

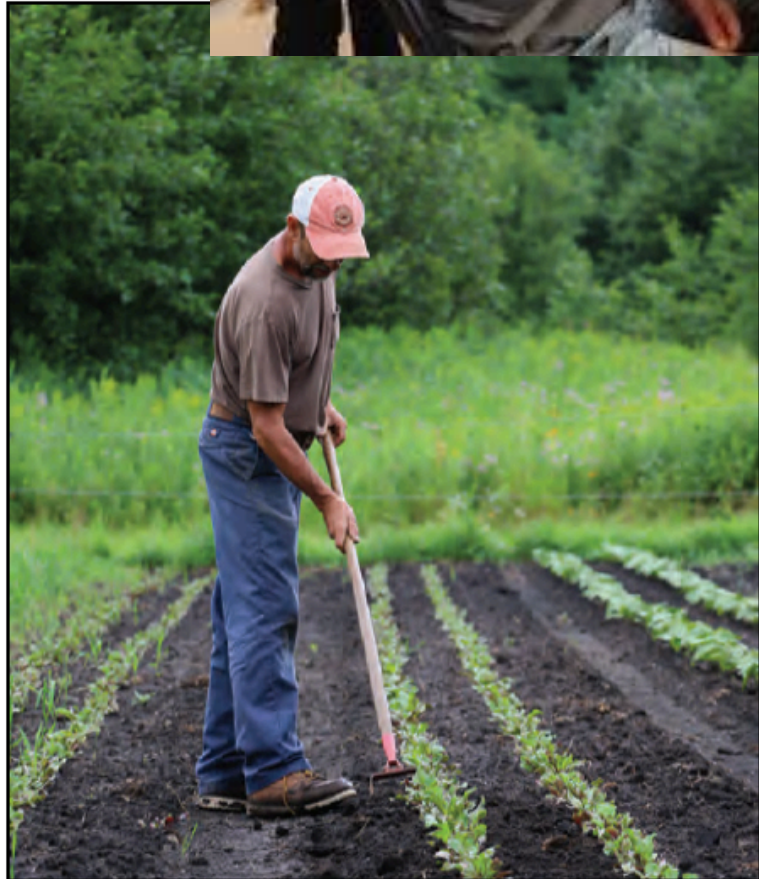


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University of Wisconsin -Madison Program on Agricultural Technology Studies

Study of *Immigrant Labor on Wisconsin Dairy Farms*

Jill Lindsay Harrison, Principal Investigator, 2006 – 2011

In early 2007, 7 focus groups with a total of over 50 dairy and other farmers throughout Wisconsin.

On-site survey of 83 dairy farmers throughout Wisconsin in 2018. During this process 103 U.S. born workers and 270 immigrant workers were surveyed.

In 2008, in-depth interviews with 12 immigrant workers from original survey

In 2010, in-depth interviews with 20 farmers from original survey.

<http://www.pats.wisc.edu/projects/2>

Published articles in *Antipode* (Harrison and Lloyd 2012) and *Social Problems* (Harrison and Lloyd 2013)

Understanding Domestic Fair Trade for Agriculture of the Middle

The UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS) is currently leading a participatory effort to better understand labor issues on small- and medium-scale farms involved in local and regional food systems.

In addition to UW researchers from the fields of economics, sociology, human ecology, law and anthropology - project partners include:

