Is Bart Simpson offering sage advice to New Zealand farmers?

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This study applies asymmetric rather than conventional symmetric analysis to advance theory in understanding job outcomes in New Zealand farming. The study applies systematic case-based analyses to model complex relations among conditions (i.e., configurations of high and low scores for variables) in terms of set memberships of farm owners. The study uses Boolean algebra to identify configurations (i.e., recipes) reflecting complex conditions sufficient for the occurrence of outcomes of interest (e.g., high versus low financial job stress, job strain, and job satisfaction. In a large-scale empirical study of farm owners (n = 928) in four (contextual) segments of the farm industry in New Zealand, this study tests the fit and predictive validities of set membership configurations for simple and complex antecedent conditions that indicate high/low core self-evaluations, job stress, strain, and high/low job satisfaction. The findings provide insights into the attribution concept of reason and cause explanation by high and low job satisfaction farm owners due to the impact of stressors and effect of psychological strain. However, the findings do not support the conclusion that Bart Simpson's advice, “Don't have a cow, man!” implies that having cows associates with high psychological strain and high stress. The findings in the present study do not support the implication of the cows alone associates with high stress. In fact, dairy farming appears much more frequently in farmographic configurations indicating low psychological strain and low stress rather than Simpson's implication. Possibly, similar to pets, cows may be given names (e.g. Betsy) more often than sheep, beef, or horticultural crops.