

The role of Landsbygdens Folk in the Changing Community of Young Farmers

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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>Many news consumers are abandoning print media for digital news, especially so-called Millennials, people under 35 years of age. The newspaper Landsbygdens Folk, targeted at Swedish-speaking farmers in Finland, is exploring ways of better reaching and serving the younger readers. To understand how young farmers see their community and the role of Landsbygdens Folk within it, ten qualitative interviews were carried out among young trustees from the farming community. The data was analyzed using thematic content analysis in order to answer the research question “how can LF help strengthen the community of the young farmers, today and in the future?” The most important themes of the interviews were sense of belonging, adaptation and need for information. The young farmers feel a strong sense of belonging to their community, with Landsbygdens Folk acting as a provider of information while easing adaptation within a society that is constantly changing. The farming community is also changing, with social media playing an important role in validating identity and offering peer support. Landsbygdens Folk is still seen as relevant and trustworthy by the young farmers, but in order for the newspaper to better serve them, more efforts need to be made to integrate the readers as co-creators of news. By listening to the readers and adapting along with them, the newspaper can make sure that the topics covered are of importance to the farmers, facilitating their work and strengthening their community today and in the future.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The newspaper industry is going through changes, with many readers abandoning print for digital news. Especially Millennials, people under 35 years of age, are getting their news mostly online today. (Fleming 2015; Mutter 2012) In light of this information, the newspaper Landsbygdens Folk has woken up to the evident lack of comments from Millennials on its Facebook page. Older readers comment and share the news posted on the page, but younger people seem to be missing from the picture.

Since LF is a membership newspaper for Swedish-speaking farmers in Finland, it is crucial for the newspaper to remain relevant to its readers, or the organization that owns the paper, Svenska Lantbruksproducenternas Centralförbund SLC, will simply cease to publish it. So far LF, published since 1947, has had a strong role in the Swedish-speaking community, but the question about how the younger readers see the role of LF today has not been studied.

With the number of farms in Finland declining each year, (Luke 2017) LF:s circulation is also naturally declining with a disappearing readership base. Within the time span of just one year, from 2016 to 2017, the number of printed copies decreased from 8.100 to 7.200, with high postage- and printing costs combined with plummeting advertising revenues causing further strain on the budget.

However, the number of cows or pigs, for example, is hardly declining at all, and neither is the land area that is being farmed, which means that the average farm size is expanding while smaller farms quit (see Appendix 1). There are young people coming into the business, but the business itself is changing.

These factors have led to discussions within the LF newsroom and the board of SLC about what direction the paper should take for the future. Should LF be digitized completely at some point, and the print version terminated? If this happened, would the

readers still want to belong to SLC? And when the young people take over their farms, in what form will they want to receive their news?

A survey conducted among LF readers in 2013 showed that a major reason to be a member of SLC is to receive the newspaper LF, with 90 percent of respondents under the age of 40 seeing it as a necessity (See Appendix 2). A large part of the young people who have taken up farming today did not participate in that survey since they were not yet members of SLC, leaving their opinions unheard.

Since the change is unlikely to take place within the next few years, the focus is now being turned towards the young farmers who have recently come into the business. These Millennials have different reading habits than their older peers, and their opinions about LF and its relevance is unknown. This study will, therefore, look at the problem of the future for LF, through the eyes of the young farmers of SLC.

1.2 Choice of Topic

The reason for this study is a knowledge deficit that exists within the newsroom of LF. At the moment, no research exists about how young Swedish-speaking farmers in Finland see their community, or what their thoughts are on LF and how it serves them. The young farmers still belong to SLC, paying a yearly fee for their membership, which means that they receive the newspaper. Whether they read it or consider it to be relevant is unknown.

The young farmers who have been elected trustees of SLC by their peers have an active role within the organization, and they arrange yearly meetings, trips abroad and other social gatherings. Many young farmers are featured in stories in LF, but there is no follow-up on who reads the articles, or if they spur any feedback for the person featured.

Since the young farmers are the LF readers of the future, this study will focus on their lives at this point in time. The study aims to find out how young farmers see their community, and how social media affects their sense of belonging to that community.

The research question is, therefore: how can LF help strengthen the community of the young farmers, today and in the future?

Since the newspaper is aimed at a specific community, this study will also seek to understand whether or not the young farmers feel as if they are part of a larger community – one that is specifically made up of Swedish speaking farmers. If there is a way of identifying this sense of belonging, there could also be a link between this sense and the role of LF within the community.

The theory generated is not meant to be one absolute truth, but rather a collection of thoughts, feelings, and viewpoints from a very important part of the readership that has not yet been heard. Hearing these readers out now can hopefully steer the newspaper in a direction that could potentially salvage it from obliteration, and instead add to the strengthening of the farming community also in the forthcoming years. The purpose, regardless of the theory formed, is therefore to make a contribution to the discussion of the future of Landsbygdens Folk.

The theory will be based on research about belonging, social groups, membership and communities, and how young people of today read newspapers on a whole. The research is bound to be inductive since there is no hypothesis to test in the interview situation.

1.3 Method

Since the research question of this study is based on an actual problem that needs addressing, there was a predisposed sense of what ground needed to be covered in order to obtain the right kind of answers. The question driving the study was based on the knowledge that young farmers are active within the organization as well as within the online farming community, and they are familiar with the newspaper LF. This meant that there was common ground to start from, and that the young farmers would likely see the benefit in participating in the study.

A pilot study was carried out with one young SLC member, and it brought forward some important points about how to formulate qualitative interview questions in order to obtain relevant data for the study. This pilot study, along with a background study about the Facebook activity and group membership of the young farmers, led to a few predisposed theories about what the answer to the questions might be.

This predisposition was the cornerstone of the interviews. The data that was generated through the ten qualitative interviews proved to have similarities to the pilot study, but also enough variations to call for use of both content analysis and grounded theory to look for new theory within the replies.

By going through the pilot study and Facebook groups, keywords like community, digital newspapers, sense of belonging and reader participation emerged from the data. These keywords were used to identify studies where similar findings had been made. The main topics were selected to be sense of belonging, online communities, newspapers as community builders, newspaper convergence, as well as Millennials and newspaper reading.

With a fair amount of previous similar studies available, a theoretical framework could be structured before the interviews. None of the studies found were closely related to the topic of this study, but the commonalities were strong enough to validate the choices in order to build the theory to form the questions on. This theory was also used when analyzing and discussing the findings generated by the data analysis.

This setup could have allowed for a hypothesis to be formed prior to the interviews, which could again have been used to form a questionnaire for a quantitative study. However, with the small number of young farmers within SLC, a survey would likely not reach out to enough participants, nor would it have been likely to generate a high enough response rate. This was in part proven by previous reader surveys in 2010 and 2013 that generated response rates as low as 23 and 30 percent respectively. (SLC)

Since the author of this study has worked as a journalist and editor at LF for several years, a relativist position, where facts depend on the viewpoint of the observer, was

taken. (Mills et al. 2014) This position affected both how previous knowledge was used in formulating theory and questions, as well as how the responses were analyzed. Theoretical sensitivity is always needed, but the experience that the researcher brings to the research influences the sensitivity towards theory and how the data is analyzed. (Mills et al. 2014) Having knowledge about the living conditions, the culture and the jargon of the interviewees makes the researcher more sensitive to local ethic-political questions that should be taken into consideration in the reports and interviews (Kvale et al. 2009).

