Role and Scope of Marketing in Agriculture

“How can farmers integrate a business marketing strategy into their activity?”
Declaration

I, Raphaël SCHWARTZ, declare that this research report is my own, unaided work, except as indicated in the acknowledgments, the text and the references.

It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of “Master of Arts” at Dublin Business School, Dublin.

It has not been submitted before, in whole, or in part for any degree or examination at any other institution.

Raphaël SCHWARTZ

SIGNED ON DAY OF 12/05/2014
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Abstract

Through this Master level thesis, the researcher will explore the role and scope of marketing in agriculture. The fact is that today farmers are facing several difficulties, and are dealing with very powerful stakeholders such as supermarkets, large sized companies and governments. Through this research the researcher is trying to find a solution in order to give farmers more control and power over their activity by using marketing. Marketing is a very powerful tool used by almost every company across the world, in order to improve their decision making process and their strategies, according to a specific process. The research question which is going to be answered is: “How can farmers integrate a business marketing strategy to their activity?”

The researcher will follow an inductive approach through this researcher. He will use secondary data as well as primary data. The secondary data collected will be presented in the literature review, and will have for purpose to provide a better understanding of the actual situation, as well as the knowledge the researcher needs to challenge this topic. Primary data will be qualitative thanks to five semi-structured interviews of professionals, and quantitative thanks to a survey to which 151 peoples responded.

The research will show that marketing can provide solutions to farmers, but only in some conditions. Farmers who want to integrate marketing have to make direct sales on their own or in association. An entire marketing strategy cannot be applied because farmers do not have the time, the knowledge, or the need for it. The marketing mix appears to be the most important and useful tool farmers can use and are already using, even if they call it “common sense decisions”. Farmers can get different kinds of help to make it work, and they can also be sure that consumers are very interested of buying farms products.

This thesis will give an overview to anyone who seeks to understand the actual situation of farmers (with a focus on direct sales), and how marketing can be integrated into farm activities. The thesis will highlight what has to change in order to integrate marketing, and what has to be done once marketing has been integrated.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

According to INSEE\(^1\), agriculture in France, since 1960, has seen a strong growth in production, despite the drop in the number of farms and the number of persons employed. The quantity has doubled thanks to the growth of technologies and machines. Today, farms are a lot bigger than few years ago, but the number of farms is also a lot less. The number of individual farmers decreased from 946,000 in 1988 to 339,900 in 2010 (Insee.fr, 2013). According to INSEE, this phenomenon is the result of the decline of value of agricultural products. In France and Europe, farmers have a lot of difficulties to survive because they always have to produce more and more, for less benefit. They are victims of consumption’s habits, and of consumers who do not care or, a lot less, about product’s quality. Consumers no longer have the time to shops in multiple places. They do their grocery shopping in supermarkets and want a large choice of products at one place. This phenomenon has resulted due to the fact that farmers’ customers are supermarkets and large sized companies. The problem, for farmers, is that these big companies, who buy large quantities, also have a lot of different suppliers and therefore have a lot of power over each farmer. They ask for more quantities but also have the power to influence their prices. Farmers have no choice but to accept this because they only have these big and strong companies as customers. Moreover, if one farmer refuses these conditions, supermarkets can easily find another supplier, the one who will not have the choice but to accept. The competition is very strong and supermarkets are using this competition to exercise their power.

Farmers went through so many difficulties that in 1962 the European Union created the CAP, which is the Common Agricultural Policy. Its purpose is to control the prices so that farmers do not lose money when they sell their products. Supermarkets and retailers cannot reduce prices with no limits. The CAP also allocates part of their budget to subsidies to help farmers to grow and, at the very least, survive. But even with the help from the CAP, farmers in Europe and in France have difficulties and have to survive with low salaries.

\(^1\) INSEE : Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (French statistic institut)
According to INSEE, the household income of farmers has seen a continuous decline from 1997 to 2003 of about -5% per year. In order to struggle against that, farmers have no other choices than to find other income. For example, a lot of them invest in real estate, propose their services, rent their own material, etc. The number of farmers who rely on “external incomes” has grown since 1997, about 5% per year. With these external incomes, they are able to make an average of 10 400€ extra per year. By combining these two types of incomes; the internal income (from the agricultural activity), and the external income (from other activity), they reached an average of 25 600€ in 2003 (Insee.fr, 2013). It means that the incomes gained solely from agricultural activity is about 15 200€ per year, which is low.

The problem is that a farmer puts a lot of investments into machines, tools and fields and they do not always have the time to work on their external incomes. According to INSEE, one quarter of farmers is highly in debt and an average 45% of the monthly incomes are used to pay their debts.

It is obvious that farmers have a lot of difficulties to survive in the current economy.

As a farm is considered a “real” company, which creates value, deals with economic factors and creates jobs, they should be able to use the same tools that any other company on the market uses in order to improve their activity. Considering the fact that they are already producing the maximum they are able to, and, that there are no effective changes to make concerning the production process, the researcher is going to assume that changes can be made in the strategy process.

The fact is that, every company integrates a marketing strategy, which is followed in order to develop the company and to make the best choices concerning many decisions in the management process. The French definition of marketing states that: “Marketing is the endeavour of adapting organizations to their competitive markets in order to influence, in their favour, the behaviour of their publics, with an offer whose perceived value is durably superior to that of the competition” (Lendrevie, Lévy, and Lindon, 2006). This definition highlights the fact that marketing helps a company “influence, in their favour, the behavior of their publics”, which is precisely what farmers need, in order to fight against the actual forces of hierarchy in the market, between them and their customers.

As farmers do not use marketing as other companies do, the researcher is going to study how marketing can help farmers.
1.2 Research area, question, and objectives

In this thesis, the researcher will show that marketing is not yet used by every farmer, or at least much less than it could be. The researcher will also try to find a solution by which farmers could use marketing as a strategic tool, like any other company.

The title of the thesis is “Role and scope of marketing in agriculture”.

Assuming that marketing is a flexible tool and can be adapted to every sector, marketing strategies should be a solution to farmers’ problems. Following this ascertainment, the thesis research question is:

“How can farmers integrate a business marketing strategy into their activities?”

The objective of this thesis is to find a viable way for farmers to improve the management of their activities, in order to have more power in their relationship with their customers and, more precisely, with retailers but also be able to deal with their difficult environment. The final objective is to propose a solution for farmers to improve their sales and, moreover, their benefits thanks to marketing strategies.

In order to answer the research question, the researcher assumes that there are objectives that need to be reach.

- **Understand the difficulties farmers are facing**
  - To understand where the difficulties come from
  - To know what farmers are doing to fix the situation
  - Understand how the future of farmers looks like
- **Find out if farming is become a real business**
  - Find out what farmers think about themselves and their activity
  - Find out if farmers would be agree to make more business and management
  - Are farmers ready to integrate new tools like marketing?
- **Make an idea about farmers’ knowledge of marketing**
  - Do they know what marketing is?
  - Did they get any training?
  - Would they be able to handle a marketing strategy?
- **Determine if marketing can help farmers**
• Is marketing providing viable solutions to a farm?
• Do farmers need marketing?
• How much is marketing going to help farmers?

➢ Understand how farmers use marketing yet
• Why is marketing not widespread in farm activities yet?
• Determined what part of marketing is the most useful to farmers
• Determined what can be improved to farmers already using marketing

➢ Find the best solutions farmers have to integrate marketing to their activity
• What has to change in order to integrate marketing?
• What is the best way to use marketing for farmers?
• What kind of help is marketing going to provide to farmers?
• Answer the research question

1.3 Suitability of the researcher

The researcher holds a lot of interest in this topic and in this area.

The researcher is very organized and precise. He works with recent and confirmed statistics and information. The researcher works with real facts, which have been confirmed. His objective is to find a real and applicable solution to help farmers.

The researcher has five years experiences in marketing as he is a student of the ISEG Marketing & Communication School in Strasbourg, France, where he obtained a bachelor and a master degree in marketing. The researcher also spent nine months of 2013 as a student in the MA Marketing program at Dublin Business School in Ireland in order to obtain a second master degree. During this year, he improved his knowledge of marketing and compared both French and Irish approaches to both marketing and work habits.

The researcher grew up in an agricultural environment. Indeed, the researcher is part of a family of farmers and has participated for many years in farm work and activities. He is aware of the difficulties and the working conditions of this type of activity.

According to the researcher’s background, he is qualified to take on this genre of research.
1.4 Contribution of the study

The research will provide a better knowledge about the current trends on the agricultural market in term of relation with shareholders, economic difficulties, and solution against farmers’ difficulties through marketing solutions.

Usually people consider agriculture as an old activity, apart from “current” jobs, which did not evolve a lot through years. Farmers are considered like person less sophisticated, living in their farm, like people in the past. But this research will show that farmers are well-educated, and moreover, can have a managerial and business profile.

Usually people do not associate agriculture and marketing. For people, farms do not need marketing, which is a science reserved for the use of a company. One proof of this assertion is that a very little number of researches have been done in this area. This research will provide a new kind of information, and explore a domain still unknown of most people.

1.5 Scope of the research and limitations

The research is going to focus on a farmer’s point of view, rather than on an agricultural market point of view. Indeed, there is a lack of research in this area, and the researcher does not want to speak about big alimentary distributors, but about the first level of the agricultural market. Often, consumers see the big food brands they are consuming, and do not think about farmers. But these big brands are strong and use marketing in every step of their promotional process. The researcher wants to know how farmers, who are producers of raw products, are dealing with marketing.

Because agriculture is a wide area, and there is a lot of different farmer and producer, the researcher is going to speak about several different types of production, but with a focus on milk, meat and vegetable producers.
The researcher is going to use a lot of academic resources about marketing improvement in business and its possibilities. Professionals of agriculture will be contacted, and consumers will be asked to provide their opinion.

The main limitation of the research will be the lack of experience of the researcher and his level of English. The researcher will also be limited by time constraints, and will have to select the most relevant information for contribution.

The researcher will also focus on the French market, because of a lack of time, financial reasons, and in order to be able to find, and access available data. But as the French market is a lot similar to the market in other parts of Western Europe, the research could have a bigger impact that includes other regions besides France.

1.6 Recipients of the research

The main recipients of this research are:

- Dublin Business School where the researcher is a full time student.
- Liverpool John Moores University, the awarding body.
- Professor Eva Perez, the researcher's supervisor.

Other recipients are ISEG Marketing & Communication School, where the researcher got his master degree.

The secondary recipients are:

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1.7 Dissertation organization

In order to follow an understandable and logical process, this dissertation is divided into several parts.

The first part is an introduction, which presents the research area and the research question. The introduction has been divided into several parts and presents the background, as well as the objectives, the suitability, the contribution, and the scope/limitations of the research.

The second part is the “Literature Review”. It covers all the academic documents the researcher has read. This part gives the researcher a good comprehension of the research area. It is the summary and critical discussion of a selected amount of professional theories, facts, and processes related to the topic.

The third part is the “Research Methodology”, which explains exactly how the researcher is going to proceed with the research, in terms of psychological and theoretical approaches.

The fourth part is the “Data Analysis and Findings”. In this part the researcher will present the data he has collected. Then, he will analyze the data and present his findings regarding the topic.

The fifth part is the “Conclusion and Recommendations”, in which the researcher is going to summarize his findings and draw some recommendations according to them. In this part, the researcher will answer the research question.

In the last part, the researcher will present his self-reflection on his own learning and performance.
Chapter 2 - Literature review

Through this chapter the researcher is going to discuss academic, secondary information enabling to him to obtain comprehension of the research problem and context. The literature review will provide the basis of the research. It will provide an explanation and understanding of the key points, essential to the research.

2.1 Farms in France and Europe

The planting and nurturing the growth of crops, and the domestication of animals for the purpose of helping humans began in Egypt in around 10,000 B.C. Naturally, as with every aspect in our human evolution, farming has grown and has developed to become its own complex industry. This has not always been good, however. The 20th century showed an increase in the use of chemical fertilization products in both Europe and the west, whereas now those old farming fads have given away to the popularization of organic or “bio” products. Regardless of the changing economic climate that farming has faced since its foundation, one thing has remained consistent. The use and need for farming is inevitable to sustaining growing economies. (Carroll, 2010)

In Europe, farmers may be eligible to benefit from the CAP, which stands for the Common Agricultural Policy, and was set forth by the European Union and implements a system of agricultural subsidies. (Ec.europa.eu, 2014)

The CAP is today, one of the biggest financial aids received by European Farmers in terms of subsidies. According to the European Union website, the purpose of the CAP is to support the competitiveness of European farmers, and to encourage the development of rural areas, especially the less fortunate ones. In addition, the European Union has increased its commitment to rural development, through a unique financing instrument that promotes agriculture and forestry as well as all activities in rural areas.

