

The Roles of Women on Wisconsin Dairy Farms at the Turn of the 21st Century

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I. Introduction

Women's work has always been a mainstay of Wisconsin farm operations. And despite the rapid changes taking place in the dairy industry and in farm households, women's work remains integral to the operation of many Wisconsin dairy farms. However, cultural images of men as farmers and women as housewives still influence the way that people perceive women's roles on dairy farms—usually underestimating the full extent of women's contributions. Previous literature (Whatmore 1991, Haney and Knowles 1987, Sachs 1983) has addressed these gaps. In reality, women are often involved in a variety of farm work in addition to household work. It is also increasingly common for women to work off-farm to supplement farm income and to obtain benefits like health insurance for their families. This report summarizes the results of a recent study designed to document and explore the ways that women contribute to Wisconsin's dairy farms.

The research details women's farm work, farm decision-making, household work, off-farm work, and quality of life issues during a time of significant change in the structure of dairy farm operations. This report seeks to address the following research questions:

- How are women's roles responding to changing farm and household structures?
- Do women have different roles in different types of dairy production systems?
- What issues do dairy farm women see as central to their roles?
- How do dairy farm women feel about their quality of life?

Providing the answers to these questions can have several benefits. First, it can increase the visibility of women's work in tasks central to the farm such as accounting, running errands, supervising children, caring for calves, and making joint farm decisions. The recognition of their contributions can empower women to have a greater voice in the dairy industry. Another advantage is that understanding women's roles in the present can give us the ability to predict what women's roles will be like in the future. Knowing more about women's roles and concerns can also enable farm service providers, such as Cooperative Extension, to develop and deliver services that include more women. By improving the resources available to dairy farm women, women's work on the farm can be enhanced, potentially improving overall farm management.

II. Methods

This study involved two stages of data collection—focus group discussions and on-farm interviews. All of the women involved in the study are on dairy farms that have been part of the National Dairy Community Study (NDCS). The NDCS is a multi-state project that PATS has been leading in Wisconsin since 1996. The purpose of the NDCS is to explore how changes in the dairy industry are affecting farm families and their communities. PATS selected dairy farms from three dairy communities around the state for the study. Previous data sources generated by this study that will be referred to in this report include:

- 1997 *mail-in survey*—252 completed questionnaires on farm and household characteristics
 - 1998 *on-farm interviews*—98 in-depth, 2-part interviews on farm and household characteristics, economic ties to community
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The focus groups—one in each of the three communities—were held in April, 2000. The women were chosen randomly from those who had participated in the mail-in surveys and/or the on-farm interviews, and a total of twenty-five women attended. The discussions covered the topics of women's roles in farm work, farm decision-making, household work, and off-farm work.

The small group discussions contributed information about roles and issues that were addressed further during the on-farm interview stage of the study conducted in the summer of 2000. The women in this second stage were chosen from among the women whose families had already done interviews for the NDCS in 1998,¹ since a great deal of background information was already known about their farms.

The findings reported in this research summary are based on both on-farm interviews with thirty-five farm women and three focus group discussions that preceded the on-farm interviews. Data tables are derived from tabulations of on-farm interview questions, while quotes are from both the on-farm interviews and the focus groups. The first section of this report describes the methods used to gather the data. The next section presents case studies of four women who took part in the interviews, providing a human context for the findings in the sections that follow. The third section describes women's overall roles in farm work, farm decision-making, and household work. The fourth section discusses changes in women's roles on farms. The fifth section addresses other aspects of farm women's lived experience. The final section presents concluding remarks about women's continuing vital roles on farms and what kinds of programs may be beneficial to them.

Stratification of Sample by Type of Production System

Women were categorized according to the type of dairy production system employed on their farm—conventional, large-scale confinement, or rotational grazer. These categories are defined as follows:

1. **Conventional**—this is the traditional dairy production system in Wisconsin. These farms typically milk less than one hundred cows. They are diversified crop-livestock operations that usually supply all or most of the feed, largely corn and hay, for their herds. They may pasture their cows for parts of each day but do not rely on pasture grass as a major source of feed for their herd. The degree of mechanization in the form of tractors and other equipment is moderate, and the operators tend to be somewhat debt averse. These operators typically house their cows in traditional tie-stall or stanchion barns and milk the cows in the same stalls using automatic milking machines and pipelines. Single families usually own these operations and provide most or all of the labor. Although losing numbers, conventional dairy farms continue to dominate the Wisconsin dairy sector and represent about two-thirds of Wisconsin dairy farms. In this study, conventional farms operators are defined as those with fewer than 100 cows and that do not use rotational grazing practices.

2. **Large-scale confinement**—these operators milk over 100 cows and tend to be highly mechanized and capital intensive, with a stronger emphasis on increasing production levels and labor efficiencies. These operators are the most likely to use technologies like total mixed ration (TMR) feed mixing machinery, parlor milking facilities, and free stall barns. These operators also tend to purchase a larger portion of their dairy feed than conventional farms, and they are more likely to contract out heifer-raising for replacement cows. Multiple families often run these farms as partnerships or as family corporations and typically hire several non-family workers to meet labor needs. These characteristics are especially common on farms that milk over 200 cows. The number of large-scale confinement dairy farms increased significantly in the 1990s and now represents about 10 percent of Wisconsin dairy farms. In this study, large-scale confinement operators are defined as operators that milk 100 cows or more and do not use rotational grazing practices.

3. **Management intensive rotational grazing** (MIRG or rotational grazing)—these operators tend to have traits in common with conventional farms, but often with higher use of technologies like parlors. The main difference is that operators using rotational grazing rely on pastures as a major source of the forage

ration for the dairy herd during the summer grazing months. Rotational grazers move their herds to fresh pasture (or paddocks) at least once a week and usually more frequently. The use of pasture reduces the need to harvest forages and raise corn, which can lower inputs and machinery expenses substantially. While milk production per cow tends to be decreased, the trade-off for fewer expenses has proven MIRG to be a financially viable option for many farmers (Kriegl, 2001). Single families usually own these farms and provide most or all of the labor. They also typically milk fewer than 100 cows, but there are some exceptions. Rotational grazing tends to be especially common as an entry strategy among beginning farmers. The use of rotational grazing increased rapidly in the 1990s, and about 22 percent of dairy farms in Wisconsin now use this practice. In this study, MIRG operators are defined by the use of rotational grazing regardless of herd size.