The final theory turned out to be a hybrid between content analysis and grounded theory, also called thematic content analysis (Burnard et al 2008).

The first step of coding the data from the interviews was done with content analysis since previous theories were applied in the analysis stage. However, since new concepts emerged from the data, grounded theory was applied to generate new theory from previously unknown phenomena. Previous theories are based on slightly similar studies, but could not be applied directly to the case.

The grounded theory, founded by Glaser and Straus in the 1960s, is presented as a tool for handling and categorizing information gained through qualitative interviews (Kvale et al. 2009; Mills et al. 2014). Constructivist grounded theory allows for the researcher to use prior knowledge in developing a theory, instead of setting it aside to develop new ones. In constructivist grounded theory, reflexivity is of extreme importance. The researcher is striving to see the world from the respondent's standpoint while also analyzing the interaction between researcher and participants. Grounded theory data remains the same no matter what methodological standpoint one takes. (Mills et al. 2014) This method was applied to the new data in this study that did not fit into pre-identified themes that were extracted from the pilot study and theory chapter (SkillsYouNeed).

1.4 Sampling

Since no previous study on the topic existed, the data for the content analysis had to be obtained from the young farmers themselves. Different approaches were considered before deciding on qualitative interviews.

The first phase of the study was to participate in an SLC reader board meeting. The reader board meets up a few times a year in order to discuss the newspaper and its contents. At this meeting, the idea of the study was presented, and the board members discussed different topics that could be studied that would potentially help LF find a path for the future. One of the aspects, presented by the editor-in-chief of LF, was to study the activity of young SLC members online. This amounted in the first draft of the research topic, which was to look at how connected young farmers are online, and if LF could find a bigger role in their community online. The background for this study was the assumption that the young farmers actively discuss farming issues online, but simply not on LF:s Facebook page. Another assumption was that they prefer their news in the form of news feeds, either on an Internet page or directly as an application on their smartphone or tablet.

Based on these assumptions, an initial study was carried out. Facebook news feeds were searched for evidence of a thriving online community, and Facebook group discussions were followed. The first study phase showed that young farmers do belong to many different farming-themed Facebook groups (see Appendix 5), but judging by the discussions within the public groups, the participation is not very active.

Having completed this research, a netnography, which was first considered as a possible method for this study, was ruled out because it would not generate the data needed to answer the research question. Therefore, the data from these groups was used as base material for a qualitative interview study.

The goal was now to carry out ten qualitative interviews with young, active members of the SLC. More active members, trustees, were selected, because they have a touch base with the other young farmers in the area, and attend local meetings. The trustees were

suggested both by a gatekeeper, a person who acted as a facilitator in getting in touch with interviewees, and by the editor-in-chief of LF. The young trustees were thought to have taken part in discussions in the field about LF, and have more thoughts on their community, as well as being representatives of their local departments of SLC.

For this purpose, twenty young farmers from different parts of Finland were selected and approached on Facebook, over the telephone or face-to-face, with the request to participate in the interviews. Of these twenty, half agreed, some immediately and some after a few reminders. The respondents were all under the age of 35, five female and five male. Three of the Facebook requests remained unread, but these members were not further pursued since a sufficient number of participants had been obtained.

The interviews were carried out over Facebook Messenger, by e-mail, face-to-face, and over the telephone. At the beginning of the study, the editor-in-chief of LF pointed out that asking for ideas and comments concerning something hypothetical is a risk, since the respondents may say they would use a certain type of service, when in fact they might not. Since the aim of this study is not as much to find a solution for capturing the attention of the young farmers, as it is to understand their behavior and sense of belonging to a community, the questions were based not so much on hypothetical situations, but instead on the reality of the farmers today.

When asking young farmers to participate in this study, Facebook generated faster responses than an SMS or e-mail. When asked about the reason for this, the farmers said that social media is a convenient way of communicating due to the nature of agriculture as a job: farming is very hands-on, with less sitting in front of a computer and more actually doing things with one's hands. This makes taking a phone call at a specific time more difficult than simply answering a question online when taking a break from work. Many of the young farmers also study agriculture, and social media can be easily accessed during classes.

The Facebook interviews generated both short answers and very in-depth replies. One respondent replied right away, but most had to be reminded several times to take part in the study. The face-to-face interviews were the most fluent ones to carry out, with dis-

cussions held after a trustee meeting. Ideas were exchanged and follow-up questions easy to pose, and the interviews turned into a natural discussion. The replies were typed down on a computer during the discussions. However, the most emotionally saturated replies, with the most off-topic ideas as well as the harshest critique towards both LF and SLC, were obtained through Facebook. The respondents received several questions over Facebook Messenger, and the replies were either posted in Messenger or sent by e-mail. The telephone interviews were the most formal, generating more general and friendly replies, but with noise in the background proving to be an aggravating factor. The timing of the telephone interviews also turned out to be more difficult, with follow-up questions sent by e-mail, followed by reminders to turn in the missing replies.

1.5 Ethical Considerations

It is important to have permission from organizations and associations when conducting research on their premises (Repstad 1999; Mills et al. 2014). Since LF is a membership newspaper, this study has been approved by SLC. The CEO of SLC was asked for permission when taking on the study, and the editor-in-chief of LF closely involved in selecting the direction of the study. Individual permission from each interviewee has also been obtained, and respondents have been informed about how the information collected will be used, what the title of the research will be, and what institution lies behind the research; in this case both Arcada and LF.

The study was going to be covert to some extent since the Facebook groups are public and the group members did not know about the study. The interviews, however, were overt and the participants knew about the reason for the study, as well as how their replies would be used. The interviewees knew that their answers could potentially impact LF, as well as be the base material for this study.

From previous work with the farmers for journalistic articles, it has been obvious that some people are more reluctant to participate in news articles than others. Everybody is not keen on being interviewed and everybody does not wish to have his or her opinion stated publicly. This is why the respondents for this study were individuals who are actively involved in the farming community, and may feel they are in a way obliged to

reply and represent their peers. Repstad (1999) notes that individuals who do not usually take interest in academic research might be persuaded to take part in an interview if the researcher explains that the study will have practical value. However, one should not over-emphasize the change that the study might bring, because there might not be either will nor need for change, nor is it even said that the research will prove to give a valid answer to the research question. This was also explained to the respondents.

Since the group of young farmers most actively involved with the organization SLC is small, it is important not to reveal details about their age, gender or geographical location. The interviewees were made aware of the fact that everything they say is confidential, and all comments they make will be generalized so they cannot be traced back to a specific person. The differences in responses were therefore not pinpointed to a certain location, gender nor age. This proved to be a challenge when selecting quotes for the data analysis since many quotes contained keywords about either region or specialization within the farming industry.

It is important to establish whether the interview situation could cause unwanted stress for the respondents (Kvale et al. 2009). Since farming takes place in natural cycles according to seasons, the interviews were carried out during winter and early spring when the workload for the farmers was as low as possible. Because most of the farmers live in rural areas in different parts of Finland, the distance between their homes is extensive. To facilitate their participation in the study, the interviews were carried out either online, by telephone or during the times the young farmers held meetings at the office of SLC in Helsinki.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will look at how a community can be strengthened by local news and social media, how newspapers can choose to adapt to the changing demands of today's society, and finally at how Millennials consume news according to previous studies on the topic. By combining theory from these three sections, questions were formed that were then posed to the young farmers. The reason for the choice of these topics was also to find patterns that could help generate themes for the upcoming data analysis.