The EEA, or European Environment Agency, discusses the topic of European Agriculture. They mention that farming is a huge influencer on Europe’s landscapes because almost half of
Europe’s total landmass is dedicated to agriculture. They also mention that the CAP is communicating with those who work in the agricultural industry and them that the CAP “has encouraged the sector to become rapidly modernised and agricultural production itself to increase intensification” (Eea.europa.eu, 2014). The EEA goes on to state that this is probably because farms have been contributing to the population of groundwater from pesticide residue. However, a report published by the European Commission and the DG Agriculture and Rural Development on the European agricultural policy analysis states that the CAP aid comprised a lot of the European Union’s budget in past years, 73% in 1985, but has seen a significant drop down to 41% in 2012 (Ec.europa.eu, 2014).

![CAP expenditure in total EU expenditure](image)

**Figure 1: CAP expenditure in total EU expenditure**

This chart shows the decline in the percentage of the CAP to the European Union’s expenditure. As can be noted, the pricing or total CAP expenditure has remained quite consistent since about 1996.
Though farmers only represent 4.7% of the European Union’s working population, they have to manage and maintain almost half of all European landmass, and produce necessary products for the rest of the population to consume on a daily basis. (*Ec.europa.eu, 2014*)

According to the official definition of the French government, a farm is, following the agricultural statistics approach; an economical unit which takes part in the agricultural production and follows some criteria:

- It engages in an agricultural activity, whether pertaining to production, or lands being maintained in good agricultural and environmental conditions, which should act as a tool for optimal growth of produce. One section or mass of land, or several areas should be allocated to this activity to be deemed fit to collect agro-environmental benefits.

- Land should reach a specific dimension of, either, 10 000 square meters of useful agricultural surface, or either, a minimum of 20 square meters of specialized culture.

- Its daily management is independent from any other unit. The existence of a registration to the Company Repertory.

*Esposti (2008)* claims that support to agricultural households demonstrate the highest positive impact on regional output and employment. For him, the help that farmers get from the European Union is a proof of the implication of the Union in the department of local agriculture. The Union knows that farmers have difficulties and try to help them. It shows us that even politics try to find solutions. For the moment these solutions are financial, but the nature of it could change.

But even if European farmers get help from European Union, they still have a lot of difficulties. A lot a farmers fail, and have to stop their activity, what is follow by some consequences.
2.2 What are the implications of farmers’ failures?

According to *Stulpiniené* (2011), the bad luck that farmers tend to face because they get the short end of economic price fluctuation, results in farmers who are efficient in terms of production, but also in debt. This has forced them to seek other ways of making a secondary income from the industry in which they thrive. *Stulpiniené* (2011) also said that, in addition, European farms are generally family businesses, so that farm failure can result in farmers and their families losing not only their employment but also their homes and way of life. Moreover, according to *Rucker and Alston* (1987), the financial failure of a farm causes substantial losses to its shareholders, and subsequently the economy and society as a whole because farms are essential to economic stability. Farms are the suppliers of every food industry and retailer, but also provide products for their country’s exports. According to these authors, farmers facing problems, particularly financial problems, will not just lose their jobs but also their family house. It will have huge personal impacts. Additionally, the society as a whole will suffer. Food companies and retailers will have difficulties and country exports will be lower. The problem is that these are two determining factors of a country’s economical success. Consequently, the prediction of failure is of critical importance to all; shareholders, managers, workers, lenders, suppliers, clients, the community and government.

2.3 What are the causes of farmers’ difficulties?

According to French farmers’ unions, such as: FNSEA², Jeunes Agriculteurs³, Coordination rurale⁴, Confédération Paysanne⁵, and MODEF⁶, the biggest problem farmers face, is the huge power that retailers have over them. Eighty-five percent (85%) of French produce is sold through retailers. However, the pricing policy applied by retailers is to maximize their margin
on the sale of each product in order to maximize their own profits. Consequently, some farmers are forced to sell their products under cost.

Green and Picciano (2002) add that, the marketing problems encountered consist of the prevailing systems privileging large-scale producers, insufficient information on market outlets and prices, and the cycle of market price disasters. Farmers have to survive in this environment, where they have to undergo rules set by retailers and governments. Already in 1982, authors were insisting that government and market rules were the reasons that farmers fail. A number of possible determinants of farm failure are; increasing scale of farm size and inputs, capital structure, farm income fluctuation, government agricultural policy, and macroeconomic factors (Shepard and Collins 1982).

Other authors accept that, even if the situation is difficult, farmers have a lot of control over the situation.

Hughes, Richardson, Rister (1984) suggest three principal reasons for farmers’ difficulties are as follows; macroeconomic policies, farm policies, and individual management decisions by which farmers can influence everything. Moreover, for Stulpiniené (2011), the usual reasons given for farmers’ problems are macro-economic indicators, such as inflation, interest rates, seasonality of farming, tax, and common agricultural policy. Stulpiniené (2011), argue also that farmers have a lot of control over this inconvenient environment, and that they are able to find solutions thanks to the management strategies. A scheme, presenting and developing the relations and the links between the environment’s influence and farmers’ management capacities, is presented in Appendix 1.

According to these authors, the causes of farmers’ difficulties are, for the most part, external and environmental factors. However, where some authors disagree is whether or not farms “have” or “do not have” power over these external factors. Some of these authors concur that farmers have to endure market rules and produce more products to make more money. Whereas, some authors concur that farmers are completely able to deal with the external factors, by using the right management skills and strategies. For these authors, the management skills and the strategies influence farm outcomes more than the environment in which they find themselves.

Another reason that farms face certain problems is that, today, in developed countries like France and Western Europe, product production is expensive. The labour cost is high and it is
more profitable to import products from underdeveloped countries where labour cost is lower. Products are less expensive and retailers make a higher profit. It means that French and Western European farmers suffer due to the financial convenience of buying products from underdeveloped countries.

The Levin Institute of the State University of New York states that first world countries import their goods for several reasons. The first reason they mention is that no country today can be completely self-sufficient and still cater to the needs of the people. Therefore, some products are imported because a) they’re essential to economic stability, or b) there are products that are attractive to consumers but they are not available in their domestic market. The second reason for importing, according to the Levin Institute, is that countries get better prices on products they can domestically produce if they import them from underdeveloped countries. Hence, these products are imported because a) they are able to satisfy domestic needs and wants while having them produced inexpensively and more efficiently, and b) they are able to make higher profits by lowering their initial product costs to bring them into the country, and c) they can also use inexpensive imports to cater to their economy when in recession (Globalization101 - The Levin Institute, 2014).

Germany has been importing produce and other food products from China in the past few years. According to Wingard and Diehn (2012), Chinese workers make between 0.93 and 1.86 euros per day working in vegetable and fruit fields. This is much less when compared to German farm labourers who make approximately 110 euros per day doing similar jobs in Germany.

Germany is Europe’s leading economic country with France following in second, and is also France’s largest economic business partner. (Wingard and Diehn, 2012)

According to a World Bank report of 2012, France imports 8.4% of its food products. France also imports 19.7% of its merchandise from developing economies. (Tradingeconomics.com, 2012) More figures can be seen in specific detail in Appendix 2.
2.4 Did the economic crisis impact the agricultural sector?

According to the French Ministry of Agriculture (Ministère de l'agriculture, 2013), the economic crisis impacted the agricultural environment through three points. The crisis decreased credit allowances, which is essential to farmers’ work, because they rely on large investments to support their activity. The crisis also decreased household product consumption, which is directly related to agricultural products. Finally, a lot of agricultural products’ prices have been reduced at the level of production cost. It is obvious that the economic crisis did impact the agricultural environment, but according to the Ministry of Agriculture, it impacted the agricultural industry as it did any other market. Indeed, the three factors presented above can impact a lot of different areas.

However, if the crisis did not impact the agricultural industry any more than it did another industry, it proves that the agricultural activity is an activity like any other, and faces the same problems that other industries face.

It can be noted that the impact of the economic recession on farming had affected farming everywhere. In fact, Dr. Walden of the North Carolina State University also agrees that farmers rely heavily on investments and credit during the planting season, which they then pay back after the harvest. However, the recession has impacted them a lot because of their struggle to sell their products at profit. Luckily, Walden says that the farming market has not yet reached the point of foreclosure on family homes, as has been seen quite frequently in the U.S. housing market. However, he adds that financing from banks has been tighter for farmers and that even land value has decreased in rural areas, making this time even harder for farmers (Ncsu.edu, 2009).

2.5 Can farmers act like managers in companies?

According to Henry L. Sisk in his book “Management and Organization”, management is the coordination of all resources through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to attain stated objectives. The fact is that this definition lists all the aspects of the job of a farmer. So, as we saw above, farmers respect the entire criteria required
to reach the definition of management. Indeed, according to *Henry L. Sisk’s* definition, farmers could be considered as managers, but is there no difference between them and managers in a more common idea of a company?

According to *Rougoor et al (1998)*, farmers’ behaviour in the production planning process can be viewed as a decision-making process including planning and choice, implementation, and control of decisions. This process determines farm efficiency and is mediated through personal characteristics of the farmer, such as objectives, ability, age, and education.

According to *Gordana and Helena (2011)*, the presence of limited rationality in the production planning process decreases farm efficiency and that working with strategies to reduce limited rationality would be one way of making farm operations more efficient.

According to *Rougoor et al (1998)* and *Gordana and Helena (2011)*, farmers have to act in the same way that managers and marketers act in other companies, because farmers’ managerial decisions determine the efficiency of farms, as in any other business.

According to these authors, farmers are real managers. So, it could be feigned that any manager from a business company could manage a farm. Indeed, the definition of managing is about managing skills that can be adapted to any business area.

However, even if farmers have, by matter of circumstance, the obligation to act like manager, many of them disagrees with the fact that they are their company’s manager. A large part of farmers agree to say that farming is a particular job and, more specifically, not just a job but a way of life (*Hobbyfarms.com, 2013*). Indeed, for them, when you are a farmer your entire life is about farming. Without passion you cannot be a farmer. This job is unique and incomparable to any other job. They state that farmers need managerial skills but that the management of a farm is completely different than that of any other business.

Considering these facts, farmers must find a solution to improve their use of management. But they are not always able to. The problem is not that farmers do not want to; but that they do not have the time, nor do they have the capacities to do so.

Indeed, in his book, *Nuthall (2010)*, argue that even if management is essential to farms, farmers are not always able to apply management strategies. Indeed, farmers have a lot of physical labour to do and are often alone in the work they do, primarily in Europe. So, they do not have the time to polish their managerial skills and, moreover, they have no time to apply management strategies. Usually, in Europe, farmers inherit their farms from their families and keep the same habits because they do not have the time to think about changing them in terms of efficiency, investment and competition.
Kleiner and Green (2008) said that, the expansion of sustainable agriculture could pass through the development of alternative production techniques and marketing strategies. Some marketing strategies and tools could easily be applied to farms without wasting time. Marketing management is the process of planning and executing, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals (Kotler 2000).

2.6 What is marketing?

It is difficult to define marketing. Many authors have tried to do this, but marketing is so large and encompasses so many ideas that we need several definitions to properly understand the concept. The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM, 2001), defined marketing as “The management process of anticipating, identifying and satisfying customer requirements profitably”. The American Marketing Association, says that “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (AMA, 2007). These two definitions focus on both the management process and activity, but other versions focus on the influence of behaviour. Indeed, Lendrevie, Lévy, and Lindon, 2006, define marketing as “the endeavour of adapting organizations to their competitive markets in order to influence, in their favour, the behaviour of their publics, with an offer whose perceived value is durably superior to that of the competition”.

If marketing specialists cannot find a singular definition, this means that numerous uses can be made of marketing. According to Baines, Fill, and Page, (2011), marketing strategy provides information about:

- Market analysis: Understanding the market place.
- Marketing goals: Determine what the marketing strategy should achieve referring to the market analysis.
- Market action: determine action to accomplish and how, in order to achieve the goals.
Therefore, marketing strategy can provide data and solutions for a company in order to reach their objectives, which can be achieved in multiple ways by way of several kinds of marketing tools and theories, at different stages in promotion/production.

2.7 Can marketing provide solutions to a farm business?

In their study on linkage between direct marketing in farm income, Adhikari and Detre et al. (2011), focus on the US market. Indeed, their study identifies factors affecting the adoption of a direct marketing strategy (DMS) by farmers and its impact on the gross sales of farm operations in the United States.

Direct marketing is a marketing tool, used in the management process in order to directly reach the final customer by removing all/any intermediaries.

The fact is that the US, and the European farm markets are different, however both operate in first world, developed countries. Therefore, the following information shows that what may be applicable to one may also be applicable to the other.

According to Adhikari and Detre et al (2011), direct marketing is one such marketing strategy that has increased in importance among farmer. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2007), 136,817 farms implemented a direct marketing strategy (DMS). Moreover, the number of farm operators incorporating direct marketing into their business model increased by 17% from 2002 to 2007 (USDA, 2009).