Characteristics of Sample

Once the women were categorized by production system they were randomly sampled. Thirty-five women agreed to do the interviews during the late spring and summer, and seven women declined. The purpose of the stratification was to include more equal numbers of women from within each category. This allows us to make more meaningful comparisons among women from different production systems, although a greater proportion of women were still from conventional farms. In the end, 19 (54 percent) were from conventional farms, 9 (26 percent) were from large-scale confinement farms, and seven (20 percent) of the women in the sample were from rotational grazer farms. These characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

The women ranged in age from 27 to 68. For the purposes of the report, they were divided into three age groups: 40 and younger, 41-55, and 56 and older. Eleven (31 percent) of the women were 40 or younger, seventeen (49 percent) were 41-55, and seven (20 percent) were 56 and older. Table 1 also shows the age distribution of the women from the different production systems.

Table 1: Interviewees by Production System, Age, and Off-Farm Labor, 2000

Age Group	Production System						
	Conventional		Large-Scale Confinement		Rotational Grazer		
	<u>Off-Farm work</u>		<u>Off-Farm Work</u>		<u>Off-Farm Work</u>		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total
40 or Younger	4	3	0	3	0	1	11
41-55	3	6	0	3	1	4	17
56 and Older	0	3	0	3	1	0	7
Total	7	12	0	9	2	5	35

Nine (26 percent) of the women had non-farm employment.¹ This is substantially lower than the rate of 40 to 45 percent from the 1997 mail-in survey responses and the 1998 on-farm interviews. Six of the husbands in the 2000 interviews worked off-farm, mostly part time, which is very similar to the findings obtained from the 1998 on-farm interviews. Sixty-three percent of the women grew up on farms compared to 91 percent of their husbands. This is also similar to findings from other studies.

Some basic size characteristics of the farms in the study are presented in Table 1A. The average dairy herd size was 121 cows. The median herd size, which is the herd size at which half of the herds are bigger and half of the herds are smaller, is 54. The herds ranged from 17 to 550 cows. The average number of acres operated on each farm was 567, and the median acreage was 393. The number of acres on each farm ranged from 80 to 1,560 acres.

III. Case Studies: Four Sample Farm Profiles

Four case studies are employed here to set up the more detailed sections on women's roles and experiences on Wisconsin dairy farms. The first two cases feature women from conventional farms, the third highlights a woman on a large-scale confinement farm, and the fourth features a woman on a rotational grazer farm. Although these cases are *not* meant to represent all farms in each of their respective categories, they do help illustrate the complexity of factors in women's lives and the range of roles they play. All names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Case 1: Conventional Farm Profile I

Nancy, 50, lives on a 46-cow dairy farm with her husband Tom. They both grew up on dairy farms. They both work on the farm full-time, and Tom also has a part-time off-farm job. Nancy and Tom do a similar amount of farm work. She does almost every task he does except for spreading manure and fixing machinery. They share most aspects of farm-decision making, although he has more say in decisions about field work. Their children are grown, and neither is interested in taking over the farm.

When they first married, Nancy worked off-farm while Tom worked with his parents who were still on the farm. She became more involved in the operation when she quit her off-farm job to raise children. She never went back to full-time off-farm work, explaining, "I decided I liked this [dairy farming] better." When his parents retired, Nancy became more involved in decisions and now considers herself an equal partner with Tom. She has thought about getting off-farm work again to improve household finances, but she and Tom cannot afford to replace her on the farm with hired labor.

Nancy does most of the household work, though Tom does some cleaning and cooking. When their children were young, she provided most of the care for them, with some help from her mother. While they were very small she carried them in a backpack as she did barn work.

Although she said that farming takes a physical toll and is hectic and stressful at times, Nancy articulated, "I do this because it's good for our marriage and for family." She added with a smile, "I'm a 'cow-reer' woman."

Case 2: Conventional Farm Profile II

Becky, 28, lives with her husband, Scott, and seven-year-old daughter on a conventional farm with 40 cows. Becky has worked off-farm full-time since finishing her degree, and she also plays several roles on the farm. She is in charge of bookkeeping and bill-paying for the farm, and she works with calves and does other barn work on the weekends. She raises a vegetable garden and does all of the yard work around the farm. Scott handles the rest of the farm work with additional help from his family.

Becky considers herself to have very little involvement in farm decision-making overall. She indicated, however, that most of the major financial and investment decisions they make are joint. She said that if she were doing more farm work she would be more involved in decision-making.

Becky handles nearly all of the responsibility for household work, including childcare, herself. She said, “I don’t expect him to help when I don’t do farm work.” Becky makes most of the decisions regarding the household.

Becky, who grew up on a farm, said, “I always figured I would work out. I probably figured there was a good chance I would marry a dairy farmer.” She indicated being very satisfied with her off-farm job, and she puts more priority on it than farm work. She currently earns the majority of their household income. She spoke of experiencing guilt for not working with Scott and not staying home with her daughter. However, she feels that farming is too risky for her family to depend on it solely for income. She added, “We farm because that’s what Scott likes to do.”

Case 3: Large-Scale Confinement Farm Profile

Mary, 55, and her husband, Dennis, live on a large-scale confinement dairy farm that they expanded to bring their three grown sons into the family operation. They are currently milking 400 cows. Family members do nearly all of the farm work, which is unusual on dairy farms of that scale. Mary manages the calf barn and also milks with the other family members on a regular basis. Until last year she also did all of the bookkeeping, but now she sends the figures to an accountant. Mary estimates that she does as much farm work as Dennis and her sons do, and they all work long hours every day on the farm. She stated, “It’s the whole day I’m working on the farm.”

When her sons were young and the family was milking about 60 cows, Mary worked off-farm. She described getting up at 3:30 am to feed calves and put dinner in the oven before going to work. After work she went back to the barn for another shift. Besides barn work, she used to drive the tractor and do haying until her sons replaced her in the field about ten years ago. Mary quit working off-farm during one of the farm’s expansions.

Mary has complete responsibility for household duties. While she ambivalently accepts the household work as her duty (“I guess so, because I do it.”), she occasionally resists. She said that her family knows when she is upset about the household division of labor, and then they help her with housework.

While the farm is a single-family operation, the farm will become a partnership between Dennis and their sons in the near future. For now, Mary, Dennis, and their sons make long-term plans and investment decisions for the farm. She also makes decisions about milking, feeding, and herd health equally with the others. As the management of the operation shifts to her sons, Mary anticipates—and looks forward to—working on the sidelines.

