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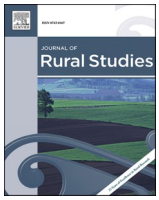

Lifescapes of emotional labour in farming support organisations: An exploration using visual methods

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1. Introduction

Recent studies of emotional wellbeing and resilience within farming communities have sought to identify the 'landscape of support' (Shortland et al., 2023) on which farmers rely in times of crisis. This landscape is comprised largely of government organisations, and farming support organisations within the voluntary and charity sector, often relying on volunteers to provide and promote services to farmers. Understanding this landscape is central to the ability to target and direct appropriate support to farmers experiencing financial, environmental, personal and other shocks and pressures that impact their wellbeing and resilience. However, as Shortland et al. (2023, p.118) acknowledge, there are few studies on the 'individuals who support farmers through difficult times'. Providing this care is not simple: as Malone et al. (2025) argue, formal mental health services often lack 'rural empathy,' limiting their effectiveness in farming contexts and requiring culturally resonant forms of support. This paper addresses this gap by examining how workers and volunteers within farming support organisations themselves find support in response to the adversity they confront. In doing so, we also respond to calls for methodological innovation within studies of emotional wellbeing of agricultural communities (Nye et al., 2025) by demonstrating the value of creative methods.

Caring for farmers involves what Hochschild (1983) defines as 'emotional labour': work that involves managing and regulating emotions as part of a job, particularly in roles requiring specific emotional displays. Performing emotional or 'affective' labour (Parish and Montsion, 2018) can be a rewarding part of working in the voluntary sector (Shuler and Sypher, 2000). This heightened dedication increases the potential for emotional labour, as they engage in deep emotional involvement and care for those they support. Yet, the intertwining of passion, vocation and emotional labour is not without negative consequences. Burnt out by trauma (Karabanow, 1999), and burdened by moral injury (Čartolovni et al., 2021), health care volunteers may come to experience the same kinds of distress as those they seek to help. How these emotional burdens are managed is the focus of this paper, shifting attention from landscapes to 'lifescapes' of support: the spatial, emotional and ethical dimensions of the relationship that workers and volunteers within farming support organisations forge with landscape, livestock, and farming (Convery et al., 2005). Specifically, this paper shows how lifescapes reflect the everyday coping mechanisms through which volunteers and workers manage the emotional labour inherent in supporting farming communities. By attending to familiar routines, relationships with animals, connections to place, and social and familial networks, we explore how participants navigate the potential emotional costs of their roles.

Unpacking the consequences of emotional labour, however, requires an ethics of care and sensitive methodology. Beyond traditional quantitative and qualitative methods, alternative methods may help to provide deeper understanding of the experience of suffering and well-being (Nye et al., 2025). Our methodological innovation comes in the form of a reliance on creative methods, specifically participant-photo elicitation. Advocates of visual methods argue that they provide participants with

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tools to 'thoughtfully communicate their own meanings and understandings' (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006: 85) of their lives, labour, and roles, and which make meaningful stimuli for deep interviews, to produce 'thick' data (Van Auken et al., 2010: 374). In using these methods, we show how emotional labour connects to a landscape of support that is not simply comprised of institutions, but to a set of heterogeneous and multi-species relations between objects, animals, peoples, times and places.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we provide an overview of the concept of emotional labour in the context of agricultural landscapes of support, and the need for creative methods to unpack them. Second, we highlight our own approach using photographic elicitation. Third, our analysis focuses on a set of participants' photographs to reveal how their landscape of support is constructed. Finally, we conclude with directions for further research.

2. Lifescapes of emotional labour

Voluntary and charity organisations (referred to in the United Kingdom as the 'third sector') that support farming communities deliver what is variously referred to as care, affective and/or emotional labour (Parish and Montsion, 2018). Together, these terms refer to both the aims of their work – providing wellbeing and resilience support – and the way that work is performed in practice. This work is described as 'emotional labour' in Arlie Hochschild's (1983) seminal work 'The Managed Heart'. Focusing on corporate America, emotional labour refers to work that involves managing and regulating emotions as part of a job, particularly in roles requiring specific emotional displays. Hochschild conceptualizes emotional labour as a theatrical performance, where the employee is an actor, the organization the director, and the consumer represents the audience. Extending Goffman's (1974) dramaturgical approach, Hochschild (1979: 556) emphasizes that 'people not only try to conform outwardly, but do so inwardly as well', so internal emotions match external expectations. She contrasts emotional 'work' undertaken in one's personal life, with the emotional demands imposed by commercial contexts in exchange for a wage.

In this view, emotional labour involves employee engaging in 'surface-acting' – where they display emotions that are not genuinely felt – and 'deep-acting' – where they attempt to align their internal emotions with those expected by the organisation. This acting is performed in exchange for capital gain. The kinds of emotional performances required from labour may be formally inscribed in a set of 'display rules' governing how employees should engage with clients. Thus, Hochschild (1983, p.ix) describes how in training, air hostesses were told to 'smile like you mean it'. Informal display rules may also provide conventions for interaction. Developing the original concept of emotional labour, Bolton (2000) instead suggests that it operates as a form of 'gift' (Smith and Lorentzon, 2005; Bolton, 2000) that is given and received. These additional gestures are not part of a job or role description, or defined by organisational rules, emphasizing their further departure from Hochschild's theory.

