2011) argue that research conducted on companies or individuals with higher social rank and stability than the researcher can lead to researcher vulnerability. Participants in the research may feel there is little benefit to them or their company due to their already privileged position and instead view their involvement as a favour to the researcher. Access to key participants may be limited as a result. In this research, Reinink Family Farms refused to provide access to their facilities, exercising power over the research that impeded its progress. Many consumers were also unwilling to donate their time to the research. These challenges were addressed by collecting data from a wide range of sources and maintaining flexibility in the research design. Collecting data through multiple techniques ensured adequate information on Reinink Family Farms was collected from sources other than site tours. The research design was
also modified to ensure consumer participation. The survey was posted online to supplement in-person survey responses and target particular respondents.

While researcher vulnerability was a valid concern in this project, Dunn (2010) argues that researchers also hold a huge amount of power over participants (p. 127). He argues that knowledge flows almost exclusively from informants to researchers who then have the power to disseminate and present that knowledge. Kearns (2010) likewise argues that power is implicit in the ways through which one group is able to study or observer another. Gillian Rose (1993) argues that geographic research methods have often been employed with an implicit masculine gaze in which the subjects being observed are objectified for the sake of research (in Kearns, 2010, p. 248). These risks are limited in the context of this research, by the fact that only established companies and persons are being studied. However, the knowledge I disseminate can affect policy and social perceptions of participants (Dowling, 2010, p. 32). Therefore, I remain cognisant of the potential impact of the presentation and dissemination of the results.

3.4 Conclusion

This research was approached through case study methodology and the application of mixed methods of data collection. Multiple case studies were analyzed through an instrumental approach. Specific data collection techniques were used for each unit being studied. Surveys were used to collect consumer data, while interviews, site tours and qualitative coding and analysis were used to collect data from producers. Public policy analysis methods were employed to evaluate the policies and regulatory framework shaping Ontario’s egg industry and to assess the role of the state in consumer-producer relations. These methods were successfully employed to meet the research objectives. Flexibility in the research design, cognisance of ethical obligations and continuous researcher reflexivity ensured that these objectives were met.
through ethical and effective practices.
Chapter 4
Consumer Data: Presentation and Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter records the results of data collected from Eastern Ontario egg consumers. The findings are based on consumer surveys distributed both in person, at diverse food venues, and online. The purpose of the survey was threefold. First, it sought to determine the respondents' consumption habits and purchasing patterns. Second, it sought to understand the motivation behind these consumption choices. Third, it sought to determine the type and level of respondents' knowledge of the egg industry and egg production. These elements, analyzed in conjunction, help develop an understanding of consumer perspectives on consumer-producer-state relations within the Eastern Ontario egg industry.

4.1 Consumer Choice: Purchasing Patterns and Motivations

4.1.1 Purchasing Patterns

The research respondents were asked a number of questions in regards to their purchasing patterns. Respondents were asked what types of egg products they most commonly purchase, either shell, processed or liquid. They were asked to identify how often they purchase specialty products and to explain their preference for the products they purchase most often. Respondents were also asked about the venues from which they purchase eggs and egg products. They were asked to indicate whether they most commonly purchase egg and egg products from conventional or alternative venues, and to identify their motivation for attending the venues they prefer; refer to Appendix B: Consumer Survey.
The research results reveal a variety of consumption patterns. Shell eggs were found to be the most commonly purchased egg product. In fact, 100% of the surveyed population indicated that they buy shell eggs most commonly, as opposed to liquid or processed products. The data also indicates that the research sample commonly purchases alternatively produced egg products (defined below). More than half of respondents, 57%, indicated that they purchase alternatively produced eggs on a regular basis. In contrast, only 34% of respondents regularly purchase eggs or egg products from alternative venues. Therefore, respondents purchase alternatively produced products more commonly than they purchase from alternative venues. These patterns will be analyzed in depth throughout the following chapter.

4.1.2 Consumption Patterns and Motivations: The Choice to Purchase Conventional vs. Alternative Products

**Defining Conventional and Alternative Products**

Conventional eggs and egg products are defined for the purposes of this research as those produced through standard processes and defined and marketed as ordinary. Shell eggs are conventionally produced through a multi-step process that includes specific processes of collection, cleaning, inspection and sorting (Egg Farmers of Canada, 2013; Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 1999). Briefly, conventional eggs are collected through a conveyer belt system from caged chickens. The eggs are then labelled according to their weight and grade (Egg Farmers of Canada, 2013). Grades are assigned based on inspection and only the highest quality, Grade A eggs, can legally be sold as shell eggs in Canadian establishments (OMAF, 2013b). Conventional Grade A eggs are marketed according to size and general egg qualities (Egg Farmers of Canada, 2013).
The production and marketing of alternative shell eggs differ in some way from these conventional practices. For example, Burnbrae Farms Nestlaid eggs are collected from chickens kept in “enriched housing systems”, rather than in cages (Burnbrae Farms, 2013). Therefore the production of Nestlaid eggs differs from conventional processes. Alternative products are identifiable to consumers through the ways they are marketed and labelled. On the Burnbrae Farms website, Nestlaid eggs are described as “eggs from hens raised in social groups that are free to perch and lay their eggs in a nesting area” (Ibid). Therefore, alternative products are defined in reference to conventional practices, based on how their production, marketing or scale of production differs from convention.

There is no single monolithic definition of alternative products, however. Definitions of alternative egg products vary by scale and producer. Large-scale producers, such as Burnbrae Farms, define certain products as alternative based on how their production and marketing differs from conventional eggs. However, smaller-scale producers, such as Covenant Farms, may define their eggs as alternative because they are produced at a different scale, by small, independent farms, rather than by agri-business. These varied definitions of alternative production will become apparent in discussions of producer practices and mentalities explored in Chapters 5-7.

**Purchasing Patterns**

More than half of all respondents, 57%, indicated that they purchase alternatively produced eggs on a regular basis, either often or always. Only 14% of respondents stated that they never purchase alternative products. The majority of respondents, 86%, purchase alternative products at least on occasion. In comparison, less than half of respondents, 43%, stated that they purchase conventional products on a regular basis, while two thirds, 68%, indicated that they make such purchases at least on occasion. Therefore, the research sample more commonly purchase
alternative, rather than conventional eggs.

**Patterns among Alternative Product Purchases**

Free-range eggs are the most popular choice among alternative egg products. They are purchased by 54% of respondents who buy alternative products at least on occasion. Their popularity can be explained in part by the fact that organic standards require organic eggs to also qualify as free range (Standards Council of Canada, 2011, 6.8). Therefore, all organic eggs are free range, but not all free-range eggs are organic. Organic eggs are the second most popular choice among alternative egg products, purchased by 39% of respondents who purchase alternative products at least on occasion. Omega-3 eggs are the third most popular choice, purchased by 30%. However, omega-3 eggs are most likely to be the sole alternative product purchased by a respondent, while respondents who purchase free-range eggs are likely to also purchase organic eggs and vice versa.

Of the 56 respondents who indicated that they buy alternative products at least on occasion, 76% purchase more than one type of alternatively produced product when they choose to purchase alternatives. The remaining 29% indicated that they buy only one type of alternative product consistently. Of this 29%, 41% indicated that they only purchase free-range eggs, 12% that they purchase organic eggs alone, and 47% stated that they only purchase omega-3 enriched eggs. Of the respondents who purchase more than one type of alternatively produced egg product, 10% indicated that they purchase all three types of alternative eggs: organic, free-range and omega-3 enriched. One respondent (3%) indicated that they purchase both organic and omega-3 enriched eggs, 10% stated that they purchase both omega-3 and free-range eggs and 38% indicated that they purchase both organic and free-range eggs.

These results indicate consumers who are motivated to purchase omega-3 eggs generally
are not also motivated to buy organic or free range. On the other hand, organic and free-range eggs are often bought in conjunction. This finding may indicate that omega-3 eggs are associated with different values than organic and free-range eggs, while consumers associate similar values to free-range and organic eggs. The values that motivate respondents' egg purchasing choices will be explored in the following section.

**Consumer Choice Motivations**

*Consumer Motivations to Purchase Alternative Products*

Respondents were asked to indicate why they choose to buy alternative products, when they choose to do so. Fifty-nine respondents answered the question. However, only 55 originally claimed to purchase alternative products at least rarely. Therefore, four of the respondents who answered this question had previously indicated that they never buy alternative products. This discrepancy may be due to lack of clarity in the questions; refer to Appendix B: Consumer Survey. However, it could also indicate that respondents feel there is value in buying alternative products even if they choose not do so themselves.

Health factors are the most popular reasons for buying alternative products. In fact, 63% of respondents who answered this question indicated that health was an important factor in their decision. Therefore, these respondents assume alternative eggs are healthier than conventional products. Animal welfare and environmental concerns were also indicated as important factors in the decision to buy alternative products. More than half of the respondents who answered this question, 59%, indicated that animal welfare concerns were a factor in their decision to purchase alternative products, while 51% indicated that environmental concerns played a role. Therefore, these respondents believe alternative products to be more humane and more environmentally friendly than conventional products. It is evident from the findings that many respondents
assume alternative egg products to be produced in a way that not only significantly differs from
the production of conventional eggs, but that is healthier, more humane, and more
environmentally friendly.

The strong relationship between organic and free-range eggs can be explained by the fact
that they are associated with similar values. Respondents who purchase organic eggs conveyed a
number of reasons why they purchase these products and their responses were fairly evenly
distributed across the three main categories of concerns. Eighty two percent of respondents who
purchase organic eggs cited health reasons as a motivation; another 82% cited animal welfare
concerns, while 73% cited environmental concerns. The reasons provided for purchasing free-
range eggs were also fairly evenly distributed across these three main categories. Sixty three
percent of respondents who purchase free-range eggs cited health concerns, while 67% cited
environmental concerns. Animal welfare concerns were the most popularly cited motivation for
purchasing free-range eggs, cited by 77% of respondents who purchase free range. Both organic
and free-range eggs were associated with all three values: health, animal welfare, and
environmental awareness.

In contrast, respondents indicated that there is a dominant motivation for purchasing
omega-3 eggs. Ninety four percent of respondents who purchase omega-3 eggs cited health
concerns as a motivation. Forty-one percent of respondents who purchase omega-3 eggs cited
environmental concerns, while 35% cited animal welfare concerns. Therefore, omega-3 eggs are
most closely associated with healthfulness, while organic and free-range eggs are associated with
a wider variety of values.

A significant number of respondents, 27% of those who answered the question, indicated
that they had reasons for purchasing alternative products other than health, animal welfare and
environmental concerns. Four respondents indicated that they purchase alternative products in order to support local food infrastructures and “small-scale, local farmers.” These answers suggest that consumers may assume alternatively-produced products are produced by alternative farmers, as opposed to large-scale egg production companies. These respondents view their decision to purchase alternative egg products as an act of support for alternative food systems.

One respondent simply stated that they purchase alternative products because they “feel better about the purchase.” Here, the respondent believes alternatively-produced products are produced more ethically than conventional products. The same respondent also indicated that they purchase alternatively-produced products for all of the most popular reasons: due to health, animal welfare and environmental concerns. Therefore, alternative products hold positive connotations for many of the respondents, and are associated with a variety of benefits. The following section will determine if respondents have enough knowledge to determine which products and production practices best correspond with their values.

**Consumer Motivations to Purchase Conventional Products**

Respondents were also asked why they choose to purchase conventionally-produced products, when they choose to do so. Once again, a greater number of respondents answered this question than had previously indicated that they purchase conventional products. Fourteen respondents who answered the question had previously indicated that they never purchase conventional products. This discrepancy can be explained in a number of ways. First, it could simply indicate that the respondents did not understand the questions. Second, it could indicate that even respondents who define themselves as alternative consumers, and as 'always' shopping alternatively, may have cause to occasionally purchase conventional products. Finally, the discrepancy could indicate that even those who do not purchase conventional products have an
opinion on the values that drive consumers to purchase these products.

Of the 51 respondents who answered this question, 84% indicated that convenience was a factor in their decision to purchase conventional products, while 23% indicated that cost was a factor. Three quarters of respondents who felt cost was a factor also indicated that convenience plays an important role. Therefore, respondents most commonly choose to purchase conventional products because it is convenient.

Seventeen percent of respondents who answered the question indicated they had other reasons for purchasing conventional products. Many of these 'other' reasons related to a lack of availability of alternative options. One respondent stated that their grocery store stocks only conventional eggs, while another indicated that while they would normally purchase alternative products, they purchase conventional eggs when “there is no other option and I NEED the eggs immediately.” Another stated: “I only choose conventionally-produced eggs when I have no other option and I absolutely need eggs!” These respondents, and others, indicate that consumers face barriers to purchasing alternative products.

One respondent stated that they “don't believe purchasing alternative products is much better if buying from conventional producers.” This statement contradicts the earlier assumptions expressed by certain respondents, that purchasing alternatively produced products strengthens alternative food networks and represents a more ethical choice. Rather, this respondent qualifies that many of the values consumers wish to express through alternative purchases can only be realized by purchasing from alternative venues.

**Distinguishing Truly Alternative Consumption and Defining 'Alternative Consumers'

Critical food studies scholars have likewise questioned the effectiveness of shopping for
alternative products within the conventional agri-food system. In particular, a body of work has arisen in the past several decades around the conventionalization of organic food (Goldberger, 2011). The conventionalization hypothesis asserts that organic agriculture is moving away from its traditional values and beginning to exhibit similar tendencies to conventional agriculture (Goldberger, 2011, p. 289). Guthman (2004), a proponent of the conventionalization thesis, argues that agri-business has permeated the organic sector, influencing a shift wherein the conventional industrial model of production has been replicated in organics in order to maximize profits. As a result, the ‘agrarian dream’ of organics, which consisted of small-scale production within localized economies, is rarely realized and the benefits to small-scale producers of organics are minimal (Makita, 2012, p. 1233). The conventionalization of organics suggests that, in contrast to what some respondents believe, purchasing alternative products does not necessarily benefit local farmers or strengthen alternative food systems.

The effects of conventionalization include increases in mechanization, the scale of production units, hired labour and mass marketing, patterns which undermine the health, animal welfare and environmental benefits many respondents believe are associated with alternative products. The conventionalization thesis therefore challenges the belief that alternative products are necessarily more ethical than conventional products. Therefore, for the purposes of this research only respondents who shop outside of the current system, at alternative venues, will be labelled 'alternative consumers.'
4.1.3 Consumption Patterns and Motivations: Choosing a Venue –

Conventional vs. Alternative

*Defining Conventional and Alternative Venues and Consumers*

In order to distinguish between 'conventional' and 'alternative' consumers, survey respondents were asked how often they purchase eggs or egg products from anywhere other than a conventional grocery store. Five potential responses were provided: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely and Never; refer to Appendix B: Consumer Survey. Respondents were considered 'alternative' if they responded: Always or Often; and were considered 'conventional' if they responded: Sometimes, Rarely or Never. Twenty-two respondents, 34%, were found to be 'alternative' consumers, while 43, 66%, were found to be 'conventional' consumers. This division is not meant to be representative of the entire population in Eastern Ontario and can only provide preliminary insight into the research sample.

*Purchasing Patterns: Distinguishing between Conventional and Alternative Consumers*

The results indicate that respondents' more commonly purchase eggs and egg products from conventional grocery stores, rather than alternative venues. A quarter (25%) of all respondents indicated that they never purchase eggs from alternative stores and therefore always purchase their eggs or egg products from conventional grocery stores. Another 20% of respondents indicated that they rarely purchase eggs from alternative venues. Twenty-two percent indicated that they sometimes purchase eggs from alternative venues, while another 22% indicated that they do so often. Very few respondents, 12%, indicated that they always purchase their eggs from alternative venues. Therefore, the majority of respondents, 64%, make purchases from both alternative and conventional stores, though more respondents favour conventional stores over
alternative venues.

Consumers can be divided into two categories based on these results. Twenty-two respondents, 34% of all respondents, indicated that they often or always purchase eggs from alternative venues and can therefore be considered, for the purpose of this research, alternative consumers. Forty-three respondents, 66% of all respondents, indicated that they only sometimes, rarely or never purchase eggs from alternative venues and therefore mostly, often or always make egg purchases from conventional grocery stores. These respondents can be considered conventional consumers for the purposes of this research. Therefore, two thirds of respondents are conventional consumers, while a third are alternative consumers.

It was initially assumed that it would be more difficult to garner participation from conventional consumers, since they were considered less likely to have an interest in the research topic than alternative consumers. In fact, more conventional than alternative consumers were successfully surveyed. This finding may be a result of the barriers consumers face in accessing eggs and egg products at alternative venues. Eggs are a particularly difficult product to access from alternative venues because of egg grading regulations in Canada that only allow eggs that have been graded in licensed grading plants to be sold at food establishments (OMAF, 2013b). Regulatory barriers to access will be discussed in further detail in the discussion of government regulations in Chapter 8. However, these barriers are evident from the consumer perspective as well. Several respondents indicated that they shop at alternative venues frequently but do not purchase eggs from these venues due to a lack of access. One respondent stated they wish to purchase eggs from alternative producers but find it difficult to do so because “there are no farmers at the local farmers’ market that sell eggs.” Another respondent stated that, while it is easy to access alternative products, “it is hard to access alternative producers” of eggs. Respondents who do not purchase eggs from alternative venues may purchase other products
from these venues but find it difficult to find egg products. Therefore, the label of 'alternative' and 'conventional' consumer is limited and only applicable within the context of this research regarding the Eastern Ontario egg industry.

**Consumer Choice Motivations**

**Consumer Motivations to Shop at Alternative Venues**

Respondents were asked why they choose to purchase eggs and egg products from alternative venues, when they choose to do so. Forty-nine respondents chose to answer this question despite the fact that only 35 previously indicated that they shop at alternative venues at all. Therefore, 14 respondents choose to respond to this question even though they had previously claimed never to shop at alternative venues. Once again, this discrepancy could simply be due to a misunderstanding. However, it could also indicate that these respondents have shopped for eggs at alternative venues in the past but so rarely that they chose to select never. More likely, these respondents may have shopped for other products at alternative venues but, due to limited access, are not able to purchase egg products alternatively. They may feel strongly about the value of shopping alternatively and therefore decided to express those values despite the fact that they do not specifically purchase eggs at alternative venues.

The values respondents expressed about alternative venues were similar to those expressed about alternative products. The respondents indicated that food purchased from alternative venues has characteristics that are preferable to products purchased from conventional venues, similar to the view that alternative products have preferable qualities to conventional products.

Almost all respondents, 86% who answered this question, provided more than one reason
why they choose to shop alternatively. The most common motivation, indicated by 88% of respondents, was a desire to support local farmers. The second most common response, indicated by 69%, was a desire to know where food is coming from and how it is produced. Animal welfare concerns motivated 55% of respondents, community building motivated 43%, and environmental concerns another 41%. In addition, 22% of respondents who answered the question indicated other motivations. All of the respondents who described other motivations also indicated at least one of the suggested answers as motivation as well. Therefore, respondents are motivated to purchase from alternative producers for a variety of positive values.

Two respondents indicated that a motivating factor in purchasing from alternative venues is the freshness of the eggs and egg products, while one respondent stated that the eggs from these venues have a longer shelf life. Another respondent stated that products from alternative venues taste better. Similarly, two respondents indicated that they feel products from alternative venues are healthier and more nutritious. All of these responses suggest that the products purchased from alternative venues are preferable to those sold at conventional stores. Therefore, these respondents associate alternative venues with better, higher-quality food.

Several respondents referred to the difference in experience when shopping at alternative venues as compared to conventional stores. One respondent stated that the alternative venue at which they shop allows them to engage in more environmentally-conscientious choices, such as refilling the same egg carton week after week to avoid creating packaging waste. This respondent argued that such practices are only possible with small producers and would not be permitted at conventional stores. Another respondent highlighted the personal enjoyment they derive from shopping at alternative venues. They wrote: “I enjoy shopping at my small, local, independent health food store for my personal enjoyment: I bump into friends, eat a snack and hang out a little, I find the small store more relaxing than a massive super store.” One respondent indicated
that a key motivation for purchasing from alternative venues is to help create “a more diversified food system,” indicating that they consciously make purchasing decisions with the goal of creating widespread change in the food production system. These responses suggest that it is not the product being purchased, but the venue itself that provides benefits impossible to reap at conventional stores. Moreover, alternative venues not only provide alternative food, but also an alternative lifestyle and an opportunity to express personal values and create positive political and economic changes according to these values.

**Consumer Motivations to Shop at Conventional Venues**

Respondents were also asked to consider why they purchase eggs or egg products from conventional grocery stores if or when they choose to do so. Fifty-four respondents answered this question. Only 11 respondents opted to skip the question, despite the fact that 16 had previously indicated that they never purchase eggs or egg products from conventional grocery stores. Therefore, 5 respondents choose to explain why they purchase from conventional stores even though they had previously indicated that they never shop at these venues. This discrepancy could have several meanings. It could indicate that respondents were not being truthful or were not clear on the meaning of the questions. It could also indicate that these respondents feel strongly about the reasons why people choose to shop at conventional venues even though they choose not to do so themselves. Alternatively, this discrepancy could represent a difference in how respondents wish to shop, or in how they view their shopping ethically, versus how they shop in practice. These respondents may simply have been indicating that they aim never to shop at conventional stores, or that they view themselves ethically as alternative shoppers who avoid or do not support conventional stores, when in reality they do choose to shop at conventional venues on occasion.
Of the respondents who answered this question, 85% indicated that convenience was a factor in their decision-making and 24% that cost was a factor. The vast majority of respondents who indicated that cost was a factor, 85%, also felt that convenience played an important role in their decision. Therefore, both convenience and cost are important factors in respondents' decision to purchase from conventional venues, however, convenience proved the most popular reason for shopping conventionally.

Eight respondents, 15%, provided an alternative reason why they decide to purchase from conventional grocery stores. All respondents who provided 'other' reasons were alternative consumers. The reasons they provided all relate to scenarios in which it was not possible, or was extremely inconvenient, to purchase from alternative venues. One respondent stated that they only purchase eggs from conventional grocery stores on “the rare occasion that [we] run out before our scheduled delivery by a local farmer.” Another respondent wrote that they purchase from conventional stores only when the local farmer they usually buy from has no eggs. They qualify that this does not occur regularly, stating that it “might happen once in winter.” Similarly, a third respondent stated that they only purchase from conventional venues when their “usual supplier's chickens aren't laying.” A fourth respondent stated that they occasionally do not have time to make it to the health food store they normally frequent and therefore buy from a conventional store instead. Likewise, another respondent stated that the main reason they occasionally shop from conventional stores is due to “bad planning on my part” when they are “in [a] location where alternate venues are not available.” These factors can be considered a matter of convenience, but they also indicate potential barriers to access for those who are motivated to purchase from alternative venues but find it difficult to do so. In fact, one respondent simply stated that their reason for shopping at conventional venues is “access.”
4.1.4 Consumer Choice and Motivations: Discussion of Results

The research results provide insight into consumer behaviour and motivations. The results also indicate barriers to change in the current agri-food system. Two patterns reveal insights into how best to challenge conventional egg production. First, the variety of motivations that underlie alternative consumption indicate that a hybridity of values must be accounted for when developing alternative agri-food systems. Second, the research indicates that more respondents purchase alternative products than shop at alternative venues. This discrepancy can be framed within the structure-agency debates embedded in food consumption geography to reveal insights into how best to produce change in agri-food production.

The diverse values expressed by respondents as motivation for alternative purchases confirms the need to recognize hybridity in alternative agri-food systems. Nost (2014) warns that attempts to refine the definition of local food systems too narrowly will create an exclusionary system of exchange (p. 152). Similarly, the diversity in needs and concerns expressed by respondents confirms that consumers are motivated to consume alternatively, whether it be consuming alternative products or purchasing from alternative venues, by a hybridity of priorities and values. Therefore the successful development of alternative agri-food systems and initiatives requires inclusivity and hybridity.

The research results show that the research sample more commonly purchase alternative, rather than conventional products, but that they are more likely to purchase from conventional rather than alternative venues. Though these results are not representative of a larger population, they indicate that, at least among the research sample, alternative egg products are popular, while buying from alternative venues is less commonplace. This discrepancy parallels structure agency debates in food consumption geography.
Food consumption geography and food activists who support an agency approach to change centre their arguments around the assumption that changing consumption choices will lead to changes in production (Clarke et al., 2007; Jackson, 2010). 'Voting with your dollar' is a core concept utilized within food activist discourse, wherein every choice a consumer makes is assumed to have political weight (Pollan, 2006; Busa, 2014). According to this theory, each time a consumer purchases a good they are casting a vote in its favour, and are giving their approval of all of the practices that were involved in its production. In order to change production practices consumers would need to stop buying all products that were produced through the 'wrong' practices and only purchase products made 'the right', or most ethical way (Clarke et al., 2007). According to the 'voting with your dollar' theory, consumers who buy organic egg products are 'voting' for egg laying hens to have access to outdoor space, to be fed organic feed and for all the other practices involved in organic egg farming. This theory assumes that choosing the 'right' product will be enough to create positive change in the agri-food system.

The research results indicate that many respondents attempt to make ethical choices by purchasing products based on values such as health, animal welfare, environmental wellbeing and community building. These results indicate that many respondents have been influenced by food activist discourse. These respondents are concerned about how ethical their food choices are and are attempting to make 'the right' choices.

Agency geographers similarly argue that consumers ought to express their agency through their consumption behaviour, by purchasing products that best reflect their values and politics (Clarke et al., 2007, p. 233). They place the onus on consumers to produce positive change in the agri-food system by making 'the right' consumption choices. The research results indicate that conventional consumers, in particular, could take greater responsibility for their consumption choices. Convenience was cited as the most relevant factor motivating conventional
purchases, whether of conventional products or from conventional venues. Both alternative and conventional consumers indicated that convenience was a factor in their decision to purchase eggs and egg products from conventional grocery stores. However, the 'other' motivations expressed by alternative consumers suggest that they use conventional stores as a back-up plan to be used only when purchasing from an alternative venue proves extremely inconvenient, while for conventional consumers convenience remains a higher priority at all times. The results indicate that many respondents wish to make alternative purchases, and often purchase alternative products. However, many of these respondents choose convenience over other values when deciding where to shop and therefore are not fully committed to making alternative consumption choices. Conventional consumers in particular could take greater responsibility for their consumption choices, by prioritizing other values, such as health or animal welfare, over convenience.

Structural geographers, however, problematize agency approaches to change (Guthman, 2004, 2008; Hudson and Hudson, 2003; Sonnino, 2013). They argue that the structure of the agri-food system makes it extremely difficult for consumers to choose 'the right' product (Hudson and Hudson, 2003). Consumer agency is often limited by a lack of access to alternatives, coupled with lack of knowledge. Structural barriers, such as the limitations on ungraded eggs, make it difficult for even politically motivated consumers to consistently purchase eggs from alternative venues. For example, only graded eggs can be sold at food establishments in Ontario (OMAF, 2013b). Small-scale farmers, who are more likely to sell their products at alternative venues, often cannot afford their own grading facilities and therefore sell either to larger producers or intermediaries that grade and sell the eggs under their own label (Burnbrae Farms 2012; Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001, s. 4.1; Elton, 2012, para. 8). As a result, eggs are not commonly sold at farmers’ markets or other alternative venues. The low
number of respondents who purchase eggs from alternative venues may at least partially be explained by a lack of access rather than a lack of commitment to shopping alternatively.

Consumers also may not have enough information to make choices that reflect their values. Therefore, their 'vote' may be misplaced. The research results indicate that the decision to shop alternatively is underlain by a number of assumptions about the positive values associated with alternative products and alternative producers. Whether respondents possess the knowledge to support these assumptions will be assessed in the following section. The validity of these assumptions will then be further assessed in future chapters.

The research results indicate that there are both structural and personal barriers to alternative consumption. In order to create change in the agri-food system, consumers must take greater responsibility for their consumption choices and prioritize values other than convenience. However, structural barriers to change must also be addressed. The following section will address key barriers to consumer agency and explore the need for structural change.

4.2 Consumer Knowledge and Access to Information

4.2.1 Consumer Knowledge: Type and Level

Lack of knowledge is a key barrier to consumer agency and transformative change in agri-food systems. Hudson and Hudson (2003) express concern over the lack of availability of consumer information and argue that consumers often lack information about production processes in particular, limiting their ability to make informed choices that reflect their values (p. 424). Clarke (2006) reveals how consumers often depend on intermediary actors, such as non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups, in situations where their agency is limited, such as when they feel they have incomplete knowledge (p. 234). The consumer survey used in this research
sought to assess the research sample's knowledge and to identify barriers to accessing reliable information within the Ontario egg industry.

Consumer knowledge can be conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct comprised of various components and sub-components (Saaksjarvi et al., 2009, p. 139). The literature on consumer knowledge distinguishes between different types and different levels of knowledge (Saaksjarvi et al., 2009). Saaksjarvi et al. (2009) distinguish between subjective and objective consumer knowledge (p. 139). Subjective knowledge reflects consumers' perception of their knowledge of a product, group of products, or industry. In other words, subjective knowledge reflects the knowledge consumers believe they possess. Objective knowledge, on the other hand, consists of factual knowledge about a particular topic, industry or product. It entails knowledge about the attributes of products, linkages between attributes and the relationship of attributes to performance (Ibid).

The literature on consumer knowledge also distinguishes between different levels of knowledge (Saaksjarvi, 2009). General level knowledge comprises knowledge about a product group or industry, including information about (and the potential benefits and risks associated with) a certain class of products or a certain industry (Saarksjarvi, 2009, p. 140). Specific knowledge comprises information about different products and brands within a product class or industry. Consumer knowledge can therefore be conceptualized as comprising of sub-components (p. 141). Specific knowledge requires knowledge of the sub-components of a product class or industry, such as the differentiating features of products within a product class, or product packaging and pricing information within an industry.

Knowledge level can apply to either subjective or objective types of knowledge. The general knowledge consumers possess about an industry, and the specific knowledge they
possess about products within a product class, can be either subjective or objective. General and specific knowledge can also be limited or comprehensive, depending on the amount of knowledge possessed.

The consumer survey used in this research sought to assess the research sample's subjective and objective knowledge of two main aspects of the egg industry: egg industry regulations and egg industry practices. First, the survey asked respondents' about their general knowledge of Ontario egg industry regulations, and specific knowledge of Ontario animal welfare, and quality and safety regulations; refer to Appendix B: Consumer Survey. Second, the survey asked respondents about egg production practices. Production practices constitute a sub-component of the industry. Therefore respondents were asked about specific practices in order to assess their level of specific knowledge. These questions sought to assess both their subjective and objective knowledge. Respondents were first asked if they knew about specific practices in order to judge their subjective knowledge. They were then asked to provide a description of the practice, in order to assess their objective knowledge. Respondents were also asked how satisfied they are with industry regulations and practices in order to assess their perception of the egg industry and to further assess their knowledge.

Finally, the survey sought to determine how respondents' access information about the egg industry and to assess the barriers they face to accessing reliable industry information. Respondents were asked to identify how they access information and also to assess whether they feel they have access to sufficient reliable information. These questions provide insight into how respondents develop their subjective perceptions and objective knowledge of the industry and its practices.
4.2.2 Assessing Consumer Knowledge

The survey results indicate that consumer knowledge is severely limited among the research sample. Respondents lack both subjective and objective knowledge, particularly of specific level knowledge. There are clear differences between knowledge type and level between alternative and conventional respondents, with alternative respondents possessing greater objective and specific knowledge than conventional consumers.

4.2.2.1 Knowledge of Industry Regulations

In general, respondents do not feel well informed about egg industry regulations. Only 3 out 65 respondents, 0.5%, indicated that they feel well informed of animal welfare and safety and quality regulations in Ontario. The majority of respondents feel they are not well informed or only somewhat informed. Almost a third of all respondents, 28%, indicated that they feel uninformed of animal welfare regulations, while 49% indicated that they feel only somewhat informed.

In regards to quality and safety regulations, 42% percent of respondents indicated that they feel uninformed, while a further 35% indicated that they feel only somewhat informed. Therefore, the research sample has extremely low subjective knowledge of Ontario egg industry regulations.

Knowledge of Production Practices

The survey results also indicate low subjective and objective knowledge of egg production practices. The vast majority of respondents, 78%, did not know, nor have any idea, of the breed of chicken that lays the eggs they purchase. Nine percent of respondents indicated that they had
an idea but were not sure, while an additional 9% stated that they did know the breed. Respondents were asked to provide the name of the breed to assess their objective knowledge. However, none of the respondents who stated that they 'had an idea' actually provided a breed name. All 6 respondents who claimed that they did know the breed provided an answer, however, only 5 provided the names of legitimate chicken breeds: Buff Orpingtons, White Leghorns, Rhode Island Reds, and Red Cross Links. The respondents' answers cannot be verified; however, the fact that they know the names of legitimate chicken breeds provides evidence that they possess objective knowledge of egg production. All of the respondents who provided a legitimate response were alternative respondents. Therefore, only 8% of the research sample, all of whom were alternative consumers, displayed specific, objective knowledge of the chicken breed used in the production of the eggs they purchase.

The survey results indicate that there is greater subjective and objective knowledge of the treatment of hens in the egg industry, as opposed to chicken breed. The majority of respondents either have an idea or know how the chickens that lay the eggs they purchase are kept while laying. Forty one percent of respondents expressed that they have an idea how the chickens are kept, while 21% indicated that they know. However, more than a third of respondents still have no idea how the chickens are kept. Furthermore, while 62% of respondents indicated that they either know or have an idea how egg-laying hens are kept in Eastern Ontario, only 45% described the conditions.

The majority of respondents who were able to describe the conditions of egg laying hens were alternative, 72%, rather than conventional, 27%. Conventional respondents provided broad, general and value-based descriptions of the conditions. One stated that the chickens are kept “in tiny cages [and] bad conditions.” Another stated that they are kept in “little cages [and] probably never see light,” and another “in cages, too close together, terrible.” One other respondent
specified that the birds were kept in 'wire' cages. Two respondents simply indicated that they felt
the chickens were treated poorly, and another stated that the conditions were “negative.” All of
these responses were provided by respondents who had an idea but did not know how the hens
were kept. Therefore they reflect subjective, rather than objective knowledge.

Alternative consumers provided more comprehensive information about the treatment of
egg laying hens. Most referred to production practices on the farms from which they purchase
their eggs, however a couple described the conditions on conventional farms. One alternative
respondent echoed the value statements made by conventional consumers, stating that
conventionally, hens are kept “in tiny overpopulated crates. It's barbaric!” Another alternative
respondent added more detail, stating that egg-laying hens are conventionally kept “in condo
style cages [with] little space.” Alternative respondents who described the conditions of egg-
laying hens at the alternative venues from which they purchase eggs generally provided more
specific descriptions. One respondent stated that the hens are kept “free roam with nest boxes,”
another that they are “free range [with] ready access to nesting boxes,” and another that they are
kept in a “coop with free range access.” Other respondents provided even more information. One
stated that the hens are kept on a “small family farm” and are “allowed to roam free,” also
specifying that they are kept with a “small number of hens.” Another respondent stated that the
hens are kept in a “large enclosed barn with straw on the ground and laying boxes along one
wall.” Therefore alternative respondents displayed greater objective and specific knowledge
about production practices than conventional consumers.

4.2.2 Assessing Consumer Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to assess their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the egg
industry. First, respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the current treatment of
animals within the egg industry. Only one person, 1.5% of respondents, indicated they are satisfied while 3 (5%) stated that they are moderately satisfied. Almost half of the respondents, 48%, indicated they are unsatisfied, while 17% stated that they are somewhat satisfied and 29% stated that they are unsure of their level of satisfaction.

The results were similar when respondents were asked how satisfied they are with current regulations of the Ontario egg industry. The same one person, 1.5%, indicated they are satisfied, the same 3 (5%) stated that they are moderately satisfied, and the same 11 (17%) indicated that they are somewhat satisfied. The largest number of respondents, 40%, indicated that they do not know, while 35% stated that they are unsatisfied.

The results indicate two main findings. First, a large percentage of the research sample is dissatisfied with at least these two aspects of the egg industry. Second, a large percentage of the research sample does not feel that they have enough information to determine their level of satisfaction with these two aspects of the industry.

4.2.3 Access to Information

In order to account for the role access to information may play in consumer knowledge respondents were asked where they access information regarding the egg industry and egg production. Twelve respondents, 18% of the research sample, chose not to answer this question. Twenty percent of the research sample indicated that they access information from egg producers' publicity materials, 25% cited Egg Farmers of Ontario and Egg Farmers of Canada information materials, and 26% indicated they do their own research on the Internet. Only 1 respondent, 1.5%, stated they access official government regulations and statistics to find information about egg production.
Eighteen respondents (28%) indicated that they use other resources to find information. Several respondents (6%) stated that they use labels as a main source of information on the products that they purchase. Others (9%) stated that the news, and other forms of popular media, such as books and documentaries, remain key sources of information. Several respondents (5%) stated that they access information from word of mouth. Similarly, one respondent stated that they primarily get information from “friends, family, neighbours.” Therefore, many respondents access information through everyday, casual interactions or from popular representations in the media. This information makes up what one respondent referred to as “wide knowledge.”