Case 4: Rotational Grazing Farm Profile

Julie, 43, farms with her husband, Matt. They are milking about 120 cows, which is somewhat atypical of rotational grazers. They have used MIRG for the past seven years, and their milk is now certified organic. Matt grew up on a dairy farm, and Julie was raised in the city. Their teenage son and daughter help with farm work, as do his parents. Julie is in charge of the milk cows on the farm. She does most of the work related to the barn other than manure management, and she hires someone part-time to help her with milking. Before they installed a parlor, she spent twice as much time milking—six hours a day. Julie also does the bookkeeping and bill-paying for the farm.

Julie and Matt have a division of labor between livestock work and field work. She said, “I don’t do equipment” and “Matt doesn’t know the cows.” Julie’s husband handles most of the grazing work. The shift to grazing and the milking parlor made a greater difference in Matt’s roles since it freed him somewhat from milking and repairing equipment needed for conventional dairy farming.

Julie had little influence in farm decisions when she first began learning to do farm work. She did a brief stint of off-farm work, but Matt asked her to come back. When she returned to working on the farm full-time, she stated, “That was the big changing of the partnership look. I got my husband to stop being so chauvinistic.” She added, “Over the years as I learned more, I gradually came into control of the cows.” She now considers herself a joint decision-maker with Matt.

When it comes to household work, Julie has the most responsibility. Her kids help her some, and she said Matt is “really pretty good” about doing the work too. He watches the kids more now that they are older and shares shopping with her. She said that he has “mellowed out” as he’s gotten older and will sometimes do other housework if he has spare time.

While Julie enjoys the work she does, she indicated that she would find off-farm employment if one of her children decided to farm with her and her husband.

IV. Findings Highlight Dairy Farm Women’s Range of Work Roles

As is clear from the preceding section, women on Wisconsin dairy farms are engaged in a wide variety of roles on the farm, including farm work, farm decision-making and household work. Different women have varying levels of involvement in these tasks. The section that follows presents women’s responses to the interview questionnaire on their farm roles. The findings here also consider the effects of age cohort on the roles that women play and how their roles have changed over their life cycles. It should be emphasized that all numbers reported in this and the following sections represent results from a small sample and thus cannot necessarily be generalized to depict the entire Wisconsin dairy farm sector.

Women’s Farm Work is Extensive

Women’s farm work ranges widely from bookkeeping to tractor driving; however, women are more likely to do some tasks than others. Women’s age also makes a difference in what farm work they do. Many women work long hours on their farms.

The percentages of women involved in a selection of common farm tasks are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Interviewees' Involvement in Selected Farm Tasks (N=35)

	Selected Farm Tasks	Interviewees Involved In Task (in percent)		Percent of Farms Where Task is Not Done
		Regularly Does Task	At Least Sometimes Does Task	
Misc.	Farm bookkeeping and bill paying	83	91	33
	Running farm errands	69	100	
	Tending vegetable garden	66	66	
	Repair and maintenance of farm machinery	0	14	
Livestock Work	Milking cows	54	66	
	Cleaning equipment/milk house after milking	51	66	
	Caring for calves	43	71	
	Cleaning manure out of stall/barns	22	49	
	Feeding milk cows	17	43	
	Breeding milk cows/pregnancy checks	14	14	
Field Work	Haying	31	66	3
	Rock picking	31	51	11
	Other field crop work (tilling, planting, etc.)	20	31	
	Spreading manure	3	9	
	Pesticide and herbicide application	0	0	6

I milk every morning and I do all the feeding of the calves. I do tractor work...And then in the summer time I do all the side-raking and stuff like that. I milk every night. I just fall behind on my housework. I do all my own paper work but my husband and I do the bills together. —*Sally, conventional dairy farm*

I help milk cows. I pick the bulls for breeding, and my husband does the breeding. I tell him when to breed them...I take care of all the calves. And I tell him, you've got to dehorn these, got to vaccinate these. For field work, I don't run the planter, but I plow and I disk, and I mow hay. I rake hay, and I bale hay with the small baler but I don't bale it with the big baler. That's because when they run the big baler they usually wrap it, and I run the wrapper behind it. I run the chopper...That's about all I do—and I do the finances...I do all the paperwork, and then take it in, and we have an accountant do it for us.—*Verna, MIRG dairy farm*

I don't do much farm work...If I'd be home, I'd be doing a lot more farm work.—*Cindy, conventional dairy farm*

I guess a big thing with me is working with employees, so I got health insurance set up with them, retirement plans, any perks or benefits that are out there...There's a lot of legal issues and a lot of other issues you've got to find out all the stuff that's correct to do because it will come back at you...A lot of time seems to be on the phone with everybody.—*Jessica, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

...My husband lets me stay in the house and take care of the children and be a homemaker. I do go out and help with the calves and milk house.—*Margaret, conventional dairy farm*

- *Bookkeeping is the most common task*

Women are most likely to handle farm bookkeeping and bill paying. A surprising 83 percent of women regularly do this task, and 91 percent do it at least sometimes. This is a task that women on dairy farms have become increasingly responsible for in Wisconsin over the past 30 years. As a result, women tend to be especially in tune with the financial situation of individual dairy farms.

- *Running farm errands and vegetable gardening are also common tasks for farm women*

The next most common tasks that the women do are running farm errands, which all of the women do at least sometimes, and vegetable gardening.³ About two-thirds of the women are involved in vegetable gardening. Women who have children under the age of 18 are particularly likely to have vegetable gardens. Several of the women with adult children stated that they have reduced the size of their gardens from acre-sized plots. For many farms, the garden produce and/or milk and meat produced by the farm household remains an important part of the household diet. A number of the women can and freeze extensively.

- *Women are more likely to do livestock work than field work*

Fifty-four percent of the women milk cows on a regular basis and two-thirds do it at least sometimes. The number of women who clean milking equipment and the milk house is similar. Forty-three percent of the women care for calves and over 70 percent do this task at least sometimes. Women are somewhat less likely to handle manure, herd feeding and breeding. In field work, women are most likely to do work with haying and rock picking (31 percent each). About two-thirds of the women do haying at least sometimes. Fewer (20 percent) of the women are regularly involved in other field crop work such as tilling and harvesting. Women are much less involved in other field work like manure spreading and none of the women from this study does chemical applications.