2.1 Community, Local News, and Convergence

Active involvement in a community online, by posting comments on social media or helping others with questions, may strengthen a community's goals, since it adds to each individual's community integration. If members feel acknowledged, they also see it as important to continue belonging to that community. (Sánchez-Franco et al. 2012) Social media platforms can perhaps even be considered central spaces for social interaction, alongside physical spaces, since most people are constantly connected to the Internet. The Internet is, when comparing it to previous forms of media, the most like physical reality. This has led not only to, what Ruotsalainen and Heinonen (2015) call a "networked individual", creating user communities online, but also to a networked society. (Freeman & Park 2015)

One's sense of community also affects how credible a news source is perceived. If social connections deem information or news as credible, that will be the standard for other community members to base their judgment on as well. (Hernandez et al. 2015) Knowing someone in the news also makes people connect even stronger to the story (Zerba 2011).

Hernandez et al. (2015) suggest that in order for a community newspaper to survive and even thrive, it has to focus on strengthening the target community. This especially means involving the readers online in the news making process and focusing on what it is they need as well as how they consume media. Another important aspect mentioned by the two authors is switching their value creating strategy "from attention to trust". A printed newspaper needed to get the attention of a reader, but with the 24/7 news flow online, trust can be much harder to gain and much more important when it comes to adding value. The newspapers should build on the trust they have gained over generations, and find a new way of being influential within a community.

A local newspaper can have a large impact on a small local community, and many local newspapers have proven to be successful online. During events, good or bad, in a certain area, they can provide accurate and up-to-date information also to readers outside the community area and to people who do not usually read them. (Cover 2012, Kahn &

Davoudi 2011). Community print media has so far had a community-building role, impacting the wellbeing of the community by providing information that has not been available elsewhere. However, with networked communication online, the local newspaper is facing a new form of competition, which may reflect how the community functions. Still, there is no evidence that the community would stop reading a local print newspaper simply because there is information available online, and, in fact, the Internet helps the local newspaper distribute information to people in the community and beyond. (Cover 2012)

For the community newspapers of today, the same three options remain that were available to the major metropolitan daily newspapers already in the early 2000s. The newspaper can choose to stick to a print version, transition to a fully digital version, or choose dual publication. (Cover 2012) The content online, however, can be published in many different forms, still preserving both the value and the objective of the content (Lozic & Lozic 2015).

Because the social change in local communities is constant, and the developments in technology quick, news firms struggle to keep up. The value chain is changing as well, meaning that the newspaper has to stop simply providing, and instead involving the community in both production and distribution. The only way to keep up is to be more connected and trust the readers more. The news firms are yet to take advantage of this opportunity, as most do not utilize the possibility of co-creation, at least not within the core value chain of the newspaper. (Hernandez et al. 2015)

2.2 How Newspapers can Tackle Change

Since the newspapers are being bombarded with demands to change, one has to look at what can be done within the newsrooms to meet this new requirement. The very idea of the newspaper could be changed significantly today, with the interactivity that the Internet has brought along. The readers do not have to be, as Robinson (2010) puts it, "them", and the newsroom "we", but instead these two can interact and even intertwine. However, in most cases, the news staff is the barrier that stops this from happening. The newspaper may be placed in a digital environment, but the same old familiar values are

used, and although reader interaction is frequently discussed, it still to this day rarely happens. Only a change in this way of thinking will allow newsrooms to fully utilize the potential that the Internet offers when it comes to shortening the gap and strengthening the ties between the newspaper and its readers. (Robinson 2010; Hernandez et al. 2015)

Within a single newsroom, there may be several opinions on how the news should be collected and presented. Some journalists may still believe it is the job of the journalist to decide on and write the stories for the public, while others may feel the readers should have more influence over the process. The chaotic nature of this process, and the newsrooms' inability to fully take advantage of its potential,¹ shows how little the industry still knows about what is to come, and how much of a struggle it is to find a new identity in a shifting news environment. There is no absolute truth, and all attempts that are being made by different news agencies to adapt to the situation are trials with an unknown outcome. (Robinson 2010)

For years, the only way for readers to create newspaper content was through letters to the editor. The journalists were in charge of what got published, and the hierarchal structure was clear. These days, the comments on social media sites have challenged that hierarchy, and the whole infrastructure of news production has shifted. It has gone from linear, one-way journalism, to an information flow that can go from newsroom to reader and from reader to newsroom.

The fact that the news flow goes both ways also brings opportunities. (Robinson 2010) Studies show that the background of a journalist influences the stories he or she chooses to write about (Pang et al. 2014). The public with all its knowledge is now available like never before for the news publishers, which could bring new angles to the stories (Robinson 2010; Hernandez et al. 2015). The readers are just a click away, changing not only how media is consumed, but also how it is made. All the newsrooms have to do is reach out to the readers and listen to what they want. The readers can also contribute to news making, making journalism much more democratic than it used to be. This could be called collaborative news. (Robinson 2010)

For some reason, many newsrooms feel they have to make the digitization happen as soon as possible, without really looking into what model might work best for their audience. Readers are excluded from the process, although their opinions are more readily available for the newspapers than ever before. (Mutter 2014) Data can easily be collected over the Internet today, and it can also help in identifying trends and topics that are attracting or failing to attract readers (Maerz 2015). A study conducted by the University of Missouri in 2014 reported that only 29 percent of newspapers that put up pay walls had asked their intended consumers what they thought about the idea. Instead, they relied on the opinions of newspapers that had already put up pay walls. In retrospect, the pay walls turned out to be the last straw for the Millennial readers, turning them further away from digital newspapers. (Mutter 2014) This shows that it is important to first learn what the audience prefers. Therefore, conducting research among readers is essential in finding features that the readers will appreciate. (Diehl & Karmasin 2013)

It is evident that production method will have to change along with the consumption pattern as advertising revenues continue to decline for print newspapers (Siles & Boczkowski 2012). According to data from 2014, the amount of people reading online news is on the rise, as well as people reading news only on mobile phones. Yet, 54 percent of the people from 150 large markets, interviewed by Scarborough Research, still read their local newspaper only in print. The same research shows that only 30 percent read the news both in digital and print form, and about 15 percent use digital-only. (Edmonds 2014)

Although one might think that more information available means less time reading news, this is in fact not the case (Mutter 2013; Cover 2012). A study described by Mutter (2013) shows that while 68 percent of people who use a computer check the headlines daily, 88 percent of those who use a combination of devices check the headlines frequently throughout the day. Since people are online all the time and everywhere, news consumption has become a natural part of our daily life, giving newspapers new opportunities to reach their readers. (Ihlström & Henfridsson 2005)

Even looking at large newspapers, it is evident that no absolute truth exists when it comes to digitizing a newspaper. They are still struggling to find a working model, and what works for one newspaper might not work for another. Sometimes it seems to be up to chance if the concept will be successful. What is present everywhere though, is the decline in print circulation and advertising revenue. (Schlesinger & Doyle 2014)

2.3 How Millennials Prefer their News

As stated above, a newspaper cannot simply follow the path it has followed for decades if it wants to appeal to younger readers and be relevant within a community. The reading preferences of young readers must be kept in mind if a newspaper wants to remain relevant to its younger audience. The print newspaper has lost its function as the primary source for information for people under the age of 45, and the percentage of people using the Internet as a news source is on the rise in all age groups. There is also an increase in the percentage of people using more than one device for following news, with computers, smartphones, and tablets being the most popular options. (Fletcher et al. 2015; Mutter 2013. Although many readers still prefer print, apps and mobile sites are required in order to reach all the potential readers. The transformation is no longer just about online news, it is about being available, on whichever platform the consumer may prefer. The change should not be seen as a threat but as an evolution. (Westlund & Fär-digh 2015; Kahn & Davoudi 2011)

For traditional media like newspapers, a new challenge is how to manage the growing differences between generations. While all age groups use online and print media, people over 45 use digital media as a complement for print news, while younger people mostly get their news from different online channels. (Fletcher et al. 2015) Although Millennials still read newspapers to a certain extent, they prefer images and videos to text (Mutter 2014). However, when it comes to reading, print media is still standard also for Millennials, who prefer their online news to resemble it (Fleming 2015).