Directly marketing strategies implemented by farmers include use of farmers’ markets, you-pick operations (where customers go pick their own fruits or vegetables from the fields), consumer cooperatives, and locally branded meats (Buhr, 2004; Kohls & Uhl, 1998).

According to Govindasamy and Nayga (1997), the key factors responsible for increasing the use of direct marketing are that producers can get a higher revenue price from the sale of their products than if they had sold it to a retailer, and also that customers can buy fresher products.

In conclusion, this study shows that, “farmers who have adopted the use of DMS capture a larger proportion of the consumers’ dollar [and are able to] increase gross sales than those who have not adopted”.

Onumah (2007) has another idea on how marketing could help farmers, and this does not focus on DMS. He thinks that farmers could reach markets in a dynamic and demanding
trading environment. Concretely, he thinks that farmers could reach new markets, but the business involves collective marketing, where larger volumes of a given crop are easier to sell and/or attract higher prices (Onumah, 2007). For Onumah, if farmers use marketing strategies, they could reach new markets, and this could help them use the existing market competition in order to improve their prices. However, for this to happen farmers have to unite. It is the only way for them to become strong enough and to generate the power and momentum they need.

2.8 Direct sales of farm’s products in France and Alsace

According to Agricultural Products Industry Profil: France, (2014), the French agricultural products market grew by 0.5% in 2013 to reach a value of $39.8 billion, and is forecasted to have to have a value of $49.9 billion in 2018. France accounts for 9.3% of the European agricultural products market value, in which fruit, vegetables, roots & tubers is the largest segment of the agricultural products market in France, accounting for 58.2% of the market's total value.

On this French market, 18.5% of farmers make direct sales as the following scheme shows:

Figure 2: Classification of French regions according to their direct sales rate
The Direction Régionale de l'Alimentation, de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt,( 2012), is a study made by the French Government which focus on the region Alsace (which is the fourth region in term of direct sales), and studied farmer’s direct sales.

According to this study, one quarter of the farmers from this region make direct sales. Small farms are concerned, as well as big size, but only big farms make a big profit. This profit can be a very big part of the farm turnover as this scheme highlights:

We can see that 35% of farms making direct sales make more than 75% of their turnover thanks to direct sales.

This study also argues that farms making direct sales are usually family business concerning at less two person of the family. A direct sale is also a reason to hire workers (18% of worker in farms making direct sales vs 9% in “traditional” farms).

60% of the time they sale their product directly on the farm, 20% on the market, 9% is delivered, and 8% through shops.

Still according to this study, in Alsace, 76% farmer producing organic (bio) products also make direct sales.

This part highlights the fact that the French agricultural market is an important European growing market. French farmers are making a lot of direct sales in some regions, like in Alsace. We saw that it is possible to make a large turnover if the farm is big enough, but a farmer cannot do it alone. It is also a tendency for organic producer to make direct sales.
2.9 Summary

This literature review helped the researcher to understand the key factors related to the topic, and has enabled him to start the research with a good overview of the situation. It provided the basics needed by the researcher to answer the research question and meet his objectives. The literature review especially enabled the researcher to become aware of the fact that even if some authors are not in agreement, and they have different theories, marketing and farms can interact.
Chapter 3 - Research Methods and Methodology

This chapter is going to present the research method and methodology, which are more precisely, the process and the way by which the goal of the dissertation is going to be achieved through the collection of data, in order to answer the research question. That is to say, the issues underlying the choice of data collection techniques and analysis procedures. Indeed, the core of the research is the data collection and analyses. This part is also called the “core of the onion” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2009, p. 106). But, before coming to this central point, many authors argue that there are important layers of the onion that need to be peeled away. It is this “onion” and its layers that are going to be developed in this chapter. This chapter is going to present, explain and justify the choice concerning the guiding principles of the thesis. In order to understand and develop these principles, the researcher is going to refer to the book: “Research Methods for Business Students”, in its fifth edition, written by Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis, and Adrian Thornhill (2009).

![Figure 4: "The research onion" Saunders et al (2009)](image-url)
3.1 Research Philosophy

According to *Saunders et al (2009)*, the research philosophy contains important assumptions about the way in which people view the world. These assumptions will underpin the research strategy, and the methods chosen as part of that strategy. The fact is that no research philosophy is better than another, but several researchers, who use different philosophies, will considerably differ on their view of what is important, and perhaps, what is more useful. A philosophy has to be considered in a holistic way (*Saunders et al, 2009*).

3.1.1 Presentation

First of all *Saunders et al (2009)*, accept that there are three ways to think about philosophy:

- Ontology: view of the nature of reality or being
- Epistemology: view regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge
- Axiology: view of the role of values in research

In their book, *Saunders et al (2009)*, the authors agreed with *Johnson and Clark (2006)*, who argue that the important issue is not so much whether our research should be philosophically informed, but it is how well we are able to reflect upon our philosophical choices and defend them in relation to the alternatives we could have adopted. It means that there is no better choice than another, it depends on the research question, but the researcher has to be able to defend his choices.

In addition to these three ways listed above, the researcher has the possibility to take different positions or approaches to these philosophies:

**Positivism**

According to *Saunders et al (2009)*, the positivism strategy works in the tradition of the natural scientist. In this philosophy, credible data are provided by observable phenomena.

This philosophy includes three basic principles:
- The social world exists externally and is viewed objectively.

- Research is value-free: “the research is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research” (Remenyi and Williams et al. 1998).

People choosing this philosophy assume that the research is just going to use facts, without any influence from the research subject or impression and feelings from the researcher.

**Realism**

The essence of realism is that what the senses show us as reality is the truth: that objects have an existence independent of the human mind. According to Saunders et al (2009), this philosophy assumes that there is a reality quite independent of the mind. It implies that research is not value-free, and is conducted within a broader framework based on our current knowledge and concept of reality. In the realist’s view, there are social processes and forces beyond the control of humans, which affect our beliefs and behavior. The critical realist position is that our knowledge of reality is a result of social conditioning (Dobson 2002).

**Interpretivism**

Choosing this philosophy is assuming that the social world of business and management is far too complex to lend itself to theorizing by definite laws in the same way as the physical science (Saunders et al 2009). That is to say that the social world cannot be understood by applying research principles adopted from the natural sciences and propose that social sciences require a different research philosophy. The purpose is to understand why people are acting like they are acting, and why a particular situation is this situation.

The basic principles of interpretivism are:

- The social world is constructed and is given meaning subjectively by people

- The researcher is part of what is observed. The researcher is involved in the topic and chose the topic because of the interest he has for the topic.

- Research is driven by interests.
This approach, research social phenomenon by making sense of how people interpret the social world.

### 3.1.2 Choice and justification

The researcher is going to follow the **epistemological philosophy**, using an **interpretivist approach**. To answer the research question, the researcher needs to understand the different and subjective points of view of different stakeholders (farmers, marketers, customers, etc.), in order to get acceptable knowledge. According to the fact that every stakeholder is going to have a different point of view, the researcher will have to understand differences between humans as social actors. *Saunders et al (2009)*, assume that, the challenge of using this approach is to enter the social world of the research subjects and understand their world, by their point of view. And that is exactly was the researcher is going to do, by entering the social world of farmers, understanding their job, and interviewing them, in order to get their point of view.

Moreover, the researcher is also part of the research as he his driven by the interests of his background experience. The researcher will interpret the farmer’s role in accordance with his own set of meanings.
3.2 Research approaches

3.2.1 Presentation

**Deduction: testing theory**

According to *Saunders et al (2009)*, deduction owes much to what we would think of as scientific research. It involves the development of a theory that is subjected to a rigorous test. The point is to try to explain causal relationships between variables, by making hypotheses to verify. With this approach, everything needs to be operationalized and defined precisely in order to make enables facts to be measured quantitatively.

Deduction approach is moving from theory to data and need a lot of quantitative data with an independent researcher.

In order to pursue the principle of scientific rigor, deduction dictates that the researcher should be independent of what is being observed. The conclusion of this approach is based on logic, using hypotheses, data collection, and theories developments, as a result of data, conducting to a test of hypotheses.

**Induction: building theory**

Induction is when a conclusion is drawn from past experience or evidence (*Saunders et al 2009*). The main assumption of this approach is that, because things have always been as they are, that is how they will be in the future.

The strength of an inductive approach is developing an understanding on the cause-effect link between particular variables and the way in which humans interpreted their social world.

The main difference between deduction and induction approaches is that the induction approach cannot prove the conclusion as a fact. The induction approach understands also, that the researcher is part of the research process. The approach is less concern with the need to generalize, because the purpose is more about gaining an understanding of the meanings that humans attach to events.
3.2.2 Choice and justification

This dissertation is going to follow the **induction approach** for several reasons. Firstly, induction owes more to interpretivism, which is the philosophy the researcher has chosen.

Secondly, this approach tries to understand the nature of the problem, what is exactly what the researcher is going to do. Indeed, the researcher assumes that it is difficult to answer a question without being aware about the nature of the problem. For example, how is it possible to answer the question: “How can farmers integrate a business marketing strategy into their activity?” without knowing why they did not integrate it yet?

Thirdly, induction cannot prove the conclusion as a fact, but instead gives an interpretation of the data or information collected. Indeed, the answer to the research question will not be able to be the only right answer. The answer will be an interpretation of the data and will not be able to be confirmed in every circumstance. In fact, there are a lot of different agricultural activities, with many different strategies. Even the same agricultural activity is managed differently from one farmer to another. That is why the result of this research will not be able to be confirmed in every application.
3.3 Research strategy

3.3.1 Presentation

Experiment

This strategy purpose is to prove that one precise variable influences people’s behavior, using an experience.

According to Hakim (2000), the purpose of an experimental strategy is to study the causal links; whether a change in one independent variable produces a change in another dependent variable. The strategy consist of the fact that, a researcher has to made a hypothesis and make an experience in order to determine if this hypotheses is right or wrong.

Survey

This strategy is usually used for exploratory and descriptive research. It allows the collection of a large amount of data, obtained by using a questionnaire administered to a sample group. It allows easy comparison and is easy to explain and understand. The purpose of survey is to produce quantitative description of a part from a given population.

Action research

According to Hart (1996), action research is problem-focused, context specific, participative, involves a change intervention geared to improvement and a process based on a continuous interaction between research, action, reflection and evaluation.

Action research helps to solve problems. To be able to do an action research, the researcher has to have a good understanding of quantitative and qualitative methods, but also management and reflection skills.

According to Coghlan and Brannick (2005), action research is more research in action rather than research about action. This strategy starts with a context and purpose, and undertakes a spiral action, as it is possible to see on the following scheme:
Grounded theory

According to Goudling (2002), this theory is particularly helpful for research to predict and explain behavior, the emphasis being upon developing and building theory.

Theory is developed from data generated by series of observation. These data lead to the generation of predictions which are then tested in further observations that may confirm, or otherwise, the predictions. The grounded theory consists in starting research with data collection, without having made a hypotheses framework.

Subbady (2006), listed six common misconceptions about grounded theory:

- Grounded theory is not an excuse to ignore the literature

- It is not a presentation of raw data

- It is not theory testing, content analysis, or word counts

- It is not simply routine application of formulaic procedures to data

- It is a “messy” theory
- It is not easy to achieve

**Ethnography**

The purpose is to describe and explain the social world the research subjects inhabit, in the way in which they could describe and explain it.

By adopting an ethnographic strategy, the researcher will be researching the phenomenon within the context in which it occurs and, in addition, not using data collection techniques. The researcher has to follow the same people for a sufficiently long time in order to be able to noticed changes in their behavior.

**Archival research**

The archival research strategy makes use of administrative records and documents as the principal source of data. It allows research questions which focus upon the past and changes over time to be answered, be they exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Saunders et al 2009). The difficulty lies in the fact that this kind of data is difficult to find and often limited. It is more often use for historical researches.

**Case study**

Robson (2002) defines case study as a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, using multiple sources of evidence.

The case study strategy is helpfully to understand the context of the research. It is more often used in explanatory and exploratory research. People using a case study strategy, are likely to use and triangulate multiple sources of data. The data collection techniques may include interviews, observation, documentary analysis and questionnaires. It can enable the researcher to challenge an existing theory and also provide a source of new research questions (Saunders et al 2009).
3.3.2 Choice and justification

Even if the action research strategy could be interesting, this thesis is going to follow the **case study strategy**. This strategy is helpfully to understand the context of the research, which is obligatory for the researcher. It is using a multiple source of data, to become perfectly aware of the situation, and get the insights of each stakeholder.

The action research strategy could also be interesting, but the main problem is that action research is more research in action, rather than research about action. This strategy takes a lot of time and needs to confirm theories, which is not possible in this case. Indeed, it takes a lot of time to get feedback from a marketing strategy outcome.

