



Natural, Local and Sustainable An Analysis of How Dairies Communicate their Environmental Work to Consumers

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Abstract

It has become more and more important for companies to market the environmental work, in order to attract consumers. Since, the interest among consumers has increased regarding sustainability issues connected to companies' brand images.

For the analysis, four dairies were chosen: Arla, Milko, Norrmejerier and Skånemejerier. These companies were selected for the reason that they were in the top layer in a consumer survey (2011), regarding sustainable brands in Sweden. That the milk is a powerful symbol also contributed to the choice of companies.

The aim of this thesis is to develop an understanding of the arguments that the dairies use and the discourses upon which they are building these arguments, when communicating their environmental work to consumers.

The discourse analysis, which takes its basis in social constructionism, is used as both theory and method in this study. The material that has been analyzed was selected from the dairies' websites. A discourse analytical approach was chosen in order to discern arguments and discourses that the dairies use in their marketing.

The arguments that were discerned from the material are: *"It is natural"*, *"It is locally produced"*, *"It is a guarantee of quality"*, *"We care about animals, nature and people"* (with the sub-arguments *"It is sustainable"* and *"We reduce our climate impact"*) and *"We listen to consumers"*.

Three main discourses, regarding the dairies' descriptions of their environmental work were also discerned. The discourses are: *"From Nature"*, *"Trust and Responsibility"* and *"Glocal Concerns"*.

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1. Introduction

“Our products should be as natural as possible” (Arla)

“Our production processes show consideration for nature and human beings” (Milko)

“We strive to minimize the environmental stress coming from transportation” (Norrmejerier)

“We promote regional and local food production” (Skånemejerier)

Concerns about the environment are here to stay. To buy green products has become mainstream among consumers. There is no longer just a certain group of people who are interested in and care about companies' engagement regarding environmental issues. Therefore, it has become more and more important for companies to create strategies for the environmental work. It is of importance to show the work by communicating the environmental concepts to the consumers, as the initial quotations display. There are different “rules” that preferably are to be considered by the companies, when they are marketing their work with environment. The companies should have in mind that it is extremely important to have a clear brand image and the image is closely connected to their reputation. It is also considered as valuable to show responsibility for a product's whole life cycle. Nowadays, consumers are looking for “sustainability” and tend to trust companies that use online media in order to engage and also teach about environmental issues. (Ottman, 2011)

The companies need to have a clear brand image, in order to make consumers understand and trust their messages. Building up such images includes the companies' visions and ideas, but also certain pictures and colors that the companies frequently communicate to consumers. This they do in order to engage and awaken the consumers' emotions. In this way the consumers may develop long-term commitments to the companies. (Linnanen et al, 2005; Norden, 2006; Olausson, 2009)

When it comes to communicating a company's work with environmental issues to consumers, some company goals are easier for the consumers to understand than others. Consumers that are aware of and think it is important to consider the impact that the food production has on the environment often value for example organic products, that the food is locally produced and that the animals are treated well. Therefore, it is common among companies to build their communication to the consumers around these issues. (Olausson, 2009)

In March 2011 the result of the survey “Sustainable brands” was launched. The survey was intended for private consumers in Sweden and the questions dealt with how well corporate brands correspond with sustainability. Both the environmental and the social responsibility were included. Among the 150 companies that were evaluated, four dairies were found in the top layer of the ranking. (IDG, 2011)

Arla, Milko, Norrmejerier and Skånemejerier are the dairies, whose website material is analyzed in this thesis. The dairies were chosen for the reason that they are four companies in the same line of business, within the agriculture and food sector, which is of special interest to me. The four dairies have different geographical distribution areas in Sweden. Norrmejerier is located in the far north, while Skånemejerier is located in the most southern counties. Arla has their main distribution in Stockholm and southward. Products from Milko can mainly be found between Norrmejerier's and Arla's distribution areas. The dairies also differ in size and

according to their websites Milko, Norrmejerier and Skånemejerier are each owned by between 550 and 800 Swedish farmers. Arla Foods is acting on a larger scale, with together around 7200 dairy farmers in Sweden and Denmark. Products from Arla are available in more than 100 countries.

Another reason why focusing on dairies is the milk's strong position as symbol in Sweden during the 20th century. In the 1920s, an organization called the Milk Propaganda Society was established. The society's main aim was to increase the consumption of dairy products through information in for example schools, since milk was considered to be such a healthy drink. The government supported the society and it seemed like everyone had a positive attitude towards milk. In the 1930s the popularity had its peak and milk was very much associated with future progress. The milk was pointed out as being able to create a new national identity, which would make the Swedish population more fit and healthy. During the rest of the 20th century the dairy companies were more or less considered to be linked to the National Food Administration. Today milk is still a powerful symbol. Though, instead of being linked to the future, milk is more associated with happy images of the past, images that perhaps never really existed. (Jönsson, 2005)

In the dairies' communication with consumers, the companies state that they take environmental responsibility. According to a consumer survey they are quite successful in their argumentation about taking responsibility for the environment. In addition, milk is also a powerful symbol.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The dairies are building their argumentation on discourses of existing images of what is counted as important, when working with environmental issues as a company. The dairies also contribute to create images of the environment, with a focus on what they want to make visible. This can be problematic, since their advertising strengthens the discourses about environmental issues and at the same time influences the way consumers think about environment.

The confidence in that consumers can make aware choices by for example boycotting products or buy products, which correspond with their own values, is today overestimated. The problem is that we so much rely on the concept of the political consumer which according to Boström and Klintman (2009) relates: *“to the idea that many late-modern consumers express non-economic values (for example, concerning human rights, animal rights, global solidarity, and environmental responsibility) through the market arena”*. Let us say that the only information the consumers get and can react upon is coming from the companies, whose main objective is to increase the selling. Based on this, the consumers are then not able to make aware decisions in the store, since the information they have received about environmental issues is very limited and simplified.

The aim of this thesis is to develop an understanding of the arguments that the dairies use and the discourses upon which they are building these arguments, when communicating their environmental work to consumers.

- Which arguments are the dairies using and what underlying conceptions (interests and values) of the consumers do the arguments relate to?
- What kind of discourses, connected to environmental issues, are the dairies building their arguments on? What is characterizing the discourses the dairies are using?

1.2 Delimitations

The companies use different means of communication, such as advertising in newspapers or magazines and through the texts on their cartons of milk. However, in this study the analysis is limited to the material available at each dairy's website.

Reports dealing with corporate responsibility, at the dairies' websites, and documents regarding environmental strategies are not included in the analysis, since it is assumed that such material is not read by ordinary consumers.

The focus is on how the companies describe their work and not on what kinds of environmental improvements they actually do. It could be the case, that milk products are something the consumers notice everyday and by habit consider as good from an environmental perspective. If that is a reason why the dairies are in the top layer of the survey is not going to be studied in this thesis.

2. Theory and Method

The theoretical framework around discourse analysis will here be presented, as well as a description of how the analysis was carried out, ending with critical thoughts of the study. In this thesis, discourse analysis is used as a methodology and as a guide to the analysis. Since discourse analysis has an integrated approach, both the theoretical section and the methodological section have been put under the same heading (Bergström and Boréus, 2005).

Discourse analysis has its basis in social constructionism. Social constructionism appeared as a concept in the late 1960s and is about how reality is socially constructed. How we humans create meaning and how reality becomes meaningful to us through language. The world outside is present all the time. We construct and reconstruct our world through language. Though, how we perceive and interpret the reality depends on our cultural background, where we grew up and our experience. Words are not neutral; they are formed in a social context. Every word is loaded with meaning, different norms and values. Every word also has a tacit meaning. It is important to point out that social constructionism is one of many theoretical concepts, which describes a way to look upon the world and how the world works. (Burr, 2003)

2.1 Discourse

The term discourse can be defined in a variety of ways. According to Wehmeier (2005, p. 434) discourse is: *"the use of language in speech and writing in order to produce meaning; language that is studied, usually in order to see how the different parts of a text are connected"*. Another example is coming from Burr (2003, p. 64) and she states that: *"A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events"*. Depending on the context, an object can be described in a variety of ways. It means that a certain word or phrase can be part of many discourses at the same time. The existing discourses can be seen as different frames of understanding, where reality can be understood with those as a background. (Burr, 2003)

Discourses exist in open social systems, which mean that it is not possible to say where the boundaries for a text are. Within discourse analysis, it is assumed that the meaning of a specific word will change, since the meaning depends on the context. (Hopf, 2004) Discourse analysis is according to Hardy et al (2004, p. 19) *"a methodology for analyzing social*

phenomena that is qualitative, interpretive and constructionist” and “tries to uncover the way reality is produced”.

A discourse analytical approach has been chosen, in order to be able to discern, what arguments the dairies are using in their texts and what discourses the arguments can be related to.