Several respondents, all of whom fell within the category of 'alternative consumers' indicated that they access information through direct communication with producers. One respondent stated that they access information from “word of mouth communication from [an] actual farmer.” Another stated that they get their information from “producers at the market or alternative grocery store.” One respondent indicated that the eggs they purchase on a regular basis are “produced locally, next door,” indicating that they have viewed egg production first hand.

Only two respondents stated that they gleaned information about egg production from their own direct experience producing eggs. One such respondent stated their knowledge of egg production stems from their “personal experience having hens and seeing the drastic difference in quality between free-range pasteurized eggs.” The other indicated that they rely on 'wide knowledge' of the egg industry to an extent, but also base their judgements of egg products on their own experience in raising chickens. All respondents who stated that they have direct contact with producers or derive knowledge from their own experience were 'alternative consumers', indicating that these consumers go out of their way to access information about the egg products that they purchase.
Respondents were also asked if they feel they have access to sufficient reliable information about the production of eggs and egg products in Ontario. Only 1 respondent feels they have fully sufficient access. 40% of respondents feel they have insufficient access, while 18% feel they have only moderately sufficient access. One person also indicated that they are not sure.

The results indicate several trends. First, more than half of respondents, 52.5%, access information from the government, egg industry regulating bodies, or producers, either through publicity materials, statistics or labels. Second, many respondents also access information from popular and easy-to-access resources such as the Internet, news programming, and other forms of 'media'. Therefore, many respondents access information about the egg industry from second-hand sources with an interest in publishing only those stories or facts that will increase ratings, viewership or site visits. Third, the majority of respondents indicated that they are able to access information about eggs and egg products from at least one source. However, the vast majority are unsatisfied with the accessibility, amount, or reliability of information they access.

4.2.4 Comparing Alternative and Conventional Consumer Knowledge

The results indicate that the research sample, in general, possesses little knowledge of egg industry regulations and practices. However, alternative consumers possess greater subjective and objective knowledge, both general and specific, about the industry.

Alternative consumers had greater knowledge of animal welfare regulations. Almost half of all alternative respondents, 45%, feel at least moderately well informed of animal welfare regulations, while 14% feel well informed. Very few alternative consumers, only 14%, indicated that they feel 'not well informed'. In contrast, no conventional respondents feel well informed of animal welfare regulations and only 16% feel at least moderately well informed. The majority of
conventional consumers, 53%, indicated that they feel somewhat informed, while a large percentage, 35%, feel they are not well informed.

Similarly, a greater percentage of alternative respondents, 41%, than conventional respondents, 7%, feel they are at least moderately well informed of the safety and quality regulations in place in Ontario. In fact, much fewer conventional respondents feel they are at least moderately well informed of safety and quality regulations compared to animal welfare regulations. The greatest number of conventional respondents, 47%, feel they are not well informed while many feel they are only somewhat informed, 45%. Similarly, double the percentage of alternative respondents, 27%, feel they were not well informed of safety and quality regulations compared to animal welfare regulations, 14%. In general, the research sample had less subjective knowledge of quality and safety regulations, compared to animal welfare regulations. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that animal welfare violations have been in the news and popular media in recent years (Egg Industry 2013, CCFA 2013, PETA 2013; Stevens, 2013). The survey also indicates that many respondents access information about the egg industry from the media and word of mouth. Therefore, the research sample is likely to have more information about aspects of the egg industry that have been discussed in popular media, such as animal welfare.

Alternative consumers not only had greater subjective knowledge of egg industry regulations, but also had greater objective knowledge of egg production practices. A greater percentage of alternative, compared to conventional, respondents expressed that they know the breed of chicken used to lay the eggs they purchase. Almost a quarter of alternative consumers, 23%, indicated that they know the breed and 18% were able to provide the name of a legitimate breed. In contrast, only one conventional respondent, 2%, indicated that they know the breed but did not provide the name. Half of alternative respondents, 50%, indicated that they did not know,
but an even greater percentage of conventional respondents, 74%, indicated the same. A greater percentage of conventional consumers (23%) than alternative consumers (18%) indicated that they had an idea. Therefore, many conventional consumers had subjective knowledge of hen breeds but alternative consumers had greater objective knowledge.

Results were similar when consumers were asked about the treatment of hens in the egg industry. A higher percentage of conventional rather than alternative respondents indicated that they had an idea how the hens that lay the chickens they purchase are kept while laying. Fortyseven percent of conventional respondents indicated that they had an idea compared to 32% of alternative respondents. However, a much higher percentage of conventional consumers also indicated that they did not know. Forty-two percent of conventional respondents indicated that they did not know, compared to 27% of alternative respondents. Also, a much higher percentage of alternative respondents, 45%, knew and were able to provide a description of how hens are treated, compared to conventional respondents, 12%. Therefore, while conventional consumers had subjective knowledge of hen treatment, alternative consumers had greater objective knowledge.

The results indicate that there is no significant difference in levels of satisfaction with the egg industry between alternative and conventional consumers. However, there is a notable difference between the number of conventional and alternative consumers who felt they were not able to make an informed estimation of their level of satisfaction. Both conventional and alternative respondents indicated that they are largely unsatisfied with the current treatment of animals within the Ontario egg industry. Almost half of alternative respondents, 45%, indicated that they are unsatisfied, while 37% of conventional respondents indicated they are unsatisfied. No alternative respondents claimed to be satisfied and only 1 (4%) indicated they are moderately satisfied. Similarly, only 1 (2%) conventional respondent indicated they are satisfied while only
2 (5%) indicated that they are moderately satisfied. However, many respondents indicated that they are not sure how satisfied they are, and a greater percentage of conventional consumers than alternative respondents. Almost half of conventional respondents, 44%, indicated that they are not sure while 18% of alternative respondents stated that they did not know.

The results were similar when respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the current regulations of the Ontario egg industry. Very few respondents, either alternative or conventional are even moderately satisfied. No alternative respondents indicated that they are satisfied and only 1 conventional respondent (2%) indicated that they are satisfied. Two alternative respondents, 9%, indicated that they are moderately satisfied, while only 1 (2%) conventional consumer indicated they are moderately satisfied. Many respondents indicated that they are unsatisfied: 36% of alternative consumers and 33% of conventional consumers. However, once again, many respondents were not sure of their level of satisfaction, and a larger percentage of conventional rather than alternative consumers. Twenty-three percent of alternative consumers indicated that they do not know, while almost half of conventional consumers, 49%, indicated that they are not sure. Therefore, the results indicate that alternative consumers have greater knowledge of the aspects of the egg industry discussed in the survey insofar as they feel better able to make an informed estimation of their level of satisfaction.

The results also indicate that in general both alternative and conventional consumers feel they do not have sufficient access to reliable information. The majority of both alternative and conventional respondents feel they have only somewhat or insufficient access to reliable information. However, a larger percentage of alternative respondents, 32%, feel they have sufficient or moderately sufficient access to reliable information compared to 14% of conventional respondents. One alternative consumer qualified that though they responded saying that they felt there is insufficient reliable information they are actually well informed of the egg
industry and egg production practices. However, they “only obtained [the information] through alternative sources” and feels it “needs to be more easy to access information.”

Only 1 respondent, a conventional consumer, feels they have fully sufficient access to reliable information about the egg industry and egg production. This respondent indicated that they access information from government regulations and official statistics about the egg industry, and indicated that they feel well informed about the regulations in place in Eastern Ontario's egg industry. However, they did not know the breed of hen that lays the eggs that they purchase and indicated only that they have an idea how the hens are kept while laying but were not able to provide a description of the conditions. Comprehensive knowledge of the egg industry, specific knowledge of multiple aspects of the industry, was not found among either alternative or conventional respondents.

4.2.5 Discussion of Results

The results reveal severe limitations in consumer knowledge among the research sample. Respondents call into question whether the information they are provided with is accessible, reliable or sufficient. Smith (2010) found that in the last decade consumers have shown increasing interest in accessing information about the foods they consume (p. 7). Smith found that one prominent way in which consumers engage more actively in food buying decisions is through reading labels and ingredient lists. However, Smith states that: “although more consumers are reading the list of ingredients [on food packaging]... 55% said they understand half or less of the ingredients” (Ibid). Smith's findings indicate that consumers are often unable to understand the information provided by food industries and producers and must decide either to trust or not trust the information they receive with very few tools of assessment. Smith notes that consumers are often left feeling confused, skeptical and distrustful of the industry. Smith's
finding is paralleled in this research where the vast majority of respondents indicated that they are unsatisfied with the Ontario egg industry and egg producers.

Morris (2000) similarly found that consumers assess the reliability of product information based on very few factors she terms “trust cues” (p. 85). According to Morris, consumers generally base their assessment of online information based on the source of information, how recently it was produced, and the perceived transparency of the information. Morris found that consumers tend to trust online information produced more recently and from sources that are unrelated to the producer of the product (p. 86). This finding may explain why so many respondents access information from outside sources, such as news, documentaries and books, rather than directly from producers.

Research on consumer psychology suggests that consumers may also rely on feelings to make judgements, often when they have little access to factual information that they are able to understand (Avnet et al., 2012; Schwarz and Clore, 2007; Pham, 2004). Consumers assume the feelings evoked when they evaluate a target, whether a product or source of information, is representative of the target, unless they have reason to believe otherwise (Avnet, et al., 2012, p. 721). In other words, consumers rely on feelings or affect as a default when they do not have the tools or knowledge to assess the reliability of information or value of a product.

The survey results indicate that affect may play a role in the way respondents assess industry information. Many respondents presented negative connotations of the egg industry, describing the “horrible” conditions in which hens are kept. Several respondents also expressed distrust of the egg industry and egg producers. One respondent claimed that producers and the industry do not want consumers to have information about egg production, stating: “I don't know if they really want [us] to know”. The respondents' feelings towards producers appear to be
largely negative, perhaps explaining why they choose not to rely on information directly from producers. On the other hand, alternative consumers were more likely to express positive connotations of producers. Their positive feelings towards the producers they purchase from may explain why alternative respondents were also more likely to access information directly from producers. Evidently, how consumers perceive the industry and industry players has a huge effect on consumer-producer dynamics.

A body of literature has risen in recent years around the relationship between trust and consumption decisions. Trust has proven to be an important factor in many food purchasing decisions and has been shown to shape attitudes towards food products, production and processing technologies, food producers, and production information. Lombart and Louis (2014) show that corporate social responsibility policies influence individuals' trust in particular retailers and that trust influences future consumer behaviour (in Hobbs and Goddard, 2015, p. 72). Ross et al. show that trust is an important predictor of acceptance of genetic modification. Siegrist et al. (2008) show, likewise, that trust is important in influencing support for functional foods. Janssen and Hamm (2014) show the importance of trust in the acceptance of organic food labels. Hobbs and Goddard (2015) argue these studies, and many others, indicate trust “might be used in situations where lack of knowledge, experience or familiarity...hampers decision-making (p. 72).” This assessment suggests that trust may not always be based on factual knowledge and may rather serve as a substitute for knowledge or experience.

The respondents in this research expressed a desire to consume ethically. They expressed values of community, environmental concern, human health and animal welfare, among others, as motivation for their consumption choices. It seems likely that they would change their choices if they had knowledge that certain practices or producers were more ethical than others. Therefore, respondents require more information and greater tools of assessment in order to
realize their consumer agency and avoid relying on affect or blind trust. The following chapters will further explore the role trust plays in consumer-producer relationships and will assess scalar differences in how trust is developed.

4.3 Discussion: Building the Consumer Perspective of Eastern Ontario’s Egg Industry

Results from the consumer survey provide insight into the consumer perspective of Eastern Ontario's egg industry. Consumer perceptions are divided among conventional and alternative consumers, based on differences in purchasing decisions and knowledge. Alternative consumers in general, have greater objective knowledge of egg industry regulations and practices. Conventional consumers have subjective knowledge regarding some aspects of the egg industry but little objective knowledge. Despite these differences, both conventional and alternative consumers indicate that they are dissatisfied with the current industry and express distrust of producers. Likewise, both alternative and conventional consumers indicate that they do not feel they have sufficient access to reliable information. Conventional consumers in particular tend to access information from scattered sources, including the Internet, popular media and 'wide knowledge' acquired from informal discussions.

The results indicate that many consumers feel there is a need for change. The majority of respondents buy alternative products and the survey results indicate that they do so to express the values they believe the egg industry ought to uphold such as human health, environmental, and animal welfare concerns, and a desire to develop local food systems, build community and support small-scale farmers. However, results also indicate that consumers lack objective knowledge of the industry and production practices. Therefore, the assumptions they make about the value of the products they purchase are often not based on factual knowledge. Rather,
consumers rely on feelings and affect to make judgements of products, the industry and industry players.

The survey results also provide insight into the potential for change in the Ontario egg industry. The results indicate there are both personal and structural barriers to consumer agency. On the one hand, the results indicate a lack of commitment to change on the part of conventional consumers who prioritize convenience over other values. While convenience remains an important factor for alternative consumers in deciding from where to purchase eggs, they only use conventional stores when the inconvenience of shopping at alternative sources becomes extreme. Therefore, consumers could express their agency more actively and with greater commitment.

On the other hand, consumers face significant barriers to obtaining both information and access to alternative products, which limits their ability to make the 'right' purchases. Avnet et al. (2012) argue that consumers often lack the proper tools to assess the information they receive. As a result, consumers rely on feelings and affect to make their decisions and choose the product they 'feel' fits within their value set. Even when consumers know which products are most ethical they are not always able to access them. Guthman (2008) in particular emphasizes the importance of addressing policy when initiating industry changes. She argues that the devolution of regulation to individual consumers in California's organic sector has made issues that consumers are unaware of, such as farm labour and pesticide drift, invisible within the industry (Guthman, 2008, p. 1180). In the context of the egg industry, Ontario's egg grading policies represent a structural barrier to accessing alternative products (OMAF, 2013b). The research results also indicate that respondents are unable to access sufficient reliable information. Barriers to both alternative products and industry information must therefore be removed in order to allow consumers to effectively express their desire for change.
Finally, the research provides insight into the development of a collective consumer identity. Starr (2010) and Melucci (1989) present collective action as an effective approach to producing structural industry change. When individual actions are made for the purpose of developing a social movement, these actions can build networks of activity that may ultimately shift society's functioning (Melucci, 1989 in Starr, 2010, p. 482). The research results indicate that consumers make consumption decisions based on a wide variety of values and ideals. Therefore, the creation of a collective identity within the eastern Ontario egg industry would require an identity that is hybrid and diverse. Chapters 5-7 will assess the egg industry and the potential for transformative change from the producer perspective.
Chapter 5
Large-Scale Consumer Data: A Case Study of Burnbrae Farms

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data collected from Burnbrae Farms, a national-scale Canadian egg production company. The findings are based on an in-depth interview with a high-level Burnbrae Farms executive, site tours of the production facilities at their headquarters in Lyn, Ontario, and qualitative coding and analysis of their marketing materials.

The interview with Burnbrae Farms was held at the company headquarters in Lyn. The building has been recently upgraded and expanded with a spacious white, wood-lined interior. The interviewee, a senior Burnbrae Farms executive, hereon referred to as 'the Burnbrae executive', has a large, square office with a window overlooking the building parking lot and farm fields beyond. The Burnbrae executive was eager to discuss the supply management system and the egg production supply chain in Canada. However, he steered the conversation away from Burnbrae Farms' products and practices and the information he provided on these topics remained in line with company marketing materials. The interview reinforced company discourse of small-scale, family-oriented, health conscious, socially responsible and science-based farming.

In addition, Burnbrae Farms provided extensive tours of their facilities, both of their

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All information about Burnbrae Farms, including quoted materials, in this chapter is derived from an in-depth interview with a high-level Burnbrae Farms executive and/or from a tour of the farm facilities and grading plant conducted October 22, 2014.
grading station and egg layers. The grading plant tour included all major areas of the plant, including the loading docks, storage facilities, grading line and employee cafeteria. The egg layer tours included all four housing and flooring systems used at Burnbrae Farms: conventional housing systems, enriched housing systems, free-run floor systems and free-run Aviary floor systems. My tour guide, a Burnbrae Farms egg farmer, hereon referred to as 'the farm tour guide', explained each system and discussed their benefits and limitations.

The tours revealed the significant scale of Burnbrae Farms' operations. The grading station and laying barns are huge, highly mechanized and require a large number of employees. The facilities engage in fast-paced, impersonal, factory farm style production.

In contrast, Burnbrae Farms markets itself predominantly as a small, socially responsible, family business closely connected to nature. Burnbrae produces a plethora of marketing materials distributed through diverse media. The company has an extensive presence on social media with accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube. Burnbrae also runs a website, blog and e-newsletter. The company reaches out to consumers online through contests, coupons, recipes and interactive features on their website and social media accounts. The company also markets through its packaging with images, information and colours that connote health, freshness, and quality. The major themes identifiable in Burnbrae's various marketing materials are small-scale family farming, national pride, social responsibility, and science and nutrition.

5.1 Background

Joseph Hudson, a recent immigrant from Stranraer, Scotland, founded Burnbrae Farms in the late 1800s. In 1893, he purchased a 100-acre farm in Lyn, Ontario and named it Burnbrae after the
topography of the land and his family's origins (Burnbrae Farms, 2015, About Us., Company History, para. 2). “Burn” is a Scottish name for stream and “Brae” for hillside. Originally, the farm produced a variety of products but focused largely on milk production. Throughout the early 1900s, Burnbrae Farm's milk was sold locally throughout Lyn's neighbouring city, Brockville, Ontario (para. 3).

Burnbrae Farms evolved into an egg production farm through the efforts of Joseph Hudson's great-grandsons: Grant and Joseph (Joe) Hudson. In 1943, Joe became involved in a high school poultry project in which he raised 50 leghorn chicks to laying hens (para. 4). The success of his project convinced Grant and Joe to continue producing eggs on the farm. From 1943 to 1948, Joe and Grant managed the egg layers as a side line project and increased the number of laying hens substantially (Burnbrae Farms, 2015, About Us, Company History, para. 4). When Joe graduated high school in 1948, Burnbrae had a respectable 3000 layers. At this time, the farm was producing eggs, milk and cash crops for profit.

Eventually, the farm's main enterprise became poultry, although the dairy herd was maintained for many years. In the mid-1950s, Burnbrae landed their first large grocery chain account, Steinberg's in Montreal (Burnbrae Farms, 2015, About Us, Company History, para. 5). As a result, Burnbrae expanded its laying barn to hold 20,000 layers and began grading their own eggs.

In 1973, Burnbrae entered the further processing market (para. 7). The company opened a plant in Brockville to break, pasteurize and package eggs to be sold to the bakery, hotel, restaurant and industrial trades. In 2006, Burnbrae Farms acquired the manufacturing rights to a premium omelette line, now manufactured out of the Brockville plant (para. 11).

Burnbrae opened two additional grading stations in Ontario in the 1970s and 1980s,
buying out a London plant, Maple Lynn Foods Limited, in 1978 and opening a plant in Mississauga in 1981. Burnbrae also added company branches in a number of other Canadian provinces. The company built Fermes St. Zotique Ltee in 1974, located in Quebec and in 1995 bought a grading station and further processing plant in Manitoba. Finally, Burnbrae Farms purchased a grading station in Calgary, Alberta (para.10).

Burnbrae Farms has forayed into international markets as well. In 2010, the company formed a joint venture with two other Canadian farm companies, Ferme Hubert Inc. and Ferme A.B. Morin and Son, to purchase Vermont Egg Farm, located in Highgate, Vermont (Hemingway, 2010, para. 3). Burnbrae also exports a small quantity of products. The Burnbrae executive explained: “I'm guessing 2% percent of our product is exported, we export some yolk and other products out of our processing plants. We have exported liquid eggs to other countries as well...We've sold liquid and frozen eggs to India, to China [and to the Caribbean]”. However, Burnbrae Farms primarily supplies the Canadian market. The executive explains: “the egg business, because of supply management, has turned out to be primarily a domestic business, just like all supply-managed products.” The company is open to opportunities for global expansion but remains primarily focused on domestic production. Of global trade, the executive states: “there's little opportunities that pop up every once and a while that work for the buyer and seller. But it's very small.”

5.2 Production

5.2.1 Products

Burnbrae Farms produces a wide variety of shell and processed egg products and sells to diverse industries across North America. This review will focus on Burnbrae Farms' shell eggs, marketed
and sold to individual consumers. Burnbrae Farms sells eggs to consumers under two different brands: Burnbrae Farms and Naturegg, refer to Appendix D: Tables Representing Burnbrae Farms Products, for an exhaustive list.

**Burnbrae Farms Brand**

The following shell egg products are sold under the Burnbrae Farms brand:

1) **Grade A white and brown** shell eggs are lain by hens fed conventional, corn-based feed, and housed in conventional caged housing systems. Conventional systems consist of layers of small cages housing six birds to a cage, maintained by machinery and conveyor belt systems.

2) **Burnbrae Farms Free Run Omega** eggs are produced from hens in open concept barns fed a multi-grain diet with added flaxseed, corn and alfalfa which results in eggs with supplemental omega-3 and lutein (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Burnbrae Farms Free Run Omega 3, para. 1).

3) **Burnbrae Farms Nestlaid** eggs are lain by hens housed in enriched housing systems that include nesting areas and house fewer hens per cage than conventional housing systems (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Burnbrae Farms Nestlaid, para. 1).

4) **Super Bon-EE** eggs are either double yolk or oversized. Oversized eggs are at least 25% larger than regular eggs, while eggs sold as Double Yolk are guaranteed to contain 50% double yolks in a carton (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Burnbrae Farms Super Bon-EE, para. 1).

5) **Prestige** eggs differ from regular grade A eggs by containing higher nutrient and vitamin content. According to Burnbrae Farm's website: “prestige eggs are an excellent source of protein. Each 53g egg is a source of 13 vitamins and minerals and excellent source of vitamin B12 and
selenium” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Burnbrae Farms Prestige, para. 1).

**Naturegg Brand**

Only speciality products are represented by the Naturegg brand. The Burnbrae Farms website provides more extensive information on Naturegg products than those sold under the Burnbrae Farms brand (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products). The following shell egg products are sold under the Naturegg brand:

1) **Naturegg Omega 3** eggs are nutritionally enhanced to provide an additional source of omega-3 fatty acids. They are produced by feeding chickens an 'all natural', flax-based diet “developed by researchers at the University of Guelph” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Naturegg Omega 3, para. 1).

2) **Naturegg Omega Plus** is also a nutritionally enhanced egg that provides an additional source of DHA omega-3 fatty acids and lutein (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Naturegg Omega Plus, para. 1). According to the Burnbrae Farms website: “each single egg serving of Omega Plus provides 125 mg of DHA omega-3 and 0.500 mg of lutein” and is an excellent source of vitamin D (Ibid). These eggs are produced by feeding hens a diet high in flaxseed and fish oil which modifies the fat in the yolk of the eggs to contain more omega-3 fats and less saturated and omega-6 fatty acids. The hens' feed also includes alfalfa and corn to ensure their eggs contain lutein (Ibid).

3) **Naturegg Free Run** eggs are produced by hens housed in open concept barns and fed conventional multi-grain feed (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Naturegg Free Run, para. 1).

4) **Naturegg Organic** eggs are produced by free-range birds fed an organic multi-grain diet that have access to the outdoors, weather permitting (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Naturegg
Organic, para. 1). They are certified organic by EcoCert Canada.

5) Finally, Naturegg Nature's Best are produced by hens fed a vegetarian diet that contains no medications, antibiotics or animal by-products (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Naturegg Nature's Best, para. 1). Their feed is enriched with Vitamins D, E and B12 as well as Folacin (Ibid).

Burnbrae Farms also produces a range of liquid egg products under their various brands, as well as Naturegg Omega-3 Hard Boiled egg snack packs (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products). In addition, Burnbrae sells a variety of products to Industrial and Food Service clients. However this research concerns only shell egg products sold to individual consumers.

5.2.1 Production at Burnbrae Farms in Lyn

Lifecycle of the Hen

Burnbrae Farms is not involved in chicken breeding but rather purchases day old chicks from a variety of hatcheries. Burnbrae Farms' egg production facilities purchase pullets from various hatcheries including Boire in Quebec, Archers in Brighton Ontario, and McKinnley's in Saint Mary's Ontario. New flocks are transferred to pullet barns on Burnbrae's property where they are vaccinated and incubated for 19 weeks. According to the Burnbrae executive, the Lyn facilities grow approximately 800 000 birds per year. Flocks are moved to layer barns at 19 weeks of age where they remain for 12 to 19 months before being pulled from production. The decision to pull a flock depends on egg quality. As hens grow older they produce larger eggs. As a result, the density of the egg shell is spread across a larger area, making it thinner and more fragile. According to the Burnbrae Farms executive, at the 12th or 13th month of laying shell quality is often reduced to the point where the eggs are too fragile for shipment. Burnbrae monitors size
and the number of cracks found in eggs from each flock in order to determine when to pull birds from production. Retired birds are referred to as 'spent fowl', or as the Burnbrae executive quips, “some people call them soup fowl.” They are sold to Maple Lodge to be used in the poultry industry.

**Egg Procurement and Collection**

Burnbrae Farms does not produce all of their eggs on site. The company supplements in-house production with eggs purchased from regional farms. Burnbrae Farms in Lyn purchases eggs from a number of farms of varying size. The Burnbrae executive states: “we buy from farms that have 3000 chickens, we buy from one big farm in Napanee that's got 400 thousand.” These eggs are picked up every week, or in some cases every day, by Burnbrae transport trucks. River Valley Poultry Farm, the biggest single egg farmer in Ontario, sells its eggs exclusively to Burnbrae Farms. Burnbrae procures eggs from River Valley each day to be graded in their Lyn grading plant.

Burnbrae most often purchases external eggs ungraded. The executive states: “once in a while we'll buy graded eggs, mostly from a competitor, if we're short on something and they're long on something, but that's very minor.” He argues that it is common for egg farmers of all sizes in Canada's egg industry to sell their eggs to grading plants, claiming that in Canada: “98% of farmers sell all their eggs out the door ungraded.” This trend is most likely due to the fact that operating a grading plant is costly and many farmers either cannot afford or do not wish to invest in a grading facility of their own.

Eggs from each farm are graded separately and the farmers receive a “grade out” cheque based on the size, quality and quantity of eggs deemed usable after the grading process. After grading, the eggs are no longer separated by farm but rather are grouped by size, quality and
alternative attributes. For example Omega-3 eggs are grouped together, regardless of their farm of origin. As a result, after the grading process it becomes impossible to trace where Burnbrae Farms eggs originated.

Burnbrae farms does not place any regulations on the farmers from which it purchases eggs, trusting in their certifications from the provincial egg board. The Burnbrae executive states: “we know that every farmer has passed the food safety audit and we know that they've passed the animal care audit. That's really the main thing we care about.”

**Egg Layers**

Burnbrae Farms in Lyn uses four different egg layer systems, conventional housing systems, enriched housing systems, free-run floor systems and free-run Aviary floor systems. Caged systems are referred to as housing systems, while open concept layers are referred to as floor systems. Burnbrae Farms does not produce organic eggs on site, nor have they developed free-range systems.\(^3\)

The different egg layer systems at Burnbrae Farms share some common features. Each layer barn contains a computer that controls all aspects of the environment, including the lighting, feeding, water, air circulation and temperature. The air in the barns is circulated by pipes in the ceiling. A water line also travels across the ceiling and delivers water to the birds. Likewise, the hens are fed through an automated feeding system.

The layers undergo required inspections each day. In conventional systems employees must walk along the bottom of the barn and use a lift to inspect the upper levels. In more open

\(^3\) Free-range and free-run systems are often confused but are distinct housing systems. The most significant difference between the two is that free-run is an indoor system while free-range systems allow birds access to the outdoors, weather permitting. The same space requirements are applied to both systems and both provide birds with perches and nests.
concept systems employees walk among the birds, checking for sick or injured hens, health
problems, issues with the eggs, or problems with the automated water and feeding systems. One
employee is responsible for inspecting and cleaning two barns each day.

In addition to these regulations Burnbrae requires a manual crack test each week to test
for egg quality and shell strength. The birds are also weighed once a week. In caged systems a
150-bird sample is taken from the first row of the barn and weighed. Once every ten weeks a
sample from across the back of the barn is taken for comparison.

Waste is removed from the layers by conveyor belts, though in the free-run and free-run
Aviary system some areas of the barn must be cleaned manually. Waste is moved to a dump on
site and sold to local farmers as manure, delivered by a broker.

The egg layer systems also differ in significant ways. Below is a description of the four
different housing systems based on information provided on the Burnbrae website and site tours
of the farm.

1) **Conventional Housing System:**

Conventional housing systems house 6 birds to a cage; refer to Appendix E.1. Space
requirements depend on the breed and weight of the birds. White birds typically weigh around
3.74 lb. and are allocated 67 square inches per bird (Canadian Agri-Food Research Council,
2013, Recommended Code of Practice, Poultry-Layers, p. 7). Brown birds weigh a little more,
around 4.18 lb., and are allocated 75 square inches per bird (p. 8). The cages are stacked one on
top of the other up to the barn ceiling. At Burnbrae Farms cages are referred to as 'housing
systems' and employees are encouraged to avoid using the term ‘cage’ (farm tour guide, personal
communications, October 22, 2014).
In conventional layers the rows of cages, or houses, are underlain by a 7-degree slope that causes laid eggs to roll out onto a 1 mile long conveyer belt that connects to the grading plant. The eggs are counted by the belt and that information is used to control the speed of the conveyor belt into the grading plant accordingly. The rows of cages are also underlain by a manure belt that is cleaned twice a week.

The housing systems are designed so that water is deposited on one side of the cage, and feed on the other. This system is meant to prevent inter-bird fighting and mitigate negative effects of the pecking order. The dominant bird in the cage must move from one side to the other in order to access food and water, leaving alternating sides of the cage free for weaker birds to access. My tour guide argued that, were the housing systems not designed in this way, the pecking order may impede submissive birds from accessing resources (Ibid).

2) **Enriched Housing Systems**

Enriched housing systems are almost identical to conventional egg layers, however the cages are larger and include a scratching post, perch and nest areas. The systems also contain more birds, 17-19 per system, which amounts to 132 square inches per bird for white birds and 147 square inches per bird for brown birds (Canadian Agri-Food Research Council, 2013, Recommended Code of Practice, Poultry-Layers, p. 7). A fully developed enriched system would feature a larger cage and 60 birds per system. However, the tour guide stated: “they’re chickens and we're chickens” and explained that Burnbrae developed an enriched system with half the number of hens to test the feasibility of running a fully developed enriched system (farm tour guide, personal communications, October 22, 2014).

One limitation of the enriched system is its failure to protect hens from inter-bird aggression spurred on by the pecking order. These systems experience more fighting and injuries
because there are more birds to compete for dominance and more space for the birds to fight.

3) **Free-run Floor System**

Free-run floor systems house birds in open concept barns rather than cages. Burnbrae houses approximately 14 000 hens in each free-run barn, see Appendix E.2. These hens do not have access to the outside but are provided with a scratch area, nesting area and enough space to give themselves dust baths. At Burnbrae Farms, free-run hens are granted about 2 square feet per bird.

The free-run barn I observed was divided into two areas. The bottom level is a simple barn floor with a perch running the length of the layer. The top level begins halfway through the width of the barn. It is angled 7 degrees and underlain by two conveyor belts, one to remove manure and the other to collect eggs. The top and lower levels are connected by a ramp since the tour guide states that the birds don't like to fly. In fact, he argues that the birds “don't move much throughout their time in the barns” and mostly stay in the area they were deposited in as young chicks (Ibid). Feeding trays extend across the length of the lower level of the barn. In the back, on the top level, is a nesting area. The lighting is designed to make shadows on that area to encourage nesting.

Once again, more aggression is noted in this system. The tour guide explains that having more dominant birds together in one space has led to more bullying. The dominant birds pick on weaker ones to keep them in their place and fight amongst each other in order to remain dominant.

The tour guide explained that this system also requires more upkeep. The birds have to be trained where to sleep and where to nest. In particular, they must be trained only to sleep and lay in the nesting area on the top level, which is underlain by conveyor belts. In order to do so,
employees must come into the barn every night and physically move the birds until they understand to move on their own. Eggs lain on the floor must be collected by hand and the lower section must be manually cleaned.

4) **Free-run Aviary Floor System**

Burnbrae is currently testing a new housing system called the Free-run Aviary system; refer to Appendix E.3. It is the most 3-dimensional of the four systems, with the characteristics of a jungle gym. Currently, eggs from the Avery system are marketed and sold in the same way as free-run eggs. However, the system comprises of three, rather than two levels, and the hens are able to travel all the way through the barn at each level rather than the lower level ending where the upper one begins.

This system requires even greater upkeep. The birds must be trained where to sleep and where to lay and cleaning is more difficult. The levels are quite low and the lowest is not underlain by conveyor belts. As a result, employees must crawl underneath the second level to clean the lowest manually. The tour guide stated that in these systems “[the chickens] are living the good life, but there's always a cost” (Ibid). He argues further that although having fewer birds per barn may improve the quality of life for the animals, it expands the ecological footprint of production because alternative systems require more space and greater resources. Also, as in free-run barns, Burnbrae has experienced increased aggression and bullying among hens in the Aviary system.

*Analysis of Burnbrae Farms’ Egg Layers in Lyn*

Burnbrae Farms supports conventional layers as the most efficient system for raising hens. The farm tour guide continually compared newer, more open concept systems to conventional layers,
arguing that the latter are safer for birds, more environmentally friendly and require less upkeep. However, Burnbrae Farms is moving away from conventional egg layers and is currently developing a range of new housing and flooring systems that provide birds with more freedom, such as the free-run Aviary system. While skeptical of these systems, the farm tour guide argues that they are more in demand and Burnbrae Farms must adapt to keep up with industry trends.

**Distribution of Shell Eggs**

Burnbrae distributes their eggs through tractor trailers, with 100 in operation across Canada (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, *From Our Farm to Your Table*). Client stores place orders in the morning either by fax or by phone. These orders are registered by employees in the Lyn office and sent into the grading plant to be filled. The orders are sent out within three days, as specified by the store, and are delivered at night.

**Grading**

The Grading Plant at Burnbrae Farms in Lyn consists of a large cement building attached to the headquarters office. The building contains large grey rooms with high ceilings. Machines inspect, clean and sort the eggs while employees oversee and maintain the machinery. Packaging is done by hand and remains a labour-intensive process. The plant is broken up into distinct areas for particular tasks and each area is governed by specific safety regulations.

1) **The Warehouse**

Burnbrae receives all of its packing materials into a warehouse at the back of the grading plant. It consists of a concrete room filled to the ceiling with piles of packing boxes and cartons. The warehouse receives 50-60 different types of packing materials. Employees packing eggs at the end of the grading line fill out 'need sheets' detailing their required packaging materials and send
these orders back to the warehouse. Warehouse employees then fill the orders and deliver them to the end of the line. Warehouse employees are also responsible for ordering, receiving, moving and organizing packaging materials.

2) Shipping/Receiving Area

Producer eggs are received in a shipping and receiving area that includes multiple loading docks. The shipments are quickly removed from the loading docks into storage and the area was well organized and mostly empty during my visit. Shipments are also loaded onto transports from the shipping and receiving area in the evenings, to be delivered to stores overnight.

3) Grading Cooler

Eggs that have been delivered or collected on site are stored in a refrigerated room before being graded. The room is filled with stacks of egg pallets, each with a ticket indicating the egg producer, as well as the type and number of eggs received. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) requires strict humidity and temperature regulations within the cooler. Ungraded coolers must be maintained at no more than 13°C with a relative humidity of 85% or less (Shell Egg Manual, §3.6.3, 2013).

4) Receiving Area for Inline Eggs

Eggs lain on site are referred to as inline. Approximately 14,000 pallets of inline eggs are brought into the grading plant each shift on a conveyor belt that connects the layers to the plant. These eggs are held in the grading cooler to the side of the receiving area.

5) Grading Area

The grading area is a huge room dominated by large machines. Eggs are transferred from one
machine to the other by conveyor belts. All grading machines are centrally controlled by a computer located in the middle of the room. Grading managers input instructions into the computer, ordering the machines to grade a certain quantity of a certain type of eggs, in order to fill specific orders.

The first machine washes the eggs. In accordance with CFIA regulations, the eggs are rinsed in water of regulated temperature and acidic balance to remove dirt and bacteria. The eggs are thoroughly dried by a second machine that gently blows air onto the line. The eggs then move through a quality control process known as candling. Candling involves shining a light through the eggs at all angles to inspect for irregularities in the shell, yolk and egg white. Grade A eggs are required to have an uncracked shell, a round and centered yolk, a round white and a small air cell. Eggs that are cracked, dirty or contain blood spots or other irregularities disqualifying them from Grade A status, are removed from the line. The central computer tracks how many eggs from each producer are cracked or rejected. The cracked and rejected eggs are then sent to the Burnbrae Farms breaking plant to be used in processed products.

