

Some characteristics of multiple job holding by New Zealand farm men and women

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Introduction

Multiple job holding by farm men and women is now a feature of the New Zealand farming scene. Research reported in this paper confirms previous studies that show multiple job holding is well entrenched as part of the economic activity of farm households. These findings are supported by 2001 census data.

Research during the early and mid 1990s examined the importance of pluriactivity as an economic strategy commonly pursued by farm households. Sequential studies funded by MAF Policy investigated off farm income (Rhodes & Journeaux, 1995), off farm employment by farm men and women (Taylor & McCrostie Little, 1995) and the involvement of farm households in work on farm but in alternative enterprises to farming (Taylor, et al., 1997). Findings were previously reported to this conference (McCrostie Little & Taylor, 1997).

These studies revealed that off-farm employment had become an important source of income for families facing cyclical commodity prices, periodic rises in farm input prices and climatic events such as prolonged drought. Farm families had evidently diversified their sources of income from the core farm business operation to include work in off-farm employment and alternative enterprises. This pluriactivity helped to maintain farm household incomes, while it defended farm equity and provided greater opportunity for retirement and family succession (Taylor & McCrostie Little, 1995; McCrostie Little & Taylor, 1997).

Analysis of data from the 2001 Census¹ builds on this earlier research to indicate a high level of multiple job holding amongst New Zealand farm men and women (Taylor et al., 2003). The average incidence of multiple job holding across the entire working population of New Zealand was 9.7 % in 2001. This figure establishes multiple job holding as a significant element of New Zealand working life and labour markets and sets a reference level for comparing multiple job holding rates in different parts of the working population. For instance, the rate for all rural areas was 20.2 %, and for some areas higher still, peaking for Chatton (Gore District) at 31.5 %.

¹ The full national analysis is available on request. The research team is also working on an analysis of changes in multiple job holding by occupation 1981-2001 that will be available later this year.

Furthermore, the incidence of multiple job holding by farming occupational groups also indicates high rates, such as cattle farmer/farm worker 24.5 %, sheep farmer/farm worker 22.7 %, and crop and livestock farmer/farm worker 21.2 %. Broken down by sex, the rates are usually higher for farm women than for farm men.

The current research programme² aims to provide knowledge about the way individuals, families and communities in New Zealand are adapting to social and economic change through multiple job holding. The research began in 2001 and is contracted through to 2007.

It is anticipated that the research findings will be useful to a range of agencies and groups including those involved in social and economic policy for the agriculture sector, and to rural communities as they respond to a range of social and economic changes.

Method

The research programme is organised into two main objectives:

- developing a profile of multiple job holding in New Zealand over recent years based initially on 2001 census data for factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, work-force status and occupation, plus a detailed analysis of changes 1981 to 2001 and comparisons to other official statistics such as the quarterly Labour Force Survey, and
- identifying the factors which encourage or inhibit multiple job holding, and determining the impacts of multiple job holding on individuals, families and communities through a series of 180 in-depth interviews, with three sectors covered in a first round in 2003-4: farming, café and restaurant workers, and health professionals.

As part of the second objective, a purposive sample of 60 farm men and women were interviewed in the Ashburton District in 2003. They were identified through farm directories, local contacts and snow balling. The sex breakdown of respondents was 26 males (43 %) and 34 females (57 %).

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

The principal definition of multiple job holding used in these interviews was paid or unpaid work for more than one employer or family business or farm in the course of the most recent week. Those who did not qualify by this criteria were screened out of the research. The interviews were

² The research is funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, contract TBAX0204

based on a comprehensive schedule combining closed and open questions and took around one to one and a half hours to complete³.

Findings

Types of jobs held by farmers

Respondents identified a wide range of work undertaken in addition to farm work, although the type of work varied for men and women (Table 1). There was a considerable spread in non-farmer occupations. Most (46 or 77 %) indicated their main job was the same as their occupation. For the other 14 their occupation was the same as their second job and for nine of these this was farming. Twenty five of the respondents who reported that their second job was a farmer or farm worker were women, and 19 were men.