However, according to *Morris and Wood (1991)*, the case study strategy will be of particular interest to you if you wish to gain a rich understanding of the context of the research and the processes being endorsed. This presentation of the strategy, matches perfectly with the researcher’s expectations. Indeed, he wants to understand the reasons and process of the actual situation in the agricultural area.
3.4 Research choice

3.4.1 Presentation

According to Saunders et al (2009), the research choice refers to how the researcher is going to use the quantitative and qualitative techniques about data collection and data analyses. The only two possibilities to collect and analyze data are quantitative and qualitative methods but they can be used in different ways as the following scheme highlights:

Figure 6: "Research choice"
3.4.2 Choice and justification

According to the explications above, the *mixed-method research* seems to be the best choice for this research. To answer the research question, qualitative and quantitative data will be collected in order to make a sustainable answer. But quantitative data will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitative data will be analyzed qualitatively.
3.5 Time horizon

3.5.1 Presentation

The researcher has the choice to choose between two solutions. He needs to know if he wants his research to take place at a particular time, or does he want it to be a representation of events over a given period.

Longitudinal studies

A longitudinal study means that the research is more akin to a diary or a series of particular time and is a representation of events over a given period. The purpose is to evaluate and understand the changes over a period of time (Saunders et al 2009).

Cross-sectional studies

A cross-sectional study means that the research takes place in a particular time like a snapshot. These studies are particularly adapted to case studies based on interviews conducted over a short period of time. These studies may use qualitative methods. Many case studies are based on interviews conducted over a short period of time (Saunders et al 2009).

3.5.2 Choice and justification

The researcher is going to use a cross-sectional study because the purpose of the thesis is to understand the actual situation and to make an answer based on this actual situation. So, the research will take place in a short period of time (few months). The researcher is also using a case study strategy which matches perfectly with the cross-sectional study.
3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Secondary data collection

3.6.1.1 Presentation

According to Saunders et al (2009), secondary data is data already collected by other people. It includes both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Kervin (1999), the data used may be raw data, where there has been little if any processing, or compiled data that have received some form of selection or summarizing. Secondary data is frequently used as part of a case study research strategy. The collect of data that has already been collected by other people and for another purpose, is a way to learn more about a topic by using different points of view. The following scheme shows different categories of secondary data with explications, and gives examples of each category:

![Type of secondary data](image-url)
**Survey based:**

This solution refers to a collection of data using a survey, usually a questionnaire that has already been analyzed by someone else. They normally refer to organizations, peoples or household. For example, surveys are useful if the researcher is looking for consumption’s habit in a particular market.

**Multiple sources based:**

According to *Saunders et al (2009)*, secondary data based on multiple sources is a combination of different data sets, which have been combined to form another data set prior to the researcher access of data. The way in which a multiple-sources data set has been compiled will dictate the sorts of research question or objectives with which you can use it. There are two different types of multiple sources (area based, and time series based).

**Documentary based:**

There are two different kind of secondary data’s documents based. The written and non-written material differs to method by which document and information have been recorded.

**3.6.1.2 Choice and justification**

In this thesis, the researcher is going to use every kind of secondary data available. The researcher is going to use secondary data as a base of information given him the opportunity to understand the actual situation on the research areas, which are farm and their relation with marketing. The purpose is to understand the present situation, and the reasons which leaded to it, in order to give an answer to the research question, which is based on this present and particular situation. The researcher wants to have a perfect understanding of the situation, the rules, the strengths and weaknesses of the situation. This understanding will give him the capacity to handle the primary data he will get, by the more efficient manner, because he will be able to tell exactly which information he needs, how he can find it and interpret it.
3.6.2 Primary qualitative data collection

3.6.2.1 Presentation

According to Saunders et al (2009), qualitative data refers to all non-numeric data or data that have not been quantified and can be a product of all research strategies. Such data can be collected through observation, by using semi-structured in-depth and group interview, or by questionnaire. However, the researcher needs to get the opinion and information from the professionals. He needs them to take part in the thinking process. That is why he will not use observation’s method to collect data.

According to the subject of this thesis, the researcher has to involve professionals in the research process. Farmers’ opinion will help him to conclude the best answer to the research question. The researcher will need farmers to answer his questions, but also give him guidance and insights by giving their opinion, not only about the questions, but also about what the researcher would not have thought about. Therefore, the researcher is going to use the interview method to collect qualitative data.

Interview is, according to Kahn and Cannell (1957), a purposeful discussion between two or more people. Interview can be categorized as follow:

- **Structured interviews**: Questionnaires based on a predetermined and standardized or identical set of questions. The interviewer read out the questions and records the pre-coded responses from the administered. The interviewer has to be really careful while the interview because he cannot indicate any bias by his voice’s tone for example. Usually structured interviews are used to collect quantifiable data.

In comparison, semi-structured and in-depth interview are considered qualitative research interviews (King 2004).

- **Semi-structured interviews**: The researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered. The interviewer and the researcher have a conversation about the themes and questions. It means that the questions and their order may change during the interview and additional questions could appear.
- Unstructured or in-depth interviews: That is an informal process in which there is no predetermined list of questions but just a clear idea about the aspect that the interviewer wants to explore. It is possible to speak freely about a topic.

Once the category of interview has been chosen, it is necessary to choose the form of interview, which is, according to Saunders et al (2009), the nature of interaction between the researcher and the interviewed. The following scheme presents the different forms of interview:

![Forms of interview](image)

**Figure 8: "Forms of interview" Saunders et al (2009)**

### 3.6.2.2 Choice and justification

The researcher is going to use **semi-structured interviews.** The **semi structured interviews** will be conducted **face to face** and **by internet.** The researcher is putting the professionals he is going to interview at the core of his data collecting strategy. He will use the secondary data collected, and his background, as foundation of his knowledge. On the top of this foundation, which represents the basis he needs on the topic; he will build an answer to the research question by using professional knowledge and ideas. The researcher will use semi-structured interviews because they allow him to ask the question he needs to be answered, but also because it allows the interviewed to share his opinion, insights and general reflections about
the topic. This method will allow the researcher to keep his mind open and keep the research factual. He is not going to focus on his own ideas, which could be far off from the actual situation, but he is going to get the personal meanings of professional.

The interviews are going to be conducted face to face as often as possible. The researcher thinks that it is the best option to reach his goal. The face-to-face form allows him to ask specific questions, but also to have a conversation about it. The researcher can adapt his questions according to the answers, and also have a conversation about the topic. Moreover, the face-to-face form makes the interview easier. Indeed, it is easier to have an exchange, but also to give more clarification if a question or an answer has not been understood.

If the interviewed is geographically too far from the researcher or, if he does not have the time, he will have the option to answer the questions by e-mail.

When the researcher is writing the questionnaire, he will have to be very careful with the content. The questions have to be precise and clear enough to make the interviewed understand them, but also open enough to leave him the possibility to develop the answer if he thinks that it could be relevant.
3.6.3 Primary quantitative data collection

3.6.3.1 Presentation

According to Saunders et al (2009), quantitative data refer to all numerical data, and can be a product of all research strategies. It can range from simple counts such as the frequency of occurrences to more complex data such as test scores, prices or rental costs.

A questionnaire corresponds exactly with this definition. Questionnaire is use by deVaus (2002), as a general term to include all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. It exists several modes to administer a questionnaire as she following scheme shows.

![Diagram of questionnaire types]

Figure 9: “Types of questionnaire” Saunders et al (2009)

3.6.3.2 Choice and justification

The researcher will use a self-administered questionnaire which is usually completed by the respondent and it will be internet administered. The purpose of this questionnaire will be to get a consumer point of view about farms and their direct selling activities. It will allow the researcher to give his recommendations according on what consumers are expecting.
3.6.4 Data analyses

3.6.4.1 Presentation

Qualitative data can be found in different forms. They need to be analyzed in order to develop theories. In this thesis, qualitative data will be provided through interviews conducted face to face or through internet.

The face to face interviews will be audio recorded and the internet interviews will already appear in a word document.

According to Saunders et al (2009), data, audio, video or note recorded need to be transcript into word-process. But it takes a lot of time to transcribe audio and video recordings. It is why; there is alternative ways of reducing the time needed summaries in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Potential problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay a touch typist to transcribe your audio-recordings</td>
<td>• Expense of paying someone else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Important data such as pauses, coughs, sighs and the like may not be included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You will not be familiarising yourself with the data as you are not transcribing it yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The transcription will still require careful checking as errors can creep in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrow a transcription machine with a foot-operated start-play-stop play mechanism</td>
<td>• Although this will allow you to control the audio-recorder more easily, the speed of transcription will still be dependent upon your typing ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The transcription will still require careful checking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Dictate' your audio-recordings to your computer using voice recognition software</td>
<td>• You will need to discover which voice recognition software works best with your voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You will need to 'teach' the voice recognition software to understand your voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You will need to listen to and dictate the entire audio-recording.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The transcription will still require careful checking as the software is not entirely accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only transcribe those sections of each audio-recording that are pertinent to your research (data sampling)</td>
<td>• You will need to listen to the entire recording carefully first, at least twice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You may miss certain things, meaning you will have to go back to the audio-recording later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Those sections you transcribe will still require careful checking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: "Alternative ways of reducing the time needed to transcribe audio-recordings" Saunders et al (2009)
Before analyzing data, the researcher has to set an approach. With the deductive approach, the researcher will seek to use existing theory to shape the approach that he adopts to the research process and to aspects of data analysis. With the inductive approach the researcher will seek to build up a theory that is adequately grounded in his data.

It exist different inductively based analytical procedures:

- Data display and analysis
- Template analysis
- Analytic induction
- Grounded theory
- Discourse analysis
- Narrative analysis

**3.6.4.2 Choice and justification**

**About qualitative data:**

The researcher will use an **inductive approach** because interviews are the core of this research. He will use the interviewed answers as the best information that it is possible to get, because the interviewed are the professionals who are the only one able to answer the research question in line with the reality of the situation.

The face-to-face interview will be audio recorded and transcribed to a word document. According to the fact that the research is taking place in France, every interview will be in French and the researcher will have to translate them to English. The questions and the answers will be transcribed from the audio form to a Microsoft Word document. The researcher will not take into account the hesitations in the discussion, as well as the non-verbal language. The researcher will transcribe the totality of the interview and use the parts he needs in the analysis.

Concerning the Internet conducted interviews, they will already be presented as a Word document, but the researcher will also have to transcribe them.
After having translated and transcribed the data, the researcher will compare each answer, compared the different opinions and the ideas he got thanks to them. The data will be used as a compilation of ideas, opinions and solutions, in which the researcher will have to analyze in order to find an answer to the research question.

**About quantitative data:**

The researcher will use the Survey Monkey software to collect the data from his survey. The software will provide him the answers to the survey, which categorizes and presents the data in bar charts.
3.7 Population and sample

3.7.1 Presentation

According to Saunders et al (2009), sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable the researcher to reduce the amount of data he needs to collect by considering only the data from sub-groups, rather than all the possible elements of all cases. The sample is a representation of the population and the results provided by the sample are taken from the existing population.

According to Saunders et al (2009), sample techniques can be divided into two types; These are: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.
Saunders et al (2009), argue that with the probability samples, the chance or probability of each case being selected from a population is known. They also state that this is usually equal for all cases. This solution allows the researcher the opportunity to statistically estimate the characteristics of the population from the sample. This is the reason why this kind of sampling is usually associated with survey and experimental research strategies.

However, on the other hand, with non-probability samples, the probability of each case being selected from the total population is not known and it is impossible to answer research questions or to address objectives that require you to make statistical inferences about the characteristic of the populations. However, the researcher may still be able to generalize from the non-probability samples regarding the population, but not on statistical grounds.

3.7.2 Choice and justification

Concerning the qualitative data, the researcher is going to interview five professionals through semi-structured interviews. It will provide him precious information about the frame in which farmers work and their opinions and insights concerning the researcher question.

Concerning the quantitative data, the researcher is going to use non-probability sampling technique and more precisely a snowball sampling method. The researcher aims to get the opinions of consumers who buy products from farms, who buy farm products in supermarkets, or who would be interested in doing so in future. The aim is to determine what is the driving force that draws consumers to farm products, and to create recommendations for farmers to increase their use of marketing by catering to consumer expectations.
3.8 Ethical issues

3.8.1 Presentation

*Saunders et al (2009)* concurred that, in the context of research, ethics refers to the appropriateness of researcher’s behavior in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of the work, or are affected by it. The deontological view doesn’t allow the researcher to act unethically, and the teleological view allows the research to act without restriction in order to reach his ends.