The remaining eggs on the line move to a weighing system which grades and separates the eggs by weight. Eggs are sorted according to size categories for Canada Grade A eggs: Peewee, Small, Medium, Large, Extra Large and Jumbo sizes. The conveyor belt then branches six ways, leading to six different packing areas. The computer is programmed to send specific grades to specific packers where the eggs are manually removed by employees and placed into cartons. Filled cartons are packed into pallets and sent to the cooler for finished product before being shipped.

6) **Cooler for Finished Product**

Graded egg pallets are sent to a cooler for finished product. The cooler must be maintained at
10°C or less, with 85% or less relative humidity. The filled orders for each store are placed underneath store signs indicating the final destination for the pallets. Employees working the afternoon shift on the shipping doc are given a 'picking sheet' that details what orders must be picked up from the finished product cooler. Orders are then shipped out at night to individual stores.

7) The Employee Cafeteria

The employee cafeteria is the brightest room in the grading plant. White walls, bright lighting and a full row of windows along one side of the room provide respite from the grey-walled interior of the plant and the repetitive tasks employees are required to conduct. A clock on the wall of the cafeteria reads: Safety First.

Analysis of the Lyn Grading Station

Several thematic elements arose throughout my tour of the Lyn Grading plant, the first being worker safety. Workers at the plant are organized into two 8-hour shifts each day. The first begins at 8 am and ends at 4 pm and is referred to as the morning shift. The second begins at 4 pm and ends at midnight and is referred to as the afternoon shift, though the employees work through the night. Burnbrae boasts extensive training programs for employees, including 27 different programs for new employees, most of which must be repeated every 1-2 years. Employees are issued full body jumpsuits and required to wear steel-toed boots in the grading plant. Goggles and helmets are additionally required in certain areas of the plant. An Ontario employment standard manual is set up at the main entrance into the plant where employees are able, and encouraged, to read about their rights and obligations as workers.

A second thematic element is quality control. Grading operations at Burnbrae Farms in
Lyn are heavily regulated by the CFIA. In accordance with CFIA regulations the plant has been divided into separate areas controlled by Critical Control Points (CCPs), which involve computerized management of the environment, including temperature, lighting and humidity. CCPs must be checked every hour and paperwork filled out to track any changes in the machinery or environment. The CFIA also requires Burnbrae to conduct quality inspections every few hours as well as annual mock recalls. Burnbrae Farms is audited both by the CFIA and independently, by several of its larger clients, such as Loblaws and McDonalds. The Burnbrae Farms grading plant is therefore a highly regulated factory system that is dedicated to ensuring worker safety and quality control.

5.3 Marketing and Consumer Communications

5.3.1 Assessing and Reacting to Consumer Demand

Burnbrae Farms assesses consumer demand both directly and indirectly. The Burnbrae executive claims the company “[has] direct contact with customers” through a variety of means. Burnbrae Farms provides their contact information on their website, including the location, phone and fax numbers for each company branch. The company also provides an inquiry form and 1-800 help line on their website. Additionally, the help line is printed on all Burnbrae Farms specialty product cartons and delivery vehicles. Calls to this hotline are fielded by a Burnbrae employee in Lyn who answers questions and files complaints (Ibid). Complaints submitted by phone or through the customer inquiry form are filed through an electronic system. The company's marketing team in Mississauga uses the system to respond to complainants, often by sending coupons or other forms of compensation.

Burnbrae also assesses consumer demands by analyzing global trends in egg production.
Burnbrae Farms has been impacted by an overall trend in global egg production away from conventional housing systems and is currently exploring new, alternative layer designs, such as the free-run Aviary system, that provide hens with more freedom and activities than conventional housing systems. The farm tour guide explained that these changes are a response to global pressure, stating that: “things are going that way...soon cage systems will be obsolete... Europe is ahead of us” (personal communications, October 22, 2014). In fact, the European Union has already phased out conventional battery cages (European Commission, 2015). Since 2012, egg farmers in the EU have been required to raise egg laying hens in enriched, free-run or free-run Aviary systems. The farm tour guide also acknowledged the role consumer demand has played in recent production changes saying: “consumers are demanding it... people don't like [cage systems] anymore” (personal communications, October 22, 2014).

Similarly, the Burnbrae executive argues that trends of increased consumer curiosity have altered the way Burnbrae connects with consumers. Burnbrae has responded to consumer demands for increased transparency with virtual tours, site tours and an increased supply of information on their website and other Internet pages. The Burnbrae executive states that: “today [consumers] want to know where their food comes from and that's why we run a lot of tours here. We run tours here constantly for consumers.” The egg layer tour I was granted is also available to Burnbrae's consumers and industrial and commercial clients. The executive estimates that Burnbrae in Lyn has hosted a thousand people in the past year alone.

The executive argues that consumer curiosity has arisen in reaction to a growing disconnect between the general population and food production. He states: “two percent of the population are on farms today, 98% are not on farms and don't really know...so we're being much more transparent then we used to be.” He claims that Burnbrae Farms is trying to re-establish the connection between individuals and their food, by increasing transparency and making
available as much information as possible about the egg production process. The executive argues that consumer curiosity and pressure has transformed the way Burnbrae approaches farming and has altered the way the company connects with consumers. He states: “twenty years ago a tour was a nuisance and today, [if people] want to come in and look at things, we're proud of what we've got here, we have nothing to hide.”

The executive argues that when consumers are ill informed about production, their demands may be shaped by activists and the media who mislead consumers to fulfil their own agendas. In particular, he believes animal rights organizations often mislead consumers by convincing them to donate based on false premises. He argues that consumers think: “they're giving to a company that's looking after cats, dogs and horses but they truly are animal rights organizations who only have one objective and it's to make everybody a vegan.” Likewise, he argues that the media plays up animal rights issues unfairly, in order to develop sensational stories. Seeming to refer to the W5 video on egg production released in 2013, he argues that undercover journalists will “find something if they look long enough... and in a one minute video they show it’s terrible” (Stevens, 2013). However, these journalists may have been undercover for weeks before discovering any transgressions, therefore their one-minute video unfairly represents the industry. Burnbrae Farms attempts to overcome this problem by educating consumers about their production practices. However, the executive's discussion of animal rights movements indicates that Burnbrae Farms recognizes, and feels threatened by, the power of consumer demand.

5.3.2 Marketing to Consumers

Burnbrae Farms markets eggs through a variety of means. It is beyond the scope of this project to analyze all of Burnbrae's diverse marketing schemes in depth. However, the following section
will provide a brief overview of two of the company's most prevalent forms of marketing: online communication and product packaging. This section will also analyze the main themes consistent throughout Burnbrae Farms' online accounts and packaging materials.

**Online Marketing**

Burnbrae Farms uses a variety of Internet tools and social media outlets to market their products and communicate with consumers. The company hosts an updated and interactive web page and runs accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube. In addition, the company runs a blog and issues a bi-monthly e-newsletter. All of Burnbrae Farms' online accounts are run by a single member of the Hudson family, Sue Hudson.

**Website**

The Burnbrae Farms website is complex and contains a plethora of information about the company, egg farming practices and egg nutrition. Burnbrae Farms provides different web pages for each of their clientele: Consumers, Foodservice and Industrial Clients (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/). Their consumer site is filled with images of nature, small barns, free roaming hens and family photographs, and provides information on nutrition, farming, recipes and the company background (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/consumer/index.htm). The foodservice site discusses the company, products, cooking tips and is filled with images of food, product packaging and industrial kitchens (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/food_service/index.htm). The industrial site consists of a single page that lists available products and company contact information and contains little colour and few images (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/industrial/index.htm). This review will focus on the consumer site in keeping with the research goal of understanding Burnbrae's relationship with individual consumers.
The consumer web page provides a diversity of information ranging from scientific nutritional information, to social responsibility, to recipes. An entire section is dedicated to describing each of Burnbrae Farms’ products, another to providing information on the farm, and another to introducing the farms from which the company sources eggs (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/consumer/index.htm). The website also boasts a section entitled “Recipe Nest” that lists a huge number of recipes, organized alphabetically (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/consumer/recipe_nest/index.htm).

The website uses interactive features to engage with and market to visitors. First, it provides multiple links to Virtual Egg Tours, an educational website run by Farm and Food Care Ontario, a non-profit coalition representing livestock and crop farmers in Ontario (Farm and Food Care Ontario, 2014, Who we are, para. 1). The Virtual Egg Tours site provides virtual tours of a variety of farms, including Conventional, Free-run, Free-range, Aviary and Enriched style egg farms (http://virtualfarmtours.ca/en/eggfarms/index.html). The tours include paragraph explanations of each aspect of the farm as well as pictures taken from real Ontario egg farms.

Second, the Our Farmers section of the website is highly interactive, featuring a map of Canada with pins representing farms that sell to Burnbrae Farms; refer to Appendix F.1 (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/ourfarmers/). Pins are randomly highlighted to display a picture of the farm family with their name and location listed underneath. Visitors can click on the pins to access a page dedicated solely to that farm. The list is not exhaustive and not all farms that sell to Burnbrae have a family farm page. For example, Reinink Family Farm is not included on the Burnbrae website. Evidently, only certain farms were selected (or agreed to be highlighted) online.

Third, the website includes an interactive feature called “From Our Farm to Your Table”;
refer to Appendix F.2. The page includes an interactive diagram that explains the process of egg production step-by-step, Step 1 being On the Farm and the final step, Your Table (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, From Our Farm to Your Table). Stages of production are numbered and each is represented with a cartoon image. Visitors can hover their cursor over the picture or number to access more information about each stage of production. The information is largely in line with what I encountered during my site tours. However, the images and terminology used to represent each stage of production fail to convey the industrial nature of Burnbrae Farms' production or adequately express their scale of operation. The diagram avoids using hard facts or numbers, such as the number of trucks used by the company to distribute eggs, the number of eggs that move through the grading plant each day, or how many farms sell to Burnbrae Farms. The website in general is highly informative but provides a skewed image of the company, failing to express the factory farm nature of production or the true scale of company operations.

**Facebook**

The main banner on Burnbrae Farms' Facebook page sets the tone for the entire account. It states “From our Family to Yours” and is filled with pictures made to look like original photographs that have been developed and tacked to a barn wall; refer to Appendix G.1 (Burnbrae Farms, Facebook image, March 22, 2013). The photos feature a range of subjects: solar panels in a field with a barn in the background, an up close image of brown and white eggs, old family photographs and pictures of Burnbrae Farms products. Across the right hand side of the banner is an image of a stream pouring over sloping rocks and framed by green branches, an image that references the origins of the Burnbrae Farms' name and also links the farm business to nature (Ibid).

The account has an informal, friendly design. Several of the pages on their account,
including one explaining etiquette for the site, are designed to appear as if written on a chalkboard with scrawling text that mimics handwriting; refer to Appendix G.2 (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Egg-tiquette). Other sections, even if science based, feature cute, childish cartoons, that undercut the seriousness of scientific or nutritional information. For example, the section on 'Egg Myths' features a cartoon egg with a super hero cape and the letters BF (standing for Burnbrae Farms) on its chest; refer to Appendix G.3 (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Egg Myths).

Much of the language on the Facebook page is informal and personal. The business description begins with “Welcome to our table!” and uses phrases such as “Let us tell you a bit about ourselves” and “How did it all start?” and “Now that you’ve found us, please feel free to make yourself at home. Have a seat, relax, and join the conversation” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., About Us). These phrases are familiar and suggest that visitors to the page are making a direct connection with the farm, as if joining a relaxed conversation at the dinner table.

Burnbrae uses Facebook as a means of interacting with consumers. The company encourages visitors to post on the site, writing: “because it’s all about the conversation, you’re more than welcome to comment on any post you’re interested in or to add additional input or thoughts on our topics” (Ibid). Sue Hudson responds to complaints posted on the Burnbrae Farms timeline. One consumer posted a picture of an egg with a spot of blood in the yolk; refer to Appendix G.4 (Hazan, November 11 2014). Sue responded immediately explaining that it is a ‘meatspot' and sincerely apologized for the defect (Hudson, November 11, 2014). However, not all questions and complaints are answered. For example, one consumer posted an image of male chicks in preparation for slaughter and asked how Burnbrae Farms handles their disposal. The consumer did not receive a response; refer to Appendix G.5 (Sewmuch, April 20, 2014).

Burnbrae Farms does not run a hatchery and purchases only female birds, therefore they are not engaged in the slaughter of male chicks. However, their failure to respond indicates there are
limits to the topics they are willing to discuss with consumers.

The Burnbrae Farms Facebook account is highly active and updated regularly. The company runs a weekly schedule that requires a post to be made four days of the week. On Mondays, they provide healthy tips “to get your week off to a great start” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., About Us). On Wednesdays, they post recipes and meal ideas “to share”. On Fridays, they “chat about the weekend” and on Sundays they post a weekly question for visitors to answer. This schedule encourages visitors to return and interact on the page regularly.

**Twitter**

Burnbrae Farms uses Twitter primarily to promote products and company initiatives, advertise events and sales, and tweet and retweet egg recipes (https://twitter.com/BurnbraeFarms). Burnbrae retweets egg farmers and consumers that tweet their support for and declare the health benefits of eggs. They use Twitter to draw attention to their contests by tweeting congratulations to contest winners. In addition, Burnbrae Farms’ Twitter account highlights the company's goodwill efforts. For example, in fall 2015, their account retweeted The Grocery Foundation's thank you to Burnbrae Farms for their support and tweeted about their participation in a shoreline clean up; refer to Appendix H.1 and H.2 (The Grocery Foundation, October 8, 2015; Burnbrae Farms, September 26, 2015). Occasionally, Burnbrae Farms tweets personal family posts or pictures of farm life. In July 2015, Burnbrae Farms tweeted about a personal family archive project and included a photograph of scattered family photos, newspapers and undeveloped film. The tweet read: “working away on a family archive project. Little overwhelmed by all the history;” refer to Appendix H.3 (Burnbrae Farms, October 11, 2015). On several occasions, Burnbrae has tweeted pictures of the Lyn farm, often shot at angles that show the fields and trees surrounding the barns. On August 1, the company tweeted an image of the
garden in front of their headquarters and wrote: “who's taking time to enjoy this lovely long weekend day? Enjoying the sun and view here on the farm;” refer to Appendix H.4 (Burnbrae Farms, August 1 2015). These casual and personal tweets are points of connection between the company and consumers.

Compared to their other online sites, Burnbrae's Twitter account provides less information about production. Rather it highlights the company's outreach initiatives, contests and personal family projects. This approach serves to develop consumer trust by presenting the company as caring, human and likeable.

**Instagram and Pinterest**

The Burnbrae Farms Pinterest account is used largely to promote egg recipes and contests, while their Instagram account is filled with images of farm life and nature (https://www.pinterest.com/burnbraefarms/; https://instagram.com/burnbraefarms/). Burnbrae also promotes events and publishes recipes on these accounts.

**YouTube**

Burnbrae has not used YouTube extensively, however their account does feature a number of playlists. One series, entitled “Cooking with Burnbrae” includes several videos with nutritionists who discuss Burnbrae products and show how to use them in recipes (Burnbrae Farms, June 4 2012- March 10 2015). Recipe videos are supplemented with nutritional videos from expert nutritionists who discuss the health benefits of eggs and specific Burnbrae Farms products (https://www.youtube.com/user/BurnbraeFarms). Nutritional videos legitimize and promote Burnbrae's products while recipe videos create excitement about using these products.

The Burnbrae YouTube account also includes 'Team Burnbrae' playlists. All of the videos
in this series feature the children of egg farmers, from farms that supply eggs to Burnbrae Farms. Each child has posted a series of videos in which they explain different aspects of egg production and discuss their individual farms. 'Andrew' discussed solar panels at Burnbrae and provided a tour of a free-run barn (Burnbrae Farms, May 1, 2012- January 9, 2014). 'Stephanie C' explained how brown eggs differ from white eggs and gave a description of how eggs travel from 'farm to table' (Burnbrae Farms, May 1, 2012- January 9, 2014). 'Audrey' is a Hudson family member who lives on Burnbrae Farms property. Her series is entitled “The Other side of Burnbrae farms” (Burnbrae Farms, May 13, 2012- February 3 2014). She presents Burnbrae as a family farm and associates a young face with the company image. All members of 'Team Burnbrae' expose aspects of farm life unrelated to chicken farming, including goat farming, calving and pony riding (https://www.youtube.com/user/BurnbraeFarms/playlists). The videos therefore present a diversified approach to farming in contrast to the mechanized approach to egg production I witnessed in site tours. The Team Burnbrae series familiarizes the company and creates a sense of transparency that may not be entirely accurate.

_Eggs for Life Blog_

Burnbrae Farms also runs a blog, entitled Eggs for Life, that is quite similar to the Burnbrae website. The main feed is dominated by egg recipes but also includes specialized feeds about health, farm production, animal care and social responsibility (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/blog/). The Health and Nutrition feed includes workout videos, healthy recipes, and posts announcing Burnbrae's athlete and athletic competition sponsorships. The Farm feed includes a limited number of posts discussing grading, pasteurization, and animal feed. The Animal Care feed includes posts about housing systems and health treatments for hens, including antibiotic use and beak treatments. The animal care feed also features posts regarding biosecurity that discuss how animal health impacts human security (Hunter, 2015; Burnbrae Farms, 2015, Avian
Influenza). The social responsibility feed includes posts about Burnbrae's charitable contributions and environmental programs (http://www.burnbraefarms.com/blog/). One post introduces Burnbrae's environmental logo and Mission statement and explains the company's initiative to increase solar panel usage to power their offices, factories and farms (Burnbrae Farms, 2013, Preserving Tomorrow). Certain posts directly market eggs and Burnbrae products. One popular post, entitled “Burnbrae Farms Nestlaid Eggs,” describes the features and benefits of Nestlaid eggs, while another post, entitled “Omega-3 for Optimal Health at Every Age,” explores the benefits of Burnbrae Farms Omega-3 eggs (Burnbrae Farms, 2013, Burnbrae Farms Nestlaid Eggs; Johnson, 2014). The blog therefore provides information to consumers while also marketing products.

*The Naturegg E-Newsletter*

Burnbrae Farms publishes Fall, Winter and Summer editions of their e-Newsletter each year. All Burnbrae Farms employees receive the e-newsletter and consumers can subscribe or find newsletter archives on the company website (Burnbrae executive, personal communications, October 22, 2014). The e-newsletter is broken down into seven sections: a recipe section, an introduction from the company president, and sections on nutrition, products, farming, community and contest announcements. Each section includes a link to relevant articles, webpages or blog posts on the topic.

The company President, Margaret Hudson, writes an introduction for each edition, headed by the statement: “Welcome to Our Naturegg Newsletter from the Hudson Family” (Burnbrae Farms, Naturegg e-newsletter, winter 2015 ed.). The E-newsletters begin with an image of an egg dish and a corresponding link to a recipe. Each addition features an article on egg nutrition. The winter 2015 nutrition article focused on the importance of increasing Vitamin
D intake during the winter months and presented Naturegg Omega Plus eggs as an excellent source of Vitamin D (Johnson, 2014). The Products section of the e-newsletter introduces or highlights a Burnbrae Farms product. In the winter 2015 edition the newsletter introduced a new product: Naturegg Simply Eggs Liquid Whole Eggs (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Our Products, Naturegg Simply Eggs). The farming section of the e-newsletter unveils and explains an aspect of farm production. The winter 2015 edition discussed animal care and explained why hens are housed inside (Petrik, 2014). The article justified keeping hens indoors at all times, arguing that they are better protected from extreme weather, predation and disease in indoor housing systems.

The Community section of the e-newsletters highlights Burnbrae Farms' charitable contributions. In winter 2015, Burnbrae highlighted their support of the Parkinsons Society, the Alzheimers Society, Ontario Masters athletics and The Children's Breakfast Club, and provided links to these charities' websites (Burnbrae Farms, Naturegg e-newsletter, winter 2015 ed.). Burnbrae also published an article on the Parkinsons Society in which they promoted increased Omega-3 as a means to boost dopamine in the brain and prevent or slow the effects of Parkinsons disease (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Exercise and Omega-3s). Finally, the contest section of the e-newsletter promotes current Burnbrae Farms sponsored contests and congratulates winners of previous contests. In certain editions Burnbrae adds or excludes a section. For example the spring 2015 edition featured an Easter related craft to replace their contest section (Burnbrae Farms, Naturegg E-newsletter).

The e-newsletter promotes Burnbrae's products, explains and justifies their practices, brings attention to their charitable donations, highlights their status as a family business, and encourages consumers to interact with their company and products with recipes, crafts and contests.
Packaging

Burnbrae packages its shell egg products with various materials and uses images and phrasing specific to each brand and product; refer to Appendix D: Tables Representing Burnbrae Farms Products.

Burnbrae Farms Brand Packaging

The Burnbrae Farms brand logo features a winding road leading up to a small barn surrounded by fields and trees. Beside the image the words Burnbrae Farms – Fermes are printed; refer to Appendix I.1. Burnbrae Farm brand eggs are packaged in either cardboard or Styrofoam cartons.

1) Burnbrae Farms Regular Grade A eggs are packaged in cardboard cartons on which the company logo is printed in red. These packages do not feature much colour or ornamentation. Brown Burnbrae Farms brand eggs are packaged similarly but in brown, rather than white, cardboard cartons.

2) Burnbrae Farms Omega-3 Free Run eggs are packaged in cardboard cartons overlain with a colourful sticker. The packaging features a green, orange and light yellow colour scheme with a prominent picture of a red barn surrounded by trees and fields and a close-up image of brown and white eggs in the foreground. Small print text on the top of the carton explains the nutritional benefits of Omega-3 eggs. The carton also features Burnbrae Farms, Facebook, Twitter, Bullfrog, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation logo.

3) Burnbrae Farms Nestlaid eggs feature orange brown banners and the same image of a red barn and green hilly landscape as is featured on Omega-3 Free Run packaging. Nestlaid egg cartons similarly feature text describing how the eggs are produced. The carton states: “from hens raised in enriched colony housing equipped with perches and nesting areas.” The Burnbrae
Farms written logo, without the image, is also printed on the carton as well as Facebook, Twitter, Bullfrog and the Heart and Stroke Foundation logos.

4) **Super Bon-EE** products are packaged in white Styrofoam cartons with the image of a blue elephant to emphasis the product's size. The Super Bon-EE logo is a simple red banner with Super-Bon-EE printed in white capital lettering; refer to Appendix I.2. All Super Bon-EE product packages also feature a Burnbrae Farms logo.

5) **Prestige** eggs feature a colourful image of a hilly, green landscape with a winding blue road that leads to a red barn, beside which is a tall tree and a hen in the forefront. 'Prestige' is printed in capital white lettering on a red background; refer to Appendix I.3. Prestige eggs are packaged in white cardboard cartons with colourful red, white and blue text and cartoon images.

**Naturegg Brand Packaging**

The Naturegg brand logo is of a white chicken encased in a white egg with sunbeams radiating from behind; refer to Appendix I.4. Underneath the image, Naturegg is printed on a blue banner. Naturegg brand eggs are packaged in transparent plastic cartons with colourful stickers that feature the Naturegg logo.

1) **Naturegg Omega-3** egg cartons feature a purple colour scheme. Text on the top of the carton explains the nutritional benefits of Omega-3 eggs. The carton also features the Heart and Stroke Foundation logo and an image of a hard-boiled egg with toast.

2) **Naturegg OmegaPlus** eggs are packaged similarly, in a light purple colour scheme. Nutritional information about Omega-3 is printed on top of the carton, which also features an image of two eggs cooked sunny side up, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation logo.
3) **Naturegg Free Run** eggs are packaged with a blue colour scheme. Text on the carton explains how free-run eggs are “produced by free roaming hens fed a multi-grain feed.” The carton also features a Naturegg logo and an image of a boiled egg on whole wheat toast.

4) **Naturegg Organic** eggs are packaged in a dark green colour scheme. The carton features the Naturegg logo and a picture of a hard boiled egg on toast.

5) **Naturegg Nature's Best** eggs are similarly packaged in a light green scheme. Text on top of the carton explains the alternative nature of the eggs. The carton also features a picture of two halves of a hard boiled egg.

*Analysis of Burnbrae Farms Packaging*

Burnbrae Farms packaging is rife with images of nature, small farms and fresh or cooked eggs. Specialty products feature more ornamentation and logos than regular Grade A eggs. Facebook, Twitter, Heart and Stroke Foundation, and Bullfrog logos are applied selectively to higher end products. Only certain packages include text that explains how they are produced, including Naturegg Free Run, Naturegg Nature's Best, Naturegg Omega-3, Naturegg OmegaPlus and Burnbrae Farms Nestlaid eggs. Text is used to explain the value, and alternative nature of the products. Burnbrae Farms packaging therefore shows more pride in, and draws attention to more expensive, alternative products. Consumer research indicates that consumers are more trusting of and place greater value on alternative products. Burnbrae Farms attempts to associate their brand as alternative, by heavily promoting their alternatively produced products.
Marketing Themes

Small-Scale Family Farming

Burnbrae proudly declares their status as a family owned and operated business on all of their online pages. The company overview on their website states that the business is a Canadian company that is “family owned and operated” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Company Overview, para. 1). Their descriptions on Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest, also state that they are a “family-run egg business” (https://twitter.com/BurnbraeFarms; https://www.youtube.com/user/BurnbraeFarms/about; https://www.pinterest.com/burnbraefarms/).

Burnbrae uses old family photographs on their social media pages to reinforce their image as a small business with traditional family values. One recurring image is a black and white photo of Joe and Grant Hudson with their father, standing by the family car that reads Hudson & Sons; refer to Appendix J: Recurring Photograph in Burnbrae Farms’ Online Marketing. This image connects the company with its humble origins as a small family farm. Furthermore, images of small barns set amongst fields, trees and streams recur in brand logos, product packaging and internet pages, and serve to reinforce the company image of a small farm connected to nature.

Sue Hudson, a member of the Hudson family, responds to consumers online, reinforcing the company’s claim that it is still family operated. Sue uses a personal title when responding to consumers, creating the impression that consumers are making a direct, intimate connection with the Hudson family. The company also uses familiar language and casual designs on its social media sites to suggest familiarity between the company and consumers, and to appear accessible and welcoming.
Several marketing initiatives highlight the centrality of ‘family farming’ themes to Burnbrae Farms’ image. First, the Our Farmers page on the Burnbrae Farms website relies heavily on family farming discourse. The individual farm pages, such as the Huitema family page, display pictures of the family, framed and taped as if they were straight from the family photo album (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, Meet the Huitema Family). A banner on the top of the page reads: “Meet the Huitema Family” and text explains the history of the farm and role of each family member in the business. Each article ends with a quote from the family. The highlighted quote from the Huitema family is: “We are a family business and appreciate that our children learn responsibility, a strong work ethic and healthy food choices” (para 6).

Secondly, Burnbrae's YouTube series 'Team Burnbrae' also highlights the small farms that supply Burnbrae Farms. This initiative associates Burnbrae Farms with small, diversified farming operations. The children provide personal family information, reinforcing family discourse and further developing a sense of intimacy between the company and consumers.

Consumer research demonstrates that consumers place greater trust in small family farms with whom they are better able to communicate on a personal level. Furthermore, consumers associate small farms with more ethical farming practices. Burnbrae likewise uses small family farm marketing and discourse to build stronger, more intimate connections with its consumers and develop trust in the company. They appeal to their family farm status on the social responsibility page of their website in order to strengthen their stated commitments, writing that: “as a family-run farming organization we aspire to achieve the highest standards in environmental protection, work place safety and animal welfare” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Social Responsibility, para. 3). Burnbrae similarly sites family farming in blog posts about social responsibility, stating: “on our family farms, we aspire to achieve the highest standards” (Burnbrae Farms, 2013, Canadian Aid, para. 1). Burnbrae therefore appeals to family farming
discourse to bolster its ethical profile and to build trust in their company.

Large-Scale Production and National Pride

In their online marketing Burnbrae Farms associates their national scale of operation with national pride. The Burnbrae Farms foodservice website states: “the Burnbrae Group of Companies is Canada's only vertically integrated egg supplier. With II divisions involved in grading, production and/or further processing, Burnbrae Farms supplies egg and egg products from coast to coast” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., About Us, para. 2). Their mission statement also emphasizes the company's Canadianness, stating that the company is: “a Canadian family egg business dedicated to quality, health and innovation” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Mission, Vision, Values, para. 1). The company description on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube also declares Burnbrae as “proudly Canadian” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d. About Us; https://www.pinterest.com/burnbraefarms/; https://instagram.com/burnbraefarms/; Burnbrae Farms, 2012, About).

Burnbrae Farms' image as a large national-scale company contradicts their discourse of small family farming. However, these two marketing approaches are used in conjunction in order to relate to diverse consumers. The company presents themselves as a large-scale business on certain web pages in order to connote success and innovation and to make consumers feel secure in the company's ability to control for quality and safety. The industrial web page emphasizes Burnbrae's large scale of production in order to reassure clients of their ability to deliver large quantities of products across the country. The industrial web page states: “with processing plants in Ontario, Quebec & Manitoba, [Burnbrae Farms is] capable of servicing customers from coast to coast with either direct delivery or through our distributor/wholesale partners” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Industrial, para. 2). In blog posts about nutrition concerns, Burnbrae refers to their
farmers as 'professionals' rather than engaging family farm discourse (Petrik, 2014). Similarly, Burnbrae calls attentional to their national scale of impact in discussions of biosecurity, presenting themselves as “one of the leaders in Canada” in implementing biosecurity measures (Sharif, 2014, para. 3). Therefore, Burnbrae Farms uses large-scale farming discourse to assert sense of security and capability.

**Social Responsibility**

Social responsibility is a recurring theme in Burnbrae Farms' online marketing and product packaging. Corporate experts Lakin and Scheubel (2010) promote community engagement and social responsibility efforts as vital to good business marketing. They argue that social responsibility initiatives can be used to enhance the company's reputation and brand image, strengthen brand value, improve customer relations and increase “customer purchase intentions, retention, and loyalty” (Lakin and Scheubel, 2010, p. 11). Burnbrae likewise tailors their social responsibility discussions to promote their company and products.

An entire section of the Burnbrae website is dedicated to discussing the company's social responsibilities. This section encompasses a page on animal welfare, Burnbrae's associated farmers, community, and the environment.

**Social Responsibility: Animal Welfare**

Burnbrae lists animal welfare as a social responsibility. However, their animal welfare policy is not readily available, rather they provide a link through which consumers can request access to the policy (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Social Responsibility, para. 5). Therefore, consumers must actively seek out Burnbrae's animal welfare policy and only consumers who are dedicated enough to request information will receive it.
The language used throughout Burnbrae Farms' page on animal welfare indicates that hens are valued primarily for their productivity. The website states: “a healthy hen is a high quality, producing hen,” calling into question the company's dedication to animal welfare beyond monetary incentives (para. 4).

Burnbrae's discussion of hen health and well-being often transitions into promoting the health benefits of eggs. An article on hen nutrition featured on Burnbrae's website explains that: “hens can be fed food that enhance the nutritional content of their eggs” (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, Hen Nutrition, para. 4). The article explains how feed used in specialty products can provide health benefits for humans. Therefore, Burnbrae uses their ethical discussion of animal welfare as an opportunity to market their products.

Similarly, Burnbrae uses their discussion of animal welfare to justify their current farming practices. The company page on animal care explains that hens are housed indoors for their own safety so “they can be closely monitored” (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, Animal Care, para. 2). An article featured in the winter 2015 edition of the Naturegg E-newsletter, and also posted to the Eggs for Life blog, justifies housing hens indoors to protect from disease, predation and weather (Petrik, 2014). The Eggs for Life blog also promotes the use of cage systems to reduce inter-bird fighting, ensure access to feed and water, ensure close monitoring, and reduce the farms' ecological footprint (Burnbrae Farms, 2013, Conventional Hen Housing). Similarly, the animal care page on Burnbrae's website argues that using housing systems that offer greater freedom “expose the hens to greater risks” (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, Animal Care, para. 7). Burnbrae Farms' discussion of animal welfare therefore serves primarily to market their products and justify their current practices.
Social Responsibility: Community

Burnbrae Farms affirms their responsibility to the communities in which they operate, stating that as a company they believe “in giving back to the communities in which we do business” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Social Responsibility, para 8). Burnbrae realizes their social responsibilities to community primarily through charity. They declare their support for “local and national charities” (Ibid). The community page on their website provides information on the larger charities Burnbrae supports, including the Parkinsons Society, the Alzheimers Society, The Children's Breakfast Club, Ontario Masters Athletics and Veterinarians without Borders (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Community). The charities' initiatives are highlighted in Burnbrae's Naturegg e-newsletter, thereby associating the company with the good work being done by the charities they support. In certain cases Burnbrae highlights the research being done by these associations in order to promote their products. The 2015 winter edition of the Naturegg e-newsletter featured an article that discussed the potential for Omega-3 to prevent and slow the progress of Parkinsons disease (Burnbrae Farms, 2013, Exercise and Omega-3s). Burnbrae was thereby able to promote their Omega-3 enriched products.

Lakin and Scheubel (2010) promote charity as a key mechanism for companies to engage with community and argue that corporate giving should be approached strategically. The authors advise companies to “align their charitable giving with cause[s] that connect to their core business” (Lakin and Scheubel, 2010, p. 3). In other words, companies ought to support charities that promote the values with which they wish to associate their company. Burnbrae Farms gives primarily to charities focused on improving health or nutrition, such as the Children's Breakfast Club, Parkinsons Society, Alzheimers' Society and Ontario Masters Athletics. The company also sponsors athletes and athletic competitions, including Tim Nedow and the Toronto 2015 Pan/Am Games. Burnbrae's charitable involvement and sponsorships therefore reflect values of health
and well-being, which are then associated with their company.

Mitchell and Humphries (2007), however, demonstrate the limitations of engaging with community through charity. They argue that charity cannot address power relations within society and therefore fails to have a profound impact on communities (Mitchell and Humphries, 2007, p. 48). While, Burnbrae Farms makes regular donations to The Children's Breakfast Club, an organization that seeks to ensure that all children in Ontario are fed a nutritious breakfast, they do not challenge the social norms that have created a need for such interventions. Burnbrae Farms highlight their contributions to charity as proof that their company is connected to Canadian communities, however the company's social engagement remains quite shallow.

**Social Responsibility: The Environment and Nature**

Burnbrae Farms recognizes their farm has a responsibility to the environment. The environment web page on Burnbrae Farms' website states: “at Burnbrae Farms, we recognize the importance of the environment and are committed to reducing our environmental footprint” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Social Responsibility, para. 8). They argue that egg production is an environmentally friendly form of farming, stating: “eggs have one of the lowest carbon footprints of any animal production farm” (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, Eggs and the Environment, para. 2). Furthermore, they argue that conventional caged housing systems further reduce the environmental impact of egg farming, stating: “hens housed in conventional cages produce eggs with the lowest carbon impact” (Ibid). Therefore, the company is able to use their discussion of environmental responsibility to justify their current practices.

Burnbrae Farms has developed a logo and mission statement to support their environmental programs and to “[raise] awareness for the environment” (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Social Responsibility, para. 8). This logo is used selectively, for certain alternative products and
specific projects. The selective use of the environmental logo suggests that Burnbrae either does not consider, or does not wish to draw attention to, the environmental impacts of other products and projects.

In addition, Burnbrae has developed several environmental programs in accordance with their commitment to the environment. The Employee Energy Awareness Program aims to reduce Burnbrae Farms' energy consumption (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Environment, para. 1). The office buildings at Burnbrae Farms' headquarters in Lyn use motion detected light switches and energy efficient lighting. The Lyn farm also uses solar panels to supplement their energy supply (Burnbrae executive, personal communications, October 22, 2014).

Burnbrae has also developed programs aimed at protecting land and wildlife. The company owns part of the axis of the Frontenac Arch, an ecologically diverse tract of land declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2002 (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Environment, para. 8). Burnbrae's land and wildlife protection programs include a tree planting initiative that has resulted in 2500 newly planted trees in the last three years, and designating 1100 acres of wood for wildlife habitat (Ibid). Therefore, Burnbrae has taken steps to protect the environment and reduce their ecological footprint, and they also use their discussion of environmental responsibility strategically, to market their company and products.

**Connection to Nature**

Burnbrae Farms' engages images and language that imply a harmonious relationship between their company and nature. Many of their product logos include aspects of the natural environment, such as fields, trees and streams. The main banner on Burnbrae Farms' Facebook page prominently features an image of a rocky stream framed by trees and bushes (Burnbrae Farms, March 22, 2013). The Burnbrae Farms’ Instagram page includes numerous images of
The Burnbrae Farms website posits a positive relationship between farmers and nature and emphasizes the close relationship between farming and the natural environment. They argue: “farmers are the original stewards of the environment, with many maintaining tracts of wood lands on their properties to provide wildlife corridors” (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, Eggs and the Environment, para. 1). Burnbrae insinuates that a positive relationship between farmers and the environment is natural and to be expected, encouraging consumers to have faith in their company as stewards of nature.