Table 1 Main occupation, main job and other jobs of respondents

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

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

³ Interviews were conducted by Nicola Robertson and we acknowledge her considerable input to the research.

47.7 hours. A fifth of the respondents worked less than the full-time equivalent of 30 hours that week, while just over a third (35 %) of them worked for more than 59 hours.

Questions obtained the usual number of days respondents worked in their main, second and third jobs. At least two-thirds of respondents (65 %) usually worked for five or more days per week in their main jobs, while 23 % did so for less than five days. Five people explained that the number of days per week they worked at their main job varied according to seasonal fluctuations in activity. Only 30 % of respondents reported that they usually worked for five days or more in their second job, while a third (33 %) did so for less than five days. Another 31 % indicated that the number of days they worked in their second job varied according to the demand for their labour.

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

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

Table 2 Other activities over the last year self-defined as a “job”

Activity	Number of responses
Officer/volunteer of schools (e.g. BOT, PTA, fund raising etc)	12
Officer/volunteer of churches	10
Officer/committee member/volunteer of community organisations	9
Paid job /contract work	8
Officer/coach/volunteer of sports clubs	6
Office/committee member of farming organisations (e.g. FF, A&P)	4
Directorships - paid & unpaid	4
Unpaid work for family members, friends & neighbours	3
Care giver for parents & other extended family members	3
Other (1)	

Note (1) Professional training & education 2, Craft sales 2, Home stay for Asian students 2, Decorating house 1

Respondents were also asked what other activities they spent a lot of time on (Table 3).

Table 3 Other activities on which respondents spent a lot of time

Activity	Number of responses	Per cent of respondents
Studying	20	33
Household work	37	62
Childcare	33	55
Community/voluntary work	30	50
None of these	2	3
Sport	16	25
Gardening	6	10
Transport for children	3	5
Other (1)	6	10
Total	153	255

Note: (1) reading 2, sewing class 1, church activities 1, family activities 1, care of mother-in-law 1.

Forty-nine respondents commented on other activities on which they spent a lot of time. The ten people, who described what study they pursued, mostly indicated it was related to their jobs. The six people who mentioned household work either commented on the time it required or how that work was shared between adult members of the family. Thirteen respondents, including two grandmothers, said they devoted some time to childcare. Some of them gave it priority over other activities, while three people said that they only spent a small amount of time on this activity. One mother noted that her children were in paid childcare for two days per week so she could do “*more dangerous*” work on the farm. Most of the remaining comments made by respondents identified the types of voluntary work, sports and other leisure activities they undertake, and described how they manage to balance them with their work responsibilities. While one respondent remarked that the lifestyle “*all seems to fall into place*”, another with high stress levels stated “[*We*] both agree it is not living”.

Multiple job holding by farmers is now longer term

A high proportion of respondents have held two or more jobs for more than a year and two fifths for 10 years or more, again with differences for men and women. Some expect to hold more than one job for the rest of their working lives. The research shows that multiple job holding amongst farmers is more established as a long-term feature of farm households than supposed by observers in the aftermath of the 1980s “farm crisis”.

Just under half (47 %) of respondents had held their main job and 62 % their second job for at least 10 years. Moreover, two thirds of the 12 respondents with three jobs reported that they were employed in their third job for 10 years or more. The average length of time respondents had worked in these jobs were 10.4 years for the main job, 13.6 years for the second, and 10.8 years for the third (Table 4).

Table 4. Years worked by respondents in their main and other jobs

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

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

Further analysis of the responses to this question by sex and age showed the men in this study had been employed in their main jobs relatively longer than the women. Sixty-two per cent of them having spent ten years and over in that job, compared with 35 % of the women. However, the difference was reversed for the second job: 68 % of the women being employed in their second job for ten years and more, while only 46 % of the men had held their second job for that period. This contrast between the main and second jobs can be explained by many of the women having a main job outside the agricultural sector (e.g teacher, nurse) which complemented their work on farm (their second job).