In a study, young people had the opportunity to not only share why they do not read newspapers, if that is the case, but also to suggest how they would improve them. One big reason for nonuse was inconvenience. They simply found it difficult to get a hold of

the newspaper, find the time needed to read it while not being able to multitask, and then having to recycle the paper. The respondents also found the news to be old by the time it was printed. Additionally, they felt that the news was more angled towards older readers, and reported it to be hard to skim through such a large amount of material in order to find something of relevance to them. (Zerba 2011)

The good news for media firms is that the Millennials are still interested in news; they simply consume it in a new way. A study conducted by the American Press Institute together with the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research in 2015, revealed that 85 percent of the Millennials surveyed said that they found it somewhat important to follow the news, and 69 percent read the news every day. The survey also showed that as much as 94 percent of the Millennials who took part in the study had smartphones with an Internet connection, and the number increases yearly. Mobile news sites are therefore crucial to young readers. (Maerz 2015) The Millennials use their mobile devices everywhere, and will only choose to read an article if it is interesting enough or evokes enough emotional response. If they do not like something, they can even make their own content. (Mutter 2014)

For stories that evoke emotions or reactions, young people like to share what they read over social media, meaning that they react to what they see instead of simply being a passive reader. More people prefer to comment on the articles on a social media site than directly on the newspaper or broadcast website. (Mutter 2013) According to a survey conducted in January 2016 by Pew Research Center, Facebook still leads the race for most popular news source among the social media sites, counted in percentage of people reached. There is even an increase in the numbers since Pew's last survey in 2013, with 47 percent of users getting news on Facebook in 2013, to 66 percent in 2016.

When it comes to trusting news sources, people under 30 still see newspapers as being more reliable than social media (Fleming, 2015; Young 2014). In a study conducted by Reuters in January/February 2015, Finland was the country whose residents put most trust in news media, with 68 percent answering yes when asked if they could trust most news most of the time. The average for all countries was 48 percent, with the United States having the lowest percentage, 32 percent. At the same time, Finnish readers were

more likely to read trusted newspaper brands online than new digital born news sources. Of the online news read in Finland, 88 percent consisted of traditional brands, compared to 24 percent for the digital born sources. The explanation is that in Finland the strong newspaper brands and strong public service broadcasters have captured most of the online market, making it hard for newcomers to find room. (Fletcher et al. 2015) The value of trusted broadcasting channels remains strong everywhere: there might be breaking news topics that first appear in social media, but both Millennials and other social media users turn to broadcasting companies to confirm the accuracy of the news (Fleming, 2015; Young 2014).

3 THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1 The Coding Process

The interviews were based mainly on the knowledge deficit in the LF newsroom combined with the main themes of the theory chapter. The main questions to the young farmers were whether or not they feel part of a farming community, what role LF has in their professional lives, as well as the role it potentially could have. When the pilot interview was carried out, some of these themes automatically emerged from the replies. The questions were modified a bit for every new interview, partly to gain a greater understanding of these specific areas.

The open coding of the data from the interviews generated over a hundred different codes. Most referred to feelings, personal preferences and opinions. Some also described actions, experiences, the nature of the work, and thoughts about the future.

Since LF was being studied and a recurrent theme of the questions, many codes were ideas about how the newspaper could be changed, as well as which parts work today, and which parts do not.

When the data was being coded, all codes were constantly compared to the ones previously coded. Some codes were merged at this point, others were merged when all coding was completed and saturation reached.

The merging was based on similarities of the codes, for example, codes like “sense of fellowship”, “part of the gang” and “like-minded people” were merged into “identification”. This code, then, was part of the larger theme “sense of belonging”.

When the first stage of merging categories was complete, the closed coding began. The new sets of codes were grouped together according to their sub-categories, and these codes were merged again, until only three sub-categories remained for each theme.

The interviews were then color coded according to the sub-categories in order to extract quotes for each sub-theme.

The system turned out to be a hybrid between content analysis and grounded theory. It generated the following themes and sub-themes:

Sense of belonging:

Identification

Online support

Validation

Adaptation:

Focus on the future

Shifting identity

Global perspective

Need for information:

Local perspective

Facilitating work

Strengthening community

3.2 Results

The responses show that young farmers see their job as a large part of their identity. They also feel like they are part of a larger community that is exclusive to farmers. This was one of the main themes, and was coded as “sense of belonging”. The sense is enforced by a feeling of recognizability in photos, memes, and posts about farming, sub-coded “identification”. It is also enforced when farmers meet up and do things together as a group. As one farmer puts it:

“I do feel like I belong to a certain fellowship of Finnish-Swedish farmers especially when spring tillage starts or when you go to farming shows!”

This feeling is also strengthened by stories in LF:s posts online where the farmer him- or herself is mentioned. By clicking the like-button under a comment, the person shows support for the cause, although commenting remains at a minimum. This is often the case, with almost all respondents claiming to be members in many farming groups on Facebook and following farming feeds on Instagram, but rarely ever posting anything themselves.

Even when the respondent did not feel a sense of belonging to a certain Finnish-Swedish farming community, the person still recognized that such a community seems to exist. This was in part explained by many respondents being newcomers in the business, and having recognized a special bond between older peers that was yet to develop among the younger farmers.

In general, the young farmers keep in touch on a weekly basis, but not daily. The Facebook groups they belong to serve as a way of knowing what is going on in the community, and invitations to events with farming topics are usually presented through this forum. Most of all, these groups again add to the sense of belonging to a certain community, and serve as places where questions can be posted and answered among peers. This theme was given the sub-theme “online support”. The communities online also offer mental support and help promote each other’s businesses.

As a young farmers put it:

“The feeling of solidarity is enforced by the knowledge that there are other likeminded people who work within the same industry, you sort of get reminded of it when agricultural things appear in your feed.”

Another sub-theme was “validation”, derived from the support the farmers give each other in strengthening their identity as farmers. The commenting and supporting online and the meetings in real life, as well as reading about peers in LF means that the farmers feel less alone in an industry that is often poorly understood by society.

“It feels good to be part of a community, so you’re not alone as a farmer when society accuses you of this and that.”

The young farmers want to be part of a group, and are actively seeking out information about their peers. Their participation is more passive than active, but it still promotes identification.

“I’m active online to be ‘part of the gang’, and take part in other people’s every-day life and to know what’s happening in the industry.”

The next main theme that was coded was “adaptation”. The farmers have become used to the fact that change is constant, and everything from market prices to subsidy demands change each year. There is only one option, to adapt to the growing demands, or farming would no longer be possible on a large scale. In order to do this, one has to know what is expected, while anticipating what is yet to come. This led to the following sub-theme, “focus on the future”. This theme stands true both for LF and for the farmers themselves:

“There are fewer and fewer of us farmers each day, and this puts pressure on LF to write about things that the specialized farms that remain can benefit from! A fun article about spring tillage isn’t enough anymore unless we get something out of it.”

