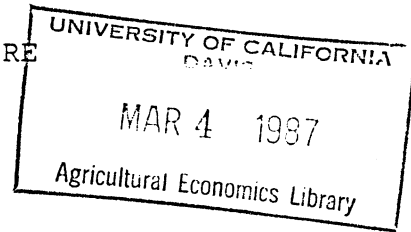


THE FLORIDA WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH/EXTENSION PROGRAM

by

Christina H. Gladwin*



1986
Women in agriculture

Like their counterparts in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, Florida women farm. Some are full-time farmers who drive tractors and on their own raise major money crops such as beans, poultry, and even registered bulls. Some run agribusinesses such as fertilizer supply houses, citrus groves, and nurseries. Other women are part-time farmers who co-manage the family farm alongside their husbands, raising hay, chickens (both layers and broilers), tobacco, vegetables, bees, beef cattle, quarterhorses, and thoroughbred racing horses. In addition, there are young women who help out on their parents' farm by taking care of animals both big and small, by picking and hauling, and helping to load a tobacco barn. They all describe their role as one of "pitching in and helping, doing whatever needs to be done to keep the farm going and the family together."

Sometimes women contribute to production on the small farm, as do women on north Florida part-time farms who grow beans and tobacco, milk cows, and haul hogs to market. Others contribute to the revenues of large agribusiness firms, most of which are located in south Florida. These women serve as general managers of the office, operate microcomputers, and keep the general

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ledger and payroll accounts of the agribusiness. While they may be daughters or wives of the production managers of the firm, usually they are trained bookkeepers hired especially for the job of managing the office or operating the computer. Still other women have more direct contact with the produce of agribusinesses, as packers and sorters in packing houses, or as farm workers in the fields. Finally, many young agribusiness women are also farm wives who are juggling full- or part-time off-farm work with farm tasks like bookkeeping, accounting, and computer programming.

Why do they farm? Farming is a goal in itself for some families. As one woman put it, "When you live on a farm and enjoy it, you're already ahead of the game." Maintaining a rural residence, satisfying the desire to "stay where you are...", to live in the country, eat high quality fruits and vegetables, and raise one's children in a healthy environment, where the mores and values of neighbors are known and shared, are also reasons Florida women farm.

The active farm work of all these women exposes the myth that, "he's the farmer; she's the helper." To help Florida farm women be recognized and supported as farmers and not just helpers, I initiated a Florida Women in Agriculture research/extension (WIA R/E) program in 1981. The program has features that are similar to a farming systems research/extension (FSR/E) program; many features, however, are quite different from a FSR/E program. As the program is described, these similarities and differences will be highlighted.

The Research Component of the Florida WIA Program

The Florida WIA program, like a FSR/E program, has both a research and extension component to it. Like a FSR/E program, the WIA R/E program starts from where the farmer -- the woman farmer in this case -- is at, and tries to help her fulfill her farming goals, as she perceives them, through extension programs. A research component to the program is necessary, in order to discover each woman's farming goals, plans, and decision processes, to put her in the context of her farm or agribusiness, and understand her way of life.

Optimally, each farm woman is interviewed either on her farm or in her agribusiness office at the start of the program. This may be done using the sondeo methodology (Hildebrand, 1980), or a combination of sondeo and more formal survey instrument, as I prefer. With the latter technique, an interdisciplinary team (of state extension specialist/researcher and county extension agent) visits farms and agribusinesses for three to five days, and asks women a series of survey questions as well as more open-ended and spontaneous questions about their farming operation. Although these personal interviews are longer than the typical sondeo interview, and average one and one-half hours, they provide data which may be compared to a national average and/or subjected to a statistical test. In addition, these one-on-one visits provide invaluable information to the local extension agent who may be acquainted with the women but not knowledgeable about their farming needs and problems. The personal interviews also tell the agent whether (and when) farm women are interested in meeting

together to form a network, and what kinds of educational programs they want at their meetings.