**Science and Nutrition**

Burnbrae Farms provides a great depth of scientific nutritional information on their website. An entire section of their website is dedicated to discussing egg nutrition and health (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Health). Burnbrae provides extensive facts on the science of eggs, including their make-up and nutritional content.

Burnbrae Farms collaborates with and supports companies and foundations in line with their image as a health and nutrition focused business. The Heart and Lung Foundation logo is printed on certain specialty products, including Burnbrae Farms and Naturegg Omega-3 eggs. The homepage of the Burnbrae consumer website declares the company's support for the Nutrition Facts Education Campaign, which aims to help consumers better understand how to gain knowledge about their food (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Nutrition Facts, para. 2). In summer 2015, Burnbrae collaborated with Goodlife Fitness chain on the Simplest Contest Ever, which encouraged contestants to sign up for a free 3-day Goodlife Fitness trial and to like Goodlife and Burnbrae Farms on Facebook in order to increase their chances to win. By pairing up with Goodlife, a fitness facility chain, both companies gained exposure and Burnbrae was able to
associate their company with Goodlife's health and fitness values.

Nutrition and health are important selling points for the company. Burnbrae refers to scientific nutritional information to legitimize their products and practices. The company uses nutritionists in their YouTube videos and in recipes posted to their website and social media pages. The nutritionists' involvement suggests that the products being used are nutritious. However, in Canada the term nutritionist is not protected by regulatory standards. Dieticians are required by federal law to have a certain level of education and commit to ethical practices, but nutritionists are not. Therefore, the nutritionists included in Burnbrae Farms’ marketing materials do not necessarily present an informed opinion regarding dietary requirements.

Burnbrae Farms refers to scientific information in order to justify their current practices. For example, the company presents corn as an excellent source of food for hens, stating: “In Eastern Canada, corn is typically the main grain used in hen feed because it is both abundant and a great source of energy” (Burnbrae Farms, 2012, Hen Nutrition, para. 1). However, animal welfare and human health organizations, such as Livestrong and Grace Communications Foundation, have questioned the use of corn feed, arguing it does not meet the health needs of hens and reduces the quality of poultry meat and eggs (Dubois, 2013; Grace Communications Foundation, 2016). However, Burnbrae presents the scientific evidence that supports their current practices, thereby using information sharing opportunities to market and promote their company.

Discussion of Burnbrae Farms' Marketing Strategy: Marketing through Information Sharing

Burnbrae Farms' most obvious marketing strategy is to spin information provision into marketing opportunities. On their online accounts, Burnbrae Farms presents evidence and information that
supports their current practices, while failing to acknowledge dissenting opinions. The company shares information about production but fails to accurately convey the factory farm nature or scale of their operations. Analysis of Burnbrae's marketing materials suggests that the company is motivated to provide information that serves to market their business, industry and products, and hide that which may negatively affect their company image.

Darban and Li (2012) shed light onto corporate social media strategies. The authors found that consumers use social media as an information source when making purchasing decisions because it allows them to interact with other consumers and the company (Darban and Li, 2012, p. 38). Darban and Li's findings suggest that companies must engage consumers positively and provide information that encourages them to purchase from the company, in order to effectively use social media to their advantage. Burnbrae Farms encourages consumer interaction and engagement on their website and social media sites, answering questions on their Facebook page, and retweeting consumers and contest winners on Twitter.

Morris' (2000) found that consumers trust information that is recent and presented through transparent processes. Social media outlets enable producers to frequently update their consumers with new information. Burnbrae provides a plethora of information on their various sites and frequently updates their social media pages with new recipes, product information and research findings that support their practices and promote their products. Burnbrae also uses social media to connect with consumers on a more intimate level, building trust in the company. Personal or 'behind the scenes' posts such as those presented in Appendices I.3 and I.4, increase perceived transparency, further bolstering consumer faith in the company.

Egilman and Druar (2012) provide further insight into Burnbrae's marketing strategies. The authors unpack the online marketing strategies used by pharmaceutical companies. They
argue that these companies provide only biased information about pharmaceuticals and use marketing ploys, such as videos and images showing improvements in sufferers of a disease, to promote their products directly to consumers (p. 4495). The authors note that the brevity of social media posts dangerously restricts the amount of information producers provide online. As a result, Egilman and Druar found that pharmaceutical companies often fail to provide the depth of information consumers require to make an informed decision (p. 4496). Therefore, consumers ought to be wary of the information provided by producers on social media which may be skewed and lack depth. However, Egilman and Druar found that consumers tend to trust online advertising direct from producers, warning that social media advertising gives consumers false confidence in the products they consume (p. 4498).

However, the research findings indicate that consumers can use social media to their advantage as well, by seeking information from companies and applying pressure for their demands to be met. Sue Hudson has replied to a number of complaints on the Burnbrae Farms Facebook page, and has had to defend the company. This finding suggests that social media may be a viable platform through which consumers can make their voice heard. However, few consumers have posted on Burnbrae Farms' social media pages, and Burnbrae has ignored consumers who expose negative aspects of their operations. Therefore, consumers may not have fully realized their potential to impact the company.

5.2 Communication and Relationship with the State: The Role of Large-Scale Agri-Businesses in the Structure of the Ontario Egg Industry

Burnbrae Farms' is highly involved with egg industry governing bodies. The Executive Vice-President of Poultry Operations and Producer Relations at Burnbrae Farms, Craig Hunter, is on
the Egg Farmers of Ontario board of directors. Hunter represents Zone 9, an area stretching from Nappanee to Ottawa (Egg Farmers of Ontario, 2015, para. 1). He is required to attend monthly board meetings to discuss industry issues.

5.4.1 Burnbrae Farms and Supply Management

In my interview, the Burnbrae Farms executive spoke positively of Egg Farmers of Ontario's values and policies. He stated that: “the big priorities [of Egg Farmers of Ontario] are food safety, providing a good environment, making sure that air and water are safe, [making] sure workers are safe and the work environment... and [ensuring] animal health and wellbeing.” The executive argues that Egg Farmers of Ontario (EFO) keeps hens healthy through vaccination programs and by restricting antibiotics usage. He states that EFO: “make[s] sure we give the birds enough space, make[s] sure we handle them properly, make[s] sure euthanasia's performed properly.” Therefore, the executive believes the egg board plays an important role in enforcing ethical farming practices.

The executive also spoke positively of supply management in general. He argues that supply management ensures that “prices are relatively stable” by equalizing supply and demand. Stable prices benefit consumers, who are better able to budget for egg products. Likewise, producers are able to stabilize wages and project accurately for growth.

5.4.2 Burnbrae Farms’ Perspective: Supply Management and Egg Producers

The executive argues that supply management ensures inclusivity in the egg industry by enabling egg producers of all sizes, and small farmers in particular, to flourish. He states: “to compare the US to Canada: [the] US has 10 times as many people, 10 times as many chickens and there are
about 85 egg farms left in the US... in Canada we have 1000 farmers, in almost every rural community in Canada there's an egg farmer.” Therefore, he argues that supply management has enabled egg farms of varying scale to develop in Canada.

5.4.3 Burnbrae Farms’ Perspective: Supply Management and the Consumer

The executive argues that the current egg production system is particularly beneficial for consumers. First, supply management ensures stable prices, which benefits both consumers and producers. Second, the executive argues that a main benefit of supply management is that “consumers can be assured that they're buying local product,” meaning eggs produced within Canada and likely within their province or territory. The system controls imports by imposing Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs) and allowing only a predetermined quantity of egg products into the country. Controlling imports protects Canadian egg farmers from international competition, allowing smaller producers to thrive. Small farmers often do not have the means to grade and distribute their eggs but instead sell them to grading stations in their area that then supply nearby stores. As a result, the eggs sold at grocery stores “are basically all local.”

The executive argues that consumers are guaranteed a local product, regardless of the company they support. However, his perspective of the egg industry was not reflected in consumer research. Many polled consumers shop at alternative venues in order to support local farmers, indicating that they do not feel these farmers are adequately supported by the industry.

Third, the executive argues that the system assures consumers “that they are getting a safe and consistent product.” He cites the multitude of regulations and governing bodies in Canada as proof that the egg industry is ensuring the safety and quality of egg products in Ontario. Once again this statement contradicts consumer perspectives of the egg industry. Consumers expressed
quality and safety concerns, particularly in regards to large agri-businesses.

Finally, the executive argues that because the industry supports a variety of farmers at diverse scales of operation, a wide variety of products are available to consumers so that “if they want to buy omega, if they want to buy free-run, they can go to a grocery store.” However, findings discussed in Chapter 5 revealed the limitation of buying alternative products from conventional venues.

5.4.4  Burnbrae Farms and Egg Grading in Ontario

Egg grading in Canada is regulated through the CFIA. Burnbrae Farms undergoes annual audits from the CFIA and constantly adapts to keep their registration in good standing. Executive members of the company are assigned to remain in contact with the CFIA and to keep track of high-level changes in regulations. Grading plant managers are responsible for preparing for and scheduling audits and ensuring that all regulations set out by the CFIA are consistently met.

The executive argues that grading regulations in Ontario support grading plant operators of all sizes. He states that: “anyone can grade eggs, you just have to go to the CFIA and get a license to grade eggs and follow their regulations... there's a lot of small grading stations around... there's likely still 60-70 grading stations in the country.” Therefore, the executive argues that the current system leaves room for egg graders of all scale. He cites Beking Poultry as an example of a small-scale egg farm that grades and distributes its own eggs. Beking Poultry is an egg farming and grading operation based out of Oxford Station, Ontario, near Kingston (Beking Poultry, n.d., Where to Find Us, para. 1). They have around 15 thousand laying hens and sell their eggs directly to stores and restaurants in Eastern Ontario (Beking Poultry, n.d., About Our Farm, para. 2). In comparison, the executive states that Burnbrae supplies chain stores rather than small businesses because “big stores want a lot of eggs [and] they want a consistent rate”
which only large companies are able to provide.

The executive argues that producers of varying scale play a different but equally valuable role within the Ontario egg industry. Small producers sell eggs to grading plants, small businesses or directly to consumers, while large companies sell to chain stores and industrial companies. He does not believe small producers and large companies are in competition or that corporations will necessarily undercut smaller producers. Rather, he believes the current system creates roles for producers of all sizes. This argument will be explored in further detail in following chapters, from the perspective of smaller-scale farmers.

5.4.5 Challenges within the Ontario Egg Industry

The executive admits that the current structure of the egg industry is complex, explaining that there are many different governing bodies with which Burnbrae Farms must work. He summarizes the governing structure of the egg industry, stating:

The food safety on the farm is regulated through Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) and EFO through an annual audit on the farm. Once the eggs leave the farm and go to a processing plant, it’s all regulated through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Environmental is all governed through, and how we handle manure, is regulated by the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Agriculture in Ontario. Worker safety [and compensation] is controlled by the WSIB, Workers Safety Insurance Board.

The complexity of the industry's governing structure means that a single issue can sometimes require the involvement of more than one governing agency. For example: “salmonella can be an animal problem, it can also be a human health problem...it can be joint, it can be everything. It can be Agriculture Canada or Health Canada.” Therefore, the sheer number of governing bodies and regulations can complicate daily operations.

However, the executive argues that the egg production system in Ontario is resilient and
adaptive. He states: “I would say the system's working well. It's like any system, it always has pains [but] there's always opportunities.” He believes the system is adaptive and will continue to make changes for the better. He cites the development of new vaccines as an example, arguing that: “new challenges come along...I grew up in this business when we were filling chickens full of antibiotics just to keep them alive. Today it's a non-issue because of vaccinations, we didn't have vaccines 40 years ago.” Therefore, Burnbrae Farms expresses confidence in and support for the current supply management system.

5.5 Discussion

The data collected from Burnbrae Farms has revealed key insights about large-scale egg production in Ontario. The results expose how national-scale supply-managed companies negotiate relationships with consumers and the state, and identify failures in communication.

Large-scale egg production at Burnbrae Farms occurs through factory farming. Multiple farms, facilities and businesses are involved in Burnbrae's production. In order for egg products to be consumed while they are fresh, production is fast paced and hens require constant care. Production at Burnbrae Farms is highly mechanized, relying on conveyor belts and machines to provide care to hens and to collect, clean, weigh, inspect and sort eggs.

Burnbrae Farms' scale of production is not accurately reflected in the company's packaging and social media marketing. Images of green fields, outdoor hens and small red barns recur on Burnbrae Farms' packaging and online accounts. The images and discourse of small-scale farming in harmony with nature, contrasts with the dark, crowded interiors of the egg layers and grading facilities I viewed on my site tours. These discrepancies indicate that Burnbrae Farms' attempts to be transparent are limited and may simply be marketing tools used
by the company to appear honest and trustworthy to consumers.

Marketing goals often act as a filter to the kind of information Burnbrae Farms' presents to consumers. In many cases, Burnbrae Farms transforms information sharing into marketing opportunities. Burnbrae transitions their discussion of social responsibility to justify their current practices and promote their company. The extensive social responsibility page on their website indicates that the company is fulfilling their social responsibilities, however their actual community engagement, environmental programs and provisions for animal welfare are quite superficial. Similarly, Burnbrae consistently provides scientific evidence that supports their practices and promotes their products.

Burnbrae Farms' marketing approach has led to contradictory discourse in their marketing materials. In Chapter 4, consumers expressed diverse needs and values. As a large-scale producer, Burnbrae Farms attempts to service a variety of consumers, including individual, industrial and foodservice clients. As a result, the company has had to associate their business with varied, and sometimes contradictory values. For example, Burnbrae Farms attempts to associate their company with both small- and large-scale farming. In attempting to connect with diverse consumers, Burnbrae has failed to be consistent in their marketing strategy and information provision. Inconsistent marketing may in part explain consumer scepticism of large-scale producers expressed in Chapter 4. Conflicting images, scales, discourse, values and information may serve to confuse, rather than impress consumers. Therefore, Burnbrae's fragmented marketing approach may be negatively affecting their consumer relationships.

In contrast, Burnbrae Farms' relationship with egg industry governing bodies is consistently strong. Burnbrae is heavily involved with the provincial egg marketing board and argues that the supply management system has positive implications for both consumers and
producers of all scales. Burnbrae concedes that heavy regulations can be a nuisance, but does not dispute their necessity. Therefore, Burnbrae Farms' state relations are largely positive.

However, the Burnbrae executive's statements contrast with consumer research, which indicates that consumers are quite distrustful of the regulatory system and more willing to trust smaller, less regulated producers. Consumer distrust of the system may be due to the fact that they are significantly less knowledgeable than producers about supply management and egg regulations. The research therefore reflects a disconnect in how large-scale producers, like Burnbrae Farms, and individual consumers, view the egg industry. The research also indicates that Burnbrae Farms may lack perspective on how consumers truly feel about the industry and make decisions about what producers to trust. Therefore, greater communication is required among consumers and producers, particularly regarding the egg industry and supply management. However, genuine information sharing requires producers to put aside their marketing goals, an act which may be impractical for large-scale producers.
Chapter 6
Mid-Scale Producer Data: Reinink Family Farm Case Study

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data collected from Reinink Family Farm, a mid-scale Ontario egg farm. The findings are based on an in-depth interview with a Reinink farmer and qualitative coding and analysis of the business' marketing materials. Unfortunately, Reinink did not allow tours of their facilities.

Reinink Family Farm is operated by husband and wife team, Hank-John and Janet Reinink. The farm is located on the western shore of Varty Lake, northwest of Kingston, and produces organic eggs, certified by EcoCert (Kingston Public Market, n.d., para. 1). The Reininks operate a grading plant on farm property and sell graded eggs to small restaurants and grocery stores in Eastern Ontario, as well as to consumers at farmers markets. In addition, half their production is sold ungraded, to Burnbrae Farms in Lyn, Ontario.

My interview with the Reinink farmer was held outdoors in mid fall, at the Ottawa Farmers Market in Brewer Park, where Reinink sells product each week. The Reinink farmer spoke candidly about the farm's origins, development and struggles. He openly discussed the farm's connection to Burnbrae Farms and spoke positively about their relationship. He was more skeptical of industry governing bodies, expressing discontent with the multitude of regulations enforced on the farm and criticizing the supply management quota system.

Reinink Family Farm does not provide much information about their farm online or on

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4 All information about Reinink Family Farm, including quoted materials, in this chapter is derived from an in-depth interview with a Reinink farmer conducted September 28, 2014.
their packaging. The farm engages in very little marketing and instead focuses on building clientele through face-to-face communication. The marketing they do engage in is rife with small family farm discourse and themes of local farming, ethics and community. Likewise, the media presents Reinink as an alternative to large-scale agri-business. None of Reinink’s marketing materials or media interviews address their connection to Burnbrae Farms. Instead, the Reininks provide information that enhances their image as an alternative farm operating in a niche market.

6.1 Background

Hank-John Reinink’s parents founded Reinink Family Farm in 1961, shortly after immigrating to Canada from the Netherlands. Hank-John grew up on the farm and watched it evolve from a diversified small-scale farm to an efficient mid-scale egg production business.

Hank-John and his wife, Janet, took over farm operations approximately 25 years ago. At the time, the farm produced conventional eggs, using traditional caged layer barns, and sold all product ungraded to Burnbrae Farms. Hank-John and Janet made a number of changes. First, they built a grading plant on farm property and began grading and selling half their production either directly to consumers at farmers’ markets, or to restaurants and small stores in the local area. The remainder they continued to sell to Burnbrae Farms.

Second, the Reininks cultivated a market garden in order to sell more diverse products. They explain: “when you start at the market you stand there and you are selling eggs and you think, well what else can I sell.” However, they stopped producing garden vegetables soon after, when they were presented with opportunities to sell more frequently. They explain their decision saying: “rather than working in the garden, and the risks involved with that, we decided to do [an extra day at the market].” Therefore, like Burnbrae Farms, the Reininks sell egg products exclusively, rather than operating a diversified farm.
Third, Hank-John and Janet transitioned from conventional to free-run production. Burnbrae Farms approached Hank-John and Janet approximately 15 years ago, and proposed the transition as a means to meet increased demand for alternative products. The Reininks agreed. Five years later, Burnbrae made a second request, that the farm be certified organic. The Reininks decided that “from free-run to organic wasn't a huge leap” and agreed to the second transition as well. Currently, they produce organic eggs exclusively.

Reinink defines itself as a small-scale farm. The Reininks state: “When people ask us [about our size], it's always a question of how many hens do we have. Six thousand birds, and people say oh my god, they think we're a monster farm but the average farm is 25 000 so we're a quarter of average, which is small.” However, they acknowledge that for a farm that engages in alternative production they are relatively large, stating that: “for free range, or organic, we're larger.”

6.2 Production

6.2.1 Products

Currently, Reinink Family Farm produces organic shell eggs in various sizes ranging from Peewee to Jumbo.

6.2.2 Production Practices

Reinink Family Farms consists of 1 pullet barn, 2 egg layers, and a grading plant.

Lifecycle of the Hen

The Reininks purchase pullets twice a year, from a conventional hatchery in Brighton, called Archers. The day-old chicks are transferred to the farm's pullet barn until 17 or 18 weeks of age
when they are moved to an egg layer. The birds begin laying at approximately 19 weeks, however, they're moved a week or two earlier in order to give them time to adjust to their new surroundings. Both layer barns are kept in production at all times, with an age difference of about 6 months between barns.

The flocks are sold off after a year of lay. The Reinink farmer acknowledges that birds are capable of laying longer, but justifies the decision to sell hens after a year in financial terms, stating that: “they'll lay longer, but commercially, logistically it makes sense.” One flock of birds is sold in early July, and the second in late November. In July, Reinink sells a number of birds to local farmers looking to expand their backyard flocks. The remainder are sold to a meat processor. In November, the exiting flock is sold directly to the processor, as there is little interest in backyard flocks at that time of year.

_Egg Production_

Reinink Family Farm is certified organic through EcoCert. Their hens must therefore be housed in free-run floor systems with 1.8 square feet per bird in indoor facilities and 2.7 square feet per bird in outdoor facilities (Organic Production Systems, 2006, 6.8.11.9). Canadian organic standards require that laying hens be fed organic feed and be supplied with nests, perches and areas suitable for dust baths and scratching (6.4; 6.8.11.3; 6.8.11.4; 6.8.11.6). Organic production facilities must grant hens access to the outdoors, weather permitting (6.1.3). Furthermore, organic laying hens must be kept as organic hens their entire lives (6.2.2). Reinink buys pullets from a conventional hatchery, however, they purchase them at a day old, ensuring they will be raised organic.

_Grading_

Reinink Family Farm has a grading facility on site. They are registered with the CFIA and have
been for approximately 20 years. However, Reinink only grades eggs they plan to sell directly to consumers or businesses. Half their production is sent to Burnbrae Farms, ungraded. Burnbrae Farms grades the eggs in their facilities (see Chapter 5) and sends Reinink a 'grade out' cheque based on the quantity and quality of eggs received. In addition, Reinink receives a premium on their grade out because their eggs are organic and therefore will be sold at a higher rate than conventional eggs.

**Alternative Production Challenges**

The Reinink farmer addresses certain challenges involved in alternative production. He states that: “with the organic and free range [production levels are] a little more variable... it's certainly not as efficient and there are reasons why they went to cages.” He acknowledges that hens have feelings and that their quality of life is limited by conventional cage housing systems, but defends conventional production in terms of efficiency. In speaking about caged housing systems he states: “hens aren't happier for it, but there are [reasons], it makes all sorts of sense time wise and efficiency wise.” Though Reinink Family Farm produces alternative products, the Reinink farmer does not feel strongly that organic production is superior to conventional, and defends, rather than condemns, the use of caged housing systems. Evidently, the Reinink farmer values organic production as a niche market from which his farm can profit, but does not feel, as consumers tend to, that it is more ethical or preferable to conventional production.

The Reininks faced several challenges in certifying their farm as organic. The main challenge was finding enough space for the hens. The Reinink farmer states: “the outdoor space was a bit of an issue, just to create it.” However, he argues that small farms are in the best position to engage in organic production, stating: “it's a question of the size and we have 6000 birds, which is, in the industry is small, but it’s a nice size to do something like this. You couldn't necessarily do it with 20 000.” Ultimately, they argue that the transition to organic was mutually
beneficial for themselves and for Burnbrae Farms. The Reinink farmer states: “it's not a huge market [for organic eggs], but [Burnbrae has] a demand for it and it fit in nicely.” His statements indicate he feels both large- and small-scale farms can thrive in the Ontario egg industry, particularly in partnership, a sentiment echoed by the Burnbrae Farms executive.

6.3 Marketing and Consumer Communications

6.3.1 Sales

Reinink Family Farm sells to restaurants and independent grocery stores in Kingston and the surrounding area. When the Reininks first decided to direct market their eggs, Hank-John did cold calls to restaurants and stores. However, the farm is no longer looking to sell to additional shops and restaurants as they are “maxed out as far as what we can produce, what we want to grade, what we want to deliver.” They do receive calls from stores and restaurants requesting product, however, the farm produces limited supplies and wants to continue to send a representative quantity of production to Burnbrae Farms.

Reinink sells directly to consumers at the Kingston Public Market and Ottawa Farmers’ Market each week. They sell to successful restaurants in Kingston, including Chez Piggy, Chien Noir, and Harper's (Kingston Region, para. 8). They also stock their product in health food stores, such as Tara Natural Foods and Desert Lake Gardens.

6.3.2 Communicating with Consumers

The Reinink farmer argues that the farm has a strong relationship with their customers. Their scale of operation allows Hank-John and Janet to attend farmers’ markets and meet their customers face-to-face. Feedback received from consumers at the markets represent the farm's main mechanism for assessing consumer demand. The Reinink farmer states that they have never
received official complaints or requests, however, the Reininks consider “having regular customers as positive feedback...” and view each sale as an act of support for their farm.

Reinink Family Farm has a long history in Eastern Ontario, and the Kingston area, that strengthens their connection to the local community. The Reinink farmer states that: “there's 20 something year old people in Kingston [and] their parents always bought our eggs so they've grown up on them.” However, the farmers' connection to individual consumers is limited. The Reinink farmer states: “I know a lot of faces, I don't know a lot of names” (Ibid). He admits that the Reininks do not, and logistically, cannot, have an intimate relationship with each of their customers. However, he argues that the farm is connected through a community network and states: “it’s nice to have that relationship. Even if it's just recognizing [people].”

6.3.3 Marketing to Consumers

Direct Marketing

The Reinink farmer indicates that attending farmers’ markets represents an important marketing strategy. The Reininks are able to connect with consumers in person and answer their questions directly. Meeting customers in person has the advantage of showing consumers that real people, and a real farm family, are producing their eggs. Consumer research indicates that consumers have more trust in smaller farms that sell their products at alternative venues (see Chapter 4).

Farmers Market Display

The Reininks farmers’ market display is simple and practical. The stall consists of a large table set up underneath an open white tent. A large sign strung up on the table states 'Reinink Eggs' in simple black print on a white background. The Reininks back their truck into the tent and sit on camping chairs while they wait for customers to approach. The eggs are sold out of a small white
cooler placed on the table. Several cartons are placed beside the cooler as decor. The simplistic display makes the Reininks seem approachable and honest, unwilling to engage in gimmicky marketing or sales tricks. Selling directly from the cooler enhances the sense of freshness and strengthens the impression that the eggs are coming directly from the farm to the consumer.

**Online Marketing**

The Reininks do not run a company website or use social media. The Reinink farmer argues that they do not need to use online resources because they have already built a strong support base through direct communication with consumers and clients. He states: “frankly, we've hustled through the years and we've created a nice clientele and a nice market.” As a result, the Reininks do not feel the need to actively market their products or farm.

However, Reinink Family Farm has garnered media attention and their online presence is therefore largely built through press. The media portrays Reinink as a small family farm strongly connected to their local community and engaging in ethical, local farming. The Reininks also represent themselves online on the Kingston and Ottawa farmers’ market websites, and on the websites of the stores they supply. They engage similar thematic elements of local, ethical family farming in close connection to community. Several key online marketing themes include:

**Small-Scale Family Farming**

Reinink Family Farms presents themselves primarily as a family farm in their self-descriptions and interviews with the media. The Reinink Farm name clearly identifies the business as a family operation. Additionally, the Reininks emphasize that the farm has been in their family for generations. One business description states that the Reininks “produce organic eggs on the farm where Hank-John was born and raised” (n.d., para. 3).
The Reininks also assert their status as a small-scale farm. Janet argues that their farm is “not that big in the industry” (quoted in Kingston Region, 2013, para. 4). The Reininks present their scale of operation as alternative, stating: “in a world with larger and larger poultry farms, [Reinink] has found a niche market” (Kingston Farmers Market, n.d., para. 2).

The Reininks emphasize their involvement in each stage of the farming process. They state that they “are proud to be farmers involved in each step of bringing fresh eggs to your table...” and explain that they “grow the day old chicks to maturity, raise the chickens throughout their egg laying career, grade the eggs in their CFIA registered grading station, and personally sell the eggs directly to their customers” (para. 3). They emphasize the connection between their farm and their customer's tables, creating the impression of an intimate relationship between their family and the families they feed. These statements imply that the Reininks operations are simple, small-scale and personal.

Local Farming

The Reininks promote their farm as local in the media. Janet Reinink states: “being local, [the eggs] are fresher of course,” implying that Reinink eggs are more local and therefore fresher than eggs sold by large companies (quoted in Kingston Region, 2013, para. 10). Hank-John also insinuates that local provision is preferable to distribution at conventional grocery stores. Speaking of the Kingston Farmers’ Market, he states: “this market is special because people can come and buy local” (McKay, 2014, para. 3). These statements contrast with the Burnbae executive's claims that all eggs in Ontario are 'basically local.' In their marketing materials and media interactions, the Reininks actively construct a 'local scale' to further distinguish their operations from conventional producers.
Simple, Ethical Farming

The Reininks market their farm as a simple and ethical operation. In an article posted by the Queen's Journal, Hank-John states that Reinink changed their farm operations from conventional to organic due to animal welfare concerns, stating that they “were unhappy with conventional farming philosophy” (para. 18-19). Hank-John states that switching to organic farming has required personal sacrifices, and that as a result he and his family lives simply (para. 24). The article presents a humble farm family willing to prioritize ethical concerns above profits. However, in our interview, the Reinink farmer explained that the Reininks only transitioned to alternative production at the request of Burnbrae Farms.

The Reininks emphasize that their eggs are an ethical choice. In one farm description they write that they raise “happy chickens” (Local Harvest, n.d., para. 1). An article in the Kingston Region states: “customers can be ethically comfortable with [Reininks] product[s]” (2013, para. 12). Similarly, in their self-description on the Kingston Farmers’ Market website, the Reininks state that they supply “fresh eggs to discerning customers who care about where their food comes from and the conditions in which it is produced” (n.d., para. 2). Therefore the Reininks reiterate their alternative status through an ethical lens, distinguishing their products and practices as ethically superior to conventional production.

Connection to Community

The Reininks emphasize their history in Eastern Ontario and insinuate that it strengthens their connection to the local area. Many of their online media profiles and self-descriptions reiterate that Hank-John grew up on the farm he now operates (Desert Lake Gardens, n.d.; Kingston Region, 2013; Kingston Public Market, n.d.). An article by McKay (2014) highlights Reininks history at the Kingston Farmers’ Market in particular, as a “vendor for the past 20 years” (para.
The *Kingston Region*’s profile of Reinink Family Farm connects local food provision to strengthened community bonds. Janet Reinink argues that buying from local farmers, like themselves, “keeps everything in the local community” and states that buying and selling locally allows local residents to “support each other” (quoted in *Kingston Region*, 2013, para. 11). The article therefore contrasts Reinink Family Farm with larger, conventional agri-businesses, and implies their superiority, indicating that buying from alternative, local farmers better supports farmers and the community. This position undercuts the Burnbrae executive's argument that the supply management system adequately supports farmers of all sizes.

**Packaging**

Reinink Family Farm packages their eggs simply, in plain cardboard cartons. The cartons are stamped with red ink that indicate the size and number of eggs, and display an image of two hens eating grain from the ground; refer to Appendix K.1. In the middle of the carton a white sticker with black print reads: Reinink Family Farms, Desmond Ontario, ORGANIC EGGS. The sticker also provides the egg size and, on the left hand side, displays a logo that reads: “certified organic, certified by Eco-cert Canada.” At farmers’ markets, the cartons are kept in large portable coolers, see Appendix K.2, and removed when requested by a customer.

**Discussion of Reinink Family Farm’s Marketing Strategy**

Reininks limited and mostly direct marketing, simple displays, and plain packaging contrast with Burnbrae Farm's expansive online presence, frequent marketing campaigns, and colourful packaging. These contrasts help build Reininks’ 'alternative' image. By keeping their marketing, packaging and displays simple, the Reininks distinguish themselves from conventional, large-scale producers that engage in widespread marketing techniques. Their 'no fuss, no marketing'
strategy builds a company image of an honest family farm, selling product directly, rather than relying on marketing ploys and sales tricks.

The online marketing that Reinink does engage in, largely through interviews with media or self-descriptions on farmers’ markets websites, serves to reinforce their small family farm image, using discourse of ethical, local farming. The articles and descriptions present Reinink as an alternative to conventional agri-business, in their scale, farm philosophy and dedication to community. None of the articles or descriptions acknowledge that Reinink eggs are sold through Burnbrae Farms as well. Additionally, the farmers do not voice their support for conventional production in public interviews, as they did in this research. In contrast to their statements in our interview, in public documents they express a belief that organic production is more ethical and preferable to conventional production practices. Therefore, similarly to Burnbrae Farms’ marketing strategy, Reinink chooses to provide only information and positions that support their farm’s image.

6.4 Communication and Relationship with the State: The Role of Mid-Scale Egg Farmers in the Structure of the Ontario Egg Industry

6.4.1 Reinink Family Farm in the Ontario Egg Industry

Ontario egg industry regulations grant Reinink Family Farm a privileged position among their peers. The Reinink farmer admits that, due to their economy of scale, Reinink monopolizes egg sales at the farmers’ markets they attend. He states: “in Kingston and [Ottawa] we're basically the only egg producer, the only egg sellers, and [it's] nice to have that sort of... monopoly is [a] word I don't like, [but] maybe it works.” Farm gate regulations require all eggs sold outside the farm to be graded. However, very few small-scale producers can afford to build and operate a grading
station and therefore must sell their product to larger-scale producers or egg graders (Ontario Regulation 171/10, 2010, s.4). Grading regulations present a barrier to growth for small-scale producers, resulting in very few mid-scale producers in Ontario. Reinink Family Farms is therefore in a unique position, as a mid-scale farm that grades and distributes its own eggs.

However, Reinink Family Farm continues to sell a large portion of its eggs to an egg grader. Provision to Burnbrae Farms is a guaranteed income, allowing the Reininks to engage in direct sales with little risk. The case study therefore indicates an avenue for growth for small farmers. By selling a portion of their product to larger grading stations, small producers can guarantee a portion of their income, enabling them to sell the remainder of their product in alternative markets.

6.4.2 Reinink Family Farm and Supply Management

The Reinink farmer spoke positively of supply management. He states: “the egg board serves a purpose. It moves product and it supplies the cost of production.” He argues that supply management stabilizes the egg industry, providing security for farmers and states that egg boards are effective “in equalizing or flat-lining the income because it makes it manageable...there aren't the ups and downs that a free market might experience.”

However, the Reininks qualify that farmers must achieve a certain scale of production in order to be successful in the industry. The Reinink farmer states: “there is a critical mass needed to make it worthwhile.” He insinuates that the industry is in fact structured to encourage large-scale production, since producers must pay for quota if they wish to own more than 100 birds (Egg Quota Policy, 2015, s. 9). When purchasing quota the farmers must also purchase the property the birds are raised on. As a result, entering the egg industry and growing an egg business is difficult without significant funds. The quota system is expensive and sometimes
unfeasible for smaller farmers. The Reinink farmer states: “there's a cost to it... we pay a levy that is considerable.”

The Reininks have run up against one particularly frustrating regulation in the Ontario egg industry that requires the owners of egg quota to also own the property on which eggs are produced. Hank-John's parents still live on the family farm, where egg production occurs, while the Reininks have their own home on a separate property. Therefore the egg farmer claims: “it's been a bit contentious, leasing the quota from [Hank-John's mother].” He argues that the regulation would be simpler if the farmer who operates the quota were also the owner, regardless of whether they own the farm property. The Reinink farmer therefore appreciates the benefits of the supply management system but also acknowledges its limitations.

6.4.3 Reinink Family Farm and Egg Farmers of Ontario

The Reininks maintain communication with Egg Farmers of Ontario. The egg board sends emails and communications to notify of any changes in policy and sends an auditor on a regular basis. The Reininks relationship with the egg board is challenging. The Reinink farmer argues that the Board implements unnecessary record keeping procedures. He states that: “[the EFO] have mandated that producers have to [do] reams of record keeping. When you swept the barn, when you fixed something, egg cooler temperatures, barn temperatures, water readings. None of which produces a cent of income but takes time out of [the] day.” This paperwork is particularly challenging for small producers trying to make a living because it takes up time and energy without producing any profit. The Reinink farmer states: “[it's] an annoyance. Certainly for... a smaller [producer]. You know if you are a larger place you hire somebody to do that.” In fact, Burnbrae Farms has hired specific employees tasked with ensuring that CFIA and EFO regulations are met.
The Reininks also take issue with how egg board policies are enforced, arguing that the enforcements are quite strict. The Reinink farmer states that: “a minion from the egg board comes and checks up to see how we've been doing, looks over, audits, and if you fail, and fail is under 90%, then they say well we'll have to come back and check in a few months and by the way we'll charge you $300 to do so too...and again, no income out of that.” The cost of additional audits is more challenging for small producers, with lower profit margins, to meet. Therefore, EFO regulations and enforcement disproportionately affect and disadvantage small-scale farmers.

6.4.4 Reinink Family Farm and the CFIA

The Reinink farmer argues that much of the record keeping and auditing mandated by the CFIA is unnecessary as well. He recognizes that these policies' may be beneficial, stating that: “it may be proactive if somebody got sued over something, so you know at least there's due diligence, you've kept records and done this.” However, he is cynical of the heavy regulations. He states: “it feels like there's sort of a 'make work' policy. People [are] coming out of school and they've hired these people and they've got to justify their existence, so they're coming up with rules to implement.” The Reinink farmer therefore hypothesizes that many regulations are created and enforced in order to create jobs within the agricultural sector. He feels trapped by these regulations, stating: “I feel it's unnecessary [but] I suck it up and just do it.” Therefore, Reinink is skeptical of heavy regulations enforced in the Ontario egg industry.

6.5 Discussion

The data collected from Reinink Family Farms has revealed key insights about mid-scale egg operations within the Ontario egg industry. The results expose methods for mid-scale producers to negotiate inter-scalar, consumer, and state relations.
6.5.1 Scalar Relations: Exploring the Connection between Reinink Family Farm and Burnbrae Farms

Reinink Family Farm sells product directly to consumers at local venues in Eastern Ontario, at a small scale. However, the farm also supplies a large-scale producer, Burnbrae Farms. Their income from Burnbrae Farms is guaranteed, enabling them to invest in their own grading operations with minimal risk. As a result, Reinink Family Farm is able to operate at a larger scale than most alternative producers. The Reinink case study therefore presents a strategy for growth for small-scale producers. The research indicates that producers can successfully grow their independent businesses by engaging with larger-scale producers for support.