This subject brought up many opinions on how LF could better serve the farming community by keeping its focus on what the farmers need, especially the ones who want to expand their business. A few respondents suggested looking for SLC members with a forward way of thinking, in order to create more momentum among the whole group.

“I wonder if people get the impact that a really good column would have on creating a mutual direction or a belief in the future or creating a morale, you can sort of reach out to members that way.”

Along with adaptation and forward thinking also came the next sub-theme, “shifting identity”. The respondents clearly acknowledged that their job is different today than it was just a generation ago. Community is a much wider concept thanks to the Internet and a shift towards a more global world. This has affected how the young farmers see themselves and their role within society.

“Access to information and how fast information is spread has changed so vastly in just a few decades. I think most people aren’t as rooted and anchored in a society today as they were before, the level of fellowship that existed only two-three generations ago is gone.”

Some even saw that the whole concept of community has lost its importance today, while it played a big part in the lives of older farming generations. The result is a more connected individual, that might still feel more alone than farmers did before.

“I think it’s much more ‘every man for himself’ today, and not the same team spirit and sense of fellowship that, for example, my grandparents had in their day.”

Since international questions were brought up frequently within the replies, the next sub-theme was “global perspective”. Although young farmers often take over their parents’ farm and are bound geographically to one area like previous farming generations,

it does not mean they do not travel and gain contacts abroad. They have adapted like any Millennials, learning languages, traveling frequently, often to visit farms abroad, and keeping in touch with international colleagues through social media. This also gives them a new perspective on farming:

“I’m a member of Finnish, Swedish and international groups. I find a lot of information and ideas and realize others have it even worse! When I joined Maa-jussit (a Finnish Facebook group) I suddenly started to understand why things are going south for Finnish agriculture.”

This is something the young farmers would also see taken into account by LF. The broader perspective would, according to the farmers, help bring new ideas to the table when the old ones are running dry.

”When there are no more sensible things to write about from the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland, then you should look for inspiration abroad. Since it’s a small community, seeing the same person being interviewed for the 6th time in a year, makes one wonder just a bit...”

The young farmers also recognize the strength in knowing what one is up against:

“The news about the EU is important but dry, everything we do is influenced by the EU in some way. I also think it gives good leverage in debates when one is aware of how much cheating is going on for example in the organic farming industry in Italy, where most scammers have been caught.”

The next main theme, “need for information”, also tied together with the previous themes. This theme, however, came up repeatedly and was dominant in many of the other sub-themes. The farmers stated a need for knowing what is going on, what to do next in terms of deadlines and bureaucracy, as well as a need for a news source in their own language. The first sub-theme in the category was “local perspective”.

“For me, someone who writes about the subsidy jungle and who reminds me what needs to be done now about the environmental subsidy, for example, is great. Someone who explains politics from a Finnish-Swedish perspective”

Another term used was anchoring, where LF can come in and act as a stable element in an unstable world. It may not be revolutionary news, but it manages to feel relevant.

“LF is relevant for me, it does not give a Heureka!-feeling every time, but it does contribute to slightly changing the way I look at farming.”

The words “local perspective” were used when referring to differences within the Swedish farming community, differences between the SLC area versus Finnish-speaking farming areas, as well as differences in Finnish agriculture compared to the rest of the world. One young farmer pointed out that LF is needed to balance out the large amount of agricultural news that is being produced in Sweden and in Finnish in Finland:

“We need balance against Swedish agricultural media. You always have to have something to compare it with. The same thing goes for Maaseudun Tulevaisuus (the Finnish agricultural media), we need comparison.“

The nature of farming as a job requires constantly updated information, which is the base for the next sub-theme, “facilitating work”. Here, LF again proves to be relevant, since it provides reminders about things that other newspapers do not write about, and that are hard to find online. One young farmer says:

“LF is the best way to reach out to members and distribute information about what is most important in farming right now, subsidies, changes in laws, markets, future aspects, et cetera.“

Even tedious topics are appreciated since the farmers know the news is beneficial to their work. In fact, even more details about current processes are desired, even on “boring topics” as a few farmers put it. Friday, when the newspaper comes out, is a day

when time is set aside even for the stories that have no entertainment value, but that can provide the knowledge needed in practical agriculture.

The final sub-theme again links back to the first main theme, and is labeled “strengthening community”. This category consisted both of data about the key role of LF, as well as data from how the community takes care of its members online.

“Reading about other Finnish-Swedish producers in LF and what they have done and the solutions they have come up with does uphold a sort of sense of belonging.”

One person even pointed out that to the farmers, SLC almost equals LF, since the headquarters are in Helsinki and most farmers rarely visit the capital. This means, without LF, more farmers might be on the fence about belonging to the organization, since the strongest link between SLC and its members is the newspaper.

The isolating effect of social media was mentioned numerous times. A few farmers stated that LF plays a role in upholding the community and a sense of “us”. It can also present members of the community that one has not met in person:

“Since we tend to live more and more in our own little bubble in social media, it’s good to read about others and what they do, and get to know more about people I haven’t met within the community.”

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

In light of the research question, “how can LF strengthen the community of the young farmers, today and in the future?”, the interview responses gave clues as to how LF fits into the equation that makes up the lives of the young farmers. The most important values are upholding a sense of belonging, helping the farmers adapt by adapting along

with them, and providing the farmers with information that equips them for both the present and the future. Clearly, the Swedish-speaking farmers in Finland feel part of a larger community that is exclusive to farmers. As stated in the theory chapter, an active online community that meets the individual's need for recognition can help the whole community be stronger and move towards a common goal. The young farmers do this systematically, liking each others pictures online and continuously promoting each other's businesses and encouraging peers.

This sense of belonging is something LF also plays a role in. The farmers are proud of their work and identity, and these feelings are validated by their peers online, and by the newspaper's stories about colleagues. To some, the importance of the local society has diminished. There is still a sense of belonging present, but it has shifted more towards an online community where nationalities are less important than they used to be. Questions are posted and answered in Swedish forums just as naturally as in Finnish forums, and community has become a larger concept. This also explains why many respondents wished for more ideas from abroad also in LF, and for stories about new methods of problem-solving that may not have been thought of in the local community. This is something that the newspaper should recognize, perhaps allowing itself to look outside the Finnish-Swedish community more often, while making sure that its identity and main role is not lost. A strong online presence among young farmers means that farmers from other countries feel closer than before, and mutual problems can be discussed in groups involving different nationalities.

This naturally brings up the question of adaptation, where LF is still viewed as relevant in the eyes of the young readers. LF can facilitate the constant need to adapt to changes in the market, in society and in technological solutions. This is no easy task to take on from LF:s perspective, but at the same time it is a sign of trust, showing that the readers believe LF can live up to the challenge. The farmers are aware of the changing nature of their job, and they are seeking to define their identity both online and within the Finnish society. As mentioned, the number of farms is declining each year, and the people who go on farming need to evaluate their methods, farm size, how they tackle financial issues, and how they profile themselves as food producers in Finland.