- *Women tend to do more manual labor than work with machinery*

This is reflected in the smaller number of women involved in field work than livestock work, and women's greater involvement in the field work (like haying and rock picking) that is the most labor intensive. Several women also mentioned that they do manual work such as scraping the cows and mats while their husbands run the skid steer when they are cleaning manure out of the barns.

In relation to other people on the farm, women are most likely to be solely responsible for farm bookkeeping and bill paying, vegetable gardening, cleaning the milk house and milking equipment after milking, and caring for calves. Although 31 percent and 20 percent of women said they regularly do haying and other field crop work, respectively, only 22 percent and 12 percent said they are among the ones who usually do these tasks on their farms. This further emphasizes the split between livestock work and field work for women.

- *The tasks that women do on farms are affected by age*

Women in the middle age group tend to be involved in the greatest variety of farm work. Women in the older age group are less likely than the middle age and younger age women to do heavier work like milking, caring for calves, and haying. They are somewhat less involved in farm bookkeeping. These appear to be life-cycle effects rather than an increase in younger women's involvement in farm work. For instance, in one case a woman had transferred the responsibility for farm bookkeeping to her daughter. A number of the women in the older age group indicated that they had previously been regularly involved in livestock work and field work. The decrease in farm work among women in the older age group appears to be mainly due to health considerations and, in some cases, adult children taking over their responsibilities.

- *Women work long hours on dairy farms*

The distribution of the women's work hours is presented in Table 3, and the data on farm hours worked by the wives in the 1998 interviews are included for comparison. Sixty-three percent of the women in the 2000 interviews spend 40 hours or more on farm work each week. Overall, the women in the 2000 interviews spend about 40 percent as much time as their husbands do on farm work. In a number of cases women work equal number of hours with their husbands. In two cases where women's husbands work off the farm, the women actually work more hours on the farm than their husbands do. Women in the 1998 interviews were more likely to work off-farm, and this may explain why they tended to spend fewer hours on farm work.

Table 3: Distribution of Women's Hours of Farm Work Per Week, 1998 and 2000 Interviews

Hours of Farm Work Per Week	Interviewees in 2000 (N=35)	Wives in 1998 on-farm interviews (N=81)
	Number (Percent)	Number (Percent)
Less than 20	8 (23)	30 (38)
20 to 39	5 (14)	15 (19)
40 to 59	13 (37)	22 (27)
60 to 79	2 (6)	10 (12)
80 or more	7 (20)	4 (5)
Total	35 (100)	81(100)

Farm Decision-Making Influenced by Dairy Work Roles, Age

Women often play important roles in decision-making on dairy farms. Women are usually the most involved in farm decisions that relate to their work on the farm. Women's influence in farm decision-making tends to be greatest when they reach middle age.

I think it really is pretty joint. Whatever it is, as far as the house or the farm.—*Kim, conventional dairy farm*

If I'm paying for it, I want a say in it. It makes you feel more like you're, I don't know, I guess [it gives you] the sense of accomplishment the guys must feel.—*Donna, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

[My husband] makes most of the decisions at home. He asks me my opinions and I sound it out, but he still has the last word. But when it comes to the house, he doesn't say too much.—*Leslie, conventional dairy farm*

As far as decisions on our farm, [my husband and I] do it together, from selling a cow to building a building...And I listen to all the salesmen, and I put my foot in and I'm always there with all the decisions. We never do anything separate. And I like it that way.—*Rosemary, conventional dairy farm*

I don't care what he does. I'm not one of those that says, 'You spend that much out there, I want that much in here.' If he needs something he can get it. He doesn't spend too much.—*Linda, MIRG dairy farm*

Anything that came to cattle, I used to make all the decisions myself. If I had my say, the cow stuff would be a lot different. It's hard not to have a say anymore.—*Betty, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

Decision making—they [the brothers] talk everything over. They don't always talk with the wives.—*Jan, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

- *Women are often central in farm decision-making*

Women's involvement in farm decision-making is closely tied to the farm tasks that the women do, as Table 4 demonstrates, and it is often extensive. The women in the 2000 interviews are most likely to be involved in long-range planning and investment decisions. Eighty percent of the women are equal or more in decisions about whether to borrow money and how much. This probably reflects the instrumental role that many women have in keeping track of farm finances. Women are also fairly involved in decisions concerning livestock. This is especially true of decisions about milking practices and procedures, where nearly half of the women have an equal say or more. Very few women are equally involved in field work decisions with their husbands. Women's greater involvement in livestock decisions rather than field work decisions is consistent with their tendency to be more involved with livestock work. Women are the most involved in household decisions and are nearly always equal or more than equal in these decisions. The reason that women appear to be less involved in decisions about children is that many of their children have already reached adulthood. The findings in Table 4 closely resemble the data on wives' involvement in farm decision-making from the 1998 interviews.

Table 4: Interviewees' Involvement in Selected Decisions Relative to Other Decision-Makers on Dairy Farms, 2000 Interviews (N=35)

Decision		Mean Index Score	Percent of Women With Score of 3 or More	Percent of Cases Where Decision Does Not Apply or Is Made in Another Way
Live-stock Work	Milking practices and procedures	2.3	46	
	Herd breeding decisions	1.7	29	
	Feeding and nutrition decisions	1.7	23	
Field Work	Timing of field work	1.3	11	
	Chemical application decisions	1.2	6	6
	Other field crop management practices	1.3	11	
Long-term & Investment	Whether and how much to borrow	2.9	80	3
	When to quit/retire/transition	2.8	71	14
	Whether to expand or reduce herd	2.7	77	
	Major farm machinery purchases	2.4	54	
	Whether to buy/sell/rent land	2.5	57	9
House-hold	Making home improvements	3.4	94	3
	Budget for household needs	3.9	97	
	Children (daycare, activities, school)	3.3	63	37

* Involvement is represented by index scores. Index scores are based on a scale where the average level of women's involvement in decision-making ranges in value from 1 to 5. A score of one would mean that women are not involved in the decision, a three would mean that women share equally with at least one other person in the decision, and a five would indicate that women make the decision mostly by themselves. The column 'Women who have a score of three or more' indicates the percentage of women who are at least equal with other decision-makers on their farm for the given decision.

- *Middle age women are the most involved in decision-making*

Women between the ages of 41 and 55 are slightly more involved in decision-making than the other women. This is especially true of decisions regarding the dairy herd. Women age 56 or older tend to be less involved in farm decision-making than the other women. This is probably related to their lesser degree of involvement in farm work compared to the other women.