To date, women farmers have been interviewed in six Florida counties: Baker County (with the help of Dr. Masuma Downie), Gilchrist County (with Janet Weston), Jefferson County (with David Zimet and Donna Sorenson), Levy County (with Mary Peters), Collier County (with Denise Coleman), and Hendry County (with Nancy Hendricks). Data have already been analyzed from two north Florida counties (Baker and Gilchrist). Because theory, methods, and results are described in detail elsewhere (Downie and Gladwin, 1981; Gladwin, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c), only major results are repeated here.

Results show that on average, the north Florida farm woman is a part-time farmer and is now farming more than did her mother and grandmother. Data in Table 1 show men's and women's contributions on four work dimensions: farm work, off-farm work, garden work, and housework. The data were collected in an open-ended way by asking women to recall the major tasks they performed throughout the year and the time required to complete those tasks. Although north Florida men spend more time doing farm work (35 hours per week) and off-farm work (20 hours per week) than women, north Florida women on average spend 22 hours per week on farm tasks and 17 hours per week on off-farm work. In addition, women spend 26 hours per week on housework and during the spring-summer garden season, an additional 12 hours per week gardening and processing garden produce. In total, men work 62 hours per week, on average, during the main garden season; while women work 78 hours per week. Men, however, spend more time

farming than women; but women's farm hours are substantial and amount to, on average, a part-time job. When compared to previous national estimates of women's farm work of 11 hours per week, as reported by time-use diaries in the 1920s and 1930s (Vanek 1974), it appears that on average, the north Florida farm wife is farming more now.

Also in an open-ended way, the same women were asked about their perceptions of themselves, in order to test the strength of the belief, "He's the farmer; she's the helper." Results showed that 42 percent of the women considered themselves to be farmers; while 14 percent thought of themselves as part-time farmers. Eight percent said they were retired from farming, and 36 percent thought of themselves as farmers' wives. In this sample at least, more women considered themselves to be farmers than farmers' wives. As women participate more in farming, they will tend to think of themselves as farmers rather than just helpers.

Evidence From National Time Series Data

These results are collaborated by recent data from national surveys. This is necessary because it is impossible to distinguish regional variation from change over time with these data, because the 1930s data are national rather than Florida-specific data. Fortunately, data from the 1980 USDA phone survey of 2,500 farm women and the 1984 Ford Tractor survey of 3,300 farm women fill the gap, because these data are directly comparable. Trying to verify the results of the earlier USDA phone survey, Ford Tractor Operations in 1984 launched its own mail-out survey of 9,300 U.S. and Canadian farm women, and received 3,300

responses (Ford Tractor 1985). Questions were asked about the type and location of the farm, the type of work the farm woman did on a regular and occasional basis, the kinds of decisions made jointly or separately by farm husband and wife, and the informational, service, and dealership needs of the farm family regarding tractors. Because the series of questions on the farm woman's involvement in farm tasks were directly comparable to the same questions on the earlier 1980 USDA national survey, the time series data in Table 2 allow us to see if U.S. farm women are farming more now.

In the rows of Table 2 are listed the tasks on a farm that a woman may perform on a regular basis (column 2), an occasional basis (column 3), or never. (Because "never" is a residual category, the percentage of women who never perform the task is omitted from the table, for brevity.) The columns of Table 2 report the 1980 USDA results on the left hand side, and the 1984 Ford Tractor results on the right hand side.

The results of both surveys show that farm women regularly take care of the garden, do the bookkeeping and financial work, act as chauffeur and gofer and run for spare parts, and take care of farm animals. A comparison of the survey results, moreover, show that more women are regularly doing these tasks in 1984 than in 1980. In addition, both surveys show that occasionally, women supervise farm work, harvest crops, make major purchases of equipment, and do field work without machinery. Only one-third of the women, however, occasionally do the plowing or discing, and market their products. In 1984, more women are doing all these tasks on an occasional basis. Clearly, women are very

involved in farm work, and that involvement is increasing!