2.2 Material Selection

There are many different means of communication that can be chosen for communicating a company's concept. This study focuses solely on parts of the material available on the dairies' websites. As stated by Linnanen et al (2005, p. 217) the internet is: *“among the most effective environmental communication channels”.*

For the analysis, material written or produced by Arla, Milko, Norrmejerier and Skånemejerier was chosen. Each company's website was read through, in order to find the parts that were relevant to the study. After going through the texts dealing with the dairies' environmental work, enough information was gathered. Then decisions were made about limitations of the amount of material that would be possible to analyze, regarding the time frame of the study. Since Milko and Norrmejerier had a more limited amount of information on their websites, everything under the tabs “Natural Quality” (Naturlig kvalitet) or “Our Environmental Work” (Vårt miljöarbete) was selected. When it came to Skånemejerier, the text in their booklet “We Love Sustainable Milk Production” (Vi som älskar hållbar mjölkproduktion) has been analyzed. Arla had the largest amount of information on their website. The material that has been chosen relates to Arla's communication concept “Closer to Nature” (Närmare naturen), that was launched in November 2008. In the analysis a booklet, a short movie (approx. 4 min.) and a television commercial have been included.

Within the discourse analytical framework, the material is referred to as texts. When the texts relate to online material, it means the printed form (from May 2011), since information on websites is updated more or less regularly (Johnstone, 2008). As Johnstone (2008, p. 21) states: *“Every choice about what to count as a text for analysis is a choice not only about what to include but also about what to exclude”.* In chapter three, where the dairies' main arguments are presented, all quotations are referred to by using the company's name.

2.3 The Thematic Analysis Process

When doing a thematic analysis, according to Fulcher (2005), you try: *“to identify meaningful categories or themes in a body of data”.* As a start, texts from one dairy at a time were read through, in order to get an overview of the chosen material. The movie and the commercial produced by Arla were watched. During the second review, the texts were studied carefully, and while reading, interesting and descriptive terms were underlined. Now it was possible to discern common themes. When going through the material all over again, quotations that represented the potential arguments in a clear way were selected for further analysis. These quotations were then collected under the argument, which described the content in the most accurate way. Quotations taken from the different dairies were now mixed. The quotations were read through a number of times, in order to get deeper into the text. Some quotations were excluded while others were found and added later in the analysis process. Important to point out is that during the process the quotations were re-arranged many times and were not fixed until the very end. More phrases that contribute to a broader perspective of the work have been kept, although the quotations did not fit into the analysis. (More quotations are given in Appendix 1).

In the texts the arguments were found and categorized, implicit as well as explicit, that the dairies were using. The pieces of text and the movie sequences were matched with each argument. To be able to develop and go on with the analysis, it was reflected upon what kinds of images the dairies have of their consumers. When talking about the dairies it refers to the marketing managers, who are assumed to be the authors of the website material. This was a way to try to imagine what arguments the marketing managers might think are important to consumers and consequently make them buy the dairies' products. When the five arguments were discerned, all the material was read one more time, since the perspective was constantly changing. This was done in case something fruitful for the analysis had been left out in earlier reviews. The terms that was underlined in the beginning of the process, later turned out to become parts of a list of phrases in the three main discourses that was discerned in the material (Phrases are given in Appendix 2). While working, it has not been considered as important that the same number of quotations should be selected from each dairy regarding the arguments, because the amount of material differs between the dairies. Also to be mentioned is that during the analysis, parts of the texts were of course read through more times than described in this working process.

2.4 Critical Reflections

It is important to be aware of the fact that discourse analysis is a qualitative and subjective method. When doing this study I am part of the analysis process and deconstruct texts in order to construct meaning. An important thing to state is that my view, as author of the thesis, is only one interpretation of the material and there might be other interpretations.

I am not only a student in environmental communication. I belong to many different categories, such as Swedish, young woman, with a background in environmental science and at the same time I am also a consumer. All these things have more or less influenced my analysis. My earlier experience also had an impact on the choice of material and what has been selected as interesting in the texts. That I have spent all my summers in the countryside may also have influenced my approach to the subject. I relate this to the fact that, when starting the analysis, I had already a pre-understanding about environmental issues that influenced the process (Bergström and Boréus, 2005).

All the texts that have been analyzed are written in Swedish, based on a Swedish context. Since Swedish is my mother tongue, that made it easier for me to relate to the texts. However, when translating specific words and phrases into English the meaning could slightly have changed, since the meaning also is dependent on cultural context and available words to translate into. My knowledge in English may also have influenced the translations.

The body of information that the dairies have published on their websites is available for everyone, so all consumers who are interested can easily reach the material. The strength with analyzing already produced texts is that I have not been influencing the content in each text, which probably would have been the case if I had conducted interviews. On the other hand, I do not know anything about the marketing people who have produced the information and what background that person or those persons have. The only thing I know is from which company the texts have been selected.

3. Analysis of Main Arguments

In this chapter the dairies' main arguments are presented and quotations from the dairies' website material are given as examples. This is done in order to facilitate the understanding of what kind of images the dairies have of the consumers and what they consider attracts consumers (interests, values and motives). The arguments are being presented without relative order. The analysis is mixed with thoughts from writers who have done studies within similar fields. One writer, who is frequently referred to, is Jönsson (2005) who has written the dissertation: "Milk. A Cultural Analysis of the Dairy Counter's New Economy". Also Rogers (2008) is referred to several times in the following sub-chapters. He analyzes television advertisements in his article, and draws connections to theoretical concepts such as ecofeminism and environmentalism. The parts of the text by Giddens (1994) bring up different ways of looking at nature. Giddens (1994, p. 206) states that: "*Nature is not nature but rather a concept, norm, memory, utopia, counter-image*". Different views of nature within ecology, that Giddens (1994, p. 204) presents are: "*it is not for us to tamper what is a divine creation*", "*the metaphor of nature as mother nature*" and "*nature as alive*". Giddens (1994, p. 204) also refers to another approach: "*the 'mechanistic approach' to nature, associated with science, in which 'nature' is conceived of as the inanimate source of natural resources*".

3.1 It is Natural

A dominating category of arguments, which the dairies are using in their marketing, is connected to ideas of nature and natural. According to Giddens (1994, p. 204) "*The words 'nature' and 'natural' have their origins in the mothering process*". It seems that the dairies are guided by their images of what consumers, in their distribution area, believe that nature should look like. "Natural" is a very strong argument for Arla, since it is connected to their entire concept "Closer to nature". Their concept attaches great importance to the use of the term natural. The other dairies are not using natural to the same extent as Arla, though different ways in where they use "nature" and "natural" can be found in their argumentation.

Skånemejerier expresses the natural as something important and integrated in all their work: "*We support a natural and healthy animal husbandry, that leads to good and nourishing provisions...The environmental issues are by us seen as integrated and natural parts in the development work, within all lines of business*". The dairy is located in the south of Sweden with the country's best farming conditions and there are many farms, often large-scale units. People in Skåne and the nearby counties are used to see cows and other cattle in the countryside. Skånemejerier emphasizes the term natural when describing their production processes, both in livestock keeping and in the development work. This can be understood as something they do in order to assure the consumers that their ways of working consider environmental issues. In addition, Skånemejerier's logo consists of a flower, namely oxeye daisy.

Milko has its production and distribution area in the middle of Sweden, a varied landscape with large thinly populated areas, medium-sized towns and fertile farm districts. It is interesting to see how the following quotation reflects the area where Milko's consumers are living. It seems that Milko trusts that the consumers will be able to recognize their region and feel related to it: "*a cultural landscape with unspoiled nature, forests and fields - from mountains to sea. To us it is natural to take advantage of this and to use the resources from a comprehensive view which is long-term sustainable*". Though there may be some contradictions in the text. One can argue that Milko makes a distinction between nature, the forests and the fields by mentioning each separately. One view of nature according to Helmfrid (2005, p. 6) is that: "*The nature we are longing for is actually the cultivated*

nature". The landscape has been used for cultivation, by humans, since the agricultural revolution. Agricultural landscapes are created by humans and the same holds for the forests used for recreation (Helmfrid, 2005). "A cultural landscape with unspoiled nature" indicates that Milko makes a separation between nature and culture. Several dualisms are mentioned whereas nature/culture is one that can be applied (Rogers, 2008). In addition, Milko has "Natural Quality" as a slogan.

It seems Norrmejerier would like their consumers to value nature to a higher degree, since they state that: "*The clean northern nature is taken for granted by us living in Norrland. Around the world, it is often mentioned as one of our greatest resources*". Norrmejerier, the dairy located in the northern part of Sweden, refers to the northern nature and creates affinity with their consumers by using the words "us" and "our" in the quotation. It can be perceived as the dairy knows or at least trusts that people in Norrland appreciate, and are proud of the northern nature. The landscape is sparsely populated and is consequently fairly clean regarding environmental pollution.

Arla is the largest dairy group in Sweden and sells the milk products in most parts of the country including the large cities Stockholm and Gothenburg. The Arla movie "Closer to Nature" is loaded with symbolism and is very comprehensive although it is only about four minutes. It is interesting and valuable for the analysis to include the short movie since it gives surplus value as the audiovisual language is very powerful.