Another aspect of farm decision-making is how women view their overall role in decision-making on the farm. A majority of the women in the 2000 interviews, especially women in the middle age group, feel that they are equal or joint decision-makers on their families' farms. Women tend to gain more influence in decision-making as they become more involved in farm work. Women also tend to become more involved in farm decisions when they and their husbands take over the farm from the previous owners, usually his or her parents. This often occurs by the time women enter the middle age group. Women in the older age group lose influence in some cases, usually due to adult sons joining the operation.

Women Do Household Work in Addition to Farm Work

Household work is another important component of the work that women do on dairy farms. Women fit household work in between farm work and, in some cases, off-farm work. Women have the majority of the responsibility for household work in every case. Childcare is also mainly women's responsibility, and grandmothers often help with this task.

That kind of gets worked into everything else.—*Darlene, conventional dairy farm*

I would be very glad for [my husband] to help if he would.—*Dorothy, conventional dairy farm*

It really is all the time that I'm not in the barn.—*Debbie, conventional dairy farm*

I clean house once a year whether it needs it or not.—*Verna, MIRC dairy farm*

[My husband] does help a lot.—*Hazel, conventional dairy farm*

- *Household work is predominantly done by women*

The women spend an average of about 30 hours on household work every week, usually more for women with young children and less for women who do not have children at home. Husbands tend to be much less involved in household work than the women and focus on either farm work or off-farm work instead. Half of the husbands spend an hour or less on household tasks every week.⁴ Women often depend on their children, especially those who are older and still living at home, to help with household work.

- *Grandmothers play important role in childcare*

One theme that stood out in the interviews is how common it is for middle-aged and older women to provide free childcare for their grandchildren. Childcare is a major issue for women on dairy farms with young children, and professional day care is generally not readily available near women's homes. Having a mother or mother-in-law who is willing and available to take care of the children makes a big difference in the ability of the women to do farm work or work off-farm. The women who said they lacked this family network expressed having had a more difficult time coping with both childcare and farm work demands. One of the women who provides childcare for her grandchildren said that she wants her daughter-in-law to be able to work off-farm and earn health insurance for her family without childcare expenses consuming a big portion of her paycheck.

V. Factors Influencing Women's Roles on Dairy Farms

Numerous economic and social changes, such as increased herd sizes, greater mechanization, and increased off-farm workforce participation of women, have affected the gendered division of labor on dairy farms. Women are still essential members of many Wisconsin dairy farms although their roles are changing in various ways. Some notable patterns that have arisen are discussed below.

Changes in Production System Affect Women's Roles

Women on large-scale confinement farms (see methods section for definitions of production systems) tend to have more specialized roles, consistent with the greater specialization of labor on those farms. Women on large-scale confinement farms tend to focus on tasks like bookkeeping, employee records, and managing the calf or heifer barns. They are seldom involved in field work, although several of the women said that they used to do these tasks when their farms were smaller. While their roles are more specialized, women on large-scale confinement farms appear to spend similar amounts of time on farm work as women on conventional and MORG dairy farms do. They also appear to be as important to their operations. The women on MORG farms in the study do not appear to have substantially different farm roles from women on conventional dairy farms.

Women's Life-Cycle Stage Is a Key Influence on Their Farm Roles

Women tend to reach the peak of their involvement in farm work and farm decision-making when they are in the middle age group. This appears to be a typical pattern regardless of what type of production system their farm uses or whether they work off-farm. Women's increased involvement during this life-cycle phase appears to be due to experience gained, changes in farm management such that women take over the farm with their husbands, and easing of women's childcare responsibilities as children grow older.

Women Who Work Off-Farm Often Spend Significant Amounts of Time on Farm Work

Women who work off-farm often do milking and/or other barn chores in addition to their off-farm job. It is common for women to keep the farm books whether or not they have an off-farm job. Overall, women who work off-farm spend less time on farm work than women who do not work off-farm. They also tend to prioritize their off-farm work over farm work. Nevertheless, women who work off-farm often provide their labor at critical times on the farm when it fits their off-farm work schedule.

Women From Non-Farm Backgrounds Are Often Active on the Farm

Increasingly, farm women do not come from farming backgrounds. Non-farm origins are common particularly among younger farm women. Women who did not grow up on dairy farms were more likely to work off-farm than the other women in the 2000 interviews. However, among women in the study who did not work off-farm, the women from non-farm backgrounds were some of the most actively involved in farm work and farm decision-making.

VI. Women's Perspectives on Dairy Farm Life

The lived experience of women on dairy farms goes far beyond the roles that have been discussed so far. The following section describes how women feel about their work and farm life, their community work and community attachment, and challenges they face. It also covers women's contact with farm service providers and concludes with a discussion of what types of programs and services may be useful to women on dairy farms, many suggested by the women themselves.

I think the nicest thing is that you can raise your kids, and be there with them. Through your working with them...you teach them your own morals...We must be doing something right, because they know how to work.—*Jan, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

[We] really are professionals at communicating too...You know, most marriages don't know how to work that out. But we're all forced to work that out. So we're all pretty good at it.—*Anne, conventional dairy farm*

Working with my husband is a big plus.—*Kim, conventional dairy farm*

You're your own boss and you can make your own hours.—*Leslie, conventional dairy farm*

There are rewards about seeing calves being born, doing things when you want to on your own schedule, and living where there aren't other people.—*Naomi, conventional dairy farm*

The downside is the hours. And the pay. The pay is the worst because it's kind of humiliating once in a while.—*Vicky, conventional dairy farm*

Because we are a single family we don't have others working with us. And because we can't afford the help, we are tied down. It's very seldom we take a vacation. If we do, it's very close by, and maybe for a day or two.—*Margaret, conventional dairy farm*

You can hardly have a husband and wife just on the farm. You've got to take extra jobs or you can't afford to pay for anything, you know, insurance. Everything we have to pay for ourselves. You don't have companies coming in and giving you insurance or benefits.—*Shelly, conventional dairy farm*

The women found pluses and minuses with living on a farm. Some of the most positive things that women expressed were working with family, setting their own hours, working with animals, and having little or no commute to work. The aspects of dairy farming that women found to be negative are low milk prices, not being able to get away from the farm, working long hours, and lack of affordable health insurance with good coverage.