The 'motivational force behind this generous gesture' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 298) is demonstrative of the ethic of care that many expect and some take for granted within, and from, the third sector in this landscape. This ethic drives individuals to go beyond what is required, making their contributions both invaluable and integral to the wellbeing and resilience of the communities they serve. Bolton (2000: 582) introduces the concept of 'emotional management,' as opposed to 'labour,' to account for this lack of financial motivation and the presence of altruistic motivations in these actions. This concept reflects an individual's voluntary effort – given without 'counting the cost' – to make a meaningful difference to those they serve. Hochschild (1983) instead calls this self-imposed emotional management 'feeling rules' rather than emotional labour, which govern expressions of feelings by personal choice rather than contractual display rules.

Whether formal or informal, display rules dictate how volunteers engage with farmers: how they respond and use emotion to farmers in the course of their work to achieve their objectives. However, common to these different understandings of emotional labour is a concern that 'the human cost of performing … is harmful' (Brook, 2009: 11), and that emotion work is extracted from employees without fair reward. As Eschenfelder (2012: 173–174) notes, 'when not recognized, understood, and mitigated, the practice of emotional labour can have detrimental effects' on individuals, organisations, and the communities they serve. Grandey (2003) for example describes the emotional exhaustion that arises from surface acting and display rules. This decreases job satisfaction (Pugliesi, 1999) and increases burnout (Jeung et al., 2018). Thus encapsulating the commodification of passion and 'service', labelling it as a 'capitalist labour process' (Hochschild, 1979) that is 'underpinned by its damning analyses of neoliberalism, corporate power and consumerism' (Brook, 2009: 8). In doing so, Hochschild's work has been at the epicentre of understanding, and moreover valuing the 'conscious effort and hard work' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 291) emotional management requires.

Whilst Hochschild's approach focuses on commercial activity, others have pointed out that emotional labour exists across employment sectors. Indeed, the traits and impositions of emotional labour are often expected from nonprofit workers and inherent to the third sector's 'ethic of care' (Eschenfelder, 2012: 174), highlighting a dedication to providing genuine support and making a positive impact without the primary motive of profit. Thus, studies of emotional labour have considered nurses (Bolton, 2000; Smith, 1992), the emergency services - both volunteer (Nowakowska, 2023) and staff (Shuler and Sypher, 2000), service workers and volunteers (Hu et al., 2022; Korczynski, 2003; Bolton and Boyd, 2003), youth workers (de St Croix, 2013; Karabanow, 1999), penal voluntary practitioners (Quinn et al., 2022), animal shelters (Taylor et al., 2008), volunteer managers (Ward and Greene, 2018) and volunteers from various sectors in Australia (Kragt and Holtrop, 2019) and the US (Allen and Augustin, 2021). In these studies the value of emotional labour is frequently unrecognized and which may be associated with poorly paid jobs (Smith, 1992; Glomb et al., 2004). This undervaluing extends to the third sector, including its paid employees and volunteers, despite their very significant economic contribution to the UK economy, estimated at £50–100 billion per year (Haldane, 2014). The sector is also increasingly driven by business methods and adopts modes of organisation and target cultures that can undermine the importance of human relationships, and the social and wellbeing value it provides.

Studies of emotional labour in the third sector also challenge what Bolton (2009) refers to as Hochschild's pessimistic view of emotional labour that focuses primarily on the negative and the financial exchange involved. Rather, when managed well, emotional labour has profound power to positively impact the quality of public life, through third sector and nonprofit organisation. These organisations often exemplify a care-ethic characterized by empathy and an authentic display of emotion (Eschenfelder, 2012) that is culturally relevant. As de St Croix (2013) suggests, employees choose careers in the third sector with a desire to 'make a difference' and 'seek out and enjoy' particular types of emotional labour (Shuler and Sypher, 2000: 57). These workers are 'especially bound to the clients they serve' (Eschenfelder, 2012: 174) often going above and beyond the call of duty. This highlights the complexity of understanding emotional dynamics in the third sector, which are rarely driven by profitability. It also suggests that many members of the voluntary and charity sector that forms the landscape of support for farmers, engage in this work having carefully considered the costs, to the best of their knowledge at a given point in time, and still chose to give of themselves to offer support.

The consequences of these gestures, gifts and displays of emotional labour can, however, take its toll. Various studies have pointed out the negative impacts of emotional labour to both paid and volunteer workforces. Similarly, amongst studies of volunteers, Allen and Augustin (2021), Snow et al. (2024) and Willems et al. (2021) show how

emotional labour is connected to emotional exhaustion. Despite the wide application of this concept, there are no specific studies that investigate emotional labour within the farming support charities, whether national or international. Yet, emotional labour and its consequences are writ large within the management of modern farming. Whilst analyses of animal disease outbreaks reveal the kinds of psycho-social impacts felt by farmers (Noller et al., 2022), other studies reveal the impact to veterinarians charged with managing both disease and farmers. The distress of this emotional labour and its witness to 'moral injury' (Williamson et al., 2023) requires support from colleagues (Convery et al., 2007), to avoid long-term consequences to one's career and health (Enticott, 2018; Doolan-Noble et al., 2023).

Whilst rural third sector workers and volunteers may have access to the same landscape of support accessed by farmers, it may also be the case that this support comes from informal sources. Writing about the impact of Foot and Mouth Disease in the UK in 2001, Convery et al. (2007) describe the role of the 'lifescape' in providing a source of familiarity and comfort, but which can be brutally altered. In this conception, the lifescape reflects the range of interactions people have across a landscape. Drawing on Ingold (1992), Convery et al. (p.101) suggest that the lifescape reflects the 'embodiment of past activity', that arises through a relational process of creating 'places that offer livelihoods for communities'. In this way, lifescapes may also encompass the non-physical dimensions of place, and belief and value systems.