UW-Extension School for Workers

Wisconsin Farmers Union

Domestic Fair Trade Association

Labor Network for Sustainability

Project funding from the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

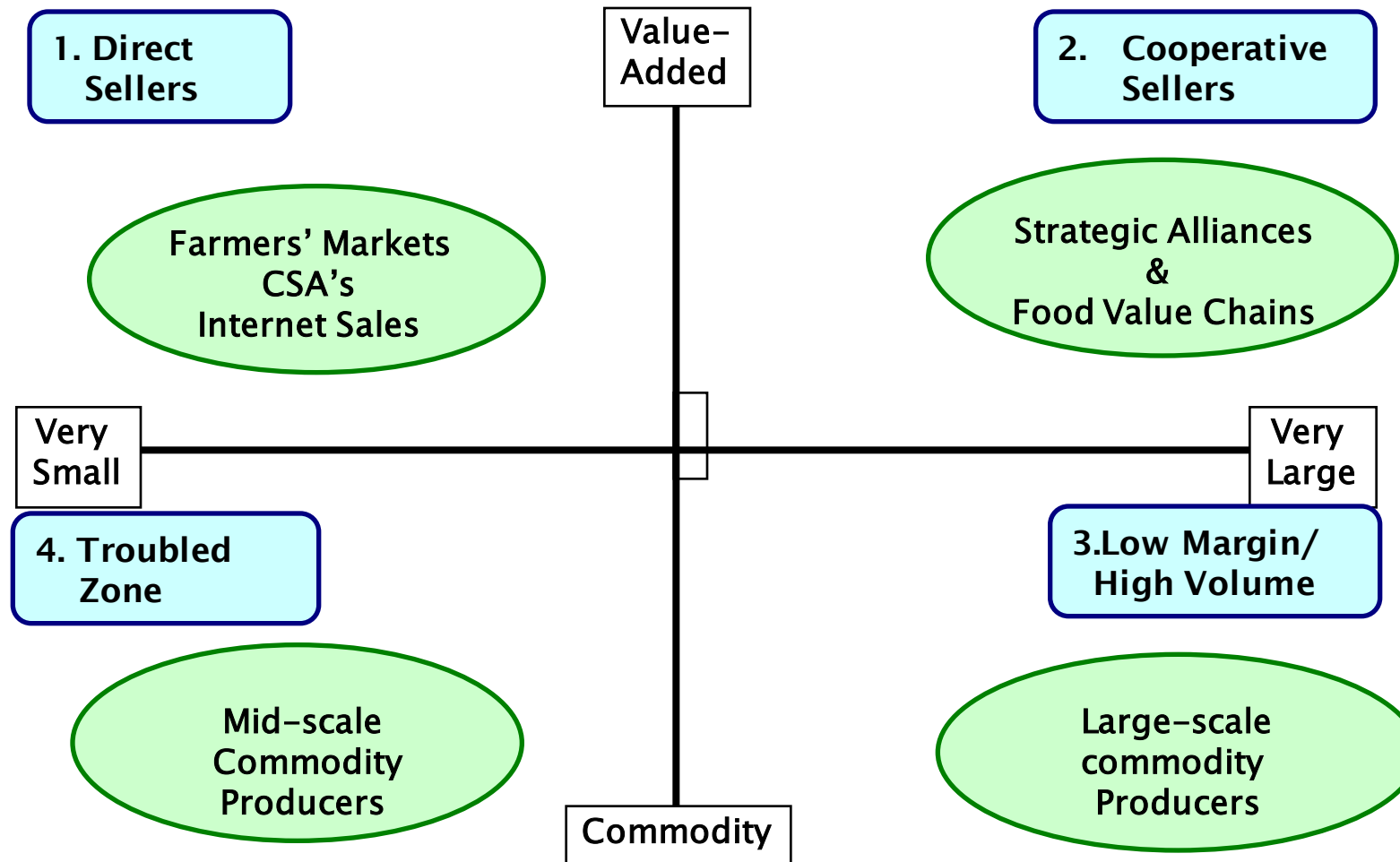
<https://www.cias.wisc.edu/fair-trade/>

What is Fair Trade?

Don't think of a banana.

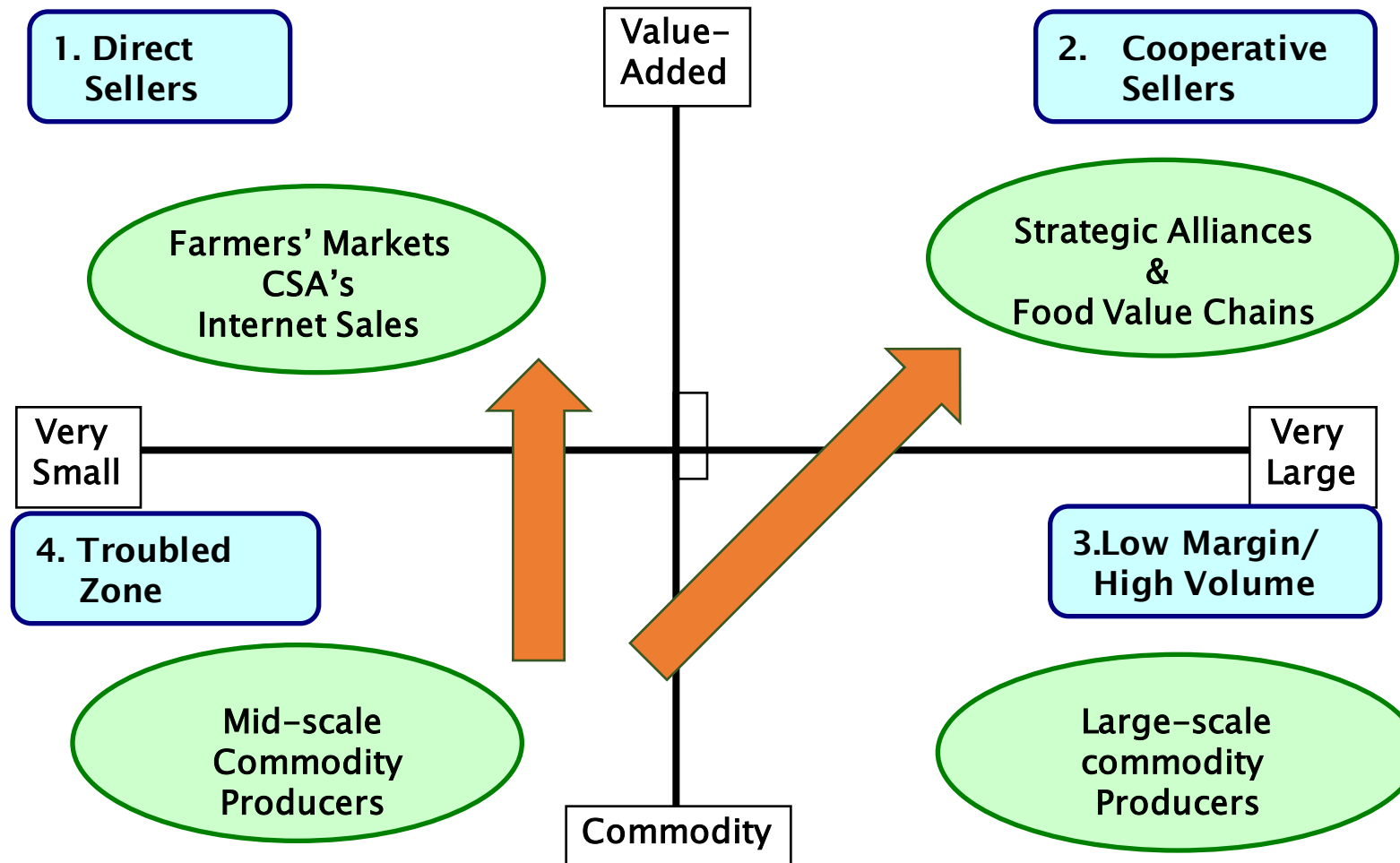
- coalitions
- certification
- negotiations
- policy - Big P and little p