The movie consists of a large number of different scenes, without an explicit "main thread". The focus is on a young boy, grazing cows and vivid landscapes. The movie does not contain any information or facts; it seems to work as a mediation of emotions. One gets the impression that the image of how nature looks like is romanticized. A green and flourishing summer landscape is pictured. There are no weeds, almost no humans and no houses either. Like the boy was alone in the world among the cows. There are no spoken words in the movie, but a number of text messages are shown: "*Sense nature everywhere, A new beginning, The power of nature, Let nature lead the way, Feel the natural goodness, Made for you by nature, An attitude towards nature, Real food, Natural milk, Natural ingredients, Natural taste, Natural health, Based on nature, Original local organic, Create a new beginning, Nature grows everywhere, We bring you Closer to nature*" (A longer description of the movie is given in Appendix 3). By using these words and expressions, Arla is trying to speak directly to the inner emotions of the consumers. It seems Arla has the image of the consumers that they long for nature and "natural food".

Arla's core message "Closer to Nature" is built on humans' inner desire and longing for nature. The use of the concept can be seen as a way to as Giddens (1994, p. 199) states: "*restore humanity's contact with soil, plant and animal life, sun and wind*". As mentioned earlier, Arla's distribution area includes the two largest cities and therefore the movie is assumed to appeal mostly to consumers who rarely experience "real nature". Arla perceives pure nature and a clean environment as something people living in urban areas are longing for. In the booklet Arla states that: "*More and more people want to have more natural food. We think that is good, since milk is something of the most natural that exists*". This is an example of rurbanism, which is a combination of the words rural and urban. Rurbanism is an upward trend that in Skarin (2011) is described as: "*a way to try to reproduce the feeling of the countryside, though in the city*". Since many of Arla's consumers live in urban areas, it seems Arla wishes to attract those consumers with the concept "Closer to nature". According

to American Express (2010) *“Rurban consumers are more aware of their environmental impact and their responsibility as consumers, and are spending more conscientiously”*.

It is obvious that the movie turns to an international English speaking audience. Arla tries to show the image of how it looks like in Scandinavia, in order to fulfill foreigners' expectations of the Scandinavian landscape from a foreign perspective.

One can argue that the movie may contain “the recipe of milk”. There are several sequences showing water (cows drink a lot of water). Other sequences are showing fresh green grass (forage) and large fields with grain (forage). Water + grass + grain = milk. Through history according to Jönsson (2005, p. 75) the cow has been seen as: *“the original producer”*. The cow generates as Jönsson (2005, p. 79) states: *“a longing for the authentic, old-fashioned, pure and genuine, in the shape of an idyllic life in the countryside that has never really existed”*.

There are sequences showing a lighthouse tower or a windmill from air photographs. These are old buildings, as Giddens (1994, p. 212) states: *“symbols of the past”*. The lighthouse and windmill seem to represent a genuine and nostalgic time, though today the dairy industry is high-tech. Arla wants their production to look authentic, in the consumers' eyes. The focus in the movie is on the raw material coming from nature, whereas very little is shown of the production in the dairies. Arla is leaving out parts that connect to human and technical processes. These aspects seem to be less important to tell the consumers about. According to Arla (booklet), milk becomes less natural in the dairies by stating that: *“No food can be called natural if it has been processed in some way. Therefore, even the milk in a carton of milk cannot be called natural. We think that both the milk and many of our other dairy products are as close to natural it is possible to reach”*. Even though Arla states the milk to be nearly natural, it is processed by humans in modern factories, where educated people are working with advanced technology. Often when dairy products are being advertised, the steps between cow and carton are taken away which means that the dairy factory is not shown. (Jönsson, 2005) This seems to be the case in the Arla movie as well. There is much focus on the cows and the nature surrounding them, but just a few short clips showing something that looks like the interior of a dairy. One can argue that Arla in a way hides the human system (production, company, experts) and instead lets the cow symbolize the work (Jönsson, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, there are many different phenomena shown in the movie. In advertising common themes of how nature is described are as Rogers (2008, p. 283) states: *“when nature is used as a backdrop in advertising, relevant structures of meaning include nature as something to be dominated or controlled, nature as commodity, nature as sublime, nature as purity”*. Movie sequences, which demonstrate “nature as dominated or controlled”, are the ones showing large farmlands (which humans have created and cultivated). The fact that the cattle have EU-labels in their ears signifies that they are controlled. “Nature as commodity” is described by showing a cow that is grazing on a large field. Suddenly, the view turns into the picture on the side of an Arla truck, which is driving through the countryside. The dramatic and magnificent landscape that is illustrated through air photographs, showing for example water that strikes the coast and large verdant fields can be connected to “nature as sublime”. “Nature as purity” is visualized through clear water (in the form of drops) and milk that is pure white. Many clouds are pure white as well; in one sequence the clouds are shown in the form of cows, towards a clear blue sky. Other examples of purity seem to be wine-red cherries and perfectly red strawberries.

The movie ends, with an air photograph, showing enormous buttercups growing in pasture land. Then the Arla logo appears which contains a buttercup. One can argue that it looks like the buttercups are genetically modified, since the flowers are enormously high. Moreover, fresh buttercups are poisonous for cattle and the cattle usually avoid eating it (SVA, 2011). It somehow contradicts the concept “Closer to Nature”, since it seems that Arla considers their consumers lacking knowledge about the characteristics of buttercups. The consumers are people living in the cities, without know-how about such facts. As earlier mentioned, Skånemejerier has an oxeye daisy as their logo. Even though the flower is not poisonous, it can cause dermatitis (SVA, 2011). Skånemejerier may not think that the consumers have knowledge about oxeye daisy.

3.2 It is Locally Produced

Lately, the interest has increased among consumers to buy products that are cultivated and/or produced locally. Many consumers want to know more about the origin of the food and they value local food. It has so to speak become trendy to ask for locally produced. An example of this is the initiative “the farmers’ market” which is held in cities all over Sweden. There consumers can meet and buy from the farmers, who live within 250 km from the market (Bondens egen marknad, 2011).

From reading the texts it is obvious that the dairies have the idea that consumers appreciate food that is locally produced. A reason why the dairies tell the consumers about local milk and state the origin of their products seems to be the connection with milk as a strong Swedish symbol. It caused for example a big debate in 2003, when Lidl introduced German milk in their supermarkets in Sweden. As Jönsson (2005, p. 57) states: *“The German milk was seen as a threat towards Swedish farmers, animal husbandry, environment and health”*.

The dairy that emphasizes the origin aspect the most is Skånemejerier. In the text, Skånemejerier is focusing on the final product, by stating that: *“We want to offer products with deep roots in their district, with clear origin and regional milk. The milk is a very strong symbol for our food traditions and our cultural heritage. We want to give our customers and consumers the possibility to get to know the farmers behind the milk and at the same time mediate an understanding about the work that is behind the milk on the breakfast table”*. Skånemejerier seems to believe that the consumers are curious about the farms and farming and therefore invite the consumers to learn more about the life on the farms. One can argue that Skånemejerier wishes to create a bond between the dairy and the consumers by using words such as “our” and “we”. That could be a way to get “faithful” consumers.

Instead of focusing on the products, Milko and Norrmejerier are talking about their regions, where they produce milk, as the best environment for milk production. For example, Milko is referring to the production area as the land of Milko: *“In Milkoland there are good conditions for farming with high demands upon environment and quality”*. It is interesting to see how the term Milkoland is used when Milko is referring to the area from where farmers deliver to Milko. The term Milkoland can be seen as something unifying for consumers living in the area. At the same time, invisible borders are being created towards the rest of Sweden. To state that it is Swedish milk does not seem to be enough. The consumers are supposed to perceive Milkoland as something even better.

Norrmejerier is following the same line as Milko by stating that: *“The milk production in Norrland keeps our countryside vivid and cuts the transport distance, which is good for the environment and the climate”*. Norrmejerier has taken “locally produced” one step further,

beyond the production areas and uses origin-labeled electricity. They describe it in their texts by stating that since 2009: *“every kilowatt of electricity that Norrmejerier uses is coming from origin labeled electricity, from Sikfors hydroelectric power station, free from carbon dioxide in the production”*. This is a valuable piece of information as it shows that both the milk and the electricity are locally produced, which is something the consumers are assumed to appreciate.

As earlier mentioned, Milko, Norrmejerier and Skånemejerier have a more limited distribution area for their products than Arla. Probably, it is not possible to find products from Norrmejerier in the south of Sweden. The opposite holds for Skånemejerier, while it is possible to find products from Arla almost everywhere. Even though Arla is acting on a global arena, the impression one gets is that the company wants to have an image of a down to earth company. Arla states that: *“Today you can find products from Arla in more than 100 countries. However, we have our roots in the Swedish and Danish earth and we are owned by Swedish and Danish milk farmers”*. Like Skånemejerier, Arla also mentions how their production has a history by relating to the earth. Arla never talks about Danish milk. Though, Arla cannot put emphasis on local milk. If they did, it is possible that the consumers would question Arla’s credibility. Even if the dairy assumes that consumers value milk, that is produced nearby. The nearest to local Arla comes, is to state that the milk comes from Swedish farms and that most of the forage for the animals is locally produced: *“About 90 per cent of all forage, the Swedish cows are eating, is cultivated in Sweden. Regarding the organic farms, the number is over 95 percent. Many farmers grow much more than that by themselves, the more locally produced the better”*.