This is partly due to the fact that, more and more, they are substituting for their spouses who must subsidize depressed farm incomes with off-farm incomes in this time of farm crisis. It may also be partly due to technological change in domestic work within the home. Because of modern home appliances, time spent doing housework has decreased from 50 to 26 hours per week during the last 50 years (Vanek 1974). This released time has allowed modern farm women to increase either their farm work or their off-farm work. Although some women choose to spend that time off the farm, in the north Florida sample an equal proportion of them choose to farm (Gladwin, 1982). As a result, more and more farm women think of themselves as "farmers" rather than "farmers' wives."

What do these results imply? The survival of the U.S. family farm, even if only as a part-time farm, requires that women farmers be recognized and supported as farmers and not just helpers or farmers' wives. While every woman wants to build a home, the average woman's contribution of 22 hours per week of farm work should be recognized at least as much as her 26 hours per week of housework. The entire agricultural community (the land grant university, the extension service, financial institutions, input suppliers like Ford Tractor, local churches, and extended family members) should recognize the growing role and contribution of the farm wife as agricultural producer on the family farm, and should give her access to information about inputs and markets, training from the extension service, credit

from financial institutions, land, and new technology necessary to co-manage the farm.

The Extension Component of Florida WIA

These are the goals of the Florida WIA Extension Program:

- to recognize the expanded farming role of farm women today, as well as their multiple roles in the family, and
- to help women gain access to information, training, credit, land, and new technology necessary to co-manage the farm.

Starting in 1982, with the help of Dr. Katie Walker and Ms. Evelyn Rooks (both home economists), and Dr. Jon Van Blokland (an agricultural economist), the state WIA program was initiated for women actively engaged in Florida agriculture.

At the start, the strategy followed was to put on educational programs for farm women in the counties, hold agent training workshops for extension agricultural and home economic agents, and publish reports in the popular press and extension circulars. Educational programs were designed to cover a wide range of topics. The typical day-long workshop included a slide-tape module on the farming contributions of women by myself, a 2-hour session on financial management tools and coordinated financial statements (balance sheets, income statements, cash flow statements) by Dr. P.J. van Blokland, a demonstration of computer software with financial applications by Rom Alderman of the Food and Resource Economics FarmLab, a talk on stress management by Evelyn Rooks, and possibly another talk on money or time management by Dr. Katie Walker. Occasionally, a local lawyer and a banker would discuss estate planning and credit-use problems,

respectively. Other state specialists were willing to discuss developing leadership skills (Beaulieu), and understanding farm policy (Carriker).

Successes

As a result, the following day-long workshops were held and newspaper stories filed:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
Oct. 31, '81	More than one hundred farm women attend a two-hour workshop by Dr. Masuma Downie and myself at the Governor's Conference on the Future of Small Farms, Ocala, FL. We present results of a monograph, <u>Florida Farm Wives: They Help the Family Farm Survive</u> . At the end of the program, one farm woman reports, "This is like going to a revival meeting; I'm going back home and encourage my neighbors to keep farming!" The program is subsequently reviewed by <u>Gainesville Sun</u> .
Fall, '82	Story on woman farmer program by Ann Sides, IFAS Editorial, is published by more than ten Florida newspapers. Numerous radio appearances follow.
Jan. 20, '83	A day-long workshop in Santa Rosa County is held entitled, "For Today's Farm Woman -- Time, Money, Computers, Estate Planning, and Stress Management," with L. Bowman, home economics agent, a local lawyer, extension specialists E. Rooks, M. Eason, and myself. Twenty-five farm women attend.
Mar. 18, '83	A program is held on "The Role of Farm Women in Saving the Family Farm" in a "Know Your Beef Shortcourse," organized by the Florida Cowbelle Ass'n, Ramada Inn, Ocala, FL. Fifty women attend.
Dec. 1, '83	A day-long agent-training workshop is held in Macclenny, Fl., on the woman farmer program with talks on time management (Dr. K. Walker), computers, farming systems (M. Swisher), Florida farm women and coordinated financial statements (myself). Four agents attend.
Dec. 2, '83	A program is held on "Partners in Progress: Women in the Pork Industry," a symposium at the 1983 International Pig Trade Show, Atlantic Civic Center, Atlanta, GA, with talks on financial tools by myself, the hog confinement business by the first woman "Pork All American," and ways to promote pork consumption by a President of the