The young farmers show determination and focus in their opinions, not being afraid to look forward and question the way things have always been done. The focal point is the near future more than the present, showing that there is, in a sense, a fear of what is to come. As mentioned, EU regulations are changing, but so is also the whole composition of the EU. Guidelines and requirements for subsidies change each year, and so do the regulations for pesticides and fertilizer. Deadlines need to be met, and LF's reminders do not go unnoticed by the readers. In order to enable adaptation, the farmers need information about what changes are on the way, and what the best ways to tackle these changes are. This became an important theme among the responses, and at the same time, proved to be the area where LF has the most to give. As stated, the young farmers place their trust in the newspaper, with all respondents claiming to trust it as a news source. However, as the farmers' lives change, so should the newspaper that serves them. Listening to the readers is something that was stressed several times in the theory chapter, and a recurrent topic in the interview responses. New angles, more detailed information, and being in the know about national and international topics is a full-time job for a small newspaper, and letting the readers take a stronger role in deciding on stories could be a way to outsource some of the work to very able people.

The fact that the young farmers are active on social media adds to their feeling of integration within the community. The same findings were brought up in the theory chapter. The acknowledgment that takes place online between farmers makes them feel it is important to continue belonging to that community and adding value to it by participating. Social media platforms can therefore be seen as central spaces for social interaction, as Ruotsalainen and Heinonen (2015) put it. The young farmers really are networked individuals within a networked society, combining the physical and virtual farming communities into one reality.

As for change in the newspaper value chain mentioned in the theory chapter, the young farmers showed interest in presenting tips to LF in order to generate stories that have an impact on the farmers' lives. However, the respondents did not express an interest in actually writing for the newspaper but instead suggested finding members that would be willing to write columns about pressing topics. One young farmer described the feeling of not being interesting enough for others to gain anything from the respondent's life:

”As a reader, I’m interested in other people’s opinions, stories and insights, but as a writer, I’m more recalcitrant to writing anything for LF myself.”

Not a single person asked wanted to participate by writing stories, which shows that involving readers in the news making process is indeed not the easiest of tasks. It also, to an extent, explains why an effective way of incorporating readers into the news chain is yet to be established. However, most of the respondents said they would participate with pictures from their own farm if something interesting occurred, which is something LF could take advantage of. Social media could also be turned to advantage more efficiently, both in the form of facilitating the process of sending in story tips, and by utilizing the material that is already there:

”Perhaps LF could ask to publish pictures that people are sharing on social media? Those pictures you have already chosen to share with your surroundings.”

The responses also show that the lives of the young farmers have changed in relation to previous farming generations. The newspaper industry may be in flux, but so is the everyday life of these farmers. The industry itself is dominated by habits and repetition, things that have always been done in a certain way. The winter months are slow and usually call for a second job in order to make ends meet, the spring is hectic with harrowing and sowing, the summer months busy, and the fall harvesting stressful with weather conditions affecting crops and timing. As profitability keeps plummeting within most areas of the farming industry, the farmers need to be creative in order to come up with methods that will make the job worthwhile, now and in a future that cannot be foreseen. This often means looking to peers, evaluating what they have done, and hopefully being able to adapt those ideas to one’s own farm. If LF could provide this information and find the people with revolutionary ideas, it would according to most respondents be an extremely valuable service to the readers.

The main themes – sense of belonging, adaptation, and need for information – sum up the current state well according to the two young farmers who were asked to evaluate the results of the study. One person referred to it as being a difficult task for LF to achieve what was brought forward in the respondents’ replies, and agreed that the pressure the newspaper faces might grow out of proportion in the near future, should LF try to fulfill the expectations of the young farmers. The focus has to shift though, from today or “this is the way things have always been done”, to “how about if we tried this instead?”.

From the responses, it was evident that the main themes are all rooted in the unstable factors and special nature of the farming industry. Young farmers may demand more, but so do the consumers, who are also becoming more enlightened about how food is produced and how animals are treated. Consumer trends are shifting and affecting farmers mentally as well as their physical job. One farmer said:

“Every consumer who can be reached by sensible and accurate information about agriculture is a profit, given how much crap it is written that is so easy to believe if you don’t remember to use source criticism and thereto lack basic knowledge about nature, animals, agriculture and the everyday life, living conditions and framework of this whole industry.”

Some respondents felt LF should write stories for consumers as well, while others felt the newspaper is not the right channel for consumers, but this should instead be done by SLC. Otherwise, LF could lose basic facts and parts of the most important material for farmers. The topic was clearly seen as important. Being a farmer is seen as being different from what the farmers refer to as consumers: people who consume produce and farming goods, but do not produce food themselves. This divide between farmers and consumers was an issue that is clearly a sore spot for most of the farmers, since they all agreed that an effort should be made to provide the public with objective, correct information about agriculture.

The segregation between “them” and “us” is a theme that is familiar from the theory about how newspapers view their readers. This segregation clearly also exists between

consumers and farmers. In this case, however, bridging the gap is not as easy as seeing consumers as drivers of the agricultural business, although they are in fact exactly that. If the whole food chain, from producer to supermarket, was more transparent, a shift from the current production model could be achieved. Several producers have already moved towards so-called REKO-rings, where consumers buy produce online straight from farmers, and the goods are distributed and paid for at a pre-determined location and time. This means no middlemen are needed: the farmers get paid a fair amount for their product, and the consumers know exactly where their food has been grown. This is a development that has been made possible by social media and by an active civil community that works together to bypass bureaucracy. Seeing the possibilities such a system offers paves the way for further exploration of how supply and demand could be balanced in the future. Potentially, it could be the path to more stable prices for agricultural goods, and less of a need for subsidies that make up for a dysfunctional market economy.

The constant change in the farming community and the current chaotic nature of the newspaper industry make for an odd couple. However, this study proves that all Millennial farmers interviewed still read the print paper, as do other Millennials in our society. Although some young people consider them to be an inconvenient way to read the news, the young farmers seem to have dedicated a certain time and place to read LF. Some say they do it after the sauna, others at the coffee table. They do point out that it can not be read in the tractor, which means pods and news applications would make for better news sources on the go. However, only a few young farmers actually saw this as a problem. There is a demand for a news application for smartphones and tablets, and more online presence, but it is not a pressing issue for the newspapers' existence at this current stage. As one respondent puts it:

“ I do prefer the paper format, and I doubt I will lose appreciation of that sort of media. But at the same time, I fully understand that most newspapers move towards electronic versions, and I do read them if they do that. But if I get to choose, it's newspapers and books in paper versions.”

Many agreed that there was no immediate need for an app, but others thought an LF news application was already long overdue:

“An app? Go for it! News feeds with a possibility to read the whole paper every Friday. I want LF to be easy to reach through an app in my pad. I would use the same app to read news on my phone during the week when I am bored. Alternatively, I would scroll through headlines that might make it into this week’s print paper.”

What was evident in the replies is that the young farmers trust LF, and tend to trust print more than online news, as the theory chapter also proves. This trust should be built upon and utilized when finding new ways for LF to strengthen the community, which should be seen as the main goal for the newspaper, whether print or digital. This was also pointed out in the theory chapter: no matter what platform the newspaper chooses to publish news on, the objective and the value of the content should not be lost in the process. An online version of LF would not decrease the trust the farmers have in the newspaper, since the trust has been built over many decades. What is important now is to give the farmers a chance for further collaboration, so called co-creation, while embracing change as it comes along. LF also has other elements going for it, since the sense of community is strong among the readers, and as Hernandez (2015) mentions, the news source is seen as even more credible when it is deemed trustworthy by the entire community. The stories in LF are also often about peers, which means the readers connect more strongly to the material when it features people that they already know.

