Interview Questions

I. Sense of place/land use
Purpose- The way people use land is a manifestation of the value they have of the place in which they live and work. Depending on the answers given, it can also display the way the producers connect food to the land or a certain place. By using these questions, I will be able to analyze the manifestations of these in each individual place and compare how they differ.

Definition- Sense of place is the process by which people define themselves by their physical landscape. Land use is the way people alter and affect their environment through their management techniques.

a. Why did you choose to set up your cheese making operation here? What are the beneficial properties of the place that assist in the process of making cheese and what are the less-than-ideal properties of the place that hinder the cheese making process?
b. Could you do what you do elsewhere (village, province, state, country)? Would it change how you do things? If so, how?
c. How long have you engaged in cheese-making here? How long have people been raising goats here?
d. How/what are your goats fed? What factors affect what you feed them?
e. Where is feed bought/grown? What factors affect your decision?
f. What is the grazing method? What grazing management techniques do you prefer?

II. Food value
Purpose- The value the producers have of food shows both what the farmworkers themselves believe and also how they adapt to the values of the customers. By focusing this section on the specific topic of food values, I would like to analyze the fundamental values that affect how the farms’ work is conducted.

Definition: The value owners and consumers place on food; values include whether they think about where food comes from, how it was made or grown, how they use food, quality and why food is important.

a. Why did you decide to structure your operation as a farmstead? In other words, why do you raise your goats, milk your goats and make the cheese all in here on the farm?
b. Since you've been in business, how has your consumer base (your customers) changed?
c. Where do you sell your cheese? (Markets, wholesale to stores, restaurants etc.)
d. Since you've been a business, are there more or less people interested in direct farm to consumer relationships? What do you think accounts for this?
e. Also since you've started the business, are there more or less people interested in goat cheese? What do you think accounts for this?
f. Since you've been in business, are there more or less people interested in small-scale farms and "local" food? What do you think accounts for this?
g. Why did you decide to work with cheese?
h. Could you define and discuss the pros and cons of the following food systems?
   i. Large-scale/Industrial
   ii. Artisan
   iii. Organic
   iv. Local
   v. Slow food
   vi. Small-scale
   vii. Your ideal of a food system

i. Do you think you are able to successfully practice these ideals? What would prevent you from being able to successfully practice it?
j. Can you make a good living at it? What decreases your profits? And what would increase your profits?
k. Is this the kind of business you want to pass on to your children? Why or why not?

III. Regulations and Policy- this includes federal, state and local regulations
Purpose- I would like to look at regulations in particular because they tend to portray the dominant culture. By asking the questions below, I would like to gain more insight into the regulations affecting each farm in order to better understand the constraints each farm works within.

a. What are the regulations that affect your farmstead and cheese making processes in the following categories and how do they affect you?
   i. Environmental quality: air, land, and water
   ii. Raising livestock
   iii. Cheese-making and processing
   iv. Cultural issues such as place of origin, artisanal, and organic
   v. Cleanliness and sanitation
   vi. Packaging and labeling

b. Which of these are more troublesome for your operation than the others? Why? Which of these are less troublesome? Why?
c. How do they impact your work and your profit margin?
d. Do you receive any subsidies?

IV. Is there anything further about these topics or about your farmstead and business that you would like to share?