The embeddedness and familiarity of lifescapes provides a sense of ontological security (Giddens, 1991), such that they can become taken-for-granted. Of course, as Convery et al. (2005, p.107) show, this permanence can nevertheless be disrupted by tragic events, such as animal disease outbreaks that disrupt 'tangible, material and tactile relationships' that form a lifescape. Nevertheless, the concept articulates the kinds of attachment that are central to a sense of self and 'being-in-the-world' (Ingold, 1992). At times of trauma – whether they arise through animal disease outbreaks, or the day-to-day experience of care-giving and emotional labour – the lifescape points to a different kind of landscape of support. Rather than to institutions, it is to the mundane objects and relations, the rhythms and routines, and familiarities that third sector workers may turn to provide relief from the demands of emotional labour. By attending to these relations and attachments – maintaining and repairing them – the lifescape therefore comes to act as a site of emotional labour (Foster, 2018).

3. Creative methods and emotional labour

Recent scholarship of farmers' wellbeing and resilience has largely relied on traditional quantitative and qualitative methods. However, the extent to which these methods can truly capture the emotional wellbeing of those within the agricultural community has been questioned recently, with Nye et al. (2025) calling for new innovative approaches. This challenge should also extend to the inclusion of workers and volunteers within farmers' landscapes of support. Key questions here include: how do these volunteers and workers deal with the stresses of their work; what is their landscape of support; and what is the best way of researching it?

More generally, visual methods provide participants with tools to 'thoughtfully communicate their own meanings and understandings' (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006: 85) of their lives, their labour, and their roles within the landscape. This approach affirms the value and importance of their identities, contributions, while also fostering the development of the researcher as a sensitive collaborator. By working alongside participants who have chosen to engage in the study, the visual and creative approach aims to be 'optimistic' (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006: 82), trusting in both the participants' abilities and the facilitator's skill to uncover and develop themes from 'unquantifiable data' (Radnofsky, 1996: 387). This method not only respects but also elevates the participants' voices and experiences, contributing to a richer, more nuanced understanding of emotional labour within the landscape.

Outside of the field of agriculture, studies of emotional labour already engage with the kinds of methodological innovation called for by Nye et al. (2025), specifically drawing on a broad range of approaches that are defined as 'creative methods' (Kragt and Holtrop, 2019; Ward and Greene, 2018). For instance, Ward and Greene's (2018) qualitative arts-based study incorporated participant-photography. Volunteer managers were given disposable cameras and asked to capture images in response to the question: 'What does your job feel like?'(Ward and Greene, 2018: 1162). These photographs were subsequently analysed through interviews to explore the meanings behind them.

The power of this method to capture the visual and explore contextual nuances, 'holds outstanding promise' (Van Auken et al., 2010: 374) in which ' … photo-elicitation produces tangible stimuli for 'deep' interviews, which produce 'thick' data and different types of information than other techniques. This helps to bridge the gap between researcher and subject' (Van Auken et al., 2010: 386). Richard and Lahman (2015) succinctly captures the utility of photo-elicitation interviews, noting that this method 'offers a visual dimension to unobservable thoughts, feelings, experiences, and understandings'(4). It provides a non-defensive and valuable approach to assessing emotional labour by highlighting participants' voices 'through their choice of words and visuals' (3), which can be 'spontaneous and unpredictable' (Pauwels, 2015: 97). This method facilitates the generation of rich narrative and 'thick description' (Geertz, 2008), as participants' images serve as focal points that reveal 'aspects of their social world otherwise ignored or taken for granted' (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004: 1524). Thus, photo-elicitation becomes an invaluable tool for assessing emotional labour, whether it is practiced consciously or unconsciously, particularly when motivated by altruistic and philanthropic intentions.

This 'bottom up' approach to research (Goodley and Moore, 2000), which emphasizes participant empowerment and direction, underscores the efficacy of photo-elicitation in eliciting 'information, feelings, and memories' (Harper, 2002: 13). It fosters reflexivity in participants, revealing both positive and negative emotions (Hurworth et al., 2005) uncovering emotional labour, often unwittingly. This participant-led approach therefore puts participants in charge of data collection, minimizing researchers' extractive and extensive prodding during interviews. This contributes to a more comfortable and natural conversational environment.

Addressing concerns for the need to be methodologically innovative, the approach to creativity adopted for this study relied on visual methods. Visual methods provide participants with tools to 'thoughtfully communicate their own meanings and understandings' (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006: 85) of their lives, their labour, and their roles within the landscape. This approach affirms the value and importance of their identities, contributions, fostering a sensitive collaboration (Ashmore, 2014). In this respect, participant-photography provides a backstage pass to participant lives.

Participants were recruited using pre-existing contacts within farming support organisations engaged in an agricultural support initiative in Wales in March 2024. Following an explanation of the project, 10 participants agreed to take part in the study. The project comprised of a sample of 10 adults, all over 55 years of age. There was an even split between male and female participants. Six participants were volunteers, two employed within farming support organisations and two were chaplains. All participants were asked to take approximately three photos a day for two weeks. These instructions provided flexibility to account for the demands of participants' daily lives. Creative prowess was not a prerequisite for the study. Instead participant-produced-photographs ('snapshots' of their everyday) acted as a suitable means to 'generate verbal discussion to create data and knowledge' (Glaw et al., 2017: 1). The use of smart phones was the most practical and accessible technology for data collection. This approach was particularly effective in capturing the self-evident, taken-for-granted, familiar,

uncelebrated (Back, 2009; Mannay, 2010) stories of those supporting farming communities.