With social media as a tool, it would be easier to find a broader readership for LF articles. This could especially be true for things that take place in the countryside, or sudden events within the Finnish-Swedish agricultural industry. LF is likely to be the first news media that writes about the topic, and by spreading stories over social media a larger audience could be reached. This would, however, mean that the digital version of LF would have to be upgraded from today’s version, since it does not spur sharing because of the outdated user interface. This has been taken into account after this study was carried out, and the digital version of LF is being redesigned in an attempt to make it easier for the young farmers to share contents from LF that they feel is important to

them. Young farmers are active news readers, not passive, meaning that they share news on social media as described in the theory chapter: if an emotional response is provoked by the story, it is likely that the story will be shared among friends on Facebook. Sharing news would enable more people to take part in the stories, therefore making news from a farmer's perspective more widely available to different audiences.

The questions about journalistic angle mentioned in the theory have arisen also within the newsroom of LF. Would it be possible to involve the readers more, and would the newspaper benefit from taking a step down from the pedestal it has stood on for all these years? By listening to the opinions of the young farmers today, it is clear that it would be beneficial, both for the readers and for the newspaper. At the same time, the divide in opinions among the young farmers interviewed shows that there really is no one, definite answer when choosing a path for LF. According to the young farmers, LF should, however, make an effort to look ahead with positivity, searching for new ways to make the community stronger together with its readers.

Another challenge for LF will be to manage the differences in the preferences of different age groups. The Millennials have stated what they want, but the median age of the Finnish farmer is 48,6 years (Ruokatieto 2016), and the older farmers may have very different needs when it comes to news. This is another reason why LF will likely be published as a print newspaper for many years to come, since the older farmers are used to turning to LF for their agricultural news. Nevertheless, this again brings up the importance of listening to the readers in order to provide something that will satisfy the different generations in order to reach all the potential readers.

4.2 Conclusions

The main themes of this study; sense of belonging, adaptation and focused information, show the complexity of the identity of young farmers and their community today. The community changes as the world changes and adaptation is required. The right kind of information can facilitate this adaptation and strengthen both the community and the identity of the young farmers. This study shows that Landsbygdens Folk still very much

has a place as an enabler of adaptation, as well as a strengthening role within the farming community. All that is needed now is to adapt along with the young farmers, embracing the technological change that makes two-way communication possible between a newspaper and its readers.

This study also went through a process of adaptation – from a case study of how Millennials read newspapers, to a netnography, finally taking shape as a qualitative study of what the role of LF is, and could be, in the lives of the young farmers. The change took place because the data showed that the real information is in this case not in the covert data, but in the minds of the young farmers themselves. The only way to reach it, and to adapt, is to ask them for their opinions and thoughts, not just on the newspaper LF but on their very identity.

Because of the different phases, the data gained was of varying nature. The young farmers answered questions about how they consume news and use social media, as well as questions about their own community and the role of LF in their life. The interviews also generated large amounts of thoughts on how LF could be changed in order to better serve the needs of the young farmers. This data was for the most part not presented in this study, but has instead already been used within the newsroom of LF, and some suggestions have been applied in the journalistic work. More attention is now paid to details in stories about farming, and a new web page is on the way in order to better serve the young farmers online. The research question was answered to a satisfactory degree, and the other reason for the study, which was to find clues as to how LF could be improved, also generated a fair amount of data.

For both farmers and newspapers, the future is unsure, but farming and news will surely continue to exist in our society. The symbiosis between LF and the farmers of SLC lives on, but the power shift is apparent. The farmers have more options for finding news online, and their identity is no longer tied to one geographical point due to the Internet and its online groups and support forums. Simultaneously, their farms remain locked in place, often as a result of decades of work on the same areas of land that are handed down through generations. This creates a bipolarity that together with the increasing

demands from consumers, political requirements and surging financial profitability can understandably make one search for support among people who are in the same situation. Community and peer support remains important, although the place where farmers look for this support is shifting.

This change means that young farmers also demand more from their news source. Since farming indeed is such a strong part of the identity of the young people who took part in this study, it is understandable that they still read and appreciate LF. Nevertheless, as both the theory chapter and the interviews prove, LF will have to be more active in listening to the young readers to find out what they need in order to effectively practice farming today and in the future. The role of a newspaper journalist is, as this study underlines, no longer written in stone. Our society is used to thinking about newspapers as ready-made products, put together by trained staff to provide the target group with hand-selected news. When the newspaper is targeted at a specific, homogenous group, like Landsbygdens Folk, the niche stories and news are angled towards and only meant to satisfy the need for information within a specific audience. But as society changes, so does the audience, and especially the demands this audience puts on the newspaper. Looking at how larger newspapers are trying their wings online, it is clear how little the industry still knows about what is to come. There is no absolute truth about how to involve readers or when to, or even whether to, abandon print and go completely digital. What is clear is that the scenario has shifted, and readers now need to be involved more than ever in selecting the right angles and news to help them with their specific needs for information

4.3 Limitations of Study

Since the membership base of SLC is relatively small, and the number of young trustees even smaller, this automatically limited the study to a certain group of respondents. Their opinions may not represent the majority of young farmers within SLC, and the results cannot be generalized to the entire organization. However, being Millennials, consumers of both news and social media, the sample represented the target group for which this study was intended. The information gained generated a pattern with enough variation to be seen as sufficiently representative in this context.

Because the author of this study works for LF and had met many of the young farmers before the study was carried out, this could have affected the responses that were given. The background in farming news may also affect how the results were interpreted, since a relativist position was taken. There was, nevertheless, enough variation in the data, with both positive and negative answers to most of the questions, to say that the respondents felt comfortable with stating their true opinions. However, if the author had been completely unknown to the respondents and had no association with SLC or LF, the responses could have generated different data.

Since Finland is a small, bilingual country with a cold climate that makes farming challenging, the sample of Finnish-Swedish farmers is very specific. This study cannot be seen as representative of the young farmers in other countries, nor can it be transferred to areas of society outside the farming industry. It does, however, reflect the ideas of a particular minority with an identity-defining field of work, where targeted news is of the essence. In other fields where the same questions have arisen as in the newsroom of LF, the study could be reproduced to offer ideas as to what a solution may be.

In today's society where technological development is fast and online communities are clearly shaping and strengthening the identities especially of young people, this study is representative only of a certain point in time. More studies of the sense of belonging online and in person need to be carried out in order to know how young people see their community. Especially for smaller newspapers, this information is crucial in finding ways to still be relevant in an ever-changing society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Statistics from Tietohaarukka 2016:

<https://www.ruokatieto.fi/ruokafakta/tietohaarukka/maatalous>

Paikallisuus

MAATALOUS- JA PUUTARHAYRITYSTEN MÄÄRÄN MUUTOS

Maatiloja	2000	2014 ¹⁾	2015 ¹⁾	Muutos 15/14 %
kpl	78 434	52 775	50 999	-4

Lähde: Luonnonvarakeskus

¹⁾ maatalous- ja puutarhayrityksen määritelmää on muutettu. Lukuja ei voi verrata aiempien vuosien lukuihin.

The number of farms in Finland from the year 2000 to 2015.

Eläimet ja eläinten hyvinvointi

KESKIMÄÄRÄINEN ELÄINLUKU TILOILLA

Keskieläinluku kpl/tila	2012	2014 ¹⁾	2015 ¹⁾
Siat	1 175	1 336	1 565
Naudat	70	77	80
Siipikarja	32 412	29 733	29 174

Lähde: Luonnonvarakeskus

¹⁾ maatalous- ja puutarhayrityksen määritelmää on muutettu 2013. Vuoden 2012 luku on laskettu takautuvasti. Lukuja ei voi verrata aikaisempien vuosien tilastoihin.