According to *Saunders et al (2009)*, the general ethical issues to follow are:

- Privacy of participants
- Voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw partially or completely from the process at any given time
- Consent and possible deception of participants
- Maintenance of the confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity
- Effects on participants of the way in which the researcher uses, analyzes and reports data, in particular the avoidance of embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain and harm

Ethical issues change at specific stages in the research as it is developed in the following scheme:
3.8.2 Choice and justification

Through the research of this thesis, the researcher is going to use the deontological view and act ethically at each stage of the research. According to Saunders et al (2009), a deontological view means that the ends served by the researcher can never justify the use of research that is unethical. For example, the researcher would never use deception to obtain his research data, even if deception was necessary to ensure the data were valid and reliable.
3.9 Limitation to the research

During the research, the researcher is likely going to meet obstacles and limitations. First of all, the researcher does not have any experience in researching for this nature of dissertation and is not familiar with the process of collecting and analyzing data. The major difficulty will be to analyze the interviews and display the data coherently.

The main limitation will appear in the research of secondary data because the number of research already done on this subject is extremely limited. And the biggest difficulty of this research will be to get enough secondary data. Due to the fact that marketing and farms are not truly related in people’s minds, studies and research on these combined topics do not currently exist in abundance.

The researcher is going to have many troubles to reach farmers. First of all, farmers are not easy to contact because they are usually working as independent workers. They are not registered or listed as companies are either. They are also geographically isolated and separated.

Considering the fact that the researcher is French, he does not speak English fluently. Consequently, the caliber of English may be poor.
Chapter 4 - Data analysis and findings

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the question: “How can farmers integrate a business marketing strategy into their activities”?

As mentioned in part 3.6 the researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data. Also previously mentioned, the researcher is going to use a data display strategy to analyze qualitative data, which are the semi structured interviews he conducted. The quantitative data will be analyzed from the bar charts extracted from the Survey Monkey report.

For the data display and analysis, the researcher will restate the interviews in a table format to display the data in a network (Saunders et al, 2009).
4.2 Semi structured interviews

The aim of the semi-structured interviews is to obtain the opinion of farming professionals about the research question. Due to the fact that the researcher must make his recommendation based on the actual situation and what he learned thanks to the professionals he has interviewed, he needs to let them express their opinions, insights and personal reflections. As is the nature of the question, and due to the fact that there are many different possible answers, there is no true or false answer.

In order to understand why the researcher chose these professionals, and why their opinion is relevant for the research, they have to be introduced.

| (Patrick Toussch) | He took over the farm from his father in 1996 and today produces milk in large quantities, as well as cereals. He sells these raw materials to professional buyers. Patrick does not make direct sales and does not intend to do so in future. |
| (Joseph Mangin) | He has been a retired farmer for 5 years, and has seen the changing world of agriculture and the arrival of new technologies and new trends. He used to produce milk and raise beef cows. He always sold his milk and cows to food distribution companies. He never made direct sales. |
| (Vincent Meyer) | He has been a farmer since 1985, and partnered in business with his sister since 1994. They are primarily milk and cereal producers. They have also produced vegetables in small quantities for the past ten years. He sells a small part of its production in direct sales and is working on a project to start producing cheese within a year. He has already built a building and purchased equipment. |
| (Alain Fautré) | He is a producer of cereal, beef cows, pigs and chickens. The company SEA Charmille was created in 2009 to include his sons in the agricultural business. There are two farms in this company. The sons produce vegetables and mostly potatoes. Three people work full time on the farm and 4 part-time. They sell a large part of their production through direct selling in their store. |
| (Aude Forget) | She works for the chamber of agriculture. The Chamber of Agriculture is a |

governmental organization. Its mission is to represent the interests of farmers and track them in the management of their farms and their development projects.

Aude Forget has several responsibilities:
- She tracks and helps create projects, individually or collectively, in the domain of short circuit (transformation and sale of farm products): global approach and advice in different areas (economy, benchmarking, local research, regulation, subvention attribution, etc.).
- She sets up trainings in the short circuit area: legislation, sales techniques, communication support, etc.
- Partnership with territorial organizations for the promotion of short circuit throughout the territory.
- Development of the supply of local products.

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<tr>
<th>CONCLUSION</th>
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The researcher has been very careful to select professionals with different activities in order to get different points of view on the research question. He took two farmers who never engaged in direct selling (one is retired), and two farmers who have done direct selling (one sells a small amount of products, and the other a large amount). The researcher also interviewed a professional from the Chamber of Agriculture, which will have an external but still relevant point of view, and overview.

During his interviews the researcher tried to ask the same questions to each of the five professionals. But according to the fact that the professionals do not have exactly the same background and kind of production, the researcher had to adapt some questions. This is why the interviews are going to be analyzed as follows: Firstly, the interviews of the two farmers who never engaged in direct selling; secondly, the interviews of the two farmers who do have engaged in direct selling; and lastly, the interview of the professional from the Chamber of Agriculture. This format allows the researcher to analyze the interviews by tackling the interviews of those professionals who were asked the same question.
About the two farmers who never engaged in direct selling:

The interviews’ questions are presented in Appendix 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: The problems farmers are facing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patrick Tousch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The challenges are many. The price at which the products are sold are taxed, which results in small margins. There is also an image problem because the consumer considers the farmer as a person from another era who works for fun and not for profit. Today he gets financial support from CAP, but he could survive without it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joseph Mangin</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For him the problem is the current system. Companies and the government want to modernize everything. The main objective is profitability. And it is the farmers who suffer due to this system. He used to receive aid from CAP, which helped him invest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCLUSION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They agree that farmers have financial difficulties. The reasons are mostly the actual system that exploits and takes advantage of them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: The possibilities of diversification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patrick Tousch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He does not produce “bio” (organic) produce because it requires meeting certain standards that he is not sure will be around in the future. If everyone was producing bio they could not offer such low prices, but neither such quantities. Direct selling never interested him. It needs investments. He considers himself as a farmer and not a merchant. Everyone has their specialty. His job is to produce, not reform, and certainly not sell. He is doing what he learned and what he is good at.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joseph Mangin</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He never produced “bio” (organic) products. For him organic is a new fad that has developed a lot in recent years. He thinks we should have organic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and non-organic, and leave the choice to the people.

He never sold his products as a trader, even if people from villages came to buy milk or other products. He never wanted to handle that.

**CONCLUSION**

For both of them, organic is a fad and they do not see any interest in diversifying themselves in this respect.

Direct selling represents for them an investment; moreover, they consider it a different job and one that they do not want to manage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3: The business part of farming</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patrick Toussch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no competition between farmers who only produce and who do not engage in direct selling. Whatever is produced, it is still purchased in full. But when a farmer sells their products directly to consumers, there may be competition in a small geographic areas if another farmer did the same thing. Farmers who only produce cannot control their prices. The only solution would be that the state intervene by limiting the margin of large retailers, and if consumers are willing to pay more for produce.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Joseph Mangin**                     |
| Farmers do not have the mentality for competition. Anyway, the price and conditions are the same for everybody. But today some farmers think that they are great CEOs and manage their operations as a business. For this kind of farmer, competition probably matters a lot. Farmers (only producers and not those who engage in direct selling) cannot set their prices. According to him, if, in an extreme case, farmers could not sell their products because they produced at a loss, the food companies would be provided with produce from other countries rather than increasing the pay of French farmers. |

| **CONCLUSION**                        |
| For them, farming is not a business like any other. Farming is more about a passion than about an ambition to make a lot of money. Even if this is slowly changing, farmers do not consider other farmers as competitors. Farmers cannot negotiate their prices like in every other |
business because the prices are predetermined.

However, they made a distinction between producers (farmers who only produce and sell “raw” products to a professional) and farmers who engage in direct selling. For the last category, they agree that the competition is a reality and that they can fix their prices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 4: About the market place</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Tousch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He carefully monitors any reforms that could be made on agriculture, including the level of aid and subsidies. He wants to know if he will be able to make more or, end up paying more fees. But he does not pay attention to the marketplace as if he ran a company that wanted to grow, expand and find more opportunities in other areas of agriculture because it is very difficult for a farm to change what they specialize in. At best, it is possible to increase or decrease the quantities produced. He does not put his products onto the market. His milk is sold to a company that continuously buys from him, and follows already agreed upon price guidelines. The only way he has to enhance his production is to produce better quality milk. But no matter how he could present his products, tests are performed to judge the quality. So advertising would serve no purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Joseph Mangin                   |
| The market place changed a lot during the last years. He was aware about the main changes that had the capacity to affect him. Mostly, this was referring to the laws and regulations. He never had to benchmark. His products did not have to be promoted on the market. |

| CONCLUSION                     |
| They do not pay attention to the marketplace like other companies that need to be aware about the consumers’ expectations, about the offers, and about competitors. What matters most to them are the laws and regulations that are the only external factors able to affect their activity, in their opinion. |
Moreover, they do not have to fight to sell their products on the market. The demand is strong enough that they will always be able to sell their products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 5: About the use of marketing by farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patrick Tousch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joseph Mangin</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION | Their opinions differ about this theme. The first one thinks that... |
marketing is only useful for farmers who engage in direct selling. But it is still not as useful as people think. He thinks that some farmers are using it because they follow examples set by other business companies, but these are two different worlds.

The second one agreed to say that farmers who engage in direct selling have the most use for marketing, but he also thinks that every farmer, even producers, are using marketing. There is a little piece of marketing, integrated into every farming activity.

Theme 6: How would it be possible to integrate marketing if it was indispensable?

Patrick Tousch
Marketing is not a priority for farmers. Schools put more emphasis on teaching how to increase the productivity of a farm and that remains the most important thing.
To integrate marketing, farmers should have more bargaining power. They should be able to negotiate prices with all buyers, private or professional.
If marketing were used for farms, there would be no need for supermarkets as people could buy directly from farmers and it would cut out that middle man.
Farmers will also have to hire people with marketing competencies.

Joseph Mangin
Thinking that it would not be really relevant, some agricultural schools could integrate some marketing, depending on the program selected. But it will stay an option that only a few students will pick.
To integrate marketing properly, farmers should receive training, learn marketing tactics and then get started. But in the present situation it is not possible. Farmers would need to have more power over the marketing of the product, as this is when the marketing comes in.

CONCLUSION
Even if marketing will not become a priority for farming schools in the near future, it would be possible to integrate a little bit of marketing through trainings. It will not be the priority for the
students.

If farmers want to integrate marketing the actual situation will have to change. Farmers will need more power regarding the product. They will have to suppress intermediaries, because they are the ones taking care of the marketing. But supermarkets and agro alimentary companies, which are strong companies, will have to lose part of their power.

It means that to integrate marketing a lot of things will have to change in the actual food/alimentary market, which is very strong and powerful.
## About the two farmers who do engage in direct selling:

The interviews’ questions are presented in Appendix 4.

### Theme 1: The problems farmers are facing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vincent Meyer</td>
<td>A lack of visibility in respect to the future, no one knows what the future will bring. This is because the price of milk and cereal change a lot, but farmers have no control over it. It happens often that farmers produce for loss. At the beginning, the CAP helped farmers to be competitive internationally, particularly up against the United States. But it created a bad image for farmers as consumers said that farmers received too much aid from the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alain Fautré</td>
<td>There is a problem with the price. Farmers do not receive a large enough percentage of the final selling price of the products. It is the fault of the system that causes this. Consumers want cheap produce so then there must be someone making less money. He receives aid from the CAP, but the day the aid disappears, he is afraid of what is going to happen to his own financial situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSION**

The lack of control regarding prices is the major problem for farmers. They do get aid, but it is a temporary solution that actually contributed to damaging the image of farmers.

Today farmers need assurance regarding their future.

### Theme 2: The possibilities of diversification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vincent Meyer</td>
<td>Producing organic products appear as a viable solution for diversification. It is difficult to set up and to produce these in large quantities. Moreover, organic products provide a real advantage for direct selling, which seems to be the only solution farmers have to get power over their prices. He started selling products directly about one year ago (mostly vegetables and milk), but always in small amounts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
He started firstly because farming is his passion and he wants to share it with people, have contacts, and explain how the product is made. Secondly he wants people from the region to enjoy fresh and good quality products. The system that pushes farmers to sell their products to large retailers is not good, because the products are carried over long distances. This costs money and reduces the quality of the product.

Today he has engaged in a project to produce cheese in large amounts. He already bought the material and the production space.

He already diversified a few years ago by producing organic products and by starting to engage in direct selling. He produces a lot of things on the farm and a percentage of each product is sold through direct sales. Direct selling is a large percentage of his turnover.

It is the problems faced by farmers that pushed him to get into the “bio” market. The expenses were too high for too little in return. Organic required a great investment for upgrading, but once started, it does not cost more than normal production and, more importantly, the benefits are greater.

According to him, people give great importance to product quality for their health. It is after having talked to a lot of consumers that he decided to sell organic products.

Farmers have the possibility to diversify their activity. It is not easy to set up, and it sometimes requires large investments, but the diversifications procure a better control for the future.