Forty nine respondents (82 %) indicated they had held more than one job beyond the previous year. They were also asked to list the jobs they held together and the years they had been in each job. Two fifths of the 49 respondents had been multiple job holders for 10 years or more (Table 5), and the average time they had held more than one job was 8.5 years.

Table 5 Length of time beyond the previous year 49 respondents have held more than one job

Length of time	Number of respondents	Per cent of respondents
Less than a year	3	6
1 - 4 years	16	33
5 - 9 years	10	20
10 - 14 years	11	22
15 - 19 years	6	12
20 years & over	3	6
Total	49	99

The 49 people, who said that they had held more than one job at once beyond the previous year, were then asked to indicate each set of jobs they held together and the number of years they held

each set. Their experience of multiple job holding showed over a third (37 %) of them had held three or four jobs at a time for a period of their working life.

Another question investigated the amount of time respondents expected to stay working in more than one job. Over half of them expected to remain multiple job holders for more than three years, confirming the longer term nature of this type of work (Table 6).

Table 6 Expected length of time working in more than one job

Expected length of time	Number of respondents	Per cent of respondents
Short term (0-2 months)	1	1.7
Less than a year (3-12 months)	-	-
1-3 years	22	36.7
More than 3 years	13	21.7
Long term (until I retire)	20	33.3
Don't know	4	6.7
TOTAL	60	100.1

Further analysis by sex and age (Table 7) showed younger respondents of both sexes expected to be multiple job holders for the medium and long terms compared to those who were approaching retirement. The data also indicate that women were a little more likely than men to expect to hold more than one job for a period of three years or less.

Table 7 Expected length of time working in more than one job by age and sex of respondents

Expected length of time	Male			Female		
	No.	age range	average age	No.	age range	average age
Short term (0-2 months)	1	-	34	-	-	-
1-3 years	8	39-65	50.8	14	42-61	50.4
More than 3 years	8	32-64	43	5	31-49	41.4
Long term (until I retire)	8	35-52	43.6	12	36-52	43.3
Don't know	1	-	43	3	32-49	39.3
Total respondents (60)	26	32-65	46.3	34	31-64	44.1

Reasons for multiple job holding by farmers

While in the 1980s and early 1990s farm men and women appear to have moved into multiple jobs largely because they had to, this new research shows that the reasons are now more complex. The respondents now hold multiple jobs by choice rather than necessity. Nonetheless, economic reasons predominate for holding multiple jobs and there are implications for farm household finances and farm finances. The general view was that employment was relatively easy to find in the District.

Respondents answered a question that explored their reasons for having more than job earlier in their working career. Forty-nine people responded and many of them had multiple reasons. The most frequently cited reasons referred to the need for extra or regular income (31). “Money”, “financial reasons” and “income” were keywords that were frequently used by respondents for this general category. As one respondent remarked, the extra money from a second job “got us through the hot patches”, while several explained that income from the farm was insufficient to sustain their standard of living. Some of these people had began working off farm after they experienced the rural downturn of the late 1980's. Other economic factors cited by respondents were the development and diversification of the farm business (5) and the establishment of another enterprise to supplement income from the farm (2).

Non economic reasons were also significant, although in several instances they were combined with the need for extra or regular income. These reasons comprised four main categories: they were approached, or persuaded, by others to take up a job (8); they wanted to follow a particular profession or occupation (8); they chose a particular lifestyle (8) and they needed social contact off farm with other people (7). The people who explained they had another job for lifestyle reasons either wanted to broaden their interests by having a non farming occupation, or had purchased a farm so they could enjoy a rural lifestyle. All but one of the respondents who said they worked off farm to meet other people were women.