The average number of animals per farm: pigs, cattle, poultry.

Eläimet ja eläinten hyvinvointi

KOTIELÄIMET

Kotieläimiä 1 000 kpl	1995	2005	2014	2015
Hevosia	50	64	75	74
Nautakarjaa	1 148	959	914	918
lypsylehmiä	399	319	285	285
emolehmiä	29	35	58	59
Lampaista ¹⁾	159	87	138	155
uuhia	69	52	69	81
muut lampaat	90	35	69	81
Sikoja ²⁾	1 400	1 401	1 245	1 235
emakoita	161	177	121	102
lihasikoja	451	460	464	570
porsaita	476	451	362	539
Siipikarjaa	10 358	10 538	12 577	12 020
kanoja	4 179	3 128	3 645	3 521
broilereita	4 276	5 472	7 341	6 992
kalkkunoita	80	495	292	247
Vuohia	6	7	4	5
Eloporoja	208	207	187	191

Lähde: Luonnonvarakeskus, Tilastokeskus, Suomen Hippos ry

¹⁾ vuoden 2015 lammasluvut eivät ole vertailukelpoisia aikaisempiin vuosiin.

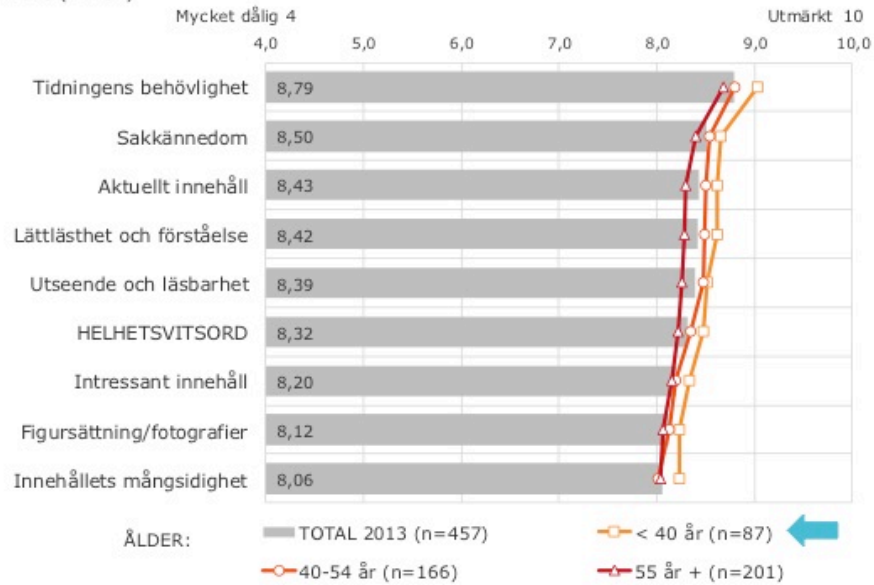
²⁾ sikojen luokittelu muuttunut v. 2015 alkaen. Luokka 'Sikoja' on vertailukelpoinen aiempiin vuosiin.

The total number of animals on Finnish farms, 1995-2015.

Appendix 2

Hur bedömer du tidningens (LF) följande egenskaper?

TOTAL 2013 (n=457)



SLCs medlemsundersökning 221100252

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Tämän tutkimuksen tulokset on tarkoitettu vain tilaajan omaan käyttöön. Niitä ei saa lainata, luovuttaa, jälleenydyä tai julkaista ilman tutkimusyrityksen lupaa.

78



The membership survey 2013, SLC. Of members under the age of 40 in 2013, the average rating for the necessity of LF was 9/10.

Appendix 3

Utförande av undersökningen

Metod: internet + post

Tidpunkt: 11-12/2013

- Urval från SLC:s medlemsregister; 1760 namn
- Via internet svarade 183 och via brev 330 → responsen var ca. 30 %.
- I rapporten användes 457 svar
- Data avvägdes inte

	N	457	221	64	102	70
		TOTAL	ÖSP	ÄPF	NSP	ÅSP
Huvudproduktion						
Husdjurproduktion	85	19%	20%	36%	9%	13%
Växtproduktion	239	52%	39%	50%	74%	66%
Växthusproduktion	61	13%	26%	-	2%	1%
Övrig verksamhet	63	14%	13%	11%	15%	17%
Åker areal						
< 30 ha	210	46%	49%	53%	37%	43%
30-74 ha	144	32%	29%	30%	38%	31%
75 ha +	69	15%	12%	13%	20%	21%
i medeltal, ha		40,5	35,8	37,7	46,5	48,4
Ålder						
< 40 år	87	19%	22%	17%	13%	21%
40-54 år	166	36%	38%	33%	36%	33%
55 år +	201	44%	38%	50%	51%	46%
i medeltal, år		61,1	62,7	59,6	58,5	61,0



SLCs medlemsundersökning 221100252

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Tämän tutkimuksen tulokset on tarkoitettu vain tilaajan omaan käyttöön. Niitä ei saa lainata, luovuttaa, jälleenmyydä tai julkaista ilman tutkimusyrityksen lupaa.



3

SLC:s membership survey 2013 was carried out among 1760, of which 457 people replied. The response rate was therefore about 30 percent, which was higher than the response rate 2010.

Appendix 4 (1/2)

Farming Groups on Facebook, accessed April 2017.

This list is included to demonstrate the number of groups that exist on Facebook, that SLC members are a part of.

The groups that could identified were (accessed on 15.4.2017):

- Unga bönder behövs, 391 members

A group for Swedish-speaking young farmers and member of SLC.

- Maaseutunuoret, 3.239 members, in Finnish.

For young professionals in the countryside.

- Norra Svenska Österbottens Unga Producenter ("Norran"), 128 members.

For SLC:s sister organization ÖSP in Ostrobotnia. The group is public, and features many posts about upcoming events, as well as service providers offering services, and buy&sell-ads.

- Mellis unga producenter, 102 members.

For young and upcoming farmers. A less active group.

- Spannmålsbönderna, 4,984 members.

For Swedish-speaking grain farmers in Sweden and Finland to exchange thoughts and ideas, as well as farming practices. Also the group that most actively posts questions and answers related to practical farming. A question usually generates multiple helpful tips, and pictures of crops get many positive comments.

- Tuottavaa luomua, 185 members, in Finnish.

A group for organic farmers.

- Eteläisten liittojen maaseutunuoret, 120 members, in Finnish.

A group for Finnish farmers in Southern Finland.

- ÅPF Ungdom, 57 members.

A group for young farmers on Åland.

- Svenska Studenters Agro-Forst förening rf, 157 members.

Appendix 4 (2/2)

A group for students in the agricultural faculty of the University of Helsinki. A public group that does not have very active discussions.

- Maskinistgruppen, 37,081 members.

A group that attracts machine workers from both Sweden and Finland to discuss tractors and other work vehicles.

- Avoin kuvapäiväkirja maaseudun tuottajilta, 24.095 members.

An extremely active public group with the intention to post pictures and videos from farming milieus and wellbeing farm animals in Finland.

- Österbottens husdjursklubb, 96 members.

A public group that brings together livestock farmers from Ostrobothnia. Mostly posts about upcoming and previous events.

Several other groups also come close to the topic, like urban farming, buying local groceries (REKO-rings), and groups for small-scale businesses in the rural area.