Direct selling seems to be a solution that farmers are likely to adopt because they are allowed to control their prices and because they perceive it as a normal extension of their regular farming job and activities.

In addition to that, producing and selling organic products seems to be the best answer to consumers’ expectations. According to these two farmers, organic products answer to the demand of healthy products and the kinds of products that consumers expect to buy when they purchase directly from a farmer.
## Theme 3: The distribution of products

| Vincent Meyer | A small amount of product is sold via the website\(^8\) that features several farmers. People go on the site, order products available that they want. He delivers the products to a depot, as do all farmers registered on the site, and consumers come to collect their order once a week.

For cheese, he wants to open a small shop next to the farm and sell the cheese and vegetables. As he plans to produce a lot of cheese, he also hopes to get the product into supermarkets. According to him, supermarkets will be the only solution to sell a very large amount of cheese. The store on the farm will not attract enough consumers.

He uses the website because he thought it was a good idea to use new technologies to enhance agriculture.

He wants to sell via his own shop because he will be able to control everything. |
| Alain Fautré | The on-site store and outdoor space is open every Saturday from 8am to 17h and from Monday to Friday from 17h to 19h.

He had no other choice than to distribute his products like this because he does not know how he could sell his products otherwise. |
| CONCLUSION | The major solution to become successful in direct selling seems to be on-site stores, which will be managed from the farm and/or located close to it. Internet can also offer solutions, but one farmer alone cannot satisfy the demand on his own. Farmers have to make associations for that.

Supermarkets are not the first choice of farmers to sell their products, but it can be a possibility, especially if they have large quantities to sell. |

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## Theme 4: The prices

| Vincent Meyer | The prices are set compared to the prices found in supermarkets. He generally charges lower prices than supermarkets because otherwise |

\(^{8}\) The website is available at: [http://www.laruchequiditoui.fr/3020](http://www.laruchequiditoui.fr/3020)
customers would not come. According to him, this is the most complicated part and that is why he is thinking of asking for help from the Chamber of Agriculture regarding the production of cheese.

**CONCLUSION**

The setting of prices seems to be complicated. They do not really know how to do it, but they also think that it is important to stay lower than prices applied by supermarkets.

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**Theme 5: The communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vincent Meyer</strong></td>
<td>He does not think communication is necessary yet. Word of mouth is enough in a rural area. Communication is more suitable for businesses or traders who have a large trading area. For the launch of the cheese selling portiong, he wants to communicate and promote. He plans to do this especially with posters. It will be necessary to communicate and promote, but he does not know how to do it well. What he would love is to promote the farm, and not just the products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alain Fautré</strong></td>
<td>He used to communicate in the beginning. When he first started direct selling. He did not really have a strategy. He created flyers with the address and the prices of the products. He distributed these flyers in the area without really knowing where they would have more visibility and profitability. He also created a small stand on a busy highway. The goal was to become known and that way people can have proof that his products were of high quality. But today he no longer communicates. It relies mainly on word of mouth. He does not know how to make communication profitable.</td>
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</table>
Their communication is really poor. They do not really know how to do it, even when they have ideas about what they would like. Moreover, for them, communication is mostly about information, at the beginning of an activity, to let people know about it. Once people are aware, they believe the world of mouth should be enough.

**Theme 6: The management of the direct selling**

**Vincent Meyer**

The direct selling activity can be part of the entire operation up to certain revenue. Once this has exceeded its limit, direct sales has to become a full-fledged business. He intends to ask for help from lawyers to understand the "legal" aspect.

If the need arises to hire a person who masters the techniques of negotiation or communication, he is ready to commit. This depends mainly on the revenue that he will be able to generate. If revenues are profitable, then he will want to expand. He will not have a choice other than to hire people to manage this.

He believes it is important to stay a farmer, and not become a business man.

**Alain Fautré**

The farm is already part of the SEA, so the store makes up part of it. He does not want to hire competent employees in selling because he does not see the need. Nobody else could speak better than him about the products. In his family, he has a daughter who has worked in sales and this helps a lot.

Farmers are great business men, but they can do several things, they can produce; transform products, and sell, all on their own. However, the core of their activity will remain farming.

**CONCLUSION**

There are some limitations to include a selling activity of a farm, and farmers are not always aware of everything, so they need help.

They also do not have experiences in selling, but hiring competent people is the last option. If they do not have another choice, they will consider hiring, but the most important aspect for them is to retain
the knowledge about the products.

Even if farmers are obliged to be, or have the responsibilities, of a businessman, their priority will always be farming. There is no expectation to become a big businessman.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theme 7: Marketing background</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vincent Meyer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He does not have any knowledge regarding marketing. Therefore, he did not do any market research before jumping into direct selling. It was an opportunity and risk he took. Besides that, he can only offer what he already produces. If consumers want something else, he does not know if he would be able to offer it to them. Today he believes that he uses a bit of marketing without knowing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alain Fautré</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has a vague idea about what marketing is. For him the definition of marketing is: what do I need to implement to sell the product? Therefore, he did not study the market in a traditional sense, but he knew what the customers were looking for. He had several years of experience, he exchanged with many professionals from different sectors. In addition, the media offers a lot of information regarding consumer desires, problems, trends and expectations. So it is very quickly realized whether or not he was able to meet their needs. Today he believes that he uses marketing, but not as part of a strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCLUSION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They do not have a precise idea about what marketing is. They agree to say that they probably use a bit of marketing, but they do not call that marketing, or do not set up a marketing strategy. For them the marketing they engage in is more so related to common sense. Consequently, they do not try to sell products consumers are looking for, but product they are able to produce.</td>
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</table>
### Theme 8: About the use of marketing by farmers

**Vincent Meyer**

Marketing is used by a large amount of farmers, but it is not marketing like in large companies. Every farmer tries to promote his products. Marketing is important for a farm that sells products through direct sales. Decide what to sell, decide prices, and choose packaging, labels, etc. Farmers who do not engage in direct sales and those who only produce raw materials do not use marketing and do not need to. It is the companies that buy their products (milk, meat, cereals, etc.) that will promote these products and sell them.

**Alain Fautré**

Often it is someone else who is doing the marketing for farmers. For example, farmers who sell "raw" milk to a company, which the company will then package and then do marketing. Therefore, in the end it is this company that is marketing the products for the producer. All farmers are affected by marketing directly or indirectly. But they do not always do it themselves.

**CONCLUSION**

Every farmer is affected by marketing. However, every farmer does not use marketing, and even fewer of them call it marketing when they use it. Marketing can be considered as common sense decisions. Those who do direct selling make the largest use of marketing. This activity requires a higher use of marketing, because they have to think like businessman. Indeed they have to think about prices, communication, production, packaging, etc., which are clearly the marketing mix.

### Theme 9: How would it be possible to integrate marketing if it was indispensable?

**Vincent Meyer**

The ‘real’ marketing, as in the marketing that large companies engage in; is only useful and feasible if the farmer sells products directly. Even then, it's not the same.

To integrate marketing, farmers must eliminate intermediaries. If the operator sells its raw material to a company that packages and sells it to
the supermarket that will sell it to the final consumer, there are too many intermediaries and the farmer has no say. Farmers must take time out of doing production work to build communication and marketing strategies. For this to work, it is necessary that the farmers sell their products directly. Training will not be useful, because farmers will always use a very small amount of marketing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alain Fautré</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing is not a discipline to develop in agriculture because it will not solve farmers’ problems. If farmers had to, they would probably appeal to outsiders. However, even if marketing is a miracle solution to their problems, he is not sure that all farmers would adopt it. There are more important things to do and manage things. At the least, many farmers could meet and share ideas and learn from the experiences of everyone. However regardless of what happens, the marketing will never be the solution for a single operator who deals only with professional buyers.</td>
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<tr>
<th>CONCLUSION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Even if marketing can be useful in some cases, it appears that it is not a priority for farmers. They do not have the time and the competences to apply real marketing strategies, and do not want to learn or to take the time to do so. One solution would be to consult outside professionals. Farmers who do want to apply marketing have to engage in direct selling; otherwise, they will remain spectators and will not take part in marketing decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**About the employee of the Chamber of Agriculture:**

The interview’s questions are presented in Appendix 5.

**Theme 1: The problems farmers are facing in direct sales**

| Aude Forget | Farmers are facing several problems by doing direct selling:  
- The working time is always longer, and the difficulty to appease different jobs (producer, transformer, seller)  
- The large investments, especially for the transformation of a warehouse for animal products  
- The need of a large offer of products.  
Moreover, there exists a competition sometimes significant in some geographical areas.  
Solutions exist:  
- Differentiation by product: quality measure (produce bio, farm visits, etc.), the development of the product range.  
- The gathering of several farmers in order to sell different products. It can be done by the creation of collective sale points, whose purpose will be to regroup a large range of products in the same place.  
- The research of a new sale circuit with a service: system of “drive farmer”, ordering and selling on the Internet, or product delivery for example. |  
| CONCLUSION | Direct sales need require a lot of investment (time and money), and in a region with many farmers doing direct sales, a competition can appear.  
Solutions exist and they are similar to the solutions that a “normal” company could use. |
**Theme 2: Direct sales in the region Alsace**

| Aude Forget | 2200 farmers are selling a part of their production via direct sale, which represent one quarter of the total farmers in the region. Wine sellers are at the top of the direct selling activity. |
| CONCLUSION | Even if the number of farmers making direct sales is still lower (one quarter) than the number of produce farmers, their number is growing and becoming increasingly important. |

**Theme 3: The reasons why farmers are not largely using marketing**

| Aude Forget | Many of them did not get education regarding sales or marketing. But the situation is moving and today some agricultural high schools are talking about this subject. Alsace has a high-density population and the highest percentage of farmers in the population. The region is very rural and people are still attached to local consumption. A majority of farmers were able to find and retain clients without having established a real marketing strategy, but by using common sense. Moreover, thanks to the direct contact with consumers, farmers are able to collect their comment, feedback and expectations. They are using the basics of marketing, without formalizing it, or simply without knowing it. The situation is changing slowly. The new generation has more knowledge regarding marketing and uses it more. |
| CONCLUSION | Farmers do not use marketing largely because they do not have the need for it yet. They are able to handle their activity with a bit of marketing, or without formalizing it. The agricultural world starts to integrate marketing through some schools and trainings and through the new generation of farmers, who use new technologies. New technologies are a powerful tool of marketing. |
### Theme 4: The solutions farmers have to integrate marketing to their farms

**Aude Forget**
Some farmers already integrate marketing into their activities, without calling it marketing. They do contemplate prices, distribution, and communication.
Suppressing the intermediary between the farmer and the final consumer would result in a higher use of marketing by the farmer, because it would create a competition between farmers.
If farmers would regroup themselves, they would have the biggest amount of products, more consumers, and the need of marketing.
Farmers will have to hire people.
Marketing is important for a farmer who makes direct sales.

**CONCLUSION**
Prices, distribution, communication, packaging, suppressing intermediaries, making groups; are some of the many reasons that would push farmers to integrate marketing. Eventually, it will become a necessity.

---

### Theme 5: The help provided by the Chamber of Agriculture

**Aude Forget**
Concerning marketing, the Chamber proposes market studies and trainings on selling techniques, and communications strategies. They try to promote the “working together” mentality. It could help farmers to offer a larger range of products.
The Chamber does not provide financial help, but they help farmers to go through the application for assistance.
Every year the Chamber proposes between 4 and 6 trainings on the topic of direct selling. External professionals provide the trainings. They also provide marketing trainings but that is usually very specific.
Today farmers are mostly asking for market studies.

**CONCLUSION**
As marketing is not widespread in the agricultural world, and because farmers do not always know how to deal with direct sales, they can ask for help from the Chamber of Agriculture that proposes a solution and helps in different areas.
The fact that farmers are mostly asking for market studies shows that they need marketing, but do not have the methods by which to apply it.

### Theme 6: Marketing and farms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aude Forget</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing has to be adapted to every company and it will have to be adapted to every farm. It is difficult to say how farmers could integrate marketing because the answer would be different for every farmer. However, it is possible to give a general idea about what should change or what should be adapted in order to integrate marketing. First of all, the only possibility is to push farmers to do direct selling. Without direct selling, they don’t have any reason to use marketing. Secondly, marketing has to be integrated in their trainings in agricultural schools. This is because even if they use marketing without knowing it, it would be easier and more efficient if they were aware of marketing strategies.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCLUSION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and farms are related. The only condition is that farmers have to make direct sales. The actual situation seems to be that farmers do not want to admit they need marketing, even if the fact is that marketing is already somewhat integrated into their activity through direct sales. Marketing obviously goes with direct sales and direct selling is a growing activity in farming, which helps farmers to face financial difficulties and to take control over their products.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 The survey

As mentioned in part 3.6.3 the researcher used a self-administered questionnaire using a snowball sampling technique. The purpose of this questionnaire is to learn about consumers’ expectations and needs regarding direct sales. It will help the researcher to draw his recommendation based on the reality of the market expectations.