Thirty-four respondents took the opportunity to comment on their work history. Half of them spoke more extensively about their motivation, situation, and reasons for holding more than one job. A district nurse, for instance, had returned to the workforce “to be appreciated and a man won't understand that”, while a primary school teacher explained that “[I am] teaching now because I do love it and my husband has developed a farming system that I am no longer virtually integral (sic) to be part of”. Another nurse, who had reentered her profession when her peer group were also working off farm, expressed misgivings about continuing to do so after her peers gave up their multiple roles by observing that “when on a treadmill it's often courageous to get off it”. A small number (3) of respondents also spoke about their involvement with voluntary associations and two about the study they had undertaken.

When asked a closed question about their reasons for having more than one job, two-thirds of respondents (67 %) said that it was because they wanted to, while just over a quarter (27 %) acknowledged that there were both elements of choice and necessity that influenced them to do so. Only 3 % said they held more than one job because they had to. Most people (51) explained further their motivations for holding multiple jobs when invited to give their comments about this issue. Their comments comprised three broad categories: those relating to the pursuit of a career, those regarding the enjoyment of having an additional job, and those about economic factors. Some (9) said that having more than one job enabled them to continue and/or develop a career (e.g. “I just love my teaching”, “[My] eventual plan is to be a full-time farmer - I'm doing the contracting to be able to buy enough land”). Others (22) described why they enjoyed having another job and mentioned factors such as the outlet it provided from the house and/or farm (e.g. “I'd go nuts if I was at home all day”), the mental or physical stimulation, the challenge and satisfaction (e.g. “It's part of who you are”), and their social interaction with work mates and other people. The third category (16) focused on economic considerations such as generating funds for debt repayment and capital expenditure, financial independence (e.g. “I want to get ahead, [it's] easier while you are young and fit”) and an improved standard of living (e.g. “We also need the money”).

Respondents were asked to assess the degree of difficulty they experienced finding work in their main occupation by using a scale from very easy to very difficult. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents considered it was very easy or easy to obtain work in their main occupation, and only 22 % thought it was difficult or very difficult. Comments made by respondents about the ease or difficulty of obtaining work indicate that generally there were plenty of jobs available for nurses and care givers (e.g. *“In rural areas they are desperate for registered staff”*), teachers and early childhood workers, rural bankers, spray applicators and farm workers. Among the respondents who thought that finding work in their occupation was difficult or very difficult were a school secretary (*“the job is as scarce as hen’s teeth”*), an art teacher, a primary teacher, a director of nursing services, and a director of a seed company.

The same scale was also used by respondents to assess their degree of difficulty of finding work in their other occupation. The only notable difference between the answers to this question and the previous one about the main occupation was that 42 % of respondents stated it was very easy, compared with 28 %. The respondents who said it was difficult or very difficult to find work in their other occupation, explained it in terms of their age, lack of experience, or the very specialist nature of the occupation (e.g. wool assessor, chairman of irrigation company, district councillor, netball administrator). Eight women married to farmers observed that this relationship was the crucial factor in their having a job on a farm. As one of them remarked *“all you have to do is marry a farmer - it comes with the territory”*. Two of the women who worked with their husbands stated that they were not interested in working for other farmers.

The general view was that employment was relatively easy to find. One respondent described mid Canterbury as *“a developing, progressive, multi-use land area”*. Others noted that Methven was a seasonal town with plenty of work and the expansion of dairying in the area meant there were plenty of jobs available on farms and in the rural transport sector. Moreover, people with occupations not directly related to agriculture, such as accountants, a computer consultant, a relief teacher and a physiotherapist said that jobs were readily available.

A series of questions addressed the effects of changes in the farming sector, and changes at workplaces in that sector on employment, multiple job holding and work practices. When respondents were asked whether it was harder or easier to find a job in farming given the changes that have occurred in the sector over the last 10 years, over three-quarters of them (77 %) said it was easier.