Photographs capture 'what was there when the shutter snapped' (Rose, 2003: 8), but the inherent position of the photographer, or image taker, is that they remain 'visibly absent' (Back, 2009: 474). The act of choosing when and where to close the shutter provides a powerful means for participants to assert their perspectives and control over the data collection process. This deliberate choice enables participants to showcase their unique viewpoints and stories. This deliberate bottom-up approach allowed for a slower, less extractive form of research that is central to the ethics of care that underlines the use of creative methods (Mannay, 2016, 2020). Indeed, feedback from participants revealed they valued this approach, indicating they found it 'enjoyable', promoted reflection, and 'cathartic'.

Participants retained full control over their data collection process, choosing what to share. Photographs were shared via WhatsApp and subsequently stored securely for further analysis. Participants were instructed not to include the faces of others to maintain confidentiality, as the ethical consent was limited to the participating individual. All data collected was anonymised and participants assured of confidentiality throughout the project. Ethical approval for the study was provided by the Social Research Ethics Committee in the School of Geography and Planning at Cardiff University.

Participants were also asked to participate in an online interview, conducted and recorded via Zoom, after the two-week period. The aim of the interviews was to explore the unspoken meanings within photographs. Interviews were organised around a discussion of the five favourite photographs selected by each participant, all of which were recorded and transcribed. This approach ensured that the images served as prompts for reflective discussion and that all empirical narratives were directly grounded in participants' visual representations of their everyday lives. This format allowed participants to articulate the meanings behind their images, providing space for them to elaborate on the internal narratives associated with each photograph. The discussion also acted as a catalyst for exploring related ideas, interests, and a plethora of stories, 'offering glimpses of what might otherwise remain unseen' (Bugos et al., 2014: 2). By selecting their favourite images, participants organized their thoughts in advance of the interview, which helped to 'guide the interview to useful terrain' (Bugos et al., 2014: 4) and ensured a focused and meaningful exploration of their experiences.

4. Snapshots of the landscape of emotional labour

A total of 422 images were taken by participants. The most common number of submitted photographs was 43. Some participants took fewer photographs (minimum: 26): in one case this was due to a broken phone and subsequent loss of images. Other participants took more (maximum: 61). A content analysis of these images revealed ten different themes (see Table 1). The most frequently photographed category was home and garden, representing a quarter of all photographs indicating a strong interest or connection to these personal living spaces, whether indoors or outdoors. The second most common category, food and drink, accounted for 15.2 % of the photographs. The third most popular category – the outdoors – accounted for 13.7 % of the photographs.

Table 1
Content analysis of participants' photographs.

Photographic Content	All Images		Favourite Images	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Home and garden	105	25.0	12	24.0
Food and Drink	64	15.2	6	12.0
Outdoors (countryside)	58	13.7	6	12.0
Office	34	8.1	1	2.0
Animal (farm and domestic)	31	7.3	5	10.0
People (including selfie)	28	6.6	6	12.0
Transport	25	5.9	2	4.0
Church and Christian faith	22	5.2	5	10.0
Livestock Mart	8	1.9	3	6.0
Other[a]	47	11.1	4	8.0
Total	**422**	**100.0**	**50**	**100.0**

[a] Other includes miscellaneous sub-categories, including health, non-food retail.

Further analysis of what the participants considered to be their 'favourite' images provided deeper insight into what they deemed important. Home and Garden, was the most popular category, accounting for almost a quarter of all images. These included views of participants' well-loved gardens, and included gardening activities, such as seed planting and chopping wood. Interiors of homes were also prominent within this theme, focusing on areas for rest and relaxation, e.g. a lounge area or home library. Eighteen images were of television screens (over 4 %), 9 of which (50 %) were of Wales playing rugby, highlighting the cultural significance of rugby to Welsh people. 12 % of favourited images by participants also included 'Outdoors (countryside)'. The main distinguishing features of photographs in this category were the evidence of a 'view', or landscape features e.g. a stream. Photographs of 'Church and Christian Faith' were also significantly important to participants and contained images of Christian literature. The role of such reading in participants' lives was significant, with this activity being carried out diligently each morning or evening. Other pictures depicted an altar, and a bell tower, emphasizing the relevance of routine and the connection to spiritual and community spaces in the participants' lives.

The content of these pictures therefore begins to reveal a lifescape of support: what places, objects and activities third sector workers find important in their everyday lives. Analysis of interview data provided deeper meaning to these photographs with thematic analysis revealing more nuanced themes reflecting how participants' lifescape provided support in relation to the demands of emotional labour. These are discussed in turn below.

4.1. Routines of Emotional Labour

The benefit of routine providing a 'time anchor' (Ludwig, 1997: 215), and the meaningful nature of routines in forming strategies that are intentional, joyful, therapeutic, and necessary are clearly evidenced through the participant images and narratives. This research demonstrates that such routine strategies positively impacted the mental and physical wellbeing of participants, as well as their capacity to manage emotional labour.

Given the timing of the daily photographs, often taken in the morning, at noon, and evening, daily routines were quickly captured in the data, revealing established patterns of behaviour. For some participants, routine was clearly structured. For instance:

> "There's, there's a sort of format. The dog needs walking and breakfast …. and in fact, we, we sometimes share at breakfast and say breakfast is perhaps, the most important meal of the day. Because we both, back in the house, we both take time. We enjoy it. And there's a little more time. It isn't all rush and bluster because we've done that … we do miss it on market days" (Participant 1).

Within this narrative lies the confession that on days when routine cannot be maintained due to work commitments, it is deeply missed. The anticipated and cherished routine is disrupted by the demands of commitment to the cause, revealing the unintended negative impact of this dedication. The participant's reflection reveals how their commitment affects their ability to adhere to a valued routine, highlighting the emotional and practical sacrifices made in the course of their work. The deliberate and crafted nature of routine was also evident in participants' narratives.