151 people answered the questionnaire. The results are detailed below, question by question, which each answer presented by a chart.

The survey’s questions are presented in Appendix 6.

Figure 14: Survey, question 1

Figure 14 shows that 83% of the respondents have already visited a farm that sold produce. It means that large amounts of people are looking for these kinds of products.
According to **figure 15**, 75% of the respondents live in an urban area. Even so, a large amount of them did visit a farm.
Figure 16 shows that people are largely looking for vegetables (90%) and fruits (78%), when they buy products at a farm.
According to **figure 17**, the most useful communication is the farm visibility from the road (66%), and the word of mouth (63%).
**Figure 18**: Survey, question 5

**Figure 18** shows that consumers do not choose farms based on organic produce.

**Figure 19**: Survey, question 6

**Figure 19** shows that consumers prefer organic products (58%), but it still does not matter for a large number of them (42%).
According to figure 20, prices practiced by farmers are usually comparable to those in supermarkets (45%).

100% of the respondents said that if they would know about more farms in their area, they would consider buying from them. It means either that not enough farms are making direct sales or either that people are not aware about them and that farmers do not communicate enough.
The two main reasons people are buying directly from farms, are because they want fresh products (93%) and supports local farms (90%). It means that people have a good opinion about farmers and the quality of their products.

Refer to figure 23; supermarkets are also places where people are able to buy farm products (82%).
88% of the respondents want to support local farm as we can see on figure 25. The prices are only the third reason.
100% of the respondents want to see more local farm products in their supermarkets. It means that people are attracted by these kinds of products.

As we can see on figure 27, people are not ready to pay more for local farm products in their supermarkets (only 12%). But they would pay the same price for 71% for them.
Vegetables and fruits are still the two first products people are most interested in buying when buying from local farms. But as we can see on figure 28, every kind of product is sought-after.
According to figure 29, 83% of the respondents are able to travel to a farm to buy product. It means that it is an interesting concept for them and that farms should not have problems to attract consumers.

However, if people had the choice, they would rather buy from farmers’ markets (60%), and supermarkets (30%), than from farms (10%). Does it mean that they are interested by those kinds of products, but would only make the effort to go to the farm if they did not have any other choice?
A large amount of people (74%) consider buying directly from farms as a proof of quality, and 0% trust supermarkets over farms regarding highest quality standards.

According to figure 32, 74% of the respondents would be interested in a home delivery service providing products from a local farm. That is a good solution for farmers to get more consumers. They would use new technologies and approaches.
Chapter 5 - Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

According to Saunders et al (2009), this chapter should be a conclusion about the whole project, and not just the research findings. The main purpose of the conclusion chapter is to answer the research question, meet the objectives and, if appropriate, supporting or otherwise the research hypotheses.

To be able to draw the best conclusion, the researcher should also return to his literature review and ask himself “What do my conclusions add to the understanding of the topic displayed in the literature?” (Saunders et al, 2009).

Over all, the aim of this chapter is to answer the research question: “How can farmers integrate a business marketing strategy into their activities?”

Objective 1: Understand the difficulties farmers are facing

The literature review has shown that farmers are facing problems related to their incomes. According to Stupliniené (2011), farmers have a lot of debt, even if they are efficient in terms of production. These debts comes from the fact that, according to French Farmers’ Unions, farmers do not make enough income to overcome the amount of power that retailers have over them. The consequence of the pricing policy applied by retailers is that some farmers sell their products under cost. Even if Hughes, Richardson, Rister (1984), suggests that farmers’ difficulties are also coming from farmers’ policy and management, most authors agree that farmers’ difficulties are related to external and environmental factors that farmers do not have any control over. Another example of an external factor is the importation of products, because they are less expensive, but because of the world economic system, French farmers do not have the possibility to produce at the same price as under developed countries.

Overall, according to the French Ministry of Agriculture, the economic crisis impacted the agricultural environment as it did with any other market.
As evidence of all these difficulties, the European Union decided in 1962 to help farmers by allowing them subsidies through the CAP. Yet, these subsidies have seen a significant drop down in their percentage of the European Union’s expenditure (73% in 1985, to 41% in 2012).

The primary data collected by the researcher shows that the farmers questioned through the interviews agree to say that they are facing financial difficulties coming from the fact that they do not have any control over prices when they sell their products. For them, the current system exploits them and does not give them enough stability regarding the future. Indeed, even if they get subsidies from CAP, they are clear about it: “the day the aid disappears, he is afraid about what is going to happen”.

**Objective 2: Find out if farming is becoming a real business**

The use and need for farming is inevitable to sustaining growing economies (*Carroll, 2010*). This line makes the link between agriculture and economy. Also, the definition of farms, which says, “a farm is an economical unit that takes part in the agricultural production”. Also, *Esposti (2008)* claims that agriculture has an impact on regional output and employment, and some other authors say that macroeconomic policies, labor costs, and management are several factors influencing farmers.

Indeed, the literature review highlights many economic and business aspects of the farming activity, which suggests that farmers are businessmen and managers like in any other activity or company. Moreover, the French Ministry of Agriculture argues that agriculture has been impacted by the economic crisis as well as any other activity.

Management is the coordination of all resources through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to attain stated objectives (*Henry L. Sisk*). *Rougoor et al (1998)*, claim that farm efficiency is determined by the personal characteristics of the farmer.

Even if the findings through the literature review have shown that many authors agree to say that farmers are real managers and businessmen, the findings made through the primary data note this affirmation.
The farmers who only produce products and sell them to a company declare that they are far away from being considered businessman. They do not have any competition, they do not negotiate their prices, and they do not contemplate strategy. So, that kind of farmer does not want to be compared to a businessman or a manager, because their only common point is to improve the production process. Even farmers who engage in direct sales, and therefore have many issues in common with businessmen, do not like to be compared to them. It shows that many kinds of farmer are proud about the jobs they do, and that it is a passion whereas management or business is often seen as a boring duty.

**Objective 3: Generate an idea regarding farmers’ knowledge of marketing**

*Kleiner and Green (2008)* said that, the expansion of sustainable agriculture could pass through the development of alternative production techniques and marketing strategies.

As the literature review has shown, it is difficult to define marketing. Many authors have tried, but marketing is so large and encompasses so many ideas that we need several definitions to properly understand the concept. (Three definitions are presented in section 2.6).

If marketing specialists cannot find a singular definition, this means that numerous uses can be made of marketing. According to *Baines, Fill, and Page, (2011)*, marketing strategy provides information about:

- Market analysis: Understanding the market place.
- Marketing goals: Determine what the marketing strategy should achieve referring to the market analysis.
- Market action: determine action to accomplish and how, in order to achieve the goals.

The professionals interviewed through the primary data collection demonstrated that farmers do not have a real understanding regarding the topic of marketing. They are aware of the concept of marketing because it has become a very widespread term, but for them, marketing is common sense. They never had any training for it and they keep thinking that marketing only refers to selling techniques, which only represent a small part of it.
**Objective 4: Determine if marketing can help farmers**

The literature review highlights that authors agree on the fact that marketing can be integrated into a farm activity. But they also agree to say that marketing can be integrated only in some conditions.

First of all, farmers cannot integrate an entire marketing strategy like any other company. Indeed, marketing strategy starts from benchmarking, and goes through a lot of steps like diagnostics, audit, objectives, positioning, targeting, etc. and results in the marketing mix. According to those authors, farmers do not have the knowledge to use all of that. They also do not have the time or the need. But they can use some “parts” and “portion” of marketing.

Moreover, these authors argue that farmers need a suitable environment. In order to integrate marketing they have to make direct sales or the must unite. In other cases, marketing would be pointless.

Marketing management is the process of planning and executing, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals (*Kotler 2000*). Indeed, this definition highlights the fact that marketing covers everything that a farmer needs to consider for making direct sales (planning, pricing, promotion, distribution). This is basically the marketing mix.

The professionals interviewed agreed with the authors by saying that marketing and farming can be related, but only if direct sales are made. Although, one of the farmers interviewed believed that every farmer has some relationship with marketing, even if they do not do marketing themselves.

Consumers surveyed said that 100% of them would consider buying directly from a farm if they knew about more farms that make direct sales. In order to take hold of this incredible opportunity and satisfy this demand, which seems not to have been satisfied yet, farmers will need promotions, and that is part of the marketing mix.
Objective 5: Understand how farmers use marketing yet

The literature review shows that in some regions of France, farmers engage in a lot of direct sales. According to the governmental document presented in the literature review, 35% of farmers making direct sales, are making more than 75% of their incomes thanks to it. In order to make their direct sales profitable, farmers have to do marketing, even if it is just a little bit. But as the number of farmers making direct sales is growing, we can say that the number of farmers doing marketing is also growing.

Only one professional interviewed thinks that farmers who are only producing and selling “raw” products to big companies do not do any marketing. But he agrees with every other interviewee by saying that farmers making direct sales are doing marketing.

According to the professionals, farmers use some parts of marketing, depending on the importance that direct sales represent in their incomes. Usually the only part they use is the marketing mix, because they need to sell their products and have to make a decision about the selling strategy. However most of the time, farmers do not call it marketing because, for them, it is just common sense decision making. Marketing is not largely used yet because farmers do not have the need for it.

By now they also do not have a real comprehension of marketing. They make decisions because they do not have a choice or because they do not know which solution is the best. For example, they are producing what they can without always knowing what the consumer is looking for. Often, the price is chosen according to supermarkets and that is it.

As the direct selling activity is part of the farm activity, the family helps and they do not ask marketers or sales people.

However, according to the employee of the Chamber of Agriculture, more and more farmers are asking for help and knowledge regarding marketing. They are going to trainings and ask professionals to help them.

Marketing remains a random process, usually used in the farming world without knowing it and simply deemed common sense. But more and more farmer pays attention to it, because they are seeing that the marketing mix is really what they need and what can help them to improve their sales.
Objective 6: Find the best solutions farmers have to integrate marketing into their activities

According to the findings of the literature review, in order to integrate marketing properly into their activities, farmers need to make direct sales. At the very least, they need to have products to sell on their own, or in association with other farmers.

Professionals interviewed agreed that, for them, marketing does not have it place in a farm’s activities if there are no direct sales. So, in order to make marketing useful to them, farmers have to subdue the intermediaries. This is because when a farmer is only a producer, he does not have any control over his prices and the intermediary company or the supermarket is deciding everything, from packaging to the promotion to pricing. Farmers will have to take on different jobs. They will have to be producers, transform products, sales people and marketers. They will have to hire people and have a managerial perspective.

Even if farmers will not be able to integrate a full marketing strategy because they do not have time, the knowledge or the need, they have to make decisions related to the marketing mix.

In order to do it properly, they can ask for help from the Chamber of Agriculture, which proposes to guide them in their projects, to organize trainings, or put them in contact with professionals.

Farmers will have to be aware about the marketing mix and about the process of how each decision has to be taken. But they will also have do studies on what consumers expect and demand. As the survey shows, consumers would rather buy farm products from markets or supermarkets, than to go to the farm. Consumers will also be interested by a home delivery service because, as mentioned, they are very interested in farm products, but do not want to drive to the farm.
5.2 Recommendations

According to the researcher’s opinion, marketing can provide a lot of opportunities to farmers if they would make the effort to think about it as a powerful tool for their activities. As they recognize that they are probably using marketing without calling it marketing, they should have the intension to study the subject.

Marketing could help them make the right decisions, at the right time. It could improve their incomes and give them more power over the management of their products. They would have the control over the product life, from the production to the final consumer. That will help them in the future, and also to find a solution to the government and big companies’ control over the industry. They will not be as dependent on the market prices, and will be able to plan the future according to their own decisions. Moreover, the final consumer will pay them the full price they actually pay to the companies and supermarkets. Farmers will receive the total final product price, and supermarkets or other companies will stop exploiting them.

But in order to do that, farmers will have to:

- Suppress the intermediaries between them and the final consumer.
- Accept the duty of becoming a manager as well as a farmer.
- Make direct sales on their own or within an association.
- Improve their knowledge about marketing through trainings or professional help.
- Ask for help from the Chamber of Agriculture, which already offers free help.
- Pay attention to what the consumer wants.
- Establish a strong and logical marketing mix strategy.
- Choose the right prices, packaging and distribution solutions.
- Engage in enough promotion, because consumers do not know about farms’ direct sales.
Chapter 6 – Self-reflection on own learning and performance

6.1 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to show the researcher’s personal learning that he achieved, thanks to the writing of the research.

In this chapter the researcher will present the concept of learning, talk about the different skills he developed, and finally discuss future applications of his learning.