Seventy per cent of respondents stated that getting their current job as a farmer or farm worker was not affected by changes in the farming sector. When asked for their view about what leads to multiple job holding in the farming sector, respondents identified a broad range of personal, social and economic factors. Although economic factors predominated, personal and social factors were also significant. Many people spoke of a need to broaden their outlook (e.g. *“So [I] don’t go nuts.”*), the interest and challenge of farming, or an opportunity to use their skills in another occupation (e.g. *“plain self satisfaction, self worth”*). Others considered that women in particular worked off farm to have social contact with other people (e.g. *“Good for farm wives to get off farm for social factor”*).

Over four-fifths of respondents said that changes at their place of work in the farming sector had affected their jobs. The main sources of change at the workplace were the introduction of new technology; conversion to another production system and the modification of the existing system, and the type and amount of labour used on the farm. Respondents also noted the influence of

increased government regulation and the associated paper work, and external economic factors on changes at their workplaces.

The introduction of new technology in the form of tractors, machinery, animal health and breeding practices, irrigation systems, improved seed varieties, and the growing use of computers for production systems and administration has reduced the amount of physical labour required on farms. There has also been a general trend for permanent farm workers to be replaced by casual and contract labour. Many respondents also mentioned that the farm they were associated with had either modified its production system (e.g. by growing more specialised crops, leasing land for dairy grazing) or converted to another system (e.g. from sheep to mixed cropping).

Respondents were asked to identify changes in their personal and family circumstances that have affected their decisions to hold current jobs. The influence of the family life cycle is clearly evident in their decision making as shown by the high frequency of responses such as starting a family, starting a long-term relationship/getting married, children’s education and planning for retirement

Further analysis of these responses by sex and age (Table 8) reveals that changing a place of residence, starting a family, commencing a long term relationship or marriage, children’s education and other family finances were more influential factors in the decisions of women in holding their current jobs than was the case for men. Yet men were more likely than women to be influenced by tertiary study or obtaining new qualifications when they made their decisions to take their current jobs. However, there seemed to be no significant difference between the two sexes with respect to the influence home ownership, or a mortgage, and planning for retirement had on their decision making. Respondents of both sexes who indicated they were influenced by these personal and family circumstances covered an age range of at least 17 years.

Table 8 Effect of changes in personal or family circumstances on decisions to hold current jobs by sex and age of respondents

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

Three-fifths of respondents made further comments about the personal and family circumstances that influenced them to hold their current jobs. One woman recalled the criticism she received from neighbours from her farming circle when she returned to nursing some 20 years before, and

added that nowadays working off the farm is the accepted norm and they seek her advice on health matters. Other women spoke of returning to their previous occupation, changing from part-time to full-time work, or quitting their jobs, as they juggled their careers with their family commitments.

Benefits of multiple job holding for farmers

Respondents identified a range of social and economic benefits in having more than one job, as well as benefits from continuity of employment.

When they were asked about the benefits they derived from having more than one job, most respondents regarded variation and stimulation, level of income, social contact and making friends, building work experience, security of income, keeping their “hand in” and hours of work as being positive features of this strategy (Table 9).

Table 9 Benefits to respondents of holding more than one job

Benefit	Number of responses	Per cent of respondents
Variation and stimulation	58	97
Level of income	54	90
Social contact and making friends	53	88
Helps build work experience	44	73
Security of income	41	68
Keeps my “hand in”	38	63
Hours of work	30	50
Suits my family	26	43
Other (1)	16	na
Total	360	na

Note: (1) Most of the responses in this category mentioned aspects of personal stimulation, satisfaction, lifestyle and skills.

Further analysis of the responses by sex and age indicated women were more likely than men to report that building work experience, keeping their “hand in”, hours of work and suiting their family as benefits of holding more than one job. There seemed to be little difference between the two sexes with regard to the other benefits - i.e. variation and stimulation, level of income, social contact and making friends and security of income.