One participant shared their chosen 'fascination with clocks', rooted in family heritage. This interest now forms a pleasurable routine that they engage with every morning and throughout the week (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Routines of Emotional Labour
"I have a fascination for clocks, and I have a number of clocks. Too many. An obsession the family says but I think it's only a fascination. And every morning I, some of them need to be wound … So often, well every day, there are two clocks I have to wind every day, and every Monday there are lots more clocks. … when my parents died, I inherited a clock. Which is a grandfather clock. And has been in the family for very many years and … And I now, I just enjoy fiddling with them, mending them, tuning them correctly, getting them in beat and having them running, I do spend a lot of time fiddling with my clocks.…the regularity of the clocks is something that I, that I enjoy, and I'm a little controlled by, I think. But umm, and I enjoy the noise of them around the house, the ticking and the chiming. Although if I have guests in the house, I am encouraged to stop some of them because I mean, one of the boys pointed out, that I've got 9 chiming clocks in the house. Which is perhaps extreme …. I think [-] can be a bit inconvenient, a bit of a chore at times, I don't, the clocks never are." (Participant 3, favourite picture 1).

The regularity of the sound from their nine clocks, whether ticking or chiming, brings the participant great pleasure. Despite the significant commitment and discipline required, their 'fascination with clocks' is never perceived as a chore. Instead, this hobby is accompanied by a purposeful, invested, and enjoyable routine. Discussions of other images epitomized the joy and enthusiasm that routine brings to the individual. In this case, routine is depicted as a delightful morning ritual and a wonderful way to begin the day, illustrating its therapeutic value and the pleasure it affords.

Other aspects of routine discussed by participants included morning walks and various religious and spiritual activities. In discussing a portrait of themselves with the neighbour's dog, participant 8 highlighted how the purposeful and therapeutic change brought about by walking the dog provided a much-needed reprieve from their otherwise difficult mornings. This shift in routine was described as a welcomed and impactful adjustment, illustrating how even small changes can significantly influence daily wellbeing. Participants expressed the significant value these routines brought to their lives. In contrast, more mundane routines or tasks, such as bill paying, rubbish sorting, and wood chopping, were less favoured and not highlighted in the interviews. This suggests that while essential, these routine chores were not as valued or emotionally significant to participants as the more meaningful aspects of their daily routines and lived-experiences.

4.2. The Value of Animals

The place and value of animals in the lives of participants, as highlighted by the impact of a dog on morning routines, emerged as a consistent theme across a range of categories, including 'Home and Garden', 'People', and 'Outdoors'. The benefits of animals to human wellbeing are well-documented, with Wells (2009) providing a literature review that largely supports their positive impact. This theme emphasizes the 'direct as well as indirect benefits of human animal interaction to mental health and well-being' (Jau and Hodgson, 2018: 29), highlighting the nuanced and complex value of this relationship for many participants. The images and narratives collectively demonstrate the significant role animals play in farm-life, family-life, and overall wellbeing, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Animals are shown to be integral in alleviating emotional labour, offering enthusiastic greetings, and serving as constant, reliable companions in daily life.

Fig. 2 exemplifies the significance of working dogs, not merely as pets but as crucial companions who play integral roles within both the farm and family settings. The value and role of the pet dog in both routine and family life is vividly illustrated by participant 1. This account highlights the dog's significant contribution to the participant's daily routine, exercise, and overall physical wellbeing. The constant companionship provided by the pet is underscored, revealing its essential role not only in daily activities but also as a cherished member of the family:

> "Yes. Well, bless him. He's such a feature in all our lives and he gets us out of bed in the morning … He's such a joy and without that dog, our life would be dull, it won't be dull, but it would be duller. And although he's aggravating on occasions … …without that little treasure life would be much more staid and less active, certainly. So in terms of our health, our activity, our weight control, that dog is largely responsible … He features in a couple of photographs … But he's everywhere. Even when he's not in the picture he's probably with you. We, we don't know what we'd do without him now." (Participant 1)

Other animals were important too, allowing an escape and moment for contemplative, restorative thought. For example, Fig. 3 depicts a picturesque view, with the horse's ears barely noticeable, fitting comfortably within the initial 'Outdoors' theme. However, as the participant elaborates on the photograph, its deeper significance is revealed. The participant describes how horses provide a sense of nourishment and moments of respite amid their busy life, fostering mindfulness that they greatly value. The horse also plays a crucial role in helping them feel connected to their faith and offers a much-needed pause to regain perspective and appreciate their surroundings. This image encapsulates more than just a scenic view; it represents a multifaceted experience that integrates Christian faith, spiritual intimacy, the outdoors, landscape, exercise, and mental and emotional restoration. The photograph and the accompanying narrative reflect how this participant navigates and mitigates the effects of emotional labour, finding joy and relief in the process.

4.3. Community care

The admiration and affection expressed by participants toward their community of work or volunteering is a prominent theme. This sentiment illustrates the value placed on teamwork and the proactive

Fig. 2. The Value of Animals – Sheepdogs
"Not only are they my friends, but they're a great help as well. Well, if, if you've got livestock or cattle, you can't do really do without a sheepdog. Because they say, I'm not sure if it's 3 or 4 people, that the sheepdog does the work of 3 or 4 people. So if you haven't got a sheep dog, or a good working sheep dog, you're a bit stuffed …. M actually lives in the house with me … because he's 15 … so he's retired, poor bloke. Because he wasn't meant to be a house dog, but he had something wrong on his back legs and spine, a few years ago … the only way that he was going to recover was to be completely still. So we couldn't do that outside so that's when he came to live in the kitchen. Then of course, once he'd been in there, we couldn't send him out then. He'd break his heart … But the point of that photo is they're my friends and they're also working … You couldn't do without them. 'Cos they're always pleased to see you. If you're in a bad mood, they don't care, they still love you and they cheer you up." (Participant 5, favourite picture 1).