A television commercial by Arla is included in the argument “it is locally produced” for the reason that the story ends with these lines: *“Come a bit closer to nature with milk from Swedish Arla farms”*. The commercial is one way to let consumers in Sweden know that even though Arla also consists of Danish farmers, there is just Swedish milk sold in Sweden. Locally produced seems to stand for something good that gives a pleasant ring in the consumers’ ears. Before the text line appears, the following has taken place in the commercial: *A young boy meets a cow in his living room. This happens after he has been drinking a glass of milk from Arla, given to him by his parent. The boy takes the cow with him down in the elevator and walks out in the cityscape. People pass by and the boy and the cow walk past major roads, full with cars. The cow walks into a dark alley and the boy follows. He catches sight of a light and suddenly he stands in the middle of an area of pasture, dazzled by the sunshine. The cow stands a bit further away, mooing. The boy runs towards it.* The story in the commercial can be seen as a typical example of rurbanism. The commercial stands in contrast to everyday life, which can be rather uneventful. The commercial is an example of an escape from reality, the boy runs from an ordinary rather dull life towards a more colorful life. When the boy in the end of the commercial is standing in an area of rich pasture, one can argue that he has reached Utopia. A Utopia where the sun is always shining and the grass is always green. This observation can be related to Rogers (2008, p. 238) when he states that nature can be described: *“as escape from the contemporary social and technological world, and nature as Utopian ideal”*. Similar things have been found in the commercial that links to what Jönsson (2005, p. 74) describes when he states that: *“happy cows on green meadows can give positive associations which publicity experts are well aware of”*.

3.3 It is a Guarantee of Quality

The quality aspect is a central argument for the dairies. The companies emphasize that their products are of high quality and use different kinds of certification systems as guarantees of quality. Examples of certifications are “The Swedish Seal of Quality” and “KRAV” (Swedish label for organic production). Behind each certification there is a control system with different criteria.

A quotation from Skånemejerier shows how they have included the quality aspect in their text: *“Raw material with good quality provides the basis for quality milk from Skånemejerier and also leads to the fact that refined products have a high standard. There are several parameters in the milk that influence the quality of the end product and in order to guarantee a high quality, the milk from the purveyors is continuously evaluated. All our milk producers are certified and approved according to the quality system The Swedish Seal of Quality”*. Skånemejerier assumes that the consumers care about the quality of the food and will be assured when they get information about the control system.

A reason why the dairies put emphasis on using and creating new certification systems seems to be the fact that consumers have been critical towards the technology used within the food industry. Food scandals in Europe such as “mad cows” and the use of genetically modified organisms within agriculture have increased consumers’ concern (Jönsson, 2005). Jönsson (2005, p. 77) states that the alarming report: *“conjures up an image that the food production has become more “unnatural” and that the authorities and large companies are not a guarantee for safe food”*. By using different kinds of labels on the products, it seems that the dairies want to reassure consumers that their products are controlled and therefore safe to consume. The idea might be formulated like this: There is so much that is threatening in the world, but consumers can trust the dairies.

In communicating the environmental work, trustworthiness is of importance. Linnanen et al (1999, p. 217) state: *“that behind each claim there must be a credible chain of argument and supporting material”*. Each new certification system means that consumers need to trust one more thing. Without trust, the consumers would not be interested in buying and perhaps pay an extra amount of money for Swedish quality and/or organic products. Therefore it is also important to the dairies to communicate trust and food safety. One way to create trust is to make visible what is happening in the production, so that the consumers are able to trace where the product comes from, through origin labeling (Jönsson, 2005). Skånemejerier is actually investing in a traceability system, so that consumers should be able to trace the origin of the products. Perhaps the consumers first of all will see it as a fun way of checking the website and not connect it to more control.

A crucial thing when it comes to labeling of products is that consumers trust both the company and the control system which is behind. Consumers are not able to check where the milk comes from, so they rely on the fact that the company is telling the truth. When the dairies describe that it is a “guarantee of quality”, they only relate to the milk. Nothing is mentioned about the origin of other ingredients, for example in their yoghurt products berries and fruits are used. The dairies may assume that consumers are not interested in knowing about that, since milk stands for the largest percentage of the content. In a quotation from Milko it is stated that: *“The Swedish Seal of Quality guarantees that the milk comes from controlled Swedish farms with high standards of food safety, sound caring of animals and environmental responsibility. At regular intervals, the farms are being controlled by an impartial certification company”*. It is important to mention that an impartial inspection is

assumed to make the system more credible. This in turn makes the company more trustworthy because the evaluation is then considered to be more objective. It can be linked to what Linnanen et al (1999, pp. 217-218) state: *“evaluation carried out by impartial, third-party inspectors, or eco-labels granted according to specific criteria, do provide excellent marketing material”*.

When reading the text from Arla, it can be understood as they equal their own quality program (The Arla Farm) with the system of “The Swedish Seal of Quality”, which the other dairies use. Arla describes: *“The quality program contains the rules that count for the work on the farm and we regularly control that they are being conformed to...Farms that do not live up to the standards are not allowed to deliver their milk to Arla”*. They seem to believe that the consumers trust their quality program. Even though, it is regarded among consumers as less credible when the company itself carries out the quality control compared to impartial control (Linnanen et al, 1999).

Two similar reassurances have been found in the material regarding the handling of organic milk, one from Arla and another from Milko. Both companies state that the organic milk is by no means mixed with the other (conventional) milk anywhere in the line of production. As Arla puts it: *“You can trust the organic milk...The organic milk is fetched by special trucks and is being managed separately in the dairy. That this is the case is also guaranteed by the organic KRAV-label”*. Milko states: *“The milk farms that are connected to KRAV are being controlled at least two times a year”* and that the organic milk: *“is treated in the same way as the conventional milk”*. It seems important to Milko to inform the consumers that organic milk is treated as conventional milk. A reason for Milko to state that the organic milk is treated in the same way seems to be that the consumers believe that the processing of organic milk is different. Some consumers who are not used to organic products might be suspicious about them. The impression one gets is that both Arla and Milko want to describe the organic milk as a good choice. Also Norrmejerier gives such an assurance by stating that: *“All the organic products from Norrmejerier are labeled with KRAV. The KRAV-label implies an organic guarantee for the consumer”*.

The dairies believe that consumers trust the certification system and think it is a good product, if it has The Swedish Seal of Quality or the organic label KRAV. When the dairies describe the different certification systems, it can be related to what Rogers (2008, p. 238) states, as mentioned earlier: *“nature as something to be dominated or controlled”*. Within the system human beings control the production, from deciding what the cow should eat to what is being distributed to the markets.

On the market, there is a jungle of different environmental labels. One of many books that is addressed to consumers has listed 42 different labels that can be taken for environmental labels, but many of them are in fact something else (Holmgren and Cederberg, 2009). One can say that the dairies use the labels in order to make it easier for the consumers to make conscious choices in the supermarket. However, it could cause more confusion instead of facilitating the buying process. If a specific type of certification system leads to a higher price of the end product, it is likely only a certain type of people is willing to pay. The impression is that the dairies think that people are aware consumers who notice and appreciate the quality labels on the products.

It seems important to the dairies to be first on the market with different labels and products. The following are all mentioned in the material: Milko is the first dairy business to label their

products with “The Swedish Seal of Quality” and states they are the dairy with the highest percentage of organic products in their sale. Arla describe themselves as pioneers on organic products and is first in Sweden to launch a climate compensated dairy product. Skånemejerier is first with origin labeling of the milk and first in the south of Sweden with milk from climate certified farms. It is obvious that the dairies have the idea that consumers value this kind information.

3.4 We Care about Animals, Nature and People

The dairies’ descriptions of how they care about animals, nature and people have become arguments, because they are integrated and important parts in the companies’ work. The work takes place in different areas, for example on the farms.

Every now and then there have been reports in media about cattle that have been neglected. In some cases the authorities have taken the decision to put away the animals and prohibit the owner from keeping animals. These reports often get a lot of attention, because many people are shocked at learning about how animals have been badly treated. As the dairies know that the well-being of animals is important to people, they emphasize that the cattle in their “organization” are treated well.

Milko: *“We want to make sure that the cow, which leaves the milk to us, feels good and lives in a clean and natural environment and that the transportation to the dairy does not expose nature to too much stress, that our production shows consideration for nature and the people living nearby and that our cartons are produced in a material that is possible to recycle”*. As seen in the quotation, Milko relates to the responsibility, not only for the animals, but for the whole line of production. It seems Milko assumes that the consumers think it is important that Milko, as a company, has a life cycle approach in the work. When a company shows that it takes responsibility for the cows, the transportation and the production, consumers will perhaps become more interested in buying the dairy’s products. When Milko describes that they show consideration for and do not want to expose nature for too much stress, it can be seen as a way to make nature human.

