



Women In Rural Professions

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Background

- ❖ The Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ISPFMRA) is an organization made up of men and women, however the society is mostly male dominated.
- ❖ The female members of the ISPFMRA play important roles in the rural professions industry and their own personal career paths.
- ❖ Gaining insight on career opportunities in rural professions could help young women in agriculture today pursue careers in this industry.

Motivation and Objectives

- ❖ Describe the current participation and role of women within the professional farm management and rural appraisal industries in Illinois.
- ❖ Conduct ethical human subjects research.
- ❖ Discuss how women can pursue opportunities in rural professions such as farm management and rural appraisal.

Methods

- ❖ In Fall 2020, telephone and Zoom interviews were conducted with eight female farm managers and rural appraisers selected from the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisal.
- ❖ An eight-question interview script was developed.
- ❖ The interviewees ranged from appraisers and farm managers just beginning their careers to those nearing retirement, allowing for a wide variety of opinions and career stories.

Abstract

The Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ISPFMRA) is an organization made up of both men and women who are employed in rural professions such as farm management, farmland appraisal, and rural consulting. The society was once all men, but the membership of women is on the rise. Although today this society is mostly made up of men, the group of women within the society play a very important role in the rural professions industry. As young agriculture students some young women may feel that there are many career opportunities not stressed to them as much as other career opportunities. Therefore, it is often a struggle to find information from other women about the careers they have chosen to pursue. The objective of this research was to describe the current participation of women within rural professions in IL and to discuss how women can pursue opportunities in professional farm management. Through phone and Zoom interviews in Fall 2020, eight women involved in rural professions from across the state of Illinois provided information related to their background, challenges they have faced in the industry, and advice for young women interested in a future career path similar to theirs. The interviewees ranged from women just beginning their careers to those nearing retirement, allowing for a wide variety of opinions and career stories. Results of the interviews indicate that many young women in the agriculture industry have at one time or another felt they were encouraged to pursue a career they were not interested in, due to their gender. However, many of the women spoke of still following the career path they wanted and having success alongside their male colleagues. Many of the interviewees stressed that young women today should not be intimidated because they are women but should embrace their difference and push for excellence in their careers. The results of this study can inform young women about the career options they have and the mentors they can lean on in the industry.



Interview Script

- ❖ What was your major or sequence in college and did you start at a four-year university or community college?
- ❖ Did you grow up on a farm or in a rural setting that led you to your career path?
- ❖ Is your current career what you had planned when you started college? And if not, how or why did your plans change?
- ❖ How did you learn about career opportunities in rural professions?
- ❖ Did you ever feel intimidated being a women applying and interviewing for your position, and if yes, how so?
- ❖ Do you feel well respected and appreciated in your current position?
- ❖ Have you ever felt that being a woman hindered your career or professional interactions?
- ❖ What is one piece of advice you'd like to give a young woman in agriculture today that's thinking about a career path similar to yours?

Findings

- ❖ The top women of rural professions today are confident that anyone who has the drive to succeed will do so in the industry.
- ❖ Women are well represented in the industry today and growth in the industry is inevitable.
- ❖ Young women who choose to pursue these career paths will have ample support to do so.

Implications

- ❖ For young women studying agriculture, the results of this study can inform them about more career opportunities with agribusiness such as rural professions like farm management and rural appraisal.