Fig. 3. The Value of Animals - Horses
"… Lent was incredibly busy. The one, or one of things, that feeds me is horses. And … I needed to get her or help make sure that she continued being ridden … …so this was literally 15 min in and I'm at the top … it was wonderful, and it was just that moment of like, I felt very close to God at those times. Very close to God. It was taking a rare moment, I guess, out, for lots of reasons. I mean, if, I probably wouldn't have done it, if [-] didn't need to have her fit for competitions. But it was two-fold. Where it enabled me to be cheerful. And take a break. A Good break. It's just, that, just a staggering view." (Participant 5, favourite picture 2).

approach to fostering collaboration within the community, nurturing relationships and working together to achieve common goals. Working alongside one another, some participants expressed satisfaction in engaging with the local farming community, especially when representing multiple organisations. They valued the opportunity to integrate their roles and efforts without having to choose between them.

Participants' motivation to support one another within the landscape of support was a prevalent theme, reflecting the concept of servant leadership – 'a motivation to serve, and put the needs of others, outside and within the organisation, above their own' (Panaccio et al., 2015: 334). This approach highlights how such leadership fosters organizational citizenship and commitment, which are crucial for the success of third sector organisations. The positive elements and motivations of emotional labour are thus evident in the collaborative and supportive dynamics observed, enhancing both individual and organizational effectiveness within the sector.

Linked to the most unexpected image (Fig. 4), an extensive narrative emerged, revealing a profound motivation to serve and support others. This underscores the power of participant photo-elicitation to uncover deep narratives, motives, and emotions in surprising ways. It highlights the participant's strong altruistic drive, and the emotional labour involved in their deliberate efforts to demonstrate support. The participant's actions, both in showing support and consciously acting for the benefit of their colleagues and the wider community, reflect a significant emotional investment in their role. The narrative weaves the sense of family and community so seamlessly that it transitions effortlessly from a family birthday celebration to the broader concept of 'family' within the local farming community. It also explores the participant's role in providing support at the livestock market, highlighting the deep interconnection between personal and communal relationships in this landscape. The photograph alone would not reveal the extent of this connection nor the participant's dedication to supporting the community at the mart. This seamless transition highlights the deep bond the participant feels with both the farming community and the support network they are part of. Their awareness of community members' health issues and their motivation to provide support reflects a profound sense of familial commitment. Such a detailed exploration of motive and connection, which might remain obscured with other methods, reveals the positive drive of emotional labour - caring for and striving to do what is best for others.

The motivation to serve and support the farming community is evident and deeply embedded in the theme of 'community care,' where it is recognized that the relationship is '*not all one-way traffic*' (participant 1). Fig. 5 provides a profound reflection on the interconnectedness of life and death and the narrative articulates the value they give to nature. Expressed within this is also a care for the community for whilst the main intention of the daily routine is for personal benefit, for mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing, it provides an "opportunity" to converse with farmers and keep an eye out for them and their livestock. We discover the proactive approach of the participant in supporting the local farming community, demonstrating a commitment to animal and community wellbeing. The participant's reflection demonstrates their deep connection to the agricultural world and its rhythms. They

Fig. 4. Community Care
"… so she's 81 and I was 70, So we had our birthdays close together. … We do stuff together and we live close to each other. We have had a lot to do with, you know, the farmers over the years. And I know a lot of them now in the market. Yeah, it's good. That you know, we've got other people from other charities there as well, to communicate with … You know, and supporting [–], I think. I feel good about, you know, that I'm supporting them really. Because they're there day in and day out, …So yes, like, yeah, yeah, I think that supporting them. So, enabling them, to support others back. So, I think it's helpful …. But I, you know, I'd like to be available just in case I need to stay … It's good to go and do stuff, you know, just supporting them … that is one of the good things. And supporting them. … not just practically supporting them, but also that they feel that they've been supported. … I just think, it's good that there are other people around them, that they feel supported." (Participant 7, favourite picture 5).

Fig. 5. Community Care
"… for me, it represents life. Because part of life is death. That's one point. Second point is that this is quite gory … and having spoken to the farmer because it, it gave me an opportunity, to tell a farmer there is a problem. Because it's like I look out for this stuff …. And that particular day, and that was the second by the way, that wasn't the first one I saw … so we were discussing it at the moment … and it's a young lamb obviously. We think this has just died because of a crow attack. … as I was walking across the field, the crow stood on it. So as gory as it is. And as sad as it is, obviously because this is a lost life, loss of income to the farmer. But actually, it fed the crow. So there's this circle going on. Of life and death. And of course the other thing is that it won't be just the crow that will be fed by that. There is a chance for the fox will come along and have a meal. There's a chance that insects will have a go at it, and bugs and microbes and all sorts of things to be fed on it, and that's just the cycle of life and it's important that we recognize that death is part of life. There is purpose, in an animal, or anybody dying actually … There's a cycle of life that we have to acknowledge. That's what hit me. And part of life is death." (Participant 10, favourite picture 2).

acknowledge that while the loss of the lamb is tragic, it is also an integral part of the natural order. Their sense of 'being' within the local community, and their role as a member of this landscape of support, highlights the value of their dual citizenship. It is the 'being' that facilitates the opportunity to support.

The collaboration, dual 'citizenship,' and the nuanced understanding of 'dictionaries' (Hochschild, 2002) are vividly illustrated through these images and narratives. This duality, crucial for achieving higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness in an environment of diminishing financial resources (Gray, 2009: 59) is highly valued by governments aiming to maximize the contributions of the third sector. However, these characteristics often remain intangible and stand in contrast to the performance metrics, individual ambition, siloed working environments, and competitiveness commonly associated with capital-driven definitions of emotional labour.