Instead of referring to nature and how to protect it, Arla focuses on the quality of the milk products and gives that as a reason why Arla cares about the cows: *“We like cows. And if the cows feel good, the milk will be tasty. That is why it is important to us that the basic needs of the cows are being provided for - that their health and well-being come in the first place”*. Furthermore Arla mentions that: *“We think that everyone has a right to healthy and tasty dairy products, produced with respect for nature”* ... *“It is important that the environment on the farms and the caring of the animals have a high standard”*. Arla talks about healthy dairy products, which is something the consumers would react positively upon. Skånemejerier also describes how well they take care of their cows: *“Sound care of animals and healthy cows are important to us...Furthermore healthy and productive animals give a less negative impact on the environment and climate per kilo milk which is produced”*. It can be understood as Skånemejerier assumes that good treatment of animals is something the consumers consider as important and valuable. It can be the case that consumers draw the conclusion that healthy animals lead to nutritious products.

As the argument displays, not only the caring about animals is on the dairies’ agenda. Some farmers are working with organic milk production. A number of people assert that organic production is better for the environment and leads to healthier products, while others argue that it makes no significant difference compared to conventional production.

Milko states that: *“By choosing organic milk, you are making a contribution to the environment both here at home and in the world’s rainforests”*. One can argue that Milko assumes that consumers reading this text will understand the connection between the consumption of organic milk and the support for the rainforests. The connection that can be made is that soya which is cultivated in tropical areas, where the rainforests are being devastated, is not allowed as forage in the organic production. The important message that Milko wants to convey is that, while buying organic products, consumers care about environment not only at home in Milkoland, but also in the tropical forests. The fact that Milko uses both the “here” and the “there” aspect could be because in most cases the consumers care more about things nearby. The longer distance the less people tend to care about the effect of their consumption. Milko further states that: *“Organic milk is on average 15 percent more expensive than conventional milk - it is a rather small difference. In a survey of organic food, it has also been shown that the organic milk gives the largest impact on the environment, compared to what it costs”*. It can be understood as Milko assumes the consumers to know that the impact on the environment in this case is positive, though it is not mentioned explicitly. Therefore, one can argue that Milko tries to convince the consumers that organic milk is worth the extra cost.

When people are informed about the devastation of rainforests it can be perceived as something consumers would react upon. That could be a reason why Arla has switched from a sort of palm oil, which has been criticized to contribute to the destruction of rainforests, to a certified one: *“Arla has taken the decision to only use certified palm oil, which is better for the environment”*.

The dairies take responsibility of a product’s whole life cycle. That is shown in the texts with expressions, such as *“from earth to table”*, *“from cow to carton”* and *“from farm to market”*.

3.4.1 It is Sustainable

Sustainable seems to be a term the dairies have taken from the rather trendy ongoing discussion about developing the future society. Sustainable is a popular term and appears in many contexts. For that reason, it could be the case that consumers expect to find the word in the material about companies’ environmental work. The dairies are not very clear about the meaning of the term when using it in the material. The work towards a sustainable society, production and/or development seems to be something the dairies assume that the consumers have heard about as good and responsible.

Skånemejerier states that: *“We are working in all lines to take our responsibility for the goal to reach a long-term sustainable development”*. When mentioning sustainable development Skånemejerier relates to the most commonly used definition by WCED (1987) *“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*. Another statement made by Skånemejerier can also be connected to the previous quotation that it is important to care about both present and future generations: *“When it comes to environment and climate we must think about both our own quality of life and the one of future generations”*. In addition, Skånemejerier has the slogan: *“We love sustainable milk production”*, which sounds like an attractive one. It is something that the dairy focuses on and wants to promote. In the quotations it seems that Skånemejerier finds it important to inform about their work for sustainability and thinks that consumers would ask for such information.

Arla organizes every year a competition (Arla Guldko) among companies and the public sector. In one of the categories it is possible to be awarded a prize for best environmental work. By this, Arla wants to reward people who are: *“working for a food production that is long-term sustainable and with fair trade”*. By arranging these kinds of events Arla wants to engage and challenge others to become successful in their environmental work.

Both Norrmejerier and Milko state that they are contributing to a more sustainable society, though they have different descriptions on how to do it. Norrmejerier mentions that: *“By recycling milk cartons we save both energy and natural resources, which contributes to a more sustainable society”*. It seems that with this statement Norrmejerier wants to create a relation with their consumers, so that they together can strive towards sustainability. Milko focuses on the organic production: *“As a part of the ecological heritage, it is natural that we start to think more about how we use our parts of the inheritance. We contribute to a sustainable society by among other things producing, developing and offering our consumers an interesting organic dairy assortment”*. This can be understood as Milko has the idea that the consumers associate organic products with less environmental impact and Milko connects sustainable society and organic production for several reasons. According to KRAV (2010), their label stands for: *“sound, natural environment, solid care for animals, good health, and social responsibility”*. Jönsson (2005, p. 86) describes that connections between the categories “organic” and “children” are being made by adults, since both categories are considered to be: *“natural, authentic, harmless, long-term sustainable”*. So when consumers consider buying organic products, they maybe think it will contribute to a more sustainable future that belongs to the children.

It is not only the production of the content in the milk products, but also the cartons the dairies use that have an impact on the environment. This is something Skånemejerier highlights by stating: *“Because the forest must have time to recover, it has to be treated carefully and with respect for the flora and fauna. In order to be sure that the forest is growing and treated in a responsible way, Skånemejerier will gradually start using cartons which are sustainability certified”*. Skånemejerier further states: *“By taking responsibility for a product’s whole life cycle and showing the value of working from an approach to sustainable production, Skånemejerier wants to increase the consumers’ understanding of the right value of the milk”*. One can understand it as the dairy thinks their consumers have only little knowledge about the milk production and how much work there is behind. To make people understand by informing could be a way to make the consumers more willing to pay the “right” price.

3.4.2 We Reduce our Climate Impact

The dairies’ work with reducing their climate impact has been chosen as an argument for several reasons. Firstly, it seems to be an area into which their organizations put a lot of effort, both on the farms and when it comes to transportation. Secondly, the dairies also try to engage consumers in recycling.

“The reduction of climate impact” is an area where all the dairies want to show good will and good results. In the texts, the dairies present the improvements they have made and describe that they will continue to work on reducing emissions in the whole line of production. Lately, much of the media coverage in Sweden, when it comes to environmental issues, has been on climate and how to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Global warming is seen as a danger, a threat to humanity, something that consumers are assumed to worry about and the dairies show they are concerned about it too. All the dairies seem to assume that the consumers are interested in and have knowledge about climate change (that it has a global

impact on environment, connected to something negative). It is likely that discussions about climate emissions coming from cattle have contributed to the fact that reducing climate impact has become an important argument.

On the Internet, there are huge amounts of information to go through for the consumers who are interested in learning more about the connection between food and climate. The fact that the information is easily accessible can be a reason why the consumers' knowledge and interest have increased. For example, get advice how to make climate smart choices, to decrease the personal carbon footprint by eating food that is locally produced, adapted after season or to ask climate experts and search climate recipes (Svenskt sigill and LRF, 2011).

Norrmejerier gives a long explanation for how they have reduced the impact on climate by streamlining the transportation: *"We strive to minimize the environmental stress from transportation, through a coordinated delivery of different kinds of products, all over Norrland. Many of these products are locally produced. It means that we drive with filled trucks, good frequency and high efficiency. In this way we have reduced the climate impact from our own and others' distribution, by using fewer vehicles"*. There are large distances between the producers, the dairies and the supermarkets in the north of Sweden, so efficient transportation is considered to be essential for Norrmejerier. It also seems Norrmejerier finds it essential to inform the consumers about the improvements. Also Milko informs about their work to make the transportation more environmentally efficient: *"The transportation of course has an impact on the environment, so our job is all the time to find better and more environmentally efficient ways to run the transportation"*.

In one way Arla disclaims responsibility for the transportation by stating that: *"The transportation is responsible for only a few percent of the total climate impact"*. A reason for this statement could be that the consumers find that transportation is a problem, many trucks on the roads lead to large amounts of emissions. Arla describes how they have decreased their impact on the environment, during the latest years, by having fewer and more modern dairies: *"There are consequently environmental benefits of having large dairies. The energy consumption gets lower per liter product and the wastage in the production decreases, since we work with long series"*. It is important to Arla to state this, since transportation is often perceived as problematic, when discussing emissions and climate impact. It seems that Arla is fully aware of that and is justifying that they have closed smaller dairies and invested in larger ones. Large-scale production has often been questioned by many people and it is quite contrary to movements going towards local and small-scale farming.

Skånemejerier talks about the fact that most of the emissions take place on the farm: *"Regarding the whole line of production, the emissions of greenhouse gases are largest from the farms; nearly 80 percent come from the farms. Our milk farmers have for a long time been working with decreasing the environmental impact from farming and finding new measures for the production, to get as friendly as possible towards nature"*. Generally among the dairies it is mentioned very little about methane (the gas is set free when the dairy cows burp). Though, carbon dioxide is mentioned a number of times in the texts. It is understandable that the dairies avoid talking about methane, since it is stated to have 23 times higher climate impact compared to carbon dioxide (Franzén, 2007). The dairies can for example decrease the emissions of carbon dioxide by planning their transportation and use renewable energy, but they cannot change the cows. It seems the dairies worry that consumers would reduce their consumption of milk products for that reason. Methane is only mentioned in a small summary of facts about greenhouse gases by Arla, hinting that something happens in the cow's

stomach: *“Emissions with climate impact are emitted during the cows’ digestion and when the farmer cultivates the ground and drives the machines. Due to this fact, we are working with gaining more knowledge and proposing measures on the farms, in order to decrease the emissions. Regarding the nutritive value of the milk, it is however climate smart food”*. Arla assumes that the consumers are conscious of the fact that some food is climate smart, while other food is not.