Farm Work is Usually the Top Priority

Like many other working women, women on dairy farms confront a challenge in balancing simultaneous and competing roles. Women on dairy farms, however, often have an added responsibility. They must be ready to respond to any situation, at any time, that may arise with livestock. Farm work is a top priority for many of the women, especially for those who do not work off-farm. Women who work off-farm usually place priority on their off-farm jobs. Family matters are also high on women's agendas. Household work is often given the least priority.

The [farm] business always comes first. Kids come next, and [my husband]. After that, household and community type things. You learn how to quit everything in the house and run outside. Because I don't go and punch a time clock, it took me a long time to learn that if I was needed outside, that's the way it was. It's kind of like being on call.—*Donna, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

The farm work comes first, and the other stuff you just work in between. Everything revolves around farm work. If you don't get household work done, you just have to let it go.—*Darlene, conventional dairy farm*

The farm work comes first at this stage of the game. That's where the money comes from.—*Helen, conventional dairy farm*

I get up early and stay up late. You learn to use what little free time you have. When my [students] are at gym class, I do work so that I don't have to bring it home, and I can focus on what I need to do at home in the evenings.—*Krista, conventional dairy farm*

Household work goes by the wayside until you find time to do it. Off-farm work takes the most important place.—*June, MIRG dairy farm*

Farm work comes first, paid non-farm work is second, community work is third, and household work is last. His family, if there's something they need, they come before farm work even. People are more important.—*Naomi, conventional dairy farm*

Family should always be top priority.—*Betty, large-scale confinement farm*

You don't have time on a farm really...It's consistent, you have to keep going. You just have to get it done, and you do.—*Sally, conventional dairy farm*

I don't know how I do it. We really work together as a family. [My husband] is really considerate and I'm considerate to him. If you don't work together, it doesn't go. And you pray a lot.—*Megan, conventional dairy farm*

While balancing their competing roles is often challenging, the women have found different ways to manage all of their responsibilities and ensure that their work gets done. This often involves working longer hours and putting off some less crucial tasks.

Most Women Are Satisfied with Their Roles on the Farm and Their Quality of Life

Overall, the women interviewed in 2000 are positive about their quality of life and feel satisfied with their roles. Many women feel that dairy farming has aspects that enhance their quality of life and personal satisfaction, while only a few felt unhappy about it. The key is that women's judgment of dairy farming as a lifestyle does not usually hinge upon its monetary side. Although low dairy prices (a problem at the time of the interviews) do cause significant strain, there are other aspects of dairy farming—like working with family—that women highly value. This is similar to responses from farmers in the 1997 mail-in survey and the 1998 on-farm interviews, and it strongly suggests that quality of life cannot be assessed by the measure of farm income alone.

I'm dedicated to survive and make the family farm run, because I know there's quality of life there.—*Louann, conventional dairy farm*

My dad didn't get nothing for his milk, and I'm farming and don't get nothing for my milk...But I do it because this is what I want to do.—*Sylvia, conventional dairy farm*

The majority of the women were satisfied with farming as a way of life (see Table 5). Among the few women who expressed dissatisfaction, most worked off-farm. The majority of the women feel very satisfied with farms as a place to raise a family, and they link strong family ties with the farming lifestyle. Despite record low milk prices at the time of the study, about half of the women also indicated that they are satisfied with farming as a way to make a living, especially when the price of milk is adequate. A majority of the women were also satisfied with their families' financial situations and their income from off-farm work, if any.

Table 5: Responses to Items Regarding Quality of Life, 2000 interviews (N = 35)

Selected Items	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral or Unsure	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Percent N/A or missing	Totals
	(Percent)						
Farming as a way to make a living	26	17	9	17	31	-	100
Your family's financial situation	9	14	9	49	20	-	100
Your income from non-farm work	-	3	-	6	17	74	100
Your overall quality of life	-	26	3	31	40	-	100
Farming as a way of life	3	11	6	34	46	-	100
Farm as a place to raise a family	-	6	9	20	66	-	100

Nearly all of the women feel that their work, including farm, household, and off-farm work, is important to the survival of the farm. The majority also feels satisfied with the way that farm work, farm decision-making, and household work is shared.

Despite low prices, nearly half of the women said that they were more satisfied with their families' ability to continue farming than they were five years ago. Considering dairy price fluctuations and rising costs of production, the women overall remain surprisingly positive about dairy farming.

Farm Women Are Important to the Community, Face Barriers to Involvement

Another aspect of women's lives on dairy farms that deserves attention is community work. Besides working on dairy farms and at off-farm jobs, many women contribute time and energy to organizations and volunteer work in the community. This unpaid work plays an important role in building strong communities and bolstering community ties.

Somebody's gotta do it. The job's to be done, and I just figure you're doing your part is about all. If you aren't busy and there's something to do, I don't mind doing it. That's the way I was brought up.—

Dorothy, conventional dairy farm

I used to be tremendously involved, but I don't have time anymore. I used to do it in order to spend time with my kids and to give them all the opportunities, choices, and experiences that I could.—*Kay, conventional dairy farm*

They ask you to help out and you do.—*June, MIRG dairy farm*

I do it to help the community out and to help the kids out. I do it to get out and to be with other people. There are too many people that don't help out and that stuff needs to be done.—*Debbie, conventional dairy farm*

I enjoy the contact with adults and kids. I was more involved when the kids were young. My husband and I were both 4-H leaders. I think it's important to work as a mentor with youth. My volunteering will hopefully increase again as farming gets less. The time I would volunteer for community work I now spend on family.—*Helen, conventional dairy farm*

Our parents were like that. You don't need money or recognition for everything you do. Somebody has to do it, and we enjoy doing it. It's rewarding. We give time instead of money. It gets us out—that's about the only way we get out with other people. Our girls are real good about it too.—*Jackie, conventional dairy farm*

Among community organizations, the women tend to be slightly more active than their husbands in church and school and "other" community activities, while their husbands tend to be more involved in extension programs, farm organizations, local government and civic organizations.

A slight majority of the women in the 2000 interviews spend at least an hour or more a week volunteering. Their work is often related to their children's or other children's activities. Common reasons for volunteering are to socialize with other adults, to help when people ask them to help, and to strengthen their communities. A number of women also indicated that they care for their grandchildren or other women's children in lieu of other volunteer work. The women interviewed, especially those in the younger age groups, tend to volunteer more than their husbands do.