The essence of 'being' and 'Community Care', whether at a local, organizational, or broader level, plays a significant role in the landscape of support provided by participants. While the economic value of these contributions may be difficult to quantify for governmental bodies or sponsors, their worth is undeniable. Characteristics of servanthood, whether in a leadership or support role, are seldom adequately valued in monetary terms. The intertwining of passion and vocation with emotional labour, even when driven by altruism, is not without its drawbacks, including the risk of burnout. Although this research does not specifically address burnout, it is crucial to acknowledge its real and pressing threat. The qualities of commitment and care, while often celebrated, are frequently undervalued and taken for granted, highlighting a critical gap in recognizing the full scope of emotional labour.

Collaboration through reciprocity, ensuring 'it's not all one-way traffic', is central to the work of supporting farmers and one another within this landscape. This practice reflects an understanding that while farmers may be 'strong individualists', they 'are not islands unto themselves', and are best approached and listened to as 'individuals-in-

communities' (Gerrard, 2009: 96) by individuals within a community that reads their 'bible' (Hochschild, 2002). Caring for oneself is foundational to being able to care for others, as healthy individuals contribute to a healthy community. A principle that has the significant benefits for both individuals and society as a whole. As one participant noted:

> "I think it's really important that we care for ourselves, so that we can try and care for others." (participant 10)

4.4. The power of place

A recurring theme in the interviews was the profound impact that place has on participants' wellbeing. As Atkinson et al. (2016: 3) assert: 'Wellbeing, however defined, can have no form, expression or enhancement without consideration of place'. This sentiment was vividly captured in a picture by participant 8, illustrating the deep sense of happiness a participant derives from their environment. When discussing the image, the participant's demeanour noticeably relaxed and lightened, as they were emotionally 'transported' to their happy place. The narrative revealed a deep appreciation for their locality, the outdoors, and the sense of peace it brings. The participant expressed a heartfelt love of this place in their life. Similarly, participants 6 and 9 who conveyed a strong affection for their home, describing it as a sanctuary: a place to retreat, rest, and even work. This sentiment highlights the profound role that place plays in providing emotional security and stability, especially during difficult times:

> "So I went through quite a bad time. So yeah, I guess, I mean, out of it, and yeah, the bereavement and yeah loss … But it really, really affected me. I'd had to leave my job, I felt I couldn't do [it] … But it's nice to have that anchorage … So, that's I guess, that's another meaning from that house as well. That it keeps me, it makes me feel safe" (participant 6)

In addition to being a place to retreat to, participants also expressed a deep love and appreciation for place, particularly in the views and vistas it offers, as previously discussed in the context of 'Routine' and the 'Value of Animals.' For one participant, place also provided the opportunity and power to truly 'see'. This regaining of such sense was expressed to positively impact their physical, emotional, and spiritual sight and overall wellbeing (Fig. 6). This participant finds both comfort and beauty in the ability of this place to help them gain perspective, offering a sense of sanctuary and solace. The interaction between participants and their surroundings—both indoors and outdoors—plays a crucial role in positively influencing their perceived wellbeing. This connection to place serves as a pivotal element in fostering feelings of peace, joy, happiness, and rest. In doing so, it acts as a powerful antidote to the emotional labour participants may experience, offering them a sanctuary that helps to restore and sustain their overall mental and emotional health.

4.5. The family unit

The theme of 'The Family Unit' emerged as a central and influential aspect of participants' lives throughout the interviews. For some, the lasting impact of their parents played a significant role in shaping the altruistic nature of their psyche. Others commented on the geographical, and by extension, relational closeness of family members, who play a crucial role in their daily lives—whether it's helping with farm duties or coming together to celebrate a birthday. This proximity not only fosters a sense of unity but also strengthens the support system within the family.

Another participant, when discussing their image of a bowl of cawl (Fig. 7), began by emphasizing the dish's virtues, especially during lambing, when there is little time for anything else, including self-care, when juggling work and farm responsibilities. However, the narrative goes beyond the nutritional and cultural values of this dish, to the emotional and physical labour of lambing. An object in the image, the plate on which the bowl sits, serves as a springboard to share about their family. Through this image, we learn they were born in the home where they now reside. The family unit is not a distant memory or something to be revisited, but a vibrant and ongoing presence. The plate, an artifact from their childhood, remains both functional and symbolic, representing the continuity and celebration of family connections and heritage.

Fig. 6. The Power of Place
"I chose this because it represented quite a lot. It represented again, seeing … And I guess what I like about it is that you could see. Well I like heights, so I went up there and it was lovely because I love heights. And so you can see over, but you could see the, on the outside of the town. So it made me, it reminded me, that it is actually a rural town. So you've got the town itself, and then you've got all the mountains around the outside, and I find that really quite encompassing, and comforting and rather beautiful." (participant 5, favourite picture 4).

Common to all participants was the value they placed on family, both past and present. The nurturing quality and significance of family to overall wellbeing was captured by one participant's emotive narrative, depicting the participant's return to a loving family unit, where they can 'switch off,' are nurtured, and can simply be. Returning to a loving unit where one feels valued and cared for, to family, 'the basic social institution in society' (Pannilage, 2017: 149), has profound positive impacts to individual wellbeing. Another participant shared the central value of family support during a personal tragedy. Their reflective account illustrated how the participant's return to their family unit was a crucial response to the loss of their child, emphasizing the 'Power of Place' in dictating where one retreats to in order to find the emotional strength needed to deal with trauma. The participant's return to their family home, and the subsequent engagement with faith and community, highlights how personal tragedies can redefine one's connection to place and family, offering solace and strength. The participant referenced the route taken to travel this difficult road and the expulsion of emotional management necessary to stave off breakdown or burnout, worked out through Christian faith that enabled them to heal. While such trauma was not a result of work, it demonstrates the critical importance of family, place, and faith in shaping an individual's ability to cope with adversity. The support of family, the stability of place, and the strength derived from personal beliefs can profoundly inspire and motivate an individual to continue supporting others, even in the face of personal challenges (see Nicolaysen and Pessi, 2010).