The dairies describe different kinds of improvements they make in the line of production to be able to reduce the climate impact, though they need help with the recycling in order to close the whole cycle. Through the texts, all the dairies show the consumers that they take responsibility and care about what happens through the products’ life cycle. The following quotation is an example from Skånemejerier which shows that both consumers and producers are responsible: *“Producers as well as consumers should be able to participate in the work in order to reduce the food’s climate impact...The consumers also have a considerable responsibility for a functioning cycle when decisions are taken whether the cartons should be recycled or not. The more cartons that are recycled in the paper recycling, the lower climate impact”*. Also Norrmejerier encourages the consumers to recycle the cartons: *“All people in Sweden can help to sort out our household waste. When it comes to the drink cartons it is important that you as a consumer rinse the cartons (to avoid smell), flatten them (to save space) and leave them at a recycling station somewhere close to where you live...For the environment it is a valuable progress”*. As Norrmejerier gives complete instructions on how to recycle the milk cartons might show that the consumers are ignorant of what to do with the cartons.

In 2009, Arla launched the yoghurt Yoggi Yalla. It was Sweden’s first dairy product that is climate compensated, through tree planting in Mozambique. Arla gives a concrete example of how they compensate parts of their emissions, at the same time as they intend to help poor people in Africa. Arla describes: *“During 2009, 35000 trees were planted, which correspond to the 7000 tons of carbon dioxide which the production is the cause of every year. The planting of trees counteracts the climate change and also helps the African farmers to be able to support themselves and their families. The climate compensation is not something we do instead of decreasing the emissions of greenhouse gases. We see it as a complement and a direct way to show that we care about our planet, at the same time as we are working further on, in order to decrease our total climate impact”*. In this quotation, one can argue that Arla makes pre-assumptions of their consumers’ knowledge and interest. For example they assume that consumers know something about the conditions in Mozambique and understand that planting trees is a good initiative. The idea of climate compensation relates to ethical aspects. It is considered to be favorable for Arla’s brand image to show that they take ethical as well as environmental responsibility. Also to be mentioned is that the price for Yoggi yalla products is the same as for the non climate compensated yoghurts. This can be understood as Arla thinks that price is an important factor for consumers.

3.5 We Listen to Consumers

An important argument, for all the dairies, is to listen to opinions of the consumers. The dairies show that they do that, by trying to fulfill the demands from the consumers.

The screw top is one example where it is obvious that Arla and Skånemejerier value the opinion of the consumers. Both companies state that the reason why they produce cartons with screw tops is that consumers prefer them, even though the production of screw tops means increased amount of emissions and plastic waste. Arla states that: *“When we design*

new cartons we look at their total climate impact. But a carton should not only be climate-friendly, it should also suit the product and the consumer". The quotation from Skånemejerier also contains some kind of solution: *"All the time we strive to reduce the amount of material, principally plastic, in our cartons without leaving what the consumers require. Recently, the screw top was exchanged, on for example sour milk and yoghurt, with one that is lower which means that the production of this variant reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases with around 25 per cent, compared to the old screw top"*. It seems both Arla and Skånemejerier want to have an environment-friendly image and want to do more for the environment. Though, first of all they care about the opinions of their consumers. Especially Skånemejerier shows that they do all they can to reduce emissions, find ways to reduce plastic waste. It seems that, although the dairies find it important to care about the environment, they are willing to forgo their own policies in order to fulfill the consumers' requirements. This can be understood as both dairies have the idea that cartons with screw tops are convenient for the consumers.

As a result of the public debate about organic products the demand for such products has increased. In the following quotation, the demand for organic products is highlighted by Arla: *"We have more than 70 Swedish organic products and with support from the consumers we continue to carry on the ecological development. That is something we are proud of"*. Milko states that: *"We gladly strike a blow for our organic products and the consumers' interest is growing all the time"*. Both Milko and Arla seem to be assuming that the consumers value organic products and that they find it desirable to be able to choose among a variety of different products. Also Skånemejerier has seen the demand from consumers increase and therefore want to offer more organic products. Though, Skånemejerier has chosen to give a reason why they have the organic dairy production in another county: *"The demand for organic dairy products has the latest years been larger than the supply. In order to meet customers' and consumers' requirements, Skånemejerier chooses to search for a solution outside the county of Skåne"*. One can argue that in order to meet the consumers' requirements, Skånemejerier is ready to forgo their idea of local production.

4. Discussion

By proceeding from the essential features in the arguments, three main discourses have been discerned that characterize the dairies' descriptions of their environmental work. The dairies draw upon many different discourses in the texts and the variety of discourses can in one way or another be related to an overall environmental discourse. The discourses are: "From Nature", "Trust and Responsibility" and "Glocal Concerns" and will be discussed one by one. These three discourses are considered to include the most important aspects with the analysis as a basis. One can get the impression that the dairies believe that the consumers can act as political consumers. Based on the information given in the dairies' texts it is possible to see that the texts are simplified and biased and more information would be needed in order to really be able to act as a political consumer.

4.1 From Nature

The picture of nature that the dairies convey through the material contributes to how people view nature and what distinguish nature. This can be related to dualisms such as the earlier mentioned "nature/culture" and also the fact that often it is made a separation between the cities and the countryside called the "urban/rural" dualism. Especially interesting is the phenomenon rurbanism.

It is a fact that human beings have explored most places on earth. Depending on how we define nature, there is either a lot of natural landscapes surrounding us or landscapes that can be called cultural. People have shaped the land that is or has been used for agriculture and the land that is afforested. When does nature become culture or something natural becomes cultural? Is it an irreversible process or can something cultural become natural again? Is it meaningful to make a distinction between nature and culture? If something is natural, does that mean that other things are unnatural (=cultural)? Is the processing of products a way to “unnaturalize” the raw material? How can people come closer to nature, as Arla invites? How close to nature can we reach if the “rurbanism” trend is adopted (stay in the city and want nature to come to us instead of the opposite)?

In the texts there are expressions like: “be in harmony with nature”, “showing respect for nature”, “not expose nature for too much stress” and “as friendly towards nature as possible”. It could be interpreted as the dairies see nature as an actor having equal opportunity as human beings to express itself. That signifies a view of “nature as alive”. Although, nature is described as something gentle that we should care about, it is man who sets the conditions. There is no negotiating with nature. It is people who have taken the right to control nature and use the resources. When it comes to translating words into deeds, the dairies seem to picture “nature as alive” in their texts, though in action one can argue that the approach is more mechanistic. The dairies use the resources that nature provides. Other questions that are interesting: What is an acceptable level of stress for nature? Is it possible to show respect for a tree? Is not that something we do for people and animals?

Cows are domesticated by human culture. They are engendered in order to produce much more milk than they would do under “normal” conditions. The cows can be perceived as small biological factories providing the life giving milk for people. It can be called an exploitation of the cow, since the milk is actually produced for the calves, but taken away from them. If we regard the cow as Mother Nature, man has in that way exploited Mother Nature.

4.2 Trust and Responsibility

It is very interesting to observe how the dairies focus on Swedish milk and their descriptions that strongly emphasize the origin of the milk. The Swedish discourse gives positive associations that include criteria such as high quality, sound caring of animals, clean nature, careful control and nutritious provisions. Questions that are interesting to raise are: What is counted as Swedish quality? Can milk have a nationality? Can quality have a nationality? What do the dairies mean with quality? How can it be perceived by the consumers?

During the last century the dairies were regarded as being in some ways related to the authorities and were therefore trusted. Since milk has been said to be healthy for children (drink milk in order to get strong legs), the milk can be seen as a symbol that brings back good and perhaps vivid memories of a happy childhood. Feelings that are created during childhood often stay when people grow up. Can trust be inherited? It can be problematic, if the dairies create an image on their websites which they do not live up to in reality. If consumers would get misleading information the trust would probably decrease. The dairies build relations with the consumers and through the descriptions in the texts the companies show a loyalty towards their home districts, which contributes to create a feeling of belonging and of being at home.

The dairies show what environmental work they do, but also want something in return from the consumers. It seems the companies are taking responsibility and expect the consumers to be responsible as well. Can the ordinary consumer take more responsibility for his consumption of milk products? Can a person do something more than recycle the cartons?

When the consumer lives in a big city, somehow distanced from what has been described as nature, it is easy to make climate smart choices such as buy alternative products with labels that states less impact on the environment. At the same time as one can argue that every little bit helps, there is a risk that people by their convenient actions think they do enough. In order to make a real difference, large actions have to be made and also that people are willing to sacrifice something (comfort, money, time).

Preconditions for the dairies' business (and an acceptable profit) are healthy animals together with well-managed farms and machineries of production. Therefore it is not remarkable that the dairies take responsibility for this.