There was also an opportunity for respondents to make further comments about the benefits of having more than one job. Thirty-nine people did so, but only 10 of them mentioned the financial benefits they derived from multiple job holding as individuals or for their family or business. Twenty-three people described a wide range of individual benefits including social contact with other people, personal growth and stimulation, a sense of satisfaction and self-worth (e.g. *“To be a valued member of society and feeling I have something to contribute”*), flexibility in hours of work, financial independence and a balanced lifestyle. For some people these benefits are the result of a deliberate choice to have more than one job, but for others they are the outcome

of other motivations (e.g. A woman who valued her contacts with a wide range of people who observed “[I] *don’t consciously go out and get more than one job*”).

Respondents were asked to indicate how their other jobs contributed to their farm business or household (Table 10). It is evident that the contribution of these jobs to the farm business or household is complex. More than anything else, however, the income from these other jobs was used to maintain the household’s lifestyle or to pay for extras to enhance that lifestyle. By comparison, its contribution to farm finances and succession was relatively minor. Only 11 respondents indicated that their job was essential for the farm finances, and another two noted that their other jobs contributed to that purpose in the past.

Table 10 Contributions of respondents’ other jobs to their farm business or household

Type of contribution	Number of responses	per cent of respondents
Essential to farm finances	11	18
Helps maintain lifestyle	52	87
Pays for extras	50	83
Helps children take on farm ownership	6	10
Helps prepare for retirement	18	30
Own income & nothing to do with farm	19	32
Other (1)	17	28
Total	173	na

Note: (1) A analysis of the other responses revealed the following themes - household expenses [4], education for children [3], overseas holiday [1], retire debt/save for future [2], capital/assets for farm [4], farm supports household [1], “fun” [1] and power & control as breadwinner [1].

Respondents were requested to rate the importance of their income to the household on a scale from 1 (very important) to 5 (not important to all). The average rate on the scale was 2.5, with 40 % of respondents considering that their income was “very important” to the household (Table 11). Respondents who indicated that their income as “very important” explained it in terms of the contribution the non farm job(s) made to ensuring economic survival (e.g. “*Keeps us floating*”, “*Without it we’d be on the dole*” and “[The] *Farm is not making enough to sustain our lifestyle as we live at the moment*”), achieving financial goals (e.g. repayment of debt and saving for retirement and other purposes) and providing cash for essential household expenditure. Those respondents who rated their income as “important” considered that it also provided money for less essential items of household expenditure (e.g. “*We eat out, which we never did before.*”) and reduced the need to draw funds from the farm. The remainder of the people interviewed (45 %) who felt their income was of lesser importance (3 to 5 on the scale) to the household were more dependent on the farm for their livelihood. They were more likely to describe the contribution of their income as providing luxury items (e.g. “*play money*”, “*icing on the cake*”) rather than as being necessary for the household’s survival.

Table 11 Importance of respondent's income to the household

Rating scale	Number of respondents	per cent of respondents
1 = very important	24	40
2	9	15
3	8	13.3
4	12	20
5 = not important at all	7	11.7
Total	60	100

Effects on work-life balance

The research identified a number of effects of multiple job holding for personal, family and community lives, and difficulties for multiple job holders managing their work-life balance.

Respondents indicated whether holding more than one job helped, hindered or had no effect on their relationships and activities (Table 12). Overall it seems multiple job holding helped personal relationships; friendship; and involvement in ongoing education; and hindered care or support of other family members; the amount of housework; health/fitness or training; involvement in organised sport; entertainment or leisure; involvement in community activities; and balance between work and personal/family life.