Although most women value community involvement, many indicated that lack of available time and scheduling conflicts between community activities and milking schedules are barriers to their involvement. Some of the women felt that community involvement has declined among farm women, partly because of increased farm work and off-farm work. Older and middle age group women were asked how involved they were in community activities when they were younger. Based on their responses, it appears that community work among farm women is declining. Younger women do not appear to be as involved in community work as the other women said they once were. Increased demands on women's time, fewer farm women to associate with, and varying milking schedules were all mentioned as contributing factors to the possible decline.

Outsiders often fail to recognize women's involvement and knowledge

The issue that stood out as the most problematic for many dairy farm women is that people do not necessarily recognize the work women do on farms. Nearly every woman in the interviews shared an anecdote of a time in which a salesperson, parts dealer, implement dealer, veterinarian, church person, or others were not aware of or did not acknowledge their involvement on the farm. Some women described how salespeople (including women) insist on talking with their husbands instead of them, even when they are equally or more prepared than their husbands to handle the matter. Many of the women added that their husbands back them up when such situations arise. A number of the women, particularly the women over 56 years old, remarked that this situation has improved for women since they started farming. Also, nearly a third of the women in the interviews feel that this issue is not a problem for them, particularly women 40 or younger.

[Parts dealers] don't want to believe me. They don't think I know what I'm talking about. They called [my husband] a couple of times and he told the guy, "She knows what she needs, ask her."—*Mary, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

I study up on different stuff and the vet comes, and he thinks, well, you're just a dumb old woman. But then when I really sit down with him and I get into this stuff, all of a sudden his mouth hangs down and [it is as if he is thinking], 'oh wow, you're a woman and you really know something.' And you really get sick of being treated like that.—*Sylvia, conventional dairy farm*

It's my pet peeve when salesmen come to our farm and ask, 'Where is the boss?' or 'Where is the man of the farm?'...If salesmen visit when I'm away, my husband tells them, "You'll have to talk with the boss, and she isn't here."—*Gladys, conventional dairy farm*

A lot of women are equal to the men who are farming, but they're not treated that way, especially if they are single women trying to farm.—*Gail, conventional dairy farm*

Things sure have changed. Women get more and more recognition.—*Lorriane, large-scale confinement dairy farm*

Non-farm women friends sometimes lack empathy

Another issue that many women found particularly problematic is when women friends do not understand the demands of living on a farm. A majority of the women felt that lack of understanding from their friends about farm needs was a somewhat or very serious problem. Related to this issue, a number of women also think that social isolation, especially lack of contact with other women, is a problem. Several women indicated that they had had problems with social isolation when they first moved to the farm, but that they adapted to it and it no longer bothers them.

Farm women deal with Social Security's shortcomings

A third issue that many of the women found problematic is the way that Social Security benefits are set up for women on farms. About one-third of the women interviewed feel that the benefits for women on farms are a serious problem, although not always for themselves. Many women have already taken measures to enhance their Social Security benefits or they have Social Security benefits through their off-farm employment. At least one woman experienced consequences of not having paid into social security herself—she had worked full-time on her family's farm but is no longer able to due to health problems. She is not eligible for disability payments.

My Social Security is dependent on [my husband's], and we wouldn't be on this farm if I wasn't here too. It isn't right.—*Dorothy, conventional dairy farm*

[Social Security benefits] are just as bad for men as they are for women.—*Kay, conventional dairy farm*

Managing finances is stressful

Reflecting their bookkeeping responsibilities on the farm, many women remarked that they experience pressure in juggling finances due to low milk prices and the fluctuations in the milk price. This was true of both women who worked off-farm and full-time on the farm. A number of women mentioned that money management and bookkeeping programs would be helpful to them, as would, of course, a higher milk price.

Knowing how to place your income when there isn't enough to go around [is a challenge that women face]. It's much simpler when you get a better price. Now when you have to fix something, there isn't money but you need to fix it in order to get the farm work done.—*Hazel, conventional dairy farm*

Women deal with health problems, finding adequate health coverage

Another challenge that a number of the women said they face relates to their health. Work on dairy farms is often physically demanding, and several of the women had had hip or knee replacements. Others are experiencing chronic health problems related to or exacerbated by farm work. Access to preventive health care is also an issue that a number of women, especially those who carry limited health insurance, are concerned about. Furthermore, one woman said that it is hard to follow doctors' orders when they do not take into account the work that she has to do, and they do not understand that hiring a replacement is not always an option. Finally, women are often in a dilemma over wanting to work full-time on the farm yet still have good health insurance benefits, which are usually only affordable through off-farm employment.

The physical challenge. As you get older, it's harder to cope.—*Helen, conventional dairy farm*

A lot of women feel like they need the health insurance, so they work off-farm for insurance...Maybe they want to quit their jobs and be at home, but they can't because of the health insurance.—*Dawn, MIRG dairy farm*

Finding childcare is challenging

Childcare is an issue that many women grapple with, and many of the dairy farm women in the interviews said that they struggle with it too. Unlike some women who work outside the home, women on dairy farms may not have childcare services available to them unless they have a mother or mother-in-law who is willing to care for their children. Even for those who do have commercial day care while they work off-farm, the cost often consumes a big percentage of their paycheck. While several women mentioned that day care centers for farm women would be helpful to them, they acknowledged that it may not be practical. As a result, the value of having a mother or other family member who provided care to the women's children was very clear.

Women that have small children—some have a hard time if they don't have grandma around.—*Barbara, conventional dairy farm*

Additional challenges

There are a few other challenges that stood out in the interviews. One relates to not being a “door-mat.” Some of the women said they work to get members of the farm to respect that they have limits to how much work they can do. A small number of women considered being the lone women at farm-related meetings a problem. While many of the women do not attend these meetings themselves, a few women indicated that women's attendance at these meetings is increasing. Another challenge is being able to juggle work and family. This means balancing work with time with their families and the activities that their kids want to be in. Some of the women acknowledged that many of the challenges they face are common to other women as well. At the same time, several of the women said that there are meaningful differences between women on farms and other women. To them, fewer women on farms means fewer people who understand their circumstances.

Most Women Are Pleased with Their Contact with Farm Service Agencies

As noted in the above section, women's relationship to people who work with the farm is important. One group of people whom the women work with that the interviews addressed specifically is farm service providers. These include extension agents, conservation officers, veterinarians, feed consultants, crop consultants, tax accountants, and financial consultants. Most of the women interacted with at least one type of farm service provider. When asked about the quality of their interactions with extension agents and conservation officers in particular, most women stated that their experiences had been positive.

