Pluriactivité: A retro-prospective

Presentation to

Rural Transformations in Troubled Times: A Policy Decade in Review

The 10th Anniversary Conference of the
International Comparative Rural Policy Seminar
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Pluriactivité: A retro-prospective

The short(er) story

1. Share of farm family income from net farm income is declining
2. But when income received by families from the incorporated farm is taken into account
   • The share of family income from farming activity and from non-farming activity has not changed (much)
3. Increase in share of “wives” with a non-farm occupation
4. (Very) small increase in share of “husbands” with a non-farm occupation
5. In the longer-run, (very) little increase in share of operators with off-farm work
6. And there has been a decline in non-farm activities on the farm
7. Thus, pluriactivité of operators appears the same now as in the 1920s
The contribution of (unincorporated) net farm income to the total income of households with a census-farm operator present has declined (although constant in the 1990s), Canada.

1. There was a break in the farm income series in 2006 because 79% of the operators chose the option to have Statistics Canada obtain their income data from their income tax form and the latter did not have rounded income estimates (e.g. $20,000) and the latter had more operators reporting the maximum loss of $-8,750 that is allowed for a taxfiler with non-farm earnings as the major source of income. Statistics Canada. (2008) **Break in the Agriculture-Population Linkage net farm income data series** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 95-633) (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-633-x/2007000/6500081-eng.htm).

* More than one operator per census-farm may be reported and, if they live in different households, there will be more than one household per census-farm.

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Non-agricultural (labour and capital) earnings were 55% to 61% of the total income of census-farm operator households from 1986 to 2001, Canada.

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** Total household income is allocated as “agricultural” and “non-agricultural” earnings and non-earned income according to the algorithm described in Appendix D. Source: Statistics Canada. Agriculture-Population Linkage, 1986 to 2006.
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In 2006, 51% of census-farm operator households reported the "wife" with a non-farm occupation (up from 15% in 1971), Canada.

* There was no Agriculture-Population Linkage in 1976.
** Starting in 1991, up to three operators could be identified for each census-farm.
In cases where the operators lived in different households, we will have more than one household per census-farm.
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3. Increase in share of “wives” with a non-farm occupation
In 2006, 34% of census-farm operator households reported the "husband" with a non-farm occupation (up from 28% in 1971), Canada.

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Since 1941, 35 to 45 percent of census-farm operators have reported some off-farm work, Canada.

* 1951 appears low, in part, because the definition of a census-farm in 1951 excluded smaller holdings that were included in 1941 and in subsequent censuses.

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5. In the longer-run, (very) little increase in share of operators with off-farm work

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By the beginning of the 1990s, the expenditure on goods and services that have been "outsourced" (i.e. items historically produced on the farm) reached one-third of the value of gross farm income, Canada.
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Relative to 2006=zero, over 20% of farming activity up to the 1950s may have been spent on activities that have since been outsourced, Canada

Proposed share of on-farm activity that has been outsourced, relative to 2006 = 0


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Farm operator pluriactivité (i.e. work that is not a "farming activity") is estimated to have declined from the 1920s to the 1980s, Canada.

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Questions / Discussion

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