Research tropospheres: assemblages of cows, sharemilkers and researcher in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Weather changes moods-
Nirvana (In Bloom)
Sharemilking...

• What is (HOSM) sharemilking? – explaining landless and mobile farming practices

• Contractual arrangement developed over time that shares the costs and benefits of operating a dairy farm

• Figures from 2013: 34% dairy farms operate sharemilking contracts which produce 42% of NZ’s milk – worth close to NZD$13.6 billion (Pepper 2013)

• The average operation milks 285 cows
Gypsy Day 1 June

• Gypsy Day – 1\textsuperscript{st} June

• Moves are emotionally, economically and physically stressful on everyone concerned incl. animals
• The combined movements of people, objects, animals and information in all of their ‘complex relational dynamics’ (Sheller 2011) come into focus.

• Highlighting a cascade of mobilities at different scales which are entangled in the multitude of technological and non-human mobilities (rhythms) and moorings

• The importance of rhythm – paying attention to circadian/diurnal rhythms of farming as well as seasonal cycles
Agential power of the weather: extending atmosphere

- Ben Anderson and James Ash (2015) – atmospheric methods and affect
- The background matters, weather matters – on being outside and light matters (Ingold 2011; Edensor forthcoming)
- *Attunement* and bodily capacities (Ash 2013)
- Somatic memory: relational weight of atmospheres
Assemblage theory

• Deleuze and Guattari (1986) underline the agency of the assemblage – not just of members but also the groupings themselves

• Assemblage is about emergence, multiplicity and indeterminacy

• Purposeful and experimental – researcher risk, opening up to uncertain and fragile compositions
In-depth methods with 10 sharemilker families

• Semi-structured interviews
• *In situ* (farming with) interviews
• Participant observation and interviews before, during after Gypsy Day: 1st June 2016
• Participant diaries/photos
Warm & sunny: early summer 2015
Suffocating heat: late summer 2016

• Drought - the tyranny of a cloudless day over and over again
• Urban beach weather – farming nightmare
• Mournful lowing cows, guilt and powerlessness
• The heat cloaked everything…troposphere affect – a suffocating interview atmosphere
Sacrifice fields, thick coagulations of mud and muck

Depression/suicide and farmers on the edge – wettest winter season in 20 years

Bad tempered cows, grumpy farmer and sullen researcher (everyone’s in a bad mood)
Summary

• We need to attend to the fluxes of wind and weather
• To feel the air and walk on the ground is not to make external, tactile contact with our surroundings but to mingle with them
• Enveloping ambience is shared and transferred between human/nonhuman/atmospheric bodies
• ‘To inhabit the open is to dwell within a weather world’ (Ingold 2011, 115).