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
	Porkettes. One hundred couples attend.
Jan., '84	Copy of the slide-tape presentation on "How Florida Women Help the Farm and Agribusiness Firm Survive" is requested for use at a National Rural Women's Committee meeting by Christina Mosher Wilson and Shirley Traxler, Secretary's Office of Public Liaison, USDA, Wash., D.C.
Jan. 11,12, 1984	Two programs on the Florida WIA program are held during a Home '84 Economics agent-training workshop organized by Drs. K. Walker and V. Mitchell. Sixty agents attend.
June 21, '84	Program on "Florida Women as Agricultural Producers" is held in the Homemakers Mini-College organized by Dr. E. Bolton, Gainesville. Forty farm women attend.
Feb., '84	Write-up of the program appears in article by Laura Lane entitled, "Networks of Farm Women: Why They Are Springing Up and What They Do" (<u>Farm Journal</u> , 1984). The program is also the subject of articles in March 83's and Feb. 84's <u>Successful Farming</u> by Cheryl Tevis. Although the impact of these articles is hard to measure, it is clear that our message is spreading through the major farm magazines that farm women are playing an increasingly vital role on the family farm and agribusiness and deserve recognition and support for their contributions.
June 26-28, '84	I am invited to be a member of Ford Tractor's Women's Council, which is a group of women from the major farm organizations who advise Ford Tractor on their policies which affect farm women. I attend a three-day meeting and evaluate tractors and advertisements. The impact of this council should not be measured by attendance (30 women), but by changes in Ford Tractor's advertisements, in which women now appear as active farmers rather than background scenery, and changes in the training of their dealers, who now deal more and more with women.
Nov.1, '84	A day-long agent-training workshop is held with talks on the role of farm and agribusiness women, enterprise budgeting (myself), coordinated financial statements (P.J. van Blokland), Computer Software (R. Alderman), Stress Management (E. Rocks), and Florida Inheritance Law (P. Stern, a lawyer). The number of agents attending this year has increased to ten.