Women's contact with farm service providers is closely tied to the farm work that they do

Dairy farm women are most likely to work with tax accountants and financial consultants (if their farms use these services). Over one third of the women indicated that they work with veterinarians on a regular basis, and somewhat fewer meet with dairy nutritionists; this reflects women's work with bookkeeping and animal management. Only a few women work with crop consultants and conservation officers. About a third of the women have met with an extension agent in the past five years. More than fifty percent of the women have used other extension resources at some time, particularly the 4-H and Family Living (Homemakers) agents. The women who are 56 or older are the most likely to have used these resources.

Women suggest few changes in delivery of existing farm services

A small number of the women who have had contact with farm service agencies indicated ever having problems with delivery of these types of services. Typically those women attributed problems to an individual rather than to an agency itself. About half of the women said that they did not think that the extension service or conservation programs could or should be changed to be more accessible or useful for women. They indicated that the agents are accessible to both men and women, and that they are comfortable with their agents.

Suggestions for Programs and Services with Farm Women in Mind

In examining the roles that women have on dairy farms and considering women's own ideas for what would be useful to them, a number of suggestions for programs and services directed toward women arose. First, we present women's own suggestions, and then we submit our proposals. The suggestions chiefly relate to women's roles in farm work. They also touch on leisure time and childcare responsibilities.

Bookkeeping-related and animal management-related courses

There are two main program needs that women mentioned repeatedly: bookkeeping-related courses and dairy-related courses. Not surprisingly, these two major program needs are both integral to the work that women usually do on farms. First, many women said that farm business management classes, tax law training courses, and training for bookkeeping-related computer programs would be useful to them. Second, women said that training and seminars in areas like dairy nutrition, breeding, herd health, and calf management would be helpful. Several women said that they would like courses and product expos that are geared more toward smaller operations. A number of women mentioned difficulty attending classes off-farm due to their responsibilities at home and on-farm.

Additional suggestions from women in the study

The women made suggestions such as classes on time management, classes on stress management and relaxation, assertiveness training, and free health screenings. Several women expressed interest in support groups for women on farms, either issues-based or leisure-oriented groups. A couple of women

requested courses geared toward safety such as general farm safety, CPR, and first-aid training. Women from farms that hire Hispanic workers called for language courses in Spanish. They expressed frustration with the communication barrier between themselves and farm employees.

Provision of childcare and greater awareness of women's roles

Taking the women's suggestions into consideration and using the information on women's roles from the study, it appears that due to women's responsibility for children an important step in including more women in farm-related training and seminars would be to provide on-site childcare at the sessions. It would also be beneficial for extension agents, other instructors, and farm-related business people to be more sensitive to the fact that many women are extensively involved in farm work, particularly related to bookkeeping and livestock. This could lead to better, more productive relationships between farm women and the other people and entities involved.

VII. Conclusion

From the above sections it is apparent that women are vital to many dairy operations today through a number of means—doing farm work, shouldering household work and care of the family, participating in farm decision-making, and providing income to the farm household and the farm itself with off-farm earnings. Women tend to be especially knowledgeable about the bookkeeping and financial aspects of their families' dairy farms. Additionally, many women are extensively involved in livestock work and, to a lesser extent, field work. All of the women have the most responsibility for household work, including care of children, which is vitally important to producing the next generation of dairy farmers. They are important in maintaining the strength of their communities through their local volunteer work and community participation as well. The main conclusions of this report are listed below.

Women Are Flexible in Their Roles

Women often do a mix of farm work and household work. They show adaptability in learning new farm skills and filling in where they are needed. In addition, many women blend these roles with off-farm work. This ability to adapt makes women essential members of many farms. Men's roles did not appear to be as broadly defined as women's, especially in the household domain.

Women Have More Specialized Roles on Large-Scale Confinement Operations

Women on large-scale confinement farms may tend more toward involvement in tasks and decisions related specifically to farm bookkeeping and calf/heifer operations. The increase in the percentage of large-scale confinement farms indicates that in the future a greater proportion of women will have narrower roles on the farm. The increase in the percentage of dairy farms practicing rotational grazing, on the other hand, may mean that a significant portion of women will still remain involved in a variety of farm work.

Increasing Off-Farm Work Participation Decreases Women's Involvement on the Farm

As the structure of the dairy industry changes, farm income is often not enough to sustain both the farm household and the farm, particularly on conventional and MORG dairy farms. It seems likely that more women will take off-farm work in order to acquire affordable health insurance benefits and to earn household income, thereby enabling families to stay more securely on farms. This will probably have the biggest negative impact on how much involvement women have on farm operations, although women will continue to play an important role in the farm tasks that they maintain in addition to their off-farm work.

Supporting Women in Their Farm Roles May Be Advantageous to Wisconsin's Dairy Sector

Cooperative extension, other public agencies, and private businesses that work with dairy farm families do not always recognize the efforts of women on dairy farms. Farm families and supporting organizations and firms would benefit if there were more awareness of women's work on dairy farms. Classes and computer programs that are aimed at women and their roles in bookkeeping would be especially useful to many women. Training and seminars that focus on farm work that women commonly do have been helpful to and desired by many women. Provision of childcare is an important step in including more women in these activities and in others that appeal to both men and women. Business people should be especially attuned to the roles that women play on farms since women have a significant role in financial decisions.

Supporting the work that women on dairy farms do may be an essential part of moderating the loss of Wisconsin dairy farms and keeping the state competitive in milk production. Women have played a crucial role in both making farms efficient and in raising the next generations of dairy farmers. Their often unpaid labor has been a key to the success of family farms, the basis of the dairy sector in Wisconsin. Women have many resources and skills that could be further developed to help strengthen Wisconsin dairy farming.

Endnotes

¹ With one exception.

² Seven of the women were working full-time off-farm at the time of the interviews, and two of the women were working part time on a regular basis. A couple of the other women have less regular off-farm employment or paid board positions, and they are not counted as working off-farm in the findings.

² Seven of the women were working full-time off-farm at the time of the interviews, and two of the women were working part time on a regular basis. A couple of the other women have less regular off-farm employment or paid board positions, and they are not counted as working off-farm in the findings.

⁴ The section of the interview on household work did not include a category for household maintenance and repairs. When women added this in, they said their husbands spend more time on household activities per week than they would have said otherwise.

⁵ None of the women interviewed in 2000 were German Baptist, Mennonite, or Amish.

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