The case study demonstrates that scales do not exist as distinct spheres, but rather are interrelated. Feagan (2007) argues that scales are relational in nature and interconnected in diverse ways (p. 15). Burnbrae Farms operates at a national scale but buys product from small- and mid-sized producers. Similarly, Reinink Family Farm operates at a small scale of extent, producing less product at a single location, and selling locally. However, the farm engages with larger scales of operation, by selling product to Burnbrae Farms. Their products are therefore sold at multiple scales, distributed locally by Reinink, and more widely by Burnbrae Farms. The Reinink farmer argues that their arrangement with Burnbrae Farms is mutually beneficial. Both parties are able to operate at their desired scale of extent with the assistance of differently scaled farms.

Therefore the research contradicts (at least in part) Mount's (2012) claims that processes of industrialization have pitted conventional and alternative food systems against each other (p. 110). Mount claims conventional and alternative food systems make for uncomfortable neighbours within the micro-geographies of rural agricultural spaces because farmers with different values and approaches must compete for land, political influence, and consumer loyalty,
within the same industries. He reasons that large-scale producers have more money and more clout, and therefore find it easier to market and sell their products, to obtain land, and to represent their needs politically. As a result, Mount argues that smaller farmers struggle and fail, often relying on off-farm income to survive (Ibid).

Reinink has found ways to negotiate the conventional-alternative divide. The farm sells product to Burnbrae Farms in order to stabilize their business and support their venture into alternative, local markets. Burnbrae Farms has likewise benefited by gaining access to alternative markets that would otherwise be unattainable. Therefore, producers of various scale in the Ontario egg industry have found ways to support each other and thrive in mutually beneficial relationships.

### 6.5.2 Scaling ‘the Local’: Points of Contention between Reinink Family Farm and Burnbrae Farms

Despite their close connection to Burnbrae Farms, the Reininks actively describe themselves as a small-scale, local farm. Politics of scale scholars argue that scale is produced through social processes (Smith and Kurtz, 2003; Brown and Purcell, 2005). Likewise, Reinink scales themselves through various marketing strategies and social interactions. Their name, along with the language used in their media and marketing materials, suggest that their farm is small in scale. In our interview, the Reinink farmer compared the farm to large-scale operations, arguing that “we're a quarter of average, which is small.” Reinink does not publicly acknowledge their relationship with Burnbrae Farms and presents their farming practices as ethically, rather than financially motivated. Therefore, Reinink adopts the same strategy as Burnbrae Farms, only presenting information that supports their desired image, as a small, ethical, family farm.

The Reininks engage in much of the small scale and local discourse used by critical food
scholars in order to scale their farm as local (see Chapter 2). The farmers build on assumptions about local food production, suggesting that local food chains establish relationships of trust and arguing that local food is fresher and more nutritious than food from large-scale producers. Assumptions about the superiority of local food have been questioned by critical food scholars (Sonnino, 2013; Winter, 2003; Hinrichs, 2003; Delind, 2011; Hinrichs and Allen, 2008). However, Reinink utilizes local discourse to distinguish their farm from conventional, large-scale producers.

Mount (2012) argues that businesses cannot build their alternative identity simply by producing alternative products. Niche products can and have been copied by large agri-business, as is evident from the diversity of alternative products offered by Burnbrae Farms (p. 112). In fact, Reinink supplies alternative products to Burnbrae Farms, enabling them to sell to alternative markets in competition with smaller producers. However, Reinink distinguishes their farm from large-scale producers, not only by the products they sell, but also by attempting to carve out spaces and features that are not as easily replicated by larger businesses. The Reininks scale their farm as local in order to access a niche market less attainable for large businesses.

The Reininks present direct exchange as an alternative feature of their farm not deliverable by large companies. The farmers meet face-to-face with their customers on a regular basis and answer their questions and concerns in person. Reinink relies heavily on word-of-mouth and direct face-to-face communications rather than marketing campaigns or online marketing strategies. Their displays and packaging are plain, with few pictures and little ornamentation. Reininks simple marketing and straightforward sales techniques distinguish the farm from large agri-businesses, such as Burnbrae Farms, who engage in extensive marketing strategies and sell their products widely.

Mount (2012) takes issue with claims of 'direct exchange', however, arguing that simply
because small-scale farmers interact more with their consumers does not mean the ideals of trust or connection, presented as inherent in local food systems, are met (p. 113). The Reinink case study confirms that there can be limits to social interactions in direct exchange. The Reinink farmer admits that the Reininks do not know many of their customers names. Similarly, Mount (2012) argues that genuine connections between consumers and producers require more than their physical meeting (p. 112). According to Mount, actual trust requires fully developed relationships. Therefore, direct exchange is often symbolic, offering an opportunity for interaction and trust that is not realized.

Symbolic direct exchange can, and has, been replicated by conventional producers. Burnbrae Farms claims their products are local and argue that their company communicates directly with consumers through tours, helplines and social media. Sue Hudson replies directly to consumers online, using her first name to imply a direct exchange with consumers. Therefore, features of the local scale, such as symbolic direct exchange, have been adopted by large-scale producers. Smaller-scale producers, like Reinink, attempt to distinguish themselves from conventional, large-scale producers, but are using similar discourse. Therefore, despite their mutually beneficial relationship, Reinink and Burnbrae Farms still operate in competition. Reinink struggles to carve out an alternative market in which their eggs can be distinguished from Burnbrae Farms’ alternative products.

6.5.3 State Relations: Disproportionate Effects of Industry Regulations on Mid- and Small-Scale Producers

The Reinink farmer is skeptical of industry governing bodies and argues that heavy regulations disproportionately affect small-scale farmers. Large agri-businesses can afford to hire employees to ensure compliance with EFO and CFIA regulations. However, small-scale farmers must take on these tasks themselves. Compliance measures require time and resources and do not produce
profits for the business. Therefore, Reinink has found it challenging to meet diverse industry regulations. Likewise, the Reinink farmer argues that the supply management quota system benefits large-scale producers who have the means to buy out quota and land, but makes it difficult for small producers to enter and grow within the egg industry (Ibid). The Reinink farmer's position on industry governing bodies and the supply management system contradicts the Burnbrae executive's statements that the egg industry in Ontario adequately supports farmers of all scale.

The Reinink Family Farm case study identifies examples of support, as well as points of contention, between Reinink and Burnbrae Farms. Additionally, the research reveals complex relations among producers of various scale and exposes issues faced by mid-scale producers in relating to consumers and the state.
Chapter 7
Small-Scale Producer Data: Covenant Farm Case Study

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data collected from Covenant Farm through interviews with a Covenant farmer (hereon referred to as the Covenant farmer), site tours of farm facilities and qualitative coding and analysis of the farm's marketing materials. The research provides insight into small farm conventions and the challenges faced by small-scale egg producers in Ontario.

Covenant Farm is a small, diversified farm operating as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative. The farm is located less than 100 km from Ottawa, outside of Rockland, Ontario, and consists of a farmhouse, two greenhouses, three barns and two hen houses. Covenant Farm agreed to an interview, held over tea and toast in the kitchen of the large white farm house. Several core thematic elements arose during the interview. The Covenant farmer expressed an ecocentric worldview and disillusionment with the conventional agri-food system.\(^5\)

Covenant Farm also provided tours of their facilities. On a cold day in late November, I accompanied the Covenant farmer on her daily walk to collect eggs from the hen coops. At the time, the farm had two active chicken coops, one housing White Leghorns and the other Rhode Island Reds. The farmer interacts with the hens on a daily basis, manually feeding and watering the birds and collecting eggs by hand once or twice a day. She releases the hens from their coop each morning and the birds are free to roam the entire property until darkness falls. At night, the

\(^5\) All information about Covenant Farm, including quoted materials, in this chapter is derived from an in-depth interview with a Covenant farmer and/or from a tour of the farm facilities conducted November 18, 2014.
hens are locked in their chicken coop to protect them from predators and bad weather. The hens at Covenant Farm are significantly less restricted than birds at Burnbrae Farms, live longer lives, and have more diverse experiences.

Covenant Farm's marketing materials are largely reflective of the values the Covenant farmer expressed during our interview and the practices I witnessed during site tours. Covenant Farm markets their operation as a small-scale, local farm working closely with nature to produce healthy, ethical food. They accurately describe their production practices on social media and attempt to maintain open lines of communication with their consumers, often encouraging participation in the farming process. Therefore, Covenant Farm markets themselves and operates alternatively, on a small scale, with the intention of respecting nature and reconnecting consumers with their food.

7.1 Background

Covenant Farm was founded in 1980 by June and Lloyd Pelot and was run as a horse farm for many years. In 2005, their daughter, Stephanie Pelot, and her husband, Jean-Pierre, started a CSA on the farm with the help of their son, Joel, and his wife, Caroline. In 2013, Stephanie turned the CSA over to Joel and Caroline to operate. The couple had difficulty deciding to take over the CSA, as they had a number of other responsibilities. Joel is a small business owner in Rockland and Caroline splits her time between the farm and a second home in Quebec. However, the couple felt a responsibility to contribute to the development of alternative food systems. The Covenant farmer states: “[they] really, really considered it... because [they] felt a responsibility to be stewards of the land and a responsibility towards the food system.” Therefore, Caroline and Lloyd operate Covenant Farm with the purpose of protecting the natural environment and contributing to alternative food systems.
7.2 Production

7.2.1 Production Model: Community Supported Agriculture

The Community Supported Agriculture model first developed in the 1980s when two farms in New England began producing food for local customers, guided by the notion that production should be share-oriented and the community should share not just farm products but also the costs of production (Nost, 2014, p. 153). The notion of a farm model wherein consumers and producers share farm costs and risks spread quickly through word of mouth and media. CSAs have since become one of the most popular means of local food provision and consumption (p. 163).

The CSA model provides an alternative to the conventional agri-food system by offering products through a shorter supply chain and creating a direct link between consumers and producers. CSAs completely rework the consumer-producer relationship, requiring consumers to enter into partnership with the farmers that supply their food. Members purchase a share of the farm's harvest at the beginning of the growing season and receive farm products throughout the season, usually on a weekly basis (p. 163). When crops fail, members receive fewer goods and see a smaller return on the money they invested. Alternatively, when the farm does well, members receive more and better quality products. Therefore, CSAs require consumers to share the financial risks involved in small-scale farming.

The CSA model is based on commitment and relationship. Henderson (1999) argues that CSAs require “mutual commitment: the farm feeds the people, the people support the farm” (Henderson, p. 3). She argues that a key problem with the conventional agri-food system is disconnection between consumers and producers. CSAs seek to reconnect consumers both to farmers and to the land. The CSA movement encourages active member participation in order to
foster community development (Hayden and Buck, 2012, p. 333; Nost, 2014, p. 153; Henderson, 1999, p. 99). Hayden and Buck argue that participation is “critical in establishing and maintaining a connection to the farm that inspires commitment to a particular CSA” (p. 333). They argue that without a sense of community binding members to the farm they may easily become disillusioned with the system when crops fail or if the farm cannot produce the variety of food they desire and can find elsewhere. Therefore, successful CSAs require commitment built through relationship and community. However, studies show that few members are willing to engage enough with their CSA to develop strong community relationships (Nost, 2014; Delind, 2011).

CSAs do not always fulfill the ideals of the CSA movement, however they do provide an alternative system of production and require, at least to an extent, the development of alternative consumer-producer relationships. Therefore, a small CSA, such as Covenant Farm, is a good point of departure for studying alternative consumer-producer relationships at the small scale.

7.2.2 Products

Covenant Farm sells a variety of garden vegetables throughout the year. The farm grows field and greenhouse vegetables, sprouts, microgreens and a variety of shoots. The products they offer differ from year to year, season to season, and week to week. Eggs are available as an add-on to weekly member baskets. Covenant Farm produces both white and brown eggs and members are able to choose their preference.

Starting in the winter of 2016, Covenant Farm plans to take a “whole diet” approach to the CSA, attempting to provide all the foods members require on a regular basis. Covenant will operate in partnership with other small-scale local farms and businesses to provide products they do not have the capacity to produce, including cheeses, coffee, honey, artisan flours, grains,
beans, and lentils.

7.2.3 Production Practices

Approach

The Covenant farmer asserts that their farm differs completely from conventional egg production, not just in practice, but also in philosophy. The Covenant farmer argues that food, plants and animals ought to be valued in and of themselves rather than for their use to humans. She claims the current industry is only able to value food and animals for their use, stating: "the whole industry is about transforming a tomato into money, which is going to be a cell phone, or a car, or gas, or heat.” She claims her farm contests the anthropocentric philosophy driving current agri-food industries, stating: “...we're trying to find a different way that's not so mechanized and [we're] trying [not] to monetize the soil or a plant, or another being, like a chicken.”

The Covenant farmer described the farm hens in terms of personality traits, rather than production value. She explains that in her experience, White Leghorns are more nervous and less trusting, while Rhode Island Reds are more easy-going. During site tours, the White Leghorns were noticeably more skittish. They skirted around the farmer as she collected eggs and flapped their wings angrily when she approached. Therefore, Covenant farm acknowledges their farm animals’ personalities, an aspect of farming not discussed by either of the other two farms in this study.

The Covenant farmer explains that their approach to farming is directed by nature and entails “treating [the animals] as naturally as possible.” She recognizes that farm animals have instincts, activities and preferences, which farmers ought to respect. She states: “even though [chickens] are domesticated animals, to me they have a natural way of being. They scratch on the ground, they eat bugs, they are very curious, they have an area that they cover.” The farm makes
production decisions based on their hens' natural way of being. The Covenant farmer explains: “[the hens] have their own way of being and they're having an experience. And so while Jean Pierre and Stephanie had them in a more confined area, just for practical reasons, we decided to let them go free range, really literally free range.” Caroline and Joel's decision to move the hens to a free-range system was therefore made in consideration of the bird's well-being, not for practical, financial or marketing reasons. The Covenant farmer's discussion of their hens’ personalities and well-being contrasts with Burnbrae Farms and Reinink Family Farm who both spoke of their hens primarily in terms of production value (See Chapter 5 and Chapter 6).

Lifecycle

Covenant Farm purchases ready-to-lay hens from a farm in St. Isidore. The Covenant farmer describes the farm as small-scale, local and “run by a kind man.” The chicks are bred and raised conventionally, before being bought by Covenant Farm.

Covenant Farm keeps the hens according to organic standards, supplying organic feed and ensuring they have enough indoor space and sufficient time out of doors. After two years of laying Covenant sells the hens to a meat processor. The Covenant farmer explains that they approach the disposal of hens as both a financial and moral decision. She states: “[we are] against slaughtering them after they stop producing but then the discussion is, and we've had it with interns, why would you keep feeding them? We've given them a good life, why would you continue to feed them if they're not producing and you're not getting your return?” Therefore, they acknowledge the moral dimensions of their choice to sell to a processor but ultimately base the decision on financial and economic concerns. However, Covenant Farm keeps their hens in production for a year longer than Burnbrae Farms and Reinink Family Farm.
Production Practices

Covenant Farm keeps their hens in 80 square foot wooden coops. At the time of the interview and site tours, the farm had two functioning chicken coops, each housing approximately 20 birds. The first coop housed White Leghorns and was located only a few meters from the farmhouse. The second coop was farther from the farmhouse, accessed by a trail through the forest. This coop was wooden and square, and housed a flock of Rhode Island Red hens. The coop walls contained numerous nests for the birds to sleep in and lay. Troughs for food and water were on the floor, underlain by straw. The hens primarily laid in their nests, however, the farmer checked both the nests and the straw bedded ground for eggs.

The hens are enclosed in their coops throughout the night, for safety reasons, but are free to roam the farm with no restrictions during the day. They are trained to return to their coops automatically at night and to lay in the coops only. The Covenant farmer releases the hens from their coop each day and collects the eggs by hand. In the evening, the farmer returns to enclose the hens in the coop for the night.

The farmer collects eggs in wicker baskets, separating brown eggs into one basket and white into another. The eggs are then stored in a cooler housed in a storage barn. The farmers then transfer the eggs into baskets for pickup and delivery at the end of each week.

The Covenant farmer argues that their farm's egg production system is very low maintenance. Despite their chickens being outside the cage system, the Covenant farmer claims they have no issues with inter-hen fighting or bullying. She acknowledges that the hens still observe a pecking order, stating: “There are certain hens that are managing. But they've split up into smaller groups of four or five and they hang out together. They're not brutal at all with each other.” The White Leghorns and Rhode Island Reds are kept on separate areas of the property.
The Covenant farmer states that though the hens are free range, they tend to remain near their coops most of the day, and travel very little (Ibid). Occasionally, the two breeds come into contact but the flocks do not experience tension or fighting, and rather avoid and ignore each other.

The Covenant farmer credits the truly 'free' aspect of Covenant's management style for the lack of issues, arguing that only when hens are under stress do they “enforce the pecking order in a really dramatic way.” The farmer refers to the natural instincts of the chickens when explaining the pecking order stating: “All of it's natural, if they're in a confined space and they're stressed it's like they don't understand what's happening and they can't get out of this survival mode.” Therefore, the Covenant farmer argues that hens in conventional systems are abusive towards one another because they are not being treated as natural beings and are kept in stressful conditions that trigger aggression.

Covenant Farm has faced certain problems in providing their hens with so much freedom. The Covenant farmer states that “because they're free range [the hens] make deposits everywhere they go, which is positive in that they're returning nutrients, but on another level it’s a little bit messy.” As a result, the farm owners have contemplated restricting some of the hens' freedom. The Covenant farmer states that they may need to “maintain them within a certain range. Because they come up to the porch.”

Despite the issues they face, the Covenant farmer highlights the joy they experience in maintaining free-range flocks. “One time [a chicken] just came inside the house and we were like “Hey what are you doing!” and she was like “Oh they saw me!” It really gives me such joy to see them free.” Therefore, the Covenant farmer values the hens' experiences and happiness and finds joy in their freedom despite the practical difficulties it creates for the farm.
Distribution

Covenant Farm makes its CSA baskets available at the farm, at a drop-off point in Rockland, and through home delivery. They deliver in the local area, including in Ottawa, for a fee.

Growth and Future Vision

In terms of growth, Covenant Farm would like to raise pullets and get involved in breeding in order to develop a whole system approach to farming. The Covenant farmer states: “If you're looking at a sustainable, whole system approach then you're doing it from A-Z, having the whole system integrated.” Their goals for growth are not based solely on production or financial aims but on achieving their vision of an alternative, natural approach to farming.

7.3 Marketing and Consumer Communications

7.3.1 Sales

Covenant Farm operates primarily as a CSA, collecting membership fees at the beginning of a growing season, and distributing their products to members on a weekly basis. They also sell products regularly at the Vankleek Farmers’ Market and Pantry Plus, a health food store in Orleans. However, Covenant Farm does not sell eggs at the market, nor at Pantry Plus, due to farm regulations that require eggs sold publicly to be graded (Ontario Regulation 171/10, 2010, s.4). The farm does not have the capacity to grade their eggs. Therefore, they distribute them exclusively to CSA members. Members have the option to buy an egg share, in addition to a farm share, and pay upfront for all the eggs they receive throughout the season. By requiring that consumers pay for a share in their hen's production, rather than buying eggs outright, Covenant Farm successfully circumvents grading requirements.
7.3.2 Communication with Consumers

Covenant Farm communicates with consumers online, through email, an official website, and Facebook account. The farm sends weekly emails to its members detailing items that will be included in the following week's basket and providing farm updates. Covenant farmers meet all of their members face to face through deliveries and pickups. In addition, they hold open houses at the beginning of the winter and summer seasons to build community among members and encourage participation in farm operations. Covenant Farm is open to members every Sunday from 10am - 3pm.

Covenant encourages visitations and participation; however, the Covenant farmer acknowledges that their interactions with members are limited. Only two CSA members visited the farm throughout the summer of 2014. The Covenant farmer argues that their members are busy and unwilling to prioritize farming in their lives. She states: “Everybody is working really hard. People have families and they have kids and they're taking care of lots of different things and at the end of the day they may want to, they have it in their heart that they want to, but then they have to drive here and things don't work out.” Therefore, she feels that members lack the level of commitment necessary to build community on the farm.

Likewise, the Covenant farmer argues that their members often do not fulfil the CSA principle of shared responsibility. They find it challenging to find patrons in the winter as many customers sign up for the summer only and are unwilling to accept the seasonal risks that come along with owning and operating a farm.

The Covenant farmer argues that their members' lack of engagement and responsibility has led to misunderstandings and an under-appreciation of the farm. The Covenant farmer attributes most of the complaints they receive from members to a misunderstanding of the CSA
model or a lack of commitment to the shared responsibility involved in CSA farming. She states: “[We] try to understand where they're coming from and try to understand what their perception is. I find that it often stems from misunderstanding or a misconception of what they buy into, and what they're expecting as opposed to what they got.” She feels that many of their customers lack respect for the farming process and do not have an appreciation of the work farmers, and nature, engage in. She states: “We would make out the list of what was in our baskets and people would say 'oh I don't want such and such a thing this week, and can you take this out?'...in the act of doing so, there was no recognition, no gratitude, not towards me, but also not towards the fact that there is an eggplant, that there is food.” She explains that lack of respect is often fueled by a lack of understanding. She states: “I had one person who said our vegetables were like the experiment that she did in her backyard that she just left and didn't take care of and I was like 'whoa that's intense' because it's not true. It just wasn't true.” Consumers do not understand the work that goes into farming their food and therefore lack appreciation for the food they receive and fail to respect the farmers who have produced it.

The Covenant farmer argues that consumers often fail to respect the natural environment as well. She explains that consumers expect to have choices in regards to their food and as a result ignore their connection to nature and their local environment when making food decisions. She states: “We're so used to going to the grocery store and just choosing what we want. [But] we live in a particular context of climate and ecology and within an ecosystem.” Therefore, she believes that some members fail to appreciate the truly alternative nature of their CSA, in producing local food in connection with nature.

The Covenant farmer concludes that alternative consumers are not necessarily more informed or enlightened about farming processes than the average consumer. Their members continue to lack an understanding and appreciation for farming, despite the fact that they invite
people to the farm and send email updates about farm progress. She argues that consumers rely on trust rather than on information when making consumption decisions, claiming that consumers often purchase from local CSAs because they feel they can better trust the CSA system. She explains: “Our CSA members want to eat fresh, healthy eggs and they trust us a lot. That's a big thing, especially with CSAs. CSA, organic, all this stuff [people] have an idea in their head of what it means... this bucolic idea that they've created in their mind, taken from different elements from their lives and in the media, but they have no idea what it actually is and they're not going to take the time [to figure it out].” She argues that members often fail to actively engage with the system and do not work to properly inform themselves about their foods production. She states: “We try to be as transparent as possible, as part of our ethic. But then there's no initiative [from members]...There's a lot of proof that they're not even reading my emails.” Therefore, she believes members simply trust the CSA to meet their expectations about alternative farming without informing themselves about the reality of farm work.

The Covenant farmer argues that consumers are reactive, rather than interactive when it comes to making choices about their food. She states: “…it's very interesting to see the trends. Recently, I got a whole bunch of questions about broccoli sprouts and I'm sure it’s because somewhere there was an article about broccoli sprouts because then suddenly everyone was asking about them.” She argues that people are simply reacting to the information they receive through the media, stating: “The CBC is feeding things to us, and the news, and the magazines, and Facebook, all these things are feeding us information and... we're just reacting.” The consumer research likewise indicates that consumers often access product information from easy-to-access resources such as the Internet, news programming, and other forms of media (see Chapter 4).

The Covenant farmer argues that people are reacting to this information as consumers: by
spending their money differently. She states: “We try to find something, a consumer choice, where can I spend my money? I'm so busy working my butt off and money is the only thing that I have in the hand at the end of the day.” Alternative consumers often feel that food ought to be produced in certain, ethical, ways, however, they do not have the time or expertise to farm, and therefore outsource their ethics to farmers they trust. The Covenant farmer states that members are “placing their trust and their ethics in us instead of doing it themselves." She argues that trust is a key component of alternative consumer-producer relationships because consumers often have only a vague idea of what ethical farming entails. She argues that, as Hobbs and Goddard (2015) hypothesized, alternative consumers use trust to make up for a lack of knowledge and experience (p. 72). The Covenant farmer argues that “people want to feel less guilty, they want to feel like they've made the right choices.” However, many people do not have the capacity to produce goods, and therefore cannot make ethical production decisions themselves. Instead, they make consumption decisions, and place their trust, and their money, in the hands of others they hope will make the right choices.

However, the Covenant farmer argues that changes in spending fail to transform the economy because they support the notion that all goods and experiences can and should be valued monetarily. Instead of directly accessing their needs, people work to gain enough money to buy access to the things they require. Therefore, the Covenant farmer argues: “We're not living directly. We're doing a big detour.” She argues further that when people access their needs and ethics indirectly, through monetary means, it becomes difficult for them to grasp the true value of their goods. They cannot understand the value of growing and harvesting food, the interaction with nature that these practices require, or the characteristics of the place in which that food is grown, because they have not experienced these values directly. Instead, they are only able to value food through monetary terms, leading to misunderstanding, under-appreciation, and failures in communication between farmers and consumers.
7.3.3 Marketing to Consumers

Covenant Farm markets through word of mouth and online accounts. They use their online presence to keep their members informed and to market their products and brand. Covenant Farm frequently provides accurate information about their products and farm practices. They garner support for their farm by expressing Covenant Farm's values and approach.

**Online Marketing**

**Website**

Covenant Farm's website expresses their love of nature and commitment to growing healthy alternative food. The web design is clean and simple, with a consistent colour scheme and layout that is easy to navigate (www.covenantfarm.ca/). The website contains images of nature and descriptions of everyday life on the farm.

Each page on the website includes a header with the name Covenant Farm across the top and the farm moto underneath: “Celebrating beauty and abundance within our ecosystem.” The name “Covenant Farm” is typed in romantic flowing cursive text, red against a white backdrop, while the moto is typed in simple black print. The home page includes a large close-up photograph of a radish being pulled from the soil.

The home page also features a blog with recipes posted by Stephanie, the former owner of the farm and mother of the current owner, and farm updates from Caroline, one of the current owners (Ibid). The recipes, such as one for a Radish Leaf Casserole, include step-by-step photographs and feature produce from the farm (Pelot, 2014, June 1). The blog also features updates from Caroline, with photographs of produce and farm work. One post entitled “Gettin' Stuff Done” includes an image of two farmers tending to greenhouse plants and explains the
greenhouse system (Levesque, 2014, February 27). The blog serves as a means of communicating information about the farm and farm production to consumers.

Covenant Farm also expresses its mission and values through its blog posts. The “Gettin' Stuff Done” post states that people are “welcome to visit and participate in this joyful and oh-so-productive farm.” This post expresses values of collaboration and shared responsibility, stating: “We have a really excellent team collaborating on the farm right now... working together to get the baskets done.” A post from Caroline reinforces Covenant Farm's connection to nature, stating that Covenant farmers always “make room to let the natural beauty bloom all around us” (Levesque, 2014, April 1).

The webpage expresses Covenant Farm's values and ideals and serves as a means to communicate farm information to consumers. However, the webpage is not updated regularly. The website provides an information sheet and sign-up form to apply for CSA membership (Covenant Farm, Sign Up, 2014). However, the page is not updated and the information sheet and registration form still have 2014 dates. Likewise, the Archives section of the webpage remains empty (Covenant Farm, Archives, 2014).

Facebook

The Covenant Farm Facebook page is updated much more frequently than the farm website. Covenant Farm's timeline is filled with pictures of various fruits and vegetables from the farm (https://www.facebook.com/covenantfarmcsa). Occasionally, the farmers post pictures of the weekly baskets. They use the site to support other local farmers, providing links to a number of small farm's Facebook pages. In particular, they highlight the work of Ian Walker and Mariposa Farm. They credit Walker as an inspiration for Covenant Farm's hanging garden greenhouse design and write: “Ian Walker [is] a brilliant and innovative farmer just down the road”
(Covenant Farm, April 25, 2014). Therefore, Covenant Farm uses their online presence to develop alternative food networks with other small-scale, local farmers.

Covenant Farm also uses Facebook to market their food. Covenant frequently posts links to sign up for CSA membership (https://www.facebook.com/covenantfarmcsa). They post pictures of their produce and baskets and advertise the venues at which they sell their products; refer to Appendix L.1. Covenant Farm also posts in advance each time they attend the Vankleek Farmers’ Market, announcing which products they will be selling; refer to Appendix L.1. They sometimes highlight and promote specific products. In January 2015, Covenant Farm posted about egg shares. They wrote: “Get your egg share for guaranteed farm fresh eggs” and promoted their hens as “truly free range;” see Appendix L.2 (Covenant Farm, January 1, 2015). Facebook is therefore a key avenue for communicating practical and marketing information to consumers.

Packaging

Covenant Farm packages their produce in reusable baskets. Members keep their basket for the week, then return it and receive a new one the following week. The eggs are also packaged in reusable cartons. Members return their cartons with their weekly basket, to be refilled.

Analysis of Marketing Materials

Principles of Community Supported Agriculture

In their online marketing, Covenant Farm promotes the benefits of Community Supported Agriculture, arguing that CSAs “contribut[e] to a local, sustainable system of agriculture” (Covenant Farm, What is a CSA, 2014). They claim the CSA system “provides farmers with a more equitable return for their labour” (Ibid). First, the CSA model requires that members take
on financial responsibility for the farm. As a result, when the farm loses money, the loss is shared across numerous individuals rather than being borne entirely by the farmers, providing them with greater financial stability. Second, the CSA model attempts to develop community ties that bind members to the farm. Covenant Farm promotes their CSA as fostering community and relationships, stating: “The farm is a gathering place. Many people have experienced a deep sense of connection at Covenant Farm” (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, Why we got into farming, para. 8).

Covenant Farm further claims that CSAs are environmentally friendly systems of production, explaining that CSAs: “help to minimize food waste, since all of the harvest is distributed equally among shareholders” and none is wasted (Covenant Farm, What is a CSA, 2014). Covenant also argues that CSAs are a healthful option and provide members “with all of the nutritional value that Nature intended them to have” (Ibid). Finally, they argue that CSAs provide a direct connection with farmers and access to greater knowledge about food production. The website states: “Members have a direct contact with the grower, and can learn a lot about how food is grown and what is in season” (Ibid).

Covenant Farm defines and markets themselves according to CSA values of alternativeness, shared responsibility, environmental stewardship, healthfulness, and direct relationships. Covenant Farm also expresses many of these values through the discourse of local food.

*Local Farming*

Covenant Farm uses local discourse to promote their farm online. The farmers highlight features of their operations widely associated with local, small-scale production. In particular, they engage assumptions about local farming such as alternativeness, increased freshness, and direct
The slogan used in their member email updates highlights the freshness, directness and alternative nature of their food, stating: “fresh from the farm, local and organic” (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, 2015).

**Alternativeness**

Covenant Farm describes themselves as “certified organic Community Shared Agriculture” (Covenant Farm, About Us, 2015, para. 1). The farmers present both their products and system of production as alternative and frequently reinforce their farm's alternative status.

The farmers highlight the alternative nature of their products, citing their organic certification on their Facebook banner and throughout their website and Facebook account (http://www.covenantfarm.ca; https://www.facebook.com/covenantfarmsa). In an email to their members, also posted to their Facebook account, they describe themselves as a “certified organic farm” providing “the very best organic products from our region” (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, para 2-3). Similarly, when posting about their attendance at the Vankleek Farmers Market, they write: “All our products are certified organic by eco-cert” (Covenant Farm, January 20, 2015).

Covenant Farm also indicates that their approach to farming differs from a conventional approach. They highlight their alternative practices on their Facebook page, describing their hens as “truly free range” (Covenant Farm, 2015, January 1). Covenant sets themselves apart from other alternative farms and presents their farm as maintaining a level of authenticity not present in other farms that produce alternative products. They argue that their CSA is ideal for those looking for “an authentic food experience” (Covenant Farm, 2015, CSA Winter Shares, para. 1). The Covenant farmer argues that many alternative food producers operate within a niche market of the conventional agri-food system rather than truly resisting conventional production. She
In contrast, Covenant Farm positions themselves as an alternative farm actively seeking to create alternative food networks. In March 2015, Covenant Farm posted an article written by co-owner Caroline Levesque about CSAs, explaining: “how you can support your local food economies” (March 30, 2015). The Covenant Farm Facebook page includes posts countering conventional food and promoting alternatives, such as CSAs. One post features an image with the words: “Maybe we should stop asking why real food is so expensive and start asking why processed food is so cheap;” refer to Appendix L.3. The farm has posted links to articles that promote the advantages of CSAs, such as one entitled “From Farm to Table: CSAs Pave the Way to a Greener, Healthier Future” (Covenant Farm, March 13, 2015). Many of their posts have a political lilt, seeking to challenge conventional food and conventional agricultural production systems. In fact, some of their posts are blatantly political. One post highlights the MAPAQ, Quebec's Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, support for CSAs (Covenant Farm, April 12, 2015). In this way, Covenant Farm markets themselves as an authentically alternative farm.

**Connection to Nature and Responsibility for the Environment**

Covenant Farm's online activities pay homage to the beauty and power of nature. The farmers write on their website: “Passion for nature and love of the good life are the roots of Covenant Farm” (Covenant Farm, Farm Heritage, para. 1). The Covenant website explains that the farm name is a reflection of its commitment to nature. The word 'covenant' means an agreement. According to the Covenant Farm website: “Each generation since June and Lloyd has agreed to uphold and maintain [their] promise to honour and care for Earth” (Covenant Farm, About Us, 2015, para. 2).
The farmers often post blogs expressing their love for nature. One post entitled “Hey There” includes a picture of a toad with the caption: “It’s always a pleasant surprise to come across a toad in the garden. I met this little fella while I was weeding the cucumbers” (Levesque, 2015, July 12). The caption expresses Caroline's joy in interacting with nature. The Covenant Farm Facebook page is similarly filled with images of nature and phrases praising the beauty of the natural environment. One post features an image of flowers overlain with the text: “Beauty of Nature: Inspiration in all spring colours – just in front of your door. Don't miss it!” (Covenant Farm, 2015, June 3). Covenant Farm often posts photographs showing the natural beauty of their farm. On May 4, they posted an image of a rainbow over the farm and in September, added an album featuring flowers growing on the farm property (Covenant Farm, 2015; Covenant Farm, 2015, September 30).

Covenant Farm's marketing materials present an ecocentric approach to farming in which nature, the farm, and farm products are valued in and of themselves rather than for their benefit to humans. Caroline posted on the farm blog: "I like to see toads because if they elect to make our garden their home, then I figure we must be doing something right” (Levesque, 2015, July 12). This post indicates that Covenant Farm does not simply measure their success according to numbers and profit but also through ecosystem values. Likewise, the farm frequently posts about their animals' well-being. On April 2, the farm posted a photograph of brown hens roaming outdoors in the snow and captioned the post “happy chickens;” refer to Appendix L.4.

The farmers position themselves as in relationship with nature. They recognize their responsibility to the environment but do not regard themselves as all-powerful stewards over the land. Rather, they are grateful for the land, animals and food, and acknowledge that they work in partnership with nature. They state: “Farming is about relationships; relationship with the ecosystem and relationships with people” (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, How we got into
farming, 2015, para. 9). They encourage members to visit and participate on the farm and to “explore your own relationship with nature” (Ibid). They are eager to connect their members to the land from which their food originates, recognizing that the environment food is grown in affects its very essence. They understand food as “a concentrated bundle, not only of nutrients, but of information that is absorbed directly from the plant’s environment” (para. 4). Therefore, they believe that in order to truly appreciate the inherent value of food, people must develop a connection with the environment within which it was grown.

**Community and Shared Responsibility**

Shared responsibility and partnership are core values of the CSA movement. Covenant Farm displays these values in their marketing, constantly encouraging participation among members and drawing attention to joint efforts on the farm. They write on their website: “Come visit us to find out more about how we grow!” (Covenant Farm, About Us, 2015, para. 5). In March, they posted an album featuring pictures of work being done on the farm and captioned it: "This is your community farm;" refer to Appendix L.5. The farmers hold events on the farm for members and non-members. In August, they posted on their Facebook wall about a Natural Dye workshop they were holding on the farm (Covenant Farm, 2015, August 19). Therefore, the farm actively attempts to build community among members and other supporters of alternative farming.

The Covenant Farm owners view themselves as collaborators. In a post from April 27, they spoke of planting orchards and thanked all those who helped, saying “brilliant collaboration” (Covenant Farm, 2015). They express gratitude for the work being done by their employees and interns. On April 1, the farm posted an image to their timeline of a man watering greenhouse soil and captioned the photograph: “Jedi watering new planting in the greenhouse. Gratitude” (Covenant Farm, 2015). On March 29, the farm posted a thank you to an employee at Pentafolio, a web design company, for the designs she had created for the business. Covenant
Farm wrote: “Such a beautiful collaboration. Thank you!” (Covenant Farm, 2015). Covenant Farm also networks with other small-scale, local businesses. They post about local farms or businesses whose values they share. On May 4, 2015, they posted about Garden Path Homemade Soap and encouraged visitors and members to visit their stall at the Vankleek Farmers’ Market; refer to Appendix L.6. In 2015, Covenant Farm partnered with a variety of farms in order to provide a greater range of products to their members (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, 2015). Therefore, Covenant Farm creates communities among workers and businesses, as well as among consumers.