4.3 Glocal Concerns

As well as the dairies care about having a local image when it comes to the production of milk they are also in some texts emphasizing the importance of broadening the horizon to a global level. It automatically becomes a global issue when talking about the climate. Why has the climate issue become so "popular"? One can argue that the question is too big to grasp for ordinary people/consumers and therefore they can feel resigned and continue their lives without caring much about environmental issues. Why not focus on informing about the improvements that more directly influence the neighborhood (which in turns can lead to reduced climate impact). That would be easier for people to take in, since it is not possible to see the companies' reductions of emissions in a concrete way (it becomes very abstract).

How will the marketing of milk products look like in the future, or to put it like this: What will be important for consumers in 50 years? Will the dairies use the same arguments and connections to nature or climate as today? Or will the situation be very different? Before making a prophecy of the future, it will be discussed how life in the countryside can be looked upon today. Many people still have some kind of relation to rural areas, even those people living in the cities. Perhaps they grew up in the countryside or have relatives who they can visit. People have become alienated from what in old times was considered as natural. Small-scale and also medium-sized farming is no longer enough profitable. Farmers stand at the crossroad to switch to large-scale production, which requires large investments or choose to discontinue. That leads of course to many closures.

In retrospect, around 50 years ago the situation was quite different. Most people had contact with farmers and the countryside. There were many more farmers and cows and small-scale production dominated. Keeping animals was part of the culture. In the stores there were only few milk products. When looking at the supermarkets' assortment today there are a large variety of milk products available. One can argue that there are too many options and that Swedish consumers are overindulged; we expect to find everything in all supermarkets the whole year around. Milk products are something consumers take for granted to find in the supermarket, and if they would disappear an outcry would be expected. Is everything within the dairies product development sustainable? Is it sustainable to have around 80 different cartons of yoghurt?

So what will happen with the dairies and milk production in 50 years and what kinds of arguments will attract the consumers? It can be assumed that “it is natural” will not be such a strong argument any longer. The old time we today are longing for, is by that time too far away. Most people live in urban areas. Even more high-tech milk production, though it does not have to be negative. It will be less important with Swedish quality, since the world will be even more globalized. More people from all over the world are living in Sweden. Perhaps they are climate refugees. Questions to consider are: Will there be any farmers left in Sweden? Will people drink milk? It is likely that the demand will increase globally, not only for milk products, but for food in general. There will be new challenges to meet.

Severe drought and lack of fresh water in parts of the world will probably become more frequently occurring due to global warming. Food production must increase and the land has to be used in the best possible way. In Sweden the land will be used for food production to a much higher degree than today. A conversion from forestry to agriculture can be expected. To cultivate the land will become profitable again. The interest in Swedish milk products will increase worldwide. Sweden will produce more food to the global arena. The climate aspect will be an even more important argument; consumers will expect more work from the companies.

The dairies local actions can have a positive impact globally. The environmental improvements the dairies are doing today will perhaps in some way support future work.

4.4 The Movie and the Commercial

In both the movie and the commercial nature is pictured as something dreamlike, though it seems to be reachable at least in a figurative sense. One can argue that people are closer to nature than they imagine. The slogan (Closer to nature) Arla uses is a way to try to compensate for the assumed lack of nature in people’s lives. Perhaps it is the case that modern people have lost contact with nature. The relation has to be restored, though in an artificial way. Today’s widespread use of online media can be seen as a parallel and the fact that some people seem to live most parts of their lives in cyberspace, rather than in the real world. Perhaps it is possible to create an artificial substitute for the natural world.

The way it is pictured by Arla, the impression is that to walk beside a cow is something exclusive and an almost exotic experience. The commercial and the movie characterize the time we are living in, when many children grow up in town. The children represent next generation and that can be a reason why a child appears in both the movie and the commercial. Children are full of natural energy, just like the milk products are supposed to be. Though one can ask, why a boy and not a girl or both? Would a girl have changed the interpretation of the movie? How would she have been pictured?

It is possible to connect the movie to religious aspects. Nature as part of the religious discourse, seen as something almost divine. A sequence that can be connected to these aspects is when the cows are shown in the shape of clouds in the sky, as if they keep watch on people or are they guardian angels? Other sequences which show milk or granola that is falling from the sky can also be related to religious aspects. In some of the movie sequences, it feels like an air of the Mediterranean with fresh figs and lemons, which may appeal to Arla’s international target group.

The purpose of the movie is to raise a feeling of well-being and consequently a positive association with Arla (the sender). It seems that Arla presumes that most people prefer

summertime, since no other season is shown. In this “perfect” summer landscape there are for example no sign of weeds in the fields. Arla is not only leaving out the production, but also the assumed use of pesticides and fertilizers. What does it lead to when consumers do not have any or little insight in the actual production? How will consumers be able to make aware choices in the store?

As mentioned earlier in the description of the commercial, a boy from the big city walks into a dark alley and is suddenly standing in the sunshine in the middle of a green area of pasture. This event can be seen as a parallel with the book (and movie) about “Alice in Wonderland”, when Alice falls down into a rabbit burrow. Both characters (the Arla boy and Alice) travel through space and time very fast. Instead of coming to the wonderland the boy reaches the natural world, though it is romanticized. A suitable title for the commercial would be “Arla in Wonderland”.

4.5 Reflections on Language

The presented arguments and discourses seem all to be social constructions of the time we are living in today, influenced by the ongoing discussions in media and society. Meaning-making is a reversible process where the dairies are being influenced by existing discourses and where the companies also contribute to create their own discourses. How the dairies describe their work and which words they use on their websites, influence the way the material is interpreted by the reader. That in turns plays a role in how consumers perceive nature, environment and the world.

The dairies’ texts can be seen as constructions of what the companies consider as important for consumers to be aware of, what the consumers are interested in and value. Through the websites, the dairies communicate their brand images (how they want to describe their work). The dairies emphasize of course the parts of the environmental work, which they know they are good at and pay little or no attention to other aspects. There are no obligations for the dairies to show all aspects on their websites. It is obvious that a company does not want to fall behind its competing companies, when it comes to environmental drives and investments. One can argue that the competition among companies calls for and makes it necessary for companies to inform about the environmental work.

Today the consumers are exposed to a large flow of information and this has an impact and affects how they perceive the world around. That means that it is difficult for companies to stand out. When it comes to the dairies, the strategy seems to be to follow the same pattern, since the dairies’ texts bring up similar themes. The texts are part of the same genre and written in a similar style. The impression one gets is that it could have been the same copywriter to all the texts. The texts in the material are written in a way that is easy to understand, accessible and based on facts. In some parts the texts are also engaging and teaching. As earlier mentioned, Norrmejerier’s description of how to recycle the cartons is part of the teaching category.

The language shows the reader respect; since it is not only a focus on that the consumer should buy the dairies’ products. It seems the dairies assume that ordinary consumers are more interested in and more aware about different labels or the climate issue, than one can argue the consumers to be. It can be understood as a way to show respect for the consumers and can lead to the fact that the consumers grow familiar in their role as conscious consumers. It can be a good strategy not to make the texts too simple, since many consumers who want to read about the dairies’ work with environment already have some basic knowledge about

environmental issues. As there are many environmental terms embedded in the texts, some pre-understanding is needed in order to grasp the meaning of the terms better. As two examples, the terms sustainable and greenhouse gas emissions are considered to belong to the environmental vocabulary.

The companies' descriptions of reality can be perceived as an underlying problem. By their descriptions, it is a risk that they simplify the complexity regarding environmental issues too much. The way they are giving simplified pictures of environmental problems can influence how people perceive the importance of acting and engaging. As an example, Milko mentions in the texts that "by choosing organic milk, you are making a contribution to the environment in the world's rainforests". Due to the fact that the devastation of the rainforests has never been on such a high pace before, it would probably not be possible to see any noticeable difference, even if many consumers would ask for organic milk. Another example is the climate compensation Arla does for some yoghurt products. In relation to the total emissions of carbon dioxide (Yoggi Yalla is one of many products from Arla), 7000 tons is a rather small amount, although it sounds like a great deal. These kinds of simplifications may be perceived as sufficient efforts. In addition, what the dairies not mention is of course also of importance regarding how consumers perceive the reality.

5. Conclusion

There are certain themes that frequently recur in the dairies' descriptions of their environmental work. Based on the findings it is possible to see what underlying conceptions (interests and values) of the consumers the dairies' arguments relate to and what is characterizing the discourses the dairies are using.

The argument "*It is natural*" contains the dairies' images of what the terms natural and nature mean to the consumers. The consumers are interested in consuming more natural products and have a picture of nature as something good. Under the argument "*It is locally produced*", the themes local and origin are highlighted. In the way the dairies describe it there is a clear interest among consumers to buy products produced locally. The dairies are focusing on their local environment and emphasize that the milk is Swedish, which seems to be something consumers value. "*It is a guarantee of quality*" is relating to food safety and food quality. The dairies seem to have the idea that consumers are concerned about these issues and want to know more. From the texts it is possible to see that the dairies view the consumers as interested in healthy products and they trust the control systems behind the certifications. It is also obvious that the consumers value labels that stand for quality.