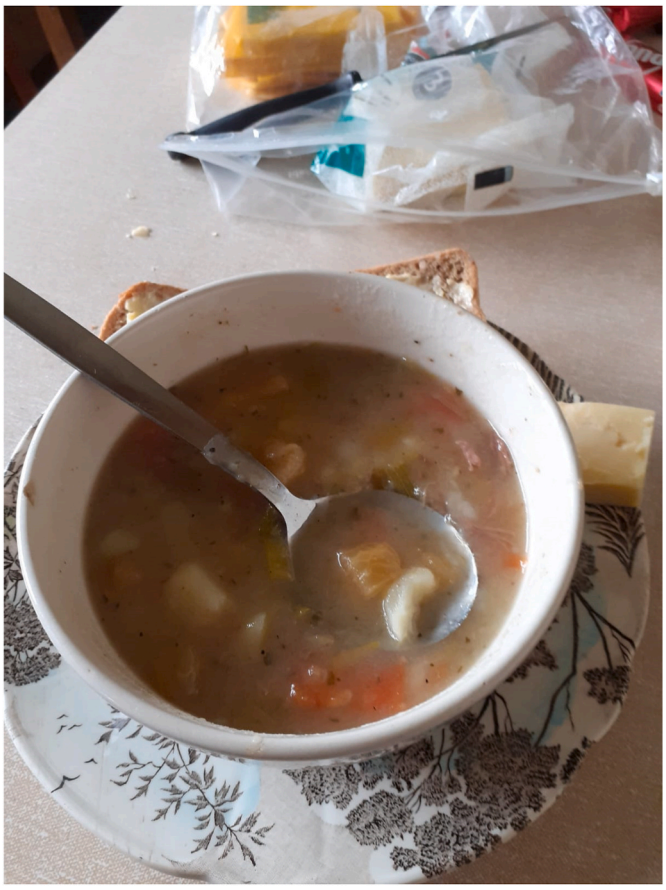

Fig. 7. The Family Unit
"… And that plate, that was one of my mum's as well and it's really old. They were actually the dinner plates I had when I was a child … I was born here … I've got two plates. I guess they would have had 6 probably at some point. But there's 2, 2 still doing the rounds. It's kind of nice as well because it brings back memories, you see. It's kind of memorabilia." (participant 4, favourite picture number 5).

5. Conclusion

In the UK, farming support organisations occupy the front line of dealing with the personal impacts of agricultural restructuring as a result of rapid policy and environmental change (Wheeler and Lobley, 2022). In attending to these effects, caregiving can provide important relief for those experiencing adversity, or the effects of chronic pressures often outside their control. However, the emotional labour these volunteers and workers provide is not without consequences. In this study, we have therefore sought to document how those working in the third sector attend to their own emotional health. Rather than a 'landscape of support' (Shortland et al., 2023), this paper demonstrates that emotional care is found within and moored to the 'lifescape of support': familiar routines and heterogenous attachments to people, places, objects and animals. It is these relations that help those within farming support organisations deal and cope with the demands of their emotional labour.

The study highlighted five specific dimensions to the lifescape of support: routines; animals; communities of care; the power of place; and the family unit. However, understanding the contribution these factors make in establishing the lifescape of our research participants was made possible using creative and visual methodologies. In granting a backstage pass into the everyday lives of participants, the use of creative methods can provide profound insights into the emotional labour performed, accessing personal spaces and experiences, delving deeply 'beyond the social front' (Wilkinson, 2017: 618) into 'unobtrusive observation of hidden realms' (Torre and Murphy, 2015, p. 13), enabling participants to carry out 'ethnography by proxy' (Plowman, 2017). While the photographs themselves 'carry a trace of what was there when the shutter snapped' (Rose, 2003: 8), the participant-led elicitation process expanded the lens, revealing the remarkable within the mundane.

Whilst this approach has the potential to generate rich data, we also suggest that the use of creative methods affords an ethics of care and responsibility for research of agricultural communities (Moriggi, 2022). The rise in importance of emotional wellbeing (Enticott, 2024) and its potential for headline making research, brings attendant dangers: over-research and research fatigue, or worse new extractive research tourisms. Creative methods may address these pitfalls. As a slower form of research (Stengers, 2018), its ethics of care co-produces knowledge as well as relationships between participant and researcher (Mannay, 2020). As these characteristics are essential to the growing use of co-designed and co-produced research for health and rural research (Peters et al., 2024), creative methods like those used in this paper may have broader applications within rural studies.

Finally, it may also be that creative methods can contribute to the design of interventions to support agricultural communities, providing catharsis to participants. Alternatively, public displays using the outputs of creative methods can promote the importance of specific elements of farmers' lifescapes to help those in the 'landscape of support' appreciate the personal impacts of agricultural change and adapt their responses accordingly. Thus, we conclude by calling for a greater engagement with the use of visual and creative methods in studies of rural wellbeing and resilience.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Rachael Aka: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Gareth Enticott:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration, Conceptualization.

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Declaration of competing interest

Rachael Aka works part-time for the Farming Community Network. **Gareth Enticott** no interests declared.

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Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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