6.2 Reflection on learning
According to Muhammad Shahid and Regnier (2011), one of the most significant processes of one’s life is learning. It is a multifaceted phenomenon in its nature. Kolb (1984), argue that learning is a continuous cycle that begins with experience, continues with reflection and leads to the action, and this becomes a concrete experience for reflection. Kolb took learning style as a result of “hereditary equipment, past experience, and the demands of the present environment” according to Muhammad Shahid and Regnier (2011). He explained ‘learning’ as an active process based on constructivist approach, to engage a person in, not as something done to anybody. According to Kopsovich, (n.d.), it is a holistic integrative perspective on leaning that combines experience, perception, cognition and behavior.

Dale (2001), argues that learning is a significant process, as all humans being need to expand their knowledge, to improve their skills for evolution. This author also presented four steps of learning that the researcher followed.

Unconscious Competence
Figure 33: Stages of learning
During his researcher, the researcher followed these stages. Before starting he was not aware of his incompetence, but once he began and faced his primary difficulties, he became aware/conscious about his incompetence. However, thanks to his researcher, he achieved competence that allowed him to move forward. This work and these researches, which also follow Dale’s learning stages, have provided some unconscious competence to the researcher.

As the researcher had to go through these four stages, he needed a lot of academic articles and books that helped him access the last stage.

The researcher followed a precise process, presented by Kolb as follow:

![Kolb's learning styles](image)

**Figure 34: Kolb’s learning styles**

Indeed, the researcher followed these steps, beginning with concrete experience, in order to gain more experience and knowledge for the research.

The researcher went through a very precise process of observation and reflection before making any decision concerning the advances on the research.
6.3 Skills development

The purpose of this section is to present the different skills the researcher improved while working on this dissertation. The researcher will develop what he learned about the topic and the general area of the research.

6.3.1 Research capability and analytical skills

First of all, the research had to adapt to the Anglo-Saxon educational and research system, which is much more based on logical and scientific methods than that of the French system, which is based more so on the philosophical approach. This is also the first time that the researcher had to work with such precise and high-level expectations concerning the method, process and content of the research. He had to go much deeper into his research than ever.

Also, the researcher learned through the literature review that academic references are not easy to find, moreover concerning the particular topic he chose. He learned to analyze, compare, and summarize relevant information.

This research granted the occasion for the researcher to use, for the first time, the Harvard referencing style. It allowed him to understand how important copyright is to such research.

During the data collection, the researcher had to conduct interviews and noticed how important it is to be prepared. Indeed, an interview progresses according to the interviewee’s answers. However, the interviewer has to be readily able to anticipate answers, otherwise some repetitions and hesitations may appear.

6.3.2 Team working skills and working method

Through his MA Marketing program at the Dublin Business School, the researcher had to work in a team with different people. According to the diversity of his classmates, the researcher learned how to work in teams composed by different cultures, knowledge, and backgrounds. The difficulty was getting everybody to agree on which process to follow. That is why dialog and listening skills were very important.

This dissertation also allowed the researcher to improve his time management skills. Indeed, the time allotted to different chapters had to be determined as well as the data collection. The
interviews and the survey had to be conducted by taking into account the time that people needed to respond.

6.3.3 The communication and language skills
The MA Marketing program the researcher took part in at the Dublin Business School, as well as this researcher, allowed him to greatly improve his level of English. The progressions made in English are the results of the researcher, the reading of articles and books, and the conversations with professors, classmates, and professionals.

6.3.4 Marketing knowledge
The high level of professors’ competences allowed the researcher to improve his level in marketing through the different courses he followed at the Dublin Business School. The researcher’s own researcher for several projects, or for this thesis, also provided him with different views on marketing.

6.3.5 Time management
This research took place within a period of almost a year because the researcher had to deal with the responses of his data collections, but also because his topic was not well studied as of yet, and there do not exist a large amount of academic articles. Also, the researcher had to deal with many external factors such as his job.

6.4 Future applications of learning
The one year of study at the Dublin Business School, and the writings by this researcher, provided rich experience for the researcher. He learned many different things and opened his mind.

On a personal point of view, this experience allowed the researcher to open his mind to new cultures, and to think about new and different possibilities for his future.
On a professional point of view, the researcher improved his competences about marketing that will allow him to obtain a job requiring a high level of responsibility in this area. He also improved his English level and can capitalize on this in the work force, for having obtained one year of experience in an English speaking country.

The researcher is also proud of the fact that he was able to follow the very long and difficult process of this dissertation writing.

The researcher will keep improving his new skills through his personal and professional life. Indeed, he learned to work in team, and to make people from different cultures agree on group projects thanks to his listening and communication skills. He also learned to manage his schedule on different projects and became familiar with the researching of relevant information to achieve his project. The researching of data, as well as the comparison or the capacity to summarize the most important information, are some of the many capabilities that the researcher developed thanks to the Dublin Business School.
REFERENCES


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Appendix 1

Conceptual model of possible causes of financial distress (adapted by author, source Ooghe, Waeyaert, 2004)
## Appendix 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORLD BANK INDICATORS - FRANCE - IMPORTS</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<td>Food imports (% of merchandise imports) in France</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel imports (% of merchandise imports) in France</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance and financial services (% of commercial service imports) in France</td>
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<td>3.8</td>
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<td>Manufactures imports (% of merchandise imports) in France</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ores and metals imports (% of merchandise imports) in France</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise imports (U.S dollar) in France</td>
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<td>Merchandise imports from developing economies in East Asia &amp; Pacific (% of total merchandise imports) in France</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
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<td>Merchandise imports from developing economies in Europe &amp; Central Asia (% of total merchandise imports) in France</td>
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<td>5.6</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Tradingeconomics.com, 2012)*
Appendix 3

Questions submitted through internet, to the two farmers who did not make direct sales.

Question 1: What are the main problems farmers faces?

Question 2: The CAP - it gives you support?

Question 3: Do you produce organic products?

Question 4: Do you do direct sales?

Question 5: Do you consider other farmers as competitors?

Question 6: What is the solution for farmers to control their prices?

Question 7: Do you follow what’s going on in the marketplace, its trends, and opportunities?

Question 8: How do you manage to get your products into the market?

Question 9: Do you have any knowledge of marketing?

Question 10: Do you use marketing?

Question 11: Why do farmers not do marketing or very little?

Question 12: Can marketing be useful for some farmers?

Question 13: Do you think schools should provide agricultural marketing training?

Question 14: If it was proven that marketing is the solution to all problems and that all farmers wanted to use it, how would they?
Appendix 4

Questions submitted face to face, to the two farmers who are making direct sales.

Question 1: What are the main problems that farmers face?

Question 2: The CAP it gives you supports?

Question 3: Do you produce organic products?

Question 4: Why did you get started in the ‘bio’ market?

Question 5: Do you do direct selling?

Question 6: Why did you get started in Direct Sales?

Question 7: How much time is spent on distribution?

Question 8: Why did you choose this means of distribution?

Question 9: How do you set your prices?

Question 10: Do you communicate your products?

Question 11: What was your communication strategy?

Question 12: Do you have any knowledge of marketing?

Question 13: Before you jumped into direct sales, did you do any market research to learn the expectations of the consumer?

Question 14: Is the "direct selling" part is a separate company? Or is it included in the farm?

Question 15: Did you hire competent people in the field of sales?

Question 16: Do you use marketing?

Question 17: Why do farmers not do marketing or very little?

Question 18: Is marketing useful for farmers?
Question 19: With your sales activities and preparation, process and presentation of the products, you do not consider yourself more of a business man than a farmer?

Question 20: Is marketing a suitable tool for a farm?

Question 21: How can farmers integrate a marketing strategy for their operation?

Question 22: Do you think that schools should provide agricultural marketing training?

Question 23: If it was proven that marketing is the solution to all problems and that all farmers wanted to use it, how would they?
Appendix 5
Questions submitted through internet, to the employee of the Chamber of Agriculture Alsace.

Question 1: Could you introduce the Chamber of Agriculture, its purpose, and its objective?

Question 2: Could you present your job (what are your major missions)?

Question 3: For you, what are the main difficulties met by farmers today? What are the reasons?

Question 4: What are the solutions for farmers to face their difficulties?

Question 5: For which reasons do farmers contact you mostly?

Question 6: In your region, how many farmer produce, transform and distribute directly their products?

Question 7: Which kind of exploitation is mostly concerned about direct sale?

Question 8: According to you, why do farmers not use marketing, or why just a little bit?

Question 9: What are farmer’s solutions to integrate marketing to their farm?

Question 10: Suppress the intermediary between the farmer and the final consumer would it result by higher use of marketing?

Question 11: If farmers would regroup themselves in order to get more power and importance, would it result by a higher use of marketing?

Question 12: Do farmers have to change the core of their job, and become seller more than farmer in order to integrate marketing strategies?

Question 13: According to you, is marketing adapt and helpful for a farmer?

Question 14: Are you able to help and follow farmers looking to do direct selling, or looking to diversify their activity?

Question 15: Do provide financial help?
Question 16: Are you trying to create links between farmers and suppliers, buyers …?

Question 17: Do you propose formations to farmers?

Question 18: What kind of help are farmers mostly asking for?
Appendix 6

Questions of the survey conducted through internet, thanks to the website called “surveymonkey”.

1. Have you ever visited a farm that sold produce?
   - yes
   - no

2. Do you live in an urban or rural setting?
   - urban (city)
   - rural (country)

3. What kind of produce have you purchased at a farm? (select all that apply)
   - milk
   - eggs
   - vegetables
   - fruits
   - grains
   - bread
   - cheese
   - honey/jam
   - wine
   - meat
   - Other (please specify)

4. How did you learn about this farm? (select those that apply)
   - online advertising
   - local newspaper/print media
   - television
   - driving by (just on the road)
   - word of mouth
   - Other (please specify)

5. Were the products “bio” (organic) or not?
   - yes
   - no
   - it was not indicated

6. Does the "bio" (organic) factor matter to you?
   - yes, I prefer products to be bio
   - no, I don't really care
7. Were prices comparable or lower than supermarkets?
   - lower
   - comparable
   - higher

8. If you knew about more farms in your area, would you consider buying directly from them?
   - yes
   - no

9. Why? (select all that apply)
   - To get fresh, quality products
   - To support local farms
   - To pay better prices
   - To get product information directly from the source
   - I would not buy from farms

10. Have you ever purchased products produced by local farms in your supermarket, shops, boutiques, etc.?
    - yes
    - no

11. Do you live in an urban or rural setting?
    - urban (city)
    - rural (country)

12. Why do you buy local farm products from your local retailer(s)? (select those that apply)
    - Because I like to support local farms whenever I can
    - The price was very good
    - They offered new products I was interested in trying
    - Other (please specify)

13. Would you like to see more products produced by local farms in your supermarkets, shops, boutiques, etc?
    - yes
    - no
14. What do you think you should pay for these products?
- less than standard products
- more than standard products
- the same as standard products

15. What kind of these locally produced products would you like to see more of in your local supermarket, shop, boutiques, etc.? (select those that apply)
- milk
- eggs
- vegetables
- fruits
- grains
- bread
- cheese
- honey/jam
- wine
- meat
- Other (please specify)

16. Would you be willing to travel to a local farm to buy their products?
- yes
- no

17. What would be your preferred method of getting these products?
- Supermarkets, shops, boutiques
- Farmers’ markets
- Farms

18. Do you think the quality would be better if you bought your products directly from the farm or from the supermarket?
- Farm
- Supermarket
- Would be the same to me

19. Would you be interested in a ‘home delivery’ service providing products from a local farm?
- yes
- no
Appendix 7
The Watson Box

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher wants to understand what kind of problems farmers are actually facing and find a solution to their problems, thanks to marketing. Moreover the researcher wants to study the nature and scope of marketing in agriculture. What farmers think about marketing and why. The researcher wants to reach several objectives in order to answer the research question:</td>
<td>The researcher is undertaking this research for several reasons:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Understand the difficulties farmers are facing</td>
<td>➢ The agriculture sector is facing difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Find out if farming is become a real business</td>
<td>➢ Companies use a lot of tools to go through difficulties. Why could farmers not use these tools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Make an idea about farmers’ knowledge of marketing</td>
<td>➢ Marketing enable to cover a lot business sides and provide lot of solution to interrogation about strategies to follow in such or such case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Determine if marketing can help farmers</td>
<td>➢ It is interesting to adapt marketing in a new area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Understand how farmers use marketing yet</td>
<td>➢ Not a lot of studies have be done in this way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Find the best solutions farmers have to integrate marketing to their activity</td>
<td>➢ The researcher studied marketing for 5 years and comes from a farmer family, so he can make the link between these two sectors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW – conceptually</th>
<th>How – practically</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The researcher needs to get a base for his research and has to read a lot of secondary data such as academicals articles. It allows him to increase his knowledge on the topic, according the authors points of views.</td>
<td>The researcher needs to collect both primary qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data are collected through semi-structured interviews of professionals, and the quantitative data are collected through a survey responded by consumers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>