In 1985, the Florida women in agriculture (WIA) program suddenly took off and expanded to more than 10 counties with 16 county agents or organizers including: Denise Coleman, Collier Co.; Mary Lamberts, Dade Co.; Lisa Abrams, Palm Beach Co.; Phyllis Gilreath and Brenda Bennett, Manatee Co.; Joy Satcher, Brevard Co.; Mary Peters, Levy Co.; Muriel Gravely, Hamilton Co.; Pat Barber, Baker Co.; Mickey Swisher and Debbie Watts, Suwannee & Columbia Cos.; Nancy Hendricks (replaced by Carol Roberts), Hendry Co.; and Janet Drake, DeSoto Co. Organizational meetings were also held with the following people: Bee Etinger, Valencia Community College, Orlando; Karen Spooner, President of WIFE (Women Involved in Farm Economics); Anne Dickinson, Florida Citrus Women; the state committee of Farm Bureau women and Kevin Morgan, state coordinator, Dorothy Shipes, President of Lake County Farm Bureau and Member of Florida Citrus Commission, and Kathy Shipes, President of Region V Farm Bureau Women.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
Feb. 19, '85	Met with Lowell Loadholtz, Joy Satcher, Doris Davis, and Linda Lovejoy of Brevard Co. and we planned the Brevard Women in Agriculture program. We then had a meeting of an advisory board on March 18, when I gave a slide show on the contributions of Florida farm women to agriculture. The first meeting of the WIA group was subsequently held on Sept. 13, 1985, with Dr. Karl Kepner on "Management, Marketing, and Merchandising", 28 women attending. The second meeting was Jan. 21, 1986 on estate planning, and the third meeting will be March 20, 1986 with my talk on Survival Tools in a Farm Crisis. P.J. Van Blokland will follow in May, 1986, with financial management.
March 21, '85	Met with Pat Smith Barber of Baker Co. to plan a WIA program in Baker County.
April 16, '85	Met with Mary Peters in Levy Co. to plan a WIA program in Levy County. I subsequently started interviewing farm women in Levy County in Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. of 1985.
April 18, '85	Presented a slide show on "The Contributions of Florida Farm Women to Farming" to the Farm Bureau women of Arcadia, De Soto County, Janet Drake, agent.
June 5, '85	Went to Hamilton Co. to plan a WIA program with Muriel Gravely, extension director. On Nov. 19, I again went to Hamilton Co. to present a slide show on the WIA program.
June 13, '85	Gave a slide show and presentation to the Farm Bureau Women's State Committee and Kevin Morgan, women's liason, at the Farm Bureau Building.

- Nov. 1, '85 Doyle Conner's Florida Market Bulletin 28(21) cited study of the values and goals of Florida farm women published in Agriculture and Human Values. Doyle Conner also decided to create a new program, Woman of the Year in Agriculture, to honor women who have made outstanding contributions to agriculture in the state.
- Nov. '85 "On Line", Vol. 2, No. 12, cites the FRED newsletter on the increase of women farmers.
- Sept. 10, '85 P.J. Van Blokland and myself present a 2 hour program on financial management and computer software to the Florida Citrus Women in Barteau, Polk County, with Anne Dickinson, President.
- Nov. 21, '85 Gave my yearly program on "How Florida Farm Women Help the Farm and Agribusiness Firm Survive" in the Women's Studies Program's seminar on Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Women with Dr. Irene Thompson, Nov. 21, 1985 (25 students).
- Sept. 17-19, '85 Again served as a member of Ford Tractor's Women's Council, which is a group of women from the major farm organizations who advise Ford Tractor on their policies which affect farm women. Attended a two-day meeting in Detroit, evaluated tractors and advertisements, and had a tour of the Ford Tractor factory assembly line. The impact of this council should not be measured by attendance (30 women), but by changes in Ford Tractor's advertisements (women now appear as active farmers rather than background scenery) and changes in the training of their dealers (who now deal more and more with women.) This is my last year on Ford Tractor's Women's Council.
- Oct. 28, '85 The Florida Business Journal 3(9) reprints article on "The Increase in Women's Farming: A Response to Structural Change," Florida Food and Resource Economics 66.
- Oct. 31, '85 Organized and ran an agent training workshop in Gainesville, October 31, 1985, on the "Florida Women in Agriculture" program, with talks on the role of farm and agribusiness women, enterprise budgeting (myself), coordinated financial statements (Van Blokland), Computer Software (R. Alderman), Stress Management (E. Rooks). The number of agents attending this year was 5.
- Dec., '85 Dr. Mary Lamberts of Dade Co. gives a talk to the Univ. of Florida WIA seminar on her Dade County Women in Agriculture Group of 58 women.

Dec., 85

Helped organize 3 symposia at the Feb. '86 Florida Women in Agriculture conference on "Gender Issues in Farming Systems Research", held at Univ. Florida. The conference had \$48,000 of funding from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and 300 registrants. The symposia included: a roundtable discussion of all Florida extension agents starting a WIA program in Florida, a plenary session by Rick Kinder of Ford Tractor Co. on the Ford Tractor Women's Council, and an extension plenary session on Feb. 28, '86.