Covenant Farm extends the concept of community to include the natural world. The farmers acknowledge the role nature plays in agricultural provision. They claim farming requires collaboration between humans and nature. Covenant Farm states that farming occurs through “contributions of the soil with its plethora of micro-organisms and insects... animals who provide compost, [and] humans who provide great care from seed to harvest and beyond” (CSA Winter Shares, Why we got into farming, para. 5). They position themselves as working in partnership, not just with their members, but with nature as well, stating: “We see ourselves as respectful collaborators; participants in the ecosystem” (Ibid).

Health and Freshness

Covenant Farm frequently describes their products as fresh, using the term 13 times in their 2015 winter email update (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, 2015). They claim their farm is a “source for delicious, wholesome, local food” and their foods are a “fresh source of nutrients” (para.1; Why we got into farming, para. 6). On their webpage, they state that their farm has “set the standard for the highest quality fruits and vegetables” (Covenant Farm, Farm Heritage, 2014, para. 4). Therefore, they market their products as, not only alternative, but also healthier, fresher and of better quality than conventional food.
The farmers promote directness as a key feature of their CSA. Covenant attempts to develop direct and open communication with their members and consumers. In their 2015 winter update, the Covenant farmers introduced themselves by name, saying: “we, Joël Béland and Caroline Lévesque, are the collaborators behind the current expression of Covenant Farm” (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, Why we got into farming, 2015, para. 1). The farmers often posts on their blog and Facebook page about work being done on the farm and include the farmer's names and pictures. Caroline posts photographs of herself on the farm to Facebook and in email updates; refer to Appendix L.7.

Covenant Farm also explains changes in their production practices on their Facebook page. On November 23, the farm posted a note about their hens, explaining that they have begun experimenting with their living conditions. They write:

We are experimenting with keeping the chickens in the large greenhouse this winter. We hope to 1. build the soil with their manure and processing the post-harvest compost that the chickens will break down with scratching and pecking (they love fresh greens from our sprout and microgreen production) 2. give them a more "natural" experience during the winter months with more light and earth 3. clean up the greenhouse at the same time and break down the dead plants; refer to Appendix L.8.

This post indicates that the farmers feel compelled to explain and justify their production practices to members and consumers, taking their part in the 'shared responsibility' for the farm seriously. Likewise, Covenant Farm also provides detailed email updates to members in which they explain and justify their farming approach and practices.

Covenant Farm recognizes the depth of connection between consumers and their food. They argue that where food is produced and in what way, affects the consumers of that food, stating: “We understand that the food we provide to you becomes part of your body, part of your being, and gives you a very real, living experience” (Covenant Farm, CSA Winter Shares, Why
we got into farming, 2015, para. 5). Therefore, the farmers feel compelled to communicate with consumers about their food and production practices.

Discussion of Covenant Farm’s Marketing Strategy

Covenant Farm’s marketing materials reflect a seemingly genuine desire to realize CSA and local food values of alternativeness, healthfulness, respect for and collaboration with the natural environment, community development, and direct relationships. Their simple, reusable packaging reinforces the authenticity of their environmental claims. The farm provides frequent updates, encourages member participation, and hosts events, reflecting a desire to truly develop personal and community relationships. Therefore, Covenant Farm has made genuine attempts to realize the goals and values they express through marketing.

7.4 Communication and Relationship with the State: The Role of Small-Scale Egg Farmers in the Structure of the Ontario Egg Industry

7.4.1 The Egg Industry

Covenant Farm does not interact with EFO because they have fewer than 100 birds and therefore do not own quota. They do not have a relationship with the CFIA either, since they do not operate a grading plant. The Covenant farmer indicates that they purposefully avoid interacting with regulatory bodies, stating they “try to stay below the radar.” However, the farm still operates within the Ontario egg industry and is affected by farm regulations, egg prices and supply management.

The Covenant farmer acknowledges both positive and negative aspects of the supply management system. She argues, similarly to other producers in this study, that supply
management stabilizes prices and provides income security to farmers. She states: “Supply management, on one hand, ensures that the farmer is going to get a good price and a stable price and that there's never going to be an overproduction. They're stabilizing the price and the farmer has more security as far as their income is concerned. That's the positive.” However, she argues that the system has its drawbacks, claiming that the supply-managed Ontario egg industry is exclusive and controlling. In particular, she argues that the system makes it difficult for new farmers to break into the industry or for small producers to grow their production. She states: “It’s a mafia. Especially the quotas and buying the quotas and getting into it and who's allowed to produce, and who's not allowed to produce and how big or small, all of those things I find disconcerting.” She expresses concern over the power of the egg board – run by established egg producers – to determine who can engage in egg production and whether and how quickly farms can expand. She states that the egg board is “doing good work for their clients and protecting the market for large-scale producers.” However the current system poses difficulties for small-scale producers. The Covenant farmer believes that the current system of egg production in Ontario must be reformed because “small-scale diversified organic farming is better suited to feeding the world.”

7.4.2 Organic Standards

Covenant Farm is certified organic through Ecocert. However, while the farm is certified, their eggs are not. Organic regulations in Canada require chickens to be under organic management from the moment they hatch (Organic Production Systems, 2006, 6.2.2.). Covenant Farm buys ready-to-lay hens, since they do not have the capacity to raise pullets, and the hens they receive have been raised conventionally for the first 19 weeks of their lives. Therefore, Covenant eggs cannot be certified organic, though their hens eat organic feed and meet all other requirements for organic certification.
7.4.3 Conventional Agri-Food Systems and Vision for Alternative Production

The Covenant farmer argues that the current system of food production and distribution must be abandoned, not simply reformed, because it is based on a flawed philosophy. She critiques conventional producers as anthropocentric in their approach to farming and argues that the system as a whole denies the true inherent value of nature, farming and food.

The Covenant farmer further argues that conventional agri-food systems are unnecessarily complex. She argues that successful alternative systems must return to the basics and simplify trade. She claims: “It's a simple calculation, how many broccoli does this region eat? How many broccoli can we produce? How many farms would we need to produce that much broccoli? It's a simple calculation, as far as I'm concerned... in the end, why are we shipping things from everywhere else when we can grow this stuff here?” Therefore, she believes the current global agri-food system is illogical and its complexity has distanced people from their food unnecessarily.

The Covenant farmer argues that the global agri-food system is also incredibly fragile. She states: “…if you really look into it, it's very fragile, this whole system…it's not sustainable but it's also fragile, it could break really easily, you have one climate incident or one political incident.” She cites political tensions between Russia and the European Union as evidence. Beginning in 2014, the EU has applied various sanctions on Russia in response to their attacks on the Ukraine (European Union Newsroom, 2015). Russia has responded with a total ban on food imports from the EU, the United States, Canada, Norway and Australia (BBC News, 2014). The Covenant farmer argues that the situation highlights the fragility of the current globalized agri-food system. She claims that both Russia and the EU have suffered because the co-dependence of their economies has made it difficult to provide the goods and services their
people need independently. She says of the situation: “Russia had to scramble to get what they need into their country because the whole system is dependent on everywhere else...And then the European producers are struggling because they can't sell their food.” She therefore argues that the current globalized agri-food system has created dependencies among countries that rely on imported food to feed their populations and exports to keep their economy healthy. Political or climate conditions that impede imports and exports can disrupt the system and leave participating nations in vulnerable positions.

The Covenant farmer acknowledges that change will be extremely difficult to enact. She claims that the economy now has power over individuals and nations. She states: “We've invested in this system, we've invested all of this and the economy is this big monster that we have no power over anymore, that's controlling us and directing us.” Dependencies have developed at each level of the global economy. Individuals outsource their needs, paying for goods and services rather than accessing them themselves, while nations likewise rely on trading partners to source the goods and resources they require. The Covenant farmer believes that because we rely on the market economy to access the goods we need, as a society we have lost the knowledge and skills required to access these goods directly. She states: “We can wear our nice clothes and drive around in cars and eat pineapple, but the fact is that pineapple doesn't grow here and if you take away those things you'd still have to figure something out.” As a result, it is near impossible to extract ourselves from the economy, and instead we allow it to determine our ability to work and access our needs.

The Covenant farmer positions her farm, and all CSAs, in defiance of the conventional agri-food system. She describes Community Supported Agriculture as a “grassroots, citizen movement” and argues that CSAs are part of a solution to the conventional agricultural system, which she describes as “really ridiculous.” She argues that their farm opposes conventional
systems but recognizes that the effect is limited because a whole system change is needed, a shift in our philosophy of food and the economy.

The Covenant farmer’s critique of the globalized agrifood system also lends support to the system of supply management. Supply management attempts to meet local demand with local supply, just as she suggested, through a ‘simple calculation’ of how much of a commodity a region will consume balanced with how much can be produced. Though she critiques the egg industry’s supply management system as being exclusive and controlling, she also describes the system as a solution to conventional production and distribution systems.

7.5 Discussion

7.5.1 Alternative Philosophy: Ecocentrism

Covenant Farm is a small-scale CSA striving to realize values of alternativeness, environmental harmony, healthfulness, community and direct relationship. Farm operations are guided by an alternative philosophy of ecocentrism. Covenant farmers view themselves as operating within a natural system in which soil, plants, animals, farmers and consumers all play a role. Within this system, farmers must apply their work and inputs to natural processes in order to produce enough of the right kinds of food to nourish themselves and their community.

Covenant Farm's practices are based on the notion that farmers should work within 'natural ways of being' in order to sustainably produce food. Covenant farm argues that hens require natural conditions, including space to explore, freedom to form social groups, and safe havens, in order to ensure their well-being. They provide conditions that allow their animals to experience natural ways of being and as a result have been able to avoid some of the problems faced by conventional egg farmers, such as inter-hen fighting and bullying. In particular,
Covenant Farm views the pecking order as a natural social interaction and strives to keep their hens in conditions that encourage only healthy interactions.

Covenant Farm acknowledges the inherent value of their animals. They express, both in interviews and online materials, that their hens' happiness and well-being has value in and of itself, apart from monetary measurement. Therefore, they value their animals from an ecocentric perspective, inherently, rather than anthropocentrically, for their use value. Covenant Farm realizes their ecocentric values through the farm's practices. Hens are kept free range, provided with shelter and nests, and allowed to roam throughout the farm with no restrictions, despite the practical difficulties their freedom sometimes causes.

Covenant Farm's ecocentric perspective extends to their concept of community. The farmers view themselves as members of the natural environment and seek to engage CSA members and consumers in this extended community as well. They promote the ideal of collaboration versus competition, arguing that in a sustainable alternative food system farmers should collaborate with nature, consumers, and other farmers in order to accomplish their goals. Covenant Farm attempts to collaborate with both businesses and consumers. They post about other small local businesses online, show gratitude for the work they hire others to do, host events on the farm and encourage member participation.

Covenant farmers argue that farming plays an important role in human survival, and should not simply be viewed as a profession, or as a means to make money. They view farming from a natural, ecocentric perspective, rather than in economic terms. They state: “On a practical level, humans, as a species among so many on this planet, have basic needs...we came to farming from a very practical place; to provide nourishment” (Covenant Farm, Winter Shares, 2015, Why we got into farming, para. 3). Therefore, to Covenant farmers, farming has a natural process and a natural purpose.
Covenant Farm rejects the notion that a farmer can be in complete control when operating within the natural order, thereby rejecting the widely held assumption that humans are able to, and must, control nature. Instead, they respect nature and view their work as collaboration. They explain:

The daily trajectory of the sun, the meandering clouds, the waxing and waning of the moonlight, the dance of the stars across the night sky, the diversity of birdsongs throughout the seasons, the presence of trees, the wind, the rain, the soil, the pollinators. All of these elements make up a constellation of influences that are unique to each garden. The farmer has a special place in this constellation, influencing with her dreams, her intentions and her actions (para. 4).

Therefore, Covenant Farm recognizes that farmers play an important role, but are not solely responsible for food production. Furthermore, they acknowledge that living beings, including plants, animals and humans, are influenced by their surroundings. As such, they express a perspective of place in which all the characteristics of a place, including the natural environment, impress upon the living things in that space. They state: “Each day, from the germinating seed to compost heap, the plant, its roots, leaves, flowers and fruit, ‘experiences’ its surroundings” (Ibid). As a result, they argue that the food we eat carries with it those experiences of place, which are then impressed upon the consumer. They state: “The food we grow contains all the magic and wonder of the cosmos, starting with our immediate ecosystem” (para. 5). Covenant Farm argues that food connects us to place, and to the natural environment on a very practical level. Food is influenced by the natural environment, and the ecosystem in which it is grown. When a person experiences that food and it becomes a part of their body, those influences also impress upon them. Covenant Farm explains: “The food we provide to you becomes part of your body, part of your being, and gives you a very real, living experience” (Ibid). Therefore, Covenant Farm expresses a wide-lensed, ecocentric view of the world and of farming that reveals deep connections between food, its consumer, and the natural environment.
7.5.2 Living Directly: Direct Exchange vs. Direct Relationships

Covenant Farm strives to develop direct relationships between farmers and consumers, consumers and their food, and all people and nature. They argue that producers and consumers have become disconnected from each other, and from the food they share. The Covenant farmer explains that consumers have become accustomed to outsourcing their needs. She states:

I think that we outsource everything, we're not living directly right? What are the needs of our bodies? Our bodies need to eat, they need food, they need a place to be, a place to sleep and be warm, we need community and human contact and nature contact. We need those things. We don't go directly to get those things, we make a big detour. We go and work really hard to get money so that we can buy access to those things.

When people outsource their needs they disconnect themselves from the natural environment, from the goods they use, such as food, and from the people who produce those goods. These disconnects create barriers to proper valuation. Producers and consumers relate to each other and to their goods primarily through monetary exchange. As a result, they are only able to value goods and relationships monetarily, not for the inherent value they hold. Since consumers do not produce their own food, they are unable to value it for the work required to produce it, or for the experience of growing and harvesting.

Eating and consuming locally can help bridge disconnections between consumers and producers, as well as consumers and the natural environment. The Covenant farmer argues:

... if you're eating locally, the soil in that place, the way the sun shines, the rain falls, the birds that are singing, the trees, the life that is happening around, whether it's your backyard or your porch, or a field, a farmer's field, the life that's happening around is influencing that plant and that food that's coming from it and when you eat that you're bringing the ecosystem into your body and you're having an experience, a direct experience, and a direct relationship.

Covenant Farm's theory of place positions the consumer to connect with the place, and the natural environment where their food was grown. However, Covenant Farm also acknowledges the limitations of these connections.
Covenant Farm problematizes the concept of direct exchange. The Covenant farmer argues, similarly to Mount (2012) and Hinrichs (2003), that despite their social interaction with members, they fail to achieve local food ideals of trust and connection through direct exchange. Just as Nost found in his 2014 study of CSAs, the Covenant farmer argues that members avoid taking on full responsibility for or fully engaging with the farm. Therefore, their consumers fail to develop actual trust in the farm, which would require a thickly developed relationship. The limited interaction between Covenant farmers and their members, through pickups and deliveries, and their activity online, is only enough to create assumed trust. The Covenant farmer states about their members: “It's all about trust, even though the idea about [the CSA] may be untrue.” Therefore, direct exchange is symbolic for Covenant Farm members, enabling them to assume trust in the farm without having to directly engage with the farmers or in the farming process.

Covenant Farm champions the notion of direct relationship, as opposed to direct exchange. The Covenant farmer argues that instead of accessing the things they require through monetary exchange, consumers ought to strive to build direct connections to the goods they need, such as food. Covenant Farm strives to develop direct relationships, encouraging members to visit and participate in the farm. However, few CSA members make the commitment to visit the farm or participate in farming operations. The Covenant farmer argues that their members’ lack of commitment is due to their failure to properly value or invest in relationships with goods, people and nature. Though the consumer-producer relationship is reworked in the CSA model, it remains based upon monetary exchange. The Covenant farmer states: “We're trying to work to create the direct link [to basic needs], but we're still monetizing...[people] don't have the understanding of what goes into that [living directly]. We don't understand what it takes.”

The Covenant farmer argues that monetary valuation coupled with a societal reliance on
outsourcing our needs has led to failure in alternative food systems. In respect to Covenant Farm, she claims that most members are unable to accept responsibility for the farm because they are unable to grasp its true value. She states: “People are like 'oh your prices' but what is it worth to you? What are you comparing it to?” She explains that it is not just the food that people are buying, but also the value of that food, of the way it was farmed and the people that put their labour into it. People's inability to correctly value farming and food prevents them from committing to true alternative and direct living. She states: “[alternative producers are] still feeding people their organic food so that they can be better at rushing around and being stressed out and being part of the rat race... we're monetizing the soil so that we can feed people so that they can be better at the rat race you know?” Therefore, she believes that changing where people shop will not produce a deep enough change to impact the agro-economy.

Her arguments align with structural geographers who likewise believe that a widespread philosophical and structural change is required to transform the agricultural system (Hudson and Hudson, 2003; Guthman, 2008; Sonnino, 2013). The Covenant farmer argues that the concept of 'voting with your dollar' is flawed because it still uses the 'dollar' as the definition of value. Instead, she argues that in order to change the agro-economy we must transform our entire way of life. She acknowledges that, given our current mindset and lifestyle, the current agri-food system makes sense. She states: “We need a clear vision of how we want to live and what we really want in life and what is the experience that we want to have as a human on this planet earth.” She argues that people must reflect on their lives, slow down and take time to interact with the places they are in, in order to find true value their experiences, relationships and the goods they consume.

7.5.3 Conclusion

Covenant Farm's ecocentric philosophy and true commitment to the ideal of living directly
distinguishes their farm as truly alternative. Their practices, approach and goals differ dramatically from the other producers in this study. Contrast between the farms indicates a difference between alternative production and the production of alternative products. Both Burnbrae Farms and Reinink Family Farm produce alternative products, however, they operate within a conventional system of production and distribution that creates relationships based on monetary valuation and exchange. Burnbrae Farms and Reinink use similar discourse to Covenant Farm, particularly local discourse of direct exchange. However, Covenant Farm sets themselves apart in their philosophy and approach. The farm has had limited success in realizing their goal of direct relationship with consumers, and between consumers and nature. However, their practices, marketing, and interview statements all indicate a genuine commitment to ecocentric farming and direct living, distinguishing their farm as authentically alternative.
Chapter 8

Canadian and Ontario Egg Industry Structure and Policies: Defining the Role of the State in Consumer-Producer Relations

8.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the Ontario egg industry's structure and policies. It describes the policy context of egg production by offering a detailed scan of the complex policy environment affecting egg producers. It also analyzes the role of the state in producing scales of production and dictating inter-scalar relationships. It then assesses the supply management system as a mechanism through which consumer-producer relationships occur, and explores the system's counter-hegemonic potential. In short, this chapter seeks to understand the egg industry, and its various scales of operation, from the perspective of the state, and to highlight the role of the state in relationships among scales and industry players.

8.1 Overview of the Governing Structure of the Canadian Egg Industry

8.1.1 Supply Management

Canada has over 1000 egg farmers, all governed by strict regulations and protected through a supply management system (EFC, Egg farming, para. 1). Supply management is a controlled production and marketing system, governed by national and provincial marketing boards. Marketing boards are producer organizations granted legislative power by federal and provincial governments in order to regulate the marketing and production of a specific commodity, or group of commodities; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure.
The Canadian government operates supply-managed markets for five commodities: eggs, turkey, dairy, chicken, and hatching eggs, under which 16,000 Canadian farms are operated (AAFC, 2015, Supply Management 101, What is supply management, para.1-2).

Supply management systems are based on three pillars of operation: production planning, import control, and producer pricing (AAFC, 2015, Supply Management 101, How does supply management work). Production planning balances the level of production of a commodity with market demand, in order to prevent overproduction or underproduction (para. 1). Canada's egg industry functions through a quota system that allocates a percentage of annual production to each producer. National marketing boards determine the level of production required to match supply with demand and allocate a percentage of national quota to each province. Provincial marketing boards enforce commodity control through the distribution of quota to individual producers (Ibid).

Proper production planning requires import control. National marketing boards monitor and control imports in order to accurately balance supply with demand (para. 3). Canada enforces Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs) for egg importation, which permits a predetermined and agreed to volume of imports into the country. Predictable imports are necessary for marketing boards to determine domestic supply requirements (Ibid).

Supply management also controls producer pricing. National and provincial marketing boards jointly determine a price level that will provide producers with a return on their labour and investments (para. 2). Grading plants purchase eggs from primary producers at regulated prices. Graders and retailers then decide independently how to price products to consumers (OMAFRA, 2015, Supply Management Systems, Eggs, para. 3).
Supply management regulates not only production, but also commodity marketing. The system enables producers of a commodity to collectively market their product through national and provincial marketing boards (para. 2).

8.1.2 National Regulation of the Canadian Egg Industry

The national, supply-managed Canadian egg industry is regulated through a variety of government bodies and legislation; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure. At the broadest level, the industry is regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food (AAFC), a department of the government of Canada with responsibilities “through all phases of producing, processing and marketing farm, food and bio-based products;” refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure (AAFC, 2015, What we do, Our responsibilities, para. 1). Agriculture is a shared jurisdiction in Canada, therefore the Department works with provincial and territorial agricultural departments to develop and deliver policies and programs. The Department is responsible for a number of organizations governing Canada's supply management systems, including the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Farm Products Council of Canada (AAFC, 2015, Minister, para. 4).

The Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal

The Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal hears appeals to orders, directions, decisions, policies and regulations made by a marketing board or a director (OMAFRA, 2015, The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, The Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal, para. 1). Aggrieved persons must first ask the marketing board for a hearing and may only appeal to the Tribunal if the issue cannot be resolved with the marketing board itself.
The Canadian Food Inspection Agency

The CFIA is a federal agency concerned with health and safety in agri-food industries. The organization was established in 1997 and operates under the authority of both the AAFC and Health Canada (AAFC, 2015, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food). The CFIA is responsible for all food-related provisions of Health Canada’s Food and Drug Regulations, under the Food and Drug Act.

The Food and Drug Regulations prescribe standards for the composition, strength, and quality of food and drugs, and lay out the rights and responsibilities of food and drug inspectors; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure (Food and Drug Regulations, CRC, c. 870). The regulations also regulate nutritional labelling and health claims made by food producers and retailers. Egg product provisions list the nutritional requirements for egg products, prohibit the sale of unsafe products, and require official methods of ensuring eggs are free from bacteria and salmonella (B.22.032). Additionally, the regulations specify allowable and prohibited packaging materials (B.23.001).

The CFIA additionally regulates egg production through the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and the Canada Agricultural Products (CAP) Act; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure. Provisions of the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act enforced by the CFIA include labelling, format, and information requirements for food product labels (Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations, C.R.C., c. 417). The CFIA enforces food provisions of the CAP Act, including egg regulations that regulate the grading, packing, marking, inspection and international and interprovincial trade in eggs (Egg Regulations, CRC, c. 284). The regulations impose registration requirements for egg grading stations and give the CFIA power to reject, suspend or cancel registration when grading stations fail to meet CAP requirements (s. 7). The regulations dictate all aspects of egg grading station
operations, including construction, equipment, egg handling, packaging and labelling (CFIA, 2012, Egg Grading, What is the process for getting registered, para. 1).

**The Farm Products Council of Canada**

The Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC) is a federal institution and part of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada portfolio (AAFC, 2015, Minister, para. 4). The FPCC provides expertise and supervision for national marketing agencies (FPCC, 2015, National Agencies). The Council must approve agency orders and regulations, including levy and quota amendments made throughout the year. FPCC is a source of expertise for the Canadian government and advises the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food on all aspects of marketing agencies (para. 1). The Council also supervises the operations of marketing agencies to ensure they accomplish their aims and hears complaints about agency decisions (para. 2, FPCC, 2015, Public Hearings, para. 1).

The FPCC was established by the Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA), and is responsible for its administration and enforcement; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure (Government of Canada, 2014, Farm Products Council of Canada, para. 1). The Council also enforces the Agricultural Products Marketing Act (APMA) and is responsible for approving all regulations and amendments made by national marketing agencies under the FPAA and APMA (Ibid).

**8.1.3 Provincial Regulation of the Ontario Egg Industry**

At the broadest level, the Ontario egg industry is regulated by the Provincial Cabinet. The Cabinet, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, is responsible for creating or dissolving provincial marketing boards and for defining regulated commodities; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure (OMAFRA, 2015, The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, Responsibilities of the Major Participants, para.
1). Within the provincial government, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is responsible for agricultural marketing boards; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure (OMAFRA, 2015, Results Based Plan, para. 1). OMAFRA established the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission in order to administer legislation and provide leadership and education programs to Ontario marketing boards (OMAFRA, 2015, The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, para. 1).

**Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission**

The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission (the Commission) is accountable for the conduct and impact of Ontario's regulated marketing system. It was established through provincial legislation as a supervisory commission in Ontario's regulated marketing system (Ibid). The Commission is empowered by, and tasked with administering, the Milk Act (MA), which applies to Ontario's dairy industry, and the Food Products Marketing Act (FPMA), which applies to all other farm commodities produced in Ontario; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure (OMAFRA, The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, Overview of the Regulated Marketing System, para. 1).

The FPMA and MA give authority to the Commission to control and regulate the production and marketing of farm products and to settle disputes as they arise. The Acts appoint certain powers to the Commission that can be either delegated to marketing boards or exercised directly (OMAFRA, 2015, The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, para. 3). For example, the FPMA gives the Commission the authority to license producers, but the Commission may also delegate this power to marketing boards. The FPMA and MA also give powers to the Commission that it cannot directly exercise, but must delegate to marketing boards, such as the authority to set prices and establish quota.
Finally, certain powers can be exercised by the Commission only, including the authority to order negotiated agreements into force, to make them binding on both producers and consumers of a commodity. Marketing boards can also request specific powers from the Commission (para. 4). The Commission will then decide which authorities to include in marketing regulations, after considering why the authorities are needed, and for what purpose they will be utilized. The Commission has the authority to limit or revoke any powers given to marketing boards (para. 5).

8.1.4 Supply Management Egg Marketing Boards

Egg producers and graders are most directly regulated by their national and provincial marketing boards, Egg Farmers of Canada and Egg Farmers of Ontario. Marketing boards are used in many Canadian markets to promote a shared commodity, protect farmers' interests, negotiate price, and facilitate international trade. However, marketing boards play a more extensive role in supply-managed industries. Only supply management marketing boards possess the power to control supply, prices and imports.

Supply management marketing boards are established under the Canadian Dairy Commission Act for dairy, and the FPMA, for eggs, turkey, poultry and hatching eggs (Historica Canada, n.d., Provincial Marketing Acts, para. 1). These acts permit the formation of national marketing boards that work in conjunction with provincial marketing boards to manage domestic supply and price. Supply management marketing boards are additionally empowered by two federal government decisions. First, Parliament exempts the agencies from The Competition Act, which forbids price fixing and coordinated supply restriction. Second, the federal government applies very high tariffs to supply-managed commodities imported from other countries (Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 2012, p. 8).
Egg Farmers of Canada

Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) is the national supply management marketing board for the Canadian egg industry. The Canadian Egg Marketing Agency (CEMA) was established by Parliamentary proclamation in 1972 (EFC, 2015, History). In 2008, CEMA announced a new corporate name, Egg Farmers of Canada, developed to “better reflect the organization and people they represent” (Ibid).

During its first few years of operation, CEMA primarily worked on national egg promotion efforts, developing the still famous slogan ‘Get Cracking’ in 1977. Marketing remains an important role for the agency. In 2015, EFC launched eggcentricTV, an app that publishes recipes and egg stories (Ibid). The agency also markets through websites, social media accounts, television ads and initiatives developed in partnership with charities and community organizations.

EFC develops policies and best practices for egg farming. In 1983, it introduced the Code of Farm Management Practice in an effort to bolster farm safety. In 2003, EFC established the national Animal Care Program aimed at improving farm animal welfare and helping egg farmers to operate according to Canadian animal welfare guidelines (Ibid).

EFC plays a vital role in Canada's supply-managed egg industry. The agency manages the national supply of eggs by estimating the needs of table and processing markets each year and establishing a corresponding national quota that respects Canada's international trade agreements. The agency implements annual national quota orders with FPCC approval and allocates the quota between provincial and territorial boards. Provincial and territorial boards then allot quotas to registered producers (OMAFRA, 2015, Supply Management Systems, Eggs, para. 1).
Each provincial and territorial egg board sets prices for producers within its jurisdiction, using EFC's cost-of-production formula (para. 2). Producers sell their eggs to grading stations at this price, who then sell to wholesalers, retailers, and institutional, industrial and food service clients at negotiated prices. When grading stations receive more eggs than they can sell in their market, they sell the excess to their provincial or territorial commodity board, which in turn sells to EFC (Ibid). EFC then sells these eggs to egg processors who process them into liquid, frozen or powdered form.

*Regulations Impacting or Enforced by Egg Farmers of Canada*

**Codes of Practice**

The Canadian agricultural sector utilizes Codes of Practice to manage the care and handling of farm animals (NFACC, 2015, Codes of Practice, para. 1). Codes are developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council, in collaboration with scientific committees and relevant stakeholders, and are subject to a public commentary period before being formally published (para. 1-3). After being published, the Codes are brought into effect by industry. The recommended Code of Practice for the Care of Pullets, Layers and Spent Fowl is enforced by EFC through a variety of regulations and programs.

Canada's Poultry and Layer Code of Practice is currently under revision. The process for updating the Code began in 2012 and was initiated by EFC with the support of the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council and the Pullet Growers of Canada (NFACC, 2015, Poultry Layers, Code Development Progress, para. 1). Priority issues for the update include feather pecking and cannibalism (Priority Welfare Issues List, para. 3). The Code Development Committee is looking for ways to reduce inter-hen fighting, taking into account environmental, genetic and nutritional factors, and considering the rearing environment, lighting, and beak
treatments as control measures. Housing is another priority issue. The Code Development Committee will report on issues with conventional, furnished and non-cage systems, and is tasked with answering the question: What is required for hens to be able to express natural behaviour? The Committee will provide updated recommendations on space allowance and group sizes for all housing systems (Ibid). The priority issues under review reflect consumer concerns for animal welfare (see Chapter 4). Review of the current Code of Practice in respect to these issues, indicates that producers take these concerns seriously and are working to make improvements in the industry.

EFC Animal Care Program

EFC administers a national Animal Care Program developed by industry stakeholders, including the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and the CFIA. The goals of the program are to ensure farmers follow the Code of Practice, ensure consistent delivery of animal care across the country, and continually improve the administration of animal care. Field inspectors inspect and rate egg farms yearly, using the criteria outlined in the Code of Practice (EFC, 2015, Animal Care, para. 1).

EFC Start Clean-Stay Clean Program

EFC administers a Start Clean-Stay Clean farm food safety program, with approval from the CFIA. The program tracks all regulated egg farms in Canada and functions by monitoring Critical Control Points, implementing best management practices, imposing *Salmonella enteritidis* testing, and requiring records of barn temperature, cleanliness, egg collection, and air quality. EFC inspects all egg farms annually as part of the Start Clean-Stay Clean program (EFC, 2015, Food Safety, Start Clean-Stay Clean, para. 1).
Egg Farmers of Ontario

Egg Farmers of Ontario (EFO) is the provincial egg marketing board in Ontario and plays a vital role in Canada's supply-managed egg industry. EFO regulates egg production and marketing in Ontario and allocates Ontario's share of the domestic egg supply to producers (OMAFRA, 2015, Eggs, para. 2). EFO also has the authority to set the prices paid to producers for eggs of different grade and size, based on EFC's cost-of-production equation.

EFO is delegated a variety of powers from the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission. The agency is authorized to require all persons engaged in producing or marketing eggs, chicks, hatching eggs or fowl, to register with the board (Eggs: Marketing, RRO 1990, Reg. 407, s. 4). It is also empowered to make orders and regulations with respect to eggs and hatching eggs (s. 5).

EFO works in partnership with EFC. The provincial board is required to collect levies and information on egg sales on behalf of EFC (Marketing Limitations, RRO 1990, Reg. 408, s. 10). The Commission also requires EFO to implement regulations made by EFC regarding quota and egg industry standards (s. 7).

Regulations Impacting or Enforced by Egg Farmers of Ontario

Egg Quota Policy

EFO’s Egg Quota policy regulates the egg quota system in Ontario. It forms the basis through which EFO allocates quota to Ontario producers and dictates the process for transferring or amalgamating quotas. The policy provides quality, housing and food safety standards with which quota owners must comply, including enforcement of EFCs Start-Clean-Stay-Clean program (EFO, 2014, Egg Farmers of Ontario Policies, Programs and Procedures, Section 3).
New Entrant Policy

The new entrant policy was developed in 2011 to assist individuals entering the Ontario egg industry. The policy creates a new entrant quota loan pool through which up to 10,000 units of egg quota are loaned per year to new entrants. Units are loaned to the successful applicants over a 20-year period based on a 1:2 ratio, where two birds are loaned for every one that is bought. Therefore, applicants are still required to purchase quota, but can use loans to increase their flock size substantially (EFO, 2014, Egg Farmers of Ontario Policies, Programs and Procedures, Section 6, p. 9).

The New Entrant policy represents an attempt by the EFO to rectify some common complaints about supply management and the quota system, particularly, that the high price of quota is prohibitive for new entrants and small-scale producers looking to expand their flock. The policy also normalizes the hegemony of large-scale production by enabling new, small producers to increase their scale of production.

Home Week Policy

The Home Week Policy requires producers to dispose of their flocks after one year of laying (p. 21). The policy is a response to consumer pressure to allow greater US egg imports, due to quality concerns in the Canadian industry. EFO responded by strengthening quality regulations. The policy explains why both Burnbrae Farms and Reinink Family Farm sell their flocks yearly. The policy also explains why Covenant Farm is the only farm in this study to keep their flocks in production longer than a year, as they do not own quota and therefore are not subject to EFO policies.

Scientific research indicates that egg quality does decrease with hen age (Tekerli and Bozkurt, 2009; Yilmaz and Bozkurt, 2009; Rodriguez-Navarro et al., 2002). Studies have found
eggs produced from older hens spoil more quickly, have reduced albumen quality, are larger, and have thinner shells (Tekerli and Bozkurt, 2009, p. 522; Yilmaz and Bozkurt, 2009, p. 466-467). The Burnbrae executive argues that reductions in shell strength are the most important factor determining the length of a flock’s production period. As hens age, their eggs grow larger but their shell density remains the same and is simply spread across a larger distance (Yilmaz and Bozkurt, 2009, p. 467). Therefore, eggs become more fragile, posing difficulties for producers that ship their product long distances and who see an increase in broken and cracked eggs after a flock’s first year in production. These quality concerns have less of an impact on small-scale farmers who sell their product locally. Therefore, Covenant Farm is able to keep their hens in production twice the length of time as Burnbrae and Reinink, with fewer quality concerns and no regulatory barriers.

**Market Growth Allowance Program**

The program seeks to grow the egg market by implementing additional market growth allowance (MGA) quota (p. 22). MGA is set at 3% of the National Production Allowance. The program issues birds on a pro rata basis, granting registered Ontario producers an additional 3% increase in their quota. The program requires that producers continue to follow housing density regulations. Therefore, producers may be required to expand their hen housing in order to accommodate their increase in quota. The policy demonstrates how industry growth can be achieved in highly regulated, supply-managed systems.

**8.2 The Canadian Egg Industry in the World: Global Relations**

Canada’s five supply-managed industries are known informally as the Supply Managed Five (SM5) (EFC, 2015, Trade Positions, para. 1). The SM5 share common interests and have
developed a unified position on agriculture in response to international trade and agriculture negotiations. Canada currently faces pressure to reduce barriers to its protected markets, which could undermine the nation’s ability to operate supply management effectively (EFC, 2015, Trade Agreements). Such measures have been actively opposed by the SM5.

8.2.1 International Connections

The World Trade Organization

The Canadian egg industry's import and export operations are regulated by the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Ibid). The WTO is a global, international organization that fosters trade among nations, and operates and enforces a system of trade rules. It provides a forum for member governments to negotiate trade agreements and settle trade disputes. Canada has been a member since January 1, 1995 (WTO, 2015, What is the WTO? para. 1).

The WTO is based on a set of agreements, negotiated by member countries, which set the ground rules for international trade (WTO, 2015, What we do, para. 1). WTO agreements cover goods, services and intellectual property (Trade Negotiations, para. 1). Countries are required to notify the WTO about changes in law that will affect international trade (Implementation and Monitoring, para. 1). The WTO Secretariat also makes regular reports on countries' trade policies.