In "*We care about animals, nature and people*" the expressions sustainable and reducing climate impact are sub-arguments. How the dairies care about the cows and that they take responsibility for the whole production is pictured. The dairies see animal rights and initiatives reducing climate impact as important and something the consumers value. However, the consumers can help the dairies to reduce the environmental impact by recycling the cartons. Among the consumers there is an interest in acting in a more sustainable way and to reduce the amount of waste. Under the argument "*We listen to consumers*" it is shown that the dairies are influenced by and try to meet the requirements from the consumers. It is possible to say that the consumers are interested in having an impact on the companies and value when the companies listen to their opinions.

When it comes to the discourses, "*From Nature*" is characterized by the opposite principles nature/culture and urban/rural, plus the use of the terms natural and healthy. The discourse

“Trust and Responsibility”, is described by the words quality and credibility, together with the dualism Swedish/foreign. Within “Glocal Concerns”, climate and sustainable are perceived as important terms, while local/global and future/present are central pairs of words.

Further research is necessary on how people are influenced by what they read and watch about companies environmental work in online media and if such information leads to an increased interest and environmental awareness or not among consumers.

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Appendix 1 - More Quotations

Arla

Arla is an environmentally engaged company, which always has protected animals and nature. We continue on that road and take further steps closer to nature.

To us "Closer to Nature" means that we as a company will be even better at working through interplay with nature, in the whole chain - from earth to table.

You can see "Closer to Nature" as a promise that we at Arla continue the work that our products should be as natural as possible. You can also trust that the farmer's work on the farm and our own work with environment and climate are done with respect for nature. Though we can become even better!

Thanks to the fact that the cows graze outdoors and that the farmer cultivates the forage to his animals, the landscape can be open and vivid. The natural pastures also contribute to biodiversity meaning that plants, insects, butterflies and birds get on well and increase in number.

Arla has been a pioneer when it comes to organic products and today we are Sweden's and the world's biggest producer of organic dairy products.

There are special demands on the organic farms. The organic farmers strive for a natural and closed cycle as possible and are therefore not using fertilizers or pesticides.

Seven out of ten Swedes have an "Arlafarmer" as their closest farmer and together there are nearly 4000 Arla farms in Sweden.

In Sweden there are different kinds of quality programs. The Arla farm is one example and another one is the Swedish Seal of Quality.

The ingredient palm oil, which mainly is used in certain cooking fats, has been heavily criticized to be conducive to devastating the rainforest and that threatened environments are being destroyed where it is grown. Therefore Arla has taken the decision to use only certified palm oil, which is better for the environment.

Drink milk and save a meadow - Looking at the whole production chain of the dairy products the emissions of greenhouse gases are largest from the farms, but it is also on the farm that the milk is produced.

Yoggi yalla plants trees. In the Spring 2009 we introduced Sweden's first climate compensating dairy product: Yoggi yalla. The climate compensation is done in corporation with the certification agency Plan Vivo through which we plant trees in Mozambique.

Arla is not only a food company, but also a large carrier. Regarding the milk's whole production chain, from earth to table, the transportation answers for just a few percent of the total climate impact.

The fact that our farms are located closely and that we plan the driving distances carefully, contribute to us having efficient transportation of milk to the dairy, and that creates large environmental benefits.

Many consumers want to have cartons with screw tops and that is a dilemma to us, since it means increased emissions of greenhouse gases. Yet, we have started to produce products with screw tops.

We would like to share our knowledge about the life on the farm and the connection between people, animals and nature. Therefore we every year invite to the so called "betesläppen" all over the country, when the cows are let out to graze in the spring. We also have 225 visiting farms which are shown to small children. At these so called "Minior" visits the children can see the cows and the farmer and learn more about the food we eat and where it comes from.

Milko

The work with environment at Milko is characterized by a comprehensive view.

Our environmental work does not extend only to the business that we rule ourselves. Our engagement for the environment also includes our milk farmers and the companies and the haulers that are working for us.

Transportation is a necessary part of Milko's work, because we fetch the milk at the farmers and because we deliver the prepared products to supermarkets and wholesalers.

One of the tools in order to improve the farms' environment is that all the milk farmers in Milkoland should be certified, according to the Swedish Seal of Quality.

Our sales of organic products are larger than at any of the other dairies in Sweden, when related to the total sales. We think that is good, but not good enough. We want an even larger share of our milk to come from organic farms.

Norrmejerier

Norrmejerier has been awarded the Environmental Prize of Norrbotten for 2010. The fine award was given to us for "an exceptional long-term work regarding development and sustainability within the green sector, where the motivational force through milk production is to keep and develop a vivid countryside."

Skånemejerier

Skånemejerier is a part of the cycle. We work in all lines to take our responsibility for the goal to reach a long-term sustainable development.

We offer a unique possibility to follow the milk back to its origin; we support a natural and healthy animal husbandry. And we promote regional and local food production.

To us environment and origin go hand in hand. That is why we have chosen to concentrate on locally produced products with clear origin, like local milk from the counties of Skåne, Blekinge and Småland.

The environmental issues is by us seen as integrated and natural parts in the developing work within all lines of business, from farm to market.

All our milk producers are certified and approved according to the quality system The Swedish Seal of Quality, which means that the work and the production on the farms should be done with affection and good caring of animals, at the same time as we protect the environment and the biodiversity.

Skånemejerier promote locally produced forage by for example exchanging the soya meal which is mostly cultivated in Brazil and from that point of view has many disadvantages regarding environment and climate.

A sustainable use of renewable resources - Cartons made of raw material from the forest is an excellent environmental choice, since wood is a resource of raw material that can be used, at the same time as it is recreated by nature.

When it comes to our cartons we are continuously working on reducing the amount of packaging material and choose material that put as little load as possible on the environment.

At the same time as the cartons of our products should be made with greatest respect for nature, the cartons must fulfill their function and the needs that our customers and consumers have.

Sweden's total food production stands for around 25 per cent of Sweden's total amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

Many consumers prefer screw tops and since we are able to offer different alternatives for packaging, our assortment consists of cartons both with and without screw tops.

Appendix 2 - Phrases to Main Discourses

Here are lines of words and phrases presented, that characterize the main discourses of the dairies' environmental work. The terms are all taken from the texts. Some of the words and phrases have been looked at more closely and can be found in the quotations in chapter three, while other terms are there in order to show the variety of words that can be connected to the same discourse.

From Nature

The nature is our lodestar, natural and closed cycle, more natural alternatives, as natural products as possible, milk the world's most nutritious nature product, natural food, clean and natural environment, natural quality, life cycle, open and vivid landscapes, vivid countryside, close interplay with nature, in harmony with nature, respect for nature, protect the environment and biodiversity, take responsibility for nature, not expose nature to too much stress, a cultural landscape with unspoiled nature, clean northern nature, healthy and tasty dairy products, ecological heritage, cultural heritage, drink milk and save a meadow

Trust and Responsibility

Locally produced, locally cultivated, from earth to table, from farm to market, from cow to carton, from the farm to the consumer, organic production, Swedish certified farms, raw material is guaranteed to come from Swedish farms, environmental standard, quality standard, controlled caring in order to keep healthy animals, clear origin, regional raw material, local milk, quality milk, sustainability certification, climate certification, origin labeling, origin labeled electricity, organic guarantee for the consumer, environment and guarantee of quality, environmental responsibility, environmental consideration, animal husbandry, with greatest possible consideration for the cows and the environment, show consideration for nature and people, high standards of food safety

Glocal Concerns

Climate impact, climate smart, production that is transportation smart, climate compensation, climate perspective, climate aspect, relative carbon dioxide emissions, direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions, recyclable materials, environmental efficient methods, waste streamlining, fossil fuels, biogas, green electricity, renewable sources of energy, non-renewable sources of energy, greenhouse effect, gases with climate impact, free from carbon dioxide in the production, self-supporting on energy, sort out household waste, smart and environmentally adapted cartons, care about our planet, the earth has no best-before date, fair trade, long-term sustainable food production, comprehensive view, sustainable society, sustainable milk production, sustainable development, ecological development, future generations

Appendix 3 - Description of Movie

A description of the story in the Arla movie “Closer to nature”:

A young boy runs out from a forest into an area of rich pasture. There a cow looks at him. Air photographs show the ocean as a source of power, the sky, open landscapes, a lighthouse tower, a windmill and large verdant fields. Another sequence shows the boy running on milk waves and a cow chewing the cud on another wave, with a butterfly flying around. Suddenly, the cow stands in an area of pasture. An Arla truck drives through the countryside with the former picture on the side of the truck. A lot of oxeye daisies are flying from the picture. One flower lands in water. A worker at a dairy is taking cherries out of clear water. Milk is whipped in some sort of machine. Other scenes show drops of water, drops of milk that fall from the sky, strawberries that plop into milk and granola raining into a bowl. A breakfast table is laid ready outdoors filled with cheese, sour milk, granola, butter and fresh figs. The sky is shifting from clouds in the shape of cows to healthy-looking cows in areas of rich pasture. An unripe strawberry gets red. A lemon is cut into two and leaves are starting to grow out of another lemon. Then the leaves are growing from enormous buttercups in an area of pasture. The movie ends with an air photograph showing the large flowers and then the Arla logo appears and the logo contains a buttercup.