Table 12 Effects of holding more than one job on relationships & activities

	No Effect		Helps		Hinders	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Personal relationships	8	13.3	29	48.3	22	36.7
Family relationships	10	16.7	23	38.3	23	38.3
Caring or supporting children	14	23.3	17	28.3	21	35.0
Caring or supporting other family members	17	28.3	11	18.3	26	43.3
Amount of housework	17	28.3	6	10.0	33	55.0
Friendship	15	25.0	25	41.7	19	31.7
Health/fitness or training	11	18.3	18	30.0	28	46.7
Involvement in organised sport	17	28.3	5	8.3	25	41.6
Entertainment or leisure	15	25.0	10	16.7	33	55.0
Involvement in community activities	20	33.3	8	13.3	27	45.0
Involvement in ongoing education	19	31.7	27	45	8	13.3
Balance between work & personal/family life	13	21.7	9	15.0	33	55.0

Forty-nine people made further comments about how holding more than one job affected various aspects of their lives. Some (13) who spoke about the individual effects listed positive features

such as enjoyment, diversity, stimulation, freedom of choice and flexibility. The remainder mentioned negative effects including tiredness, rural isolation, increased stress levels and little opportunity for time off. “[It’s] *the hours that kill you really*” - a spray contractor & farmer working 70 hours per week. “*The lifestyle is more of a life sentence than a lifestyle*” - an art teacher & farmer working 62 hours per week. “*I don’t think I’m a boring person to live with or be with, but perhaps I’m too busy for family and friends sometimes. I miss them*” - a primary teacher, farmer & company director working 64.5 hours per week.

Other people acknowledged that achieving the appropriate balance between their work and personal/family lives was an ongoing issue (e.g. “[I] *can’t do everything*”). Several respondents mentioned that they needed to organise and plan ahead to achieve that balance in their lives.

Seven respondents described their experiences of caring for their children. Most of them admitted they were unable to spend as much time with their children as they would like, although one father, who was able to spend time with them, stated that “[My] *boys [are] only with me for another 10 years so [I] might as well do stuff with them now*”.

Six described the effects of multiple job holding on the relationship with their partner. They spoke of the need to support each other, to negotiate about childcare, to communicate and (when working from home) to “*be tactful [about] when and where I work*”.

Five respondents mentioned the effects of holding more than one job on their friendships. They all agreed that although their old friendships were difficult to sustain when they took another job, it was easier to acquire and maintain friendships with workmates and professional colleagues.

Five respondents mentioned the impact that multiple job holding has had on the rural community. They noted that nowadays there is a reduced pool of volunteers available in rural areas. The voluntary organisations that have survived are struggling, and are run by older people. One respondent had to relinquish her sporting activities when she took another job, while another belonged to 13 different committees before a return to the workforce meant she had to resign from them.

Conclusions

Ashburton provides a range of farm sizes and types, with an emphasis on cropping. However, as the findings from interviews are from one district, they should be treated with caution in terms of national representativeness. The objective of these interviews was to provide depth of analysis to help understand some of the dynamics of multiple job holding for individuals, households and communities. In the research programme this in-depth analysis is being combined with wider analysis of national statistics to build a picture of changes in the patterns of work amongst farm men and women.

The research shows that multiple job holding amongst farm men and women is more established as a long-term feature of farm households than supposed by observers in the aftermath of the 1980s “farm crisis”. Just under half (47 %) of respondents had held their main job and 62 %

their second job for at least 10 years. Over half of them expected to remain multiple job holders for more than three years, confirming the longer term nature of much of this work by farmers.

While in the 1980s and early 1990s farm men and women appear to have moved into multiple jobs largely because they had to, this new research shows that the reasons are now more complex. The respondents hold multiple jobs more by choice than necessity. They identified a broad range of personal, social and economic factors behind their jobs, and although economic factors predominated, personal and social factors were also significant.

There have been a number of changes on farms influencing job choices, including the introduction of new technology, the modification or conversion of production systems, and the type and amount of labour used on the farm. The influence of the family life cycle is also clearly evident in decision making.

While pressed for time and experiencing issues for their work-life balance, multiple job holders from farms make a significant contribution to the social capital of their communities through their voluntary work with schools, sports clubs, community organisations and churches.

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