The WTO is founded on principles of economic liberalization and aims to “reduce obstacles to international trade” (WTO, 2015, What is the WTO? para. 4). WTO agreements spell out principles for open commerce, and include commitments made by individual countries to lower customs tariffs and open markets. Hartwick and Peet (2003) argue that the WTO’s main purpose is to encourage and enforce trade liberalization, the removal of governmental restrictions on the movement of goods and services. Therefore, the WTO contributes to the neoliberal
Canada has liberalized its supply-managed agricultural industries in response to WTO trade negotiations. Canada participated in the WTO's Uruguay Round of trade negotiations from 1986 to 1994. The agreements banned import quotas and provided exporters with greater access to Canada's protected markets. Previously, Canada had relied on import quotas to control imports of supply-managed commodities (Barichello et al., 2009, p. 204).

Canada implemented tariff rate quotas to replace its former import quota regime in response to the Uruguay Agreement. In accordance with WTO agreements, Canada allows a minimum quantity of eggs and egg products to enter the country at a minimal or zero tariff (EFC, 2015, Trade Agreements, Canada’s Egg Industry and the World Trade Organization para. 1). Canada then enforces over-quota tariffs and customs duties that discourage imports beyond negotiated levels. TRQs have been equally as effective as import quotas at controlling imports. Over quota rates range between 155 and 299 percent, and are high enough to prohibit imports above the minimum access amounts (Barichello et al., 2009, p. 204). Imports consistently account for approximately 5% of domestic egg consumption (EFC, 2015, Trade Agreements, Canada’s Egg Industry and the World Trade Organization para. 1).

Barichello et al. (2009) argue that the Uruguay Round Agreement had little immediate impact but lay the groundwork for future trade liberalization of Canadian agricultural markets (p. 204). Canada is currently engaged in the WTO’s Doha Development Round of negotiations, which seeks further reductions in import protections.

**Canadian Federation of Agriculture and World Farmers’ Organization**

EFC is a member of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, a coalition of agricultural regulatory bodies (EFC, 2015, International Activities, World Farmers’ Organization, para. 1). The CFA was
formed in 1935 to strengthen the agricultural sector and create a unified voice for agricultural industries in Canada (Canadian Federation of Agriculture, 2015).

As a member of the CFA, EFC is involved with the World Farmers' Organization (WFO) (EFC, 2015, International Activities, World Farmers’ Organization, para. 1). The WFO brings together agricultural producer organizations from around the world to create policies and advocate on behalf of farmers worldwide. The WFO has recognized supply management as a legitimate domestic policy measure and an important tool to ensure industry stability. In its 2013 meetings in Japan, the WFO passed a policy on trade which declared that “trade rules should permit domestic policy measures which promote stability of supplies such as safety nets, orderly marketing and supply management” (EFC, 2015, International Activities, World Farmers’ Organization, para. 1). Therefore, Canada has garnered support for its supply-managed industries among the international agricultural community despite the WTO’s neoliberal pursuits.

8.2.1 International Trade Agreements and Negotiations

A number of current international trade negotiations and agreements hold major implications for the Canadian egg industry, Canada’s food supply, and the future of Canadian egg farms. Egg Farmers of Canada monitors trade negotiations that may impact Canada's agricultural trade policies. The following section provides an overview of international negotiations and agreements over which EFC has expressed concern (EFC, 2015, Trade Agreements).

*The Doha Development Agenda*

The latest round of negotiations among WTO members, the Doha Development Agenda, began in 2001 (Barichello et al., 2009, p. 204). The Doha Round will set the rules for international trade in agricultural products for at least 15 years following completion of the agreement. The negotiations aim to reform the international trading system through the introduction of lower
trade barriers, including increases to the minimum market access levels, and reduction of over-quota tariffs (WTO, 2015, The Doha Round, para. 1).

Canada's SM5 industries have asserted the position that over-quota tariffs should be maintained at current levels and increases in minimum access commitments should be minimal (EFC, 2015, Trade Agreements, Canada’s Egg Industry and the World Trade Organization para. 3). Though talks have been stalled since 2008, the EFC expects Doha Round negotiations to resume and the starting point of agricultural negotiation to be the reduction of over-quota tariffs and increases in minimum market access. EFC estimates that the result for the Canadian egg industry would be a 23% reduction in over-quota tariffs, a position that the agency declares “is simply untenable” (Ibid).

Barichello et al. (2009) explore the implications for Canada’s supply-managed sectors of proposed Doha provisions regarding export competition, domestic support, and market access, were they to be accepted (p. 204). The authors estimate that the trade policy changes mandated by the DDA will be small enough that supply-managed industries will be able to accommodate them with limited changes to their current operations. However, they contend that major over-quota tariff cuts will soon be required, and argue that to avoid major problems in the future, Canada must take proactive steps to slowly phase in a more liberal trade regime (p. 205).

**Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement**

The Canada and European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade agreement regulates all aspects of Canada’s trading relationship with the EU, including trade in goods and services, investments and government procurement (Global Affairs Canada, 2015, CETA, para. 1). The agreement is pending approval in Canada and the EU before being implemented (para. 2). CETA will increase EU access to the Canadian dairy market by phasing out the current milk protein
No additional access will be provided to any other Canadian supply-managed products. The federal government has promised to monitor CETA’s impact on supply-managed industries and provide compensation if necessary (Ibid). However, EFC has expressed concern that allowing increased access to Canada's protected, supply-managed dairy market has set a precedent that could lead to the removal of trade barriers in Canada's other protected markets (EFC, Trade Agreements, Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement, para. 1).

Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a trade pact among 12 countries and is the largest and most comprehensive trade agreement in the world (Global Affairs Canada, 2015, Trans-Pacific Partnership, para. 1). TPP negotiations were concluded in October 2015. The agreement will create a free trade zone among 12 nations around the Pacific: Canada, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States of America, and Vietnam (Ibid).

TPP will secure new export opportunities for Canadian dairy, poultry and eggs, including increased duty-free access to the United States and other TPP partners (Global Affairs Canada, 2015, Advantages of the Trans-Pacific Partnership in Ontario, para. 1). Canada has offered only limited new access to supply-managed products that will be granted through additional quotas implemented over five years. Increased access amounts to a small fraction of Canada's current annual production, and most heavily affects milk producers. Shares in imports will be increased 3.25% for dairy, 2.3% for eggs, 2.1% for chicken, 2% for turkey and 1.5% for broiler hatching eggs (Protecting and Preserving Canada’s Supply Management System, para. 8).

The TPP agreement was welcomed by most of Canada’s agricultural sector, including substances tariff (Global Affairs Canada, 2015, CETA: Technical Summary, Agricultural Goods).
pork and beef producers, who expect to see greater demand for their goods overseas (Global Affairs Canada, 2015, Advantages of the Trans-Pacific Partnership in Ontario, para. 1). According to the federal government, the deal will deepen Canada's trade ties in the Asia-Pacific region and strengthen existing economic partnerships in NAFTA. The Canadian government promises the TPP will open new markets for agricultural commodities, as well as food processing and beverage industries (Global Affairs Canada, 2015, Opening markets for agriculture and agri-food products, para. 3).

However, Barichello et al. (2009) argue the negative effects of the deal will be disproportionately felt by Canada’s supply-managed farmers, who face cheaper foreign competition and a drop in prices paid by large food companies (p. 204). Furthermore, the production of supply-managed commodities is unevenly distributed across Canada. In 2009, supply-managed commodities accounted for 38.7% of Quebec's agricultural profits while accounting for 19.6% of farm cash receipts for Canada as a whole (Ibid). Therefore, effects from the TPP agreement will be disproportionately experienced by provinces that have a greater concentration of supply-managed producers.

On October 5th, 2015 the Government of Canada announced a series of new programs and initiatives for supply-managed producers and processors to support them through the implementation of the TPP and the Canada-EU Trade Agreement (AAFC, 2015, Trans-Pacific Partnership, Supporting Canadian Supply Managed Producers and Processors, para. 1). The Income Guarantee Program will provide 100% income protection to producers for a full 10 years from the day TPP comes into force. Income support will then be tapered down for five years. The program's budget is $2.4 billion (Ibid).

The Quota Value Guarantee Program will protect producers against reduction in quota value when quota is sold for ten years following TPP implementation. The program is budgeted
for $1.5 billion. These programs will be implemented and delivered by the Canadian Dairy Commission and the Farm Products Council of Canada (Ibid). These initiatives highlight the role of the state in neoliberalization processes. Canada is actively involved in transitioning its protected industries to accord with more liberal trade agreements.

8.3 Analysis of Canadian and Ontario Egg Industry Policies and Structure

The Canadian egg industry is regulated through heavy government intervention that produces distinct scales of production. The supply management system resists neoliberalization by protecting the domestic market and ensuring producers of all scales can survive within the industry. The industry also ensures a unified marketing strategy for producers, and fosters consumer-producer communication through marketing.

8.3.1 Scalar Analysis

The Canadian government plays an essential role in producing scales of governance and production. The governing structure of the supply-managed industry creates distinct hegemonic scales of governance based on national and provincial boundaries. National marketing boards administer national policies, while provincial boards regulate producers within their borders.

Policies governing the egg industry also define scales of production. Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations, enforced by the CFIA, define local production in reference to local government units, including "cit[ies], metropolitan government area[s], town[s], village[s], municipalit[ies]..." (Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations, C.R.C., c. 417, s. 3). According to the regulations, local products are those that are manufactured, processed, produced and/or packaged in a local government unit and sold only within that government unit, or to one or more immediately adjacent units (Ibid). This definition of local food provides an
example of how government participates in the creation of scales. However, EFC and EFO use local discourse to promote all Canadian eggs, even those that are traded inter-provincially. Therefore, even among governing bodies the definition of the local scale remains fluid and disputed.

Egg industry policies also define small scales of production. Producers with flocks smaller than 100 birds are defined as a distinct scale of extent in the Ontario egg industry. These producers do not own quota and are not as heavily regulated as registered producers. Such small-scale farmers are restricted in their scale. If they choose to expand their flock beyond 100 birds, they will also be required to purchase quota, which is priced prohibitively high.

Egg industry grading policies dictate inter-scalar relationships. Smaller-scale producers who cannot afford to grade their own eggs must sell to larger-scale producers, such as Burnbrae Farms, or independent grading plants. Farm gate sales policies allow smaller producers to circumvent grading requirements, however, such policies also restrict their scale of extent. Producers who sell their eggs at the farm gate are restricted in the geographic extent of their sales, unable to sell beyond their local community.

Egg industry governance reinforces large-scale production as hegemonic. EFO’s New Entrant policy reinforces large-scale production as desirable by aiding new entrants to grow their flocks. Furthermore, producers in this study argue that the industry primarily benefits large-scale producers (see Chapters 6 and 7). The wide range of governing bodies regulating Ontario’s egg industry require extensive reporting and paperwork from farmers. Reinink Family Farm argues that heavy regulations by the state disadvantage smaller-scale farmers who cannot afford the unprofitable labour of constantly reporting to the EFO. In contrast, Burnbrae Farms has a close relationship with Egg Farmers of Ontario, engaging in similar projects and marketing campaigns.
Primary producers are enmeshed within the governance structure of Canada’s egg industry, and are heavily engaged with industry governing bodies. National and provincial egg marketing boards are primarily composed of egg producers and are mandated to support and protect the industry; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure. Likewise, at least half of FPCC members must be primary producers at the time they are appointed; refer to Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure. In this sense, the supply management structure engages in clustering techniques, similar to those proposed by Beckie et al. (2012), by connecting independent producers to enhance their collective power (p. 335). Clustering provides smaller-scale producers with marketing advantages and knowledge sharing opportunities associated with the large scale, without requiring them to expand.

The close relationship between the state and producers is strongest with large-scale egg producers, such as Burnbrae Farms. In comparison to other producers in this study, Burnbrae Farms had the most favourable view of the supply management system, and was most engaged in industry governance, with an executive member of the company sitting on EFO’s board of directors. Therefore, large-scale agri-business is constructed as a hegemonic scale within the Ontario egg industry.

However, comparison with the United States’ egg industry indicates that Canada establishes a greater role for small- and mid-scale producers than other, more liberalized nations. The United States has only 62 egg producers, compared to over 1000 in Canada, and five of the largest producers own approximately 49% of US hens (American Egg Board, 2015, para. 3-4). Therefore, the Canadian egg industry protects smaller-scaled producers. The industry also makes national and provincial scales of governance hegemonic, and thus defies neoliberal enforcement of global scales of governance.
Supply Management and Neoliberal Resistance

Neoliberal Critiques of Supply Management

Supply management has been widely critiqued by proponents of liberal market systems. Neoliberal critiques of supply management argue the system is inefficient, non-competitive and regressive.

A primary critique of supply management is its inefficiency. Liberal economists argue that trade is most efficiently organized through competitive free markets. Free markets are free from government intervention and allow the forces of supply and demand to determine ideal commodity prices and quantities. A market is competitive if there are many buyers and sellers, none of which individually have the power to influence the commodity price (Findlay and Gres, 2012, p. 9). Economists consider this situation ideal, arguing that it incentivizes producers to keep prices low and quality high, in order to appeal to consumers.

Liberal economists argue that supply management restricts competition (Findlay and Gres, 2012; Cardwell et al. 2015). In supply management systems, government regulated marketing boards set commodity prices and restrict quantity. Findlay and Gres (2012) argue that supply management systems are comparable to cartels, groups of producers that voluntarily combine to act as a monopoly in order to raise the price of their commodity and increase their profit margins (p. 9). The authors argue that supply management is a more robust form of cartel, because it has government support (Ibid). Supply management marketing boards are exempt from anti-competition laws that affect all other markets. As a result, marketing boards can set and maintain prices above that which would prevail in a competitive market. All producers of supply-managed products are required to join their commodity marketing board, effectively prohibiting free riders who may act as competition. Thus, the system limits competition within the industry,
ensuring that producers sell an allotted quantity, all at the same price.

The government also limits external competition by effectively prohibiting imports beyond an accepted level. As a result, wholesalers, graders, consumers and other egg purchasers are forced to pay prices set by, or influenced by, egg marketing boards, despite the availability of cheaper alternatives in other countries. In 2009, the retail price of milk in Canada was 38% higher than the US, and 42% higher than Australia-New Zealand, which has a free market (Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 2012, p. 11). Ottawa restaurant, Colonnade pizza, claims they struggle to afford supply-managed products (Fitz-Morris, 2012, p. 1). On their menu, domestic cheese is a more expensive topping than imported specialty products, such as Spanish anchovies.

Lack of competition within supply-managed systems means that egg purchasers and consumers cannot rely on imports or new entrants into the market to put pressure on the high prices set by marketing boards (p. 9).

The higher prices of supply-managed commodities have been criticized for having regressive welfare effects across the income spectrum (Findlay and Gres, 2012; Cardwell et al. 2015). There are two main aspects of regressivity arguments. The first is that higher prices transfer income from poorer consumers to richer producers. In 2009, the average Canadian household income was approximately $68 000, compared to $119 000 for poultry and egg producing households (Statistics Canada 2011 in Cardwell et al., 2015, p. 2). Supply management policies can therefore be viewed as transferring income from lower-income (on average) consumer households, to higher-income producer households.

A second aspect of regressivity is based on Engel's law, which asserts that the percentage of household income spent on food is inversely related to income levels. Canadian households in the lowest income quintile spend approximately 16% of income on food, while those in the highest quintile spend 8% (Ibid). Therefore, policies that increase food prices disproportionately
disadvantage lower-income households.

However, macro-economic regressivity critiques fail to account for nutrient content. Eggs provide some of the best nutrition for their price and are cheaper than most other protein sources, such as meats. Therefore, eggs remain a cost effective source of nutrition for low-income households. Regressivity arguments highlight the deceptiveness of macro-economic theories that fail to adequately account for externalities.

Opponents of supply management argue further that the system also negatively impacts producers. Liberal economists argue that free market competition ensures that only the most efficient producers, those who can produce their product at the lowest price, are able to survive in their industry. Opponents of supply management argue that the system fails to push uncompetitive producers out of the industry due to lack of competition. A Conference Board of Canada study (2009) concluded: "high prices, profits, and high quota values discourage inefficient producers from leaving the market" (quoted in Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 2012, p. 11). Producers are also restricted from increasing their production in order to gain increased profits, as they must obey quota orders. Therefore, both market growth, and the growth of individual farmers, is restricted.

Opponents also argue that supply management prohibits new entrants into the market. The high price of supply-managed goods make supply-managed industries appealing to farmers. However, new entrants must purchase a share of quota from existing producers in order to enter the market. Ontario’s quota transfer system is complicated and involves extensive application and bidding processes. The difficulties faced by new entrants, coupled with high demand for quota, have caused the ‘right to produce’ to take on value (Barichello et al., 2009, p. 204). This value is expressed in the cost of quota, which has become prohibitively high for new entrants into the egg industry. Farm cash receipts in real terms were the same in 2006 as in 1981, while
quota values increased dramatically. Between 1981 and 1995, the real compound growth rate of quota value was 2.8%. This figure skyrocketed to 6.5% between 1995 and 2006 (Ibid). Opening up supply-managed markets would reduce the value of quota by making the 'right to produce' less exclusive. However, policy changes that reduce the price of quota, or quantity of available quota, are strongly opposed by quota-owning producers who do not wish to see their quota to lose value. Cardwell et al. (2015) argue that Canada’s supply management policies have “delivered high and stable incomes to producers but at a high cost to society through lower productivity and high prices for consumers” (p. 4).

**In Defense of Supply Management**

Support for supply management is based on government and industry assertions that the system supports local farming and encourages small-scale production. Contrary to neoliberal idealization of the free market, supply management depends on extensive government involvement to enable farmers to set prices that provide them with a decent living wage. Government protection prevents internal and external competition from undermining producers’ price setting ability. Supply management can therefore be theorized as a system that contends neoliberal, international pressure to open markets to international competition and free industry from government interference.

In order to defend supply management from neoliberal and liberal economic critiques, the ideals on which these arguments are based must be questioned. Supply management is undeniably a protectionist and non-competitive system. However, proponents argue that these features are beneficial rather than detrimental, for both producers and consumers.

The ideal of a fully free market is rarely realized in agricultural industries. The United States (US) relies heavily on subsidies to support farmers (Fitz-Morris, 2012, p. 2). American
and European farmers also receive tax breaks, which provide them with more income, allowing them to keep their prices low (Fitz-Morris, 2012, p. 2). Fitz-Morris (2012) argues that these tax breaks mean that consumers pay hidden costs for their goods. He argues that the supply management system ensures consumers “only have to pay for their milk [and other supply-managed commodities] once at the checkout counter and they don't have to pay again at tax time, as in the case in the US or Europe” (Ibid). Canada’s supply-managed industries do not require subsidies or tax breaks because producers are able to set prices at profit-making levels.

Government subsidies and tax breaks enable farmers to keep their prices low and internationally competitive. If Canada’s supply-managed commodities were to enter the international market they would not be able to compete without similar government interventions. Furthermore, reforming the supply management system would require further government assistance in order to support farmers adjusting to market changes. A 2014 study from the Conference Board of Canada proposed a ten-year phase out which would cost between $3.6 billion and $4.7 billion for the dairy sector alone (McGregor, 2015, Who can afford a buyout? para. 4). When Australia deregulated its supply-managed milk market, the industry required government support in the form of an 11 cent per liter tax to aide farmers leaving the industry or adapting to the new system (Findlay and Gres, 2012, p. 17). Therefore, the ideal of free market deregulation is rarely met and the elimination of government support for agricultural industries is an unrealistic goal.

Food activists argue that liberalization of supply-managed industries is not just unfeasible, but also undesirable. Competitive markets lower prices and make it difficult for small-scale farmers to continue operating. Activist blogger, Scott Sinclair argues that supply management systems are socially just because they ensure farmers make a decent living (2015, para. 4). He argues that farmers in countries and sectors without supply management systems are
subject to frequent and extreme changes in price and have little ability to negotiate reasonable returns with large global agri-businesses. Supply management systems support family operations of various size and scale, including small-scale producers “that would not be able to compete with American agricultural powerhouses” were trade to be liberalized (Western Producer Editorial, 2015, para. 12).

The experience of other countries suggests abandoning supply management could lead to more concentrated industries, with fewer farms operating on a smaller scale (McGregor, 2015, Food sovereignty, para. 3). McGregor (2015) explains that when prices fluctuate and farmers experience tight margins, they require economies of scale to survive (Sustaining the little guy, 2015, para. 1). The price of Canada’s supply-managed commodities reflects the true cost of production and therefore adequately support small and mid-scale farmers.

Sinclair (2015) argues that supply management enables the government to ensure the quality and safety of protected commodities as it can easily apply Canadian standards to the domestic market (para. 7). Increased international trade may introduce pressures to change Canada's production practices or import standards in order to remain competitive and sustain healthy international relationships. For example, Sinclair highlights the US dairy sectors use of growth hormones, such as recombinant bovine somatotropin (rBST) which are banned in Canada. He argues that Canada may face pressure from the US to accept these inputs into imported milk (Ibid).

Sinclair argues economists ignore the social benefits of supply management. He claims: "free market economic theories, with their flexible models of supply and demand, are ill suited to reflect the reality of farming" (para. 13). Consumers in this research have asserted a desire to support local, small-scale farms, and have indicated concern for food health, quality and safety (see Chapter 4). Supply management seemingly meets many of these demands.
Supply management was also lauded by the majority of producers in this study. All three producers praised the system for stabilizing prices and enabling producers of various sizes to succeed in the industry (see Chapters 5-7). Reinink Family Farm and Covenant Farm critiqued the system for high quota values, which prohibit new entrants and make expansion difficult for small-scale producers. The high price of quota and the difficulties faced by new entrants into supply-managed systems must therefore be addressed, and can be explored in further detail in future research. However, none of the producers in this study recommended abandoning supply management and rather vouched support for the system.

Supply management contends neoliberal processes by protecting Canada’s domestic egg market. As a result the system enables small scale, local production. Though the system has flaws, it attends to the majority of consumer concerns indicated in this research, and is supported by producers of all size in this study. Therefore, liberal reform of the supply management system could undermine consumer and producer interests within the Canadian egg industry.

8.3.3 Marketing: The Role of the State in Fostering Communication among Consumers and Producers

Supply management governing bodies play an essential role in fostering and influencing consumer-producer relations. Marketing boards communicate levels of consumer demand to producers, by calculating demand and setting quota accordingly. State regulations also dictate the information producers must share with consumers and regulate how those details are shared. Consumer Packaging and Labelling regulations enforce transparency measures, by requiring all packaged food be labelled with the identity of the business that produced and packaged the product (Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, RSC 1985, c. C-38, s. 10). The regulations also set out requirements for accurate representation of the number of servings contained in packaged food products and regulate pictoral representations on food labels, requiring that they be
accompanied by specific labelling information (Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations, C.R.C., c. 417 s. 33-34).

Marketing boards also communicate production and marketing information to consumers through a variety of media. EFC and EFO use consistent discourse, imagery and marketing strategies to sell their commodity and connect consumers with producers.

**Analysis of Egg Farmers of Canada and Egg Farmers of Ontario Marketing**

EFC and EFO market primarily online, through websites, social media, and apps. The agencies use identical colour schemes, and similar images, strategies and discourse in their marketing materials. The agencies also engage similar themes and discourse as Burnbrae Farms, accentuating the close relationship between the governing bodies and big business.

The agencies’ websites, online accounts, and apps feature a consistent yellow, white and black colour scheme. By using the colours naturally found in eggs, the agencies market their product through design. The agencies use clean lines and geometric shapes to organize content in an efficient and engaging fashion. Overall, their look is clean, professional and organized, yet approachable.

The agencies’ seek to engage consumers with their industry and commodity through photographs, farmers’ personal stories, contests, crafts and recipes. The agencies post seasonal egg crafts and recipes on their websites and social media accounts. Each recipe is accompanied by beautifully staged, professional photographs (EFC, 2015, Recipes; EFO, 2015, Eggs Anytime). EFC’s YouTube account features a series of #CrackedIt recipe challenges from October 2014, which challenged consumers to master a new egg recipe each week, for seven weeks (EFC, October 1-31). The crafts and recipes encourage consumers to use egg products and to associate eggs with fun and creativity.
EFC and EFO both consistently employ discourse of health and science, social responsibility, community-centred family farming, and local food. These core themes are reinforced on each of their official web pages and apps.

**Health and Science**

EFO and EFC both provide nutritional and scientific information to consumers. EFC’s website includes a nutrition section consisting of articles on egg nutrition and health (EFC, 2015, Egg Nutrition). The articles promote the protein, omega-3 fatty acid and vitamin content in eggs and include links to healthy egg recipes. The site includes a section entitled “For Your Baby” which recommends feeding eggs to babies as young as 6 months old (EFC, 2015, For Your Baby). The section includes recipes for egg-based baby food and provides tips for recognizing when your baby is ready for solid foods.

EFC provides additional egg information through a series of articles posted under a section of their website entitled “Eggs 101” (EFC, 2015). The articles discuss food safety and storage, the anatomy of eggs, and nutrition facts. One article entitled “Egg Storage, Freshness, and Food Safety” explains how to store fresh and frozen eggs, and provides tips for safely cooking with eggs (EFC, 2015). Another article entitled “Introduction to the Egg” breaks down the anatomy of the egg, provides nutrition facts, and explains egg sizing in Canada (EFC, 2015).

EFC posts nutritional information on its apps. Both its eggcentricTV and egg timer app feature articles on egg science and nutrition (Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, eggcentricTV, 2015; Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, Egg timer, 2015). Additionally, eggcentricTV produces a comedy series entitled “The Benedicts” which features eggs, with hand-drawn faces, as characters (Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, EggcentricTV, 2015). The episodes frequently work egg nutrition information into the plot. One episode entitled “Romeo and Omelet” tells the
story of a teenage girl egg cast in the role of Omelet in a school production of ‘Romeo and Omelet.’ Her father fears she will have to kiss the male actor playing Romeo, saying ‘what if she gets cooties!’ His wife reassures him that because they are eggs they are high in selenium, which keeps the immune system strong (Ibid).

Many blog posts on EFO’s website are dedicated to nutrition and discuss the health benefits of eggs. Health and nutrition articles include titles such as “Eggs are Brain Food” and “5 Ways to Keep Trim this Holiday with Eggs” (Heibert, 2011; Mitchell, 2012). EFO has also published a healthy eating manual for health professionals, promoted on its website (EFO, 2015, Education). The manual provides sample meal plans, kid-friendly recipes, and nutrition tips. The agency frequently posts egg facts and tips on their Twitter account. A fact from January 20, 2016 states: “Egg yolks are one of the few foods that naturally contain vitamin D” (EFO, tweet).

EFC and EFO refer to registered dieticians to enhance the legitimacy of their health claims. A registered dietician outlines the nutritional benefits of eggs in a video posted to eggcentricTV entitled “What is the nutritional value of an egg?” (EFC, 2015, EggcentricTV). EFO likewise posted an article on its blog entitled “Why this dietitian loves eggs,” in which a registered dietician outlines a range of benefits of eating eggs, including nutritional content, the range of available egg products, and the ability to access locally produced products (Mitchell, 2013).

**Social Responsibility: Community Engagement**

EFC and EFO both approach corporate social responsibility from the lens of community engagement. EFC’s website includes a community section which highlights the agency’s contributions to, and partnerships with, local and national charities (EFC, 2015, Community). EFC also maintains a ‘Community’ playlist on their YouTube account that highlights the efforts
of EFC-sponsored charities (EFC, October 9 2015-January 19 2016). The majority of videos advertise Heart for Africa, a charity through which EFC is sponsoring several food security improvement projects. The videos describe and show footage of various initiatives, and include messages from EFC executives who declare EFC’s commitment to social responsibility (Ibid).

EFO likewise promotes their community engagement initiatives on their website and social media pages. EFO frequently detail their charitable donations and partnerships with local and provincial charities through blog posts. One article, entitled “Supporting Rural Ontario,” highlights EFO’s financial support for a variety of community organizations and events, such as food banks, children’s programs, and athletic clubs and teams (EFO, 2015). EFO also frequently tweets and retweets posts regarding their sponsored sports teams (https://twitter.com/EggFarmersOnt). On December 15, 2015 the agency retweeted an EFO sponsored Ontario curling team stating: “thanks for your support @EggFarmersOnt.” Both EFC and EFO utilize diverse platforms to communicate their charitable and community involvement to consumers.

As Lakin and Scheubel (2010) recommend, EFC and EFO approach their social outreach activities strategically. Similarly to Burnbrae Farms, the agencies partner with charities and organizations that reflect the values they wish to market. EFC and EFO largely support health, fitness, food provision, and community-oriented organizations. EFC has been a participant in the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s Health Check Program since 2001 (EFC, 2015, History). In 2010, EFC was the nutritional sponsor of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure, and in 2014, launched a partnership with the Breakfast Club of Canada (Ibid). EFC also sponsors a number of food security projects through Heart for Africa. EFO proudly supports ‘local community’ clubs and associations, including food banks, sports teams and children’s charities (EFO, 2015, Egg Farmers in the Community; EFO, 2015, Supporting Rural Ontario). Therefore, the agencies’ charitable and community outreach initiatives serve to associate
themselves, and the egg farmers they represent, with values of health, well-being and community development.

Community

EFC and EFO both highlight the importance of farmers within communities. Farmer profiles posted on EFO’s website quote each farmer answering the question 'what does community mean to you' (EFO, 2015, Meet the Farmers). The Schenk’s responded stating: “They support us and we support them,” indicating a reciprocal relationship between farmers and the community of consumers they feed (EFO, 2015, Meet the Farmers: Schenk). Egg Farmers of Ontario also tweets about, and retweets messages from, Ontario farmers. On December 25, 2015 the agency retweeted a holiday post from Burnbrae Farms that read: “We are scrambling up some eggs for our Christmas breakfast. What are you serving up?” (EFC). On December 18, 2015, EFO tweeted a photograph of a family of egg farmers with the caption: “The Mulder Family are #proud to provide a great product to Ontario and their community” (EFC). EFO therefore utilizes community discourse to promote Ontario egg farmers, emphasizing the connection between farmers and the community they feed.

Egg farmer Stephanie Nanne, in her profile on EFC’s website, argues that there is a growing role for consumers in farming, stating: “the role of the consumer changes what farming is today. There are opportunities for us as farmers to listen and connect with consumers more than ever before” (EFO, 2015, Meet the Next Generation, Nanne). Her statement parallels the Burnbrae Farms executive’s argument that the industry is becoming more reactive to consumer demand. EFC and EFO have channeled the trend into marketing campaigns. In February 2016, EFC posted a series of quotes from farmers with the hashtag #farmtogether (https://twitter.com/eggsoeufs). The campaign symbolically bridges the gap between consumers and producers by sharing farmer’s words and pictures with consumers. The #farmtogether hashtag
insinuates a community among farmers that actively engages with a larger community of consumers.

**Family Farming**

EFC and EFO both post farmer profiles on their website. The profiles describe the farmers and their families, and provide a gallery of personal photographs (EFC, 2015, Meet the Farmers). EFC likewise produces a series on their YouTube account entitled “Meet our Farmers” (September 28 2010- April 10 2015). Each video in the series profiles a different Canadian egg farmer who discusses their farm and family. The videos feature footage of the farms, all of varying size. The farmers are seen working on their farm, engaging with their families, and, often, cooking with eggs.

The “Meet the Farmers” section on EFC’s website also includes a subsection entitled “Meet the Next Generation” which profiles children of Canadian egg farmers who plan to continue working on their family farm into adulthood (EFC, 2015, Meet the Next Generation). Each of the four profiles includes a video of the teenagers showing off their farm, explaining farm production, and discussing their role as future egg farmers.

EFO also highlights family farms on social media. On December 5, 2015, EFO posted a message from a farmer pictured with her family. She stated: “My favourite part of being a farmer…is to be able to work with my family, to see my family at lunch hour, spend a lot of time with them” (EFO, December 5, 2015). EFO also posted of the family: “Gabriel and Nathalie have been #OntEgg farming together since 1985 & now work alongside son Francis and daughter Valerie” (EFO, October 28, 2015). By highlighting family farming, the agencies make farmers relatable and attempt to develop a sense of connection between consumers and producers.
The consumer research found that consumers are more likely to trust information that comes directly from producers (see Chapter 4). EFC and EFO provide information about eggs to consumers ‘directly’ from farmers through sections such as “Ask a Farmer” on EFC’s website, in which an experienced egg farmer answers frequently asked questions about farming (EFC, 2015). The “Journey of the Egg” playlist on EFC’s YouTube account likewise features egg farmers who describe egg farming processes (EFC, June 9 2011). The marketing boards then enhance consumer trust by presenting farmers as family-oriented individuals who contribute to their local community and are therefore deserving of trust and support.

**Local Farming**

EFC’s website boasts that egg farmers in Canada “produce fresh, local and high-quality eggs for Canadians to enjoy” (EFC, 2015, On the Farm). Many farmers profiled on their website are proud to sell their product locally. Nova Scotia egg farmers Jill and Sharon Thomas sell their product at local grocery stores and on their farm (EFC, 2015, Meet the Farmers: Thomas). Egg farmers Hubert and Cindy Shillings state: “providing a high-quality, nutritious food for their local community gives the Schillings a great sense of pride” (EFC, 2015, Meet the Farmers: Shillings). Likewise, Glen Jennings explains that his “favourite part of egg farming is providing his neighbours with locally produced food” (EFC, 2015, Meet the Farmers: Jennings). Jennings explains that he only delivers to local consumers in order to reduce his environmental impact. EFC therefore engages in local food discourse, communicating the health, freshness, community and environmental benefits of local food. The agency presents many of its registered farmers as operating local, family farms.

EFO also promotes local values. The agency frequently discusses its support for ‘local communities’ (EFO, 2015, Egg Farmers in the Community; EFO, 2015, Supporting Rural Ontario). Dietician Bill Mitchel explained, in an article posted on EFOs website, that one of the
main benefits of egg products is that they “are locally produced. The eggs we buy at the store are produced by an egg farming family right here in Ontario. When we buy eggs we support our local farming communities” (Mitchell, 2013). EFO likewise argues that Ontario’s egg industry is designed for local production. A pdf posted to their website explains how eggs are delivered from farm to table within a week of being lain (EFO, 2015, From Our Farm to Your Table). The pamphlet reads: “Local eggs. From farm to table in 4 to 7 days.” An infographic posted to EFC’s Pinterest account likewise explains how supply management ensures “fresh, local, high quality eggs for Canadians (https://www.pinterest.com/eggs/). The marketing boards therefore engage local discourse in their marketing materials and promote local production as a key feature of their industry.

**Discussion of EFC and EFO’s Marketing Strategy**

Darban and Li (2012) argue that consumers often make consumption decisions based on information that is easy to obtain and comprehend, and frequently look to social media for fast facts (p. 38). EFC and EFO, similarly to Burnbrae Farms, market primarily by sharing favourable information about their products online. The agencies’ discussions of health invariably promote the nutritional benefits of eggs. Articles and features regarding egg farming present the process of production as simple and engaged in by honest, family-oriented farmers, deserving of support. Community discourse insinuates that egg farmers and their governing organizations play a vital role in Canadian communities, through social outreach and the provision of healthy egg products. The egg marketing boards engage in the thematic elements discussed above in order to promote a particular image of the Canadian and Ontario egg industry, as composed of honest, family and community-oriented individuals, engaged in the production of healthy, nutritious food.

Many of EFC and EFO’s marketing and information sharing campaigns seek to build a
connection between consumers and producers. However, the consumer research indicates that many consumers are still wary of the egg industry, mostly due to a lack of knowledge. The complexity of Canada’s egg industry may contribute to consumer confusion. The wide variety of interconnected regulations, policies and governing organizations could explain why so few surveyed consumers access information about egg production from government sources (see Chapter 4). EFC and EFO attempt to bridge the gap between producers and consumers, however, they primarily engage in marketing, rather than information sharing, and rely heavily on simplistic social media marketing campaigns. As discussed in Chapter 4, consumer skepticism of the egg industry may be fueled in part by a lack of understanding. Therefore, the industry must find ways to communicate more extensive information to consumers through mechanisms they can easily access and comprehend.

8.4 Conclusion

The Canadian egg industry’s supply management system achieves many of the interests expressed by consumers and producers in this research, including support for local production and small-scale farming, and the imposition of safety and animal welfare regulations. The protectionist system contends global neoliberalization processes, and supports domestic producers of all scales. However, consumers in this study were unaware of how the industry functions and actively sought alternatives in resistance to the ‘conventional’ egg system, not realizing that supply management is an alternative agri-food system (see Chapter 4). Given this result, supply management marketing boards would do well to more actively explain and promote the supply management system to consumers, in order to garner greater support for the system in the wake of international pressure attempting to liberalize Canada’s protected markets.
Chapter 9
Concluding Statements

9.0  Summary of Conclusions

This research draws a number of conclusions about the current state of Ontario's egg industry. In short, the research assesses consumer demands, identifies scalar practices, and exposes the strengths and weakness of the industry’s alternative regulatory structure. Ultimately, the research encourages greater communication between producers and consumers, and the state and consumers, and suggests policy changes to ensure consumer and producer interests are protected.