Business & Marketing Options



from Stevenson et al.

Business & Marketing Options



from Stevenson et al.

Domestic Fair Trade Case Studies

- **Organic Valley and supply chain partners**
- **\$15/hour campaigns in California and New York**
- **CSA vegetable farms in the Upper Midwest**
- **Milk with Dignity campaign in the Northeast**
- **Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship**
- **Good Food Procurement policies**

What is Decent Work?

Decent work is defined as opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. This concept was created by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and has been adapted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the rural context.



The CSA Case Study

Methodology

Qualitative Research

Two focus groups with CSA farmers in Wisconsin

One focus group with CSA farmworkers in Wisconsin

In-depth interviews with three CSA farms in Wisconsin

A critique of CSA has been that labor relationships – both the farmer self-exploitation and the farmer-hired labor relationships have not been fully considered. And the CSA model is often idealized and romanticized.

Some examples of this literature:

Allen 2008, 2010

Guthman 2008

Galt 2013

Sbicca 2015

CSA seen as strategy for farmers to be in direct relationship with consumers and avoid the troubles and vulnerabilities of the commodity markets.

Our case shows in CSAs that are working explicitly to deepen relationships and involvement and risk sharing with consumers (or members) the issue of self-exploitation is moderated or mitigated.

Use of a CSA Core Group to negotiate in the supply chain has been beneficial for farm business stability.

Price of Proximity (Gray 2014)

Quotes from CSA farmworkers in the case

“You get to know the farmer that you are working with. Sometimes they have a really small crew. You feel guilty because you are asking them for money. That is underlying the labor dynamic. There are not clear conversations. Is it an 8 hour day or 13 hour day?”

I know of people that don't report all their hours on their time card because they know how much the farmer is struggling to pay.”

“Feelings get in the way in the small-scale.”

Precurity (Keller, Gray and Harrison 2016)

Quotes from CSA farmworkers in the case

“It seems like a lot of people that are just getting in to it. They are younger. And they go traveling in the winter months. And that’s fun for a couple years. But if you are wanting to keep doing it then it is hard. Piecing together winter work is hard. I worked for UPS this season. But it only lasted for a month. Finding little bits of work to do.”

Did you make more money at UPS? “Yes. Twice as much hourly.”

“It’s a headache. It’s stressful.”

“I worked as a tutor for 3 winters and I made more money doing that.”

“You usually end in October and start in April. So you have to piece things together. The biggest issue is often finding housing and paying for rent if you are going to return to the same place.”

Does the CSA model provide unique ways of negotiating up and down the supply chain?

As a CSA farm worker, how much interaction do you have with the CSA member?

“There is a disconnect. Many have an idealization of farm work. There is also evolving member expectations that being a member of a CSA will save them money. And then it is not about the relationship. And some CSA farmers use that as a selling point – that it is a bargain. So it is then reinforced.”

Key Learning from the CSA Case Study

Farmers want to be good people managers – they could use some guidance and best practices templates. Developing resources for farmers to engage with, with their workers.

Workers want some guidance in what the laws are and what their rights are. The project has developed a workers rights card in English and translated into Spanish to provide this for Wisconsin.

CSA farms that were financially stable had more energy to spend figuring out more stable labor relationships – both when it comes to farmer self-exploitation and hired labor relationships. This is anecdotal from the case study and would be interesting to study further with a larger sample. But this matches in some ways what we learned from the immigrant labor on dairy farms case.

Initial Learning from all the Case Studies

The opportunity and the possibility for decent and fair labor relationships is in the space of collective action, rather than individual action.