First, the results indicate that eastern Ontario egg consumers demand alternative production practices, as well as alternative systems of distribution. However, consumers face structural and personal barriers to making consumption choices in line with their demands. For example, Canada's egg grading regulations represent a structural barrier to consumer agency. Government regulations require all eggs sold at commercial establishments to be graded (Ontario Regulation 171/10, 2010, s.4). Small-scale producers, unable to afford their own grading facilities, are therefore prevented from selling their eggs through retail establishments or farmers’ markets. As a result, they must sell their eggs through alternative venues (e.g., farm gate). Consumers find it difficult, or at least inconvenient, to access egg products from alternative venues, thus limiting their consumption choices.

An additional barrier to consumer agency, frequently identified within the critical food studies and food consumption geography literature, is a lack of knowledge (Hudson and Hudson, 2003; Sonnino, 2013; Hobbs and Goddard, 2015). Consumers in this research displayed a surprising lack of knowledge regarding egg production and the egg industry. Respondents access information from varied sources, many of which are easy to find and understand, but unreliable,
such as the Internet and other popular media. Very few consumers access information directly from producers and industry governing bodies. In fact, consumers indicated distrust and skepticism of the industry and producers, and the research indicates that this distrust is not unfounded. Producer case studies indicate that producers are often motivated to provide only self-serving information to consumers. Likewise, national and provincial egg boards are tasked with marketing egg products, rather than providing consumers with information. Therefore, eastern Ontario egg consumers lack reliable, trustworthy information, limiting their agency. The research indicates that structural change, such as regulations that enforce accurate and timely information sharing, may be necessary to increase consumer knowledge and enhance consumer agency.

While the research identifies structural barriers to change, it also provides support for agency geographers' claims that consumers possess power within agri-food systems, and can use their clout to influence change (Jackson, 2010; Clarke et al., 2007; Goss, 2004). Burnbrae Farms has altered many of their practices due to consumer demand for greater transparency and more natural housing systems. It should be acknowledged that these changes are also influenced by structural change within globalized agri-food systems, such as the EU’s ban on caged systems (European Commission, 2015). However, the research indicates that motivated consumers can express their agency within the industry. The Covenant Farmer reveals a tendency among consumers to outsource their ethics to producers, relying on loosely based trust that producers will farm according to their values, rather than engaging with the farming process to enforce their ethics. Likewise, the consumer population is most often motivated to shop conventionally for the sake of convenience. However, alternative consumers, those who regularly purchase eggs from alternative venues, tend to value other concerns over convenience, and therefore only shop conventionally when the barriers to shopping alternatively are extreme. Alternative consumers also display greater knowledge of egg production than conventional consumers. Therefore, the
research indicates that if consumers make an effort, they can act with greater agency.

Second, the research suggests that consumers are better able to influence change by purchasing products from alternative venues, rather than purchasing alternative products through conventional production chains. The producer case studies reveal producers of all scale produce and sell alternative eggs. However, Covenant Farm, a small-scale producer operating through an alternative system of production and distribution, engages in the most drastically alternative practices. Covenant Farm keeps their hens in production for a year longer than Burnbrae Farms and Reinink Family Farm, doubling their lifespan. They are also the only farm to keep hens free-roaming, rather than in layers. In contrast, none of Burnbrae's various housing systems grant hens access to the outdoors, and all experience interhen fighting and bullying. Reinink professes alternative production and distribution practices, however the farm sells half its production to Burnbrae Farms, and into the conventional distribution system. Furthermore, their hens are kept free range, with limited outdoor access, and therefore likely face similar bullying issues as Burnbrae hens. Therefore, the research indicates that shopping for alternative products may not address consumer concerns for animal welfare, or support alternative systems of production and distribution. In order to truly express their demands and values, consumers must make an educated choice to shop at alternative venues. Consumers must also engage more fully with farmers and producers in order overcome barriers to direct exchange and avoid outsourcing their needs and ethics. Consumer engagement will allow them to gain further information and to develop direct relationships based on actual trust.

Third, producer case studies reveal a number of comparisons between scales, including distinctly scalar production and marketing practices among the three cases. Burnbrae Farms operates factory-style production and grading facilities, and produces a variety of shell egg types. The company markets its brand widely through a variety of campaigns, mostly online, through
social media. In contrast, Reinink Family Farm produces only one type of egg, white organic, and engages in very little marketing. The mid-scale farm largely markets through word of mouth and interviews with local media. Their packaging is likewise simple and practical. Their marketing strategy contrasts with Burnbrae's, serving to accentuate their status as an alternative farm.

Covenant Farm operates outside of Canada's supply-managed system, at a small enough scale that it is not required to own quota. Therefore, the farm's production practices are not governed as strictly by regulations, and differ significantly from the other two producers in this study. The farm does not use egg layers and rather houses their hens in coops and allows them to roam free throughout the day. Covenant Farm operates as a CSA and therefore distributes their eggs directly to consumers, either through delivery or pickup. The farm markets itself on social media but uses its accounts to express the owners’ ecocentric worldview, rather than engaging in strategic marketing campaigns. Therefore, the research reveals distinct production and marketing practices within each scale of production.

Fourth, the research reveals differences in producer-consumer communications across scale. Each producer professes a dedication to direct exchange, education for consumers, and transparency. All three cases use similar discourse of local, family, ethically-minded farming, and pledge support for Canadian communities. However, the ways in which producers execute these goals and fulfill these claims differs among cases and across scale.

Burnbrae Farms reaches out to consumers primarily online, through social media, and attempts to develop a connection with its consumers through familial and community discourse, and simulated personal exchanges. Burnbrae provides a wide variety of information on their website and social media pages, however, most of the information is self-serving rather than genuinely educational for consumers. Burnbrae provides tours of their facilities to consumers.
and posts about their policies on their website. However, these resources are difficult for consumers to access. Burnbrae does not promote their tours to consumers and mostly uses them for industrial, commercial or retail clients with whom they are interested in doing business. Likewise, they require that consumers request access to their policies, rather than posting them freely (Burnbrae Farms, n.d., Social Responsibility, para. 5). Therefore, their attempts at direct exchange, education and transparency are shallow.

Burnbrae Farms' marketing discourse is varied and sometimes contradictory. Burnbrae engages themes of local, family farming, but also highlights their large scale of production in certain marketing campaigns. The national-scale company attempts to address the concerns of a wide variety of consumers, including individual consumers and industrial, commercial and retail clients. As a result, their marketing is inconsistent, which could potentially fuel consumer distrust.

Reinink Family Farms foregoes online communications entirely. Instead, the mid-scale farm values direct communication with consumers at farmers’ markets. However, this approach limits the amount of information consumers can access about the farm, restricting transparency and requiring customers to rely on trust and word-of-mouth, rather than accurate information, when making judgements about the farm. Reinink's limited marketing and information sharing hides information that does not fit within the farm's image as an alternative, small-scale, family farm. Reinink sells half their production to Burnbrae Farms, into the conventional system of distribution. This information cannot be found online, neither through Reinink nor Burnbrae.

Covenant Farm does communicate with consumers online, though their presence is limited compared to Burnbrae Farms. They post images of their hens, as well as information about CSAs and other alternative production practices and networks. While the information they share contributes to their image as a small-scale alternative farm, and is therefore self-serving,
also reflects the owners’ genuine philosophy and accurately presents their production practices. Covenant provides extensive information about their decision-making processes regarding their hens. In one Facebook post, the owner explains, in great detail, their decision to change hen housing during the winter; refer to Appendix L.8 (Covenant Farm, November 23, 2014). Covenant also communicates with members through weekly emails that provide updates about the farm and information about weekly produce. They also engage with consumers directly when possible, encouraging their participation in the farming process and hosting community events on the farm. Therefore, while the farmers use similar discourse in their marketing materials, scalar analysis reveals each engages in distinct production practices, marketing schemes and methods of communication.

Fifth, the research reveals inter-scalar relationships among egg producers and exposes mechanisms for small-scale producers to thrive within the multi-scalar Ontario egg industry. Reinink negotiates its position as a mid-scale producer by selling half its production to Burnbrae Farms, for which it receives an organic premium. As a result, the farm is able to afford its own grading plant and therefore sell directly to consumers through its own brand, according to its values of community and direct exchange. Therefore, the farm works in partnership with Burnbrae Farms in a mutually-beneficial relationship. The research indicates that the dichotomy of large and small scale is simplistic and indicates that differently scaled producers can successfully operate in partnership within the Ontario egg industry. Reinink hides their association with Burnbrae Farms, most likely because they feel it will clash with their small-scale alternative image. However, if consumers were more educated about the relationship between small- and large-scale producers, they might accept that the two scales are not always dichotomous and Reinink may feel more comfortable sharing information about their farm.

Sixth, the research found that supply management complicates discussions of
conventional and alternative production and consumption in the context of Ontario’s egg industry. The research reveals that the supply management system as a whole is alternative, and resists neoliberalization by protecting Canada's domestic egg industry from globalized agri-food systems. However, producers still engage in conventional egg production within the alternative system. The industry creates distinct scales of production and establishes large-, national-scale production as hegemonic. Burnbrae Farms operates conventionally within supply management, through the quota system and at a hegemonic large scale. Covenant Farm, in comparison, operates alternatively, outside of supply management.

Supporters argue that supply management's greatest value as an alternative system is in protecting producers of all scales, in comparison to markets that function through globalized conventional agri-food systems, such as the United States (American Egg Board, 2015). However, this research reveals the system could better support small- and mid-scale farmers, who struggle to afford quota and to manage industry regulatory demands. The research suggests the system be revised to remove barriers to alternative production and to make the quota system more accessible to new and smaller-scale producers. These changes are necessary for the system to continue operating with the support of Canadian egg farmers and consumers.

Finally, the research exposes threats to Canada’s supply management system and concludes that the system ought to be protected. Consumers desire alternative systems of production and producers benefit from non-competitive multi-scalar relationships. Supply management, though it requires revisions, ultimately protects these interests by ensuring a non-competitive environment for producers. Therefore, the research concludes that the system ought to be protected in order to support consumer and producer interests.
9.1 Key Contributions

9.1.1 Theoretical Insights

The research contributes to discussions of scale within critical food studies literature. The research delineates scales of production within eastern Ontario's egg industry and identifies distinct production and marketing practices at each scale. The research also highlights differences in consumer and state relationships between scales, and reveals interrelationships among scales of production. The research also contributes to critical food studies discussions of neoliberal resistance, by revealing consumer demand for alternative production, and identifying ways in which supply management contends neoliberal globalization.

The research contributes to food consumption geography debates regarding the role of consumers and the state in enacting change within agri-food systems. The research found that the egg industry, while regulated through an alternative system, favours large-scale production and restricts alternative small-scale producers. Therefore structural change is necessary to lend greater support to Ontario's small-scale and 'local' producers. This may require better defining these terms so that they cannot be coopted by large agri-business to reinforce hegemonic large-scale production. However, the research also identified a need for consumers to accept greater agency in order to enforce their demands. The research therefore contributes to structure-agency debates by identifying changes in both structure and agency required to ensure consumer demands for alternative production are met.

Finally, the research contributes academic support for Canada's supply management system. Academic literature addressing Canada's supply management system almost exclusively approaches the topic from the position of economic liberalism and therefore proposes dismantling the system (Mussell, 2010; Findlay and Gres, 2012; Cardwell et al., 2015; Barichello
et al, 2009). A notable exception is the work of Bruce Muirhead who has consistently provided academic support for the system (Muirhead, 2014; Muirhead, 2015). However, most academic analysis of supply management highlights its negative aspects. This research provides further insight into the benefits of the system, for both consumers and producers of various scales, and therefore bolsters academic support for supply management.

9.1.2 Policy Prescriptions

The research suggests several potential policy prescriptions. First, the research indicates that the supply management system ought to revise the quota system to reduce costs prohibitive to new entrants and small-scale producers looking to expand. Second, the research indicates that the state ought to remove or revise regulations that restrict small-scale producers from selling their product to consumers at retail establishments. This goal could be achieved through a variety of means. For example, the state could simply allow ungraded eggs to be sold to consumers, while enforcing labelling requirements that inform consumers of potential safety risks. Alternatively, the state could devise a system in which primary producers have their eggs graded by third party grading plants, at a regulated price, before having their eggs returned to the farm in order to sell directly to consumers. At the very least, the state could require egg graders to trace the origin of eggs, and to sell them with the original producer’s label. Such changes would increase transparency and enable greater communication and connection between consumers and primary producers. Revisions to these aspects of the egg industry would create better support for alternative and small-scale farmers, enhancing the system's ability to resist neoliberal globalization.

Finally, this research concludes that it is in the best interest of the supply management system to engage in greater information sharing with consumers, particularly about the egg industry's regulatory system. Consumers have indicated skepticism and distrust of the egg
industry. The industry therefore faces not only external pressure from international trade negotiations that threaten supply management, but also internal pressure from unsatisfied consumers who have no knowledge of the benefits of the system. The state might consider mandating supply management boards, not only to market their commodity, but also to share information about their commodity and industry with consumers. This action may remedy consumer distrust and garner greater internal support for supply management, helping it to withstand external pressure.

9.2 Research Limitations

This research does not assess the full spectrum of egg production in Ontario. The scope of the study was limited to primary producers, egg graders (to an extent), individual consumers (rather than industrial, commercial or retail clients), and select governing bodies and regulations. Therefore, the research neglects to address a number of industry players, such as breeders, hatcheries, retailers, and wholesalers. Furthermore, the research does not assess the full breadth of Canadian and Ontario egg industry regulations, policies and governing bodies. The industry is governed by a wide network of institutions and laws that could not be fully addressed within the scope of the research. Therefore, suggested policy prescriptions ought to be supported by further research before being considered.

The research is not statistically generalizeable, therefore in the strictest sense, conclusions are only applicable to the population and parties who participated in this study. However, precautions were taken to ensure that the research is analytically generalizeable. Therefore, theoretical insights gained by this research have wider implication.
9.3 Future Directions

The conclusions reached by this research could be bolstered by further research into consumer demand and more generalizeable studies on producers of various scales. In particular, the results warrant further and more direct study of communication mechanisms and techniques that allow consumers to express their demands to producers and that enable producers to share information in a way that is accessible to all consumers.

The results also support the need for further research into supply management. As discussed earlier in this chapter, academic literature on the system largely voices opposition. However, the positive aspects of the system highlighted in this research indicate the topic warrants further analysis from a variety of perspectives. Furthermore, the academic community ought to engage in further research into the specific challenges faced by small- and mid-scale producers within the supply management system, in order to influence change that respects consumer and producer interests.

9.4 Conclusion

This research reveals specific challenges faced by Ontario’s egg industry, both internally and externally, and suggests avenues for change that respect the interests of both egg consumers and producers. Further research is required to bolster these conclusions. However, this research provides an initial step in unravelling the complex industry, and negotiating a way forward, through conflicting narratives of local, alternative production and neoliberal globalization.


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Appendix A: Overview of Canadian Egg Industry Governing Structure

General Definitions

**Supply Management** – a controlled production and marketing system, governed by national and provincial marketing boards granted legislative power. The three pillars of supply management are:

- **Production planning** – balancing levels of production with market demand
- **Import control** – controlling the quantity of imports, in order to allow for proper production planning
- **Producer pricing** – marketing boards set commodity prices at a level that provides producers with a return on their labour and investments

**Agricultural Marketing Boards** – statutory bodies that perform or control one or more marketing functions on behalf of a group of producers of a specific agricultural commodity (Historica Canada, n.d., para. 1). Possess the power to control supply, prices and imports

**Federal Bodies Governing the Canadian Egg Industry**

1. **The Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food** – a department of the Government of Canada. Responsible for policies governing agricultural production, agriculture and food research, farm income and inspection, the regulation of plants and animals, and rural development (AAFC, 2015, What we do, Our responsibilities, para. 1). The Department is responsible for the following organizations governing Canada's supply management systems (AAFC, 2015, Minister, para. 4):

   - **Canada Agricultural Review Tribunal** – an agency empowered by legislature to make legally binding decisions (OMAFRA, 2015, The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, The Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal, para. 1). Hears appeals to orders, directions, decisions, policies and regulations made by a marketing board or a director (Ibid).

   - **Canadian Food Inspection Agency** – a federal agency under both the AAFC and Health Canada, tasked with mitigating food safety risks, protecting public health and safety, and ensuring a healthy and sustainable animal and plant resource base in Canada (CFIA, 2015, CFIA at a Glance, What we do, para. 1).

   - **Farm Products Council of Canada** – administers the Farm Products Marketing Act and Agricultural Products Marketing Act and provides supervision and expertise to national marketing boards.

2. **Health Canada** – a department of the federal government responsible for establishing standards for food safety and nutritional quality (Health Canada, 2014, About Health Canada). It exercises its power under the authority of the Food and Drug Act and pursues its regulatory mandate through the Food and Drug Regulations. Health Canada is also responsible for the CFIA's food safety activities.
3. **Egg Farmers of Canada** - the national supply management marketing board for the Canadian egg industry. Run by a board of 16 directors, comprising one egg farmer from each province, one from the Northwest Territories, and four industry stakeholders (EFC, 2015, People, Board of Directors, para. 1). Stakeholders include three representatives of the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council and one from the Consumers' Association of Canada. EFC elects a chairperson each year from its board (Ibid).

- **Important Regulations and Programs**: The National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice (enforced by EFC); EFC Animal Care Program; EFC Start-Clean-Stay-Clean Program

**Federal Legislation Structuring the Canadian Egg Industry**

1. **Farm Products Agencies Act** – provides the legal foundation for national marketing agencies and their supervisory council; establishes and delegates authority to these bodies; national quotas and levies set through this Act.

   - Contains 31 regulatory instruments: 5 Proclamations, made by the Governor in Council on recommendation of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the FPCC, to establish national marketing boards and delegate authority to them; 36 instruments, created by national marketing agencies, to set quotas and levies.

2. **Agricultural Products Marketing Act** – delegates federal authority over interprovincial and export trade to provincial commodity boards.

   - Contains 65 regulatory instruments (FPCC, 2015, FPCC's Regulatory Interpretation Policy, para. 3): 90 first level delegation orders through which the federal government delegates authority to provincial commodity boards; 75 instruments that are a mix of levy orders and regulations created by, and under the responsibility of provincial commodity boards (Ibid).

3. **Canada Agricultural Products Act** – regulates the marketing of agricultural products in import, export and interprovincial trade and provides national standards and grades for agricultural commodities. Administered through the CFIA.

4. **Food and Drug Act** – applies to the health and safety of food, drugs, cosmetics and therapeutic devices; includes provisions in regards to the prohibition, labelling and packaging, sanitary manufacturing, inspection, importation and interprovincial movement of food. The CFIA is responsible for all provisions related to food.

5. **The Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act** – regulate the consistency and accuracy of the labelling and packaging of consumer goods (Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, RSC 1985, c. C-38). The CFIA is responsible for administering and enforcing these regulations as they relate to food (CFIA, 2015, List of Acts and Regulations).

**Provincial Bodies Governing the Ontario Egg Industry**

1. **Provincial Cabinet** – responsible for creating or dissolving provincial marketing boards and for defining regulated commodities, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It establishes each board's electoral governance structure and appoints a director
to provincial supervisory councils and commissions.

2. **The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)** – responsible for Ontario's food and agricultural sectors and rural communities and works in conjunction with the federal agricultural department to develop policies regarding animal welfare, food safety, rural development, agricultural planning, food and beverage manufacturing and agricultural trade. OMAFRA established the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission in order to administer legislation and provide leadership and education programs to Ontario marketing boards.

3. **Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission** – accountable for the conduct and impact of Ontario's regulated marketing system and made up of private citizens appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Commission has four main roles:
   
   1. Administers legislation and regulations of the Farm Products Marketing Act and the Milk Act.
   2. Provides leadership to Ontario's marketing boards in the form of advice, facilitation and direction.
   3. Develops and implements policies governing Ontario's regulated marketing system.
   4. Develops education programs for marketing boards and industry stakeholders.

4. **Egg Farmers of Ontario** – the provincial egg marketing board for Ontario. Operated by councillors, elected from ten zones across Ontario. The number of councillors designated to represent each zone depends on the number of egg quota holders operating within the zone (Eggs: Plan, RRO 1990, Reg. 409 s. 6- s. 8). Board of directors consists of one councillor for each zone, elected as director, as well as a pullet director to represent Ontario pullet producers (EFO, 2015, EFO Team).

   - *Important Regulations and Programs*: Egg Quota Policy; New Entrant Policy; Home Week Policy; Market Growth Allowance Program; General Regulations

**Provincial Legislation Structuring the Ontario Egg Industry**

1. **Farm Products Marketing Act and Milk Act** – outline the powers and responsibilities of participants in Ontario's regulated marketing system, including supply management marketing boards. The Milk Act applies to Ontario's dairy industry, while the FPMA applies to all other farm commodities produced in Ontario. The FPMA established the Farm Products Marketing Commission and enabled the development of provincial marketing boards. Gives the Commission authority to control and regulate the production and marketing of farm products and to settle disputes as they arise. Also appoints powers to the Commission which it may then delegate to provincial marketing boards. Regulations under the FPMA relevant to the Ontario egg industry include:


• Eggs: Marketing Limitations, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 408: requires EFO to set up a quota system and to ensure the number of eggs produced in Ontario accord with the national quota. Reg. 408 also gives EFO the power to make orders and regulations, and requires the organization to collect levies on behalf of the EFC.

• Eggs: Marketing: R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 407: dictates the powers the Commission delegates to EFO.

• Arbitration of Disputes: R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 389: determines that any party to a dispute may refer the matter to the Commission and request that it be settled by an arbitrator or board of arbitration. The regulation lays out the requirements for bringing a dispute to the Commission and explains the process of arbitration.

2. EFO General Regulations – enforce the egg quota system and marketing system on producers, graders, wholesalers and other industry players. Require licensing with EFO, enforce levies set by EFC and additional levies to support the provincial Board, and set licensing and reporting requirements (EFO, 2014, General Regulations). Detail penalties for the failure to pay levies, and dictate the procedure for EFO to suspend or revoke licenses. Enforce product testing, seizure, detention, release and disposal regulations laid out by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (Ibid).
Title: Egg Consumer Knowledge and Demands

Introduction: The purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding of the relationship between agricultural producers and consumers and to evaluate the impact of consumer demand on producers. This research will also seek to develop policy prescriptions that will improve consumer producer relations. The researcher for this study is Deborah Carroll, a Masters student from Carleton University. She is working under the supervision of Dr. Patricia Ballamigie in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. This study involves an online survey with egg consumers/an in-person survey with egg consumers. The survey should take between 2 and 5 minutes to complete and the responses will remain completely anonymous. You can choose to withdraw at any time while you are filling out the survey by simply exiting the survey without submitting your responses/by asking the researcher to stop the survey process. Once you have submitted the data you can no longer withdraw from the study. The responses are anonymous, therefore it will be impossible to trace your data in order to remove it from the research. All research data will be encrypted and password-protected. Research data will only be accessible by the researcher and the research supervisor. The host server does not have ownership over the data, it is completely under the ownership of the researcher. Once the project is completed, all research data will be securely destroyed. Electronic data will be erased and hard copies shredded. This project was reviewed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board, which provided clearance to carry out the research. Should you have questions or concerns related to your involvement in this research, please contact: Professor Andy Adler, chair of the Carleton University Research Ethics Board at 613-520-2517 or ethics@carleton.ca. Or contact the researcher at 613-407-6858 or deborahcarroll@cmail.carleton.ca.

Are you currently residing in Eastern Ontario?

Yes
No

A. Egg Consumption Habits

1. How often do you purchase eggs or egg products?

☐ At least once a week
☐ Every couple weeks
☐ Around once a month
☐ A few times a year
☐ Never

2. What types of egg products do you purchase on a regular basis?

☐ Shell eggs
Liquid egg products

Processed egg products

Other, please specify…

3. How often do you purchase eggs or egg products from alternative venues (anywhere other than conventional grocery stores)?

- Always
- Often, but sometimes I purchase from conventional grocery stores
- Sometimes, but often I purchase from conventional grocery stores
- Rarely
- Never

4. When/if you purchase eggs or egg products from alternative venues why do you choose to do so? (check all that apply)

- Community building
- Environmental concerns
- Animal welfare concerns
- A desire to know where my food is coming from and how it is produced
- A desire to support local farmers
- Other, please specify…

5. When/if you purchase eggs or egg products from conventional grocery stores why do you choose to do so? (check all that apply)

- Convenience
- Cost
- Other, please specify…

6. How often do you purchase alternatively produced eggs or egg products (i.e. organic, free range, omega-3)?

- Always
- Often, but I sometimes buy conventionally produced egg products
Sometimes, but I often buy conventionally produced egg products

- Rarely
- Never

7. When/if you purchase alternative products, what kinds of alternatively produced products do you purchase? (check all that apply)

- Organic
- Free range
- Omega-3 enriched
- Other, please specify…

8. When/if you purchase alternative products why do you choose to do so? (check all that apply)

- Health reasons
- Environmental concerns
- Animal welfare concerns
- Other, please specify…

9. When/if you purchase conventionally produced products why do you choose to do so? (check all that apply)

- Convenience
- Cost
- Other, please specify…

B. Access to Information

10. Where do you access information regarding the production of egg products? (check all that apply)

- Commercials and publicity materials of egg production companies
- Egg Farmers of Ontario/Egg Farmers of Canada information materials
- Internet research
11. How well informed do you feel you are regarding the animal welfare regulations and protocols in place in Ontario?
- Well informed
- Moderately well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not well informed

12. How well informed do you feel you are regarding the safety and quality protocols regulating the egg industry in Ontario?
- Well informed
- Moderately well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not well informed

13. Do you know what breed of chicken is used to lay the eggs you purchase?
- No
- Yes, please specify…
- I have an idea but am not sure

14. Do you know how the chickens that lay the eggs you purchase are kept while they are laying?
- No
- Yes, please specify…
- I have an idea but am not sure
C. Assessment of the Ontario Egg Industry

15. Are you satisfied with the current treatment of animals within the egg industry?
   - Fully satisfied
   - Moderately satisfied
   - Somewhat satisfied
   - Unsatisfied
   - Not sure

16. Are you satisfied with current regulations of the Ontario egg industry from what you know of them?
   - Fully satisfied
   - Moderately satisfied
   - Somewhat satisfied
   - Unsatisfied
   - Not sure

17. Do you feel you have access to sufficient reliable information about the production of eggs and egg products in Ontario?
   - Fully sufficient
   - Moderately sufficient
   - Somewhat sufficient
   - Insufficient

Thank you for completing the survey! Your time and energy is greatly appreciated. Have a wonderful day!
Appendix C: Interview Schedule and Sample Questions for Producer Interviews

Opening

A. Introduction

My name is Deborah Carroll and I am a Masters student at Carleton University in the department of Geography and Environmental Studies. I am currently conducting research on consumer demand within Eastern Ontario's egg industry.

B. Description of the Purpose and Motivation for Research

The purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding of the relationship between agricultural producers and consumers and to evaluate the impact of consumer demand on producers. This research will also seek to develop policy prescriptions that will improve consumer producer relations.

I hope to use this information to develop a better understanding of how consumer demand affects egg production and to explore how these demands can be communicated more effectively to producers.

C. Description of the Purpose and Benefits of this Interview

This interview will help me understand your current production practices and how they are influenced by both consumer demand and government interference. I am interviewing three companies of various sizes for comparison purposes. The main focus of this interview is to generate an understanding of how your company responds to and is effected by consumer demand.

D. Timeline and Reminder of Participant Rights

The interview should take about 30 to 40 minutes. It is broken into four sections, first we'll discuss your company's background information, then we'll move on to a discussion of the company's production practices and responses to consumer demand and finally we'll discuss the company's relationship with the government.

You have the right to refuse to respond to any of the following questions. You may also withdraw
from the research entirely at any time during the interview or up until two weeks after it is completed.

Is there anything you need before we begin? Let me know if at any time during the interview you would like to take a break.

**Transition:** Let me begin by asking you some background information about the company/farm.

**Body**

**A. Background Information**

1. Can you provide a brief overview of the history of the company/farm?
2. What kinds of products are produced by your company/farm?
3. Can you describe your company/farm's role in the egg industry (i.e. producer, distributor)?

**Transition:** I'm now going to ask about your production practices.

**B. Production Practices**

4. Can you list the diversity of egg products produced by your company/farm?
5. Can you please describe the general process through which eggs and egg products are produced?
   a) From where does your company source its chickens? What breeds are used and how are they bred?
   b) What is the fate of male chicks bred for egg laying?
   c) How are the chickens kept while producing eggs? At what point are they no longer deemed useful and where are these older birds sent?
   d) Do you produce eggs on site or source from other producers? If you source from others how do you regulate their production practices?
   e) How do you regulate the quality and safety of your products? Please describe your regulations and practices in detail.
   f) How are the products packaged and transported?
6. Can you please describe the main differences in the production of alternative products? For example how does the production of organic eggs differ from the production of conventionally produced eggs? Please be as specific as possible.

**Transition:** Thank you, I'm now going to ask you some questions regarding consumer demand.

Would you like to take a break first?

**C. Consumer Demand**

7. Can you give a sense of the popularity of each of your products?
8. How do you measure the success of each product on the market?
9. How are new products developed and introduced?
10. How does your company assess consumer demand?
11. How are consumer demands incorporated into decision making processes?
12. In what ways would you say consumer demand influences your company's choice of production practices?

Transition: For the final portion of this interview I am going to ask about your company's relationship with the government.

D. The Federal and Provincial Government

13. In what ways does federal and provincial legislation influence your company's production practices?
14. How does your company keep informed of the development or alteration of relevant legislation regarding egg production?
15. What legislation or government bodies are most influential in impacting or regulating your company's production practices?
16. In what ways do you feel the company is restricted or aided by government bodies or legislation?
17. Do you feel federal and provincial legislation protects consumer interests, if so in what ways? If not, in what ways do you feel the government is failing consumers?
18. Do you perceive differences in demands of the government and the demands of consumers? If so, which demands do you prioritize?
19. What changes would you like to see in the regulation of the egg industry?

Closing

Those are all the questions I have regarding my research for now. Is there anything else you feel I should know about your company or anything else you would like to say on the topic?

Participant Feedback

Before I leave, would you mind answering a few questions on the interview itself?

a) Did you find the interview invasive or offensive in any way?

b) Do you feel you were given enough notice and preparation for the interview?

c) Was the location of the interview suitable?

d) Were there any interview questions that made you feel uncomfortable?

e) Did the questions seem appropriate given the overview of the research I gave you at the beginning of the interview?

f) Is there anything you would change about the interview process or questions for the future?
Thank you so much for your time and effort. I may contact you within the next month to schedule a follow up interview if any more questions arise. Would you be open to doing a second, shorter interview?

If you have any questions regarding the research or if you wish to withdraw do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number I've provided you with. If you would like to receive a copy of the final research write-up you can contact me and I will send you a copy upon completion.

I appreciate that you took the time to participate in this study and I will keep in touch.
### Appendix D: Tables Representing Burnbrae Farms Products

#### D.1 Table representing Burnbrae Farms brand products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Product Packaging</th>
<th>Layer Type</th>
<th>Chicken Breed</th>
<th>Feed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade A White Eggs</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Eggs" /></td>
<td>Conventional Caged Housing System</td>
<td>White Leghorn</td>
<td>Grain feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade A Brown Eggs</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Eggs" /></td>
<td>Conventional Caged Housing System</td>
<td>Rhode Island Red</td>
<td>Grain feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free-run Omega-3</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Eggs" /></td>
<td>Free-run Floor System or Free-run Aviary Floor System</td>
<td>White Leghorn and Rhode Island Red</td>
<td>Multi-grain feed with added flaxseed, corn and alfalfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestlaid</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Eggs" /></td>
<td>Enriched Housing System</td>
<td>White Leghorn and Rhode Island Red</td>
<td>Grain feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Bon-EE</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Eggs" /></td>
<td>Conventional Caged Housing System</td>
<td>White Leghorn and Rhode Island Red</td>
<td>Grain feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Eggs" /></td>
<td>Conventional Caged Housing Systems</td>
<td>White Leghorn And Rhode Island Red: young hens only</td>
<td>Grain feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Name</td>
<td>Product Packaging</td>
<td>Layer Type</td>
<td>Chicken Breed</td>
<td>Feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturegg Omega-3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional Caged Housing System</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>All natural feed with added flaxseed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturegg Omega Plus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional Caged Housing System</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feed that contains flaxseed, fish oil and alfalfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturegg Free-run</td>
<td></td>
<td>Free-run floor system or Free-run Aviary floor system</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grain feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturegg Organic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Free-range – access to outdoors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organic grain feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturegg Nature's Best</td>
<td></td>
<td>Caged Housing System</td>
<td>White Leghorn and Rhode Island Red</td>
<td>Vegetarian feed, contains no medications, and is enriched with Vitamins D, E, B12 and Folacin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Images of Egg Layers

**E.1 Image of a conventional egg housing system**

![Image of a conventional egg housing system](http://www.burnbraefarms.com/blog/page.asp?c=0&id=9)


E.1 – Example of a conventional caged housing system published on Burnbrae Farms' Eggs for Life Blog; the image was incorporated into a blog post defending the use of caged systems
E.2 Image of a Free Run floor system

![Image of a Free Run floor system](http://www.burnbraefarms.com/blog/page.asp?c=4&id=8)


E.2 – Example of a free-run floor system published on Burnbrae Farms' Eggs for Life blog; the image was incorporated into a blog post promoting free-run eggs
E.3 Image of an Aviary Free-Run floor system


E.3 – Example of a free-run Aviary floor system published on Burnbrae Farms' Eggs for Life blog; the image was incorporated into a blog post explaining the newly developed system
Appendix F: Materials from Burnbrae Farms’ Website

F.1 Our Farmers page on the Burnbrae Farms website

F.2 ‘From Our Farm to Your Table’ interactive diagram from the Burnbrae Farms’ Website

Appendix G: Materials from Burnbrae Farms’ Facebook Account

G.1 Burnbrae Farms’ Facebook banner

G.2 Egg-tiquette section of the Burnbrae Farms Facebook page


G.2 – Example of the handwritten text used throughout the page
G.3 Cartoon figure from Burnbrae Farms’ Facebook page


G.3 – Example of the cartoon figures found throughout the Burnbrae Farms Facebook page
G.4 Image posted to the Burnbrae Farms Facebook page by a consumer


G.4 – Image posted to the Burnbrae Farms Facebook page from a customer that found a spot in their egg. Sue Hudson responded the same day with an apology.
G.5 Image posted to the Burnbrae Farms Facebook page by a consumer


G.5 – Image posted to Burnbrae Farms by a customer concerned about the treatment of male chicks in the egg industry. The consumer did not receive a response.
Appendix H: Materials from Burnbrae Farms' Twitter Account

H.1 Burnbrae Farms retweet from The Grocery Foundation

![Retweet from The Grocery Foundation](https://twitter.com/BurnbraeFarms)

We'd like to say thank you to @BurnbraeFarms for their help to feed hungry students! #loveONTfood


H.1 – Retweet by Burnbrae Farms of a post by the charity The Grocery Foundation thanking the company
H.2 Tweet by Burnbrae Farms highlighting a company shoreline cleanup initiative

H.3 A personal tweet by Burnbrae Farms about a family archive project

H.4 Casual Tweet by Burnbrae Farms

Appendix I: Burnbrae Farms Brand Logos and Specialty Labels

I.1 Image of the Burnbrae Farms logo

![Burnbrae Farms Logo](http://www.burnbraefarms.com/consumer/our_products/index.htm)


I.2 Image of the Super Bon-EE Logo

![Super Bon-EE Logo](http://www.burnbraefarms.com/consumer/our_products/shell_super_bon_ee.htm)


I.3 Image of the Prestige Logo

![Prestige Logo](http://www.burnbraefarms.com/consumer/our_products/shell_naturegg_prestige.htm)

I.4 Image of the Naturegg Logo

Appendix J: Recurring Photograph in Burnbrae Farms’ Online Marketing

Appendix K: Reinink Family Farm Images

K.1 Image of Hank-John at the Reinink Family Farm stand at the Kingston Farmers Market

K.2 Image of Reinink Family Farm packaging


K.2 - Reinink Family Farms dozen Extra Large organic eggs carton
Appendix L: Covenant Farm Materials

L.1 Covenant Farm Facebook post promoting produce to be sold at Vankleek Farmers Market

L.3 Covenant Farm Facebook post – quote from the film Food Inc.

L.4 Covenant Farm Facebook post about their free-range hens

L.5 – Covenant Farm Facebook album

L.6 Covenant Farm Facebook post promoting a fellow local business


L.6 – Covenant Farm Facebook page promoting Garden Path Homemade Soap, a local company that sells product alongside Covenant Farm at the Vankleek Farmers Market
L.7 Image of Caroline Levesque, co-owner of Covenant Farm, posted to the Covenant Farm Facebook account

Hello, my name is Caroline and I’m your farmer.
Bonjour, je m’appelle Caroline. Je suis votre ferrière.